We are at a crossroads

Since our last issue, we have observed two historic rebellions against regimes in Ukraine and Bosnia. In previous issues, we have written about the popular uprisings in several Arab countries, in Portugal, Ireland, Greece and Spain, in Turkey and Brazil. Now the bells of rebellion are ringing in Eastern Europe. Despite different national realities, these protests have a lot in common. Growing economic social and geopolitical exploitation, coupled with intensifying authoritarianism are being experienced around the planet. These uprisings inspire each other across borders – ordinary people see that the same people who must change things through organization and mobilization.

And due to the actual participation of far-right and fundamentalist groups in many of these uprisings, we on the left are constantly pressured to choose between the current oppressive regimes and potential future regimes that may be un-democratic, ultra-conservative, or simply alternative agents of global capitalism.

We should not consider it strange or threatening that these uprisings are happening in countries that are homogeneous in terms of their level of organization, political ideology, demands and strategies. In several countries authoritarian, conservative and pro-corporate rulers tress over the bulwark against dark forces, terrorists, fascists, and fundamentalists.

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Fortress Europe

Turning borderliners into storage houses for unwanted migrants

- Manolis

Since early 2010, facing a severe economic crisis characterized by uncertainty and austerity measures resulting in rising unemployment and steep decreases in salaries and benefits, Greeks have been emigrating in large numbers and Baltic immigrants who dominated previous waves of migration into Western Europe. Howev- er, the implementation of the Dublin Regulation (allowing the host country to deport the São Paulo decisions on the EU country of origin) means that they do not get stuck in Greece. This has triggered a second wave of so-called “storage houses” for unwanted immigrants by the countries of immigration into the EU.
Spanish state - What is happening in Spain?

The 1st February, a demonstration took place in Amsterdam against the new Spanish law on abortion. The demo was called by Casa Klical, a social movement distributed by Spanish activists organised in the indignados movement in Amsterdam.

Early in 2012, the Rector Magnificus of the University of Amsterdam surprised friend and foe alike when in her annual Dies Natalis speech she stated that universities were training students to become 'competent rebels'. In the same speech, she also criticized the Dutch 'Sector Policy' through which funds for academic research were transferred from the Ministry of Education and Science to the Ministry of Economic Affairs, prioritizing the main sectors of Dutch economy such as the chemical industry, logistics, water management, and the 'creative industries'. In short, the Rector-voiced support for the "old" ideal of the university as a haven of social critique, intellectual freedom and scientific autonomy, and a central countervailing power against market and state.

The Rectors' speech however sharply contradicted Dutch policy on higher education since the 1990's, which otherwise has instrumentalized the university for the sake of strengthening the competitiveness of the Dutch economy. Combined with national trends in Europe, it is clear that the University of Amsterdam is at risk. This suppresses all possibilities of 'informed' development of knowledge, and is a danger to all the civil society organizations that are asked to perform its dirty work.

- Boris Slipjer

Academia in crisis, management in denial

Univessities

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