

**THE MIGRANT QUESTION:**

8

THE REALITY OF THE LABOUR MARKET  
VERSUS THE NATIONALISM OF CIVIL  
SOCIETY

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### *INTRODUCTION*

This document has for the moment only been published in French and English and is a work in progress. The text has arrived at a certain level of maturity, and that's why we have presented it for the criticism of comrades without waiting for further developments in the situation. We will take account of criticism received in the eventual publication of another pamphlet which will then be translated into various languages, as is usual.

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# INTRODUCTION

The advanced capitalist countries, particularly in Europe, have been facing an important wave of migration since 2012-2013. In 2014 in the OECD area, there were more than 800,000<sup>1</sup> applications for asylum (of which 600,000 were in Europe). In 2015, this figure was over 1 million out of a total population of slightly more than 508 million people (in the 28 states comprising the EU)<sup>2</sup>. This is the highest level of asylum applications since the wave of migration that resulted from the war in former Yugoslavia (1991-1995). This migration wave is difficult to grasp for the states involved, given its heterogeneity, not only in terms of nationalities and migration patterns, but also in terms of the range of "choices" of targeted countries of destination by migrants themselves. These choices largely reflect the size of communities already established in the destination country, the language, historical ties, geographical proximity or the routes used by smugglers' networks. These choices are also the result of state policies which differ widely within the EU, and thus again reflect its lack of political integration.

In the current context of moderate economic recovery in several countries central to capital accumulation, after the last cyclical crisis in 2008-2009, the injection of new workforces thanks to immigration is not constitutive of a so-called "crisis" for capital but rather offers a windfall, especially if we look at the generalized decline in the birth rate in the EU. The average fertility rate in the EU 28 is 1.58 children per woman (Eurostat)<sup>3</sup>, which is below the population replacement rate (2.1 children per woman). Since the 1970s, the persistent lack of a natural population increase is combined with a constant increase in life expectancy, resulting in an aging population. In the case of France the prospect for 2030 shows that there will be more inactive workers than active ones. Generally, fertility regulates demographic trends but immigration may contribute decisively, as was the case in the last three years. Between 2012 and 2014, the migratory input played a crucial role in the population gross increase. In 2014, in the UE 28, the gross rate, which expresses the annual gain in population for 1,000 inhabitants, was barely 2.2 (Eurostat). The natural increase contributed 0.3, against 1.9 from migration. Without immigration, the total population growth would be lower by 0.4 points per year in the US and 0.2 points in France. There would be zero growth in the United Kingdom and in Spain, and negative growth in Germany, and even strongly negative growth in Italy.

Historically, immigration has regularly contributed to capitalist development (the typical cases are the USA and several European countries after the Second World War). Immigration quickly compensates for the demographic weakness of a population. The demographic bonus created by workforce immigration should ideally correspond to a demand for labour, but it supplies more generally the need of the CMP (Capitalist Mode of Production) for population and surplus population. Even more, this bonus is often reinforced by the superior fertility rate of the immigrants compared to the general population. In addition, this labour force is composed of young adults who are already educated and who thus enter in the labour market at lower reproduction costs. If the production time of an adequate native workforce runs to around 20 to 25 years for the most skilled workers, the inherent advantage of well selected immigration is to provide an almost completely educated workforce in a very, very short time corresponding to the flexibility of production of the commodity labour power. Finally, a last advantage is financial since the cost of this workforce is paid in the country of origin.

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise stated, figures are taken from the document "*Is this humanitarian migration crisis different?*", OECD, *Migration Policy Debates*, no. 7, September 2015.

<sup>2</sup> In comparison, there are in the USA over 11 million undocumented migrants out of a total population of 320 million.

<sup>3</sup> In 2014, the minimum fertility rate was 1.23 in Portugal, the maximum was 2.01 in France. Others are: 1.47 in Germany; 1.74 in Belgium; 1.44 in Hungary; 1.53 in Czech Republic; 1.81 in the UK. Source: Eurostat, 15 March 2016

The consistent and continuous arrival of migrants over the past year as well as some state intentions – voiced by the German Chancellor – supported by representatives of the dominant fractions of capital, to "welcome" and "integrate", under certain conditions<sup>4</sup>, this new workforce are part of the historical trend of CMP population growth. The closing or the opening of migration flows, coldly considered as tools for managing additional labour forces, aim in both cases to provide the best subjective conditions for capital valorisation. Contrary to common perception, the refugees arriving in Europe are not always the poorest of the poor in their country of origin and generally tend to have higher skill levels than their general population (with large variations among countries<sup>5</sup>). On the other hand, they are generally less qualified than the proletarians of the destination country. Moreover, there is a fundamental political element: this workforce is already domesticated and aspires to fulfil all the requirements of the "host" society to the highest level. Unlike immigration during the years following the Second World War, for example in Belgium, Italy, Spain and Morocco, where these labour forces were recruited through economic promises or forced interstate trade (such as trade between Italy and Belgium, exchanging workers for tons of coal), today it's not even necessary to have a recruitment policy since migrants come directly, at their own expense, and braving all risks to their lives and those of their families. What could be better for capital, transport is free and the commodity itself participates in its valorisation!

In light of the different political and economic situations in the countries of arrival of the migrants, the latter are perceived by states and civil societies of these countries as a boon or, inversely, as a calamity that must be pushed out at all costs. In several EU countries, large-scale migrant inflows are a new experience. This is the case, for example, in Hungary and Bulgaria and to a lesser extent in Poland and in the Czech Republic. This partly explains the rather hostile reactions of their civil societies and the State policies of border closing. Whether in the name of democracy, order, defence of secularism, community defence, religion, integration or national integrity, conservative traditions, reactionary fears, the march towards progress, population aging, the concerned states are in total symbiosis with their ruling classes and send clear signals to their civil societies so that they form a block with them, be it in favour of the hosting of migrants or for the borders' closing..

The aim of this work is neither to intervene in bourgeois squabbles about the most appropriate ways and instruments to "deal with" the so-called immigrant issue nor to suggest an unlikely Marxist "solution" to this problem. We want to go back to the analysis of social relations by using the general theoretical concepts governing the population/CMP<sup>6</sup> relationship and to apply them to the examination of the current situation; and in this light, to decode the facts related to the arrival of these additional workforces. Our political goal, through the analysis of that immigration issue, is to encourage the objective process of proletarians' revolutionary unification. Although currently demoralization prevails in the ranks of conscious proletarians, we have to repeat and repeat again that this situation is primarily the result of the lack of political independence of the exploited classes, and particularly that this is reversible.

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<sup>4</sup> For example: time limits for refugee status; mandatory integration courses; limits on access to social benefits

<sup>5</sup> See later in the text.

<sup>6</sup> See MC n° 6 (in French): "Sur le rapport population/MPC. Bases pour la critique de ladite question immigrée".  
[http://mouvement-communiste.com/documents/Archives/Reviews/rmc\\_6\\_question\\_immigree.pdf](http://mouvement-communiste.com/documents/Archives/Reviews/rmc_6_question_immigree.pdf)

*“It is in relation to this and in this precise sense that communism denies to its foundations the two terms constituting the "immigration question". The category of "immigrant", like all others that claim to be superimposed on classes, does not exist, as from the point of view of the revolutionary proletariat, the existence of brothers and sisters coming from somewhere else, "foreigners", does not pose any special problem apart from those imported into it by the dominant classes with the aim of holding back its political unification. Acting around demands like fraternisation between "natives" and "immigrants", tolerance or even the refusal of "exclusion" has nothing in common with the line of conduct of orthodox communism. The only real aim therefore remains the fight to recover the greatest and widest political unity of the proletariat, knowing how to develop slogans of a general and particular character which are rigorously functional. For the independent working class nobody is really from here and nobody is completely from over there but everyone occupies a definite place in the social relations of production and it is this which in the end guides individual and collective behaviour. To the "question" of foreign proletarians posed by the capitalist states which, according to the depth of crises and inter-bourgeois armed conflicts, rapidly transforms itself into a latent civil war aimed at them, advanced workers and the organisations which are an expression of them respond by an activity of unification of their class beyond differences of nationality, race, religious belief and sex with the objective of achieving the violent death of capitalism in the shortest possible time. To an attempt to recruit one fraction of the proletariat to fight another, they denounce this war as being aimed at the whole of the exploited and oppressed. To attacks against immigrant proletarians, they appeal to the whole of the class to behave in a way which is really fraternal and in solidarity.”* (MC review no. 6, pg. 4-5).

This migration wave is not going to dry up any time soon. Not only is the end of the conflict in the Syria, Iraq, Libya area not yet on the agenda but the demographic and economic factors at work in sub-Saharan African countries always push more proletarians to emigrate, as do the high rates of poverty and unemployment in the Balkans (Kosovo and Macedonia for example), especially among the Roma. Back in 1993, following the adoption in France of immigration control measures (the "Pasqua Act" which hardened the entry and residence conditions for foreigners<sup>7</sup>), we already stressed the need for criticism of the capitalist relations of production. The present period, apart from its cyclical specificities, does not indicate any modification of this analysis.

## **CMP law of population, relative overpopulation and migration of labour forces**

Theoretical clarification of the so-called “migrant question” implies a discussion of the general relationship between the CMP and population and, more specifically, the relationship between population and over-population within the framework of the details of capitalist exploitation. In political economy, population *“forms the basis and the subject of the whole social process of production. Closer consideration shows, however, that this is wrong. Population is an abstraction if, for instance, one disregards the classes of which it is composed. These classes in turn remain empty terms if one does not know the factors on which they depend, e.g., wage-labour, capital, and so on. These presuppose exchange, division of labour, prices, etc. For example, capital is nothing without wage-labour, without value, money, price, etc.”* (Marx, 1859, Introduction to a Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy)<sup>8</sup>.

The factors that act upon life and death, growth and decline, inertia and movement of populations are intrinsically historical, or in Marxist terms, related to a specific mode of production. Variations of population size, because of obstacles to or, on the contrary, of elements

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<sup>7</sup> See MC leaflet (in French): “Mythes de l’immigration zéro versus réalité du marché du travail sur fond de crise de l’accumulation de capital”.

[http://mouvement-communiste.com/documents/MC/Leaflets/tract\\_9306\\_mythe\\_immigration\\_0.pdf](http://mouvement-communiste.com/documents/MC/Leaflets/tract_9306_mythe_immigration_0.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> Source: <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1859/critique-pol-economy/appx1.htm#205>

stimulating its growth, can't simplistically be reduced to the volume of food resources – as Malthus claimed in the absence of any consideration for the concrete conditions of production, and with a pseudo-scientific fantasy concerning geometric and arithmetic growth of human and vegetable populations.

In the modes of production preceding the CMP, population growth was limited by the narrowness of the material basis of production. The very weak development of productive forces, given the property relations that organized and ruled appropriation of surplus-labour, permitted only the reproduction of what already existed. Maintenance of societies, meaning the conservation of social relations, relied on a determined numerical basis and the containment of man's productive power, which had historically dissolved older social formations. During antiquity, considering the demographic pressure on productive powers, forced emigration was a regular chain-link of society's structure in case of growth of population. These states relied entirely on some demographic limitation lest they compromise their very existence. *“To remain civilised they were forced to remain few. Otherwise they would have had to submit to the bodily drudgery which transformed the free citizen into a slave. The want of productive power made citizenship dependent on a certain proportion in numbers not to be disturbed. Forced emigration was the only remedy.”* (Marx, 1853, “Forced Emigration”, The New York Tribune, 4 March 1853)<sup>9</sup>.

However, with the CMP, the reverse is true. The existence and development of capitalism are fundamentally conditioned by and linked to an absolute growth of worker population. As proof, *“between 1750 and 2010, that is to say, 0.02% of mankind's history, 87% of total world population growth occurred”*<sup>10</sup>. Despite very high continental and (sub-)regional demographic variations, since 1960, one more billion human beings comes to fill the ranks of world population every 13 years on average. The greatest world population growth ever witnessed is thus occurring concomitantly with the expansion and maturation of the CMP. Although multifactorial, this growth owes a lot to the growth of agricultural production, thus to the quality and quantity of food – a finding that annihilates Malthus' anti-worker speculations. In European countries, this growth wasn't homogeneous. Marx and Engels established a link between growth of population, wage level and available work by analysing the case of England. During the first half of the 18th century (manufacture), a slow growth of population goes hand in hand with rising wages; while during the second half of the 18th century (large scale industry, machinery), a rapid growth of both population and over-population occurred despite a falling level of real wage. Explanation: it's not so much the wage level that influences population growth as the availability of work. Wage-labour demand regulates the expansion or contraction of the worker population. Yet, labour demand is inversely proportional to the wage level. The weaker the wage, the more the capitalist consumes living labour and the more the population is encouraged to grow, including in order to combine many (small) wages inside the same household.

*“An increasing population appears to be the basis of accumulation as a continuous process. But this presupposes an average wage which permits not only reproduction of the labouring population but also its constant growth. Capitalist production provides for unexpected contingencies by overworking one section of the labouring population and keeping the other as a ready reserve army consisting of partially or entirely pauperised people.”* (Marx, Theories of Surplus Value, Chapter 17)<sup>11</sup>

As value that valorises itself during a process of accumulation and concentration, capital converts surplus-value extorted from labour into additional capital. Thus doing, it reproduces itself at an enlarged scale, entailing a development of productive powers and thus a global growth of living labour necessary to function as new means of labour involved in the cycle of production of surplus-value. Augmentation of the number of simultaneous work days entails recruitment of additional proletarians through the subjugation of population layers that do not yet or not completely participate to production (for example, women, petty bourgeois recently

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1853/03/04.htm>

<sup>10</sup> See Yves Charbit et Maryse Gaimard (2014), *La bombe démographique en question*.

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1863/theories-surplus-value/ch17.htm>

proletarianised under the effect of competition and, of course, fractions of the surplus population that can be reintegrated). Capital thus benefits strongly from a growth of worker population, whether the latter results from a “natural” movement or a migratory one. Capitalist development of the productive power of labour during its phase of large scale industry – by division of labour, cooperation, machinery and science – is thus conditioned by and generates in the same time a growth of population, an enlarged reproduction of the proletariat whom capital doesn't pay any more than nature, these two constituting the foundations of wealth. On the other side, shrinking of population is accompanied by a diminution of productivity and weakening of the potential for reproduction of capital and the perspective of increased valorisation.

Absolute growth of labour volume, thus of labour demand, caused by the augmentation of total capital, can however undergo an opposing movement depending on the two historical forms of surplus-value extraction<sup>12</sup>.

Where absolute surplus-value rules, weak mechanization corresponds to a preponderance of the use of living labour. Thus, any growth of capital translates into a gross augmentation of working hours and the extraction of surplus-value can only be increased by lengthening the working day well beyond the work necessary for the reproduction of the labour force, under physiological and “moral” limits that capital felt historically and still feels. In this case, demand for labour is significant, over-population is small and the worker population tends to grow.

Under the form of relative surplus-value, the preponderance of objective factors of production induces a lack of equivalence of the repartition, between all of its components, of the process of accumulation of capital. The global mass of work still grows but the share of variable capital, the part that goes to proletarians in the form of the wage, grows far less, even diminishes, relative to the share of constant capital and the quantity of surplus-labour (rise of the rate of exploitation). Capital owes its existence to labour it exploits and it *“has one single life impulse, the tendency to create value and surplus-value, to make its constant factor, the means of production, absorb the greatest possible amount of surplus-labour. Capital is dead labour, that, vampire-like, only lives by sucking living labour, and lives the more, the more labour it sucks”* (Marx, 1867, Capital, Book I, Chapter 10, section 1)<sup>13</sup>.

Whereas the mass of production increases, the rate of growth of wage-labour progresses less and less according to the rhythm of the former: less men to make the same quantities or more commodities, here is an iron law of the CMP. To a rising technical composition of capital, comes a relative decrease of capitalist demand for living labour. In other words, the trend of absolute augmentation of labour demand goes paradoxically hand-in-hand with a relative decrease of the latter. In this case, worker population diminishes relatively, but not in absolute numbers. Here there appears, driven out of the labour market, an always growing relative over-population. Moreover, with the modification of the technical composition of capital, the physiognomy and characteristics of the workforce experience decisive upheavals. The “non-qualified”, often migrants, pay the price harshly as they can always be propelled out of the labour market, an obsolete workforce, useless and illegal. This factor is permanent and tends to act with an increased intensity during difficult moments of the industrial cycle (crisis and stagnation). Stagnation and crisis phases only confirm this trend: there are necessarily too many workers when labour demand diminishes.

*“Here it is not the want of productive power which creates a surplus population; it is the increase of productive power which demands a diminution of population, and drives away the surplus by famine or emigration”<sup>14</sup>. It is not population that presses on productive power; it is*

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<sup>12</sup> Bien entendu, « *La tendance du capital est, bien sûr, de lier la plus-value absolue à la plus-value relative donc allongement maximum de la journée de travail avec nombre maximum de journées de travail simultanées allant de pair avec la réduction au minimum d'une part, du temps de travail nécessaire, d'autre part du nombre nécessaire de travailleurs.* »

(Marx, Manuscrits de 1857-1858 (Grundrisse), T. II, p. 258 ; in MC, Modalités de l'exploitation capitaliste, p. 80).

<sup>13</sup> Source : <https://www.marxists.org/francais/marx/works/1867/Capital-I/kmcapI-10-1.htm#ftnref3>

<sup>14</sup> Inanition ou émigration, auxquelles on peut ajouter les guerres et conflits capitalistes, mais également des méthodes moins immédiates et plus progressives comme l'encouragement de la contraception



*productive power that presses on population.*” (Marx, 1853, “Forced Emigration”, The New York Tribune).

This over-population is the mass of pauperised supernumerary proletarians, temporarily or definitively relegated to the fringes of the labour market given their uselessness for the needs of valorisation of capital. Over-population is thus not antagonistic to but on the contrary a consequence of surplus-labour and surplus-value, in other words the overabundance of wealth created by the development of productive forces. The population growth trend of the CMP thus goes together with a polarization of population between necessary and excess.

*“The demand for effective labour being ruled not only by the size of variable capital already put to work but also by the average of its continued growth, the supply of labour remains normal while it follows this movement. But, when variable capital falls to an average inferior level of growth, the same supply of labour which was until then normal becomes from then on abnormal, overabundant, with the result that a more or less considerable fraction of the wage-earning class, having ceased to be necessary for the valorisation of capital, and losing its reason for being, has now become superfluous, supernumerary. As this game is repeated with the forward march of accumulation, it consequently leads to a growing surplus population.*

*The law of the proportional decline of variable capital, and of the corresponding diminution in the relative demand for labour, therefore has as its corollary the absolute growth of variable capital and the absolute augmentation of the demand for labour according to a declining proportion, and finally in addition: the production of a relative surplus population. We call it “relative” because it stems not from a positive growth of the worker population which goes beyond the limits of the wealth being accumulated, but, on the contrary, from an accelerated growth of social capital which allows it to do without a more or less considerable part of its workforce. As this surplus population only exists in relation to the momentary needs of capitalist exploitation, it can rise and fall in a sudden manner.*

*In producing the accumulation of capital, and in so far as it succeeds, the class of wage earners therefore itself produces the instruments of its own removal and its metamorphosis into a relative surplus population. Here is the law of population which distinguishes the capitalist epoch and corresponds to its particular mode de production. In effect, each of the historic social modes of production also has its own law of population, a law which only applies to it, which will disappear with it and consequently has only a historical value. An abstract and immutable law of population only exists for plants and animals, and even then only when they are not subject to the influence of man.”* (Marx, 1967, Capital, volume 1, Part VII, Ch. 25, section 3 – from the French edition, our translation)

Overpopulation or excess worker population is thus a necessary result of the CMP, *“in the sense where an augmentation of the technical and organic composition of capital leads to the liquidation of a certain number of workers who’ve become surplus in relation to the needs of capital accumulation. This population, periodically separated from the labour process, is only useless relative to the imperatives and conditions determined by the valorisation of the period under consideration.”* (MC Review no. 4, “Los Angeles”, part 5). Necessary and useful because a good part of this population is used as a reserve for the periods of production growth, it increases the competition between proletarians and contributes to reduce wages, specifically in depressed phases of the economic cycle. A cyclical wage level adjustment tool, the growth of population reinforces the historical trend of depreciation of the labour force in the CMP.

*“Big industry has a constant need for a reserve army of workers not occupied for the moments of overproduction. Is not the principal aim of the bourgeoisie towards the worker, in general, to have the labour-commodity as cheaply as possible, which is only possible if the supply of this commodity is the greatest possible relative to the demand for it, that is to say if there exists the greatest overpopulation possible?”* (Marx, 1847, Wage Labour and Capital, “Annex: the wage”)<sup>15</sup>.

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<sup>15</sup> Source: <https://www.marxists.org/francais/marx/works/1847/12/km18471230-8.htm>

The CMP presupposes and thus stimulates an absolute growth of population, at the same time as it creates conditions for the existence of a relative over-population. That said, in the most advanced capitalist countries, accumulation produces at the same time conditions, both objective and subjective, able to foster trends counter to population growth and thus, over-population. The current diminution of fertility in the most advanced capitalist countries is linked to many factors: the rise of the average standard of living and drastically reduced infant mortality, increased participation of women in wage-labour coupled with improvement of their level of education and social status, establishment of compulsory schooling and its extension that tends to delay marriage, acceptance and easing of access to contraception, modernisation of social relations (specifically the evolution of sexual relations and the retreat of religion) and, last but not least, the collapse of the traditional family or rise of single lifestyles. All of this curbs the reproduction of population, as European fertility rates, greatly below the replacement rate, show very well. This phenomenon can potentially continue to the point beyond which the proletariat diminishes in absolute numbers. The consequences of this phenomenon are amplified by population ageing, causing a growing scarcity of working age proletarians in relation to the rest of their class. Immigration of new workforces answers the capitalist demand thus created.

At the root, amongst other things, of every racism, of all competitive confrontations between proletarians and, more generally, between human beings is *“necessary labour, compressed to the extreme, and surplus labour, extended as far as possible according to the objective and subjective conditions of production, opposes and confront each other from the beginning in the factory and within the necessary worker population, then on the scale of the whole of society between the necessary and supernumerary fractions of the workforce. The necessary worker population, whose growth in numbers never ceases, is submitted to the pressure of its own productivity which in the end renders one part of it obsolete, unusable in the environment of the CMP: the more the relative wage (the relation between the wage and surplus value, the inverse of the rate of exploitation) shrinks, the more fractions of the employed exploited class are thrown out of production. Necessary labour, while it gives up certain portions of itself to surplus labour, transforms some others into superfluous labour. Here’s the internal contradiction between the process of immediate production and the end of capitalism and here is how, in the same way, from necessary labour we arrive at general surplus population under capitalism. The dimension of progress, in these circumstances, is found to be deformed, because its measure is expressed in the scale of pauperisation, engendered by the creative quality of social labour. In the face of the immense piling up of wealth in the form of value rises an army of beggars, of poor, of workers with nothing to do, of proletarians without a social purpose.”* (MC review no. 6, “Rapport population/MPC”).

## **The different types of relative overpopulation**

The analysis of class composition that populates the society of capital is a fundamental and priority task for communists. Its origins and its relationship to the problem of the unification of the proletariat are obvious to all communists. Trying to understand class composition on the basis of a tangible dynamic case like this is therefore a difficult but vital work. The point is to differentiate accurately the current immigration waves according to their origins and technical compositions that characterize them, to determine those that will participate directly in necessary labour or who will join one of the forms of the relative surplus population characterized by Marx in Volume I of Capital. Marx segments the supernumerary proletarian population into several categories. It is important to apply the categories today to the migration issue to better understand what is at stake in the current crisis and the likely changes in European policies up until 2050.

Marx observed that the working population is divided into:

- 1) An active industrial army composed of workers and employees (simple difference of contract) actually used in the production sphere; necessary population.
- 2) A floating relative overpopulation which corresponds, further to the changes in the technical composition of capital, to the fraction of the working population which, no longer

finding any place in production, finds itself "in transition", either looking forward to a new phase of growth or needing to be readjusted to the new technical conditions due to the recurring introduction of science in production (the bourgeoisie calls it frictional unemployment).

3) A latent relative overpopulation which corresponds to the phenomenon of the emigration of rural populations (rural exodus due to the development of the productive techniques in the countryside and the harsh conditions of existence) towards urban centres in the hope of finding employment and thus constituting, on the edges of towns, more or less stable slums that can function as reserves of labour.

4) A stagnant relative overpopulation which corresponds to the surplus population both in industry and in the countryside and whose main function, along with its numerical expansion, is to exert downward pressure on wages. In periods of crisis and stagnation, its growth strengthens this pressure, also called "compulsion to work" (the bourgeoisie speaks then about cyclical unemployment). "This layer of the proletariat contains all the "supernumeraries of large scale industry" which have lost all hope of finding a stable job and who must be content with irregular ways of earning a living and who represent an inexhaustible reservoir of labour power available to capital. (...) When the members of this layer work, they permanently oscillate between productive and unproductive work. The various jobs they have generally don't need much training which means that they can easily (without even noticing it) move from productive to unproductive work." (MC Review no. 4, Los Angeles, part 5).

5) A mass of pauperized supernumerary population, which only very rarely finds some employment; chronic unemployed people, the disabled, elderly, benefit recipients of various kinds.

6) The lumpenproletariat, which very generally does not maintain a wage relationship as a dominant element of its social position. The lumpenproletariat is not a moral category. As all the definitions of classes and sectors of society, we must start from the position occupied in the social production/reproduction, in the social relationships of production/reproduction.

Of course, lumpens can come from the latent and stagnant overpopulation. But this overpopulation has meaning, in capitalism, only if it intervenes (indirectly in this case) on the labour market, as a burden, threat and scarecrow for the waged population directly mobilized in the production/reproduction of the social relations of capital. The lumpens leave the supernumerary part of the proletariat to devote themselves to hustling, most of the time deals of some kind (drugs, bodies - including their own -, thefts, receiving stolen property, etc.). This type of reproduction is more akin to the most rudimentary forms of commercial capital than to the leasing of its ability to work, characteristic of all the proletarians, unemployed or not. The wage relationship gives way to the exchange of commodities, sometimes even in its primitive form of barter.

The dividing line between stagnant proletarian overpopulation and lumpenproletariat fluctuates: some can devote themselves to "lumpen" activities while remaining available to join the army of proletarians with a job. This is particularly true for sectors of the youth of the big capitalist metropolises, but it's not just them.

*"The industrial reserve army, during the periods of stagnation and average prosperity, weighs down the active labour-army; during the periods of over-production and paroxysm, it holds its pretensions in check. Relative surplus population is therefore the pivot upon which the law of demand and supply of labour works. It confines the field of action of this law within the limits absolutely convenient to the activity of exploitation and to the domination of capital."*

(Marx. Capital Volume One. VII° section. Ch. XXV. III)

*"In the centres of modern industry — factories, manufactures, ironworks, mines, &c. — the labourers are sometimes repelled, sometimes attracted again in greater masses, the number of those employed increasing on the whole, although in a constantly decreasing proportion to the scale of production. Here the surplus population exists in the floating form."*

(Marx. Capital Volume One. VII° section. Ch. XXV. IV)

*"As soon as capitalist production takes possession of agriculture, and in proportion to the extent to which it does so, the demand for an agricultural labouring population falls absolutely, while the accumulation of the capital employed in agriculture advances, without this repulsion being, as in non-agricultural industries, compensated by a greater attraction. Part of the agricultural population is therefore constantly on the point of passing over into an urban or manufacturing proletariat, and on the look-out for circumstances favourable to this transformation. (Manufacture is used here in the sense of all non-agricultural industries.) This source of relative surplus population is thus constantly flowing. But the constant flow towards the towns pre-602supposes, in the country itself, a constant latent surplus population, the extent of which becomes evident only when its channels of outlet open to exceptional width. The agricultural labourer is therefore reduced to the minimum of wages, and always stands with one foot already in the swamp of pauperism."*

(Marx. Capital Volume One. VII° section. Ch. XXV. IV)

*"The third category of the relative surplus population, the stagnant, forms a part of the active labour army, but with extremely irregular employment. Hence it furnishes to capital an inexhaustible reservoir of disposable labour power. Its conditions of life sink below the average normal level of the working class; this makes it at once the broad basis of special branches of capitalist exploitation. It is characterised by maximum of working-time, and minimum of wages. We have learnt to know its chief form under the rubric of "domestic industry." It recruits itself constantly from the supernumerary forces of modern industry and agriculture, and specially from those decaying branches of industry where handicraft is yielding to manufacture, manufacture to machinery. Its extent grows, as with the extent and energy of accumulation, the creation of a surplus population advances. But it forms at the same time a self-reproducing and self-perpetuating element of the working class, taking a proportionally greater part in the general increase of that class than the other elements. In fact, not only the number of births and deaths, but the absolute size of the families stand in inverse proportion to the height of wages, and therefore to the amount of means of subsistence of which the different categories of labourers dispose. This law of capitalistic society would sound absurd to savages, or even civilised colonists. It calls to mind the boundless reproduction of animals individually weak and constantly hunted down."*

(Marx. Capital Volume One. VII° section. Ch. XXV. IV)

*"The lowest sediment of the relative surplus population finally dwells in the sphere of pauperism. Exclusive of vagabonds, criminals, prostitutes, in a word, the "dangerous" classes, this layer of society consists of three categories. First, those able to work. One need only glance superficially at the statistics of English pauperism to find that the quantity of paupers increases with every crisis, and diminishes with every revival of trade. Second, orphans and pauper*

*children. These are candidates for the industrial reserve army, and are, in times of great prosperity, as 1860, e.g., speedily and in large numbers enrolled in the active army of labourers. Third, the demoralised and ragged, and those unable to work, chiefly people who succumb to their incapacity for adaptation, due to the division of labour; people who have passed the normal age of the labourer; the victims of industry, whose number increases with the increase of dangerous machinery, of mines, chemical works, &c., the mutilated, the sickly, the widows, &c."*  
(Marx. Capital Volume One. VII° section. Ch. XXV. IV)

Not all the migrants who've recently arrived in Europe are equal with regards to the needs of valorisation of capital. On one side, there are those who come with a good level of education (teachers, doctors, nurses, engineers, technicians, skilled workers etc.), mainly of Syrian origin, who are destined to stay in Europe and who, for the most part, will be integrated into the necessary population or will occasionally join the floating relative overpopulation.

On the other side, there are those who, if they can remain (often clandestinely) in Europe, will be directly incorporated into the stagnant reserve army (for the most fortunate) or will be in the category of the pauperized supernumeraries, and perhaps will fall into the lumpenproletariat. This part is mostly comprised of migrants from Africa or the Eastern European countries.

*"Looking at the education distribution of people residing in the EU who came as humanitarian migrants between 1988 and 1993, a large number of whom are from the former Yugoslavia, reveals that on average 15% have a tertiary degree (33% in Sweden, compared to less than 10% in Austria and Germany).*

*Among the recently arrived Syrian nationals, the share of people with a post-secondary diploma appears to be much higher. According to Statistics Sweden, more than 40% of Syrians in the country in 2014 have at least upper secondary education, compared to 20% of those from Afghanistan and 10% for those coming from Eritrea.*

*In the case of Germany, there is no systematic recording of the educational level and qualifications of asylum seekers, but they are asked (on a voluntary basis) about their education and occupational skills during the application procedure. On average for those who came in 2014, 15% of the asylum seekers had a tertiary degree, 16% had upper secondary education (Gymnasium), 35% lower secondary education, 24% attended only primary school and 11% had not attended school at all. Syrian refugees, however, were on average better educated: 21% of the Syrian asylum seekers who came to Germany between the beginning of 2013 and September 2014 said that they had attended university, 22% had received upper secondary education and 47% had obtained either lower secondary or primary education.*

*In the case of France, based on survey data (ELIPA), in 2010, 14% of all refugees had attained tertiary educational level and 43% at least secondary education. The percentage of tertiary educated was slightly higher for those coming from Europe (20%) and lower for those originating from sub-Saharan Africa (10%).*

*Refugees have skills (many of them have college degrees) even if they are less highly educated than the general population in the welcoming countries and in most cases also less than migrant workers. Enabling refugees to become language-proficient, to get their educational and professional credentials recognised and in some cases to complement their skills with additional training, will be critical for their successful integration as well as for a positive economic impact of these flows in destination countries.*

(Migration Policy Debates, OECD, No. 7, September 2015, pg. 8)

This differentiation/separation performed within the working class by capital and its ruling classes is unfortunately important to note because it is decisive in the case of class struggle. If we look at industrial workers and the proletarian layer which finds itself in the stagnant relative overpopulation, important differences appear. On the side of the stagnant overpopulation:

*“They have the ideological advantage over the factory worker of not being subject to any workplace patriotism and/or cult of the commodity produced but they combine several points of weakness which make them, despite or rather because of their complete destitution, particularly vulnerable. The most important is the lack of perception, which does exist amongst industrial workers having a steady job, of the social power of productive labour, of its central character in the CMP. This follows from the disorder, the extreme atomisation which they are victims of, coming from the chronic instability of work and other arrangements and the great closeness and mixing with the sub-proletariat which part of the individuals who belong to this social fraction regularly sink into. These determined “sociological” traits constitute a factor of instability within the revolutionary class. Such instability is well explained by the eruptive nature of its actions, by an almost total lack of understanding of the necessity of organisation and planning of the fight and by the singularly systematic absence of any clear objectives of the struggle. The proletarians “supernumerary forces of modern industry” – stagnant form – seem to partially call into question, by their incessant coming and going between the proletariat, the semi-proletariat and the sub-proletariat, the scientific communist thesis which says that: “it is at present only the proletariat which has really become a stable class of the population.” (Engels, *The Situation of the Working Class in England*) Without fundamentally contradicting it, these factual elements are a living partial dialectical negation of it with which organised communism will certainly have to address in its theoretical confrontation. Workers of big mechanised industry cannot, in the decisive battles against exploitation to come, do without this formidable army of brave troops and will, with their party, have to pose all the questions which are linked to the persistence of the division with it in class action.” (MC Review no. 4. Los Angeles part 5)*

## **Migration is inherent to humanity**

**Capital only increases it in size and frequency. Migration cycles are largely aligned with cycles of capital accumulation.**

There is no century without population displacement. Since the beginning of human history, humans have moved, often under duress, hoping to settle in more hospitable places to find better living conditions. Whether fleeing natural disasters, be they seasonal movements or a matter of survival, migration is a fundamental trend in human history. Since the Ancient period (Greek, Roman, "barbarian" empires etc.) until the end of the Middle Ages, and during the Renaissance, population movements are a constant.

From the sixteenth century, and for over 300 years, millions of African slaves were deported to the Americas and the Caribbean. As slavery was abolished, other workers' flows succeeded it, particularly to the USA and to the overseas European colonies. The United Kingdom would show itself to be one of the champions in the management of the workforce through immigration, with a double advantage: get rid of the unwanted and use them in the colonies (the case of the settlement of Australia by convicts is a good example).

The development of capital is made possible because of a massive migratory movement corresponding to its valorisation needs on a scale never reached before. Massively, capital expelled farmers from their land to push them to join its armies of manufacturing, and later factory, workers. This rural exodus, which began in England, would accompany every state in its capitalist development, generating and widely utilising the latent overpopulation of the countryside.

Legal borders (i.e. an official geographical boundary, recognized by other nation states, which includes or excludes people), were created with the nation states. Thus with it comes the concept of illegal immigration. With the birth and settlement of the nation state, which is objectively reflected in territories, borders, nationalities, armies, etc., the issue of migration flows takes on a new meaning. This particular problem is only an expression of workforce management within capitalism. It is of considerable importance in this context and it becomes vital for states to be able to manage and to integrate this additional labour force, which sometimes acts as a weapon against the "national" labour force and sometimes is used to fill gaps in the labour market.

The United States are a good illustration of this. This country was almost entirely built on immigration (mainly European in its infancy, but also Asian and African). The USA have "welcomed", over the decades, millions of migrants who fed and developed this immense centre of capital accumulation. Let us recall the famous sonnet engraved on the Statue of Liberty, "*Give me your tired / Your poor. Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free...*" These same United States would not hesitate, in the 1920s, to drastically restrict the flow of workers in a difficult period of the cycle of accumulation. They will always be able to play with these labour flows as an adjustment mechanism to regulate the domestic labour market. The United States still remains, at present, the most important country for immigration in the world.

Between 1846 and 1939, over 50 million European emigrants came to populate or to take refuge in the "new world" or in the various colonies, making Europe "*the most important starting point ever known in the history of man.*"<sup>16</sup> Between 1860 and 1915, nearly 3 million Chinese chose a new country in Southeast Asia, including Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Philippines. In the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, there were also large population movements within Europe. Many Irish came to Britain after the Great Famine of the 1840s caused by the fall in production of potatoes (due to the "potato blight"). A few years later, France received many Belgians and Italians coming to work in its new industries that lacked manpower. In 1881, there were nearly 240,000 Italians in France, nearly 500,000 in 1911 and 800,000 in 1931. The Polish immigration arrived around 1900, firstly in the agricultural sector and then in the Northern coal mines from 1909.

The passage from the period of formal submission of labour to capital (highly consumptive of labour with little or no skill) to the real subsumption period has brought a change in the conditions and terms of immigration. During the first period (formal subsumption), migrants (with the notable exception of Asians<sup>17</sup>) were almost able to move without restriction as soon as they could afford a transport ticket and eventually take a medical examination when they arrived. This new and large labour force could begin a "new" life in another country, without anyone asking them for a residence or work permit, or a "green card." Gradually, depending on domestic labour market needs, the states concerned are pushed to increase their control and select the workforce and therefore control migratory flows. It is no longer a question of bulk importation of all types of workers, but rather of selecting the best workers with technical skills corresponding to the present needs of valorisation. During the 1920s, the United States ceased to let Europeans and Latin Americans enter freely and, in the 1930s, Canada began to restrict immigration from southern and eastern Europe in order to encourage Anglophone migrants. These restrictions, fed by xenophobia – which was increased by the deep trauma of the economic crisis and then by the two world wars – suddenly put a stop to "voluntary migration" over much of the planet between the 1920s and 1950s.

The European continent has experienced several large-scale population movements in a more or less recent past. The two world wars and the end of the colonial empires caused, during the twentieth century, an exodus and forced displacement of population never seen before. The period immediately succeeding the Second World War was marked by important population transfers, particularly to Germany and to Poland, following the redrawing of borders. Then, the post-colonial period saw great returns of population to France in 1962 (about 800,000), Portugal in 1970 (about 600,000 people in three years) and, to a lesser extent, the United Kingdom and Belgium. Large migrations were also recorded for other reasons, for example, in Greece between 1989 and 1993 (up to 160,000 Pontic Greeks<sup>18</sup> from the former Soviet Union and Turkey) and

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<sup>16</sup> See Gildas Simon (1995), *Géodynamique des migrations internationales dans le monde*.

<sup>17</sup> "Since the 1850s, in the Australian colonies, then in most major settlement countries, laws were passed to prohibit entry to the Chinese, Indians, Japanese and other Asians. After the founding of the Commonwealth of Australia in 1901, one of the first adopted laws instituted the so-called policy of "White Australia"; A member of Parliament even declared that his countrymen were "committed to preserving Australia from invasion and contamination by foreigners." Canada and the United States followed suit in the 1880s, double-locking their doors to Asian immigrants." (The OECD Insights: International Migration P.28.)

<sup>18</sup> Coming from the Greek word *Pontos* ("sea"), referring to the eastern borders of the Black Sea.



Germany between the late 1980s and the early 2000s (more than 3 million East Germans). Outside Europe, Israel received about 1 million Jews<sup>19</sup> with their families from the former Soviet Union in the decade after 1989.

In recent years there have flows of migrants of comparable size, particularly to Spain, whose foreign-born population tripled (to 4 million) between 2000 and 2010; to the UK where the population born in the EU increased by 1 million since the enlargement of the EU in 2004; but also to Germany, that had become, even before the current wave of migration, the second country of immigration in the OECD, after the US, with more than 500,000 permanent entries in 2014 (twice the 2007 figure). During the 1992-95 conflict in ex-Yugoslavia, there were at least 1.2 million people displaced, including about 800,000 to OECD countries and more than 300,000 to Germany alone. Also in 1992, over 300,000 Albanians were trying to settle in Greece and Italy. The Kosovo war of 1998-99 resulted in more large-scale movements, again especially to neighbouring countries, but also towards OECD ones. Germany recorded 78,000 asylum requests, Switzerland 53,000, Belgium and the UK about 25,000 each and Austria 15,000. All these population movements were absorbed by those countries with very limited impact on their labour markets. In most cases, these countries benefited economically from these arrivals, at least in the long term.

Since 2012-2013, the immediate impact of the present wave of migration is mostly concentrated on a few countries. In the Middle East, Turkey is one of the countries most affected by this flux. Nearly 1.9 million Syrian refugees and a large number of refugees from Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan (about 300,000) are settled on its territory. Lebanon, with around 1.2 million Syrian refugees (out of a population of 4 million), Jordan (more than 630,000 Syrian refugees) and Egypt (130,000 Syrians) are also affected. Within the EU, Italy, Greece and Hungary are heavily affected, being neighbouring countries (although here the migrant population is mostly passing through to somewhere else), but the main destination countries are, in absolute terms, Germany, and, relative to their population, Sweden (7.8 per 1,000 inhabitants), Austria (3.3 per 1000) and Switzerland (2.7 per 1000). Germany accepted at least 800,000 migrants in 2015, 1% of its total population, Sweden 74,000 (81,300 in 2014) and Hungary over 65,000 (however, most leave the country to make a request for asylum or residence elsewhere). Britain recorded 31,200 requests for asylum in 2014 and 39,000 in 2015<sup>20</sup>, compared to over 100,000 in 2002. In Switzerland, there were 22,000 in 2014 compared to nearly 40,000 each year between 1991 and 1999 (mainly ex-Yugoslavia). France had 60,000 new migrants in 2014.

So far, public attention has focused on the influx of Syrian refugees into Europe because of the conflict<sup>21</sup> that is taking place on the Syrian and Iraqi territory. In fact, the origins of the refugees are very heterogeneous, much more than during the migratory wave caused by the conflict in the former Yugoslavia. There are also more minors and unaccompanied children now than in the past. In 2014, 24,000 unaccompanied minors accounted for 4% of all asylum seekers in the EU. In 2014, the main countries of origin of asylum seekers in the EU were Syria (21%), Kosovo (9.6%), Eritrea (6.4%) and Iraq (2.6%). In 2015, the composition changed. Together, the migration from Syria, Eritrea and Iraq (the only nations covered by the resettlement scheme proposed by the European Commission on 9 September 2015), represented "no more" than a quarter of all asylum applications recorded in the first six months of the year. However, this share increased to more than a third in June 2015 and will have continued to grow. Other migrants are also Afghans, Pakistanis, Albanians, Nigerians, Somalis, Sudanese and Gambians.

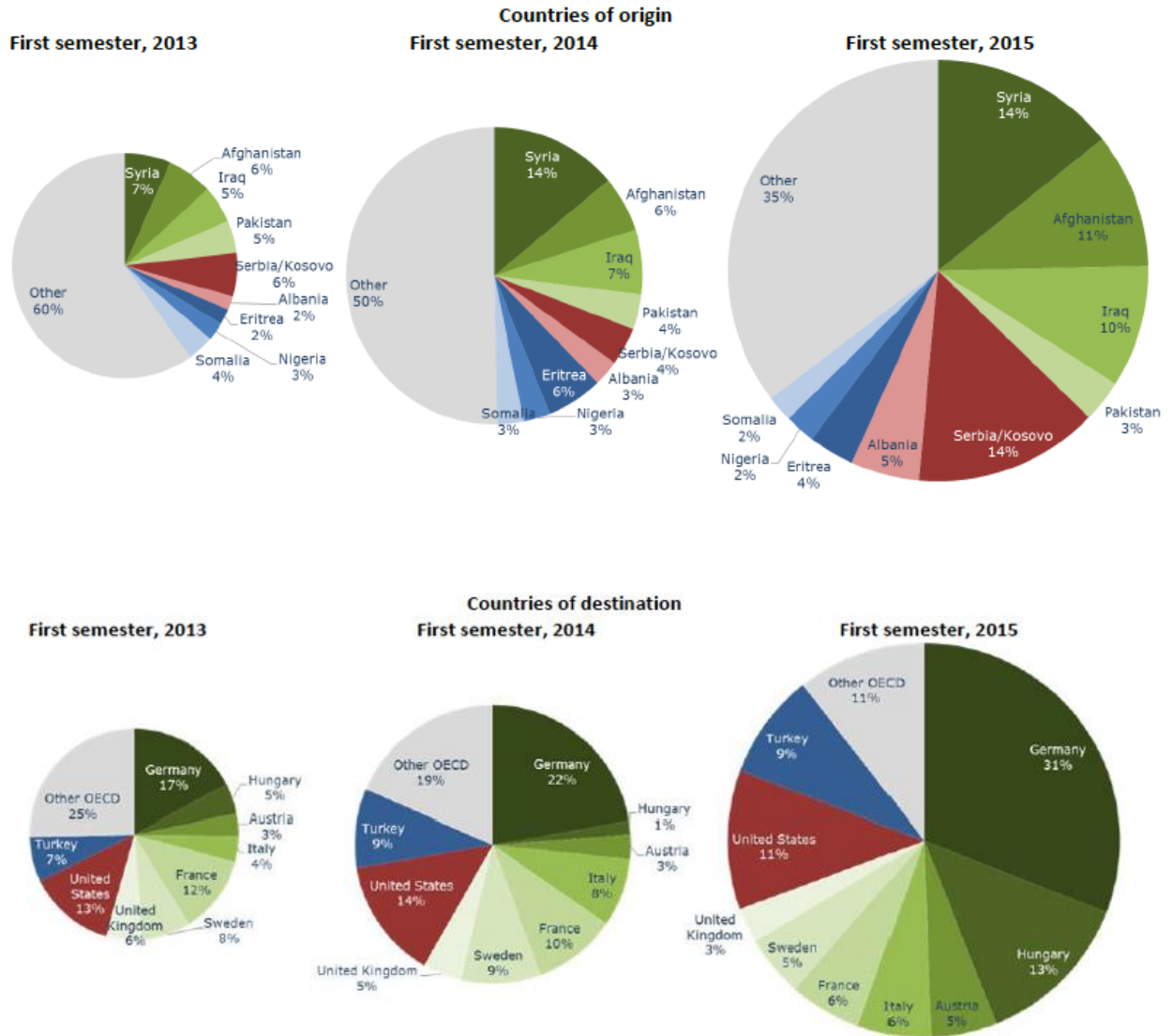
<sup>19</sup> That is, those who had chosen to be classified as "Jewish" in the "nationality" section of the Soviet passport. Many of them were not Jewish in any religious, or even cultural, sense.

<sup>20</sup> Office for National Statistics, *Migration Statistics Quarterly Report: February 2016*.  
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/internationalmigration/bulletins/migrationsstatisticsquarterlyreport/february2016>

<sup>21</sup> Before the arrival of regular troops from Iran on the scene, this conflict was on of low intensity. But since then Russia has been involved and Turkey has increased its incursions. Today it is a modern war with three armies deployed (Russia, Iran and Turkey).



**Fig 4. Evolution of the distribution of asylum seekers in the EU by main nationalities of origin and destination countries, Q1 2013 -2015**



Source: UNHCR.

(Migration Policy Debates © OECD, N°7 September 2015. P. 7-8)

## **Migrant women: violence on the road to exile, integration into the feminized sectors of employment**

Worldwide, 50% of migrants are women while in the current wave of migration towards Europe around a third are women and children<sup>22</sup>. During their journey to Europe, some women, notably war widows, travel alone or with their children. Most often, they travel with a family group or are at least escorted by a man, whether an uncle or a brother.

These women suffer all kinds of possible violence, in particular sexual abuse. They report violence from fellow refugees, including male family members, but also from smugglers, cops, border guards, or staff from the camps, including in Europe. When not simply raped and beaten, women are pressed to trade sex for travel expenses, or to get access to food, water, or other necessities.

It has been reported that men prostitute their wives in order to cover the travel costs. In one dreadful example reported by the New York Times, a husband, running out of money, offered his wife to a smuggler as a sex slave. For three months, she was raped almost daily and, soon, her husband started raping her too in an attempt to restore his male “honour” in the purest tradition, where women are only perceived as child bearers, objects for male pleasure, or commodities. “Everybody knows there are two ways of paying the smugglers,” explains a woman “With money or with your body.” Some children are also forced into “survival” prostitution. The smugglers are very pragmatic and easily become pimps in refugee camps, as has been reported in Calais. Vulnerable, indebted, or isolated, migrant women are also victims of organized prostitution on the whole European territory.

Migrant women and men often come from archaic patriarchal societies at the periphery of the capital. There, women are generally less educated than men; they speak few or no other languages than their mother tongue. They have often been raised in an ideological (cultural, religious) and legal environment, where women are not considered as social beings but as objects that can be possessed by men, where their role is defined by and limited to reproduce the species and perform domestic work, and where violence against them is acceptable and silently accepted. Therefore, female refugees are often economically and socially dependent on males during their exodus. What’s more, violence increases their dependence on a male, who will protect them against other predators.

The arrival of migrant women in Europe does not solve their problems with a magic wand. On the one hand, they too often remain at the mercy of the patriarchal rules, which have travelled with them and their family. Going out, partying, or working, is often still prohibited without authorisation from a husband, a brother, an uncle, or a father. On the other hand, women can be disoriented in a society, which is new to them. In cases of domestic violence, even though German laws are theoretically well equipped to deal with it, migrant women have trouble using legal or volunteer assistance.

Whether they are qualified or not, migrant women are mainly employed in specific sectors: health, education, domestic work, and human services. These sectors in particular are relatively stable as they cannot be relocated and are scarcely automated. As a result, while migrant workers were particularly hit by the job losses following the financial crisis of 2008, the layoffs rates were twice as high for migrant men, largely employed in construction and manufacturing, as they were for migrant women. Also, the layoffs have affected contract workers more than illegal ones, which are not declared. Again, the latter are often women and are more easily subjected to wage-cuts and extra working hours

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<sup>22</sup> The proportion of women and children was 34% in October 2015. It is as high as 51% in the camps in Syria and the surrounding area, whereas it is only around 10% in Calais (France). At least 10% of women are pregnant.

Sources: <http://www.unhcr.fr/562a4f03c.html> ; <http://www.unhcr.fr/562a4f03c.html> ;  
<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jul/31/women-in-calais-camps-i-have-to-focus-on-how-i-can-stay-alive> ;  
[http://www.lemonde.fr/europe/article/2015/10/12/sur-la-route-les-femmes-migrantes-plus-vulnerables\\_4787830\\_3214.html](http://www.lemonde.fr/europe/article/2015/10/12/sur-la-route-les-femmes-migrantes-plus-vulnerables_4787830_3214.html)

Whatever qualified or not they could be, many migrant women are recruited in specific sectors of activity: health, education, domestic work and home-care services (child minders, household helps, elderly helps, industrial cleaning). Following 2008 crisis, migrant workers were particularly hit by job losses. However, redundancy rate for migrant men (more present in construction and manufacturing) was two times more high than that of migrant women and has more hit employees with regular contracts than illegal workers employed in Black economy (mainly women thus more easily submitted to wages cuts and deregulated work time)<sup>23</sup>. Those sectors are enjoying a relative stability because they can't be relocated and are weakly mechanised (for instance in case of personal relationships).

## Case studies

The nature of different labour markets is the key to understand and interpret the current situation. The decline of births in Europe (and thus the ageing of the population) is a factor in the explanation but cannot be mechanically applied to explain all current situations. The rigidity of some labour markets compared to others, the influence of civil society attitudes in various countries etc., have to be taken into account.

Some states have the same kind of problems (ageing of population, lack of manpower for certain kinds of jobs) but nevertheless are adopting radically different attitudes towards the current migrant wave. The cases of countries representative of different reactions found in Europe will be used as examples to understand the present political contradictions. We will focus on several examples, from Germany that decided to welcome 800,000 migrants in 2015 to the "opposed" Hungary that decided to build barriers all along its southern frontiers to prevent migrants passing through its territory.

### **The German case**

From the beginning and very quickly the government was pressed to promote a generally welcoming policy in order to promote a European response, rather than a national one, to this migratory wave. It stated the desire to accept up to 800,000 migrants onto its territory, while other European countries were reacting in disorder or withdrawal in the name of their national sovereignty. In Germany in 2015, opinion polls seemed to suggest that the rather favourable economic situation had made public opinion more welcoming towards migrants, although this did not prevent xenophobic attacks. Public opinion seemed at least more prepared for immigration compared to the situation in the 1990's. During 2015, the government repeatedly modified legal requirements to facilitate the integration of migrants and refugees into the labour market.

But events of Cologne sensibly changed situation<sup>24</sup>. In fact, the fears and/or opposition to the welcome politics introduced by Ms. Merkel are reinforced day after day within civil society. The vote of 13 March 2016, in the Länder of Baden-Württemberg, Rhineland-Palatinate and Saxony-Anhalt saw the victory of the new far-right party, Alternative for Germany (AfD), with 21.5% of the vote in Saxony-Anhalt in the former East Germany, 10-11% in Baden-Württemberg (southwest) and 12.5% in Rhineland-Palatinate (west). Their programme was openly anti-immigrant.<sup>25</sup>

Germany, swinging according to the opinion of its civil society from a position largely open to welcoming migrants towards a more pragmatic/chilly position including border closures, remains nevertheless particularly perceptive about its immediate and future labour needs. Since

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<sup>23</sup> Source: Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, 2010, *The impact of the global economic crisis on migration in Europe*. <http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/X2H-Xref-ViewPDF.asp?FileID=12407&Lang=FR>

<sup>24</sup> See our statement #9 "Cologne: attacks against women are the product of patriarchal domination and play into the hands of anti-immigrant racists". <http://mouvement-communiste.com/documents/MC/Leaflets/BLT1602ENVF.pdf>

<sup>25</sup> AfD: "Alternative für Deutschland" (Alternative for Germany), a party of the nationalist right, founded in February 2013. "Anti-euro" and anti-immigrant, it obtained 4.7% of the parliamentary vote in 2013 and 7% in the regional elections with its best results in: Saxe-Anhalt (in the old East Germany), 21.5 %; Bade-Wurtemberg (South-West), 10-11%; Rhénanie-Palatinat (West), 12.5%.

the early 1970s, the German fertility rate has been 1.39 children per woman (1.47 in 2014) while the rate ensuring the renewal of the population is 2.1. This leads to population ageing and population decline, without immigration<sup>26</sup>. Since 2005 Germany has thus faced a risk of workforce shortages (especially of skilled workers). German reunification was able to partly compensate for this phenomenon, but this is no longer the case today.

The German social model works with relatively unrestricted labour legislation and a highly developed co-management with unions, especially at the enterprise level. Unlike the rest of Europe, Germany has gone through the last crisis without too much damage, thanks to the numerous reforms of the labour market established in the 2000s (the Hartz laws in particular), and also thanks to the internal flexibility of its labour market, as well as collective bargaining methods. Faster than other countries, Germany has reached a low unemployment rate (4.7% in May 2015). From 2004 to 2015, its high employment rate rose from 65.5% to 73.8%, being 10% higher than the European average. Between 2010 and 2014 no less than 900,000 jobs were created in Germany<sup>27</sup>. Remarkably in the German labour market, job creation has benefited the age ranges which are usually the most vulnerable, that is, 15-24 and 55-64 years old. The youth unemployment rate was 7.7% in 2014 while the European average was 24.4%. The employment rate of over 55's was also higher, reaching 65.6% in 2014.

Before the financial crisis, Germany had a level of long-term unemployment<sup>28</sup> higher than the European average, and its labour market was characterised by a large component of temp workers (a quarter of wage earners in 2006). The crisis has not accentuated these two problems of the German labour market. In 2014 only 34.2% of the unemployed were long-term. Part-time work continued to increase between 2007 and 2014 (+1.4%) but to a lesser extent than in the rest of Europe (+2.1%). This maintenance and improvement of the labour market were made possible by specific choices and industrial policies (reducing costs and expenditure of industry and the state, reform of the labour market, relocation of some companies to neighbouring countries with lower labour costs, orienting industry and consumer products towards the economies of "emerging" countries, booming in the 2000s).

But also by imposing large scale "wage restraint" that hit German workers hard, forcing them often to take on two part-time jobs to survive. La « modération salariale » généralisée a été un facteur clé dans la réduction du coût unitaire du travail. Generalised "wage moderation" was a key factor in reducing the unit cost of labour. All sectors of the German economy were affected, and the lowest wage sectors relatively more than the others. To give an idea of the magnitude of this "wage moderation", we must realize that real unit labour costs in 2013 were lower than those of the 1990s.

<sup>2</sup> The efficiency of this industrial reorganization was coupled with a significant increase in productivity due to significant investments in constant capital which generated significant gains in profitability in the period of 3 to 4 years before the last crisis (the good results of German companies contributing significantly to their strength during the crisis). During the same period, companies had also developed the system of a time saving account (CET), which, with the use of temporary unemployment, would be an effective weapon for resisting the fall in profitability. Capital resilience during the crisis also reflects a significant internal flexibility of workers combined with regular use of partial unemployment, instead of layoffs. Indeed, one of the main strengths of German companies has probably been their ability to negotiate, both in the branches and businesses, around employment, wages and working time. This massive use of partial unemployment allowed German firms to retain their skilled workers and to benefit from them as soon as the recovery began. This was vital for German industries, particularly given that the aging population inevitably produces an absolute decrease of skilled labour of working age.

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<sup>26</sup> Despite positive migration flows of 200,000 people, the German labour market is predicted to have an annual reduction of 194,000 people on average between 2014 and 2025, and 327,000 between 2025 and 2035. Source: Enderlein H. and Pisani-Ferry J. (2014), "Réformes, investissement et croissance: un agenda pour la France, l'Allemagne et l'Europe."

<sup>27</sup> See European Commission (2015), *Labour Market and Wage Developments in Europe*.

<sup>28</sup> In 2006, 56.1% of all unemployed were long term unemployed. This included a large part from the former East Germany, who never managed to integrate into the new labour market and went to join the stagnant overpopulation.

In Germany in July 2015, there were 589,000 unfilled job vacancies (versus 391,000 in July 2010). There were also 37,100 unfilled training courses (Sept. 2014). According to Der Spiegel newspaper on 27 August 2015, there were 45 million people of working age in 2011. Without immigration, this figure would fall to 36 million in 2030. The same newspaper continues, "... a study by the Bertelsmann Foundation concluded that in each scenario examined, there is no viable solution without immigration. 'If net migration significantly decreases, the ageing population will create insoluble problems for social security systems and the national budget,' explains Lutz Schneider, of the Coburg University of Applied Sciences, which examined the implications of the immigration to the Bertelsmann Foundation".

Confronted with an ageing population, the German government has taken some measures. Firstly, it launched a programme of "Partnership for skilled labour" to solve the lack of skilled workers in the German labour market. This measure targets all the "particularly fragile profiles on the labour market: women, pensioners, immigrants, long term unemployed"<sup>29</sup>. On the other hand, it has largely opened the labour market to migrants.

*"Germany is in a demographic state of emergency and risks losing from 4 to 7 million inhabitants in twenty five years. A third of women don't have children, including 40% of women with degrees; 3% of men have had themselves sterilised. The weight of Nazism which called for big families, the schooling system where children leave the school at 1 p.m., the willingness for mothers to fully take on their role by being at home for their children has one part to play in this Malthusian behaviour which will have serious consequences for pension systems, the diffusion of German culture and, in the end, the disappearance of the German people announced by the most pessimistic some time towards 2300. There will need to be 3.2 million immigrants per year from here to 2050 to maintain the age pyramid as it is today."<sup>30</sup> *"The projections of Eurostat show that the population of Europe will fall by 1.5% between 2004 (457 million) and 2050 (450 million). The decline will be strongest in Germany (9.6%), in Italy (8.9%) and in the 10 new countries of central and Eastern Europe (11.7%). Of even greater concern is the decline of the economically active population (15-64 years old): 67% today, with 16% of people over 65. In 2050, a 57% active population will have to support the 30% who are over 65."<sup>31</sup>**

Here we can probably find the explanation to the opening of Germany's borders to migrants. But, certainly, not to all migrants. Rather to those capable of integrating themselves quickly into the labour market, who therefore have adequate qualifications for this market and whose education has cost Germany nothing.

Using the categories of Marx we see the consequent fall of the active industrial army in Germany caused by the sharp decline in the birth rate. The state and companies have already successfully mobilized young and old workers, who've usually fallen into the floating relative overpopulation. A significant proportion are allowed to return to the active army thanks to training and enterprise adaptation. The previously too old and too young, are now necessary for the production of surplus value. But that is not enough, far from it. Supernumerary agricultural populations of countries on the periphery of the capital can now find their place. The most qualified will be first, but also other, less qualified people, who will find employment in personal "services". Besides taking care of a growing share of the elderly population, those workers will enable German workers (women) to find their way to centres of production or to work longer shifts. Other immigrants, with no or very few qualifications, join the ranks of the supernumerary surplus population close to the lumpenproletariat, finding only marginal work to survive.

### **The Hungarian case**

At the end of August 2015, the Hungarian government set up a barrier along its border with Serbia. It was 175km long and 1.5m high, then rapidly duplicated with a more substantial barrier of 3.5m equipped with gates and barbed wire. Hungary, which registered more than 50,000

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<sup>29</sup> See: *Les réformes du marché du travail en Europe – Allemagne*, p. 35.

<sup>30</sup> Catherine Wihlto de Wenden, Raimondo Cagiano de Azevedo (2008), "*Démographie, Immigration, Intégration*", p. 5.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

arrivals of migrants in August (principally Syrians and Iraqis), hoped, according to its Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, that with its wall it could make a “rampart” to protect the West from illegals.

*“In early May, the government sent out 8 million questionnaires to Hungary’s citizens containing a dozen questions, including: “Do you agree that migrants threaten jobs for Hungarians?” This campaign which was openly hostile to migrants was illustrated by official posters calling on foreigners to not “take work from Hungarians” or to respect Hungarian culture. Foreigners, perfect scapegoats for diverting the attention of voters away from the corruption of those in power and the fall in popularity of Fidesz faced with the extreme right Jobbik. A party which itself admitted it could not do anything about the question of migrants moved the government to the right. But in five years, the extreme right have caught up with Viktor Orban at the polls. According to a survey published on 17 March by Ipsos, the Jobbik party, so radical that it is judged unsavoury by the French Front national and the Austrian FPÖ, today would be the second force in the country, with 18% of voting intentions of all electors, against 21% for Fidesz-KDNP.” (Le Monde, 4 September 2015)*

In terms of fertility and the ageing of the population, the Hungarian situation seems similar to the situation in Germany. The fertility rate is 1.44 in Hungary (against 1.47 in Germany). The rate of unemployment is of the order of 7% (May 2015) and the rate of employment in the age range of 15-64 is 67.6%. In the end, Hungary will be confronted with similar shortages in the labour market (particularly for skilled labour). But there the similarity ends. In effect, despite facing a situation of ageing of its population and relative scarcity of labour (at least in the medium term), the reaction of the Hungarian government to the wave of migration is the opposite of that of Germany. We need to try to explain this openly xenophobic and quasi-fascist behaviour.

For a long time the flow of migrants into Hungary has been relatively modest<sup>32</sup>. In 2005, there were 1.5% of foreigners in Hungary’s population. It has rather been confronted since 2008-2009 with an emigration of its citizens to Germany, Austria and the UK (7 per thousand inhabitants in 2012; between 1996 and 2014 the population fell by 402,000). It’s a matter of a mostly highly qualified emigration principally in the domain of health care which created fears of a shortage of qualified staff (a sixth of doctors have left Hungary since the middle of the 2000s). Up until 2011, immigration into Hungary principally consisted of people of “Hungarian stock” coming from the neighbouring countries (around 100,000 of them<sup>33</sup>). Immigration is held back by the barrier of language, but also by the xenophobic attitude widely distributed in Hungarian civil society.

From a political point of view, the situation is radically different from Germany. The Fidesz party of Viktor Orban is already situated well to the right of the political spectrum and is shadowed on its right by Jobbik, which is openly Nazi. And, above all, a large part of civil society supports and even encourages the anti-immigrant policies of Fidesz. Generally in Eastern Europe (principally Hungary and the Czech Republic) whatever may be the reality of migration and the needs of the labour market, the hateful reactions of civil society and the political parties are overwhelming<sup>34</sup>.

In the countries of Eastern Europe, one possible explanation for this resurgence of virulent nationalism with the smell of fascism is the fact of their independence being late (only since 1989), and therefore in reaction to the USSR. To justify their existence as “independent” states

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<sup>32</sup> *“As for Hungary (10 million inhabitants), which lost two thirds of its territory and a third of its population in 1920, said François Bafoil, it has “the dread of losing its language, of seeing its Magyar people disappear”. The populist Victor Orbán always invokes the 15 million Hungarians, which includes those who live outside the country in Romania and Slovakia.” (L’Express, 16 September 2015)*

<sup>33</sup> However, the great majority of this population have stayed in these countries.

<sup>34</sup> Under different circumstances, Denmark expresses the same anti-migrant attitude (the extreme right is now a serious force in local politics with 12.3% in the 2011 elections).

they fantasise about their “glorious past” and about an illusory community, however fictitious<sup>35</sup>. To achieve this, one of the factors of cohesion of civil society put forward is hatred of the other. At the same time, Hungary and the Czech Republic already have their own “enemy within”: the Gypsies. It seems therefore that this migrant “crisis” does not play the role of an economic windfall but rather offers a political opportunity to reinforce nationalism and racism.

Another part of the explanation perhaps resides in the fact that since the start of the 1990s in all these countries (with the exception of Poland) and in all productive sectors (industry, finance and commerce), large-scale companies (and also medium sized ones) are almost all owned by foreign companies. This stretches (far more than in the Western countries) the link between the state and the needs of businesses and therefore opens the way to a state which is more receptive and more ready to listen to public opinion. More than that, the question of “internal immigrants” in the Czech Republic, Hungary and Romania, that is to say the Roma, provides a solid base for anti-immigrant hatred.

### **The French case**

Between countries like Germany, who have decided to open their doors to refugees and to help put them to work, and the ones like Hungary who close their doors, we can find France. Even if migrant workers have played an important role in the growth of capital during the twentieth century, only a small number of refugees are being accepted this time. While the government doesn't declare itself hostile to their arrival, it firmly opposed the proposal of the European Commission to introduce quotas for the sharing out of refugees. Having the highest birth rate of the EU countries (2.01 children per woman in 2014) and a high unemployment rate, workforce needs are less pressing than in neighbouring countries, with undocumented workers occupying low-skilled jobs in services and agriculture. But the beneficial effects of the current wave of immigration have not escaped bourgeois economists. “*Because it has an extremely low growth potential Europe should be generous and, without of course opening its doors to uncontrolled immigration, take advantage of the supply shock induced by asylum seekers, especially if their skill level is higher than in the past*” explain Patrick Artus and Evariste Lefeuvre of Natixis, a French bank<sup>36</sup>).

France is however not the destination of choice for refugees from the Middle East. Its lack of economic attractiveness, the difficulty of administrative procedures, lack of community networks (no diaspora) and the difficulty in finding accommodation, combine to keep the number of refugees low. In 2015, from a total inflow of almost 1.2 million in Europe (which almost doubled in a year), the number of asylum applications in France increased by just 22% (79,130 in total). The most skilled migrant workers have preferred, since the 1990s, to settle in the US, UK, and more recently in Germany and Northern Europe. However, 63% of immigrants who entered France in 2012 have at least a baccalaureate (secondary school diploma) or equivalent qualification, while a quarter are without a diploma. Between 2004 and 2012, from all origins, the share of immigrants with a degree equivalent to Bachelor's rose 7 points, 2 points between 2009 and 2012. Immigrants from Asia account for 55% of the increase since 2009. In fact, nine out of ten Chinese entering France in 2012 held at least a bachelor's degree level. Immigrants from

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<sup>35</sup> “History allows us to understand the isolationism of these countries, François Bafail, a researcher at CERI-Sciences Po, specialist in Eastern Europe, explained to Express. The four so-called Visegrad countries (Hungary, Poland, Czech Republic and Slovakia), who have rejected the obligatory quotas proposed by the European Commission, “were for a long time occupied by the great empires. That gave birth to the obsession with escaping from subjugation. They are haunted by the anguish of being swept into the dustbin of History”. Czechs (10.5 million) and Slovaks (4.4 million), for example, only knew twenty years of sovereign autonomy between 1919 (end of the Austro-Hungarian Empire) and 1939 (German occupation). Scarcely had the Eastern countries left the tutelage of the Soviet Union in 1989, when they found themselves negotiating with the EU. “The countries of Central Europe oscillated between a tense identity based on victimhood, so well described by the Hungarian philosopher Istvan Bibo as the ‘misery of small nations’ and the sentiment of being the real heart of Europe.” A situation which explains the presence of powerful far-right movements – often linked to the church –, whose opinions are impregnated with chauvinism.” (L'Express, 16 September 2015)

<sup>36</sup> “Crisis des migrants: une chance pour l'Europe” (“Migrant crisis: an opportunity for Europe”), *Special Report. Recherche Economique*, no. 79, 8 September 2015.



Africa account for 42% of the increase since 2009. European immigrant workers do not, on average, have equivalent degrees. However, they find a job sooner than Africans.

Immigrants have been involved for over a hundred years in the capitalist development of France, taking over from internal migrations like the ones from Brittany or Auvergne. In 2012, 5.7 million immigrants lived in France, 8.7% of the total population (INSEE). Adding 6.8 million descendants of immigrants makes it more than 20% of the population. In the early twentieth century, 1.1 million immigrants were already residing in France. They were 2.3 million in 1954 and 4.2 million in 1990. After stabilizing in the 1990s, the number of immigrants has increased again since 1999. 41% of them have become French citizens. Until 1975, immigrants were predominantly male. Women represented 44% of the total in 1968 but their share grew to 51% in 2012.

In 2011 there were 4 million immigrants aged 15 to 64 residing in France, representing 10% of the working age population (DARES). The share of immigrants in the population of working age increased between 2003 and 2011 by 1.4 percentage points, after rising 0.9 point between 1995 and 2002. In 2011, 78.5% of men and 58.6% women immigrants aged 15 to 64 are present in the labour market, employed or unemployed (international criteria defined by the ILO) against respectively 74.4% and 67.0% of non-immigrants. 30% of them were born in a country of the European Union, 31% in North Africa, 15% in sub-Saharan Africa and 24% in European countries outside the EU or on a non-African continent.

The participation of male immigrants in the labour market is equivalent to that of non-immigrants. It is much smaller, but growing for women, especially those from North Africa or Turkey. The unemployment rate for immigrants born outside the European Union is much higher than non-immigrants<sup>37</sup>. In 2011, it was close to 23% for those from the Maghreb or sub-Saharan Africa, against 8.5% for non-immigrants and much more for those who come from the EU. Immigrant workers in employment are very active in the construction, accommodation and catering, security jobs, cleaning and personal services. They are more often in situations of underemployment than non-immigrants. Manufacturing industries, which have traditionally employed large numbers of workers, particularly in the automotive sector, have been downsizing during the last thirty years. The proportion of non-natives, immigrants and people born French abroad, in the population of working age is lower in France than in the whole of the European Union 15 countries. In each of these 15 countries, the unemployment rate for non-native non-EU is significantly higher than that of natives.

The sons and daughters of immigrants are mostly working-class (Trajectories and Origins Survey 2008); two descendants of immigrants out of three had a working class father when they were 15 years old against 39% of those without direct immigrant ancestry. An even greater class membership for those whose parents come from southern Europe and North Africa, with an over-representation in the latter case of unskilled workers. Their social mobility is important because, according to this study, one third of the sons and daughters of immigrants occupy between 35 and 50 years, a more skilled job than their father at the same age. At identical sociodemographic characteristics (gender, diploma, social background of the father, etc.), this mobility does not vary according to geographical origin. However the public service offers more mobility opportunities than the private sector and the children of North African immigrants have more difficulty finding a steady job.

For German companies the influx of immigrants is an opportunity. "*Companies need to take care of migrants, not only for humanitarian reasons but also from economic interest,*" said Ulrich Weber, head of human resources at Deutsche Bahn, national railway company, who just launched a training program for refugees<sup>38</sup>. Business leaders in France are much less enthusiastic.

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<sup>37</sup> The proportion of non-natives (immigrants and people born French in another country) in the working-age population is less in France than in the whole of the core 15 countries of the EU. In each of these 15 countries, the rate of unemployment of non-natives from outside the EU is higher than that of natives.

<sup>38</sup> "Pauvre en travailleurs, l'Allemagne garde les migrants syriens" ("Lacking workers, Germany looks to the Syrian migrants"), *La tribune de Genève*, 26 August 2015. <http://www.tdg.ch/monde/allemanne-penurie-mainduvre--renvoie-requrersants-syriens/story/19365402>



“I had an African worker who was in a temporary situation. We have made requests, we gave him a permanent contract that allowed him to get his residence permit. But we keep going round in circles, it takes a permanent contract to obtain papers and you need to be naturalized in order to sign a permanent contract. The problem, more broadly, is that with over 10% unemployment, there is no shortage of labour”, says Jérôme Arnaud, CEO of Doro, a company of 250 workers<sup>39</sup>. This difficulty in entering the labour market in France largely explains the lack of attractiveness of the country for foreigners. When asked in the press, employers confirm the wait-and-see position of companies in France, unlike the situation in Germany and the UK.

The difficulty in finding employment significantly contributes to the lack of worker solidarity in France with their foreign brethren. The competition for jobs, housing and social welfare increases tensions between proletarians. In France, no less than 64% of the population disapproves of the migration policy of its government, more than the 60% average in Europe. Similarly 59% of the population is concerned about migration to or across Europe. This is the highest percentage, apart from Greece and Italy. These surveys date back to 2014 and the recent attacks and the success of the National Front in the last European elections indicate that these "concerns" were further strengthened.

### **The Swedish case**

The Swedish case is emblematic of the contradictions that occur in a country that seemed to be a guide and an example for the integration of migrants.

For the economy of Sweden things currently (2015 to early 2016) look rosy. Inflation and unemployment rates are relatively low compared to the European average. Public debt hardly exceeds 40% of GDP. In 2014, the fertility rate was 1.88 children per woman, the employment rate for 20-64 year olds was the highest in the European Union: 80% (82.2% for men and 77.6% for women). The employment rate of 60-64 is high: it is 66%, occupying first place in the EU, against the 36.6% European average. Apart from a real estate market that seems increasingly decoupled from the real value of dwellings<sup>40</sup> and with household debt increasing significantly<sup>41</sup>, everything seems to go well for the Swedish economy. Not surprisingly, the economy is growing at a rapid pace. GDP in the third quarter of 2015 appreciated by 0.9%, and by 3.9% year on year. A solid growth affects not only consumption but also investments and exports, says the Central Bank.

Yet in the polls, the far-right party Swedish Democrats (SD, *Sverigedemokraterna*<sup>42</sup>) went from 12.9% of votes at the parliamentary elections in September 2014 up to 25% for vote in the polls. If elections were held today (January 2016), it would be the largest party in the country, despite the fact that Sweden is facing no obvious problems, whether economic, financial or in housing. The political programme of the extreme right party is based mainly on the issue of migrants.

Sweden is the country that hosted the most refugees, by far, in relation to its population. In 2015 alone, migrants arriving in Sweden represented 1.5% of the total population, a higher level than in Germany. This partly explains the rise of the far-right, although, as in the UK<sup>43</sup>, there is a

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<sup>39</sup> “Hire a refugee? ‘Yes, but’, say the bosses of Medef”, *Le Nouvel Obs*, 28 August 2015.

<http://tempsreel.nouvelobs.com/economie/20150827.OBS4868/embaucher-un-refugie-oui-mais-disent-les-patrons-du-medef.html>

<sup>40</sup> Low rates of interest, generous interest subsidies for new mortgages and severe restrictions in the building of new housing has pushed prices to a very high level (just in 2015, the price of houses rose by 20%).

<sup>41</sup> The average rate of indebtedness of a Swedish household stands today at 170% of its annual income, twice the level for a Belgian household. Almost a quarter of Swedish homes are even in debt up to 500% of their annual income (*L’Echo*, 16 January 2016).

<sup>42</sup> Founded in 1988 under the slogan “Security and tradition”, the Sweden Democrats party was first of all a political front for the neo-Nazis, with a typical vote of 0.02% in its first elections. Over twenty years the SD regularly improved their score without getting over the 5% barrier needed to enter Parliament. The de-demonisation process from the end of the 1990s took a long time but eventually bore fruit. Dozens of members were kicked out in 2012, the party from then on claiming a zero tolerance for racism and calling itself “national-democratic centrist” while putting forward a vicious social nationalism (refusal of immigration, “islamophobia”, etc.).

<sup>43</sup> See Letter # 41, “What does the May election result tell us that’s useful to know”.

clear split between the relative lack of support for a right-wing anti-immigrant party in urban, “multi-ethnic”, areas (Stockholm, Malmö, Göteborg...) and the strong support it enjoys in small towns and rural areas. This is exacerbated by the government policy of settling refugees in rural areas (sometimes in very small towns)<sup>44</sup>. The extreme-right has increased its score in all the local councils in Sweden but central Sweden (generally south of Lake Vättern) is the principal reservoir of electors with a particular concentration in the county of Scania. The electors of *Sverigedemokraterna* are found mostly in the municipalities next to Göteborg and Malmö, where the number of racial conflicts keeps growing. From January to October 2015, fifteen refugee centres have been set on fire in the area, some being completely destroyed.

According to the IMF, average budgetary expenses for asylum seekers in EU countries could increase by 0.05% and 0.1% of GDP in 2015 and 2016, respectively, compared to 2014. Sweden has the heaviest fiscal cost for refugees: 0.3% of GDP in 2014, 0.5% in 2015 and 1% forecasted in 2016. The planned fiscal policy of the state will support the increase of public spending in 2016 and 2017, confirms the Riksbank, which forecasts a decline in unemployment to 6.5% in 2017. The arrival of migrants on the labour market should push the unemployment rate to 7.4% in 2020 but conversely, putting them to work will increase production and tax revenues of the state, while reducing public spending.

No less than 80% of the increase in the number of workers in the Nordic countries is accounted for by the children of parents born abroad. Compared to what it would have been without immigration, the GDP of these countries will have increased 2.5% on average by 2020. To enable faster integration, Sweden allows asylum seekers without work permits to work under certain conditions. The country has developed an introductory programme for employment for all refugees aged 20 to 64 (and from 18 for those who have no family). This programme includes learning the language, validation of previous studies and work experience, and knowledge of Swedish society. Participation is voluntary but supported by financial support that continues for six months after finding a job. The programme includes help with finding housing in areas where there is a strong demand for labour but not so much housing.

However, under ideological pressure from the extreme right, supported by a growing share of its civil society<sup>45</sup>, Sweden has reintroduced border control. It will also replace permanent residence permits with temporary permits for certain asylum seekers. The unemployment rate among migrants is much higher than in the Swedish-born population, and the difference has increased further in recent years. In these circumstances, Sweden appears less and less as the model for European states.

## **The Czech case**

### **Overview**

The Czech Republic belongs with the states which don't welcome refugees and where de facto no refugees want to stay. We will look at some history and the attitudes of companies, state and civil society. The Czech population is ageing. The number of people over 65 compared to a group of 100 people between 15 and 64 year old (the index of dependency) was 20 in 2000, 26 in 2015 and, according to estimates, it should be 34 in 2025, 52 in 2045 and 59 in 2065. The fertility rate was 1.4 in 2015, and the number of people older than 65, relative to a base of 100 for the 15 to 64 age-group (index of dependance II), was 20 in 2000, 26 in 2015 and, according to estimates, it will be 34 in 2025, 52 in 2045 and 59 in 2065.

The refugee wave found the Czech Republic in conditions of strong growth, some 4.3% last year. The growth was the most rapid from 2007 and it was three times higher than the

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<http://mouvement-communiste.com/documents/MC/Letters/LTMC1541%20ENvF.pdf>

<sup>44</sup> <http://perspective.usherbrooke.ca/bilan/servlet/BMAnalyse?codeAnalyse=2002>

<sup>45</sup> Attacks on women carried out by migrants (hidden from the eyes of civil society by the Swedish authorities), coupled with the events at the end of the year in Cologne contributed significantly to the progress of the extreme-right *Sverigedemokraterna*.

European average. Many companies have been expanding production and many more plan to do so: for instance, Foxconn plans to invest 2.5 billion crowns (\$US100 million). Many investments are intended for the car industry - INA Lanškroun wants to invest 2.5 billion crowns, Varroc Lighting System 1.3bn crowns, RONAL CZ 1.7bn crowns. The government “obtained 196 new investment projects for 108bn crowns which should generate more than 23,000 jobs” between January 2014 and June 2015. Škoda Auto will invest 7.2bn crowns in the industrial zone Solnice-Kvasiny (80 km east of Prague) which will create more than 2,000 jobs.

Le The return to pre-crisis levels of growth is accompanied by the return of the labour market shortages which we saw before 2008. The employment rate (employed proportion of population in the age range of 15-64) was 70.7% in December 2015, the unemployment rate (unemployed proportion of population in productive age range) was only 4.5% in the same month. Not only are skilled workers missing from the market, but unskilled ones too. According to data from the Labour Office, the labour market lacked 103,000 workers in the last quarter of 2015 (unskilled workers: 19,000, machine operators and mechanics: 21,000, service workers: 22,000, technicians: 10,000, specialists: 7,000).

In the first quarter of 2016 the most needed workers, by qualification, are mechanics/repairmen, mounters/machine operators and auxiliary/unskilled workers, followed by workers in services/retail, technicians/experts and specialists. Some estimates are even more alarmist – for example, Bohdan Wojnar, member of the Škoda Auto’s Board of Management, even suggests that more than 100,000 technicians are missing from the labour market and that this number will grow to 420,000 in 2030. According to the “Czech Association of Exporters”, the economy lacks, just in the category of the blue collar workforce, about 70,000 workers. But everybody agrees that capital faces a shortage in all sectors of workers, from engineers to unskilled workers in production and logistics.

According to the vice-president of the Alliance of Industry and Transport, the Czech Republic is in the same situation as before the crisis: *“It means that in addition to bad research and development, insufficient quality of applied research and non-collaboration between factories and universities, the biggest brake on their development for employers is the lack of a workforce.”*

### Migration before and during 2008 crisis

Before the crisis companies were solving the lack of workers by means of migrants. Immigration meant mostly Ukrainians at the beginning of the 1990s (Ukrainian workers squeezed Romas out of the labour market, mainly in the building sector) but began rising very strongly in 2001, in a reaction to the orientation of the social-democratic government to FDI<sup>46</sup>. There were 211,000 foreigners in Czech in 2001, but 321,000 in 2006.

The importation of foreign labour culminated in 2007 and 2008, when the demand and struggle of companies for foreign workers was the most intense. Why couldn’t companies use domestic workers? The unemployment rate was very low (6% in 2007, 5.4% in 2008). The companies had no interest at all in unemployed Romas, even in times of the most acute lack of (even unskilled) workers. Unemployed Czechs didn’t care about the jobs on offer (mainly due to the shift regime, distance to travel to work and low wages). The number of foreigners jumped to 392,000 in 2007, and to 438,000 in 2008. It meant that between 2001 and 2008 the number of foreigners in the Czech Republic more than doubled. But the migrant workforce was used not only to fight the lack of workers. It became also the test laboratory for the flexibilization of work – foreign workers were the first resource for employment agencies. The agency work penetration rate reached 0.9% in the Czech Republic in 2015 – the European average is almost 2% – which meant that 200,000 workers worked for job agencies in the Czech Republic.

Slovaks were the most numerous foreigners (2001: 53,000, 2008: 76,000), followed by Ukrainians (2001: 50,000, 2008: 132,000), Vietnamese (2001: 24,000, 2008: 60,000), Poles (2001: 16,000, 2008: 22,000). It means that the majority of foreigners came from the former Eastern bloc countries.

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<sup>46</sup> Czech state was the biggest provider of investment incentives in the Visegrad IV group.

The number of foreigners slightly decreased after the crisis hit. Between 2008 and 2010 it fell by about 14,000, but from 2010 has been rising again. The composition of migrants has slightly changed, in favour of migrants from EU countries. There were 450,000 foreigners in Czech in 2014.

### Companies, State, civil society

Today surveys confirm that companies regard the lack of labour as a problem again. Many representatives of capital therefore speak about refugees as a potential substitute for both domestic resources and traditional foreign resources. *“Employers, at least those who are represented by us, are ready to contribute to approaching the migration crisis not as a threat but as an opportunity”*, said the vice-president of Alliance of Industry and Transport. He added that companies are ready to accept and integrate 5,000 refugees immediately. Of course, it is not a humanitarian vision. *“I am afraid that our attitude [i.e. the anti-refugee attitude of the state] won’t pay off. If Germans will employ refugees, they will get the best ones... and the less competent ones will move to Czech”*, as Chief of Chambers of Commerce, Vladimír Dlouhý, put it.

But the Czech state has not chosen the German way. The Czech state stands between the simply nationalist: *“We will help some refugees but we won’t allow anybody to dictate quotas to us”* (social-democratic Prime Minister) — *“Orbán has very good politics”* (social-democratic Minister of the Interior) and: *“Islam means only terror”* (President, former member and chief of the social-democratic party).

The state was, after all, very cautious towards migrants even before the crisis. The expression of the needs of companies for quicker and easier employment of foreigners required the introduction of a “Green Card”. The result? It was the Ministry of Interior (which saw migrants as a security problem) which was in charge of the new project instead of the Ministry of Industry and Trade (which defended the interests of capital). It was the Ministry of Interior which chose the 12 countries which could be a source for Green Card immigrants, and which excluded from this group Ukraine and Vietnam. Moreover the negotiations were so slow that the Green Card was not introduced before 2009 when the demand for extra labour was already reduced by the impact of the crisis (and later removed completely). But after the start of the crisis the state managed to act more quickly: it stopped accepting requests for visas in April 2009 from one day to the next, and strictly limited requests by non-public quotas. After restoration of their acceptance, the state immediately started to do repressive police controls and raids. Migration decreased from tens of thousands of foreigners to hundreds per year.

The only systematic result so far is the Ministry of Industry and Trade’s plan for the import of 500 highly skilled and 5,000 medium skilled workers. And what about companies’ wishes? According to the survey done by the “Czech Association of Exporters” in March 2016, companies massively prefer migrants from Ukraine followed by workers from Vietnam, Belorussia, Russia, other countries (for instance Moldavia, Romania and Bulgaria) and last of all from Syria (Slovak workers were not counted as foreigners).

Today the dismissive attitude of the state to refugees is partly connected to state’s vision that it will selectively choose skilled labour (examples are the Blue Card project and simplified recruiting for skilled labour from Ukraine). But the attitude of the State is connected above all to nationalism, not only its own but the nationalism widespread within civil society. We can see nationalism within the state attitude but we have to see it widespread within civil society too. Anti-refugee sentiments permeate society, in the same way it was permeated by anti-Roma sentiments five years ago. But while those dangerous demonstrations against Roma were connected to the impact of the crisis (and the non-ability of the class to react to the crisis in a useful way through class struggle), the recent hatred against refugees is much less based on the economic reality of a strong capitalist cycle (and it ignores the real situation in general because Muslims who already live in the Czech Republic can’t be viewed as communities of criminality and no Muslim refugees have come to the Czech Republic).

But we can't speak only about concrete anti-Muslim racism. It is also the "pure" general Czech nationalism, supported by the older experience of Nazi occupation and by the less old experience of Soviet colonialism (which expressed itself in the nationalistic characteristics of the Velvet Revolution of 1989). It's also visible in the paternalistic "noble" and silent domination over "backward Slovakia" before the split of Czechoslovakia in 1993, more than visible in anti-Roma hatred but also in the popular defence of Czech sovereignty against the European Union. This is a change in comparison with the decade of the 1990s when society was under the slogan "Return to Europe" and predominantly pro-European, although less so than other East European countries. Until recently anti-European sentiments took the form of condemnation of "EU human-rightsists" defending Romas.

This nationalism is armed with the necessary element of authoritarianism and blaming of the weakest parts of the class and society in general (including children with learning difficulties, in a recent campaign against inclusion in schools) and their "naive" defenders. This absence of solidarity is without any doubt the product of the atomisation of the class unable to create elementary collectivity due to absence of collective struggle.

All these elements found their expression and catalyst in the grouping "Islám v České republice nechceme" ("We don't want Islam in Czech republic") and "Blok proti islámu" ("Bloc against Islam"), which are Czech cousins of the German Pegida<sup>47</sup> and AfD, but more importantly in the president of the republic who's grown into a figure of leader of the common people. His recent more than warm reception of the president of China was a demonstration of "independent and sovereign" assertion of national interest: the clear and repeated message was that the Czech Republic is no longer the prisoner of the foreign policy of EU and the United States and pursues its own economic policy.

The less recent anti-refugee sentiments of civil society (which is permeated by them across all classes) come from economic reality, as it is understood and respected as the reality of capital. The Czech Republic is a receiver of European subsidies and the Schengen system is a key element because of the cohesion of the Czech economy with the European market and production cycle. According to a study by UniCredit Bank, Czech Republic and Slovakia are the European countries with the most intense movement across borders. The introduction of Schengen contributed to the raising of foreign trade by 70% between 2005 and 2014 and Schengen contributed by more than 40% to the overall grow of the Czech economy. The petty nationalism of the working class (which failed to defend its basic material interests and hence didn't create a space for developing its political understanding) contrasts with the internationalism of both individual and collective capital which understands its conditions within the capitalist cycle rather clearly.

Migration into the Czech Republic (and also migration abroad) is related to the capitalist cycle but it is not in 100% in harmony with it. The needs of accumulation have not been immediately translated into reality, either in the time of labour shortage before 2009 nor now — for many reasons.

### ***The Italian case***

Up to the beginning of the '80s, migrant arrival was a phenomenon that, if not quite non-existent, was close to unknown in Italy, a country whose population, mainly in the South, was used to migrating to the north of Europe. It's only at this time that numerous immigrant groups seeking jobs began to arrive in Italy. In particular, according to census data from 2001 to 2011, the immigrant population living in Italy jumped from 1,300,000 to more than 4 million.

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<sup>47</sup> Pegida: "*Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes*" (Patriotic Europeans against the Islamisation of the West), an extreme-right movement, close to the French FN, founded in October 2014, anti-Islam and therefore anti-immigrant. They organised weekly demonstrations, starting in Dresden, then in other cities in Germany and Europe, against Muslims and immigration.

From a demographic point of view, according to ISTAT<sup>48</sup>, the fertility rate in 2015 was 1.35 children per woman (against 1.46 in 2010, with a steady diminution since), namely one of the lowest in Europe. Again according to ISTAT, the death rate in 2015 in Italy was 653,000, an increase of 9.1% against 2014, when it was 598,000. Such an increase, according to the Institute, could be partly due to the structural effects of population ageing because mortality is concentrated in the oldest age groups (75 – 95 years old).

According to the immigration status records for 2015, in 2014 there were 5,421,000 immigrants, including 3,979,208 from outside the EU, 8.2% of the whole population. Between 2008 and 2014, the immigrant employment rate fell by 8.5%, against 2.7% for Italians. According to the same records, tax income due to immigrants reached 16.6 billion euros in 2013, while state expenditure reached 13.5 billion. In the Italian landscape of productive industry, highly characterized by an unskilled workforce, the immigrant share is 35.9%, against 7.8% for Italians. From a wage standpoint, an immigrant from outside the EU earns 942 euros a month, against 1,326 euros for an Italian.

Regarding employment, during the first two quarters of 2014, immigrants with a job numbered 2,441,251, 11% of everyone employed, mainly concentrated in Northern areas. Regarding fields of activity, there were: 39.3% in human and community services, 19.2% in hotels and restaurants, 18% in construction, 17.1% in agriculture, 10.5% in manufacturing, 10.3% in transport, 6.4% in commerce and 6.2% in company services and miscellaneous activities. Although there is no official data, the recourse to undeclared work, mainly in construction and agriculture is very important. In construction, most of it consists of small companies, very often managed by immigrants working for themselves.

In agriculture, there is a real internal movement of immigrant workers, mainly Africans, who follow seasonal work for various crops. In this field, even more than extremely low wages (20/30 euros per day, for 10 hours a day), there is a particular phenomenon of extremely brutal recruitment (“caporalat”<sup>49</sup>), that adds more pain to the fact that immigrants are often forced to live in slums without even minimal sanitary conditions (unsafe constructions without any drinkable water, drains, light and heating).

From an economic standpoint, since 1990 Italy has seen a growth rate among the lowest in Europe. The recession following the crisis of 2008 meant that, even if the 2014 unemployment rate was officially 12.9%, the GDP and unemployment rate show only weak signs of improvement.

The bosses have not taken a stand, for or against, the last wave of migration. They seem only interested in government measures concerning the reform of the labour market, along with additional fiscal benefits regarding hiring, and there is no labour shortage (even of skilled labour) at the moment in Italy, nor is there a particularly combative proletariat that can challenge mass competition from desperate people.

In this context, the migrant wave in Europe in 2015, mostly concerned Italy as an entry into the EU, a means to reach northern Europe countries. In fact, the main preoccupation for Italy – and for the governments that did not show signs of closure towards immigrants – was to rescue and to prevent from certain death hundreds of thousands of migrants coming from Northern Africa by ships crossing the Mediterranean. Right now (March 2016), there are 100,000 migrants in centres (under various names), according to speeches from the Home Secretary, Angelina Alfano.

Despite this, this arrival of migrants and the “preoccupations” created among proletarians – due to the economic situation and unemployment, daily difficulties and cuts in state assistance, has become the hobby-horse of the anti-immigrant party, the Northern League, who recently signed an alliance agreement with French “Front National”, and who, according to the polls, would get 14-15% of votes on a national level if there was an election. That percentage is far

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<sup>48</sup> National Institute for Statistics.

<sup>49</sup> A method where the man in charge of hiring workers is all-mighty and acts as a “corporal”.

more significant if we count just the Northern areas, which are its historic bastion (contrary to the South where it hardly exists), making it the most important party of the Centre-Right coalition<sup>50</sup>.

As we can see, in a context where economic difficulties continue, it is difficult to hope, unless there's an upheaval which we don't see any traces of yet, for practical solidarity towards arriving migrants.

### ***The Greek case***

Over 80% of the more than one million refugees who arrived in Europe in 2015 via the Mediterranean have landed in Greece. No less than 108,000 refugees arrived in December alone, bringing the total for 2015 to 880,000, according to Frontex statistics. The refugees include 27% children, and 78% men among the adults. The Syrians are the majority, 59%, ahead of Afghans and Iraqis, 24% and 8% respectively. And these figures will not go down, with the majority of new migrants intending to bring their families if they get refugee status.

It is a very difficult situation then for a country with 25% unemployment and a financial and economic crisis that are not under control. The Syriza government has increased the symbolic gestures of solidarity with refugees, but being careful that they cost nothing. Thus, the Olympic torch will pass through the refugees camp Eleonas, near Athens, and a refugee will be among the carriers of the torch. It is a sad consolation for the 40 migrants who drowned off the island of Kalolimnos on 22 January. The construction of transit camps for refugees in the islands of Lesbos, Kos, Samos, Chios and Leros, as well as Piraeus, faces hostile demos organized by the fascist party Golden Dawn, with local populations in support.

Syriza originally protested against the construction of the wall of Evros (Turkish border). Having come to power, the party now says that the destruction of the wall, eliminating the refugees' dangerous sea route, is technically impossible.

To slow the influx of refugees the European Commission and the Greek government have proposed a closure of the borders of the country, which would leave it outside the Schengen area. The closure would be coordinated with the Turkish state. Alexis Tsipras has negotiated during the Davos summit with his Turkish counterpart, Ahmet Davutoğlu, the possibility of sending back migrants coming from that country. This policy has been confirmed by recent agreements between the German and Turkish states. The closure of the borders, the EU refusing entry to refugees from "safe" countries who cannot claim the status of "refugee" in Greece, may block hundreds of thousands of refugees who only hope to reach the Nordic countries, Germany and the UK, offering better job opportunities and housing. The refugee distribution plan set up by the EU is supposed to solve this equation. But the closure of a border only pushes the use of new routes. Already the Albanian "mafias" are working to open up new paths, through Bosnia and Serbia.

Yannis Stournaras, the president of the Bank of Greece, said in an interview with the Financial Times, that the benefits from the influx of refugees mainly go to the host countries in which they go to work. The costs mainly stay with the transit countries. According to calculations by the Bank of Greece, the direct cost in 2015 will be between 0.3% and 0.4% of GDP, or more than EUR 600 million; indirect costs are higher. If the economic situation of the country is less negative than was expected (industrial production, unemployment, confidence...), the influx of refugees weighs heavily on the national accounts. Other calculations made by the IMF estimate at 0.17% of GDP the fiscal cost of emigration to Greece in 2015. It's a higher percentage than the average in the EU, 0.14%, and more than three times higher than the 0.05% in France. Refugees having no intention to remain in Greece, they will have no long-term positive effect on the economy.

The high concentration of the arrival of migrants in some islands (half for just the island of Lesbos<sup>51</sup>) has disrupted tourism in these places, said an advance report of the Bank of Greece. The major tour operators have already warned of a decline in activity in this sector for 2016.

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<sup>50</sup> In Centre areas, the League enjoyed a small growth during last municipal elections in 2015, where the Left was running cities.

<sup>51</sup> 1,632 km<sup>2</sup> and 55,000 inhabitants.

International trade in Greece is also affected by the closures of major trade routes. This will also reduce foreign investments to Greece, the report said. However, local economies benefit around hotspots of spending by the many members of NGOs providing assistance to refugees. Some of the refugees still having currency savings are also spending on housing and food, for the benefit of the local petty bourgeoisie. In exchange for the cooperation of Greece with the EU programs, European leaders, in Germany in particular, have suggested that the question of Greek debt would be reviewed with greater "understanding". The collapse of the Greek economy would stop the state from playing the role of gatekeeper that other European states want it to play.

During the 1990s and 2000s Greek companies, mainly in agriculture, have harshly exploited immigrants, often from Asia. The immigrant workers did not always remain passive. In 2013, in Manolada, a village in the west of the country, workers from Bangladesh employed to pick raspberries went on strike against major delays in the payment of wages of 22 Euros per day. And yet, the boss kept 6 Euros for food and "accommodation". Armed with sticks they claimed their due but were shot at by the henchmen of the boss. In Lesbos, Albanian workers employed in the cultivation of olives obtained a pay increase after a struggle they had organised themselves.

But since then the arrival of migrants from Turkey has turned everything upside down. The local economy (small merchants and services) has prospered on the backs of the migrants by selling them goods and services at high prices. And there is another Greek sector which has done well out of the migrants, the maritime transport companies which are paid by the state to transport migrants from Lesbos to the Greek mainland (and now to take them back to Turkey). By this windfall they are assured a continuous activity while waiting for the return of the tourists during the holiday season.

In large cities immigrants clearly don't find jobs. The only possibilities are to work for the local mafias or become street vendors, a job under the thumb of the same mafias. Some are organized with local groups to fight against police harassment. Refugees have also begun to no longer accept being herded. Revolts have increased in Lesbos, and recently in Idomeni, on the border with Macedonia.

## **Migrant crisis and European crisis**

**The "migration crisis" reveals rather than causes the inability of Europe to establish itself as an integrated entity on political, economic and military levels.**

The current wave of migration, combined with the reactivation of the terrorist threat following the attacks in France in 2015 and in Belgium in 2016, fuelled existing tensions within Europe, showing the lack of coordinated responses and strengthening national withdrawal. Indeed, politically and practically, European states are divided on the management of migration flows and do not act centrally, but rather rely primarily on reflexes of "sovereignty", related to the particular interests of the parties controlling the government and the expressions of their civil societies.

Coping with the difficulties of containing migration flows, i.e. to ensure the control at the external borders of the Schengen area (especially on the Greek-Turkish border where nearly 85% of migrants arrived in 2015), European States are also unable to agree on a harmonized European migration policy, provoking an erosion of the area of free movement since September 2015. A dozen states have taken unilateral initiatives – and for the first time a multilateral one between Austria and some Balkan countries – to re-establish temporary controls, more or less intensive, at the internal borders of the Schengen area. Some states have even erected anti-migrant fences to restrain the entry of refugees on to their territory.

Today, on one side, the German government of Merkel strongly defends a European solution resulting in a stronger operational and political unification. This policy is however disputed even within the ruling coalition, and with more force since the events in Cologne<sup>52</sup>. On the other side, in Hungary, Orbán is very active in building a defensive approach towards

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<sup>52</sup> See Bulletin 9, already quoted.



European territory at the external borders (Greece, Macedonia, Bulgaria). He also voted against the relocation scheme. France experienced an acceleration of the security approach after 13 November<sup>53</sup>. The government wants to restore a systematic and thorough control at the external borders of the Union, but also at the internal ones. Greece appears to be the weak link in the EU, unable to meet its obligations to control external borders and to record and host new entrants. Austria has therefore coordinated, without Greece, a closure of the border between Greece and Macedonia asserted with a quantitative management of the number of migrants arriving on its territory, completely indifferent to the risk of turning Greece into a giant refugee camp. Finally, the UK is preparing a referendum on a possible EU exit. Cameron calls for maintaining the UK within the EU and negotiates at the same time significant easing of the application of European regulations on its territory; particularly concerning the payment of social benefits to documented foreigners and concerning restrictions on labour force migration coming from other EU countries (thus questioning free movement and non-discrimination between EU citizens).

So, one of the EU pillars is currently being undermined. The "Schengen crisis", coupled with a secessionist threat of the UK (the so called Brexit), illustrates the European default of economic and political integration related to several dividing lines between states:

- West vs East: In Western Europe, rallies of varying sizes in different countries, were organized in favour of asylum seekers, especially after the scandal caused by the death of little Aylan in the Mediterranean sea. In Central Europe, on the contrary, the anti-migrant demonstrations were numerically larger, in Warsaw, Prague or Bratislava.
- Internal vs external: The border countries in the South, namely Italy and Greece, are in the first line to receive migrants. But they are no longer able to cope with their duties, asking for help (financial, logistics) but also for a rapid relocation of migrants (thus questioning the Dublin Regulation<sup>54</sup>).

The EU was built up as a space for commercial exchange, eased by the free circulation of goods and people and the creation of a common currency. However, the EU first appears as an association of states or rather, unlike the United States, a juxtaposition of sovereign States without political and military union (no army, no common economic or foreign policy, and therefore no common migration policy etc.). The symptom of this lack of centralization manifests itself in crises (economic, migration) that systematically result in threats to break up the EU (Grexit, Brexit) and demands for adjustments.

After much haggling and negotiation, a final agreement was prepared by Germany and the Netherlands and then signed between Europe and Turkey on 19 March. This agreement reveals the European disunity on political, economic and financial matters as showed by the nationalist reaction of various member states, and not just the Eastern ones. This agreement also formalizes the existing situation of internal border closures. And of course this agreement is primarily a bailout agreement of the Schengen area threatened with break-up for months, and by the way a rescue of Greece increasingly put into difficulty by the confinement of migrants on its territory. This agreement finally reflects the feelings of distrust and sectarian withdrawal of various civil societies towards migrants, feelings that are exacerbated by the recent attacks on the French and Belgian territories.

Taking advantage of this opportunity, Turkey has restarted the game of negotiations concerning its integration into Europe. In recent years, Turkey had made a certain number of "bad" economic and strategic choices. Trying to emancipate itself from American tutelage, Turkey became economically closer to the Russian area, but lost an ally with the overthrow of the

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<sup>53</sup> See November 2015 leaflet, "Fight the deception of the state's warmongering slogans. Class war is the only possible response to the mass murderers. Neither gods, nor masters, nor states, nor bosses"

<sup>54</sup> This regulation determines which member state will be responsible for the treatment of an asylum application. Practically, it is the state through which a migrant first entered the EU (or, if it is appropriate, the state which granted a residence permit) and where he/she will be sent back to if making another application in another member state. The concrete dynamic of migration flows does not correspond to the Dublin Regulation. For example, Sweden and Germany receive the largest share of refugees but it is almost impossible to go there directly, without traveling through another member state.

Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt in 2013. The Syrian conflict has allowed Turkey to get back on track, widely using Syrian refugees as a geostrategic bargaining chip, despite the deterioration of its relations with Moscow. In exchange for the involvement of Turkey in migration crisis management, Europe agrees to pay 6 billion euros to Ankara in order to help with the settlement of refugees in Turkey, liberalises visas for Turkish nationals in June, and finally accepts to restart negotiations concerning its integration into the EU. With this agreement, Europe subcontracts to Turkey the selection of migrants willing to reach its territory and also tries to strengthen the repression of smugglers. From March the 20th, the agreement provides that all undocumented migrants arriving in Greece via Turkey will be sent back there. The same for those who are currently in Greece and who either do not apply for asylum or fail to obtain refugee status. Ankara started the returns on the 4 April. Migrants who claim asylum in Greece will be processed through an accelerated individual asylum procedure, consistent with international conventions. Only those whose refugee status has been recognized may remain in Greece. In addition, for each Syrian refugee sent back to Turkey, a Syrian living in a Turkish camp will be resettled in Europe. One of the biggest problems is the effective resettlement of Syrian refugees from Turkey to Europe. 72,000 places would be made available. But this is theoretical since among 160,000 migrants who were to be relocated, less than 1,000 have been processed in the last six months.

Meanwhile, Angela Merkel nourishes the project to establish a "humanitarian corridor" between Turkey and Europe in order to welcome new migrants, following her political line. But above all, the agreement with Turkey is in the context of the Juncker Plan, written in May 2015 within the walls of the European Commission. This European migration plan has so far only been allowed to reap short-term involvement (strengthening of the Frontex Agency, voluntary relocation, financial and logistical support to reception and registration in the entry countries, strengthened operations against trafficking networks). The plan is hampered by the fierce opposition of some member States (Denmark, Hungary, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia and the UK) concerning the relocation scheme. Yet the long-term perspective of this plan is to develop a common migration and asylum policy that would allow employers to "express their interest" to give priority to recruit the workforce matching their needs from amongst the migrants.

The agreement with Turkey also allows to the European Economic Community to be saved (and even prevent a hypothetical Grexit) and stems the spiral of nationalist reactions which would be very expensive for capital. On economic grounds, the weakening of the Schengen area would generate various difficulties, for example for commodity transport, for the tourist sector and for the companies employing cross-border workers (and for the workers themselves). The France Strategy Institute estimated that the restoration of border controls would have a direct impact of 0.8% GDP for the Schengen countries, which means 110 billion euros until 2025. Trade between countries would also decrease structurally from 10% to 20%.

## **By way of a conclusion**

Policies initiated by various states regarding migrants are not exclusively correlated with the requirements for the valorisation of capital established in these states (either in short, medium or long terms), cannot be mechanically reduced to economic logic, that they are also affected by currents that agitate civil society, along with various internal contradictions. Beyond the migrant question, the very nature of Europe is called into question once again: it is a heterogeneous and far from complete assembly of states. Merkel's motto for governments "*those who benefit from Europe must contribute to the common effort*" is the first attempt by "central" authority to act over and against "local" politics. Germany has already knocked on the door to realign Europe with its own political and economic interests.

Regarding the various migration policies of various states, the German standpoint (a strong state at the centre of Europe) is led by a clever understanding, from its government, of the conditions to fulfil to maintain a sufficient level of capital accumulation in the near future, and this despite the xenophobic opinion of a part of its civil society. The Hungarian case shows the reaction of a weaker state that wants to withdraw in on itself, partly conditioned by the reactions

of civil society, and thus unable to take the opportunity to gain a cheaper workforce (migrants are already well educated in their own countries).

Let's remember that every capitalist state carries out and expresses several functions at the same time:

- A board of directors of the bourgeoisie, guaranteeing the efficient operation of valorisation and representing various fractions of capital operating within same internal market (to achieve this, it must maintain optimal conditions for valorisation, such as ensuring social peace, development of suitable infrastructure etc.);
- An individual capitalist with its own interests. It may be in contradiction, or not, with interests of some layers of the internal ruling classes and even in apparent contradiction with its own "nation" (that is, the general interests of the bourgeois fractions which support it). A very specific individual capital that, endowed with a monopoly over its internal market, is able to impose its will over the whole of civil society as was shown during the last cyclical crisis;
- Representative of the expectations of various branches of civil society (classes, intermediate bodies, etc.) as long they remain confined within the system's limits.

These three aspects of the state may, at certain points, enter into contradiction with each other, and sometimes one aspect will prevail over another, according to the balance of power or the necessities of valorisation. Tough political struggles within the ruling classes show that government choices do not only match purely objective concerns. Each political choice is a bet on the future and even the most "clever" state can make a bad choice. At least a state can be more or less efficient according to the "good health" of a civil society which is able (or not) to produce and train capable people to efficiently manage the state.

**Against all the divisions among proletarians imposed by states, the working class response must be without any ambiguity: active solidarity towards its class brothers and sisters who are victims of xenophobia and jingoism created by capital, and the exercise of its direct power to smash capital and its state.**

On a general level, staged debates about the migrant question, led by various parts of capital (in every state) around concepts of the nation, citizenship, "nationality by place of birth" versus "nationality by blood" policies, integration/separation, tolerance, identity, civil rights for foreigners, difference/assimilation etc., are, most of the time, followed by very concrete and efficient anti-foreigner measures. The civil societies of strong countries of the CMP are unfortunately sensitive to arguments thrown out by the propaganda circles of the ruling class because of the persistent absence of the exploited class from the class struggle stage. Whether during crisis or stagnation periods or during periods of economic growth, states always attempt to exacerbate competition between wage workers. If the class struggle does not prevent it, then competition leads to a creeping or explicit civil war, the war of the poor for the glory of exploitation.

Democratic states unceasingly increase the legal measures framing the access of the foreign workforce to the internal labour market, and thus for the "national" proletarians too. These states encourage and reproduce nationalism, xenophobia, racism, sexism, i.e. all possible forms of working class divisions. To maintain Order and social cohesion, states indiscriminately blow hot for "exclusion" and cold for "integration". Every civil society of every state is permanently pushed, appealed to by their ruling classes to support them. What fundamentally separates the various states, is just the method by which they try to increase exclusions and inequalities as a concrete manifestation of relative overpopulation.

Some, like in Hungary, are pushing for the creation of private militia, radically anti-worker, able to lead punitive expeditions against "foreign" workers, while others call for the state to protect them by legally exercising its monopoly of violence. The great comeback to the European scene of nationalisms, of the religious question, of the cult of "roots", and of "cultural" traditions and specificities – in a single phrase: every kind of division – is used to hide the universal exploitation of the vast majority of human beings. It is also used to build up, around the

corresponding bourgeois fraction, a reactionary social block that no longer needs to find its basis within the expansion of social “gains”. The beautiful cosmopolitan and liberal ideas expressed during economic growth periods easily give way to xenophobic speech and acts, the struggle against the “internal” and “external” foes and the fierce struggle for the order of exploitation.

Against these reactionary forces, the only class able to stop the slaughter<sup>55</sup> and to topple the system, is the proletariat. It’s the only class that does not exploit anybody while being the most exploited, it’s the only one without a fatherland and that exists everywhere in the world. If this class is distributed among nationalities, ethnic groups, races, religious communities, distinct sexes, it nevertheless has unique interests that converge into a unitary international struggle against the exploiters and oppressors of the whole world. Struggling against its own bourgeoisie is an essential and preliminary condition in order to prevent our “migrant” class brothers and sisters from being trapped in any nationalist, community or religious ideologies, and in groups that implement every means possible to separate them from, and oppose them to, other proletarians.

This fight can only be taken up and led by the proletarian class. However it must not prevent itself from bringing alongside other subaltern classes. But it must try to keep them on its ground to train them to struggle only for the demands that take them away from particularisms and selfishness. When people are expecting to satisfy their own needs, the working class must always put forward the struggle and organization to transform these demands into living practises and, above all, direct actions, movements that anticipate a new society based on social cooperation and superseding the statist form. The force of working class to convince is directly proportional to its obvious capacity to be a social and politically independent protagonist in the areas where it can act: factories, poor neighbourhoods, schools, hospitals etc. As a matter of fact, its power to convince depends on exercising its direct power to smash capital and its state.

To the intimate and personal hatred of the other, the exploited of the whole world have not so far opposed collective class hatred. Nevertheless, it’s the only way to make the first kind disappear. As we stated in our text “Myths of zero immigration versus the realities of the labour market in the capital accumulation crisis” in 1993, to be against all repressive measures taken by capitalist states against immigrants, we must list some “basic” proletarian demands:

*“- defence of the real direct wage of all fractions of the working class (native/immigrant, “legal”/ “illegal”, in the contracting countries/in the sub-contracting countries...): equal pay for equal work, equal pay rises for everyone.*

*- defence of the real indirect wage of all fractions of the working class: social security for all without discrimination, equality of conditions of access to the labour market, to housing, to education.*

*- international unity of the working class and of the oppressed masses with the basic goal of containing and reducing the competition, inevitable under the CMP, between sellers of labour power: extension to everyone and all sections of social production of the most favourable contractual conditions of pay and work (no to working on the black).*

*To respond to the present measures, which aim at creating a new normative, legislative and policing environment around “settlement of foreigners” it is necessary to put forward specific objectives which, nevertheless, will be stripped of any meaning if they are disconnected from those which attack the question on a fundamental level; here they are:*

*- total freedom of movement for workers*

*- unlimited and unconditional right of residence for foreigners (without a requirement for “morality”, dress code, religion, nationality etc.), no to republican integration, no to the assimilation of immigrant populations*

*-no to expulsions, no to the double penalty [prison plus deportation], no to identity checks.”*

*(“Zero immigration”, p. 4-5)*

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<sup>55</sup> We are thinking of the thousands of “migrants” who drown every year in the Mediterranean Sea while trying to escape their miserable conditions of existence.

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

WORK DOCUMENTS

N°1	Les 35 heures contre le prolétariat –Considérations liminaires sur les agitations des chômeurs	Juin 1998	gratuit
N°2	Nazisme et question ouvrière	Juin 2001	2 €
N°3	Modalités de l'exploitation capitaliste	Juin 2001	2 €
N°4	Critique du « concept » de la nouvelle économie	Juin 2001	2 €
N°5	Argentine : Développement du capitalisme et lutte des classes/Péronisme et classisme/Dépasser l'Argentinazo	Juin 2003	5 €
N°6	L'antimondialisation, variante moderne dégénérée du socialisme petit-bourgeois	Juin 2003	2 €
N°7	Égypte : un coup d'État au nom du peuple et de la démocratie	Novembre 2013	1 €
N°8	The migrant question: The reality of the labour market versus the nationalism of civil society	May 2016	0,5 £

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*“By cowardly giving way in their everyday conflict with capital, they [the workers] would certainly disqualify themselves from the initiating of any larger movement”*

Karl MARX,  
*Wages, Prices and Profit, 1865*