

To the wanderers

We asked for labor powers, men came.

Max Frisch

No one emigrates from their country for pleasure – here's too of a simple truth that many want too hide. If someone peacefully leave their land and their loved ones, we wouldn't define them as migrants, but simply travelers or tourists. Migration is a coercive kind of moving, a roaming in search of better life conditions.

At the moment there is a 150 millions foreigner around the world, because of wars, ecological disasters, famine, or simply the running of industrial production (the destruction of countryside and of forests, mass lay off, and so on). All these aspects form a mosaic of oppression and of misery in which the effects of exploitation become themselves more or less direct causes of suffering and eradication, in a never ending spiral that makes every distinction between "displaced", "migrants", asylum seekers, refugees, survived an hypocritical distinction. Just think about how social are these so called *ecological emergencies* (lack of water, growing desertification, fields sterility): the explosion of a oil refinery, together with the destruction of every local autonomy on which it laid on, can change the fate of an entire population sometimes.

Unlike to what the racist propaganda want us to believe, immigration regards the rich North only for the 17%, involving all continents indeed (the African and the Asian one in particular); that means that for every poor country there is an even poorer one from where immigrants are running away. The *total mobilization* imposed by economy and the States is a planetary symptom, an undeclared civil war that crosses every national border: millions of exploited people roam through the hell of the commercial heaven, jolted from border to border, forced in refugees camps surrounded by the police and the army, handled by the so called charity organizations – partners in tragedies whose causes they don't denounce for the mere purpose of exploiting the consequences – piled up in "waiting zones" in the airports or in stadiums (macabre *circenses* for those who don't even have bread), locked up in Lagers called "detention centers, and last wrapped up and expelled in the most total indifference. For many reasons we can say that the face of these unwelcome is the face of our present – and that's also why we're afraid of them. We're scared by immigrants because in their misery we can see the reflexion of our own misery, because in their wanderings we recognize our daily condition: the condition of persons that feel more and more like strangers both to this world and to themselves.

Eradication is the most widespread condition in our present society – we might call it its center – and not a menace coming from a terrifying and mysterious *elsewhere*. Only by driving our stare into our daily lives we can understand what gets all of us involved in the conditions of immigrants. First though we have to define a fundamental concept: the one of clandestine.

The creation of the clandestine, the creation of the enemy

[...] *what are you?* [...]

You are not of this castle, you are not of this village, you are nothing.

But you are something too, unfortunately, you are a foreigner, someone that is always

inopportune and in the way, one that brings a lot of troubles, [...]

whose intentions no one knows.

F. Kafka

A alien, simply, is someone who doesn't have regular papers. And for sure not for the pure pleasure of risk or of illegality, but rather because in the majority of cases, to own such papers he or her should be able to give those same grantees which possession wouldn't have made them aliens, but simply a tourist or a foreign student. If the same standards were to be enforced on everybody, millions would have been thrown overboard. Which Italian who is unemployed, for instance, could give the grantee of a legal wage? What might all the precarious people from here that work for temporary job agencies, which contracts are not worth a visa for the immigrants? And by the way, are there so many Italians living in a 60 squares meters flat with no more then other two people? Let's read all these decrees (both from the left wing and the right wing) about immigration, it will be clear then that the clandestinization is a very accurate project of the States. Why?

An illegal immigrant is more liable to be blackmailed, brought to accept, under the menace of being expelled, even more hateful conditions of work and existence (precariousness, endless wandering, makeshift accommodations, and so on). With the ghost of the police, bosses obtain tame wagedworkers, or rather real hard labor workers. Even the most reactionary and xenophobic right wing parties are perfectly aware that hermetically closed borders are not only technically impossible, but not even profitable. According to the United Nations, in order to keep the present "balance between active and inactive population", from here to 2025, Italy should "take" inside its borders a quantity of immigrants five times the present yearly fixed amount. *Confindustria*, infact, continuously suggests to double the quantity fixed so far.

The accordance of year long or season long permits or their rejection contribute in creating a specific social hierarchy among the poor ones. The same distinction between immediate forced repatriation and expulsion (or the must, for an irregular immigrant, to show up at the borders to be sent back home) allows to choose who to make a clandestine or who to expel right away – a choice based on ethnic principles, of economical-political agreement with the governments of the countries where the

immigrant is coming from and of the needs of the work market. Infact, authorities are perfectly aware that no one will ever spontaneously show up at the border to be expelled; surely not people who have spent all that they owned – sometimes even more – to pay their trip to here. Businessmen define the features of the goods that they buy (*immigrants are goods*, like everyone after all), the State record data, police carries out the orders that it is given.

The warnings of politicians and mass media, the anti-immigration claims build up imaginary enemies, to drive the exploited ones from here to lay on an easy scape-goat the growing social tension and reassure them, letting them admire the show of poor people even more precarious and more blackmailed then them, and last them feel part of a ghost called Nation. Making of “irregularity” – that same irregularity that they create – a synonymous of crime and dangerousness, the States justify a police control and a criminalization of the class conflicts that are getting more and more seditious. In this context, for instance find its place the manipulation of consent after 11 September, synthesized in the despicable slogan “clandestine=terrorists” which joins together, if read in the two senses, racist paranoia to the demand of repression towards the inside enemy (the rebels, the subversives).

They shout out, from the rightwing as well as from the leftwing, against the racket that puts up the trips for clandestine people (described by the mass media as an invasion, as a scourge, as the advance of an army), when it's by their laws that they are promoted. They shout out against “organized crime” exploiting so many immigrants (fact that it's true but still partial), when it's them supplying it with desperate and ready-for-everything resources. In their historical symbiosis, State and mafia stand united by the same liberal principle: business is business.

Racism, a mean for economical and political needs, finds room to spread out in a context of generalized standardization and isolation, when insecurity creates fears that can be opportunely manipulated. It's of very little use a moral or cultural condemn to racism, since it is not an opinion or an argument, but a psychological misery, an “emotional plague”. It's in the present social conditions that it ought to be sought the reason of its spreading and then, at the same time, the power to fight it.

The welcome of a lager

To call *Lagers* the detention camps for immigrants waiting for expulsion – centers introduced in Italy in 1998 by the left wing government by mean of the Turco-Napolitano law – it's not a rhetorical emphasis, like most of the people using this formula thinks, afterall. It is a strict definition. Nazi Lagers were concentration camps where people thought by the police to be dangerous for the State security were locked, even in absence of criminally indictable behaviour. This precautionary measure – defined as “protective detention” – consisted in taking all civil and political rights away from some citizens. Whether they were refugees, Jewish, gipsy, homosexuals or subversives, it was up to the police, after months or years, to decide

about what to do. So Lagers were not jails where to pay for some crime, nor an extension of the criminal law. They were camps where the Rule set its *exception*; in short terms, a legal suspension of legality. Therefore a Lager is not a consequence of the number of internees nor of the number of murders (between 1935 and 1937, before the start of Jewish deportations, in Germany the internees were 7500), but rather of its political and juridical nature.

Immigrants nowadays end up in the Centers regardless from possible crimes, without any criminal process whatsoever: their internment, ordered by the police superintended, it's a simple police measure. Just like it was happening in 1940 under the government of Vichy, when prefects could lock up all those individuals considered a "danger for national defense and public security" or (mind this) "foreigners in excess respect to national economy". We can refer to the administrative detention in French Algeria, to the South Africa of apartheid or to the present ghettos for Palestinians created by the State of Israel.

It is not a coincidence if, in regard of the infamous conditions of the detention centers, the good democrats don't appeal to the respect of any law at all, but to the respect of human rights – the last mask in front of women and men to whom remains nothing but belonging to the human specie. It's not possible to integrate them as citizens, so they are falsely integrated as Human Beings. The abstract equality of principles hides everywhere the real inequalities.

A new eradication

*Immigrants that for the
first time landed on Battery Park soon
realized that what they had been
told about the marvelous America
wasn't true at all:
maybe land belonged to everybody,
but the first come
had largely served themselves already,
and to them there was nothing left
than crowd together in ten in windowless*

hovels
of the Lower East Side and work fifteen hours
a day. Turkeys didn't fall roasted
traight in the dishes and the streets of New York
weren't paved in gold.
Yet, most of the times, they weren't
paved at all. And then they realized that
it was just to get them to pave these streets that they
were let to come. And to dig tunnels
and canals, to build up streets, bridges, big
embankments, railroads, to clear forests, to exploit
mines and caves, to make cars and cigars,/
carabines and clothes, shoes, chewing gums,
corned-beef and soaps, and to build
skyscrapers higher
then the ones that they discovered when first arrived.

Georges Perec

If we go a few steps back, it will come clear that *eradication* is a crucial moment in the growing of state and capitalistic domination. At its dawn, the industrial production drew the exploited ones away from country and villages to gather them into the city. The ancient *skills* of farm workers and handcrafters had been so substituted with the forced and repetitive activity of the factory – an activity impossible to control, in its means and its finalities, by the new proletarians. So the first children of industrialization lost at the same time their ancient *spaces* of life and their ancient knowledge, the ones that allowed them to autonomously provide to the most part of their means of subsistence. On the other hand, forcing millions of men and women to similar life conditions (same places, same problems, same knowledge), capitalism unified their struggles, got them to find new brothers and sisters to fight against

that same unbearable life. The 20th century marked the apex of this productive and state gathering, which symbols had been the factory-neighborhood and the Lager, and at the same time the apex of the more radical social fights for its destruction. In the last twenty years due to technological innovations, capital has substituted the old factory with new productive cores always smaller and more distributed across the territory, breaking up also the fabric of the society inside which those fights had grown and creating in this way a new *eradication*.

There's more. Technological reorganization has made trade faster and easier, opening the whole world to the most ferocious competition, overthrowing the economies and the way of lives of entire Countries. So here is, in Africa, in Asia, in South America, the closure of a lot of factories, mass lay outs. All this, in a social context destroyed by colonization, from the deportation of inhabitants from their villages to the shantytowns, from their fields to the assembly lines, produced a crowd of poor people who became useless to their masters, of *unwanted children of capitalism*. Be add the fall of self-styled communist Countries and the debt racket put on by the International Monetary Fund and by the World Bank and we will get quite a faithful cartography of migrations, of ethnical and religious wars.

What we call today "flexibility" and "precariousness" is the consequence of all this: a further progress in the submission to the machines, a bigger competition, a worsening of the material conditions (deals, health, etcetera). We've seen the reason why: capitalism has dismantled the community that it had created. Anyway it would be partial to conceive of precariousness only in an economic sense, as the missing of a steady work place and of the old pride for the profession. It is isolation inside standardization, or a fanatic conformism with *lack of common spaces*. In the distressing void of meaning and perspectives, mystified the unfulfilled need of community gets back, giving birth to new nationalistic, ethnical or religious contrapositions, tragic re-proposition of collective identities just where every true mutuality among the individuals has come less. And it's right in this void where the fundamentalist argument find its place, false promise of a redeemed community.

Civil war

All this brings to a scenario that it's more and more the one of a persisting civil war, with no distinction between "time of peace" and "time of war". Conflicts are no longer declared – just like the military interventions in the Balkans has shown –, but simply administrated to grant the establishment of the World Order. This endless fight goes through the entire society and the same individuals. Common spaces for dialogue and fights get substituted by the adherence to the same commercial models. The poor ones go to war against each other for a fashionable sweater or hat, since the possession or not of particular goods create the illusion of a social or clanic hierarchy. Individuals feel more and more irrelevant, ready then to sacrifice to the

first nationalist blunderbuss or for whatever flag. Abused everyday by the State, here they come defending with zeal any Padania (desolated and polluted, with factories and mall everywhere – would it be this one the “land of the forefathers”?). Tied to that mirage of property that is left to them, they are scared to lay bare in front of themselves for what they really are: interchangeable gears of the Megamachine, in need of psychotropic drugs to get to the end of the day, always more envious towards everyone who looks even just happier than them. To an always colder, more abstract and more calculating rationality, correspond always more brutal and untold drives. So, what’s better than someone different by color of the skin or religion to throw their grudge on? Like a man from Mozambico said, “people has taken war inside of them”. Some outside conditions are enough for all this to explode just like in Bosnia. And these conditions are being carefully prepared. To the capitalist Universalism opposes, in a tragic game of mirrors, ethnic particularism. Under institutional order, with always more anonymous and controlled places, lies hidden the implosion of human relationships. It all looks like the same quicksand from where in the 30’s the *totalitarian man* has risen.

Two possible ways out

Why did we talk so much about immigration and racism so far, since we are not *directly* touched by problems of wandering and expulsion? Dictated by some of its peculiarity such as precariousness and impossibility to decide for our present, the same capitalism joins our lives more and more: that’s why we feel like brothers, in deeds, with the all the exploited ones that land on the shores of this Country.

In face of a feeling of despoliation of millions of individuals towards a commercial imperialism forcing everybody to dream the same lifeless dream, there can be no appeal to dialogue or to a democratic integration. Whatever the legalistic antiracists might say, it’s too late for hypocritical civic education classes. When everywhere are growing – from the shantytowns of Caracas to the suburbia of Paris, from the Palestinian territories to centers and stadium where aliens are locked – the *fields* in which misery is confined; when the *state of exception* – or the juridical suspension of every right – becomes the rule; when millions of human beings are literally left rotting into the reserves of the capitalist heaven; when entire neighborhoods get militarized and armoured (Genova, doesn’t tell you anything?), it is a despicable joke to talk about immigration. From this conditions of desperation and fear, from this planetary civil war, there are only two ways out: the fratricidal clash (religious and clanic in all its alterations), or the social storm of class war.

Racism is the grave of every exploited individual’s fight against the exploiters, it’s the last trick – the dirtiest – played by those who would like to see ourselves killing one another. It can only evaporate in the moments of common revolt, when we recognize our real enemies – the exploiters and their servants – and we *recognize ourselves* as exploited individuals that want to be no longer like that. The social

fight that took place in Italy during the 60's and 70's – when the young workers immigrated from the South met the ones from the North on the field of sabotage, of the wild strike and of the absolute disloyalty – has given a demonstration. The disappearing of the revolutionary struggles after the 70's (from Nicaragua to Italy, from Portugal to Germany, from Poland to Iran) has crumble the bottom of a concrete solidarity among the dispossessed ones of the World. This solidarity will only be conquered again in the revolt, and not in the powerless words of the new Third-worlders and of the democratic antiracists.

So, or the religious and clanic massacre, or class war. And at the end of this we can only catch a glimpse of a world free from State and money in which there'll need no money to live and travel and no visa will be needed.

A machine that can be broken

In the 80's there was a slogan that said: "It's not really by the noise of boots that we should be scared today, as the silence of the slipper". Now they're both coming back. With a holy war speech (the police as the "army of the good" that protect the citizens from the "army of the evil", just like the Prime Minister recently said), day after day the State has put up rides at the expense of the immigrants. Their home are devastated, aliens are roundup in the streets, locked up in lagers and expelled in the most total indifference. In many cities new detention camps are already in construction. The Bossi-Fini law, worthy prosecution of the Turco-Napolitano law, wants to limit the number of visas according to the exact length of the work contract, blacklist all the immigrants, to change the clandestineness in crime and to strengthen the machine of expulsions. The democratic mechanism of citizenship and rights, for widen that might be, it will always presuppose the existence of excluded people. To criticize and to try to prevent expulsions means to realize a critic in act of racism and nationalism at the same time; it means to create a common space for revolt against the capitalistic eradication that involves us all; it means to obstruct as a hateful as an important repressive mechanism; it means to break the silence and the indifference of the civilized ones that remain watching; last it means to confront the same concept of law dictated by the principle "we are all aliens". It means, in the end, an attack to one of the columns of the state and class society: the competition between the poor people, the substitution, nowadays more and more seditious, of social war with ethnic or religious wars.

The expulsion frame needs, to be running, of the help of many public and private structures (from the Red Cross that cooperate in the managing of lagers to the companies that supply services, from airline companies that deport aliens to the airports that put up waiting zones, going through styled charity association collaborating with the police). All these responsibility are easy to be seen and attacked. From actions against detention camps (like it happened a couple of years ago in Belgium and a few months ago in Australia, when some demonstration ended up with

the liberation of some clandestine immigrants) to the ones against “waiting zones” (like in France, at the expense of the Ibis hotels chain, that supplies the police with rooms) or to obstruct the flights of infamy (in Frankfurt, the sabotage of optical fibers cables some years ago put out of order all the computers of an airport for a couple of days) there’s thousands of activities that a movement against expulsion can realize.

Today like never before it’s in the street that it’s possible to rebuild class solidarity. In the complicity against police raids; in the struggle against military occupation of the neighborhoods; in the restless rejection of every division that the masters of society want to impose on us (Italians and foreigners, legal immigrants and aliens); aware that every outrage suffered by any dispossessed on Earth is an outrage to everyone – only in this way the exploited people from a thousand countries will recognize themselves.

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