

Appendix 1_EEC Notes

Title: Notes taken from testimonies made during EUREDUCON
Category: Testimonies/ Notes from discussion/ Clarification of Wider Context
Format: Notes/ Journal
Event: EUREDUCON, Ruhr University, Bochum
Date: 25-30/5/2010

What is Bochum?

Bochum, Germany: The European movement against the Bologna process May 2010.

Bochum: European Education Conference: reflections on the Occupation in Vienna against the Bologna Process.

The European Education Congress took place in Bochum, from the 25th to the 30th of May, in the Ruhr-University. The main aims of this event are: to do a critical analysis of Education, addressing a criticism to the whole of society from the University's point of view; share experiences of struggle, start transnational common projects and network.

Bochum, Germany: The European movement against the Bologna process May 2010.

- how to sustain an occupy directory of students who are moved to resist.
- post occupy blues
- Where does it happen, Holloway - in the cracks. Rancourt.
- Issues with assembly and collective living.

The occupation was set up as a satellite squat reflecting on the Occupation in Vienna against the Bologna Process. After the University occupations of students in Vienna against the increased corporatisation of higher education. The Bochum gathering wanted to address how to sustain momentum and a directory of students who are moved to resist, after the demands were met, the group dissipated and the core activists felt vulnerable should the management change tact, reorganising could slow down appropriate responses. How could a successful demonstration maintain pressure and hold promises made to account.

Lisbon Council representative from the OECD Andreas Schleicher's thoughts

Education needs to become a systemic factor in economic policy.

Andreas Schleicher says: "Wealth creation will be a very important factor, unless we can demonstrate the link between education and economic outcomes, **education will remain a footnote in discussion of finance ministers**. This is just one dimension, we need to look at social outcomes, human capital, cultural capital and economic capital - **making these visible and clear will be important.**"

Anti cut movements and Bologna student protests were a response to the large public spending cuts and marketisation of HE measures sweeping Europe in 2008.

*The Lis-Bologna Protests are reactions against the instrumentalisation of higher education in the EU, one of their main protests are against standardise EU University accreditation based on the US and UK standards to make modules across the EU conform in order to compete in the production of "skilled" graduates with seamless social mobility.

-Fee paying BA/MA structures closely resembling Anglo American models of several, more short term standardised degrees with clear and comparable outcomes. This move threatens to create a stratification of educated haves and have nots. If we are becoming conscious of our role in education as consumer dependent in a system designed by private capital is resistance possible?

In these protests autonomous zones of learning took over institutional spaces to reassert the rights of students to "reclaim [their] education, body and brain". The students' resourcefulness, self-organization, spontaneity and openness to reclaim time, space and the commons for their right to acquire tactical useful social knowledge as a field of relations and potential rather than as just a set of standard tangible outcomes to be achieved across the board by narrow evaluation models.

Who participated

A collection of raw first hand testimonies of students who participated in occupation and film documentaries from activists reinforce this recurring strain of being in the struggle and struggling. Mostly from European struggles and Vienna but also an international representation worth noting.

An economist from Catalan who runs an Economic institute as an open collective for workers in Catalan to understand the

economic context that they are working within. They shared the difficulties and hardships to set up autonomous spaces for public information of private companies.

Activist teacher, Denis Rancourt, shared anti oppression ideology and his experiences within University of Ottawa when broke academy legislation when he opened his classrooms to the public and homeless with severe professional consequences.

Indonesian activists working with slum dwellers would find active participation only when State bulldozers were at their doorstep. Once the activists worked with them and agencies to communicate a state of conditions. The support dwindled and their old ways of living carried on: penny prostitution, exploitative conditions working as (rickshaw?) drivers, poor education and conditions of living and their root causes were not questioned nor was there a will the change. The activists struggled to continue in a cause which seemed to bear no fruit.

Conversations with participants who were living alternative lifestyles, nomads, communes, or collectives or squats about their feelings about reform vs revolt.

Participants from Nepal, and Taiwan had very different revolutions in mind, they wanted more education, libraries, access to buildings, spaces for females, the liberties which their European counterparts took as givens.

Occupation and the autodidact

There remains the anarchism which acts by means of persuasion, by the creation of small groups and networks, denouncing falsehood and oppression, aiming at a true overturning of authorities of all kinds as people at the bottom speak and organize themselves.

J. Ellul



Writing on the wall in chalk among the seminar rooms. Photo: Stefanie Tan

Organisation: Destroy info point

Potato salad solidarity, No plena, no food

Hardt & Negri describe this increased tendencies of left movements as being drawn to being leaderless and not being located to one spokesperson as one of the possible issues of retention. In several assemblies, the main gripes were from a few committee members that the work of running the kitchen or administrative responsibilities were not being fairly distributed.

Defeat

Claims of leaderless organisation are relegated to the realms of 'mythology and public performance' (Smucker 2014).

Occupy is considered too disorganised, yet surreptitiously too organised, subject to 'the tyranny of structurelessness', a phrase

that cannot fail to echo 'the dictatorship of the proletariat' (Freeman 2004). Participants in the Occupy movement are actors, only representing the perennial 99%, and further extending the invitation to play the part of the 'part with no part' (Rancière 1999: 11).¹

Leaderless movements?

Issue of losing momentum of radical behaviour where energies exhausted and petered out, and connections made between diverse groups during occupation for real impact did not sustain.

These grassroots movements was unable to sustain enduring membership to seriously engage with the long term struggles they are resisting.

After demands are met the movements faded and momentum had to be built again for the next protest.

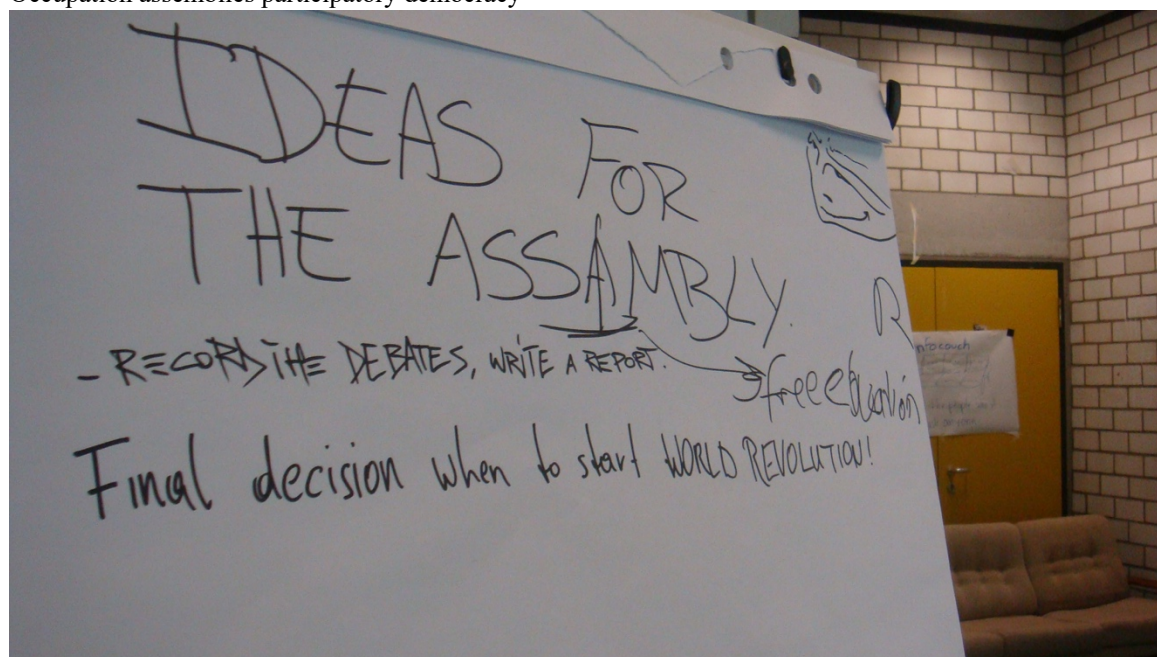
Squatters in slums in Jakarta Indonesia also concur, tired activists complain as soon as the bulldozers go away, they return to their illegal precarious existence without desiring to fight for a better way of living.

Occupy was described by David Graeber as a largely conservative movement, it's protest was for the promise and conditions where their parents prospered.

There are issues with these projects, they still require the composer, the curator, the producer, Belsey reminds us the revolution is incomplete and precarious, the process is unfolding what can we see, listen, read and write about it?

Are our senses being challenged to a new literacy, an emotive and visual literacy being engaged, is the structure of education keeping up with the revolution or is it reaffirming capitalist agenda in spite of the outcry of the student enslaved by debt?

Occupation assemblies participatory democracy



Daily notice board by the information station. Photo: Stefanie Tan

I related to organisers' issues of inevitable centralisation and issues of funding politics were raised and caused some stresses at daily plenums or general assemblies. thiscollection was an experience of similar the difficult processes involved in similar event management that tries to enact democratic processes.

Political education of the movement and activists

exposed to the politic motivating the anti-cuts movement and some sound analysis of approaches to why the Bologna Protests were in force through Poh JY's analysis of privatised education and reflections from Greece by established activist educator XXXXX and Denis Rancourt's deep analysis of oppression and disabling education in the current climate of privatisation.

Listening to an economist from Catalan who runs an Economic institute as an open collective for workers in Catalan to understand the economic context that they are working within. The difficulties and hardships to set up autonomous spaces for public information of private companies.

Activist teacher, Denis Rancourt, shares anti oppression ideology and his experiences within University of Ottawa when he opened his classrooms to the public and homeless.

It was Illich's custom as visiting professor at various American universities, to invite students who took active part in the lectures and readings to have dinner conversations with him as peers, he even managed to have the wine served as such gatherings listed as a teaching aid and thus tax deductible with help from a cunning accountant. How many of us now can claim to have such good relations with peers or predecessors in our scattered academic environment today? To paraphrase John Mcknight's reflection on Illich "What preserves the culture of community when departments or schools are the enemy of community."

The sharing of knowledge rather than the transactional calculatedness which the Bologna process or most modern educational institutions emphasise is worth considering. Illich warns us as early as 1978 that the very language has been inverted, verbs becoming nouns: to learn becomes to accumulate credits.

Denis Rancourt



Audience with Activist teacher, Denis Rancourt. Photo: Stefanie Tan

We are in the thick of resistance, for an excellent current case of a rogue academic in Canada who is resisting the oppressive domination hierarchy in the University of Ottawa and encouraging student activism within the institutions, do listen to Denis Rancourt's interview which is linked to the NOU blog. Denis Rancourt was a tenured professor of Physics who established a course encouraging students to engage in social activism where he, as did Aristotle in the age of the Lyceum, opened the doors of the university lecture hall to the general public. The course was attended by homeless and paid students, this and various accusations led to his unfair dismissal and arbitration. He recently won a trial against the University and is currently appealing for damages.

Rancourt among his many concerns in particular challenges the modes of assessment, that act of assessing is a form of oppression that delimits learning at higher education level and citing Paulo Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed, should be disbanded. The challenge to let go of these institutionalised structures that bind us to routine and administrative efficiency must be seen in the context of society's greater need the recovery of our purpose and use on this planet apart from slaves to profit.

A Universal struggle but at varying levels of decolonisation?

Girard: scapegoating, violence within communities as a lever of managing peace. Unwittingly school has evolved in developed nations as a ritual where we sacrifice the child to appease manageable masses – productive work force in the name of progress. Contrast to education with purpose, vocation and ethics born out of necessity and charity. The currencies are different, communities as they were post war in developed nations have become fragmented, education in developing worlds still serve as vital propaganda channels for health notices and community broadcasting of how to prevent or identify outbreaks of disease and illness. **Bochum, there were representatives from Indonesia, Tibet and Taiwan, and their agendas for being at the occupation were markedly different from their host's definitions of education. Indonesians wanted more political freedom to criticise their government and worked with squatter communities to resist city developers who have government support, activists felt used, for as soon as the bulldozers went away, the political awareness melted away in the mundane duties of social reproduction. Tibetans were fighting for libraries and university expansion, and the lone Taiwanese was demanding justice for international school fees to be reduced, given the inequitable amount of time and access he had with his tutors.** Whilst the Europeans were concerned about the corporatisation of their courses, and the increasing debt piled on.

Activists from Indonesia and Nepal who were fighting for the very institutions Europe was beginning to question and tear apart – they depended on "Wild Schools" and alternative spaces not as a choice but as the only option available to their communities, to some extent Elf¹, a software engineer from California, now an activist living off the grid, and his attempts to present alternative crab grass based open source ways of living seemed to me to be a way for the states ravaged by neoliberal ethic to rebuild and revise the public institution for an authentic public.

The debt, the protests, the anger, the alienation, these are not new, history reflects that universities have gone through this before, in their own manifest destiny to expand market share no one considers what we really need, even as this wheel squeaks, a million cogs wait to take her place with hope for a good prospect and an improvement in their station in life.

Perhaps this crisis is a chance for NOU to make a contribution to the situation facing many of us across Europe. Many are waking to the myth of university degrees leading not to gainful employment but indentured slavery to a broke down system, or the perpetuated abuse within academia which prize ranking powers over partnerships and seeks to continually reproduce itself for ease of administrative management rather than discovery, knowledge sharing and real connection.

Alternative ways of organizing the social

Bochum many interesting discussions from participants who were living in communes, or collectives or squats about their feelings about reform vs revolt.

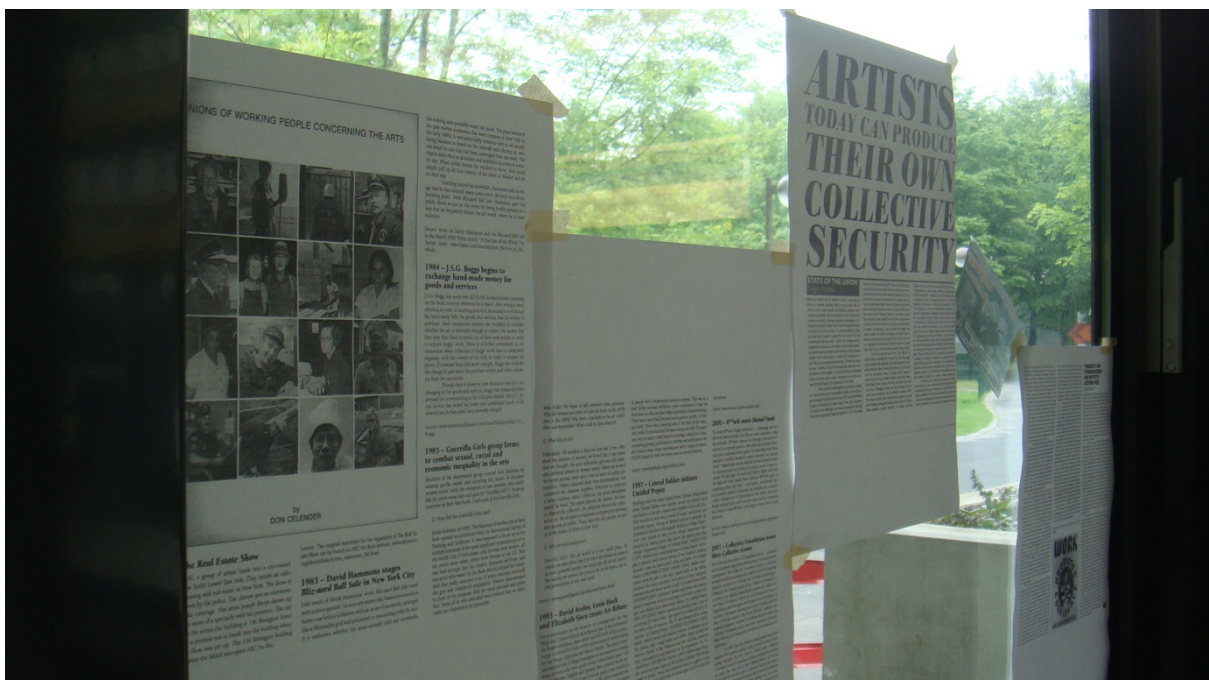
Bochum: No holding back for some.

Banner developed with participants.

¹ When I asked Elf where he was from he said the 3rd bend on the River Wisteria, I asked is that Poland? He replied, "What is Poland? The River has always been there."



First strokes for some. T_mas represents the *Black Block* in the collective banner made at the end of the conference. *Photo: Stefanie Tan*



At the behest of artists based in Chicago I installed a copy of Art Net's Newspaper on Precarious Labour in the breakfast room. *Photo: Stefanie Tan*

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Testimonies

A collection of raw first hand testimonies from activists presenting and reflecting on stigmatised knowledge and a vernacular of experience set in a backdrop of an occupied wing of a university in a deprived old coal mining community. Notes here are taken from their presentations.

###

Don't panic, organize

Under the pseudonym, Mo Gas, presented a history of activism and struggles to the conference.

Poem from a missing Indonesian activist

they push me to know 1+1
they push me to know who is my president
they push me to know what colour is the flag
they push me to know who is my minister
I don't know why I must know

Context:

The new order administered by Suharto resulted in genocide in 1965 of the non-religious populace, opposition supporters, ethnic Abandon Javanese and Chinese. An amnesia through a state education's version of events - the political prisoners on Buru Island forgotten. There was a patriarchal resistance to the idea of popular education and process of continuing a culture to restore social memory. Education of 1920s Wild schools in slums based on an oral dissemination of knowledge was also sanitised exploiting the popular vision of education as a way out of poverty. In 1978 massive student revolts against corruption and price hikes were dismantled by the military regime, several student activists were captured and kidnapped. In 1998 despite peaceful demonstrations protested fuel and energy price inflation resistance demanding improved access and facilities for higher education Trisakti university saw four students shot dead by police and wounding 2 others. In 2008, activists continued to protest corruption and based themselves in slum neighbourhoods in efforts to conscientise a marginalised population to limited success. While student protests fight for drop out systems debunked and a move to 75-90% capacity of student attendance with 50% female access and their employment in public organisations and crucially transparency in finances against privatisation of public expenditure. Vocations to scholarship and intellectual development were suppressed, retention of professors at large was untenable leading to unstable development of critical independent thought.

In gathering the Indonesian activists defined their vision for emancipatory education:

Education is accessible for all, pupils of all stages are united by general assembly to the cause to defend literacy and resources to develop independent thought free from fake representative councils on the side with agendas contrary to independent scholarship e.g overt state or corporate censorship. Globally connected interdisciplinary projects based on genuine needs will lead to authentic learning purpose, gainful employment within a functioning network of commons. We own our education and institutions and develop attitudes of curiosity and imagination to see it as something to be kept alive and not a commodity disconnected or bound to a designated space. We have agency and are conscientised, on guard to conflicts of interest impacting our rights to education within prevailing power structures, thereby gaining autonomy; freedom from potential instrumentalisation.

###

Learning from self management

Case study:



Taking advantage of the weather seminar with the Instituto de Creencias [sic] Económicas y de la Autogestión Institute of Economic and Self-Management Sciences (ICEA) moves outside. .Photo: Stefanie Tan

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Website: <http://www.economiacritica.net/?author=36> [Accessed 17/2/23]

ICEA is a free autonomous self management institution started by a group of social scientists and economists it is based on a 1930s model of the Catalynuan Institute of economic science. They organise teaching and self management tactics via assembly, solidarity, mutual support and root their ethos on anarchy assimilst ideas. They are autonomous but have links with the CNT² and the International workers association. ICEA is an interdisciplinary home to students, teachers and professionals in economics, professionals from other social and human sciences (sociology, political science, history, philosophy, rights, psychology, etc.) and working people in general who carry out teaching and research activities in political economy, social sciences and worker and social self-management. They aim to catalyse anarchism, by offering understanding of the economic and social dynamics of contemporary capitalism offering an alternative to dominant ideology it aims to complement information and complete formation of a new subjectivity. They address current affairs, newspapers and organise discussion groups to work ideas out together their focus in the 2010s was the study of waged labour. Their publications are not put in academic journals but open access in the form of notebooks, reports and biographies supporting anyone interested in the analysis of economic and social conditions which affect labor relations, issues of social impact, or general militant practice.

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A Taiwanese perspective of the expansion of higher education (2010)

PoYL, youth labour union representative from Taiwan and Sociology PhD candidate in Goldsmith College London at the time of this sharing.

Context:

The global average of 40-50% of employment with wages to recoup debt and live independently required Higher Education (HE) qualifications. In Finland 65% of the populace were in HE. According to the OECD 2009 annual report on education, there was a steady trend for countries to expand the HE sector for undergraduate and postgraduate degrees. 2007 population census in Canada and Korea reflected the difference in attitudes in attainment at tertiary education between youth and their parents educational backgrounds. Most significantly in Korea 60% of young people were in HE where only 10% of their parents had qualifications at that level. In developed countries like UK and Canada the gap averaged at 10-20%.

A 1997 EU study of tuition fees for the study of law reflected the corresponding impact of fees on attainment.

	UK	Finland	Vienna
EU	£3-5000/yr	Free	Free
Non-EU	£9-12000/yr	£ 1000/ yr	£370/ semester

The nationalist view of HE expansion

Investment in education is synonymous with human capital which is crucial for economic growth a nation's competitiveness and individual's achievement. "All people's" talents are resources for the knowledge economy. In the UK, the Blairite³ slogan of "Education, Education, Education" perpetuated the democratic materialism of HE market expansion as a key path to success and access to all.

The neoliberal view of HE expansion

Privatisation of HE, introduction of tuition fees, cuts to public funding for University research were done in the name of improving the efficiency of HE budgets. Objections to privatisation was reneged as elitist views against democracy.

The libertarian (radical) view of HE expansion

Education as 'enlightenment' and emancipation for the people towards abolishing capitalist commodification of knowledge and self improvement. This meant the widening of access and a democratisation of HE. This equality was aimed at the abolition of class reproduction for this to happen HE needed to be free and supported by the public and not be a private good which would lead to debt slavery and HE as an enterprise of privilege rather than diverse and robust intellectual development.

Challenge

Does the expansion of HE genuinely benefit "people" who are these "people", what are the ideological origins and impact of HE expansion along this uninterrogated trajectory? Is instrumentalisation unavoidable?

Realities of expansion

Economically the push towards democratic materialism of attaining tertiary qualification leads to a Gresham effect where the value of the pursuit diminishes with unfettered access determined not by authentic need but competition and societal coercion. This "good intention" leads to rising educational costs for the taxpayer fees, housing, time spent in lieu of paid employment. Inflation of HE and certification leads to an influx of graduates into the job market which lowers the salaries for entry

level graduate positions; **in particular adjunct tutors within Universities.** HE as a coercive requirement leads to debt and fiscal imbalances which inevitably causes institutions to turn to privatisation. Due to competitive nature of the assumption that a degree leads to employment skews the pursuit of a holistic knowledge of a populace where certain specialisms are favoured, science and applied science for instance are perceived as more useful than the humanities. This form of schooling results in alienated labour.

Socially class remains an inequality, those from middle class backgrounds encouraged in environments which social and cultural capital play a part in advancement. Working class students who have more barriers to such benefits rather than contribute to the diversity of the intellectual atmosphere face pressure to conform and hide their roots. **Free HE as an ideal under current conditions does not live up to the libertarian ideal of emancipation as hoped.**

A marxist analysis, the word capitalism and abolition of class reproduction are terms commonly associated with Karl Marx. He refers to "the commodification of labour power" where people compete with each other to sell their labour for survival or a decent living. **Education is a crucial site for pre-competition, it has the potential to promote Rousseau's process of individuation.** Ironically it is against capitalism's goals to commodify education, skilled labour power increases productivity, a capitalist state would regulate education to provide better labour power for capitalist accumulation but in short term austerity measures it has turned its hard won institution instead into an Edu- factory where virtualisation of capital trades in debt rather than the altruism of a general intellect which it continues to disable through its expanding terms of enclosure.

Propositions

Movements against the commodification of labour power must work by drawing the individual into a collective consciousness.

Factors towards such liberation and social democratic reform

The anxiety of the middle classes, those disillusioned by the benefits of HE. An increase of alternative education movements linked to a critique of capitalism and critical of state provisions for public education. Resisting privatisation is not an end in itself, educational exploitation of privatisation is the **start of challenging enclosure and working towards a network of commons.**

Reflections

Bochum

Bochum, stands for oak in ancient German, timely as I was reading a blog about trees as a darwinian reference to the wonder of evolutionary patterning. It compared it to how synthetic genetics inspires us to see not just one direction of branches growing but also of many complex layers of networks within and around us. A blog which has since parked empty links, links waiting to be filled.

TO DUSSELDORF (DUS)

The easiest way is to fly to DUSSELDORF(DUS)(about 50km away from Bochum), taking the SkyTrain to the airport station and take a local Train (it's called "RegionalExpress" / Lines RE1 or RE6 Direction "HAMM or MINDEN") to Bochum Hbf (Bochum Main Station). Then follow the "by train" instructions.

The ticket you need for this is called "Preisstufe D" and costs you 10,90 €. But there are group tickets available as well. Please take care by buying your tickets: **To have no or the wrong train ticket is a crime in Germany and you will have to pay a fee of 40,00 € to the railway organisation and, and this is new until the 1st of january [2010](#), the will bring you to**

the judge as well.

I arrive in Bochum by train from Dusseldorf, I am lost in an expansive grey plaza before non descript brutalist architecture. I look for signs to the Bochum: European Education Conference but there were none. I feel lost and frustration sets in as Ruhr-universitat was difficult to get to, instructions from the organisers came with stern warnings about ticket fraud. Add to this accommodation anxiety, there was little information available and I did not want to be sleeping on the floor.

I finally wander through enough corners and find a relaxed gathering of youth settling into the space. I warm by the colourful set up, bedecked in hand painted posters. The open plan kitchen busy preparing a welcome dinner with its self organised dishwashing system set up in bright bold pails. I find the registration centre and am greeted by a fresh faced enthusiastic organiser, she points out the general map and schedule of the workshops and seminars for the conference. She made a note that though it was up to me to design my own schedule, only attendance at assembly or plenums after meals was compulsory. As I did not have a tent, I am directed to a sleeping area, where I had to find my own space to sleep.

Amidst the groups of bright well worn sleeping bags I find a large black couch which I move against a wall and put all my belongings on it to mark a zone of sorts. I scribble a note saying "Occupied. Please do not disturb." When I came back after a wander - someone had written over the note saying - "Property is Theft bitch."

1. Political Concepts and Prefiguration:

A corpus assisted enquiry into democracy, politics and community University of Manchester 2019

Jan Buts P.56

2. Confederación Nacional del Trabajo is a Spanish confederation of anarcho-syndicalist labour unions, which was long affiliated with the International Workers' Association (AIT)

3. Attention poor students: LEAVE home! Get away from the poverty environment. Your parents and friends will take you down with them. When you're at college, hang with students that are studying finance and engineering careers--even if you're in Liberal Arts. Study the wealthy class. Work hard. Choose the hardest professors. Embrace numbers! Read the Wall Street Journal, not just Chaucer. Learn from the wonderful, rich environment that college offers.

Angela on June 16, 2010 at 6:00pm EDT in response to Ann Larson's Higher Education's Big Lie

June 3, 2010 <http://www.insidehighered.com/layout/set/print/views/2010/06/03/larson>