

European Camp System

NoLager-Network (2006)

Although our protest focusses on single camps like Bramsche-Hesepe, we always have the development of the European camp-system as a whole in our view. When we speak of the European camp system we are referring to the fact that at the moment a system of different camps, which are complementing one another, is set up inside and outside the European Union with a very high speed. To these belong first refugee camps in front of the EU borders, like in the Ukraine, Libya or Mauretania; second huge camp complexes directly at the EU-borders, at the polish border to the Ukraine as well as at the italian island Lampedusa or the Canary Islands (Spain); and third different camps inside the different countries of the EU. The basic principle of these camps is isolation – be they situated in the Libyan desert, in the forests of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern or in an industrial area of big cities in western Germany. The more refugees and migrants are isolated or socially closed out, that is the more sparsely their contact to the neighbours, to migrant-communities, to lawyers or political activists is, the deeper the control is getting a grip of them and the stronger they are exposed to harassment, humiliations and punishment by the management of the camp and the authorities.

With this politics of isolation the camp-bureaucrats are pursuing several, sometimes contrasting aims at once: In the first place as many refugees and migrants as possible shall be caught in camps in order to prevent them from entering the EU. This goes hand in hand with other measures for example the increasement of the number of border police, the technical perfection of the monitoring at the borders or the spying out of secret migration routes and meeting points. Putting people in camps is secondly a central requirement for deporting refugees and migrants as easy as possible, either directly to their countries of origin or into the just recently set up refugee camps in Northern Africa, where it is then up to the governments of Libya, Tunisia or Marocco to decide what is going to happen to them. Thirdly the camp politics aim at deterrence respective illegalization – be it, that refugees and migrants prefer it to enter the EU irregularly (instead of going through an anyway almost hopeless asylum procedure) or be it, that they are worn down through their experiences inside the refugee camp and ‘voluntarily’ decide to live illegally. Both is calculated, at least to a certain level: people without any legal status do not cost the state money, and in addition they are available to the european labour market as cheap, flexible workers who are not organized in trade unions – be it in the agriculture, at construction sites, in the cleaning business, the catering trade, the sex-industry or in the private households of the middle class.

It is also important for us to point out that unfortunately it is only a minority who migrates out of curiosity and for the reason of discovering new places. The majority of people is looking for a better life – a life in dignity and self-determination, in safety and where they can exist above the subsistence level. In other words: They leave because the basis of their livelihood has been destroyed, because they have to get to safety from war and dictatorship or sexist persecution. Many of these reasons are directly or indirectly linked to the ruling (economic) world order. Therefore the politics of camps and migration have to be understood also as an attempt of the rich countries to keep up the world-wide extremely unfair conditions of allocation.

We decline the isolation of refugees and migrants without papers, no matter if they are put from the cities into the forests or to the Northern African desert camps. We stand up for the right of global freedom of movement. Everybody has the right to stay wherever and as long as they want to! We demand the stopp of all deportations and the immediate closing of the refugee camps – here and everywhere!

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