



There is no such thing as
a single-issue struggle
because we do not live
single-issue lives.

Audre Lorde

ANTI THESE

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#5



EDITORIAL

When we started *Antithese* a year ago, during the Maagdenhuis occupation, we aimed to fill a void. We somehow felt that a platform to share our thoughts and experiences was missing. Our voices were heard, but the urgency of the occupations left us with such a short time to develop and reflect on what was actually happening around us. Over the year, we shared in the pages of this zine many texts having as main focus the disintegration of universities. But our involvement in social change goes far beyond the institution. Indeed, we all share the student's identity, whatever that means. We recognize each other as part of the same academic community, and we fight to liberate this community from neoliberal, capitalist oppression. But one shouldn't neglect the fact that, despite of our unity, we are subjected to different forms of oppression that intersect. Therefore, we believe in a student struggle that takes this intersectionality into account and embraces diversity.

Intersectional solidarity: a work in progress!

If feminist, decolonial, gender or class issues are progressively taking more space in the academia's curriculum, our experiences in the institution show us that this institutionalisation is highly problematic. Yes, critical theories find their ways into some disciplines, but does it make the university an inclusive, safer space? Just as in society, institutional forms of oppression are deeply rooted and internalized within the academia¹. And they are mirrored in our activist sphere as well, where male dominance for instance, and especially the macho behavior, tends to reproduce patriarchal dynamics.

While we want to embrace marginalized people's struggles inside and outside the universities, one main pitfall of such solidarity is actually the reproduction of practices that are oppressive. In fact, becoming good allies is a process that isn't easy at all. It needs sensitivity, self-reflection and open minds. It requires leaving space for the marginalized to speak and emancipate themselves, which is only possible if we constantly reflect on our own internalized behavior and privileges, and sometimes adjust our tactics.

This edition of *Antithese* aims to foster such reflections. It offers an overview of actual social struggles, which are beyond the scope of the main student issues that has been raised last year, and in which the notion of intersectionality is inherent. Led by a diverse collective consisting of women, former refugees, queers, non-white people, squatters and men involved in the student movement in Amsterdam, this zine addresses a large range of topics; from feminism to the language of domination, trans politics, anti-fascism, solidarity actions, gentrification, and perspectives on student and academic struggles abroad.

We invite you to read this diverse collection of articles and texts and to consider your own experiences and surroundings. Because the only way we can grow as individuals and as a movement is by keeping in mind that our actions and those of the people closest to us aren't irreproachable, and thus could always benefit from further analysis. And this is only possible if we first give ourselves a space of self-reflection. Creating such space is the purpose of *Antithese*.

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Don't forget you can print and share this zine from our blog : antithese.noblogs.org. You can also submit texts or images any time at antithese.zine@gmail.com.

¹ We refer you to the contribution of University of
Color in the second issue of *Antithese* ("No
Democratisation Without Decolonization", May 2015)

WOMEN, WE HAVE TO ORGANIZE!

As I first got involved in the student movement in Quebec in 2012, I wasn't aware that also I was affected by gender inequalities. Sure, there were still wage gaps between men and women, and some stereotypes dissuading girls to play sports and become mechanics, but it seemed at the time that it didn't apply to me. Then I took part in the general strike against the tuition fees hike, as the co-spoke-person (together with a male comrade) of our national student organization, the *Association pour une solidarité syndicale étudiante* (ASSÉ). And by then I realized I was one of those women... It may seem strange that this revelation occurred to me as I was involved in a leftist organization. Aren't we supposed to fight for the same thing? Equity for everyone, including women? Well, we sure are, but our student's organizations, as all political spaces, are not immune to society. Whatever radicals we may be, we still reproduce social oppressions inside our political spaces. This contradiction made me self-aware of my condition as a woman. I quickly realized I wasn't treated the same way as my male comrades. Gender division of labor, sexual violence, media disinterest for female spoke-persons or feminist demands, everyday sexism, men monopolizing speeches, were all issues addressed by women during my involvement at ASSÉ, and still continue to be.

ASSÉ acts on those issues since its foundation. Some basic things to promote women's involvement and overcome sexism in our organization were included in ASSÉ's regulations; gender speaking turns during general assemblies, speaking and writing feminization and a restriction for students delegations from local associations to be formed of a maximum of two men in our national congress. Since the beginning, there was also a women's committee among other ASSÉ's committees to give the possibility to women to organize in a non-mixed space. A weekend of feminist workshops is also organized annually and this year the first non-mixed congress, where specifically feminist matters will be discussed exclusively between women, will be held. Finally, a feminist principle has also been added to the basic principles of ASSÉ to ensure that students associations who join the organization are also working toward gender equality.



"Individually trying to break those boys clubs is very hard, because men feel we take too much space even if parity is never reached. [...] So to organize ourselves in a non-mixed space give us the chance to really take the lead in our struggle [...]."

Why is it important to organize in a non-mixed space? Well, first we have to acknowledge that women are excluded from a lot of spaces: political spaces, management spaces, sports, etc. The exclusion of women from these spaces is one of many ways for men to maintain their privileged position over women. Individually trying to break those boys clubs is very hard, because men feel we take too much space even if parity is never reached. We are also experiencing a lot of sexism. So to organize ourselves in a non-mixed space give us the chance to really take the lead in our struggle, because as we are the oppressed, we are the best persons to know what to do in order to overcome our situation. This is the same organizational means Afro-American people have used to fight racism in recent decades. It is a struggle by the oppressed for the oppressed.

As you can see, our actions head towards two goals: firstly making our organization and students associations a safer-space for women, and secondly contributing to the progress of gender equality in society in general. In fact, despite our good intentions, it's idealistic to think we can achieve gender equality inside our ranks without first transforming society as a whole. To transform society as a whole, we at ASSÉ think that we have to create a political leverage in relation to our opponents. How? By mass mobilization based on the principles of «syndicalisme de combat» (combative unionism). Through constant mobilization and democratic structures, we can create a mass movement and when our pressure escalates, we strike a blow to our opponents. These combative tactics also apply to our feminist struggle. ASSÉ's

women's committee, with the help of all committees of ASSÉ, works to develop women's committees on every campus and to launch feminist campaigns on local ground.

This spring, our women's congress will aim to vote on a national feminist campaign in the hope to further feminist mobilization in our organization and beyond. What topics will be discussed? First, I can imagine that women would want to share their experiences allowing them to unwind and find solidarity with their sisters. Then, there will be debates about what demands we should focus on to rally local student associations on a national scale. We could launch a campaign on sexual violence in schools, ask for the establishment of centers for prevention and fight against sexual assault on each campus. Like everywhere, we are having some difficulties at being taken seriously by the administrations when sexually assaulted on campus. And more often our assailants – teachers, colleagues, comrades – walk with impunity. We could also demand addition of feminist courses to the obligatory college curriculum, which seems endangered by new government reforms in the name of austerity. A lot of challenges wait for us but if we are united I know we will succeed!

| Jeanne Reynolds |

Association pour une solidarité syndicale étudiante; elected member of the executive council (2012-2013; 2015-2016), of the women's committee (2014-2015) and co-spoke-person during the student strike of 2012.



WELCOME TO SPIJKENISSE, PLEASE LEAVE YOUR RIGHTS AT THE DOOR

On the train the mood is relaxed – a group of women on their way to a small protest. Not expecting to achieve much, just feeling that someone needs to speak out; that they need to speak out. None of them know or expect that by the end of the day all of them will have been verbally assaulted and threatened. And even worse, that they will have both their voice and their freedom forcefully taken from them – not by the opposition, but by those that hold the power, those that in name should be there to protect them.

I was one of the women arrested in Spijkenisse for opposing Wilders' hijacking of feminist themes in order to sprout his racist propaganda. And while in comparison to our message our personal experiences are hardly important, the way in which authorities treated us, the way our message was received – or rather, violently silenced – is. It sets a grim tone for how inconvenient opinions are oppressed, for how police forces aid the oppressor instead of protecting those being oppressed, and for how authorities will go out of their way to take away those voices they don't feel need to be heard.

In the days after our protest outrage ensued over the things people had shouted at us. But while they were vile, violent and highly abusive they were also, at least to us, not very surprising. The people shouting them have ideas different from ours, they are very passionate (for lack of a better word) about these ideas and we were there actively opposing exactly those ideas. Their comments give little hope with regard to starting a constructive conversation, but wishing awful things upon others, being sexist and expressing abusive, patriarchal and oppressive views are hardly limited to this group of particular social class.

The extreme extent of this abuse by supporters of the PVV and other racist groups to anyone that dares oppose them is a tactic of terror aimed to bully their opposition into silence. For me it was the reason I was reluctant to go that day. It

was also the reason that, in the end, made me decide to go. I felt it was important to show people that there still are plenty of people who will stand up against both sexism and racism and I was not about to be terrorized into silence. Our protest claimed that sexism, patriarchy and rape-culture are a structural problem within Dutch society and that Wilders and his followers were only denouncing it in order to reinforce their xenophobic, racist narrative without actually having a problem with it or wanting to actively look at themselves before pointing fingers at others. They drove our point home splendidly.

"Our protest claimed that sexism, patriarchy and rape-culture are a structural problem within Dutch society and that Wilders and his followers were only denouncing it in order to reinforce their xenophobic, racist narrative [...]."

What, to me, is far more scary than the behavior of these people, or even the things being said about us online – which are much more violent and graphic – is the conduct of the police on that day. Or rather, the implications that this behavior has. As opposed to the other people on the square, police officers are not present to voice their opinions. They are there as puppets of the state to 'uphold the law', or at least punish anyone that breaks it. The police is in a position of power and has a monopoly on violence. In Spijkenisse police used this power to intimidate us and sabotage our protest from the moment we got off the train. We were chased by a police van, pictures were being taken and we were asked to show ID's before any signs, banners or other signals of protest were even visible. During the protest there was a clear dichotomy between how the police treated the feminist versus how they treated those hurling verbal assaults and

threats at said feminists. Rather than protect the right to protest, it was the police – not the people that disagreed with us – that violently took away both our voices and our freedom. They used their power not to protect but to abduct us. They ended up holding us hostage, demanding our names as ransom. About the reason for this behavior, be it that we caused them extra work or that they personally disagreed with what we were saying, we can only speculate. But it is clear that from the moment we arrived, they were set on gagging us rather than protecting our rights. They were set on getting our names, they were set on preventing us from using our right to protest and they were willing to rob us of our freedom to achieve these goals.

Unfortunately, what happened in Spijkenisse is not an incident. There are plenty of cases where police have arrested protesters without sensible reasons. On New Years Eve over a hundred people were arrested during a noise demonstration because someone had allegedly written something on a car. In another case dozens of protesters were arrested while protesting the blackface caricature known as 'Black Pete'. The arrests involving the Black Pete protest took place in 2014, but only recently a court has ruled that they were unlawful. At a different demonstration against Black Pete, one of the speakers was arrested the moment he left the stage, allegedly for 'insulting the monarch'. And talking of monarchs, anyone remember the woman getting arrested 'by accident' while protesting the fact that the Netherlands is a monarchy? These are just a few incidents, not even the tip of the iceberg, when it comes to how police disregard people's right to protest.

Neither groups like the PVV, nor the police should be free to use tactics of fear in order to bully others into silence. It is about time we held them accountable. Accountable for using tactics of fear to oppress other people's opinions,



accountable for the things they say, the things they do, and the hate and oppression they instigate. We went there, not to get praise, not expecting any large result, but because we felt it was necessary. It is about time we acknowledge the structures of oppression whose roots lie deep within our society, it is about time we acknowledge that fear is never a good reason to stay silent and it is about time to acknowledge that a structural problem requires a structural solution. But while the public response after Spijkenisse was both encouraging and heartwarming, we cannot be offended only when ten women get arrested and then go on with our lives. Change never comes easy, but being outraged from afar ensures no change at all. It is about time the spectators get up and join the fight.

| Anonymous |



"This is where the macho is born. At the same time, the relation with other men starts to be based on what we can call heterosexual solidarity. Most of the jokes and provocations amongst them will be about questioning their masculinity and making their aversion of homosexuality manifest."

LIBERATING THE MACHO

You may easily be able to picture someone with the attributes of a macho. He is a male, the kind that is showing off and domineering in the presence of women while also competitive in the company of other men. He may be extrovert, always making his presence stand out, and protector of the weakest when he feels his supremacy challenged. In his interactions with others the most essential factor is whether the other person is male or female. This will radically determine the words he uses, his gestures, even the pitch of his voice and especially, the topics and aim of the conversation. His behaviour is based on dominating and keeping under control all those that his hegemonic masculinity makes vulnerable: children, women and all those who fall outside his heteronormative expectations.

Thinking about this, it comes to my mind one time I was at some party when I saw how a guy who was talking and flirting with a girl suddenly was punched by another man. While the two started fighting under the gaze of the desired girl, a guy I had just met came hastily to me and said: 'You see? It's always about pussy, he has pussy, he doesn't and they fight.' This terrible metonymy left me thoughtful and made me see clearer than ever what was going on. I did not only see a girl as an object deprived of any will whatsoever and contested as a mere reward, I also saw two pitiable young men. I not only pitied these two, but also all the others whose frustration I could see in their longing eyes, incessantly peering over the crowd in search of any feminine feature that would uncover a potential conquest. They definitely did not deserve my compassion, but I could not help pitying them, because, instead of enjoying their night, they had to protect or fight for some pussy; because, instead of having a good time, for them going out was a sort of hunting tournament where sensitive things such as honour and self-confidence were at stake. Where youth, nonchalant behaviour and camaraderie were expected, I encountered a hostile, aged and primitive frustration on their faces. Their success and contentment are measured by the number of girls they master and if they fail in their goal, their wounded masculinity pains them to the deepest part of their identity. In short, a macho's life revolves around sex, but why is having sex with women so important in the lives of these men?

Most of you readers that grew up treated as boys will recognise this. Your father, uncle, elder brother, older friend... or any other masculine role model trying to teach you how to be a man and in the absence of women saying things such as 'and how many girls...? Is there any girl...? When I was your age...' The young boy thus understands in this way what role he is expected to play in society in order to be considered a man, and during the adolescence will foster this conception together with other boys. The mystification of the sexual encounter, pornography and the need to be accepted as men will draw a clear line between them and the opposite sex that, from now on, will be seen as their ultimate yearning and, at the same time, the culprit of their innermost frustrations. This is where the macho is born. At the same time, the relation with other men starts to be based on what we can call heterosexual solidarity. Most of the jokes and provocations amongst them will be about questioning their masculinity and making their aversion of homosexuality manifest. Every time one of them considers friendship in a more intimate way, shows feelings or approaches a girl with an aim other than having sex, is accused of homosexuality and mocked. The friendships of these men are a continual contest to demonstrate who is more masculine, and that is quantified by the number of women they get to sleep with. What underlies their relation to every woman is the need to protect their mothers, sisters, girlfriends and daughters from other men, and simultaneously the desire to pick up girls that belong to other men. The failure in accomplishing this task is the origin of misogyny. Naturally, women will in many cases not yield and rebel against the desires and needs of the macho, resulting in the common belief among men that portrays women as guilty of their unhappiness and dissatisfaction. Misogyny and sexual violence are exactly that, machos fighting those that refuse to submit to their mastery.

Being a macho is not easy. Everyone suffers from his repulsive behaviour more than himself, but he also endures his identity being constantly proven and determined by rigid norms. He is not allowed to show fears or sentiments, always has to keep an erect pose and defend his property. Rebelling against this behaviour in an environment where it is predominant is rebelling

against the culturally conditioned masculine identity that has been imposed on you while growing up. Abandoning your stereotypical masculine role is accepting being banished from your macho milieu. Escaping from this can be hard even for men that develop awareness and, unfortunately, these men are not absent from the activist sphere. Even though many activists are very aware of the above structures, they think themselves cleared of blame too often. Being aware of the processes in society as a whole does not mean these dynamics are not unconsciously at work in socially committed environments. In meetings men will often speak more and more loudly than others and use a dominant language. The ones speaking up will do the interviews in the media, will decide strategies that might make others feel uncomfortable and, in sum, keep deciding what happens within the movement. We could say that the existence of the macho depends very much on being promoted, tolerated and encouraged by in his environment, and the way to prevent this from happening is decidedly pointing out and denouncing such behaviours when they emerge.

| Sam |



"Language is power, life and the instrument of culture, the instrument of domination and liberation."

— Angela Carter



LANGUAGE OF DOMINATION

What kind of attitudes tends to be oppressive? How can we improve our behavior in the classrooms, group discussions, meetings or general assemblies? Here's a guide written by radical feminists* to warn us about the language of domination we sometimes use. Very useful for everyone interested into making their environment more inclusive, and into bringing the revolution in the everyday! (Don't forget to allow yourself and your fellow students/colleagues/comrades to make mistakes; it's part of our learning process...)

→ Silencing/looking for attention

- Monopolizing the meeting: speaking too much, too loudly and/or too long (especially centering the conversation around those in a structural position of power at the expense of more marginalized participants)
- Speaking in CAPS LOCK: presenting our opinions as solutions as a finality
- Looking for celebrity: using strategy to get maximum attention for our own ideas or experience
- Only listening to yourself: preparing an answer as soon as the other starts speaking without listening.

→ Emotional and mental control

- Neglecting how larger power structures (sexism, racism, ableism, queerphobia, etc.) affect conversation dynamics
- Adopting a defensive attitude: taking a contrary opinion personally, victimizing yourself when being called out on oppressive behavior
- Imposing more value on tasks and content than on the learning of individuals or the working process of the group
- Finding problems with any subject or project in a destructive, uncritical manner
- Neglecting emotions: rationalizing, laughing or opposing passive resistance when it's time to share personal feelings. Making others feel unsafe to share.
- Being condescending and patronizing (mansplaining): making the others feel childish, especially the younger or new participants. Typical sentence: "You will need my help to do that task!" Also: Over-protecting the others. Typical sentence: "Now, does the new participant want to say something?"
- Playing the role of the solution-maker before anyone could propose anything
- Reducing a subject to some themes that you know very well

→ Being competitive/manipulative

- Playing the hierarchy
- Looking for support by being competitive with someone else
- Being dogmatic: claiming that some positions are final
- Pretending that racism, sexism, classism, homophobia, transphobia and/or ableism does not exist in activist groups
- Speaking for others: making their own opinions as the voice of a community or interpreting what others are saying. Typical sentences: "Most of us think this way..." "What they/she/he etc. want to say is..."
- Controlling the flow of information: keeping some secrets from the group
- Taking the key tasks before the others
- Making others feel uncomfortable by using ambiguous humor, manipulating others through seduction

* Translated from a flyer published in 2012 by the women's committee of ASSÉ (Québec); edited in 2015 by the LSE Occupation (London) and De Nieuwe Universiteit (Amsterdam).



WHAT I DON'T GET ABOUT THE TOILET THING IS... STUDENT RADICALISM AND TRANS LIBERATION 101

When talking to people, reading articles and thinking about student uprising of 2015 in Amsterdam and across the Netherlands, you could be forgiven for wondering what relevance an article about Trans liberation has to this story. After all, this was a struggle about 'democratisation' of the university and 'the six demands', right? In this article, via looking at the often 'controversial' issue of gender neutral toilets in the Bungehuis and Maagdenhuis occupations respectively, I'd like to show the much broader, and radical politics that drove the initial upsurge of the movement. I'd like to show the reasons why I, as a Trans anarchist-feminist activist and student, was involved. By doing so, I hope to give a brief introduction to Trans liberation and its place within a revolutionary student politics.

Trans politics and toilets 101: why I put those signs up in the Bungehuis

So, first things first; everyone uses toilets. They are an essential adjunct to other basic necessities like eating, and drinking. Access to public toilets is what allows people to navigate social space and exist in public. Infrastructurally speaking, toilets, and particularly public toilets, are crucial elements of **social reproduction**. The role of public toilets is a point so basic, that, to **cisgendered** people (people who identify with the gender that the doctor assigned them at birth) it doesn't warrant thinking about; if you easily fit into one of the two genders you've been assigned, binary toilets are something designed *for you*. This is a privilege (we'll get back to this in a bit).

However, for trans people (people who do not identify with the gender they were assigned at birth) such a basic thing as going to the toilet is a matter that can entail at the very least social awkwardness, and at the worst physical violence and even death. When you cross the **gender binary** of female/male (whether that be identifying within, in between, or outside of said binary) binary toilets are places that often lead to the playing out of the worst forms of gendered violence from people who, for one reason or another, are threatened by Trans people's existence. Furthermore, for those trans people who identify outside, in between, or more generally have a fluid relationship



to the gender binary, binary-gendered toilets often leave a choice of two categories, neither of which fit properly. To illustrate this, for myself, as a genderqueer, assigned-male-at-birth trans person, this choice is one between using a female toilet, where I may face intrusive questions, exhortations to justify my femininity, insults and social uncomfortability, and using a male toilet where I often face verbal abuse and physical violence.

Such a situation leaves trans people in a situation of having to negotiate social space, while constantly thinking and worrying about whether they can use the bathroom safely; to speak for myself, anywhere in the city of Amsterdam I go, I have a mental map of toilets that I know I can use in relative safety, places where I know if something happens someone can easily intervene or be called for help, and places where I really don't want to go to the toilet because I have been assaulted on multiple occasions. Different university locations come in each of those three categories.

The ability to never worry, or even have to think twice about using public toilets is an example of the privileges that being cisgendered gives, and shows the fundamental character of privilege more generally: the ability to think something is not a problem, or not even consider something, because it does not affect you.

Student politics; what's Trans got to do with it?

Again, let's start simple; I am a student. I am Trans. I am involved in student politics. To think that my identity as a Trans individual could be separated from my politics surrounding the university is to imagine that my experience of the university is incidental to, for instance, its corporatization. It is to think that the history of enforced division of gender roles and spaces, and more generally, the permutations of patriarchal power through the ages, have no relationship to, impact upon, or trace within the university/degree factory today. It is to

think that the application form that I filled in as a foreign student where I was forced to choose between identifying as male or female, has nothing to do with the rest of its bureaucratic structures. It is to think that politics consists of separate, perhaps related spheres; or worse, to assume that trans liberation is not 'real politics', not the 'real issue', or even, simply not an issue at all.

The Bungehuis occupation, and more generally DNU as an organization in many ways, emerged from a disparate milieu of activists within the UvA and beyond. This ranged from people for whom this was their first experience of direct action, to those who were politicized by the science park occupation against the AFS merger, or the Titanic occupation at the VU. It ranged from people who found their way to direct action and activism from years of grinding disillusionment in student council bureaucracy, to those like me, who were politicized by student movements across the world. This is to say nothing of the broad diversity of political concerns, trajectories and analysis each individual brought to bear on the original, expansive 57 point list of demands (that has been shortened in 6 demands). These claims were broad and far reaching, from demands for courses focusing on structural oppression, to the removal of all private interest from university services (such as Eurest or Shell), to instituting positive discrimination on gender, racial and ability grounds, to the dissolution of the CvB and the institution of direct student and worker control through devolved councils... and the list goes on.

It is in this context that, before the occupation, I prepared signs to gender neutralize all the toilets in the Bungehuis. One of the first things I did when we got in was to stick these signs over every toilet door. I did this for many reasons and especially one: forcing such a politics makes my existence within the occupation more comfortable. In the same vein, the act of gender neutralizing the toilets was for me internal to the movement; in acting as part of a group taking the Bungehuis, I was exercising my own power to reclaim space, and in the same way, leveraging power within the movement to expand the view of what constitutes student politics, to include the lived experiences of marginalized and oppressed groups within the university. The liberation of every

student, the creation of a truly egalitarian university, based not on a homogenous 'student experience', but on accommodating the lived experience, identity, needs, and capacities of each person is a demand which simply cannot be expressed in the language of the 'allocation model'.

"The liberation of every student, the creation of a truly egalitarian university, based not on a homogenous 'student experience', but on accommodating the lived experience, identity, needs, and capacities of each person is a demand which simply cannot be expressed in the language of the 'allocation model'."

Many important discussions were sparked by this, in meetings, in personal conversations, on twitter... I was overjoyed, for once, in a student context, people who before didn't even know what words like 'transgender' or 'genderqueer' exactly mean, were suddenly thinking, modifying their analyses, and articulating support for trans liberation within the academy.

I was pleasantly surprised to see, when I joined the recently occupied Maagdenhuis, that some gestures towards a politics beyond a vacuous plea for 'democratisation' were being articulated; that the actions and interventions that I and others had made within the discourse, direction, and demands of the movement, had filtered down, and inspired others. I saw that the binary signs had been removed from toilets doors. Instead, feminist slogans were daubed all over the doors and stalls in brightly colored graffiti (and even with, in one amazing and provocative example, menstrual blood). Pamphlets on patriarchy in meetings and 'the language of domination' were handed out before general assemblies. I saw posters for this new and exciting thing called 'University of Color' stressing the need for an intersectional approach.

However, the conversations I heard, on the stairs, in meetings, and with newly-found comrades, were less heartening: "Separate toilets exist for a reason... this is feminism gone bizarrely too far... what's the problem with having separate toilets anyway, that's not about equality, men and women are simply different..." And the list goes on. Throughout the course of the Maagdenhuis, I witnessed gender

neutral toilets turned into a mere theoretical trifle, a pseudo political 'special interest' not worthy of press releases or inclusion in demands. I saw it being dragged into all sorts of discussions as a metaphor for 'undemocratic' actions undertaken by a 'radical fringe'.

One of the interesting things to note in comparing the toilets in the Bungehuis and Maagdenhuis, is the manner in which they were neutralized. In the Bungehuis, the use of signs clearly stating the political motivations and issues behind the neutralization provoked thought, discussion and dissemination of ideas. In the Maagdenhuis, the removal of the signs, without any statement, or elucidating detail, lead to a situation in which individuals, many of whom had never encountered any form of feminist or trans politics, had to speculate over the political motivations behind the action, leading to a heterogeneous response as seen above. Combine this with a nascent feminist consciousness within the Maagdenhuis that unfortunately never emerged into an organisational and communal political form, structural critique of the academy did not fully emerge¹. Without an active intersectional discourse and culture surrounding it, it is easy to see the way in which such an action could be misinterpreted, distorted, and used for inner-political point scoring. This critique aims at elucidating the ways in which such interventions can create space and shape political movements, and the ways in which we might approach this in future.

To conclude, all my love and solidarity goes out to those of you still struggling within the academy to articulate a broader, intersectional, liberationist and revolutionary critique of the university-factory within your movements, and through your actions. Take care, and stay dangerous.

| michellouise@riseup.net |

¹ However, the night before the eviction, just such a space was made within the Maagdenhuis, in the breaking open of the door of Hans Amman's office to create an autonomous women, queer and trans space within the occupation.



DE MISVATTINGEN OVER ANTIFA EN ANDER LINKS TUIG

Na de PEGIDA demonstratie van zaterdag 6 Februari is in media weer de discussie uitgebroken over Antifa. De 'extreem'-linkse tak van anti-racisme strijders moet het weer hebben van de zoveelste zij-zijn-net-zo-erg-argumentatie zonder werkelijk nuance aan te brengen in de dialoog. Terwijl het precies die nuance is die zo nodig in het alsmat radicaliserende Nederland van nu. Joost Niemöller kan hoog en laag springen terwijl hij op zijn website claimt dat de PEGIDA demonstranten geen nazi's maar enkel bezorgde burgers zijn, die opkomen voor de rest van het bezorgde volk in Nederland. Begrijpt Joost dan niet dat de daadwerkelijke nazi's van de jaren '30 en '40 van de vorige eeuw ook simpelweg bezorgde burgers waren? Dat waren geen roodgloeiende types met hoorntjes op hun voorhoofd en rook uit de oren. Ze zagen er net zo 'gewoon' uit als de demonstranten van PEGIDA die schreeuwen om een Islam-vrij Nederland. De parallellen zijn niet moeilijk te trekken en degenen bij wie dit historisch besef een gevoelige snaar raakt, organiseerden een tegendemonstratie om op deze manier een sterk tegengeluid te laten horen. PEGIDA stond bij de Stopera in Amsterdam met één enkele reden: haat verspreiden tegen moslims. De antifascisten reageerden daarop met één enkele slogan: 'Toen niet, nu niet, nooit meer fascisme'.

De voorstanders van PEGIDA zijn nu in alle staten vanwege de inbreuk op hun vrijheid van meningsuiting zonder zich echter te beseffen dat vrijheid van meningsuiting in dit geval niks meer inhoudt dan dat de overheid hen het recht van demonstratie niet mag afnemen. Het heeft er dus helemaal niks

te maken met of hun mening gerespecteerd of überhaupt getolereerd zal worden. Daarnaast is het buitengewoon bedenkelijk dat een organisatie zoals PEGIDA in naam van de vrijheid van meningsuiting diezelfde vrijheid en ook nog de vrijheid van godsdienst van een groot deel van de samenleving probeert te ondermijnen. Nu zijn ze verontwaardigd over het feit dat hun veiligheid niet door de politie gegarandeerd kon worden vanwege de aanwezigheid van tegendemonstranten. Is PEGIDA toevallig vergeten dat zij en hun achterban de veiligheid van andersdenkenden keer op keer in gevaar brengen? Om de daders van de aanvallen op vluchtelingen, azc's, burgemeesters, etc. te scheiden van de PEGIDA demonstranten is een grove denkfout. Het zijn namelijk dezelfde mensen - met aan kop Geertje Wilders - die deze hatelijke stoet voortzetten onder het mom van 'bezorgde burger', 'Islamisering van Nederland', en 'eigen volk eerst'. Niet alleen blijft deze gevaarlijke tendens groeien onder een deel van de bevolking, het andere deel doet er niks aan!

Als we de haatdragende gevaarlijke ideologie van PEGIDA, PVV en alle andere vreemdelingswerende organisaties van Nederland vrij spel geven, als wij geen sterk tegengeluid laten horen, zullen ze straks nog denken dat heel Nederland achter ze staat. Maar dat is niet zo en dat laten Antifa en ander 'links tuig' zien. Want laten we eerlijk zijn of de bewering is dat alle mannelijke islamistische vluchtelingen schuimbekkende verkrachters zijn, of dat de gehele islam het probleem van de Nederlandse samenleving is - het maakt niet uit. Beide

van deze uitspraken zijn racistisch en de mensen die deze uitspraken doen kapen doelbewust de dialoog over seksisme, dakloosheid, werkloosheid, gebrek aan betaalbare woningen enzovoorts. Niet omdat ze bezorgd zijn om Nederland, maar omdat ze een zondebok willen creëren.

De kern van het verhaal is niet of de tactieken van Antifa jouw tactieken zijn, maar dat de we een sterk tegengeluid moeten laten horen tegen de haat die PEGIDA verspreidt. Antifa tracht op haar manier de herhaling van genocide te voorkomen, want genocide heeft deze wereld al genoeg gekend. En waar trek je de streep en onderneem je actie? Op het moment dat AZC's in de fik worden gestoken? Als er varkenskoppen verspreid worden? Of als politici aangevallen worden met wapens omdat zij vóór de komst van een AZC zijn? Of pas als het te laat is? Denk daar nog eens over na voordat beweert dat Antifa net zo extreem is als Pegida. Dit gaat voorbij het vergelijken van appels met peren. Nee, je sluit je ogen voor het probleem door degenen die tegen fascisme strijden te vergelijken met degenen die zich aan fascisme schuldig maken. Wie was het ook al weer die net zo als Wilders, PEGIDA en consorten nationalisme gebruikt heeft om een bepaalde groep mensen systematisch te demoniseren en te ontmenselijken ten einde hen als zondebok voor het een en ander te kunnen gebruiken? Als het aan Antifa ligt, en zonder verder namen te noemen, dan gaat de vergelijking tot hier en niet verder. Want zodra de ovens weer branden, kunnen wij ons dan niet, net zoal zoals zij zich toen niet, beroepen op onwetendheid. Nooit meer fascisme!

[Anonymous]



REFUGEES WELCOME



NO ONE IS ILLEGAL



REFLECTIONS ON NEW YEAR'S EVE SOLIDARITY ACTION

Every year on New Year's Eve, several activists and migrants take part in a noise demo around the migrant's detention center next to Schiphol airport. This year, almost all participants found themselves detained by police forces for the reason that some of them caused damages by tagging cars during the demo. The following public statement, released on the IndyMedia platform by one of the affinity groups present at the demo, is raising relevant concerns on the practice of intersectional solidarity. By reproducing parts of this statement, Antithese hopes to shed light on the necessity to adjust tactics and decision-making processes in order to build up concrete safer spaces and effective solidarity.



[We joined] the action organized during New Year's Eve, specifically as an act of solidarity with the migrants without papers being imprisoned in the detention centre at Schiphol. We think it is important that these solidarity actions are organized, and we value and appreciate the fact that AGA [Anarchistische Groep Amsterdam] took the initiative to do so. With our collective, we organized an evaluation of the action and our participation in it. With this statement, we would like to share some of our critical reflections. We do this in the hope that a constructive critical exchange on how we organize and collaborate, and discuss the politics behind this contributes to better actions in the future and strengthens the critical movement that we are all part of.

Regarding the preparations, we appreciated the 'briefing' given [previously] the rights of detainees, the

"In the building of a broader pro-migration movement these differences need to be acknowledged, discussed and negotiated, but not denied and done away with in an authoritarian and purely ideological way."

organization of the 'arrestantengroep' and the lawyer. However, in retrospect, we feel that the level of confrontation with the police should also have been discussed and collectively decided upon. [Our affinity group] holds that establishing a confrontation level collectively is part of collective decision-making process about participating an action. As the confrontation level was not discussed and agreed upon beforehand, people ended up in a situation they might have chosen to avoid if they had known in the first place. From the statement published on Indymedia, we understand the position of 'some anarchists' on police confrontations. However, not communicating this beforehand basically means enforcing one's strategies and tactics on the rest of the activists present. This is an anti-democratic practice that according to us does not have a lot to do with anarchism or creating alternative practices for the 'new society' we are struggling for. Additionally, this situation is very detrimental in the construction of political alliances. We understood that several people were not willing to join an action that had the potential of escalation and as a consequence might not join a solidarity action with migrants without papers in the future. Not all people standing with undocumented migrants are anarchists, and several of us who are anarchists apparently do not share the same interpretation of what solidarity means. In the building of a broader pro-migration movement these differences need to be acknowledged, discussed and negotiated, but not denied and done away with in an authoritarian and purely ideological way.

[We] have participated in several 'high risk' actions and do not avoid confrontation with the police. We share the political view that the police are mainly there to protect the state and corporate interests which need to be abolished. Additionally, we agree that the police forces acted in a totally outrageous and disproportionate way. However, we also think that in the definition of our confrontation level, we need to use



tactical and political criteria based on a historical and contextual analysis. 'Solidarity' from our perspective means at a very minimal level listening to those whom you are in solidarity with and acknowledging their specific conditions, needs and demands. From this perspective, we cannot pretend that the situation of undocumented migrants is the same as that of documented folks. We know this reality also through the composition of our own collective. Taking this difference into account is something else than 'denying their agency' or 'victimizing' them. It is simply acknowledging the more precarious situation of undocumented people in the face of our current failing system (which was the reason we were there in the first place). Denying this is just a demonstration of 'privileged' position of some self-proclaimed radical activists. Therefore, we were astonished and angry that several activists 'upgraded' the confrontation level with the police at several moments during the action without any apparent consultation. Was this asked to the undocumented activists present? Was it negotiated with them and the rest of the activists present? We know for a fact that it was not.

So then, what kind of solidarity is this? Can we define our solidarity without taking into account the opinions, demands and situations of the people we are in solidarity with? In any case, this type of solidarity in practice led to the sad and ironic situation that our action in solidarity with imprisoned →



VAN WIE IS DE STAD?

"So then, what kind of solidarity is this? Can we define our solidarity without taking into account the opinions, demands and situations of the people we are in solidarity with?"

undocumented migrants actually put more undocumented people, against their will, in danger of being incarcerated. [...]

The people that wrote on the cars merely provided the police with what they wanted: an excuse to arrest us and the migrants without papers to intimidate and to create fear. In that context, one can ask which tactics actually played into the strategy of the police? Stating that the same situation would have emerged if the cars hadn't been tagged is mainly hypothetical, not grounded on a historical analysis (nothing happened in previous years at the same action) and is therefore too easily used to legitimize and cover up a tactical and political fuck-up. And for the record, nobody 'forced' the arrest of the people who did the tags. Several different strategies were discussed and people even volunteered to take the blame and be arrested. These proposals were all done away with, based on the purely abstract and ideological claim that 'we do not and cannot negotiate with the police', again without taking into account the will of the undocumented activists present.

We hope that these reflections will bring all of us in a stronger position where everyone is more aware of the various opinions, demands, situations within the group, so that we can be better aligned as a whole in our fight for a better world.

| An Amsterdam-based affinity group |

In het centrum word een lokale en plaatselijke winkels verstoten door de zoveelste nutella-zaak. Ietsje verder buiten het centrum wordt de goedkope groenteboer verdrongen door nog een hippe koffie-zaak. De grondprijzen blijven in rap tempo stijgen en ondanks een zogenaamde hotel-stopkomen er nog steeds continu hotels bij. Verder blijkt 1 op de 13 mensen hun appartement weleens te verhuren via 'AirBnb' en bestaan er bedrijven die appartementen full-time via AirBnb verhuren. Woningcorporaties die toch eigenlijk volkshuisvesting als doel hebben verkopen in rap tempo hun sociale huurwoningen en de wachtlijst voor een woning is inmiddels meer dan twaalf jaar. Vooraanstaande Amerikaanse sociologen gebruikten Amsterdam vaak als voorbeeld van de 'rechtvaardige stad', een voorbeeld van hoe het ook kan vergeleken met de vele problemen in Amerikaanse steden. Maar in zeer rap tempo gaat het in Amsterdam dezelfde kant op.

Historisch gezien heeft Nederland in vergelijking met andere landen behoorlijke sterke huur rechten. Deze zijn echter in het afgelopen decennium grotendeels ondermijnd door de nieuwe contract-vormen. Anti-kraak en allerlei soorten tijdelijke huur en campus-contracten zijn volledig genormaliseerd en duizenden studenten hebben tegenwoordig een onzekere woonsituatie: ze kunnen er elk moment uitgezet worden zonder dat ze rechten hebben. Ook sociale woningbouwcorporaties, die nog altijd volkshuisvesting als publiek doel hebben, maken veel gebruik van anti-kraak en tijdelijke contracten. Vaak doen ze dit in buurten die op het punt staan 'booming' te worden en waar ze in de toekomst appartementen willen verkopen. Ze maken dus gebruik van de 'flexibiliteit'

van studenten om een buurt 'leefbaarder' en 'hipper' te maken alvorens die helemaal in de uitverkoop gaat¹. En als je na verscheidene jaren je huis wordt uitgezet, dan wordt je verteld dat je toch wel had kunnen weten waar je aan begon toen je het contract tekende, terwijl je met je noodzaak tot een dak boven je hoofd toch weinig keuze had. Veel studenten accepteren dit als iets normaal en zien het als natuurlijk dat de markt bepaalt hoe duur huizen zijn, met tot gevolg dat bepaalde buurten voor de meesten onbetaalbaar worden. Gentrificatie wordt als iets onontkoombaar gezien.

Dit alles is onderdeel van een ideologische verandering die de overgang van de Keynesiaanse verzorgingsstaat naar het huidige gefinancierde (neoliberaal-) kapitalisme rationaliseert. Net zoals het 'recht op onderwijs' met de introductie van het leenstelsel vervaagd is tot een 'investering in jezelf', is het 'recht op huisvesting' in de newspeak van woningbouwcorporaties verandert in 'jouw persoonlijke wooncarrière' waar je zoveel mogelijk moet doorstromen. En net zoals je in de schulden moet steken om een diploma te verkrijgen (in enkele jaren is de gemiddelde studieschuld gestegen van 10.000 euro tot aan binnenkort 30.000 euro), moet je tegenwoordig ook een gigantische schuld (hypotheek) aangaan om ergens te mogen wonen. Het leenstelsel zorgt ervoor dat hoger onderwijs minder toegankelijk wordt voor jongeren uit lagere klassen en dat die minder snel zullen kiezen voor een studie met ogenschijnlijk minder economisch nut. De afbraak van volkshuisvesting en woonrecht heeft als gelijksoortig gevolg dat in een dure stad als Amsterdam wonen steeds meer een privilege wordt voor jongeren met rijke ouders, die hun kinderen financieel kunnen steunen door

bijvoorbeeld een huis voor ze te kopen. Dit alles versterkt de nog steeds groter wordende ongelijkheid.

In de loop van de jaren '90 werd volkshuisvesting steeds minder als een collectief probleem gezien en het beleid creëerde geïndividualiseerde 'bewoners'. Huurders werden 'woonconsumenten'. De democratische verantwoordelijkheid voor huisvesting van de overheid werd weggegeven aan (geprivatiseerde) woningbouwcorporaties die geen verantwoording hoeven af te leggen aan bewoners noch overheid. Verder kwam er in de jaren '90 het beleid dat sociale huurwoningen alleen bedoeld zijn voor de lagere inkomens, terwijl het daarvoor juist voor iedereen was. Diegene met een midden (of hoger) inkomen die in een sociale huurwoning blijft wonen wordt gestigmatiseerd als een 'scheefwoner', want die woont "te goedkoop" en "neemt ruimte in" die bedoeld is voor lagere inkomens. Men doet alsof sociale woningbouw altijd alleen maar bedoeld was voor de 'armen', maar het was juist universeel en voor iedereen. Het is de moeite waard om het verschil met bijvoorbeeld zorg en onderwijs te laten zien: segregatie gebaseerd op inkomen zoals bij huisvesting is gelukkig nog steeds not-done en men is er gelukkig nog van overtuigd dat elke burger onafhankelijk van inkomen recht heeft op dezelfde doctoren en docenten.

Als we terug willen naar betaalbare volkshuisvesting en een rechtvaardige stad dan zullen we daar voor moeten vechten. Amsterdam heeft gelukkig een inspirerende geschiedenis van sociale woningbouw en woonstrijd. De buurten die begin 20^{ste} eeuw zijn gebouwd waren uitsluitend sociale huurwoningen voor arbeiders. Deze massale bouwprojecten waren ook bedoeld om de revolutionaire dreiging af te wenden. Deze nieuwe

blokken werden gebouwd in de stijl van de Amsterdamse School, een stijl bedacht door bevoegen architecten met socialistische idealen die paleisjes wilden maken voor de arbeiders². Verder was er in de jaren 70/80 massaal buurtverzet in verscheidene buurten. In de Nieuwmarkt buurt zijn bijvoorbeeld in het midden van de jaren '80 nog hele woningblokken 100% sociale huur opgebouwd, wat het resultaat was van massaal buurtverzet tegen de massale sloop van woonwijken voor de bouw van een ongewenste metro-lijn, een snelweg en grote kantoren. Wat toen gelde geldt nu nog

steeds: wachten op de goede wil van stadsbestuurders en politici zal ons niet ver brengen, vooruitgang zullen we zelf van onderop af moeten dwingen. Enkele maanden geleden schreef Eric van Duivenoorden, in het Parool dat de Amsterdammer de stad kan heroveren en dat "ook 45 jaar geleden studentenacties en een Maagdenhuisbezetting vooraf [gingen] aan de golf van engagement waarbij men de stad weer in eigen hand nam. Voor de huidige studenten is er wat dat betreft in Amsterdam nog een wereld te winnen". Laten we er voor gaan, de Amsterdamse geschiedenis van woonstrijd geeft in ieder geval genoeg houvast!

| Anonymous |

¹ Zie Tijdelijk in de Kolenkit (fb). En ook hoe een woningbouwcorporatie als Rochdale gebruik maakt van het klasse-verschil tussen studenten en lokale bewoners ('allochtonen') om solidariteit te ondermijnen.

² Het zijn juist deze sociale huurwoningen van bijna honderd jaar oud, waarvan de oorspronkelijke bouwkosten en renovaties al lang zijn afbetaald door de jarenlange huur van bewoners, die nu worden doorverkocht aan midden-boven klasse yuppen met een gigantische hypotheek.

Zie:
Rechttopstad.nl
Faircity.amsterdam



*Most of the illustrations you find in our zine are from Zola, an anti-oppressive street artist based in Montréal, unceded Kanien'kehá:ka & Anishinape territories. For more amazing stuff, visit zolamtd.tumblr.com.



DISTURBING THE STATUS QUO IS NOT A CRIME, IT IS A DUTY ACADEMICS FOR PEACE IN TURKEY

On January 12, 2016, there was an explosion in Sultanahmet - one of the most central and touristic squares of Istanbul, leaving 10 people dead, 15 wounded, - carried out by a suicide bomber said to be affiliated with Islamic State. Just in a few hours, the president, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, appeared on TV, condemning the "terrorist attack" and stating, one more time that the government is against "all types of terrorism". This expression has continuously emerged as a governmental discursive trick to justify future maneuvers "against terrorism", mainly towards Kurdish and leftist groups. Yet, there was something even more interesting in this speech. After spending only a few minutes on the explosion, Erdogan dedicated the rest of his speech to target the 1128 academics that under the name "Academics for Peace" signed a petition a few days before, demanding an end to the violence of the Turkish state in Kurdish provinces. The petition condemned the curfews that had been going on in Kurdish towns and neighborhoods, the attacks on civilian settlements with heavy weaponry that resulted in the deportation of the people in the region and the violation of their lives, liberty and security. Academics demanded the state to abandon this deliberate massacre and declared "we will not be a party to this crime".

Erdogan accused the academics of "making terrorist propaganda", "backing the terrorist organization" referring to the PKK, being "cruel", "despicable", "dark people" who are "not even half, but quarter intellectuals". Employing the familiar "you are either with us or with them" discourse, he told academics to "dig trenches and go to the mountains" if they don't like parliamentary politics. Shortly after, the Institute of Higher Education declared that they would take "all the necessary measures" against the academics who signed the petition. The day after Erdogan's speech, pro-government newspapers wrote that



"Compared with organized social movements and direct actions, a petition might be seen as not the most radical or efficient method of protest. Yet the Academics for Peace petition, perhaps as one of the most "radicalized" and criminalized petitions in history, and perhaps precisely because of this, stood up as a way of gathering, if not in the streets, on paper."

there was a connection between the explosion and the petition, while a pro-government mafia leader declared they would be happy to "take a shower in the blood of the academics". The universities declared one by one that they would investigate the signees. In the meantime, the website of the Academics for Peace was hacked with notes such as: "We have taken over your site, you will not be forgiven anymore", "Your ears will blow up when we speak", "Our operations will go on", while a huge Turkish flag covering the page.

Since then, academics are being officially charged with violation of the infamous Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code, which criminalizes "insulting the Turkish nation or the state of the Turkish Republic", as well as with "terrorist propaganda" and "inciting hatred and enmity". They have been subject to prosecution and administrative penalties from their universities. There are countless cases of suspension or dismissal of academics and it is not a surprise that academics with precarious, flexible contracts are more affected by the situation. In addition, police raided the houses of some academics, detaining more than a dozen and public prosecutors launched investigations against more than one hundred academics. Alongside official investigations, there are innumerable academics that are receiving threat messages, deactivating their social media accounts and having to leave their schools and even cities.

In 2015, not only hundreds of people were murdered and thousands tortured, but also voices of criticism and solidarity with Kurdish people, any attempt of collaboration between the "West" and the "East" of the country and calls for peace have been violently suppressed, as in the case of Suruç and Ankara massacres in 2015. In this context, it does not come as a total surprise that it was time for the government to target the

academics who always have been a popular target group in the history of oppression. Ironically, in one of these days, a high school teacher in Istanbul was threatened by the school board because she had a Michel Foucault quote as WhatsApp status. The school principal thought it was the teacher's own words: "Is it surprising that prisons resemble factories, schools, barracks, hospitals, which all resemble prison?" The school board did its best to prove and perform Foucault's words by threatening the teacher and assigning another philosophy teacher who openly supported to another school.

Compared with organized social movements and direct actions, a petition might be seen as not the most radical or efficient method of protest. Yet the Academics for Peace petition, perhaps as one of the most "radicalized" and criminalized petitions in history, and perhaps precisely because of this, stood up as a way of gathering, if not in the streets, on paper. Yet, Academics for Peace can be seen as not only signing a pro-peace petition but also putting their signature under an Edward Saidian definition of the intellectual in taking disturbance of the status quo as their duty. The disturbing voices multiplied in a short while; the number of signatures doubled up, solidarity messages burgeoned and consequently the groups that declared their support to the academics (writers, white-collar workers, artists, unemployed people, translators, psychologists, filmmakers, international intellectuals) came together under the name Everyone for Peace; turning what's on paper into physical solidarity, which might have a stronger influence on the political climate, as well as on the judicial processes.

What was equally important has been the support of the students. More than thirty thousand students signed a petition declaring that they affiliate with the demands of their teachers. In several

universities, students made sit-in protests and in social media they campaigned with the hashtag of #hocamadokunma (#takeyourhandsoffmyteacher). The extent to which the students react against their teachers being detained will be a crucial factor in how the situation will unfold, which shows once again the critical role that the student movements have in freeing universities from state oppression. In a period in which universities are increasingly constrained by economic and ideological principles of neoliberalism, as well as institutional political pressure, the wave of student movements in the last few years from Canada, Chile, the United Kingdom to the Netherlands, demanding an academia free from neoliberal logic and political control, gives hope not only for liberated knowledge production, but also for a more just society. As one of the banners in the occupied Maagdenhuis said: "A free university in a capitalist (let me add, neoliberal and authoritarian) society is like a reading room in a prison".

| Aylin Kuryel |
Amsterdam/Istanbul



THE CURRENT SITUATION IN THE SPANISH PUBLIC EDUCATION AND THE STUDENT MOVEMENT THAT WE NEED

Public education across Europe is suffering in the last years one of the hardest attacks in history and the working class youth, as usual, is getting the worst part. The consequence are that only in the last year more than 55.000 students have been expelled from the Spanish universities for not being able to afford the tuition fees.

The successive governments have dismantled public education and cut its budget, imposing even worse conditions on teachers and non-teaching staff, while at the same time minimizing student grants and removing any kind of support for students with financial problems. Meanwhile, they impose laws that make universities only accessible for the most privileged and adapt education to the needs of the job market.

The attacks are continuous. After the Bologna Process, the vocational education has also been worsened by the LOMCE [new Spanish educational law] and in the last year, the government, against the will of the whole educational community, passed a new reform that reduces the years of bachelor and gives more importance to



"[...] the privatization plans we are facing are taking place globally. We, the European and international youth, have to act conjointly and in solidarity with other struggles."

the master programs. This reform deprives students without means of getting a specialized education. In addition, the OECD praises these reforms in one of its last reports arguing things such as: 'Higher tuition fees could encourage students to make choices more suited for the labour market.' It is clear that the purpose of this all is privatizing education as well as turning a public service and right into a privilege for a few.

For these reasons, this moment is more important than ever to stand up to the attacks from the Spanish government. However, the response we are giving does not match the magnitude of the attack we are getting. To oppose these reforms in Spain and Europe, we need a broad social answer that unifies students (from higher education and high schools) with teachers and staff and links with the labour and union movement and other social movements.

The task we have now is reaching the majority of the students by explaining patiently and class by class, in every educational institution, the content of the reforms and the privatization plans. This is the way to let everyone know

how grave the situation is and the need to confront this offence in the streets, mobilizing together with our friends, facing together this attack and looking for links to join other social sectors.

However, explaining is not enough. It is essential to involve the majority in making decisions and organizing the next protests by having assemblies where we can decide together and where the debate takes place, so we can act collectively. We have to turn the feeling of defeat caused by the imposition of Bologna and the LOMCE and the decrease of mobilization due to the electoral promises, into rage against the government and the Troika.

Finally, there is an essential task that we often forget: the privatization plans we are facing are taking place globally. We, the European and international youth, have to act conjointly and in solidarity with other struggles. That's why we say: here, in Greece, Amsterdam or Chile, our struggle is the same!

| Marco González |
Seville, Spain

BOOK REVIEW

Competente Rebellen – Casper Thomas

Competente Rebellen door Casper Thomas (hierna C.T.) is het eerste boek over de studentenprotesten van het afgelopen jaar. Het is een zeer vlot en leesbaar boek geworden dat het verhaal vertelt van hoe de universiteit in opstand kwam tegen het marktdenken. In de media leek het veelal alsof de bezetting van het Bungehuis uit het niks kwam en dat studenten spontaan in actie kwamen omdat enkele talen-studies zouden verdwijnen. C.T. heeft echter begrepen dat het Bungehuis voortbouwde op voorgaande protesten en netwerken. De inspiratie van de studentenprotesten in Quebec van 2012 en de daarvan toegeëigende red square symbool wordt genoemd. Daarnaast krijgt de gekraakte common room van het Spinhuis een centrale rol toebedeeld als broeinest van de studenten revolutie. Het Spinhuis ging inderdaad over veel meer dan een akkefietje over de mogelijkheid om zelf tosti's te mogen maken, de ideeën die het ideologisch fundament van de bezettingen vormden bestonden al jaren. Daarom was de kritiek die door het collectief uitgesproken werd in de vele persberichten goedkeurend geciteerd door C.T. in het boek – dan ook dezelfde als in de vele boeken die geschreven zijn over de teloorgang van de academie door de vermarkting en bureaucratisering. Chris Lorenz schreef bijvoorbeeld in 1993 al *Van het universitaire front geen nieuws* over de vermarkting van de academie. Maar het maakte niet uit hoeveel boeken en manifestos de wetenschappers schreven, het werd allemaal moeiteloos genegeerd door de onderwijsautoriteiten. Een bezetting van één van je gebouwen is echter moeilijker te negeren.

De belangrijkste gebeurtenissen tijdens de Bunge- en Maagdenhuisbezetting worden door C.T. grotendeels accuraat beschreven. Het is altijd bijzonder om over gebeurtenissen die je zelf hebt meegemaakt terug te lezen, zoals opmaat naar de Bungehuis bezetting, de vruchteloze onderhandelingen tijdens de bezetting en de bizarre escalatie met de honderduizend euro dwangsom, die toen leidde tot massale steunbetuigingen voor de bezetting (in tegenstelling tot toen ze diezelfde dwangsom gebruikten tegen de krakers van het Spinhuis). En natuurlijk de daaropvolgende door ons georganiseerde persconferentie voor het oog van de landelijke media, waarna het nog vier dagen duurde voordat de ME op

dinsdagochtend eindelijk de boel ontruimde met buiten honderden studenten en steunbetuigers. De avond van de bestorming van het Maagdenhuis wordt beschreven en de zes weken lang durende open bezetting vormt de leidraad van het boek. En in tegenstelling tot de reguliere media wordt het bestaan van University of Colour, één van de meest hoopgevende initiatieven uit het Maagdenhuis, bevestigd en wordt er in ieder geval een paar pagina's besteed aan racisme en het gebrek aan diversiteit in de academische wereld.

De maatschappelijke context maakte het mogelijk dat de protesten zoveel weerklank vonden in de samenleving. Niet alleen de kritiek over de vermarkting van de universiteit bestond al veel langer, maar ook de gebeurtenissen in de Eurozone en de verkiezingsoverwinning van Syriza hebben hun invloed gehad. Zo noemt C.T. het 'End austerity' spandoek in het Grieks dat aan het Bungehuis hing. Zo ook speelde de onvrede over gentrificatie en massa-toerisme in Amsterdam een rol, natuurlijk met als eis dat het Bungehuis niet verkocht zou worden aan Soho House en daarmee een in een members-only hotel voor de kosmopolitische creatieve elite zou veranderen. De onvrede over de Europese bezuiningspolitiek van de Troika en gentrificatie in Amsterdam verwijzen net als de universiteitsprotesten naar een groeiende onvrede over economisch rendement als maat der dingen.

De schrijver is redacteur van de Groene Amsterdammer en wat me vaak aan de Groene nogal stoort gebeurt ook hier. Het samenvatten van interviews van vooraanstaande intellectuelen wordt gebruikt om over controversiële onderwerpen te schrijven waar men de pen uit eigen naam liever niet vuil aan wil maken, zogenaamd om de journalistieke integriteit, distantie en objectiviteit te behouden. Maar deze intellectuelen moeten wel eerst serieus genoeg zijn bevonden; dat wil zeggen ze moeten 'serieus' zijn genomen door 'serieus' prestigieuze uitgeverijen en bladen als *The Atlantic* of *The Guardian*, om over geschreven te mogen worden in de Groene. Een anarchist zal niet zo snel 'serieus' worden genomen door de Groene, maar als deze internationaal salonfähig genoeg is – geworden dan maakt de Groene er dankbaar gebruik



van; zo werd David Graeber al snel de 'bezettingsintellectueel' met bijna een heel hoofdstuk dat over hem gaat. En de lijst van 'serieuze' mensen in het boek is lang.

Maar net zoals C.T. gebruikt maakt van 'serieuze' mensen maakten wij daar natuurlijk net zo goed gebruik van tijdens de bezettingen. Met het uitnodigen van allerlei 'serieuze' mensen om te spreken verkregen wij niet alleen vele (impliciete) steunbetuigingen, maar zorgden we er ook voor dat er veel mensen binnen kwamen en dan op laagdrempelige manier kennis konden maken met DNU. Op deze manier had het Maagdenhuis zes weken lang een beter sociaal-cultureel programma dan De Balie, Pakhuis de Zwijger en De Rode Hoed bij elkaar zonder geld voor toegang te vragen. C.T. wekt echter de impressie dat de open bezetting er alleen was om een debat te faciliteren over de toekomst van de universiteit, alsof het enkel een open podium was om gezamenlijk De Nieuwe Universiteit uit te vinden. Maar de bezetters zelf hadden vrijwel geen tijd om mee te doen aan de talloze discussies, zo zijn er dan ook verschillende van deze mensen die er dagelijks waren gedurende de zes weken maar die die geen enkele 'serieuze' spreker hebben gezien. Voor veel van de studenten was het Maagdenhuis primair een drukmiddel om verandering af te dwingen. Het besluit om het Bungehuis te bezetten werd juist ingegeven door de het simpele feit dat de talloze debatten en discussies die door de jaren heen gevoerd zijn, weliswaar met minder media aandacht dan deze keer,

helemaal niets hebben veranderd of opgeleverd. De groep die 13 februari het Bungehuis bezette en ook veel van de mensen die zich daar later aansloten hadden heel goed door wat er mis was met de universiteit en ook genoeg concrete voorstellen hoe deze problemen opgelost konden worden. Daar hadden we echt niet het open podium in het Maagdenhuis voor nodig.

Er wordt in het boek ook wel heel erg een romantisch beeld geschetst van het Maagdenhuis en open bezettingen, maar het was juist die openheid dat ook een groot mankelpunt was. Er kwamen veel mensen die er niets te zoeken hadden en niet alleen daklozen voor gratis maaltijden die C.T. opgemerkt heeft. Het leidde tot een situatie waarin we permanent bezig waren met damage-control, om de idioten maar buiten de media te houden. Mensen die tot vier keer toe werden weggestuurd kwamen toch maar weer binnen lopen om vervolgens Powned te worden te staan. Wat dat betreft laat het boek wel zien dat de damage-control niet voor niks is geweest aangezien C.T. en anderen er weinig last van hebben gehad. Het zorgde er echter wel voor permanente stress en dat er niet genoeg energie werd gestoken in de noodzakelijke verbreding naar de faculteiten en de samenleving. De meeste betrokkenen waren dan ook blij dat het eindelijk over was.

Er wordt door C.T. een beeld geschetst van hoe de meest recente Maagdenhuisbezetting van afgelopen jaar net zoals de allereerste van 1969 symbool kan staan voor een grotere maatschappelijke omwenteling. Net zoals 1969 een nieuw tijdperk inluidde, is het niet ondenkbaar dat men in de toekomst zal terugkijken op de bezetting van 2015 als keerpunt richting het einde van de marktsamenleving (of het neoliberaal kapitalisme). En dit is ook precies het beeld waar we gebruik van moeten blijven maken, want om de wereld te kunnen veranderen hebben we ook het geloof nodig dat fundamentele sociale verandering daadwerkelijk mogelijk is. Het gaat om het creëren van een vicieuze cirkel die opwaarts gaat: hoe meer we sociale verandering geloven hoe meer we het mogelijk maken, en hoe meer we het mogelijk maken hoe meer we erin kunnen geloven. We kunnen wat dat betreft dankbaar zijn dat dit het eerste veel gelezen boek is over de universiteitsprotesten van het afgelopen jaar en ook dankbaar voor C.T. zijn bijdrage voor het versterken van deze vicieuze cirkel.

| 'Kees' |

(één van de bezetters en geïnterviewden in het boek)

CURRENT STUDENT STRUGGLES

Copenhagen

Due to massive cuts in funding by the Danish government, the University of Copenhagen will have to fire 500 people. This includes scientific staff as well as administrative staff and technical personnel. This means larger classes, fewer group lessons, and fewer lab exercises. The academic staff will also have to take up many of the tasks that were formerly done by administrative staff, thereby increasing the workload.

Slovenia

Because of illegal payments made to a lot of professors at the University of Ljubljana students and teachers took to the streets. Among the professors receiving the "bonus" were the current minister for education Maja Makovec Brenčič and the current financial minister Dušan Mramor. The protesters asked for the resignation of the rector (also former social minister), who is slowly corporatizing the university which leads to lower quality in lectures, higher enrollment fees and contraction of courses.

Morocco

On January 24th thousands of protesters defied a governmental ban to demonstrate. They took to the streets to protest against planned budget cuts to the education system. Riot police were very present along the march.

USA

On January 26th four protesters were arrested while interrupting a Board of Governors meeting at the University of North-Carolina. They presented a petition calling for the removal of the new president of UNC who will start on March 1st: Margaret Spelling. Some faculty and students have raised concerns about Spellings' previous affiliations with the for-profit University of Phoenix, which has been under government investigation for recruiting practices, and with Ceannate Corp., which collects debt on student loans.

Myanmar

47 student protesters who were arrested in March 2015 are still imprisoned. 22 of those imprisoned are now facing severe health problems due to lack of care. Their conditions included tuberculosis, severe hypertension and gastrointestinal diseases. The health problems got worse when the Judge and prison authorities refused to transfer the activists to appropriate medical facilities.

UK

Students at University College London protest the enormous rise in rent, which has risen with approximately 60% since 2009. About 150 students have paid their rent to a bank account run by the UCL union, thereby withholding the money from UCL residences. They demand a 40% reduction in rent. The cheapest single room is 542.36 pounds per month. UCL owns the halls, so there's no reason to charge this much according to one of the strikers. Besides the halls are outdated and distant from the main campus. The high rents prevent students from less well-off families to study in London.

South Africa

In Durban about 200 pupils of Masiphumelele High School barricaded the gate of their school with burning tires. Because no formal teaching has taken place at the school since the start of this term. They also called for the removal of the principal, because of an unfair suspension of 20 pupils. The situation in higher education institutions has decreased since students have been protesting over various issues which include escalating fees and accommodation. There have also been demonstrations over institutional racism allegedly perpetrated by university administrators. Workers at various tertiary institutions have also been demanding an end to outsourced employment. The North-West University is even being closed after one of the buildings has been set on fire.

NEW LOCAL INITIATIVES

→ Anarcha-Feminist Kollektive Amsterdam ←

Does your feminism know no bounds? No husbands and no Masters? No hierarchies and no states? No borders and no prisons? Would you rather burn down corporations than campaign for a few more upper class cisgendered white women to be at the head of them exploiting the rest of us? Do you see gender as intrinsically intertwined within a system of other relations of oppression? Do you see the oppressive structures of Gender as intricately linked with the domination of state, capitalism, white supremacy, heterosexism, transphobia, and indeed, all forms of oppression and hierarchy? Are you frustrated at the inadequacies of both single-issue-lobby based activism surrounding gender, as well as those of the often dismissive, at best opportunist 'feminism' of many leftist party's and organisations? Are you tired of learned Marxists brocialists telling you that 'we can deal with that after the revolution'? Are you tired of manarchists macho posturing and fetishized aesthetic violence? Do you want to take direct action against white-supremacist-cis-heterosexist patriarchal capitalism, to disrupt, to attack, to create, to open up cracks for liberated, safe spaces?

If you answered yes to any of those questions, you might be interested in helping establish the newly-formed Anarcha-Feminist Kollektive Amsterdam (AFKA). For more details surrounding meetings, actions, reading groups and many other super fun feminist things, send an email to afka@riseup.net or visit: afka.noblogs.org/



→ Decolonial School (UoC) ←

The University of Colour launches its Decolonial School! It takes place every Thursday at Vrankrijk, from March to the first week of June. The program is meant for those who are interested in being part of social movements, activism and want to participate in the ongoing global struggle that aims to decolonize not just the University, but also the imperialist, white-supremacist capitalist ableist hetero-patriarchy. The program consists of:

- Workshops, lectures and receive a (not mandatory) reading list.
- Chill events that are meant to get to know each other better and learn more about the different forms of oppression.
- Healing events to help you deal with the imperialist white-supremacist capitalist ableist hetero-patriarchy.

Sounds amazing!!! The school is open for everyone to attend (students and non students). But... it's too late for subscription, it's already full! They have a waiting list on which you can subscribe. Just contact them perhaps some places will eventually be available. And stay tuned; maybe the Decolonial School will come back next semester! For more info please visit: universityofcolour.com.

University of Colour Education

Decolonial School, March - June 2016

IN A WORLD WHERE WE ARE ALL COLONIZED, WE NEED TO RECOGNIZE, RESIST, AND REIMAGINE OURSELVES AS DECOLONIZED.

