

In the Aftermath of the Paris Terror Attacks: Global Manhunts, Halting Refugees

By [Dr. Binoy Kampmark](#)

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Theme: [Police State & Civil Rights](#), [Poverty & Social Inequality](#)

On this Monday morning, the CNN network is scrolling features about a “global manhunt” for those said to have been involved in the Paris attacks on Friday. Attackers are “at large”. The imaginary of global terror feasts yet again on the body of reason. But what should also be featured is a calming campaign against what is becoming a virulent assault on certain vulnerable persons. They did not dictate the narrative of Paris, but they are becoming its victims.

Where there are flows of people, there will always be suggestions of impropriety and poor character. The legitimate asylum seeker is stalked by suggestions that he or she takes the seed of tyranny, or criminality, with them. Australia’s Howard government throughout the 1990s and the first decade of 2000 made a long sport of it, arguing that refugees who sewed their lips up in protest were morally deficient, and dangerous to that unspecified concept called the Australian character.

At every given opportunity, statements were made to harden the Australian populace against these purported charlatans who were attempting to cash in on generous spirit in the antipodes. The Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet’s office was stern about strategy towards those intercepted at sea, notably on the injunction against humanising the refugees.

Images of children being thrown overboard by desperate parents were manipulated. “I can’t comprehend,” feigned Howard in 2001, “how genuine refugees would throw their children overboard.”[1] Such a poison still lingers in the Australian body politic.

It is axiomatic that amidst tens of thousands of people, an enterprising bad egg, or moulding apple, will be found. Amongst the concentration camp survivors liberated as the Second World War neared its conclusion, the vigilant guards, sensing an opportunity, attempted to disappear into the crowd. Such an argument was never one to be used against liberating the survivors, let alone allowing refugees in. Nazis and Nazi collaborators did become migrants, as did genuine displaced persons.

It is that sort of argument, at least in some form, that is being used in attempting to further halt the refugee arrivals in Europe. It patterns all too neatly with the paranoid world view of former Australian Prime Minister, Tony Abbott, who warned in the second Margaret Thatcher lecture at Guildhall that Europe, in embracing a “love your neighbour” policy was slipping into “catastrophic error”.

“The Australian experience proves that the only way to dissuade people seeking to come from afar is not to let them in.”[2] Turn them back, he was suggesting. Cut off arrival points.

Close borders. Extend the gulag. The conservative *Spectator* magazine cheered in Thatcherist approval.[3]

The challenge is proving most pressing being in such countries as Germany, which is becoming the “shock absorber” of Europe for those seeking refuge. There are broader matters at play as to why such large numbers are being accepted, not least an economic rationale fronted by German industry.

A bleaker social and security picture, however, is being pushed home by nervous sceptics, not least of all from the governing parties themselves. Chancellor Angela Merkel’s Bavarian allies are seething, and the immediate aftermath of the attacks in Paris prompted sharp remarks by some members.

The point of contention here was the holder of a Syrian passport found near the body of one of the assailants who perished in the Friday night attacks. He had passed through Greece in October, according to Greek authorities. Not in itself conclusive of anything, but it was enough to link free movement with ISIS penetration even *before* responsibility was ascertained. It was enough to suggest that open borders constituted open invitations to spread mayhem in Europe.

Bavarian Finance Minister Markus Soeder provided his few Euros worth on the topic: “The days of uncontrolled immigration and illegal entry,” he told *Welt am Sonntag*, “can’t continue just like that. Paris changes everything.”[4] Such dangerous nonsense slams the door on legitimate attempts to flee oppressive regimes, shifting the focus back on concepts of illegal entry. We cannot trust them, these strange creatures who do not abide by the protocols of processing.

Soeder had inspiration from Bavarian state premier Horst Seehofer of the Christian Social Union (CSU), who has called for a border clamp down. Soeder has, in turn, been listening to the railing statements of Hungary’s Viktor Orbán, who has told Merkel in no uncertain terms that there should be no “moral imperialism” at play here.

Orbán has seen his moment underscored in the Paris attacks. Blood has nourished his pan-European Christian rhetoric, a point he managed to put forth in his parliamentary address in Budapest titled “Attack on Europe.” Some of his initial words suggested that he would, in fact, draw a line between desperate refugee and opportunistic terrorist. “In a deliberate and organised way, terrorists have exploited mass migration by mingling in the mass of people leaving their hopes of a better life.”[5]

Then, a truer picture emerges, one that has little to do with compassion, and everything to do with the orthodox righteousness of the nation state. “The right to self-defence is stronger than any other, we should not put European lives at risk on the basis of any kind of ideology or economic arguments.” Except, of course, the ideology of unquestioned sovereignty itself.

This then paved the way for Orbán to strike at apologists and the compassion brigade, a feint suggestion that they had collaborated in the project of undermining European security. “Those who said yes to immigration, who transported immigrations from warzones, those people did not do everything for the defence of European people.”

The dog whistling then became vehement. “We don’t think that everyone is a terrorist but no one can say how many terrorists have arrived already, how many are coming day by

day." Liberal Europe, deemed deluded in its compassion, under assault, and gradually giving way at the seams.

Dr. Binoy Kampmark was a Commonwealth Scholar at Selwyn College, Cambridge. He lectures at RMIT University, Melbourne. Email: bkampmark@gmail.com

Notes

[1] <http://www.safecom.org.au/kids-overboard.htm>

[2] <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/oct/28/tony-abbott-urges-europe-to-adopt-australian-border-policies>

[3] <http://new.spectator.co.uk/2015/10/the-moral-case-for-a-tough-line-on-migration/>

[4] <http://www.jpost.com/Breaking-News/Paris-changes-everything-Bavarian-allies-pressure-Merkel-on-refugees-433129>

[5] <http://www.nst.com.my/news/2015/11/111893/jihadists-mingled-among-migrants-hungary-pm-says-after-paris-attacks>

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