

Assembly no lager in Thessaloníki text for the discussion about migratory flows organized by the Anarchist campaign of internationalist solidarity – Three Bridges in 28/05/2015 in Thessaloníki

1. Migratory flows from North Africa and Asia have increased significantly. Yet that only applies compared to the last two years, as a few years ago we also had large migration flows to Europe. This increase can be attributed to wars, which followed the Arab Spring in North Africa. Of course this is not only due to internal factors in those countries. The truth is that Europe has played a role. Manipulation and overthrow of regimes, generalized "war against terrorism" while at the same time financing and granting equipment to extremist organizations, the draining of natural resources and the set up of entire expeditions based on squeezing the local cheap labor are only a few of the violent penetration practices of the western world in those countries as well as in the wider region of the Middle East (Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan).

The main routes of the migrants to Europe are now through the sea, mainly towards Italy and the islands of the Aegean. This is due to several factors, such as the closure of the Moroccan–Spanish border, the "narrowing" of land borders through Evros (see. Fence of Evros), but also due to various economic factors associated with trafficking. Until recently the crossing of maritime borders was primarily achieved by makeshift boats of small capacity. Following an agreement made between the Italian state and the EU, which replaced an expedition aiming to rescue migrants in the Mediterranean region by another expedition which has as a priority the guarding of the external borders of the EU, the crossing of the borders in this way was made substantially difficult. The result is that immigrants had to turn mainly to traffickers with larger capacity ships where there are often stacked up to 1000 people in desperate conditions, a condition greatly increasing the risk of travel. As a result only in the first quarter of 2015, the number of dead immigrants at the European sea borders have surpassed that of 1750.

It is important to say at this point that it is not the migratory flows that have rapidly grown, but the ratio of deaths and profits of the slave trade circuits which are only ostensibly the target of the EU. Traffickers, the mafia – from Manolada to Italy – and states – from the police and the port cops to the judicial authorities – do not cease to cooperate in the increasingly lucrative exploitation of the migratory flows, confirming the close connection between "legal "and" illegal" capital.

It seems that the drowning of migrants has increased in areas where Europe supervises more tightly the borders, thus negating any illusion that may have existed as to EU's intentions. **What eventually leads thousands of people to death, is thus the European border / immigration policy.** As a consequence we could say that the borders constitute the regime that murders immigrants by "illegalizing" people whose only solution is migration, and essentially legitimize their death.

On Sunday 19/4/2015 the whole Europe seemed shocked by the news of a human tragedy that cost the lives of over 800 people – a week before there was another wreck with 400 dead immigrants. Undoubtedly what touched the chord of the humanitarian organizations, the sensitized Europeans and the Europe fortress was none other than the massiveness of the deaths. Willing to put forward its humanitarian mask, Europe called for an emergency summit in Brussels. Following the meeting, a 10 point action plan was presented by Avramopoulos and adopted by the ministers of interior and exterior of the EU. The solutions proposed are summarized in an increase in the resources available to the expedition "Triton" of Frontex, the further militarization of the borders and the intensification of their guarding, the direct intervention in "third countries", as a "targeted action", under the pretext of destroying trafficking ships and the even more intense stigmatization of migrants by taking fingerprints and violent deportations in "quick return". In this context

there was made the key proposal to extend Frontex's area of responsibility, until now limited to 30 miles from the Italian coast. **This practice aims ultimately to the transport of the maritime borders in the African and Asian shores.**

Tears and instant reflexes are only the humanitarian mask that Europe wishes to put forward. If we examine the points that are proposed as a solution to the humanitarian crisis in the Mediterranean, we can easily determine that the priority is essentially the further militarization of the borders' guarding and not the rescue of migrants. Migration policies also not set up on the basis of two shipwrecks, but on the needs of the capital in Europe. And the capital currently does not need extra manpower but to further discipline the existing one. So reconstructing the anti-immigrant policy in the way that we mentioned above, Europe is trying to achieve both. Those left over are to be drown in the sea, or at best (and here Europe is wearing its humanitarian face) to be deported to their home countries, if, of course, they ever manage to escape from them, since the project is essentially the borders guarding to start on the shores of the countries around Europe.

Besides, we have already witnessed the work of the emergency summit. The image of the last session pertains to something that has happened again in the past, after the first big crash in the south of Lampedusa in October 2013. At that time the EU had reacted similarly, expressing outwards originally a humanitarian rhetoric and speaking of the need for rescue measures for migrants, while what was promoted at that time was also the further militarization of the borders' guarding. It appears that the EU instrumentally uses shipwrecks in order to continue headlong the restructuring of its immigration policy.

This is why the EU has stable structures that deal with migration and **constantly changes its policy that is based on the needs of capital**, each time using the specific situations in such a way as to support these changes. This is what happened with the drownings in the Mediterranean. And so is the case with jihandism. In this case the EU is trying to send the message that "every immigrant is a potential jihadist", thus creating a new external enemy from whom we have to be protected so as they do not to penetrate in our safe society. **This demonization of immigrants aims to achieve the necessary, for the unhindered movement of capital, national cohesion and the creation of a fearful climate within the European labor force in order for it to be more obedient.**

2.

Greek reality does not differ much for immigrants, since Greece is also – along with Italy – the main entrance country in Europe. Greece participates in all anti-immigrant programs of the EU, often playing a key role in them. What does this mean in the question of what should be done? Warm greek "hospitality" offers two possibilities for immigrants trying to cross the greek borders. Death and incarceration. They are either left to be drown in the turquoise waters of the Aegean (there are cases where not only they were not rescued, but their boats were rammed from the vessels of the greek port police), or (those who manage to reach land) are confined in modern concentration camps. As for camps, we still have plenty...

Many people's hopes rose with the new –for the first time left-wing– government of Syriza and ANEL. Hoping, among others, that the government would put an end to detention camps. This hope led to a close watch of the government's announcements and as a consequence, when it finally became clear that detention centers would continue to operate, many focused their discourse on Syriza's change of plans. Yet, what is important is to understand, not what Syriza promises and un-promises, but how the state functions. And as a structure that exists only under capitalism, the state can not be turned against itself, but only contribute to its continuation, thus having only a limited possibility of intervention in the economy. And modern concentration camps play an important role in the economy, as their role – among other things – is to throw out of the

work market a piece of the workforce and at the same time they function as inhibitors for migrant workers that wish to cross the greek borders. And these reasons make them necessary for the state.

In the first weeks of the government of Syriza, a migrant detainee in Amygdaleza dies because of the indifference of the cops concerning his health as he was suffering from chronic diseases. In the following days two more migrants commit suicide, one in the police station in Dodekanisou in Thessaloníki and the other one in Amygdaleza. These incidents forced the issue of the detention camps to come back to publicity and Panousis, the Minister for the Protection of the Citizens, as well as some organizations visited Amygdaleza in order to reveal, in the most spectacular way, the squalid conditions in the camp. After his visit declarations were made about closing the camps, and especially Amygdaleza for symbolic reasons. There was also given a deadline of 100 days for their shutting down, and so migrants should show a little more more patience until their release. A few days later another immigrant is found dead in the barracks of the police station in Kifissia, Athens, after the cops refused to transfer him to hospital although he complained about his health problems. The list of these murders of immigrants from the state is growing, although its fresh new representatives are quick to share hopes. At the same time, the gradual release of immigrants from detention camps begins, provided a residence declaration and the presence, from the part of the immigrants, twice a month in police stations.

It is obvious that this partial release of immigrants does not reassure us since they are still under a terrorist regime in which they are continuously forced to prove the legitimacy of their existence. Also, the release of migrants simultaneously marked the restoration of an old rhetoric in the media, the same that we had previously heard from Chrysohoides, Dendias etc. – ministers with the government of the right-wing party Nea Dimokratia – stating that "without medical reports, home address or occupation the streets of Athens will replenish with immigrants that threaten the greek citizens' public health and security".

However, immigrants who are still in detention camps, are not passive spectators of the discourse that is developed around their lives or their confinement. They fight with whatever means they possess claiming their freedom. On March 17, more than 300 inmates immigrants in the detention camp in Corinth started a hunger strike for the horrible conditions in which they live. On March 19, minors started a hunger strike in the detention center of Liti, Thessaloníki, where they had been transferred from Amygdaleza, after the fake "emptying" of Amygdaleza, demanding their freedom. A few days later, immigrants in the concentration camp in Paranesti, Drama, started a hunger strike, also claiming they their freedom. On March 24 at the detention camp in Corinth six immigrants climbed on the roof as a reaction to their confinement and threatened to jump. Together with the hunger strikes and the immigrants' actions for their freedom, various solidarity actions are carried out in Patra, Mytilini, Corinth, Xanthi, Paranesti, Athens and Thessaloníki.

Despite the release of a number of immigrants, the state's anti-immigrant policy continues its course unhindered, stacking immigrants in detention camps, in police stations, or by immersing them in the sea bottom. The management of the immigration policy may partly change, but its core remains the same: killing or keeping immigrants in a confinement regime since their existence is illegal. Immigrants either as perpetrators or as victims, they are treated both as an imminent danger (crime increase, jihandism etc.) and as a problem that is left in the responsibility of various NGOs and humanitarian organizations to solve.

Four months of a "left-right wing" government and the anti-immigrant policy of the state seems in its essence unchanged. That alone is a good reason not to put the blame only on governments, but **understand the policy of the greek state as a process with continuity, regardless of electoral results**. The same continuity that is displayed by the greek society, since it is its pervasive racism that legitimizes the existence of the detention camps, the various anti-immigrant policies and the divisions among us. It is thus necessary, inter alia, to

attack to all these discourses (and their bodies). Having rejected from the beginning the paranoid delusions of optimism that brought the change in government, we remain focused on the initial aim set by the Assembly: the communication and networking with the immigrants. We will continue to protest outside detention camps as a minimum of solidarity and support of the struggles of the detainees and we will not stop protesting in the city to propagate that our goal is nothing less than destroying all detention camps.

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