

Pirates vs. Corsairs!

J. Vinagre

[ed. – Privateers (French ones of the Breton port of St. Malo being the first known as corsairs), while using similar methods to pirates, were licensed by a State, such as the notorious Sir Francis Drake of the British Empire or the Barbary Corsairs of the Ottoman Empire; in comparison to the general historical view (rightly or wrongly) of pirates of that era as being lawless, cross-racial and anti-hierarchical.]

“I will defend France, its vital interests, its image, its message. And I make this commitment before you: I will defend Europe, the community of destinies that gave itself upon the people of this continent. Its our civilization that is at stake. Our way of being free.”

– Emmanuel Macron, 2017 inauguration speech as French President

France is one of the European countries that is most interested in the trade of natural gas imported to Europe, because they will be one of the biggest distributors, and also because France is one of the strongest countries in the European Union and NATO. France’s new presidential speech lets us foresee an iron freedom. “Our way of being free” never was, and still isn’t, in relation to other people outside the “community of destinies” free from moral, ethical and technological superiority. We constructed our civilization in ways that depend on energy sources, which are transforming this world environmentally and socially. **The main global energy source pushed to the 21st Century is non-conventional natural gas, and Europe is betting high in it’s energetic independence.** On a environmental level the debate is everywhere. What about the social level? The ocean bed will be the future depository of natural resources to be explored on a large scale by multinationals, from energy sources to minerals like lithium or copper, and organisms for biotech *[ed. – see **Return Fire vol.1 pg31**]*. Europe is prepared. What about the “others”?

In 2016 NATO stated that the Operation “Ocean Shield” was completed with success. Initiated in 2008, the objective of the operation was to protect shipping from pirates in the Western Indian Ocean, off the Somalian coast.¹ But...

¹ ed. – “Ever since Somali dictator Siad Barre was toppled in 1991, the country has been in a civil war. The ‘Transitional Federal Government’ that is in place controls merely a few blocks in the capital Mogadishu. The absence of a real government has been exploited by the rest of the world. Fishing trawlers from Europe, North America and Asia have been helping themselves to the huge fishing grounds off the 3,300 kilometre coast of Somalia. In its peak, this IUU trade (Illegal, Unreported, Unregulated) in Somalia generated some US\$300 million annually for the first world [sic], according to calculations by the UN. This is a world-wide problem, and the UN estimates that about one in five fish consumed worldwide is fished illegally. The pirates come in large fishing trawlers from rich countries (who have

This May 11th super methane vessel La Mancha Knutsen, transporting LNG [*Liquid Natural Gas*] for Fenosa Natural Gas, of Spain, was attacked by pirates in the Guinean Gulf, south from Nigeria.

According to the maritime website Maritime Herald, the methane vessel was harried by another boat with at least seven armed men on board. After the alarm sounded, the vessel's captain had to take evasive maneuvers to stop pirates boarding. The pirates shot against the vessel's tower, but in the end gave up and went back to the land without hurting anybody or causing material damage. Unlike how companies are used to working nowadays, this vessel didn't carry any security guards.

La Mancha Knutsen left Aliaga's harbour, in Turkey. The ship belongs to the consortium Trygve Seglkem and to NYK, and has been constructed by Hyundai Heavy Industries in South Korea.

Turkey, that has been brought to the world's eyes for the worst reasons [*ed. – see Return Fire vol.3 pg97*], may become a member of the European Union. According to a European Parliament report of 2014: “*while US has an abundant supply of cheap gas from the “Shale Revolution” [ed. – see Return Fire vol.4 pg14], the EU remains dependent on gas imports. Ukraine's crisis raised concerns around the security of Europe's gas supply.*² *Europe is well connected to its main suppliers through a*

long ago depleted their own fishing grounds), registered under flags of convenience of countries who never signed any agreements on fishery quota. The depletion of what was once described as ‘a rainforest of fish’ soon removed the livelihood of the coastal population of Somalia[...] The industrialised countries also discovered another use of the Somali waters: as a giant waste dump. Ever since the London Convention of 1993 banned the dumping of waste on sea, industrialised countries have been looking for a way out. Greenpeace reports of ships cruising the oceans for years, trying to find a ‘suitable’ place to dispose of their cargo. While the disposal of a tonne of toxic chemical waste in Europe costs more than €200, dumping the shit in Somali waters costs as little as €2, so the economic incentive is obvious. For radioactive waste the ratio is even steeper. Organised with the help of the Italian Mafia, pretty much every European country got rid of their unwanted waste this way for years. Other countries, like Australia joined in. The extent of this scheme was literally uncovered during the tsunami of 2004, when hundreds of rusted barrels were washed up along the coast of Somalia, poisoning many people. [...] With little fish to catch, some of the out-of-work fishermen decided to take matters into their own hands and started their own ‘coast guard’ operations. They stopped foreign fishing vessels and demanded money from their owners to compensate for the fish they had taken. As the new Somali coast guard became successful, others copied the business model. Regular trade vessels were hijacked and ransom was demanded. According to reports by Reuters from December 2009, a stock exchange system has been set up in Haradheere. A former pirate at the time said: ‘[Four months ago] we decided to set up this stock exchange. We started with 15 “maritime companies” and now we are hosting 72. Ten of them have so far been successful at hijacking. The shares are open to all and everybody can take part, whether personally at sea or on land by providing cash, weapons or useful materials... we’ve made piracy a community activity.’ [...] No warships ever stopped the poachers or the ships with poisonous waste. Instead, Somalia was declared a ‘failed state’ and simply written off. Only once the Somali population started defending themselves, did the rest of the world react. As soon as ‘free trade’ was threatened, the rich countries decided to gang up and deploy warships [*ed. – remaining fishers have been shot and killed by Italian and Russian naval guards under suspicion of being pirates, and in 2012 European Union troops were authorised to fire on ‘pirate positions’ on land; see Return Fire vol.3 pg35*]. The Horn of Africa is one of the world's busiest shipping routes – more than 20,000 ships pass there annually. The industrialised world simply cannot allow the population of a country without a real government to have any form of control over the shipping routes. [...] There is more to be poached from Somalia than just fish. Large oil and gas reserves, as well as iron ore and aluminium are suspected, and exploitation of a uranium mine is under way. [These are the reasons] why every country wants to be involved in the ‘battle against piracy’” (‘Pirates’ vs Pirates: Somalia Through the Eyes of a German Court).

² *ed. – Europe's main gas supplies from Russia run through Ukraine. An uprising in 2014 against the then-President comprised nationalist/fascist factions, those wanting to join the European Union, anarchists, supporters of the Russian colonial powers of the country, elite factions and many others (during weeks of bloody combat, in Kiev alone at least 88 people were killed within the span of 48 hours, many shot by snipers on the roofs of government*

*network of pipelines, but there are plans for new pipelines to transport gas from the Caspian Region [ed. – see **Return Fire vol.2 pg83**], and later perhaps from Iraq and Iran crossing Turkey and Italy.”*

These plans are an alternative for the gas supply from Russia to Europe, that saw its construction of a new pipeline that would connect the Balkans and Austria denied for disrespecting European Union’s trade rules.

“If Turkey’s membership fails, this will due to the Turkish, not European, lack of will to apply to European standards.” (Jean-Claude Juncker, President of European Commission, to German newspaper Bild).

The methane vessel will be the first of four LNG Knutsen boats that will deliver natural gas, where the vast majority is fracked gas to Spain,³ coming from the LNG Sanine Pass of Cheniere Energy, Louisiana, USA. The delivery is one of hundreds expected to happen starting in August of this year as part of a contract of 20 years. According to the website thefreeonline.wordpress.com, some shipments arrived before the period stipulated by La Mancha Knutsen. The contract to import natural gas from the company Fenosa Natural Gas from the USA is similar to Energias de Portugal’s contract.

Civilization and Europe’s heart have been attacked by pirates, terrorists and refugees. The pirates and terrorists are the ones that couldn’t seek refuge; they are all hostage of a global system that feeds civil wars at their homelands, using them as human resources there or in another place in the world. The pirates, former fishermen, saw the sea become the dump of the Western garbage, toxic garbage that killed all fish that used to feed them.⁴ Forced by hunger or many other times by armed paramilitary groups with Western technology, they

buildings), ending with Russia annexing the Crimean Peninsular and battling Ukrainian troops, and neo-liberals in power in Kiev. From ‘The Ukrainian Revolution & the Future of Social Movements’: “The events in Ukraine must be understood as part of the same global trajectory of revolt as the Arab Spring, the plaza occupations in Spain, Occupy, and the Gezi uprising in Turkey. This is not good news. In each of the previous examples, initial police repression caused a single-issue protest to metastasize into a generalized uprising, transforming a square in the heart of the capital into a fiercely defended urban autonomous zone. This seemed to offer a new political model, in which people cohere around tactics rather than parties or ideologies. (It is telling indeed that Occupy was named for a tactic rather than a goal.) All these revolts could be broadly interpreted as reactions to the consequences of capitalism, though anti-austerity proved too narrow a frame: Turkey and Brazil saw protests over the effects of ascendant economies, not recessions. [...] A few years ago, it was possible to hope that the coming insurrections would be a naturally fertile ground for anarchist resistance. Now it is clear that, although anarchists can find new affinities within them, nationalists can capitalize upon them just as easily. This may be an inherent problem with movements that cohere around tactics, and it poses serious strategic questions to anarchists. [...] What had been a purely symbolic conflict over space with Occupy became full-on paramilitary urban warfare in Ukraine. By taking the front lines in confronting the authorities, nationalists and fascists have won themselves legitimacy as “defenders of the people” that will serve them for many years to come. Surely fascists around the world have been watching, and will be emboldened to try the same thing elsewhere when the opportunity arises. Fascists, too, are plugged into a global imaginary; we ignore this at our peril. [...] Identifying ourselves, via word or deed, merely as antagonists is not clear enough when we are not the only antagonists of the ruling powers. Our opposition to all hierarchy and domination must be communicated in everything we say and do; otherwise, we risk bolstering a reactionary opposition.”

³ It’s not known yet where the natural gas delivery will take place. Barcelona’s refinery is the more likely to be chosen due to its large storage capacity. But this is only one of the seven refineries adapted to treat and distribute gas in Spain.

⁴ ed. – “The fishing industry is the clearest example [of actual luddite wars in the ‘third world’]. Those using older boats and nets and maintaining the ecology of their areas over centuries have sometimes been forced to literally ambush and burn the mechanized trawlers brought in by modern industries and states to ‘improve productivity’. This particular war has taken place all over Asia’s shorelines, till governments have been forced to demarcate areas for the operations of the two different sciences” (Western Science and Violence).

started to work in exchange for a reward of the ship's goods. On the ships, pirates and the ship's crew fight against each other but they have the same goal: survive and go back to their homes. Deciding what will be the destiny of both (depending on the ship's cargo interest) are the Masters, emperors and their heirs (i.e. Capital); the pirates' and crew's destiny was mixed, but the destiny of the corsairs working for the empires was exactly like they teach in school: Fraternity; Equality; Liberty! [*ed. – 'enlightened' watchwords of the French Revolution that brought the bourgeoisie to power; see 'The Matter of Knowing Who We Are'*] (i.e. Globalization).

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