
Book Reviews

A 'Limes' to separate rich and poor?

by Elisabeth Hellenbroich

L'Empire et les Nouveaux Barbares: Rupture Nord-Sud

by Jean-Christophe Rufin
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The Empire and the New Barbarians: North-South Rupture is the translated title of Jean-Christophe Rufin's book, which first appeared in 1991, and has now been translated into German. The French author speaks out in a brutal and shocking manner about things which for years have only been discussed in whispers at meetings of the Trilateral Commission and the Ditchley Foundation under such rubrics as mass migration, emigration, and overpopulation: namely, that a new "Limes" is being constructed between North and South. Following the model of the ancient Roman Limes, whose ruins dot the landscape of southern Germany today, this "protective wall" is supposed to protect the North against barbarians "flooding in" from the poor regions of the South.

"For the first time, the myth of development has been burst apart, revealing a long-hidden reality: The North and South are developing in diametrically opposite directions. . . . These differences make it possible to draw the ideological line which separates the North from the new barbarians. . . . Today's new Limes between North and South marks the beginning of a new type of worldwide apartheid. The idea of the Limes more or less explicitly contains the intent of delineating, and then protecting the North. But this will occur by means of forcing an abandonment of the South, which will be considered barbarians. This [abandonment] is already evident today in many regions. In demographic terms: The effort to keep the size of the world's population within bounds, will be supplanted by a hope that at least the masses in the South can be curbed; people will set their hopes on

malthusian catastrophes which can regulate it."

Under malthusianism, Rufin includes its totalitarian forms, such as are practiced in China, as well as "natural" malthusianism. He considers famines and plagues, such as cholera and AIDS, to be an essential "correctives against population growth." The only form of natural malthusianism which must not be tolerated, in his view, is migration.

As for economics: The universal idea of development will be supplanted by a selective policy according to which aid will only be granted to the buffer states located along the perimeter of the Limes, in order to guarantee their stability.

As for politics: The universal foundation of democracy will be replaced by a new coming to terms with the totalitarian states of the Third World (China, Iran), insofar as they prove themselves capable of contributing to regional stability, especially in regard to preventing massive flows of refugees.

As for the military side: The direct and excessive influence of the big powers in wars in the Third World will be replaced by a more differentiated treatment which will depend on the conflict's local specifics: Conflicts breaking out directly on the Limes's perimeter will provoke massive retaliation from the North, while the other conflicts will merely provide the public with another free horror show, whose outcome is a matter of indifference. The ideology of the Limes thus means that there will be a great shrinkage in the size of the territory considered to have any significance for human history.

Terrae incognitae

As far as the North is concerned, most of the developing countries are no longer "strategically relevant." The North will withdraw into itself. And the deeper the South descends into misery, the more blank areas will show up on the world map. Rufin speaks of *terrae incognitae*—strife-torn areas in Africa such as Somalia, Liberia, Angola, or in Colombia, the Philippines, Peru, Kashmir, Tibet, etc.—areas where, just as in the Thirty Years' War in the 17th century, there will never be a return to normality. Rather, they will remain in a permanent state of turmoil, fragmentation, and diverse forms of despotic rule.

Along with the North's withdrawal will come the erection of the new North-South Limes. It will extend from Mexico, over the Mediterranean trench, Central Asia, and the Mideast up to the Amur River, which forms the border between China and Siberia. According to the author, the first definite demarcation line is the border between Mexico and the United States.

"All strategic principles involving the Limes have their expression, if not even their origin, in this narrow zone between Anglo-Saxon and Latin America. . . . In order to combat the seeping in of emigrants, the North Americans must once again establish border garrisons."

Rufin argues that *maquiladoras* and family planning have not been able up to now to stem the influx of Mexican immi-

grants. This reminds us of the interview with the French oceanographer Jacques Cousteau in the French newspaper *Le Nouvel Observateur* in 1992, where he said that 350,000 people must be killed off each day in order to “stabilize” the world population. “Do you know that the Americans are building a wall at the Mexican border, precisely where the immigration is the greatest? The wall is currently only 35 kilometers long. But the Americans are hypocrites. They say that the wall is supposed to halt the drug traffic. I asked the CIA people about this threat. They said they’re not worried; they’ve got the atom bomb. More and more people are ready to use the atom bomb when a billion people are making their way toward the West.”

While the South descends into chaos, and the greatest mass death in history occurs before North’s unsympathetic eyes, the North, with the help of “compartmentalized deployment plans,” will devote its military planning to effective “defense” against the masses flooding in from the South. Should land-based Strategic Defense Initiative anti-missile defense systems be ultimately employed for this purpose? That, at any rate, was speculation aired by the German weekly magazine *Der Spiegel* (No. 44) in a commentary on a meeting of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in Travemünde, and on a proposal brought up there by the U.S. secretary of defense. Such a “cordon of defense along NATO’s southern border, from Gibraltar, via Sicily, to eastern Anatolia, would promise billions in deals.”

Henceforth, according to Rufin, the North will only intervene into areas “which are considered to be important because of their location near the Limes’s dividing line between North and South, i.e., in so-called buffer zones.” The Persian Gulf war is supposed to have been the first conflict in which the allies’ chief concern was to create such a zone of stability between North and South.

The South marked for chaos

The North is issuing a call to battle against the nations of the South, which, split up into ever smaller units, are descending into chaos and hopelessness. “A region is marked for descent into total chaos, when first the tourists stay away, and then the journalists pull out, and finally even the humanitarian organizations pull up their stakes,” the author states bluntly. As a consequence of this planned withdrawal and this policy of indifference, “today we are witnessing the extinction of entire cities, such as in Zaire, Angola, and Uganda. Where 10 years ago you could find flourishing trade metropolises, now all you see is ghost towns taken over by weeds.”

Meanwhile, the South is seeing the spread of a counter-ideology, oriented toward the world view of the bloody Shining Path terrorist organization which takes elements of Marxist syncretism and indigenism, according to Rufin. It is the hatred felt by the “wretched of the earth” (Franz Fanon) against Greco-Latin values, against progress, science, and

western culture. Rufin speaks of the “archipelagos of poverty,” of the “bread plebeians” who are driven in millions by hunger from the countryside into the city. The miserable refugee existence in the “Bidonvilles,” the *favelas* of Rio de Janeiro, and the slums of Mexico and Manila, etc., are becoming the norm. What the existence of the Palestinian refugee camps signifies for the Middle East, is now becoming the reality on a world scale. However, “the erection of a borderline, a cordon of stability, a Limes, which isolates the two worlds of North and South from each other, will have a calming effect in the face of catastrophes which are so obviously brewing there, and in face of the hostility with which the South regards the North.”

Stop the malthusians

As depressing and shocking as Rufin’s analysis is, the author never once calls into question the basic assumptions underlying malthusian geopolitics. The North’s deliberate acceptance of genocide proceeds from the malthusian-geopolitical doctrine which claims that “overpopulation” is the trigger for future strategic conflicts (for example, Hans Otto Miksche’s 1991 book, *Das Ende der Gegenwart [The End of the Present]*). These modern geopoliticians argue that the North gains strength and unity only when it blocks itself off from the misery in the South. But therein lie the seeds of the North’s own destruction. Because of its refusal to provide real economic assistance to the planet’s poorest, the North is digging its own grave. The North’s economic and financial condition has reached a point today, where a gigantic financial collapse could be triggered anytime by the billion-dollar derivatives deals which are transacted each day. But they do not devote a single word to the deep economic crisis and mass employment which is driving the North into “disintegration” and “chaos” as a result of its systematic deindustrialization.

The only real answer to the current economic and strategic crisis is economic development—i.e., development of infrastructure, energy, transport, and communications, on the basis of targeted credit creation. If this development goes hand-in-hand with a cultural renaissance that would place man’s dignity, and the right of every person to development, at the center of all future strategic planning, then it will constitute our only hope for a better future.

In a recent interview in the Italian daily *La Stampa*, Pope John Paul II warned political leaders in East and West that they lack the “vision” and the will to attack the root of evil today, namely, “unbridled, barbaric capitalism.” This, he said, has been the cause of the economic misery in many eastern European countries, and has driven many people into unemployment and moral degradation. The pope’s reference, reminiscent of the social doctrine of Pope Leo XIII, to the “kernels of truth” even in communist doctrine, are a sharp warning to all the free traders, shock therapists, and Limes ideologues.