The indifference of the public, the silence of the political world and the evil will of the administration constitute a kind of permission to exert an almost unlimited power to punish the naked, namely, as a right to make them suffer [Didier Fassin, French anthropologist, sociologist, and physician].
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Dear comrades and colleagues of the European Group

We hope this edition of the newsletter finds you and your family and friends safe and well. There is – we are sure - little need to highlight we are all in unprecedented times and no doubt experiencing significant changes, individually and socially. We are sending solidarity to all members in the knowledge that we will each deal with the increased fears, restrictions and uncertainties in different ways, but are above all hopeful we all come out safe and strong as things progress.

This newsletter is therefore largely dedicated to some key pressing issues for the European Group, not least the potential for impacts on civil liberties, human rights and already visible restrictions in social control. Whilst we support measures to curtail the spread of Covid-19/Coronavirus, we are mindful that our collective commitment should stay focussed on issues around the unprecedented state controls and decisions as the pandemic progresses, and particularly in the aftermath – see a proposal in pages 5-6.

As you may have seen, the current events have also led us to make the decision to suspend the 48th Annual Conference for the Study of Deviance and Social Control (further information below). This was a difficult decision to make, but was undertaken with consultation with lead organisers, and with the centralisation of the wellbeing of our friends and colleagues in Italy who have been working hard under pressing (to say the least) circumstances. We hope to reconvene our conference in December, but will make this decision in due course. We thank our colleagues for everything they have done to develop us this far – stay well.

In the meantime, we are taking the much-needed opportunity to send some very good news – a welcome to the newest member of the European Group, Myles David Shafran-Tucker! Born on 7th March (just in time for International Women’s Day!) at 9lbs. Massive congratulations to Katie Tucker and partner Daniel on this lovely news – we wish them well and look forward to meeting him in person at the next conference.

Welcome Myles, to the world and the European Group!

In hope and solidarity

Vicky, Katja and Dani
hospital laundry
somewhere under the effects of state-corporate crime
I. AGAINST THE SHOCK DOCTRINE

It's not just about a virus, it's about social justice
It's not just against a virus, it's against state-corporate crime

The outcomes of this ‘global crisis’ threaten to exceed the criminal effects of 2008 financial crash, but they also could enable us to stop the ongoing global cycle of looting and structural violence. Fighting the implementation of exception and antisocial measures is the first step in order to prevent a new criminal period of financial restructuring and power concentration.

We want to collect contributions (reports, documents, critical analyses, practical examples, community initiatives, statements by resistance projects and movements) in any language from scholars and collectives in any country, and put this archive at the disposal of social movements and collectives in struggle.

Points for consideration:

* Health systems and political priorities. Unveiling the effects of privatisation. Lessons for a public, free, and universal health system.
* Market interests, state accountability, and social harm. Who profits? Who must profit? Who will profit?
* Shock doctrine. Against one more ‘recasting’ of capitalism. What’s being used for what? Emergencies and ‘opportunities’.
* Economic measures, labour exploitation, class inequality, and capital concentration. The ‘economic effects’. Faking equality and deepening inequality.
* Resisting the discourses of restoring business-as-usual, not least within the University. How do university workers best use their intellectual, social and emotional resources to support social solidarity and social justice, and what 'business as usual' tasks must be jettisoned to allow this?
* Social struggles/ crossroads and strategic responses/ reclaiming the public for all. A worst-case scenario or an open chance for social justice?
* State of alarm, emergency, and exception. Their chance to pacify mass protests. Control practices and totalitarian temptations.
* Prisons, detention centres, exception measures and fundamental rights. Specific measures and consequences behind bars.
* Refugee camps, massive exclusions and confinements. Still, and above all, the biggest tragedy.
* Borders, control practices/ recovering the nation-state narrative. How are narratives and practices regarding ‘borders’ being used by governments.
* Discipline under global synopticon. The 21st century panopticism. ‘All together’: patriotic demagogy and ‘social distance’. Legitimacy, populism, mass media, and propaganda.
* "Utopian ideas" to address the consequences of this global crisis. It is imperative to question the normality of the system we live in today and ask ourselves- what are the ways in which it should function differently?

Contributions will be welcome at europeangroupcoordinator@gmail.com
I. CONTRA LA DOCTRINA DEL SHOCK

No se trata solo de un virus, se trata de justicia social.
No se trata solo de luchar contra el virus, sino contra el crimen estatal-corporativo.
Los efectos de esta ‘crisis global’ amenazan con superar los del colapso financiero de 2008, pero también pueden servirnos para detener el ciclo global de saqueo y violencia estructural en curso. Luchar contra la excepción y las medidas antisucesas es el primer paso para evitar una nueva fase criminal de reestructuración financiera y concentración de poder.
Queremos recopilar aportes (informes, documentos, análisis críticos, ejemplos prácticos, iniciativas de base, declaraciones de movimientos y colectivos en resistencia) y poner ese archivo a disposición de organizaciones y colectivos en lucha.
* Sistemas de salud y prioridades políticas. Efectos de la privatización. Lecciones para un sistema público, gratuito y universal.
* Intereses del mercado, responsabilidad estatal y daño social. ¿Quién se beneficia? ¿Quién debe beneficiarse? ¿Quién se va a beneficiar?
* Medidas económicas, explotación laboral, clasismo y concentración de capital. Los ‘efectos económicos’. Simular igualdad y agravar la desigualdad.
* Resistir los discursos sobre ‘recuperar la normalidad’, incluida la Universidad. ¿Cómo deben emplear los académicos sus recursos intelectuales, sociales y emocionales para la solidaridad y la justicia? ¿Qué ‘normalidades’ deben ser abandonadas?
* Luchas sociales y estrategias de respuesta. Reclamar lo público para todos. ¿Un escenario adverso o una oportunidad para el cambio social?
* Estado de alarma, emergencia y excepción. Su tentación para paralizar la protesta social. Prácticas de control y tendencias totalitarias.
* Prisiones, centros de detención, medidas de aislamiento y derechos fundamentales. Las consecuencias tras los muros.
* Campos de refugiados, expulsión masiva y confinamiento. Aún y sobre todo, la peor tragedia.
* Fronteras y prácticas de control. Resucitando el relato del estado-nación. Cómo están usando los gobiernos los discursos y prácticas sobre fronteras y soberanía.
* Disciplina bajo el sinóptico global. El panóptico en el siglo XXI. ‘Entre todos’: demagogia patriótica y ‘distancia social’. Legitimación, populismo, comunicación y propaganda.
* “Utopías” frente a la crisis global. La obligación de cuestionar la normalidad del sistema en el que vivimos y preguntar cómo debería funcionar.

Envíos en castellano: ivan_md4@hotmail.com, djf@unizar.es, aleforero@ub.edu
Envíos en inglés u otros idiomas: europeangroupcoordinator@gmail.com
'Pandemic is capitalism, the cure is mutual support'
(Barcelona)

London
(photo: Jorge Martin on Facebook)
II. Suspension of 48th annual conference in Torino

Dear friends,

We hope this message finds you safe and well.

We are writing to update you on the European Group 2020 conference. Due to current global events regarding Covid-19, we will be suspending the annual conference. It is presently due to be held in September in Torino, Italy. Given the unclear trajectory of this pandemic, we aim at this point to suspend all associated work on the conference until June, where we will re-evaluate with the objective of holding it in Torino in the week commencing 14th December 2020.

Whilst the trajectory of this current crisis in unpredictable and may be resolved by September, we have taken this decision to ensure that our friends organising in Italy are enabled to focus their energies on the wellbeing of themselves and their families and friends – something we should all prioritise at this juncture. As such, no further work or focus on conference organising should be undertaken within this next three-month period. This includes the submission of abstracts to organisers and working group co-ordinators, which will also now be suspended until June. If we are able to go ahead, we will reissue a call for papers then.

We will revisit the objective of holding the conference when we reconvene conference discussions in June. If the situation has not vastly improved and travel restrictions or the potential for impacts on health remain, then we will issue a cancellation. We are also aware that the reality of financial support may be affected, and will monitor this also. However, we are clear that this is a time for friendship and collaboration as well as critical reflection: central aspects of our conferences. As such, a suspension seems a way to ensure the potential for these networks to continue were the pandemic to resolve. Moreover, as some states are moving toward punitive means to control the spread, and others are reducing support for migrant and other socially disenfranchised groups, this seems an important time to keep a handle on critical discussions around social control – the core ethos of our group.

We send best wishes to all, and all our thanks to our friends who have been working on conference organisation in Italy and in the Working Groups. This work has been invaluable, and much appreciated during these increasingly difficult times.

In hope and solidarity,

Vicky, Dani and Katja.
III. Justice, Power and Resistance Vol. 3(1)
Neoliberalism and Harm Production

The first of a two part series of the EG journal Justice, Power, Resistance is available to buy online. This is a significant contribution to the study of social harm and includes work and commentary from a number of the Group’s members. Many thanks to all involved in the process at EG Press, and to the guest editors for their input and excellent collation of articles.

You can buy the edition here:

https://www.amazon.co.uk/Justice-Power-Resistance-Neoliberalism-Production/dp/1911439162

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IV. Coronavirus and Moral Panic

Beppe Mosconi – Università di Padova. 24 March 2020


The differences between the fears urged by recent "security decrees" and the fears related to the "Coronavirus" emergency are too obvious to prompt more than a reflection. The fear of the "invasion" of migrants and the landing of "clandestines" refers to an external enemy, particularly visible in appearance and origin, an alleged threat to our way of life and our well-being that remains at a ghostly level. The facts show the opposite, in terms of the proficiency of the phenomenon in order to cope with a systemic crisis. With the C. Virus, although the issue is stuck in the physiological side of fear, the enemy is all internal, absolutely invisible and unsuspected: ourselves, our family, our children, our friends, potentially everyone; above all our habits and our way of life. No matter what was the subject of the threat.

Not to mention our economy, which, far from being threatened, is being severely attacked and undermined by a wide range of limitations and the collapse of entire sectors of production and the market. The paradigm shift is so drastic and radical that it inevitably raises some questions. Is it the severity of the disease that causes this upheaval, or is it the measures what are pushing – especially with the last decree - the severity of the disease? In order to respond, we must acknowledge some ambiguities that permeate our way of life and our attitudes in these weeks. On the one hand we believe and hope that it is a temporary crisis, which may disappear with the heat of spring; on the other hand we are getting used to and surrendering before the idea that the length of the pandemic is unpredictable and uncontrolled.

Phobias and panic, up to the slightest gestures and self-protection rituals, can go hand in hand with fatalism. Whilst due healthcare measures are essential, state led paranoia should be played down; just look at the myriad of gags circulating through the web. It is in fact a strange panic flowing towards abandonment, surrender, the end of social conflict, except for its expressions – not coincidentally - among the less protected areas (prisons, a re-emerging working class). Particularly significant is the ambivalence towards state and institutional measures: the suspicion of exaggeration and instrumentalism, to cover other aspects of the political and economic crisis, the reaction
against measures deemed too drastic, and it goes hand in hand with obsessive respect for 
every minimum rule, with the capillarity of mutual control, with the sense of joining a wide 
mobilization.

Here the panic seems to bring up a new relationship between law and consent. If the Law of 
postmodernity is distant, abstruse, and incomprehensible for citizenship, here a strict 
continuity reappears through the imposition of draconian rules which all of us are forced to 
follow, for the mitigation of common risk – not security. But it is a regressive protection, an 
invasive and demanding ‘necessary minimum’ to prevent danger: not to defend and promote 
development, not to respect the logic of the market (who talks about it anymore?), but rather 
to save what can be saved, in a climate of war. So here our system, the one that has seduced 
and conditioned our lives, suddenly reveals to the full, even more than the climate crisis, its 
limitations, its precariousness, its illusory ideology.

Maybe those who, after being expelled from the shopping malls, the last 
Sundays, before the last bans, poured festively on river banks and hill trails 
could symbolically represent a future possible after the nightmare.

NO PODREM 
TORNAR A LA 
NORMALITAT 

PERQUÈ LA 
NORMALITAT 
ERA EL PROBLEMA

'We can’t get back to normal, 
normality was the problem'