

NO BORDER KITCHEN LESBOS

We are a non-hierarchical/horizontal self-organized group of cooking activists from all over the world that share the aim of supporting people on their journey to Europe. No Border Kitchen [NBK] started in September 2015 on 'the Balkan route' with few activists. We cooked at different spots along the Balkan route, as an independent and self-organized collective, during the long summer of migration. But since the Balkan route turned into a governmental controlled "Balkan-corridor" the repression towards people seeking refuge and those supporting them along the way grew. The EU government tries to divide people by letting some pass, some only register while leaving others totally stranded. People are stuck on the Greek islands, in the no-man's lands of borders, in prisons and detention centers or being forced further into even riskier methods of travel, living a marginalized life in constant fear of arrest and deportation. Alongside the governments are trying with repressive mechanisms – ID-controls, registration procedures, accusations, and prisons – to control access of independent activists and finally destroy the solidarity structures. We stand against this controlling system and deny to be part of the inhuman policies.

That is when we decided to go to the island of Lesbos, Greece, which is a place of transit for the majority of the people overcoming the European border regime. Since 14th November we are cooking at Tsamakia beach, which is close to the port of Mytilene. It was squatted by the people seeking refuge as a place to shelter for a few nights and supported by the No Border Kitchen in terms of food and infrastructure. This is how NBK evolved into a self-organized camp where we support people seeking refuge, irrespective of their backgrounds and adapting to the current situations.

The NBK crew is an open structure: anyone is welcome to join as long as they agree to our basic anti-authoritarian positions and non-hierarchical form of organization. We as individuals of different backgrounds refer to the broad terms of Antifascism, Antiracist and Antisexism. We are a vegan kitchen, acknowledging the connection of exploitation and oppression of all living beings in the logic of capitalistic system. We create this space together and invite all people present to create it with us. We are individuals and affinity groups who use private donations to support each other. There is no organization behind us. Our resources are limited, but we try our best to support the different needs we have.

NBK is not only about providing food for the people seeking refuge, but crucially also about respecting each other as individuals. Each traveler has their own unique aspirations, desires and sets of circumstances that brought them to undertake their journey. In our self-organized camp all people regardless of gender, nation and religion are welcome. We hold regular general assemblies, translated into different languages, in which we explain the general idea of No Border Kitchen and how the space works, and also spread independent travel and border information to help people on their journeys. We hope that through the relations formed here we can offer each other the mental strength to ride the storms and challenges of what is fast emerging as a distinctly brutal historical era, with dignity and courage. We believe in our capacity to resist the regime of devastation that is undermining precisely those aspects of our lives that we cherish the most: freedom to move, to share and to create relations of respect and curiosity.

NBK is a political project that rejects the border regime enforced by the governments of the European Union. We are in Lesbos because we believe that Fortress Europe and its borders must be destroyed.

We are not here to assist the governments of Europe in management of 'refugee flow' and this is why we do not work officially together with non-governmental and humanitarian organizations and we are not officially registered as one with the authorities. We do cooperate on an informal level with some NGOs on the island when it comes to safety of boat arrivals or medical needs. Anyone may join in the activities of the No-Border-Kitchen, with the proviso that you do so as an individual, not as a representative of an NGO or other organization. We reject the ongoing mobilization of massive resources for the purpose of controlling and restricting the way in which people are seeking refuge, the increasing militarization of our societies, the erection of new walls, the continuation of war and the political and economic system that needs war in order to reproduce itself. We want to fight the distinctions the state and media make between "good" and "bad" migrants based on whether they are "refugees" or "economic migrants", "innocent victims" or "criminals".

We are not here as "volunteers" to fulfill a role of humanitarian charity, nor to "look after" someone in a paternalistic manner supposedly passive refugees. The people we meet at the camp and along the way are able to take care of themselves, and have their own structures of solidarity and mutual aid, and capacities to endure through the direst of circumstances which we can only learn from and be inspired by. We feel it is a gift to us to be able to share and create social space with them, hear their stories and learn about the experiences and perspectives of those whose structural oppression in this world is far greater than our own.

We are aware that many people of us that are in solidarity have a safe status and don't have the same experiences of racism and illegalization as the people we meet, nor do we know what it is like to be forced to live lives where you are constantly "playing with death" (the words of one Afghani teenager we met), but we believe that we share some common desires: freedom of movement for all and an end to the European border regime of death. Our struggle aims to fight the institutions who keep up the current order: the European states with their repression apparatus.

We, the No-Border-Kitchen-crew understand that what we are doing is a small attempt in the face of the enormity of destructive forces at work in the world today. But it is a real commitment of real individuals, it is one concrete effort among many, it is one piece of the puzzle of another possible world. We believe that all these efforts do make a difference and that they should be developed and expanded further.

Our broader desire is to build relationships of solidarity and form new collectivities in struggle. Therefore we also connect with the local activist structures, with whom we share common struggles and hopes and who we support. We believe that by establishing networks in our common struggle, we can fight powerfully as a united movement and rise together against fortress Europe.

United we stand, divided we fall.

**FIGHT FORTRESS EUROPE! NO BORDER, NO NATION!
FOR THE FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT FOR EVERYBODY AND EVERYWHERE**

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