

NO BORDER KITCHEN LESVOS

What is the No Border Kitchen?

We are a non-hierarchical self-organized group of activists from all over the world that share the aim of overcoming the borders and restrictions that impede freedom of movement. No Border Kitchen [NBK] started cooking in several locations in September 2015 on 'the Balkan' route. Government repression of refugees and their supporters increased until the Balkan route was effectively closed. People are stuck on the Greek islands, in a no-man's land of borders, prisons and detention centers, forcing them into even riskier methods of travel. Additionally, the EU continues their attempt to repress and destroy the independent activists and their solidarity structures. We stand against this controlling system and refuse to be part of its inhuman policies.

That is why we opened a kitchen on Lesbos, Greece, which is a place of transit for the majority of the people overcoming the European border regime. From the 14th November we cooked at Tsamakia beach, close to the port of Mytilene. It was squatted by the people seeking refuge as a place of shelter for a few nights and were supported by the No Border Kitchen in terms of food and infrastructure. This is how NBK evolved into a self-organized camp where activists and refugees lived together and supported people seeking refuge, irrespective of their nationality.

After the Macedonian border closed the camp rapidly grew to over 300 people because the authorities reduced the transfers to the mainland of Greece. Then the EU-Turkey deal made the situation even worse by the deportation of people back to 'safe' Turkey while thousands of people are stuck in the island. They are not able to move on with their journey, neither can they go back to their countries. Refusing to endure the depravity of the detention/deportation center at Moria, many sought refuge at the NBK camp.

On the 20th April the camp was brutally evicted by police and coastguard agents. Everyone was arrested and the refugees were imprisoned in Moria. Far from being finished, however, it soon became apparent that political activism and infrastructure were necessary to support groups that escaped detention. Many are still requesting a place that can serve as an alternative to imprisonment at Moria as they wait in desperation to escape the island. Refugees actively resisted oppression by rioting in Moria. Although media attention has faded on the plight of refugees stranded here and many NGOs are moving to other areas, boats are continuing to arrive. That is why we consider it crucial to open a new facility to meet these current needs of migrants on Lesbos and unite our efforts in the struggle for freedom of movement.

Some of our friends from Tsamakia Beach have become part of the NBK Crew. Together we want to create an open space in which we are not just trying to meet basic needs but open a space for discussing and approaching political questions and struggles. Another aim is to monitor and publish the changing situation on Lesbos in order to put it back in focus and be able to maintain a flexible structure.

What is No Border Kitchen about?

NBK is a political project that rejects the border regime enforced by the governments of the European Union. We are on 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 another organization.

The continuation of a political and economic system that needs war, injustice and exploitation in order to reproduce itself forces people to migrate. We reject the ongoing mobilization of massive resources for the purpose of controlling and restricting the migration of those deemed 'undesirable' or lacking worth to the capitalistic system. We also reject the increasing militarization of our societies and the erection of walls and borders. 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 believe in unconditional freedom of movement for all.

We are 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 adhere to the broad terms of Anti fascism, Anti-racism and Anti sexism. We are a vegan kitchen, but offer people the possibility to cook their own food.

We are individuals and affinity groups who use private donations to support each other. There is no organization behind us. NBK is not here as a group of "volunteers" to fulfill a role of humanitarian charity, nor to "look after" refugees in a paternalistic manner supposedly passive refugees.

NBK is not only about providing food for the people seeking refuge, but also about respecting each other as individuals. Each traveler has his or her own unique aspirations, desires and set of circumstances that brought them to undertake their journey. In our self-organized structure 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 information to help people on their journeys or in their current situation.

We hope that through the relations formed here we can offer each other the mental strength to ride the storms and challenges with dignity and courage of what is fast emerging as a distinctly brutal historical era. 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.

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. However, it is a real commitment of individuals, 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 collectives in our struggle. Therefore we also connect with the local activist structures, with whom we share common struggles and hopes and whom 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 EVERYWHERE

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