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From Nazi Legacy to Cold War: British Perceptions of European Identity, 1945-54

In August 1946 an article in *Picture Post* drew attention to the sufferings of Germans in the aftermath of the Second World War (Jacobson 1946). It prompted this response from Mrs. Jackson — a reader in Redcar, Yorkshire:

> We had Germans for six years, and it's still Germans, and Germany,
>
> and we in England are heartily sick and tired of hearing about them.
>
> They got more than their fair share of everything when the war was on
>
> by plundering other countries. No wonder they say they were better
>
> fed then than they are now. How soon they forget![1]

Mrs. Jackson's protest centres on the publication of any article on Germany — she goes on to ask *Picture Post* to provide her with lighter and more entertaining fare. But even though she wants no reminders of the war, she also censures Germans for forgetting they inflicted suffering on others, placing memories of war at the centre of her judgement on their sufferings.

There is a considerable historiographical consensus that the Second World War reinforced a sense of detachment from continental Europe through a particular memory. Kenneth Morgan argues: 'Dunkirk, the Battle of Britain, the image of 'standing alone' and subsequently saving a stricken continent from itself went deep into British folk memories' (Morgan 1993, 42-3). David Reynolds calls this 'the enduring mentalité of 1940', when, according to national myth, Britain severed itself

from 'perfidious continentals'. This myth, he argues, 'animated a generation of Britons who had been through the dark days of Hitler's war' producing 'an abiding suspicion of the continent — or even contempt' (Reynolds 2003, 163). Malcolm Smith similarly notes 1940 as a defining moment that endured in British collective memory: 'France's defeat, and Britain's subsequent survival, not only worked to confirm Britain's sense of innate national superiority but also helped to cement a more general distrust of European entanglements for generations' (Smith 2000, 40. See also, Garton Ash 2006, 455, Reynolds 1990, 348-9, Weight 2002, 101).

Such emphasis on an enduring time-warp dominated by memories of 1940, however significant these were, takes little account of subsequent developments and the diversity of post-war meanings of the continent. Even in wartime, the story of European resistance, told prolifically across all media from 1941, drew heavily on traditional associations of Europe and civilisation. Its message, encapsulated in the slogan of the 'V for Victory' campaign — 'Europe against the Germans' — set Germany, not Britain, outside the family of European nations. Reporting of the liberation of concentration camps strengthened an opposition between European civilisation and German barbarism that was central to the resistance narrative. But in the aftermath of war the meanings assigned to the continent were volatile and in the late 1940s drew on another association with a considerable history: Europe as a place of war and of the threat of war.

This chapter focuses on three moments in the development of British media narratives of Europe, in each case considering the place of Germany within imagery of the wider continent. The first is April 1945 when reporting of the liberation of

concentration camps clearly identified Germany as the perpetrator of war crimes that produced what the *Times* called 'tormented Europe'.[2] The second, beginning in September 1945, saw some erosion of this opposition. An increasing emphasis not only on German suffering but also on wartime collaboration and post-war corruption in imagery of the wider continent meant that ideas about Germany and Europe increasingly converged. In the third moment from the late 1940s, an emergent Cold War narrative became familiar, particularly through the metaphor that Winston Churchill borrowed from the stage and first used six months before Mrs. Jackson wrote her letter: 'Iron Curtain' (Wright 2007). Widely taken up by journalists and politicians, this metaphor dramatised the post-war divisions of Europe and identified a new enemy — the Soviet Union.

There is a substantial literature on British perceptions of the Nazi legacy of suffering in Europe — both official and popular — particularly on concentration camps and war crimes trials (Kushner 1991, Reilly et al. 1997, Bloxham 2001, Frank 2006, Ramsden 2006). There has also been increasing recent acknowledgement of the impact of the Cold War on British culture and identity and a developing literature on its cultural dimensions (Shaw 2001, Jones 2005, Contemporary British History 2005). But these literatures have generally developed separately while stories of the Nazi legacy and the Cold War circulated simultaneously in the late 1940s. What was their impact on perceptions of Europe? What was the relationship between British attitudes to Germany and to the wider continent? In addressing these questions this chapter explores the post-war meanings of the continent and of British-European relations from the closing months of war to the mid-1950s. It argues that Britain engaged with many 'Europes' beyond 'perfidious continentals'.

Civilised Europe

In 1945 a film about Nazi concentration camps was shown at all German prisoner-of-war camps in Great Britain and Northern Ireland: part of a wider programme by the Political War Executive (PWE) — a propaganda unit of the Foreign Office — to re-educate German prisoners. Although the American Office of War Information supplied the film, the PWE requested some modifications to the commentary and the addition of extra shots showing a British Parliamentary delegation visiting Buchenwald. A report in August 1945 recorded that 202,404 German prisoners had attended screenings, involving 1,580 performances given by film projector vans. An introduction to the film, addressed to the prisoners, told them:

> You will see in these pictures one of the reasons why Germany earned the hate
> and justifiable contempt of the whole world, and why she herself must do
> penance to atone for her irreparable guilt. No excuses such as "We didn't know
> about it" or " We couldn't do anything about it" will release you from the moral
> responsibility which must be borne by every German.[3]

Extensive newspaper, magazine and newsreel coverage conveyed a similar message to the British public, generally delivering a verdict of collective guilt. The *Daily Mirror* declared: 'A race which can produce so much foulness must itself be foul', and gave the label 'stupid soft-hearts' to readers who attempted to draw distinctions between 'the Nazi war-makers and torturers and the German people'.[4] Gallup Polls that asked: 'How do you feel about the German people, apart from their

leaders' recorded 54% saying 'do not like' in February 1945, but by April 1946 this had increased to 59%. Despite the idea of collective guilt, much reporting nevertheless individuated Germans, especially Josef Kramer the Belsen camp commandant and Irma Grese, the SS guard who were widely named the 'Beast' and 'Bitch' of Belsen'.[5]

A view of the Second World War as a conflict between civilisation and barbarism, focusing on German barbarism, was apparent in much wartime propaganda. 'Hun' — the term by which the German enemy was popularly known during the First World War — was banned by the BBC in 1937, but widely used after 1939 and much favoured by Winston Churchill in his wartime speeches.[6] In 1944, Churchill sent a telegram to Bernard Bracken at the Ministry of Information to request that, since the name 'Aachen' was 'pure Hun', the BBC should use its French name — Aix la Chapelle — when they announced its capture. Bracken's reply assured him that the BBC would make use of the 'more civilised term'.[7] The notion of *Sonderweg* — a peculiar path taken by German history — linked barbarism to Prussian and German traditions, offering an account of German history in which the Second World War was just one more episode in an epic tale of aggression, militarism and destruction rooted in the character of German people. Reporting of the concentration camps presented evidence of their horrors as the final vindication of the view that Germans were inherently barbarous and cruel. The *Daily Mail* concluded its reporting of the liberation of Buchenwald and Belsen: 'These are the Germans'.[8] The British Paramount newsreel on Belsen was entitled 'Proof Positive'.[9] With some exceptions, such as the *Manchester Guardian*, there were few references to Nazi racial ideology or its victims: Jews, Roma, Slavs.

Belsen, as the only concentration camp to be liberated by the British, received the lion's share of British media attention. In contrast to the individuation of the 'Beast' and 'Bitch' of Belsen, concentration camp victims — both the dead and survivors — generally remained unindividuated and undifferentiated and were referred to collectively as 'inmates', 'slave labourers', 'prisoners', and sometimes 'political prisoners'. But *The Man From Belsen*, broadcast in 1946, featured Harold le Druillenec who, as a Channel Islander, had lived in the only British territory occupied by Germany before his deportation. In December 1945, le Druillenec sent loyal greetings from the empire and Commonwealth to the King on radio, just before the King's Christmas broadcast. In *The Man from Belsen*, he reconstructed his experiences from arrest to liberation.[10] Such a focus on a British victim suggested a tendency to nationalise a story in which everything about Belsen bespoke the difference between Britain as a tolerant and decent nation — its soldiers shown caring for concentration camp victims — and Germany. Richard Dimbleby was the first reporter into Belsen. He concluded his radio broadcast for the BBC:

> May I add to this story only the assurance that everything that an army can do to save these men and women and children is being done and that those officers and men who have seen these things have gone back to the Second Army moved to an anger such as I have never seen in them before (Dimbleby 1975, 193).

If reporting from Belsen tended to focus on British civilisation, an editorial in the *Daily Mail* set this in a wider European context. Deploying the notion of

Sonderweg to place Germany firmly outside European traditions, it argued that a 'German shadow' had darkened Europe for a century. The concentration camps showed that: 'the terror inside Germany has reached a point which could not even have been imagined by the peoples who have inherited the humane civilisations of the West … because the course of their history has divorced them from the humanities deriving from Greece and Rome'.[11] The introduction to the film shown to prisoners-of-war in 1945 conveyed a similar message: 'When you begin to be informed of your crimes … you will understand that the journey back from this barbarism — the truth of which has been proved by events in Germany in 1945 — to civilisation and to a useful membership of the European family of nations, is no short and quick one, but one which is marked by many periods of trial'.[12]

In the aftermath of the liberation of concentration camps, the contrast between Germany and Europe focused on sufferings inflicted by Germany. Reports that millions were starving in Holland and that the flooding unleashed by the German army would further increase the famine closely followed the revelations about concentration camps in April 1945. An editorial in the *Times* speaking of 'tormented Europe' noted that the people of western Holland had 'been brought down almost to concentration camp level'.[13] Widespread protests at the treatment of German prisoners-of-war in Britain who, under the Geneva convention, received the same rations as their soldier captors, focused chiefly on the disparity this caused between prisoners-or-war and British civilians working together, where Germans ate better than their British fellow-workers. But a cartoon in the *Mirror* captioned 'Surely the waiters weren't intended to starve', pointed the contrast between well-fed German prisoners-of-war and suffering Europe. A waiter presents two fat German soldiers

with a menu of dishes 'designed by the Geneva Convention'. He is bent, haggard and emaciated and the napkin draped over his arm bears the legend 'Starving Europe'.[14]

The *Times* editorial that spoke of 'tormented Europe' hoped for a quick surrender by Germany, but it also outlined Germany's condition as comparable to the rest of Europe: collapsed and ruined. The incorporation of Germany into a generalised image of a continent characterised by hunger and disease was qualified by the view that Germans had brought upon themselves their own ruination. But it foreshadowed an increasing tendency in the late 1940s to blur the distinction between Germans as perpetrators of violence and other Europeans as their innocent victims in a generalised image of a continent that was suffering, chaotic, corrupt and threatening.

Suffering, Chaotic and Threatening Europe

In *The Lost People* — a British feature film released in 1949 — Captain Ridley (Dennis Price) gestures around a former theatre in Germany, now converted into a dispersal centre for refugees under British administration where Ridley is the officer in charge. The war is over, but it has made millions of Europeans into refugees. 'Something we'll never see again', Ridley tells his Sergeant (William Hartnell), 'the whole of Europe under one roof'.[15]

From 1946, as war crimes trials were held and the extent of wartime and post-war displacement became apparent through the millions of Europeans who ended the war in displaced persons (DP) camps, reporting of the liberation of concentration camps was quickly succeeded by attention to the Nazi legacy. As the perpetrator of

war crimes and crimes against humanity as well as the site of war crimes trials and of many DP camps, Germany was at the centre of these stories. Mrs. Jackson wanted to hear no more of Germany in 1946, but her letter was published in an edition of *Picture Post* with a 4-page spread on 'The Greatest Trial in History': Nuremberg.

Imagery of DP camps in Germany and Austria produced a generalised image of Europe in which suffering was a prominent theme and women were foregrounded. In her autobiography, Mai Zetterling — the Swedish actress who came to Britain in 1943 — noted: 'I must have trudged, looking pathetic, through more bombed cities and rehabilitation camps than any other living actress' (Zetterling 1985, 83). Zetterling played Lili in *The Lost People*: one of the DPs who comprise the 'whole of Europe' at which Captain Ridley gestures. She played Hildegard in *Portrait From Life* (1948): the woman in a portrait seen in a War Artists Exhibition by Major Lawrence (Guy Rolfe) which prompts his search through many DP camps to find her.[16] Both women are victims of the Nazis, but neither film explores wartime experiences. Rather, the characters played by Zetterling stand for a generalised image of European suffering at the hands of the Nazis.

Alongside its imagery of suffering *The Lost People* also shows chaos and division in constant quarrelling and squabbling within and between different national groups, particularly in conflicts over who had collaborated. The film may be careful to establish that the DPs are of a very wide range of European nationalities but it shows them sharing similar characteristics regardless of nationality — prone to shouting, hysteria, fighting and sometimes violence. Both *The Lost People* and *Portrait From Life* show DP camps teeming with desperate people and as places of

black market activities, corruption and spying. In *Portrait From Life*, Major Lawrence's narrative voice, describing his tour through a range of camps in search of Hildegard says that it is 'like a nightmare'

Despite the efforts of the government, similar associations of DPs with wartime collaboration and black marketeering recurred in imagery of European Volunteer Workers (EVWs) — the name given to DPs from camps in Germany and Austria who were recruited to the British labour market in the late 1940s. In an unprecedented move, and one that was never subsequently extended to any other group of migrants, the Ministry of Labour attempted to shape public attitudes in the 1940s through their interventions to secure favourable coverage in the media, setting up a Committee on Publicity for the Education of Popular Opinion on Foreign Workers in 1947.[17] The Committee found that opinion about EVWs included the view that they were Fascists who had fought for the Germans, 'some of the scum of Europe' and 'the Jews of Europe'.[18]

An identification of EVWs as 'the Jews of Europe', despite the very limited numbers admitted under the scheme, drew on the history of anti-alienism in Britain in which the term 'immigrant' was widely used to mean Jews in the early part of the century and many migrant and refugee groups from Europe were seen as suspicious, threatening, and criminal foreigners (Cesarani 1993). Post-war media portrayals often drew on attitudes familiar from this history, but added distinctive inflections from post-war imagery. In 1947 the *Daily Mirror,* commenting both on DPs in Europe and those recruited to the British labour market, linked ideas of criminality and suffering. The paper portrayed DPs as a 'great suffering lump of humanity … composed almost

entirely of men and women who have run away from something', arguing that they 'wouldn't even be useful as labour, in England or anywhere else [as] they are broken people. One in four is a crook or has been made a crook by his suffering'.[19] A *Daily Mirror* editorial in 1948, under the headline 'Let Them Be Displaced', portrayed EVWs as criminals, but named them also as black marketeers.[20] Doubts about the war records of EVWs were a consistent undercurrent in popular responses. As David Cesarani's work demonstrates, war criminals of a range of nationalities did enter Britain under the EVW scheme (Cesarani 1997, Cesarani 2006, Chapter 6).

The idea of Europe as criminal, corrupt and sinister is particularly evident in *The Third Man* (1949) — a film not only acclaimed by the critics but also the most popular film at British box-offices in 1949.[21] Its themes of black marketeering, murder, spying and mysterious disappearances and its visual references to film noir evoke a sinister and shadowy world of danger, intrigue and moral bankruptcy. The opening narrative voice — that of the film's director Carol Reed — identifies this world as the post-war condition of Vienna. Over shots of boots, stockings, cigarettes and watches changing hands, the narrator tells the audience: 'I never knew the old Vienna before the war, with its Strauss music, its glamour and easy charm … I really got to know it in the classic period of the Black Market'. There is no glamour in the Vienna of the film — it is framed by sequences in cemeteries, and much of its action is set in seedy apartments, hotels and bars, dark streets and sewers. Its music is the sound of a solo zither, not Strauss. Nor are the rackets only in cigarettes and watches. Holly Martens (Joseph Cottens) discovers that his old friend Harry Lime (Orson Welles) runs a racket stealing penicillin from military hospitals and watering it down, resulting in the deaths of children. Both Holly and the amoral Harry are American, but

the film shows Holly losing his innocence through his journey to Europe and ends with him shooting his old friend in the sewers of Vienna.

A generalised image of a continent that was suffering, chaotic and threatening increasingly incorporated Germany through attention to the suffering of Germans in the aftermath of war. The Save Europe Now campaign begun in September 1945 on the initiative of the publisher, Victor Gollancz, was particularly concerned with the millions of Germans who had become refugees at the end of the war through flight from the advance of Soviet forces and expulsion from Poland and Czechoslovakia. It publicised the German refugee crisis and the prospect of mass starvation among German refugees, raising the question of whether Germans were also victims of the war. In 1946 with the lifting of the ban on non-fraternisation, local campaigns invited German prisoners-of-war to spend Christmas in British homes.[22] The plight of Germans was merged into a wider picture of European suffering by the Save Europe Now campaign which also drew attention to the millions in the wider continent who were in danger of perishing from hunger and cold during the winter (Frank 2006). In November 1945, the Archbishop of Canterbury, a supporter of Save Europe Now, appealed to the government to take further measures to save Europe 'from dying in our hands'.[23]

Despite the increasing tendency to blur distinctions between Germany and the rest of Europe in a common image of suffering and chaos, schemes for the relief of German suffering, like Save Europe Now, proved highly contentious. *A Defeated Nation* (1946) — a documentary about the administration of the British zone in

occupied Germany, directed by Humphrey Jennings — begins with a dialogue between different voices expressing these views:

> 'What's it like in Germany?'
>
> 'Must be terrible'.
>
> 'Well they've asked for it, they've got it'.
>
> 'Yes, but you can't make them starve'.
>
> 'I don't know about that. I've got a son out there. As far as I can see it would be a good thing if some of them die'.[24]

These voices are scripted, but the letter-columns of newspapers and magazines offered a similar range of opinion. In *Picture Post*'s letter column in September 1945 headlined 'Should We Let Germany Starve?' views ranged from support for the 'Save Europe Now to 'let them suffer — they deserve to'. One female letter-writer deplored what she saw as 'organised sympathy' being launched only four months after the defeat of Germany with no mention of 'similar and even worse conditions … in all the countries that have suffered from Teutonic aggression'. In contrast a man argued that: 'The fact that those who are suffering so terribly are German makes no difference'.[25] Attention to German suffering may have been a factor in the considerable decline in those who said they 'did not like' Germans in response to Gallup Polls. From their high-point of 59% in April 1946, they fell to 51% by October 1946, but then declined steeply to 20% by summer 1947 when almost half of those polled stating that they were 'sympathetic' or had 'no ill-feeling'.

The relief of German suffering was also contentious in newspaper coverage where there were sharp divisions over whether Germans could be seen as victims. But even amongst those who thought Germans undeserving of any sympathy, there was increasing recognition that relief was necessary for the sake of Europe. In language where there was a notable slippage between Germany and Europe, the *Daily Mirror* advocated the need to solve the German refugee crisis, emphasising that this was 'not out of any sympathy for the German people', and highlighting this point through the headline: 'Feed the Brutes?' But it argued that: 'The longer Europe is allowed to sink into the bog, the longer it will take to raise up — the longer the occupation will have to go on'.[26] Other press coverage began to show Germans as victims. In a considerable revision of its position in April, the *Times* argued in September 1945: 'It is surely not enough to say that the Germans brought these miseries upon themselves'. Speaking of 'the universal chaos of Germany' and the sufferings of Germans expelled from Poland, its correspondent commented: 'brutalities and cynicism against which the war was fought are still rife in Europe, and we are beginning to witness human suffering that almost equals anything inflicted by the Nazis'.[27]

The turn to an image of suffering Germany, however contentious the schemes for relief, meant that Germany was increasingly incorporated into the wider image of a suffering continent. But suffering itself took on a threatening meaning as the prospect of mass starvation in Germany prompted fears of disease, rioting, violence and anarchy. The *Sunday Chronicle* suggested that 'for the sake of Europe and ourselves, for the safety of our occupying troops … Germany must be prevented from becoming a plague spot and a danger to the world' (Frank 2006, 243). The *Picture Post* article that prompted Mrs. Jackson's objections argued: 'Europe can't afford a

dead Germany now, or the war that will certainly come later out of her economic chaos and bitterness' (Jacobson, 1946). As peace was ushered in, the narrative of European suffering continued to associate the continent with the threat of war.

The immediate post-war period could be regarded as a transitional moment between war and post-war for Britain as well as other European nations. Wartime conditions persisted. There were extreme shortages of food in Germany and continued and sometimes intensified rationing in Britain and France.[28] The legacy of war was apparent in many other aspects of everyday life: housing shortages, bomb-sites, bereavements and divorce rates — which peaked in Britain in 1947, in France in 1946 and in Germany in 1948. But British hardships could not be compared with conditions on the continent. In the late 1940s, as Europe was defined as much by its sufferings and its menace as by its civilisation, the wartime opposition between Britain and Germany often slid into a wider opposition between Britain and Europe: British stability and order against a war-torn and chaotic continent.

'Eastern' Europe

In 1954, in the context of debates about the rearmament of West Germany and its membership of the European Defence Council, the British government considered censoring an episode of the BBC's first television series on the Second World War — *War in the Air* — which showed Germany as a militaristic power. Winston Churchill, Prime Minister in 1954, minuting that he had watched the 'offending film', stated: 'compared to the harm done by Lord Russell of Liverpool's book it is trivial'.[29] On the same day, apparently having difficulty in bringing himself to name the title of the

book, he informed the Foreign Office: 'Lord Russell of Liverpool's book has already sold 60,000 copies and is being reprinted as fast as possible as the demand is very great'.[30] The title of the book was *The Scourge of the Swastika* and, according to the preface, was 'intended to provide the ordinary reader with a truthful and accurate account of many … German war crimes' (Lord Russell 1954, viii). Earlier that year, the government had attempted to prevent its publication.[31]

The government's attempts at censorship in 1954 marked a dramatic shift in official ideas about Germany and its place in Europe. The introduction to the film shown to prisoners-of-war in 1945 had told them that their journey back to membership of the European family of nations would be neither short nor quick.[32] Nine years later, the government was committed to the speedy reinstatement of West Germany as a member of the European family. Its thinking about *The Scourge of the Swastika* was in the context of the Cold War and, as one official noted, a commitment to 'controlled German rearmament, and to a policy which contains, as an important element, belief in the possibility of a free Germany reborn on democratic lines'.[33] The book was therefore deemed 'offensive' because 'there is no doubt that many Germans would now be frightfully hurt by this book' and because 'it does little good to rake over the ashes of the past'.[34] Lord Salisbury, commenting on the proposal to censor the episode of *War in the Air* which showed Germany as a militaristic power, stated succinctly: 'It is of course true that the Germans are a warlike nation. That is why we want them on the side of the West'.[35]

In the 1950s, public memories of the Second World War, evoked most obviously in a prolific cycle of Second World War films, celebrated the national

wartime record largely as a masculine military conflict with Germany. Nazi war crimes, genocide against the Jews and sufferings on the Eastern Front were all neglected. *The Scourge of the Swastika* devoted considerable attention to such themes, went through seven editions by 1955, and came out in paperback from Corgi in 1956. The initial demand for it, noted by Churchill, was probably fuelled by the considerable press coverage it received as a result of the government's attempt to prevent its publication. Its popularity might also suggest an eagerness for alternative memories of war, beyond the standard fare of British-German conflict. But the publisher's provision of a lurid yellow dust-jacket showing emaciated figures standing in the shadow of a huge pair of jackboots suggests that they anticipated another kind of interest. Billie Melman, tracing the development of an English popular culture of history from the nineteenth century, has noted that it was often perceived as 'a place of … pleasurable horror' (Melman 2006, 23). British schoolchildren made *The Scourge of the Swastika* into an illicit source of such pleasurable horror, passing it round classrooms under desks.[36] Its black and white plates included pictures captioned 'shrunken heads found at Buchenwald', 'a mass grave at Belsen', 'a wagon-load of corpses at Buchenwald', and 'Polish women's legs disfigured by human guinea-pig operations'. Some plates showed naked women.

The *Daily Express* reported the attempt to ban *The Scourge of the Swastika* under the headline 'Monstrous Act of Censorship' and proceeded to serialise the book.[37] Most newspapers reviewed it and affirmed the importance of remembering Hitler's death camps, but a number also invoked Siberian labour camps.[38] The onset of the Cold War involved a distinct shift eastwards in notions of barbarism, as the Soviet Union was identified as the principal Cold War enemy — a shift particularly

apparent in the terms used for European geography. Announcing the descent of an 'Iron Curtain' on the continent in his Fulton speech of 1946, Churchill had listed a wide range of capitals 'in Central and Eastern Europe' which were now behind this curtain. By 1954 the 'Iron Curtain' signalled a division between 'East' and 'West'.

Once the war was over, the Soviet Union's wartime role, including its liberation of the death camps of Eastern Europe played almost no part in memories of war. In contrast, the Soviet Union's post-war menace and corruption bulked large in the Cold War narrative. A report on public opinion polls in 1947 suggested that popular attitudes were slow to shift away from the wartime admiration for the Soviet Union repeatedly reported in wartime Home Intelligence Reports (Rose, 2005, 50-56). Anti-Russian feeling was hardening 'slowly, painfully, but steadily', it commented, while the large number of 'don't know' responses to questions could be attributed not only to lack of interest but also hesitancy, in a context where news sources were distrusted as propagandist (Willcock 1948, 70-72). A year later, the story of the blockade of West Berlin and the Allied airlift clearly identified the Soviet Union as oppressor, but it was through news of 'Eastern Europe' that it was increasingly revealed as tyrant.

In a striking comment on the invention of the idea of 'Eastern Europe' in the eighteenth century, Larry Wolff suggests that uncertainty over the geographical border between Europe and Asia 'encouraged the construction of Eastern Europe as a paradox of simultaneous inclusion and exclusion, Europe but not Europe' (Wolff 1994, 7). The Cold War narrative told a similarly paradoxical story. A merger of the USSR and Nazi Germany in a common image of totalitarianism — 'Red Fascism' —

has attracted the attention of scholars in both American and British contexts who trace it to the 1930s (Adler and Paterson 1970, Shaw 2001, Chapter 3). The invocation of Siberian labour camps in reviews of *The Scourge* suggests another merger that has attracted less attention. Behind the Iron Curtain were the brutality and oppression practised by anti-Christian totalitarian regimes, but also oppressed peoples who were deprived of European democracy and freedoms. 'Eastern European' nations acquired a double meaning: police states like the former Nazi Germany, but also places of suffering under Soviet oppression, like occupied Europe under Nazi rule.

As barbarism was located in the east, ideas about Germany became increasingly ambiguous. Official attitudes that recast West Germany as ally were not always replicated in the media, but the Democratic and Federal Republics were generally distinguished in Cold War language — East and West Germany. Distinctions between their values were particularly apparent in an ongoing story about refugees, in which East Germany inflicted sufferings on its people, while West Germany provided asylum. In 1953, Norman Swallow, a BBC producer, was in the midst of making a television documentary on refugees for the Special Enquiry series when news broke of an East German uprising repressed by Soviet tanks. Despite the holiday that he was taking, he immediately wrote what he called a 'business letter' about plans for this documentary: 'I feel we must cash in on the East Berlin riots in a big way. They fit well into the programme as being a more violent form of evidence than our refugees that the East German government drives people to desperate measures'.[39]

Swallow had made a documentary on EVWs for the BBC in 1951 — *I Was A Stranger* — which portrayed refugee experiences as part of the brutal legacy of Nazi rule in Europe.[40] His reaction to the East Berlin uprising demonstrates a shift of attention from the Nazi legacy to the Cold War. It also suggests that East Germany could take on the meaning formerly assigned to occupied Europe under Nazi rule: suffering under oppression and brave resistance. As the destination of most refugees, West Germany had a different meaning, exemplifying the freedom of the 'West'. The final version of Swallow's documentary noted that nearly 500,000 refugees had fled from the Soviet zone in the past four years, the majority of them in the previous six months. It claimed that 'the story of Berlin's refugees is probably the most awful human story in Europe at this moment'.[41] A BBC Viewer Research Report found that, while there were a 'few dissentients who feel no compassion for the sufferings of ex-enemy peoples', the majority reacted to the programme with 'keen interest and approval' and 'as a rule the reaction was one of unreserved sympathy'.[42] Second World War records were largely irrelevant to this story.

The Man Between, set in Berlin, was released three months after the East German uprising and, like *The Third Man*, directed by Carol Reed. Dilys Powell's review noted: 'there is a world of difference between the baroque, decaying elegance which Reed discovered in the ruins of Austria and the cautionary carelessness of life which he has seen in Germany'.[43] Even so, the films share imagery of a corrupt, seedy city characterised by criminality, rackets, spying and blackmail. Many reviews noted shared 'Iron Curtain' imagery, suggesting how far the Cold War shaped their memories of the earlier film, since they had made little mention of the 'Iron Curtain' at the time (Shaw 2001, 29). *Picturegoer* identified the star of *The Man Between* as

'Berlin itself, hysterical, suspicious, forever alive with menace'.[44] But while corruption, suspicion and intrigue characterise West as well as East, the East is a particular place of danger and menace. The West is the British zone of occupation where Susanne (Claire Bloom) arrives from Britain on a visit to her brother — a Medical Officer working with the British army of occupation. In a film in which divisions of the city are prominent in the theme of border-crossings — by foot, by car and finally by laundry-van — it is men from the East who kidnap Susanne and take her to the Eastern sector. As she re-crosses the same border in the final sequence, travelling West, her German lover is shot in the back.

Claire Bloom as Susanne in *The Man Between* has to cope with threats to her life in Germany, but as Susan in *Innocents in Paris* she faces no more than the advances of a middle-aged French man.[45] Narratives of continental visits began to emerge quickly once the war was over. A *Times* editorial on the British holiday-maker in March 1946 was titled 'the return to Europe' and noted that 'the first announcements of Continental readiness to greet foreign guests come from countries which have been spared the ravages of war'.[46] Switzerland — neutral in the war — was the setting of the first post-war film about continental tourism — *Passionate Friends* (1949).[47] But two films released in 1953 showed more modest excursions encompassing Britons of a range of social classes and ages. *A Day to Remember* showed a day trip to Boulogne by a darts team from a London pub.[48] *Innocents in Paris* which showed a weekend trip, earned criticism from many reviewers for its clichéd representation of 'gay Paree' as 'a city given up to a perpetual good time' with 'buckets of champagne'.[49] Such a vision of what was 'continental' was familiar to viewers of BBC television's *Continental Café* which featured international cabaret

and champagne buckets and was introduced as 'l'heure du champagne' — although guests drank ginger ale.[50] The 'return to Europe' reinstated 'continental' as sexuality, glamour and sophistication, in contrast to 'Eastern Europe' as a place of drabness, oppression and impoverishment, signified particularly by unglamorous and unfeminine women.

A British officer in *The Colditz Story* (1955) — a film about British prisoners-of-war in Germany — when reminded of the sufferings of occupied Europe, thanks God for the English Channel.[51] The Cold War narrative never completely displaced attention to wartime Europe under Nazi rule, as the publication of *The Scourge of the Swastika* demonstrated. Although 1950s filmic images of the war were dominated by military conflict with Germany, the post-war persistence of the resistance narrative meant that British wartime involvement in continental Europe, German war crimes, and the courage of European resisters continued to resonate in British memories. But as menace and barbarism shifted eastwards, narrative of day-trips and weekend-trips to the continent identified a 'Europe' that excluded the 'East' and began to lose associations with war.

Conclusion

Mrs. Jackson was not alone in 1946 in hoping that she would hear no more of Germany and that the media would provide more entertaining fare than news from the continent. In the late 1940s attitudes in Britain to the recent war were complex and ambivalent and the peace was associated with austerity, difficulty, national exhaustion and sometimes with national decline (Zweiniger-Bargielowska, 2000). Films about

the war were not popular in the last years of the war, and did not regain popularity until the 1950s. Even so, the centrality of Germany to late 1940s stories of the Nazi legacy in Europe meant that attentive media audiences could not avoid hearing a good deal about Germany. In the 1950s they heard even more, not only through war films which paid far more attention to Germany than to other former enemies, but also through the central place of Germany in the divided continent of the Cold War.

One common thread ran through these diverse narratives of Germany: war, the legacy of war, the threat of future war. In the late 1940s, these were associated with the wider continent — the legacy of chaos and suffering itself threatening violence and further war. Ending a half-century in which the majority of journeys from Britain to the continent were for the purpose of war, they reinforced the idea of Europe as a place of danger and of threat to British lives. They cast Britain as champion of civilisation and bastion of stability against a war-torn continent.

The moment when Britain was defined against Europe proved short-lived. Churchill's Fulton speech of 1946 identified the 'West' mainly with the English-speaking peoples — the United States, Britain and the Dominions — paying comparatively little attention to the continent. But the divided continent of the Cold War not only meant that the wartime vision of 'Europe against the Germans' increasingly receded, but also gave salience to the European dimensions of a 'West'. By 1961 these European dimensions were significant to a new meaning of 'Europe' that gained currency in Britain in the context of the British bid to join the European Economic Community (EEC). But membership of the EEC, while hotly debated through the failed bids of the 1960s, had little relevance to a further meaning of

'Europe' anticipated by narratives of excursions to the continent, foreshadowing the development of mass tourism in the 1960s. This 'Europe' had associations which Mrs. Jackson perhaps enjoyed: playground, not battlefield.

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[1] *Picture Post*, 21 September 1946.

[2] *The Times*, 30 April 1945.

[3] National Archives (NA), FO 939/72

[4] *Daily Mirror*, 20 April 1945.

[5] See, for example, *Daily Mail*, 21 April 1945.

[6] Memo, 21 May 1937, BBC Written Archives Centre (WAC) R34/282.

[7] Churchill to Bracken, 16 September 1944; Bracken to Churchill, 18 September 1944, NA, PREM 4/68/8.

[8] *Daily Mail*, 19 April 1945.

[9] 'Proof Positive', *British Paramount News*, 30 April 1945.

[10] *Radio Times*, 21 December 1945; 7 April 1946.

[11] *Daily Mail*, 19 April 1945.

[12] NA, FO 939/72

[13] *The Times*, 30 April 1945.

[14] *Daily Mirror*, 27 April 1945.

[15] *The Lost People* (Bernard Knowles, 1949).

[16] *Portrait From Life* (Terence Fisher, 1948).

[17] Publicity for the Education of Popular Opinion on Foreign Workers, Minutes of Committee Meeting, 5 December 1947, NA, LAB 12/513.

[18] NA, LAB 12/513.

[19] *Daily Mirror*, 5 March 1947.

[20] *Daily Mirror*, 20 July 1948.

[21] *The Third Man* (Carol Reed, 1949).

[22] *Lancashire Evening Post*, 19 December 1946; 23 December 1946; 15 January 1947.

[23] *The Times*, 27 November 1945.

[24] *A Defeated People* (Humphrey Jennings, 1945).

[25] *Picture Post*, 29 September 1945. Questions of German suffering were widely debated in local as well as national newspapers. See for example *Yorkshire Post*, September 1945 and *Lancashire Evening Post*, October to December 1946.

[26] *Daily Mirror*, 5 October 1945.

[27] *The Times*, 11 September 1945.

[28] Bread rationing was introduced for the first time in Britain in 1946. In France, bread rations were reduced after the war was over.

[29] Minute from the Prime Minister to the Foreign Secretary, 1 November 1954, NA, FO 371/190343

[30] Minute from Prime Minister's Office, 1 November 1954, NA, FO 371/109733

[31] Letter to Lord Russell, 30 July 1954; Memorandum, 9 August 1954, NA, LCO 4/273

[32] NA, FO 939/72

[33] Minute, 12 August 1954, NA, FO 371/109733.

[34] Minute, 12 August 1954, NA, FO 371/109733; Memorandum, 30 July 1954, NA, LCO 4/273.

[35] Letter, 30 October 1954, NA, FO 371/109343.

[36] Personal communications from Mike Paris and Lynn Froggett who attended British schools in the 1950s.

[37] *Daily Express*, 11 August 1954.

[38] *Manchester Guardian*, 19 August 1954. See also *The Star*, 11 August 1954; *Spectator*, 20 August 1954.

[39] Letter, 19 June 1953, WAC, T4/66.

[40] *I Was A Stranger*, BBC television, 12 September 1951.

[41] WAC, T4/66.

[42] Viewer Research Report, WAC, T4/66.

[43] *Sunday Times*, 27 September 1953.

[44] *Picturegoer*, 17 October 1953.

[45] *Innocents in Paris* (Gordon Parry, 1953).

[46] *The Times*, 23 March 1946.

[47] *Passionate Friends* (David Lean, 1949).

[48] *A Day to Remember* (Ralph Thomas, 1953).

[49] *Evening News*, 9 July 1953; *Daily Telegraph*, 11 July 1953. See also *Daily Mail*, 10 July 1953; *Daily Express*, 10 July 1953; *News Chronicle*, 10 July 1953; *Evening Standard*, 9 July 1953.

[50] *Continental Café* was a long-running series on BBC television from 1947-1955. See WAC T12/37.

[51] *The Colditz Story* (Guy Hamilton, 1955).

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