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The Functions and Legitimization of Suffering in Calais, France

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ABSTRACT

The instrumentalisation of disaster – long considered a feature of wars and famines in Africa, for example – has now been brought right into the heart of Europe. Suffering in Calais has been manipulated for the purpose of deterrence and for domestic political purposes, and forms part of a wider system of outsourcing violence and suffering that has been legitimised through Arendt's "action as propaganda" and through perverse distributions of shame.

> As someone long prepared for the occasion;
> In full command of every plan you wrecked –
> Do not choose a coward's explanation
> That hides behind the cause and the effect.
>
> (Leonard Cohen, Alexandra Leaving)

INTRODUCTION

On a sweltering July day in 2016, amidst the sprawling, rat-infested and insanitary tents and overflowing toilets at the so-called "jungle" camp, you could easily feel yourself to be in the middle of a hastily improvised camp for displaced people in a Sudanese war-zone. But this camp was located in a holiday destination within peacetime northern France, where one of the world's richest countries was "playing host" to over 7,000 people who had fled violence and repression in Sudan, Syria, Afghanistan, Eritrea and a number of other countries.

Conditions and facilities in the Calais "jungle" were in many respects significantly *inferior* to those in many refugee camps outside Europe. Visiting Calais in October 2015, child psychiatrist Lynne Jones asked:

> How is it possible that on the borders of a north European town, there are some 6,000 people living in conditions worse than those I have encountered with Somali refugees on the Ethiopian border, Pakistanis after a devastating earthquake, or Darfuris in the deserts of Northern Chad, one of the poorest countries in the world? (Jones, 2015)

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Talking with people in Calais in the summer of 2016, it was shocking to realize that a humanitarian disaster could develop – and be *allowed* to develop – in the heart of Western Europe. In France, none of the "usual suspects" that cause disasters and impede aid were applicable – civil war, drought, etc.; and Calais is about an hour-and-a-half by train from the capitals of the UK and France, two of the world's richest countries.

Wars and famines have functions as well as causes (e.g. Keen, 1994; cf Foucault, 1980: 135–6). Today, the instrumentalization of disaster – often considered a feature of wars and famines in Africa and Asia, for example – has been brought (back) into the heart of Europe. This article builds on work by Andersson (2014), De Leòn (2015), Cuttitta (2018) and others in considering the instrumentalization of migrants' suffering. Agreeing with Davies et al.'s (2017) view that neglect is a form of violence, the article asks what *functions* are being served by this neglect (and by more active violence).

The paper also argues that suffering has been legitimized in Calais via a perverse distribution of shame in which perpetrators have tended to be remarkably shameless while shame has routinely been loaded onto the victims (cf Cohen, 2001). As Fanon (1967) and others have highlighted, colonialism (which profoundly shaped patterns of migration) has itself been characterized by a perverse distribution of shame (e.g. Fanon, 1967); and at some rather fundamental level, the inhuman treatment meted out to exiles in Calais reflects – and reveals in the present moment – a long history of denying the humanity of people who are black or brown (or at least not considered "white"), a practice that colonialism depended as well as encouraging both at home and abroad (see, e.g. Mbembé, 2003; Davies *et al.*, 2017; Davies & Isakjee, 2019; cf Arendt, 1979). Discourse and practice around the Calais exiles have certainly been deeply and persistently infused by racism. In fact, the suffering in Calais has formed a part of a broader array of suffering (often camp-based) in which "global racialized inequalities are suddenly writ large on the European landscape" (Davies & Isakjee, 2019: 215).

In further understanding how abuse in Calais has been legitimized and sustained, Arendt's concept of "action as propaganda" turns out to be particularly helpful. This is the process by which action – usually violent action – makes implausible propaganda seem more plausible over time. In *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Arendt shows how the power of the totalitarian state is demonstrated, in large part, through its ability to re-make reality so that reality begins to align more closely with the lies and distortions of propaganda (Arendt, 1979, first published 1951). Arendt referred to "the advantages of a propaganda that constantly 'adds the power of organization' to the feeble and unreliable voice of argument, and thereby realizes, so to speak, on the spur of the moment, whatever it says." (Arendt, 1979: 363).

She discussed at least five important ways in which this mechanism could work. First, violence could be used to "reveal" humanitarian ideals as an unrealistic irrelevance, so that (for example) "the incredible plight of an ever-growing group of innocent people was like a practical demonstration of the totalitarian movements' cynical claims that no such thing as inalienable human rights existed" (Arendt, 1979, 269). Second, violent action could foster widespread fear, creating demand for a state of emergency as well as for "strong" leadership more generally (Arendt, 1979). Third, violent action could serve as powerful propaganda by provoking hostility on the part of those who were designated as "threats" or "enemies." Fourth, when the Nazis confined Jews to insanitary ghettoes and concentration camps, the victims were made to appear disease-ridden and even as less than human – in line with the way Nazi propaganda had for some time been depicting them. Fifth, violent actions (such as extermination in concentration camps) could lead many ordinary bystanders to infer guilt from the existence of punishment. While Arendt was seeking to explain the very particular appeal and plausibility of Nazi and Soviet totalitarianism, each of these mechanisms turns out to be disturbingly relevant when we try to understand the legitimization of suffering – and the perverse distribution of shame – in the Calais crisis, a crisis nurtured by two of the oldest democracies in the world.

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In the Calais "jungle" in the summer of 2016, I worked with a empathetic and insightful translator/psychologist and we were able to speak with Afghans, Pakistanis, Sudanese, Eritreans, Egyptians and Syrians, usually at length in individual interviews and sometimes in groups. Some people we met in restaurants and shops, and some we found in the tents and huts that were their homes. My wife and 8-year-old daughter visited the camp, too, and we were welcomed into games of chess and volleyball; perhaps bringing a young child into a camp where people have been stigmatized and even demonized helped to break the ice, but generally there seemed remarkably little ice to break. We conducted 28 interviews in Calais, about half in English and half in Arabic, most of them in-depth talks with male exiles/refugees (migrants/refugees hereafter are "exiles"), principally young men.[1.] We were repeatedly struck by people's generosity and patience in taking time to sit down with us and offer us whatever food and drink they had, particularly since many researchers have visited Calais and since I come from a country – the UK – with a heavy responsibility for bad conditions in Calais. "Within this shantytown/camp," as Agier (1998: 143) reflected, "the migrants themselves invented the hospitable town in France that the government refused them." Apart from exiles, we spoke with aid workers, British police in the camp, guards in the burgeoning private security industry, and some Calais "locals." The article draws on more aid worker interviews away from Calais as well as NGO reports, newspaper articles and government reports.

Section "Disaster in calais" looks at the nature of the humanitarian crisis that developed in Calais, showing how suffering was actively imposed on exiles. Section "Political theatre and the functions of suffering" highlights the *political* functions of the disaster in Calais and the way that abuse served as a form of propaganda; the section argues that the crisis has been instrumentalized, first, as *deterrence* and, second, as *political theatre* aimed at domestic audiences. Section "Legitimising the crisis in Calais: action as propaganda and the distribution of shame" looks at the *legitimization* of the crisis, arguing that a perverse distribution of shame has helped to sustain it, with Arendt's "action as propaganda" pivotal here. The conclusion looks at a wider instrumentalization of migrant suffering.

DISASTER IN CALAIS

Influenced by his work in Algeria, Fanon contrasted "the settlers' town" with "the native town." The latter was a "hungry town... men live there on top of each other... a crouching village, a town on its knees..." (Fanon, 1967, 30). In his article "Necropolitics," Mbembé referred to "disposable" people and "the living dead." Referencing Palestinian camps in particular, Mbembé highlighted "buildings that bring back painful memories of humiliation, interrogation, and beatings... children blinded by rubber bullets... a certain kind of madness" (Membé, 2003, 39). If this sounds "far away," a 2011 NGO report noted of Calais:

> Police repeatedly raid dwelling places, destroy shelters, contaminate food and water, take or destroy possessions; from bedding and cooking pots, to money and documents... they drive people away from facilities such as the charity food distribution [or the] medical clinic, inflict sleep deprivation with repeated 'drive-by' raids at night, and humiliate people through racist abuse or attacks on religious symbols... Some migrants become very anxious and depressed, and even malnourished... (CMS, 2011: 2, 8, 15). [2.]

The racial segregation of Calais echoes Fanon, while exiles have been "disposable" in the sense of lacking basic human rights. France's *Défenseur des Droits*, the human rights ombudsman, said the "jungle" camp's very existence was "a blatant violation of [asylum seekers'] fundamental right to accommodation" (Défenseur des Droits, 2015, p. 16; see also Jaspars and Buchanan-Smith, 2018), while police violence discouraged the turning to authority that an asylum application

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involved (HRW, 2017). Crucially, violence and other humiliations were routinely inflicted by police (e.g. BHRC, 2016; HRW, 2017). In 2019, one aid worker who had worked extensively with exiles in North Africa said that he was shocked to find in Calais (where he has worked over many years) that police violence was actually *worse*. Fear of the police has been all the greater because exiles know they may be sent back to a country where their fingerprints had been taken under the Dublin regulations (Hagan, 2018; Ansems de Vries & Guild, 2019).

Police violence reflected a longstanding strategy of dismantling the various camps and "jungles" that have existed in the area since the late 1990s (e.g. Agier, 1998). After the main "jungle" camp swelled rapidly in 2015–16 and then was destroyed in October 2016, police violence continued, prompting one volunteer to observe "we are in a constant state of expulsion" (Hagan, 2018: 62). This was a "politics of exhaustion" (Ansems de Vries & Guild, 2019: 2,156) and a continuation of "social torture" (Cotterill, 2016; cf Dolan, 2009).

More than half respondents in a 2016 Refugee Rights Data Project survey said they never felt safe in the camp, with more than three quarters having experienced police violence (teargas, rubber bullets, dogs, beatings) (RRDP, 2016: 9). One volunteer told us: "The head injuries from rubber bullets were terrible." A young Syrian man said he was injured during an attempt to catch a lorry from Paris and then beaten by police when they arrested him. One respondent in the RRDP survey said police attacked him with gas and kicked him in the face on the way to the Lidl supermarket. One child said, "The jungle is surrounded by police and if you try to leave they are violent towards you." (RRDP, 2016: 27). Summarizing the situation, a young Syrian man told us, "We feel besieged by the police." For another Syrian, police raids recalled abusive militias back home. One Darfuri man said in 2011, "We have come from one war to another" (CMS, 2011: 32). Prosecuting the police was virtually impossible, so generally crimes did not count as crimes (cf Agamben, 1998). Meanwhile, activists have also been subjected to police violence (CMS, 2011; cf Amnesty, 2019; Hagan, 2018).

Adding to the climate of fear was police inaction in relation to racist members of the public (Défenseur des Droits, 2015; RRDP, 2016). Exiles reported groups of up to 20 operating on the periphery of the camp, with aggression ranging from yelling, spitting, insulting, holding noses, kicking, beating with sticks and hitting with glass bottles from moving vehicles (RRDP, 2016). More generally, while some local people supported the exiles (for example by hosting aid volunteers), many exiles felt they got a hostile reception in the city. Tensions were visible, with private houses on the *Rue des Dunes* alongside the camp having locked gates, high fences and barbed wire. Economic fears were part of the problem, and one Calais resident observed "People see Calais in the media and they don't want to come here," while a taxi driver commented: "There are about 1,800 hotel rooms in Calais. You sometimes have 1,200 occupied by police, so that's only 600 left for tourists!... Tourism has gone down. The economy here is not good." In the 2017 Presidential elections, Pas de Calais was one of two departments in France won by National Front candidate Marine Le Pen.

Several reports (as well as exiles' accounts in the research) indicated that trauma and hunger were part of everyday life, with both of these worsening in 2016 as the camp's rising population outstripped food distributions and as stays in the camp became longer (e.g. CMS, 2011; Weaver & Gentleman, 2016). NGO medics reported 15 deaths inside the camp June–September 2015, an exceptionally high figure for such a young population (Davies *et al.*, 2017). Residents practically lived on top of each other, many crouching in tents. The toilets were scarce and filthy. In July 2015, French aid workers reported "an undignified and intolerable situation (a single water point for nearly 3,000 persons, no shelters, no toilets accessible from 7pm to noon the following day)... waste and excrement litter the ground" (CNCDH, 2015). The rats, which ran around the tents and over the roofs of improvised restaurants, were a constant reminder of neglect, and one senior Syrian man told us, "If Bashar Assad can drop barrel bombs on hundreds of thousands of Syrians, the French government can surely get rid of the rats here!" In general, residents and volunteers

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emphasized grave deficiencies in hygiene, shelter, heating and lighting (cf RRDP, 2016; Davies *et al*., 2017).

One young man from Khartoum told us: “There’s nothing good about life here. Just waiting. Life is passing you by. It’s like watching a silly movie you’re not enjoying but you’re forced to see.” In a separate conversation, a young man from Syria said, “I’ve been here for one year. It’s like a movie with no story.” One aid worker said the camp had increasingly become “a warehouse of desperate souls” (Weaver & Gentleman, 2016). The camp consisted mostly of young men, often restless and often well educated (around a quarter had a university degree) (RRDP, 2016). Poorer groups generally lacked funds to engage a smuggler, and an Italian aid worker commented, “The Sudanese community here I see as a community in extinction.” An estimated 800 unaccompanied children in the camp had very little care or protection, with the UK having largely neglected its promise to take them under the so-called Dubs amendment (e.g. Weaver & Gentleman, 2016; see also HRW, 2017).

Residents’ status as “disposable” was underlined by the location of the “jungle” camp and by the dishonesty surrounding its establishment. In March 2015, the “jungle” camp was set up in “a marshy flood zone” (Défenseur des Droits, 2015: 12) next to a chemical factory on a chemical dumping ground contaminated with asbestos (Channel 4, 2015). To “persuade” people to move here, police destroyed existing squats and restricted existing food distributions (Défenseur des Droits, 2015). Further, as France’s *Défenseur de Droits* noted, “the associations [various organisations supporting the exiles] were informed [in person, at each of the squats by Calais’ sub-prefect] that if the migrants settled on this plot of land placed at their disposal by the town council, *they would not be at any risk of expulsion*.” (Défenseur des Droits, 2015: 11, my emphasis). Yet despite this promise, the south part of the “jungle” camp was destroyed by French police in February–March 2016, with perhaps 3,500 people losing their temporary homes (RRDP, 2016) as fires swept through the shelters and panicked residents tried to gather their belongings (Burck & Hughes, 2018). (Some were offered accommodation in converted shipping containers, but this involved handprints and many feared it would be an obstacle to asylum [e.g. Freedman, 2018].) Within a camp that was now significantly smaller in area, the population then swelled to a peak of around 10,000 residents before October 2016 saw the rest of the camp demolished by French police. Part of the “rightlessness” of exiles in Calais, evidently, was that promises did not have to be kept.

POLITICAL THEATRE AND THE FUNCTIONS OF SUFFERING

For the most part, the suffering in Calais has been no accident; it has reflected what we might call a “theatre of deterrence.” In Calais, abusive actions – including what Davies et al. (2017: 1,268) called “violent inaction” and “deliberately produced abject conditions” – appear to have served as a form of double-propaganda: on the one hand, as a message to deter journeys to Calais (and staying there); on the other, as a “tough” message to impress domestic audiences (especially more right-wing elements and constituents) in France and the UK.

DETERRENCE: THE PROPAGANDA OF SUFFERING

From the early 1980s, France became an increasingly unwelcoming environment for asylum seekers. In 1981, some 20,000 foreigners sought asylum in France and 80 per cent were granted it; but by 1999, amidst a growing suspicion of asylum seekers, there were some 30,000 applications and 80 per cent were *rejected* (Fassin, 2005). The majority of asylum applicants had in effect been

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moved from the category of "worthy" to the category of "unworthy." Suspicion, as Didier Fassin notes, became the default mode, setting the tone for Calais.

Several statements from French officials suggest an intention to foster suffering in Calais as part of a propaganda effort aimed at those considering coming to, or remaining, in the Calais area. Such aims have sometimes been (somewhat indirectly) acknowledged via some variation of the statement that helping exiles in Calais creates an unacceptable "magnet" for international migration. Back in 2002, the then French Minister of the Interior Nicolas Sarkozy said the Red Cross-run Sangatte centre at Calais was being closed "in order to put an end to a symbol of the illegal immigration magnet effect in the world" (Défenseur des Droits, 2015: 9). In 2011, with police carrying out almost daily raids on exiles in an abandoned factory, Calais' deputy mayor Philippe Mignonet said the local council was determined to maintain "a certain level of pressure" on exiles coming into the city. "We want them to send a message back that it's useless to come to Calais," he added, "that it's not as easy to come here as their mafias tell them." (Carr, 2012: 128). The instrumentalization of disaster as a tool of deterrence was also clear in a chilling question posed by Fabienne Buccio, prefect of the Pas-de-Calais, during her meeting with representatives of France's constitutionally established *Défenseur des Droits* in June 2015. "To what extent can conditions in the 'camp' be made human," she asked, "without endangering the local inhabitants' situation through the creation of a magnet effect?" (Défenseur des Droits, 2015: 13). In July 2016, one young Sudanese man from Darfur said simply, "Beatings are getting worse as large numbers are here now and they [the police] want to discourage it."

Within a post-Cold War world beset by numerous conflicts, the UK was also becoming increasingly unwelcoming of asylum seekers. A UK 2008 Refugee Council report noted the escalating numbers of refugees globally alongside a "dramatic decrease in the number of refugees coming to the UK over the last 20 years," deterred by UK border controls (Reynolds and Muggeridge, 4; CNCDH, 2015).

The UK Home Office was keen to take credit for a sharp fall in asylum applications after the tight British border controls that were established in France under the 2003 Le Touquet agreement (Home Office, 2017). France's *Défenseur des Droits* stated plainly in 2015 that the origins of the Calais crisis lay in these British border controls (Défenseur des Droits, 2015), and these controls in turn reflected the UK's non-participation in the Schengen agreement (originally signed in 1985 and evolving into a system of free movement within the European Union).

Unsurprisingly perhaps, we do not find UK politicians spelling out an intention to deepen the suffering in Calais. But such suffering was a predictable – and soon a *known* – consequence of British policy, and many exiles in Calais (as we shall see) saw Britain as contributing greatly to the violence there. Part of the UK/France "administrative arrangements" of July 2009 was an agreement not just to step up "forcible returns" by air but also to step up policing operations so as to "avoid concentrations of irregular immigrants at the common frontier" (Ministère francais de l'immigration, 2009; Défenseur des Droits, 2015). More specifically, UK Minister for Borders and Immigration Phil Woolas said part of the understanding in this "administrative arrangement" was that France would raze "the jungle" by the end of 2009 (Chrisafis, 2009). Sure enough, the so-called "Pashtun jungle" was destroyed by French police in September 2009 (CMS, 2011) and the following year the UK government welcomed "the dismantling of the illegal encampments along the Channel and North Sea coast" (Prime Minister's Office, "UK-France Summit 2010 Declaration on Immigration," 2 November). When Calais deputy major Mignonet said in 2011 that "pressure" on the exiles was to send a message that "it's useless to come to Calais," he noted that this policy was being carried out in consultation with the UK Border Agency (part of the Home Office) (Carr, 2012: 129). In August 2015, the British and French governments signed another agreement, designed to strengthen security cooperation in Calais. On the day of the destruction of the "jungle" camp (October 24 2016), British Home Secretary Amber Rudd said the British government was allocating £36 million "to maintain the security of [border] controls, to support the camp clearance

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and to ensure in the long term that the camp is kept closed." Rudd added, "This contribution is not made unconditionally, and we will continue to work with the French government to ensure that the clearance is full and lasting." Rudd said the destruction – or "clearance" in her words – was necessary in order to secure the border, tackle criminal gangs, and to protect the 2003 Le Touquet agreement from growing criticism within France (Home Office & UK, 2016). Between the October 2016 destruction of the "jungle" camp and January 2018, British funding for security and policing in Calais amounted to more than 150 million pounds (Travis & Stewart, 2018).

An important element in the evolving system of deterrence that has grown up around Calais has been a kind of *humanitarian abandonment* (a gap that a few aid agencies and thousands of volunteers have attempted to address) (e.g. Sandri, 2018; cf Jaspars, this issue). In 2002, after heavy UK government pressure, the Red Cross's Sangatte centre in Calais was closed; the UK press had been stirring up fears around London "losing control of its borders" (e.g. Article 19, Fassin, 2005; CMS, 2011). UNHCR actually withdrew any permanent presence from Calais at this time. In 2009, when UNHCR eventually set up a small office for asylum advice, the organization observed that migrants "mostly come from places like Afghanistan, Eritrea, Iran, Iraq and Somalia," adding (after this list of some of the most violent countries in the world), "Most are motivated by economic or family reasons, but a few have fled violence or persecution and their well-being is of direct concern to UNHCR" (UNHCR, 2009). While the basis for playing down the numbers fleeing violence was unclear, the statement was quoted in the press at the time of the destruction of the "Pashtun jungle" in September 2009 (Allen, 2009). Médecins du Monde, Médecins Sans Frontières and Secours Catholique have been doing important work along with a considerable number of smaller agencies such as Care4Calais, but as one aid worker put it November 2015, "The question is where are the big agencies?" (Jones, 2015). Save the Children, which gets around 40 per cent of its income from the UK government (Pickering-Saqqa, 2018), had no permanent presence (though it did some advocacy in relation to child refugees); asked why Oxfam was not working in Calais, Oxfam staff said the organization had other priorities.

"TOUGH" ACTION AS PROPAGANDA FOR A DOMESTIC AUDIENCE

The political theatre in and around Calais was strongly informed by Arendt's "action as propaganda" as (violent) action has been routinely used in ways that make implausible propaganda seem more plausible over time. While this was unlikely to be a formal plan, the various ways in which violence created (spurious) legitimacy for itself do appear to have been useful in sustaining an abusive system. We have noted that one form of "action as propaganda" was fostering fear and creating demand for states of emergency and "strong" leadership. Certainly, amidst the widespread depiction of Calais exiles as a threat, something close to a de facto state of emergency has existed for many years in Calais (e.g. Fassin, 2005: 2013; HRW, 2017). The de facto emergency in Calais was subsumed within a formal state of emergency after the November 2015 Paris attacks; and when this formal emergency ended in November 2017, it gave way to a wide-ranging anti-terrorism law.

In the UK, much of the popular press and Eurosceptic politicians helped to stir up fears around migration (not least in relation to Calais itself), preparing the way for the June 2016 referendum vote to leave the European Union. In their "Vote Leave" campaign, Boris Johnson and UKIP leader Nigel Farage – both often seen as "charismatic" leaders – proved adept at inciting fear and at offering a ready solution.

The number of exiles arriving via Calais has been very small in relation to overall UK immigration, with a majority of "irregular migrants" entering legally and overstaying their visas (e.g. Migration Observatory, 2011). Yet the situation in Calais was a major focus for UK media and

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politicians alike. “Tough” statements over Calais seem to have sold papers and attracted political support (cf Cornelius, 2001; de Genova, 2013; Andersson, 2014). The UK’s *Daily Mail*, *Daily Express*, and *Sun* regularly presented Calais as a kind of existential threat to Britain, often on the front page (Article19, 2003; Berry *et al*., 2015). One study of UK media coverage from December 2013 to March 2014 found that while 7.7 per cent of *Guardian* stories on refugees/migrants were about Calais, almost 40 per cent of refugee/migrant stories in the *Daily Mail* focused on Calais. The BBC also focused a lot on Calais (Berry *et al*., 2015). As numbers in Calais rose, the shaming and dehumanization of exiles appear to have intensified. In July 2015, UK Prime Minister Cameron responded to crisis in Calais by promising to deport more people from Britain and commenting “you have got a *swarm* of people coming across the Mediterranean seeking a better life, wanting to come to Britain...” [my emphasis] (Taylor *et al*., 2015). Meanwhile, the press’s emphasis on fights among national groups in Calais chimed with old tropes around inherently fractious people under imperial rule; just before the UK’s “Brexit” vote, a *Daily Mail* headline noted: “Calais refugee camp is reduced to ashes as hundreds of exiles burn tents amid brawl over human trafficking routes to Britain,” with the accompanying story stressed the “squalor” and “anarchy” of the camp (Daily Mail, 2016). A week before the June 2016 Brexit referendum, the Daily Mail ran the headline “We’re from Europe – Let us in!”, with a story about migrants hiding in a lorry (Khomami, 2016) The image of migrants desperate to “invade” chimed conveniently with the “take back control” slogan of the “Leave” campaign. While fears around immigration to the UK had traditionally centred largely around non-European people (e.g. O’Toole, 2018), a focus on Calais conveniently recast leaving Europe as shutting out non-European people.

This was all the more bizarre since, first, leaving the EU would not actually affect Britain’s ability to regulate such non-European immigration, and, second, strong physical controls on the movement of (mostly non-European) exiles moving through northern France *already existed*. If anything, leaving the EU promised to *weaken* these border controls, perhaps bringing migrant camps to Dover. The *Daily Mail* itself ran a story with the headline “Illegal immigrants aiming to cross the Channel say Brexit will make it EASIER to sneak into Britain because France will no longer try to stop them” (Newton and Boyle, 2016). Significantly, the story was published on 24 June, the day *after* the UK’s Brexit referendum – a classic case of “Now they tell us!” Fear of Calais persisted; one July 2018 comment in the *Daily Mail* suggested Calais migrants simply be dumped in the sea, receiving 177 “likes” and only one “dislike.”

In their coverage of migrants generally, the *Daily Mail* and the *Sun* focused a lot on migrants as a drain on the welfare state, a health risk and a threat to national security (Berry *et al*., 2015). The exiles in Calais were often described as “economic migrants” who were desperate to get to the UK to take advantage of the welfare benefits (Article19, 2003; Berru *et al*., 2015). The UK Home Office itself tended to play up the lure of UK work and benefits and to downplay “push” factors like human rights abuses (Reynolds & Muggeridge, 2008: 55), while several French politicians urged the UK to reduce its benefits (Défenseur des Droits, 2015). Yet exiles themselves often stressed “push” factors, as when a Syrian man trying to join – and provide for – his family in the UK told us:

> It’s not about the [welfare] benefits!... Syrians can’t believe they are refugees! We have everything we need – mosques, even nightclubs. We do not need Europe! We have received so many refugees over the years, Armenians, Lebanese, Iraqis, so many.

The UK media tended to use risk-taking to underline “fanatical” determination, and such determination and risk-taking were real enough: one young man from Khartoum told us that in the previous 12 months he had made around 150 attempts to join his family in Cardiff. Yet in reality risk-taking also reflected previous experiences of violence in “origin” countries and *en route* to Calais (Défenseur des Droits, 2015; Jones, 2015). In the “jungle” camp, a member of the British border

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police summed up this dynamic: "I tell them they will find a lot of problems in Britain. Why not make a life here? And I tell them about the risks of travel. They say they've taken so many risks already, so why not another?"

Viewing repression in Calais as a kind of "political theatre" is supported by evidence that this repression tended to "push the problem around" rather than actually providing a "solution" (cf Andersson, 2014). The 2002 closure of the Sangatte centre prompted exiles to spread over a much wider area of camps or shanty towns. Until the closure of the "jungle" in 2016, the number of exiles in Calais tended to increase – despite intense repression and neglect and despite tightening border restrictions; the increase was dramatic in 2015–16. In line with other analysis of Europe and North America (e.g. Andersson, 2014; Reynolds and Muggeridge, 2008; Cornelius, 2001; Délano Alonso & Nienass, 2016), clampdowns on particular migration routes tended only to displace migration into more dangerous routes. Tightened security at Calais port, for example, led to increased attempts to go through the Channel Tunnel (Défenseur des Droits, 2015). Bescherer documented the complexity of border fortification at Calais and observed that the British and French governments and the border-security industry

> seem to be aware that this has the effect of simply pushing migrants further back along the highway or to other points of passage along the coast, so that fortifying the border in Calais actually causes the border to proliferate, like cutting off a hydra only to have several more spring up in its place. (Bescherer, 2017)

In July 2016, an aid worker with considerable experience of the camp observed: "The argument is we can't make it too nice or more people will come. But it's really the "push" factor that keeps people coming."

When the "jungle" was destroyed in two stages in 2016, this was also a kind of theatre. Again, the very brutality of the police behaviour – and the huge numbers of police – reinforced the message that these vulnerable people were somehow an existential threat to Western populations.[3.] Even plastic bags pulled over the boots of the police drove home the message that residents were "unclean." Calais had become the city with the highest ratio of police officer per inhabitant in France (Défenseur des Droits, 2015), implying a threat that was correspondingly large. In January 2018, there were 1,130 police and gendarmes stationed in the Calais region – almost double the number of exiles (600) that the authorities estimated to be present (Hagan, 2019). This brings us back to Arendt's "action as propaganda," and especially, the argument that violent actions may lead people to infer guilt from punishment. Arendt noted that "Common sense reacted to the horrors of Buchenwald and Auschwitz with the plausible argument: "What crime must these people have committed that such things were done to them!'" (Arendt, 1979: 446).

LEGITIMIZING THE CRISIS IN CALAIS: ACTION AS PROPAGANDA AND THE DISTRIBUTION OF SHAME

Sen and Drèze (1991) famously argued that democracies with a free press do not suffer famines since elected politicians are likely to be voted out of power if a famine is seen to occur on their watch (Sen & Drèze, 1991). On the face of it, the analysis would seem to apply to humanitarian disasters more generally as well as implying that democracy would protect France from such disasters. But evidently France has *not* been immune, while the shame and political fall-out from Calais has been accommodated sufficiently for the suffering to persist. In this section, we see how shame has been perversely distributed. A climate of *shameless* abuse was created in Calais, and Arendt's concept of "action as propaganda" can help in understanding how violence reinforced a kind of shamelessness, serving in effect as propaganda *for itself*. With migration stemming to a large extent

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from colonialism and the "war on terror," exiles themselves found that shame was loaded onto them. From other contexts, we know that shame can also *fuel* violence, for example when people ward off the threat of shame through violent behaviour (e.g. Gilligan, 2000; Keen, 2012); as it turned out, the threat of shame arising from the situation in Calais did also play a role in fuelling violence – not least in the destruction of the "shameful" "jungle" camp itself.

"Action as propaganda" and exiles' living conditions

Within the UK and France, calls for strong leadership and emergency measures were legitimized by a range of actions that *generated* a sense of threat, further obscuring the role of major Western powers in stoking international migration through empire and war. Further, with human rights being rather systematically neglected, it naturally became harder to believe that human rights (that is, rights accruing *by virtue simply of being human*) actually *existed*. Importantly, Arendt saw violence and a lack of asylum in the 1920s and 30s as undermining collective belief in the existence of human rights, whether this was belief among perpetrators, bystanders or victims. In Calais, one Afghan exile commented, "People say that there are human rights in Europe... but they're just saying that." (Hagan, 2018: 50).

The plight of exiles in Calais underlines Arendt's suggestion that fundamental human rights tend to collapse at precisely the moment of exodus – when people's humanity is all that they have to fall back on (Arendt, 1979). The difficulty here was significantly compounded when a range of abuses in Calais helped to erode the *appearance or impression* of humanity at precisely the moment when this humanity was all that the exiles had to rely on. And when the grim reality began to dawn that people were being routinely mistreated, this itself seems to have bolstered the "harsh new world" that European border policy was bringing into existence: according to one important logic (the one highlighted by Arendt), human rights had been shown not to exist by the systematic non-observance of human rights! Meanwhile, in the discourses of populist right-wing politicians, nations and nationalism were increasingly presented as constituents' best hope of protection. Indeed, when politicians stressed the pride and advantage in being British or French, the point was only underscored by the egregious abuse of those who most conspicuously lacked this status.

Even as UK border controls in France created the informal migrant settlements around Calais, these settlements were then used to underline the necessity of strong controls. Moreover, right-wing populism's instrumentalization of suffering in Calais depended on a number of stereotypes about migrants – a highly contentious and politicized script in which migrants were some combination of violent, terrorists, disease-ridden, desperate, crazy, lazy and driven by the lure of "benefits." A key thing that went missing in most accounts was that many of the problems presented as *emanating from* the migrants can actually be traced to the way they were treated: in effect, to go back to the Cohen song, much of the media and the policy-making community was "hiding behind the cause and the effect."

In general, poor conditions for exiles (including the destruction of part of the camp in February–March 2016) helped to create the image of in-fighting, disease and desperation that made Calais such a potent political symbol for the right (cf Sigona, 2015). After a July 2015 visit, French aid workers reported that "precarious living conditions" and "concentration" were "liable to engender an explosive situation, as shown by the regular occurrence of violence between individuals and communities." The aid workers added that "The extreme and undignified living conditions in the "jungles," in the squats on the heathland [the new jungle camp]" had contributed to infectious disease including a scabies epidemic and widespread pulmonary infections (CNCDH, 2015: 5–6). When food distributions were strained by rapidly rising numbers in 2016, it led to long lines and more tensions. Tightening border restrictions were also fuelling frustrations.

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Dangerous fires were a feature of "the jungle," but they too resulted from mistreatment – especially the lack of proper lighting and heating combined with the close proximity of huts and tents. During one evening meal, I managed to set my own shoe on fire with a small candle that had been placed under the dining table. Propane canisters used for cooking sometimes exploded in the fires, and some fires were also reported to have resulted from police use of teargas. Even planned fires were a problem, and one German volunteer told us, "It can be so cold in the winter and there's not enough fuel, so people burn anything, garbage, even plastic. So the atmosphere can be very bad."

Media discourses linking migrants to terrorism were sometimes matched on the ground, and one local taxi driver told us, "The camp can be violent. Last month 40 people had to go to hospital with knife wounds. People fear the migrants will be attacking them. People are very emotional - the Nice attack, the attack on a German train [when an Afghan refugee injured four people in July 2016]." Exiles themselves, by contrast, tended to stress that they had been *victims* of terror. There were banners expressing solidarity with the victims of terrorism in Nice, and one read "We are against the terrorists too." A Syrian man commented angrily: "The attack in Nice - I'm not responsible! It's not my fault! It's someone who was raised in Europe! A planned one-minute silence for the victims was pre-empted by the police raids. But why did nobody have a minute of silence for Syrian victims?"

If exiles were sometimes portrayed as fanatically determined or even crazy, exiles themselves stressed that any "craziness" sprang directly from terrible conditions, from repeated exposure to violence, and from the way they were labelled (cf Goffman, 1961; Harrell-Bond, 1986; Dolan, 2009). On a practical level, volunteers and exiles pointed to the scarcity of psychological support, and one young Sudanese man noted: "I fear being physically injured as I am alone here and there is no-one to help me. I question if I'm normal. Many here have gone a bit crazy. We need outreach!"

Part of the problem was that many exiles had internalized a sense of shame: again, the system was *loading shame onto its principal victims*. One migrant in Calais told child psychiatrist Lynn Jones, "We are human beings. We have not committed any crime. We just hope for a better life." Therapists Charlotte Burck and Gillian Hughes noted the prevalence of "We are human too" slogans in the jungle camp, and observed, "It was a continual challenge to counter the internalization of negative identities… In the current migration crisis, seeking asylum has become framed as a crime, not a right" (Burck & Hughes, 2018: 227; see also Davies *et al.*, 2017).

Potentially pejorative distinctions in the media were also playing out in the camp, sometimes feeding tensions. For example, a young man from Daraa in Syria told us: "I'd waited too long for a meal from the kitchen. I was waiting behind 400 Africans. Priority should be given to Syrians while Africans are economic migrants! I got into a fight with security." The "jungle" label was itself problematic of course: it is widely used by exiles, aid workers and observers (and I use it here for this reason); nevertheless, it is clearly uncomfortable. One senior Syrian man told us: "The 'jungle' is for animals. It's dehumanizing!" Adding to the burden of shame was the sad and simple fact of getting stuck in Calais: one young Syrian man, who said he had found some dignity in his meticulously clean and well-ordered hut, commented

> I prefer to live away from other Syrians – too many questions and pressure from the Syrian community. Who's made it [to the UK], who has a job, a baby? It's even said in a provoking way. I feel envy sometimes. I prefer to isolate myself. I would hate to go back to Syria and say I've failed to make it.

An important part of action as propaganda were the police raids on businesses in the camp. While enterprise and resilience are qualities routinely lauded in the aid world, these traits were actually *punished* in Calais. Migrant and volunteer initiatives created plenty of positive things in the jungle – mosques and churches, art and language lessons, restaurants and shops. These were

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elements, in fact, of an improvised city (see, e.g. Agier, 1998). British jazz singer Ian Shaw was well known in the camp – not just for his singing but for helping a number of businesses.[4.] The ramshackle restaurants played an important role in the social life of the camp as well as helping to plug the shortfalls in free food distributions as migrant numbers rose.

However, in July 2016 we witnessed a series of large-scale police raids on shops and restaurants. At one point, 20 police-vans were lined up on the west side of the camp, along with eight police cars. Police with shields and helmets came at the camp from both sides, as if in a military operation. This kind of "overkill" served to dramatize the alleged "threat" from the exiles – another element in the theatrical repertoire of "action as propaganda."

In the "Peace" restaurant, a frail-looking Afghan man who had just arrived with his children told us 40–50 police had come to the restaurant earlier in the day when he'd been asleep. He showed us a mark on his wrists that he said police had inflicted when they were rough with him. Visiting the "Welcome" Afghan restaurant, the squalid camp morphed magically into a beautiful lake view with reeds and birds. But inside, staff were soon telling us that police had just raided and told them to shut down, with officers citing poor hygiene and not paying taxes and then threatening six months in jail if the restaurant re-opened: "The police took everything!" a restaurant worker said. One Syrian man commented on the raids: "If it's meat [that's posing a risk], why did they take everything, including drinks?" He added, "It's Islamophobia!" Of course, hygiene was a continual challenge, but we ate at many restaurants in the camp and didn't have stomach problems. The apparent concern with restaurant hygiene standards also seemed absurd in view of all the many standards of health and safety were *never* enforced – for example, the shortage of toilets, the rats and indeed the camp's origins in a chemical dumping ground. After the raids, Calais Migrants Solidarity noted: "The truth is they [the French authorities] are trying to kill the little vitality that remains..." (CMS, 2016; cf Koegler, 2017). Before the 2009 destruction, Mayor Bouchart had complained "It's not a camp, it's a village." (Rygiel, 2011). Repeatedly, attempts to move from Agamben's "bare life" to some kind of agency brought swift retribution, with exiles being periodically pulled back towards the condition of absolute need and desperation that they were said to embody (cf Sigona, 2015; Davies & Isakjee, 2019).

A final example of violence giving (spurious) legitimacy to itself was the process by which conditions in Calais were allowed – and indeed *made* – to become so bad that eventually the physical eradication of the camp could be presented, bizarrely, as a *humanitarian act*. Sangatte's status as a "camp" had created uncomfortable echoes of World War Two, and the shame around the camp – explicitly acknowledged by then Minister of the Interior Nicolas Sarkozy – had been dealt with by closing it in 2002 (Fassin, 2005). When police destroyed the so-called "Pashtun jungle" in September 2009, the NGO Calais Migrants Solidarity noted:

> Following a common pattern seen before and since, the Prefect of Pas-de-Calais, [Pierre] De Bousque [de Florian], presented the clearance as an action for migrants' own health and safety: "... We cannot accept this jungle, which is a scandal in terms of the right to sanitation, and in terms of criminality, of whom the first victims are the migrants who camp here."

But after this 2009 destruction no attempt was made to rehouse people in more sanitary conditions (cf Sigona, 2015). Scattered exiles (as today) suffered an *increased* vulnerability to police abuses, and aid agency attempts to improve sanitation and health were blocked (CMS, 2011).

This type of behaviour and justification continued. When the main "jungle" camp had first been established in 2015, Calais major Natacha Bouchart said this allowed the disappearance of squats with appalling sanitary conditions (Défenseur des Droits, 2015). The following year the French government was describing the destruction of the jungle camp as "humanitarian," while UK Home Secretary Rudd said that the destruction of the camp was "a challenging but necessary humanitarian operation" and that the British government was not prepared "to allow people to continue to live in

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those conditions" (Home Office & UK, 2016). UNHCR also voiced its support for the demolition of the Calais camp, citing poor conditions. Yet exiles continued to be attracted to Calais, and conditions for them – as we shall see – *deteriorated*. Having for some time portrayed exiles in Calais as destroying and polluting the environment, French authorities now emphasized that the destruction of the camp was helping to promote an "environmental" agenda: in fact, the site was declared an area of "ornithological and ecological excellence." Highlighting this agenda, Maria Hagan (2019) refers to "a meticulous effacement of the national shame that the Jungle represented." In another startling illustration of "action as propaganda," the shame of "the jungle" no longer existed because "the jungle" itself no longer existed.

"Useful Enemies?" Smugglers – and the French police

Another example of "action as propaganda" was the reproduction the human smuggler by the tightening of border controls. In practice, this tightening tended to reproduce an "enemy" who was playing an increasingly important role in legitimizing "tough" initiatives that were themselves framed as clampdowns on crime as well as on migration itself (Andersson & Keen, 2019).

If we discount the long-term effects of empire for a moment, most of the responsibility for the suffering in Calais lay with the makers of migration policy in the UK and France, with a range of governments and armed groups in "origin" and "transit" countries, and finally with governments (including the US and UK) who had helped to destabilize Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria and Libya, for example. One Afghan restaurant owner told a British aid worker, "I would love to go back. All I want to do is help my people. It's impossible at the moment. And this is your fault. You made the problems in my country not me." (Jones, 2015).

But policymakers increasingly focused on another culprit – the human smuggler. In a popular piece of political theatre, EU and member state politicians emphasized the importance of "undermining the smugglers' business model" (e.g. Andersson, 2014), as when UK Home Secretary Theresa May (announcing increased British/French cooperation over security in Calais in August 2015) proclaimed, "We must relentlessly pursue the callous gangs that profit from smuggling innocent people" (News24, 2018). The "human smuggler" was also used by the UK government (as noted) to justify its active support for the destruction of the "jungle" camp in October 2016. We may say, in fact, that the figure of the human smuggler proved to be a *useful enemy* (Keen, 2012), stepping rather conveniently into a pre-existing template that had hitherto focused largely on *the terrorist*: for here was another figure whose vilification helped to justify a range of violent behaviours by those claiming to seek his demise.

It is worth noting that the Calais exiles themselves tended to paint a negaive picture of smugglers, observing for example that smugglers protected "their" parking lots with beatings and, at the extreme, murder (see also, e.g., CNCDH, 2015). Smugglers have also been involved in sexual exploitation in Calais (Freedman, 2018). A senior Syrian man told us: "Psychological pressure comes from the smugglers. They give the illusion that everything will be sorted. ... Smugglers are cheaters and liars..." At the same time, exiles also stressed that smugglers often emerged from the communities that bought their services, while both exiles and volunteers emphasized that smuggling had been fuelled by tightening border controls, with smugglers' high prices being in large part the *result* of official policy. In fact, exiles stressed that the profits of the smugglers have risen whenever restrictions on movement to the UK have been tightened. Exiles' desperation to get away from police abuses also fuelled the smuggling business, and the Human Trafficking Foundation found from its own research in Calais that "the hostile actions of the French authorities have created a more immediate "push factor" of trafficking to the UK" (Human Trafficking Foundation, 2017: 10).

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Rather than trying to board a truck in a traffic jam (or making your own obstacles), a somewhat safer location for boarding could be secured through using a smuggler (with a premium for driver cooperation). The *Défenseur des Droits* said the boost to smugglers' prices from tighter border controls had pushed the poorest towards the most dangerous roots (Défenseur des Droits, 2015). Again, this mirrors findings elsewhere (e.g. Reynolds & Muggeridge, 2008; Andersson, 2014). One young Syrian told us:

> Tougher restrictions have been good for smugglers, especially for the 'guaranteed' route. I was here around 9 months ago, and there were 40–50 people succeeding in getting to the UK every day – from the port, from the train station.... 'Guaranteed' [transit, that is with the truck driver's cooperation and knowledge] was around 2,000 Euros, and only 500–1000 for an 'attempt' [with help from a smuggler but without the truck driver's cooperation] a year ago... A few months ago, the price was 10–11,000 Euros for 'guaranteed'.

Through these various mechanisms, policymakers actually nurtured the very problem of smuggling that they were rather loudly condemning – another case of "action as propaganda." Police actions often did not match the anti-smuggler rhetoric, moreover. Bescherer makes the point that Calais (where the jungle was destroyed in 2016) has itself offered significant opportunities to get to the UK for those *not* using human smugglers while French police have taken a relatively relaxed approach to Dunkirk, where smugglers' control has been more far-reaching (Bescherer, 2017; see also BHRC, 2016). Experience in a number of civil and even international wars suggest that the enemy is often more vigorously denounced than confronted, and Calais proved to be a variation on this well-worn theme.

Another potentially "useful enemy," paradoxically, were the French police themselves. Of course, police violence was potentially embarrassing for both the UK and the French government. But it was also convenient for the British government in particular, which was outsourcing in effect its own border controls and its deterrence efforts to the French police. On the whole, exiles and volunteers saw through this procedure: as one volunteer noted, "The [bad] image of French police also comes from measures to stop people going to the UK" (see also HRW, 2015). One migrant reported that police told exiles "The UK government pays us. We catch you, then we send them a report to say "we've stopped all of these people from getting to the UK." (Hagan, 2018: 52). But London still avoided much of the shame and blame from the violence it was in effect sponsoring. Noting London's direct support for the French police and for clearances and walls in Calais as well as London's role in attracting migrant labour to insecure jobs and London's major role in the "war on terror" and the international arms industry, Mould described the Calais jungle as "a slum of London's making" (Mould ,2017: 390). Meanwhile, there has been a deafening silence from the UK government on violence by the very French police that Downing Street has been supporting.

Research on the police has been very limited, due in large part to non-cooperation (e.g. Hagan, 2018). But alongside shameless behaviour by many French police officers, an element of shame sometimes "got through." For example, one police officer who had been going to the various camps and squats in Calais for over 15 years without ever having a conversation with a migrant told the French publication *ebdo* "I detach myself from all of this. Maybe one day I'll confess my sins to the Lord!" (Sabéran & Steadman, 2018). One officer told Maria Hagan, "I've got better things to do than chase kids all day, you know? It's a sad situation." (Hagan, 2018: 59) while a police chief commented, "I am not proud of what I do. But you have to understand orders are orders and I have a family to provide for." (Hagan, 2018: 59–60).

Police officers stressed to the 2015 *Défenseur des Droits* that staff felt worn down and powerless, puzzled by the task of stopping exiles from leaving when colleagues (or they themselves) had elsewhere been trying to stop immigrants from *entering* France (Défenseur des Droits, 2015: 78). In 2018, one CRS police officer commented:

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> I know that all of this is useless. We are asked to look busy, to evict people, to arrest them… If we had a Prime Minister who had the balls, we would tell the English: 'we'll tear your [2003] Le Touquet treaty to shreds, deal with the migrants in Dover for all we care'. We are meant to be… dealing with people coming in — not with those trying to get out! (Sabéran & Steadman, 2018).

Police reported that they were "being asked to empty the sea with a teaspoon.", with Calais often seen as a kind of punishment posting (Sénat, 2018: 10). Revealingly, those in the camp stressed to us that the French police were rather ambivalent about the allotted task of preventing people getting to the UK. One young Syrian who had made several attempts to get to the UK said in July 2016, "A few months ago, it was better than recently. The French police would say 'Today we have lots of control, but try tomorrow when it may be better!'" Some felt the UK's vote to leave the EU in June 2016 had contributed to a degree of laxity. Another young Syrian man commented, "I think the French government wants people to leave, to go to the UK or go elsewhere." Levels of control varied, and a Pakistani restaurant owner in the "jungle" camp told us: "A year ago, 200–300 people a day were making it to the UK. The police were more lax. It's hide and seek!" A German volunteer also suggested there were major cracks in the ability and determination of the French police to stop journeys towards the UK:

> The numbers that succeed depend on the day of the week and the time of year, for example the number of police. It goes up and down a lot. People say it depends a lot on the level of support from the UK. There were an awful lot of police earlier in the year [2016] and it was very hard.

Back in 2009, UK Minister for Borders and Immigration Phil Woolas went so far as to say, "We have been saying to them [the French authorities], 'What's the point of us pulling off all these measures to stop people getting through if you arrest and let them through further down the road?'" (Chrisafis, 2009). Sometimes rebelling at their Sisyphean task, the French police were invited into violence and invited also to absorb the shame that London was, in effect, outsourcing.

CONCLUSION

Beyond the manufactured suffering on France's northern coast, we know that migrants have been left to drown in the Mediterranean – for example, when Italy's Mare Nostrum mission was ended in late 2014 and search-and-rescue greatly restricted. Concerns that rescue is a "pull" factor have been part of this. Significantly, French Minister of the Interior Bernard Cazeneuve complained shortly before the Mare Nostrum mission was ended: "although the Italian navy's rescue operation has enabled the rescuing of numerous migrants at sea, [it] has also resulted in the creation of fixed migrant gathering points in the North of France" (Défenseur des Droits, 2015: 82), while the UK government also said it was not in favour of planned search-and-rescue, which it considered a "pull factor" encouraging dangerous sea crossings (Taylor, 2015). An increasingly repressive system has seen large numbers of exiles forcibly returned to Libya where they are known to face torture and extreme exploitation in detention centres. The Libyan coastguard has played a key role here and received funding, equipment and encouragement from the EU (Amnesty, 2017).

Exiles in Calais described to us how they had been forcibly turned back to horrific conditions in Libya. We are today witnessing an increasing tendency to *redefine* humanitarianism not as granting refuge or asylum but as *the prevention of dangerous journeys* – whether from France to the UK, Libya to Italy, Turkey to Greece or Mexico to the US. Yet meanwhile migrant controls are *pushing* people into more dangerous journeys (e.g. Cornelius, 2001; Andersson, 2014; ICG, 2018). While migrations from Libya to Italy came down sharply when interceptions escalated, a larger percentage of people were dying *en route*. In the first few months of 2019, an astonishing 1 in 10 people

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embarking on the Central Mediterranean crossing were dying or missing at sea – a huge rise from 2.6 per cent in 2017 (International Organisation for Migration, 2019).

Within this emerging *system of suffering*, drowning (while often highlighted regretfully) has also come to serve two related functions – first, as deterrence and, second, as propaganda for the allegedly "humanitarian" project of preventing people from making the journey in the first place. In fact, the political theatre of Europe's collective assault on asylum has seen the drowning migrant and the human smuggler emerging as the most marketable and in many ways the most useful victims and perpetrators. An "anti-crime" framework has been very convenient for those wishing to push politics under the radar while denouncing or even prosecuting NGOs for "colluding" with smugglers when they offer aid or rescue (Cuttitta, 2018; see also Amnesty, 2017; Andersson & Keen, 2019). As in civil wars and the "war on terror," a very particular definition of the enemy is being policed by strategically expanding this definition to as to include those who question it.

According to a "liberal" framework in which "all good things go together," "recipient" countries have an interest in promoting peace around the world since stability reduces international migration flows. But a disaster *within a transit country* will actually tend to deter – or at least may be expected to deter – those who are considering a journey to that country or onward to a final destination (like the UK). Noting the humanitarian disaster in the deserts of Arizona, De León shows that in pursuing the US's Prevention Through Deterrence strategy from 1993, "policy makers were well aware of the role that death [in the desert] would play in this enforcement strategy" (De León, 2015: 34). The UK's outsourcing of migration control to France can be seen as part of a wider project of outsourcing migration control – and indeed of the outsourcing violence and suffering. When it comes to the EU, migration control has been outsourced not only to Libya but to Turkey, Sudan, Niger, Mali and a number of other countries, just as Washington has been trying to outsource migration control – notably to Mexico (Andersson & Keen, 2019). While not all the suffering here is planned or intended, we are witnessing the emergence of an evolving *system of suffering* in which violence is routinely outsourced while misery among peoples with some history of formal and/or informal imperialism has been routinely tolerated and even encouraged for reasons that are identifiable and even sometimes openly expressed. Calais has been part of this system.

Moreover, if we revisit the national origin of exiles in Calais (with Syria, Iraq, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran and Sudan featuring prominently) as well as the use to which suffering in the "transit country" of Libya is being put, we can see more clearly how Western politics increasingly turns on the manipulation of "blowback" from empire and the "war on terror," with violent and racist migration policies increasingly embraced (and sometimes in the name of "warding off" fascism and racism). Yet as Arendt warned, rather than warding off the "greater evils," embracing "lesser evils" tends to lead us inexorably towards them (Arendt, 1979).

After the dismantling of the jungle camp, many those sent to so-called "welcome" centres found that the promised opportunity to claim asylum did not materialize and some were placed back in the "Dublin" framework, facing deportation to Italy or Greece despite promises to the contrary (Freedman, 2018; Agier, 1998). Meanwhile, many exiles were back on the streets of Calais, hiding from police officers who would not even allow camps or tents, while aid workers have faced increasingly intense official criticism and even prosecution (e.g. Amnesty, 2019). The modicum of humanity that the 2015–16 "jungle" camp had provided had been erased. In March 2017, local authorities barred humanitarian groups from distributing food, water, blankets and clothing; and when French courts objected, assistance resumed in a very restricted form (HRW, 2017). Any humanitarian work in this context was *inherently* political (cf Scott-Smith, 2016), and the functions of the disaster (cf Keen, 1994) are again indicated precisely by the blocking of assistance.

With both exiles and helpers increasingly exhausted, there is even some nostalgia for the greater visibility of the "jungle" camp, for the (precarious) hope of "safety-in-numbers," and for simple things like the chance to sit, talk, drink tea, and rest. An Ethiopian man commented in 2017, "Since they destroyed the camp last year, there is no place to sleep or eat. It's like living in hell"

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(HRW, 2017: 1). Maria Hagan (2019) commented, “Objects and makeshift structures that might remind us of a shared humanity are actively destroyed... In the first fourteen weeks of 2019 alone, 275 camp destruction operations took place across Calais and Dunkirk.” Increasingly, aid workers themselves stress the need for regular “Rest and Recuperation” – a chance for the helpers to escape periodically from France as aid workers have commonly escaped from warzones within Somalia or the DRC. Meanwhile, posters pasted on billboards in Calais declared “We are not insects! Stop spraying us with gas!” (Hagan, 2019: 8), a *cri de coeur* that invites a final example of “action as propaganda” from Arendt: “Given the possibility to exterminate Jews like bedbugs, namely, by poison gas, it is no longer necessary to propagate that Jews are bedbugs.” (Arendt, 1979: 413). If Arendt shows us how every violence can serve as a form of propaganda for itself, the reverse is also true: each of the countless acts of kindness (whether on the part of exiles or the often unpaid aid workers) has served to make the opposite point: that shame can be diminished rather than heightened, and that human rights do in fact exist.

NOTES

1. Most we spoke with had fled violence (see also, e.g. Freedman, 2018) but not all may have met the legal standard for refugees. 2. CMS recorded over 1,000 arrests in 5 months. 3. Marta Welander has been exploring this aspect insightfully. 4. By coincidence, he used to give me lessons.

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