

ARE REFUGEES PROFITABLE?

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“To greed, all nature is insufficient”—Seneca

We can dare say if refugees were not profitable they would not even exist. The recent tragedies at the Lampedusa port have made headlines though many had died there before, and many refugees have perished along the Yemeni coast and even in war torn Somalia, specifically Bosaso. All of a sudden the hypocrites in Europe, the architects of Fortress Europe, started to lament on the fate of the refugees and the cruelty of the regimes they flee from (client regimes of the EU and Washington in most instances). But, as Goethe stated, change amuses the mind, yet scarcely profits and so Italy talked of a State funeral for the close to 400 Eritrean victims, proceeded to cancel it altogether, gave nationality rights to the dead and denied the same to the survivors. The message is clear: die first and we shall make you Italian or European. The refugees are obliging, alas, but by dying first.

Little changes and would change. Right after the Lampedusa disaster, there were more deaths and rescues involving thousands. The flight of refugees is not going to end because the basic conditions that force them to flee and confront death have not changed and because their condition or situation benefits many quarters. Also, there is no way the repression and suffering is going to end any time soon be it in Eritrea and Ethiopia or Somalia, Iraq, Burma, Afghanistan, Burma, Sri Lanka, Congo and Syria. That means there are still hundreds of thousands of refugees and they are easy prey for the profiteers at various levels. Take Eritrea where high level officials have been accused of getting paid thousands of dollars to ensure the departure of the would-be refugees be it to the Sudan or elsewhere. In Ethiopia, trafficking refugees is a multi- million Birr business with the lions share going to the regime’s top cadres who assure safe exit to Kenya or the Sudan or to other countries. Illegally, traffickers make you pay as much as US\$ 5000 for a legal visa to European countries who embassies patronize this business though they may deny it. The trek for an Eritrean or Ethiopian asylum seeker involves the payment of thousands of dollars before he or she reaches the Gaza, Libya and eventually Europe. The Bedouins of Gaza extorting the refugees, raping and killing them, holding them prisoners for ransom

(same happens in Yemen too) are duplicated by Libyan police and security thugs who do the same and hold many hundreds of refugees in containers in the desert sometimes close to the Libyan Chad border. Lampedusa costs thousands of dollars and gives them death in most instances.

Refugees benefit traffickers and cruel government cadres at all levels. They are beings without much choice though we may evoke legitimate queries on why they flee if they have so much money to spend in their own countries—but they do have strong life or death reasons. The Rohingya for example are helpless victims of fanatic Buddhist priests and other repressive and callous officials all around them. Eritrea is a hellhole for its citizens much as Ethiopia is for its impoverished and repressed populace. Who would not flee from Syria and the miserable refugee camps in the vicinity? Who would not choose exile to escape from the carnage, rape and mayhem of Eastern Congo? For many, risking death does not appear that frightening. This is the reality and not because, as some claim in Europe, refugees want to enjoy easy and comfortable life at the expense of Europeans and not also because refugees do not value their life. Lampedusa should highlight the gravity of the unjust situation and also point its fingers at those profiting from the life and death of every refugee.

As I had written many times, Africans are polite and feel ready and happy to sustain so many NGOs staffed by young, and in many instances inexperienced, Westerners. Refugees help in this by being victims who bring in profit. For example, the new right wing prime minister of Australia hyped the migrant issue to assure his election but who does benefit from refugees making their way there through difficulties? The Sydney Sun Herald asked the same question and wrote the following:

“The only people really benefiting from the steady stream of asylum seekers to Australia are the heads of the multinational SERCO Australia which is a division of a British multinational”.

Another report presented the comment cited below

“The ‘asylum market’ is a nice source of private profits for private, offshore corporations, with \$8 billion in contracts awarded in 2012. In 2009 Serco, the biggest player in Australia’s asylum

industry, held detention contracts worth \$323 million. The same contracts have since hit \$1.86 billion and come on the back of a 45 per cent increase in profits in 2011. G4S, another big multinational, runs the Manus Island detention center, which recently made headlines with allegations from a former employee of rape, torture and self-harm at the facility". Serco runs detention centers and private prisons in Britain too. Under the title "Big Business Profits from Asylum Seeker Detention Centers" the Leftist Vanguard wrote (on September 2013) as follows:

"Imperialism's media outlets and their political representatives in parliament in Australia, led currently by Rudd and Abbott, have a lot to say about the money that so-called 'people smugglers' make out of asylum seekers who fill the boats bound for Australia from the shores of Indonesia and beyond.

What they don't talk about is the millions of dollars made by multinationals from the incarceration of asylum seekers.

Detention centers in Australia, Manus Island and Nauru are privatized and run for profit by multinational companies such as Serco and G4S.

These multinationals are likely to make more profit from the detention centers on Manus Island and Nauru because the wages and conditions of detention center workers there is likely to be far less than wages and conditions of detention center workers in Australia.

Other multinationals such as Transfield and Toll make huge profits from contracts with the federal government to supply equipment, materials, food supplies and construction of the centres.

Some of these multinationals make so much money out of the plight of millions of asylum seekers around the world that they have a vested interest in the number of asylum seekers ever increasing.

Placing detention centres in developing countries like Papua New Guinea rather than Australia suits them down to the ground, as they can take short cuts to increase profits more easily, far away from the eyes of the Australian people.

Detention centres have become a growth industry for imperialism, a contributor to their political representatives' Gross Domestic Product. How decadent is the system of imperialism that includes and welcomes detention centres as contributors to the system's "economic growth"!

It is to be noted that:

- " the money for the asylum processing in Manus and Nauru Island has come from the aid budget, further distorting relationships around the Pacific;
- Papua New Guinea is a violent country where women suffer high degrees of domestic violence so there's no protection for women asylum seekers. And it's extremely corrupt.
- Both Nauru and Papua New Guinea are bankrupt ex Australian colonies in no position to refuse the Australian dollar. Other Pacific States have told them to sod off! "

Refugees assure billions of dollars and are thus very profitable. Another reason why Lampedusa and other infamous shores as far as Australia's will continue to deal with asylum seekers dead or alive. In Other words, the hue and cry against invading asylum seekers is just a hoax—for business the more the merrier. If, on the other hand, asylum seekers are a curse on the West we can surely say that the West and NATO are the ones to blame for the predicament they say they are in. Robber barons of the mining sector are responsible for the carnage in Eastern Congo and behind the fleeing of so many refugees from that place. Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria are also fine examples. Bad and now dead Khadafy promised them publicly that he will protect them from the savage hordes prepared to invade Europe's shores from Libya. What did Europe and NATO do? Instead of a thank you to the tyrant they bombed Libya to its present state of near statelessness and had Khadafy murdered. Europeanese for "let the hordes come to our shores and increase our profits! "