



# **THE CITY OF WAR: VENGEANCE**

**AND THE END OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR**

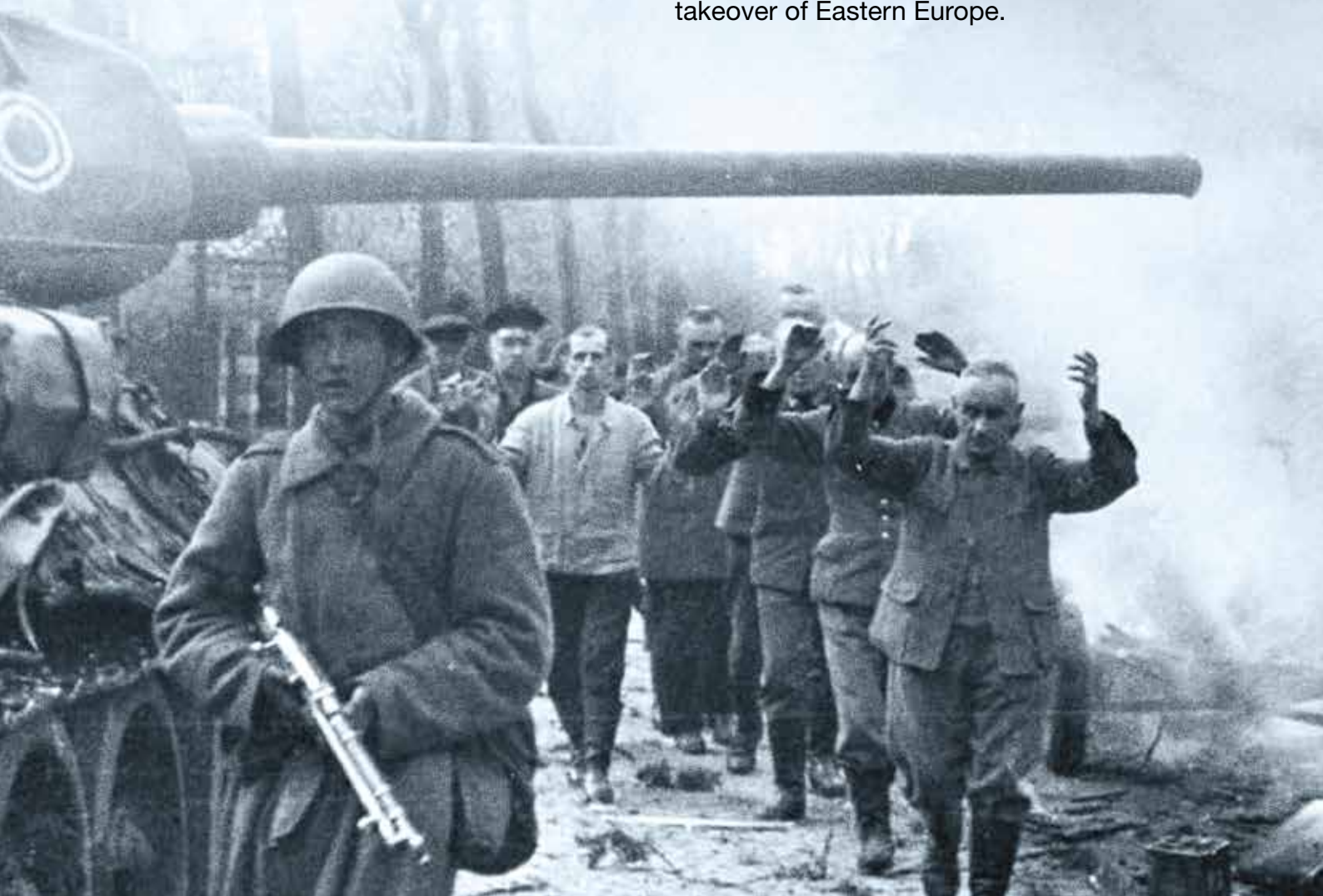
The end of the Second World War led to a period of savage vengeance and lawlessness on the continent of Europe, particularly in Germany and Eastern Europe. This is not fully understood. National myths about the Second World War and its end have dominated public consciousness. The myths hide much of the history of what happened at the end of the war. This new 100-minute programme visits and evokes these worlds, haunted by their past and their uncertain futures.

Through a combination of interviews with leading authorities, archive footage, contemporary witness statements and evocation of the areas described, the two-part film builds into a comprehensive portrait of a world of suffering, vengeance and savagery, mitigated by the courage and humanity of those who tried to help end savagery. The Second World War in the minds of many historians has concentrated on the western front and the war in Western Europe. It is less well known that Russia lost twenty-eight million people in the war; twelve million Germans were

ethnically cleansed after the war between 1945 and 1948; torture continued after 1945 as part of acts of vengeance.

In accounting for the continuing savagery after the end of the war, various narratives are portrayed: the retribution of the victors against the brutal German waging of the war, the effect of Hitler's cruel prolongation of the war even when defeat was certain; and above all, the power of the retaliatory hatred which created the force of the terrible vengeance that was wrought upon the vanquished in this the cruellest of all wars.

In response to this period of extreme brutality and hatred, the dream of a united Europe arose as a reaction to the violence and destruction. The Frenchman Jean Monnet among others set about creating a new Europe - so that savagery would not happen again between European peoples. Glasnost, the tearing down of the Berlin Wall and the emergence of new democratic states in eastern Europe are a long way from the fall of Berlin and the Russian takeover of Eastern Europe.





The film starts by visiting the haunted landscapes of the world that existed after the end of the Second World War. Now often forgotten, these melancholy deserted worlds, whether in Berlin, East Prussia, the Ukraine or Bulgaria, were the scenes of terrible acts of vengeance, human violence and murderous killing. Rape and destruction powered by ethnic hatreds and the desire for vengeance characterised this period of post-1945 lawlessness. As well as state and military violence, elements within the civilian population often took the law into their own hands to wreak a collective retributory violence with horrific consequences.

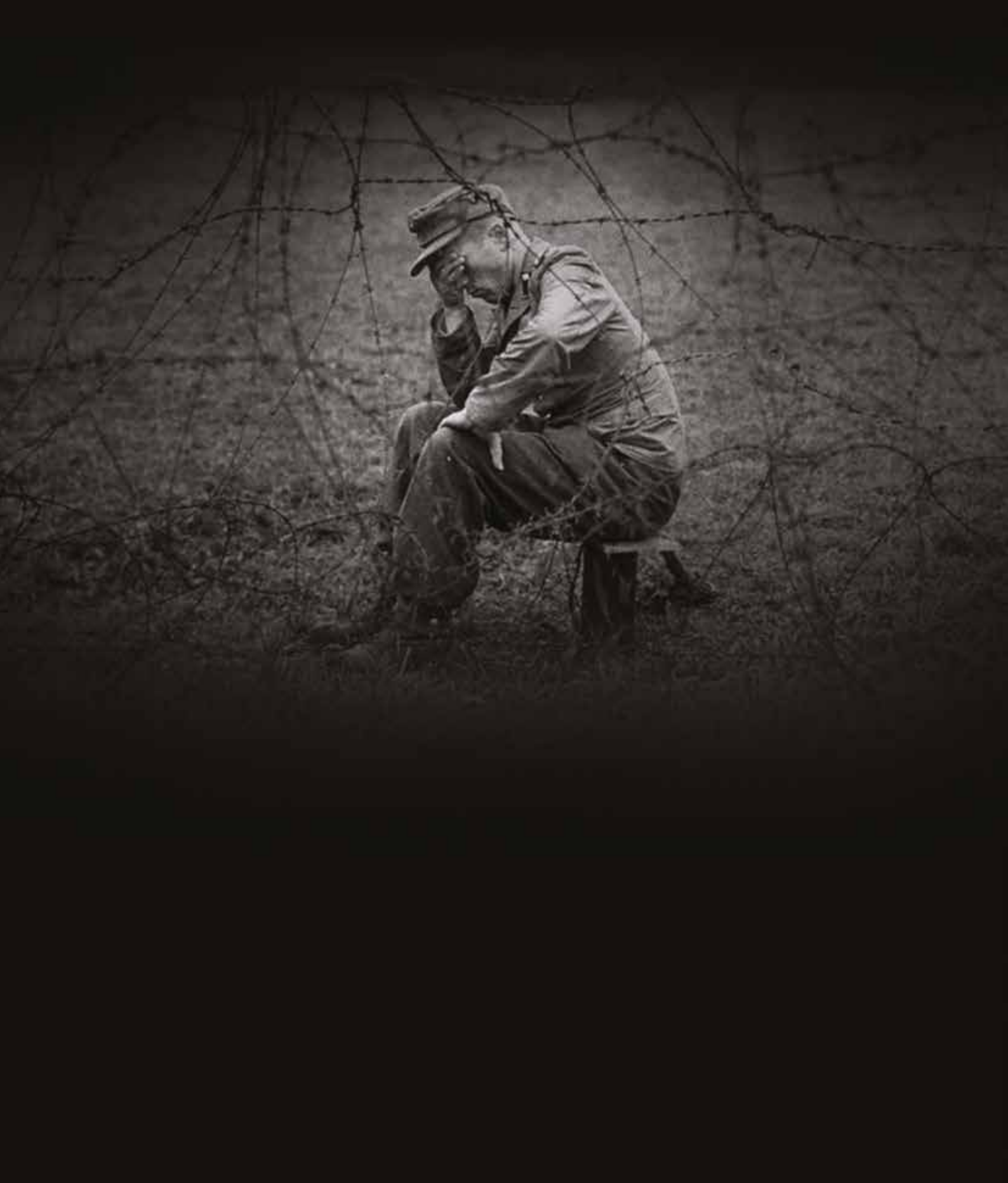
The Russians, who themselves had suffered terribly under German attack and domination, brutally attacked and occupied the territories they conquered. In the fall of Berlin and the defeat of Germany it is estimated that two million German women were very brutally and often repeatedly raped. As defeat became inevitable, there were mass suicides by German men, women and children. Orphan children

roamed many cities. Concentration camps were set up. East Prussia was removed from Germany and handed over to the Soviet Union. These territorial changes were mirrored in many other countries.

The film ends by asking whether the vengeance wrought by so many on so many was understandable - or simply inevitable after the brutality with which Germany fought the war, the Holocaust and the generalised horror of the Second World War and all that accompanied it. The reaction of the Allies was remarkable in the face of the vengeance wrought. The Marshall Plan, instituted by George Marshall and the US government, put into practice the realisation that only economic development, good government and international institutions could stop the savagery. It took longer for the eastern European countries to become free. Not until the breakdown of the Soviet Union and the associated policies of Gorbachev would free countries and institutions emerge in eastern Europe.

**ENDS**





ADRIAN MUNSEY, ODYSSEY TELEVISION,  
PINWOOD STUDIOS, PINWOOD ROAD, IVER HEATH. BUCKINGHAMSHIRE SL0 0NH  
TEL: +4479 800 11535 E-MAIL: [ADRIAN@ADRIANMUNSEY.COM](mailto:ADRIAN@ADRIANMUNSEY.COM)  
WEB-STE: [WWW.ADRIANMUNSEY.COM](http://WWW.ADRIANMUNSEY.COM)