

UNGRATEFUL

Migration as Crime, Crime as Resistance



Criminalization as experienced by albanian migrants,
greek state's needs for labor and some considerations
for creating common grounds of struggle

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All Copies Are Beautiful when used for the anti-authoritarian movement

contact: ungrateful@espiv.net

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A FEW WORDS ON THIS BROCHURE

As a collective project, we are trying from the beginning to take form through two main ways. On the one hand, through having a conversation regarding the needs and the lacks of the movement in Greece. On the other hand, through our participation in actions, events and demonstrations, so as to build a collective experience. This brochure is an effort to respond to two main deficits that we have traced while discussing about the state's migration policy and the relationship between the antagonistic social movement and migrants.

The first lack concerns several forms of resistance that are used by migrants but are not recognized as such. We believe that this is the result of a long-term state policy that aims to undermine and exploit migrants. One of the tools used by the state for this purpose is the criminalisation of their resistances, in order to strip them of their political characteristics. As for the antagonistic social movement, it very often fails to perceive different forms of resistance adopted by migrants as such, because they are not always part of the movement's common practices of resistance (for example attacking a bank, or a hunger strike). From our point of view, we consider it important to be able to recognize negations, resistances and forms of struggle that migrants choose for themselves that are "strange" to us and to highlight them.

The second lack concerns inequalities in the relationships between locals and migrants, both inside and outside the social movement in Greece. Within the movement, the dominant perception is that equality is considered a fact, only because someone participates in a horizontally organized group. On the contrary, we believe that equality is not a fact, but a goal, and that it can only be achieved by pointing out our particularities, our differences and our personal experiences, starting with the ones of the most oppressed. For this reason, in the first part of this brochure, we chose to present the lived experiences of migrants from Albania. On the one hand, to make these experiences more visible in the public discourse and on the other hand in an effort to bridge the inequalities between us and to be able to support each other in terms of mutual respect and solidarity.

HOW DID WE DO IT?

Taking for granted the structural inequality between locals and migrants, and knowing how hard it is for someone to share his or her experiences as a migrant, we decided to trigger a discussion in which only albanian migrants from our group would participate. A discussion which would evolve without the presence of greeks and that would be recorded from the discussion group itself. The first part of this brochure is the result of this recording. It is the result of the discussion between migrants from Albania. So this brochure is practically the product of two parallel procedures: our political

group and the discussion group concerning the lived experiences of criminalisation of being a migrant.

We didn't have a magical recipe on how to do that, and we still don't have answers to all of the questions that arose through this procedure. The way that we did it is a sort of an experiment and a test on how we should face these kind of questions and how we can build equal relationships through the things that we do. Since the beginning, when the idea first came up, but also all through the evolution of the project, many questions came up which we consider fruitful to share: For example, what is the relationship between a political group and a discussion group about the latter's lived experiences? How can the discourses of these two procedures coexist, without creating or reproducing a relationship of political exploitation, since the brochure can be defended in its totality by the political group, for its own purposes and needs, while the discussion group only participates in the first part? Maybe, the best would have been for both groups to co-author the whole, but this would require first to give answers to all the other questions. Finally, what is the relationship between the two groups during the writing procedure or after it? We leave this questions open for further discussion.

CONTENT

This brochure consists of three parts. In the first part, part of the lived experiences that have been recorded from migrants from Albania are presented, regarding (among other things) their criminalisation from the greek state and greek society and vis a vis the mainstream discourse during the same period. In the second part of the brochure we try to point out the needs of the greek state and capital for cheap migrant labor, its management and its consequences for the development of greek economy. However, this chapter was written without having a previous common perception or method on the ways that the state and capital functions. Therefore, we restrained ourselves to the presentation of precise moments and facts from the history of greek capital, that we consider being indicative of (part of) the state's strategy, before the migration from Albania in the beginning of 90's started. Finally, in the third part we focus on the functioning of criminalisation, on crime as a form of resistance and our position on these subjects, aiming to contribute to the overcoming of the deficits mentioned earlier (recognizing other forms of struggle, building relationships based on equality).

antiauthoritarian initiative from athens
September 2018

Ungrateful

Migration as crime. Crime as resistance

1.
The lived experience of criminalisation

“I have passed the borders walking two times. The worst way to get caught was if the soldiers got you. They would torture you in different ways. They would put the barrel of their gun in the fire to heat it and they would burn you with it. I know about this guy that they had tortured him like that before they deported him. But he didn't forget. After a while he did a journey back to Greece and managed to settle in a town. Over there, one day in the street he saw a familiar face. Once he got sure it was one of the soldiers that had tortured him, he got revenge.”

“One summer I went to the island of Rodos to see a friend. I was 16. When I arrived at the port, while I was leaving the boat with all the other people, the cops with their guns stopped me in the middle of the quay and they pulled me towards them. We went to the side so as not to block the passage. There, they open my luggage and throw everything down. Inside there was a phone, you know, these old huge and fat ones. When one of them sees it he asked me ‘where did you steel this you filthy albanian?’ and he slapped me. They told me to pack my cloths and they handcuffed me together with an other albanian, pointing their guns to our heads for fun. All this in public.”

“My parents had a residence permit, and every once in a while they had to present themselves in the police station. One day they were told that their permit was not legitimate and they detained them, along with my brother that was 2 years old. Within a few days they had put them in an airplane and they had sent them to the detention center in Athens in order to deport them.”

You can tell a good day from the morning

It's rare to talk with an albanian migrant that hasn't got a story to tell, of his own or someone close to him, a story that connects their national identity with crime and repression. This is one of the main reasons that as albanian migrants, many of us were forced, directly or indirectly, to hide our origins and the characteristics that would show our nationality. As for example, to speak albanian publicly or to keep our albanian names.

In cases when this was not possible, we were obliged to apologize all the time for the national identity we carried. This constant, violent and extended surveillance, with a finger pointing permanently on us, which goes along with an exploitation similar to slavery, would have an important impact on the choices of many of us.

Even though various different facts that have to do with the period of migration, or the place of settlement influence the living experience of everyone of us, we can not but notice that there is a constant and collective pattern that depicts feelings and thoughts of our experience as migrants.

Since the arrival of the first albanians in Greece, to be an albanian was considered as synonym of crime. The greatest effort in order to spread and convince for this racist identification were made by the media, the church and the politicians. Science would back it up with the arguments and art would make fun of it: albanians steal and kill. We are underdeveloped and uncultivated. Our place is at the rock bottom of greek society.



ALBANIANS, An Open Threat For Our Borders And Our Society / Do something good, Throw them to the sea / They come and go as they like – Everyday a different crime (Apogeumatini, Right Wing newspaper, 5 January 1992)



Under albanian Occupation (they kill us inside our houses, 24 May 1993)

Within a while, the image of albanian migrants who wanders around the country and threaten locals becomes normalised. This image appears constantly to remind that we are in an emergency situation, similar to a war. The borders, that kept ‘the evil’ outside, are wounded and the country is under albanian occupation. Men are criminals, women are whores. The albanian origin is connected to ideas of crime and disease. Albanian migrants are presented as a scourge that has to be faced with national strength.

“Fear and agony have taken over the residents of greek villages near the borders, that are surrounded by hungry albanian fugitives. The army has given special recommendations to the residents of the area on how to deal with the situation...”

“Greek residents of the villages near Albania live every night with the fear of albanian invaders. Behind these mountains lays Albania, and every night army and police forces patrol in order to dissuade the albanian criminals...”

(From the central newscast of MEGA channel, a mainstream national TV channel, 1992)

This situation demands an immediate answer, and it will come both from the state violence, as well as from the locals that take the situation in their hands very easily. TV channels also take action, showing soldiers patrolling forests, cops searching public buses, trains and houses. Indignant citizens parading in front of the TV screens with guns in their hands. Chasing albanian criminals, beating them up and leading them to deportation. Somewhere between this chaos will appear the desperate patriot deploring that “we can not take it anymore, we became strangers in our own country”.

Τραγικό τέλος για τρεις Αλβανούς

ΔΕΝ είχε πρόθεση να βάλει κατά του Αλβανού φρυγάδα ο Έλληνας στρατιώτης. Αυτό τονίζεται σε ανακοίνωση του υπουργείου Αμύνης σχετικά με το θλιβερό γεγονός που αποκαλύπτει το δράμα των Αλβανών φρυγάδων που αναζητούν καλύτερη τύχη στη χώρα μας.

Φοβικό τέλος βρήκαν άλλοι δύο συμπατριώτες του στο Αργίνο, που βρέθηκαν κατακρουσμένοι, ενώ ένας ακόμη Αλβανός λαθρομετανάστης, στην προσπάθειά του να περάσει στη χώρα μας, παρασύρθηκε από παραστάσια και πνίγηκε.

✓ Ένας νεκρός από σφαίρα φρουρού
✓ Δύο κατακρουσμένοι στο Αργίνο
✓ Κι άλλος ένας πνίγηκε σε ποτάμι

κε ικανοστά σε ομάδα Αλβανών λαθρομετα-

το θάνατό του, ενώ οι στρατιώτες και οι συλλεγμένοι Αλβανοί μεταφέρθηκαν στο στρατόπεδο. Για το θλιβερό επεισόδιο διενεργείται προανάκριση.

Ο νεκρός στρατιώτης, που κατάγεται από την Κέρκυρα, μέχρι σήμερα θράυο εκρατείτο στο 628 Τ.Π.

Όπως ανακοινώθηκε από το υπουργείο Εθνικής Άμυνας «σε συνάντηση αξιωματικών στην ελληνοαλβανική μεθόριο ή αναφερθεί από την ελληνική πλευρά το ατύχησ συμβάν και θα παραδοθεί η σορός του φανεμένου».

• ΑΓΡΙΝΙΟ, 4.

ΦΡΙΚΤΟ τέλος για δύο νεαρούς Αλβανούς στο Αργίνο. Βρέθηκαν κατακρουσμένοι σε αγροτόπειο μεταξύ των κοινοτήτων Λεπενούς και Κυνέλης, επί της εθνικής οδού Αργίνο - Ιωαννίνων.

Τους δύο Αλβανούς, ηλικίας 28 και 30

Tragic ending for three albanians / One of them dead by soldiers’s fire / Two lynched in the town of Agrinio / Another one drowned in a river. (Ta Nea, center mainstream news paper, 4 November 1991)

400 ΛΑΘΡΟΜΕΤΑΝΑΣΤΕΣ ΤΡΟΜΟΚΡΑΤΟΥΝ ΕΝΑ ΟΛΟΚΛΗΡΟ ΧΩΡΙΟ 3.500 ΚΑΤΟΙΚΩΝ

Αλβανικό ... μέτωπο στο Κριεκούκι

ΠΡΟΑΦΗΡΜΕΝΟ από την είδηση μιας ζώνης απάγκου στο Κριεκούκι, στην περιοχή Δυτική εκκλησία, ληστεία, απόπειρα φόρου.

Το ποίδη ζυγίσαν και η μία ληστεία τη μία από τις επιδρομές φρόνιμα νηρόν από άλλους με το έτσι θέλω το νόμο στα χέρια τους, καθώς οι τρεις αστυνομικοί δεν έφυγαν.

Οι σούλιες των λαθρομεταναστών φρονίσι να κληθισμένοι ήταν, αλλά στην παρούσα περίπτωση παρασύρουν από δύο Αλβανούς. Οι πιο καλά απ' αυτούς κρηγύονται στα βασικά κυριότητα με αμοιβαία πενήσι, και τους κατακρούσανται τα μέλη της οικογένειάς τους.

Παράλληλα, σκοτώνει το φθοστικό 3.500 κατοίκους του Κριεκούκι, οι οποίοι κλονίζονται με την κεραιότητα όλων τους για τη προστασίαν από τις επιδρομές τους. Οι Αλβανοί μάλιστα της ημέρη μόνον κρηγύσει σε λαζαριά στο όνομα και έτσι βροχάται ούτως στην περιοχή.

Οι αλβανικό μετακρούσανται στα πέλας τους και οι γονείς, ιδιαίτερα εκείνοι που είναι νεαροί, κρηγύονται τα παιδιά τους στο στρατόπεδο με σκοπέλας και παραμόνο απ' ένα για να τα κερουν στην Ελλάδα. Η κατάσταση πλέον στην περιοχή διατείνεται και οι ληστείες καταστρατηγικές έχουν γίνει το συνηθισμένο θέμα ούτως στους κατοίκους.

Εκτός όμως απ' αυτά, οι Αλβανοί μάλιστα καθίστανται στην κοπή κρηγύλωση τρυφερόν από και νεαρούς και με απόπειρα βιαιότητα εκδιπλοκρηγύονται στρατός Άνομα προβάλλουν βίαιους το κρηγύλωση αφοβία της κρηγύλωσης, κρηγύλωση, ούτως βροχάλωση οι λαζαριά.

Κάνα απ' αυτές τις σούλιες, οι δύο κρηγύλωση, απ' οι οποίοι σούλιες, κρηγύλωση που κερουν το από από ζή-με τους. Ούτως και σούλιες με λαζαριά κρηγύλωση κρηγύλωση Αλβανών, φρόνιμα και αβίων, τους έκλεισαν την κρηγύλωση τους κρηγύλωση στην κοινοτήτις της. Προ-φρόνιμα απ' αυτούς τους φρο-φροφρόνιμα Δυτέρα σε δύο σούλιες ένα από Κρηγύ-κι, δύο από από άλλους, ού-θως από και από άλλους κρηγύλωση 10 Αλβανών. Απ' τους έκλεισαν, τους κρηγύλωση σε άρχη κρηγύλωση και στην κρηγύλωση.

«Κοντεύει, μας κύνει μέ-τρι και τις σούλιες, μας ένα κάποιος της κρηγύ-λης»

«Είνα οι δύο παιδιά σούλι-σούλι και κρηγύλωση, με τους σούλιες... Σε ένα, που κρηγύλωση από βροχάλωση κρηγύλωση η μία».

Albanian...Front in the suburb of Kriekouki (Eleytheros Typos, Patriotic Right-Wing News Paper, 21 May 1993)

« Άλλωστε ήταν κι Αλβανοί» ...

Αμετανόητος και παθολογικά κυνικός ο δράστης

ΠΡΕΒΕΖΑ
Στη σφαίρα της ψυχολογίας αναζητούνται πλέον τα αίτια της αποτρόχαιης εγκληματικής δράσης του 25χρονου αγρότη / κτηνοτρόφου Γεωργίου Παλιόπουλου από την Αγία Τριάδα Πρέβεζας. Ο Γ. Παλιόπουλος συνάσκει με καρμινιστά όμο Αλβανούς αγρότες στην περιοχή, δύο μέρες πριν από την Πρωτοχρονιά.

Ρεπορτάζ: Γ. ΓΚΟΝΤΖΟΣ

Τους πυροδόλησαν έχοντας μόνο υποψίες...

ΘΕΣΣΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ
Γραφείο Βορ. Ελλάδας:

ΥΠΟΨΗΤΟΥΤΑΝ ότι τρεις Αλβανοί λαθρομετανάστες παραμεταπολούν κλοπές στον στάβλο του και χθες τα θυμωμένα τους πυροδόλησε και τους τραυματίσε την ώρα που κοιμόνταν.

Με τις κατηγορίες της επικίνδυνης ομοειστικής βλάβης, παράνομης κατοικίας και καταστροφής συνολικής και παραζημιώσεως στο δικαστήριο ο 27χρονος κτηνοτρόφος Γεώργιος Παλιόπουλος, από το Μικροχώρι Ημαθίας, ενώ

Αρσενικό: «Δεν μετανοώ». Μια οφθαλμική Γ. Παλιόπουλος (στο δεξιά μέρος της φωτογραφίας) στον αντιδικαστήριο με Γ. Παλιόπουλο. Πάνω: η μητέρα του θύτη: «Πώς μπορεί να ήταν τόσο ήμερος από αυτό τα έδωσαν, έχοντας κάνει όλα αυτά».

πλήρ το χρέμα του μακαρίτη του άνδρα μου. *

Οι γείτονες δηλώνουν ότι ο πατέρας του Γ. Παλιόπουλου, Ευαγγέλιος, μάλλον συχνά τον γιο του. Στην Πρέβεζα

λαϊκό. Πρόβαλα και τον έκομα με το αλκοολικό. Ύστερα του έβρα και με την καρμινιστά... *

Κάνει τη χαρακτηριστική κίνηση και κοιτάζει δυνατά, νόστιμος για το σπασί.

προσθήκη: «Αλήθεια, τι λές, πόσο θα ήμουν; Αν άρχισαν τις κοβήματα για τη ζωή μου φιλάνω...». Στα 25 χρόνια του έχει σκοτώσει ήδη τρεις ανθρώπους.

ΕΡ - Τι συνέβηκε και τι λες σου κόκο;

“Anyway, they were albanians: No remorse and pathological cynicism is the answer of the killer”

They shot them because they looked suspicious. / A boat with albanians sank.

Ta Nea. center mainstream news paper, 6 February 1993. The killer of two albanians migrants is represented as a person with psychological problems, hating albanians for no particular reason. The article to the right informs us that a farmer took his shotgun and shot 3 albanians while they were sleeping in a hut, suspecting them for stealing.

The message given by the court rooms will be constantly the same: the murders of albanians are necessary and have the approval of the greek state and have the wide consent of greek society. Criminal origins and national threat become the arguments justifying hundreds of firing in the heads of albanians, lynching, police operations and public defamation.

Our conviction is as evident and necessary as our exploitation. Every action against us is kept invisible, our voices are nowhere to be found. Its obvious that we are all accused and our only right is to keep silent and obedient, and its called hospitality. And if we are human, its because we can be exploited in something. The claim “don’t shoot the albanians” is nothing more than an invitation to “take an albanian to do the job”.

“I remember one day my father and uncle had gone to the mini market near the house we were renting to buy cigarettes. After half an hour, the bell rings and the owner of the mini market enters inside the house along with some cops. Someone had stolen form the store and what was more “natural” than to come and search at the first albanian house”.

“Once, they robbed the house we were leaving, and the landlady called the police and wanted us to press charges. The police answered that we couldn’t because we were from Albania.”

Learning the rules of discipline

“Whats that fucking name! Put a normal one”

To get baptized in the orthodox church and change our names. To put normal clothes. To learn how to walk properly. To believe in God. To speak only greek and with a good accent. To hang out only the ones like us. Not to hang out after a certain hour. To beg for breadcrumbs and say ‘thank you’. And to work. Mostly that. All these commands and limits that shape every choice we make.

The slightest derogation from all these orders is considered a threat and the punishment vary. When we speak albanian, we are being told off because its not right to speak in a language that locals don't like or understand. When we ask to get paid for our work the bosses and the cops will come and mock us in front of our settlements. When we hang out in public spaces or stroll around in a neighborhood it will be a provocation.

“The people can't stand it anymore. Last week, in two days we had seven burglaries in houses and stores of the village”, says Vasilios Kourkooutas, president of the village of Palaio Keramidi, in a national newspaper, explaining the reasons that lead to the unanimous decision of the village's council for “the creation of a voluntary secret service, that will guard the village community 24hours”, in order to “stop the illegal movement of migrants , mostly albanians, in the village after sunset.”
(A village decides to form a patrol against albanians, Ta Nea 26 Mars, 1998)

The myth of the ‘good’ albanian

“The vast majority of greek society will sooner or later accept the good and honest ones as equals. That's the answer we get by looking at past experiences in our country.”
(The foreign...Greeks, To Vima, mainstream center news paper, 26 October)

“We were hearing so many times people saying that the good and working ones could stay, but the criminals should leave. Or that they don't have problems with albanians but with those who steal and kill.”

“In '93, when we arrived at the town of Patras, and since my parents could speak both languages (Albanian and Greek), the cops were approaching my father in a persistent and threatening way, asking him to become a snitch and give them information about new comers. As my father kept on refusing, they became more violent and more threatening (threats regarding his family). We were approached with the same persistent way by christian organizations, with their bourgeois humanitarian attitude, in order to make us normal people, to find us jobs, to baptize us.”

The criminalisation of our origins is a basis on which the state repression that takes place with murders which start from the borders and expand to villages and cities, are not only justified but also applauded.

In the detention cells torturing continues. Lynching and other acts of racism is the daily bread of the migrants. And when the boss doesn't want to pay our shameful wages, he can call the cops and ask for our deportation, or even shoot us. When a neighbor doesn't dig his albanian neighbors, he can also call the cops. When the teacher doesn't dig seeing “*little albanians that talk back*”, he also can threaten to call or really call the police . The threat of deportation, or actual deportation, are national tools towards many uses. Either it's for our compliance, or for a straight solution of the problem called “being albanian”.

In this daily war zone, the existence of the “good albanian” is nothing more than the expression of a satisfaction regarding our obedience. A good albanian man is not the one that doesn’t steal, but the one who changes his name. The one that wakes up or sleeps in a construction site or a field. The one that doesn’t complain when he doesn’t get paid and turns the other cheek. A good albanian woman is the one that works as part of the black economy and doesn’t ask much, the one that cleans after grandpas and grandmas as if they were her parents, that satisfies the sexual appetites of the locals and understands the problems of her boss. That washes and irons the clothes of all the greek family with love and patience. A good albanian is the one that accepts the violence and doesn’t react, the gets humiliated and doesn’t respond, that is always excusing him or her self from any crime that happens, not just as the usual suspect, but as an accomplice. That understands that the greeks offer him work and something to eat because they’re kind and hospitable, and that she or he should be eternally grateful for that. The good albanian is the only perspective that the greek state and the big majority of greek society has to offer. It’s nothing but a myth.



The hunters of albanians (Ethnos, center mainstream newspaper, 8 January 1997). The violence of cops and citizens against albanian migrants presented as an action film. “300 ate dust”, says the newspaper while informing us that every object in the possession of an albanian is considered as a stolen good.

“When you have an uncontrolled number of albanians, that exceeds 500.000, and moving all around the country, people without any moral restrictions, it’s clear that things are pretty bad... Even if there are some greek criminals, we can see that more than 60% of criminality comes specifically from albanians and that’s where we need to focus.”

(28 June 1999, Dimitris Kuriatzidis, President of the syndicalist union of police, in a news Tv bulletin entitled “in the mercy of criminal gangs”)

“There is an insecurity problem. And it’s completely justified. There is a rise of criminality that creates this insecurity. And it is the responsibility of the state, of the government to tackle this problem. Which means a modern and effective police force, effective border surveillance, registration and control of illegal migrants.”

(Dimitris Papadimoulis, Spokesman of Synaspismos, the party that later became Syriza. In the same bulletin as above. Papadimoulis is the actual (autumn 2018) vice president of the E.U parliament and head of the Syriza’s group in the E.U. parliament.)

And when this doesn’t happen, when this only perspective is questioned, when the violence is returned, it’s considered as ungratefulness towards the hospitality albanians were offered. That at the end you shouldn’t trust these albanians, because they’re all crooks. That they have it in their blood. And the parents rush to protect their “little greek birds” from those albanians, the “good and peaceful” locals rush to buy shotguns and to secure their doors. They start patrolling and witch-hunting the albanians with prohibitions, lynching and torture. They fill up greek prisons with albanians. The message is clear: migrants shouldn’t “bite the hand that feeds them” and they should prove that they deserve the hospitality. A hospitality that bears only submission and no rights. A hospitality marked by blood and mockery.

“I went to meet some friends at a house where my mother was working. I had seen their bikes outside the house. She told me to leave because nobody was there. In the end, I found out that they were accusing my mother for stealing, and that’s why she didn’t let me in.”

“I know that my mother was stealing a lot from the bakery she was working. It’s because she was getting paid so few, that by doing this felt she could work there without feeling such a fool”.

“I heard a story about two guys that were working in the fields of a guy for a long time. The boss was always delaying the pay-out. One day the police came, they arrested and deported them. They were certain that it was the boss that called the police, and so, at a later point they came back to Greece, found him and took revenge.”

“In our neighborhood there was this guy that was beating up small kids from Albania. At a certain point, some guys from our group found him, cut his arms with knives and tied the wounds. They told him that next time that he beats somebody they would let him bleed.”

“Two friends were working in construction sites and had this deal to paint a house. When it was time for them to get paid, the owners refused to pay them before they painted the doors and windows. But that wasn’t on the deal. So what happened is that one of them grabbed the owner and hanged him from the balcony, and finally he paid them.”

Young criminals (or the apple does not fall far from the tree)

“Three girls, high-school students from Athens, will open their hearts to our news paper: «the albanians come and occupy our space, they gather in groups and they think they’re special. They act as if they’re strong.» The issue of fear against albanian students is fragile and existing one. Maria, Elina and Antigoni are very clear on the fact that they have no problem with all the foreigners that flood the schools of Kypseli neighborhood. «It’s them that have a problem with us. They are full of complexes, they always go together, in groups of 15-30, and they curse us in albanian. As if it was something...»”

(To Vima, mainstream center news paper,, 31 October1999)

“One day my sister came to me frightened and asked me if I had stubbed anyone.”

“In the last year of primary school, when we finished all the classes, a bit before the real end of the school year, all the kids were playing in the school yard, and to celebrate the end of school we were tearing apart our books. Some days later the principal called me in his office. I was 12 years old. We were alone in his office. There, he showed me a torn book cover with my name on it and started saying that these books are public property, and that they were lent to my parents by the state. That the police could enter my house at any moment and ask for them, and if they see that we don’t have them, they will make my parents pay for them, or even deport them. And that after all, they were just doing me a favor treating me well, because I was a good student, but I wasn’t really worthy of it.”

Our first lesson in school was that of shame. Shame for our peculiar names, our clothes, our faces. All that shame is concentrated in the fact that we have come from a lowly country, with pathetic, if not bad people. The albanian language that we speak is also bad, as bad are our first efforts to learn the greek language. All these things we will be reminded of constantly by teachers and school-mates. The same thing goes for parents, who will say to our school-mates not to hang out with us because we are thieves or dirty and we might pass them some disease.

“In the second year of high-school a guy had blocked the door and wouldn’t let me in if I didn’t show him my papers.”

Thus, it was made clear to us where our place is: in the last rows of the class room, in the lonely school breaks, in charity and these rare times we were allowed to speak. And when we were allowed to speak it was in order for us to apologize for something concerning our origins or to take position about our feelings.

“Since we were kids we learned that being from Albania was shameful. Dealing with that shame was not easy. Many times our patience to racist commentaries or even physical aggression was running out, and then, we weren’t good kids anymore.”

“I remember that in school I used to hang out only with an English girl. And that in group dances they use to put me at the end because they thought I had head lice, and that way I wouldn’t give them to the other kids.”

“We always used to fight in school. I remember this kid, that his mother was telling him not to hang out with me because I was albanian. I once heard him saying to a friend of his that they should come and beat me up... and we fought.”

These are things that we share since we were kids, sometimes openly, sometimes as a common feeling, and that’s how we built our own friendships, trying to find ways to answer to all the humiliations and the violence in an equal way, which also means violently. And that’s how from being pathetic we change into being scums or whores. We answer to the violence with more violence, and we claim our right to relationships and friendships that spoil the clean ones of locals. While our mothers work in “cleaning the stairs” or to “the madams”, while our fathers work in the construction or in the fields, we built our own terms of survival. We question the place that is reserved to us and we demand space and respect. And when we have the chance, we fill our school bags with things from the super market, we steal fruits from the neighbor’s garden or we steal our parent’s bosses.

“My father used to go to a small cafe in the neighborhood where we were leaving, to drink beers after work. In the cafe we were seating in a corner with other albanians, at a distance from the other tables. Even though I was a kid, I could feel there was a bad atmosphere regarding our presence there. I could see it in the eyes of all those people observing us and talking about us. One day my father had enough and said something to one of them, making him a gesture. Everybody in the cafe, about 8 to 10 men, got up straight away and threw us out by force. They continued chasing us outside, throwing down my father and beating him up all together. I was ten years old and I can hardly remember any faces. At the time, I had sworn to my self that when I grow up I will take revenge. If I could remember who they were, I think I would like to meet them.”

“Where are you from, you...”

“Hundreds of greek nationals abroad live under very difficult conditions. They live surrendered to their misfortune, without even the right to have a church, to have basic freedoms, like everybody else in Europe in our days. Even in the Soviet Union, or every where else in the world people enjoy basic freedoms that are absent over there” (A. Samaras, greek Foreign Office minister. Press conference after his visit in South Albania in 1990, where a population of “greek” origin citizens leaves, called “vorio-ipirotos”).

“When we talk about illegal albanian migrants, that are almost 200.000 in Greece in our days, we do not mean the “vorio-ipirotos”. Very few of them have done illegal things, maybe

because they have different origins, maybe they felt more like home here.

(Apogeumatini, right-wing mainstream news paper, 28 September 1992)

“Many times when we were searching for a house to rent, they would ask us if we were albanians, because they wouldn’t rent to albanians.”

The figure of “vorio-ipirotis”¹ is an other made-up figure, a suffering one this time, that functions as a counter-example of the albanian, since it is a useful figure for the interests of the greek state in South Albania. He is distinguished from the albanian, as for his characteristics, as well as his prospects. Vorio-ipirotis is presented as a person who has problems, while the albanian as somebody who creates or is him-self a problem.

This distinction, which in theory offers different prospects, but only in theory, because in real life violence and exploitation hardly make this kind of distinctions, will operate in such a way, that many of us will conform with it. If being vorio-ipirotis means not being beaten by cops, being able to rent a house, not being stigmatized all the time and have better conditions of leaving, then we will become even vorio-ipirotis. The same way that from non-believers we would become orthodox christians. That from Erjon, Enkeleda, Arben, Mimoza we become Giannis, Maria, Nikos, Katerina.

It’s ironic to think that during this whole period that we were being savagely exploited, that every house had his albanian, the greek state presented himself and greek society as victims of migration. It shows compassion for the misfortunes of greek-speaking citizens of south Albania, and cries out for their rights, at the same time that the very essence of “rights” is unthinkable, even as a joke, for the “greek brothers” that live in Greece. Here, we have very specific rights, and they all go through exploitation, racism and deportation.

1 “Vorio-ipirotis” is the name given by greek nationalists to the citizens of south Albania with greek origins. Ipiros is a north department of Greece, in the borders with Albania. And vorios means northern in greek. So Vorios Ipiros would be the part north of Ipiros, that is South Albania, that for greek nationalists should be a part of Greece.



North Ipiros is being emptied. Big concern and a special meeting of the government. The prime minister visits Tirana.

Alia is emptying the country from its Vorio-Ipirotis, National Depopulation.

(Front pages, Eleftherotypia, Greece's most left-wing mainstream newspaper and Ethnos, center mainstream news paper, 2 January 1991)

“You don't look like one!”

“Everything shows that the most difficult part concerning the “reception” of economical migrants in our country – particularly albanians – has passed. Now days we go through the period of their integration, a procedure that is not the result of a migration policy, but that of the dynamics that developed within greek society.”

(“Every farming family has its “Hasan”, Kathimerini, “broadsheet ” left- wing mainstream newspaper, 18 January 2003)

That's how time passes by, through countless moments of exploitation and negation, controls and cops raids, waiting in lines and being humiliated in Petrou Ralli, where the central migration office and detention center is located, the comings and goings in police stations and public services for a piece of paper, until we start not looking like ones. Not looking that we are able to learn a language, that we are capable of demanding, even through our semi-illegal existence, equal conditions of living with the locals: in school, work and public space.

This expression, that we don't look like ones, is nothing more than a reminder that our existence is attached to a certain position. This of an inferior human being and the image that goes along with that position. Thus, not to look like migrants, means that we look like something else. That something else is nothing more than what is recognized as similar, that is to say greek, and therefor acceptable. That way, our visibility in schools for example, is dealt as a natural derogation that has to be corrected by the reminder that "you can not become greek, you can only be born greek"².

"I therefore accept, without doubts, that this young man, like so many other little albanians that I know, that are born here, and they speak reek, wants to integrate fully in the society that he's living in – and that he was simply seeking the right way, that is compatible with the broadly accepted customs (that is how his integration will be confirmed), and that he adopted them with all his heart: I have no reason to doubt that Ulysses is now a sincere christian".

(Do you renounce the albanian in you? I renounce!, Kathimerini, 8 July 2001)

In 2001 I was finishing primary school and I had the best grades so I was asked to carry the flag during the annual march. Below me in grades, there were a boy and a girl having the same grades between them. greeks. Along with their parents they created a fuss for a long time arguing that 'there must have been a mistake' and 'are her papers surely legal?' I didn't want to have the flag anyway but I was pissed off by their reaction and I was stubborn. After giving it a lot of thought I decided that since nobody wanted me to have it, I would do the opposite. After the march – which sucked- I started to be very careful never to be among the top 3 of the good students again.'

"In 2004 I had this girlfriend. When I started feeling more close to her and to trust her, I felt the need to tell her things that I couldn't find the place to say. Things that had to do with my origins and my non-christian name. With memories from my childhood in Albania. She didn't know I was albanian. I was speaking greek fluently at the time, and I had a greek name. When I told her where I'm from she was shocked and she told straight forward that she is racist with albanians and this is how our love story ended".

"Recently my brother had met a girl that he used to hung out with. When she learned about his origins she never spoke to him again."

In moments like that, all the distance that we have covered in order to be able to exist in equal terms with locals, is being tested again. In moments where innocent questions like if we feel more greeks or albanians express nothing less than a deeper concern about our discipline, about our migrant's history and memory. And that's the main reason why every time we become visible, in every aspect of our everyday lives, it is directly perceived as something dangerous, and that the limits should go back where they were at the beginning. That a relation between someone inferior and someone

2 Famous nationalist slogan.

superior must be once again redefined. Between a boss and a slave. Between charity and ungratefulness.

“When Greece won the Euro cup in 2004, I had gone down in the city center with my brother, his brother-in-law, who is greek, and his brother. In the streets there were a lot of migrants, since the gathering was at Omonia square. What shocked me was that one of the slogans that people were shouting was “albanian, you will never become greek”. It was as if I was set back to my place.”

“When I was in university, we went once to hang posters in the street with our bicycles. The cops stopped us. We complained and they told us that they will take us to the police station for identification. I told them that this wasn’t possible because we couldn’t leave our bikes like that. And the cop, since he had seen my ID, said “don’t be afraid, the worst that could happen is that some albanian steals it from you”.”

“Recently, in the island where I’m leaving, some citizens started collecting signatures against the settlement of refugees in the island. And they asked us as well. I refused to sign telling them that I am also a migrant. You are one of us, they replied, you were born here.”

On the importance of lived experience, for our own memory

By entering this procedure of sharing and discussing about our lived experiences, we came closer and realized that the lived experiences of each one of us are not a personal matter that one hasn’t worked with him or her self well enough, or a matter that hasn’t been silenced as much as it should have. To make it simple, it’s not a question for which we should seek the answer in the field of psychology or something to deal with in a personal way. We know that there are migrants that find it difficult to share these experiences even with their own children. Even when their children, that were born here, affront everyday discrimination and racism. Saying that this things belong to the past is saying only half of the truth. The other half is that to gain the place to express these experiences is a constant fight against integration, that demands our oblivion.

We talk about an organized condition of devaluation and inequality that marks many years in our backs as migrants, and that repeats itself constantly with the same or upgraded techniques. A structural condition that comes to the surface and is being reconfigured every time the social equilibrium is disrupted. Every time that we choose to make our memory and our own lives visible and to defend them. Every time that the structures of power and the fascists choose to point at us and to turn against us. Not simply as albanians, but also as Pakistanis and Moroccans. Algerians and Syrians. As migrant men and women.

Observations like these offer a dynamic character to the lived experiences. They spread it and constantly reshape its meanings. They reshape what living memory should do. To be shared and take sides. To become dangerous and return not only the a finger, but also the fist where it needs be returned.

2.

The greek state-capital
and migration in the 90's

The greek state during the early 90's, capitalizing the fall of regimes in Yugoslavia and the subsequent political turmoil and realignment in the region, seized the opportunity to present itself as the "main stability pillar" in Southern Balkans. This premise has been used as a leading ideological weapon to secure and form greek national unity from its subordinates, a tactic used till the present day. The political order finds itself in great unrest since the alliance between Right and Left comes into being -occasioned by an expected in a capitalist state scandal (Koskotas scandal)- only to accelerate reconstruction of labor relations. On the background, well attended protests for the "macedonian issue" take place for whose organization and coordination the official state would set the tone (by closing schools so that students could wholly participate for example) allowing for a perfect opportunity to uplift national/patriotic constitution and consciousness.

Further in the first part of this chapter we will present some crucial historical moments of the greek state/capital which we think reveal, even partially, its needs and which have led to the shaping of devaluation politics directed to migrants in the early 90's. In the second part we briefly present the legal framework designed to manage migrant mobility and the role of migrant labor in greek economy. The third part deals with the stance taken by bureaucratic syndicalism of the time while the last part with the importance of migrant labor for the formation of the community of the nation.

History and needs of the greek capital

Since we (so far) don't collectively possess a common methodology or a precise understanding for the function of state/capital we will just present some moments and facts from the history of greek capitalism which we think are important and shed light to its needs -needs covered by massive migrant labor after 1990. Additionally, we will use statistical information derived from statistical academic researches and governmental agencies, not without acknowledging that statistics as a science of the sovereignty is nothing but neutral. We will use it however because this is precisely the way that the capital thinks and makes decisions. Lastly our reference to literature doesn't imply an overt identification or acceptance of these works. We will use them to the extent that they remain (partially or entirely) useful for our needs.

Against a logic that wants the greek state to be underdeveloped, retrograde and completely dependent on other more powerful states (a logic that dominates most of the Left), it is important to recognize a degree of autonomy in the way it moves and decides - without, of course, ignoring transnational power correlations. Indicative of this is the history of greek capitalism. Examples of this autonomy are impossible to exhaust here but it is interesting to consider the division of labor in Greece compared to other capitalist countries. Despite it is not being adequate to compete other capitalist powers of the time, industrial production (industries and smaller craft businesses) in 1907 in Greece employs 25,6% of laborers, a portion comparable to that countries such as France and the USA, 26,7% and 24,4% respectively, but still far behind from that of Germany (36%) and England (59,4%). However, it is still evident that Greece at the time is not an underdeveloped retrograde country but a peripheral country with potentials and ambitions to climb up the ladder of capitalist competitiveness.³

³ An article about "the greek economy in the 20th century" in greek "Η ελληνικη οικονομια κατα τον 20ο αιωνα, Γ. Μηλιός, p. 4

As a result of the Balkan wars and the First World War the lands of the greek state expand and its industrial growth is accelerating. After the events in Asia Minor and particularly the destruction of the city Izmir and the subsequent massive migration of greek population of the city to Greece in 1922, the further expansion plans for the greek territory reach a dead-end and at the same time the greek capital deals with a massive increase of cheap labor -even skilled one- combined with territorial broadening of its activities. New capital is being introduced by greek entrepreneurs from the Ottoman Empire and therefore the conditions necessary for an enormous capital accumulation are formed. Industrial production increases by 80% in the time period between 1921-1931. Despite the bankruptcy of 1932 and the international economic crisis of the early 30's, "*Industrial production is growing in the period 1928-38 by 68%, achieving the highest growth rates in the world after the Soviet Union (an increase in industrial production over the same period of time, 87%) and Japan (73%).*"⁴

It is also important to note that after World War II and particularly the period between 1960 and 1973 is the "*golden era of greek capitalism*". The internal migration caused by poverty, wars and the utter prevalence of the fascist Right, provided with cheap labor which in combination with the under state supervision developmental planning of the 50's and the strategic choice of greek capital to connect with the EEC led to the greek state being placed among the most high rates of industrial production and investments among the countries of EEC and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development – OECD⁵. The growth rate of the period 1961-1970 was 7.5%, the highest among the EEC countries (eg Germany had 4.6% and Italy 5.7%). We should not forget here however the labor struggles of the 60's which -even partially- questioned this development/growth and how the greek state imposed the necessary "*law and order*" with a military management of labor and social reproduction (Military dictatorship 1967-1974). Without going into detail about the 70's and the greek state's change of strategy, its further attachment to international capital and its response -in a social democratic way (80's, PASOK)- to social resistance born after the fall of the dictatorship, we will address the last period of interest before the 90's.

The 1980's are a time of crisis for greek capitalism. Indicatively in the period 1980-1985 the hourly wage increased by 22% while the hourly productivity ratio increased only by 1%⁶. The highest rates of real wage increase compared to those of productivity consists in fact a decrease in exploitation, it is therefore a real crisis for the bosses, an actual nightmare! Consequently, by 1985 new austerity politics are being implemented trying to reverse the situation. These politics have been successful until at least 2008⁷ (better not wonder about what happened since then and till the time being).

Since that period the greek capital enters an era of modernization. Central in this era is the change of mechanical equipment and the domain of processing of products/goods, a domain which could render greek capital competitive within international markets. This strategical choice creates a "two-speed economy" where one

4 Same as before p.13

5 Also in greek "Μια «Οικονομία που υποβαθμίζεται»," Δ. Κατσορίδας, Journal Theseis, Issue 52, 1995

"...while in 1960 exports of industrial products corresponded to just 3,7% of the overall value of exports, in 1969 the amount of exports climbed to 34.5%."

6 In greek by "tptg" collective. Visit their site here: <http://www.tapaidiatisgalarias.org/>
"Θέσεις για τον μικροαστισμό και την αντικουλτούρα στην Ελλάδα 3", Τα Παιδιά της Γαλαρίας, Issue 5, 1995, p.4

7 «Η ελληνική οικονομία κατά τον 20ο αιώνα», Γ. Μηλιός,

part modernizes while the other remains stable. Similarly, this duality is expressed in a labor market which “tends to be segregated in two major divisions:

- a. *One part of skilled labor which mainly employs greek males absorbed in big industries. Their salaries are above the national average and their labor relations are regulated by a strict institutional framework characterized largely by stability and security.*
- b. *One part of unskilled labor, employing youth, women, migrants and so forth which is absorbed in smaller scale industry, services, construction and rural/agricultural work.”⁸*

Entering the 90’s the needs of greek capitalism crystallize. But before moving on let us note something.

The question of wage labor

From our perspective, we don’t accept a deterministic analysis about capital’s moves, where capital operates in a vacuum and imposes its strategies in complete accordance to its needs and aspirations. On the contrary, capital builds its strategies based on the reactions and resistances of its subordinate classes, whether they are workers or not. The behaviours of these subordinate classes might be conscious and politically organized. They might however also be social behaviours and common practices which posit objective obstacles to capital’s growth and developments regardless of their initial intensions.

In 1961 the percentage of wage laborers over the entire active population of Greece, reached 33,6%. The self-employed represent a 31,8% and those assisting family businesses (usually members of the family) represent 28,6%. This division happens in one of the best eras for the greek capital. Most workers of the 60’s and the 70’s seek to escape from the position of the worker and become bosses or bosses of their own selves. Many of them indeed succeed and even manage to acquire property (house, car, summerhouse etc) leaving behind their roles as proletarians. It is then self-evident that possibilities for increased profits from capital’s perspective are limited due to the above-mentioned labor relations.

Throughout the decades it has been a steady goal of the greek state to alter labor relations and thereby ensure exploitation of the subordinate classes. To achieve that goal the greek state often and again launches a campaign under the name “modernization”. The recent years of Memoranda have been exactly this: an attempt of radical change of labor relations. This is something to keep in mind when we examine the massive migrant labor of the 90’s because it is through it that new forms of labor where so viciously imposed for the first time to parts of the working class, a condition which is totally normalized today.

8 Μια «Οικονομία που υποβαθμίζεται»; Δ. Κατσορίδας, journal Theseis, Issue 52, 1995

To better understand the trajectory of labor relations throughout the decades let us see the following table⁹.

active (working age) population by position in the profession (1961-2001)					
	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001
employers	3,2	3,8	2,9	6,8	11
self-employed workers	31,8	31,9	32,7	28,2	16,2
wage laborers	33,6	39,2	48,8	51,8	62,7
family members	28,6	24,4	11,1	6	4,8
not capable	2,8	0,7	4,5	7,2	5,3
totals	100	100	100	100	100

Source: ΕΣΥΕ (greek Agency of Statistics), Census Population 1961-2001, edited by the author

As we can see, 10 years later, in 1971 the percentage of wage laborers increases by 5,6% an increase uncorrelatable to the number of the self-employed but rather from the exit from family businesses and the continuous internal migration to the big cities. Until 1981 the same trends are present with no significant changes. During the 80's, the increase rate of waged laborers drops drastically (from 10% in the period 1971-1981 to only 3% by 1991). We can here safely assume that the simultaneous decline in the increase rate of wage laborers and the increase of "real" salary unlike the productivity of labor that doesn't follow the upward trend, became a troubling puzzle for greek capitalism- since wage labor is one of the most profitable investments.

This puzzle was "solved" through migration in the 90's. We can see in the table that the increase in wage laborers is higher than ever -at least since WWII- reaching a high of 10,9% and striking an unprecedented hit in self-employment whose share declines by 12%. This shift in labor relations, in the positioning of laborers in their work, reflects of course migrant labor as well which is almost entirely waged. We need to take into account that a large part of migrant wage labor is not registered a fact which points to even higher numbers. According to ELSTAT, greek Agency of Statistics, the

9 "A statistical picture of the evolution of working class in Greece". In greek: «Μια στατιστική εικόνα της εξέλιξης της εργατικής τάξης στην Ελλάδα», Γ. Πετράκη

first trimester of 2018, self-employed workers are a bit above 30% of the active greek population, meaning a return of the family members to 3,9% and wage labor to 65,6%.

We can conclude that the shift in labor relations that took place in the 90's with migrant labor in the forefront has been a structural change that remains as such till today. The needs of greek state/capital for cheap, wage labor in combination with the restructuring of the technical constitution of capital (upgrade and investment in mechanic equipment and therefore demand on new knowledge and skills from the laborers) and labor market can largely explain the history of the 90's and the receiving of migrants from greek state and greek society at the time. The need, in the end, for cheap labor force to be employed in domains that local working class was abandoning in order to be employed and contribute in upcoming domains that capital required. But let us follow the main characteristics of that story.

Migration in the 90s

On December 26, 1991, the dissolution of the Soviet Union occurred making official the decay that had already begun the previous years. In the collective memory of the western societies, the beginning of its end has identified, not accidentally, with the fall of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989. This change in the geopolitical map had tremendous consequences in the power relations on a global level. The end of the Cold War, the dominance of the USA and the ideological hegemony of neoliberalism changed the world forever as it was known until then. These events also changed the correlation of power in the Balkans. In January 1990, the League of Communists of Yugoslavia dissolved and during the same year elections were announced. From the next year, one by one, the federal democracies had been declared as independent states and the war started to spread in the Balkans. The albanian state, having close relationships with Yugoslavia and following the decay of the Soviet Union, began reforms to liberalize the regime after 1989 in order to transform itself gradually to a civil liberal democracy. One of the measures was taken in June of 1990 and allowed to albanians to migrate to another state. That year was the beginning of mass migration, having as main destination Italy and Greece. In 1991 and after the first "free" elections mass migrations continues and stabilizes the next years (until 1996) to increase again after the uprising and chaos of 1997. These are the most important moments for the migration from Albania to Greece with the rest of the years being relatively stable.¹⁰

The greek state, as we showed in the previous part, needed cheap, unskilled labor force to employ in jobs that the local working class was meant to abandon. At the same time, having connected its existence with the western states (member of NATO, EU etc) and international markets, the destabilization of neighbor states – a respected desire of every honest capitalistic state – gave it the chance to climb on the hierarchy of the states in the Balkan Peninsula and become a guarantor of the West in the region. A job that the greek state does very well until today.

This condition created a parallel motion. On the one hand, part of greek capital found an opportunity to expand in the Balkans deploying the violent liberalization of the markets in those countries and on the other hand, found cheap labor within the greek capitalist formation. This motion of capital had a double direction. And double benefits.

10 «Albanian migration and development: state of the art review», Julie Vullnetari, 2007, σελ.31-35

Legal regulatory framework

The greek state determines the way in which migration is controlled by the 1975 Law of 1991. By this Law, migration is considered as a domain of Public Order and thus it is under the jurisdiction of the police. Therefore, from the very first moments of migration's movement management, the practice of criminalisation of migration is put into operation. Whoever crosses the borders without papers violates the law and thus commits a crime. One commits a crime not for something that has done but for something that does not have; papers.

In 1997, with two presidential decrees, the first "attempt of legalization" of migrants is made without abolishing the previous law of 1991. It is important to see what exactly happened. The decrees defined two phases. In the first phase, every migrant who didn't have papers (permission for residency and work) could take the white card which functioned as a temporary permission of residency and work. In the second phase, everyone who had acquired – through an extremely bureaucratic process – the white card was able to apply for the green card which functioned as a residency permit of limited duration from 1 to 3 years (while in practice was mainly given for 1 year).

The legislative interventions continued in 2001 with the 2910 Law, following the same attitude of registering migrants and linking directly their stay in the country with work. Moreover, whoever applied for a specific duration of residency he/she should pay the equivalent amount of money. An additional class barrier was introduced. In the case that someone couldn't prove his residency for the last year – as it was required by the law – she could alternatively pay the insurance stamp of one year. A measure that objectively functioned as a further deduction of migrants' income and particularly for the reinforcement of the insurance funding system. At the same time, the inconvenience and bureaucracy that these processes required, together with the racism of employees and cops in state's services, made many migrants to avoid participation in the process. Participation from migrants was around 377,000 out of about 800,000 registered.¹¹

The greek state connects in a direct way residency in the country with work. It officially treats migrants as workers. If they don't work, they cannot stay in the country. With the first phase it tries to register migrants in order to map the situation and with the second tries to make a selection. By the law of 2001 it tries to choose among those who already stay and work in the country, establishing the corresponding criteria of residency and work for the last year.

The real function of migrant labor

The thousands of tortures and humiliations on the streets, in the fields and in the police departments, the thousands of deportations and illegal detentions was the norm for the migrants who were crossing the borders since the early '90s and later on. The goal was to make clear to the bodies and the minds of migrants the intentions of the greek state. This treatment had a double target. On the one hand, the migrants who were trying to enter the country and on the other hand the greek citizens. To the former it showed its violence, decisiveness and the cops' club to make them enter the country with bent heads, trying at the same time to persuade the latter that the greek state is "under attack" and protects the greek nation by putting restrictions to albanians. Simultaneously, along with the media propaganda for the albanians "invaders" and "criminals", it achieved to create the following perception – pervasive widely to the

11 A 2007 study about women's migration in Greece by an official institution (K.E.Θ.I.) in greek; "Η Γυναικεία Μετανάστευση στην Ελλάδα, Τα αποτελέσματα της πανελληνίας έρευνας του Κ.Ε.Θ.Ι." Λ. Μαράτου-Αλιπραντή (Επ. Υπεύθυνη), 2007, σελ. 57-60.

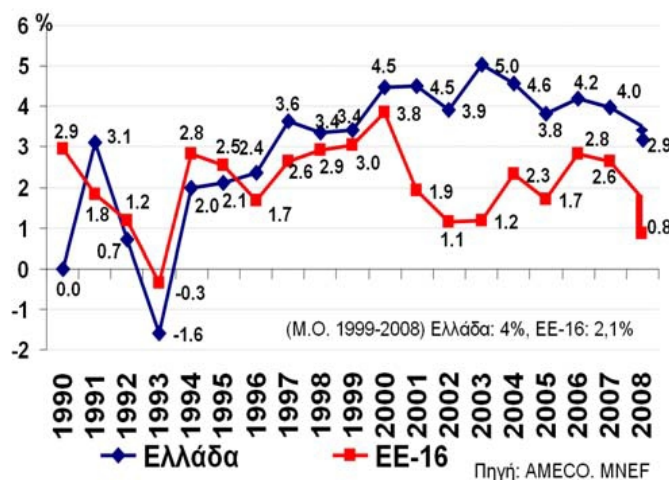
greek society and absolutely contradictory to the daily experience; that albanian migrants were useless for the greek economy, that the greeks “do them a favor” by accepting them and even that “they give them jobs” or that albanians “take their jobs”.

This perception achieved to rule ideologically and build a permanent racist attitude of the majority of the greeks against albanians, even though this had nothing to do with reality. We saw the real needs of greek economy before the mass migration in the previous part; we will now see the reality of the results of migrants’ labor.

“In 2008, 35% of migrants were working in the construction sector, 14,2% in manufacturing, 5,4% in agriculture, 29,7% in services and 15,3% in household services. The vast majority of migrants is employed in our country in a waged labor relationship (92,7%). 69,7% of the workers have permanent or indefinite duration working relationship and the remaining 30,3% represents provision of specific services or occasional works.”¹²

Migrants’ labor is vastly waged labor and vastly unskilled – even though many migrants had specialized in their country after their arrival in Greece they were forced to de-skilling. They came to cover specific work positions. From working in construction, agricultural sector and tourism to cleaning, services and jobs of every kind in houses – that are mainly women labor; which means even more devalued labor either by a perspective of working conditions or by the level of wage. It is broadly accepted (from studies and researches of state’s employees) that with their labor and the increase of demand they had a positive influence in general economy. Either on GDP growth and increase of wages (in some sectors) or to the creation of new jobs and insurance funding.¹³

This contribution is depicted – as we can see in the diagram below – on the rate of greek’s economy growth which since 1993 is on the rise and steadily above the average of the EU (of 16).



12 «Ελληνική οικονομία και μετανάστες: Χτες... σήμερα... αύριο», Σ. Ζωγραφάκης, Χ. Κασίμης (our translation; “Greek economy and migrants; Yesterday.. today.. tomorrow”, Zografakis, Kasimis)

13 Indicatively, some studies that are easily accesses on internet which concentrate a bibliography on these subjects (all in greek); «Διερεύνηση της ενσωμάτωσης των οικονομικών μεταναστών στον αγροτικό χώρο», ΔΙΔΑΚΤΟΡΙΚΗ ΔΙΑΤΡΙΒΗ, Κωνσταντίνος Παππάς, 2014. «Οι Επιπτώσεις της Εγκατάστασης και Απασχόλησης του Ξένου Εργατικού Δυναμικού στην Ελληνική Ύπαιθρο», Πανεπιστήμιο Πατρών-Πανεπιστήμιο Ιωαννίνων, 2002. «Η συμβολή των μεταναστών στην ελληνική οικονομία: Μετά-ανάλυση των εμπειρικών Ευρημάτων», Θεόδωρος Μητράκος, Τράπεζα της Ελλάδος, Κοινωνική Συνοχή και Ανάπτυξη, 2013, 8 (2), 87-106.

Their labor not only is not antagonistic to the local workers but also it had a determinant effect to the further prosperity of the locals. With the bosses' words (our translation);

“The results show that there is a positive and important relationship of the impact of migrants on the probability of employment of the natives, confirming previous studies that have found a positive impact of migrants on employment. Regarding unemployed greeks who are searching for work, no systematic impact of migrants on their probability of finding a job was found. In other words, no competitive relationship was detected as one would suspect.”¹⁴

Migrants' class not only contributes in almost every level of greek economy, bosses' profits, greeks' class upgrade, contributions to the insurance funds, the increase in wages and GDP size but mainly it is the beginning of the implementation of new forms of flexible, insecure, temporary (under the table or not) working relations with contractors and subcontractors entering slowly in the market since the end of the 90's. What is the norm for the majority of waged laborers today was the rule for migrants from the beginning.

The stance of the Left and the trade unions

The largest part of the Left (during the '90s and even today) has defended over time the opinion that greek capitalism is underdeveloped and depended. This perception is accompanied by the orthodox Marxist view of KKE (Communist Party of Greece) about the necessary development of the productive forces in order to reach socialism.¹⁵ According to this logic, a “normal” and developed capitalism should first exist and only after this, the working class should bring the revolution. This perception has functioned objectively as the left side of capital, as the left integration of the state/capital. Thus, the Left – hiding the capital/labor antithesis – defended growth of national economy, modernization and meritocracy, prioritizing the sustainability of businesses etc. The positions of the Left and trade unions about migration were result of these views.

At the time, trade unions considered by the state and considered themselves as social partners. That is co-managers and counselors of state policy. The only thing they wanted about migration was to have a word too, to be able to control migration labor together with the other social partners and the state. Indicatively, in 1991 EKA (Workers/Employees' Centre of Athens, which belong to GSEE - General Co-federation of Workers of Greece) submitted a memorandum on the discussion of the relevant law and proposed for the migrants the following: up to 6 months after the publication of the law “unofficial foreigners are obligated to declare their presence in the nearest office of OAED (Organization for Employment of Labor Force)”. For those that wouldn't do this “to be considered as illegal and deported”.¹⁶ In the same discussion about the law GSEE, EKA, the Union and the Federation of Construction Workers (which is ruled by KKE) proposed the creation of a National Committee in which (underlines are ours)

14 A 2010 report (in greek) by the Bank of Greece about the greek labor market. “Η ελληνική αγορά εργασίας: χαρακτηριστικά, εξελίξεις και προκλήσεις”, ΤΡΑΠΕΖΑ ΤΗΣ ΕΛΛΑΔΟΣ, 2010, σελ. 53-4

15 An indicative example from the greek history is that in the '40s the KKE's (Communist Party of Greece) intellectual and specifically, D. Mpatsis (who was executed together with N. Mpelogiannis – a historical and well known member of the party) that suggested the development of heavy industry in Greece with his book; “Heavy Industry in Greece”/“Η βαρεια βιομηχανια στην ελλαδα”, εκδ. ΚΕΔΡΟΣ, 1947

16 A 2007 report of GSEE and ADEDY with the title; “Unregistered employment and the legalization of migrants; the challenge of migration policy”. In greek; «Αδηλωτη απασχοληση και «νομιμοποιηση» των μεταναστων, η προκληση της μεταναστευτικης πολιτικης», ΙΝΣΤΙΤΟΥΤΟ ΕΡΓΑΣΙΑΣ ΓΣΕΕ – ΑΔΕΔΥ, 2007, σελ. 272

“will participate representatives of Parliaments’ Parties, of GSEE, of the Ministry of Labor and one representative of employers. The Committee will study in national level the situation and **the needs of market labor and production** and will decide to allow the entrance of foreign employees and their exact number. Moreover, in the text of GSEE is pointed out that this Committee, after recording **the lack of local labor force**, could suggest to the Parliament **the conclusion of international agreements** with the countries of workers’ origin.”¹⁷

As we can see, the trade union “movement” seeks to have a co-managing role and contribute to the development of greek capitalism. It thinks as the state. It puts as a priority the needs for labor in sectors of economy and proposes that the number (of migrant workers) that can be accepted by the greek state should be based on these needs. It proposes that the migrant labor should be controlled in common by the state (through OAED), the employers and the unions. It even proposes transnational agreements (according to the paradigm of German state and migration from Greece in the ‘50s and the ‘60’s). Also at the time, GSEE expresses its disappointment saying that “*from the state’s side was never expressed any intention of dialogue and consultation with the social partners for migration policy.*”¹⁸ However, the first law for the legalization of migrants (1998) was made in this way. A committee was created by the greek parliament in which it sought for the opinions of employers, self-employed workers and employees.

It is probably useful to refer an incident, indicative for the identification of the unions with the greek state/capital which is related to the dissolution of the Balkans. In 1993 – in the beginning of the war in the Balkans – the Orthodox Church of Greece organized an open rally in the Stadium of Peace and Friendship (in Athens) to honor Radovan Karadžić¹⁹ (yes, the guy that was condemned for Srebrenica massacre in 1995 where Serbian nationalists killed 8.000 Bosnians). In a period that the entire political spectrum (from the leftists to fascists) saw with a good eye the dissolution in the Balkans and allied with the orthodox Serbian state. Presents in that rally were representatives from ND, PASOK, KKE and SYN (that is all the parties of the parliament at that time). Co-organizers of the rally were GSEE, ADEDY (civil servants’ union) and PASEGES (farmers’ union).²⁰

Community of nation and migration

We saw that massive migration of the ‘90s served the need of the greek state to employ cheap labor force of low skilled workers (mainly in constructions, tourism, agriculture, cleaning and household services) and “push” another local, skilled and educated labor force to other sectors that corresponded to the restructuring of capital after 1985. As we saw that the percentage of self-employed in Greece was and still is high enough, so much that it’s legitimate to say that they form a powerful group both in the level of business operation and in the level of social behaviors, attitudes, culture and relations – what we call “petit bourgeois”. A crucial part of migrant workers was employed by the class of self-employed and small bosses.

Massive racism against migrants is not a general hysteria to the “Stranger” but an advantageous behavior by the local medium-sized enterprises or workers towards migrants who would do their jobs. The incidents of unpaid labor for seasonal migrants

17 Ο.π. σελ. 277

18 Ο.π. σελ. 280

19 Who said on the microphone the following phrase; “No, we are not alone. We have God and the Greeks with us”

20 Article in greek newspaper: «Η Ελλάδα και η καταδίκη του Κάρατζιτς», άρθρο του Κ. Παπαϊωάννου στην Εφημερίδα των Συντακτών, (30.03.2016). Accessible here (in greek): <http://www.efsyn.gr/arthro/i-ellada-kai-i-katadiki-toy-karatzits>

and the snitching against them to the police by their employers are indicative examples of this relationship. Thus, in the beginning of the '90s when the nationalistic bigotry was ascending, at the same time is favored a construction of the nation based on migrant labor. The greek nation, medium-sized enterprises, one part of working class and self-employed had material interests that they could see daily in front of them to oppose against the newly entrant migrants. Racism results to the increase of their income.

The greek nation, in this sense, is not just an imaginary community but a community of interests that really benefits from the exploitation of foreigners. As the researches that we referred to showed, migrants' cheap labor had positive effects on all levels. It is important to recognize the material basis of racism and constitution of nation instead of remaining only in the level of ideas and beliefs of locals.

Ungrateful

Migration as crime. Crime as resistance

3.

Nation – State, the function of criminalisation
and some considerations on resistance.

The nation state and the myth of the big national family

According to Unesco, the nation-state is an entity "where the great majority are conscious of a common identity and share the same culture [...] The ideal of 'nation-state' is that the state incorporates people of a single ethnic stock and cultural traditions"¹. Obviously this definition, like most definitions given by the ruling class (derived from sovereignty), conceals more than it says. It conceals all the violence and oppression employed to impose a uniform national identity and consciousness, using two main tools: on the one hand the imposition of a common language and a common religion. On the other, the rewriting of a common "national" history, tailored to the borders that have been engraved by wars, centuries after the dawn of this "common national history". On its basis, the nation-state is a mechanism built to structure society. So it's not a neutral one. On the contrary, it crystallizes and implements the most important systems/means of dominance of our time: capitalism, patriarchy and racism.

However, what the above definition does not conceal, is the fact that the nation-state is a racist construct by definition and at the backbone of its constitution. It is a racist construct, which acknowledges rights only to those who are citizens, meaning -in theory- those who belong at the same national group. It is, therefore, constructed on the exclusion of the "other", the "foreigner", the "outsider". Of course this relation with the "other" is adjusted mainly to serve the financial interests and reproduction of the local ruling classes. The criminalisation of the "foreigner", the segregation from the "big national family" and the only partly and conditional admission of rights, is still the essence and one of the basic functions for the reproduction of nation-state as an institution, both in material and ideological level. And on this segregation is based one of the most powerful myths built by the sovereignty to sweeten the pill of its mastery on the oppressed: the nation as a unifying factor, the famous "we greeks have nothing to divide between us (fight over)". In a few words the naturalization of class and gender differences, and the corresponding competition and conflict.

This partly or none admission of rights to foreigners is the first step towards their criminalisation. From a wider point of view, the concept of crime, and in consequence criminalisation, the characterisation of a person, a social group or even certain social practices, as criminal, is one of the basic tools state uses to preserve the social conditions that allow its reproduction. One of these conditions, which is the corner stone of capitalism, is property, that "sacred" right. It's no coincidence that within capitalism the concept of crime is indissolubly connected to that of property, and any kind of social inequalities that come with it, as well as the consequent conflicts as expressed in the social field. Burglaries, robberies and some cases of manslaughter extensively covered by state's statistics, are "crimes" related to the protection of property.

For its part, the state, since the dawn of its constitution, is the main protector of property. Through its laws, but mainly its executive power that guarantees their enforcement, the state guarantees that accumulation of property will never change so radically as to become a threat to the foundations of capitalism, patriarchy and the status quo in general. On the other hand, property appears as a necessary prerequisite for one to be acknowledged as a citizen, since for a long time, in the primary liberal democracies, only men with some property had the right to vote. Over time and with the acquirement of better living standards in western liberal democracies, property was defined via laws in a universal form (way/manner), meaning it is a common right – common to those who are acknowledged as citizens of the state. So a sense of justice is established and at the same time a strict framework of protection. However, what this

right requires and defends, is the unhindered operation and development of the dominant relations of exploitation and power.

Since the concept of property is so fundamental to the formation of the state, one is entitled to view the nation-state as a property itself, where the lawful owners are they who own -at least- the same national identity. For us, this means that since "Greece belongs to the greeks", as many greeks say, albanians passing the borders, intruding the "big home" (homeland) of the greeks, are perceived and confronted as outlaws, thieves, uncivilized and dangerous. They become a national threat, and as such, the most obvious (way to deal with them) are statements like "they should go back where they came from", or the more condescending "sorry, but we can't all fit in a country". In this way the depreciation of migrants (that bears gender, cultural and religious characteristics) penetrates labor and is extended to all types of social relations.

Crime and law: beyond authority's significations

As mentioned before, the concept of crime is one of the tools state uses for its reproduction. It is a tool in the hands of the state, in the sense that crime as such-doesn't exist by itself; it doesn't exist out there as a separate sphere. It is, therefore, a concept that itself creates crime as a reality. One has to define it as such, and then society must comply (or not) with this one definition. As a true child of social reality, crime includes/entails the social and class contradictions of each era. And even though the state and the sovereignty systems it represents have the last word in its definition, the process of definition was and always will be a field of competition.

There are infinite examples of social practices that sovereignty defines as illegal, "criminal", but are so widespread that the executive bodies of power are unable to suppress, and thus end up disregarding them. On the contrary, many social practices, which are often born spontaneously from the social base, and their dissemination can become a threat for some areas of power, are made entirely illegal or delimited within a legal framework so that they can be controlled. Consequently, as all social relations are dynamic, so crime can not have a one-dimensional definition. As long as it can be used as a tool for control, suppression and marginalization, it can also become a symbol of resistance and rallying. As much as it can function as a tool for division (of the oppressed) and social cannibalism, it can also function as a way of re-employing and redistributing wealth produced by the oppressed.

As long as power criminalises resistance practices, so the oppressed will appropriate the concept of crime and the form of the criminal, as is the case with the many "Robin Hoods" in the legends of the oppressed throughout the world, or with the modern pirates in Somalia, who declared themselves as "cost-guards", before appropriating proudly their characterization as pirates by the west world, or even with the case of social robbery and its long history in our land. As is also the case of many albanian bandits, who became legends in their homeland, symbolizing a form of resistance to the oppression albanian migrants experienced in Greece, for managing to steal even an infinitesimal part of the wealth they themselves had produced, and which they would never have a chance to grasp within the law.

So, crime is a social variable and its form is directly dependent on social equilibrium. The opposite face of crime is law, that is the structure in which the state is trying to organize society in order to preserve and reproduce the dominant forms of

oppression, and along with these the privileges of the ruling classes. It is a prescriptive ordinance, which aims to impose the proper behaviors in society. Proper, of course, always according to the value system and the interests of the dominant power systems, that is, in our time, capitalism, racism and patriarchy. As in the case of crime, so is the law also a field of social competition, both in terms of its formulation and its application. At the level of its formulation, there are competitions within sovereignty, sometimes true, but more often false, expressed through opposition parties and all kinds of inter-party discussions and interventions of the so-called 'Civil society'. And there are also wider social competitions, expressed in all kinds of protest against passage of laws, which sometimes affect the final formulation of the law or even achieve their full cancellation on a rare occasion.

As far as the level of implementation is concerned, just like in the case of crime, the application of law is directly related to various social relations. A typical example is the various laws that at times are dug up from the past, usually from periods of authoritarian regimes, and are applied again in later times, because the level of social competition allows it, or more often imposes it. Respectively, law enforcement is almost never the same for different social groups. Anyone who has some experience of courtrooms, knows that any offense, theft for example, will not bring the same penalty for a white greek with a certain level of education, as for a migrant or a Roma. Finally, in the field of social competition for law enforcement, there are also many examples of collective or individual disobedience, such as payment refusals or insubordination to the military and other obligatory services.

From the movement's side, we think it's important to be conscious that for both the concepts of crime and law, the final form and the meaning are given by the ones in power, even if both are always the result of social competition. It is therefore important, being the oppressed, to always see beyond these definitions and instead find and bring out their meaning according to our code of values, autonomously and mostly against the meaning sovereignty has assigned. It's no coincidence that illegality and crime, as defined by sovereignty, are often a meeting point for resistance practices of various social groups, such as anti-authoritarians and migrants. A recent (massive) example is the uprising of December 2008, where migrants and locals met at barricades and expropriations. So it is important to look into and bring forth communication channels and possible connections between different subjects of resistance through different practices, including the ones defined as illegal.

The function of criminalisation

By the term criminalisation we refer to the process of turning one subject, individual or collective, into a criminal. In this particular case the subject is the albanian migrants, and the one who "moves" the whole procedure is this complex that we call "ruling class". In order for the procedure of criminalisation to be completed, a necessary condition is the broad social acceptance that the subject is indeed a criminal. In other words, a broad social acceptance of the notion of crime as defined by the ruling class. A direct consequence of that acceptance is that a big part of society aligns itself with the interests of the ruling class. Which means adding in the eye of the state, the cops and the bosses the eye of the neighbor, the citizen... in the gavel of the judge, the shotgun of the self-declared punisher.

Thus, one of the first and most essential functions of criminalisation is the distinction between the “healthy” part of society, as would the ruling class put it, and the “sick” one, the criminal one, which needs a “special” kind of treatment. This distinction has a double function: on the one hand, it brings together a critical mass of people and guarantees a general social acceptance, opening that way the path for any kind of management of the criminal subject. Ranging from the official physical and psychological tortures, to the spontaneous lynching and to all sorts of self-declared judges-punishers. On the other hand, it isolates the criminalised subjects, making them that way much easier to handle, at the same time that it tries to guarantee that the ruling class has the absolute control of their social integration. An integration that is nothing more than a proof of subordination.

Through criminalisation a double surveillance is established upon the bodies of the migrants. An “external” one, “objective”, that comes from the state and from society, which penetrates the working condition and spreads through the whole social life of migrants. It is the surveillance of being forced to always justify your existence in that country. The surveillance of the fact that your existence is identified with crime, and so the only way to stay “innocent” is not to exist, not to get noticed. The surveillance of the permanent dependence from a racist and punitive bureaucratic mechanism. The surveillance of having to learn how to behave, how to be called, how, when and who to talk to, of having permanently to prove your value. The surveillance of the permanent threat of imprisonment, torture and deportation. It is finally the surveillance that ensures that you will stay in your position, the one of the invisible of this society.

The second form of surveillance is the one internalized from the migrants themselves. The one that derives from the internalization of discipline, guiltiness and subordination. The one that wants to make them being a shame for their origins, their customs and their behavior. That wants to make them adopt “willingly” greek names, greek religion, greek language, the “supreme” greek culture. That wants to make them endure silently the other, the “external” surveillance.

Criminalisation also guarantees the denigration of the life of albanian migrants. A denigration which can be reduced to their total denudation from every civil right. Or, as they put it in the first part of this text, in their only right, that of silence. It is easily understood that a person with no rights, who has to confront a whole state mechanism, the bosses and a wide spread social racism, is much more vulnerable. His or her slightest disagreement, let alone demand, could turn automatically into a punishment. Thus they become the perfect labor force, completely dispensable for those who do not need it in a permanent bases; relegated to the level of pure survival, without ever passing the minimum that allows his social reproduction, for those among the locals that need a stable exploitation. Deprived from every right, isolated from society, but mostly cut off from their past, their habits, from all the elements that was building so far their experience, the only thing left to migrants in that state of nudity is their body, their labor force and their will to live.

Seen through that perspective, it is not at all contradictory that at the same time that a big part of greek society was shouting “migrants get out!”, at the same time, the same persons were exploiting in many ways migrants. It is a logic of undermining that goes along perfectly with the state policy that considers the migrants as necessary as their deportations. It expresses an ideal relation of exploitation for the capital, as well as his possibility to reproduce himself with the lowest possible cost. It expresses an ideal relationship for a society that in order to unite around the idea of nation, needs to prevail totally over the “Other”, the “foreigner”.

Criminalisation of albanians as a whole results in that the only presence allowed to them in public space passes through the filter of criminality. It results in that their own lived experience, their history and their words have disappeared from social life, with the exception of the moments that they apologize. Therefore criminalisation, as mentioned before, becomes synonym of invisibility. And that is where the image of the “good albanian” comes into play. And while it’s supposed to open a door of existence for migrants, the only thing that it truly does is to confirm their subordination. Because the “good albanian” is the one that will work one week extra without asking any money, because “the job must be done”. It’s the one that will apologize before even hearing why she’s accused for, it’s the good student, but not too good so as to be better than the greek ones, the one that will speak greek so perfectly, that he “won’t look like one”. In conclusion, it’s the albanian that only exists as an example of what greeks seek from them.

Finally, their total undermining brings the undermining of their resistances. Since every act of albanian migrants that questions the position that they are condemned to, is seen as a crime, their resistances are depoliticized, they become directly odious and antisocial acts. They lose their public character, that would allow them to be communicated, to link with the resistances of other subjects, to found the public image of the albanians on the basis of an other identity than the one of a criminal. Thus, this resistances survive many times as legends or secret knowledge between migrants themselves, as an underground reminder that they are still humans, because they still have dignity... the dignity to resist in their own way and with their own means in the horrible living conditions that a whole society has condemned them to.

Lived experience, its significance and limits

The choice to talk about the invisibility and devaluation of the albanian migrants through their own words is obviously not random. We have borrowed the significance of lived experience from feminist groups of the second wave, which promoted experience as one of their most fundamental tools. It has helped to bring forth types of oppression in social and political life which have been naturalised in such a degree that cannot be considered as such to light. On the other hand, we are aware that the use of experience from a movement perspective is a complicated case which would demand a deep analysis. Unfortunately, there is not a possibility and enough space to do so in the constraints of this publication. As a result, we will refer epigrammatically to some points which we consider as significant and point out the importance of lived experience from the perspective of the oppressed.

We do believe that one of the most basic things that migrants and the oppressed in general are deprived of is the fact that they cannot speak in public (and on their own terms) by themselves about their experiences. Spotlighting the speech of the oppressed subjects is the first step to subvert the dominant trend which considers the writing of the History as an exclusive case of the oppressors. In this way, our personal experiences are set against a knowledge which is so-called objective only because it has the means to be imposed as true. At this point it should be pointed that when we refer to the oppressing and the oppressed we do not mean two closed communities with fixed historical roles that they should perform. On the contrary, we refer to dynamic social roles which are switched and they go across each of us and, as a result, our movement structures too.

The above acceptance leads us to a second important point. As it has been already mentioned, lots of types of oppression are naturalised in such degree that the subjects themselves cannot often realise these types as such. We think that through expression and discourse, internal processes are conducted in the subjects themselves. These processes help the realisation that certain social practices, which have taken the place of the “natural order of things”, exist on the roots of experiences of oppression that either remained unexplained or were attributed to other reasons. Especially, when this verbalisation is conducted in collective terms pointing out that many experiences of oppression are not a personal case or personal mistakes of the oppressed themselves. The structural role that this type of oppression has in our society comes to prominence through sharing and the realisation that a type of oppression has a collective character. At the same time, the mediation of this experience by the ruling class is subverted and as a result its meaning as it is imposed from the oppressing. In this way, the experience becomes politicised and collective resistance against the types of oppression which are connected to this becomes now possible.

Moreover, the fact that the experience becomes collective and the different experiences of each of us are pointed out constitutes necessary requirements for empathy towards the situation of the other. This empathy is the only way to build equal relations among us. Not all of the oppressed are at the same degree oppressed and the majority of the types of oppression, on which inequalities are built, do not become extinct in a magical way because it is written on a piece of paper.

However, we do feel that lived experience as an approach has certain limits regarding the movement and the political use of it. For instance, we are concerned about the fact that lived experience nowadays has come to prominence from the ruling class itself and mostly from its neoliberal version as a tool to assist its plans. Additionally, the prominence of lived experience should be done in certain frames so as to be liberating.

Firstly, it should be done in terms of autonomy of the subjects without being imposed or “offered” from a “caring” type of oppressor. In this case, as experience has shown, the creation of a safe space has played a significant role. In a safe space, oppressed subjects can be expressed without the fear of not being heard, being disdained or being mocked or even that their speech will be appropriated by individuals who do not face the same types of oppression and they are sometimes even oppressing instead.

Secondly, the use of lived experience should aim to empower procedures which desire complete social emancipation. It is clear that lived experience, the refugees' experience for example, can be totally different when it is pointed out in terms of a movement self-organised process or a charitable organisation such as an NGO or a lifestyle newspaper like LIFO which wants to show a more philanthropic face.

To conclude, in terms of the movement itself lived experience is one of the foremost tools through which multiple and invisible types of oppression and exploitation can be brought out. Nevertheless, experience by itself cannot give answers which are either way difficult to be given. It is quite obvious that the making of strategy is incomplete when it is made from above, ignoring the subjects' actual experiences. Similarly, however, the experience can describe a situation but this does not suffice to place it in a whole network of power relations and as a result to build a strategy for the complete overturn of them. In order to become subversive, a critical analysis is needed and also abstractive thought and collective practice. It should be sharpened by critical thought in order for its subversive aspects to be brought out. In this way, its use will be dangerous and subversive for the dominant order of things.

The aim of this brochure

As migrants are invisible, away from the society's dominant channels of communication, they come on the political-social spotlight only when and in terms of the advantage of the dominant class. Namely, as we have mentioned, either as ungrateful criminals, prostitutes, objects of mockery and devaluation or as an example of subordination, as a proof that "they can do it as well"; that there is also the "good albanian", especially when the authorities want, for their own reasons, to be thought as philanthropic.

The main aim of this publication is to contribute, as much as we can, to creating a political space where the voice of the subjects themselves who receive various types of oppression will be heard more. In this way we try to break up the monopoly that power has on the making of migrants' public image, an image which the majority of greek society adopted and still adopts very easily. We aim to contribute to bring out in the surface of social life this "stable and collective motif which describes the feelings and the thoughts of our migrant experience", as migrants themselves state in the first part of this publication. This collective memory which has been condemned to obscurity ought to be written down and become public and political.

It is clear that in terms of this limited attempt we were not able to refer to all the types of oppression which albanians and all migrants in general faced and still do. So, we decided to focus on the aspect of criminalisation which was dominant in the management of these first migrant waves that Greece received in its contemporary history. On the one hand, by pointing it out or reminding it through press or public discourses of current important figures, but also by emphasising its usefulness for the greek capital. On the other hand, by publicising the albanians' thoughts on the issue, how they themselves experienced criminalisation and devaluation, what it was like to grow up in such an environment. By dragging these memories out, we want experiences to be brought out through traumas and resistances as well, which have been hidden under the veil of migrants' invisibility or victimisation.

We focus on criminalisation because we want at the same time to bring out especially crime as one among the infinite molecular types of resistance that are being invisible and suppressed by the system without even being considered as resistance. Unfortunately, we notice that these types of resistance are often ignored by the majority of the antagonistic movement which has been taught to perceive as resistance only what is in accordance with its values and, consequently, what is born by its social environment.

Thus, the Left as a whole (along with the mainstream unions) sees migrants in terms of victimisation. In this way, on the one hand it plays inevitably the game of dividing migrants into good and bad ones, since an evil, criminal migrant does not conform to the concept of victimhood. Hence, a large part of the migrants' resistance, which is expressed de facto through illegal actions, becomes invisible or when it becomes visible it is devaluated. On the other hand, it degrades the whole migration issue on the level of human rights, namely that some poor people ask from a superior organisation to acknowledge them as victims of misfortune. As a result, migrants are perceived as passive subjects, so their resistance becomes invisible once again. Correspondingly, a large part of the anti-authoritarian milieu cannot often perceive these

acts of resistance as such, maybe because it is influenced by the migrants' devaluation in all levels of social life .

On the contrary, we do believe that the struggle of making migrants visible depends necessarily on making visible the acts of resistance that they themselves develop against their devaluation and exploitation.

At this point, it should be pointed out that this text does not pertain to crime itself. It is about migrants, how they experienced the criminalisation, how this was used by the ruling class but also how this use was subverted by active subjects, whenever they were capable, as they returned a little violence from what they daily received/experienced. It is not our aim to search if albanian migrants were criminals or not and if this is “good” or “bad”. Crime, like any other type of social practice and resistance, does not have clear forms and there is no point in searching for them. We are not interested in praising or demonising crime. Crime can in parallel be an act of resistance against a type of oppression and reproduce another type of oppression. What we are interested in is to highlight the first.

But what mainly interests us, which also constitutes the core of this text, is our contribution to the building of equal relations and mutual respect among natives and migrants in and out the antagonistic movement. An attempt which requires the singularities and differences of each one's circumstances to be given prominence, starting from the ones of the most oppressed. Furthermore, it should be understood that under different circumstances of living different types of resistance are created. When these types, which migrants as autonomous and active individuals themselves choose, become visible then maybe a space could be created where our actions could meet and we could participate in common struggles equally, with respect to each other, not from a superior place that our greek identity provides us, with all the experiences it entails.

“I have passed the borders walking two times. The worst way to get caught was if the soldiers got you. They would torture you in different ways. They would put the barrel of their gun in the fire to heat it and they would burn you with it. I know about this guy that they had tortured like that before they deported him. But he didn’t forget. After a while he did a journey back to Greece and managed to settle in a town. Over there, one day in the street he saw a familiar face. Once he got sure it was one of the soldiers that had tortured him, he got revenge.”

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