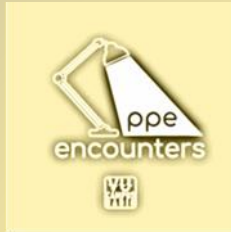


NEWSLETTER

November



Hi all, glad you stuck it through the first PPE Encounters Newsletter. Now here's our second; November 2021. Anyone can contribute creative works, bla bla bla of the people, by and for the people. 😊

After a serious week of Mid-Terms, deadlines and stress, now the 'relaxing' part of the period begins where people take everything less seriously... (required readings become not so required et cetera et cetera, sorry Lieven). So, take that rightly deserved break to flick through these pages for articles concerning all things philosophical, political, and economical, and much more.

In order to screen articles, we will use the following colour-coded system:

Politics

Economics

Philosophy

Other


Change is in the air. Along with COVID, of course, as we enter at least the third distinctive lockdown period. Yay. Anyway, you hear enough about the virus from uni and the government, so let's get down to it. Here's what's happening in Amsterdam over the next few weeks:

1. The Amsterdam light festival starts on Thursday and runs until 23rd January, open every day until 11pm! Starting at Centraal, it winds around the city and is perfect for cold winter walks.
2. Not specific to December, there's an Amsterdam Museum Pass that everyone seems to be getting, so it must be good... It's 65 euro for access to pretty much every museum for 1 year :P
3. The Christmas markets 'Funky XMAS Market', 'Amsterdam Winter Paradise' & the 'Ice Village Amsterdam'

On the PPE side, we have some events coming up!

1. The Academic Committee organises a debate every Monday on the 4th floor. Check it out for exciting debates about contemporary and contentious topics.
2. This Wednesday from 15:30-17:15, KallioPPE is hosting a sustainable Christmas decorations workshop. Bring along any materials, paper etc you have to spare, where there will be hot chocolate (incl. non-vegan!), drinks and music!
3. The Social Committee will be organising a Secret Santa to keep festive, stay tuned for more updates.

Now, to the Newsletter. It's shorter than the last, unfortunately, but we still have three thought-provoking articles, plus the answer to last Newsletter's riddle and a new one provided by our very own Teun de Koning.



First, though, a very well written article on a little party you might have heard of called FvD...

'Fascistic Characteristics of the FvD.' Tate Gibbs

This essay is the first part in a series discussing fascistic elements of the Dutch political party Forum voor Democratie.

Although fascism is ideologically indefinable due to being highly adaptive and particular to its environment, fascistic movements can be grouped together through some common characteristics. A few of these characteristics, as highlighted by Mann (2004) are nationalism, statism, transcendence, cleansing and paramilitarism¹. While these characteristics are not necessarily defining, having all of them show up within the rhetoric of a popular political party is worrying.

Forum voor Democratie is an up and coming Dutch far-right populist party spearheaded by Thierry Baudet, a charismatic young nationalist whose party grew significantly in the recent elections.

In a 20-minute speech celebrating his success in the provincial elections of 2019 (arguably his first major political success), Thierry Baudet said the following:

“Just like the other countries in our boreal world, we are being destroyed by the people who should be protecting us. We are undermined by our universities, journalists, the subsidy-receiving artists and architects. And above all we are undermined by our government”²

1: M. Mann (2004), *Fascists*, Cambridge University Press.

2: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HuSkkuEOEa4&ab_channel=NOS

Baudet references the boreal, which is a term referring to the romanticized northern regions, often used by white-nationalists to allude to white culture. The term was popularized in to the far-right political language by esoteric fascist Julius Evola³. Apart from his use of white-nationalist language, Baudet also comments on his aversion towards government subsidized intelligentsia and art. In the same year, Baudet's party called for students to report to them leftist professors⁴. In addition to his strive against professors being politically motivated, Baudet refers to modern artists as being “Cultural Marxists”⁵.

Fears of conspiring Cultural Marxists are common amongst fascist regimes and serve as the motivation for political and cultural cleansing. Due to no group referring to themselves as such, the term Cultural Marxist can be prescribed to opponents of nationalist movements as they are perceived as being both opposed to traditionalism and too ‘multiculturalist’.

However, in private, Baudet doesn't hide his racism behind difficult words. In a conversation with ex-party member Pouw-

3: J. Evola (1934), *Rivolta contro il mondo moderno*, Inner Traditions.

4: <https://www.rtlnieuws.nl/nieuws/politiek/artikel/4656656/woede-om-meldpunt-forum-over-indoctrinatie-onderwijs>

5: <https://twitter.com/thierrybaudet/status/994922341288304641?lang=en>

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Verweij, Baudet waved away claims of anti-semitism in his party, claiming **"where does your crusade against antisemitism come from? Almost everyone I know is antisemitic"**⁶.

Additionally, whatsapp messages of the FvD leader were leaked where he claimed white people have a superior IQ⁷. The statist elements of FvD lie within their support for autocratic world leaders such as Vladimir Putin and Victor Orban. Besides from reportedly having ties to the kremlin⁸, Baudet applauded Putin for "taking the lead of the free nations"⁹.

This support for hostile foreign powers serves as a part of Baudet's transcendence, as he rejects both the existing social order and progressive reformism.

All though Baudet often cites himself as being a 'conservative', his rhetoric is overtly reformist, aimed at attacking and dismantling current institutions.

His reformism isn't focused on re-establishing historical Dutch values, but (much like 'make America great again') aims to establish a fetishistic Dutch culture based on romanticized

modern perceptions of the historical Dutch culture. In this way, he speaks to groups who are dissatisfied with the political status quo while dismissing leftist materialist conceptions of emancipation. Baudet creates an imagined community of 'Dutch people' with 'Dutch values', with people falling outside of this community being foreign enemies. He uses this to create an artificial conceptualization of unity and of the enemy, alienated from material interests and thus not threatening the domestic power structure. As for paramilitarism, I will let this tweet of the party's youth organization speak for itself:

Translation:

Training for paramilitary unit #fvd begins.

New #JFVD (young FvD) chairperson Iem al Biyati

(in military clothing in the middle picture) inspects the recruits. #fvdarmy



dr. Marina
@mmeeuw

Training voor paramilitaire eenheid #fvd begint. Nieuwe #JFVD voorzitter Iem al Biyati (in legerkleding op middelste foto) inspecteert de rekruten. #fvdleger

[Translate Tweet](#)



6: <https://www.rtlnieuws.nl/nieuws/nederland/artikel/5199340/baudet-pouw-verweijd-uitspraken-radicalisering-antisemitisme>

7: <https://www.rtlnieuws.nl/nieuws/politiek/artikel/5213604/appverkeer-met-geur-van-racisme-tussen-thierry-baudet-en>

8: <https://www.politico.eu/article/dutch-far-right-leader-baudet-had-ties-to-russia-report/>

9: <https://twitter.com/thierrybaudet/status/1446894222552993800>

'Poetic Justice.' Rudolfs Terauds

More people, especially the youth in Russia, are finding solace in rap music to talk about and form opinions about the state of politics in their country. In the last decade alone, rap music in Russia has come on in leaps and bounds, both melodically and lyrically, to the extent that some argue it has risen above rap music in the US. However, political freedom in Russia and, say, the Netherlands are not on the same level. Russian rappers have been in, and continue to be in, an uphill battle for their right to free expression. The first major backlash from The Kremlin happened in 2012, when a feminist group and punk rock band named Pussy Riot, known for their unauthorized public protests over LGBT rights & opposition of Putin, performed inside Moscow's Cathedral of Christ, protesting against the church's support for him for the upcoming elections (I urge you to look up 'Pussy Riot punk prayer' on Youtube). Three members were later arrested for hooliganism, and sentenced to two years in prison. In response to further imposing consequences for 'disobedience against the state', most days of the trial were streamed online (so everyone could see what happens if you oppose the status quo). The situation reached its apex in 2014 when Russia invaded and annexed Crimea. Artists who performed there, like Eldzhey, and GUF, were put on stoplists from entering Ukraine for up to 3 years. After this,

Russian rap exploded, and punishments' from the Kremlin became more lenient. However, the situation is still far from perfect.

While the Kremlin wasn't capable of filtering what every small rapper has to say against Russian politics, the biggest artists are still prone to their speech being limited, as well as confinement. In 2018, a notable Russian rapper named Husky, known for his dark lyrics about life on the outskirts of Russia, performed a concert on top of a car after the government banned his shows due to explicit government- and police-mocking in his songs. Husky was arrested and sentenced to 12 days in prison. The electronic duo 'IC3PEAK' faced similar consequences the same year when they released "Death No More"; about life in Russia, coupled with a highly satirising political video. It drew audience from all over the world. As a result, The Kremlin went on to ban all of their concerts, public and underground. In an interview, the duo says that they are happy even with a half-length concert before it gets shut down. More people, especially the youth in Russia, are finding solace in rap music to talk about and form opinions about the state of politics in their country. Today, rap is not only informed by politics, it is influencing political change as well.

PPE Encounters

We have another poem for you, to give you some solace in these strange times, kindly donated by Puck Ast, untitled.

*as the darkness slowly comes
and the city turns in grey
I am looking for the wonder
in the brightness of the day*

*bringing light inside my heart
that you brought back to life
looking for the candles
lighting up the city night*

Watch the Time

Fred owns this digital watch. He allocates points to every time that is displayed on the watch. Some example are:

9:28 is 18 points

21:52 is 17 points

11:11 is 8 points

0:00 is 18 points

13:14 is 13 points

What time during the day would he allocate most points to?



PPEMarx- club
will host debates,
contact Tate for
more info

Read on for two more
though-provoking pieces

'On language and names'. Philip Conroy

I had an experience the other week in which I had gotten to know a friend of a friend about as well as you can in an hour or so. The brief moment in which he slipped me his name slipped through my fingers like a grain of sand, however, I was sitting nearby and we conversed for a while without having to reference back to our given names once. After a while, we parted ways, only to cross paths later on in the night. Right about the moment where many might nonchalantly slip the other's name in, I began talking, suddenly aware that for the life of me, I couldn't remember his name. Not out of sheer ignorance, such as when you hear a random person's name and think, when am I ever gonna see them again, or, that I couldn't care less, but out of sheer forgetfulness owing to the engrossing nature of our previous exchange. And then it struck me; it doesn't matter! Yes, in our current society the most enduring characteristic of a person that many may remember is the person's name (this sounds pretty normal... after all, how could we possibly identify everyone we meet without the existence of names or at least a verbal tag), and most would be within their rights to feel slightly offended if someone you feel you had gotten to know, even briefly, had forgotten their name.

However, this is all customary. Our perception of the world, though we think it to be shaped through language, is actually primarily informed through our senses, and with everything we empirically take in, we must rigidly fit them into mutual sounds and rules called language in order to communicate with others. But characteristics of a person, such as amiableness, friendliness, dedication, (im)patience and aptness all stem from a person's character. It is practical to combine all the characteristics and looks of a person into a short, memorable name, but at the end of the day, a name is just a name. It's arbitrary. You are assigned it by someone else and can change it whenever you want. Remembering a person's name is useful and necessary to function in vast human societies, however, it shouldn't be held in as high regard as it is concerning the question, 'Who am I?'

Thoughts?



'I'm a Climate Activist, but I don't support civil disobedience.'

Arthur Vuister

What is the first thing that you think of when you think of climate activists? It could well be that you think about the students and high-schoolers who have been marching in streets all over the world since 2019, however, people are increasingly associating Climate Activism with civil disobedience groups, such as Extinction Rebellion or (the terribly named) Insulate Britain. I think this endangers the cause of climate activism.

To explain why, it might first be useful to explain what I mean when I say "civil disobedience"; the most prominent examples that come to mind for me are the occupations of roads, smashing of windows and disruption of traffic that occurred in London in April 2019, but also the blocking of trams and bridges right here in Amsterdam in October 2019. I distinguish this from organised and legal protest, of which I am a great advocate and participant.

Advocates of civil disobedience often claim that this is the only way that their opinions can be heard and therefore the only way that they can induce change. I disagree with this on several, fundamental levels. Firstly, in our democratic system, there are accepted methods to make your voice heard, namely voting and

Advocates of civil disobedience often claim that this is the only way that their opinions can be heard and therefore the only way that they can induce change. I disagree with this on several, fundamental levels. Firstly, in our democratic system, there are accepted methods to make your voice heard, namely voting and legal protest. The political incentives are structured in such a way that, if you mobilise enough people, you will get a chance to have your voice heard. A great example of this was the "Klimaat Mars" that many of us attended during COP26.

Arguably, this led to the Dutch government committing to ending foreign subsidies of oil and gas. Secondly, there are much more effective ways to force the government to change course. Look for instance at the "urgenda" court case which also forced the Dutch government to make their climate plans more ambitious.

Unfortunately, civil disobedience campaigns are making progress such as this more difficult. By claiming that you have to protest in illegal ways in order to be heard, activism becomes more difficult for the most marginalised in society (those who cannot simply go to prison). The climate movement should be a vector to make it easier for these people, who are most at

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risk of climate change, to be heard. It should not be another way of making it more difficult for the marginalised in society to speak up. Furthermore, whether we support it or not, many climate activists get tarred with the same brush of civil disobedience. This can make it significantly more difficult to get a seat at the table for discussions and allows political opponents of the climate movement to portray all climate activists as criminals. Obviously, the blame for this lies with those politicians that misrepresent the facts, but unfortunately the dispelling of lies and fake news takes a lot of time; which we do not have.

Ultimately, I share many of the goals of civil disobedience activists and I admire their bravery and commitment to fighting climate change.

However, I believe their energy and efforts would best be spent

mobilising citizens to the ballot box and to legal protests, as well as working within the system of the municipalities, courts, provinces and other institutions. These methods have proven to be effective, which is exactly what is required when time is running out.



Thanks for reading!