

## The human consequences

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## The human consequences

The toll of the Second World War was extremely heavy: the loss of human lives, and the partial destruction of economic potential. The number of Jewish victims alone was estimated at nearly six million, among them most of the Jews of Eastern Europe who had died in Nazi concentration camps. While the material destruction seemed to be reparable, the human consequences would be felt for several generations. In the countries most affected by the war, a serious demographic imbalance appeared. Millions of young men had lost their lives in combat, which resulted in a sudden ageing of the population.

Harmony between the peoples of Europe now seemed even more improbable than at the end of the war. Millions of Europeans had been forced to leave their homes because of changes to national frontiers. Such mass displacement caused a large number of human and logistical problems: reception facilities had to be set up, new accommodation built, entire families had been separated. It would take more than 10 years to meet the basic needs of such people who had been uprooted from their homes.