

Empire's *Limes* Policy Turns Mediterranean into a Cemetery

by Our European Bureau

Oct. 14—As seen in recent horrific drownings of hundreds of impoverished Africans attempting to reach the Italian island of Lampedusa, the Anglo-Dutch Empire is carrying out a policy of what Lyndon LaRouche called in December 2002 a “deliberately intended genocide,” modeled on the *limes* practices of ancient Rome. The *limes* was a “protective wall” to keep the “barbarians” from the poorer South from flooding into the wealthier North.

Today the *limes* policy is global; the genocidalists, ensconced in our global financial institutions and governments loyal to them, are writing off entire populations—in Africa, the Middle East, South America, the Caribbean, and Asia—with their policies of economic destruction, drug legalization, and perpetual warfare. The City of London's swinish *Economist* reflected this imperial outlook in its Oct. 12 commentary on the Lampedusa tragedy, remarking that “the flotsam of a wrecked world washes up regularly on the shores of southern Europe.”

Flotsam? Human beings fleeing from desperate conditions? Yet, that is the de facto policy, as reflected in the craven decisions being made in Europe and the United States.

The Case of Lampedusa

In the first nine months of this year, 30,100 migrants arrived in Italy and Malta, up from 15,000 in all of 2012, according to the UN High Commission for Refugees. They come chiefly from sub-Saharan Africa—Somalia and Eritrea. Others are from Syria, Egypt, and Pakistan. Smaller numbers come from Gambia, Mali, and Afghanistan. The London *Guardian* reported Oct. 14 that the number of migrants landing on Italian shores *doubled* from July 1 to Aug. 10.

One of the prime stops on the treacherous trip to Europe from Africa, especially from Tunisia, is the small Sicilian island of Lampedusa. That island's name has become associated with drownings at sea,

where boats overloaded with refugees have capsized, leading to many deaths. The most dramatic occurred on Oct. 3, when 339 Africans, mostly Eritreans who had come from Libya, perished at sea, after their boat caught fire.

While this was an extraordinarily high death toll, it was only one among many such events. For example, a week later, on Oct. 11, more than more 30 refugees died at sea when another boat capsized.

Contributing to the horror is the fact that, following last week's drownings, Italian prosecutors immediately moved to *criminalize* the act of seeking asylum from starvation, poverty, and war—opening a *criminal investigation* into the survivors for violating laws relating to “clandestine immigrants” which carry fines of EU5,000 (\$6,800)! Anyone who might rescue any immigrant at sea is also subject to prosecution!

With good reason, when European Commission President José Manuel Barroso landed in Lampedusa last week with Italian Prime Minister Enrico Letta, they were greeted with catcalls from an angry crowd that yelled, “disgrace,” and “killers,” as the two walked off the plane. “They should be ashamed of themselves! They should solve this humanitarian problem. . . . We've been living with this for 20 years. We've had enough of death! These deaths are on the conscience of Italian and EU politicians!”

The Pope Intervenes

Pope Francis has called last week's drowning tragedy “a disgrace,” stating that only “a determined collaboration of everyone can help prevent this from happening again.”

During a trip to Assisi, the Pope on Oct. 4 addressed a group of the poor with whom he met: “And today, many of you have been despoiled by this savage world, which does not give you work, which does not offer help; to which it does not matter if there are children who die of hunger in the world; it does not matter if

many families have nothing to eat, and do not have the dignity of being able to bring home bread; it does not matter that many people are forced to flee from slavery and hunger, to flee in search of freedom. With great sadness we see, so many times, that instead they find death, as they did yesterday, in Lampedusa: Today is a day of grief.”

In early July, in his first trip abroad as Pontiff, Francis traveled to Lampedusa to express his solidarity with the immigrants who survive there under terrible humanitarian conditions. Holding a mass for 15,000 people on the island, the Pope decried “the culture of well-being, that makes us think of ourselves, that makes us insensitive to the cries of others, that makes us live in soap bubbles, which are beautiful but are nothing, are illusions of futility, of the transient, which bring indifference to others, which bring even the globalization of indifference.”

The Pontiff reported that when he hears of the suffering and deaths of immigrants, “the thought always returns as a thorn in the heart.”

An Oasis, Not a Cemetery!

Speaking about the Oct. 11 refugee drowning incident, Malta Prime Minister Joseph Muscat declared: “As things stand, we are building a cemetery within our Mediterranean Sea.” Muscat despaired of Europe’s policy toward refugees, saying that “rules need to change; whether they are tighter or looser is not the issue, the fact is that this thing is broken and it needs to be fixed.”

The way to fix it is with a U-turn in economic policy, which would bring life-saving investment in infrastructure, agriculture, and industry to the African continent. Proposals for such development have been put on the table again and again by the LaRouche movement, and other institutions as well. But these proposals have been refused on various pretexts, from financial to environmental.

On July 17, European Member of Parliament Cristiana Muscardini filed an interrogatory to the European Union Development Commission, laying out the disastrous situation of mass death from displacement, starvation, and war in the Sahel, and presenting the Italian



UNHCR/A. Di Loreto

Italian Coast Guard sailors help African migrants, adrift near Lampedusa Island, 2007.

Transaqua project, first developed in 1972, as a feasible approach for dealing with the water crisis which is contributing to the disaster in the region. Muscardini then asked:

“1. Does the Commission know about the ‘Transaqua’ water transfer project?”

“2. Has the scaled-down version of the project got underway, and—assuming that the it has—how far has the work progressed?”

“3. Why has Transaqua not been taken into consideration?”

On Aug. 16, EU Development Commissioner Andris Piebalgs replied:

“The EU is aware of the water-transfer project from the Ubangi River to Lake Chad (Transaqua). Preliminary feasibility studies, however, indicate that the project would involve major environmental risks.” Piebalgs reported that the EU is examining “32 proposals” and part of the EU development funds “could include a contribution to safeguard Lake Chad.”

Reached for a comment, Transaqua author Marcello Vichi remarked that so-called environmentalists have alleged that the Transaqua Canal would prevent wild animals from moving freely in the Congo region. “It is as if when in Italy, the North-South motorway was built in the ’50s, they had said: ‘Stop it, because it divides the country in two.’” Most outrageous is the fact that so-called environmentalists are always good at “defending nature in someone else’s home,” he said.