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Europe at crossroads

Welcome or Detention?

Towards the end of a "long summer of migration" we see feverish activity everywhere to stop the departures. Especially the movements of flight and migration along the open route from Greece via the Balkans to Germany and Scandinavia are to be slowed down, and control to be re-established. Continued militarisation of the external border, detention in /hot spots/ in Greece and Italy, detention camps declared to be transit zones, new fences plus Frontex and EUNAVFO - from sealing off Europe to firing orders, it is not far. Will the European promise of freedom find its end?

Moving Europe 2015 from Fish in Water Films on Vimeo.

Meanwhile an autonomy of migration has evolved, partly as a consequence and continuation of the Arabellion. The new assertiveness of migrants, and the strength with which they enforce their freedom of movement, their /right to move/, will no be easily crushed by the EU and its policy of fending off migrants. The networks of migration by now extend further than Syria and as far as Pakistan, and countless people in the South-East of Europe have been inspired by the experience that migration alone can assert the right to migration. The dam has broken. If the Fortress Europe is to be defended, it cannot be achieved peacefully anymore.

Europe is at crossroads: Are hundreds of thousands at the external borders to be condemned to die, to be detained in camps or even to be shot at? Then a cycle of rebellion and repression would take hold of Turkey and the Balkan alike. A rollback of unimaginable extent would first upheave the countries at the European periphery and would then spread to the central regions of Europe. The bondage of everyday digital surveillance would be extended by the bondage of classical police states. Europe would unrecognisably change.

"States make refugees," the scholar of migration Peter Gatrell just wrote,"but refugees also make states." States in its two meanings. Europe will change, but it must not fall back into the old patterns of deportation, detention and repression. Instead, Europe could open up and allow a process of re-orientation and pluralisation which would be befitting of the 21st century.

To open up such a perspective, all of us need to be involved.

Will all those people that have welcomed migrants enthusiastically be able to withstand the increasing attacks from the political right and the blowbacks that the next months will inevitably bring? Can we communicate that austerity and precarity goes hand in glove with competition and racist division? And will we be able to develop processes of solidarity and common struggles? Are we ready and willing to not merely "integrate" migrants, but to allow and foster more drastic changes that will also re-align our own lives?

Laden with these questions we will be traveling the routes of flight and migration in the coming weeks. At the end of October we start with a mini-bus as a mobile and flexible infrastructure of support and information in the Balkans: to render support in urgent cases, but predominantly to gather and spread information and to show presence towards the "security forces". The bus project will be embedded into a network of activists which will provide regularily updated reports at mostly all border crossings and points of interest along the route between the Aegean and Scandinavia. These reports will then be spread to those who need them on their onward journey.

In this way we want to contribute to keep open a path into a new Europe - for those that are arriving as well as for ourselves.

Europe is in movement, Europe needs to move - Moving Europe!

Forschungsgesellschaft Flucht & Migration
bordermonitoring.eu
Welcome to Europe

The project "Moving Europe" with the focus on the mobile info bus as well as the new info hotline of Welcome to Europe is funded by Medico international.