Reviews: Mark Mazower, ed., After the War was Over: Reconstructing the Family, Nation and State in Greece, 1943 —1960, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2000; xii + 302 pp.; 0691058423, £12.50 (pbk); 0691058415, £41 (hbk)
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towards democracy in different ideologies). In so far as Kroll’s study deals with, and explicitly acknowledges the importance of, the ideology of the Third Reich, it would have been of interest to learn to what degree Kroll’s reading of Nazi ideology corresponds to definitions of generic fascism as proposed, for instance, by Stanley G. Payne, Roger Griffin or Roger Eatwell. In particular, Roger Griffin’s sophisticated conceptualizations of fascist ideology would be worth relating to the different visions of the Nazi leaders analysed by Kroll. This could help in clarifying an old issue in comparative fascist studies, namely whether Nazism should be seen as a variety of generic fascism, or not — as has been suggested by Juan Linz and perhaps most explicitly claimed by Zeev Sternhell. To this reader, Kroll’s emphasis on the concept of ‘renewal’, and on the modern dimension of mainstream Nazi thought (which in turn made Darré look so peculiar), and, especially, his reference to the non-racist, or at least non-biologically racist, ultra-nationalism of Goebbels would all seem to support Nazism’s classification as a permutation of generic fascism as defined by Payne, Griffin or Eatwell. Yet, perhaps, my interpretation of the result of Kroll’s study in comparative perspective would conflict with his own — which is why Kroll’s omission of a reference to comparative fascist studies is so regrettable.

This comment notwithstanding, it should be emphasized once more that Kroll’s study is a comprehensive, dense and, in view of its clear focus and impressive depth, very useful presentation of Nazi ideology. It should encounter a grateful readership among researchers, find broad application in the teaching of interwar Europe, and greatly help to improve our understanding both of the Third Reich and of the phenomenon of fascism in general.

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Mark Mazower, ed., After the War was Over: Reconstructing the Family, Nation and State in Greece, 1943–1960, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2000; xii + 302 pp.; 0691058423, £12.50 (pbk); 0691058415, £41 (hbk)

The turbulent period of the Axis occupation in Greece and the subsequent civil war constitute one of the most popular and controversial themes in modern European history. To be sure, this is a subject that cannot escape politicization — something demonstrated
by the angle from which most historians approached it over the years. Outside as well as in Greece the historiographical debate on Greek civil war was transformed into a battle between scholars of left and right. Their main concern in the period following the Truman doctrine (1947) was to attribute responsibility for the Greek civil war to their ideological rivals. In Greece, the same debate formed a historical problématique after the political restoration of 1974. Unfortunately, even then it would be reduced to a prejudiced assessment of political choices made both by the left and the right in Greece, or by the British and the American policy-makers of the period. What were utterly ignored — with a very few recent exceptions — were the micro-histories that took place within the same socio-political framework: issues of gender, culture, Alltagesgeschichte, local experience. The trauma of the civil war in Greece, and the burden of foreign agency in it, obliterated the multiplicity of historical experience.

The volume here reviewed, edited by Mark Mazower, marks a turning point in this respect: it sheds light on all these repressed or forgotten stories which the official record overshadowed for many decades. It is a collective work which, despite its diversity in terms of research, approach and academic language, manages to tell the tale of the longer-term social and psychological repercussions of civil war. Mazower’s allusion to Svoronos’s famous dictum that the causes of the conflict of the 1940s are to be found in ‘the very structures of Greek society’ (9) provides the book with a core theme. Written against the grain of established historiographical trends on the Greek civil war, which present the events against the winners–losers binarism, this book has a unifying theme, which focuses on the Greek domestic arena and explores internal conflicts that threatened the Greek social order — namely the law, the family and the nation.

The first essay by the editor re-addresses the question of power legitimacy in the post-Liberation period. The gap in central political power which the war generated became an object of contest among the returning liberal Papandreou government, EAM/ELAS (National Liberation Front/Greek People’s Liberation Army) with its communist version of ‘People’s Justice’ and a nationalist conception of ethnic justice. Mazower’s unfolding of three different narratives of political criminality shows how difficult it is for historians to escape in their research the passage from ideological analysis to normative judgement and the very conception of justice. Chapters 2 (Elena Haidia) and 3 (Procopis Papastratis) deal with the attitude of the state, various institutions and the masses towards collaborators. Both essays show how fragile, geographically limited and
blocked by foreign (f)actors, such as the British, was the Greek government’s attempt to punish them. Both essays comprise an in-depth analysis of the legitimacy crisis, thus complementing Mazower’s opening chapter.

Chapters 4 (Polymeris Voglis) and 5 (Mando Dalyannis) form a poignant dialogue concerning political recantation. Voglis explores how the state used the death sentence to exert pressure on political prisoners and extort official renunciations of their ideology. The government condemned those who did not succumb; but those who repented had to live with the stigma of the traitor. The former, who faced the death sentence, had to choose between their sense of duty and their commitment to the party, and family pressure exercised on them in order to sign the recantation of their ideological positions. Dalianis’s piece of oral history explores the ambivalence of feelings such decisions generated in the children of those political prisoners, as well as the degree to which ideological brainwashing affected their views.

Chapter 6 (Tassoula Vervenioti) is dedicated to the fascinating subject of women’s position in post-war society. Although on some occasions the end of the war restricted these women who had joined the resistance to the domestic sphere once again, it could also assign them new roles that allowed their return to public action. Chapter 7 (Riki von Boeschoten) casts light on the changes the war wrought on Greek political geography. Von Boeschoten’s microhistory of the village Ziakas witnesses how little rigid communist control permeated private life. The loyalties of the villagers rested more on their sense of community than on communism itself; this essay gives a moving narrative of the ways this communal feeling helped common people to survive the war. Chapters 8 (Stathis Kalyvas), 9 (John Sakkas) and 10 (Lee Sarafis) make a strong case for an abandoned field of research: the countryside’s experience of the war. The communities of Argolid, Karpenisi and Deskati went through political control by EAM/ELAS, reprisals from the occupiers, and systematic murders. Though the tactics followed by both resistance groups and the Germans did not differ from place to place, reaction from the local communities betrays how national political loyalties were subjected to local interests and concerns.

In Chapter 11 Anastasia Karakasidou reads a series of decrees and administrative regulations as an attempt of the Greek state to construct a cult of national pride in the Greek part of Macedonia. Chapter 12 (Bea Lewkowicz) concentrates on Thessaloniki and looks into war memories of the survivors of the Jewish community. According to Lewkowicz the Jews who survived extermination withdrew from public life — a conscious response to their symbolic
exclusion from the Greek nation. In Chapter 13 Xanthippi Kotzageorgi-Zymari and Tassos Hadjianastassiou write about wartime memories of the Bulgarian occupation of north-eastern Greece. The ways these memories survive and are glorified (or not) by the first, second and third generations of the region show a shift in Greek mentality and the changing role of heroic history in the modern Greek world. Finally, Chapter 14 (Susanne-Sophia Spiliotis) is a study of the Merten scandal and its role in Greek–German post-war diplomacy.

The strong case this book makes is that the war was not over when the occupation and the civil strife came to an official end — an ironic conclusion, bearing in mind the title of the volume. The fact that the Greek domestic conflict and its aftermath are treated as a whole reveals how fragile and flexible supposedly historical categories and periods become when they are revisited impartially. As an enterprise, After the War was Over invites Second World War specialists, as well as historians of contemporary Greece, to reflect on their own writing and its ideological implications. The shift in terms of approach of such an important subject ought to find some emulators in the future. Returning to the theme of one of its chapters, one could ask whether this shift betrays an increasing awareness of the complexity of historical record or simply that the specific period became a distant memory, which cannot affect present attitudes and therefore can be rewritten as history, and not as a political manifesto.

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Lewis H. Carlson, We Were Each Other’s Prisoners: An Oral History of World War II American and German Prisoners of War, New York, Basic Books, 1997; 258 pp.; 0465091237, $15

This volume draws together the testimony of thirty-three male American and German Prisoners of War who were interned in the enemy homeland in the Second World War. The author Lewis Carlson places himself in a tradition of recovery history, confessing ‘an affinity for the enlisted men, whose individual stories too often have been reduced to impersonal statistics in traditional military histories’. The men’s histories are drawn from interviews and personal writings collected from over 150 POWs by the author between c.1991 and 1996. The collection also includes well-selected images drawn from both public and private collections (regretfully neither