EU Policy Is Deadly: For Your Bank Account and the Refugees

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UNHCR/B. Sokol

A Syrian refugee camp in Turkey, which is being paid billions of dollars to keep refugees out of Europe.

Dec. 18—If another bit of evidence were needed, the latest EU summit (Dec. 17-18) provided it: This "European Union" is neither a union, nor European. Instead of promoting with one voice the general welfare of the people of Europe, the EU showed itself once again to be a lobby for the bankers and the speculators, who use ever more totalitarian measures to act against the interests of people—people within the EU, as well as the refugees.

On refugee issues, the EU has demonstrated—of course with the exception of the generous aid of many people in Germany and elsewhere—that the oft-cited "European values" don't exist. The "Photo of the Year 2015" chosen by UNICEF, showing the brutal treatment of the refugees on the infamous Balkan Route, is an indelible mark of shame. Of the 160,000 people who, according to the EU's resolution, should have been distributed among various EU member states, only 200 have been accommodated.

Death Sentences for Refugees

The deputy Foreign Minister of Greece, Nikos Xydakis, told the *Wiener Zeitung* exactly what it would mean for the security of the EU's borders if they were militarized by an armed Frontex organization: Leading politicians from several EU countries, he said, have repeatedly made the unbelievable and unacceptable demand that the Greek Coast Guard force refugees arriving by boat from Turkey, back into the sea—which would have resulted in their death by drowning. Greece has refused to do this. As a result of this policy, *Spiegel Online* reported, under the headline "Sea of Death," that nowhere in the world did so many migrants die in 2015 as on the external borders of the EU—5085, to be precise.

This same EU, which was able to find trillions of euros in order to "save" the deadbeat banks which had gambled people's money away, has paid Turkey *three billion* euros to stop the refugees from coming to Europe. As Amnesty International has just made public, Turkey—which bears no small responsibility for the refugee crisis due to its support for the terrorist IS,—used this money, among other things, to either deport Syrian refugees back to Syria, or to hold them in prison-like detention camps.

As if this wheeling and dealing weren't abominable enough, according to the *Bild-Zeitung*, at the beginning of the summit the EU Commission knowingly provided the EU heads of state with obviously false counts of the refugees, to justify the massive financial payments to

Turkey. A paper ascribed to Juncker claimed that instead of the level of 52,249 refugees a week, who were arriving at the end of October, only 9,093 per week had come from Turkey in the previous weeks. But, according to the internet site *Politico.eu*, owned by Axel Springer SE, there is an internal paper of the EU Commission which reports that in the week of December 7 to 13, 27,069 refugees from Turkey arrived in Greece alone. Thus, according to *Bild*, Juncker had reduced the number of refugees by approximately a factor of three.

The gentleman has much practice in such deceit, as he confessed in an interview with *Spiegel* back in 1999: "We decide something, then put it in play, and wait a while to see what happens. If there is no huge outcry and no revolt—because most people don't even grasp what has been decided,—then we go further, step by step, until there is no turning back." This practice earned him the nickname "Flunker-Juncker" (Juncker the Deceiver).

And to bar refugees from Africa, the EU has now made two billion euros available—believe it or not!

What the EU has proposed, both earlier and at this recent summit meeting, as the solution to the refugee crisis, is totally bankrupt, morally and politically. The idea that several million refugees from Southwest Asia and Africa should be repelled with gun boats, and that the drowning of thousands and hundreds of thousands must be accepted,—while the EU at the same time carries out a neoliberal economic policy which condemns Africa to the underdevelopment which is the underlying cause of the massive refugee flow—is as far from reality as it is disgusting.

Europeans on the Chopping Block

Such contempt for human life is also expressed toward people within the EU. After four local savings banks in Italy went bankrupt, banks which had encouraged more than 100,000 customers to invest in subordinated bonds, a "bail-in" on the Cyprus model was applied. This wiped out many people's entire savings and deposits, and led a 68-year-old retiree to commit suicide,—which led to a wave of protest. The incident was all the more scandalous, because the big investors had been warned beforehand, and had safely taken out their money, which in some cases ran into the millions.

After the bail-in expropriation of depositors and bank stockholders in cases of insolvency was applied for the first time in March of 2013 in Cyprus, Jeroen Dijsselbloem, the head of the Euro-Group (Eurozone finance ministers), declared that this would be the blueprint for the entire EU. He has now again affirmed that the application of bail-in is absolutely necessary, and on January 1, 2016 the corresponding guideline, which has meanwhile been approved by all the EU member states, will officially go into effect.

Rijksoverheid/Valerie Kuypers

Bail-in advocate and Euro Group head Jeroen Dijsselbloem, in a picture taken in 2014.

The trans-Atlantic financial crash—which will make the collapse of Lehman Brothers and AIG in September of 2008 look like a joyride in comparison—is already in full swing. Four hedge funds have already gone bust in the United States, because, like the entire shale gas and oil sector, they were entangled in a five-trillion dollar derivatives bubble; the oil price has fallen to under $35 a barrel while their contracts had been concluded on the basis of a price of $80 a barrel or more. Likewise, the bubble in the commercial real estate market—where the entire global crisis of 2007-2008 got its start—has now grown even larger than in the Summer of 2007.

On January 1, Puerto Rico is supposed to pay a billion dollars on its total debt obligation of $72 billion; this is money it doesn't have—and on which, again, hedge funds and banks depend. They are thus threatened with insolvency. In the province of Alberta in western Canada there has been, and still is, a a series of insolvencies in the shale oil sector, which have touched off a wave of suicides among those affected.

The United States' official unemployment rate of 5% is a bad joke. In reality there are more than 100 million people of working age who are not employed—largely because they have given up trying to find work. Forty percent of the employed make less than $15,000 a year—that corresponds to the minimum wage—and half of these make less than $5000 a year. Included in the job statistics are those who work only one day a month.

In reality, the entire trans-Atlantic sector is in the midst of a collapse which is gaining more and more momentum. Faced with indebtedness and derivatives exposure amounting to the trillions, the U.S. Administration and EU have only one card up their sleeves—"quantitative easing," i.e., further money-printing, and the bail-in, i.e. the expropriation of depositors, and bond and stockholders. This can only be described as criminal. The more this crash expands, the more human lives it will cost.

The planned bail-in which Euro Group head Dijsselbloem has just once again defended, is a policy which will cost more lives by far than the gunboat policy of the EU in the Mediterranean. If the goals of the so-called Report of the Five Presidents, announced in July, were to be implemented in full, the EU would become a full-fledged totalitarian dictatorship, serving the bankers' interests.[1]

There is a solution. The entire trans-Atlantic region must immediately put through the package of measures with which U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt began, in 1933, to get the United States out of the Great Depression. The Glass-Steagall bank separation system must shut down the casino economy of Wall Street and the City of London, and in its place a credit system must be introduced in the tradition of Alexander Hamilton, FDR, and the policy of the German *Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau* (Bank for Reconstruction) after World War II, which put into effect long-term investments in the reconstruction of the real economy.

With this policy we can rebuild the economies of Southern Europe and the Balkans, which have been destroyed by the policies of the Troika. We must replace

1. The report, "Completing Europe's Economic and Monetary Union," is known as the Report of the Five Presidents. It was prepared by the President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, in close cooperation with Donald Tusk, Jeroen Dijsselbloem, Mario Draghi, and Martin Schulz, respectively the presidents of the European Council, the Euro-Group (Eurozone finance ministers), the European Central Bank, and the European Parliament.

self-destructive geopolitics with a new paradigm, whereby the international community works together to develop all of Southwest Asia and Africa.

The obvious approach for doing that is the extension of China's New Silk Road and the proposal of the Schiller Institute for expanding this program into the World Land-Bridge to bring peoples together, and thus overcoming the conditions which are the fundamental source of the refugee crisis.

In this way we would not only put our own economy back on the track of economic growth, but even more importantly, we would can stop the collapse into total barbarism and win back our humanity.