shift magazine

INTERVIEWS

Saskia Sassen

Angela Mitropoulos

EUROPE'S BORDERS

No Border camps and Euromayday

Arguments against the E.U.

CLIMATE CAMP

Photo diary of Edinburgh

Fortress Europe

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editorial

"A spectre is haunting Europe - the spectre of movement?" Movement and migration have again become the topic of parliamentary debates, pub conversations and street protests. They have become the challenge to the social, democratic and liberal veneer of European reality. That is, the continuous movement of migrants making a mockery of the idea of Europe as an impenetrable fortress, as well as the social and political movements that resist securitisation and precarity from within its borders, sometimes in solidarity with immigrants, sometimes not. The point of the collection of articles in this issue is then to start taking seriously the proposition 'no borders', also in the context of international no border camps such as this years' camp at the heart of the EU's administration in Brussels.

Europe is far more than a collection of borders. As crisis deepens, the up-scaling of the management of capital and populations is forced to intensify. Increasingly, this is justified through a quasi-nationalist reference to the idea of 'Europe'. "We (Europeans) are all in this together." It is an idea which garners support from both the left and the right of the political spectrum, both seeing it as insulation from a predatory outside, be that predatory capital or dangerous foreigners.

Europe is a site of conflict. There is struggle not just about where to dra¬w its borders or how open they should be. At stake is the very identity of the continent and what form of governance this should entail. Some, such as Antonio Negri, put in a claim for a left-wing, social and democratic European Union. Others, such as numerous trade union campaigns, reject the idea of the European Union altogether. Sometimes it seems like the achievements of the labour movements are protected more easily in the national setting than in a globalised, supranational one. Ben Lear argues for a way out of this conundrum that is neither national(ist), nor international(ist).

Sociologist Saskia Sassen (in an interview with Shift Magazine of which we publish an extract in this issue) spells out how the question of globalisation cannot be answered with a return to the nation. Instead she argues for an understanding of the complex and interdependent relations between global(ised) actors and migration flows. We need to comprehend the reasons behind migrations, which often lie in the policies of nation-states themselves.

Angela Mitropoulos, in another interview in this issue, goes further than that. Her understanding of a no border politics entails support for the autonomy of movement across borders. Questions are not asked as to why people migrate, but their right and ability to do so becomes a political act in itself.

Markus Euskirchen, Henrik Lebuhn, and Gene Ray identify the European Borderland as a new site of struggle for anti-capitalists fighting for the abolition of immigration controls. However, Europe throws up new obstacles for campaigners and migrants attempting to subvert it from both inside and out. Acknowledging the disparity of these efforts within and beyond Europe they question the role of 'bordercamps' and 'EuroMayDay' marches as manifestations of these struggles.

Such campaigns or instances of activism need to go beyond a mere criticism of individual national or European policies. Fortress Europe would hardly be a better place to live without its surveillance networks, data banks and border guards. What is at stake is a critique of European totality, one that questions its construction as a space that is deemed somehow more inclusive, democratic and social, ignoring the fact that capitalist reality does not allow for any of these things.

an interview with saskia sassen

"i think that the attempt to control borders is a self-defeating proposition"

The question on the relationship between the national and the global is an interesting one to start with. Especially when we talk about globalisation, because the main idea is that globalisation destroys the national border and it becomes less important; but now we don't see this. Borders are increasingly important.

Of course. The language of globalisation is pretty ambiguous, on the one hand, for me and this is critical politically and theoretically, most of the global happens inside the national but it is not recognised as global. What we recognise as global is mostly very powerful actors, the WTO, the IMF, the multinational corporations, the financial firms etc; and these actors produce a huge penumbra that hides and obscures all the other, the little presences if you want, and they also have the effect of disempowering. If you're not one of them you're out, you're provincial, you're a local,

you're immobile. I think that we have to change the language, the code through which we understand reality. So number one, globalisation has certainly opened the borders for flows of capital, information, certain kinds of products, outsourcing. It took law and making new kinds of regulation to enable these cross border flows. On the other hand we have also put in a lot of effort in building up the border vis-a-vis other flows.

The migration question is probably the most important one; so are the refugees. They often find closed borders when they most need to not encounter those borders. Secondly, something that has really not been noticed is that globalisation has produced a new kind of bordering, which is a bordering that cuts across the traditional borders and produces a space of cross-border circulation. But you can't enter that space, it's an elite space. For instance under the WTO, the NAFTA and all the other free trade agreements we have invented, we have made a subject with portable

rights. This is a transnational professional class. They have special visas and all kinds of rights in all the WTO member countries. We have produced similar regimes for the IMF top level staff and the WTO. This means we can produce the capacity to create a subject with portable rights, something which many immigrant activists have asked for, to have portable rights; something which workers who depend on their employers for rights, for their insurance, also want. It's a big movement in the UK to try to give portable rights to workers.

We have produced this subject, we've just made it elite. We have produced a new kind of bordering, this is just one example. There are multiple such borderings, where if you're outside of this transnational zone you have no access. This is as tough a border to cross as some of these traditional, conventional borders. The point is that globalisation has actually produced a whole series of new borderings besides strengthening the old borders vis-a-vis the flows of

migrant workers.

From this point of view what would the answer be? Would the answer be that of re-nationalisation, of bringing the nation-state back in?

No, I don't think so. I think that we have a renationalising in the politics of membership, in other words anti-immigrant sentiment - "this is just for citizens" - we have strong renationalising tendencies. Structurally speaking there is much less of it than ideologically speaking. You see that also within the EU, the way the sovereign, the government speaks, they speak as if they have the capacity to control their borders vis-a-vis migration when in fact many of their competencies have shifted to the EU level. The government will take certain decisions, the legislator might approve those that restrict migration but then the international courts will eliminate them. We have very interesting conflicts of that sort. So that tells me that structurally speaking there is a greater amount of internationalism if you want, within the EU, than there is in the language and the politics. This includes that of the working classes which feel threatened because they don't have jobs and then lateralise the conflict so they go against the other poor, the immigrants, rather than contesting.

But I do think that part of the role of this lies in a misconception about migrants. I think it's very interesting that, in the case of the UK, a report has come out saying that by this past summer 50% of the Polish workers who had a right to come here had returned home. We need to create the possibilities for much greater circulation. There was a time when a lot of us who were politically active protecting the rights of immigrants contested the desirability of promoting circulation. But now we know, given the inbred racism and exclusion, that many migrants, perhaps a majority, would like greater flexibility to come in and out rather than being attached to one employer, which means that if they leave to go back home then they lose their job. Many of these immigrants live fuller lives in their home cities and villages than they may have in our fancier cities. So we have to revisit what was politically correct

twenty years ago, when the notion of temporary work permits was seen as not empowering the immigrants. Many immigrants say "all I want is to work for three months, I don't want to become a citizen of Germany or the UK, I just want to work here for three months and then go home where I have a real life". That is a big shift, because this used to politically be an issue of empowering people for the sake of equality.

There's an ironic development of an internationalism in national states focused on global finance, on multinationals. Is that capability transferable to migrations?

Now the other thing that I have long argued is that migrations do need to be governed, that's different from controlled. I think that the attempt to control borders is a self-defeating proposition in two senses. One, you create a massive distortion such as the Mexico-US border, people often say it's militarised but I think its weaponised, it's an active weapon, the border is a weapon basically. The military are continually active, they have tribunals, research divisions. But a weapon is far more elementary. Again one of the issues that you've probably heard that I've said is this

notion that we have enormously complex systems to produce elementary brutalities.

So, I think that what we have done at somewhere like the Mexico-US border is an immensely complex apparatus to produce an elementary brutality. Now, once you deal with humans that way, you basically can kill them or let them die in the desert. The notion that you only do that vis-a-vis the outsider is a fallacy, sooner or later it's kind of a cancer inside of the system that is going to spread. So I say at some point this will affect us, the protected, the citizens. We now see in the United States where a lot of people who are being arrested for supposedly violating the border are citizens but the system is slow in reacting. So they are sitting in jail, we have 300,000 people sitting in jail in the last two years still waiting to get a hearing. They've not even been condemned, and some of them are citizens, but citizens who look like immigrants. I think this is a point in a trajectory that is unsustainable and when we are at a later stage in this trajectory we will look back and say "what happened there?"

So there is a difference between controlling and governing borders? Is this the idea that controlling borders is something that is essentially ideological? A case of controlling the global movement of black and white people? Whereas governance might stem from a more systemic necessity toward controlling and managing labour? We are wondering what your reasons are to support this idea of 'governance?'

Well governance and governing are a bit different, governance is supposedly a system which goes beyond national. But I speak about governing in a very generic sense whoever the entities. Controlling is what we are doing now but it isn't working and the actors involved have recognised this. There was a famous June meeting in Rabat almost two years ago, where for the first time thirty European and thirty African countries got together and discussed "how do we do this". The enforcement of

the borders is leading to enormous abuses in terms of other normative orders, human rights etc. It's not just human rights though. We are trying to enforce a law and in that process governments are violating other laws. At some point the coding will include all these violations and it will become unsustainable. So, for me, the notion of governing means a whole bunch of elements but it certainly has to be a co-operation, the sending governments are also highly objectionable in a lot of things that they have done. They really don't care. They haven't done anything to develop. There is lots of corruption. We've got to find a system where multiple interests are brought into the picture.

At a much higher level - a really aspirational level - really doing away with borders, I don't see that happening any time soon. fact it is us that have produced these actors. So we almost need another language in order to understand these complex processes.

If we are to govern then we have to recognise and understand their complexity, rather than this notion of "how do we make sure that not too many come". That is not governing. Rather that is the idea that we have to control better and that we need countries to make sure that they control who comes and who doesn't - that is a quota. That is a control system, or maybe governance. But by governing I mean a really rich, complex understanding.

So one of the things that I proposed in the U.S, a long time ago, is that whenever a new big international decision is made, a law, a statute, a piece of legislation is brought in, say outsourcing, or going to war, you should always have 'immigration impact' statements. If you are going to invade or set up operations in this country, you are building a bridge and the drug dealers, the people traffickers, whoever, are going to use it; they are the unexpected users of what we make. So when a national state takes international actions, there are consequences. Now in this case what is amazing in our current histories is of course, the combination of two things; one is the colonial past that is still operative in many ways. The other is what we did with neo-liberal policies in 'sending countries' where, over the last 30 years, we literally

So when I say governing I mean having a reasonable mix of elements so that you don't also have borders with no controls which become a savage space, we don't want that either. So I mean governing in the best sense of the term, not controlling but governing. This is a reality because in a way migrants, especially when a new migration begins, are a historical avant-garde which signals a reality, a change that is much larger than these people who are moving or their actions. I'm a bit of a structuralist; I think they move because something shifts and so then they migrate, and it's always, mostly, a minority, an absolute minority that migrates. So that indicates something.

And as I have often argued, in my first book for example, we the receiving countries often build the bridges to export capital and our goods to the countries that then produce the migrants. And so you have all these old colonial patterns being reproduced. Often, then, the language of immigration suggests 'here is a sending country' and 'here is a receiving one', so immigration describes a certain part of the circuit. Whereas for the migrant, it might be the second half of a circuit that starts here in the 'receiving' country – but we never bring this in. So when we go to war, in Vietnam, say, or set up export processing zones in Haiti and in Dominican Republic, we assume that they'll come. I often argue that, politically speaking, the language of immigration is so charged with content and with notions of how these migrations happen whereas often it's an individual that decides to leave, for example and then it's up to the receiving country to be nice or not so nice. But in

destroyed small, traditional operations that were very inefficient, but therefore of course, there were a lot of people hanging in there. So employment structures were like sticky webs; nobody could totally drop out. That is why countries that have long had poverty suddenly produce emigration. You can not reduce that emigration simply to poverty. Something else had happened to activate that poverty into a migration sending factor. Governing means taking all those complexities into factor. That means that in the case of the United States, the Pentagon and the State Department, they are also part of the story, it's not just the Immigration Police.

And then, coming back to the European Union, the big issue is that the EU does not have an immigration policy – when the EU goes for the asylum seeking or even the refugee convention, it reinserts itself in a really unilateral mode. Because the asylum seeking regime is opting out of the international refugee regime; a very well established regime, where the national state has responsibilities that cut across. The asylum seeking system allowed every state, individually, to do what they want, so you have all these different policies within the EU. So in some cases they gave you money, temporary work permits, but not in other countries. There again the EU has, very often, a civilising influence. So the EU said 'we've got to standardise'. But still the asylum seeking regime gives the national state more arbitrary powers than the international refugee regime. If you don't have a serious immigration policy and you have the potential for immigration – and you know, given that we destroyed their national economies and everything else – then you have these people trying to enter via the asylum regime and then they are straight into the unilateral hands of a state that is not entirely accountable to an international regime.
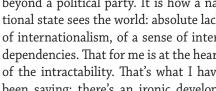
So the national state is the problem. It's not a particular national state. It's way beyond a political party. It is how a national state sees the world: absolute lack of internationalism, of a sense of interdependencies. That for me is at the heart of the intractability. That's what I have been saying: there's an ironic develop-ment of an internationalism in national states focused on global finance, on multinationals. Is that capability transferable to migrations? Can something happen that means we can start to be more intelligent about the environment, you know, anything that is a global commons, and migration is.

One of the things that we, as activists, as actors in a grass-roots social movement, are very keen to do is to see migration as a social movement itself, as something that is autonomous from border control, and possibly from other forms of governance as well. We wondered what you think about that idea?

I think of these as aspirational projects that matter. It's like when we think of citizenship as being about equality, it's not a reality at all, it's an aspirational project that matters. I also think that politically it is very interesting to think about this not as mobility, but as a political, social movement. I like that because again it gets beyond this thick category with all its excesses of meaning of immigration; you know, with these images of all the poor masses of the world that come that seek refuge in a generous country. My god let's get out of that! Now I just gave you the hardcore side there, let's be clear about that. But the other side then is 'who is the migrant'. There's this extraordinary book by a Spanish women named Natalia Ribas Mateos, she has a way of talking about the migrations between Tangiers and Spain. She captures a whole space that doesn't fit into the traditional idea. She looks at these women, basically women, that are circulating. She captures a choreography of movements that are their own space, they don't function as the typical image of the migrant, well of the immigrant, that is the really typical image. She also did a fantastic study on Albania. She studies the Mediterranean really as a space of connectivities rather than barriers. So I really like what you are saying, because it's one way of extricating the subjects, in the postmodernist sense, an actor, not as a subject to, and recovering a subject that is not the "thick" immigrant. There's something else there: each one of us is multiple subjects too, and the same thing with the immigrants. So we need to recover the grandmother, the woman that is the artist etc.

And then there is also the social movement. I like the notion that you can't collapse the subject into "the immigrant", which isn't necessarily a bad word always - it's very powerful. If we really want to create an opening of the mind then we really need to sometimes not use "the immigrant", but say "the young artist", "the old artist", "the activist", you know whatever it is. They are all those things. And frankly you know many of the activists are immigrants, certainly in the United States. Say for example organising in labour unions; that can be much easier when there are immigrants involved because there you have the community for solidarity etc. It's re-humanising the immigrant in a way; and in this case, making an active actor. I really like that in what you are saying. But it's really only a partial project, there are so many other versions of this.

Markus Euskirchen, Henrik Lebuhn, and Gene Ray

immigration rights and no border struggles in europe

Immigration rights and no-border movements in Europe are protesting and resisting an emerging border regime characterised, first, by a shift from traditional borderlines to extensive and intensive borderlands and zones and, second, by a public discourse that distorts representations of migrants in specific ways, as both criminals and victims. Protests and campaigns against the (old and) new strategies of control and exclusion have become a major field of action for many grassroots groups in Europe.

However, until today we can hardly speak of a coherent European immigration rights movement. Activists are evidently well connected across the European Union, and camps and demos often draw several thousand people from different countries. But overall, protests and interventions remain dispersed and uncoordinated. It is difficult to piece together an even rudimentary overview of the immense quantity and variety of creative actions across the continent. With few exceptions, such as the French "Sans Papiers" movement of the

1990s or the Spanish legalisation campaign of the early 2000s, immigration rights campaigns hardly ever make it into mainstream media news coverage.

Why has a strong and coherent European immigration rights movement failed to develop from the new forms of struggle and protest? To a large degree, it is the new border regime itself – the European Borderland - that makes it difficult and personally risky for undocumented and precariously employed migrants to organise themselves politically or even to participate publicly in campaigns organised by networks of the radical Left, the activists of which at least are not exposed to these constant threats of deportation or detention. This has certainly contributed to the failure of many campaigns up to now to develop into robust and effective social movements capable of actually stopping or reversing the trends toward border and immigration policies driven by the politics of security and fear.
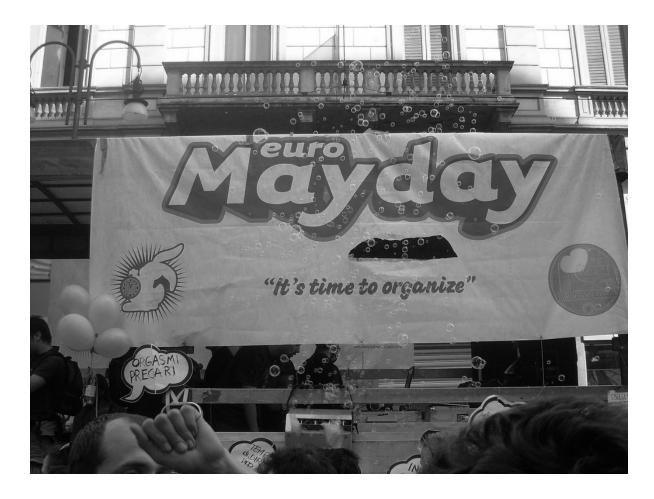
However, as we will see, this "failure" has

not been an utter one, for this field of struggles has produced a steady stream of inventive forms and tactics. Currently, migration struggles appear to be one of the most active, creative and engaging fields for radical politics in Europe, and grassroots groups increasingly bring together topics such as environmentalism, international migration, police brutality and precarious labour in inventive and compelling ways. In this essay, we will look in more detail at two recent examples of radical immigration rights struggles, the "activist camp" and EuroMayDay, and discuss them in the broader context of radical left tactics and strategies.

The Activist Camp and the EuroMayDay Parade

The activist camp – or "bordercamp," as it is also called in movement discourse – is an organisational form that emerged from the experiences of past struggles in Europe, among others the militant annual campaigns to block the transport of nuclear waste in Germany. In the US, the near-

est thing to this model is probably the travelling direct-action training camps organised by the Ruckus Society in the 1990s. In Europe the form has been developed further by the no-border and anti-racist movements, and by the ad hoc networks of groups preparing the large-scale international protests against the G8 and other summit meetings of dominant states and institutions.

The first European no-border camp took place in 1998 at the German-Polish border. It "was initiated to allow refugees, migrants and undocumented migrants, such as the 'Sans Papiers' in France, and members of support and campaign groups from across Europe to forge new alliances and strengthen solidarities in a 'ten-day laboratory of creative resistance and civil disobedience'." Since then, various camps and caravans have been organised all over Europe. Frequently synchronised with important EU-summits, they often function as counter-summits, bringing together hundreds and sometimes thousands of activists from different countries and di-

verse political affiliations within the radical Left.

Theoretically, these camps come quite close to Hakim Bey's notion of the TAZ or "Temporary Autonomous Zone": organised negations of capitalist logic and normality that appear for a limited time in some crack or interstice of everyday life. With their colourful and festive tent cities, their "Food Not Bombs" style communal kitchens, and their radically democratic "assembly" processes modelled on anarchist tradition as well as the EZLN in Chiapas, the European activist camp solves the logistical problem of materially sustaining international activists gathered for coordinated protests and at the same time prefigures alternatives to capitalist hyper-individualism and competition.

But many participating activists are also critical of these activist camps. Critics point out their limitations and internal contradictions. The camps are necessarily self-selecting and therefore far from ideally inclusive – not everyone, after all, is

cut out for the rigors of camping. And while realisation of direct democracy in the camps is indisputable, the strains of organising everyday life and the time-consuming processes of collective decision-making, or "conflict transformation," can become paralysing. Finally, despite the fact that camps disappear before they can develop any permanent structure they still attract police repression – and indeed may even facilitate it by concentrating activists in delimited locations. However, the camp model remains a unique tactical form for building critical masses of activists from different cities and regions over periods of several days, and grassroots groups are now trying to extend the movement beyond political camping and some of its tendential problems. And while the activist camp is a tactical, rather than a strategic form, it does push against the limits of tacticality. The camp, as a social space, doesn't just erect tents; it also constructs, each time, some of the conditions for a different kind of collective life – an alternative way of living that can be realised here and now, while struggling in common for

radical social transformation within the existing reality. In this way, the camps push against the very contours of the dominant way of life. This, ultimately, is the source of the tensions within them – and also what draws repression from without.

The second example we want to point to is EuroMayDay. These colourful rallies and marches are organised by a large network of grassroots groups from across the so-called undogmatic Left. They aim to connect struggles often fought separately and to bring together workers, students and migrants in a common anti-capitalist front. The first EuroMayDay march was held in 2001 in Milan, where it now gathers up to 100,000 people each year. Since 2004, the process has spread all over Europe with radical and anarchist groups participating in dozens of cities. In 2007, an international assembly met in Berlin and agreed on six demands for EuroMayDay 2008:

- full legalisation for all persecuted migrants

- the right to form unions and other forms of self-organisation free from state repression

- an unconditional (or universal) basic income

- a European living wage

- free access to culture, knowledge, and skills

- the right to affordable housing

In response to this program, the question can be posed: do we really need yet another May Day parade in Europe? The EuroMayDay marches aim to solve a dilemma that emerged within organising on the Left over the course of the 1990s. Neither the traditional labour day rallies organised by Social-Democratic, mainly co-opted bureaucratic trade unions, nor the autonomist black-block style confrontational demonstrations were able to offer a viable pathway to a broad and radical social movement capable of effectively taking up new issues around migration and precarisation. In this context, EuroMayDay –

sometimes compared to a leftist carnival procession spiced up with Salsa bands, political pamphlets and banners, and humorous yet radical direct actions– is an experiment aiming to re-occupy, re-frame and re-define the highly symbolic First of May.

Despite well-connected international networks, the many actions and campaigns across Europe remain dispersed and without effective critical mass

Within the radical Left, EuroMayDay has often been criticised for exactly this: being fun and party-oriented. Many radicals fear that it goes too far in the direction of the carnivalesque, to the point that it de-politicises May Day. Moreover, EuroMayDay suffers from the usual weaknesses of programmatic marches. As a tactical form, a parade can at best open social space for the performance of radically alternative representations. But the gap between representation and reality returns at the end of the march: the mobile carnival does not demand enough from those it attracts to radically transform their ways of living. Finally, it's not so clear who the EuroMayDay demands are directed to; while few leftists would argue with these six aims, none of them are clearly linked to the political means that could realise them.

From our perspective, however, EuroMayDay has at least been fairly successful in attracting new and diverse grassroots groups, subcultures and individuals, including undocumented migrants. It provides a common forum and shared experiences that potentially are the basis for closer coordinated actions in the future. And while the carnivalesque approach does risk trivialising the problems of responding effectively to the causes of social misery, the emphasis on humour, parody and surprise rather than direct confrontation does protect the demos from the usual stigmatising reflexes and strategies of mainstream media. In any case, it seems to us that both the trade union marches and more militant black-block clashes with riot police also tend to become de-politicising in their very ritual predictability. The vector of re-politicisation begins where predictability ends, and in this sense EuroMayDay is an impressive and viable attempt to rescue May Day by reinventing it.

Immigration Rights Struggles in Europe between Incoherence and Subversion

Despite well-connected international networks, the many actions and campaigns across Europe remain dispersed and without effective critical mass. One obvious reason for this is the fragmented political landscape of the EU. Language barriers, highly differentiated regional labour markets and a variety of national political cultures, policies, practices and institutions make it difficult to transform dozens, if not hundreds, of local initiatives into a truly European movement. But more importantly, the effects of the new border regime itself pose serious obstacles and challenges for grassroots movements – especially when it comes to connecting local activists and migrants across national borders. As a result, there is still no unified social movement that can produce political effects at the highest level of the EU, where questions of common visa policies, cross-national law enforcement cooperation, asylum and deportation standards, etc. are being negotiated and developed.

However, from our perspective, the decentralised character of the current struggles also has some clear – if mainly tactical –

advantages. Small and locally grounded movements tend to learn more quickly and adapt more flexibly to new challenges and situations than can larger, more institutionalised organisations. They also tend to be more democratic and participatory and for this reason also more effective in tapping the creativity and energy of their activist membership. The protests around the G8 Summit in Germany in the summer of 2007 and similar large-scale, highly-visible international protests demonstrate the capacity of small groups and networks to organise effectively across borders in preparation for specific scheduled events – even if these mobilisations usually dissolve soon after. These are the tactical strengths that correspond to the strategic weaknesses we have indicated.

In fact, policy makers and politicians seem to fear the fluid and unpredictable character of the current movement, especially when the line is crossed between co-optable law-abiding demonstrations and more militant civil disobedience. In 2008, after one of the largest French deportation prisons was completely destroyed by revolting inmates, a French minister expressed fears of "an accumulation of incidents of that kind in the near future" – meaning riots, revolts and similar explosive upsurges of resistance.

The recent uprising in Greece and that in the French banlieues in 2005, as well as others elsewhere, indicate that his fears are not ungrounded: in a context characterised by persisting forms of institutionalised racism, reduced social entitlements, increasing precarisation of labour and deepening militarisation of everyday life, unexpected explosions of popular revolt are always just around the corner. Such uprisings, often triggered by incidences of police brutality or murder, are difficult and risky for states to deal with; false moves can easily pour gasoline on the flames of revolt and expose the depth of a generalising crisis of legitimation circulating through the capitalist "democracies." The production of borderland also produces its own specific and explosive forms of social misery. If such uprisings are to develop into effective forces for radical social change, however, the strategic weaknesses of de-centralised protest movements would have to be overcome. In the struggles over borders and immigration policies, this would mean developing organisations adequate to contemporary realities – namely, to the deterritorialised but nevertheless efficiently coordinated border regime that has emerged in Europe in recent years. The flows of migration driven by the dialectic of desire and the relentless coercions of globalised capitalism are already a material force. Borderland names the structural and institutional constraints that, so far, block this force from becoming a factor of emancipation. To overcome this blockage, the no-border movement would need to develop strategic capacity and collective agency that could open – and defend – a pathway to the goals of free mobility and access to social rights based on residency. In the current balance of social and political forces, this means: shaping discourses more capable of disarticulating the hegemonic representations of immigrants within the prevailing politics of fear and security, and reaching beyond the comfort zones of radical-leftist politics to build more durable and effective coalitions for struggle.

Border Lines

by Claire Fauset

Spain is not as you dreamed it Idrissa
Spain is a tiny boat across the mass grave
of the Med
Spain is an exhausted landing on a
hostile beach
Spain is a fat man shouting at you in a
language you don't understand
Spain is a baton and a gun

Spain is not your friend Idrissa
Spain will lock you up and ship you off
Spain will dehydrate and starve you
Spain will scar and scour you
Spain will steal the one change of clothes
in your fake burberry bag
and you will have only your god for company

I saw you praying in the desert Idrissa
Bowing and rising and supplicating yourself
long after the others had rested and the sun had gone down
You were praying for safe passage
passport-less, paperless, powerless
with every border you cross a step further from everything you know

Well you made it to Mauritania, Idrissa
We crossed the border in a sandstorm
waiting in a Berber tent in the electric tension of the night for you to
be interrogated
You made it through
Away from the warm camaraderie of West Africa
To a country where there are no vegetables and they eat only goats
Where the water sits in huge pouches on the side of the road
Where no pretty girls sell you eggs through the windows of the buses
Where even the capital city is desert

No one here is pleased to see you, Idrissa
And no frontier will let you pass
And every policeman is your enemy
And every day is scarier than the last

Well listen to Belle and Sebastian with me Idrissa
let it soothe you to sleep for a few hours
Share some mangos with me Idrissa
The sweet juice, perhaps, can be a palliative for your panic
and friendship a proof, perhaps, that there is hope.

Ben Lear

neither national nor international: notes against europe

This article seeks to critically discuss our movement's relationship with the European Union in its entirety. Many on the Left of capital, whilst critical of Fortress Europe and its lack of political accountability, are generally positive about the EU and see it as playing a progressive role in national, continental and global politics. This article will focus on those who are supportive of the EU project as this position accounts for large amounts of those on the reformist Left. This does not mean that parts of the Left are not critical of the EU in its perceived entirety as well as its specific manifestations, such as migration control. The NO2EU campaign, backed by the RMT union, which offered "left-led opposition to the Euro super state" during the last European Parliament elections, is one example of left wing anti-EU politics. However, the similarities between this form of anti-EU politics and the anti-EUism of right

wing parties such as the BNP and UKIP are alarming. Indeed the commonalities between far right and left wing positions demonstrate the need for an explicitly anti-national as well as anti-capitalist position.

The Strange Bedfellows of a New Europa

Europe as an idea and a scale of political organisation is not a natural phenomenon. Its perceived borders and characteristics have been produced, and contested, through the actions and ideas of many, often disparate, groups, individuals and organisational actors over a long period of time. The political community of the EU is being continually produced and reaffirmed by a host of physical and political processes. In the same way that the British or Spanish states did not exist as we know

them today before a deliberate project was launched to build them, (replete with national dishes, outfits and anthems), this is the same with Europe. The political ideas which shape the direction the EU takes are being produced simultaneously alongside its policies. As anti-authoritarians we must begin to unpack the host of arguments for and against the EU, from both the left and the right of the political spectrum, before we can begin to take meaningful action against it. Whilst the No Border network and those organising around the EU Stockholm Programme's plans for increased integration of EU security architecture are notable exceptions, many on the radical Left have not yet begun to develop an understanding of the new political terrain that European integration reveals. This is particularly true for many of us here in Britain. Indeed NO2EU may be one of the only attempts at formulating a coherent

EU position from any actor that can be deemed vaguely on the Left. For many of us involved in anti-capitalist movements here in the UK, the EU just isn't an issue at the moment.

Many commentators on both the Left and Right of the political spectrum see Europe as a counter-balance to rampant global capitalism and undemocratic elements. In these arguments Europe is seen as embodying the legacy of the Enlightenment and a blueprint for other societies to follow. Democracy, peace and systems of state welfare are frequently mentioned. Indeed, in the wake of the Iraq war "old Europe" was seen as a potential counter-balance to American militarism, whilst at the start of the financial crisis the social welfare model of capitalism prevalent in some parts of Europe was held up as a better model than the "casino capitalism" of other states, America in particular.

Famous leftwing academic Antonio Negri came out in support of the recent EU constitution, arguing that it provided a counter-balance to American-led globalisation:

'The (European) constitution is a means of fighting Empire, this new globalised capitalist society. Europe has the chance of being a barrier against the "pensée unique" of economic unilateralism: capitalist, conservative, reactionary. But Europe can also construct a counter-power against American unilateralism, its imperial domination, its crusade in Iraq to dominate petrol. The United States has understood this well, and has, since the 1950s, fought like a madman against European construction.'

Indeed support for the supposedly benevolent, enlightened EU is common among many who would place themselves within the Left. Europe is seen as an example of an alternative, socially responsible form of capitalism at odds with the predatory capitalism of the US. As Rob Augman argued in the first issue of Shift Magazine there are similarities between certain alter-globalist positions and those emerging from the far right. In the vision of a benevolent Europe of peoples these similarities are once again apparent.

Many that support the EU project utilize other aspects of what is selectively chosen as the European heritage. Over the past decades we have witnessed the far right move away from positions focused on racial identity to more cultural forms of exclusionism. Philosophers such as Alain de Benoist, the "terza posizione" (third position) of Roberto Fiore and political groups such as the British National Party are prominent examples of this move away from racial exclusion to ultra-nationalist populism based upon ideas of culture. Every cultural group needs an "Other" with which to compare itself, against which to define the boundaries of itself. In Europe in the past decade we have seen the rise of a strong populist movement against Islam. Throughout the EU Islam is being portrayed as this Other, as something alien and incompatible with what are increasingly being seen as the characteristics of Europe; namely democracy, secularism and human rights. Across Europe the far right, who in the main have moved away from explicitly racist positions are now beginning to develop strong anti-Islam positions exemplified by Geert Wilders in Holland and the English Defence League. These positions, which variously criticise Islam or its militant Islamist interpretation, focus on some of the anti-democratic and oppressive features of specific forms of Islam and argue they are incompatible with European ideals. The veil in particular has become a key area of struggle with France's national as-

sembly voting to ban it, parts of Northern Italy banning it and several other countries such as Belgium discussing a ban. In defining what is anti-European, a European identity is being formed.
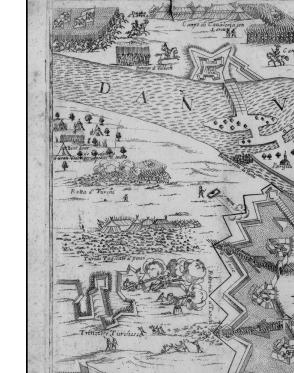
This is a form of exclusionism not explicitly based on racial prejudice but on the perceived failure of Islam to adhere to what are seen to be European characteristics. Rather than being a characteristic of the far right this hostility towards Islam is becoming a part of the political centreground. As well as being seen as the site of a more "humane" form of capitalism, Europe is also seen as the beacon of freedom and democracy. This has led many within the right to portray Europe as being in conflict with "Islamo-fascism". This discourse is making its way into mainstream public debates. The European project is an inherently exclusive one, it is interesting that support for this project comes from both the moderate left and right of the political spectrum.

Whilst many support the EU project, there are also those that do not. As already discussed with regards to the NO2EU campaign these movements recognize that even by current standards the EU is an undemocratic institution. However, in their attempts to tap into the financial crisis by appealing to populist anti-banker sentiment, these very same movements often argue that Europe is run by and for the bankers. This is a worrying regression to conspiracy theories in which mysterious bankers pull the political strings in order to ensure maximum profits. Indeed those on the Left arguing for a Europe of peoples rather than bankers and the necessity of a European Populism share an interesting discursive similarity with many on the far right who also see Europe as under threat from rampant speculative capital. Meanwhile, those not calling for the revision and democratisation of Europe, such as British anti-EU parties such as the BNP and UKIP, seek a return to national politics, a regime that has been more systemi-

cally discredited by the Left. The new political battleground appears to be distinctly European.

Neither National, Nor International

Whether pro or anti-EU the positions we have looked at so far share the same shortcomings: false perspectives on capitalism and therefore false solutions which will be unsuccessful at best or exclusionary and oppressive at worst. Both of these positions base their economic analysis on the premise of an outside or foreign predatory capital, often financial in nature, and propose an internal, tangible economy as a solution. This distinction between fictitious, rampant finance and tangible, honest work is inaccurate and dangerous. Capital, when expressed as money and circulated within the financial system, is but one moment of the capital-labour relation. To distinguish between the financial and the productive economy, i.e. the produc-

tion of things and services, fails to recognize the totality of the system. Whilst finance capital may be the purest expression of value production, it is the production and consumption of commodities in the "real" economy which produces the capital which flows through the finance system. This distinction serves to insulate the capital relationship from criticism and divert it towards calls for a Tobin tax or the nationalisation of the banks instead. Capitalism isn't a conspiracy run by a cabal of fat cat bankers nor is it the imperialist project of the USA. Those that see it as such have a foreshortened critique of capitalism. Our critique can not be about the "excesses" but the totality. The true secret of society, the real power that drives it, is not that of a secret elite ruling in the shadows, but rather the social relationships that we enter into every day. We make capitalism. To exit capitalism does not entail outing the bankers/Bilderbergers/lizards but in developing ways in which humans can live outside of the value relation. Attempts at curbing the power of finance capital are reformist at best.

Support for the EU is not and can not be considered an anti-capitalist position. It is important to recognize that the social welfare model that EU supporters applaud was the outcome of the struggles of workers movements and was a solution to falling rates of profit. Indeed, it looks likely that solutions to the current financial crisis will involve cuts and state led austerity rather than the production deals of the sixties and seventies. Globally, the next decade looks likely to see the costs of this recent crisis socialised in order to guarantee a stable environment for future rounds of growth. Europe, with its history of state intervention and socialised welfare, appears in a strong position to force through the seemingly necessary cuts. During the Greek uprisings "we are an image of the future" was a common slogan daubed on walls and across banners, unfortunately this statement has been proven correct in an unintended way. The austerity drives being implemented in Greece in order to satisfy bail out conditions is likely to become a common feature throughout Europe. In Slavoj Zizeks book "First as Tragedy, then as Farce" he suggests that, in the context of the collapse of the neo-liberal project, future political conflict will be be-

tween socialism, or socialised capitalism, and communism. We cannot support the "enlightened" capitalism of Europe; it must be rejected as fiercely as the neo-liberal project. As the EU becomes the scale at which capital becomes organised, so our resistance must be upscaled.

Whether they see Europe as a bulwark against 'Islamo-fascism' or a defence against predatory financial capitalism, their arguments rest on shaky ground

The supporters of Europe vary in their reasoning and rationale, whether seeing it as a bulwark against 'Islamo-fascism' or a defence against predatory financial capitalism, their arguments rest on shaky ground. The EU is a political structure that is emerging to help manage both capital and populations. As austerity measures are pushed through the necessity of an integrated security apparatus will become more evident. The Stockholm Programme is the latest EU wide attempt at integrating the currently national security systems of its member states. This will interlock with the EU's integrated migration management system. The up-scaling of specific state functions is a necessary response to the demands of contemporary capitalism.

Neither here nor there

As anti-capitalists therefore, we must resist the EU. The EU is not and can never be an anti-capitalist structure. This rejection can not fall into a foreshortened critique of finance capital or slip into the chauvinism of nationalists. We must embody a third position which is neither national nor inter-national. Our critique is not geographical, about where the borders of our political community should lie, nor is it technical, about the forms in which the domination of capital over life will take place.

In "At the Borders of Europe" Etienne Balibar suggests that "Europe is for us first of all the name of an unresolved political problem". Whilst for Balibar these questions are geographical and entwined with the politics of citizenship for any movement which seeks to supersede capital we must produce a new answer. Europe, perhaps, is the reformulation of an old problem. That problem is capital. We must be wary about getting sidetracked into discussing the management of capital. Our solution will not be geographical, or technical, but a political one in which we collectively search for an exit from the capital relation. The future battleground for Europe will not be on its militarised borders, nor will its opponents be "foreign" capital. Europe's real antagonists must be us and the movements which we form.

Ben Lear is an editor of Shift Magazine.

interview with angela mitropoulos

"no border camps are important for experiencing the real materiality of borders"

At the end of September this year, No Borders activists are holding a protest camp against European security and immigration policy in Brussels. What kind of bordering practices would you say the location of Brussels represents?

Brussels becomes important as the administrative policy location, in terms of the organisation of technologies but also of forms of knowledge around what borders are and whether they should change, be relocated or shifted. In terms of the No Borders camp, for the last ten years they have become an important way of putting people at the threshold of border technologies and borders as such, resituating ourselves at the threshold of those practices and contesting them at that very physical, proximate level. So, No Borders camps are important for experiencing the real materiality of borders.

The issue of materiality is what we want to get at. In a large city such as Brussels which is also a city of immigrants this is certainly given. On the other hand the rationale of the camp is very much the symbolic aspect that is represented by the institutions of the European Union. So is this not different from going to, say, Calais or Lesbos?

Yes, this is an interesting shift, especially in terms of taking yourself to one of those administrative-political centres. In a sense it's a way of strengthening and congealing the various streams of No Borders activities around Europe and of looking into FRONTEX and these kinds of practices.

Though I guess I'm not the person to talk about the details of political action in Brussels, with my history being more in the context of Australia.

When we do talk about Europe, though, do you think we are letting the nation-state off the hook? Do supranational institutions such as the European Union have sufficient powers, also with respect to immigration policy, that should make them a prime target?

There is an interesting thing that happened over the last ten, fifteen years – globally – which is the notion of the harmonisation of border controls. So you have, for example, Australian immigration officers situated in Indonesia. The border, in effect shifts, and you have different

states co-ordinating their border policing. You can't think of the nation-state without thinking of it as part of an international complex. Historically, both emerged together. And the proliferation of the nation-state as the prime political form has been an international process. So these things kind of mesh. I would say you can't think about one without thinking about the other – historically and practically.

Then what do you think of the theories, put forward for example by Antonio Negri, that the European Union represents a post-national constellation that should be welcomed by anti-state activists?

I think this is wrong. That's why I say you have to think of these two together. On the one hand, political emotions are mobilised in increasingly nationalised forms.

Nationalism, I think, has been on the ascendency for almost 20 years, for very particular reasons. Anti-immigrant sentiments rise, but that was always hinged upon the international proliferation of the nation as the political form. That's why I think it's wrong to think of the supranational structure as separate, or even to welcome it. Border policing is a way of creating differential markets, and of distributing people across those spaces. This requires a level of international cooperation, but this also requires the mobilisation of national sentiment at the same time.

We could say that the No Borders network has always focused more on social and individual autonomy than on the idea of the post-national. You also use the term of autonomy a lot in your writings.

The concept of autonomy kind of emerged in discussions around the Documenta [The Documenta X 1997 in Kassel, Germany, sparked the foundation of the German-wide 'No One is Illegal (Kein Mensch ist Illegal) network – ed.]. The concept of autonomy was a way of thinking of the act of migration itself as a political act. It supersedes notions of border control but it also supersedes notions of how people think of themselves as nationally situated.

You mentioned the Documenta. This would be a reference point for only very few people involved in No Borders organising today. Could you say a bit more about the beginnings of this in Europe?

Ok, let me think. At the end of the 1990s there was a kind of spin-off session at the

Documenta X that started talking about 'No Borders' as one word and started thinking about a No Border network. In terms of its composition, it emerges at the same time as political groups that increasingly use the internet as a form of organisation. So you have this geeky aspect to it, which is tied to things like FLOSS or Open-Source, and it starts to think of this informational flow alongside the flow of bodies. So initially the No Borders network is at some kind of juncture between Open-Source politics and migration politics. It was quite an interesting moment of putting these two things together, but also of thinking through the tensions between these two aspects. For example, in internet stuff or digital labour stuff the notion of visibility is significant, but in migration, often, clandestinity is very important. So

there was also conversation in the early days about migrants needing clandestinity to move in an undocumented way, and the ways in which people who worked with media could aid that but also at times the way they had to think through the possibility that that might be a problem for migrants. So you had to navigate those two elements – that was interesting in some of the early discussions.

Do you think that since then the responses by authorities has changed in the sense that maybe at that time what we were seeing was a form of control of movement, whereas now movement is being recuperated into forms of management of migration flows?

I think there was always a sense in which

the state creates illegalisation. The state illegalises certain kinds of movement and that creates the possibility for people working at cheaper rates, that creates the possibility for all kind of work practices, for example. So there is always a sense in which there is a point in integration, especially for undocumented migrants. But politically there has always been the tension between the NGO politics around managing migration and the No Border position, which states emphatically that we don't care why people move, that's up to them and that's not something we need to concern ourselves with. The No Border position was about making this possible. If people wanted to stay where they were they could stay, if people wanted to move they could move.

This then gets us away from the idea of the migrant or the asylum seeker as a victim?

Yes, totally. Everybody makes decision in whatever conditions they find themselves in. They are not necessarily free agents, but they are not victims either. In a sense they make a decision within a certain context to cross borders and not wait for this crossing to be authorised.

Could we connect this to the idea that No Border activism is not just about helping the 'other', but that it is actually about our freedom of movement as well? Or can the No Border philosophy be accused of a radical liberalism, as just a more militant version of NGO work?

One of the really interesting things about No Border politics that I have seen unfold in a really concrete way is that it forces people to not think like a state. It forces people to think through their politics, not only about migration stuff, but a whole series of themes – and then to

relinquish that moment of sovereignty that you have, of being a British citizen or an Australian citizen or whatever. This is a very corrosive and practical way of thinking about politics, without thinking like a state.

Would you see this also the difference between a 'no borders' and an 'open borders' position?

Yes absolutely, because an open borders position still wants to make some decisions about whether people are asylum seekers, or refugees, or economic migrants, while the No Borders position wants to erase the border, both in an epistemological sense and in a political sense. And that makes it quite powerful, I think.

Angela Mitropoulos is a writer and activists based in Australia. Her writings can be found at http://archive.blogsome.com/.

a climate camp diary

Thursday 19.08.

"I hope the weather stays good for you. Enjoy Climate Camp." The officer from Lothian and Border Police waves us through to the site's entrance with a smile.

Our first impressions of Climate Camp in Edinburgh are dominated by the surreal nature of this year's location – right in the Royal Bank of Scotland's back garden (which is some kind of carefully land-scaped site of woodland, wild meadows and nature trails). Just 200 yards across the tiny Gogarburn stream are RBS's headquarters, a 3-story building of glass and concrete. We can watch some of the 3,000 employees sitting at their desks, and they can watch us erecting our tents and straw-bale toilets.

On the way to pitching my tent, I can't help shaking my head in disbelief at see-ing a group of uniformed police officers carrying water canisters to the camp's main entrance. Apparently, until the wa-ter supply has been established, the cops are lending a hand.

One officer is nonetheless impressed by our organisational skills. They are on 12-hour shifts, he says, and despite being promised a hot meal for lunch they only get a sandwich, an apple and a packet of crisps. Some lucky ones got hold of an ex-tra Mars bar.

The cops stood on the little footbridge that is the most direct way to RBS HQ (and to the bus stop on the other side of the building) complain that the stab-proof vests and their 'tool' belts are weighing down on their backs, and are sure that their changing night/day shift patterns will have the effect of shortening their lives by several years. With the govern-ment's new pension plans they are now facing a 35 year (instead of 30) service. It's like I walked in on a shop stewards meet-ing. But what do they think of RBS, I ask instead. 'If I see one of them I'll ask for my bank charges back', says one PC, laugh-ing.

Friday 20.08.

There are many newcomers at Climate Camp again this year, and again many of the old faces have stayed away. Nonethe-less, it feels a lot less 'trendy' and 'gap-year-like' than the previous camps in and around London. The obligatory strategy and evaluation workshop asks the ques-tion: 'what are we good at, and what not'. The newcomers tell us enthusiastically how welcome they feel, while those who have stayed away are not around to say why. The person next to me mumbles: 'we're good at telling

ourselves what we're good at, and shit at realising what we're shit at'.

Back on the gate by the footbridge to RBS, the friendly banter between cops and campers continues. It gradually becomes clear that the officers positioned on the bridge haven't actually been briefed to stop protesters from crossing. A polite 'excuse me' is enough, and some 150 campers cross for the first time with a sound system on a bike trailer for a walk and dance around the HQ.

Saturday 21.08.

Today is the official start of the camp. It's all about the day of mass action to shut down RBS HQ, and wider strategy discussions about the future of radical climate activism. At one of the meetings, most applause is reserved for a passionate defence of the climate camp's 'process': 'After Drax, people complained about the lack of community engagement, so we went to Sipson and set up a permanent space near Kingsnorth; then people said we weren't action-focused enough, so we organised the Radcliffe Swoop; then people criticised that we weren't anticapitalist enough, so we put up a 'capitalism is crisis' banner at Blackheath and now we're at RBS'. The camp has certainly had a dynamic and responsive process, and I dread to think where it would be now had it not been for its informal hierarchies, but I wonder about the 'you criticise – we do' distinction that I've heard several times already. It's almost as if debate, argument and criticism ex-

Sunday 22.08.

Eco-Wombles? Not padded out, but dressed in white overalls and with a handful of hammers between them, a couple of hundred campers make good use of the negligible police presence on the footbridge and push back the few officers who stand in their way. This time it's not just for a dance, but for a semi-determined attempt to enter the RBS building, while a 3-person slingshot launches a balloon filled with molasses at the building. A couple of the large windows are broken with hammers, but there are still too few to hold back the police who quickly regroup and manage to push the crowd back towards the camp.

A 'de-brief' for the day's events comes with a surprising twist. The breaking of windows is not condemned by 'pacifist' campers but by two indigenous Canadians who describe themselves as 'guests' of the Climate Camp and as representing their nation, the 'Frog Clan'. Back in Canadaƒ they are responsible for their activities abroad, they say, and feel they can no longer stay at the camp. They ask for 'respect' from the rest of us and that their workshop (which was interrupted by the incursion towards RBS) is rescheduled. The camp seems split, or unsure how to react. While some strongly defend 'property destruction' as part of a 'diversity of tactics', others apologise unreservedly for it. Only one person

commented that we should 'not put indigenous peoples on a pedestal', though it was reassuring to hear much approval for this sentiment around the camp fires later that night.

Monday 23.08.

The day of mass action. With the rain having set in, it wasn't exactly everyone's cup of tea to get up early to shut down RBS offices and branches across Edinburgh. A few groups of activists did use the morning however to leave the camp (sometimes without even encountering a police officer) to disrupt activities at a couple of offices and the main RBS admin building.

Most were back in time for what had been rumoured to be the spectacular highlight of the day: an assault on RBS's headquarters with the help of a wooden siege tower complete with a mounted rhinoceros battering ram (made out of paper-maché!). It turned out to be more farce than action, yet surreally spectacular it was. Built on wheels too far away from the camp's exit it took some 50 activists, 'armed' with bows and arrows, with painted faces and animal masks, more than 3 hours to pull and push it in front of the police lines. A marquee that stood in its way had to be swiftly taken down, just like a few branches of a tree (after much discussion and apology to the tree) that stopped the rhino's slow progress towards RBS. It ended with an underwhelming 'bump' into the bonnet of a police van, amidst shaking heads and murmurs of the 'Camp for Climate Comedy'.

Despite all, I must agree with what Harry Giles' assessment on Indymedia Scotland: 'I defend to the hilt any action's right to be utterly absurd and completely unworkable'.

what next?

As you will have noticed, we had to increase the price for the magazine by 20p to £2. This is to cover increased printing and paper costs. We are still far off from breaking even and rely on donations and fundraising. If you can help with selling Shift, in your shop or to friends, let us know.

Issue 11 of Shift Magazine will be published in January 2011. We are seeking articles on the theme of Islam and Islamophobia, particularly critical assessments of the relationship between the Left and political Islam. If you have an article idea, please get in touch.

Thank you,

Shift Editors.

CONTACT SHIFT
shiftmagazine@hotmail.co.uk
www.shiftmag.co.uk

www.shiftmag.co.uk