

The Refugees Are Coming!

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I don't really know, I don't understand how it feels: to live in a rich European country, which is rich mainly because it has been directly plundering many poor nations around the world. Or it has been plundering by association, through its membership in some extremist organization like NATO. To live there, refusing to acknowledge why it is rich, how it became rich.

Palaces, theatres, railroads, hospitals and parks in that rich country are built on broken skeletons and restless specters, on lakes of blood and shameless theft.

Then, when one looted country after another begins to sink, when there is nothing left there, when children begin dying from hunger and when men commence fighting each other over tiny boulders and dirty pieces of turf, pathetic boats, or dinghies, begin crossing the waterways, bringing half starved, half-mad refugees to the European sea-fronts decorated with marble.

What a horrifying sight! As if a woman, her hair waving in disarray, her lips broken, comes begging a man who raped her after killing her husband – begging for shelter and at least some work and piece of bread. She decided to abandon all her pride, because her children are sick and starving, because it is either this, or death.

That is what you reduced the world to, Europe – you, and your huge, insatiable offspring – North America!

Too egocentric, too cruel, you lost the ability to judge, to feel. All moral standards collapsed. There are no higher principles, anymore, only self-interest.

In Calais and Kos, in Paris, London, Stuttgart, and Prague, I heard the same questions posed with absolutely straight faces: “How are we going to absorb all those hordes of immigrants?”

Almost no one in the West is wondering aloud: “How did the people on other continents manage to endure those long centuries of colonialism and neo-colonialism, of shameless plunder, of slavery, of constant locust-like onslaught of corporate and neoliberal cannibalistic hordes? Wouldn't a set of keys issued to each and every citizen of robbed, formerly or presently colonized country, be the tiniest, the most basic token of justice?”

Is it morally acceptable that a thief, an arsonist, a rapist, a liar, a serial killer, all in one, would be allowed to live in a mansion, surrounded by slums housing his victims?

In the West, in the Christian West, in fundamentalist West, such arrangement is obviously tolerable.

Most of the citizens of Europe are completely unrepentant. Only few of them are capable of detecting connection between their continent's wealth, those hundreds of millions of ruined lives all over the world, and the latest wave of immigrants.

A few months ago, my comrade and fellow philosopher, Milan Kohout, lost his temper, after listening to staunchly racist, anti-immigrant guests at a studio of the Czech Television in Prague. He began shouting, live, at both the moderator, and the bigoted speakers.

Insulting letters commenced raining almost immediately: "Why don't you stick a few of those ni**ers into your own bedroom, you asshole?" Or more threateningly: "You should be hanged for this, you bastard!"

Several weeks after the television appearance, I received his email:

Just letting you know I have been getting so many death threats that I am starting to take them seriously. Even the neighbors from the village we have the summerhouse in are threatening us. I do not know whether I should take all this serious or not but I guess I have to be careful...

On the Greek island of Kos, which is now hosting several thousands of refugees from the Middle East and Asia, but which has neither camps nor other facilities for them, a brave medical volunteer (I decided not to use her name, as she was already threatened), described the recent developments:

The situation in Kos is totally out of control. The [right-wing] extremists of Golden Dawn – some of them fully armed – have unleashed pogroms against the refugees. Someone must speak loudly for the Mayor's responsibilities... who had sabotaged every solidarity effort and possible solution, from the very beginning.

At the other side of Europe, the British Prime Minister is considering to employ the army, lamenting inconveniences being experienced by British holidaymakers. Traffic at the Eurotunnel is slow, often interrupted, as thousands of desperate refugees living in an appalling camp nicknamed "The Jungle" at the outskirts of the French city of Calais, are trying to reach England, some dying in the process.

Great Britain, responsible for the loss of hundreds of millions of human lives worldwide (through its colonial genocides and triggered/orchestrated famines), is now pretending that it is facing a serious "refugee crises", while there are only some 25.000 asylum applicants on its territory.

As the Morning Star commented:

According to the Refugee Council up to 74 per cent of all asylum-seekers are refused residency in Britain. While numbers have grown since 2008, applications for asylum in 2014 were below 25,000, with those fleeing from conflicts in Afghanistan, Syrian and Eritrea among the highest number of applicants.

In Germany, Netherlands, Scandinavia, Greece, in fact all over the Europe, right wing, xenophobic groups and movements are busy attacking and intimidating defenseless refugees.

Immigrants are portrayed as some menace, or pest, not as a group of desperate human beings – victims of the Empire.

It is mainly because of the collapse of integrity inside the Western political elites, mass media, as well as in academia and art world.

Now, most of those who are speaking in favor of accepting immigrants are doing so self-righteously, “out of charity”, not because they recognize that accepting victims of their continent’s cruelty is their moral obligation; not because they are convinced that breaking the gates of “fortress Europe” would be at least a tiny payment from the monstrous debt towards the world that had been ravished and plundered for numerous centuries.

It is not only what you see in Europe – that tip of the iceberg, that tiny fraction of misery that managed to land on Italian, Greek and Maltese shores.

The world is on the move. Tens of millions are displaced.

The overwhelming majority of the refugees are forced to leave their homelands because of political and economic imperialism of the West.

Syrians, Libyans, Iraqis and Afghanis were bombed to the stone-ages, just because they tried to feed, house and educate their people. In the eyes of the Empire, this was the greatest crime, as all resources are supposed to be used for alimenting Western corporations, banks and military complexes.

Eritreans were debilitated by sanctions and embargoes, right after their long war for independence. 10 million of Congolese people died since 1995, butchered by West’s allies – Rwanda and Uganda – so that Washington, London and Paris could enjoy a free flow of uranium and coltan. Many Congolese people are now trying to flee unimaginable horrors at home. Many Somalis are trying to escape, after Washington destabilized their country, after Kenya invaded its southern part on direct orders from the West, after the EU has been dumping toxic waste at its shores.

Even the plight of Rohingya people in Burma could be traced to the monstrous “divide and rule” of the British Empire in Asia.

For decades and centuries, the West kept overthrowing progressive governments, one after another. It has been murdering great political leaders like Patrice Lumumba, liquidating all attempts to build decent, socialist societies.

Then it would say: “Those ni**ers cannot govern their own countries... All their people want is to come to us, stealing our jobs, straining our social systems.”

It goes without saying that, if left alone, those countries that are now bleeding millions of their own people, “exporting refugees”, would be, most likely, as rich or even richer than the West. It applies to Iran and Iraq, Syria and Libya, perhaps even Congo and Indonesia.

The ongoing “refugee crises” is not a “problem that Europe has to deal with”. Europe is creating the crises. Europe is not “dealing” with anything. It is, as always, cheating, lying and calculating pennies, after stealing billions. Those who don’t see it are either blind or conditioned, alternatively well paid not to see.

If the mother earth gets hit, powerfully, with tremendous destructive force, pieces of it will fly, in all directions. The same applies to countries, to nations. If left in peace, states will find the way to take care of their people.

The present situation is actually just a tiny reflection, an overflow of horrors that the colonized and plundered world has to endure. It is just a tiny bit of that nightmare which is taking place inside Africa, the Middle East and several parts of Asia; a tiny bit thrown back to the face of the Europeans; being brought to and left at their doorsteps.

How come that “they” don’t see it? How come that almost all Western mass media are silent? How come most of present-day philosophers are not addressing, not combining the subjects of neocolonialism and immigration?

What I am saying in this essay is philosophically clear. It would be hard to dispute it. French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre came to several similar conclusions in his “Colonialism and Neocolonialism”, few decades ago. But that was “then”. Now, to combine the plunder of the Planet committed by the West, and the plight of the refugees, appears to be taboo.

But I don’t believe in taboos, as I don’t believe in a knowledge that is strictly “theoretical”.

In the past few years I documented human misery in countless battlefields, and in the refugee camps that are housing exiles from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia, Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq, Bangladesh, Libya and many other broken places.

I often see, first hand, how grotesque, unsustainable, repulsive the situation is: while tiny Lebanon is now a host of over 2 million Syrian refugees, one of the main global bullies, the UK, has lesser than 25.000 registered asylum applicants on its turf!

Even the intellectuals of aggressive NATO country, Turkey, write openly and honestly in the newspapers: “We wanted to act like some smaller regional United States, therefore we should pay for those 1.8 million refugees who were forced to cross the border and settle in our camps.” Turkey is paying. As aggressive as it is, it has at least some dignity left, compared to the West.

There is simply something appalling, hypocritical, twisted, profoundly un-humanistic, in the way Europe addresses the plight of its victims.

Of course “it” is not something new. “It” has deep roots in both Christian dogmas and Christian cultural fundamentalism – the elements that are unyieldingly controlling the minds of the majority of European people. Such fundamentalism has been helping to accept and promote, even glorify, colonialism and neocolonialism, as well as the “exceptionalism”.

Fundamentalism and *exceptionalism* put their religions (even in the countries that became ‘secular’ on the surface), cultures, races and ways of life on the pedestal. They see “those others” as irrelevant. The suffering of “the others” is trivial, insignificant. Or it simply “does

not exist”.

Orwell defined un-Christian, un-white and un-Western people simply as “un-people”, in the eyes of the West.

In Europe, wherever you go, you can read between the lines:

If millions of “them” starve to death, then be it – as long as Germany and France could maintain clean sidewalks and hospitals, and as long as the schools don’t have too many undesirable, foreign elements and influences.

Destruction of the world, killing and starving of millions, is sad but a necessary price to be paid for the high standard of living of the chosen, white, good Christian people in Europe and North America. Let the slaughter be contained to far away places! Let it not appear on the television screens. Let us not see the victims.

And let those dirty and uncivilized beings stay where they are. We don’t want to face them at our resort towns and in our capital cities. We don’t want to see their sores, their wounds, and their puss.

Let everything remain out of focus, as blurry as possible, and at extremely low volume.

As I was told in California, during a conference: “Do not show us graphic images of Africans suffering... Here, people are very sensitive!”

Neocolonialism? Modern slavery? We don’t like these terms. They belong to the Cold War era. They died with the Soviet Union, didn’t they?

As long as the Empire reigns, as long as the West rules over the planet, the refugees will be crossing dangerous waterways on board their fragile dinghies.

Some will die; others will make it.

Those who will make it will be put on trial. What they did is defined as “illegal”. They will have to prove that they are persecuted in their home country, that their lives have been threatened.

A tricky game... A very filthy game... Like in those days of Inquisition, men, women and children facing Western Christian “justice” would have to lie, in order to survive.

They would not be able to say: “I had to escape because your country killed my family”. Or: “Your continent robbed me of my livelihood”.

Fear of persecution... A “genuine” refugee would have to invent his or her imaginary story, his or her torturer: one that is approved by the Empire.

Then, and only then, a refugee would have at least a tiny chance to receive his or her asylum, a shelter and a piece of bread – a tiny bit of what was already stolen from his or her native land.



The Jungle camp in Calais, France.



Calais – anti refugee walls.



Congolese refugees in Goma.



Fainted refugee in Kos (courtesy photo from Kos).



Refugees in Kos Greece (photos courtesy from Kos).



Shia IDP on Madura Island, Indonesia.



Somali refugee in Dadaab camp.

Andre Vltchek is a philosopher, novelist, filmmaker and investigative journalist. He covered wars and conflicts in dozens of countries. His latest books are: “[Exposing Lies Of The Empire](#)” and “[Fighting Against Western Imperialism](#)”. Discussion with Noam Chomsky: [On Western Terrorism](#). [Point of No Return](#) is his critically acclaimed political novel. [Oceania](#) – a book on Western imperialism in the South Pacific. His provocative book about Indonesia: “[Indonesia – The Archipelago of Fear](#)”. Andre is making films for teleSUR and Press TV. After living for many years in Latin America and Oceania, Vltchek presently resides and works in East Asia and the Middle East. He can be reached through his [website](#) or his [Twitter](#).

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