

Uniriot towards Wien

On March 11th and 12th, an event that is only apparently insignificant and self-referential will take place in Budapest and Wien: the celebration of the anniversary of the Bologna Process, the reform of the university system drawn up ten years ago and progressively applied in the European countries, but not only there. Between Budapest and Wien, the 46 European Ministers of Education will gather to toast to the failure and the decadence of the European education system. We, that in the last years have been taking active part in the Italian struggles against the divestment of the university, we that have crossed Europe to join other experiences that, as we did, opposed the destruction of university and the precarization of our lives, won't let them deceive us neither by this farce, nor by the empty and tired liturgy repeated by those gentlemen: "student mobility", "euro-compatibility", "competitiveness". Words that actually imply something quite different: deskilling of knowledge, fragmentation of the course of studies, economic exploitation of the student, cutbacks in public funding, gradual divestiture of the rights and welfare structures. During the last years, the technocratic deceit that pervaded the reform process had been precociously unveiled by the movements that protested against the Bologna Process: these movements have foreshadowed a new constituent European space without any nostalgia for the past, but claiming the excess and immeasurableness of knowledge. These movements have unveiled the real nature of neoliberalism, opposing the privatization of knowledge and the new enclosures force established through patents and copyrights. At the same time, these movements, fed up of the control of the state bureaucracy upon university and knowledge, claimed a public but not state university.

The student, as the same draft bills proposed during the last years in the different countries are never tired of repeating, is a subject, in every respect, internal to the work market based on knowledge. Students are at the centre of gentrification and productive processes in every European metropolis. Students are a social figure that produce wealth. We are not nostalgic. On the contrary, we want to stress this centrality, reversing it against those who used it as a rhetoric to promote new forms of exploitation. We want basic income, guarantees, decisional power, recognition of the social activity carried out inside and outside the university to correspond to the centrality of

the student in the production. On the contrary, the purpose of Bologna Process, behind the rhetoric of competitiveness and efficientism, is to transform universities into places of intensive exploitation of the new work force. The recognition of the centrality of students in the production process coincides with a more and more violent precarization.

Italy, from this point of view, has been a veritable laboratory for testing both the Bologna Process, and the movements that opposed it. In a country where the continuous cuts in funding the university, still considered as a current expenditure rather than a sector in which to invest, the fragmentation of training, the deskilling of knowledge, the expulsion of researchers from universities - all in a unique blend of company-oriented rhetoric and persistence of the corporative power of the academy – are the prevailing features, it is easy to understand how the underlying trend in Europe is to push down and downgrade the cognitive workforce. The very objectives that the Bologna Process aimed at, the ones the same Italian authors feel they have missed, resulted in a complete failure, the figures speak for themselves: 3 +2 did not include more students into the labor market nor there is a correspondence of the salary to their skills in a future work. Also as far as the student mobility is concerned, it is known that access blocks between universities, faculties, between 3 and 2, between the master degree and doctorate far outweigh the possibility of mobility.

The Wave, last year, was a response to all this, not only to economic cutbacks, but to the very structure of the university. The struggles that occurred have immediately throw into crisis the current state faced by the universities, requiring not only more quality in training, but also and especially autonomy in the direct management of the course of studies, in the sharing of knowledge and research. The same opposition to corporatism that characterizes the universities in Italy, has found a constructive expression in the practices of independence and self-management of faculties..

The network Uniriot, since 2005, has always been having the goal of building links and networking among other struggles that emerge in schools and universities, with the awareness that it is always possible to detect a trend in the closure of the control devices, as well as opportunities for strategies and practices of moments of resistance. The experience of the Wave has not been isolated: it had found

some anticipations in the movement against the CPE in France in 2006, as well as into the experiences of Denmark, Greece, Holland, Germany, Croatia, Serbia and Austria. A true cycle of university struggles is spreading all over Europe even without a general continuity. Everywhere we have put evidence on some decisive issues: the quality of living conditions of young people, the need to experience independence in the training, the opposition to the precariousness and privatization of knowledge, the intolerance towards the present state of things.

We, as Uniriot network, believe that it is fundamental to cross the Vienna days to take part both in the March 11th demonstration to challenge the official meeting of ministers, and in the workshops of March 12th-14th. An opportunity to rise to the fore what in recent years remained in the background, to build a common vocabulary among all those experiences that in recent years have opposed the process of destruction of the university. For this reason we will organize, in the main Italian universities, caravans reaching Vienna in the days of the summit.

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