



NR 3/2019

# DN

DACKEKURIEN

# **Dackekuriren**

Dackekuriren is published 4 times a year by active members at Smålands Nation.

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Over 150 million workers on a 2-day national strike in India.

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In this issue DK is looking beyond the graffitiyard behind Korpa. We want to learn more about struggles all over the world. You might be surprised, but there are actually other things going on than Brexit and Donald Trump tweeting.

We will look into recent strikes in India, how the housing struggle in Sweden and civil disobedience actions for the climate are related, and you will get some insight from an Extinction Rebellion activist who participated in the London action during Rebellion week in April 2019, where activists had been occupying the city center. As usual, Filipe will share some thoughts about queer activism, and how it is influenced by American media depiction.

Lots is happening around the globe that we are not even aware of, if you want to share some thoughts about movements, struggles or topics that concern you, send us an email and we will share it in the next issue! Again, we hope you enjoy the reads and we are happy to receive comments and critique. We are always happy to welcome new writers as well (hint: the more the merrier).

Colloquially, the Dackekuriren editorial

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# INDIA DÄCK

Socialism & Feminism

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T-SHIRTS & MERCH  
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Kaffe & Klasskamp  
Sedan 1999

# STRIKES IN INDIA

Fighting capitalism; building class consciousness

*Irene*

Last January, 200 million workers in India went on strike for two days to fight against the anti-workers policies of Modi's government, paralyzing the whole country. Narendra Modi, from the conservative Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party, is the prime minister of the current government, that has been ruling since 2014. They claimed to bring progress and modernization to India, with the creation of 10 million jobs per year. However, none of the promises have been fulfilled during his term, besides making the upper classes even richer. Sadly, many people voted for him as a result of the disenchantment elicited by the previous government, dismissing his right wing-based policies.

This strike has been the third under the current government since the strikes in 2015 and 2016, and has challenged the upper classes related to Modi's Government. Attendance has not been confirmed, but it seems that the support has been around 200 million workers, out of a total population of 1300 millions.

It was organized by a Workers National Convention that took place in September 2018 and gathered the ten main labour unions, that group 100 million workers in all the country, with special support in the states of Kerala, West Bengal, Odisha, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Delhi, according to the information provided by authorities and local media.

Their main demands were related to general price increase, unemployment, privatization of the public services and asking as well for social welfare for all the workers (especially for the rural workers, that do not even have access to the minimal medical services), pensions and increase of the minimum wage to 18.000 rupees (220 €), since the price increases has not been accompanied by an increase in the salaries.

This massive strike, considered the biggest in history so far, was supported both by the workers in the public sector (railway, bank, etc), as well as in the private (mine, factory workers and transport workers...), as well as students and workers from the rural areas. The farmer's situation is of special importance, considering their continuous fight against the attitude of the government in regards to the precariousness of their life conditions.

The public sector has demanded the end of the foreign direct investment, which has left hundreds of thousands of people unemployed. The labour unions have demanded the end of the public sector's privatization, in regards to the railway, insurances and defence. Private insurance companies have much higher prices that cannot be afforded by the workers; however, the government keeps privatizing the already existing public insurance companies, that later on will fire thousands of employees.

In many states, the labour union activists organized protests and marches to stop the trains, leading to the interruption of railway service.

Factory workers also have really precarious situation, in most of the cases without social welfare. Within the building industry, deaths from workplace accidents has become quite common in the past few years. The fact that this strike is also focussed on social welfare for all the workers is related to the death of multiple workers in the field of construction.

On the other hand, Modi's government has promoted short term employment only for particular projects, increasing those previously mentioned bad conditions in the workplace that the workers are forced to accept if not better opportunities appear. The labour unions are also fighting to put an end to this law.

The General Secretary of the All India Congress of Trade Unions, Amarjeet Kaur claimed that everything stopped on the first day of the strike. It was specially in the Eastern states of Assam, Manipur, Maegahalya and Odisha, as well as in the Southern state of Kerala, ruled by Marxist coalitions, where all types of establishments, including schools, colleges, hospitals, post offices, banks and industrial zones remained closed.

The strike even reached the small islands and rural areas on the country, showing its amplitude and strength. In fact, one of the requests of the labour unions is to withdraw the land acquisition amendment bill, that allows local and multinational companies to confiscate the farmer's lands without any compensation, and affects close to a million people that live in rural areas.

The failure of the promises of development of Modi's government have shown the falsehood of progress under capitalism, bringing class solidarity within the workers, in response to the government's support to the upper classes. In fact, Modi has lost the last elections in three states, showing the desire of change among the people. However, the power of the people in the streets cannot be left aside.

With those policies, the differences between the workers and the upper classes have reached the top in India, resulting in the frustration of the working class and leading to the protests and demonstrations of the last few years.

Besides that, the leaders of the left-wing parties have been corrupted and are no longer giving any hope to the people to end up with capitalism. It is the workers that have been shown to take the lead in ending the capitalistic oppression, creating a socialistic transformation of society, which has started to be apparent with those strikes.

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# REBELLING AGAINST EXTINCTION

Interview with Extinction Rebellion activist taking part in the actions in London during XR action week  
*August*



Photo: Vladimir Morozov, Extinction Rebellion at Oxford Circus on the 17th of April 2019, 3rd day of rebellion.

The following interview was conducted with one of the activists participating in the actions in London during the XR action week. This prelude will first serve to introduce the demands and modus operandi of XR to you as a reader who might not have a good idea what they actually are.

Extinction Rebellion, as a movement, became public in 2018 when they kicked off with a large-scale road blockade in England involving thousands of activists and reaching public media in a dramatic proportion. Their actions are a reaction to the inaction of politicians to address the climate emergency unfolding globally, which is further addressed through their three demands:

1. Tell the truth – Governments must tell the truth about the issues of climate change by declaring a climate emergency.
2. Act now – Government must act immediately to halt biodiversity loss and reduce greenhouse gases emissions to net zero by 2025.
3. Beyond politics – Government must adopt a Citizen’s assembly and allow to be run by it in topics of climate and ecological justice.

Admittedly, this is not an exhaustive description of the demands but serves to bring an overview. More information on each topic can be found on their webpage [rebellion.earth](http://rebellion.earth)

Since late 2018 XR has adopted an international strategy to mobilize and act through civil disobedience, thus creating an international organization that by today spans 56 countries.

## **Q How did you, in the first place, get in contact with XR?**

I first came into contact with XR after their November road blocks made the news, 5 central London bridges were blocked by 6,000 activists and around 60 were arrested. I was instantly excited by the prospect of climate activism taking such a disruptive position in the middle of London. I attended a lecture with my local group called ‘facing climate change with an open heart’ and another called ‘heading for extinction and what to do about it’. While I was well aware of many climate issues, to hear them discussed so passionately and with such fear, I was rid of my nihilism and the need for direct activism became so clear to me.

## **Q Can you tell us a little about the planning for going to London for the action weeks? Affinity groups, how did you choose your targets etc?**

I was involved in organising through my local group in Manchester. We have a number of activists who are working with the national team in London, which facilitated the communication between the nodes of rebels. Otherwise, regular emails were used to communicate the national plans, which are mostly directed from the London groups but open to criticism and development from any XR group. A small team of activists in Manchester took on the task of

contacting our 'signed up' members (there are around 1,200) to invite them to rebellion week. Most of the rebels who travelled to London from Manchester were part of the active core, of which there are around 60 - 80 people. Once enough people had signed up affinity groups were formed, depending on the length of time each activist could stay and the riskiness of their actions (high risk arrestable would be together, low risk non-arrestable would be in another group). Within each affinity group there were 2 assigned well-being officers, who would abide the law (as much as possible) and, instead, provide support during arrest. Once our group of 12 was established we began planning together, meeting for drinks at a pub, and creating some banners in the kitchen of a fellow rebel. Breaking the law with 11 strangers was a bit worrying and it was nice to become acquainted before we left for London. Within the many groups that were leaving from Manchester, we all discussed disruptive actions to carry out in London, which would be directly linked to issues in the North West of Britain, our local area. I helped draw up some plans around a protest of DEFRA (Department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs) for their silence regarding fracking, new coal plants and the government's failure to tackle climate change. We also considered targeting OGA (Oil and Gas Authority) which were particularly relevant to Manchester and the North West. They enabled and supported Cuadrilla, a fracking firm that established the controversial Preston New Road fracking site in Lancashire against the votes of local people and the local government, in 2016-17. The idea behind this decentralised, local planning was that all groups would have autonomy to carry out actions relating to their homeland, while being united under London's larger, (inter)nation focused climate issues. With 330 XR groups across the UK, the potential for explosive and diverse methods of protest became very exciting, and the hope that many small actions would be happening simultaneously gave hope that the authorities would be too overwhelmed to deal with them.

## **Q How did your plans go? Did you change them during your stay in London?**

When we arrived in London action began very quickly. On the first morning, after 300+ rebels illegally camped in the royal estate of Hyde Park, myself and other members of the Manchester group awoke at 05:00 to travel to XR HQ and loaded vans with food, banners, art material, cooking tools, tents, speakers, tables, stage equipment, and outreach materials. These vans were coordinated to arrive at the 5 London sites (Marble Arch - the legal camp, Oxford

Circus, Parliament Square, Waterloo Bridge, and Piccadilly Circus) ready to set up our occupations, once the government had failed to respond to our 3 demands, which were presented at 09:00 on Monday morning. From the very start the scale of the operation became clear and many of our initial thoughts about localised protests were dropped due to the huge amount of work needed to create the rebellion and to hold the sites across the week. In tandem, with arrests of affinity group members on 3 days, with some being held up to 28 hours, at cells over an hour from London, fragmentation and burnout soon set in. While we worked compassionately and communicably as a team, it is undeniable that we lacked the time and energy to come together regularly and discuss group actions.

It is worth noting here, however, that once the blockades began to fall, a series of citizen's assemblies began to discuss how to use the time that was now created as the need to hold 4 central London sites was lifted (this job was requiring around 100 people per site, many of whom would be willing for arrest if the site was raided by the police). Since then the discussion of direct, localised actions has awoken within my affinity group and by XR more widely, in order to establish rebellion week into an evolving network of peoples and actions.

**Q In London there were some specific places that were chosen to be blocked, why were these places chosen? How did it go to block them? What did people do during the blockades?**

4 sites were blocked across London. Marble Arch was the only site which held a legally authorised occupation, as XR required a legal space where rebels could camp and organise. This huge junction in central London was chosen for its proximity to Oxford Street, Europe's busiest shopping street with 300 shops and 500,000 daily visitors. Oxford Circus, 1km to the East, along Oxford Street was chosen for this same reason, and together these 2 sites managed to close the Western section of the consumer capitalist through way. On the first day of occupation businesses began to report a loss in sales and complained to the council, police and government to sort it out, over the next days pollution monitors reported a 32% drop in metal particulates along Oxford Street with no significant increase along the surrounding streets. While these sites aimed at creating a rift in the center of London's shopping district, they do not do much to slow the transport of people and goods around the city. This moved us to our third site, Waterloo Bridge, one of the busiest bridges in London, connecting the inner city financial and shopping districts with the South of

the city. For this reason, I believe, the police tried hardest to clear the bridge, starting with arrests on the Evening of Monday. The final site, of Parliament Square was symbolic of British politics and democracy and has been the site of countless protests throughout history. This space lies outside of major flows of people, goods and capital, but nonetheless was a fundamental site for holding citizen's assemblies, engaging with the public and reclaiming space.

Each site was 'captured' slightly differently, as site coordinators and the assisting rebels worked 'on the ground' to work out the best methods to take particular spaces. For that reason, I can only comment on the taking of Parliament Square, where I was stationed on Monday morning. Having woken up at 05:00 on Monday morning, to travel to XR HQ in North London, a number of trucks were heading out to site across London, ready to set up from 11:00. Having submitted our proposals to the government at 09:00 with the threat of 'closing down London' if they should fail to respond, we began disruption at 14:00. With 5 roads leading into the 4 corners of Parliament Square, we required around 100 people to lay their bodies in the road, to prevent traffic moving in. With samba bands, DJs and speakers on megaphones filling the air with a roar of excitement and 'ferocious love' we carried banners, barricades, tents, crates and our belongings onto the roads. Traffic came to a standstill, with many drivers becoming frustrated, asking the police to 'do their job' and remove us, and eventually turning around altogether. The sheer number of people who filled the streets was clearly worrying for the police. I looked across the Square, perhaps as large as Stortorget in Malmö, and could see no pavement, no grass, no space, only people. Over the next week the barricades would host campsites, bands, music, singing, meetings, debates, dances, chess tournaments, kitchens, lock-on's, hundreds of arrests, demolition by the police, and the rebuilding by rebels. For the last 3 nights I slept under a gazebo (tent without walls) with 22 fellow rebels, taking it in shift to stay up and keep watch. We ate together, sang together, rested together, disobeyed the law together, thought together and existed alongside one another for days on end. The use of bodies was what the blockades depended upon and it is from them that XR built its strength across the city.

**Q Can you tell me about a moment in the rebellion that had an extra impact on you?**

On Saturday evening, after 6 days of occupation, within which time I had witnessed over 100 people being carried to custody by police as fellow rebels

cheered, sang, danced, and celebrated their sacrifice, there came an unique series of arrests. The majority of the week had a party vibe, where chanting and cheering support had been the norm, usually with a samba band or DJ playing upbeat music to the crowds. This festival atmosphere was surreal in combination with the police arrests and became quite emotional as countless people would lay themselves down for arrest until the police resources were depleted. On Saturday evening however, most people were exhausted, many had spent at least 1 night in police custody, and the strain of holding the central London sites was taking its toll. During a quick citizen's assembly, the 250 people holding Parliament Square's South East corner decided, in light of some light brutality by the police at Oxford Circus, that we should create the calmest environment as possible. With around 15 people 'locked on' to one another at the center of the group a women's choir began singing melodic, environmental hymns, once we picked up on the tune; 'this land is our land, this land is your land, this land is all we have', we sang together for 3 hours without disruption, without talking, and with a sense of total peace. The police had marched in and formed a kettle around the arrestable rebels after 20 minutes and the handheld saw to cut open the lock-ons arrived a short while after. As the sun set over the houses of parliament, just 50 meters from the road block, people lit candles and held their homemade banners pleading for climate action. One by one our rebels were carried away by police into a van parked 100 meters down the street, with our voices filling the street behind them. It's hard to describe the desperation, bravery and sense of unity that came together in that moment, but it allowed me to process a lot of the emotions that had built up during the week. Then, standing face to face with an officer at the front of the kettle tears began to flow, at which point the officer diverted their eyes. The tears of others assured me that I was not alone in this mourning, both for our fellow rebels, for the struggles of direct democracy and for the pain of the planet, and this is perhaps what made the experience quite so emotional.

**Q**

**There has been critique that the police knowledge about the blockade affected the impact of the action by redirecting traffic. Was this the case? How did the police respond towards the blockades when you were there?**

Hmm this is an interesting thought to respond to. I can't say I have much information or understanding of how things happened on the ground but, to be clear, it was only at Marble Arch that we were fully authorised by the authori-

ties to occupy space for 1 week. At the other sites we announced that we would be protesting, and the police were probably aware that we would attempt to block roads but XR never sought legal blessings for this. The police undoubtedly had some time to consider the implications of this, and in line with XR's policy of thoughtfulness and compassion the city municipality and emergency services were alerted so public transport could be rerouted and emergency services could continue to operate. While this may seem to have hindered our goal of shutting down the city, it certainly made it harder for the city, public transport, emergency services, and police to create a strong argument against us, and probably helped us hold the sites for as long as we did. Besides, London is an old, poorly planned city, as for hundreds of years it has mostly been constructed by the logic of the free market - ad hoc slums for the poor, private estates for the rich, massive royalist projects, monopolist infrastructure projects, the influence of the church and medieval streets all come together to create an urban jungle that is hard to rearrange, even with warning. It is London's specific history that, in part, gave XR so much strength in shutting down the city.

**Q XR has a non-violent approach to civil disobedience, including towards to the police. Do you agree with this approach, what was your relation to the police?**

XR have a very clear approach to the police. Firstly, the movement targets systems, not people, and therefore individual officers are treated with love and respect. Secondly, all rebels take full responsibility for their actions and upon arrest accept the power of the police; although, as activists we oppose being dragged from the streets during peaceful demonstration, XR's philosophy is that sacrifice is fundamental if we are to change the system. If we are taken to court, then we use this platform to challenge and target the system. Due to this respectful and peaceful approach to the police it has been hard for the authorities to impose certain laws upon us, which in turn helped us hold the sites across London for 9 days. While I personally, at times, find it difficult to fully endorse this approach to the police and punitive law, I was overwhelmed by its effectiveness during the protests. I saw many police moved by the actions we were undertakings and, after arrest, several officers speaking of their discomfort with undertaking orders to remove peaceful protesters. My personal cynicism for the police remains, but the power of non-violent direct actions, led by compassion and respect, was made clear in the media.

# Q

## **Sometimes climate change is presented as a complicated question. How does XR create a narrative about problems and solutions?**

A major message of XR is that we are not experts, we do not know or understand the science (necessarily) and we are not here to tell the government exactly what to do on all climate issues. Instead, the first 2 demands; 'tell the truth', and 'act now', insist that the government must listen to climate scientists and take their recommendations seriously, with concrete political policy. While many rebels know a lot about the implications of the climate crisis, they protest as 'concerned citizens' and 'earth protectors', using their bodies and voices to highlight how serious and urgent the issue is! The problem therefore becomes the government's ignorance to climate issues and its support of expansionist, extractivist fossil fuel industries, as well as lifestyles heavily dependent on carbon economies. The solution, therefore, is the movement of the people to force the hands of government to listen to the experts and to consider the opinions of the public through a climate focused citizen's assembly. By demanding a citizen's assembly, we also position the political system as a huge limitation in our struggle, as I discussed in the previous question.

# VÅRA RÖSTER KRÄVER INGA VAL

Det finns kamper som är konkreta, som har ett tydligt mål och som omfattar många. Jag har deltagit i två sådana kamper. Den ena rörde mitt bostadsområde och den andra rörde den globala miljöförstörelsen.

*Klara*



Photo left: Tim Wagner (Ende Gelände Flickr) Ende Gelände 2018. Right: Malin Fricke, Pennygången Protest 9th of May 2012

Jag är uppvuxen i en hyresrätt i Göteborg. 2012 damp det ner ett kuvert från hyresvärden i vår brevlåda. Där kunde vi läsa att lägenheterna i vårt bostadsområde skulle renoveras. Bostadsområdet heter Pennygången och består av vita klossar i funkisstil. Hyrorna är låga och 16-bussen tar en till centrum på en kvart. Husen är ganska skitiga, slitna och i behov av upprustning. Men vad som kunde läsas i brevet var att lägenheterna inte bara skulle rustas upp, de skulle lyxrenoveras. Parkettgolv, klinkers, tvättmaskin och balkong skulle resultera i hyreshöjningar på över 60%. Renoveringarna skulle inte innebära en förhöjd levnadsstandard för de låginkomsttagare som bodde på Pennygången. De chockhöjda hyrorna antydde att syftet snarare var att byta ut dem. 8 av 10 skulle nämligen inte ha råd att bo kvar. Beskedet skapade ramaskri och Nätverket Pennygångens Framtid bildades för att protestera mot renoveringarna. Det fanns mer än en vilja på Pennygången. Men för att ha en chans mot hyresvärden valde vi att enas kring den vilja som var gemensam: att alla skulle ha råd att bo kvar. Under parollen "Alla ska kunna bo kvar" gick hyresgästerna ihop och kampen mot hyresvärden vanns i slutändan. Renoveringar behövdes

och så skedde, men det blev varken lyxrenoveringar eller ockerhyror.

I slutet på oktober åkte jag ner till södra Tyskland för att delta i en klimataktion. Aktionen vid namn Ende Gelände var riktad mot användningen av fossila bränslen med särskilt fokus på utvinning av brunkol. Flera tusen deltagare samlades några kilometer från gruvan Garzweiler som drivs av tyska staten. Det gemensamma målet var att försöka ta sig in i gruvan och ockupera den för att på så vis tvinga produktionen att stanna av. Det var inte bara tyskar som deltog i aktionen. Men så är det inte heller bara människor innanför Tysklands nationsgräns som påverkas när tyska staten utvinner fossila bränslen. Tusentals miljöaktivister med olika bakgrund samlades på Ende Gelände för att det fanns ett gemensamt intresse – att stoppa klimatförändringarna, och för att det fanns ett konkret mål – att tillfälligt stänga ner gruvan. Under aktionen ropades unisont ”System change, not climate change!”.

Kampen på Pennygången såväl som Ende Gelände är exempel på mobilisering kring en fråga. I bostadsområdet skedde det på lokal nivå medan det på klimataktionen gällde en globalt viktig fråga. Men oavsett omfattning är det genom att hitta den gemensamma nämnaren som förändring är möjlig. För att rösta i riksdagsvalet måste vi ha gemensamt att vi är svenska medborgare och för att rösta i EU-valet krävs EU-medborgarskap. Men för att säga ifrån när ett vinstintresse påverkar människor negativt är nyckeln inte ett gemensamt medborgarskap. Vad som behövs är ett gemensamt mål. På Pennygången gick hyresgästerna ihop mot Stena Fastigheter. Vissa för att de inte skulle ha råd att bo kvar, andra av solidaritet med sina grannar. Alla för att de inte vill ha lyxrenovering och höjda hyror. På Ende Gelände kom folk från flera europeiska länder för att gemensamt säga ifrån mot utvinning av brunkol och fortsatta klimatförändringar. Det går att enas kring en fråga utifrån olika utgångspunkter och det går att påverka utanför partipolitiken. Låt den lokala kampen stå som förebild för globala frågor. Motstånd mot den vinstdrivande eliten är möjlig, inte genom att rösta, utan genom att gå ihop som grupp med utgångspunkt i den minsta gemensamma nämnaren. Detta gäller lokala såväl som globala kamper. Jag har röstat två gånger i mitt liv, men det var under protesterna på Pennygången och Ende Gelände som jag kände att min röst fick betydelse. Så vare sig det rör ditt bostadsområde eller din planet – hitta den gemensamma nämnaren och gå ihop och påverka tillsammans.

# THE QUEER AGENDA, NO. 3

Has queer media homogenized us?

*Filipe*

The word queer itself has always referred to being out of the norm and is automatically connected to some sort of uniqueness that we have as a community. The truth is, how we portray ourselves, how we speak, what we do, and pretty much every aspect of our queer culture, is deeply rooted in American media, and may not be as diverse as one would like to think.

Prior to the 1970s, pretty much every Hollywood representation of a homosexual male was a caricature of oneself, by either portraying them as a villain, or as someone to ridicule, generally more effeminate, and with mannerisms. Likewise, lesbians were often portrayed as more masculine women. These stereotypes are at the core of queer identification, as through the ages we have gradually absorbed these archetypes into our cultures. This is referenced in the 2014 documentary “Do I Sound Gay”, which aims to determine why there is such a thing as a voice being portrayed as gay. In this film, it is mentioned that we emulate what we perceive as our kind, either consciously or unconsciously.

More modern examples of American media homogenizing our culture, come in the form of the 1990s sitcom *Will & Grace* or the reality TV competition *RuPaul’s Drag Race*, among others. These have both expanded the limits of what a gay man can be, but also introduced a vast amount of slang, a vast amount of which having originated in the underground drag and ball cultures. We started allowing gay men to take different shapes and forms, but we still find ourselves searching for labels in the form of twinkies, bears, jocks, wolves, pink flamingos or baba ghanoush. Queer women’s identity has been substantially less explored, perhaps being more associated with feminist movements and specific artists such as Tegan and Sara, while the rest of the LGBT umbrella continues to this day to face very poor and inadequate media representation.

Another prime example of American queer culture dominating in Europe comes in the form of pride parades. These have originated from the revolts at Stonewall in New York and are nowadays a staple tradition of the queer movement.

Note that while there is nothing inherently wrong with being influenced by foreign media and culture, you should be conscious that your local queer history and community is very likely underrepresented, and prone to disappear. You should consider the value of supporting your local queer artists and initiatives, if having a unique queer identity is something that you value. Stretch your horizons beyond what you are told to watch or who you are told to be, learn your history and absorb local and foreign culture. Use these new perspectives and this new information you find along the way and build up your stances and opinions. Shape yourself in diversity and be critical of the status quo, if you aim to be queer beyond modern queer.

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