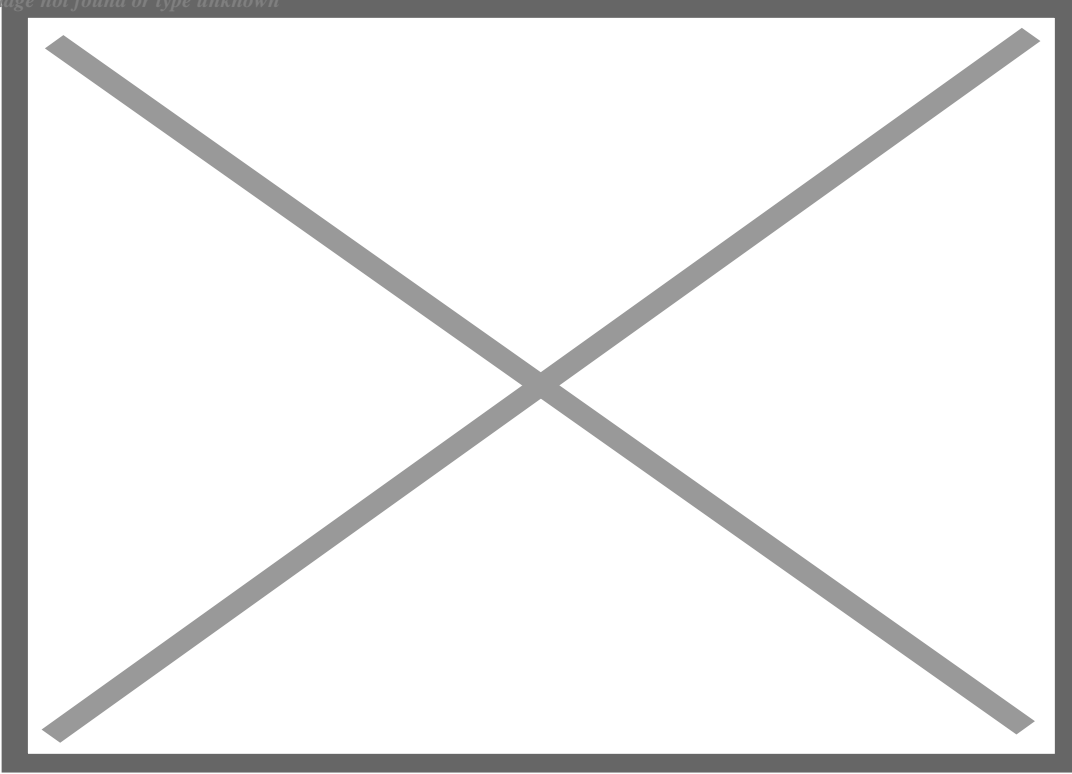


The Welcoming Europe

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By Guillermo Alvarado

In times when many people, especially in the Western hemisphere, usually exchange greetings, affection, good wishes and willingness to improve relations between people, several European countries insist on showing their rejection and contempt for migrants trying to reach that soil.

In this line, the government of France, increasingly distant from the principles of equality, liberty and fraternity that enlightened the world a little more than two centuries ago, recently passed a law tightening the conditions for those who are there in an irregular situation.

The essence of the aforementioned legislation is that we are not all equal and those who do not have a legal status in that country will not receive the social benefits provided for the rest of the citizens either.

This distinction, of course, only applies to non-EU migrants, i.e. those who do not come from other EU nations. To put it more clearly, it is designed in particular for people from poor countries in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean or certain regions of Asia.

If any doubt remains as to the xenophobic nature of the law, it is worth mentioning that it received the full support of the party of the ultra-right-wing Marine le Pen.

In this way, France has put itself on the same moral level as the United Kingdom, where since the middle of the year a regulation has been in force to send asylum seekers to Rwanda while their file is being processed, which may happen in a year, five, ten or never.

While the date arrives for the expedited mass removals to begin, they are locked up in an infamous floating prison docked in Portland harbor in southern England.

The barge is called "Bibby Estockholm" and has a long history of being used from 1994 to 1998 to house homeless people, including asylum seekers, in Hamburg, Germany.

In 2005 it was transferred to the Netherlands to detain undocumented immigrants, until 2008 when a person held there died due to repeated negligence in the provision of medical services.

Now it is in the United Kingdom, whose Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, by the way, is a descendant of migrants, only that they made a fortune and money in adequate amounts, as is known, serves to erase many differences.

So far we are talking about those who manage to overcome thousands of obstacles and reach a European border. Many, several thousands of them, remain on the roads or under the waters of the Mediterranean, but that, friends, is another story that we will tell as well.

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