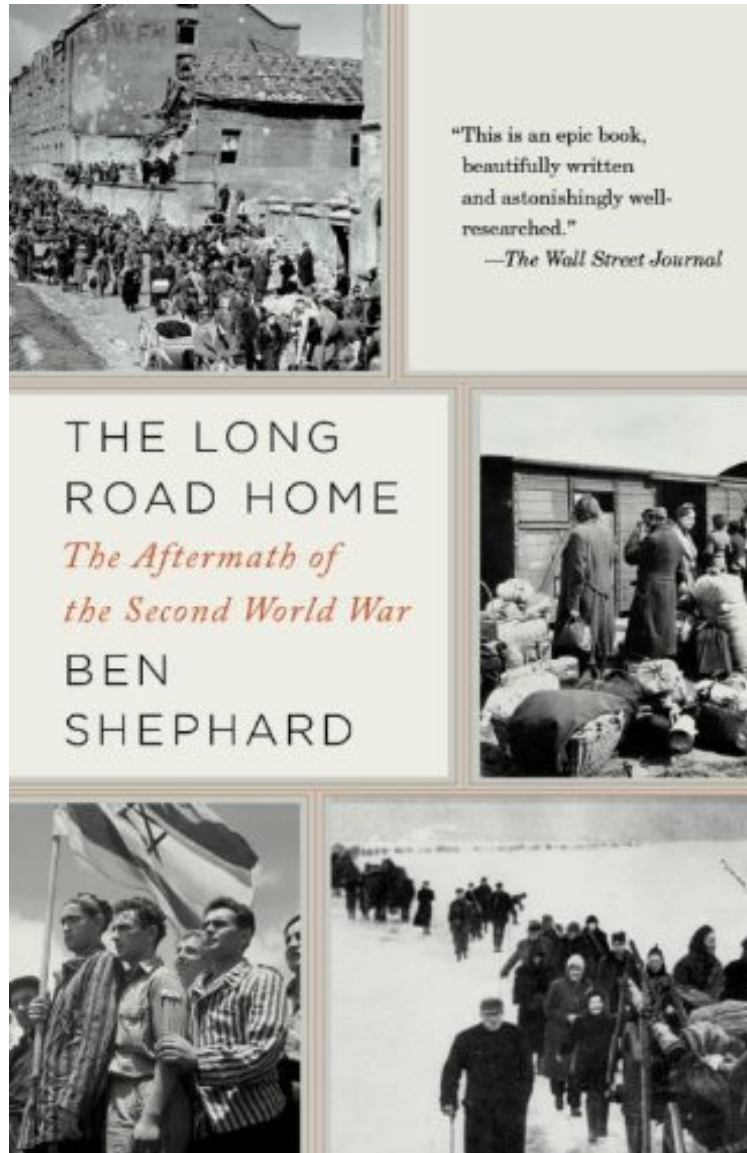


(Read download) The Long Road Home: The Aftermath of the Second World War

The Long Road Home: The Aftermath of the Second World War

Ben Shephard

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Ben Shephard : The Long Road Home: The Aftermath of the Second World War before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Long Road Home: The Aftermath of the Second World War:

47 of 48 people found the following review helpful. The fate of the displaced persons By Paul Gelman Each war in

history has its price. To be more precise, the price is usually paid by those who are lucky enough to survive such a traumatic experience. This is exactly what happened to millions of people who found themselves uprooted during WW2 and became displaced when the war ended. Among those millions one could find Latvians, Poles, Ukrainians, Yugoslavs, Russians and Jews, as well as Germans. The Allies were confronted by many questions and problems posed after the war, such as: How can mechanisms for international humanitarian aid made to work? To what extent can immigration be absorbed by the various countries? How can an occupying power restore prosperity to a defeated enemy? What about the fate of the different ethnic groups and how can they live together? What about the future of Poland? And how were the borders of Russia to be decided? These are only some of the many points raised and elaborated on in this tragic tale. Journals, oral histories and new essays written by actual DPs which were found during the writing of this book serve the main corpus of the nineteen chapters which constitute this study. There are numerous stories about individuals who survived the hell of the German extermination and concentration camps as well as the history of organizations which were set up to help the displaced, UNRRA being the chief protagonist. On May 22, 1945, the Russians and the Allies met and made arrangements for the exchange of prisoners and another six million Russians, many of whom barely showed a willingness to return to Stalin's empire. In the course of time the severe winter of 1946-47 did not make things easier for anyone and it was only after the initiation of the Marshall Plan that things got better in Europe. One of the best and moving chapters is the one which discusses in detail the efforts of tracing missing children throughout Europe—a process which went on for decades after the war. With the onset of the Cold War, all prospect of harmonious cooperation between the East and the West had vanished. Allied military authorities grew more determined in not returning children to the East unless they could be shown to have close relatives. Because the Americans regarded the displaced persons "a dead weight on the ailing economy of Europe" and a drag on European recovery, efforts were made to persuade other countries to let in many of the displaced immigrants. In 1947, it was becoming clear that a permanent solution to the refugee problem would be found overseas, namely in North and South America and the British Commonwealth. Many countries imposed an endless number of tests upon those who wished to leave Europe. The only country which actually courted the DPs was Australia. It adopted an aggressive and successful strategy to lure them by using books, pamphlets, films and posters which were distributed around the camps extolling the wonders of that place. The personal stories of the DPs are mixed with the Allied efforts to bring some kind of relief to those millions of unfortunate survivors who had to start their lives from scratch. All this is done in a fascinating tale that radiates, after all, with optimism.

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. A look at post-war Europe...By Jill Meyer British author Ben Shephard has written a masterful look at the post-WW2 people migrations in his book, "The Long Road Home". It's a story not often covered in the history books, which often go from Allied victory in May, 1945 right into the Cold War. Millions of people survived WW2 in different locations than they had begun the war. Not only Jews, but hundreds of thousands of European Christians were either forcibly taken from the captive countries to work in Germany or volunteered to do so. After the war, these people were on the move across Europe. Also, of course, Jews who survived the Nazi concentration camps were freed. Prisoners of war - both Allied and Axis - were finding their way home, as well. But what was "home" and did it exist anymore? Boundaries had been redrawn, countries that had existed before the war no longer existed, and countries, like Poland, that had been split in half during the war - half-German, half-Soviet - once again appeared on the European map as a single nation. But if borders were redrawn, the advent of the Cold War also turned people against each other. Those Christian Poles, for instance, now, in many cases, chose not to return to Soviet-run Poland. Where were they going to go? Added to this mass of humanity on the loose in post-war Germany were the ethnic Germans who had lived in Czechoslovakia for years (and were the pretext, of course, for the annexation of Czechoslovakia by the Germans in 1938). They were abruptly expelled from Czechoslovakia after the war without, in many cases, any property. Homeless and propertyless, they joined the mass of humanity called "Displaced Persons". The victorious Allied powers, recognising the mistakes they made after WW1 which led, in some part, to the rise of Nazism and WW2, decided to handle the post-WW2 period differently. The new organisation, UNRRA (United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration) moved into the mess of post-war Germany - amid the ruins of most German cities - and tried to provide leadership. Released survivors of concentration camps were often put into DP camps, sometimes, as with the case of the DP camp Belson, in the same area as the concentration camps the survivors had just left. Schools and hospitals and small cities were established in the DP camps. Relief workers helped the DP camp inmates (a strange word to use in this case, I think) with every day living and plans for "what next". In the period right after the war, starvation was staved off due to the efforts of UNRRA workers and the occupying forces - the US, France, and Great Britain. Britain had its own troubles with post-war food and energy supplies. Shephard writes beautifully of both those caught in the post-war morass and those who set about to help. He examines both the greater politics of relief as well as the lives of those who were the recipients. Those millions of people, milling around, trying to make new lives for themselves in the aftermath of a terrible war.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. The Human Cost of War By Joseph D. Parry Ben Shephard's book tells a very important story about the international efforts that were made to bring relief to post-World War 2 Europe. The people and institutions behind these efforts very much deserve to have their story told with the care, detail, and kindness that Shephard brings to his task. But I also appreciated very much

Shepherd's sense of the monumental challenges and complexities these good souls faced in their work--challenges and complexities that no one did or could understand simply because the scale of destruction and exploitation wrought on the world by Nazi Germany in the 30s and 40s, then amplified further by their scared, desperate, and vindictive victims, couldn't be measured, much less comprehended, in those first crucial post-war years. (It may have been too much to ask for Shepherd to more fully account for the role that Stalin's Soviet Union had played in helping to create the situation that the Western Allies found with the "Displaced Persons" who showed up in Germany after the war, but I found myself wishing on several occasions that Shepherd had written this book after reading Timothy Snyder's "Bloodlands.") But that's what makes it so imperative that books like these are written. It has taken so long--and will take even longer--to discover, as well as to understand, what the devastation of Nazism and Stalinism has meant to scores of nations and millions of individual lives. We really do need to know what happened and what it all means so that we can do and be better in our present and future, but it was especially enlightening to gain a little more understanding of these things in a story that bore witness both to the goodness that is to be found in many people, but also to our ignorance of what it will require from all of us to make this world a better place.

Groundbreaking and remarkably relevant to modern emergency relief efforts, *The Long Road Home* tells the epic story of how the mammoth refugee problem in the wake of World War II was painstakingly solved. While the war was still going on, the Western Allies began to plan for the humanitarian crisis they knew would come when the shooting stopped. Haunted by memories of the chaos and loss of life at wars end a generation earlier, they were determined to get it right this time. But what faced aid workers in 1945 was not what they had planned for Jewish survivors of the concentration camps and a mass of displaced persons from Eastern Europe Poles, Ukrainians, Latvians, Yugoslavs who did not want to go home. It would take five years to find them new countries in Israel, the United States, Canada and Australia. Ben Shephard has drawn on a mass of materials, including newly discovered diaries and journals, to bring out the human reality of this story.

From Publishers Weekly Starred . In the vast literature on WWII, scholars have largely ignored the 10 million to 15 million displaced persons who confronted the Allies in 1945. British writer and documentarian Shephard (*After Daybreak: The Liberation of Bergen-Belsen, 1945*) tells a fascinating story of their ordeal. Although concentration camp victims made headlines, their numbers were hugely augmented by millions of foreign workers and slave laborers later joined by millions of destitute Germans expelled from former conquered nations. Aid planners expected a typhus epidemic, but generous use of DDT prevented this. They expected to repatriate everyone only to discover that many objected to returning to Soviet rule; Shephard describes American soldiers dragging terrified Russians and Ukrainians to assembly points. Despite relief efforts, in 1947 a million refugees lingered in dreary camps; Germany remained devastated. Matters only improved after the Marshall Plan's massive infusion of money and supplies, sold to a reluctant Congress as an anticommunist program. Shephard reveals that however well planned, post-WWII relief also produced shambles. His masterful account mixes history, colorful personalities, and moving individual stories. 8 pages of photos; 1 map. (Feb.) (c) Copyright PWxyz, LLC. All rights reserved. From Booklist The enduring images of VE Day are of the unrestrained, joyful celebrations that swept European and American cities. But as this detailed and absorbing study illustrates, massive human suffering and even violence was far from over. Left in the wake of the cataclysm were millions of so-called DPs (displaced persons), many of whom were Jewish survivors of the concentration camps, although the massive scale of the Holocaust was not yet evident. But the miserable also encompassed numerous other nationalities tossed about by the vagaries of war. Tasked with the responsibility for dealing with their misery was the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA). Oxford-educated historian, writer, and documentary-film producer Shephard is sympathetic to the difficulties of the mission. Yet his description of the efforts of UNRRA is replete with examples of bureaucratic bumbling and political manipulation that imposed an immense human cost on already destitute people. Shephard has provided a depressing but valuable examination of a largely neglected aspect of WWII. --Jay Freeman "[A] highly readable and moving book of postwar relief efforts. . . . Shephard raises an important point about the writing of history, which so often dwells on spectacular evil at the expense of pedestrian virtue. . . . With this book, [he] has made a significant contribution to redressing the balance." *The New York Times Book* "This is an epic book, beautifully written and astonishingly well-researched." *The Wall Street Journal* "Thoughtful and sobering." *New York Journal of Books* "Masterful...With its thorough and compassionate depiction of the DP era as a whole, *The Long Road Home* establishes beyond question the period's pivotal importance. . . . [It] should be required reading for anyone who seeks to obtain insight into the capacity of ordinary individuals to confront and, for the most part, overcome the consequences of persecution and dire devastation." *The Washington Post* "A welcome and much-needed analysis of the refugee crisis in post-war Europe." *The Christian Science Monitor* "Shephard manages to integrate the experiences of major military and political figures with that of ordinary residents of the camps, deftly weaving quotations from his sources into his narrative. . . . A highly readable, solid study." Richard Breitman, *Washington Independent Book* "A splendid account of the refugee crisis, moving seamlessly from compelling personal stories to the larger historical and political context, *The Long*

Road Home is remarkably and refreshingly candid." Tulsa World