

Conference “Europe – what’s left? Strategies after the coup”

Berlin, June 2-5, 2016

Venue: Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung, Franz-Mehring-Platz 1, D-10243 Berlin

The events in Greece have shown that we have to rethink previous ideas about paths to political and social change. We need a new discussion of the content and forms of common organising and praxis. Many developments have made this clear – from refugee policy to the increasingly authoritarian policies in Europe, from the austerity regime to the state of emergency, from growing repression to more plans for a reconstructed neoliberal EU. As the first step, we are inviting activists from different left parties, extra-parliamentary organisations, trade unions, and social movements of many European countries to exchange views on initiatives of left politics and on how much room for manoeuvre there is: How can we act together and develop effective left solidarity, even if our starting point, our analysis, our forms and areas of activity, and our immediate goals are different?

Against the background of defeat – not only of SYRIZA but of the whole European left – one thing is certain: Europe and the EU are no longer what they were. From a left perspective the European Union cannot be defended as a project of supposed European unification without succumbing to pure illusion. Some of us have never made this project our own. But what then? What should be done, and how, and who should do it? What positions could be not just programmatic but capable of changing the relations of force? It is not only in Greece that recent developments have been leading to divisions in the left. Now there are many initiatives in Europe pointing in different directions, coexisting but unconnected.

We will need not only to redefine what our political contents are; we will also have to find appropriate political forms to carry them out. They must be strategically connectable and simultaneously link activities on diverse levels – local/municipal, national, and European. In view of the scarce resources there is the question of what ‘the right’ level is in each case, ‘the right’ instrument of political intervention and organising. Despite differing positions and ideas of goals, the point is to find connective perspectives and practices, which, if they do not permit a unified *modus operandi*, at least allow for a synchronisation of an emancipatory-solidary politics of resistance for another Europe.

The language of the conference is English.

Programme (as at June 1, 2016)

Thursday, June 2

18:00-20:30 Public discussion “The scope of the left in government: The examples of Greece and Thuringia”

The blackmail of the Greek government by its international creditors continues: Again they are demanding further “reforms” (i.e. lower wages and pensions, further privatisations etc.), threatening not to pay the next tranches of the credits promised last year. Although there are differences between the IMF and the EU (the IMF demands unbearable reforms but also acknowledges the necessity of a further debt relief which is blocked by the EU), the Greek government could not profit from these differences. On the contrary, the additional demands and open questions are threatening to asphyxiate the Greek government. The situation in the state of Thuringia is comparable to Greece in some respect: Here we also have a left government in a federal state with a relatively weak industrial structure and financial restrictions which are imposed by the federal government of Germany. What is the scope of left governments under these conditions? How do they deal with the problem of neoliberal ‘multi-level governance’ in the EU and in Germany respectively? How do they relate to trade unions and social movements and their critique? To what extent is it possible to defend or to augment workers’ rights and change the balance of forces progressively despite the financial restrictions?

Speakers: Georgios Katrougalos (Minister of Labour, Social Insurance and Social Solidarity of the Hellenic Republic and Professor of Public Law at Democritus University of Thrace) and Susanne Hennig-Wellsow (Chairwoman of the parliamentary group of DIE LINKE in Thuringia)

Facilitator: Martin Schirdewan (Head of the Brussels office of Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung)

Friday, June 3

Lunch

13:30-14:00 Welcome and introduction (Mario Candeias, Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung)

14:00-15:30 Plenary session 1: The multiple crises in Europe and the crisis of the left

- **Two inputs** (10 minutes each) on the asynchrony of crises (including aspects like the unequal economic and social development in Europe, the refugee movements, the rise of authoritarian populism and neo-fascism, the state of emergency etc.) by Sandro Mezzadra (Professor of Political Theory at the University of Bologna and EuroNomade, Italy) and Nikola Vukobratović (Editor of Le monde diplomatique Croatia)
- **Two inputs** (10 minutes each) on the state of the left in Europe: Gabi Zimmer (Chairwoman of the parliamentary group of GUE/NGL in the European Parliament) and Maurilio Pirone (Coalition of social centres, Italy)
- **Discussion** (50 minutes): What is the current balance of forces in Europe and what are the challenges for the left at present?

Facilitators: Mario Candeias (Director of the Institute of Critical Social Analysis, Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung) and Corinna Genschel (Liaison office of the parliamentary group of DIE LINKE for social movements)

15:30-16:30 Break

16:30-18:30 Plenary session 2: Alliances of actors, programmatic alternatives and practices of the left regarding the transformation of Europe

Central questions:

Which forces are the bearers of the different goals and strategies regarding European politics (plan A, plan B, plan C ...)? How are the programmatic alternatives translated into concrete practices? How are national and European debates connected to each other? Are there common demands and connecting points despite diverging assessments of the present situation and different goals? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the various practices? What are their conditions of success?

Brief inputs on European alliances of actors, platforms, campaigns and practices – with a self-critical view (the task is not just to introduce actors or to propagate initiatives, but to shed light on their weaknesses and to discuss their challenges):

- Solidarity with the refugees: Katarina Anastasiou (change4all, Austria)
- Local practices of solidarity and the new municipalism: Kate Shea Baird (Barcelona en comú, Spanish State)
- Left politics at the national level – the case of Portugal: Catarina Principe (Bloco de esquerda, Portugal)
- Left politics at the national level – the case of Slovenia: Kira Cerjak (Initiative for Democratic Socialism, Slovenia)
- The European Left Party: Eleonora Forenza (Member of the European Parliament, Lista Tsipras - L'Altra Europa, Italy) (tbc)
- AlterSummit: Felipe van Keirsbilck (General Secretary of Centrale nationale des employés, Belgium)
- Blockupy: Corinna Genschel (Liaison office of the parliamentary group of DIE LINKE for social movements)
- The Transnational Social Strike platform: Eleonora Cappuccilli (Precarious [dis]connections, Italy)
- Plan B: Hadrien Clouet (Parti de Gauche, France)
- DiEM25: Cristina Soler-Savini (DiEM 25, France)
- **Questions & answers**

Moderation: Johanna Bussemer (Centre for International Dialog and Cooperation, Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung) and Martin Schirdewan (Head of the Brussels office of Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung)

18:30-19:45 Dinner

20:00-22:30 Public discussion “One year after the coup: Europe between violence and solidarity”

After the subjugation of the Greek government led by Syriza there was the summer of migration. The self-empowerment of the multitude of migrants achieved what the movements against austerity politics did not achieve: One of the pillars of the European Union, the border regime based on the Dublin agreement was overturned. And with the reintroduction of border controls the Schengen agreement is also obsolete temporarily. Fissures are looming in the European power blocs. The

debate about the refugees and the response to the terrorist attacks with the declaration of the state of emergency reveal a growing authoritarianism of the governing elites and a right-wing populism radicalizing itself. However, there are strong moments of solidarity time and again: From the structures of solidarity among the people in Greece and Spain to the protests against austerity, and from the solidarity with Greece to the initiatives welcoming refugees, people conceive their commitment as a political intervention and an expression of a democratic mode of life. How do we understand the present situation? How can an emancipatory practice become visible and effective in a situation of social and political polarization?

Welcome address: Dagmar Enkelmann (Chairwoman of Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung)

Speakers: Katja Kipping (Chairwoman of DIE LINKE, Germany), Srećko Horvat (DiEM 25, Croatia), Giorgos Chondros (Syriza, Greece), Miguel Urbán Crespo (Podemos, Spain)

Facilitator: Hilary Wainwright (GB, Red Pepper/Transform!)

Saturday, June 4

10:00-10:30 **Presentation of the workshops**

10:30-13:30 **Workshops on the development of connective practices**

Workshop 1: ***European Platforms***: We experience the formation of new actors, platforms and alliances in Europe (DiEM25, „Plan B“ etc.). Which dynamics can they develop? What is the relation between the new initiatives on the one hand and organisations and alliances that have existed for a longer time (like the European Left Party, the AlterSummit alliance and the Blockupy alliance) on the other hand?

Facilitators: Corinna Genschel (Liaison office of the parliamentary group of DIE LINKE for social movements) and Mario Neumann (Institut Solidarische Moderne, Germany)

Inputs: Cristina Soler-Savini (DiEM 25, France), Tom Kucharz (Ecologistas en acción, Spanish State)

Workshop 2: ***European Campaigns***: How could we develop a campaign against the authoritarian regime of austerity? How could we mobilize for such a campaign? What could we learn from the campaign against TTIP in this regard? Which role could an European citizens' initiative or a "wild referendum" play in this regard? How could different forms of practice be connected in such a campaign? How could the struggles against austerity, against free trade agreements, for the defence and re-appropriation of the commons, for the freedom of movement, for social rights and "real" democracy be connected? What could be the focal point which unites a broad spectrum of democratic and emancipatory oriented actors?

Facilitators: Judith Dellheim (Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung) and Ramona Hering (Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung)

Inputs: Kenneth Haar (Corporate Europe Observatory, Belgium) and Chiara Filoni (CADTM, Belgium)

Workshop 3: ***Rebel Cities and Everyday Organizing***: With local social movements and progressive city governments in the Spanish state, a *new municipalism* has gained importance. Are there practices which could be generalized? How could the limits of this municipalism be overcome by a jump to a higher scale (at the national and/or European level)? In the face of the limitations of existing forces and resources, how

could organising in every-day life, building solidarity structures and at the transnational level be connected? What is our focus and what are our priorities? Which role do actions of civil disobedience and other forms of practices play? How could we retrieve political dynamic? How can radical forces and forces which are not so radical be united?

Facilitators: Mario Candeias (Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung) and Raul Zelik (DIE LINKE, Germany)

Inputs: Gala Pin (Barcelona en comú) and Christos Giovanopoulos (activist in solidarity networks, Greece)

Workshop 4: ***Transnational Union Organizing and Labour Rights***: How can the struggle for higher wages and better working conditions be organised at the European level? Which starting-points and which barriers are there for union organizing at the transnational level?

Facilitators: Boris Kanzleiter (Director of the Centre for International Dialogue and Cooperation, Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung) and Wenke Christoph (Belgrad office of Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung)

Inputs: Anastasia Frantseskaki (Dockworkers Union, Port of Piraeus, Greece), Nicolas Galepides (Solidaires, France), Piotr Ikonowicz (RSRP, Poland) (tbc), and Valentina Orazzini (FIOM, Italy) (tbc)

Workshop 5: ***Left Governments and Struggles on a National Level***: Which scope is there for leftist reform politics at the national level within the European Union? Is a rupture with neo-liberalism possible at the national level in the EU, and if yes, how? What are the conditions for a successful left in government?

Facilitators: Claus-Dieter König (Head of the Brussels office of Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung) and Lia Becker (DIE LINKE, Germany)

Inputs: Haris Golemis (Nicos Poulantzas Institute, Greece), Catarina Principe (Bloco de Esquerda, Portugal)

Workshop 6: ***Right Wing Populism and Left Strategies***: How could a class-based and popular-democratic strategy against right-wing populism and neo-fascism look like? Why have previous attempts to confront the new right-wing forces not been successful? Does the social and political polarisation hold the possibility of an emancipatory rupture? Or do we experience the beginning of a process of fascistisation which makes necessary a new defensive strategy? How do we get out of the defensive?

Facilitators: Cornelia Hildebrandt (Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung) and Thomas Sablowski (Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung)

Inputs: Christina Kaindl (DIE LINKE, Germany) and Antoine de Cabanes (PCF, France)

13:30-15:30 Lunch

15:30-18:00 Plenary session 3

Short reports from the workshops

What was the object of the debate? Which ideas have been developed? Which proposals of common practices were formulated?

Discussion

Facilitators: Henning Heine (Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung) and Ramona Hering (Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung)

18:00-20:00 Dinner

20:00-22:30 Public discussion: Plan A, B, C? What is uniting us?

A plan A in order to found Europe anew, a plan B, i.e. a left exit from the monetary union, or a plan C to develop an economy of solidarity from below? And how, at which level do we act – with a European platform, a party or a new municipalism of communes connected at the European level? What is connecting our different initiatives?

Welcome address: Heinz Bierbaum (DIE LINKE, Germany)

Speakers: Brid Brennan (Transnational Institute, The Netherlands) (tbc), Steffen Lehndorff („Founding Europe new“, Germany), Zoe Konstantopoulou (Plan B initiative, Greece), Catarina Príncipe (Bloco de Esquerda, Portugal) (tbc)

Facilitators: Corinna Genschel (liaison office of the parliamentary group of DIE LINKE for social movements) and Mario Candeias (Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung)

Sunday, June 5

10:00-13:00 Plenary session 4: Towards a constitutive process in Europe

Which Europe do we want – and with which strategy can we achieve it? Can the European institutions be democratized, and if yes, how? How could a constitutive process be shaped? How can we form actors who are able to develop counter-power and to intervene in institutional processes effectively?

Which conclusions do we draw from the discussions in the workshops? At which level (local, regional, national, transnational) are our priorities? How do we connect the different levels of action in the face of limited resources? How can we connect organizing in every-day life (in our neighbourhoods, at our workplaces), at the national parliamentary and extra-parliamentary level, and at the transnational level?

Introductory inputs (5 minutes each): Mario Candeias (Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung), Hilary Wainwright (Red Pepper, Great Britain), Walter Baier (Transform, Austria)

Discussion

Facilitators: Boris Kanzleiter (Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung) and Sandro Mezzadra (EuroNomade)

13:00 Farewell and a small lunch

The following persons have confirmed their participation in the conference:

Katerina Anastasiou (change4all, Austria), Walter Baier (Transform, Austria), Kate Shea Baird (Barcelona en Comú, Spanish state), Ricard Bellera Kirchoff (CCOO, Spanish state), Andrius Bielskis (Mykolas Romeris University, Vilnius, Lithuania), Heinz Bierbaum (DIE LINKE, Germany), Amieke Bouma (University of Amsterdam, Netherlands), Daphne Büllesbach (European Alternatives, Germany), Giuseppe Caccia (EuroNomade, Italy), Eleonora Cappucilli (Precarious [dis]connections, Italy), Franco Carminati (Attac, Belgium), Kira Cerjak (Initiative for Democratic Socialism, Slovenia), Eleni Chatzimichali (solidarity clinics, Greece), Giorgos Chondros (SYRIZA, Greece), Emma Clancy (Sinn Féin, Ireland), Alicja Czubek (RAZEM, Poland), Peter Damo (FSIE, Romania), Antoine de Cabanes (PCF, France), Klaus Dörre (University of Jena, Germany), Paul-Emile Dupret (GUE/NGL, Belgium), Oksana Dutchak (Center for Social and Labor Research, Ukraine), Chiara Filoni (CADTM, Belgium), Elenonora Forenza (Lista Tsipras, Italy), Anastasia Frantzeskaki (Dockworkers Union, Port of Piraeus, Greece), Nicolas Galepides (Solidaires, France), Sonja Giese (DIE LINKE, Germany), Martin Glasenapp (DIE LINKE, Germany), Christos Giovanopoulos (active in solidarity structures, Greece), Haris Golemis (Nicos Poulantzas Institute, Greece), Paula Guisande Boronat (CCOO, Spanish state), Kenneth Haar (Corporate Europe Observatory), Yannick Harrison (Roskilde University, Denmark), Katja Herzberg (neues deutschland, Germany), Susanne Hennig-Wellsow (DIE LINKE, Germany), Srećko Horvat (DiEM 25, Croatia), Jiří Hudeček (Party of Democratic Socialism, Czech Republic), Kees Hudig (www.globalinfo.nl, Netherlands), Andrej Hunko (DIE LINKE, Germany), Pjotr Ikonowicz (RSRP, Poland), Filip Ilkowski (Institute of Political Science, University of Warsaw, Poland), Federica Illiano (Ex OPG, Naples, Italy), Mariya Ivancheva (LeftEast, Bulgaria, and Attac, Ireland), Christina Kaindl (DIE LINKE, Germany), Georgios Katrougalos (SYRIZA, Greece), Katja Kipping (DIE LINKE, Germany), Zoe Konstantopoulou (Plefsi Eleftherias, Greece), Tasos Koronakis (Initiative for the network of the radical left, Greece), Dawid Krawczyk (Krytyka Polityczna, Poland), Lydia Krüger (DIE LINKE, Germany), Tom Kucharz (Ecologistas en acción, Spanish State), Steffen Lehdorff ("Europa neu begründen", Germany), Julia Lindblom (Allt åt alla, Sweden), Sandra Lindquist (President of the Student association of the Left, Sweden), Jirí Málek (SPED, Czech Republic), Heidi Meinzolt (Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Germany), Sandro Mezzadra (EuroNomade, Italy), Neil Michiels (LCR/SAP, Belgium), Jagoda Munic (Friends of the earth, Croatia), Wanda Nowicka (Association Equality and Modernity and Federation for Women and Family Planning, Poland), Lukas Oberndorfer (Arbeiterkammer Wien, Austria), Ana Oliveira (CGTP, Portugal), Valentina Orazzini (FIOM, Italy), Alexis Passadakis (Attac, Germany), Gala Pin (Barcelona en Comú, Spanish state), Maurilio Pirone (Coalizione dei centri sociali, Italy), Florin Poenaru (CriticAtac, Romania), Zoltán Pogátsa (DiEM 25, Hungary), Zakhar Popovych (Left Opposition, Ukraine), Catarina Príncipe (member of Bloco de Esquerda, Portugal), Pascoe Sabido (Corporate Europe Observatory, Belgium), Artan Sadiku (Solidarnost, Macedonia), Raúl Sanchez Cedillo (Fundación de los Comunes, Spanish state), Jussi Saramo (Left Alliance, Finland), Jan Schlemmer (Ums Ganze, Germany), György Sebestyén (Left Alternative Association, Hungary), Thomas Seibert (Interventionist Left, Germany), Cristina Soler-Savini (DiEM 25, France), Petar Stanic (Serbia), Steffen Stierle (Attac, Germany), Felix Syrovatka (DIE LINKE, Germany), Hadrien Toucel (Parti de Gauche, France), Miguel Urbán Crespo (Podemos), Myriam Vander Stichele (SOMO, Netherlands), Felipe van Keirsbilck (Centrale nationale des employés, Belgium), Eva Völpel (ver.di, Germany), Nikola Vukobratović (Le monde diplomatique, Croatia), Tanja Vukša (Levi Samit Srbije, Serbia), Asbjørn Wahl (Norwegian Union of Municipal and General Employees), Peter Wahl (WEED, Germany), Hilary Wainwright (Red Pepper, Great Britain), Raul Zelik (DIE LINKE, Germany), Gabi Zimmer (DIE LINKE, Germany).