

# ‘Camp of the Saints’ in Real Life

*Boat People Demand a Better Life in the West*

BY BRENDA WALKER

The last year has seen notable examples of migrants taking to the seas to escape their backward homelands for more cushy lifestyles in modern western societies. They see difficulties at home and decide to leave for more advanced societies. They may well wonder: Why bother with the hard slog of reforming retro nations when comfortable countries already exist and offer generous welfare programs to boot?

The big boat approach has strategic advantages, particularly the effect of pure numbers and their quality of overwhelming. Hundreds landing on a shore has much more psychological weight than another carload of illegals plopped in Arizona. The arrival of a boatload of miserable foreigners is a news event that allows the press to churn out easy-to-write sob stories, with heart-tugging visuals of tearful kiddies suitable for television. The do-gooder community often uses such occasions to exhibit their virtue by calling on the government to spend other people’s money (i.e. from taxpayers) on the poor bedraggled victims. Plus the boat people cannot be readily tossed back across a land border, like Mexicans, after they have crossed miles of ocean to deposit themselves in the first world.

The “Arab Spring” was a concept quickly embraced by the dinosaur press as a reassuring proof of universal values of equality and justice existing in the Muslim world, despite Islam’s history of war against those beliefs. Plus, an inconvenient truth is that many young adult males have used the chaos as a cover to escape the not-so-glorious revolution. Months of photos have shown a remarkable lack of women and children: a true refugee situation has a diversity of humanity, but the Arab Spring escapees are illegal aliens who are economic opportunists.

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Tens of thousands of young Arab men have piled into boats of various quality to reach the Italian territory of Lampedusa, a small island that is the southernmost reach of Italy, just 70 miles from North Africa as the fish swims. According to the Italian Interior Minister Roberto Maroni, as of late August more than 48,000 Tunisians and Libyans have fled from their homelands to Lampedusa since the beginning of this year. It doesn’t say much about the Arab Spring that so many potential freedom fighters are fleeing home to connect with Europe’s welfare offices and underground economy.

The invasion has been unpleasant and frightening for the 5,300 residents of Lampedusa, where at times the number of Arab Spring escapees has exceeded that of the local Italians. The Africans have trashed the little island (7.8 sq. mi.) with their tents and garbage. Gangs of young men have harassed local girls, and one report said Lampedusa fishermen feared leaving for work because of what might happen to their wives and daughters from the rough Muslim men.

In mid-September, after a recent batch of 1,500 North African boaters were told that they would be repatriated, they proceeded to burn down the immigration center, torch other buildings, and generally riot. There were violent clashes with local people, in which at least 13 were injured, including three policemen.

The mayor declared he had a baseball bat in his office to use in self-defense. “I must defend myself,” he remarked. “We’re at war, people have decided to take justice into their own hands.” He also denounced the Italian government for abandoning the island to the foreign hoards.

After a couple days of violence, the Italian government announced that the boat people would be removed from the island and repatriated as planned. A few days later, Italian authorities declared the island to be “an unsafe port” and that further floating migrants would be sent to Sicily instead — which gets them closer to the European mainland, which they desire, and merely relocates the problem. Oh well.

Over in Brussels, European Union elites are fight-

ing to maintain and strengthen their idealized borderless Europe, against growing anger among member states that want to protect national perimeters. Freedom to travel throughout the continent is thought by EU bureaucrats as one of their most wonderful accomplishments. But down on ground level Europe, more Muslims are not desired, particularly in this economy. France, Italy, Spain,- and Denmark want to reinstitute borders, in large part to keep out unwanted, unfriendly illegal aliens flooding labor markets and threatening general safety. But adding a layer of government in Brussels has put decision-making still further away from the people who are affected by it.

Europe is unlucky in geography to butt up against the backward Muslim world, but North America has seen far more ambitious ocean cruisers hoping to hit the big asylum jackpot. Multicultural Canada is known around the world as generous to the downtrodden (or effective pretenders) who make their way to the country and has received two ships loaded up with high-paying Sri Lankans determined to improve their prospects by demanding acceptance in Canada.



The first in recent memory appeared in October of 2009, when the freighter *Ocean Lady* arrived off the coast of British Columbia carrying a cargo of 76 Tamil men from Sri Lanka who sought asylum in Canada. They were promptly taken by the RCMP to Vancouver for screening. The men were held for a while and eventually released into the country.

Ten months later (August 2010) an overpopulated ship, the *Sun Sea*, arrived in western Canada from Thailand, crammed to the gunwales with nearly 500 Tamils who also intended to stay. The following May, the Canadian Immigration and Refugee Board announced that four of the *Sun Sea* asylum seekers would be deported

because they were found to be Tamil Tigers, a particularly brutal terrorist group, according to *Time* magazine:

The Tamil Tigers of Sri Lanka are undoubtedly one of the most organized, effective and brutal terrorist groups in the world. They invented the suicide vest and, according to the FBI, are the only terrorist group to have assassinated two world leaders. The rebels, based in northern and eastern Sri Lanka, have been waging a violent offensive against the central government on and off for more than 20 years. Federal forces recently announced they had captured the Tigers' capital, Kilinochchi, but it's a safe bet that, regardless of territory lost or possibly dwindling ranks, the guerillas will not give up their fight willingly. "A Brief History of the Tamil Tigers," *Time*, January 4, 2009.

Authorities have treated Tamil terrorists with seriousness. In 2006, several Tamils from Canada were arrested in Long Island, NY, for trying to purchase shoulder-launched missiles and other weapons for the Tigers. The ringleader got 26 years in prison. The same year, Canada added the Tamil Tigers to its list of banned terrorist organizations, which put the group's Canadian fundraising operations on notice that passing the hat for Tiger terror would no longer be legal.

But most of the *Sun Sea* boat people got to stay, to the happiness of the Tamils already residing in Canada, who number around 300,000 and are enthusiastic boosters of their tribe. Toronto, for example, is home to 200,000 Tamils, so the refugees won't feel lonely if they settle there.

The tickets to ride the *Sun Sea* did not come not cheap — up to \$45K per person — and demonstrate a large investment on the part of the passengers. Some seafarers, however, submitted to being trafficked, meaning that they made an IOU arrangement, perhaps to be paid in future crime rather than cash. Continuing debts may remain among the persons accepted as refugees and might ensure criminal activity to come from them as their payment.

The steep price tag makes shipping refugees around the ocean look like an appealing enterprise for the entrepreneurially inclined. One wonders why there isn't more of it.

One reason is that big ticket human smuggling via oceans is a large roll of the dice. Rusty freighters are not always the most sea-worthy vessels, as exhibited by the crack-up of a migrant-loaded ship near Christmas Island

(a territory of Australia) last December in which 28 died.

Another off-putting outcome would be a long prison term for the smuggling honchos. Four Sri Lankans arrested for piloting the *Ocean Lady* are still awaiting trial.

In mid-October, the Canadian press noted that the *Ocean Lady* freighter would be put up for sale. The government had tried unsuccessfully to find the owner, but no one came forward to claim the vessel, so the federal court allowed the sale to recoup some of the costs associated with towing and storing the ship. The freighter is valued at around \$500,000, so it sounds like a fixer upper.

The *Ocean Lady* was the first boat full of Sri Lankans to arrive on Canada's shores in 25 years, but Australia had reported more than a dozen boats carrying an estimated 750 Sri Lankan refugee claimants — at least 500 of whom were of Tamil origin — in the past year.

Interestingly, WikiLeaks revealed that American authorities perked up in 2009 when the *Ocean Lady* landed in Canada. The U.S. State Department observed in a cable that every asylum claim accepted “increases the pull of motivation for others to attempt their own passage” — which is more common sense than one usually sees from Foggy Bottom.

In the larger southeast Asia floating migrant picture, the last few months have seen more refugee activity headed toward Australia, perhaps because of Canada's quiet anti-smuggling efforts in the region. Ottawa still wants to appear “welcoming” in the naive liberal sense, but prefers to avoid a Camp of the Saints scenario of boat people headed in their direction.

Canada has already welcomed more unfriendlies than any country should, particularly from the jihad gang. The 2006 plot of a dozen Muslims to blow up Parliament and behead the Prime Minister comes to mind. So adding Tamils who are believed to be inclined to terrorism is recognized as unwise by Canada, at least for the time being.

The easy solution to preventing a Camp of the Saints flotilla of diversity is not to allow the ships to land at all, to bar their entrance, as the U.S. Coast Guard does to some degree with Cuban boaters (in a quirky program known as “wet foot, dry foot” where those caught at sea are shooed off). But the West has a hard time saying “No” to large groups claiming to be victims (even those buying \$45K tickets), so boats will continue to come, particularly to countries unlucky in geography and weak in resolve. ■