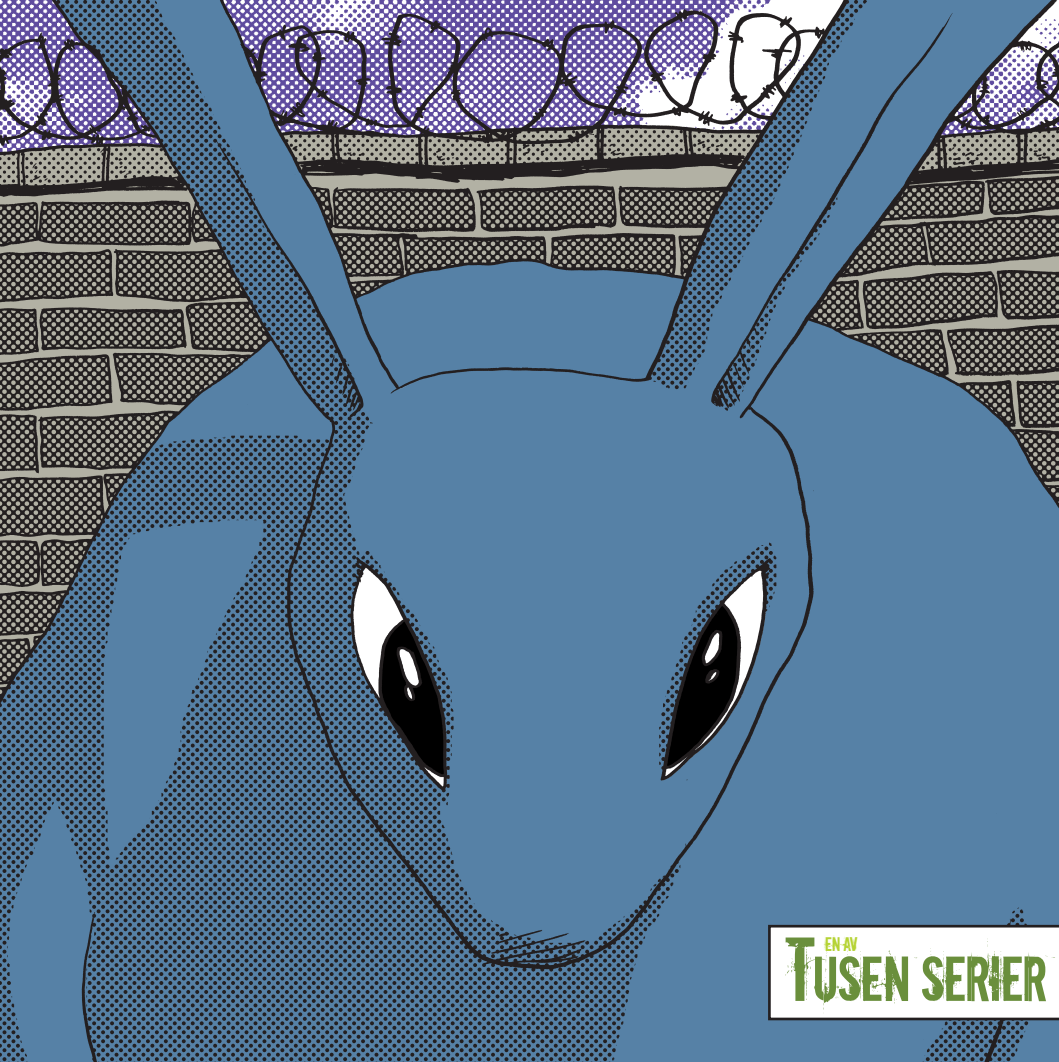


Angry Animal crossing borders



EN AV
TUSEN SERIER



Angry Animal crossing borders

**Script: Aktion Mot Deportation &
Mattias Elftorp**

Art: Mattias Elftorp

TUSEN SERIER

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Design and translation by Mattias Elftorp: www.elftorp.com

Script consulting from Aktion Mot Deportation: www.aktionmotdeportation.se

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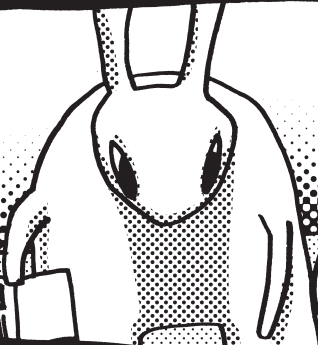
Angry Animal

— Introduction to Migration



Have you ever thought about the absurdity of all the processes you have to go through when travelling abroad?

Like they don't trust you not to blow up your means of transportation.

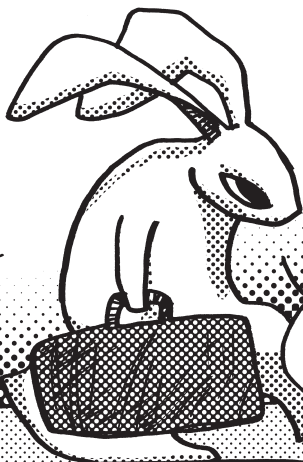


And to have to show your passport all the time. Identifying yourself as if you were renting a movie or something.

While at home and when you've arrived, you can move freely, but when you cross a line on a paper, something special happens.

And if you get the idea to stay on the other side of the border, then it's even worse.

Especially if you want to stay in the wealthier parts of the world.



By the way, did you know that more Europeans move abroad each year than the amount of people moving to Europe?

The whole idea behind the nation state, that we just take for granted, is not very old. Legislation about immigration in Sweden hasn't been around for even 100 years.



The first law, from 1920, was mostly concerned with protecting the job market against foreign competition and preserving the Swedish race.



Back then, racism and antisemitism were popular and it was reflected in the laws. A bit later, we could see where that trend was leading...



After the world wars, things changed. Then more people were needed to rebuild Europe, so we couldn't really afford being racist about it.

In the 60ies, immigration was seen as an opportunity rather than a risk, like now.

VÄLKOMMEN

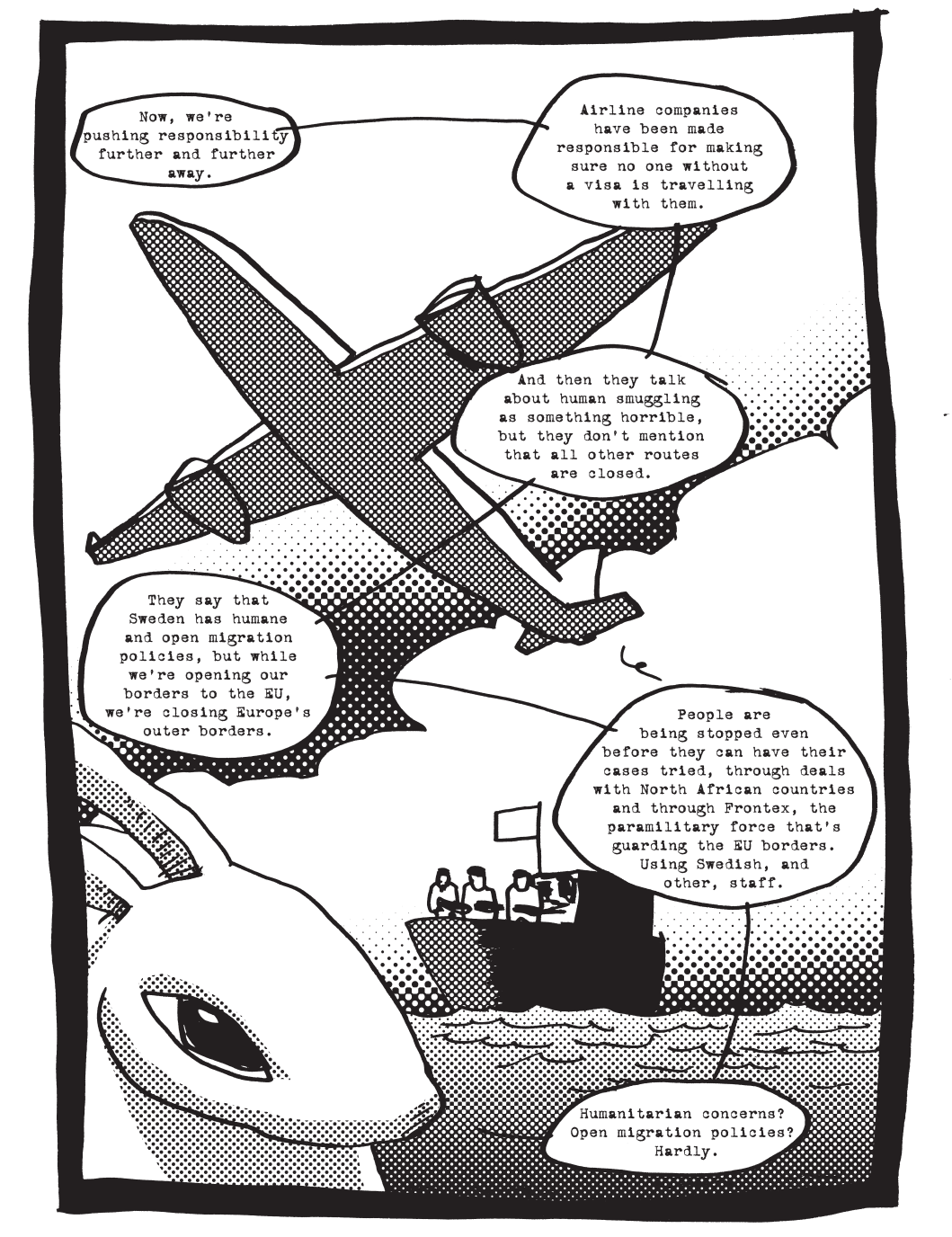


During the 80ies it turned around, and after a new law from 1990 it's just become harsher.

Since 1954, refusing asylum to political refugees wasn't possible if not for special circumstances.

Now, very special circumstances are needed to be granted asylum.





Now, we're pushing responsibility further and further away.

Airline companies have been made responsible for making sure no one without a visa is travelling with them.

And then they talk about human smuggling as something horrible, but they don't mention that all other routes are closed.

They say that Sweden has humane and open migration policies, but while we're opening our borders to the EU, we're closing Europe's outer borders.

People are being stopped even before they can have their cases tried, through deals with North African countries and through Frontex, the paramilitary force that's guarding the EU borders. Using Swedish, and other, staff.

Humanitarian concerns?
Open migration policies?
Hardly.

Those who still manage to get in are met with a whole system built up to send people away.

The asylum process

The staff at the Migration Board make decisions that can be appealed at the Migration Court, which is following rules and practice in a system designed to dehumanize and turn people into numbers and statistics, administered by individual clerks who are just following orders, doing their jobs, taking care of their small part of the process.

Imagine coming from a really bad situation (bad enough to make you leave your home behind). You've just arrived and are probably not thinking all that straight, having travelled far, in uncomfortable and dangerous ways. And the first thing you need to do is tell your life's story, and you have to get all the details right and include all the crap you've been through. Probably easier said than done.

Maybe you came via Malta, Hungary or Italy who are infamous for their bad treatment of asylumseekers.

If you ID yourself after coming via another Schengen country you'll be sent back there because of the Dublin agreement. And if you don't ID yourself, you're seen as dishonest.

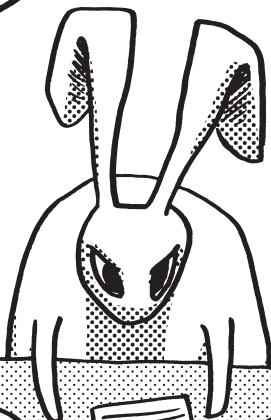
So you've finally arrived and can relax a bit. Maybe you'll think of something else, more details that you didn't tell them in the first interview, because you were stressed and that's how people work.

Like a contest in good behavior!

Then you're seen as untrustworthy. And the most important thing in the asylum process is your credibility, not your need for protection.

When the Migration Court was introduced, the legal process was supposed to become safer, but that's not how it turned out. It's just another institution to make it all less human.

Futhermore, it's the Migration Board who apoints your legal representative, and it's not exactly in their interest to give you a good lawyer. You're lucky if you even get an interpreter who speaks your first language.




It's up to you to prove your need for protection, and you need to have individual reasons to stay. You have to prove that you, personally, are being threatened or persecuted. Coming from an area where you belong to a systematically persecuted minority, or where there's a war, isn't enough.

"If you come here again I'll cut your throat!!"

KOMMER DU HIT
IGEN SKA JA G
SKÅRA HALSEN
!!!

If your life is threatened, you need to have documents that prove it and they have to be submitted as originals to your case officer. You'll just have to hope to get them back for the next time you need to show them.

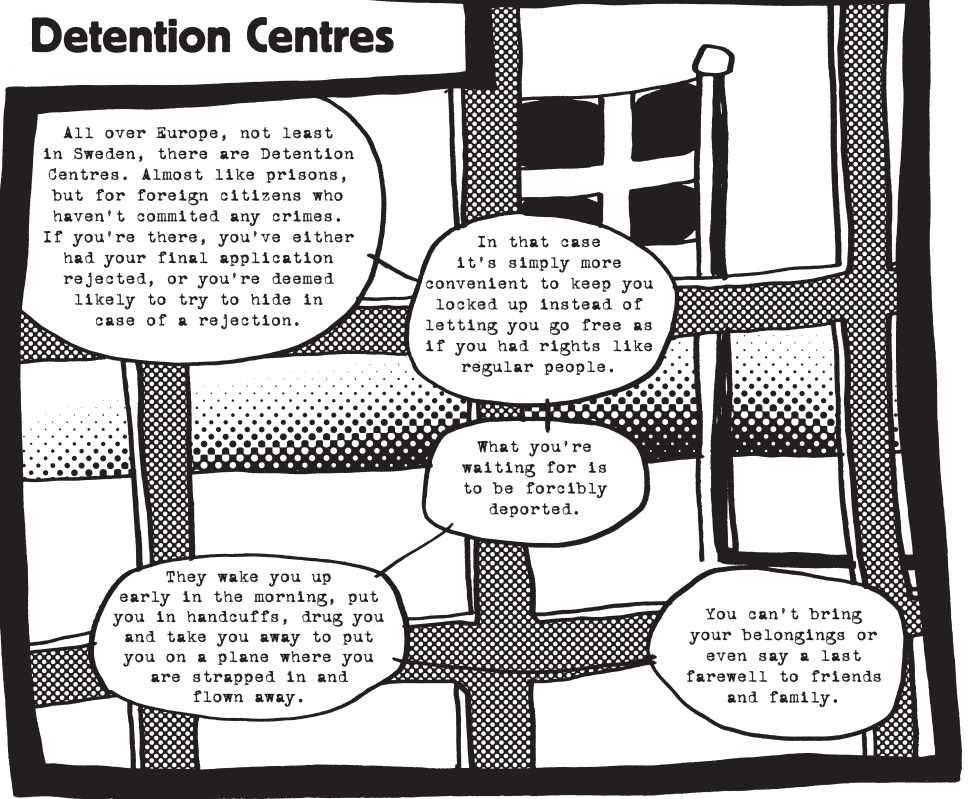
Sound reasonable to you?



And does it sound reasonable that it isn't taken seriously if you're so desperate that you try to kill yourself or sow your mouth shut in a hunger strike rather than going back?

Or that it isn't taken into account if you're disabled or don't have any contacts at all in your country of origin because you've been living here for 10 years and have your whole life here or if you're a child with experiences that are so traumatic that you shut yourself off from the world.

Detention Centres



All over Europe, not least in Sweden, there are Detention Centres. Almost like prisons, but for foreign citizens who haven't committed any crimes. If you're there, you've either had your final application rejected, or you're deemed likely to try to hide in case of a rejection.

In that case it's simply more convenient to keep you locked up instead of letting you go free as if you had rights like regular people.

What you're waiting for is to be forcibly deported.

They wake you up early in the morning, put you in handcuffs, drug you and take you away to put you on a plane where you are strapped in and flown away.

You can't bring your belongings or even say a last farewell to friends and family.

The machine

What was seen as a normal behavior towards non-Swedish people coming here 40 years ago, or towards people in general, doesn't seem to exist in today's migration politics.

Instead, it is characterized by mistrust and dissociation.

It's a machinery for dehumanisation and deportation where no individual official has to take the full responsibility for any of the people being processed.

But in the end, no one's responsibility is everyone's responsibility.

At some point it has to stop, before it's too late.

Earlier in history, we've seen where things are going when people are treated differently depending on where they come from. When some are being made suspect and are treated as something less than human.

True, we don't have concentration camps yet, but we're building bigger and bigger detention centres in order streamline and expand the deportations of undesirables.

There are those who try to use "integration problems" as an argument for making the rules even tougher, the borders even harder to cross. But how do you integrate into a society where you've been so utterly unwelcome from the very start?

When this era is over and everyone is asking: "Why was there no resistance? Why were everyone quietly watching while all this was going on?" the list of who stood up will be pretty short compared to what it should be.

We have a social climate of individualism and unwillingness to share the wealth or even see that we could gain something from exchange with someone from a different culture. It's remarkable that there are even a few groups and networks of people who are working in different ways for some change. From asylum groups to Action Against Deportation to different religious groups and so on...

Sometimes it's helping with appeals, collecting money and arranging safe health care for those who are in hiding, disseminating information, blocking deportations or springing people from the detention centres. Think about where you stand in all of this and see where you can do your part, because even if you don't want to, you're a part of this society and have to act accordingly.

(NOT)
THE END

SERIEFRÄMJANDET PRESENTERAR:
TUSEN SERIER

Tusen serier is run by the Swedish Comics Association through the comics activists Amanda Casanellas and Mattias Elftorp. In short, the goal of the project is to broaden the Swedish comics scene and open it up for people with a background outside of Sweden. One part of this process is working for the publishing of a number of graphic novels in the theme of migration. This pamphlet can be seen as an introduction to this theme.

www.tusenserier.com

DON'T MOURN, ORGANISE:

(some organisations in the Swedish asylum rights movement)

FARR (Flyktinggruppernas och asylkommittéernas Riksråd):

www.farr.se

Ingen Människa Är Illegal: www.ingenillegal.org

Asylgruppen i Malmö: asylgruppenimalmo.org

Asylgruppen Lund: asylgruppenlund.webs.com

Aktion Mot Deportation: www.aktionmotdeportation.se

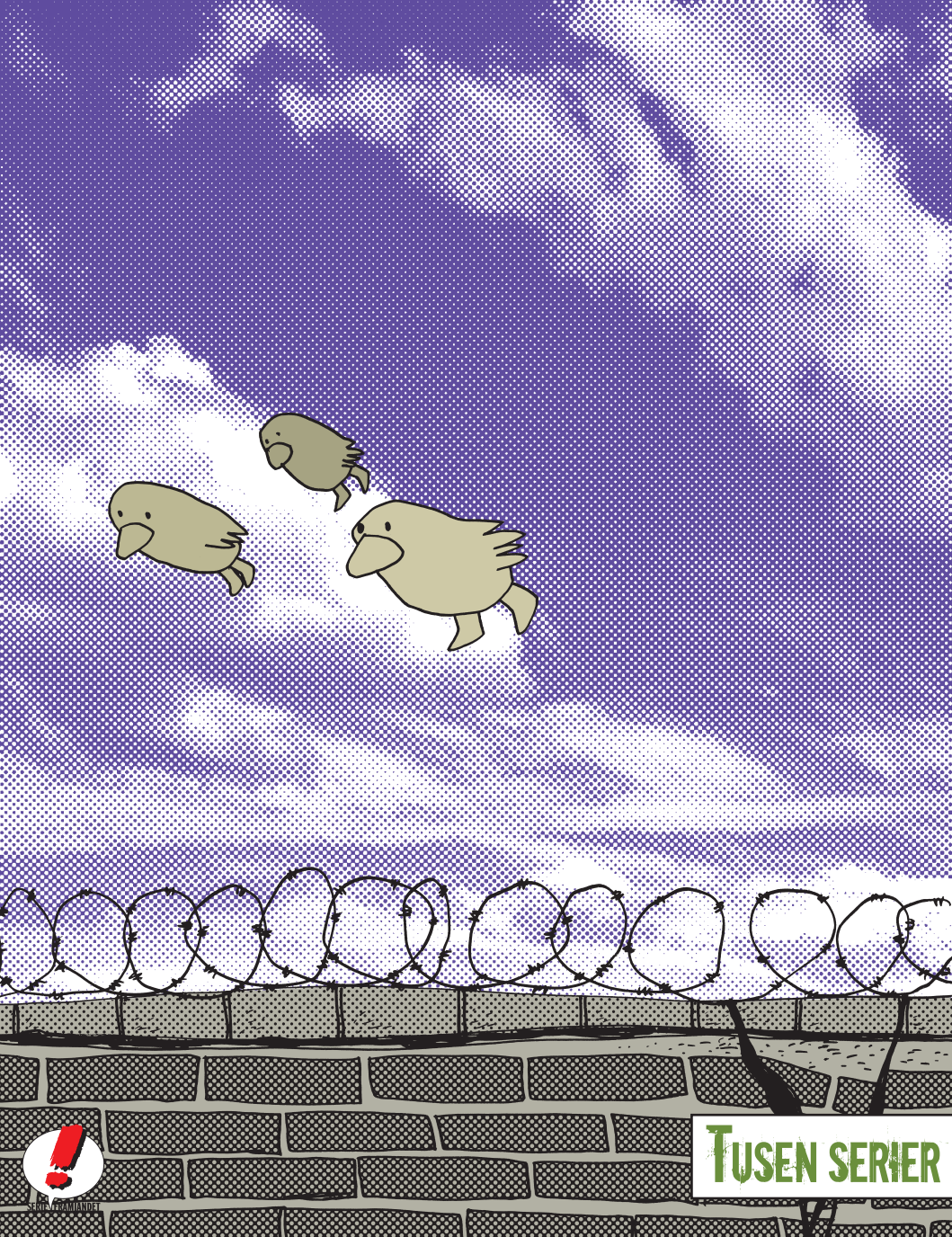
Flyktingbloggen: www.flyktingbloggen.org

No Border: www.noborder.org

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– a project from the Swedish Comics Association, with support by Arvsfonden and Kultur Skåne.





TUSEN SERIER