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Global Solidarity For an Internationalism of the Future

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BORIS KANZLEITER

GLOBAL SOLIDARITY FOR AN INTERNATIONALISM OF THE FUTURE

INTRODUCTION

In left-wing discussions worldwide, the call for a “new internationalism” is growing ever louder. In the British *Guardian*, US presidential candidate Bernie Sanders has called for the foundation of an “international progressive movement”.¹ According to Sanders, a political project should be established that opposes the “international authoritarian axis” — a project that stands for a “vision of shared prosperity, of security and dignity of all peoples”. This movement must address “the massive global inequality that exists, not only in wealth but in political power”.² Similar arguments have been articulated by voices of a broad Left spectrum, from the British Labour Party, the new feminist movements, the union movement, the climate justice movement, and intellectuals of the Global South. For example, shortly before his death in mid-2018, Egyptian theorist and founder of the Third World Forum Samir Amin published a call for the establishment of a “Fifth International of workers and peoples”.³

In light of the global crisis of capitalism and its intensification due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, discussions driving a “new internationalism”, as well as an international networking of the branches of the Left in civil society and politics, appear to be more urgent than ever before. Given the global character of the multi-dimensional crisis, a key point of departure for this text is that any discussion on left-wing strategy will only be capable of speaking to the current context if it comes with a globally-oriented analysis and an internationalist perspective. A left-wing politics fixated purely on the nation-state simply cannot go far enough, even if, in reaction to the symptoms of the crises, those approaches that focus on the nation-state are again rising to the fore. Equally, demands for a “new internationalism” ought not to be confined to appeals and rituals directed only towards recalling the forgotten past of internationalism within the Left, impressive as this past may be. Rather, looking back into this history, it becomes clear that each and every period of capitalist development provoked a different left-wing internationalist praxis, each of which reacted to specific challenges. If a “new internationalism” is the aim, this internationalism must relate to a political context that is currently experiencing rapid change, above all developing and strengthening concrete strategies and praxes in the struggle to secure left-wing social alternatives.

This text works towards formulating a number of possible points of departure for an “internationalism of the future”. The first section will address the various dimensions of the global political context of the “capitalist multiple crisis complex”. Subsequently, the notion of “global solidarity” will be formulated as a possible emancipatory response to this crisis. In the following section, eight strategic approaches and goals for an internationalism of the future will be laid out. These include: (1) a transformative and socialist Green New Deal as a concrete political project that will facilitate necessary social-economic system change, as well as the development of a truly socially-oriented infrastructure in the core sectors of health, education, housing, etc.; (2) peace policy, a new multilateralism, and decolonization as ongoing challenges an international left-wing politics must address; (3) economic relations formed in solidarity and for global justice; (4) struggles for food sovereignty; (5) the control, regulation, and ultimately socialization of globally active private corporations; (6) struggles for global social and labour rights as a key terrain for transnational campaigns and networking; (7) the transnational feminist movement; and (8) migrant rights and solidarity cities. In the final section, the text turns to a number of reflections on strengthening transnational modes of organization on the Left.

The discussion around an internationalism of the future must necessarily be pluralist and take the form of a series of controversies. The multiplicity and contradictory nature of interests articulated via a broad spectrum of left-wing initiatives is vast. This should not be considered an obstacle, but a strength. In fact, it is particularly urgent to give space to voices otherwise often not heard. The foreseeable and dramatic political upheavals in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic will make an open discussion all the more important.

1 Sanders, Bernie: A new authoritarian axis demands an international progressive front, *The Guardian*, 13 September 2018, www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/ng-interactive/2018/sep/13/bernie-sanders-international-progressive-front.

2 Ibid.

3 Amir, Samir: It is imperative to construct a 5th International of workers and peoples, *Defend Democracy Press*, 29 July 2017, www.defenddemocracy.press/it-is-imperative-to-reconstruct-the-internationale-of-workers-and-peoples-by-samir-amin/.

The perspective taken by this text is contextualized in the work of the Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung's Centre for International Dialogue and Cooperation.⁴ The foundation is an institution for political education that is aligned with the German political party Die Linke. The Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung maintains a worldwide network of 25 regional offices that work with various left-wing initiatives. Through this, it supports social movements as well as groups in civil society, transnational networks, and left-wing political parties.

1 CAPITALISM'S MULTI-DIMENSIONAL CRISIS: A WORLD ON THE BRINK

The notion of a "multi-dimensional crisis" was assembled by critical sociologists in their analysis of the global financial and economic crisis of 2008. The concept seeks to describe "historically specific constellations of multiple crisis processes in neoliberal finance market capitalism, which mutually influence one another and are to be understood in relation to one another".⁵ Here, four sets of crises are taken into consideration: (1) the crisis of finance-dominated accumulation; (2) the social-ecological crisis; (3) permanent crises of reproduction; and (4) the crisis of parliamentary democracy. "The current constellation of crises is to be located within power relations of neoliberal finance market capitalism, and can be analyzed as an intensification of the global development of neoliberal capitalism", write Pauline Bader, Florian Becker, Alex Demirović, and Julia Dück in their 2011 book *VielfachKrise* ("Multi-Dimensional Crisis").⁶ Ten years later, we can confirm a dramatic acceleration and consolidation of the four crises, and add to them a fifth: (5) the crisis of the world order and the escalation of military conflicts.⁷

(1) Following a momentary stabilization in recent years, the world economy is now once again experiencing a downturn. As early as September 2019, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) warned of a "global recession".⁸ It is not really possible at this stage to anticipate what the economic effects of COVID-19 will be. What is certain is that we are witnessing a radical break. As with the depression of 1929, history will, in retrospect, be divided into a before and an after. According to estimates by the International Labour Organization (ILO), in 2020 around 255 million jobs were destroyed worldwide, four times more than in the 2009 financial crisis. Social inequality is increasing. Globally, the income of the working class was slashed by US\$3.7 trillion in 2020. That represents 8.3 percent of the total income from wage labour worldwide. At the same time, both public and private debt levels are rapidly rising. On the other hand, according to figures published recently by Oxfam, the wealth of the ten richest men in the world grew by almost half a trillion US dollars from February 2019 to December 2020.

Increasing levels of debt represent a structural problem in many countries across the board, and one that is likely to explode due to the COVID-19 crisis. This is compounded by insecurity caused by trade wars, turbulence in the financial markets, political crises, and the suspension of multilateral mechanisms. The impending depression renders the structural character of the crisis of the global capitalist finance and economic system painfully apparent. A coordinated corporatism capable of sustainably cushioning the crisis is becoming less and less conceivable. This is because in a neoliberal and globalized context, nation-states have transferred their sovereignty to non-democratic or less accountable forms of transnational statehood, as seen in the European Fiscal Compact, but also in bilateral investment treaties. At the same time, the liberalization of financial markets has led to a race to the bottom for nation-states in terms of tax regulations and welfare and labour rights guarantees. Through this, the scope for action for progressive governments to react to the crisis is significantly reduced, above all in peripheral countries but also in industrialized countries. There is reason to fear that this trend will only continue.

(2) The social-ecological crisis has also intensified at an alarming rate in the last two decades. In its most recent reports, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has established that climate change is progressing at a significantly faster rate than hitherto predicted. Ocean warming, the rise of sea levels

4 I would like to thank my colleagues Loren Balhorn, Mario Candeias, Benjamin Luig, Gabriele Kickut, Stefanie Kron, Ingar Solty, Andrea Peschel and Alex Wischniewski for their comments, which have enriched this text. In particular, I would like to acknowledge the contributions of those colleagues who largely formulated specific sections: Stefanie Kron on migrant rights and Solidarity Cities; Alex Wischniewski on the transnational feminist movement; and Benjamin Luig and Jan Urhahn on food sovereignty.

5 Bader, Pauline/Becker, Florian/Demirović, Alex/Dück, Julia, "Die multiple Krise – Krisendynamiken im neoliberalen Kapitalismus", *VielfachKrise: Im finanzmarktdominierten Kapitalismus*, edited by Bader et al., 2011: Hamburg, pp. 11–28, p. 13.

6 Ibid.

7 On the dimensions of the crisis see Solty, Ingar, "Die Welt von morgen – Szenarien unserer Zukunft zwischen Katastrophe und Hoffnung", *LuXemburg* 3/2019, pp. 36–45, www.zeitschrift-luxemburg.de/die-welt-von-morgen-szenarien-unserer-zukunft-zwischen-katastrophe-und-hoffnung/.

8 Elliott, Larry, "Global recession a serious danger in 2020, says UN", *The Guardian*, 15 September 2019, www.theguardian.com/business/2019/sep/25/global-recession-a-serious-danger-in-2020-says-un.

through the melting of ice shelves, desertification, and environmental devastation can no longer be stopped but in the best-case scenario simply limited. Yet climate change is only the most obvious expression of the destruction of ecological systems worldwide, which threatens all complex forms of life. The drastic loss of biodiversity and accelerated extinction represent further consequences. Even the conservative prognoses of the IPCC demonstrate the scale of the global ecological crisis: In order to keep global warming below 1.5 degrees Celsius, carbon dioxide emissions worldwide must be halved in only one decade, and further reduced to “net zero” before 2050. This means that any continuing carbon dioxide emissions must be offset via carbon dioxide absorption measures at the same rate. Only under these conditions might the consequences of climate change be kept somewhat bearable. On the other hand, failure to do so will lead to far-reaching destruction of the natural foundations for life, with catastrophic social and political consequences. The IPCC therefore calls for an immediate transformation of energy production, food production, transport, and construction methods—worldwide and across the board.⁹

(3) The dictates of austerity, privatization, and the accelerated polarization of wealth have, in many countries, additionally led to an intensification of the crisis of social reproduction. Even in the industrialized countries of the North, fundamental rights such as the right to housing, health, or education are no longer guaranteed for significant segments of the population. The current COVID-19 pandemic puts this in a dramatic light. The ecological crisis intensifies the crisis of reproduction. From a global perspective, we are confronted with a chronic food crisis due to, among other factors, extreme weather events, violent conflicts, and economic crises. Millions of people are forced to become refugees due to environmental damage and the absence of viable social infrastructure. Above all, the crisis of reproduction affects women worldwide, because they are still today responsible for the greater share of care activities.¹⁰ Additionally, in Western industrialized states, the crisis of social reproduction is increasingly leading to a crisis of social cohesion.

(4) At the same time, in recent years we have been experiencing a worldwide crisis of democracy and the expansion of authoritarian governmental and regime forms. The victory of extreme right-wing candidate Donald Trump during the 2016 presidential election in the US sent a signal across the world. In the EU, a vicious cycle has been set into motion by austerity politics pushed by authoritarian constitutionalism, the loss of legitimacy of political parties, and the rise of authoritarian populist forces. In many European countries, right-wing populist movements have become so strong that they participate in governing coalitions or even form governments in their own right. A newly strengthened right wing in Latin America is attacking the democratization processes and social progress that grassroots movements and left-wing governments have fought for in recent decades. The “Arab Spring” of 2011 has ended in civil wars, the restoration of the elite, or military rule. In Asia, as well—whether in India, the Philippines, or Thailand—authoritarian and in part extreme nationalist forces are gaining a strong foothold. In short: the emancipatory shifts in industrialized countries of the North after 1968, progress towards democratization in post-socialist countries after 1989, the overcoming of dictatorships in Latin America in the 1980s, and the progressive constitutional processes of Latin American left governments are all on the line.¹¹ Segments of the Western elite, too, appear to have lost trust in the ability of representative democracy to exert control. The worldwide expansion of authoritarianism and the right goes hand-in-hand with attacks on women’s right to self-determination and LGBTIQ+ communities, as well as on ethnic minorities and migrants. There is reason to fear that this trend towards authoritarianism will be further exacerbated through the handling of the COVID-19 pandemic. Instruments used to control movement, border shut-downs, and states of exception—all of which are currently applied in order to curb the spread of the virus—will foreseeably be integrated into the repertoire of state power at large.

(5) Increasingly, these four areas of crisis are accompanied by a crisis in international relations. This is triggered by a structural shift in geopolitical power relations. Following 1989, the US and the countries of the European Union were at least temporarily able to celebrate their position as winners of the confrontation between political systems. However, since that moment, they have lost both economic and geopolitical traction. Industrial and, increasingly, technological production are being relocated to the rising powers in the Global South—above all in Asia. Due to its successful state-interventionist policies, the People’s Republic of China has gained clout as one of the most important high-tech industrial powers and it increasingly makes its political and military influence known. In order to retain the dominant position of the US, the Trump regime has invested in military rearmament as well as an authoritarian-imperialist form of neoliberalism that pursues protectionist policies

9 IPCC, “Global Warming of 1.5°C, an IPCC special report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways, in the context of strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change, sustainable development, and efforts to eradicate poverty”, 8 October 2018, www.ipcc.ch/2018/10/08/summary-for-policymakers-of-ipcc-special-report-on-global-warming-of-1-5c-approved-by-governments/.

10 Wischnewski, Alex, “Die Krise hat ein Geschlecht”, n.d., www.rosalux.de/publikation/id/39999/die-krise-hat-ein-geschlecht/.

11 See Schaffar, Wolfram, “Die Globalisierung des Autoritarismus: Aspekte der weltweiten Krise der Demokratie”, Studie 6/2019, edited by the Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung, Berlin 2019, www.rosalux.de/publikation/id/40874/globalisierung-des-autoritarismus/

in trade and a unilateral politics in its international relations.¹² The new Biden administration is attempting to rebuild transatlantic relationships with European partners. At the same time, Biden continues to build military power. This makes the US a growing threat to world peace. Washington regards the People's Republic of China as a new military enemy. In the context of the conflict in Ukraine, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is working to bolster a military threat against Russia. Tensions between NATO and Russia have the potential to lead to military escalation. According to numerous security experts, the threat of the deployment of atomic weapons is greater today than during the Cold War. This is exacerbated by the annulment of the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF Treaty) in early 2019, which previously regulated nuclear disarmament in the intermediate range with Russia. The US has intensified military conflicts in the Middle East through its support of Saudi Arabia, threatening Iran. Russia, on the other hand, supports Iran, as well as Assad's Iran-aligned regime in Syria, and thus bears equal responsibility for the escalation. The war in Syria has long since collapsed into a regional conflict, serving as a proxy war within a new world order characterized by the break-down of multilateral mechanisms and increasing competition between nation-states.

2 FOR A POLITICS OF "GLOBAL SOLIDARITY"

The dimensions of crisis outlined in the previous chapter are, however, met with concrete resistance. In the recent past, countless social movements and initiatives from the left have mobilized against austerity measures, the attack on social rights, authoritarianism, racism, the destruction of nature, and war. The COVID-19 pandemic has led to new forms of solidarity. In the process, we have learned that networking movements and other stakeholders expands our scope for action. Relations, parallels, and links formed between various movements, such as the 2011 Arab Spring, the Indignados, and the Occupy Wall Street movement, encourage the development of political alternatives. A global perspective can only strengthen local struggles. Strategic alliances render all participants stronger. Shifts in power relations in any one region can expand what is possible in other geographical spaces. If we want to develop and realize convincing alternatives to the multi-dimensional capitalist crisis, we need the global solidarity of a broad range of resistance movements.

Here, the notion of "solidarity" means above all the development of strategies of resistance, of alternatives, and the uptake of struggles by various groups who actively articulate and organize around shared interests. That said, our concept of solidarity must be broader, more open: it is not possible to start from the assumption that material interests will be shared. On the contrary, we must anticipate that the working class and other subaltern classes and groups will be divided. Indeed, this was always part of the "natural" condition of capitalism. Subalterns are divided in multiple ways according to gender-based or ethno-national attributions, various forms of (re-)production, etc. Their formation into a class has always been a political project. Additionally, in transnational contexts, various classes of subalterns must be taken into account (workers, smallholder farmers, informal and freelance workers of every form, traditional modes of (re-)production etc.). In this sense, the development of a politics of solidarity involves a generalization of interests that works beyond essentialist simplification. It involves the production of a collectivity that does not negate, but rather respects difference. "Solidarity means having regard to the interests that different participants have in a counter-hegemonic project when formulating one's own interests", explains Mario Candeias, director of the Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung's Institute for Critical Social Analysis.¹³

"Instead of assuming shared values that must merely be awoken from slumber, and discrete units (such as 'peoples'), which affect one another and bear relation to one another, solidarity should instead focus precisely on difference, on the unfinished", write Jens Kastner and Lea Susemichel, concluding that "radical solidarity is built on nothing less than differences. It presupposes that there are, precisely, no shared—economic, cultural, political—foundations and that this separating factor can be temporarily overcome. It consists not in partisanship for the same or the similar, but in creating solidarity with precisely those people who do *not* share one's factory, one's milieu, one's gender, or one's ethnic attribution."¹⁴

In the history of the socialist movement, the notion of "international solidarity" refers to mutual support between left-wing initiatives and progressive state projects that transcend the borders of the nation-state. Today, alongside the notion of "international solidarity", we work with the notion of "global solidarity",

12 According to a report by the International Institute for Strategic Studies, in 2018 the military spending of the United States reached US\$643 billion, more than three times China's spending and ten times that of Russia. "Among European NATO countries, the UK had the highest levels of defence spending at US\$56.1 billion. France followed with US\$53.4 billion and Germany with EUR 45.7 billion." Zeit online, "USA geben zehnmals mehr Geld für Rüstung aus als Russland", 15 February 2019, www.zeit.de/politik/ausland/2019-02/muenchener-sicherheitskonferenz-usa-verteidigungshaushalt-budget-jahresbericht-iiss.

13 Candeias, Mario, "Von der fragmentierten Linken zum Mosaik", LuXemburg 1/2010, pp. 6–17, p. 11.

14 Susemichel, Lea/Kastner, Jens, Identitätspolitik: Konzepte und Kritiken in Geschichte und Gegenwart der Linken, Münster 2018, p. 138.

which describes the central strategic necessity for an internationalism of the future. For at present, the multi-dimensional capitalist crisis confronts us with complex problems that can only be fully grasped from a global perspective—both in understanding how they arose, and in the formulation of potential solutions.

An intellectual foundation for such a project of “global solidarity” might be found in the notion of “universal emancipation” as conceived in the founding formulations of the socialist movement. This understanding of emancipation is aimed at “overturning all relations in which the human being is humiliated, enslaved, abandoned, despised”.¹⁵ Ultimately, it was the socialist movement alone that stayed true to the central precept of the French Revolution—namely, the equality of all humans. During the Second International’s campaign for women’s suffrage at the latest, if not already during the course of the 1848 revolution—at least until revolutionary liberalism took a conservative turn—the socialist movement became the central bearer of basic democratic rights and freedoms. As underscored by the refrain “*Die Internationale erkämpft das Menschenrecht!*” (“The Internationale fights for human rights!”),¹⁶ the historical socialist movement stands for equal rights for all against every form of discrimination inflicted due to markers of identity such as gender, ethnicity, and skin colour—including in a global context. The feminist and anti-racist movements are also historically closely connected to the socialist workers’ movement.

At the same time, in a future project of “global solidarity”, the notion of “universal emancipation” must be rethought from decolonial, ecological, and feminist perspectives if it is to be accountable to the social and political power relations in a world defined by global capitalism. As Portuguese sociologist Boaventura de Sousa Santos explains, a globally-thinking left must affirm the “epistemologies of the South”.¹⁷ Global social justice will be possible only through the acknowledgement of non-Western epistemologies—that is, through “global cognitive justice”. Side-stepping a postmodern relativization of notions of emancipation, this instead involves a politics of appreciation and recognition, and of cultivating non-Eurocentric notions of liberation.¹⁸

Here, a significant aspect in decolonizing the notion of universal emancipation involves lifting the separation between human and nature. This separation has had a major impact on the Western tradition of Enlightenment thought and, through this, on the socialist tradition as well. In light of the global ecological crisis, it is clear that emancipation is only possible if the relation between human and nature is rethought. A further component involves the reconception of “universal emancipation” from a feminist perspective. While the revocation of hierarchical gender relations is a constitutive element of the notion of universal emancipation, feminist demands have long been and are still all-too-often subordinated as secondary issues in class struggles. This tendency has not yet been overcome. Feminism, feminist class politics, and intersectionality are thereby fundamental components in a politics of global solidarity.

A decolonized, feminized and ecological renewal of socialism’s comprehensive notion of emancipation is no dry theoretical exercise. When translated into everyday action, such a renewal can, far more, constitute a key factor in establishing a new hegemony of left-wing politics. This has been demonstrated, at least to a degree, in Germany’s two massive #unteilbar demonstrations in Berlin (October 2018) and Dresden (August 2019), which involved significant elements of a politics of global solidarity. Anti-racist initiatives, feminist groups, environmental movements, unions, and social organizations demonstrated together with left-wing political parties. In its entirety, the movement was larger and louder than the sum of its parts. It is precisely the plurality of #unteilbar, the connections it draws between questions of social justice and the struggle against racism, that make it the strongest mobilization of the Left in recent years. For a brief moment, the potential of a “third pole” for the “defence of a democratic way of living in solidarity, as well as of the ecological foundations of society” made itself known as a potential counter-hegemonic model responding to the neoliberal mainstream of centrists and the extreme right.¹⁹ The campaigns of Bernie Sanders and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez in the US, as well as the politics of Jeremy Corbyn under the motto “For the many, not the few”, are similarly oriented.²⁰ Sanders and Corbyn were ultimately defeated, but not before showing that their message resonates far beyond the organized Left and its sympathizers.

Ultimately, the strongest argument for a politics of global solidarity grounded on a renewed, left-wing notion of universal emancipation is that it corresponds to the Left’s own historical *raison d’être*. Despite its many crises,

15 Marx, Karl, “Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right”, in Marx, Karl/Engels, Fredrich, Collected Works [MECW], vol. 3, 1975: London.

16 Translators’ note: Taken from the chorus of the song The Internationale in Emil Luckhardt’s 1910 German translation.

17 de Sousa Santos, Boaventura, *Epistemologies of the South: Justice Against Epistemicide*, 2014: London.

18 Ibid.

19 See Candeias, Mario, “What Now, Die Linke?”, Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung, <https://www.rosalux.de/en/publication/id/41378/what-now-die-linke/>.

20 The two “Labour Manifestos” for the parliamentary elections of 2017 and 2019 articulated significant aspects of a politics of global solidarity. A program calling for the radical redistribution of wealth, the guarantee of global basic services, access to a free healthcare system, LGBTIQ+ rights, and the rights of migrants was proactively and assertively linked with an expansion of democracy and an ecologically sensitive industrial policy, as well as a multilateral and peaceful approach to foreign politics. Through this left-wing and socialist program, Labour was able to increase its share of the vote by 9.5 percent in 2017, winning 40 percent in total. During the elections in December 2019 Corbyn lost ground due to the Brexit debate, which crowded out all other topics. Nonetheless, the 2019 Manifesto remains a key point of orientation for a contemporary, left-wing, and socialist politics.

defeats, and even Stalin's crimes committed in the name of the socialist and communist movements: time and again, the promise of universal emancipation for all people has renewed the Left and generated its strength in political mobilization. Precisely in light of the multi-dimensional capitalist crisis—which goes hand-in-hand with growing inhumanity, racism, and xenophobia, the authoritarian right, wars, violence, and the deaths of thousands of refugees in the Mediterranean Sea—today everything depends on strengthening once more the Left's emancipatory humanism, which finds its expression in a concrete, bottom-up politics "for everybody". Only in this way might we build a convincing counter-pole to the strengthened right wing.

3 STRATEGIC APPROACHES TOWARDS AN INTERNATIONALISM OF THE FUTURE

In the strategic debates on the Left, subjects and supporters of change, the territorial and institutional layers of political intervention, and the methods of mobilization and implementation of demands are all common matters of dispute. This can often lead to dichotomies, which in the German discussions often cluster around the following oppositions: working-class vs. marginalized; nation-state vs. global; "cosmopolitan" vs. "communitarian"; parliamentary vs. movement-oriented; environmental movement vs. union movement; and identity politics vs. the social question. Similar debates take place in other countries and regions. In Latin America, such debates often focus on questions relating to the possibilities and limits of left-wing governmental projects, including the use of mineral resources: radical resistance against extractivism is pitted against a left-wing governmental project advocating state control of resources.

Many of these debates and disputes reflect real conflicts of interest and political contradictions and therefore have their legitimacy. At the same time, they can often lead to paralysis and fragmentation in the Left, blunting its power as a social force. On an international level, language barriers, varying political and social contexts, diverging traditions and narratives in the Left, as well as differing political cultures can compound this effect. Even the two largest neighbours of the Federal Republic of Germany—France and Poland—are fundamentally different to Germany in multiple ways. Even greater are the differences between European and African contexts.

The fragmentation and contradiction between political contexts, frameworks for action, and political subjectivities must be taken into account when developing particular strategic fields for action for an internationalism of the future. This hinges on three principles: (1) Social movements cannot be invented out of nowhere. Rather, it is crucial to take up existing movements and further develop them. (2) Consideration should be given to how existing movements, political initiatives, networks, and organizations can be linked and how, acting at their own particular locations, they can promote a political project aimed at establishing left-wing hegemony. (3) Strategies should be developed to strengthen processes of transnational networking and open global perspectives for mostly local and nation-state-based movements and political actors. One strategic approach of a politics of global solidarity may well be found in developing a framing for international and transnational fields of action, such that various left-wing initiatives with differing interests might work together without negating conflict, contradictions, and differences. The process of transnational networking must bring concrete benefits for local actors.

In these strategic considerations, the connection between various modes of action on local, state, and global levels plays a decisive role. In past decades, the neoliberal globalization of capitalism has markedly weakened leeway for shaping political reality on local and state levels through the liberalization of financial markets and the strengthening of transnational corporations. This is accompanied by a hollowing-out of democracy in politics, as democratic legitimation, representation, and control thus far function best on local and state levels. One approach for left-wing politics should therefore involve regaining scope for political action on these levels. This relates to processes of decentralization and democratization. These, however, can only be successful via an internationalist politics capable of addressing global problems. For in order to bolster political scope for action at local and national levels, incisive changes on the global level are necessary. This means advancing the debate on forming a progressive relation to selective "de-globalization" ("de-linking") and "alter-globalization in solidarity", replacing the present framing, which is polarized between globalization vs. a return to the nation-state—a dichotomy that only serves to reproduce the false opposition between neoliberals and the right wing. At stake here is a new connection to be formed between decentrality, transnational links, and the need to overcome global inequality. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic and the foreseeable discussions around the role of national politics in a globalized world economy, this question will become ever more important.

In the following, eight problem areas will be laid out in which the development of a strategy for an internationalism of the future seems possible and expedient. Further political processes could be added.

3.1 For a Transformative and Socialist Green New Deal

Against the backdrop of the life-threatening global ecological crisis and the crisis of social reproduction, a radical, social-ecological system change must be a central element of a “new internationalism” and of every left-wing politics. This transformation must take place in the coming decade if human civilization is to regain control over the climate catastrophe of what Elmar Altvater has called the “Capitalocene” and the break-down of social reproduction, which leads to an uncontrollable chain reaction.²¹ This involves an immense political challenge—not only for the Left in society, but ultimately for all who are interested in the further existence of human civilization.

Responding adequately to the challenges, then, would constitute a major feat. There are no easy answers. At the same time, the debate on a Green New Deal (GND) is currently taking on the contour of a strategically designed political blueprint with the potential to formulate a considered response and become a central part of a politics of global solidarity. In the coming months, the debates around the GND must be connected with an emancipatory politics that works towards overcoming the COVID-19 pandemic.

While the first high-profile discussion on the GND—which took place in the context of the presidential candidacy of Barack Obama almost a decade ago—focused primarily on ecological modernization within a capitalist framework,²² in the meantime, a left-wing approach that works towards a transformative GND has developed—one that holds the capitalist system accountable for the ecological crisis and points towards fundamental alternatives. These approaches could give rise to an eco-socialist strategy for transformation.

The most far-reaching models are currently under discussion in the Left in the US and in the UK. On a political level, the discourse has been popularized above all by Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Bernie Sanders. In the UK, the campaign “Labour for a Green New Deal” at the Labour convention in Brighton, September 2019, led to an ambitiously formulated resolution. In the “Labour Manifesto” for the parliamentary elections in December 2019, elements of a transformative GND were adopted under the catchphrase “A green industrial revolution”.²³ The Confederation of the European United Left/Nordic Green Left (GUE/NGL) in the European Parliament uses the language of a “Green and Social New Deal”.²⁴ On a conceptual level, the British economist Ann Pettifor prepared the way for the campaign “Green New Deal for Europe” in her book *The Case for the Green New Deal*, as did the Canadian writer Naomi Klein in her book *On Fire: The (Burning) Case for a Green New Deal*.²⁵

One point of departure for a transformative GND consists in considering connections between social injustice, carbon dioxide emissions, and environmental destruction. Only ten percent of the global population generates approximately 50 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions. The majority of this ten percent lives in northern industrialized nations, that is in member-countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD countries). The poorer a population, the lower its emissions. The poorest half of the world population—three and a half billion people—produces only ten percent of emissions. At the same time, the poorest people and the countries with the lowest emissions are those who bear the brunt of climate change’s catastrophic ecological, social, and political consequences. Although the growth-rate of emissions is at its highest in newly industrialized countries, these economies largely produce those goods consumed in rich countries.²⁶

Against the backdrop of this analysis, protagonists working for a transformative GND suggest that the point of departure for an ecological turn should be sought out primarily in OECD countries. Due to the exorbitant amount of environmentally destructive emissions they produce, OECD countries should lead with a radical and speedy withdrawal from fossil fuel extraction and a “de-carbonization” of the economy. This radical change in course should be accompanied by a new set of relations between the North and South formed in solidarity, heralding a global social-ecological transformation.

As with the historical New Deal under US president Franklin D. Roosevelt from 1933–39, the lever for this transformation in OECD countries may be found, at least initially, in a massive investment programme in public infrastructure. This programme should aim for the production of renewable energy, saving resources in the process and leading to the greening of the transportation sector, the construction sector, and the entirety of

21 To the notion of the “Anthropocene” Altvater counterposes the notion of the “Capitalocene” in order to demonstrate that the destruction of the natural conditions of existence for life is not simply the work of human beings, but a product of the capitalist mode of production.

22 The debate over a GND began over ten years ago. Since 2007, the term has been used in discussions led by Greenpeace International’s Economics Unit, the Green European Foundation, and left-liberal journalists. Barack Obama used the term during his 2008 election campaign. In September 2009, the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) published a report with the title “Global Green New Deal” on a plan for sustainable development. See Löhle, Nora, “Revival eines Begriffs: Zur Entstehungsgeschichte des Green New Deals”, in *Green New Deal: Fassadenbegrünung oder neuer Gesellschaftsvertrag?*, Politische Ökologie 4/2019, pp. 18–23.

23 For further information on “A Green Industrial Revolution” see: <https://labour.org.uk/manifesto/a-green-industrial-revolution/>.

24 See GUE/NGL, “Left launches policy for Green & Social New Deal”, 11 December 2019, www.guengl.eu/left-launches-policy-for-green-social-new-deal/.

25 Pettifor, Ann, *The Case for the Green New Deal*, 2019: London and Klein, Naomi, *On Fire: The (Burning) Case for a Green New Deal*, 2019: London.

26 These figures are drawn from the Oxfam study *Extreme Carbon Inequality*, 2 December 2015, www.oxfam.de/system/files/oxfam-extreme-carbon-inequality-20151202-engl.pdf.

public infrastructure. This green reconstruction should be accompanied by a job guarantee for those employed in industries that will have to shrink — such as mining, arms production, and the production of cars — as well as the creation of new, well-paid, and unionized jobs in the new sectors. The jobs guarantee should render a GND politically feasible, while using the qualifications of affected workers to serve the greening of the economy. A constitutive part of a left-wing GND is the systematic strengthening of the rights and participation of women and subaltern groups, such as those with migrant backgrounds or ethnic minorities. In order to support social rights, the development of a system of *universal basic services* in the fields of education, health, and housing is currently part of the debate.

This programme must be financed through effective taxation of high income and assets, a financial transactions tax, the reduction of arms budgets, the redirection of subsidies from fossil production to the production of renewable energy, as well as through state loans and further measures. The aforementioned “Green New Deal for Europe” campaign, which is carried by left-wing think tanks and organizations such as Democracy in Europe Movement 2025 (DiEM25), Common Wealth, European Alternatives, the New Economics Foundation, and the Tax Justice Network, calls for the mobilization of five percent of gross national product per year. In the EU, this would amount to a yearly investment of EUR 800 billion.²⁷ An indispensable precondition for a transformative GND is the democratization of the economy. The profit motive characteristic of systems of capital accumulation should be subordinated to the common interest and preserve the natural foundations of existence. This would require an expansion of public, democratically controlled property structures, as well as a reduction in transnational firms. In order to strengthen democratic control over investment activities, the key players of the banking sectors should in particular be nationalized. At the same time, mechanisms for economic democracy should be bolstered. In light of today’s dominant power relations, this all appears to be scarcely possible. On the other hand, the banking crisis of 2007 and the buy-out of major banks via wholesale state investments of taxpayers’ money demonstrated that a crisis situation opens possibilities that were previously considered to be out of the question. In the context of the current COVID-19 pandemic we may observe a similar phenomenon; the consequences are as yet unforeseeable.

The discussions around a transformative GND are, understandably, controversial. From an internationalist and socialist perspective, questions relating to the transformation of property relations as well as to decolonization should play a larger role in these discussions. And crucially, the imperative of economic growth — that is, of an economic mode that strives only towards accumulating ever more profit — must be fundamentally questioned. The key is rather a combination of growth and degrowth. While specific sectors of the economy will shrink (in Germany, for example, fossil-based energy extraction, the production of cars and armaments, air transport, etc.), other sectors will grow (health, renewable energy production, the ecologically sustainable development of infrastructure in transport and building maintenance, as well as care, education, etc.).

At its core, a transformative and socialist GND should develop an idea of society in which the measure of wealth no longer operates along the lines of purely quantitative measures such as gross national product (GNP), but which instead strives for a better life for the majority, beyond capitalist logics of profit and growth.

As the British economist Jason Hickel explains, societal indicators show that there is not necessarily a correlation between GNP per capita and general well-being. On the contrary: human developmental indicators such as happiness, education, health, and longevity are far more relevant than quantitative indicators such as production and consumption. According to the UN’s “World Happiness Report”, people in Costa Rica are far happier than in the US, even though Costa Rica has a GNP per capita that is one fifth of that of the US. Human happiness in any given society does not primarily arise through consumption, but more through social equality, stable and long-term social safety-nets that guarantee survival, good interpersonal relationships, and fulfilling and healthy relationships in the workplace.²⁸

The debate on the GND has made it possible, at least in the US and the UK, to create a frame in which the environmental movement, key parts of the union movement, and other social movements might collaborate with political stakeholders in strategic coalitions, allowing a considerable force for mobilization to unfold. The task must now be to intensify and expand the debate. In addition, specific projects should be developed on local and national levels in order to provide pathways into a transformative GND and generate signalling effects. This should be feasible in situations where left-wing actors and initiatives have political scope for action. While in Anglo-Saxon regions the term “New Deal”, with its allusion to Roosevelt, clearly carries a positive connotation, and *green* is not used in the party-political sense, in Germany it may be necessary to drive the discussion under a different catchphrase — although to date, no alternative suggestions have been made. Potential alternatives

27 See “Green New Deal for Europe”, Blueprint paper, For Europe’s Just Transition, n.d., <https://report.gndforeurope.com/>.

28 Hickel, Jason, *The Divide: A Brief Guide to Global Inequality and Its Solutions*, 2017: London.

could be *sozial-ökologische Revolution* ("social-environmental revolution"), *sozial-ökologischer Systemwechsel* ("social-environmental system change") or *grüner Sozialismus* ("green socialism").

3.2 Peace Policy, New Multilateralism, and Decolonization

Alongside the social-ecological crisis, the question of peace policy represents a second key challenge for an internationalism of the future. Against the background of a changing world in which geopolitical power relations are shifting, a peace policy that supports global solidarity should grow from a number of points of departure. In Northern industrialized countries such as the Federal Republic of Germany, most important is demilitarization and an immediate end to all weapon exports. These two aspects are closely interrelated: that which is produced is generally also exported; the abstract separation between inside and outside does not generally hold. Additionally, foreign military engagements must cease, as they ultimately serve primarily to push geopolitical interests and fail to achieve their own "moral" goals, as demonstrated by the situations in Afghanistan, Iraq, or Libya. Instead, military expenditure should be invested in a transformative GND and the conversion and liquidation of the arms industry. These are popular demands that can be conveyed to a broad public.

At the same time, an internationalist peace policy must contextualize the wars of the twenty-first century, not only geopolitically, but also socio-economically. It is imperative to develop a complex analytical conceptualization of present conflicts in order to avoid erroneous positions along the lines of "the enemy of my enemy is my friend". This applies in particular to those "civil wars" that are described as being "ethnic" or "religious", as for example in Mali or Syria. As with the conflicts in Rwanda, the Caucasus, and former Yugoslavia in the 1990s, an analysis not only of the geopolitical context but also of the internal causes and economies of war that influence these conflicts is crucial. Behind apparently "ethnic" and "religious" conflicts often lie social problems, disputes over the control of natural resources, or competing political claims to power from elites who are frequently instrumentalized by external powers.

Looking towards a left-wing peace policy and global solidarity must involve overcoming the structural societal power relations that generate wars. These are based, on the one hand, on imperial policies pursued by industrialized countries bent on securing resources or geopolitical power, and on the other hand on structural relations of violence within societies which cause social conflicts to be played out through the use of force. The refusal of military intervention and weapons exports is one key point of departure for a left-wing peace policy in Northern industrialized countries. The establishment of fundamental social and democratic rights in order to overcome power relations propped up by violence is another. The task is to generate what the peace studies scholar Johann Galtung calls "positive peace".

Crucial here is the defence of the general prohibition on state violence as defined by international law.²⁹ At the same time, a politics of the Left—with its class-based perspective—must intervene in societal conflicts and wars internal to other states by strengthening emancipatory initiatives, scandalizing human rights violations and war crimes, and aligning itself in solidarity with those affected. In this, the indivisibility of the canon of human rights must be the guiding principle. Reconciling international law and human rights with one another is a task fraught with tension. In concrete cases it is politically highly challenging, as demonstrated by discussions in the Left on the wars in former Yugoslavia in the 1990s, as well as today in Syria. At the same time, both points are essential for an internationalist politics.

Left-wing government policy on an international level, as well as on the level of foreign policy, should primarily take up the task of strengthening a new multilateralism in a reformed system overseen by the UN. In this multilateralism, the positioning of economically and politically weak states of the South should be strengthened. Progressive governments should again bring international law and international relations governed by clear rules to the fore in order to counteract the unilateralism of strong-arm states.

Informal intergovernmental meetings held between the richest countries of the G7 states (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the UK, and the US) must come to an end so that interactions on a UN level can take precedence. A reformed UN could become a stronger frame for negotiating and implementing human rights, global social rights, and the ecological transformative goals of a Green New Deal and world economic and trade relations formed in solidarity.

Further treaty-based, multilateral systems such as the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) or the Council of Europe (CoE) could also play a more important role. Since Russia is a member of both of these institutions, they could become central in constructing an architecture of security as a basis for cooperation in Europe, representing an alternative to the aggression currently directed by NATO-driven politics

29 "All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations." (Charter of the United Nations, Article 2, No. 4).

towards Russia. The dissolution of NATO itself would not represent an improvement unless NATO were to be replaced with alternative security structures that are oriented towards demilitarization and co-operation. In this sense, the INF Treaty should be brought back into play and expanded to include China in order to reduce the risk of nuclear warfare and end the global nuclear arms race.

Decolonization is a further key aspect of a politics of global solidarity in the sphere of international relations. Here, decolonization means on the one hand the cessation of colonially-oriented power relations in countries such as Western Sahara, Puerto Rico, or Palestine either via complete recognition or the full realization, underwritten by international law, of the rights to self-determination of the populations of these countries.³⁰ Decolonization, however, is far more than a question of international law. Rather, it has to do with economic, cultural, intellectual, and political emancipation from colonial rule and its history in all its societal aspects in post-colonial societies. Additionally, it must involve a global struggle against the racism that permeates culture, politics, and society worldwide, primarily as a result of colonial and post-colonial rule.

The existing UN system contains numerous approaches towards a new multilateralism. The potential of the UN system showed itself at its strongest in the 1960s and 1970s, when the socialist countries and above all those states belonging to the Non-Aligned Movement (Yugoslavia, Egypt, India, Cuba, etc), as strong actors in the UN system, were able to secure a series of important successes for countries of the South, including the expansion of the notion of human rights and the establishment of a right to independent economic development. This involved the implementation of UN General Assembly Resolution 1514 on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (1969), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR, 1966), and the Declaration for the Establishment of a New Economic Order (1974).

These documents, which were ratified by the UN General Assembly, read today in part as if they were the declarations of an internationalist Left. They indicate the current degree of regression in international relations caused by the triumph of neoliberalism and unilateralism. Progressive governments must work to take up, strengthen, and expand these important processes, which have today been side-lined, but which are more important than ever.

3.3 World Economic Relations Formed in Solidarity for Global Justice

Trade and economic relations based on solidarity are essential ingredients of a transformative GND and a new multilateralism. The point is to establish global justice. Although the ideology behind the classical development aid approach implies that the North altruistically supports the South, the 500-year history of the expansion of the capitalist world system has been a history of the transfer of wealth from the Global South to the industrialized countries of the North. This logic must be reversed.

The transfer of wealth continues today in various forms. The European conquerors of Latin America, Africa, and Asia plundered mineral resources in the colonies, enslaved populations, and forced millions of people to work in mines and on plantations. The system of slavery enabled the economic rise of Northern industrial nations while destroying entire societies and economies in the colonies. Modern capitalism continues colonial exploitation in other forms, as informal imperialism, or what Leo Panitch and Sam Gindin call an “empire without colonies”.³¹ Interest payments on loans are one mechanism. Another is the, in Samir Amin’s words, “unequal exchange” of goods and services. Due to the political, economic, and military weakness of countries in the South, the production of industrially manufactured goods for export from the North yields higher profits and wages than the extraction and export of raw materials, mainly from the countries of the South. Even under transnationalized relations of production, the repatriation of profits – that is, of the surplus value created by wage-earners in the global South – to the capitalist centres is secured, namely by the specific hierarchy in the international division of labour. At the same time, the value and production chains of global capitalism mean that the ecological costs of production and consumption are externalized by the North onto the South.³²

Since the 1980s, numerous campaigns criticizing the neoliberal policies of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization (WTO) have contributed to the delegitimization of these institutions among broad sections of the global public. In the process, numerous avenues towards more global justice have also been opened up. Central among them are demands for a re-regulation of the financial markets, the international banking system, and credit rating agencies in order to bring the financial markets back under public control. More ambitious demands argue that it is necessary to nationalize the financial

30 The UN lists 17 “Non-Self-Governing Territories” that still today are not able to self-govern. The largest territory is West Sahara, which is occupied by Morocco. Alongside this, there are semi-colonized regions such as Puerto Rico, which is included as part of the US, but whose citizens do not have the right to vote in the US. Although Palestine was created as a state in 1988, to date it has an observer status in the UN, which defines West Jordan and the Gaza Strip as “occupied territories” under Israel.

31 Panitch, Leo/Gindin, Sam, *The Making of Global Capitalism: The Political Economy of the American Empire*, London: 2013.

32 See Lessenich, Stephan, *Neben uns die Sintflut: Die Externalisierungsgesellschaft und ihr Preis*, Berlin: 2016.

sectors and transform them into public service institutions that will guarantee the implementation of a socio-ecological transformation.

Campaigns for tax justice and against tax dumping, tax loopholes, and money laundering also need to be stepped up. Achieving tax justice is key in curbing the destructive potential of the profit principle and levering financial flows into a transformative GND. Liberalized financial markets and tax dumping must be replaced by publicly controlled mechanisms for financing investments in the greening of production and infrastructure. A socio-ecological reform of international finance would be one way to contribute both to overcoming inequality in the North-South relationship and to strengthening the scope for political influence over the economy in the global North.

In recent decades, in the campaigns against the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in the mid-1990s, the policies of the WTO or the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), and the free trade agreements between the European Union and former European colonies (European Partnership Agreements), groups and social movements on the Left have developed numerous proposals for an alternative trade policy aimed at giving shape to solidarity-based global economic relations. Rather than being based on rivalry, competition, and free trade, these relations would rest on solidarity-based cooperation for the preservation of the shared foundations of life and on increased equality in living conditions. Key dimensions of a policy of global justice would include the deliberate strengthening, in all societies, of the social and economic position of women and marginalized minority groups.

For the North, solidarity would in this context mean dismantling the structural advantages that have been imposed during the 500-year history of colonialism and neocolonialism. The emphasis of solidarity-based international trade and economic relations would be on local and regional economic cycles, the containment of extractivism, and on overcoming the externalization of the ecological and social costs of production and consumption onto the Global South.³³

The issue of global justice could also be syncretized through the demand for a global reparations fund for the consequences of colonialism, illegitimate debt, and environmental destruction in the Global South. This demand would have to be raised by initiatives from the Global South and introduced into political debates in the North by left-wing groups and a critical civil society. This could be a way to turn the topsy-turvy debate over development policy right side up.

Strategically, the demand for global justice is a major challenge, especially for the Left in the Global North. The key lies in developing easily communicable demands. Indeed, campaigns against free trade agreements such as TTIP, as well as for the closure of tax loopholes and the effective taxation of large corporations, are popular. Alternative approaches to the politics of finance and trade also have great potential to mobilize people in the North. The decisive factor, however, is pressure from progressive governments, left-wing alliances between states, and other actors from the South.

3.4 Food Sovereignty

Food sovereignty is not a concept with a scientific definition. Rather, it can be understood as one of the guiding concepts to have emerged from social movements.³⁴ In 1996, the international peasants' movement La Via Campesina popularized the term on the margins of the UN World Food Summit in Rome. Since then it has been adopted around the world by numerous social movements, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and even states. From its inception, the struggle for food sovereignty was conceived as an internationalist global network of social movements – whose struggles, however, are situated at the local level, as work aimed at asserting the rights of those in the movement. Pitted against the privilege of the few individuals, corporations, and governments who decide on the production, distribution and consumption of food, the concept of food sovereignty represents an assertion of the normative validity of the right of the many to shape food practices. The crisis of global capitalism comes to a head in today's global food system. On the one hand, hardly any other sector of the global economy exhibits such a concentration of wealth and power: for example, four transnational corporations – two of them from Germany (Bayer-Monsanto and BASF), plus Corteva Agriscience (DowDuPont) and Chemchina-Syngenta (Sinochem) – control over 60 percent of the world's commercially traded seeds and pesticides. On the other hand, few sectors so shockingly demonstrate the effects of poverty and exploitation: two billion people worldwide – more than one in four – are malnourished and undernourished. Capital- and resource-intensive industrial agriculture is one of the main drivers of the climate crisis. At the same

33 On solidarity-based trade policy see Arndt Hopfmann's text: <https://www.rosalux.eu/en/article/1380.fair-gerecht-besser-noch-solidarisch-handeln.html>.

34 For what follows, see Luig, Benjamin, "Ernährungssouveränität", in *Wörterbuch Land- und Rohstoffkonflikte: Ein kritisches Handbuch*, edited by Brunner, Jan/Dobelmann, Anna/Prause, Lousia, Bielefeld: 2019.

time, the effects of climate change fall particularly heavily on farmers dependent on rain-fed agriculture and plantation workers who are paid by output.

The idea of food sovereignty, then, stands as an alternative to agrarian capitalism and occupies a key position in a transformative Green New Deal and a solidarity-based global economic policy.

- Food sovereignty looks to the (re)localization of food systems. It strives for short supply chains and tries to bring producers and consumers geographically and socially closer together. Its advocates stress that while food sovereignty is by no means directed against international trade, it does prioritize local and domestic markets over the world market—in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity.
- Food sovereignty aims at local control over natural resources. In many cases, it goes hand in hand with demands for land reform or the strengthening of local seed systems.
- Food sovereignty strengthens knowledge- and competence-based forms of production and strives for production in harmony with nature. In many cases, food sovereignty movements advocate agro-ecological forms of production.
- Food sovereignty upholds the principle that producers and consumers should be empowered to determine the shape that their agriculture and nutrition take. It is about a democratization of the food system and a repoliticization of agricultural policy. Many endorse the establishment of food councils as a means to this end.

The transnational convergence of peasant organizations to form La Via Campesina and the dissemination of the concept of food sovereignty in the 1990s—to begin with, especially in Central America and Southeast Asia—were responses to a restructuring of agricultural production in the course of the twentieth century that left peasant agriculture increasingly marginalized. With brief interruptions, real prices for staple foods fell steadily throughout the century. This was increasingly felt by smallholder farmers worldwide. Their real incomes decreased dramatically, often to well below reproduction costs, leading to worsening poverty and famine in rural areas.

From the point of view of smallholder farmers, multilateral and bilateral free trade agreements represent nothing more than an institutionalized, forced imposition of the principle of comparative cost advantages. Through the world market price, “agricultures” are globally linked, leading to the destruction of the majority of farming livelihoods. During the period of its emergence, especially against the backdrop of the founding of the WTO, food sovereignty represented the counter-project to a neoliberal world trade order. “Sovereignty” was defined in terms of a chance for governments in the Global South to take political action for the protection of local agricultural markets. The concept has since been further developed, at the latest beginning with the outbreak of the economic and financial crisis in 2007/08. Since then, food sovereignty has also come to stand for the “sovereignty” of local communities, for example, in defending their control over local resources such as land, seeds, and water—and thus their means of production—against the encroachments of transnational corporations or the communities’ own national governments.

Food sovereignty is a broad, popular concept—open enough to link a number of different local struggles against the privatization of shared resources and against the activities of transnational corporations, and thus to articulate a new internationalism. Besides this, the concept provides the basis for a political identity; it is powerful enough to mobilize broad alliances to engage in common action that links different groups, on condition, however, that one not fall into a romanticization of small-scale agriculture. The widespread narrative of the “people of the land” on one side and transnational corporations on the other is indeed meaningful, and it mobilizes. But many food sovereignty activists have too narrow a concept of the “people of the land”. They have the idyllic image of smallholder farmers in their minds, who alone ensure “the world’s food supply”. Meanwhile, they ignore the fact that social differentiation exists along class lines within agriculture, as in any other social sphere. The recognition of class structures in rural areas is a prerequisite for being aware of, for example, different forms of marginalization in order to enable progressive alliances to form.

In the twenty-first century, only a small part of global peasant agriculture is characterized by simple reproduction. The assumption that a large part of peasant agriculture is, as it were, outside the capitalist order does not hold. Peasant agriculture is always also embedded in markets—whether they be markets in land, labour, credit, or commodities. In fact, many peasant households earn their livelihoods through a precarious combination of their own production and additional earnings through (usually temporary) wage labour. The supposedly clear analytical boundary between peasant households on the one hand and (unpropertied) agricultural workers on the other is not matched by reality; in the main, modes of existence that mix wage labour and small-scale agriculture dominate.³⁵

35 Bernstein, Henry, *Class Dynamics of Agrarian Change*, Halifax: 2010.

Moreover, in many rural areas the number of people who are completely dependent on wage labour is increasing. Oliver Pye's description of the situation in Southeast Asia holds worldwide: "The numerical significance of the proletariat in the corporate food regime, as in the new palm oil landscapes, is undeniable. Millions of former smallholders or landless peasants have become wage-earners on palm oil plantations and in oil mills."³⁶ In the future, food sovereignty perspectives must focus far more intensively on rural workers' struggles against exploitation, and show where points of connection with peasant demands can be identified. When addressing food sovereignty in the future, there is an entire array of questions that movements across the world need to find responses to. Centrally:

- How might we conceive of ways of combining food sovereignty with broader concepts of a social-ecological transformation, such as a Green New Deal? Where do the points of connection lie?
- What role can left-wing politics play in strengthening local food systems?
- What sorts of practicable emancipatory policy approaches might advance the agricultural transformation and at the same time protect both peasant producers and workers along the entire supply chain? How and with which instruments can farmers' seed systems be strengthened, for example, or human and labour rights be put into practice?
- Which investments and (digital) innovations can strengthen agro-ecological forms of production and collective forms of agriculture? Where do the risks lie?
- What role do cooperatives play as production models both in agriculture and in food processing and distribution? What might a just transition – for example, away from the meat industry and its destructive effects on the climate – look like in this context?

3.5 Control, Regulation, and Socialization of Transnational Corporations

After four decades of neoliberal globalization and the defeat of socialism, the political and economic power of transnational corporations is currently at an all-time high. At the same time, it is closely intertwined with state power. In this world of extreme social inequality and increasing authoritarianism, we are witnessing transnational capital, transnational corporations, and state apparatuses converge into an unprecedented, systematized concentration of power. This system is represented by individuals who combine political and economic power, such as Donald Trump and Michael Bloomberg in the United States, or Friedrich Merz in Germany.

Public control and regulation of transnational corporations is a necessary precondition of any radical socio-ecological turn, as advocated in the discussions on a transformative and socialist GND. A socialist politics of transformation puts the property question and the nationalization of these corporations on the agenda. But leftists should also support the growing initiatives for regulation (for example by repoliticizing competition law, reducing subsidies for corporations, and introducing definitions of unfair trade practices perpetrated by corporations that dominate markets along the supply chain) as constituting a path towards nationalization. There are a variety of campaigns and political processes that provide starting points. Local struggles against the extractivist policies of transnational corporations in the fields of mining, oil, and gas extraction and energy production are key. Both union organizing and labour struggles along the production and supply chains and campaigns against the exercise of political influence by transnational corporations are of major significance.

An important step in this direction is the attempt by left-wing governments, civil society organizations, and trade unions to create a binding intergovernmental agreement to regulate the business activities of transnational corporations. In 2014, on the initiative of Ecuador and South Africa, the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva created an intergovernmental working group and tasked it with drafting a binding international agreement on transnational corporations and human rights. Despite obstruction by countries such as the United States and Germany, the first draft of a UN treaty was presented in June 2019. Rather than providing investment protection, it would enshrine compliance with human rights, labour rights, and ecological standards. The movement pushing for such a treaty has the potential to bring together left-wing organizations and initiatives at different levels and to create the concrete beginnings of a politics of global solidarity. One further reason that the UN treaty is especially important is that it has fundamentally shifted the discourse on social and ecological sustainability along supply chains: away from neoliberal governance by the corporations themselves – which use voluntary codes of conduct that prescribe guidelines regulating aspects of how their suppliers shall produce, and attractively designed sustainability seals to give consumers the impression that conditions are fair – to state regulation, which puts the onus on transnational corporations to show that they are fulfilling their obligations.

36 Pye, Oliver, "Für einen *labour turn* der Umweltbewegung: Umkämpfte Naturverhältnisse und Strategien sozial-ökologischer Transformation", *Prokla* 189, 4/2017, pp. 528f.

In Germany, an alliance of NGOs, trade unions and churches is calling for a supply chain law that would be modelled on the United Nation's Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, and would regulate the business activities of transnational corporations based in Germany. The Supply Chain Act initiative calls on the German government to enshrine companies' human rights due diligence obligations in law and attach clear consequences to non-compliance.³⁷ Despite all of their shortcomings, such initiatives represent important building blocks for global solidarity.

3.6 Struggles for Global Social Rights and Labour Rights

The idea of "global solidarity" is further consolidated when considered in light of the concept of global social rights.³⁸ Here, the point of departure is an extension of the discourse on political freedom and personal rights to include economic, social, and cultural rights as integral components of human rights. The UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) already lists some basic social rights. In the context of the confrontation between the two blocs of the Cold War and the decolonization movements, economic, social, and cultural human rights (ESCR) were further elaborated. In addition to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the aforementioned ICESCR was also adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1966. The ICESCR formulates far-reaching social rights. These include the right to self-determination (Article 1), equal rights for men and women (Article 3), the rights to work and adequate remuneration (Articles 6 and 7), the right to form trade unions (Article 8), the right to social security (Article 9), the protection of families, pregnant women, mothers and children (Article 10), the right to an adequate standard of living, including adequate food, clothing, and housing (Article 11), the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health (Article 12), the right to education (Article 13), and the right to participate in cultural life (Article 15).

Social human rights have also been formulated in other international legal documents. These include the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979), the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), the International Convention on the Rights of Migrant Workers (2003), and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2008). In 2018, after a 17-year negotiation process, the UN General Assembly also adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas. The struggles of indigenous groups for their rights are also of major importance for the extension of social human rights.

In the field of labour rights, the International Labour Organization (ILO), a UN organization founded in 1948, has defined a series of fundamental rights in eight conventions. These "ILO core labour standards" deal with the right to organize, the right to collective bargaining, the abolition of forced labour, equal pay, the prohibition of discrimination in employment and occupation, and the elimination of the worst forms of child labour.

The social human rights and global labour rights defined by the United Nations and other supranational organizations such as the Council of Europe (European Social Charter) now provide a relatively broadly formulated normative framework, of which a politics of global solidarity can make use. The challenge is above all to create mechanisms for the binding implementation of these rights. This can only be done through the pressure of local and nation-state-based campaigns and efforts at implementation.

The struggle to recreate, expand, and deepen global social human rights can serve as a point of orientation for campaigns and organizing processes whose demands often go beyond UN standards. Local groups can link up through these struggles. One example has been the campaigns by La Via Campesina and other organizations and networks for the Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Others Working in Rural Areas, mentioned above. Another is the campaign for the UN Convention on Domestic Workers, which has facilitated a good deal of organizing at the national and local levels.

At the same time, those social rights that have already been defined can serve as a legitimizing foundation and a strategic starting point for the development of transnational organizing. This is demonstrated by the campaigns run by international trade union federations such as IndustriALL and UNI Global Union for the enforcement of global framework agreements with transnational corporations. These agreements provide for the implementation of minimum labour rights on the basis of ILO core labour standards. They can create opportunities for transnational organizing along production and value chains and thus strengthen trade union enforcement strategies. Ultimately, success in the enforcement of labour rights always depends on strengthening the organizational power of trade unions.

Meanwhile, the struggle for the extension of global social rights also opens up the opportunity to influence legislative or even constitutional processes at the national level. This can be seen, for example, in the push to

37 See the initiative's website: <https://lieferkettengesetz.de/>.

38 For an introduction, see Fischer-Lescano, Andreas/Möller, Kolja, *Der Kampf um globale soziale Rechte: Zart wäre das Größte*, Berlin: 2012.

include basic social rights such as the right to housing in Germany's Basic Law. The constitutional processes of left-wing governments in Ecuador, Bolivia, and Venezuela in the first decade of the twenty-first century exemplified the ambitious intention to elevate social, economic, and cultural rights to constitutional status. The struggles for global social rights have good strategic potential. They are able to link struggles at the local and national levels with global processes. They can contribute to the transnationalization of social movements. And they can create a strategic link between extra-parliamentary social movements and left-wing parties in parliament.

3.7 The Transnational Feminist Movement

Feminist ambitions cannot be limited to a single domain, but must be a constitutive component of all reflections that aim towards a new internationalism. Understanding the ways that relations of oppression and exploitation—such as along the axes of gender, sexuality, place of origin, skin colour, or class—interconnect is essential for all analytical and strategic reflections towards the necessary socio-ecological transformation. We need to take up the criticisms advanced by feminists from the Global South who point to connections between extractivism, violence against women, and the extreme exploitation of working women's bodies, just as we need to reject overpopulation debates that operate at the expense of reproductive justice for marginalized women. For this to happen, women must be actually—and not just formally—enabled to participate on an equal footing in participatory democratic processes, in decision-making positions, and jobs in the socio-ecological transformation of industry and infrastructure.

This includes, among other things, social and economic security as well as the redistribution of the work of caring for relatives and communities, which is still largely performed by women. In today's economic order, the political responses to financial and economic crises usually involve cutbacks, privatization, or the non-provision of public resources for care work, since this work generates little or no profit and women have always been counted on to carry it out for little or no pay. This has also led to gaps in the provision of public services being filled by—mostly female and migrant—domestic workers and caregivers under precarious conditions, as well as to the emergence of global care chains.

A reversal of these effects also has to start by working to introduce solidarity-based economic and trade relations, as described above, and democratically controlled financial markets. These represent basic presuppositions of a (feminist) economy that would be oriented towards human needs and care for one another, would preserve ecological foundations, and in which the production of goods would also serve these goals. In other words, an economy that would take account not just of paid activities. It is therefore above all a feminist demand when we say that the dismantling of certain economic sectors in a transformative Green New Deal needs to be go hand in hand with the extension of social infrastructure and with its shaping in accordance with the idea of solidarity.

This includes not only access to services, especially for marginalized groups, but also good, non-discriminatory working conditions for employees in the care sector. Concrete starting points in this area include the transnational trade union networks that confront globally active healthcare corporations, or organizing around ILO Convention 189 on domestic work and beyond.

At the global level, however, and inextricably linked with the project of decolonization, a far broader process is crucial: that of overcoming the social and economic devaluation of women and all of the political, legal, ideological, and cultural forms that support it. This massive task is currently being tackled by a growing transnational feminist movement. Particularly through the use of the feminist strike—declared in over 50 countries in 2020—not only is a better networking of regional movements developing, but also a convergence of different concrete struggles with a common interpretive frame.

One challenge for a new internationalism lies in the fact that, at least in part, the divisions of the world community are reproduced because international meetings and activities are dependent on Western donors or are based on the contacts they create. This is despite the fact that the impetus for feminist movements currently comes from countries in the Global South and the countries of the European periphery. Movements in the economic centres of the Global North should draw on this impetus to exert direct pressure in their own countries on those who benefit from a hierarchical world order. As described above, in order to support this process, it is an ongoing challenge to formulate demands that are accessible to a broad range of electoral groups.

Nonetheless, through increasingly energetic reciprocal interactions between regional and international processes as well as between specific struggles and a fundamental critique of society, feminist movements are currently exerting an influence on various fields of action. In order to ensure that actual feminist demands are not engulfed by the pressure of traversing multiple, challenging topics, one strategic task is to strengthen the organization of this feminist international in the making and to take up its impulses.

3.8 Migrants' Rights and Solidarity Cities

Against the backdrop of growing global inequalities, climate crises, and wars, the right to global freedom of movement and settlement is another strategic domain for a new internationalism of global solidarity. Here, with the growing sanctuary city movements in North America and solidarity cities in Europe, we are seeing the emergence of particular, concrete locations — urban space — for putting global social rights into practice.³⁹

Since the 1990s, the political leaders of EU member states and the USA have pushed ahead with policies restricting migration, further sealed off their borders, and thereby accepted the deaths of thousands of people seeking asylum via routes into Europe or the United States. At the same time, more and more city governments, municipal administrations, and civil society movements in North America and Europe have declared their cities to be sanctuary or solidarity cities.

They strive for more inclusive immigration policies, protection of rejected asylum seekers and undocumented migrants against deportation, improved security of residence for people with precarious residency status, and the extension of social and political rights for all city residents without local citizenship, but often also for a democratization of urban life in general.

In Europe, solidarity cities demonstrate the growing importance of urban political alliances in the fight against the Europe-wide shift to the right and the tightening of European border and migration policies. In the EU, it is not only the policy of sealing Europe off at the Mediterranean or the question of national citizenship and the legal status of foreigners that play important roles for the living conditions of migrants, but also the policies of cities and municipalities. It is therefore crucial to the development of a left-wing strategy in the area of migration policy that the various city networks be critically engaged. Above all, it is a question of how local political measures can be developed with which national and European migration controls and mechanisms of exclusion can be circumvented or even overridden, at least at the municipal level.

What at first appear to be two separate issues — EU border policies and social rights in the city — turn out on closer inspection to belong together. By experimenting with new ways to decouple access to rights and resources from nationality and citizenship, for example through municipal identity cards,⁴⁰ solidarity cities also, at least implicitly, strengthen struggles for open borders. For although for a growing number of people the preconditions of access to social rights are given, the right to (global) freedom of movement and settlement demanded by pro-migrant initiatives and refugee movements has so far not been incorporated into the catalogues of social rights in the narrower sense. What is referred to as freedom of movement, i.e. the free choice of place of residence, belongs — according to its character — rather to individual liberties and thus to civil rights. Article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights gives everyone “the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state” and “to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country”. The Declaration thus recognizes a right to emigrate, but not a right to immigrate.

This legal gap is a matter of debate within the (academic) Left. Authors who try to take a global perspective in inequality studies or political philosophy see the undivided right to global freedom of movement and settlement as one of the most important preconditions for access to many other (social) rights and thus for the goal of global social justice. Political scientist Joseph Carens, for example, writes that, given existing barriers to mobility, citizenship in a wealthy country is comparable to feudal privilege for the majority of people in the world, since it distributes life chances in an enormously unequal way. Anyone who is seriously committed to individual freedom, Carens argues, cannot avoid accepting a general right to international freedom of movement.⁴¹

The “visa politics” pursued in the northern hemisphere, especially by the EU and the US, and the associated unequal access to global mobility (the “global mobility divide”), is even described by sociologist Stephan Lessenich as a central pillar of “externalization societies”. In this way, the “imperial mode of living” and the privileges of the Global North are maintained at the expense of people in the Global South: “Opportunities for mobility are a monopolized resource that one claims for oneself, but denies to others. The regulation of physical movement — some are mobile, others are demobilized — is an essential element of the Western lifestyle.”⁴²

By contrast, in solidarity city movements and networks, a right to global freedom of movement and settlement for all is, as a matter of practice, recognized, and attempts are made to implement global social rights in the local political space. The Charter of Palermo, which Palermo’s mayor Leoluca Orlando formulated in 2015 and

39 For an extensive treatment, see Wenke, Christoph/Kron, Stefanie (eds.), *Solidarische Städte in Europa: Urbane Politik zwischen Charity und Citizenship*, Berlin: 2019, www.rosalux.de/fileadmin/rls_uploads/pdfs/sonst_publicationen/Broschur_SolidarischeStaedte_2teAuf_web.pdf.

40 New York, for example, introduced the New York City Identification Card (IDNYC) in 2014. This was a key reform brought in by the new mayor Bill de Blasio. Anyone who can prove residency in New York receives the IDNYC card, regardless of citizenship or residency status. Homeless people can list an aid organization as their address. The ID card entitles the holder to sign a lease, attend school, join libraries, open a bank account, and so on. This has significantly improved the living situation of hundreds of thousands of people without secure residence status. See Lebuhn, Henrik, “Ich bin New York’: Bilanz des kommunalen Personalausweises in New York City”, *LuXemburg* 3/2016, <https://www.zeitschrift-luxemburg.de/kommunaler-perso-new-york-city/>

41 Carens, Joseph H., “Aliens and Citizens: The Case for Open Borders”, *The Review of Politics* 2/1987, pp. 251–273.

42 Lessenich, Stefan, *Neben uns die Sintflut: Die Externalisierungsgesellschaft und ihr Preis*, Berlin: 2017, p. 137.

which many solidarity cities in Europe have since cited, is a particularly clear example. In the Charter, Orlando explicitly calls for the abolition of residence permits, the linking of civil rights to a person's place of residence, and the unconditional guarantee of the (human) right to global freedom of movement and settlement.⁴³

In the Anglo-American debate, such policies are discussed under the label "urban citizenship". The language of urban or regional forms of citizenship is used when local policy instruments are introduced that not only guarantee or extend social participation to citizens, but also integrate city dwellers who do not have formal citizenship status or whose marginalized social position prevents their making use of it.⁴⁴

In contrast to the debate in German-speaking countries, the concept of urban citizenship makes it possible to address the topic of migration not in terms of discourses of cultural difference, such as the integration *dispositif*, attributions of ethnicity, or the alleged formation of parallel societies. Instead, the focus is placed on the tension between belonging to a political community on the one hand and the possibilities of social participation that go along with it on the other. This, in turn, concerns not only migrants—even if they are often excluded from (formal) citizenship—but all people who, in the course of neoliberalization processes, are pushed into the social margins and whose social and civil rights are de facto curtailed.

In this sense, urban citizenship is not limited to preventing deportations. Rather, it is about strengthening social rights and participation in society in their various dimensions: social rights to health, education, housing, work, but also cultural and gender-specific rights. Contrary to the often expressed reservation that fundamental changes in these areas can only be achieved at the national level, there is certainly some scope for action at the state and local level—at least if activists, local politicians and administrations pull together.

There is a model of this in the area of health policy. Although hardly any area is as strictly regulated as is access to the public health care system, it has now been possible in several German states to provide medical care for people without access to the statutory health insurance funds through alternative public programmes. This, in turn, benefits not only migrants without regular residency status, but also many other people who have been pushed out of mainstream care on account of their social marginalization. In Berlin, medical treatment with an anonymous health insurance voucher was made possible in mid-2019. The health certificate itself is obtained via a non-governmental counselling centre without the person having to disclose their identity or legal status.⁴⁵ While such programmes are far from perfect, they reflect the insight that society as a whole is responsible for guaranteeing everyone the right to health and financing it publicly. One problem with solidarity cities, however, is that the local scope of municipal regulations on health care, for example, means that they do not provide access to social safety net systems, which mostly sit at the federal level. Solidarity city and urban citizenship policies, while important, are therefore only a small step in the right direction.

The situation can be summarized by observing that the solidarity and sanctuary city movements and alliances in Europe and North America are politically very heterogeneous, pursue different interests, and raise a variety of expectations on the part of other political actors. It is possible to distinguish four dimensions of intervention in migration policy at the municipal level. The first of these is protection from the prosecution and deportation of irregular migrants and rejected asylum seekers. This feature is common across the US and Canadian sanctuary city movement, which by now encompasses 560 cities, counties, and states. The second dimension is that of human rights intervention. The Seebrücke initiative and the mayors of European cities such as Berlin, Cologne, Düsseldorf, Bonn, Barcelona, Palermo, and Naples, who in the summer of 2018 publicly expressed their willingness to accept refugees fleeing by boat directly into their cities, are primarily concerned with supporting human rights through an intervention in the humanitarian crisis of the European border and asylum regime. Third, there is the politics of urban citizenship. Through innovative experiments such as municipal ID cards in New York, San Francisco, Barcelona, and Zurich, and the anonymous health card in Berlin, city governments are attempting to implement global social rights at the municipal level and thus to decouple them from the residency status and nationality of city residents. The fourth dimension, finally, is the "right to the city". The activist solidarity city network is concerned with a fundamental democratization of urban life. It is a social movement that fights for a city that is more emphatically grounded in solidarity, more socially just, and in which everybody can better participate. Thus, while neoliberal institutions such as the World Economic Forum emphasize urban policies of inclusion and diversity as engines of economic development, left-wing movements see solidarity cities as a "space for progressive politics in Europe".⁴⁶

43 Orlando, Leoluca, "Internationale Freizügigkeit von Menschen: Charta von Palermo", 2015, www.linksfraktion-hamburg.de/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/PDF-CARTA-DI-PALERMO-GER.pdf.

44 In recent contributions to this debate, citizenship is not only understood as a status that people either possess or do not possess. In addition, focus is placed on the political and social struggles through which recognition, rights, and access to resources are fought for and won in the first place. Especially with regard to the situation of migrants and refugees, Engin Isin and Greg Nielsen have coined the expression "acts of citizenship" to describe these struggles for rights. See Isin, Engin/Nielsen, Greg, *Acts of Citizenship*, London: 2008.

45 See Medibüro Berlin, "Hintergrund anonymer Krankenschein", December 2018, <https://medibuero.de/anonymer-krankenschein/>.

46 See Watch the med/Alarmphone, "From the Sea to the City!", 27.7.2018, <https://alarmphone.org/en/2018/07/27/from-the-sea-to-the-city/>.

For all their diversity, the alliances and networks of solidarity and sanctuary cities articulate a deep political dissent with the increasingly restrictive and exclusive migration policies at the national and regional levels. Therein lies their political relevance and potential strength. But they also come up against limits. For example, in the long run, the goal cannot be to move the issue of social rights to the municipal level and thus produce a regulatory patchwork. Municipal recognition of the right to global freedom of movement and settlement constitute a powerful appeal, but as long as national and regional governments demonstratively continue their hard-line border policies—as in the case of the blockade of sea rescue attempts in the Mediterranean— it will hardly have a positive impact on most refugees.

In order for global freedom of movement to make it onto the catalogues of chartered human rights and for global social rights to be implemented beyond particular urban spaces, we need new or strengthened political alliances at the national and regional levels—for example, with civil society organizations concerned with development issues, open-minded administrations, and progressive politicians. A growing number of politicians and activists in urban political alliances now know that migration struggles and urban citizenship policies do not serve particularized interests, but emphasize precisely the common interest of (supposedly) different groups: social justice. It is precisely the link between the demand for the right to freedom of movement and the demand for global social rights in cities that opens up the possibility of opposing neoliberal and far-right global elites with a solidarity-based response.

4 TOWARDS TWO, THREE, OR MANY NEW INTERNATIONALS: STRENGTHENING THE TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF THE LEFT

With the historic defeat of the socialist states in 1989, the global context and the conditions for left-wing initiatives of varying political identities and ideological orientations have fundamentally shifted. The worldwide imposition of neoliberalism has put the Left and social movements on the defensive. Those socialist states that still remain—such as Cuba, Vietnam and the People’s Republic of China—have also had to adapt their policies to the new situation.⁴⁷ That the Left—viewed in global perspective—is weak can be seen from the enormous growth of global inequality and the rapid acceleration of environmental destruction.

Nevertheless, there are different contexts in which left-wing groups have repeatedly succeeded in gaining strength since 1989. The Zapatista uprising in the Mexican state of Chiapas in 1994 ushered in a wave of mobilization of social movements and, in particular, the indígena movement in Latin America. With the electoral victory of Hugo Chávez in Venezuela (1999), Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and the Workers’ Party in Brazil (2003), Evo Morales in Bolivia (2006), and the formation of left-wing governments in Ecuador (2007) and Argentina (2007), government projects under the banner of “twenty-first century socialism” emerged in Latin America at the end of the 1990s and the beginning of the 2000s—even if by now these are already history again. In Europe, a number of new or renewed left-wing parties developed out of the protests against austerity policies after the global economic crisis of 2009. In Germany, Die Linke became the first party to establish itself to the left of the Social Democrats since World War II. In the United States, left-wing democrats were able to achieve significant electoral successes and popularize the ideas of “democratic socialism” among a broad public. With the new feminist movement, the climate justice movement, and the democracy and social protest movements of autumn 2019, mass movements with a strong capacity to mobilize have emerged in many countries, from Chile to Lebanon to Iraq.

Boiling the last 30 years down somewhat schematically, we can identify three major waves of transnational left-wing movements. Against the background of the resurgence of the Latin American left, the second half of the 1990s and the beginning of the 2000s saw the development of a global justice movement (or alter- or anti-globalization movement). One point of departure was the 1996 “Intergalactic Meeting Against Neoliberalism” in Chiapas, initiated by the Zapatistas. This was followed by the first World Social Forum in Porto Alegre (2001) and the resulting process of transnational networking in various World Social Forums and continental and sectoral meetings. Latin American left-wing governments began to coordinate. High points in the mobilization of the global justice movement were the WTO conference in Seattle in 1999 (the “Battle of Seattle”) and the

47 A nuanced examination of developments in Cuba, Vietnam, and China is beyond the scope of the present text. However, it is clear that these countries have become more or less integrated into the world market and each help to constitute global value chains. Nevertheless, they still have a relatively high proportion of state ownership of the means of production and pursue nationally integrated development goals. China, in particular—despite its authoritarianism and its integration into the world market—has also achieved enormous socio-political successes. Cuba plays an important role in supporting left-wing government projects and left-wing initiatives in Latin America.

protests against the G8 summit in Genoa in 2001. The founding of the São Paulo Forum (back in 1990) and of the Party of the European Left (EL) in 2004—as associations of Latin American and European left-wing parties, respectively—were part of this transnational movement cycle, which ended at the latest with the global economic crisis in 2009.

A second transnational mobilization cycle began in 2010–11. It initially involved spontaneous mass protests against austerity policies in the wake of the global economic crisis, commencing in December 2010 with a revolt in Tunisia that is also considered the beginning of the Arab Spring. It then spread to protests in Egypt, Syria, and numerous other countries. In Southern Europe, mass mobilizations and occupations of city squares took place—especially in Greece and Spain from 2011, and continuing in countries in Southeastern Europe (Slovenia in 2013, Bosnia-Herzegovina in 2014) and Turkey (the Gezi Park protests of 2013). In the US, Occupy Wall Street was a part of this cycle of protest against austerity. Despite transnational links in terms of framing and forms of mobilization, the protests were mostly oriented toward political processes at the level of the nation-state. On 14 November 2012, militant unions organized a first set of parallel strikes and protests—mainly in various Southern European countries—against the austerity policies of the EU Commission. However, attempts to sustain a lasting European mobilization against those policies were not successful. While protests in Arab countries were sometimes brutally put down (Egypt, Syria), in some Southern European countries left-wing political formations emerged in the form of new, renewed, or strengthened political parties: Syriza in Greece 2015–2019, Podemos in Spain beginning in 2019, Bloco des Esquerda in Portugal beginning in 2015, Levica in Slovenia, the Peoples’ Democratic Party (HDP) in Turkey, and the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) in the United States. The mobilization cycle—and in some cases, left-wing parties’ subsequent participation in government—ended either in defeats or partial successes.

A third wave of international protests appears to have begun in late 2018 with the yellow vests movement in France. It continued in 2019 with mass protests in Sudan, Ecuador, Chile, Haiti, Lebanon, Egypt, Iraq, and other countries. In some ways, some of these protests appear to be a continuation of the surge of anti-austerity protests of 2011. As they did then, economic protests have been flaring up around local conflicts and disputes, such as gasoline price increases (France and Ecuador). However, these movements have quickly established transnational links and addressed overarching problems such as authoritarianism, corruption, and nepotism on the part of political elites. It remains to be seen how these movements will develop and whether they will become institutionalized. The crisis surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic and the onset of the global recession have created an entirely new context with unprecedented conditions that are certain to provoke dramatic political reactions.

Following a different dynamic, in recent decades a number of sectoral transnational movements and organizations have developed that exhibit far more consistency and continuity than the spontaneous protest movements. Foremost among these are the global movement for climate justice and the new feminist transnational movement. Important transnational organizing processes also include the development of effective networks of peasants’ organizations such as La Via Campesina and the development of global union federation organizations such as IndustriALL and UNI Global Union. At times, these sectoral movements and organizations have considerable capacities for mobilization and hundreds of local affiliates. Existing alongside these are international networks, such as Attac, that have extensive expertise on the issues they address. The sectoral transnational movements are linked to a large network of local or international NGOs. The NGO sector is very heterogeneous. The tendency for activist groups to become more professionalized and politically embedded—an effect of the way NGOs function via international donor structures—should be viewed critically. On the other hand, many NGOs offer activist groups the opportunity for lasting activity beyond cycles of protest. Thus, when it comes to a transnational organization of the Left, countless beginnings already exist. The central question relates back to how they can grow their power to politicize, mobilize, and achieve their goals. Here, too, connecting decentralization and the establishment of transnational linkages seems crucial. The starting point for fostering transnational organizing on the Left lies first and foremost in strengthening left-wing initiatives that, while operating at local and nation-state levels, are oriented toward a politics of global solidarity and active in relevant broader networks. Usually, alliances work best when they are supported by a number of groups—where each group has a mobilization potential of its own, but all of them share a particular orientation. Examples from the past include the historic solidarity campaigns against apartheid in South Africa in the 1970s and 1980s—which involved churches, trade unions, left-wing initiatives, and socialist states—but also the campaign against TTIP from 2013 to 2016, in which a broad coalition of civil society groups, trade unions, political parties, and governments worked together.

Against the backdrop of this deeply heterogeneous landscape of existing initiatives, it does not seem fitting to strive for the founding of a “Fifth International” that would aspire to form a “world party”. The homogenizing call for a “world party” stands in contradiction to the political commitment to decentralization, self-determination, and participation articulated by most emancipatory social movements. On the contrary, today we could echo

Che Guevara's injunction to "create two, three, many Vietnams" with an appeal for the creation of "two, three, many Internationals". This approach could consist in the development of numerous international organizing processes oriented towards particular problems and conflicts. Whether one considers the struggle for climate justice, feminism, peasants' rights, or the assertion of labour rights—in all of these fields of action, numerous transnational networks capable of taking action have already developed; they now need to be strengthened and developed.

At the same time, however, work would still be necessary across sectoral boundaries on overarching political projects such as a transformative and socialist GND and the strengthening of general networks. With their motto "another world is possible", the World Social Forums represented one such venue for cross-sectoral discussion and networking. Political efforts should be made to build on these processes and work towards creating new forums. An important element of this effort would involve transforming the division between social movements and left-wing parties into a cooperative relationship. It would also be crucial that the ownership of international forums lies with initiatives that are actually politically grounded and possess real mobilizing potential. Too often, international forums are a playground for groups and individuals without a real base.

Thinking global solidarity in this way, namely in terms of pluralistic internationals, networks of the many could arise, each one linking initiatives that respect difference and relate to one another in a spirit of cooperation and solidarity. However, such spaces of cooperation and solidarity are yet to be forged. For this to happen, strategic discussions will be just as crucial as the concrete inputs of political organizations to open these spaces and to fill them with political initiatives.