

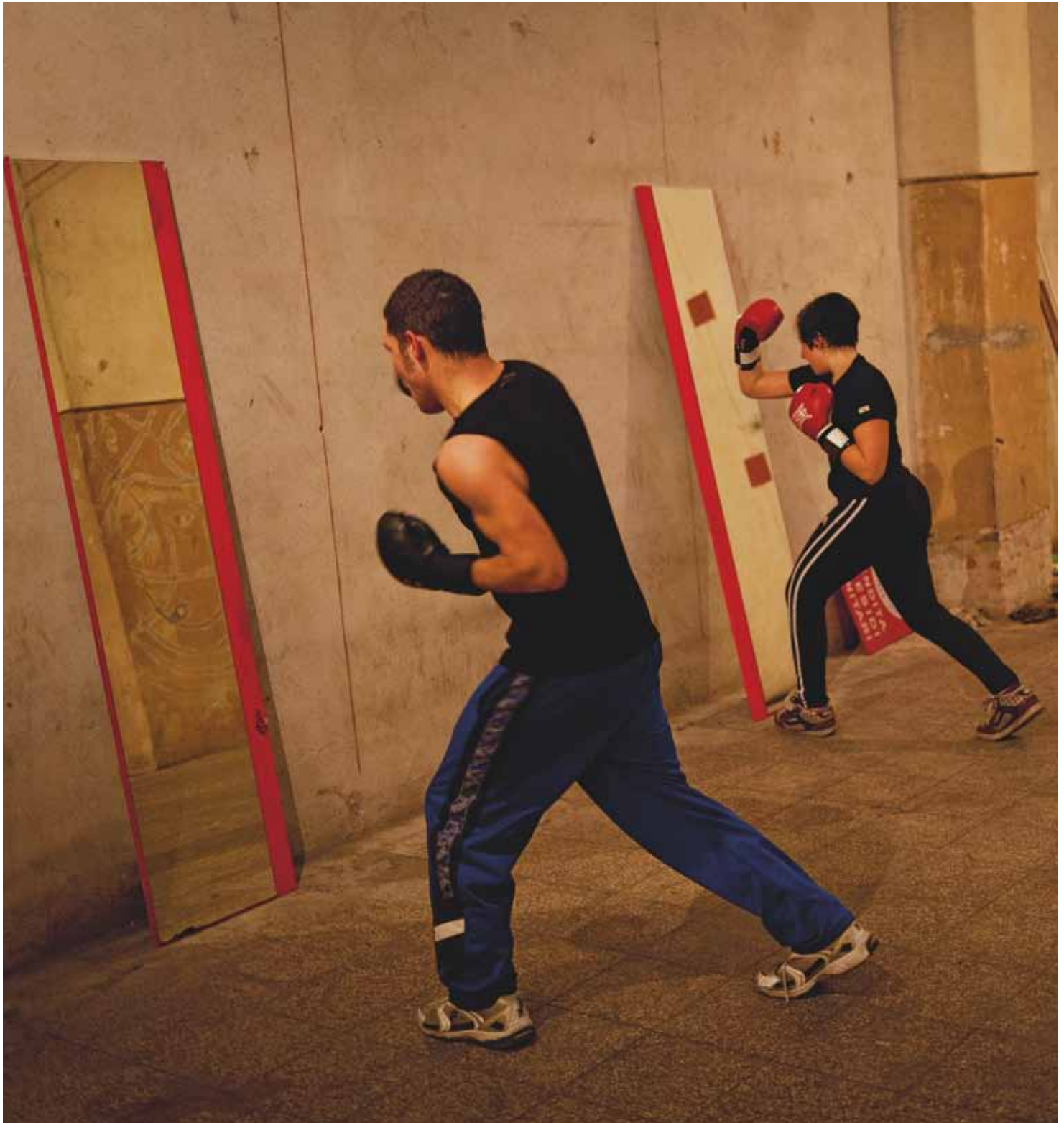


# FRESH THINKING

N°01/2012 | QUARTERLY MAGAZINE

## The growing pains of Europe's youth

FOUNDATION FOR EUROPEAN  
PROGRESSIVE STUDIES |



# MEET THE REFORMER WHO APPRECIATES TRADITIONAL VALUES.

## AGE-APPROPRIATE WORK. IT'S WHAT'S NEXT FOR US.

For Ludwig Lang, tradition and change are not necessarily a contradiction. Quite the opposite: When manufacturing axle drives at the BMW plant Dingolfing he combines the latest production technologies with 40 years of experience. For the project "Today for tomorrow" he and his colleagues, plant designers, physiotherapists and physicians laid out age-appropriate workplaces, using elastic wooden flooring which relieves knee joints and ergonomic plant design. Also, the plant now is equipped with a fitness area and offers age-appropriate work-time models. What Ludwig changes today will be to the benefit of tomorrow's generations. That's how we prepare for the challenges of demographic change.

The BMW Group is the world's most sustainable car company for the seventh consecutive year. Find out more about the Dow Jones Sustainability Index sector leader at [www.bmwgroup.com/whatsnext](http://www.bmwgroup.com/whatsnext)



**BMW  
GROUP**



Rolls-Royce  
Motor Cars Limited



**For a young boy**, it was hard to connect the dots. It was the mid-80s, we had an old, box-like TV in the living room which only showed Sweden's two channels provided by the state. The suburb north of Stockholm where I lived was safe but hardly exciting. Family travels abroad were few and far between. But every Saturday afternoon I left the country.

It started an hour before kick-off. The first hour was public service TV, with information about the city where the football match was about to be played. I fell in love with the team with red jerseys from Liverpool, where unemployment raged but where the people were proud of The Beatles and their football. I started to master the map of England. But when I watched the evening news with dad, the same cities that gave me joy in the afternoon were on fire. There was panic on the streets, as Morrissey sang, and the TV showed pictures of an Iron Lady called Thatcher.

A quarter of a century on and The Iron Lady is on screens across Europe again. This time in a film about Thatcher and dementia, but without Thatcherism. Unfortunately, Thatcherism flourishes in reality instead. The Thatcherite policies of privatisation, liberalisation, cutting welfare and education are again being practised by her conservative successors across the European Union. 5.5 million unemployed young people in the EU are following the footsteps of the financial crises and blind austerity. This figure equals the entire population of Denmark

and is more than twice the number of people living in Slovenia. Even in Sweden, which is considered a model but ruled by the right since 2006, youth unemployment is 22.9 percent. We have already seen panic on the streets of London and Athens. More might follow. So the growing pains of Europe's youth is a very fitting theme for the first issue of Fresh Thinking for 2012. We asked British journalist Laurie Penny to frame this broad topic (p. 8). She gives us a rough guide to a generation that has been bankrupt and might yet become the first with fewer opportunities than their parents. But she also found a generation that was ready to fight back.

As always, we take a fresh approach to the theme. Did you know that Portugal's youth has been encouraged to turn to Angola – its former colony – for work (p. 22)? We found some critical thinking driven by young people outside the party political framework (p. 26). And as our faithful readers will know, we like to use photography as a journalistic tool. This issue, the photographer went to Palermo to see how young students are taking matters into their own hands (p. 14). The students in Sicily and elsewhere would probably welcome the proposals to combat youth unemployment that were recently presented by the Party of European Socialists. The 20 bullet points could, in theory, halt the drift of young voters to the extreme right, described in a warning from Hungary by Daniel Renyi (p. 29). Luxembourg's minister for employment Nicolas Schmit and others have made a welcome effort to put the youth guarantee on the EU agenda. But in order to achieve real change, progressives need to be in power.

And 25 years on, I find it a little easier to connect the dots. The link between rising inequalities and the growing pains of Europe's youth is evident. Sure, there are no quick fixes to profound problems. But on May 6th, the electoral pendulum in the EU might start moving to the left.

And remember the shirt of the team I fell in love with when I was transported abroad on Saturdays thanks to an old TV set? The winner of the French presidential election (p. 32) will hopefully, in the world of politics, wear the same colour.

Eric Sundström  
Editor-in-Chief

**P.S.** In three issues of Fresh Thinking we have gone from looking at the poor state of Europe to examining the extreme right and now the growing pains of the EU's youth. And, in the spirit of the progressive movement, we would love to hear your feedback so that we can make the coming issues better. Please contact us at [info@nwmd.de](mailto:info@nwmd.de) with any thoughts you have about what we've done or what you would like us to do.

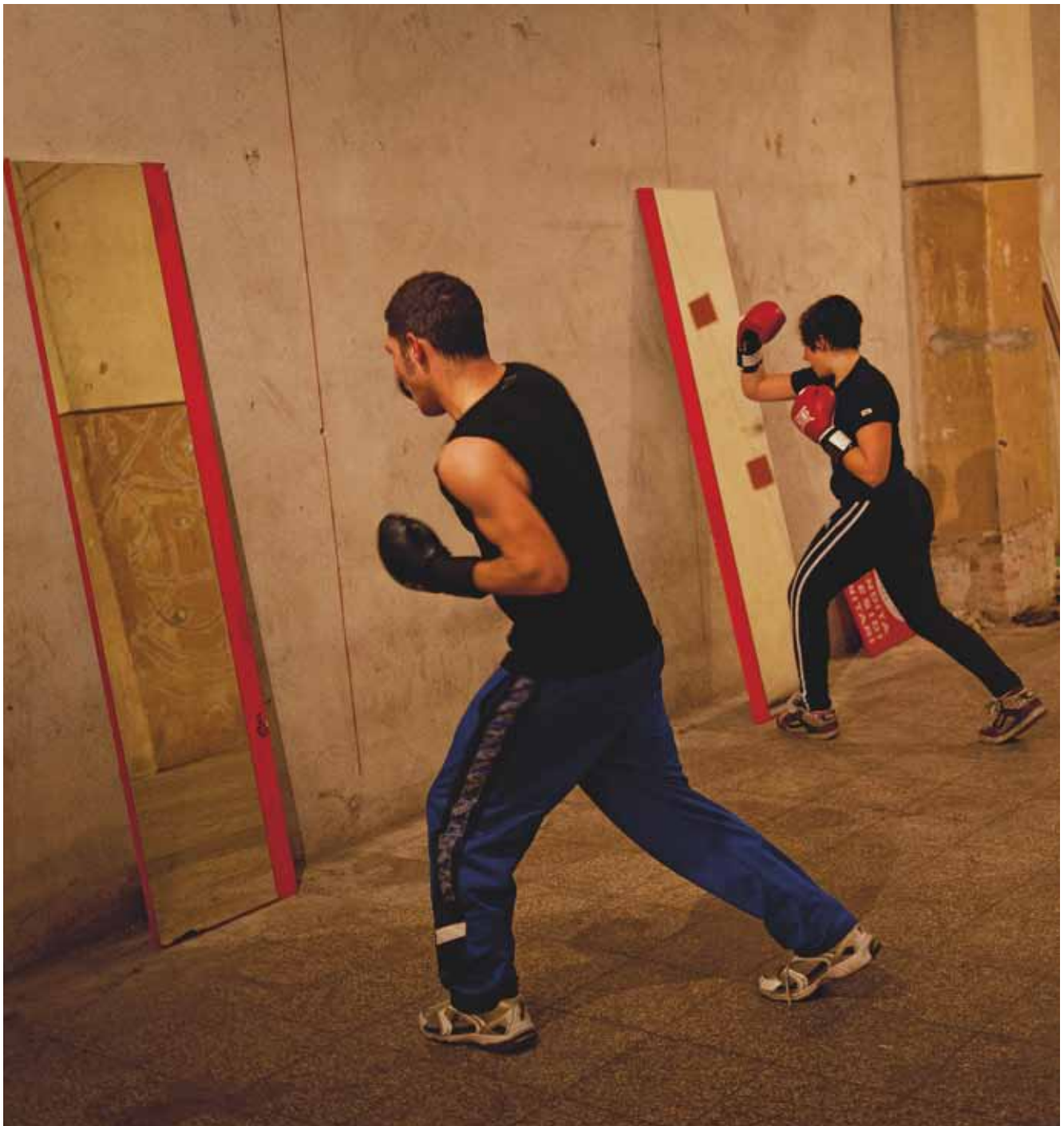


## FRESH THINKING N°01/2012

Front cover and photo essay by  
**Franziska Gilli** | Photographer

Franziska Gilli was born in 1987. She is a freelance photojournalist based in Hanover. She grew up in Bolzano, Italy, and graduated in International Cultural Management from ISW Freiburg. Her interest in photography led her to study photojournalism and documentary photography at the University of Applied Sciences in Hanover (FH Hannover) in 2011.

[www.franziskagilli.com](http://www.franziskagilli.com)



- 3 **EDITORIAL** | Editor-in-Chief Eric Sundström introduces this issue which assesses the challenges that young people face in Europe today.
- 6 **... IN NUMBERS** | Stats and figures which sum up the state of our youth.
- 8 **THE KIDS ARE NOT ALRIGHT** | Journalist Laurie Penny charts the mood of the young generation who feel robbed of their future.
- 13 **THE DANGEROUS NEW CLASS OF THE 21ST CENTURY** | Social scientist Guy Standing looks at the rise of a new class: the precariat.
- 14 **'WE TAKE WHAT WE NEED'** | Franziska Gilli's photo essay on how students in Italy are taking matters into their own hands.
- 21 **TEENAGERS SPEAK** | Europe's young people reveal what they want to achieve and what they are most scared of.
- 22 **FROM LISBON TO LUANDA** | Journalist Fernando Figueiredo Paula explores how Portugal's youth are turning to a former colony for work and hope.
- 25 **WE NEED A NEW RADICALISM THAT YOUNG PEOPLE CAN TRUST** | Journalist Ivana Bartoletti calls for a new agenda to protect Europe's young people from austerity.
- 26 **POLAND'S CRITICAL THINKING THAT IS TURNING WORDS INTO ACTION** | Journalist Zuzanna Kisieleska examines the cultural institution proving that being outside of parliament doesn't mean being outside of politics.
- 29 **THE POWER OF HATE IN HUNGARY** | Journalist Daniel Renyi explains how the far right has taken control in a young democracy.
- 30 **INTERVIEW WITH JULIA FRIEDRICHS** | Contributing editor Birgit Güll talks to the author who has revealed the shrinking ambitions of a generation let down by politicians.
- 32 **POLITICIANS SPEAK** | Europe's policy makers and thinkers share their thoughts on how to turn around the fortunes of a disenfranchised youth.
- 34 **MEET THE PRESS** | A digest of how Europe's leading newspapers debate the impact of austerity measures on young people.
- 36 **CULTURE** | At the crossroads where politics and art meet our editor picks the best books, movies and music on the subject of youth rebellion and having a voice.
- 38 **MISCELLANY** | An eclectic mix of ideas and quotations that illuminate the subject of this issue.
- 39 **PUBLISHING INFORMATION**



19.7: The percentage of young people (under the age of 25) across the EU-27 who were unemployed in 2009. Spain is one of the countries with the highest proportion at 37.8%, Latvia has 33.6%, while the Netherlands just had 6.6%. The overall unemployment rate in the EU-27 was 8.9% in 2009.

Source: Eurostat 2011

29: The age when women in Italy leave the parental home. Men are often older than 30. Compare this to Finland where women tend to leave the parental home at the age of 22 and men at the age of 23. (See Franziska Gilli's photo essay on Italian students on p. 14)

Source: Eurostat



40: The percentage of Germans, aged 15-24, who were interested in politics in 2010, compared with 34% in 2006. (See Birgit Güll's interview with Julia Friedrichs on p. 30)

Source: Shell Jugendstudie 2010; Youth 2010

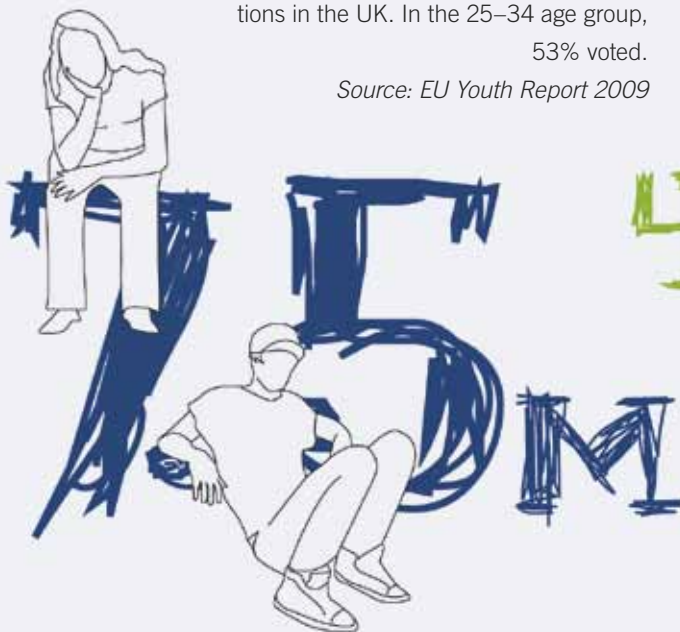


78: The percentage of Austrians aged 13-30 who voted in their national elections, compared to the 40% of young people who voted in the EU elections in 2004.

Source: EU Youth Report 2009

45: The percentage of young people aged 18-24 who voted in national elections in the UK. In the 25-34 age group, 53% voted.

Source: EU Youth Report 2009



7.5: The number, in millions, of young people in the EU aged 15-24 who are currently not in employment, education or training. (Read how young European's feel that their future has been cancelled on p. 8)

Source: European Commission



9.95: The percentage of people, aged 13–30, who were members of political parties in Slovakia in 2006, compared with 4% in Sweden and 2.8% in Germany.

Source: *EU Youth Report 2009*

40.1: The percentage of 15 to 24-year-old employees in temporary work in the EU in 2010. (Read how the young Portugese are finding jobs in former Portugese colony Angola on p. 22)



Source: *OECD*



20: The percentage of EU's 96 million population aged between 15 and 29 in 2007. The "youngest" nations were Ireland, Cyprus, Slovakia and Poland, each with more than 24% aged 15-29, whereas in Denmark, Germany and Italy, less than 18% of the population fell within that age group.

Source: *Eurostat 2009*

24.9: The percentage of 15 to 24-year-old employees working in part-time jobs in the EU in 2010.

Source: *OECD*



17: the percentage of votes that the rightwing party Jobbik polled at the Hungarian election in April 2010.

(Read how fast the far right has grown in Hungary on p. 29)



100: the number of books that the publishing house belonging to the cultural institution Krytyka Polityczna has published since it began. (Read about the influential Krytyka Polityczna Political Critique on p. 26)

Illustrations by **Nina Rode**





# The kids are not alright

From Madrid to Athens young people are taking to the streets, disillusioned and cynical about democracy and hungry for change. **Laurie Penny** charts the mood and rising anger of Europe's "lost generation".

**Madrid's Puerta Del Sol**, 15 October 2011: a hundred thousand kids chant that kids didn't care about the general election. Like the protesters I have previously met in London and New York, the young people gathered in the Spanish capital thought that representative democracy was no longer doing what it said on the tin.

As the members of what started as the 15-M movement in the summer began to hold an enormous general assembly, a participatory democratic meeting of thousands to determine the future of

---

*Greek demonstrators have raised their voices against the unelected technocrats appointed to take care of their country and have been fighting running battles on the streets.*

the movement, every person I spoke to under the age of 25, of all political stripes and of none, agreed that the result of the upcoming election was a foregone conclusion. The polls would swing to the right and they couldn't care less. No mainstream political party could be trusted not to act in the interests of big business. For better or worse, the youth of Spain were convinced that representative democracy no longer worked for them.

They are the same arguments that I have been hearing in Britain for over a year, as I have watched young people who spent the election year canvassing for parliamentary candidates and working for liberal think-tanks, donning black

hoods and taking to the streets in anger. In London's Whitehall, a barely-elected coalition government is forcing through, on a smaller but no less rankly undemocratic scale than in Greece and Italy, austerity measures for which they have no mandate from the citizens to bankroll the financial failings of the super-rich.

University fees have been hiked by a party that ran for government on a platform of fighting fee increases; youth unemployment is over a million. Home ownership, secure employment and decent wages are no longer realistic goals for people leaving school and college in 2012. Young job-seekers are made to work for free in supermarkets and discount stores in return for



*Temporary work and serving “the power generation” is feeding resentment in the young.*

unemployment benefits that barely cover basic food bills. Betrayal leaves a bitter taste in the mouth. Eighteen months ago, 50,000 students occupied and vandalised the headquarters of the party in government to protest the raising of tuition fees and the removal of education maintenance grants which had supported the poorest pupils through school-leaving exams. Now, with crackdowns on dissent taking place across the nation, the young people of Britain are occupying, demonstrating and mobilising against austerity with a renewed cynicism.

Young people in Europe no longer believe in the transformative potential of parliamentary democracy. It is an indictment of those in power that this loss of faith is not being taken seriously.

In 2012, with unelected technocrats in place in Greece and Italy, and demonstrators fighting running battles in Athens’ Syntagma Square and demanding the right to a voice in the democratic settlement, the crisis of representative democracy in Europe is becoming more acute. Those under 25 are the first generation for some time to grow up with the dream of democratic participation as a European right, and now that dream is dying. It is important, when speaking about generational

politics, to be clear what we mean by a “generation”. Politically, we’re talking about a specific set of political circumstances determining the psychic tempo of a demographic linked roughly by age. The generation of Europeans between the ages of 16 and 26, the people massing in the streets and squares of the continent, the warm bodies peopling the welfare queues of London and Lisbon and Budapest, share more than digital fluency and knowledge of Rihanna.

### **The golden generation**

We are not just the people serving the power generation coffee, sitting pointless exams and fire-bombing police vehicles. We are the people whose emerging political sensibilities were framed by two major world events. Specifically, we are too young to remember what happened on and immediately after 9 November 1989, and we are largely old enough to remember what happened on, and immediately after, the 11 September. We have no clear recollection of a Europe divided by an iron curtain and, just as importantly, we grew up with no defined sense of a lived alternative to free-market political economy, however haggard and paranoid that alternative might be.

We were the generation who grew up after Francis Fukuyama and other second-rate historical hacks anodyne pronounced the end of history. We were

## **Young people in Europe no longer believe in the transformative potential of parliamentary democracy.**

meant to take stewardship of a united and booming continent where war and major civil unrest were just things we learned

about in school. We were the golden generation, the lucky ones: the Europe we would inherit was supposed to be prosperous and undivided, with the clear light of Chicago School economics driving away the ponderous shadow of regulatory thinking of any kind.

In 2005, in my first year at university, I bought a cheap rail ticket and travelled around the continent for a summer. Every-

## Home ownership, secure employment and decent wages are no longer realistic goals.

where I went, from Italy to Poland, Slovakia to Slovenia, I met kids in youth hostels and in the all-night cafes of train stations who couldn't wait for the future to arrive. Kids who believed that growth and opportunity and jobs would continue because that was the story they had been raised on.

Now, the future we were waiting for has been cancelled. Those late-night station cafes are full of young people leaving cities and countries where there is no work to be had and the menu of potential adventures has grown sparse.

### Nationalistic tendencies

What do the youth of Europe have left to share? Not as much as we previously thought. Being a young person in the Netherlands, where unemployment stands at 6.6%, is not qualitatively similar to being a young person in Spain, where the figure is almost 40%. The internal borders of the continent appear to be calcifying as the Eurozone crumbles.

Much of the mood on the ground is nationalistic as resentment grows at austerity measures suggested, or directly imposed, on the ordinary workers of Greece, Italy, Spain, Ireland and Great Britain by the IMF and the ECB.



Students at Hamburg, Germany (top) or Oxford, UK (middle) hope there is more to the future than for those stuck in part-time supermarket work in Vilnius (bottom), but to many the exams seem "pointless".



Some students study in Berlin (top), while others are taking to the streets (above). The growing number of jobless, meanwhile, wait in line at the unemployment office (below).



In Syntagma Square in Autumn 2011, young people involved in anarchist movements told BBC reporters that, where once their politics had been trans-national, they now saw the emotional and practical logic of defending their country against the threat coming from Europe, a threat that would not arrive with guns and tanks but with financial ultimatums wringing

## The future we were waiting for has been cancelled.

the life out of the workers, parents and children of Greece without a single shot being fired. With the Greek people now speaking darkly of the “German boot” on their collective neck, the language of European division has not been so desperate for some time.

To be young and European today is not the stroke of luck that once it was. The so-called “lost generation” is struggling to reach adulthood from London to Ljubljana in a world without jobs, without security and without an overarching narrative of how our collective future will be built. If anything unites us, it is precariousness, and it is resilience.

It is our determination not to lie down and accept austerity measures that none of us voted for, our willingness to put our bodies and what remains of our prospects on the line to reclaim the democracy in which the technocrats of Europe no longer maintain even the pretence of interest. On 12 February, with Syntagma Square ablaze, young activists across Europe held impromptu rallies in solidarity with the Greek people. That’s what real European unity looks like. ■

*Laurie Penny, born in 1986, is a British journalist, blogger and author who has contributed to the Guardian and the New Statesman.*

# The dangerous new class of the 21st century

A faction is emerging in society spawned by insecurity, frustration and without a bright view for the future. **Guy Standing** assesses the problems and the conditions that created the new class: the precariat.



**Politicians should beware.** A dangerous new class is being bred. It is not yet what Karl Marx would have described as a class-for-itself, but a class-in-the-making, internally divided into angry and bitter factions. It has emerged from the liberalisation that underpinned globalisation. It is the precariat.

The precariat consists of a multitude of insecure people, living bits-and-pieces lives, in and out of short-term jobs, without a narrative of occupational development, including millions of frustrated educated youth who do not like what they see before them, women abused in oppressive labour, criminalised people tagged for life, millions categorised as “disabled” and migrants in their hundreds of millions. They have a more restricted range of social, cultural, political and economic rights than citizens around them. Growth of the precariat has been accelerated by the financial shock, with more temporary and agency labour, outsourcing and abandonment of non-wage benefits by

firms. The precariat swells. Most in it do not belong to any professional or craft community and have no shadow of the future hanging over their deliberations with other people, making them opportunistic. One of the biggest dangers is that populist politicians will play on their fears and insecurities to lure them into neo-fascism, blaming “big government” and “strangers” for their plight. We are witnessing this drift in the case of the True Finns, Swedish Democrats and French National Front. The precariat has no control over its time, no economic security and they have no incentive to take low-income temporary jobs once they are receiving benefits.

We need a strategy for enabling the precariat to gain control of their lives, to gain social and economic security, and to have a fairer share of the vital assets of our 21st-century society. A progressive strategy for the precariat must involve more equitable control over key assets of a tertiary society – quality time, quality space, knowledge and financial capital. There is no valid reason for all the revenue from financial capital going to a tiny elite who have a particular talent to make money from money. The only way to reduce income inequality is to ensure an equitable distribution of financial capital.

“Quality time” is a crucial asset. We need policies to equalise access to it. Again, there is no inherent reason for the rich having so much more control over their time than the precariat. But the latter has to allocate so much time

to handling bureaucratic demands, to chasing one short-term insecure job after another and to learning new bags of tricks called “skills” that could become obsolescent before they have a chance to use them.

Why should the elite and salariat have access to so much of the quality space while the precariat faces a steady shrinkage of “the commons”, as they see parks, libraries and community facilities wither in front of them? We need a progressive strategy to rescue the commons.

Why should the precariat have their dwellings exposed to ruin while those of the rich are protected? In cutting public spending in towns across the US, some fire services are limiting themselves to protecting the insured, leaving the uninsured to burn.

Why is it that the salariat can obtain much cheaper credit than those without long-term employment contracts? We know the reasons, but these are cumulative inequalities that do not stem from merit or diligence.

The precariat observes with growing anger. The politicians had better respond or we will reap a harvest of discord. We can do better.

*Guy Standing, born in 1948, is Professor of Economic Security at the University of Bath and author of *The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class*.*

*A version of this article was published by Policy Network.*

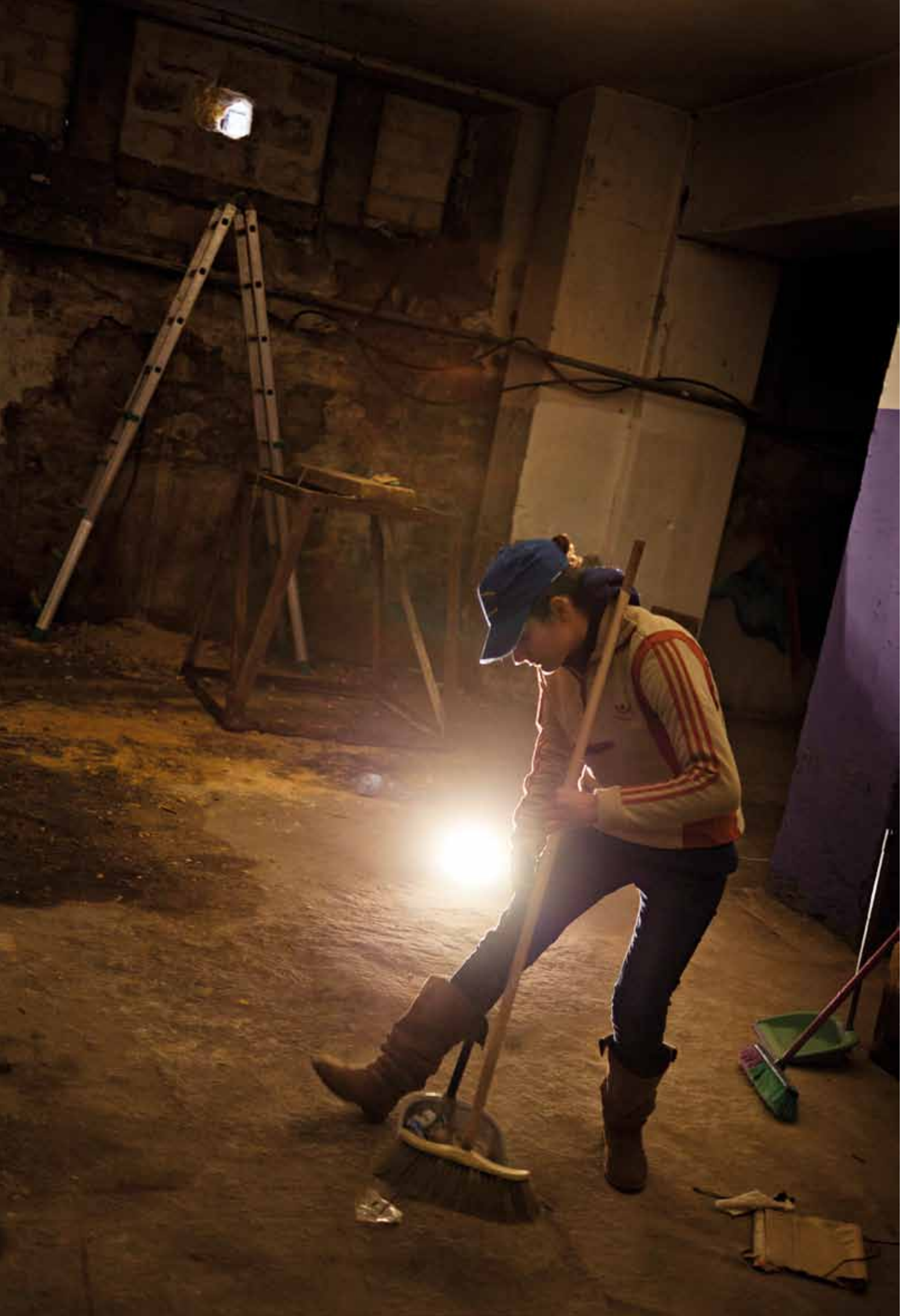
# ‘We take what we need’

**In November 2009, in response to Palermo’s constantly rising rents** and the radical cutbacks in university accommodation, young members of an autonomous student collective occupied an unused storage building in the Faculty of Science. It had been deserted for decades and was transformed into a self-organised dormitory called Anomalia – a name that suggests the abnormal conditions that young Sicilians find themselves in today. Because of new strict degree programmes, as well as a lack of jobs, they are often forced to rely on their families up until the age of 30. Despite an eviction notice, issued by the head of the university in summer 2011, the students have returned to the building and created a centre for political assemblies and social and cultural activities, all free of charge and held by students and young unemployed people. They regularly organise protest marches with Palermo’s high school students and recently occupied an abandoned convent in the multicultural quarter of Ballarò to turn it into a new social centre for the neighbourhood.

Photographs by **Franziska Gilli**















# Your future is my future

**A European Youth Guarantee now !**



**There is a crisis facing Europe's youth. 5 and a half million young Europeans have no job.**

**The issue of youth unemployment costs the European Union 2 billion euros every week.**

**It costs those young people their future.**

**The Party of European Socialists (PES) has the solution.**

**This is the European youth guarantee.**

**It is time for social democratic action.**

**Campaign launch: April 2012**

# Talking about their generation

We asked a selection of teenagers from across Europe two questions: what they most wanted to achieve in life, and what they were most worried about. Their answers give a revealing insight into the concerns and preoccupations of young Europeans today.

Juliane, 16, Germany

**I would most like** to achieve running a successful designer brand. It would be brilliant if I could be a mother and still have my own way of getting time for me! Art and design is a mixture of all different activities for me. I would like to continue with sketching or building miniature sculptures. I would also love to travel to Africa and India and get a view of their cultures and art. What worries me most is how well I will be paid and if I will ever get the chance to achieve all the things I want to. Also I worry that being a mum and a working woman won't be as easy as you would think.

Weronika, 14, Poland

**I want to be** involved with work that will give me satisfaction and pleasure. I'm fascinated with everything that's new and unknown. I find material wealth secondary, but still an important factor. I think that money is necessary and that wealth can bring you happiness, but not as much as, for example, love. Every person, no matter what he or she says, deep down inside needs attention and emotion from somebody close. Death is what terrifies me the most. Not only my own death, but death of my close ones, of people I care about. That's why I want to truly live through every moment that I have. I want to live as if every day was the last day of my life. And when this final day arrives I want to look myself in the eye and have no regrets.

Louis, 16, Belgium

**I really would like** to have a good job and for me it means: to meet a lot of people and other cultures, to earn a lot of money, to help people and to make a better world. In the future I will be a journalist in order to fulfil this purpose.

For me education is very important. There is a lack of respect between human beings, and between people and the environment. So if you are a good journalist, you can inform them and save the world.

Fatima, 15, Germany

**I have many aims** in my life and I'm sure that I'll achieve quite a lot of them. But for some I still have a long way to go. I do hope though that I'll achieve them. My biggest dream is to become a doctor and I will do my best to achieve that. My worries? I'm scared about failing. I'm scared about school and I worry about the future. I'm worried that I might let myself be distracted and then won't achieve my aims.

Felix, 15, UK

**The things I would most like** to achieve is to have a family, raise children and watch them grow up. I don't think that achievements can be shown by objects; rather the happiness I have and give in my life. What worries me most are often everyday things like getting mugged, or attacked. Living in Hackney there is a constant awareness of things like that. But mainly I worry about making people unhappy or offending people who I know.

Elena, 16, Ireland

**The thing I would most like** to achieve is to have my own design company. And good health, wealth and happiness. What worries me the most is how I will do in my exams. I also worry about the recession.

Robin, 14, France

**I want to live** as long as possible to make the most of my life. I'd like to be married to a warm and pretty girl. I'd love to have one marriage and no divorce! I hope to have children. If I do, you can be sure I'll love them. I hope I'll have a happy family life and not get divorced or be single, because I think love is important and helps you to be happy. I also hope I won't have a job I don't like, for example, a chef! It's why I try to work hard at school.

Hannah, 15, UK

**I want to be able** to look back and know that I did what made me happiest. I'm afraid of big changes and getting things wrong – especially exams, which unfortunately are a very important part of my life.

Jorin, 14, Germany

**All I want** to achieve is to have a family, which is happy and has all it needs – not too much, just enough. I want world peace, a reduction of pollution and climate change. I want to develop new plans for renewable energy. What worries me most is that it is already too late to stop climate change, and if this is the case, my little brother and the children I want to have, are in grave danger. I don't think I could live with that. ■

# From Lisbon to Luanda – a new life in Africa

As Europe struggles with financial crises and rising unemployment, one country is turning to its colonial past for an answer.


**Fernando Figueiredo Paula** looks at how young Portuguese people are being encouraged to look for work in Angola – and reversing the established immigration trend.

**The Euro crisis dominates** the European newspaper headlines. There is panic about the Euro, the state of the union and fears of bankruptcy and collapse. But while Athens draws the attention, there are other European countries in precarious financial conditions, feeling the pains of economic turmoil. Portugal is one such country struggling to avoid default. It has saved itself with loans from the EU, the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund, but unemployment is rising. In December 2011 Portugal had the dubious honour of having the third highest unemployment rate in the EU; it had reached 13.6%. According to Eurostat, only Spain and Ireland outstrip Portugal for lack of jobs. Reacting to the problem, government officials took a surprising step. In October 2011, Alexandre Miguel Mestre, Secretary of State for Youth and Sport Affairs, advised the young Portuguese: “If you are unemployed you must leave your ‘comfort zone’ and venture beyond our frontiers”. The statement caused unrest among a population strug-

**Angola offers what Portugal can't provide: jobs for the qualified and high salaries. It's a desirable place to work, despite the difference in lifestyle.**

gling with austerity measures and the news that the unemployment rate of those below 25 was 27.1% in September 2011. But the message that better opportunities lay elsewhere hit home and people are taking the advice. The result has thrown one of Portugal's former colonies into the spotlight. Angola, an African state on the west coast of the continent which was ravaged by war and unrest for most of the last half of the 20th century, has become the unlikely destination for the Portuguese job seekers. Although there is no official data, anecdotal evidence suggests the number of Portuguese residents in Angola is growing. The best estimates by specialists in migration put the number at 100,000. It's not too hard to see why.





Forty years after the end of Portuguese rule, Angola now offers what Portugal can't provide: jobs for the qualified and high salaries. Like many developing countries rich in resources, Angola has the necessary capital for state-run and business investments, yet lacks qualified employees to make businesses work. Over the past 10 years in Portugal the number of people with college degrees doubled while its job market failed to offer any work for them. So the principle of supply and demand, as well as the common language, has made Angola a desirable place for Portuguese people to work despite significant differences in culture and lifestyle.

### **From Lisbon to Luanda**

Francisco is a journalist. Born in Portugal in the 1970s, he has spent most of his life there. But Angola has offered him something that his home country could not: prospects for progress in his career, an interesting professional challenge and a salary three times what he could earn back home. It didn't take much time for him to make up his mind, pack and go. Four years have passed since he moved to Luanda, Angola's capital, in which time he has married and become a father. His wife and child live in Portugal but he has no plans to return there: "Although my family lives in Lisbon, it would be impossible to have the same standard of living in Lisbon as the one I have in Luanda, even taking into account the fact that I live apart from my family." He flies to Portugal every month which is part of the package he negotiated with the communications company he works for. "I presented my terms and they agreed to them," he says in a rather matter of fact way.

**In Portugal I was just a journalist. Here I am editor-in-chief. I could never have had the same kind of job with the same benefits.**

Every time he comes back to Portugal he is reminded of why he wants to stay in Angola. The opportunities are simply better for him there, he says. "In Portugal I was just a journalist. Here I am editor-in-chief. Besides, due to the current socio-economic conditions in Portugal I could never have the same kind of job with the same benefits." His income is high compared to the remuneration of someone in Portugal performing the same tasks at the same level of seniority. And the company pays for his accommodation, food expenses and a private driver among several other benefits that make this ex-pat experience worthwhile. Since he came to Luanda in 2008, Francisco has witnessed the arrival of many fellow countrymen. Angola is employing young specialized workers and its state-owned companies are investing in several Portuguese enterprises in diverse business sectors. Angolan economists, however, view this Portuguese migration with growing concern. They suggest that by employing foreigners in high-ranking jobs the Angolans' chances on the job market are being diminished. But that is only part of the tension that exists between the two countries. While Angola becomes the El Dorado for Portuguese youth looking for good jobs, it is instructive to look at how this phenomenon was born out of colonialism and the uneasy relationship between the two countries.

## Birth of a Nation

Soon after Portuguese traders and navigators set foot in Angola in the 15th century, it became (and for centuries remained) an important commercial warehouse for the Portuguese slave trade. By the middle of the 20th century, however, Angola's status at last changed; it became an "overseas province" of the Portuguese empire. Despite this, a colonial war broke out 1961 lasting 14 years after which Angola became an independent state. Thousands of Portuguese came back home in a massive repatriation programme, while Angola plunged into a violent civil war lasting almost three decades.

### The majority of Luanda's 10 million inhabitants live on the poverty line, adrift and ashamed of how poor they are.

It ended in 2002. Angola has lived in peace for the last 10 years and in one decade its economy has grown, with GDP expanding at an average of 3.7% per year. According to IMF estimates there is a real possibility that this year's growth will be a two-digit figure. Oil and diamond extraction account for around 90% of the GDP.

According to unofficial data though, around 40% of the population lives below the poverty line and is concentrated in the larger urban centers. In cities such as Lobito, Huambo or Luanda the great real-estate investments stand next to bullet-hole ridden buildings, the witnesses to the country's poverty and its bitter civil war. Bruno came to Angola four years ago. He left a whole way of life in Portugal – his girlfriend and his house with a small garden by the sea in Estoril, a wealthy suburban area near Lisbon. In exchange, he received a monthly salary three times higher than the one he would have had if he had stayed in Lisbon.

He worked for an information technology company implementing IT systems in universities which led to him working as a consultant. After four years in Angola he is now self-employed, working with IT systems in one of the dozens of private universities in Luanda. For him, living in Luanda is an uncomfortable experience. It is, he says, a dirty and ugly city that has two opposite standards of living: "One is the Luanda of wealthy people. They are a minority and they live in a bubble. There you find money, restaurants, clubs, terraces and expensive stores on the streets. Everyone else – the majority of Luanda's 10 million inhabitants – live on the poverty line, adrift and ashamed of how poor they are." Bruno believes that most people who have left Portugal for Angola feel divided between their will to fulfill their goals and the difficulties of adapting. Just like him. He says that life there is not easy.

He doesn't, however, regret his decision to emigrate to Angola. It opened the door for a new life and work experience. Now, though, he feels he has had enough. He believes the time has come to return home. He might just find, though, that when he comes back to Lisbon – and a Europe torn apart by debt and austerity measures – that all his friends will have gone and emigrated to Luanda. ■

*Fernando Figueiredo Paula, born in 1977 in Lisbon, Portugal, is a journalist writing mainly about marketing, advertising and business. SIC Notícias, the leading new channel on Portuguese cable television, broadcasts his work.*

*The names of the people interviewed in this piece have been changed.*





# We need a new radicalism that young people can trust

Europe's conservative governments are using the economic crisis to introduce cuts and privatisation programmes but these measures are changing the fabric of society and will have a dramatic impact on our youth, argues **Ivana Bartoletti**.



**Do you know** when Conservative parties last dominated Europe's parliaments like they are right now? You'll have to go right back to the first world war. Now it seems as if people consider that voting for the left is a risk worth taking only when the economy is booming. This prompts the question of whether the left in Europe hasn't yet shaped a clear economic alternative.

The need for a convincing narrative is particularly true when it comes to the younger generation. We are the ones bearing the brunt of the crisis with rising unemployment and little or no return for hard work or years of study. Young people's dreams and aspirations for an independent and fulfilling life are suffering the most.

I believe the greatest challenge for the left is to set out an agenda grounded

in the imaginative radicalism that modern times require and that young people would trust.

Movements such as Occupy London and the Indignados in Spain show that there is a real demand for fairness and social justice among the younger generation. These movements seem to be an important place for them to express their anger about how the world is run and to discuss alternative platforms. When I was a young politician in Italy I spent a lot of time in social movements. I did not always agree with them but I did share their belief that reform on the fringes was not enough. A fresh approach was needed. After the financial crash of 2008 this became utterly clear.

The logic of short-termism, which prevailed in the financial arena for decades, led to failure as growth was built on short-lived money and speculation. The hard-working majority, alongside the younger generation, have suffered the consequences. They have been pushed out of the workforce with unemployment rates rising to record levels. Conservative governments have used recession as a legitimate gateway for introducing cuts, including the privatisation of health care, as well as cut backs to local authorities and welfare. These cuts, which have happened too drastically and too quickly, are going to change the social fabric of countries. It will also have a dramatic

impact on young people, who, among other things, should fear higher annual university fees as well as cuts to the education maintenance allowance.

I moved from Berlusconi's Italy to London in 2008 and I have found the debate in the British Labour party very promising. New Labour transferred money through taxation to fix the ravages of capitalism but we can all see that this is no longer possible. A solid economic alternative must be established in order to answer the question of how to create social justice and fairness in tough times. Labour is now discussing how to reform capitalism through greater employee participation in decision-making processes and remuneration committees; tackling vested interests; promoting long-termism in investment and strategies; and the establishment of sustainable growth.

I think that this is a debate in which the younger generation would like to participate. It is not about reform on the periphery, but forming a new narrative about development and growth. The Occupy movement of the past few months, and the sympathy it has generated worldwide, tell us that a new agenda is needed. It is up to the progressive parties of the left to forge a new path. ■

*Ivana Bartoletti, born in Naples in 1979, Editor of Fabiana, the Fabian women's network magazine.*



*Sławomir Sierakowski, the 32-year-old founder of Krytyka Polityczna, is one of the most high-profile public intellectuals in Poland.*

# Poland's critical thinking that is turning words into action

Krytyka Polityczna (Political Critique), a quarterly magazine published in Warsaw, has within a decade become a powerful cultural institution. Some call its young founders the saviours of the Polish left, others armchair socialists. **Zuzanna Kisielewska** looks at the publication trying to prove that being outside of parliament doesn't mean being outside of politics.

**In November 2011**, Krytyka Polityczna (KP) was at the centre of a huge media scandal. During Independence Day, a Polish national holiday, the streets of Warsaw were occupied by two opposing demonstrations: the Independence March, with its nationalistic banners, and the Colorful Independent Blockade, a peaceful response to the March organised by a coalition of various leftist and anti-fascist organizations, among them, KP. The media focus, however, was on the football hooligans who followed the March and later on clashed with the police.

The media hype grew even more at the news of a group of German anti-fascists, who came to Warsaw to block the March and ended up running from police to finally find a safe haven in a café run by KP. Political right-wingers immediately accused KP of helping leftist extremists.

"We have never invited any militant groups from abroad. We are against violence caused by the nationalists, but at the same time we want to condemn any acts of violence on the part of anti-fascists." That was the statement from KP which aimed

to put a stop to any further insinuations. A letter of support for KP was signed by many renowned intellectuals and artists, such as the world-famous jazz musician Tomasz Stanko and Oscar-winning director Andrzej Wajda. It's true that the accusations put forward by the right-wingers were over the top but polarizing public opinion and provoking its adversaries has been KP's trademark from the very beginning. It's also not the first time artists and intellectuals have backed KP. In 2003 Sławomir Sierakowski, the founder of KP, initiated an

open letter to the European public opinion. He managed to gather 250 signatures from people of culture and high academic stature. At the height of a heated debate

## **Mainstream media didn't allow many of the voices to be heard ... We wanted to change that and allow opposing views to clash.**

over the European Constitution the letter was a strong voice supporting European federation and opposing Polish lobbying to include references to Christian values. No one thought that the discussion triggered in part by the letter would become a milestone for one of the biggest success stories on the political scene of the Third Republic of Poland since 1989.

Agata Szczesniak, the deputy editor of KP, recalls the beginnings of the magazine. "Mainstream media didn't allow many of the voices to be heard and both conservative and leftist circles had no intentions of debating with each other. We wanted to change that and allow opposing views to clash." The first issue of the journal *Krytyka Polityczna* was published in 2002. Sierakowski's call – who back then was a 23-year-old student at Warsaw University – to resurrect the once prominent Polish tradition of the politically engaged intelligentsia resonated with representatives of different cultural circles. Many, like the current art director of KP and this year's curator of the annual Berlin arts festival, the Berlin Biennale, Artur Zmijewski, joined Sierakowski of their own accord. Michał Sutowski, a political scientist and member of the editorial board of KP explains that

---

*Krytyka Polityczna set out to change the language of the public debate. The bookshop in the "New Wonderful World".*

"simultaneous creation of a certain intellectual environment and transformation of that environment into various institutions allowed us to build our political identity". The quarterly, which now has Ukrainian, English and German versions, is a platform around which a whole network of institutions comes to life. By the end of 2011 there were over 100 books published by KP's publishing house. Among them you can find works by both Polish and foreign thinkers and writers - from Marx to Slavoj Žižek. While printing presses are busy, all around the country KP discussion clubs are emerging and cafés and public cultural centres are organising meetings.

Discussions go from issues concerning protection of the natural environment to problems of economic exclusion. At the same time KP has expanded to Gdansk, Lodz and Cieszyn. Within a few years it moved its headquarters to the Royal Route, Warsaw, one of the most prestigious addresses in the capital. The name of the place became a political manifesto: New Wonderful World, which is a play on words using the name of the street (Nowy Swiat - New World) and Aldous Huxley's book title *Brave New World*. Timothy Garton Ash and Zygmunt Bauman have been among the authors invited to editorial meetings and the café downstairs is one of the fanciest places in Warsaw. But the real ambition of KP is not its educational or cultural crusade but the actual revolution in the language of public discourse and debate. This is how Sierakowski defines

it: "It's not hard to be the best novel and remain hidden in the drawer. In the same way it's not hard to claim to be the true left but stay hidden in the basement." Political scientists, publicists and social activists – they all enter the media with the identical banner of KP attached to their name and contribute an alternative voice to the public debate. KP's website has also become an important weapon in the fight for the positive reception of leftist thought. In Poland this is a particularly hard goal to achieve. As a part of the communist heritage, leftist movements are commonly associated with the old socialism, empty store shelves and the compromised propaganda machine. In the 1990s it was social liberalism that was triumphant. Despite the bitter taste of transformation, the media propagated the apotheosis of the free market. Slogans such as material equality or social justice sounded like a joke made at the expense

## **To their critics they are Warsaw bohemians, nicknamed the 'caviar left'.**

of newly restored freedom. But discourse is also politics. Sutowski explains: "It's not politicians but people outside of the parliament who put new issues on the agenda."



That's true. In recent years many of the parliament's initiatives have been inspired by the suggestions of citizens united in groups such as the Citizens Movement or the Women's Congress; initiatives such as dedication of 1% of the budget for cultural institutions, or parities on the ballots, were their ideas. Both were supported by KP and both have succeeded. Sociologist Paweł Marczewski claims that KP works like a huge loudspeaker that lets ideas be heard.

The simple fact that in today's Poland it's harder to speak disrespectfully about equal rights for homosexuals and that, for the first time in history, an officially elected public servant is a transsexual, is a direct result of the fact that issues such as gender identity and equal rights for sexual minorities are being consistently undertaken by KP and introduced to the public debate. KP can be heard in public debate and its influence is considerable. But is it a candidate for a meaningful political force? In the country where a social-democratic party is in deep crisis, it's a valid question provoked by the spectacular success of intellectuals from the New Wonderful World. They remain distanced, however, from any idea of entering the political scene or becoming affiliated with already existing left wing parties, explaining that what discourages them is how powerless political parties seem to be and citing the hardships of entering the political scene. They tend to say that the political sphere



*Slavoj Žižek is one of Krytyka Polityczna's favourite authors.*

comprises more than simply Parliament. To their critics they are just armchair moralists propagating civil liberalism – a new breed of Warsaw bohemians representing just one branch of the Polish left. That's why they are so often and so enthusiastically given the nickname of “the caviar left”. Mostly, though, that seems to be envy.

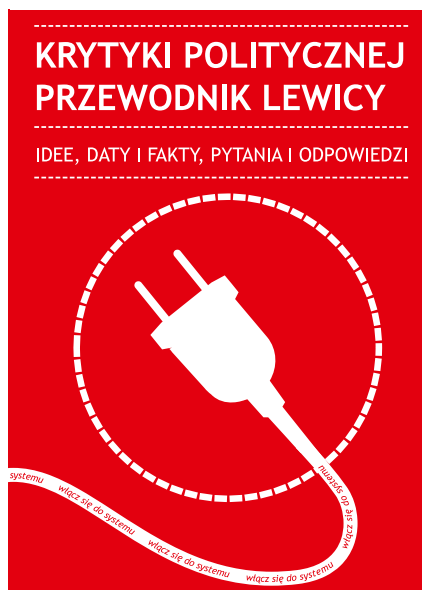
## It's not politicians but people who put new issues on the agenda.

The criticism that is worthy of merit comes from those who point out that KP offers no coherent and comprehensive alternative social and economic policy. Although it backs various worker protests and gathers signatures for petitions defending laid-off employees it has little idea of what to do in order to improve the conditions of those whom they defend. Sociologist Krzysztof Iszkowski, formerly affiliated with KP, comments: “It's an environment which is not proficient when it comes to creating a positive program. That's why it's a mistake to recognize them as a true political power. You cannot confuse politics with debates conducted among members of intelligentsia.” KP's circle is also extremely diverse. There are pragmatic people eager

to form an alliance with the established social-democratic party SLD, as well as idealists, dogmatic people and green-orientated members. Such a composition makes it difficult to form a political party. However, if KP wants to become active on the political scene, it may soon become harder. After the last parliamentary elections in the autumn of 2011, a completely new and ambitious party, bursting with ideas for positive solutions, emerged on the scene. Led by the eccentric Janusz Palikot, the party has quickly seduced many left-leaning voters. Iszkowski, who is now collaborating with Palikot, claims that if Palikot's party is able to introduce its positive program, KP will be in trouble.

In the meantime, the launch of a Russian version of the quarterly, establishing at least one new, self-standing community centre in Poland and the implementation of a truly modern drug policy are among the goals that KP wants to achieve this year. It will probably also have to move its headquarters. Rumours in the press say that the city authorities won't extend the rental agreement for KP's current premises and in August, New Wonderful World will disappear from the map of Warsaw. But the KP team is keeping calm: KP is much more than just a café. ■

*Zuzanna Kisielewska, born in 1980, is a freelance journalist for various magazines in Poland*



*The Krytyka Polityczna Guide for the Left. Ideas, Numbers and Facts, Questions and Answers. The cover of a KP publication from 2007.*

# The power of hate in Hungary

Over the past decade in Hungary, the far right has grown in strength and with a speed that is almost unprecedented in modern Europe. Most alarmingly, however, the movement has gathered a lot of support from the country's youth, says **Daniel Renyi**.

In spring 2006, Jobbik, the only active far-right party, having been founded a mere three years before, polled only slightly more than 2% of the vote, which was way short of the threshold for getting into parliament. By contrast, after 2010's general elections, it entered parliament as the third strongest party, having polled almost 17% – nearly 900,000 votes. Since its formation, the party has been advocating openly racist, homophobic and anti-EU politics with its supporters consisting mainly of young people. They also enjoy the backing of militant, partly illegal organisations, which would not refrain from resorting to violent action. Their rhetoric is so extreme that their MPs could not be tolerated even among the ranks of the most radical faction of the European Parliament, the Europe for Freedom and Democracy (EFD) party.

The success of the radicals among the nation's youth is particularly threatening. One of the main reasons for this is that in Hungary, since 1989, and during the first 10 years of a free-market economy, unemployment and social and regional differences increased. The new political system did not bring the welfare that many expected.

Like the previous cabinets, the socialist-liberal government (in power from 2002 to 2010) failed to tackle the decade-old reasons for, and symptoms of the escalating social tensions in their local contexts – particularly between Hungarians and Roma people living together in the eastern regions of the country. So they abandoned the mostly young and uneducated people involved in the conflicts.

At the same time, Fidesz, Hungary's conservative party, striving for the

complete unification of the rightwing, and for this purpose attempting to appeal to far-right voters, chose the streets as the main venue for political debate and tried to put the government under increasing pressure with repeated mass demonstrations. However, with the passing of the years, they were able to control fewer and fewer supporters called to the streets by anti-communist and nationalist rhetoric. These combined circumstances facilitated the quick success of Jobbik. Jobbik consciously established its own cult among disenfranchised and uneducated young people. Using the shortcomings of public security as an excuse, they started recruiting and established Magyar Gárda, which operated as an alternative to the police and whose members marched in a uniform similar to that of soldiers during second world war. They attempted to “maintain order” in underprivileged regions and provoked ethnic conflicts.

Since Jobbik became a nationwide political force, conflicts between Hungarians and the Roma have increased across the country, many of which have resulted in fatal tragedies. Jobbik not only gave these impoverished people “simple answers” and institutional support with anti-Roma slogans, but also a strong sense of community.

The Magyar Sziget festival, established by Jobbik, has taken place annually over the past decade and has become an integral part of radical underground culture. It grew into the main meeting place for eastern European radicals. At these events, dozens of far-right and also neo-fascist organisations appear, with an average number of attendance being around 10,000. Another catalyst for their rise has been the internet revolution, with their



bloggers among the first to understand the significance of the new medium's efficiency. Their headquarters is the website [kuruc.info](http://kuruc.info), which continuously publishes illegal and hate-mongering contents. There have been numerous attempts to ban the site, which is why it is now operating from a US server. It is the third most popular Hungarian political webpage with a readership of 150,000 per day. There is only one cure that can prevent further strengthening of the radicals: the treatment of social problems with social solutions – as opposed to the currently governing Fidesz party's harsher use of the police force as a remedy.

The rise of Jobbik should be a warning to other eastern European states. The decade-long neglect of social inequalities and social tensions can lead, even in the short term, to the resurrection of extremism which functions by addressing complex problems with simple answers based on aggression. ■

*Daniel Renyi, born in 1983 is journalist for the Hungarian weekly Magyar Narancs. In 2011 he received the Freedom of Press Award from the organisation Reporters Without Borders.*



## Julia Friedrichs

Julia Friedrichs, born in 1979, works as a freelance journalist for, among others, the German broadcaster WDR and weekly newspaper Die Zeit. In 2007 her work was awarded the Axel Springer prize for young journalists and the Ludwig Erhard prize for young journalists. Her book *Gestatten: Elite – Auf den Spuren der Mächtigen von morgen* (Excuse me: Elite – On the trail of tomorrow's powerful) was published in 2008. A year later she published *Deutschland dritter Klasse – Leben in der Unterschicht* (Third class Germany – Life in the underclass) with two colleagues. Her book *Ideale: Auf der Suche nach dem, was zählt* (Ideals: In search of what counts) was published in autumn 2011.

# Youthful ambition loses its way

Young people today are happy just to aim for a simple family life. But according to journalist Julia Friedrichs' research even that seems out of reach for many of them. Birgit Güll talks to her about the aspirations and ambitions of Europe's youth and how politicians have let them down.

**Julia Friedrichs suggests** we meet in a café in Berlin's Kreuzberg area. It is in a quiet street full of trees close to where she lives. I arrive shortly before the agreed time and she is already there. It is 7pm and she has been out all day. It suits her well, she says, to get going with the interview right away, so she can see her son later. But our interview isn't rushed. She handles each question with care and shortly afterwards her boyfriend walks past the café with their child. We wave them in and I meet the two-year-old who was the catalyst for Julia Friedrichs' engagement with the subject of her new book, *Ideals*. She wants to find out how to change the world for him.

**In your book, *Ideals*, you asked schoolchildren about their vision of their future. The majority longs for a family, a house and money. Why is there this desire for happiness instead of for achieving big change?**

*Young adults are finding out that many things that were almost guaranteed in the past have now become very unstable. They leave their apprenticeship and there is no guarantee at all that they will find a job afterwards. They see their parents no longer working in the same job for*

*40 years and families fall apart. With this great insecurity in mind, the bourgeois idyll – a family, a job, a house, a few possessions – is now something that seems so unreachable for many, that it has become a valid ambition. I find this sad but it's explicable. But I find it terrifying that they want to build a fence around this idyll.*

*When asked what they would like to change, many schoolchildren wrote that social welfare recipients shouldn't get so much money any more, that foreigners should be expelled from the country, that people who cause trouble should be treated more harshly. That wasn't at all the image I had in mind about young people.*

**Is the fear of belonging to the losers of the social divide behind this segregation?**

*I would definitely see it that way. When I did the research for my book *Gestatten: Elite* (Excuse me: Elite), I could see that parents and institutions pass on pressure to young people. Especially middle-class parents, there's an almost hysterical fear that their own child won't make it. Children feel that their parents want them to be with the right people, that they go*

*to the right school, choose the right job. The answers I got from the schoolchildren are the result of this.*

**Why don't young people rebel?**

*Rebellion doesn't exist any more. There is a very harmonious relationship between children, parents and grandparents. On the one hand, that's nice. On the other hand, many youth researchers say that the purpose of the age of youth is to break free. When young people strive to become like their grandparents, the consequence is stagnation.*

**The latest German youth study from 2010 shows a slight increase in political interest. At the same time it shows that young people hardly have any faith in political parties and their power to influence decisions. Have political parties driven young people away?**

*As far as I'm concerned, I theoretically have a high regard and gratitude towards those who go into politics, but in practice this appreciation has often been let down. In 1998, when Germany formed a government made up of Social Democrats and the Green Party, I believed in a real change of politics. The disappointment that that government*

liberalised things and that those politicians in particular later went to work for private businesses was a turning point for many people of my age. There are fewer and fewer young people who go into politics. The choice we get is not necessarily the result of competition between the most able.

Many parties complain that they have problems filling positions in deprived areas. Without putting it in a nasty way, sometimes you can see the result of this. There is a lack of people who can inspire. I think political parties are great. They are the only place where democratic ideas will manifest themselves permanently and in a legitimate way. At the same time, it is a world that is completely alien to me. And the more I have to do with it, the more distant it becomes.

**What would have to change to make you, a young woman, contribute?**

I contribute without being attached to a party, go to demonstrations, sign petitions and so on. Parties could excite me if I had the feeling that they really conduct politics, work out solutions. They would have to say what they stand for and also turn that into reality. The latest politician to excite me was Ursula von der Leyen (CDU) when she was family minister.

I had the feeling that someone was able to realise what the deficits were and introduce measures to get rid of them. At the moment the German government has many young politicians. They could be role models but I don't know what they stand for. I don't get the feeling that they are fighting for big ideas. For many, politics is just a career option like any other. But I expect a kind of special idealism from a politician. They should say: I'm doing this job because I want to change the country.

**In your book about elite schools you say that consultancies suck up all the talent from around the world. You talk about a "parallel system of the**

**new powerful against whom old-fashioned organisations, such as the state or scientific research, seem to have no chance". Can this dynamic be reversed?**

You need to discuss things. The economic sector and the financial sector offer a speedy career, a chance to influence things and all with very high salaries. You don't get that in politics. No one can promise to you that you'll be a minister in five years' time. The salary is pitiful in comparison with the economic sector – and public recognition tends to be nil. The state shouldn't adapt to these conditions under any circumstances.

Politics has to show that it is a different world, which operates with different mechanisms. Here, the best ideas are being traded, not the smartest appearance. Politics is missing a big chance to satisfy a need that is there in so many people: to show that there has to be another world apart from the world of economics, which is equally powerful and influential.

**Why can't politics use this opportunity?**

Someone who takes on political responsibility has to be a role model. It's not OK that someone is elected and then throws all the ideas that they had fought for overboard. Maybe there would be some change if there were people who could inspire others. Of course, then there's that question again: where do those people come from? It has to start somewhere. It is becoming increasingly difficult to get people, who could work in other areas too, to work in politics.

**Disenchantment with politics and the financial crisis led to the Occupy demonstrations last year, protests in England and also anti-nuclear energy demonstrations. Is youth rebellious after all?**

Those protests are all very different. The anti-nuclear energy protest in Germany has shown that a grown-up political movement can have power. Very many

people have said: we don't want that. They have demonstrated and voted accordingly, they have shown that, as citizens, they have political weight and power. Only a few people in Berlin joined in at the Occupy protests. Maybe something will happen here and it will become a long-lasting movement. In autumn 2011, I had big hopes but now I'm rather disenchanted. The protests outside Germany show that young people can be political and are political. For example, in Israel a protest against high rents has turned into criticism of Israeli politics.

Also the protests in Spain have given me hope. I would find it a shame if German youth waited for too long before starting to contribute to how the country is being built. There are many players such as the organisation Campact, which organises a lot of protests and is very lively and powerful. But there is still the big counter movement – the many who have turned their backs on the political world and are satisfied with just earning a living. I can't give any prognosis for the future.

**You are part of a generation which the sociologists call "pragmatic". What could shake up youth?**

So much has happened over the last few years. There was a crazy redistribution from the bottom to the top. Opportunities in life for young people have become more unstable, more fragile.

I have thought twice – in 2008 at the beginning of the financial crisis and again last autumn – that people would get together, fight back, look for alternatives. On both occasions it hasn't really worked properly. ■

*Birgit Güll born in 1981 in Vienna is a contributing editor for Fresh Thinking*

# What is next for Europe's youth?

We asked some leading European politicians and political thinkers about what could be done to improve the conditions and the future prospects for the young generation



**Kaisa Penny**

President of ECOSY  
– Young European  
Socialists



**François Hollande**

French Socialist Party,  
candidate in the 2012  
French presidential  
election

**Young people today are no different** to those in the past. Their problems are not mysterious either. The greatest problem is unemployment. There are too few jobs and inadequate employment, apprenticeships and education services to get young people started in the labour markets. The European welfare states have been built on welfare through work. Income, social security and a sense of belonging are all based on work. The lack of it is devastating.

At the same time the decision-making has moved further away from people, and young people especially lack the means to influence society and their own lives. We find it difficult to enter the circles where decisions are made, and political parties and electoral systems tend to favour established politicians and interest groups. This feeds frustration and anger, manifested, in the worst cases, through rising support for extremist and populist movements, or, in the best cases, through activism like the indignados or the Occupy protests. However, it is far from clear how these movements might develop into sustainable and effective political forces.

How we have got here is a question of political choices – a consequence of the weakening of welfare states during the good times, and austerity in the bad times. Therefore this choice can be reversed. The generation of current decision-makers benefitted from their parents work in building the welfare state – their will to create opportunities for their children. Our generation is ready to work for ourselves, and for society. We are not asking for everything on a silver plate. What we want is the same fair chances in life that our parents had and for this we need a strong, just welfare state, secured at the European level. We are the first generation to be less well off than the last. Is this the legacy our leaders want to leave for their children?

**For too long** young people have been forgotten by public policy. The indignados movement and, to a certain extent, the Arab spring, show that the deadlock we have reached cannot hold in the long run. This is a question of social cohesion as well as an economic issue for Europe. What society can claim to prepare the future without being concerned for its youth? How can we reverse the feeling of decline when the coming generation thinks that it will not live as well as we do? I am convinced that we need all the strength of youth to recover hope and to put our countries and our continent back on the right track. Of course, challenges are different from one country to another, but there are certain constants. The first issue pertains to education. Europe must take care not to be overtaken by emerging countries that are investing massively in education in order to catch up. On this subject, I propose an educational pact in France that will put education back at the heart of national priorities. Among other things, we will create 60,000 jobs and will take a new look at the pace of schooling; students with learning difficulties will benefit from personal accompaniment. The second issue is access to employment. Young people are less experienced and easier to make redundant, so they are the first victims of a labour market squeeze. Improving youth employability is another major priority for me. To achieve this, a measure that I have called the generation contract will encourage companies to employ young people by exempting them from employers' social security contributions for two jobs when they hire a person under 25 and keep an older employee on the job until retirement age. All our resources must be mobilised to integrate young people, all young people, into the labour market rather than leaving them without a solution.





### Michał Syska

The Ferdinand Lassalle Centre for Social Thought (Wrocław, Poland)

**The lack of possibilities** to reconcile their careers with their private lives and the difficulties of obtaining an apartment are the main obstacles that are discouraging young Poles from starting a family.

Support and proper funding of social policy aimed at young families (such as the access to nursery schools and kindergartens, benefits, etc.) should be among our national priorities. Polish spending designated for these purposes, one of the lowest in the whole of the EU, should be seen as an investment and incentive targeted at activating young professionals, increasing the educational opportunities for children, and a tool for reversing the disadvantageous demographic trends.



### Pauline Gessant

President of JEF, a politically pluralist youth NGO with about 30,000 members

**We need to encourage** the participation of all young people in democratic life. We must also recognise that youth organisations are an indispensable channel for supporting citizenship and for developing young people's skills, both for the labour market and for an inclusive society.

Unfortunately, we face an increased divide within European youth in terms of knowledge of foreign languages, access to the labour market and mobility as well as participation in European projects.

That's why the Youth in Action EU programme should be maintained as an independent programme focused on the non-formal education of young people, active citizenship and support for the wide range of youth organisations that represent the diversity of youth in Europe.



### Judith Kirton-Darling

Confederal Secretary, European Trade Union Confederation

**We must show** Europe's youth that they are part of Europe's future. Our younger generation must not be considered disposable. We want a decent future, good training, jobs and prospects for life. We need jobs not promises. The European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) is calling for a legally enforceable youth guarantee throughout Europe. Every young person must be offered a job, further education or training. The youth guarantee must be supported by a genuine European employment strategy, financed with €10 billion, taken from the €30 billion unused in the European Social Fund. We can't afford to lose a generation – we need action now to give our young people a chance!



### Åsa Westlund

MEP from Sweden for S&D since 2004

**The EU is** facing a dual challenge: the financial crisis with huge youth unemployment, and climate change. For the EU to be competitive we must tackle both. In times of economic crises there are political choices to make. New jobs have to be created in green sectors with a focus on sustainable growth. Money and effort should be invested in renewable energy and efficiency. The right education is fundamental for young people to get a job. More and better education for all is a priority, as are internships to promote work experience, networks and references. Political leaders must start to talk about the future again. If people don't see how the future could become better, they will lose hope. And there is nothing as dangerous as a young generation without hope.

# What's making Europe talk

With the economy in crisis, many countries are resorting to austerity measures to see them through the hard times. Sadly, it is the younger generation who are affected by the cuts with a lack of jobs and training, and little hope for the future.

We have collected together what some of Europe's leading newspapers had to say on the subject.

”

*The Polish economy and the budget have coped with the global crisis in an exemplary way. But what about the people? That's a different story. (...) It is not just what you earn that matters, it is also the standard of living. Because of the crisis, Poland has become quite an unpleasant country for young people. It is mainly the new generations who cushion the crisis. The work conditions have deteriorated across the whole society, but particularly for young people. Only one in seven of working 24-year-old Poles have a permanent work contract. (...) For young people, normal working conditions that were standard for the older generation, are now nothing but a dream – and one that cannot come true.*

*Polityka, Poland*

“

**European societies face a historical challenge as they struggle to create a new job market for unskilled workers and find new gateways into the education system for those young people who do not fit into the existing classes and courses. For the individual, it is a personal tragedy every time a boy fails to make it. For society, it is an economic disaster that up to one in four boys is never trained to meet the requirements of today's labour market.**

*Politiken, Denmark*

“

The protest movements all over Europe and around the Mediterranean first and foremost are about respect and dignity. There's a growing fear, especially among the educated youth, that they will go down in history as the betrayed generation. What's left for a young female engineer from Barcelona, but looking for a job in the north? What chances do graduates in Thessaloniki have apart from the shrinking public service and the unproductive field of tourism?

*Claus Leggewie in Süddeutsche Zeitung, Germany*

”

**Those 60,000 kids born in 2002 will be 21 in 2023 and we'll still be paying €3.1bn a year [...] And the 74,000 kids born this year will be 19 in 2031 – and we'll still be paying. In Professor Whelan's words, this will “bleed the taxpayer dry for the next 20 years”. The gross distortion of the country's economy will continue, with increasing effects on jobs, education and health [...] This is the price of the submissiveness and deference of this Government – and of its political ambitions.**

*The Irish Independent, Ireland*

The cuts will bleed harder this year: each job loss is a family tragedy, full of bitter personal humiliation as well as hardship. Some 1,829 people a day are losing their jobs, not numbers but people – and the pace is accelerating. Incomes will fall yet again this year: a 7% drop, the sharpest in 35 years, says the Institute for Fiscal Studies. The real value of minimum wage incomes has fallen furthest, says the Resolution Foundation. The silent exodus from homes and schools has begun, as tomorrow's housing benefit cuts already start to drive families out of privately rented homes: Barking reports 140 new families arriving last month, including 70 uprooted child protection cases, and with thousands more expected.

*Polly Toynbee in the Guardian, UK*

Belgium is not the only one to have been blind. The US too believed in the virtues of a runaway deficit, not to mention Greece, as well as Italy and France. This also holds for European leaders who promoted the enlargement project and monetary integration without ever consolidating their base to be sure those projects would last. Governments have an astounding capacity to shut themselves in a bubble, to deny the obvious, to be deaf and blind to signals and external reality. Economists have warned us about this narrow-minded austerity. Is this another blind alley?

*Le Soir, Belgium*



We are all conscious of the world's troubles and are very rightfully concerned about the economic situation and jobs. We know about the gradual evaporation of political power to the point that it has become a cloud that can barely cast a shadow on the skies of financial markets. [...] The temptation to be pessimistic is strong, and even alarmist. But this would be a major defeat – resignation is not the way to go. Because tomorrow's world will not necessarily amplify what is happening now. To combat historical determinism, thought and imagination are vital today.

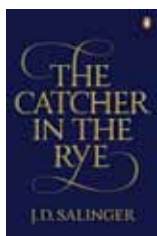
*Libération, France*

For students graduating in 2008, it was enough to send out 24-25 job applications, but those who finished two years later had to apply, on average, 37 times [...] Half of the people finishing their university studies in 2008 found a job almost immediately, and among them there is practically no one who could not have found a place in the end. 36% of the 2012 graduates were hired within a month, but 6% have still not found anything.

*HVG, Hungary*

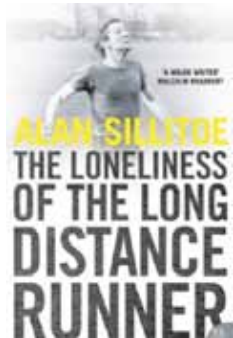
## FRESH THINKING BOOKS

Growing up in a rich part of the world where inequalities are rising. Being young in times of austerity. The chance to study, but little chance of a job. These are the serious matters we are addressing in our third issue, and which are ever-present at the crossroads where politics and culture meet. Editor **Eric Sundström** suggests that you stop, look and listen to how some artists and writers have handled the frustrations and hopes of their younger years.



Starting with novels, there are one or two classics that you simply can't ignore. About a quarter of a million copies of **J.D. Salinger's** *The Catcher in the Rye*

are sold every year, and for good reason. If you never have met Holden Caulfield – the main character, antihero and symbol of teenage rebellion and confusion – it's time you did. And if you read the book when you were as confused and alienated as Holden, it might be worth reading this story about longing to belong again.



*The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner*, a short story by **Alan Sillitoe**, is not as well-known but ought to be up there with the true classics.

Colin is a teenager in a poor working-class area in Nottingham. He ends up in borstal (youth prison) where he starts long-distance running as a way to get rid of everyday life. The final scene, which involves a competition against a prestigious “normal” school, is a symbol of rebellion and independence.



**Nina Bouraoui** was born in Rennes and lives in Paris, but grew up in Algiers, Zürich and Abu Dhabi. She often addresses questions such as the journey

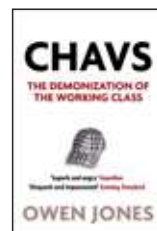
from childhood to adulthood, identity and desire. In *Garçon Manqué*, the French term for a girl behaving like a boy, different worlds meet, twist and turn: France, Algeria and the author's own, personal world. It is a short but explosive book where every sentence hits home.

Turning to more recent and academic books about Europe's current problems, let's start with *Jilted generation: How Britain Has Bankrupted its Youth* by **Ed Howker** and **Shiv Malik**. As Madeleine Bunting wrote in the Guardian: “The evidence of pokey overpriced housing and endless unpaid internships piles up convincingly. [...] Howker and Malik argue that a short-termism, an absorption in immediate gains rather than investing in the future, has contaminated our politics. [...] For a generation who have some good reasons to feel short-changed comes a manifesto.” We couldn't agree more.



**Guy Standing**, author of *The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class* argues that “every progressive political movement has been built on the anger, needs and aspirations

of the emerging major class. Today that class is the precariat.” One major part of the new multitude of insecure people that make up the precariat, is the millions of frustrated educated youth. This is an alarming read.



*Chavs: The Demonization of the Working Class* by **Owen Jones** has a broader scope, but it is obligatory reading when trying to understand how class

and rising inequalities hamper the prospects of young people. The same goes for **Lynsey Hanley's** *Estates: An Intimate History*, which focuses on housing.

## FRESH THINKING MOVIES

The convenient link from books to movies is the adaptation of *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner* to the silver screen. **Tony Richardson**, who directed the film in 1962, belonged to the Free Cinema movement of the 1950s – a reminder that a good film need not be brand new or made

in Hollywood. Again, the final scene will stay with you.



The 1970s was a period for films closely related to music and youth rebellion. **Quadrophenia**, based on the rock opera by **The Who**, follows a London mod who is disillusioned with his parents and his job. Rumour has it that a special edition will be released on Blu-Ray in 2012, enabling us to revisit the mods and rockers rivalry.

We have recommended **La Haine** and **This is England** in previous issues of Fresh Thinking. They deserve to be mentioned again, especially since now we also have a second sequel to the latter film. In **This is England 88** we continue to follow a gang of friends as they are growing up in a mix of misery and happiness in a northern industrial town.



Strong movies about the pains of growing up can be found across Europe. **Show Me Love** is a Swedish coming-of-age film about two

teenage girls who fall in love in a small town. **Turn Me On, Dammit!**, from Norway, also explores the limits of being young and female. And the new wave of Romanian cinema continues. **If I Want To Whistle, I Whistle**, about a young man about to leave prison, won the Silver Bear Grand Jury Prize in Berlin. **Loverboy** is a story about sex trafficking where the hunter becomes the hunted.



**Tanguy**, a French comedy about a young man who can't afford to move away from his parents, has actually enriched the French language. The word "tanguy" is now applied to those adults still living at home. A more recent film in

the francophone world is **Le Gamin au Vélo** by the Belgian **Dardenne** brothers. The story about a young boy in foster care, searching for his father and a bike, won the Grand Prix in Cannes.



Turning to documentaries, **Payback** by **Jennifer Baichwal** had its premiere at the Sundance Film Festival earlier this year. Based

on the book by **Margaret Atwood**, this feature documentary offers "a fascinating look at debt as a mental construct and traces how it influences relationships, societies, governing structures and the fate of the planet".

You should also keep your eyes open this spring. **We're Not Broke**, the documentary about the Occupy Wall Street movement by **Karin Hayes** and **Victoria Bruce**, will be released after much anticipation.

## FRESH THINKING MUSIC



Go to YouTube and search for "Cameron, The Smiths, Prime Minister's Questions". You will hear how

Kerry McCarthy, MP for Labour from Bristol East, points out that **Morrissey** and **Johnny Marr** of **The Smiths** have banned David Cameron from liking them. McCarthy calls The Smiths "the archetype of a student band", and then accuses Cameron of betraying the students.

She concludes by wondering which songs the students will listen to if Cameron's policies become law: **Miserable Lie**, **I Don't Owe You Anything** or **Heaven Knows I'm Miserable Now**. In his reply, Cameron immediately cites two other songs by The Smiths: **This Charming Man** and **William, It Was Really Nothing**. As the Commons erupts in cheering, the Speaker has to intervene: "It's simply too much noise".

As journalist Jan Gradvall has noted, these 59 seconds on YouTube explains why the box **The Smiths Complete** is the most important recent event in music. A band only active between 1983-87 became so influential that their songs are easily referenced in the House of Commons. This remastered box set, relying on Morrissey's words and Marr's guitars, shows that The Smiths were not just the archetype of a student band. They are the best band since **The Beatles**.



To list the best songs about rebellion and youth is not easy, but we'll have a go. **The Who** talks

about **My Generation**. **Pink Floyd** states that school can be **Another Brick in the Wall**. **Aretha Franklin** demands **Respect**. **Nirvana** makes us jump as everything **Smells Like Teen Spirit**.



**The Undertones** conclude that teenage dreams are hard to beat in **Teenage Kicks**.

**The Beach Boys** tells us it is **Student Demonstration Time**.

**The Jam** simply suggest **Going Underground**. **Rage Against The Machine** demands a revolution against racism in **Killing in the Name**. The **Ramones** want to **Beat on the Brat**. **Jay-Z** raps about **99 Problems**. **M.I.A.** repudiates immigration stereotypes and relates to her own visa troubles in **Paper Planes** – a song that includes a **Clash** sample. Which reminds that The Clash was a band that encouraged white youth to join their black friends in a **White Riot**.

**The Clash** also sing about **The Guns of Brixton**, a song that predated the Brixton race riots in the early 1980s. What music will the more recent riots, protests and inequalities throughout Europe inspire? Keep your ears open ...

**Every generation laughs at the old fashions,  
but follows religiously the new.**

– Henry David Thoreau

And you say,  
“My children weren’t the same”  
“My children’s children they’re  
the ones to blame”  
And you say,  
“In my day we were better  
behaved”  
But it’s not your day no more

And we are the youth of today  
Change our hair in every way  
And we are the youth of today  
We’ll say what we wanna say  
And we are the youth of today  
Don’t care what you have to say  
at all

– Amy Macdonald, *Youth of Today*

**It better work out  
I hope it works out my way  
‘Cause it’s getting kind of  
quiet in my city’s head  
Takes a teenage riot to get me  
out of bed right now**

– Sonic Youth,  
*Teen Age Riot, 1988*

Our youth now love luxury. They have bad manners, contempt for authority; they show disrespect for their elders and love chatter in place of exercise; they no longer rise when elders enter the room; they contradict their parents, chatter before company; gobble up their food and tyrannize their teachers.”

– Socrates 469BC – 399BC

Now all the  
youth of England  
are on fire

– William Shakespeare

The youth of the present  
day are quite monstrous.  
They have absolutely no  
respect for dyed hair.

– Oscar Wilde,  
*Lady Windermere’s Fan*

Schön ist die Jugend / sie kommt  
nicht mehr! // Youth is a great  
time / it’s never coming back.

– Deutsches Volkslied, 1926

Youth is a wonderful thing. What  
a crime to waste it on children.

– Attributed to  
George Bernard Shaw

Women under the age of 30 are the first generation to see  
in their mothers that an interruption in their work or a  
part-time job, leads to dependency on men and the state.

– Jutta Allmendinger,  
*German sociologist, 2008*

The UN declared August 12 International Youth  
Day (IYD) in 1999. The first IYD was in 2000.

**The problem with the youth of today is that one is no longer part of it.**

– Salvador Dali

People try to put us down  
(Talkin’ ‘bout my generation)  
Just because we get around  
(Talkin’ ‘bout my generation)  
Things they do look awful cold  
(Talkin’ ‘bout my generation)  
I hope I die before I get old  
(Talkin’ ‘bout my generation)

– The Who, *My Generation, 1965*

**I was so much older then, I’m  
younger than that now**

– Bob Dylan,  
*My Back Pages, 1964*

Youth is the one thing worth having.

– Oscar Wilde,  
*The Picture of Dorian Gray, 1890*

Ich möchte Teil einer Jugendbewegung sein //  
I wanna be part of a youth movement.

– Song by Tototronic, 1995

**Who had made the Arab spring?  
Young people who are hungry.**

– Sean Penn



# FRESH THINKING

**Publisher**

FEPS – Foundation for European  
Progressive Studies  
Dr. Ernst Stetter, Secretary General  
Rue Montoyer 40  
1000 Brussels, Belgium  
E: info@feps-europe.eu

**Coordination:**

Alain Bloëdt – FEPS  
Communication advisor

**Produced by:**

NetworkMedia GmbH

**Project Manager:**

Sara Franz

**Editor-in-Chief:**

Eric Sundström

**Creative Director:**

Björn Andresen

**English Editor:**

Mark Espiner

**Editorial Contributors:**

Birgit Güll, Piotr Buras

**Translation:**

Claudia Eberlein, Janek Pytalski

**Proofreading:**

Cathrin Schaer

**Address of publishing company:**

NetworkMedia GmbH  
Stresemannstraße 30  
10963 Berlin, Germany  
T: +49 30 255 94 179  
F: +49 30 255 94 199  
E: info@nwmd.de  
www.nwmd.de

**Managing Director:**

Guido Schmitz

**Advertising Manager:**

Nicole Stelzner

**Advertising Department:**

T: +49 30 255 94 180  
F: +49 30 255 94 190  
E: stelzner@nwmd.de

**Frequency:**

Quarterly

Berlin, ISSN 2192-5135

**Picture Credits:**

Cover: Franziska Gilli // p. 3: Linus  
Hallgren // COVERSTORY XXXXX //  
p. 14-19: Franziska Gilli // p. 22/23 :  
Kenneth Gerhardt/Gallo Images/Getty  
Images // p. 24: Issouf Sanogo/AFP/Getty  
Images // p. 26: Robert Kowalewski/  
Agencja Gazeta // p. 27: Jacek Lagowski/  
Agencja Gazeta // // p. 28: Jakub  
Szafranski/Krytyka Polityczna; Krytyka  
Polityczna // p. 29: private // p. 30: Gerrit  
Hahn // p. 32: Wilma Hurskainen; Ben-  
jamin Géminel p. 33: ; private; private;  
private; Marcus Kurn // 34/35: Franziska  
Gilli // p. 36: Penguin Books; Harpercol-  
lins UK; Livre de Poche; Bloomsbury;  
Verso // p. 37: Universal; Filmmovement;  
uniFrance films; Diaphana Distribution;  
Warner Music International

FOUNDATION FOR EUROPEAN  
PROGRESSIVE STUDIES  
FONDATION EUROPÉENNE  
D'ÉTUDES PROGRESSISTES

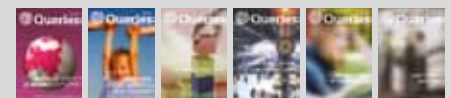
The new  
**Queries**  
is now  
available

## THE NEXT WOMEN'S MOVE



One topic, one issue, readable in a user-friendly electronic FluidBook® that can be downloaded and shared in a few clics.

[www.feps-europe.eu](http://www.feps-europe.eu)



- 6 Asia: what's next? An Indian perspective**
- 5 Next left: social progress in 21<sup>st</sup> century**
- 4 The next global deal**
- 3 What comes before, what comes next**
- 2 The next wave of emancipation**
- 1 Next Europe, next left**

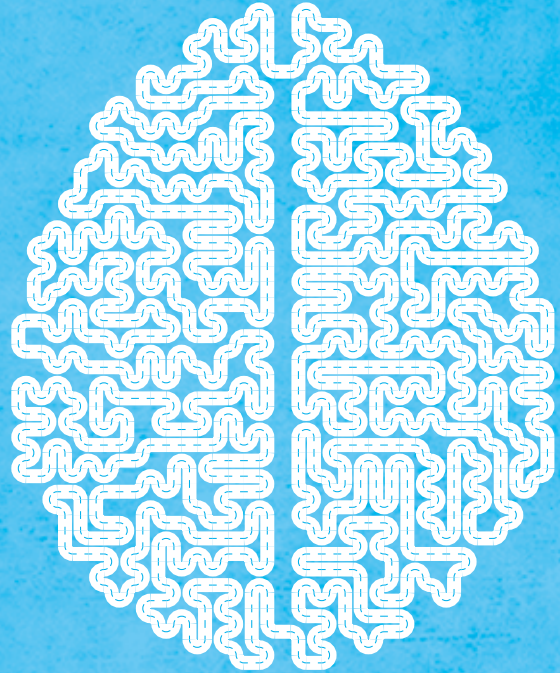
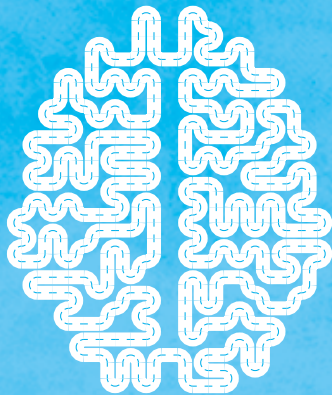
Queries is one of FEPS' tools to promote a true European space for political reflection. Academics, politicians, journalists and other actors are invited to contribute with their visions and ideas on the Europe we live in today.

FOUNDATION FOR EUROPEAN  
PROGRESSIVE STUDIES  
FONDATION EUROPÉENNE  
D'ÉTUDES PROGRESSISTES



Think.

Think Blue.



## Think Blue: thinking further, getting further.

Having a good idea is one thing. Bringing it to life is another. The combination of both is what "Think Blue." means to us. The idea of cooperating for a sustainable future. Of motivating people to act responsibly. Of discovering that environmental consciousness can be fun. And last but not least, of constantly improving our technologies. Such as our BlueMotion models, which are constantly setting new records in terms of range and fuel consumption. For more information about "Think Blue.," just go to [www.volkswagen.com/thinkblue](http://www.volkswagen.com/thinkblue).

Think Blue.



Das Auto.