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**Europe's shame.
Death at the Borders of the EU**

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Some figures. The Canary Islands counts about two million people. On average, the islands handles about 9 to 10 million tourists per year. This considerable tourist industry justifies practically its entire right to exist (over 32% of its GNP). Although these figures consist of a significant multiplicity, they never determine the media whatsoever.

The following figures are in every single aspect inferior to the cited figures mentioned above: In the last few years, the Canary Islands counted twenty to thirty thousand boat people coming from various parts of Africa and increasingly from Asia. Estimates differ, but estimated guesses centre around a few thousand people who died in their attempt to reach the Spanish islands. Further down the Mediterranean the Italian authorities intercepted twenty to third thousand people annually. The majority arrived on Sicilia and on the island of Lampadusa. Others stranded in Calabria, Puglia en Sardinia.

Now we ask the following. On which grounds do we make a holiday camp site for the former group and a deportation camp for the latter? Why do we raise a monument for the death of the first group, exemplary is the recent installation of the monument for the Dutch casualties among tourists of the 1977 air disaster on Tenerife, and not for the African and Asian travelers *without papers* who died on their journeys? What legitimizes this different valuation of human lives?

What is at stake here is the problem of classification and purification based on a consensus of non-egalitarian political difference. The distinctive factor here is interest (Badiou, 2005, 97). Interest has nothing to do with equality or indifference, but under the necessity of the political interest is largely concerned with non-egalitarian protection. In the first place this political difference is ethical since it's consensus has split the multiplicity into those people as identifiable tourists, and those people who are a priori recognized as uncivilized, subhuman boatpeople with an unclear and undefined status that threaten our interest. These latter people have been named illegal, undocumented or irregular immigrants, the *Sans papiers*. These are the people without a name. In this context, Badiou (2005a) refers to the *Law*, by which he means the state of the situation, as a 'prescription of reasonable order'. The difference between the subsets of tourist and illegal migrants is the result of an obstinate ideology of 'ethics' (2005b, 28, 29) According to Badiou, in a consistent multiplicity the Law decides which parts are

accepted as normality under the predicative order and which parts are forbidden, are considered abnormal and un-lawful, illegal. Recently, Agamben has similarly explained the working of this inclusive exclusion in the normalization process of the sovereign (Agamben, 2002). Earlier, Schmitt made a comparable reasoning on the construction of the exception, which, in the words of Schmitt, are a consequence of the processes of *Ortung* (claiming a location) und *Ordnung* (bordering and ordering) (Schmitt, 1950). The political classification has nothing to do with any political truth based on justice (=Equality). Equality can only exist if all subsets, all possible constructible subsets are equal under the law.

Under the predicative order of the European Union the ethical *difference* between these two subsets is the *a priori* recognition and consensual identification of evil vis-à-vis the good. The difference between the good tourists and the evil illegal migrants on the Canary Islands is seen as normal and immanent. Tourists are short-stay travelers, who come to enjoy the Mediterranean and the Atlantic. As a contrast, the illegal migrant is *a priori* seen as a barbarian who is suspicious and *not* of interest, who allegedly come in large numbers and threaten the public order and security. Illustrative in the media coverage on migration is the outspoken and impudent citing of *floods, streams, masses*, and even *tsunamis* against to which *embankments* have to be erected in order to prevent *flooding*.

In a similar vein, psychoanalytic Jacques Lacan has in a commanding way argued that the construction of fear has to be explicated from a feeling being deluged by *unnamable*, potential immense streams, hordes, masses and streams of ‘Others’ who threaten to negate the existing and familiar world, or worse, to let her disappear (see Lacan, 2004; Harari, 2001; Žižek,). This influx of the ‘Other’ is considered as overwhelming when an apparent shortage of space for identity construction occurs. Since our identity construction only relates to the subjective element of economic interest, the influx of the unnamable is considered and imagined to be dangerous for 1. The fulfillment of the ‘European’ in terms of authority, citizenship and identity and 2. The economic well-being and the public safety (safety, protection). Moral panic infused by the media is the general factor for the imagined lack of space which makes people feel uncomfortable and the familiar alienate. The erection of a border is an often-used strategy when the sequential ‘threat’ of the *unnamable* increases. Installing a border is basically saying: keep your distance.

If we look more closely however, we must recognize that the hordes of tourists are as ‘strange’ as the illegal immigrants. They escape cold European winters, or save their last pennies to escape the drag of daily life for their annual discount holiday to Tenerife. Just to escape from the stuffiness, from commands and demands, competition and the routine. Many escape from their work, for their boss who only grants them one week off for the perverse reason that ‘time is money’. In this sense, tourists are also refugees, yet their lawful classification is radically different.

It is worrying that the moral panic based on flows of discreditable sequential representation is far from any thorough scientific knowledge of contemporary global

migration. Despite the often relentless used conceptualization of ‘floods’ and ‘tsunamis’, only a fractional subset of total humanity is migrant. It is the majority of people who make up the subset tourist. Hence, the constructed moral difference between subsets is based on a dubious sequential representation. The media cry for help for the south-European islands without mentioning a word on the millions of tourist refugees. This media attention has not led European politics undisturbed. It is now forced to anticipate on the fear of the namable masses. In fear of a flood of nameless boat-people they have bordered and fortified the imagined longitudinal watershed to considerable higher level. The EU external borders surrounding the Mediterranean have literally turned into a *deadline*. With that fact, the politics of difference demands a horrifying toll. The boat-people are seen as, to use the words of Sibley the ‘‘filt’’, the ‘‘impure’’, the ‘‘disordered’’ or what Bauman called the ‘*wasted lives*’ (Bauman, 2004). They are *de facto* regarded as inevitable and acceptable waste in the conveyor belt production of our European prosperity. The wasted lives have no face and no name. They are numbered, ‘received’ in camps, the human dumping sites for the civic dead, and subsequently deported. Hence, the representation itself has taken the appearance of a harsh reality. Over the years, the installing of the external borders of the EU has produced an appalling human cost, and especially in and around the Mediterranean and since 2005, the Atlantic, although not solely there. Many of the migrants died because of drowning and hypothermia, others have died because of suffocation and asphyxiation during their traveling in ships or trucks and there is a significant number of people who committed suicide while being held on the threshold of citizenship or deportation, that is in the detention and deportation centres¹.

We conclude. Let us hold the maxim that human multiplicities of any kind consist of the *same* in at least three ways. 1. All people are equally morally worth 2. People should have a say over policy principles that have an effect on them 3. The faith of the origin of birth of a person is not a just moral principle for a policy principle. When we hold this maxim and apply this to the bordering practices of the EU, we must conclude that the EU violates all three egalitarian principles of the just moral regime. The EU makes a moral distinction between people, the EU does not include the people into their bordering practices who are effected by them and the EU unjustly politicizes the faith of birth of people. The EU constructs a distinction between a namable and unnamable refugee, in other words, between a welcome traveler and a political enemy on the basis of his/her origin and economic value. This leads to a subhuman burden and redundancy rhetoric which provokes racist populism. It results in an absurd maxim: if you have escaped a position out of vital necessity to increase your social status or even save your life by risking your life, you are categorized as disposable barbaric. At the same time, we must not forget, that most of the so-called illegal migrants, once they make it to the domains of the EU, find work. They build, cater, clean and nurture the houses of the working EU population. And, lest we forget, besides the ‘‘illegal migrants’’ there are other productions of unnamable subsets of the European neo-liberal factory of progress, that is

¹ On <http://www.monde-diplomatique.fr/cartes/mortsauxfrontieres> one can see the geographical variation in the total number of the death-toll of the closure of the borders of the EU

the beggars, the homeless, people who are under the moral imperative 'victims' instead of barbarians. They come to the boulevards and beaches of tourist islands in order to survive for no other reasons.

It is the political particularity within the European Union who creates her own strangers and eventually its own wasted lives. The consequences of such a production of the eternal desired 'We' and the eternal undesired 'They' is an increased agitation of moral panic on which some politicians thankfully seize upon in their competition for more votes (Sibley, 1995). This unjustified moral fear for a liminal drift of the world constructs a harrowing situation of irregular travelers to the European Union. It is the inequality of a politics of difference of which the people with their wobbly ships, who 'en mass' threaten to flood 'our' territory are victim. They are pushed in the non-self-chosen category of the immigrant with no name. This particularity is the political difference within the European Union, which opposes the good, with the clear political name of liberal democracy of which tourists are a category of interest and the unnamable bad, the illegal migrants whom sorrow is imagined to be a result of their own backwardness. The border of the EU discriminates unjustly and unfairly between people on the basis of their country of origin and on the basis of papers. The result is a shameful difference in the colouring of Europe's Mediterranean. Whereas for some, the tourists, the Mediterranean has an imaginatively pure and shiny azure blue colour, for some allegedly redundant others, the colour of the sea is bloody red.

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