

FORCED MIGRATION, GLOBAL MEDIA AND PEACE CULTURE

Abstract: The present dominant tendency of economization and securitization of forced migration to our region and to the EU as a whole is the subject of a critical analysis in the paper. The global corporate media as representatives of the interests of the elites of the rich countries are presenting migrants as terrorists, malicious users of social welfare and dangerous people to the host society. The global corporate media are enemies of the peace culture. Forced migrants are innocent victims of conflicts in an unjust social and political order, with military aggressions, civil wars, tyrannical regimes and ethnic tension, generated by the rich countries and their elites. The adequate solution of problems of forced migration and the overcoming of violence causing it could be a shared responsibility of humankind as a whole. Political and economic elites cannot resolve such problems – they can only exacerbate them.

Key words: forced migration, global media, peace culture

The present dominant tendency of economization and securitization of forced migration to our region and to the EU as a whole is the subject of a critical analysis in the paper. The global corporate media are the most important instrument of this propaganda: they represent the rich countries as victims of refugee waves and terrorism, and organize permanent campaigns against foreigners and Islam. The global media as representatives of the interests of the elites of the rich countries are presenting migrants as terrorists, malicious users of social welfare and dangerous people to the host society. This media are trying to replace the humanist culture of peace with an aristocratic anti-culture of fundamental divisions (West-East, Christianity-Islam and rich countries-poor countries), aggression and hatred for the victims of forced migration.

This is a result of the war against global terrorism after 11/9 and it is associated with the continuing social and economic crisis of the Western world. The latest crisis with the terrorist attack against the yellow French magazine *Charlie Hebdo*, which has published provocative caricatures against Islam, is

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another confirmation of the present existing and deepening process of internal war and the fundamental division of the West. It is a consequence of the brutal capitalist expansion, which reached a new peak after the Cold War era.

The present-day capitalism could not provide normal living conditions to humankind at least at the level of elites and the people of the rich countries. Moreover, the world today is increasingly divided by regional and civil wars, by violent conflict redistribution of resources bringing huge misery for people, state destruction and forced migration floods. Global injustice, wars and poverty forces millions of people to search for better living conditions, work and better life chances in rich countries.

How could we define forced migration? There is a continuing trend of its growth by leaps and bounds. Two years ago, Delgado Wise² classified four types of forced migration:

- Migration due to violence, conflict, and catastrophe (43 million refugees)
- Smuggling and trafficking of persons (2.45 million victims)
- Migration due to dispossession, exclusion, and unemployment (72 million migrants)
- Migration due to over-qualification and lack of opportunities (25.9 million migrants).

According to the German magazine *Der Spiegel* and the information of the UNHCR for the year 2013, more than 50 million people left their homes, which is a record data since the Second World War! 9 out of 10 immigrants are accepted by developing countries. 2,3 million people are immigrants from the war-ravaged Syria – 1 million are living in Lebanon and 1 million in Turkey at present. For the last 14 years, more than 23 000 refugees have died trying to reach the rich countries in Europe. Applications for the EU countries for the 3-year period until 2013 are about 80 000 per year.³ Therefore, the claim that the refugees are in fact economic refugees to the rich West, is doubtful.

Now, there are more than 200 millions forced migrants in the world: one could say that this chaotic process of displacement of huge masses of people looks like a rematch of the people from the peripheral countries for the inverted structure of our imbalanced and confused world. The response of the rich West is a politicization of migration as a threat to security on the basis of inventing a connection with global terrorism and organized crime. Especially in its nationalist expression, this response becomes more and more hysterical, especially in the period of the deepening social and economic crisis of the ‘welfare state’. The

² Delgado Wise, R. (2013), The migration and labor question today: Imperialism, Unequal development, and Forced Migration, *Monthly Review*, Volume 64, Issue 09;

³ Kak ES se prevurna v neprevzemaema krepost za bejancite [How the EU has become an impregnable fortress for the refugees] – in: *Sega* N 219, September 2014 (<http://www.segabg.com/article.php?id=718078>)

Western nationalism as a degenerate successor to the Western imperialism from the first ages of the capitalist expansion imperceptibly becomes a very influential trend in the developed countries defining their policy as regards the rest of the world. A good symbol of this policy are the 'Schengen barriers' still impregnable for Romania and Bulgaria and the statements of some Western leaders (Merkel, Sarkozy) for the failure of the multiculturalism.

After the end of The Cold War the world did not become a safer place to live in, altogether. Geopolitical confrontation and intensive fight for natural resources and control over main trade roads and markets are now widespread and the number of regional conflicts keeps on growing, too.

In the last 20 years the USA and the West handily destroyed through military aggressions, support for Islamist movements and intelligence operations like "the Arab Spring" the timid attempts of modernization of the Arab and Islamic world – Iran, Lebanon, Afghanistan, Iraq, Tunis, Egypt, Libya, Syria. Everywhere the violent "democratisation" has left monsters in place of the secular governments: impoverished countries, internal civil wars and tyrannical regimes... All these sinister processes became possible after the end of the Two Camps confrontations – the Third World lost its support from the Soviet Union and the socialist countries. The West lost its strong competitor: there was no need to present itself for a knight of freedom... It has turned in freedom of conquest of natural resources! Finally, the faithful allies of the West against Russia and Syria – the jihadists – have designed their Islamic State (ISIS): a new challenge to the naive world of freedom.

The system of international security inherited from that Cold war era is unable to overcome regional conflicts and to parry off new threats to humankind. The alternatives are: unipolar world with a monopoly of forcefully-imposed solution to global conflicts, or multi-polar world, based on balance of power and consensus in the common interest of security, respect for the interests of every individual country and social values. The present-day global political confrontation between the West and the East in our days is a manifestation of the rivalry between these two alternatives. The situation in the world continues to be imbalanced, with long standing conflicts in it and unprecedented huge differences in wealth distribution.

In this situation of a global crisis we are faced up with a process of securitization and economization of forced migration caused by the collective fear of global terrorism – to mention here its attacks in the U.S., England, Spain and Russia. Another determining factor in this context is the existing global social and economic crisis in the wake of which the number of nationalist and anti-immigrant political parties in Europe is nowadays growing dramatically.

At present, we can remember what J. Huysmans said 8 years ago, because his words are becoming more and more relevant:

„One of the striking characteristics of the contemporary discourse on migration in the European Union is the contrast between a negative portrayal of

asylum seekers and illegal immigrants and talk about the necessity of increased economic migration to support growth and welfare provisions. Despite the obvious difference between repressive and permissive migration policy that plays out in this contrast, both policy positions share a desire to control population dynamics for the purpose of optimizing a society's 'well being' by keeping the unwanted out and integrate the needed into the labour market. Illegal immigration represents an existential danger in this view not because it threatens a society's wealth or stability but because it represents a challenge to its functional integrity, i.e. its capacity to control the method of shaping this wealth...

This section introduced the idea that security framing structures existential situations by means of distributing fear and trust. – concludes Huysmans - Different from teaching moral and civil values, increasing social cohesion by means of security practice arranges social relations through the construction and circulation of fear. Fear is not simply an emotion that security framing instigates in social relations. It is first of all an organizing principle that renders social relations as fearful. An important characteristic of this principle is that it arranges social relations by objectifying an epistemological fear of the unknown through the identification of existential dangers“. The „distribution of fear and trust“ became a tool for administration of social inclusion and exclusion and for assimilation of immigrants.⁴ Crises like last one with *Charlie Hebdo* became a form of collective manipulation of fear and hatred of foreigners. It is an expression of some deep problems with one's own identity of these expansionist communities in the rich West!

There are real facts to justify the thesis that the EU policy on refugees and asylum seekers focuses on measures for their rejection of the territory of the rich countries. The aggressive elites of the rich West are assigned to the Balkans as a sanitary cordon against refugee flows.

In 2014 the refugee pressure against the EU countries continues to grow rapidly. The 28 members of the EU received 216 300 asylum claims during the first half of 2014 – a 23 % increase compared to the corresponding period of 2013 (176 200). Among the EU regions, the largest relative increase in mid-year asylum levels was reported by the countries of Southern Europe. These countries (Bulgaria, Greece, Turkey) received 60 800 asylum requests during the first half of 2014, a 73% increase compared to the first six months of 2013 (35 200).⁵

Bulgaria is the poorest country in the EU and its economic opportunities to ensure adequate intake of forced migrants are relatively limited. In 2013 unexpected flows of forced migrants from the conflicts in Syria and North Africa caused great difficulties to our institutions and they had to seek help from the EU

⁴ Huysmans, Jef (2006), *The Politics of Insecurity. Fear, Migration and Asylum in the EU*, UK: Routledge, pp. 47–50;

⁵ UNHCR *Asylum Trends, First half of 2014. Levels and Trends in Industrialized Countries*, 2014.

and the UNHCR.⁶ Some of the emerging chronic problems are the following: resource insufficiency and lack of expertise and language skills of the border police and other involved institutions; poor living conditions at the points of accommodation of refugees and illegal migrants; slow processing of applications of refugees; social and cultural barriers to social integration into national society.

The EU is becoming now a fortress against the refugees with the help of the activity of the organization Frontex strictly guarding its borders and a common system for registration of refugee prints (Eurodac). According to the Dublin Convention (2004) each member-country which detects an immigrant with a legal status received in another country is obliged to return him to the first country. Following this corrupted mechanism, the Balkan countries become a concierge or a „cordon sanitaire“ of the EU! The rich countries of the EU require us to accept the refugee flow from the Arab countries and Africa without restrictions. This is hypocrisy in action!

People from the host countries need a new culture of peace and tolerance in treatment of refugees. The global corporate media are enemies of the peace culture. They spread monstrous lies: the refugees seek to rich countries to benefit from their social system and describe them as terrorists and criminals.

Corporate global media cannot be an instrument of the culture of peace, because they have made widespread individualistic values of the consummative society. Through their symbolic power, they successfully dominate over every sphere of existence of a society: politics, economic life, social ties, national culture, human communication and private life. Their products are symbols and ideas put out by cultural and media industries, false values and „cloned“ images. They create a new reality in which people live a fictitious life. They are the new theologians of the neoliberal society. They are the distributors of fear, which would like to administrate the inclusion and the exclusion from the present-day welfare society.

The thesis that the Internet and world networks are the only natural spheres in which people can become united for resistance against this global domination of the corporate media has been grounded in my previous publication.⁷ A global civil society could only emerge by means of free communication countering activities of proponents of social globalization; it is against abuse with power by political and economic elites, and against global injustice. „The culture of peace“ roots in values of tolerance, solidarity, mutual respect and cooperation of people across the world - against common threats. Ordinary people, not elites – should benefit from the advantages of the process of globalization. The latter is a source of crises, striving for attainment of unlimited power. Crises augment the wealth of certain people and widen the gap of global poverty.

⁶ UNHCR Observations on the Current Situation on Asylum in Bulgaria, 2014 April.

⁷ Bouzov, V. (2010), Media, Balkan Conflicts and the Globalization of the Culture of Peace – in: Медији и култура мира на Балкану, Филозофски факултет, Универзитет у Нишу, Центар за социолошка истраживања, Ниш, pp. 169–175.

Forced migrants are innocent victims of conflicts in an unjust social and political order, with military aggressions, civil wars, tyrannical regimes and ethnic tension generated by them. In action, a social justice cosmopolitan view would assign duties to every individual in regard to social institutions –in order to make them work for the overcoming poverty and social imbalance, for guaranteeing the basic rights of forced immigrants and their integration in a given society, on the basis of humanism. The adequate solution of problems of forced migration and the overcoming of violence causing it could be a shared responsibility of humankind as a whole. Political and economic elites cannot resolve such problems – they can only exacerbate them. They are able only to wage wars, endless conflicts and to maintain tyrannical regimes of their collaborators.

The social institutions working for the promotion and realization of a humanist approach to forced migration should not be solely relying on activities of UNHCR or the EU elites. All countries and NGO's, and the global civic society as a whole, should be drawn into activities of support for human rights observation everywhere.

We need to change our general approach to the forced migration. It must be based on a communitarian approach to international relations presenting them as relationships and conflicts of historically formed communities – religious, social, political and cultural including nation states. This approach rejects the unification around the Western liberal values and accepts differences, promoting political and cultural diversity.

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ПРИСИЛНЕ МИГРАЦИЈЕ, ГЛОБАЛНИ МЕДИЈИ И КУЛТУРА МИРА

Резиме

Сада доминантна тенденција економизације и секуритизације присилних миграција у нашем региону и у ЕУ у целини јесте предмет критичке анализе у овом раду. Глобални корпоративни медији као представници интереса елита богатих земаља представљају мигранте као терористе, злонамерне кориснике социјалне заштите и опасне људе који представљају безбедносну по земљу домаћина. Глобални корпоративни медији су непријатељи културе мира. Присилни мигранти су невине жртве неправедног друштвеног и политичког поретка, који богате земље и њихове елите спроводе кроз војне агресије, грађанске ратове, тиранске режиме и етничке тензије. Адекватно решење проблема присилних миграција и превазилажење насиља представља велики изазов, а заједничка одговорност за његово спровођење лежи на човечанству у целини. Политичке и економске елите не могу да реше овакве проблеме – оне само могу да их погоршају.

