

The Poor of the Europe (-an Union), in Contemporary Times

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Abstract

Even though Europe presently represents one of the richest parts of the Globe, traces of poverty are to be seen even within this continent, including European Union member states. Disprivileged people are stuck in their deprived positions due to lack of education, ethnicity, gender, age, health. The elimination of poverty, at least in such a location as Europe, is theoretically quite possible. However; it appears that an implicit rule stipulates the very existence of poor people in affluent societies, as a number of sociologists have determined for sure.

Key words: Poor; Poverty; Deprivation; Europe, European Union

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1. HIGHLIGHTS OF THE EUROPEAN SOCIO-ECONOMICAL HISTORICAL FACTS

Roman Empire's collapse had formed a disorderly situation leading to the formation of the feudal ways in Europe. Eventually; in mid-fourteenth century, waves of a horrible bubonic plague epidemic (Black Death) quickly diminished the European population, making manpower (unpaid agriculture work by serfs) scarce and thereby increasing their say in administration, in general in England and West Europe.

Not so in eastern Europe. There landlords tightened their grip on the peasants even more. After 1500, the agrarian products of the east (notably Poland, what is now Germany, Hungary) were continuously demanded by the west (notably Netherlands, England, France, and Spain). Farther East, the absolute rule of the Russian Tzar was even harsher.

After the discovery of South and North Americas, colonization¹ activities were observed. All richness of the new lands, including gold and silver, began to flow into Europe, mainly to the profit of marine civilizations (mercantalist era). Finally; thanks to capital collections and the terrific inventions (steam engine, steam locomotive, spinning frame, steamship) in the bosom of England (a country valuing tangible and intellectual property) the Industrial Revolution unfolded (abridged from Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012, pp.96-106).

The industrial revolution provoked a total disruption in the professional structure. Agrarian tasks used to constitute 75%-80% of the population before 1800; whereas they now represent 8%-20% in developed nations (Fourastié, 1967, p.25).

According to laissez-faire theory dominant at the time of the Industrial Revolution, the State ought only to interfere in social life to protect property, to defend society against external attack, and to regulate disputes between citizens. This myth of the so-called "night watchman state", however, scarcely applied to the British governments which drove hundreds of thousands off the land through parliamentary Enclosure Acts, forced them into the slums of the new industrial cities, and repressed both rural and urban resistance by vicious legislation and governmental terror, and employed similar violence in creating colonies. But governments did not rely solely upon force. Machiavelli, centuries earlier, had counselled the wise prince to use force

¹ "The contribution of colonial exploitation to capital accumulation is given by Mandel (1970) in the following words: 'This stolen capital b/w 1500 and 1750 was decisive for and propitious for the industrial revolution. Between 1760 and 1780 the profits from India and West Indies alone more than doubled the money available for the rising British industry'" (Frank, 1979, p.73).

where necessary. But persuasion, including “fraud”, was perfectly adequate much of the time. (Worsley, 2002, p.479)

As Baumgärtner & Poppinga also affirm (1975, p.216); the entry of Capitalism into the landscape occurred savagely. The peasants got expelled from the land. With the introduction of monetary economy and fines, they were obliged to hire themselves for employment or produce values. The initial capital accumulation also was closely related to the proletarianization of the farmhands and colonialism.

One can debate whether or not the globalization really represents a progress. Yes, in average, people get richer but meanwhile for about two billion poverty-stricken human beings this is no consolation. For the average man the depth of the lake may not exceed one meter; however in deeper spots some are yet easily drowned. Moreover; between 1870 and 1914 also a world-wide economical system had been in existence. Goods and capitals and men could move easily among continents. Ever since 1974 telegraph communication between Britain and America across undersea cables had been functioning satisfactorily. The current system was better than it is today. The gold standard ensured that nobody needed to worry about the value of his money at home or abroad. From 1914 onwards, up to 1970s the principle of national economic policies prevailed. Meanwhile; between 1914 and 1945 global Capitalism actually suffered a crisis (making a peak on October 25, 1929 on Black Friday) as prophesized by Marx and later by Lenin. Only in 1970s the states began to backtrack from economic issues, eventually leading to the recovery of the situation in 1900 (abridged from Otto, 2007, pp.33-35).

2. BITTER FEELINGS ON THE PART OF THE DISADVANTAGED

When it comes to the definition of poverty; there is no need to go into numbers and charts and complicated data. The poor are recognized merely at a single glance. They are the ones who, in any given society, live in comparatively worse conditions as far as all material advantages and possessions are concerned.

They usually are people with little or no education or with certain disabilities. They are mostly women or children rather than men. They are mostly elderly rather than young. Again, they usually belong to some ethnical or racial minorities.

Grasping the essence of the issue basically revolves around mutual comparison²; that is, comparing a continent

² “At one extreme, there are the Benelux and Nordic countries with little poverty and small inequalities. At the other extreme, there is a mixed group consisting of Southern and of Anglo-Saxon countries. Part of these differences is attributable to differences in social spending. Changes in poverty and inequality over time, have been rather small” (Pestieau, 2006, p.20).

with another, or a country with another or a neighborhood with another, or finally one individual with another eventually provides us with a general “feel” of the game in judging related problems as scholars or even as layman-observers.

In this respect; obviously; a study of poverty invariably goes hand-in-hand with the scrutiny of distribution of income; namely that horrible examples of extreme inequalities. Breakthroughs in production is a reality in modern times; yet; the critical question would be “who is it that really benefits from it”?

In 1909 German chemists Fritz Haber and Carl Bosch invented a process to synthesize ammonia [NH₃] from atmospheric Nitrogen and the hydrogen fossil fuels; today their process produces millions of tons of ammonia-based fertilizer each year, which adds as much nitrogen to soil as all natural sources combined. Meanwhile, farms around the developed world were converting to tractors, replacing horsepower with oil power. When in 1960s, we exported this industrialized agriculture system to the Third World, we called it the green revolution. (Mckibben, 2007, pp. 64-65)

[Looking at]

the present-day wealth inequalities, world-poverty has not only shown little sign of improvement but, in actuality, might indeed be worsening. What the anti-globalization stance contends is that, globalization, as it stands now, is an illusion. (Hsu, 2010, p.213)

“Max Weber developed a more complex view of social stratification than Karl Marx’s view of economically based classes. Weber developed three separate but interrelated dimensions of stratification: Class, status and power” (Stolley, 2005, p.140).

A poem by Turkish poet *Orhan Veli Kanık*: (1914-1950)
The street cat says to the butcher’s cat:

—“We can not get along. Your food comes in a tinned vessel and mine is not even guaranteed. Yours is a wet dream while mine is about food”.

The other retorts back:

—“So, you are talking about hunger. You must be a communist, then. You must be the culprit of all those crimes of arson; what a pig you really are!”

The rich keep getting richer merely because of their richness and poor get poorer merely because of their poverty. Today inequality is continuing to deepen within its own logic and momentum without any aid, impulse, support or stimulus from the outside (Bauman, 2014, p.16).

Kloby (2005, 213) states that Luxemburg Income Research has revealed that inequality is most prominent in Britain followed by other European countries and only in Italy and Portugal a tendency towards more equality is discernible.

Sweezy (1970, p.72) asserts that in the past American social scientist had been eager to deny social classes, claiming their existence only in the minds of the observers. But this idea collapsed through empirical

research. The American society is a society of social classes. The nucleus of the class belonging is represented by the family into which one land simply by birth. Whether or not two distinct families belong to the same class is clarified through intermarriage of their members (real or planned).

[There are winners, yes]

Then there are the losers, a motley collection of unfortunates whose very diversity prevents them from organizing. The greater part of them lives on the land. Dryland farmers can be in this boat, because their land is so unproductive. The landless labourers, are evn more exposed. Outside agriculture; the losers are the workers in moribond traditional industries, the self-employed or insecurely employed in the urban informal sector, and the unemployed. (Harrison, 1990, p.414)

3. VARIOUS SCENES OF MISERY PERTAINING TO EUROPE

Maybe the most conspicuous and shamful aspect of poverty can be acknowledged in the horrible fact that we encounter thousands of homeless people within the developed western³ countries! A Turkish statesman returning from abroad referred to this issue, stressing the fact that Turkey, in this respect, was at an enviable position, the number of homeless being much lesser than in Europe. The family institution, despite relative declines in cohtemporary times, is still strong enough and the solidarity of kinship fortunately saves the face of Turkish society.

In a novel of Hemingway where the plot evolves in Spain in 1930s, Pilar is a resolute woman working for the cause of the progressive front against faschist forces. Finito had been her former boyfriend. He was a matador. Pilar bitterly remembers her dead-love:

How do you expect him not to catch TB? In a country where the bourgeoisie harms their stomachs from excessive food and resort to bake soda for comfortable digestion while the poor go about hungry from their crades to their graves; how do you expect him not to catch TB? If you from childhood days onwards, had to travel beneath third class seats in trains among pools of spit to reach different arenas... (French version, p.204).

As late as mid-1940s, in other words the date of the invention of penicilin and other antibiotic agents, the fear

of tuberculosis⁴ was a relentless enemy of the generations. This was especially true for poor people, who was not well-nourished and lived in non-hygienic houses. Sillitoe (1985, pp.23-24), the famous writer who chooses his heroes from among the English⁵ working class, talks about the health concerns of a young factory worker:

The ladscape came a bit hilly. I was puffed [on my bicycle], which reminded me that a week ago I had been with Albert [my best friend] to have an X-ray at the General Hospital, to see whether or not we had got TB. The gaffer at the factory said that all who worked for him should go, and though Albert and I didn't want to bother, we went in case the others thought we were afraid. It was like waiting to find out whether you'd been sentenced to death or not.

One of German novelist Konsalik's wonderful novels also deploys in Spain. The setting was a village in Spain in 1950s. Anita's husband is dead. Juan is her tender son, different from his crude and strong brother. He is a secret painter and sculptor, who furtively work in a cave with inadequate materials.

The provincial practitioner-doctor cures him once and discovers his talent. The doctor notifies the art circles in Toledo. The peasant boy is taken to an art academy. Before going on rout they wash him in a big basin and furnish him with new clothes.

In one of his autobiographic novels, French author Genet narrates his wonderings in Europe in his youth in 1930s in miserable conditions. His impressions of Spain are given below:

In 1932, Spain was then full of beggars [like me]. We used to go from village to village, from city to city. Sometimis six of us slept in a single bed without sheets and at dawn we would go begging in the markets. Some of us would carry a basket since some shopkeepers would only donate some vegetables instead of coins. At noon we would return to our shelter and cook our soup with those collections (Genet, 1949, p.18).

⁴ *Abdulmejid The First*, the 31st *Sultan of the Ottoman Empire*, died of tuberculosis in 1861 at the young age of 38; just like his father, *Mahmud The Second*.

In more recent times, Turkey's former prime-minister Menderes (1899-1961) had lost both of his parents in childhood because of TB. When he came to power in 1950 he established the Society of Struggle with TB. Physical examination and vaccination campaigns were launched all over the country. The result was an achievement disproportionately successful with respect to other intended social campaigns, at the time.

This sub-theme also reminds one an American ballad popularized by *Woody Guthrie* (1912-1967): *I've got the TB blues*.

⁵ Looking at it from the third world; one has a tendency to consider all Americans or all British rich. This is a sheer misconception. As a matter of fact; in a recent conference on marine history, in İstanbul, a former naval-atachée-and-admiral, on one occasion said:

— Today, the London youth consume fish or other sea food, even at breakfast!

Pointing to his own cheek with his forefinger, he admiringly went on:

— Accordingly; their cheeks are, rose-colored and bursting with health-energy!

³ What upset me most in America during my travel some years ago was the sight of many homeless people. In Ohio, cincinatti, a homeless man approached towards me and I got startled. He then made a smoking sign. I had run out of cigarettes. I had long regreted not being able to offer him some cigarettes.

Industrialization in northern Italy (which had begun in 1880) was resumed after World War I until getting interrupted by the Great Depression. A new upsurge began 1952, after World War II⁶. But the Mezzogiorno [Southern mainland Italy, including the islands of Sicily and Sardinia] has not shared in this expansion (Higgins, 1968, p.708).

Ettori (1978, p.248, 259) gives an interesting example of a funeral song (*vocero*) in the nearby Corsica—also a very poor and traditional⁷ Mediterranean island in the mids of Europe—at the end of the eighteenth century during the church service. The cleric warns a woman who keeps crying funeral songs during the church office service of the dead.

The funeral singer (*vocératrice*), however, does not hold herself back from retorting to the priest as follows:

“Ancu vo, o sgiò curà / Diti: chiati chiati! / Ma no perdimi roba è ghjennti / E’ à vo vi crescini l’intrati”.

The French translation is provided near the Italian Corsican dialect as follows: “*Vous aussi, Monsieur le curé / Vous dites: taisez-vous, taisez-vous! / Mais nous, nous pardons corps et biens / Et pour vous les entrées augmentent*”.

All that means is the following: “You too [Reverend] priest / you say: *Shut up, shut up!* / But we, we lose life and fortunes / While your income keeps growing”.

I remember an Italian comedy movie from my teenager days. The poor southern Italian man goes to America, works hard, returns and now becomes somebody in his hometown. Some relatives envy his lot. One complains aloud that he did not have the chance to go to America and become successful like him.

In one episode our hero, the guest worker, is working a double shift as a shoe-shine man. A young woman in a short skirt sits on the stool and pushes her boot to be shined. The Italian man’s eyes roll over a few times in the direction of the mini-skirt. Then he hears a reprimanding inner voice and pulls himself together: In America everything comes in cans; so; you might as well can your desires!

In an Italian novel by Marciano (2003) talking about the history of an eccentric family in Puglia-region, among the hidden transcripts we get to learn about traditional

practices⁸ like folk-healing applied by tobacco-farmer-peasants to patients stung by poisonous spiders. Little Alba’s peer little Rosa is one such patient. Traditional musicians play their melodies while the girl climbs a rope dangling from the ceiling. Afterwards she jumps on the white sheet spread below and begins a frenetical dance. Her eyes have grown bigger and her mouth has begun foaming. Alba can not stand watching this scene. She faints and is carried home by the bailiff and his men.

In early 1960s fast-growing German industry was in need of urgent manpower and they at the time recruited some guest workers from southern Italy, as well as Yugoslavia, Greece and above all Turkey, of course.

One novel of the German author *Konsalik* (1994) was about a half-open girls’ reformatory in 1960s. The girls go to work in fields and enjoy outdoor activities during the day, in contact with the local peasant community. (The surrounding swamp makes escape impossible, anyhow). Meanwhile we can catch glimpses on the hard life conditions of the German peasants as depicted by this particular author.

French author Thierry (1998, pp.92-93) gives an account of a especially sad poverty case, namely the misery of a woman in 1990s, whose husband, a descendant of a noble but unlucky—or maybe even curse-stricken—family, is a now-successful business-manager:

Étienne went on with his success. The marquis was a happy man... On the evening of December 25, he was on the way to a sweetshop when a female tramp in rags and stinking of cheap wine approached him. Étienne pushed her back and she agitated the passers:

— He is my husband!

Étienne examined her and recognized Henriette, his wife the marquise. The others looked at the elegant man and the woman fallen into the muddy pool and burst into laughter. She cried. When the marquis returned from the shop, she was still around, now gleaned cigarette-butts from the street. He dropped a cigar to the ground and walked on. [Readers of the entire work may find that she deserves her new poverty; but this would only constitute another topic].

4. THE TOPIC’S “OVERLAPPING” WITH ETHNICAL ISSUES

The general economic situation of transnational

⁶ The second World War had indeed witnessed horrible problems embedded in the collective memory of the humanity. Starvation was one of them. While an undergraduate student I once had a summer job as an interpreter by a foreign oil drilling company in the Thrace region of Turkey. The head-engineer, a Dutchman by nationality, once casually said to one of his colleagues, while playing billiards:

—“In the war times [WWII] we used to eat cats and dogs!”

⁷ The August 1924 issue of the *Encyclopedia Sciences et Voyages* writes (p.11) that there stay some retrograde places where people are not drifted into the stunning speed of the mechanized age and where even the most painful labors are still done manually and depicts Corsica as one such place on the earth.

⁸ I understand that strong traditions exist in Scotland, too. When I was a summer-trainer in a Swiss plant as a junior chemical engineering student, my Scottish boss, Dr. Roger Page once mentioned about sewing woolen patches on the torsos of rural children in autumn and leaving them untouched until the spring, without washing the trunk.

He said some families consider it healthier. He named the practice as being “bleached” or “bleached” as I understood from the pronunciation and as far as I can come close to spelling it; but I could never check it on any written literature, which is expected.

communities in Europe (like Pakistanis in Britain, Algerians in France, Turkish workers in Germany) is apparently at a lower level than the mainstream society of the host country.

Now, social scientist August Gächter came up with the formula: Exclusion makes poor; poverty makes one alien; alienation causes fear". This is the summary of maintaining the gap between the newcomers. Rising efforts of migrants are thus frowned upon and regarded false (Schenk, 2011, p.1).

The tragedies encountered by Turks in the shrinking economic arena of West Germany in 1980s are vividly depicted by *Günther Wallraf* in his superb work based on participant observation. An excerpt from the English translation under the title *The Lowest of the Low* is provided below:

I've been putting off playing this part for almost ten years. Probably because I knew what it would be like. I was quite simply afraid. "From what friends told me, and from the many publications I had read, I could visualize the life of immigrants in West Germany. I knew that almost half of the young immigrants suffer from mental illness; they can no longer digest the countless impositions. They have little chance on the labor market. Having grown up here, there is no real possibility of a return home for them. They are homeless. The limitations on the right to political asylum, the racism, the increasing ghettoization —I knew about it but I had never experienced it." In March 1983, I placed the following advert in several newspapers: "Foreigner, strong, seeks work of any kind, including heavy and dirty jobs, even for little money. Offers to 358 458".

A similar argument based on the comparison of the new-comer by the host country member with himself revolves in the following lines for the case of England:

Evidence suggests that as the lot of the colored man in Britain progressively becomes better, so racial conflict is likely to increase. The first generation of coloured immigrants from the commonwealth are low on all status rankings [income, occupation, education, race]. But as further generations find themselves in a situation of status disequilibrium, radical political and social attitudes are likely to escalate. (Hill, 1970, p.203)

"Thus the British working-class man has been placed in a position of primary conflict with alien groups" (Hill 1970, p.202) whereas

in Brazil, for instance, the working-class man is in a state of perfect equilibrium, being low on all possible statuses, so that even the relatively poor white worker does not take him as a challenge. Indeed; it is in these terms that J. Galtung explains the higher degree of racial harmony in Brazil. (Ibid., p.200)

Generally speaking, Gypsies are subject to the heaviest discrimination in the continent of Europe. While other minorities are excluded by the state apparatus, Gypsies suffer a sheer social exclusion. Their low education and income level rendering them prone to criminality, aggregates their rejection by the mainstream population. Even in member states of the European Union they emerge

as groups with heaviest problems. Since they do not cause international conflicts like other minorities they more easily fall into oblivion and are the last people to concern the democratic conscience of Europe. Their density is highest in Romania. In Czech and Slovak republics, Hungary and Slovenia they also constitute large numbers living in difficult conditions (abridged from Bilener, 2003, pp.188-190).

5. INCOMPATIBILITY OF CULTURE AND INCOME IS PROBLEMATIC, INDEED!

Normally, cultural capital (roughly tastes emerging initially from the bosom of the family) and social capital (one's network and relations with other people) depict similar pictures while the income is accordingly proportional and the life style is going smoothly. If this good harmony is disrupted, tragic happenings do follow. In this respect; the French revolution was a macro-scaled turning point leading to successive historical repercussions and the ruin of nobility in much of Europe.

The revolution came out as an absolute victory of the bourgeoisie and the democracy. Many developments⁹ followed one after the other. *The absolute French monarchy gave way to a limited authority as permitted by a written constitution. The top man now was conceived as the office-holder for serving the people. All citizens, including the nobility and the clergy, became equal before the law. Toleration of other religions was granted. A nationalistic enthusiasm fusing all classes into a common body was inspired. In short; the leading dimensions of liberalism had been brought to the front* (abridged from Schevill, 1946, p.447).

Zealous leftist scholars, would therefore criticise the revolution for reaching a certain point and being stopped deliberately by the newly-rich classes in collaboration with the naive peasants and poverty-stricken city-dwellers (*plebians /sans-culottes*). The October Revolution in Tsarist Russia, they would say, went to full completion, as a contrast. However, later it got revised countless times and evolved into a horrible totalitarian bureaucracy. Max Weber, who had modelled bureaucracy, had also feared its eventual abuse, which would come true in Soviet Russia. George Orwell satires the Soviet Russian rule in his unforgettable symbolic book, *Animal Farm* (Çaya, 2015, p.61).

[Indeed] Pluralist democracy is only possible where relative social and economic equality produces political stability, and

⁹ Even though this revolution is glorified by many historians, many wrong steps were also taken. Lavosier, the forefather of modern Chemistry got guillotined. The judge is known to have said "The revolution does not need scientists". Men of clergy and nobility were persecuted. Barbara Cartland, in one her novels, depicts a young noble French girl, who was concealed and protected by her maid just after the horrible days following the revolution (Çaya, 2015, p.61).

where economic and industrial development has produced a high level of material prosperity. Thus, totalitarian systems can [also] be seen as a consequence of underdevelopment. (Ball, 1974, p.52)

In any case, the new champion was the new bourgeoisie class. The effects soon propagated like waves onto the whole continent (the Ottoman Empire being no exception). Even in Tsarist-Russia the position of the nobles were deteriorating vi-à-vis the enriching Russian bourgeoisie class. Such hidden transcripts can be detected from literature works, like those of playwright Chekhov. In *The Cherry Orchard*, the newly-rich merchant Lopahin steadily betters his situation at the expense of the declining aristocracy. Below are interesting extracts. Merchant *Lopahin* is speaking:

— “Your brother calls me a vulgar profit-seeker; but what do I care!”
(At a later episode)
— “Your cherry orchard is to be sold to pay your debts. But don’t you worry, my lady! The cherry orchard must be leased [to me] to build bungalows and as soon as possible! [Otherwise] the auction is right on top of us!”
(At a later episode)
— “Musicians, play up! All must be as I wish it. Here comes the new master, the owner of the cherry orchard! I can indeed pay for everything!”

Irish author Donn Byrne (1889-1928) in his short story in *The Argosy*, gives us a glimpse of a poor woman, who must have lived better times, in a pawnbroker’s shop:

Larson held the ring up to the light. The blue stone shone with a steady light. His brows knitted hard together. Behind him he could hear the woman’s fingers beat nervously on the counter.
— “How much do you want on it?”
— “Could I get 25?”
Her hand closed on the counter in a grip of desperation. The furrows about her mouth deepened.
— “All right”
He went to the desk.
— “Here is your ticket”
The door shut to behind the woman with a swish and a click. Larson looked out of the window with a twist of contempt on his mouth. He then muttered:
— “Damned fool!”
— “Who?” demanded the assistant.
Larson turned on him like a flash:
— “You get on and mind your own business, do you hear?”
(narrated in a grammar-book, no date, pp.103-107).

Still in another British novel, we see the impoverishment of former nobility. One of those landlords saves himself thanks to a lucky marriage from America. the stubborn persistence of aristocratic ways and means, like not sending girls to schools but fetching private teachers to the dwelling, is also mentioned in this literary work: *Like many land-owner British aristocratic men Lord Oxenford also lost his fortune after the First World War. It was his wedding to a rich inheritor which made it possible to go on with his life style* [(German version of) Follet, 1992, p.165].

[Harry is a charming petty criminal pretending rich airs. Margaret is the lord’s daughter]
— I didn’t have a real school education, either!
— In spite of your tremendous money?
He asked incredibly. She nodded.
— We had our own private tutors!
Harry could not trust his own ears. For respectable Londoner of the working class it would be a shame not to send their offspring to school. Most children had to stay home for a day, when their shoes were being repaired since they had no spare pairs of boots. That was a bad enough suffering for the mothers. didn’t have a real school education, either! [(German version of) Follet, 1992, p.177].

Early Republican Turkey’s authority figures expelled the Ottoman dynasty and the lot of those noble men and women were also very tragic. Generous-hearted and fond of offerings, they ended up in difficult conditions in foreign lands. Some had their loyal servants and eunuchs to keep and support, as well. Most went on and sold their personal jewelry incrementally, to stay above the water. Few of the girls were fortunate enough to achieve good weddings. Most men ended their lives in misery.

An interesting character of the author *Vicki Baum* is a young and poverty-stricken nobleman, a permanent guest of a luxury hotel in Berlin. Handsome Baron Gaigern is an acrobatic thief who furtively climbs walls to steal valuable things of other guests. He also acts as a swindler if the occasion emerges.

6. POVERTY COULD BE ERADICATED; BUT THIS STEP IS NOT TAKEN!

In many cases, it is the poor people who bear the burden of economic and social problems on a national scale. Indeed, sociologist Gans (2011) emphasizes the desired existence of the poor population from the outlook of the better-off folk: There are a number of grounds for this unwritten-wish; the chief reason being that “society has physically dirty, dangerous, undignified jobs” to be done and this is exactly where poor people come into the play.

According to Gans, in some countries, even the continuation of an army in peace times is possible because the poor sections of the society are simply willing¹⁰ to serve there (Ritzer, 1983, p.233).

Indeed, according to Baudrillard [*La société de la consommation* / The Consumer Society (1998)], the consumer society does not entail any genuine progress; it does not attempt to alleviate poverty or generate greater equality between classes, sexes and ethnic groups and it does not seek to promote affluence or abundance. Instead;

¹⁰ Years ago at a seminar in Illinois I became friendly with a Navy sergeant. He explained his recruitment with the following wording: “I could not afford the tuition amount for a university education. Then I thought I should join the military instead of pumping oil to cars in a gasoline station or doing a similar lowly job”.

its purpose is to maintain a system of social privilege (Pawlett, 2007, p.19).

Croatian psychologist Klain (1992) asserts a similar idea for the case of former federal Yugoslavia: *Only two hierachical institutions would offer free education: The Church and the Armed Forces. Poor Serbians would opt for the former, while poor Croations would choose the latter. Serbs were raised with heroism epopees. Uniform and arms appealed to them. Croations were full of bitter feelings of being exploited since 1918. They thought they were underestimated and they felt lowly.*

Let us specify that this pertains to the rank and file of the armies. The officers, especially of developed countries, come from upper classes: O'Donnel (1988, p.124) notes that in England in 1983-84 academic year: 58.6% of War College cadets came from private schools, while 41.4% came from state schools.

Indeed, the obligation of a recommendation from a senator or Congressman ensures a certain social level. The first time I heard about this was from an American ex-military chemical engineer. Recently I read about it once more in the German translation of a novel by Ken Follet.

[One of the heroes is a flight engineer in 1940s]. *Eddie is a wood-chopper's son from Oregon. He had to walk miles to school from his house. The teacher Mrs. Maple liked her enthusiastic student. Years later she wrote to a Congress member so that Eddie could participate at the entrance exams to the marine Academy in Annapolis* (Follet, 1992, p.86).

[At the academy] *while the other freshmen complained about the food, Eddie would wipe out his plates completely. He witnessed that besides him, there was only one other cadet who enjoyed the food: Steve. They looked at each other and understood each other [they would be friends for life]* (Ibid., p.135).

CONCLUSION

Europe, the cradle of reform, renaissance, enlightment and industrial revolution; is a relatively well-to-do place in this planet in economic sense. Nevertheless; traces of poverty can be seen even within this continent, among claimful European Union member states. Homeless people on the streets come to the mind firstly as the most convincing hard evidence; and this fact is literally a shame for the liberal, democratic, prosperous western world.

Greece is presetnly known as the "bankrupted" child of the European Union. Other Balkan states (Bulgaria, Romania, Albania, Macedonia, Serbia, Montenegro etc.) are also far from being prosperous countries of the European continent.

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APPENDIX-A: IMPRESSIONS FROM GREECE; THANKS TO PARTICIPATION IN THE 2014-MEETING OF BAFS (BALKAN ACADEMY OF FORENSIC SCIENCES) HELD IN THAT COUNTRY



Figure 1
A Scenery From the Peripheries of the City of Alexandroupolis, Greece. Even the Church Looks Somewhat Neglected. Countryside Is Generally Poorer Than City Centers, Almost Everywhere (Photo: Courtesy of Medical Doctor Yoldemir, Who Had a Zooming-Camera)



Figure 2
A Partly Rusted Small Truck Belonging to a Tiny Construction Repair Firm in Alexandroupolis, Greece. One Can Infer That It Does Not Belong to the Rich (Photo by the Author)



Figure 3
Simple Cigarette-Lighters on the Greek Market. They Come at Fairly Cheap Prices (Scanned by the Author)

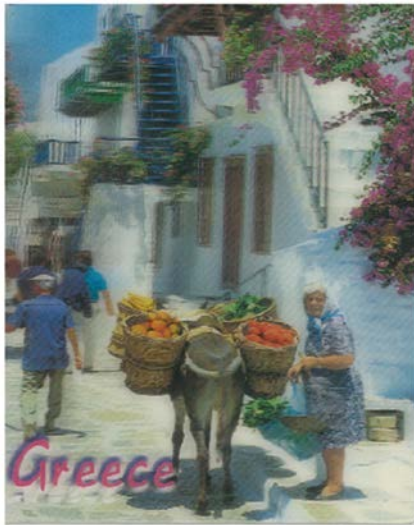


Figure 4
Greeks Do Not Deny Their Humble, Agrarian Roots and Traditions. On the Contrary; they Are Proud of Them as Shown on This Postcard (Scanned by the Author)



Figure 5
The Agrarian Roots and Traditions of Greece on Still Another Postcard (Scanned by the Author)



Figure 6
Pet-Bottled-Water Is the Cheapest Drink Available on the Greek Market (Tap Water Excepted) (Scanned by the Author)



Figure 7
The Cheapest Cigarette Brand Available on the Greek Market (Scanned by the Author)



Figure 8
Greek *Chapelets* / Rosaries — *Begleri* Is the Local Word— as an Imprint of the Former Ottoman Rule & Culture. Greek “Worry-Beads” Have Longer Strings and Fewer Beads Than Their Turkish Counterparts. It Is Especially Males of Humble Socio-Economical Classes Who Carry Them Around (Scanned by the Author)



Figure 9
The Side-View of a Humble Coffee-House in Alexandroupolis, Greece (Photo by the Author) (The Mustached Man Is Playing With His Worry-Beads)



Figure 10
A Disused House in Alexandroupolis, Greece (Photo by the Author)



Figure 11
A Mediocre House in Thessaloniki. The Heater Is the Old-Fashioned Stove With Pipes. The Picture Was Taken as the Scene of an Incident, by Forensic Experts (Photo: Courtesy of Medical Doctor Panagiotis Et Al. From BAFS, June 2014)



Figure 13
A Lower-Middle-Class Apartment in Alexandroupolis, Greece. Indeed, It Is Not in the Culture of the Rich to “Display” Washed Laundry Outdoors (Photo by the Author)



Figure 12
A Humble Coffee-House Whose Front Open Space Is Favored by Smokers in Alexandroupolis, Greece (Photo by the Author)

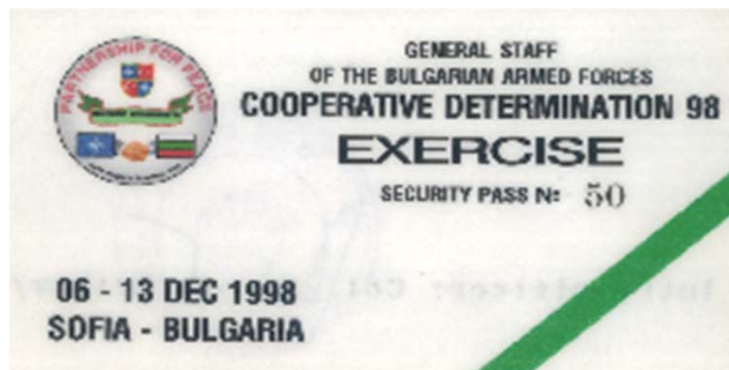


Figure 14
A Small, Down-Town-Park With Humble Visitors, in Alexandroupolis, Greece (Photo by the Author)



Figure 15
Mediocre People From the City of Alexandroupolis, Greece (Photo by the Author)

APPENDIX-B: IMPRESSIONS FROM BULGARIA



Figures 16
The Author in Sofia-Bulgaria at a One-Week-Long International Maneuver-Activity; During His Military Service. Food, Equipment and Furniture Was Only MEDIOCRE, Despite the Warm Hospitality Generously-Offered by the Bulgarian Armed Forces (Photographs: Courtesy of Sergeant-Ilhan & the Security-Card Is Scanned by the Author)

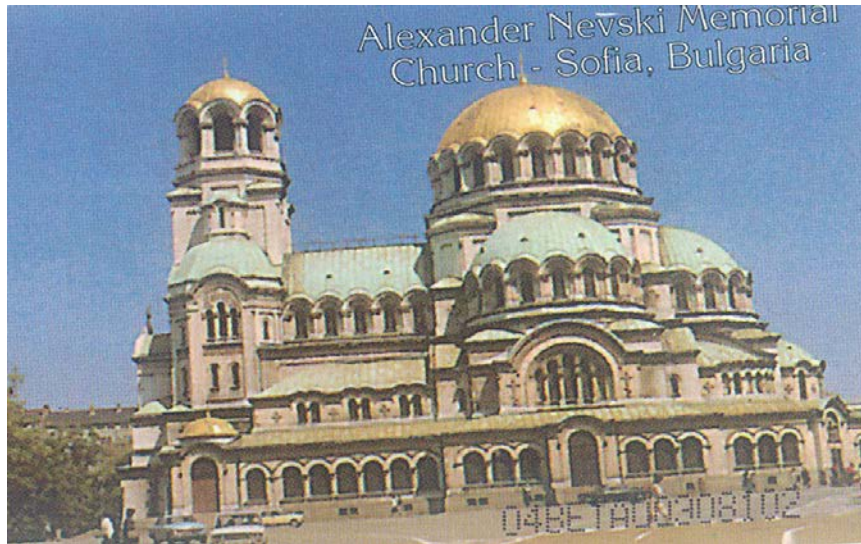


Figure 17
At the Time, We Collectively Visited Touristic Sights Including *Alexander Nevski Memorial Church* (Postcard Scanned by the Author). Within the Temple a Gorgeously Beautiful Blond Girl and a Boy —They Could Have Been Siblings— Were Asking for Alimony From The Visiting Tourists. I Truly Regretted This Scene!

APPENDIX-C: AN “EXTENSION” OF FRANCE IN A DISTRICT OF ISTANBUL, IN TURKEY



Figure 18
A Hospice (*Armenhaus*) Kept for Poor French People Living in Istanbul. The Location Is Şişli-Bomonti (Photo: Courtesy of G. Şencan)

APPENDIX-D



Figure 19
Gypsies / Romany People: The Poorest and the Most Devoid Persons of Europe; Who Are Usually Jovial, Despite Their Destitution (Picture From the Internet)