

Interview with Nadji

Anonymized in front of a running camera
Basel, 8th of April 2020¹

The conversation was held in Arabic and French and has been translated into German and now into English.

Content Note:
Denial of rights

When did you arrive at the camp?

"One and a half months ago."

What kind of ambience does it have?

"[Laughs] None. It doesn't have any ambience."

Have you experienced any violence at the camp?

"It's very bad."

What kind of violence exists; can you talk about it?

"I've come here today to talk about racism, violence, and human rights. I want to tell you about what I've experienced here in Switzerland and what happened to me in my asylum procedure. I had an accident in another city in Switzerland. Three days later I arrived in Basel, I wanted to undergo surgery here. I went to the federal asylum center to seek asylum. They didn't want to let me in, though, and sent me to Chiasso. They said that I wasn't well and that they couldn't let me in in this state. Of course, I did not want to accept this, because of my [injured] leg. In the end they said: *Okay, you can stay for one night and tomorrow we'll see.* That was the beginning of the problems. I wanted to get a room on the first floor, because I wasn't able to climb the stairs. But they didn't want to give me one. We're like everybody else, we also have the right to eat, drink, sleep, live. Now something important: Why do they only do this to us? Why do they only target us *Arabs*?"

There are things that I can't say with my mouth, only the heart can feel them. And not all people can feel it, only those who've been in the *cell*.

¹ The interview has been conducted by a journalist and simultaneously filmed. Additionally, it has been recorded by members of our collective. An edited version is presented here.

We've seen that in Switzerland, it's like at war. The people here, the kind ones and the hateful ones, are all the same. But we, we also have a heart."

Why do you think is it that the hostility is only directed against people from the Maghreb?

"That's the reason I've come here. I'll tell you something. If a person from the Maghreb comes to Switzerland - I've seen and experienced this - this person comes to Switzerland to seek asylum. Normally you'll get help but if a person from the Maghreb arrives, the Securitas' faces change instantly. Everything, their facial expression and posture change. I spoke to those people completely normally. But I can't stay with the Securitas and ORS employees anymore. I feel it. It feels like I'm going back to hell."

What kind of violence have you experienced or witnessed at the camp?

"I'm ill, injured. I can't feed myself [e.g. getting food which means climbing stairs or queuing]. No employee has helped me, no one is looking after me. I'll now tell my story: I've been in the camp for 40 days. Since my surgery I haven't had a day of rest. Once a minor was charging his phone at 11 pm. He didn't have an extension cable, so he went to the hallway. A Securitas passed by, together with a female* asylum seeker. The minor asked the Securitas if he could charge his phone there in order to talk to his mother. The Securitas, however, went up to him and pushed him hard against a trash can. The minor complained and asked why the Securitas would do something like that. The Securitas then grabbed him and dragged him downstairs. The Securitas was alone with this woman* but immediately called other Securitas and told them that the minor provoked him."

[see above for continuance]

Do you know the Securitas' name?

"No, not the name. But I'd recognize the face."