

Berlin Seminar 7 – 9 July 2016

State of Affairs in Europe

Transform and the Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung invite political scientist and actors to debate the possibilities for common perspectives and action of the Left in Europe in Berlin-Seminar under the title: “State of Affairs in Europe” in Berlin on 7-9 July 2016.

Against the backdrop of blackmail of SYRIZA government in the negotiations with the institutions , further cuts to pensions and social benefits make the mass protests against these measures as against the implementation of the privatization, the continuation of neoliberal politics, the alarming soar of the far right in numerous countries, but also the introduction of new left leaning government in Portugal, the crumbling of the bi-partisan system in Spain which lead to new elections on 26 June, and after the referendum about Britain’s membership in the EU, we believe that a new determination of the positioning of the Left is necessary.

For this a number of conferences, seminars and debates have been taken place (especially the foundation and conferences of DiEM-25, the conference ‘Building alliances to Fight Austerity and to Reclaim Democracy’ in Athens, the Plan B-conferences and the strategy conference of the RLS). We do not intend to add another event to this sequence but rather try to draw provisional conclusions of these debates also in the view of the forthcoming congress of the EL.

Following topics we want to discuss

1. State of the Union

Given the severe multifaceted crisis of the European Union this first part of the workshops aims at taking stock of the various contradictory and polarizing tendencies: On the one side there is an effort to tighten the technocratic governance of the European institutions and their interplay with the member states (Five Presidents’ report, reorganisation of the EU Commission according to the “Better Regulation” reform package); on the other side in an various member states a process of alienation from the integration process takes place. We also see a political polarisation however in an asymmetrically at work; on the one side parties of the radical Left in the European South perform well in national elections and challenge the regime of austerity, on the other side parties of the far right gain ground in Northern, Central and Eastern Europe. Nationalism is growing all across the European Union and impacting even the political agenda of traditionally pro-European forces.

2. State of the Movements

- What conclusions can be drawn from the outcome of Syriza’s month’s long negotiations with the ‘institutions’?
- What is the impact of the new preconditions that must be met for the EU to be effective at the national level? And in what way do these preconditions change the scope of action for an alternative political approach?
- Which are the most important strategic proposals discussed in within the European Left (Plan B, DiEM, Action plan of the European Left, Common platform of the European South, regional integration ...) What are the viable proposals and which one will remain wishful thinking?

- What “natural” and potential partners can be found at the EU level who deal with processes such as the erosion of democracy and solidarity (also regarding the refugee issue) and the decay of the European welfare-state model, such as representatives of municipalities, the Council of Mayors (RdB), the Committee of the Regions, Social Council Conferences, refugee organisations etc.?
- What is the actual and potential role of the European trade union movement?
- Against this backdrop a change of the political and societal power relations is underway; leading to a swing to the right across Europe.

3. State of Politics

- What are the courses of action for the Left – which analyses are available, which are missing?
- In what way has the Left changed the political balance of power in Europe and the EU?
- Which scenarios does the Left expect and discuss?
- Which strategies and plans is the Left discussing, on what assumptions are they based, which strategies are being proposed?
- Which new societal and political alliances can be created for achieving a policy change? What is the role of Social Democrats and Greens in developing alternative hegemonies in Europe?
- What is the role of left-wing parties in a broad alliance for building a different Europe and achieving a policy change?

More detailed information on the seminar’s schedule, and concrete topics and on the other participants will be sent to you well in advance.

Needless to say, Transform and the Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung will take care of the travel costs to Germany and accommodation. The discussions will be in English.

Please let us know if you would like to participate in the seminar and please confirm your participation and inform us about the exact dates of arrival and the departure, so that we can book the accommodation.

If you would like to take part, please inform us:

1. If the Transform should book a flight for you; please contact:
2. If we should book a hotel room (and about the date of you arrival and departure);

Looking forward to seeing you soon.

Please contact my colleague **Heidi Ambrosch**:

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Many thanks and the best regards

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Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung

Berlin Seminar 2016 – overworked Schedule work-status: 6.7.2016, 1. pm

7 July : State of the EU – contradictions, polarisations, scenarios moderation: Cornelia Hildebrandt/Walter Baier		
14:00 – 15:00	Welcome and Introduction: State of Affairs in Europe Outcome of the plan-discussion of Plan B, DIEM, Action plans of the EL, common platforms (include the results of the strategy-conference in June in Berlin) Dr. Mario Candeias , director of the Institute for Critical Social Analysis of the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation (IfG, RLF) Dr. Walter Baier , coordinator transform Europe	
15:00 – 16:30	State of the Union after the UK-referendum – critical scenarios of EU multifaceted crisis of the EU, contradictory and polarizing tendencies of the EU (the role of the refugee-questions) Dr. Judith Dellheim , RLF, Institut for Critical social analysis, Senior Research Fellow for Solidarity Economy	
	Discussion	
16:30 - 17:00	Coffee Break	
17:00 – 18.00	Reconstruction of the European legislation and Institutions with consequences for the Left . René Jokisch , Senior Research Fellow DIE LINKE	
18.00 – 19.30	The new quality of the shift to the right, new quality of EU-scepticism and nationalism Joachim Bischoff/Bernhard Müller Redaktion Sozialismus	
19:30 – xx	Dinner in a restaurant	
09:00 – 11.00	The new quality of the shift to the right, new quality of EU-scepticism and nationalism – core-elements of Input and Moderation: Thilo Janssen , Senior Research Fellow , GUE/NGL a) The case of France Antoine de Cabanes , Espace Marx b) CEE-Countries Joanna Gwiazdecka , RLS Warsaw comment Holger Politt, RLS , Berlin/Warsaw	

		<p>c) The case of Austria comment Hanna Lichtenberger, Aufbruch</p> <p>d) The case of Germany comments : Joachim Bischoff/Bernhard Müller</p>
	11.00 – 11.15	Coffee break
	11:15 – 12.30	<p>Scotland, UK and the EU – the EU-referendum – change in the society and mobilisation (research-project)</p> <p>Dr. Jan Eichhorn, University Sussex</p>
	12:30 – 13:30	<p>The Situation of the social democrats in Europe short overview Conny Hildebrandt, Deputy-director IfG</p> <p>Renzismo in Italy Giuseppe Caccia, political scientist, Italy (former mayor of Venetia)</p> <p>Social democracy in Austria Hanna Lichtenberger, Aufbruch Austria</p>
	13:30 – 14:00	Lunch break
	14:00 – 15:00	<p>The social-democrats in Europe – the case Labour-party in UK</p> <p>Hilary Wainwright, Red Pepper</p>
	15:00 – 15:30	Coffee Break
	15:30 – 18:00	<p>Mapping of the radial Left in Europe</p> <p>Dominic Heilig, political scientist, DIE LINKE Jiri Malek, SPED Daria Popova/Anton Pechenkin, policial scientist and actors, Ukraine etc.</p>
	18:00 – 18:30	Snack
	09:00 – 10:30	<p>Left and Government a) Example of Greece: include the discussion based on the study of (1th SYRIZA-Government) Nasos Iliopoulos, SYRIZA the current situation</p> <p>Elena Papadopoulou economist, General Secretary of the Ministry of Finance, Greece</p>
	10:30 – 10:45	Coffee break

10:45 – 12:15	<p>Left and Government :</p> <p>a) Example of Portugal: : “The fall of the Berlin Wall 26 years later” André Freire, Associate Professor with Agrégation. Director of the Doctoral Programme in Political Science (& IR). Department of Political Science & Public Policies - School of Sociology & Public Policies</p> <p>b) Example of Spain</p> <p>Marga Ferré, IU, Spain</p> <p>comment: Armando Fernandez Steinko , political scientist</p>
12:15 – 12:30	Coffee break
12:30 – 13:30	<p>European Migration Policies: A major strategic issue for the European left</p> <p>Vassiliki Katrivanou, psychologist, former MP of SYRIZA, former member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, activist in the Human Rights movement</p> <p>Gregory Mauzé political scientist and activists</p>
13:30 – 14:15	<p>Final discussion and outlook/open questions</p> <p>Open discussion Input: Marga Ferré , Haris Golemis How to deal with EU scepticism how to deal with European institutions how can we organize new forms of cooperation and Alliances for another</p>
14:15 – 15:00	Lunch Break/snack