

Parresia, Academic Freedom and Power. On the Recent Events in Turkey

International symposium

Organized by *Next Generation Global Studies* - University of Padova

Monday May 9, 2016

14.30 – 17.30 c/o Teatro Ruzzante

More than one thousand Turkish and international Professors last January signed a petition advocating a pacific solution for the Kurdish issue. The reaction of the Turkish police was harsh: 4 university professors were arrested with the charge of treason and “terroristic propaganda” and the salaries of other colleagues were frozen, all of them were asked to withdraw their signatures.

We can dissent or not from the signed petition; but this is not the real issue.

What is under discussion, and directly concerns us as professors of this university, is the freedom of expression, opinion, teaching and research that is at stake. The motto of the University of Padova is *Universa Universis Patavina Libertas* and has characterized our University since its foundation as an institution promoting the freedom of thought and opinion. This freedom is formally enunciated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: “Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers” (Article 19). In its statute the University of Padova declares its “pluralistic character and its independence from any conditioning and discrimination based on ideological, religious, political, economic or physical motivations” and declares its mission to “promote open debate” among professors, researchers and students.

We believe that the University of Padova, in the name of freedom of opinion and thought, can and should express its solidarity with the Turkish colleagues under accusation, through initiatives that are not merely symbolic. We believe that a way to express such solidarity is that of inviting some of the Turkish colleagues – University professors and researchers involved in the events – offering them the opportunity to express their point of view in this place of freedom that is the University of Padova.

Introduction by Next Generation Global Studies

Speakers:

Funda Bařaran Özdemir

Faculty of Communication, Ankara University

Basak Can

Department of Sociology, Koç University

Barıř Ünlü

Faculty of Political Science, Ankara University

Seda Altug

Atatürk Institute for Modern Turkish History, Boğaziçi University

Invited comments and open discussion