

Radical Left in Europe 2017

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Preface

"State of Affairs in Europe" – this was the title of the "Berliner Seminar" organized by the European left foundation *Transform! European Network for Alternative Thinking and Political Dialogue* (Transform!) and the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation (RLS) from 7 to 9 July 2016. The seminar brought together nearly 50 scholars and political actors from 14 European countries to discuss common perspectives and opportunities for action by the left in Europe.

The workshop took place at a time of far-reaching changes in Europe. The blackmailing of the SYRIZA-government in the Troika negotiations resulted in further reductions of pensions and social benefits in Greece that in turn led to mass demonstrations against these measures, as well as against the implementation of privatization programs and the continuation of neoliberal politics in general. Second, we saw the alarmingly high election results for extreme right parties in many countries, but also the formation of a left government in Portugal, and the crumbling of the two-party-system in Spain due to the rise of Podemos. Third, the crisis of European integration manifested itself in the results of the British referendum on EU membership.

These developments had already been topic to a large number of seminars and debates; they triggered the foundation and conferences of DiEM25, the conference "Building Alliances to Fight Austerity and to Reclaim Democracy" in Athens, the Plan-B conferences, and an RLS Strategy Conference. It was not our aim to just add another seminar to the long list of events that had accrued by mid-2016; instead, we intended to draw preliminary conclusions from these debates, in view of the then upcoming 2016 congress of the European Left (EL).

With this goal in mind, the Berliner Seminar concentrated on three thematic fields: (1) the current functioning of the European Union; (2) the state of political movements; and (3) the state of left politics. In light of the severe and multi-faceted crisis of the European Union, the seminar aimed at analyzing the interplay between the various contradicting and polarizing tendencies. On the one hand, the conference identified strong EU efforts to streamline the technocratic governance of its institutions, and to strengthen its interaction with the member states, especially in relation to the Economic and Monetary Union (Five Presidents Report [2015], Restructuring of the European Commission in accordance with the "Better Regulation" reform package). On the other hand, in various EU member states we observe an increasing alienation from the integration process, and a growing Euroscepticism that benefitted the nationalist agendas of right-wing populist parties.

This political polarization occurs asymmetrically. Especially in the south of Europe, parties of the radical left achieved successes in national elections and thereby challenged the regime of austerity, while in northern, central and eastern Europe, right-wing parties are gaining ground. Growing nationalism across the European Union is now also affecting the political agenda of traditional pro-European forces – which poses a specific challenge for the political action of the left.

In addition to studies presented at the Berlin Seminar, the present volume also contains more recent papers on strategy development. The contributions were updated in the summer of 2017.

Cornelia Hildebrandt (Berlin) and *Walter Baier* (Vienna) deal with the dilemmas of the European radical left forces in the face of recent European developments. They tracked the ups and downs in the development of radical left parties in Europe since the 1990s –

including successful opposition work and mostly failed government participation. According to the authors, the contemporary radical left is confronted with political, ideological and cultural cleavages, including: (1) anti-neoliberal coherence versus center-left unity; (2) anti-neoliberalism versus anti-capitalism; and (3) old traditions versus new realities. As a result, the present-day situation of the European left carries many challenges and risks. In an age of deep ruptures, there is a need for fundamental social alternatives that must be accompanied by political strategies for their implementation. Only if the radical left of Europe succeeds in mastering these challenges it can become an influential force in future developments. If the left fails, it might be drawn into the quagmire of political crisis that seized the European political system as a whole.

Michael Brie and *Mario Candeias* (both Berlin) advocate an assertive dual strategy that aims at influencing state politics from the left while at the same time pushing forward the radical transformation of society. Given the present balance of political forces in Germany, the authors argue that there is no opportunity to form a decidedly left-wing government that would fundamentally change the direction of the economy and social policy, lead the transition to a different kind of production, and advocate a radical change in the political approach of the EU. This means, according to Brie and Candeias, that for DIE LINKE the question of participating in a federal government coalition is currently not on the agenda. Instead, the party should continue to struggle for political change through organizing opposition in society and in parliament; possible is also the toleration of a minority government of the SPD and the Greens (*Grünen*).

Judith Dellheim (Berlin) investigates different scenarios of development for the European Union. For the coming five to fifteen years, six scenarios appear possible: (1) a catastrophe leading to the end of the EU; (2) a "weakening" of the EU that will turn the union into a kind of European Free Trade Association (EFTA); (3) a decline of the EU through the loss of more members and/or a growing conflict between neoliberal and overtly nationalist forces; (4) a perseverance of the status quo, with some losses; (5) improvement or progress through solidarity-oriented steps that mitigate the current situation, and a path towards resolving the burning problems; or, lastly, (6) an open situation with an unpredictable outcome. With this uncertain future in mind, Dellheim argues that the European left has to be active on three intertwined battlefields: first, the fight for democratic, social and ecological standards; second, the struggle for the preservation and democratization of public space, and third, the struggle for an active local and regional development.

René Jokisch (LINKE, Germany) examines the consequences that European Union legislative and institutional development have for the political left. He describes how institutions were reorganized to strengthen the executive on European and national levels. The left must analyze the anti-democratic effects of these new forms of institutionalism; important is not only how rules are changed, but also by whom and for what purposes. Given the strong interlinkage between national and European actors, it is no longer sufficient to analyze national and European policies in opposition to each other. Which actors gain influence, at which levels, to change the rules of the game – as was the case after the 2008/2009 crisis of the banking system. According to Jokisch, the new institutional bodies of intergovernmental cooperation increased their power at the expense not only of national parliaments but also of the European Parliament. The left has to intervene wherever democratic procedures and processes are violated, and, where possible, the left should seize opportunities to break rules also in favor of a leftist agenda. At the same time the left has the task to shape European policies in those fields where national solutions are insufficient. Jokisch advocates

the search for a new model of coordinating the economic policies of member states. This cannot be left to the decision of national governments but must be part of a democratically legitimized European body that is also responsible for the organization of social security.

Antoine de Cabanes (France) analyses the metamorphosis of the Front National (FN) in France that started with Marine Le Pen's election as party leader in 2011. Under her father Jean-Marie Le Pen, the FN's links to extreme right-wing groups and neo-fascist movements, as well as the anti-Semitic and racist statements of the party's front man, had been rejected by the entire political spectrum. Yet Marine Le Pen developed a strategy to "normalize" the FN, and changed the party's discourse and policy proposals. The party formally cut all ties with radical groups of the extreme-right, prohibited racist and anti-Semitic language in its own ranks, and excluded activists that publicly supported the Vichy regime or defended the French colonization in Algeria. As a result, the FN became an acceptable voting option to traditional right-wing voters in the second round of the 2017 presidential elections. Faced with the challenge of growing FN support, Cabanes calls for a long-term campaign to deconstruct the FN's goals and strategies. Moreover, the left must focus on providing a clear alternative to the FN that offers solutions to the problems of the lower classes, in order to win current FN supporters over to the radical left.

Hanna Lichtenberger (Vienna) discusses the decline of social democracy and the rise of the political right in Austria, focusing on the Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ) under Heinz-Christian Strache. In Lichtenberger's analysis, the present electoral success of the FPÖ results from three decades of implementing neoliberal ideas in politics and economy, and from the transformation of the labor market that took place under the auspices of the social democratic SPÖ. This created the conditions for the rise of the FPÖ, which today presents itself as a "*Soziale Heimatpartei*" ("social homeland party"). Meanwhile the Austrian left failed to offer an interpretation of the existing inequality and of the causes of the current crisis, and to provide the broader public with alternative narratives of a democratic society. As such, the left has failed to develop a vision for the future that could motivate the majority of the population for joining its struggle.

Giuseppe Caccia (Italy) analyses three forms of Italian populism: (1) a "right-wing populism", represented today by the leader of the Lega Nord Matteo Salvini, who turned a regional separatist party into a nationalist and xenophobic political force; (2) an "ambiguous populism" of Beppe Grillo's Five Star Movement (M5S); and (3) a "populism in government" by Matteo Renzi (prime minister from February 2014 to December 2016) and his Democratic Party. Renzi pushed through a profound centralization of the Democratic Party and focused on the two goals of forming a nationally exclusive government; his goals has been to carry out neoliberal reforms and building a "Party of the Nation" that would embrace people from different strata of the population. Caccia underlines that the three forms of Italian populism must be considered as "symptoms" of the disease that plagues Europe, while at the same time constituting conservative "pathogenic agents" that perpetuate the situation without offering real alternatives.

Jiří Malek (Czech Republic) looks at how the East-West differences that characterize Europe influence the European left. More than two and a half decades after the transformations in Central- and Eastern Europe, the European left has not been able to find a common language and promote a united left agenda. According to Malek, the longstanding miscommunication between East and West is fed by substantial differences in both content and direction that continue to impede the formulation and implementation of a European

radical left agenda to date. Simultaneously, the Western European radical left has been unable to help their counterparts in Central-Eastern Europe in stemming the tragic weakening of the left in the region. This stands in contrast to the fact that right-wing, liberal, and other political forces in Central-Eastern Europe have long been supported by their western counterparts, and gained much ground in the region. The existing pan-European concepts of the left generally do not consider the effects of this deepening cleavage (which has only few exceptions), nor does it develop strategies how to overcome this problem.

André Freire (Lisbon) explores the state of the left in Portugal. Since 2015, three parliamentary parties of the radical left (the Left Block, the Portuguese Communist Party and the Green Party) have supported a minority government of the Socialist Party. According to Freire, there are five reasons why this constellation is of fundamental importance to the left: (1) it represents a moment of inclusion, as the radical left parties of Portugal had so far been excluded from national decision-making. The left-left government solution has improved the quality of political representation, as (2) it aligned the preferences of the party elites with those of left voters regarding government participation and (3) it increased the quality of the political competition and representation by offering a clear left program against the contenders from the right of the spectrum. (4) This also increased the responsibility of the radical left parties, who now have to deliver in a particularly difficult European and global context. Finally, (5) this constellation enabled a convergence of the Portuguese left with the Western European left since 1989.

Vasiliki Katrivánu (Greece) refers to the friendly migration policy implemented by the SYRIZA government in Greece, and developed ideas for a European left intervention in the refugee issue. What is happening in Europe should not be considered a refugee crisis; rather, it is a reception crisis turning into a crisis of integration, social cohesion and solidarity. One cannot defend the claim that Europe, with a population of half a billion, is unable to respond adequately to one million refugees – less than the number of Syrian refugees accommodated by Lebanon alone, a country of a mere five million inhabitants. Katrivánu called upon the left in Europe to develop comprehensive campaigns against the EU-Turkey refugee agreement, against the reactivation of the Dublin Regulation, and against the creation of a European coast guard. The left must pressure the EU to assume its responsibility for the reception and safe passage of refugees.

Gregory Mauzé, political activist and scientist (Brussels), likewise considers the position of the radical left towards the refugee issue. The European left has responded to the refugee issue in various ways. Together with human rights organizations, the left called for an end to "Fortress Europe", and rigorously defended the right to asylum. However, the large influx of refugees into Europe in the summer of 2015, triggered by the Syrian crisis, also caused discomfort on the left side. This was largely caused by the extreme right's effective capitalization on the situation. This issue led to fissures in various political organizations that fight against neoliberalism. The author develops a historical perspective that looks at the roots of the left's current discomfort regarding migrant issues, and discusses what the asylum crisis tells us about the current position of the left regarding migrants. In Mauzé's view, the political challenge is to integrate migrants and people with a migrant background into the general struggle of the left. Ultimately, the goal is to make social struggles a logical continuation of migrants' struggles, and to make migrant struggles a part of social movements.

Amieke Bouma (Amsterdam) traces the development of the Dutch Socialist Party (SP), founded in 1972. Originally a tiny Maoist organization, the party broke with Marxism-Leninism in the 1990s and first entered the national parliament in 1994. Since 2000, the SP's ideology has changed from rejecting capitalism to advocating a 'different' and 'more humane' society based on the welfare state model. This allowed the SP to present itself as a viable alternative to government and to become acceptable to broader layers of society. At the height of its development, the SP won a respectable 25 parliamentary seats (out of a total of 150) in the national elections in 2006 and boasted over 50,000 party members from 2007 to 2009. In the run-up to the 2012 elections, the party reached high support rates, but ultimately only managed to maintain its 15 seats in the Dutch parliament. In the 2017 general elections, the SP won 14 seats; today party membership is just below 40,000. According to Bouma, recent disputes over the party's direction signal the difficulties in reconciling the self-image of longtime SP activists with the political understanding of newer constituencies. These tensions are a result of the growth of the party in the last two decades, and reflect the transition of the SP from a marginal party to one of the core parties in Dutch parliament.

Roberto Morea (Italy) analyses the voting behavior in the December 2016 Italian referendum on constitutional reforms. The proposed reforms would have significantly reduced the size of the Senate (from 315 to 100 senators), and also the Senate's power. However, the reforms were rejected by a large majority of the electorate in the referendum. The author briefly sketches the constitutional history of the Italian Republic before examining the interests of the different political actors in the referendum. The constitutional reform, advocated by Prime Minister Renzi, was based on the desire of the Italian and international ruling classes to simplify political decision-making and to centralize it in the hands of government, especially of the prime minister. The yes-campaign received widespread media coverage, including from Berlusconi's Mediaset Networks and public broadcaster RAI. The votes against the reforms came in particular from young people with precarious jobs and little securities, as well as from socially deprived sections of the population who, living in the suburbs of large cities and in the poorest areas of the country, are excluded from social security. For this reason, many commentators interpreted the result as a "social no", more than as a political choice.

Nika Kolač (Slovenia) reports on the United Left in Slovenia, a coalition of three small left parties, which in the June 2014 parliamentary elections managed to overcome the four percent threshold and entered the National Assembly with six mandates (representing six percent of the votes). For the first time in 25 years, a socialist party re-entered parliament with a clear left agenda: democratization of society, opposition to privatization, a fairer distribution of wealth, ecological transformation, and the abolition of all forms of discrimination and subordination. The author analyzes the common campaign of the United Left and parts of civil society for the legalization of same-sex marriages. In the 20 December 2015 referendum, however, the proposal for introducing the "marriage for all" failed to attract sufficient support, with 37 percent of voters in favor but 63 percent against. This is but one example - so Kolač - of the many problems that currently face the socialist left. Another example is the increasing fragmentation of the critical left in the public sphere. In particular, the Slovenian left has so far been unable to develop a clear strategy to effectively counter the lies of right-wing neoconservative movements.

Finally, *Jochen Weichold* (Berlin) investigates the economic processes underlying European integration, which are too often ignored in discussions on the left's position towards the

European Union and the Euro. The author argues that European integration is a result of the objective process of the internationalization of capital. An objective process cannot be prevented; however, it can be shaped and influenced. Hence the discussion must not focus on leaving the EU and/or the Euro. Instead, Weichold advocates the further development of the European Union, with a specific focus on "curing" the mistakes made when the Euro was introduced. Then - analogous to the "American Dream" - the "European Dream" of a better life could gradually become reality.

Overall, the Berlin seminar provided very important analyses of the political situation in individual European countries, and of the left forces within those countries. At the same time, the workshop also served to connect left-wing actors and scientists at the European level. A future seminar of this kind should focus even more strongly on the elaboration of common left approaches for societal change on the continent. In a February 2018 interview, Chairwoman of the European United Left / Nordic Green Left Group (GUE/NGL) in the European Parliament Gabrielle Zimmer, reflected on the upcoming 2019 European elections, and in this context emphasized that already the *Ventotene Manifesto* developed the vision of a unified Europe "with impressive visionary power". Yet Zimmer's remarks on the present state of affairs were sobering: "There is no longer a common left vision for Europe. It simply doesn't exist." Transform! and RLS seminars see it as their task to contribute to the development of such a left vision for Europe. This is a task we can only face together.

Invitation and Concept

We would like to invite you on behalf of Transform and the Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung to the Berlin-Seminar State of Affairs in Europe – taking into consideration of the Left' in Berlin on 7-9 July 2016. This European seminar will bring together leftwing political actors to debate the possibilities for common perspectives and action of the Left in Europe.

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 after the electoral breakthrough of Podemos ... etc., 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 months 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?

Hildebrandt, Cornelia and Baier, Walter

Radical Left Transnational Organisation

Summery

The 1990s proved to be fateful years for the radical left. The thesis of the end of the left turned out to be just as untenable as that of the end of history. However, what we are seeing now in terms of a 'radical left' in Europe is so fundamentally different from its predecessors that we have to speak of something truly new. Moreover, Europe itself has been fundamentally restructured by the Treaties of Maastricht and Lisbon, the introduction of the euro, and the EU enlargement towards the East. The financial crisis of 2007, which was met in the EU by harsh austerity policies, changed the situation still further. Additionally, to the negative social consequences, above all in Europe's south, it has led to a further centralisation of the EU's governance which has in turn aggravated the centrifugal tendencies. Many commentators interpret Brexit and the EU-wide rise of the far right as symptoms of a deep crisis of the European system of political representation and, beyond this, as socio-political ruptures. Increasingly, there seems to be no more consensus for 'more of the same'. However, in contrast to what many expected, this collapse of consensus has strengthened the left in only a few cases; instead, with few exceptions, it has enabled a significant growth in the support for, and power of, right-wing radical parties.

In this chapter, we will describe the efforts and difficulties at trans-nationalisation of strategy and the creation of transnational structures with which the radical left is reacting to the changed situation. Although these attempts do not represent, either politically or institutionally, a continuation of the internationalism of the twentieth-century communist left, they have arisen in its shadow.

We will begin with a sketch of the radical left's development from 1990 so that we can then define the term 'radical left' more precisely.

The anti-austerity agenda adopted by the radical left 90ies has proved an effective opposition strategy in some countries. But it was not serviceable for creating a left political alternative on a European scale. Even from its position as a governing party, Syriza did not manage to climb out of austerity as its aspirations were smashed by the lack of European solidarity, specifically of the social democratic parties.

The essential argument that we are presenting here is that an anti-neoliberal strategy that limits itself exclusively to opposing austerity is leading to a dead-end, all the more so that the radical, nationalist right dangerously competing with the left in the left's very home base: the appeal to the discontented and disadvantaged.

The collapse of the communist regimes in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe (from 1989 to 1993) triggered a swift, heavy, and universal decline of radical left parties, whose aggregate electoral strength in Western Europe plummeted from 9.6% to 5.1%. However, surprisingly for many observers, in the following five years the left embarked on a strong recovery and rose again to 7.2% (Chiocchetti, p.65). Italy's Rifondazione comunista, as a junior partner, supported a centre-left government in 1996; in 1997 the French Communist Party (PCF) entered into governments led by the Socialists. Yet neither party lived up to their electorates expectations, which led to electoral defeats. At the European level this introduced a period of stagnation, which was expressed in the weakening of the GUE/NGL's European Parliament group, whose number of deputies (MEPs) sank in the 2009 election from 41 to 35. This alt-

though in Germany in 2007, the largely East German PDS and the West German WASG fused to become the electorally successful party Die LINKE, and in the 2005 referenda on the EU Constitutional Treaty left parties effectively drew attention to themselves through their own campaigns.

With the 2007 financial crisis and the anti-austerity social movements, however, new opportunities arose for the radical left. In some Mediterranean countries it scored extraordinary gains and re-emerged as a significant party family in two other countries (Belgium and Ireland). Therefore, the results in the May 2014 European Parliament elections were positive though not consistent, as parties of the radical left were able to reach 13 million voters and get an 8% share, which, with 52 seats, has made the radical left group (GUE/NGL) the fifth strongest group in the Parliament.

Radical left: from a party family *in itself* to a European party family for itself?

The strengthened GUE/NGL is yet a heterogenous group. What is its common identity, aside from the advantages MEPs derive from simply belonging to a group?

In the literature on the subject there is by now agreement that the parties to the left of social democracy constitute a 'party family' on the basis of their growing influence and their similarities of provenance and political programme (e.g. March, 2011 p. 7). This is by no means of interest only to political-science specialists as it speaks to the question of whether there is sufficient basis for effective transnational cooperation and possibly for transnational integration of the radical left in Europe – and whether the complementary or competing structures they have created can be sustainable.

The case of the radical left in this respect is special because fundamental system-critical internationalism is part of its programmatic core. But in times of global and continental crises the criterion of internationalism cannot be an abstract ideological confession of faith but needs to be translated into concrete nationally and internationally applicable strategies, which in this case has to lead to a capacity for a common European politics. However, it is precisely this capacity which comes up against considerable difficulties.

All studies dealing with radical left parties (RLPs) in recent years face the problem of an exact demarcation and adequate designation of the object of research (e.g. March 2011; Brie, and Hildebrandt 2006; Hudson, 2012; Baier, 2015; Príncipe and Bhaskar, 2015; Calossi, 2016; Chiochetti, 2017).

Categorising parties corresponding to their party names and transnational affiliation can be deceptive. For instance, the Ecological Green Party of Portugal, which belongs to the European Green Party, appears in a national-level electoral alliance with the Communist Party of Portugal. Denmark's Socialist People's Party belongs neither to the GUE/NGL group in the European Parliament nor to the Party of European Socialists but has allied with the Greens in the European Parliament and is a member of the European Green Party.

The occasional identification of party sub-types – such as 'conservative communist', 'reform-communist', 'democratic socialist', 'populist socialists', 'social populist' (March, p. 17) – to which could be added 'left socialist', 'left-green' (see also: Calossi, 2016, p. 82), and 'pluralistic left parties' made up of several tendencies – is based on momentary snapshots. Moreover, it mixes historically developed party identities ('conservative communism', 'democratic socialism') with the question of political and communicative methods ('populism'). However,

parties are living organisms within which diverse tendencies can be active. In the German party Die LINKE both a 'Communist Platform' and a 'Forum of Democratic Socialists' exist; between them and within each there is controversial debate as to whether and to what extent a left might adopt a populist political style.

Against the background of overlapping fundamental social or socio-economic and socio-cultural fault lines and their modification in the last twenty years as a result of globalization and ruptures in the mode of work, the identification of parties along the classic fault lines has become still more difficult. This is, moreover, especially true of new protest parties such as Italy's Five-Star Party, Poland's RAZEM, and the recently created movement *France Insoumise*, which refuse to be categorized along a left-right spectrum.

The left between popular democracy and radicalism

The term (radical) left is a sub-cultural concept that comprises more than the party spectrum identified with it. It includes parts of the trade-union movement, social movements, NGOs, cultural institutions (Brie and Hildebrandt, p. 11 ff.), but also individuals, artists, and scholars, which with their special qualifications and high public regard can be identified with the radical.

Parties are intermediary structures between civil society and the state. While civil society by definition eludes political-party affiliation, the influence and success of parties depend to a large extent on their relations with civil society. But for left parties, civil society is not merely a site in which they can struggle to gain influence in terms of their parliamentary strength. From a left point of view, civil society is a space of social struggle. Left parties support or call for strikes, demonstrations, the occupation of public squares, and civil disobedience. Some of them have come out of such movements. They see the mobilization of the population in extra-parliamentary actions as a legitimate expression of popular democracy, which does not necessarily stand in opposition to parliamentary democracy but expands it and completes it in the sense of real or direct democracy. Civil society is itself to become a political actor. In the understanding of many left tendencies it is even seen as the kernel of the new state. With this programmatic perspective the left stands in sharp contrast to populism, whose essence resides in the direct appeal of a leader to the discontented masses (Laclau, p. 160), unmediated by democratic institutions which in fact means preventing the people from real participation, something which also was observed by Walter Benjamin who wrote about fascism that it 'seeks to give the masses an expression while preserving property' (Benjamin, 1936). Consequently, Europe's radical left took part in the globalization-critical movement and the six European Social Forums between 2002 and 2010 in Florence, Paris, London, Athens, Malmö, and Istanbul). These were large, grassroots-democratically organized 'open spaces' in which tens of thousands of participants, primarily representatives of civil society, discussed issues in hundreds of gatherings. It was thus not coincidental that in 2002 the idea of founding the Party of the European Left was publicly announced at the first European Social Forum in Florence.

The Party of the European Left has tried to make itself into a protagonist in the organization of political protest against the austerity policies of the EU at the European level; it has decisively supported the Alter Summit, which was a conference held in Athens in 2013 aiming at rallying NGOs, social movements, trade unions, and political actors.

In his study, Luke March uses the term *radical left parties (RLPs)* to describe parties which 'reject the underlying socio-economic structure of contemporary capitalism and its values and practices', which identify 'economic inequality as the basis of existing political and social arrangements', espouse 'collective economic and social rights as their principal agenda', and which are 'internationalist' in terms of their inclination to 'cross-national networking and solidarity'. (March, 2011, p. 49) *Radical* in this context should be understood in the sense of Marx's famous definition: 'To be radical is to grasp things by the root', which leads to 'the categorical imperative to overthrow all relations in which man is a debased, enslaved, contemptible being'. Marx: 1975, p. 182 and March 2011, p. 8 f)

In the 1990s this passage of Marx, which German dramatist Heiner Müller has called the 'fiery nucleus of Marxism' played an important role in the left of German-speaking countries, as it formed the last ethical sanctuary of a radical left shaken to its very foundations, allowing it to maintain the link to classical Marxism which it still wanted to regard as its root.

However, important objections were raised against seeing the notion 'radical' as the decisive marker (Calossi, 2016, p.86). For one, that in several European countries (France, Italy, and Denmark) there are 'radical parties' within a liberal tradition, and that as far as they have a left orientation, they belong to the moderate and not radical wing. Another objection is that in the most recent period, a pejorative use of the word 'radical' has gained currency, in which 'all boundaries between radical intents and use of violence has been put down in the public discourse' (Calossi, 2016 p. 88 f.). It is most likely for this reason that the German party Die LINKE rejects the radicalism label in domestic use.

While Greece's Syriza calls itself the 'Coalition of the Radical Left', although its policies – under the given constraints – would more properly be called moderate, the PCF prefers not to be called a radical left party, an appellation it tends to reserve for its Trotskyist critics (the Nouveau Parti Anticapitaliste and Lutte Ouvrière).

It is obvious that a common political identity for the parties in question cannot be described by the term radicalism, which is why it is not used in the fundamental statements published by the EL (European Left, 2004, 2007, 2010, 2013, 2016) and the GUE/NGL (GUE/NGL <http://www.guengl.eu/group/about>). The Italian political scientist Paolo Chiocchetti offers another definition of RLPs (Chiocchetti, 2017, 10): 'In my opinion the solution to these dilemmas lies in the definition of the radical left as a party family (a) situating itself in the tradition of the "class left", - a historical tradition to reform or overcome capitalism from the standpoint of universalistically conceived working-class interests, and (b) identifying itself as a separate tendency from and to the left of mainstream social democracy'.

Both parts of this definition are apt:

(a) All of the parties examined here start from a fundamental criticism of the capitalist system against which they see themselves as the representatives of the great majority of the population whose interests, they feel, stand in objective opposition to this system – which would be an exact translation of 'class left'.

(b) Such a 'universalistically' conceived critique of capitalism was however also expressed historically in the social democratic parties. Appropriately enough, therefore, attention has been drawn to the connection between today's radical left parties and the historic break of the revolutionary with the reformist tendency within the social democratic parties at the end of the First World War.

However, the resulting historic identification of social democracy with reformism and of communism with revolution is obsolete in today's world, since most social democratic parties have laid to rest the programmatic goal of establishing a socialist society by way of reforms, and the radical left including the communists have appropriated reformism as a strategy for reaching revolutionary goals.

In contrast, Richard Dunphy, an Irish political scientist, proposed 'transformatory parties'¹ (Dunphy 2004, p. 2) as an alternative term to mark the differences with social democracy. 'Transformatory left' emphasizes these parties' intention to bring about social change not essentially through 'insurrection' and certainly not through minority rule. This alludes to 'democratic socialism', the term used by the social democrats of the 1920s to differentiate themselves from communists¹.

The various attempts to conceptualize the (radical) left – as anti-capitalism, radical emancipation, popular democracy, extra-parliamentary activism, universalistic orientation to the working class, organizational independence from social democracy, and transformative strategy are not mutually exclusive but in their totality demarcate a political space within which the parties move that due to their affiliation with a European party structure, the group of the left in the European Parliament, and due to their tradition, can be considered as a 'party family'. *in itself*, this common bond does not produce the political capacity for common action that would allow us to speak of a political movement *for itself*. Since the fundamental anti-capitalism of the radical left lost a great deal of its political currency in the early 1990s it could reinvent itself only as an opposition to the *neoliberal* project pursued by the ruling classes. This worked in those instances in which the parties associated themselves with social movements and they learned new cultural and organizational forms appropriate to these movements: '[t]he early divergences in ideology and identity (between the parties of the radical left) unevenly but progressively turned into convergence around a similar anti-neoliberal program' (Chiocchetti, 2017: p. 201).

The fundamental opposition to a centre-left working for an unpopular neoliberal agenda offered favourable conditions for developing RLPs in Western Europe. This lent strength to the interpretation of austerity as a *cleavage* that draws a new demarcation line between the social democratic mainstream and a left opposition including RLPs (Calossi 2016, 9. 107, Chiocchetti, 2017 p. 72). This is also the point of departure of the various authors contributing to the book edited by Caterina Príncipe and Bhaskar Sunkara, *Europe in Revolt*, who portrayed selected RLPs in their interrelationship with social movements.

We are less interested in Calossi's proposal (2016) to conceive of Europe's RLPs as 'anti-austerity left parties' (AALPs) than we are in investigating the political question of whether in this way the radical left in Europe could transform itself from being a party family *in itself* to a European party family *for itself* and making the struggle against EU-wide austerity the basis for its transnational association.

¹ A concise theoretical presentation of the relationship between democracy and socialism from a democratic socialist point of view is found in Karl Polanyi's 1927 manuscript 'On Freedom': There can also be dictatorial justice, and if justice, when it is realised through democracy, really is to mean ethical progress, this is not due to the nature of justice but to that of democracy... 'This idea of social freedom is a specifically socialist one' (Karl Polanyi, *Chronik der großen Transformation (Artikel und Aufsätze 1920 – 1947)*, vol. 3, (2005) Metropolis Verlag, Marburg, pp. 142 ff. As for an actual interpretation in the view of the European Left see: Fausto Bertinotti, „15 Thesen für eine alternative europäische Linke“, in Brie, Michael/Hildebrandt, Cornelia (eds.) (2003), *Die Europäische Linke*, Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung. Berlin

The contradictions of anti-neoliberalism

Participating in centre-left governments as a junior partner proved not to be a recipe for success for the radical left in the second half of the 1990s. The defeats of those parties who, after having built up their critical stance vis-à-vis social democratic or socialist parties, decided to form governments with them were significant. Both in France (1997-2002) and in Italy (1996-1998 and 2006-2008) this ended with devastating defeats in the following elections. Both parties had emblematic importance for the European left, but the collapse of *Rifondazione Comunista*, which in 2008 even lost its parliamentary presence, was an especially hard blow, as it was seen as the paradigm of a renewed radical left party, and Fausto Bertinotti had been the first elected chair of the Party of the European Left in 2004.

Spain's *Izquierda Unida*, which in 2004 had helped create a majority for a Socialist minority government but which was punished for this in succeeding elections with a sharp drop in votes and elected officials, was able to recover within the opposition.

But the problem indicated that behind the decisions that were retrospectively recognized as mistakes a structural contradiction was operating. Conciliatory currents actively sought to participate in centre-left-alliances but given the existing balance of forces ended up supporting policies diametrically opposed to their stated aims. Intransigent currents, on the other hand, were often perceived as advocates of a sterile opposition lacking any concrete strategic perspective.

This might be regarded as characteristic for the 'anti-liberal field of forces', in which the new radical left had to move and which 'originated in the triple crisis of international communism, the Fordist social model, and of neoliberalism' and confronted the radical left with political, ideological, and cultural dilemmas which Chiocchetti enumerates as the following ones:

- anti-neoliberal coherence versus centre-left unity;
- anti-neoliberalism versus anti-capitalism;
- old traditions versus new realities (Chiocchetti, p. 228).

In addition to the negative dialectic of successful oppositional politics and failed government participation there was the fact that although in its opposition to neoliberalism the radical left could indeed mobilize new social strata far beyond its traditional electorate these new voters did not remain loyal. What became obvious, on the one hand, was a lack of strategically practicable projects for launching a fundamental change of direction and, on the other, the reluctance of the parties to institute a political and cultural self-transformation, which the party leaderships declined to adopt, and which considering their core electorates were not in any case feasible at the speed that would be required. The short-term pragmatic syntheses and inner-party compromises that worked in times of political upswing broke up in the face of the defeats, resulting in ruptures and fragmentation.

In terms of electoral results, the picture was similarly volatile. At the national level in 2015 the aggregate vote share for RLPs in 17 western European countries reached 9.6% But this peak is almost exclusively due to the upswing in three Mediterranean countries, Greece, Spain, and Portugal (Chiocchetti, p. 210).

However, a one-sided focus on Western Europe does not reveal the complete picture. Still, as we outline further below, the regional disproportion in influence represents a decisive

weakness of the radical left at the European level, which limits its influence even in its strongholds.

A one-sided focus on Western Europe more over becomes anachronistic for two important reasons: one is the considerable and still growing influence of CEE countries like Hungary and Poland on the entire EU polity; the other is the precarization of the Western European party systems themselves, which according to some important scholars indicates an approximation of Western European liberal democracies to Eastern European conditions (Bos and Segert 2008)

European integration on a neoliberal basis

The fact that in its negotiations with the 'institutions' (EU Commission, ECB, and IMF) the Greek government was, despite the unequivocal result of the referendum and the IMF's recognition that Greece's debt sustainable was not longer credible (IMF: Greece Preliminary Debt Sustainability Analysis – Updated Estimates and Further Considerations), denied the requested easements showed that more than money was at issue; what was at stake was a fundamental collision over Europe's economic and social model, for which Greece was a test case. The radical left's opposition to neoliberalism, too limited as it is to anti-austerity struggles, proved too weak a response

The political framework in which the confrontation took place was generated by the 1994 Treaty of Maastricht. The Treaty not only expanded the authority of the European Union beyond that of its predecessor the European Communities; the criteria established by Maastricht for participation in the economic and currency union (inflation, budgetary deficits, and public debt) made the central thesis of neoclassical economic policy – the priority of monetary stability above all other economic-policy goals – into the fundamental norm of the EU. Under pressure of the financial crisis, which erupted in Europe in 2007, it became clear that the system of economic governance created by Maastricht also created a new disadvantageous scenario for the left, including for the social democrats.

Even within Syriza, the foundational anti-austerity consensus among the party's ideologically very diverse tendencies proved insufficiently strong when it came under pressure of the confrontation, and this resulted in a split. The Syriza government's signing of the third Memorandum in July 2015 put back on the agenda the dilemma that the radical left has been unable to solve since the 1960s: Should it further Europeanize its politics or continue to concentrate on the nation-state framework? On the debate between the PCF and PCI and between the CGT and CGIL starting in the 1960s see: Cruciano, 2010)

Richard Dunphy has shown how the positions taken within the radical left have become further differentiated though without cancelling this basic difference:

'In actual fact, by the mid-1980s at any rate it is probably possible to speak of at least four discernible strands of thought in the Western European Left':

- 1) Seeing the EU as an agent of multinational capitalist exploitation and of German or US hegemony, fundamentally incompatible with a socialist, or even mildly progressive programme;
- 2) Even agreeing with the foregoing analysis a second position argues that a campaign for withdrawal from the membership or for the dissolution of the EU is unrealistic, per-

haps even undesirable. That is why a root and branch restructuring of the EU is advocated.

3) Critical of the limited and restrictive nature of its existing institutional setting a third position sees the EU as a potential proponent of social progress. It argues in favour of a strong European parliament that can legislate and can elect the European Commission – the key to providing the EU with the mechanisms to stand up to the powerful multinational corporations and the financial markets.

4) And finally a weak reformism or uncritical pro-integrationism which tends to regard deeper European integration as an end in itself. The creation of the United States of Europe based on a 'historic compromise' between all pro-European forces from the centre-left to the centre-right is envisaged (Dunphy: p. 4ff).

While the ideal-type of the first position is represented by the Communist Party of Greece, and also with some differences by the Portuguese Communist Party and by the EU-sceptical currents within the Nordic green-left parties, which means that it is also present in the GUE/NGL group in the European Parliament, the majority, and the strongest, of the EL member parties, such as Germany's Die LINKE, The French Communist Party, and Spain's Izquierda Unida occupy a space between positions 2 and 3.

As argued by Gerassimos Moschonas (2016), [t]he great irony of the radical left's European policy is that they gradually accepted European integration just as the latter was acquiring an increasingly neoliberal character.' In reality, austerity policy and the changes to EU primary law in the course of the economic crisis appreciably attenuated the pro-integration mood in many parties and removed the political basis for an uncritical pro-integrationism.

Which of these paths would be most promising under the given relations of forces?

Moschonas (2011, p 15) saw the radical left facing a contradiction: 'The European Union structurally, not conjuncturally, undermines the modes of action of historic radicalism.' He adds:

The issue is not ideological ('for' or 'against' Europe). It is a question of elementary strategic coherence [...] Either the left opts for a European strategy and manages the political consequences; or else it opts for an anti-Union strategy (leaving the Union, restoring national sovereignty) and copes with the resulting consequences. [...] What is incoherent (in fact, deprived of strategic reason) is to opt for a 'European' strategy (meaning seeking solutions at the European level) and continuing to use discursive schemes inspired by the insurrectional model; or to opt for a 'return to the nation' and claim to be representative of universalism and the world proletariat.²

But, we may ask, how could a political answer to a contradictory project be itself free of contradictions?

There are good reasons for the growth of Euroscepticism, especially in the countries of the European South. The perception of the fundamental neoliberal design of the EU treaties has revived the central discussion within the left about its relation to European integration. Well-known politicians like Oskar Lafontaine and Jean-Luc Mélenchon tend to privilege national sovereignty over further integration. Starting in 2016 they have organized a series of confer-

² <http://www.transform-network.net/en/yearbook/journal-092011/news/detail/Journal/the-european-union-and-the-dilemmas-of-the-radical-left.html>

ences in European capitals (Copenhagen, Paris, Madrid, Berlin, and Lisbon) entitled 'Plan B', in which they weighed what the possibilities would be for an expansion of the economic room for manoeuvre for a socially oriented economic policy either through exit from the euro or by substituting the euro through the re-establishment of the European Monetary System (https://www.euro-planb.eu/?page_id=96&lang=en; see also: Horn 2016). The weakness also of these debates, however, seems to be that they are informed by exclusively economic arguments, which under the existing balance of forces and the institutional setting of the EU can only confirm the belief of those who see the EU as unreformable.

At present, those voices within the left calling for a re-nationalization of politics are in the minority, but the radical left has obvious difficulties in giving a political answer to how the economic, political, and democratic aspect of Europe could be meaningfully institutionalized at the European level. This is the fundamental issue for the movement DiEM 25 (<https://diem25.org/>) initiated by former Greek Finance Minister Yanis Varoufakis. In view of the rise of the radical right, a renationalization of politics is seen to be just as great a danger as the EU's and Eurogroup's untransparent, undemocratic structures, which is why DiEM 25 goes beyond an alternative monetary and economic policy and calls for a radical democratization of the EU and the Eurogroup.

Both movements have won adherents among the left public interested in European policy and influenced discussions within the parties. Indeed, they also have the potential to develop into new transnational left structures, which could be significant in terms of the 2019 European Parliament elections.

The deteriorating geopolitical environment confronts Europe and the radical left with a further dilemma. The mainstream of European policy, as formulated in the White Book of the European Commission published in March 2017, is pushing for an increase in arms expenditures and the EU's increased military cooperation (European External Action Service, 2016, p.10 f)³.

A universal, continental security system based on disarmament and structural non-aggression is being discussed by the left as a logical alternative to the buildup of an EU military power as well as to national arms buildups. But this again poses another set of thorny questions since a collective security system implies a ceding of sovereignty. Even more complex is the institutional frame of a European security system which by definition could not be the EU, at least not in its present form. With this, the vision of the unification of Europe after the model of the United States of America would be obsolete. Concepts and proposals put forward by the radical left adequate to this goal have not yet materialized.

The long shadow of the Communist International

'Workers of the world, unite!' is the emphatic call ending the *Communist Manifesto* published in 1848 by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. With this, internationalism was practically inscribed into the DNA of the radical left. With the immediate experience of the demise of the Second International at the beginning of the First World War, the radical left parties that came together in 1919 to form the Communist International, subjected their international-

³ 'In particular, investment in security and defence is a matter of urgency. Full spectrum defence European Union Global Strategy capabilities are necessary to respond to external crises, build our partners' capacities, and to guarantee Europe's safety. Member States remain sovereign in their defence decisions: nevertheless, to acquire and maintain many of these capabilities, defence cooperation must become the norm.'

ism to a strict discipline, which was codified in 21 stringent conditions. The self-conception this created of the communist movement outlasted Stalin's 1943 dissolution of the Communist International.

The decades-long dominance of party Communism over the radical left was connected to the ideological myth that the division of the labour movement into a reformist, social democratic section and a revolutionary, communist one was a result of the Bolshevik Revolution of October 1917. In fact, the division went back further. In German social democracy an orthodox tendency had co-existed with a revisionist one since 1898. In Russia the Mensheviks and Bolsheviks split in 1903, and already by 1915 the rift amongst social-democratic opponents of the war at the Zimmerwald Conference anticipated the founding of the Communist International four years later.

What the Russian Revolution actually accomplished was to establish the dominance of the current which Lenin and Trotsky represented within the new radical left taking shape within the crisis at the end of the First World War. At the beginning of the 1920s, after the Europe-wide council movement that had arisen in the wake of post-war agitation petered out, it became evident that the motto that arose with the founding of the Communist International, 'those who are not with us are against us', made the Communists into a minority within the working class.

Rosa Luxemburg's critique of the authoritarian practices of the Bolsheviks together with the thesis developed by Antonio Gramsci a decade later of the necessity of a strategy for the West ('war of position') different from that of the East ('war of manoeuvre') meant that it was impossible to transfer the model of the Russian Revolution to a developed capitalist society. It was only in 1935 that the Communist International (at its Seventh World Congress) came to this understanding as a result of the victory of fascism in Germany. Nevertheless, this was only an interlude, since at the beginning of the Cold War the Soviet leadership under Stalin implanted its system of state socialism in Eastern Europe and in so doing suppressed all resistance within and outside the parties.

A critical spirit subsequently developed as open or hidden opposition to the dogmas dispensed by Moscow. The attempt by Leon Trotsky (exiled from the Soviet Union in 1928, and, with Lenin, the most important leader of the Russian Revolution) to build a new Fourth International benefitted from the intellectual, radical potential of the left that had turned away from Stalinism, but it was a failure – not only due to the lack of material resources, which the Soviet Union abundantly provided to the Communist International, but above all because it was unable to formulate an alternative to authoritarian dogmatism. At present, there are no fewer than 20 organizations claiming to be successors to the Fourth International. Beyond these there are an indeterminate number of competing 'Fifth Internationals' that at least recognize that their predecessors are wrapped up in hopeless quarrels (March, 2011, p. 155).

Thus those parties became synonymous with communism who located themselves in the tradition of the Communist International, which defined their international policy and relationship to the Soviet Union. This influenced the politics even of the most self-confident and influential parties such as the French Communist Party and the Italian Communist Party until the early 1980s (Wolikow, 2010, p.23; also Neubert, 2002, p.218).

The high regard in which the Communist movement stood by 1945 was due to two factors: the decisive role the Soviet Union played in the victory over Nazi Germany, and the fact that

in most countries it was the Communist parties that had led the national resistance movements. However, the development of European Communism after the war is a story of crisis and the fragmentation of the unified movement. In 1943 the Communist International was dissolved. The Communist Information Bureau (Cominform)⁴ composed of the nine most important Communist parties of Europe, created in 1947 to replace the Communist International, fell apart due to the Stalin-Tito conflict.

The military suppression of the oppositional workers' movement in Poland and of the uprising in Hungary, paradoxically in the wake of the de-Stalinisation introduced by the 1956 Twentieth Party Congress of the CPSU, brought a series of moral defeats which ushered in the crisis of communist internationalism.

It is true that during de-Stalinization there was a thaw in relations between the Soviet Communists and the Yugoslav Communists expelled in 1948. But, in the framework of Yugoslavia's leading role in the movement of the non-aligned, the Yugoslav Communists developed a new concept of internationalism standing outside that of the Communist movement.

By contrast, de-Stalinization and the orientation to peaceful co-existence introduced by the Twentieth Party Congress led to a break with the Chinese Communist Party. Although it failed in its attempt to proclaim a new centre of world communism, this attempt did hinder the West European communist parties from uniting around a platform of action (Cruciani, 2010 p. 68).

The deterioration of western European Communism followed the rhythm of its Eastern European crises although with a time lag. This was most visible from the end of the 1950s in Scandinavia, where the Communist parties began gradually to separate themselves from their Communist identity. In 1959 the Danish People's Party split from the CP; in 1961, the anti-Soviet wing of Norway's CP united with oppositional social democrats to form the Socialist People's Party; in 1967 Sweden's CP expanded its party name to Left Party – the Communists (Hildebrandt, 2010 p. 12 f).

Subsequently, at the beginning of the 1970s, after the suppression of the Prague Spring, the major western European Communist parties decided to shift the focus of their international efforts. The Italian, French, and Spanish parties determined the key parameters of a political conception that was called 'Eurocommunism', so called after casual remarks made by the PCI's General Secretary Enrico Berlinguer during a press conference. At the same time, the French CP lost ground to the Socialist Party with which it was allied, but the conclusions it drew were different from those of the Italian and Spanish parties. Not only did the party leadership under Georges Marchais initiate a rapprochement with the Soviet Union but, with full commitment to the political culture of its own country, laid even more stress on the national character of its politics.

Such differences increasingly affected transnational co-operation. The international Conferences of Communist and Workers' Parties (Moscow 1969 and Berlin 1976) barely concealed the fragmentation behind diplomatic formulas. The emergent European Community became a focus for differentiation (e.g. Dunphy 2004, and Cruciani). While the Italian Communists, in

⁴ The Cominform consisted of the ruling parties – the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the Bulgarian Communist Party, the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (from 1949), the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, the Polish United Workers' Party, the Romanian Workers' Party, the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party – and two western European parties: the French Communist Party and the Italian Communist Party.

accord with their Spanish comrades, espoused the expansion of the EC, the French Communists, together with the Portuguese CP, opposed it.

In 1979, with the first directly elected European Parliament, the Communist and allied parties won 44 seats, and its MEPs affiliated with the Communists and Allies Group. However, in 1989 the Group split into the integration-friendly Group for the European United Left (EUL / GUE) in which 28 MEPs of Denmark's Socialist People's Party, the Italian Communist Party, Spain's United Left (IU), and Greece's Synaspismos cooperated, and into the Euro-critical Coalition of Left Unity (LU) with 14 MEPs from the French Communist Party, the Communist Party of Greece (KKE), the Communist Party of Portugal (PCP), and the Workers' Party of Ireland.

Transnational organization of the radical left after 1989

At the European level, there are five relevant transnational organizations that attempt to coordinate the national left parties: (1) the Confederal Group of the European United Left/Nordic Green Left (GUE/NGL), (2) the Party of the European Left (EL) along with transform! europe (TE), the research and educational network allied to the EL, (3) the Nordic Green Left Alliance (NGLA), (4) the European Anti-Left (EACL), as well as (5) the Initiative of the Communist and Workers' Parties. It is also worth mentioning three of the numerous Trotskyist internationals active on a European scale: United Secretariat of the Fourth International, which is still the biggest Trotskyist international, the Committee for a Workers' International (CWI), the Internationalist Communist Union (UCI), and the International Marxist Tendency (Calossi, p. 137).

The collapse of the Communist regimes in Eastern Europe initially compounded strategic and organisational fragmentation. Italy's CP completed its transformation into the Party of the Democratic Left and entered the Socialist International, and in 1993 it made the transition to the Socialist grouping in the European Parliament. However, 1994 saw incipient processes of reconfiguration. The remaining European left MEPs formed the Confederal Group of the United Left (GUE – *Gauche Unitaire Européenne*). In 1995, the group expanded with the inclusion of MEPs from Finland, Denmark, and Sweden, which constituted the Nordic Green Left Alliance (NGLA) and united with the GUE, resulting in the current rather long name 'Confederal Group of the United European Left / Nordic Green Left' (GUE/NGL). In 1999, Germany's PDS (today Die LINKE) joined, as did the Czech CP and the Cypriot Progressive Party of Working People in 2003, along with Sinn Féin from Ireland and Portugal's Left Bloc.

A key role in picking up the fragments of the left and bringing them together at the political party level was played by the New European Left Forum (NELF), founded in 1991 in Madrid. The NELF became the most important locus for discussion amongst left parties outside the European Parliament. Ultimately, this led to an agreement between the reformed Communist and the new pluralist left parties. In March 2003, they were invited by Greece's left party Synaspismos to meet in Athens. In October 2003, the transform! network, which had been founded two years previously, invited the chairpersons of left parties from Germany, France, Italy, Greece, Austria, and Spain to a seminar in Paris during which they united in calling publicly for the founding of a European left party (see Marcet, undated).

Simultaneously in 2000, outside this arena, several Trotskyist groups created the European Anti-Capitalist Left (EACL), which was intended to bring about a unification of the left within a Trotskyist platform. The Party of the European Left (EL), not least due to the decision of Fausto Bertinotti to become its chair, was able to win the competitive battle, which in this

phase was carried on between the EACL the EL.⁵ Today there are 9 member parties in the EACL and 7 parties with observer or guest status from 13 European countries. Of these parties only Portugal's Left Bloc and the Luxembourg party Déi Lénk are present in national parliaments. The last two also belong to the EL. Since 2009 none of its parties has MEPs in the European Parliament. With the decline of France's Nouveau Parti Anticapitaliste, the leading force in the EAL, as well as the active role played in the EL by Denmark's Red Green Alliance and Portugal's Left Bloc, the importance of the EAL in European politics has sharply decreased. A remaining important arena for their cadre is the European social movements in which they have played an essential, organizing role beginning with the Social Forums through the Alternate Summit to CP 21 in Paris.

The Party of the European Left and its competitors

Over time, the EL has become the most important political-party point of reference for left politics at the European level. At present, 36 parties from 23 countries belong to it. 12 of the 25 member parties are represented in the European Parliament and make up 21 of the 52 members of the GUE/NGL. More than half (18) of the EL member parties have no national parliamentary presence. The number of left parliamentarians on the national level is 369 (as of October 2016), clearly higher than that of the Greens (Chiocchetti, p. 210).

The strongest EL member parties from the parliamentary point of view are, after Syriza (with 145 members of the national parliament), Spain's left as represented by Izquierda Unida (IU), which cooperates at the national and European level with Podemos, Portugal's Bloco de Esquerda (BE), Die LINKE in Germany, the French left – consisting of the Parti Communiste Français (PCF) and the Parti de Gauche (PG), Denmark's Red-Green Alliance and Finland's Left Alliance; amongst the observer parties there are the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (KSCM) and the Cypriot AKEL. Beyond this, the Moldovan Communist Party also counts amongst the strongest parties from the parliamentary point of view. Within the EL, the Communists – or, more precisely, those Communist parties which have redefined themselves as transformational, pluralist left parties – are a minority. This was not an obstacle, however, in the 2012 election of the PCF's National Secretary, Pierre Laurent, as EL chair.

The EL has in fact encountered no polemical opposition, with the exception of the spectrum of the orthodox groups formed around the Communist Party of Greece⁶ that have congregated in their own European party, the Initiative of Communist and Workers' Parties (<http://www.initiative-cwpe.org/en/home/Liste>). This group comprises 29 parties, of which only Greece's CP has some social and political influence. The CPs of Portugal, Bohemia and Moravia, and of the Russian Federation did not join the Initiative. Up to now the Initiative with social and political marginalized small parties has had negligible influence. More representative than this European Initiative of workers and communist parties without the formal character of a European Party are the annual international meetings of Communist and workers' parties organized on a global scale in which 120 parties from 85 countries participate, among them most Communist parties that are also members of the EL but also the Communist Party of China, the Communist Party of South Africa, and the Communist Party of the Russian Federation.

However, even the EL, as the new nucleus of the European radical left, suffers from the

⁵ The PRC is to the present day in fact a member of both parties and also a participant in the International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties.

⁶ In 2014 the Communist Party of Greece (KKE) decided to leave the GUE/NGL group.

disparate fortunes of its constituent parties. If we look at the parties of the EU radical left a quarter century after the collapse of state socialism, its situation varies greatly according to country. It is only in Greece that the left alliance, Syriza, governs; Portugal's Left Bloc is tolerating a socialist minority government. However, a fundamental change of direction of politics, not to mention a break with the system, is in sight neither in Greece nor in Portugal. In Spain IU and Podemos are confronting a divided PSOE, so that in autumn 2016 the hoped-for change of policy and government became impossible. In Finland, the Left Alliance, part of a six-party coalition, no longer wanted to assume responsibility for austerity measures and in 2011 left government. For the same reason Denmark's Red-Green Alliance ended its toleration of the social democrat-led government in 2012. At present, in all other EU countries, the question of left alliances with socialists/social democrats or Greens only seem realistic at regional or municipal levels, as in Spain, in Germany, and in the Czech Republic.

In the core countries of the EU the development of RLPs is arguably stagnating. Still, Die LINKE in Germany and the SP in the Netherlands get around 10% in national elections. Stable parties are Sinn Féin in Ireland, -- which combines a progressive social-policy agenda with the demand for a united Ireland independent of the UK -- and, aside from the issue of its gaining membership and electorate, the KSCM, with electoral results of between 10 and 15% (but only 7,8% in October 2017). Polling in single digits are Denmark's Red-Green Alliance, Sweden's Left Party, Finland's Left Alliance, and the Front de Gauche, with electoral results between 5 and 8%; France's left presents a fragmented picture: After Jean-Luc Mélenchon's success (19%) in the first round of the presidential elections, in which he was the candidate of *France Insoumise*, the movement he founded, the PCF and this movement were not able to agree on an alliance for the parliamentary elections and are now represented by groups of nearly equal size in the National Assembly. The effects of this fragmentation on the EL cannot yet be foreseen since both tendencies, the Parti de Gauche, which has been absorbed into *France Insoumise*, and the PCF are EL members, although in their European policies their paths diverge.

The Left Party in Luxembourg, with around 5 per cent, counts among the smaller stable RLPs. The interesting developments in post-socialist countries include, alongside the Left Alliance in Slovenia, Poland's RAZEM, which is strongly oriented towards Podemos and rejects the classic left-right positioning. Worthy of note are also the attempts at building new alliances in Austria, among others with KPÖ, *Aufbruch* ('Departure') and the *Mosaik-Linken* (Mosaic Left), with which the youth organization of the Green Party is now associated. In Italy, such attempts continually fail when they come up against the issue of determining the relationship to the Partito Democratico.

Outside the parliamentary arena, there are parties whose political influence is important for the overall development of the EL. This applies to the Communist Party of Austria (KPÖ) and Italy's Rifondazione Comunista (PRC), which has to date not been able to process its loss of importance since its failure in the centre-left Ulivo alliance under Romano Prodi.

On the EL's practice and public image

How has the EL managed to consolidate such disparate forces? The EL's practice -- codified in its statute -- is the principle of consensus. However, for the first time, at the Madrid party congress in 2013, there was a divergent procedure (from the consensus principle) for the election of Alexis Tsipras, the party-leader of SYRIZA as the top candidate of the EL for the 2014 European elections.

At any rate, Tsipras was not only the party's lead candidate but ran according to the agreement made between the European Parliament and the European Council, that is, that the lead candidate of the party with the most votes should be named President of the European Commission. To claim the presidency of the European Commission was a courageous step to take, since it went beyond the EL's previous position on European integration. Its political significance became clear when Tsipras intervened in the debate that flared up again after the election around the nomination of the Commission's President and insisted on the right of the Parliament to elect the lead candidate of the strongest party, Jean-Claude Juncker of the European People's Party.

In the debate that preceded Tsipras's nomination, apparently it was mainly tactical arguments that had tipped the scales. On the Greek side there was an interest in creating a European platform for the opposition leader in the Greek parliament, which would in turn have impact within the country. In 2014 Tsipras embodied as no other the struggle of Europe's left against austerity. Putting him forward as the candidate made it clear that the left's criticism of EU policy, unlike that of the right, was not anti-European. Tsipras's celebrity, his charisma, and his media presence opened the EL for the first time to a broad European public.

Podemos used Tsipras' candidacy to demonstrate its solidarity with the Greek left. He was a guest speaker at the founding congress of the Slovenian United Left which developed into a successful electoral alliance. The Austrian left used his candidacy to lend greater voice to Europa Anders. Finally, the fragmented Italian left named its electoral alliance L'Altra Europa con Tsipras and in fact succeeded in entering the European Parliament with three seats.⁷

However, focusing the debate on the struggle against austerity and the concentration on the Greek left, which boosted the electoral campaign, led to a backlash after the defeat of the Syriza government in the negotiations with the Troika. This may have confirmed the convictions of those who gave their electoral campaigns a predominantly conventional orientation, addressing European politics mainly from a national angle as has been the case up to now in European Parliament elections. For example, in Germany, Die LINKE's posters read: 'Don't let the refugees drown', 'prohibit arms exports', 'no tax money for gangs of gamblers', and 'higher wages, higher pensions, more war on poverty'. This orientation of Die LINKE's electoral strategy was decided on after weighing the electoral chances and the extent to which solidarity with Greece, and still less with a left government, was *not* supported by broad sections of society. Parties like the KSCM acted similarly.

This in fact points to a fundamental problem for the whole left: the lack of a unifying European strategy, going beyond Tsipras's candidacy. Caterina Príncipe makes an important point (Sunkara and Príncipe, p 1): '[i]f Syriza's electoral success at the beginning of 2015 seemed to vindicate the strategy of the new left parties of Europe, its ultimate fall to the eurozone provided ample ammunition to these parties' critics. Many such critics dismissed the possibility of a political alternative to austerity altogether, asking us instead to focus on developing extra-parliamentary movements.'

The opportunities and risks of a Europeanization of politics are very closely related. It became painfully obvious that using one and minimizing the other requires a more precise assessment of the room for manoeuvre and the relations of forces. These are extraordinarily

⁷ However, the list was not to enjoy lasting success. Barbara Spinelli, one of the three elected MEPs, left the group, and the two other Italian members of the GUE/NGL do not represent a common party project.

unfavourable for Greece not only due to the country's weakness, which represents no more than 2 per cent of the population and 2 percent of the GDP of the EU. On the political level, too, the Greek government stood alone within the European institutions. Support on the part of governing social democrats did not go beyond displays of sympathy.

Furthermore, the opportunities for action for the parties in the EL connected to Syriza, which represent a minority with a total of 7 per cent of votes at the European level, proved too limited. The occasionally very sharp criticism of Syriza from sectors of the radical left thus also reflected the weakness of the left in broadening the national and European room for manoeuvre for any government project they might advocate.

But what also became visible was that the European RLPs hardly developed any capacity for concrete solidarity. On the one hand, Syriza and its left government had difficulties in formulating what concrete help for Syriza might mean beyond the demand for strengthening the left in each country. On the other, the EL was unable to develop Greece's left government into a European project to effectively confront neoliberal policy in Europe and an aggravation and spread of the general rightward shift.

The manner in which the third Memorandum was forced through by the Troika against the resistance of the Greek government under Tsipras and despite popular will expressed in the referendum led to more sharply critical positions on the process of European integration. The document of the EL's Fifth Congress (December 2016, Berlin) reads: 'Europe must not substitute itself for individual states, for the national level and for their prerogatives, but should encourage cooperation on joint projects and global challenges. The sovereignty of every state should be respected. The democratic legitimacy of each country must take priority over the current European treaties' (European Left 2016).

The most important political resolution of the 2016 party congress was certainly the initiative for holding a European forum of the left on the model of Latin America's São Paulo Forum. The course has been set to open up this Forum to all forces interested in an alternative politics.

In the EL's evaluation report at its Fifth Party Congress in Berlin in 2016 the EL's lack of capacity to act and of presence in the eyes of the broad European public was formulated with a sharpness that points to growing dissatisfaction within the EL and its member parties. (Hildebrandt, 2017) Structures capable of action are to be created. The strengthening of the EL's structures through a continually active Political Secretariat was long overdue in view of the relatively infrequent meetings of the Executive Committee and of the Council of Party Chairs. The underlying structural weaknesses point to a political problem, which those engaged in the EL can only cope with to a certain extent, namely the need for a renewed consensus.

The EL cannot be stronger than its important constituent national parties let it be. This discussion must above all be conducted in the member parties, specifically in the most influential ones that determine the place Europe holds in their own politics as well as the visibility of the EL in their countries. They are also the ones that create room for manoeuvre for their European party, which it needs to develop its own European-policy identity. To this end, it is significant that in Gregor Gysi the EL for the first time has a chairperson who is not simultaneously the chair of a member party.

Even if European policy is (still) not within the focus of the national policies of the EL's influential parties, Europe, that is, the EU, still defines their parameters.

The problem is principally a political one. If the EL wants to evolve beyond a loose party alliance to become a European political actor, the member parties have to expand the political consensus on which their European party rests.

However, this requires a readiness to take up discussions that have up to now been avoided in order not to put too much burden on political unity. The core question is in what form democracy and self-determination, as they are called for in the political document of the Fifth Congress, can be realized under conditions of European integration. Richard Dunphy is right in this.

transform! europe as the European foundation of the EL intends to play an important role in initiating this discussion process; in recent years it has facilitated, pan-European co-operation between parties and civil society and provided a space for open discussions among the parties. transform! europe is a network of 29 left-wing research and educational organizations, which was founded in 2001 in the context of the first World Social Forum at Porto Alegre. Some of transform's founders played a role in the founding of the Party of the European Left. In 2007, it was registered as an association in Brussels and recognized by the EL as the political foundation associated with it. (Calossi 2016 p. 186), notes that the composition of transform's membership is not identical to that of the EL. In fact, there are also institutes working in transform that are close to parties outside the EL as well as those which do not see themselves as related to any party. In five countries there are several organizations belonging to the network. Inside the network, we find the most significant tendencies of the European left and their diverse outlooks. In conformity with the self-conception of a network, the members and observers conceive of transform as a common, in that they autonomously determine the substantive orientation and the allocation of resources. This enables cooperation with social movements, trade unions, and foundations of other progressive families as well as action in spaces that, like the social forums, are inaccessible for political parties. In this way transform consciously sees itself as a mediator and translator between politics and social movements.

To underscore its mediating role transform has resolved to reformulate its conception of European policy and more openly in terms of the debate it sees as necessary: 'Experience has demonstrated that the noble and progressive idea of European Unification cannot be upheld against the across-the board growing nationalisms and the Far Right by uncritically defending the status quo of the existing European Union. transform is committed to critical research on the European Union. It aims at providing spaces for free and unprejudiced discussions to pave the way for a democratically and peacefully united Europe.' (transform! europe, 2017)

Transform's 2015 budget shows a revenue of 1 million Euros, 85 % of which is due to a subsidy from the European Parliament and the rest to self-financing. This allows the network to support a 9-person staff distributed through four countries, a Central Bureau in Vienna, and several multilingual media⁸. In terms of research, transform sees itself as a platform in which the members and observers carry out common European projects. These are presented for discussion at the annual members' assemblies and voted on.

In view of the crisis and the major emerging political confrontation over the future path for Europe, expectations about transform's role are being raised. The strategic decisions that the radical left has to face demand intensive research as well as the weighing of diverse, in

⁸ For more details see <http://www.transform-network.net/home.html>

part opposing, standpoints. In the foreground of transform's research programmes there are the problems of the actual disintegration of Europe and of left alternatives, the growth of nationalism and right-wing radicalism, and the development of a class politics that takes account of the social structure altered by neoliberal capitalism, of feminism, and of the necessity of an ecological reconstruction of the entire mode of work and life in the developed capitalist centres.

Conclusion

Europe's left is now in a situation that is both challenging and full of risks. In the age of deep ruptures, the need is arising for fundamental social alternatives and for political strategies to realize them. If Europe's radical left succeeds in meeting these challenges it may become an influential force for future developments. If it fails it could be dragged into the maelstrom of the political crisis that has gripped the whole European political system. It can still decide to be part of the therapy or a symptom of the decay of European democracy.

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The Return of Hope. For an offensive double strategy

The future has gone astray. The neoliberal utopia is exhausted just as much as left alternatives are. The decades of an initially conservative-orthodox neoliberalism from Thatcher to Kohl, its generalisation under the governments from Blair to Schroeder, and finally its authoritarian deepening and anchoring in the years of the crisis, have caused social inequalities and dynamics, which are hardly to control. The structural crisis is not resolved and cannot be solved in the old framework. The attempts to stabilise financial market capitalism only extend the agony and tear apart the European Union and our societies. The situation is however not characterised by rupture; instead, an old quote from Gramsci applies: "The old world is dying and the new one cannot be born. It is the time of monsters." One such monster is the new radical Right in its various forms.

The political field currently is not being structured along the cleavages of left vs. right, but rather along the polarisation between a liberal and a illiberal capitalism, between the defence of globalised capitalism with modified means (Clinton, Merkel, May, etc.), and the turn towards a social-national and authoritarian ethno-racist gated capitalism (Trump, Le Pen, Petry, etc.). The good news is that the time of no alternatives is over. The bad news is that it's precisely the wrong alternatives which are opening up. A response to the crisis that is democratic and with solidarity is thus far absent. What dominates is the "loss of a general, positive idea of the good" (Eribon).

There is a great need for this idea of the good. Constantly new movements and initiatives are placing this idea on the agenda. Occupy Wall Street and the Bernie Sanders campaign, the passionate struggles for renewal of social democracy within the U.K. Labour Party or the German SPD, *Nuit Debut* and the militant strikes against the new labour law in France, the *Indignad@s* and the rise of *Podemos* in Spain, the activities for self-organisation and solidarity structures and the struggle for a left government in Greece and its course – the list goes on. In Germany there are the welcome initiatives – about 8 million people - for those who have fled to Germany, the demonstrations against CETA and TTIP or the De-Growth-Movement. Many people are pushing for a new politics of a good life, for a democratic mode of living within which dignity and solidarity are lived. But precisely in Germany, the neoliberal power centre of the EU, there lacks the integrative power to help the new world into being. The many lack the unifying force from which power grows to usher in a change of political direction. To contribute to this, to constitute, and to make visible the democratic camp of solidarity, is the common strategic task of the left. Hope and power must converge around a "third pole" – a pole of solidarity – to effectively intervene in the hegemonic constellation, the contemporary battle-lines between those "above" and those on the "right".

1. Times of agonisingly slow development and sudden turns

The last few decades in Germany were only ostensibly times of stability. In reality, the international situation has become increasingly dangerous. On the southern and eastern border of the EU wars have flared up or are smouldering, states are destroyed, disintegrated, without prospects. The attempts to integrate the EU mostly through markets and the Euro have brought the European project to the edge of collapse. Hope for social participation and well-

being vanished; fear and insecurity are growing. Impossible to continue like that. Already, the constitutive politics of neoliberalism has become a politics of permanent crisis modus and state of emergency. Barbarism is marching fast.

Such a situation generates tensions and strong contradictions. Left politics must prepare to fight long-term defensive struggles but also for very fast engagement in open situations: the “war of position” can rapidly become a “war of manoeuvre” and then come to a standstill again. As of yet, the left is not prepared for such a contradictory strategy of alternating moments, neither intellectually, organisationally, nor politically.

We are in a situation in which no political *change of direction* is possible, but *modifications* certainly are – to the right as well as the left, more authoritarian but also democratic ones. Excessive inequality, the class question, and the heavy social dislocations in a “downwardly mobile society” (Nachtwey) are being discussed again. Correspondingly, large investment programmes are being debated likewise, as well as putting an end to declining pension levels, or pushing back against temporary contract work and precarious employment. In foreign policy, agitators are confronted by opponents who expressly seek cooperative solutions. Already, some modifications to the Agenda-2010-politics⁹ have been achieved: the introduction of the minimum wage law and more flexible regulations regarding the retirement age of 67. More of such things would certainly be possible – the discourse of the new social democratic leader, Martin Schulz, indicates that. For now, it’s about partial concessions to neutralise growing protest, to absorb specific groups, without changing the fundamental orientation of politics – precisely in order to avoid changing direction. Such a change of trajectory would be confronted by the oligarchic power structures of politics, corporations, consulting agencies, hardened interests even from sections of organised labour, as well as institutional blockades at the global, EU and nation-state levels. And a change of direction must be financed. This cannot happen if austerity politics continues.

But neoliberal continuity is not secured. The crisis is too deep. That is why the left must prepare for a political crisis in which the ruling elite will not be able to continue in their usual ways, in which hitherto political approaches appear neither effective nor legitimate, therefore resistance massively increases, also under the banner of the new Right. At every moment, the possibility of a new, deep financial and economic crisis is conceivable, the acute intensification of international conflicts (even between the major powers) or massive terrorist attacks, acute ecological catastrophes, the rapid disintegration of the EU – such events have become possible again. This has unleashed a nervous tension among the rulers, who witness the rattling of their politics’ fundamentals and assumptions, and under pressure from the new Right. Sections of the rulers even increasingly see hope in the new Right, and are considering their options.

In an open crisis situation, a radical new situation emerges, wherein the elite becomes divided (Klein 2016), a change of direction becomes possible – towards an authoritarian gated capitalism or towards a restructuring based on solidarity. The left must become capable of intervening in such a situation. Yet it is not: the left is too busy with internal divisions and subtle distinctions. It also lacks imagination and possibly also the strength and willpower to face the severity of the situation and the danger of the crisis.

⁹ Agenda 2010 was a comprehensive reform package passed by the SPD-led government in 2003, which, among other things, flexibilised the labour market, retrenched the social welfare system, and reversed progressive taxation. [Translator’s note]

In the current situation, all existing ideas about how left politics should be done must be reconsidered. The possibility of a left turn appears nearly impossible, and is however more urgent; social-ecological transformation increasingly unlikely and yet more acute. How can the left, however, orient itself in these contradictions?

Saying what is, Ferdinand Lassalle said, is the first revolutionary act. What the Left in Germany needs first, is a consequent analysis and an open strategic discussion. All too often, different groups remain among themselves, fear that changes present danger, deny themselves an open self-critical discussion as well as challenging experiments. A common praxis and power perspective, however, cannot emerge spontaneously, but must rather be forged. This requires not a nit-picky divisive debate, but rather a connective perspective that enables a common narrative and corresponding praxes. Clarity is needed, to avoid sinking into the mash of endless ambiguities, from which anything and everything is justified.

2. The three battle lines of the left in the crisis

The societal left finds itself in a complex situation defined by *three* battle lines. *First*, precisely *it* has the task of defending liberal democracy, which it has always rightly criticised for its reduction to formal democracy with formal political equality and its limitation to the political field (with immunisation by economic rule). But losing this democracy opens the gate to open barbarism. *Second*, it must protect what Wolfgang Abendroth means with “social democracy” (as political and social participation) even in its real-existing narrow form of a redistributive, paternalistic social state. Its authoritarian “modernisation” and austerity-political hollowing out has a triple effect: With the lowering of pensions, fear of poverty in old age has emerged. With the low-wage sector and the expansion of precarious jobs, employment and income fears have become generalised. With the division in education and life chances, people are concerned about the future of their children and grandchildren. This triple fear destroys democracy and solidaristic cohesion, is the basis for racism and violence. Social, individual, and general security – it is increasingly obvious – are the indispensable conditions for freedom and self-determination.

Of course, the left cannot stop there, deflecting attacks against liberal and social democracy. *Thirdly*, it must go beyond, to develop its own practices of solidarity of societal organising and to a strongly radiating third pole, a pole of solidarity (as a basis for socialist democracy). The alliance with the bourgeois powers in defence of liberal democracy is only persuasive when the struggle against the ruling politics is also effectively fought, a politics which contributed greatly to the erosion of democracy and thereby for the rise of right-wing forces. The defence of social democracy in its old form is not enough, because it has been outmoded for some time, it provides no solutions to the questions of a completely different class of wage-workers whose composition has become more feminine, migrant, heterogeneous. The left must therefore first undertake a political transformation of itself.

3. The strategic tasks of the left

This demands a change of perspective: a *new class politics*, which does not negate the multiplicity of interests of the left mosaic. This cannot mean a simple return to the old class struggle. Racism, gender relations, and social questions, ecology and peace, for instance, are inseparably intertwined. Differences should not be treated as secondary contradictions, but

instead, interests should be actively connected with one another. That's only possible in conjunction with people themselves, being present and organising together in their everyday lives, in neighbourhoods and workplaces, encouraging people to take decisions and act together. On this basis, credibility can also be restored to the Left Party, upon which a functioning parliamentary representation can be built, a magnet for the many who themselves do not want or cannot be politically engaged.

When speaking about the future, we must take the new democracy movements seriously. Representative democracy has its strengths, but in Europe the social and political participation connected to it is emptied. Representation and self-organisation must be brought into a new relationship. That requires new institutions, including our own organisations, and not least, of the party. They must become organisations where it is possible to take initiative in one's own hands, doing concrete and sometimes small things, but with a view towards society as a whole.

Solidarity initiatives could be important starting points for this. For example, inspired by the Greek example *Solidarity4All*, the Left Party works on pilot projects of organising in deprived neighbourhoods. To organize in very practical terms, go out, and build real connection with the popular classes in the neighbourhoods, especially in deprived areas to build a base beyond the usual left suspects. This is a precondition for any left perspective to win real power to pursue its goals. This is why we started ringing the doorbells in former strongholds of Die LINKE and in deprived city areas - all over Germany, in every region. We trained Hundreds of activist in canvassing techniques, and keep trying to multiply the numbers. This will also be a central part of the electoral campaign - reaching out to the popular classes. And we will continue after the elections as a long-term project. We listen, we discuss, we invite to very specific local meetings centred around local problems - and we come back again, try again. The idea is not only to win members, but to build local nodes of resistance, especially around the housing question, but not only. This is combined with parallel training in transformative organizing.

In such initiatives as organisational nodes, "people's idea of what they can do" can be changed, to "develop, with them, a sense of their capacity for power" (Wainwright¹⁰), for a new inclusive *WE*. This is because the experience of the common imbues agency and restores the belief in a possible and practical change and in one's own future. Here too, approaches of a new emancipatory and democratic form of welfare could be developed.

Such approaches are thereby not only an effective counteragent to (right-wing) populism, but could also minimise dependencies to a (left) government and guard against clientelism. It doesn't limit itself to "civic activity" to compensate for the deficits of a slimmed down welfare state, but instead aims with actions of civil disobedience and direct expropriation for the state's reconstruction and democratic reorganisation. From this perspective, the expansion and democratisation of the welfare should reroute means and decision-making power into civil society: "In and against the state" (John Holloway).

Beyond this, what's required is a clear relation of antagonism, a constitutive outside. The current situation was produced, and there are political factions and classes responsible for. So it would go against the governing political caste, the corporations and the wealthy, who have emancipated themselves from their fiscal responsibility to society and fertilizing the

¹⁰ Wainwright, Hilary, "Greece: Syriza shines a light", 2012, <http://www.redpepper.org.uk/greece-syriza-shines-a-light/>

commonwealth. It would go against the normalcy of corruption and greed, the competition fetish, which undermines the common, the societal fabric. And it goes against the political twins of “la casta”, the self-radicalising right-wing populism, which seeks protection at the expense of vilifying other societal groups, foments hate and sows violence.

In contrast to that, we should say that we work to overcome capitalism, towards a society which Bernie Sanders uninhibitedly calls Socialism. Belonging to this are self-evident needs such as free healthcare and education as well as affordable housing for all; public services without charge, from libraries to public transportation; substantive democratic participation with the capacity to accomplish things; ecological reorganisation of cities, transport, energy supply and agriculture; much more time for each other and for living. Here appear the unsatisfied past futures that have yet to be actualised, from the French to the Russian Revolution to 1968 or 1989. As Corbyn says: “For us, it may be the same thing since the last 40 years, but for the new generation it is brand new.” It’s about ways within capitalism that lead beyond it.

Now the word socialism has become speakable again. People are jarred, they look it up on Wikipedia, they inform themselves. We shouldn’t remain behind but instead name our ideas for a solidaristic, democratic, feminist, anti-racist, etc. post-growth alternative by its new, old, unfulfilled name, and fight together over what it should mean in the twenty-first century: Socialism – a good, solidaristic, just society, something simple, but difficult to achieve. Not everyone in the “mosaic left” or in the “third pole” will support this, but it should be accepted as obvious, that a transformative left within the mosaic stands for *socialism*.

And we shouldn’t be afraid to make it clear how we feel. The Right works with fear, resentment and hate. We must counter it with solidarity and hope, not as an appeal but as concrete practice. It is good and does good to act in solidarity. A practice of solidarity, furthermore, with refugees and minorities, as well as with those who’ve been de-classed, and with the anxious middle-class: welfare/workfare recipients, the unemployed and low-wage workers, towards all those who, running on the hamster wheel, seek to acquire a “good life”, and are sometimes angry at those who are supposedly less “productive”. Not only do people want to feel that their interests are acknowledged, but also that their situation and existence is received with empathy. We must learn to create connections which lie beyond the discursive, all too rational, and bring forth, what in Spanish is called “*Ilusión*”: *Ilusión* can hardly be translated, means literally in Latin “bringing something into appearance”, a conception and a feeling about how something could be, not yet real, but can be sensed. Ernst Bloch called it the anticipation of another world. It is the desire, to live different and be different. We must practice that, it is another side of the factual analysis and debate, each must nurture the other.

And finally, the left must work on the perspective of political power. This should not be reduced to elections. On this electoral one-dimensionality is where a traditional parliamentary-orientation meets a purely discursively constituted populism. The episodic, but concentrated mobilisation can certainly achieve success, this is however precarious when the mobilisation is not connected to sustainable anchoring and organising. A political left in the representative institutions without a strong, independent, critical left in society, anchored in neighbourhoods, workplaces, initiatives and movements, is doomed to fail. If it succeeds however to revive the “heat flow” (Bloch) of hope, which draws its power and energy from the experience of solidarity and self-determination, then, even taking part in a government may be discussed differently.

4. The current crucial question is: How does a left party address the question of governing power?

It is a poor and empirically disproved argument, that societal and political opposition have no effect. The opposition can set fire under the seats of the rulers so that they must move. When they don't respect or fear the left, than nothing can be achieved. This is even true for Germany. Neither Bismarck's welfare state reforms, nor the workplace participation or the Adenauer pension reform would have come about without a powerful opposition. There would have been no plan to phase out nuclear energy and no minimum wage. It can be proved to the contrary, that the left often weakened itself through its involvement in governing coalitions, even destroyed itself when it was not connected to any left real power options which it could bring about. Quite so in Germany 15 years ago. The Social Democratic Party (SPD) became a party of social injustice under the government of Gerhard Schröder, and has only recovered very recently, but still far from old strength. The Greens participated in a NATO-war of aggression and the Agenda 2010, and dismantled the asylum laws recently. Left is something else. The PDS¹¹ and the Left Party had great difficulties in regional governments, not strengthening the left in society, and finally weakening the party itself. The actually decisive question is not whether to participate in government or not, but rather, how to strengthen the left and build real power, and with which means, in each concrete situation.

Usually, the governing question is discussed in a completely wrong way. In the foreground, it is asked, which single reforms could be pushed through and which not. But the question which must be posed regarding governing is not only *what* might be achieved, but also if the societal forces of the left would be strengthened or not. As Rosa Luxemburg said: Most importantly is the question of *how!* The *what* is built on sand if no societal and political forces stand behind it to defend and expand it. Working for individual reforms, not to mention for participation in government, that do not clearly strengthen the reverberating power and agency of the left, but instead, through them, weakens it and erodes its credibility, are a direct threat to democracy in the current situation.

But this answer is also too abstract: In our view, the entire left including the Left Party must prepare themselves for two very different situations for action. One is that the relative economic, social, and political stability in Germany may persist. Neither on the social nor on party-level conditions for a turn of the political trajectory will be present. That is the current situation. The other possibility would require the societal left and the Left Party alike to prepare themselves for an open crisis situation. Then a much more radical approach is required and a vigorous mobilisation. The question regarding parliamentary opposition or participation in the government must reflect the possibility of *both* situations. If participation in a governing coalition would weaken the possibility for the Left Party to stand up in an open crisis situation as a convincing alternative for a fundamentally different politic, than it would have historically utterly failed. The claim of the electoral alternative to represent an alternative trajectory would be relinquished.

The strategic use value of the Left Party exists in the dialectic of "revolutionary realpolitik" (Luxemburg). As a party, it must work to create the conditions for a fundamental change *and simultaneously* achieve politically feasible modifications of ruling politics today. This is its foundational consensus and reason for existence. Both efforts must strengthen the other in

¹¹ The Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS) was a left party in East Germany formed in 1989 after the collapse of the German Democratic Republic and was fused with the West German WASG party in 2005 into today's Left Party. [Translator's note]

reciprocity, wherein exists the “art of sailing against the wind” of neoliberal finance market capitalism, to recall Walter Benjamin.

Social Democracy today constitutes, in a double sense, the boundary of the possibility for progressive transformation in Europe. Without it, all left projects reach their limit, including movement projects such as those in France and Spain, but also in Greece (due to the negligible support from European Social Democracy). But this also unfortunately means that the possibility for renewal of Social Democracy is limited. A rupture of the kind sought but not yet achieved in the British Labour Party under Corbyn, would not be possible in Germany. It is questionable whether such a renewal would be possible in countries in which the position of a left social democracy is contested by other parties. In Germany, large parts of the left social democratic spectrum left the SPD, and switched, through WASG, to the Left Party. Left politics in Germany must therefore also focus on applying pressure towards a left renewal of the SPD, and to openly fight against its current form, which presents a blockage for a left politics on the federal level.

The opening up with Martin Schulz is a chance and a danger at the same time: he brings back hope to a deeply frustrated party membership and mobilises a lot of people to join the SPD. This reflects the strong desire for bringing back a social democratic discourse of justice. And most important this hope redirects voters from right-wing populist Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) to social democracy. The danger: Schulz is not a lefty like Corbyn or Sanders. He was supporting not only welfare in Germany, but stands for austerity in Europe, crushing down the Greek Syriza government, pushing through TTIP and CETA, avoiding parliamentary debate and decision taking etc. Now he is propagating some social measures for a kernel of the “hard working people”, the core employees. At the moment he is not aiming to do something for the poorest, for wealth distribution with higher taxes for the rich etc.– core issues for a left turn.

A sober look at the SPD shows: For decades, programmatically and personnel have been closely intertwined with neoliberalism, and that a leadership situated at the switch point of governmental and administrative power, lacks the potential for renewal. It is threatened consequently with missing out on the historical moment in which the “conflict between represented and representatives” becomes too large: “At a certain point in their historical lives, social classes become detached from their traditional parties. In other words, the traditional parties in that particular organisational form, with the particular men who constitute, represent, and lead them, are no longer recognised by their class (or fraction of a class) as its expression” (Gramsci, 1992: 210). The societal groups turn away towards the right or left. That is the point where such parties become politically meaningless. The Greek PASOK is a political corpse, the Spanish PSOE finds itself in the most difficult existential crisis since its founding, and the French PS has little chances in the polls.

Before the “so-called Schulz effect” the poll numbers for the SPD lie near the 20% mark and have shrunk nearly in half since the election of 1998 (40.9%). Now, for the moment, they are back at 30% or so. But the SPD holds tightly onto a government which ruthlessly forced through an authoritarian neoliberal crisis regime throughout Europe, and relentlessly carries out the destruction of any alternative, and by the way dismantling the asylum laws. So is all that just loose talk? A renewal of the Jeremy Corbyn kind is currently foreclosed in the SPD. But in no way however, should a (more or less opportunistic) change be fully omitted – even for pure self-preservation, in view of the list of their sister parties threatened with elimination. This possibility must also be considered, but not however over-estimated. Opportunism

suffices only for the modification of politics. A real change of trajectory together with the SPD in the current moment seems unrealistic.

With the Greens, the situation is dramatic in a different way when measured against the challenges of left politics. Its position was relatively stable, with minor electoral variations up and down. But it would not be easy for the Greens to keep both of its political options open: a “Black-Green” coalition with the conservatives (including the conservative’s right-wing populist faction, the CSU), or an unpopular red-red-green coalition together with the SPD and the Left Party – that would for the party and not least for its voters – place it under the test of being torn apart. It too embodies no political change of trajectory, but rather just a “green thread” in the mesh of finance-market capitalism. Now confronted with bad polls, they are playing out the justice card, but with little credibility and two leaders identified with a green-liberal agenda.

5. Potential overlaps and conditions for a change of course

If a change of trajectory in the country is currently blocked, what does this mean for the Left Party with view towards the question of opposition or governing? *The strategic goal of the Left Party should be a left government in Germany that has a strong civil society as critical partner.* This would be a government of hope and powerful entry into transformation, a government of the “third pole”, the camp of solidarity. Therefore, the party should partake in an electoral strategy in the sense of a “spirit of cleavage” (Gramsci), a spirit which delineates a boundary, and also makes clear the will for a societal project without sectarianism and one which transcends its own party. The conditions for a left government however are not yet established.

On October 18 2016, hundreds of parliamentary representatives of the SPD, Left Party, and the Greens met to explore the possibilities of a governing coalition on the federal level. This was long overdue. Since 2005 there has ruled the demobilising contention that this is impossible. The search for left alternatives that join hope with power was almost completely abandoned. The assumption was that this cannot be brought about anyway. But why not a coalition of the three parties? It appears simple, even if difficult to realise: One explores commonalities, agrees on a list of projects which each favours, neutralises the fields where a common denominator is not in sight, and develops trust which also passes stress tests.

The opening of the three parties to a serious exploration of possible collaboration on the federal level is an important building block toward breaking the barriers preventing a change of political direction. Yet, the danger is very, very large, namely, that too short of a leap would be made – with devastating consequences. One would like to say with Brecht: “We would be good – instead of low. But our condition’s such it can’t be so.”

There appears more or less to be a consensus around what’s not possible for the Left party: No participation in a government that decides on more military interventions, privatisation, or new cuts to social welfare, not even in exchange for positive reforms. But what could be the minimal conditions as positive realisable elements, which could also be communicated or advanced through public participation and social movements, and collectively realised? Which positive elements with the actually existing partners would be realisable? Which elements could be agreed upon? Let’s try briefly to identify positive overlaps rather than dividing points.

- (1) An initiative for diversity and hope, which connects the expansion of social infrastructures (health, education, and housing) “for all” and the integration of refugees with a redistribution of wealth for a social-ecological investment offensive, which also massively creates new jobs – five or more percent of the Gross Domestic Product or so. That also means putting an end to Schäuble’s austerity, and taxing large incomes and wealth. The Greens have developed appropriate conceptions and following a failed election initially banned this idea to the basement. Now there are new proposals. The SPD worked quietly on a “feasible” property tax – this of course may be too small, but it is a starting point. Would Schulz embrace it? Unclear for the moment.
- (2) On the European level, an initiative for the adequate taxation of property, but also of specific financial operations is imaginable. Major overlaps exist between the trade unions’ “Marshall Plan for Europe”, the “Green New Deal” of the Greens, and the “compensatory union” of the Left Party. And not least, the long awaited Financial Transaction Tax could finally be implemented, thanks ironically to Brexit. Also the fight against tax havens could be more consequently pursued on the European level or even by single states (see USA). It will be more difficult to address the problem of removing export surpluses of the German economy of between 6 and 7 percent of the Gross National Product, and to redirect it towards domestic investment or to connect it to a solidaristic rebalancing of the EU. This is not possible without beginning the process of comprehensive structural change of German export industry and economy as part of the transformation of the economic structure of the EU.
- (3) There are also commonalities in the need for pension reform to stabilise pension levels and to prevent poverty of children and among the elderly as well as the rejection of private provisioning. Hartz-IV¹² will surely not be abolished, but steps towards basic security free from poverty and sanctions and minimal retirement allowance would be essential. Also the regulation of temporary and contract work, the strengthening of collective bargaining commitments, for instance, through general inclusion, and pay-rate committed laws fall in the area of collective possibility, just as do measures against rising rents and for the expansion of social housing.
- (4) Certainly, there will be no exit from NATO and no immediate end to weapon exports – but what’s definitely conceivable is the phasing out of foreign military interventions, a significant reduction in arms exports, and an end to weapon shipments into conflict zones or to actors directly or indirectly involved in conflicts (e.g. Saudi Arabia). Instead, commonalities would be found in the strengthening of priorities for non-military conflict resolution, with the expansion of mediating rolls, redirecting military support into non-military reconstruction aid (also financial). A common peace initiative would need to be connected to the cessation of one-sided economic and trade agreements, involving not only a rejection of CETA, TTIP and TISA, but also of the innumerable Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs).
- (5) And not least, the extension of possibilities for democratic participation onto all levels is absolutely a shared goal, although with very different nuances. Included in this would be that the state (local, regional, state-wide, federal, and in the EU) must take on important tasks of planning and steering investment, e.g. with the conversion of brown coal regions and the just transition for employees and local people, or with the social-

¹² The Hartz-IV reform took effect in 2005 and lowered financial support for people out of work and increased pressure upon them to find employment. [Translator’s note]

ecological reconstruction of urban and rural areas, including mobility, and building up to the transition towards organic agriculture. Central to this is the relief and funding of re-communalisation of public services and the funding of communal associations and solidaristic economies.

On all of these points there are certainly programmatic overlaps for common reforms. Yet on every one of these points, the resistance from economic, media, and vested interests would be enormous, also from the inner circles of the SPD and Greens. Also the idea of placing the common ahead of the divisions would be thwarted in concrete policy work, which would be confronted harshly on the national and European level, and would be quickly confronted, not only for the sake of reputation, but also to mitigate the confrontation with powerful interests, with specific power factions in society, and even inside the SPD and the Greens. We regard this minimal program with today's actually-existing SPD and Greens as non-viable at the moment.

The Left would come under enormous pressure to accept unpalatable compromises in order to realise some of the mentioned goals. This requires more spine than most have, namely, possibly terminating the coalition or toleration. The party is not prepared for such challenges – and nor is its societal support base. Its participation in government always endangers its societal standing, its extra-parliamentary support. Often, nearly always, the Left Party is weaker after its participation in government, also because the government is not used for the broadening of its societal basis.

6. Toleration and work on the “third pole”

If it is possible to tangibly influence government politics from the opposition, and if it is not possible to form a left government and initiate a change of political trajectory, as presented in point 5, due to the absence of necessary societal and political conditions, then the Left Party should not participate in a governing coalition at the federal level. To do so would abandon a *realpolitik* that takes seriously the demand for fundamental political change. The Left cannot afford the luxury of holding and spreading illusions.

This position means asking the SPD and Greens during the election campaign, if they would like to take the risk of a change of trajectory or if they rather only want to modify existing politics. There are very simple questions, which we should ask. Retirement free from poverty: Yes or no? End to austerity politics: Yes or no? Restructuring of the financial sector: Yes or no? Publicly-steered investment: Yes or no? Social and ecological investment program: Yes or no? Turn away from the dominance of the export model: Yes or no? A real peace agenda: Yes or no?

If there's a parliamentary relation of power that would allow for an SPD-led minority government, the Left Party could offer toleration. In former years, this offer was always turned down by the SPD. The path of toleration of a minority government was taken recently in Portugal. There, the largest crisis protests in Europe took place, relative to their population size, but these did not consolidate into new organisational forms and the impulse of the movement threatened to fizzle out. It found a temporary expression in good election results for the radical left: the communist-led coalition and the Left Bloc (8.27 and 10.22% of the votes). Against this background, the toleration of a minority-government of the socialist party in October 2015 by the communists and left bloc, offered a chance to begin easing the austerity politics. This would certainly be a possibility in Germany too. Since 2005, the Left Party has

repeatedly raised it for discussion. The proposal of the Left Party parliamentary delegates giving their votes to the current SPD-chairperson for Chancellor has been around for some time. Important reform projects to modify current policies could get off the ground – with retirement, minimum wage, basic income, housing, energy transition, additional and better modifications than the continuance of a CDU-led government – the commonalities are known.

As with a coalition agreement in toleration, the minimum conditions and measures are also set in a clear contract. In contrast to a coalition agreement, “coalition discipline” is limited from the start. The Left Party would not be tangled up in ministerial and administration apparatuses, which they cannot control, and they would have no ministers who would be compelled to frame the minor or even negative decisions and regressions as success. Instead, it could concentrate on the common development of reform initiatives and laws in parliament and in societal debates, without subordination of the party and parliamentary faction under the governing logic. Its own initiatives could be brought to the public (instead of just discussing government proposals). The party could further expand its function as a party demanding change and *simultaneously* achieve the possible in the form of an effective opposition or even hopefully an even more effective toleration arrangement.

And possibly on the way with successful toleration the conditions for an effective left government in Germany may rise, carried forward by society and social movements together. Then on the basis of effective social forces, a division of the ruling elite might emerge, and powerful left actors could possibly establish a firmly left government in the power centre of the European Union, and the approach that was developed before could be comprehensively implemented:

- (1) It would be a government that would halt the austerity politics in the EU and Germany, and support large projects for the solidaristic integration in the EU. That calls for the willingness to selectively break with rules of the EU and common currency, and to implement new rules. The accumulation of large property must be drastically taxed in such a situation. This requires comprehensive measures of capital controls.
- (2) It would be a government, which initiates vigorous steps to subordinate the financial system to society and to an economy with a new approach. The financial sector must be significantly reduced. Fundamental protections for health, care, and old-age must be the exclusively public. The public banking sector must be strengthened, also through its privileging over the private sector. It would take priority over EU-competition laws. Systemically important banks, which are too big to fail, would be broken up and socialized. As long as tax havens still exist, capital transactions with them would be dealt with through tax penalties.
- (3) It would be a government that launches a comprehensive social and ecological investment programme, with a scale of 5% or more of the Gross National Product. Only then could childcare, education, healthcare and nursing, a basic security free from poverty and sanctions, and the hindrance of child or elderly poverty, a quick democratic energy transition, the ecological renovation of housing and existing building stock, the transition to an ecological transportation system, as well as a solidaristic foreign policy, succeed. The social-ecological transformation of urban and rural space, and the transition to an organic agriculture are pending. Public services belong in public hands again.

- (4) It would be a government in which the state (local, regional, federal, and in the EU) took on important tasks of planning and steering investment. A left government would thereby also be a government of state restructuring.
- (5) It would be a government, which would steer the export surplus of 6 to 7 % of the Gross National Product in large part to domestic investment, connected to a solidaristic re-balancing in the EU. This requires nothing less than a comprehensive structural transformation of German industry and economy as part of the change of the political economic structure of the EU.
- (6) It would be a government that really takes seriously the international responsibility for a global politics of justice, of ecological restructuring, and of the securing of a positive idea of peace (not just the absence of armed conflict and war), today and especially in eastern Europe, north Africa, and the near and middle East. Military interventions and weapon exports to militarily engaged conflict participants must be ended by such a government. The arms industry must be reduced to the size necessary for a country's defence, with conversion of the rest.

The conditions for this change of direction have not yet emerged. That the toleration model, favoured here for *today's* situation is unlikely, has to do with the fact that the most elementary approach of the necessary political courage is missing in the SPD and Greens, and maybe of the Left too, a courage which would also be the minimal condition to discuss the governmental participation of the Left Party and to initiate a change of direction. A common government of SPD, the Greens, and the Left, right now, is a positive alternative only for a third of the population. And the ruling elites are in no way divided on this question, they would counter such a politics with unlimited resistance. The rejection of the politics of Oskar Lafontaine as finance minister in 1998/9 would appear as a mild breeze compared to what must be expected. And in the EU, neoliberal politics are not by a long shot as weakened as they must be in order to initiate change.

The proposal for toleration should be brought forward with all seriousness. It would be the best possible scenario. It could make clear what could be possible even today. We offer this third option because a) there is no clarity about a left project, and b) there is no sober assessment of the societal and political fields or of the potential coalition partners, and so c) the debate appears to us to be stuck in the ascriptions of "grim opposition" and "power hungry government participation." In the current conjuncture opposition means, when things go wrong, to get a coalition government of the conservatives and Greens, or a continuation of conservatives and the SPD, with a populist AfD as major oppositional force. Toleration makes it possible to proceed from the identified overlaps with the SPD and Greens – insofar as they are really willing – towards corresponding reforms, without the tight confines of direct government participation that splits the Left Party and weakens it in society. In each instance, the membership (not just a party congress) decides over the entry into government, toleration, or opposition.

On the one side, the discussion with the SPD and Greens should be intensively engaged, immediately. And on the other side, and just as important, it's a matter of discussing with all those in society, who know that it's about a fundamental change in the direction of the economy and social policy, that it's about another mode of production and of living, about a change in the development of the EU and its global policy approach. Commonly we must produce an agenda for such a change of trajectory, offensively discuss it and establish with

it, the conditions for a decidedly left government in Germany – this is a task clearly beyond 2017.

The conditions for such a change of direction and a left government do not exist at the moment. We have to develop them first. Therefore we have to reach out to the people and organize in their everyday life. The removal of the barriers of dialogue between the SPD, the Greens, and the Left Party is an indispensable step forward. But what could emerge from the commonalities of these parties right now is nothing more than a centre-left government on the basis of the existing rules of tempered neoliberalism. Fulfilling the double task – further influencing state politics from the left *and* working towards a radical transformation – would not be possible in that arrangement. For this reason, in our view, the question of participation in a governing coalition by the Left Party on the federal basis is not on the agenda, but rather the struggle over a change in direction of politics through societal and parliamentary opposition, or – possibly – toleration of a middle-left government.

Dellheim, Judith

On scenarios of EU development

- I. **Why "scenarios"?**
- II. **Which "scenarios"?**
- III. **Let us discuss scenarios!**
- IV. **What to conclude?**

Before starting now, I should present the very modest aim of my contribution: i.e. to focus

- on an analysis of historical developments and our present societal relations by consequentially making use of political economy in a critical Marxian tradition,
- on a permanent self-critique, asking about our own integration within processes of renewing the capitalist mode of production and its corresponding ways of life,
- on a permanent work on political strategies, without fear and avoiding contradictions and dialectics.

I do regard scenarios as an instrument for the complex critique of our society and of a self-critique, capable of making us able to overcome the present situation of our political defensive and of making the left sustainably stronger. This makes it clear that we do need a very special kind of scenarios and a permanent debate on scenarios.

I. Why scenarios?

We have to work on political strategies to change the societal reality and our understanding of a political strategy that explains which work on scenarios could be helpful for us. In major English speaking discussions the term "strategy" is understood as mainly meaning "tactics", and "tactics" is understood as "playing games". But when we do speak about "strategies" of a left wing collective agency here, our aim is a sustainable improvement of the existing socio-political power relations, so that socially and environmentally destructive processes are initially slowed down and stopped, meaning to be pushed back and gradually be structurally overcome once and for all. At the same time, although not in strict parallel, processes of developing social and environmental sustainability, a corresponding socio-ecological transformation will have to go on, and increasingly come into effect.

- a. A strategy in this sense is made for deciding a concrete aim within a concrete time horizon of up to 10 until 15 years.
- b. It starts from critical scenarios of social development, which in turn are based on the analysis and reflection of developments in the last 15 years, and particularly in the last five years. Here critical caesuras and scenarios of different developments, which have been possible, are of special interest.
- c. Such a strategy for a collective agency of the left wing is based on the analysis of the own internal and external resources and the assessment how the agency will be capable of developing its own resources and change itself in a concrete time frame.

- d. And finally such a strategy focuses on that what has to be done now, in this very moment, in order to build and to increase both - the internal and external resources available, as well as developing the capability to act within society in order to realise the very scenario which is realistically the best one possible.

That's why scenarios!But:

II. Which scenarios?

The history of scenarios has started as such within the US American military in World War II. The main idea was to prevent getting surprised by enemies and also partners. Scenarios have then been connected to the cold war, practiced within NATO and later on also within transnational corporations as a tool for strategy building related to markets and resources. Nowadays, the Joint Research Centre as the in-house science service of the European Commission addresses decision makers on different levels. It explains scenarios as "a 'story' illustrating visions of a possible future or aspects of a possible future. They are used both as a research method or a tool for decision making. And they are 'abstracting from' or simply disregarding actual societal power relations, which have a historical character.

The term "*critical* scenarios" is used here to mark a critical stance with regard to such scenarios. *Critical* scenarios are developed in connection to analysing and addressing social and societal interests, on the basis of a specific understanding of society, as well as of the aims of research and politics. While making use of political economy in the critical Marxian tradition and analysing societal relations in terms of over-determined class domination and of over-determined class struggle, in order to become capable of determining the conditions for the left wing to counter-act this domination politically, special issues of strategic confrontation are identified. In connection to such issues, decisive events will determine the way of dealing with the contradictions and so the course of specific societal developments. These events will have to be understood as *critical caesuras*, or, in case of being an element of a stable time frame of events, as *critical stages*. They do refer back to the respective balance of powers between existing political forces in a specific historical moment. And this is largely determined by the strength, the hegemony and/or dominance of capitalist oligarchies which are (to different degrees) now "integrated by and into the EU", or more broadly put, "euro-peanised" and/or directly "globalised". As the result of the actual political power balances existing within Europe, societies find themselves in a complex constellation of diverse and overlapping social, economic, ecological and resource crises which are reinforcing each other. Societies are confronted with an increased resorting to violence, while their dominant policies are more than ever ignoring human and citizen rights, and react more or less helplessly to dramatic and still rising global problems. But since the open outbreak of the financial crisis

- the EU and the Eurozone have been further moved in the direction of the neo-liberal paradigm of economic policy
- EU law has been changed in the same direction,
- EU institutions have been changed, the financial architecture and the institutions of the Eurozone have been "improved" in a contradictory and repressive way
- a new Union method has been imposed, which is systematically undercutting democratic controls,

- a new type of association agreements and free trade agreements have been signed, that legitimise and strengthen these tendencies
- inequality and poverty have increased, a humanitarian crisis is developing, new zones of exploitation are being tapped,
- solidarity and social fellow-feeling are diminishing or vanishing,
- democracy has been destroyed in many respects and is still under pressure of further destructive processes,
- a general tendency towards ideological and cultural regression into racism and ethnocentrism is increasing strongly,
- in the very neighbourhood of the EU violence and dislocation are taking an explosive turn, thereby also affecting the EU itself,
- repression, surveillance, and militarization are increasing within the EU, while the EU members and institutions also increase military activities on EU borders and outside of them,
- Germany has turned out to clearly dominate within the EU
- the EU is constantly declared to be in a state of emergency or exception, and leading governments are acting on this basis
- the very existence of the European Union is more and more questioned by reactionary and nationalist forces.

There have been alternatives, i.e. real and effective possibilities for different paths of development. They have not been realised, because the strongest agencies have been able to successfully act in their very own interests. The left has not prevented this. In this context there are some issues, which have been of decisive importance for the development of the EU:

- the "case of Greece" and the Euro crisis
- the "Ukraine issue",
- the EU membership of United Kingdom,
- arriving at an adequate understanding of the global role of the EU and of its "security" - which is especially raising the issue of its relations to the United States and the NATO
- the issues of free trade, of intellectual property rights, and of "investment protection",
- the issue of immigration to the EU (refugee-deals),
- the pressing issues of climate and biodiversity, especially in relation to the energy problems of the EU (Paris agreement),
- the issues of "demographic pressures", referring in reality to the questions of gender relations, of inter-generation relations and of the 'inclusion' of migrants,
- the overarching issues of human and citizen rights, of democracy, of democratization and therefore also of the media,

- the issue of realising the SDGs of the UN,
- the issue of how to bring about an alternative policy change within the powerful and large "core member states" - i.e. in Germany, and in France.

So:

III. Let us discuss scenarios!

If the starting point of the scenario construction is derived from the complex politico-societal constellations, as they seem to exist, six scenarios of EU development for the next five and then for the next 10 to 15 years could be:

- catastrophe as the end of the EU
- "dilution" of the EU (as an "EFTA" leaving its politics to NATO)
- worsening/decline (in the form of losing members and/or in that of rising conflicts among neo-liberal and openly nationalist forces)
- status quo plus, status quo minus
- improvement/progress (as solidarity-oriented steps to mitigate and to begin to resolve problems)
- open situations (with unforeseeable outcomes).

Each of these scenarios can be concretised; so there are e.g. three types of *catastrophe*: total and non-reversible, huge and reversible with enormous efforts, selective and reversible ... As any lapsing into a playing of games in a technical mode should be avoided, the question to be discussed will be about the real power constellation of agents with their concrete interests and about the conditions and tendencies of change, which can be analysed by making use of a grid. (See table 1)

It should only illustrate the fight between tendencies, which are connected to actors with interests to deal with problems by making concrete policy by respectively waiting for actions by others.

And there are nine significant fields of indicators capable of describing these scenarios:

- economy (connected with technologies),
- ecology
- gender relations
- social structures within the EU member states
- spontaneous ideological relations
- formal and societal political relations
- relations between EU members
- international relations in Europe (including NATO and OSCE),
- international relations on the global scale.

Also the next table (see table 2) may serve as a further guideline for deepening this debate - especially as a research grid for identifying key developments, as they may be gleaned from existing (also statistical) material. The lines indicated serve to connect issues with tendencies (in columns). The grid may help to understand that the status quo has a permanent tendency to worsen or to decline. It also helps to explain the role of a policy, oriented at effectively addressing emerging problems. And it illustrates the key role of democracy for problem re-

solving, on the one hand, and the over-all orientation of EU policies on US policies, on the other hand. The central task will be to work on how to make EU scenarios effectively refer to reality without losing sight of real possibilities. Here it is necessary to keep in mind that - already before the global financial crisis has begun - different developments have deeply changed the EU and its neighbours. But the EU has always (and especially during the crisis) reinforced its neighbouring policies, while it is looking only at its own interests and therefore exclusively laid out for 'gaining' the Ukraine as a market and as a 'security buffer'. In "the own interest" of the EU means more and more in the interests of the strongest economic-political forces within the EU. But rising contradictions, rising instability and rising violence are effects of these developments. To remind you of "some issues of decisive importance for the development of the EU", this has very specific and concrete consequences for concrete people and member states:

- Greece stands for a process of violent hierarchisation of international relations, reducing democratic and social standards in a much more than a dramatic manner, tending towards a permanent state of emergency and to the complete loss of solidarity within the EU, i.e. for a modern brutalisation of societal relations led by capitalist oligarchies
- The Ukraine stands for a rising conflict, essentially provoked also by EU member states, without a sustained interest on the side of the EU to resolve the conflict. (To state this does not mean to defend an attitude of "solidarity with Putin and so on".)
- The refugee crisis is especially a result of the own policy of the EU and its member states, but the fight is opened against the refugees
- The Brexit stands for a further forced process of political and economic competition, especially a sharpened competition between locations for industry,
- The BRICS are under pressure, the EU has been active in working against this potential competition and in trying to put its members against each other
- The climate and environmental issues are still getting worse, with foreseeable consequences,
- The societal gaps and contradictions are still being further forced,
- The pressure on human rights, as well as on citizen rights, is further rising, which leads to an increase in violence in all of its forms
- The NATO is aimed to be enlarged and even to be involved in the battle against refugees from Africa.

Therefore, the conditions for possible ways towards mitigation and a resolution of existing problems are further weakened. The five or six scenarios of EU development mentioned above are in fact reduced to three or four:

- A) keeping the EU alive, until getting almost full free trade and investment protection
- B) keeping the EU alive only as a specific location within global competition and as a specific area of NATO, under the imperative of "security"
- C) reducing the EU to an effective core for being such a location in global competition and a specific area of NATO
- D) this core may be located in a more or less large area belonging to the European Union.

While thinking about these real developments, the discussion must also address the issue of a worst-case scenario. Such a scenario has not to correspond with the interests of one concrete group of agents. It is not necessary to plan or to wish it as such, but it can just be the result of uncontrolled dynamics of struggles. It can also result from a mistaken awareness of their own interests on the side of some agents having to act in a highly opaque complex of circumstances. Look at the BREXIT (see table 3). Here you may see the issues of decisive significance and the agents producing violence and finally the tendencies to the mentioned three to four scenarios.

See table 4 for working on strategies to prevent worst-case scenarios and to enable alternatives. Let us ask the following two simple questions:

- (1) Who is, and why interested in preventing a worst-case scenario?
- (2) How can we find and define a (potential) common interest of those, and at which points (or in which respects) will there still be (potential) conflicts between the agencies and agents refusing a worst case scenario?

And finally:

IV. "What to conclude?"

Summarizing the observations on critical scenarios we have articulated so far, we may say that there are strong arguments for the conclusion that in the next few years the much needed changes of direction with regard to asylum and migration policies, and to the European neighbourhood and 'security' policy, will not be effectively addressed, let alone decided positively by the ruling forces. The tendency towards an ever increasing recourse to repression could partially be countered and at least slowed down by some concessions to the struggle of Greece, but this will certainly not happen with regard to immigration.

The nationalist and reactionary forces will not be weakened in the short run, rather to the contrary: They have not yet reached all their potential and may grow to be a significant menace. The hierarchies existing in the transnational and international system of the labour division will not be tackled, nor will the ecological problems be properly addressed. The societal hierarchies based on the ownership of resources for the production and reproduction will be further accentuated. Even the societal hierarchies based on family relations, on gender/sex positions, on the place of birth, on ethnic and cultural origins or backgrounds will also continue to gain importance again - as a way of reacting to a complex crisis for which no solution has yet been found. And looking on the developments in the financial sphere a new wave of financial crisis is being built up. The last one was used by the most destructive and powerful forces. So being in a political defence three existing and interrelated or at least inter-relatable fields of action may effectively be developed:

- *first*, the struggle for democratic, social and ecological standards - in particular for a minimum social security - to defend people against poverty, for protecting basic rights, and for fighting against on-going ecological destruction
- *second*, the struggle to maintain and democratize the public sphere, in particular public finance; and
- *third*, the struggle for an active local and regional development.

Being connected to issues of special significance like free trade agreements and therefore to concrete interests on different levels, these three fields could be starting points for new political alliances as conditions for alternative developments. While working on such political strategies the comprehensive mode of living with its embedding in the production and consumption patterns and so in societal power structures has to be put at the centre of interest.

Coming to the end I want to ask five questions:

- 1 When at the beginning of the crisis alternatives have existed - please remember the slogans on disgraced neo-liberalism - why were we not able to use them?
And why could the capitalist oligarchies do that?
- 2 When another crisis wave is arising now, how shall we make sure to become able to resist another political roll back?
- 3 When the work on critical caesuras and scenarios could help to understand the history and present time better and to work on political strategies - how will we organise it?
- 4 When an alternative mode of living could help to work on a new societal political consensus - how will we work on it?
- 5 When we are left with no effective organisational form of working on political strategies - how to develop it?

The work on critical caesuras and scenarios provokes to ask these questions. Their effective responses would allow us to get a more optimistic debate on critical caesuras and scenarios.

Tables to illustrate some ideas resp. expressions in the contribution

„State of the Union – critical scenarios on the EU“

Table 1

An illustration of the often-antagonistic tendencies and of possible scenarios (agents with concrete interests and more or less elaborated political strategies are behind the tendencies)

Table 2

An illustration of tendencies and of the fields of indicators (agents with interests, activities/behaviour/ political strategies and limits as natural laws work; the summarised effects bear concrete tendencies or scenarios)

Table 3

An illustration of concrete issues as fields of interests in opposition and in struggle, resp. of agents with interests being significant for tendencies resp. scenarios of EU development

Table 4

An illustration of concrete issues of significance for further EU development as battlefields of agents with interests and political strategies. There are concrete conflicting facts being connected with concrete interests and causing resp. explaining common interests of very different agents and agencies which have a significant influence on tendencies on further EU development

Table 1

Result (hor) Tendency (vert)	Result: Catastrophe	Result: Dilution	Result: Decline / worsening	Result: Status quo (plus or minus)	Result: Improve-ment / progress	Result: Open situation
Tendency towards catastrophe	Historical regression, eco-logical disasters and war / An aggressive political regression imposing a destructive turn	An aggressive political regression imposing a destructive turn	An aggressive political regression imposing a destructive turn	Regressive blockades within European societies	Blocked	Transformation
Tendency towards catastrophe	Historical regression, eco-logical disasters and war / An aggressive political regression imposing a destructive turn	An aggressive political regression imposing a destructive turn	An aggressive political regression imposing a destructive turn	Regressive blockades within European societies	Blocked	Transformation
Tendency towards decline / worsening	Political regression into problem denial / Regressive blockades within European societies	Regressive blockades within European societies	Regressive blockades within European societies	Regressive turns in public opinion compensated by institutional stability	Policy of business as usual	Transformation
Tendency towards stability	Policy of business as usual	Regressive turns in public opinion compensated by institutional stability / Policy of business as usual	Regressive turns in public opinion compensated by institutional stability / Policy of business as usual	Policy of business as usual	Mitigation	Alternative reforms /Transformation
Tendency towards improvement	Blocked	Mitigation	Mitigation	Mitigation, strong mitigation	Strong mitigation	Alternative reforms/Transformation
Tendency towards an open situation	Blocked	Blocked	Blocked	Alternative reforms	Alternative reforms	Transformation

Table 2

Tendencies field of indicators	Catastrophe	Decline	Status quo	Improvement	Open
Economy/technology	Crash, gigantic disasters	Deep complex crisis Disasters	Continuity of dominant policy + destruction	Orientation on sustainable development (Brundtland report)	
Ecology	Crash of ecosystem	High speed/dimension of warming, biodiversity loss	Ongoing global warming + biodiversity loss	Fighting global warming and biodiversity loss	
Gender	Return to old patterns of gender relations	Selective return to old pattern of gender relation	Orientation gender balance	Fighting gender inequalities + discrimination Orientation on social equality	
Social structure	Acceleration of social gaps, open brutal exploitation	Increasing social gaps/inequality	Conservation/slower raise of social inequality	Fighting social inequalities	
Spontaneous ideologies	Explosion of harassment against all "different"	Rising xenophobia, racism, sexism, nationalism	More or less toleration of xenophobia, sexism, nationalism	Fighting for open, tolerant societies respecting human rights of everybody	
formal political organization	One party system	Accelerated decline of parliamentary democracy	Ongoing decline of parliamentary democracy	Comprehensive democratisation also of parliamentary democracy	
Relations between EU member states	Breaking apart of the EU	Disintegration, some "-xits"	Selective integration (à la carte)	Integration while realising sustainable development (Brundtland)	
Relations with other European states	War	Increasing tensions	Freezing tensions	Orientation on the "common house Europe"	
Global international relations	Global war, new US unilateralism	Ongoing conflicts, regional wars, US/EU global domination	Freezing conflicts, their slowly ongoing rise	Orientation on UN documents	

Table 3

Issue	Worst case scenario	Agents with specific interests whose being caught in the existing power balances makes a worst case scenario possible
„Case of Greece“	The humanitarian crisis is going on, the potential for a sustainable development is being destroyed. Violence against ethnic and cultural minorities is further rising, as racist and neo-fascist forces are growing in strength. This could be even culminate with a Grexit under dramatic circumstances with violent confrontations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Representatives of member states as well as of EU institutions, and the IMF in so far as they are determining hegemonic policies - racist, xenophobic, and fascist forces - determinate NATO circles interested in the ‚appropriate measures‘ needed for taking NATO members back ‚under control‘
Ukraine problem and NATO enlargement	The problem is managed in a way to make it simply go on indefinitely and may finally be used for a major war of NATO against Russia	NATO circles far from Europe, above all in North America; short-sighted forces in Europe who are unable to see the possible consequences for themselves
British EU membership	After having contributed heavily to the reduction of social standards within the EU, the UK will leave the EU, while Scotland and Northern Ireland will possibly leave the UK. All this cannot happen without a sharp increase of tensions and an exacerbation of nationalisms; the UK will take an anchor-role for the US within the EEA. In the EU and within Europe, the case can be regarded as a signal to be followed - which would strengthen all of the nationalist tendencies and the resulting tensions within the populations.	Nationalists oriented on the exclusive role of a state or a region. (Regional nationalist can be oriented towards the ‚left wing‘ due to an overestimation of the role of regional factors or to an underestimation of the dangers and dynamics set in motion on the basis of a mistaken evaluation of the balance of forces).
Global role of the EU	Together with the US, the EU is aiming at preserving and expanding its global role. This presupposes a significant increase in its GNP, in its direct investment, in its military spending, in free trade, and in financialisation	Capitalist oligarchies in the US and in the EU share similar interests and aim at their closest possible co-operation to maintain their capability for dominating globally
Immigration	The current policy will be continued, leading to an increase in all problems based on social inequalities, as well as to a further boost to the rise of xenophobia, racism and nationalism, as well as of violence, inside and outside the EU	Nationalists, racists, right-wing fundamentalists, regardless of their societal place and historical background.

	and also to "Protect it from refugees	
Environmental issues, especially in connection with energy security	The limits of ecological carrying capacity are approaching fast, environmental and technological catastrophes have begun to take place, and this further reinforces the tendencies to attempt an individual or group escape and therefore to migration. The people concerned are then fought against, because they are seen as the active subjects of these processes, instead of being their victims, and are considered as a 'threat to the living conditions' of the members of the existing 'communities'	Capitalist oligarchies based on fossil, nuclear and energetic mega-projects (giant dams, gigantic energy plantations etc.), and their economic partners in an objective (conscious as well as unconscious) alliance with egoistic and politically short-sighted agents and individuals; people struggling for their survival
"Demographic pressures", implicitly referring to gender relations, inter-generational relations, inclusion of migrants	The social inequalities and connected with these tensions are increasing sharply, while they are not tackled, but rather further reinforced by governments and institutions implementing hard neo-liberal policies	A conscious and unconscious alliance of politically backward-looking, and short-sighted agencies and individuals, reaching from the capitalist oligarchies supported by political and administrative agencies to individuals struggling for their working places, their homes, their pensions, and their traditional ideals of gender relations and family life ...
Human rights and citizens' rights, democracy, democratization and therefore also the mass media	The destruction of existing democratic, social and cultural rights is going on while official repression and constitutionalized authoritarianism are being further developed. Social inequalities, as well as the demands for 'security' from terrorism, migration and climate change are being used for mass media manipulation and violence	A conscious alliance – which is intentionally constructed and reinforced by legal experts and by media agents – and the unconscious convergence of politically short-sighted agents and individuals are in fact reaching from the hardcore capitalist oligarchies supported by political and administrative agencies to individuals manipulated and struggling for their work places, their homes, their pensions, some of them nostalgically backward looking, while others champion hyper-modern life-styles

Table 4

Issue	Agencies and agents struggling against a worst case, defending themselves against risks arising for the standards achieved, for security, for protection against violence, and for democratic control of societal developments	Conflicting facts among the forces which struggle against the emergence of the worst case scenarios
„Case of Greece“	Large groups of the population in Greece and of EU citizens, EU institutions, significant circles in the US, within the IMF, or within the World Bank	The issue of the ‘concessions’ to be made to Greece, as well as that of the political conditions to be asked for such concessions
Ukraine issue, NATO strengthening	Large groups of the population in the EU and in Europe and of politicians within the EU	The issue of the ‘concessions’ to be made to Russia, as well as the ‘concessions’ to be made for the sake of ,security’, NATO membership
British EU membership	Large groups of the population in the EU and of politicians within the EU, major agents within the European economy	Concessions to the neo-liberal as well as to nationalist forces: reduction and restriction of social standards, definition of immigration limits
Global role of the EU	Majorities of the left wing forces, large groups of population, large groups of nationalists	Concessions to large groups of objectors related to some standards, especially with regard to international trade and currencies
Immigration	Majorities of the left wing forces, large groups of the population	Concessions to the nationalist and large groups of the population, as well as to politicians ,worried’ about ,domestic peace“ and ,security’
Environmental issues especially in connection to energy security	Large groups of the populations and of politicians, potential winners of an ecological conversion of the economy	Concessions to the main agents of globalisation
“Demographic pressures”, referring to gender relations, to inter-generational relations, and to the inclusion of migrants	Majority of the left wing forces, large groups of the population and of politicians, significant groups in the economy; more especially referring to gender and inclusion of migrants also main agents of globalisation	Concessions to main agents of globalisation, on the one hand, to nationalist and backward looking agents as citizens, on the other hand
Human and citizens' rights, democracy, democratisation and, by consequence, also the mass media	Majority of the left wing forces, large groups of the population and of politicians	Concessions to the main agents of globalisation

Jokisch, René

Reconstruction of the EU legislation and Institutions with consequences for the Left

Introduction:

Thesis: The reconstruction of the EU cannot be understood in simple terms of strengthening of the European level versus the national level. Instead we should look at the state apparatus ensemble where specific actors are strengthened, like the general direction for economic and financial affairs in the commission and the respective financial ministries in the member states. Non the less we have to witness that the role of member states increased in the decision-making of the EU and especially by fleeing the institutional frame of the EU, while the European parliament and national parliaments have lost influence. In the end we see member states faced with more compulsory obligations imposed by themselves and controlled and possibly sanctioned by the EU commission that is increasingly used as instrument of the member states.

After the Lisbon Treaty came into force, it was supposed to be the basis for the future EU work for decades. But the banking crisis showed that the EU was indeed not prepared to react to the challenges, as indeed it's rules were even hampering efforts to contain the crisis, as for example the ban of capital controls.

After the banks were saved by the state the crisis was politically turned into a crisis of state debt and an economic crisis followed partly due to austerity policies. These three elements were mirrored by the reconstruction of EU legislation and institutions in a constant process.

When the Greek state budget was in crisis in 2010 as the interest rates exploded, the Greek PASOK-government asked for a loan which the EU, the IMF and the ECB granted in march in exchange for austerity measures as an European solution to prevent an even bigger crisis all over Europe.

It is worth remembering that than chancellor Merkel emphasized that this kind of deal would be an unique, singular exception and member states would in future always be alone and responsible for their debt. The first memorandum of understanding also gave birth to the Troika of EU-commission, IMF and ECB monitoring the implementation of the austerity and privatization program as condition for the pay-out of the tranches.

But as other countries came under pressure of refinancing their debt the member states decided already in May to install a provisory stability mechanism – the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF) – to hand out loans together with the IMF and the EU in total of 750 billion Euros. Legally there were major concerns, as this approach contradicts the no-bailout-clause of article 125 and it was weakly based on article 122 designed for severe difficulties caused by natural disasters or exceptional occurrences beyond the control of a member state. It is also worth noting that this EFSF as an organisation of the member states with no direct link to the EU. Again Merkel made her point that this facility is an exception of limited time (till 2013) due to the severe crisis.

Anyway as the crisis was deepening the European Stability Mechanism (ESM) was installed in 2012 as a permanent mechanism outside of the EU. But as this was permanent, a solution

had to be found for the lacking legal basis in the treaties and the contradictions to the no bailout clause of article 125. As a direct change of the no bailout clause would have been a provocation, the change was made indirectly by adding a new paragraph in art 136: The Member States whose currency is the euro may establish a stability mechanism to be activated if indispensable to safeguard the stability of the euro area as a whole. The granting of any required financial assistance under the mechanism will be made subject to strict conditionality. (meaning structural reforms, privatization etc.)

Now with the third Greek bail out package of August 2015, the ESM is also on board. So the detested Troika was indeed not sent out of Greece, but is now strengthened as Quadriga.

The role of the ECB is of special interest, not only in the Troika, but also towards member states that are not under a bailout program. The so called political independent Central bank has been politically active already in 2011, when the president Trichet sent a letter to Silvio Berlusconi, demanding measures to promote growth, strengthen the competition by privatizing and liberalization of the labor market and cuts in pension funds – in exchange for the purchase of Italian state bonds. Right now the ECB is buying bonds of all Euro member states – except Greece. And the financial suffocation of Greece by the ECB was a central instrument in forcing Syriza to obey to the austerity paradigm.

Maybe two more words on the commission: Firstly the new commission under Juncker has introduced a completely new form of organisation, where the vice-presidents are responsible for field of policies of other commissioners. These vice-presidents can veto every proposal of their commissioners so that rather progressive initiatives of the commissioners for employment and social affairs or Health and food safety cannot be discussed in the cabinet and don't get public. Juncker's vice-president Timmermans can veto every proposal of his colleagues.

The other new development is already quite known under the term "better regulation". This new concept aims at strengthening the competitiveness of EU enterprises by reducing their costs. The commission wants to minimize the influence of the Parliament and the Council. : Assessing effects of all EU legislation on profit margins and competitiveness in the internal market should get obligatory. So any changes to proposals of the commission would have to be supported by such an assessment.

So we have come to the field of Legislation, which normally the commission proposes:

But the fiscal compact is another example of an intergovernmental treaty outside of the EU – proposed by the member states. It came into force 2012 and includes even harsher obligations than the stability and growth pact. Especially the reduction of state debt is implemented and reinforced by quasi-automatic sanctions by the commission.

With the six-pack proposal of the commission the stability and growth pact was stepped up – so sanctions for violating the deficit rule were politically easier to push through and there was a new procedure against macroeconomic imbalances. But the indicators are much more strict for countries with foreign trade deficits, whereas surplus countries have to fear no sanctions, even if they violate the rules.

The six-pack was later added with the so called two pack to better control the households of all member states and an intensified control for states with financial problems. In the Euro-

pean semester member states have to present the households to the commission together with a national reform program.

After the fiscal compact another compact was proposed in 2012 by the presidents of the commission, the European council, the Eurogroup and ECB for a stronger coordination of the economic policies. Relabelled by Merkel as Competitively Pakt in 2013 it met resistance by other member states and now found its way into the new paper of the five presidents with the President of the European Parliament involved. The basic concept always stayed the same: the member states should enter into a commitment to follow the recommendations of the experts of the commission for the reform of the economy. So the European semester and the mechanism for economic imbalances should be reinforced so that the commission can sanction states that do not follow. The newest proposal wants to combine this with a national technocratic committee for competitiveness or in the new wording "committees for productivity" to work together with the commission to propose another set of recommendation, that should be obligatory and sanctionable. The direction is always unmistakable: Reform of the labour market, Flexicurity, reform of pensions, liberalization etc. So the aim is Troika for all, but the well-behaving countries should get some financial rewards.

Consequences:

On the one hand we see how the leading forces try to secure the technocratic authoritarian rule in the name of austerity by ever-harsher rules and controls and sanctions (in the frame of the EU or outside). These new constitutionalism is hard to conquer on the legal field as every change would need the majorities in the EU-process or even worse unanimity in the case of the EU-Treaties or the international treaties.

But on the other hand we can see that there are restraints to use the new punishing measures against member states. Right now the commission gave Spain and Portugal some more weeks to react to their deficit – but they are already reported as the first countries in the eurozone to face penalties for breaking EU fiscal rules. France is another example: On the one hand, the French deficit was tolerated although it is beyond the rules. On the other hand there was massive pressure to reform labour laws that eventually led to the new labour reforms and the massive protest against it. So EU actors and member states can well put pressure on national governments, but how they react is always a question of power.

If they try to constrain democracy the left should seek the confrontation of democratic decision with international obligations. Because sociology as political experience makes it clear that rules can be changed by breaking them. That's by the way what the governments keep doing to the Lisbon treaty and their constitutional and human rights commitments.

On the other hand we need a different concept of how we want to organize the coordination of the economic policies of the member states. In my view this cannot be left to the decision of national governments but must be part of a democratically legitimized European body that also organizes social security.

The new founded EU Institutions and regulations cannot serve for this goal as long as the rule of austerity and authoritarianism in the EU is not ended.

Cabanes, de Antoine

The metamorphosis of the Front National

A month ago, the Austrian presidential election finally came out with the rejection of far-right presidential candidate Norbert Hofer. However the defeat of the Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs's (FPÖ) candidate should not lead to optimism; if this outcome contrasts with the Brexit and the victory of Donald Trump, we should keep in mind that more than 46% of Austrian voters chose to vote for a man whose party defends islamophobic, nationalist, xenophobic and populist measures. And the current polls estimate that the FPÖ may win the next parliamentary election, polling at around 34-35%¹³ thus becoming the largest party at the Nationalrat¹⁴. This forecast was turned to hope by Marine Le Pen, the head of the French Front National (FN), when she consoled Hofer after his defeat¹⁵.

Le Pen's reaction was not a coincidence, as the FN and FPÖ's MEPs (member of European Parliament) are sitting in the same group at the European Parliament¹⁶, along with the MEPs of the Dutch PVV. The FN and the FPÖ are not only sharing a common parliamentary group, they also have in common an islamophobic and eurosceptic rhetoric, a past deeply connected with neofascist movements¹⁷ as well as both of them being at the gates of power. The common features of these far right parties, like the PVV or even, in a slightly different way, UKIP (UK Independence Party), the UDC (Union Démocratique du Centre) or the AfD (Alternative for Deutschland), raised several debates among academic and activists, especially about the relevant characterisation for these new manifestations of the far right. While some call them right-wing extremists¹⁸, others prefer populist radical right parties¹⁹; we will adopt the denomination populist right, which seems to reflect at best the key characteristics of these parties²⁰.

We previously said that these parties seemed in a position to win the elections and thus access to power, the most obvious being the Front National upon the presidential and legislative elections of May and June 2017. While the classical right (the former UMP renamed Les Républicains in 2015) designated its candidate in October, the Parti Socialiste (PS) will organize a primary election at the end of January to appoint its candidate. Therefore, the precise context of the election will be known in the beginning of February and the election campaign will really start at that moment. That is why it is relevant for us to analyze and characterize now the new aspects of the Front National, in order to understand how this party succeeded

¹³<http://www.oe24.at/oesterreich/politik/Hofer-fuehrt-im-Hofburg-Thriller/259205883>

¹⁴<https://www.ft.com/content/3ad5ea36-bae5-11e6-8b45-b8b81dd5d080>

¹⁵ Marine Le Pen's tweet stated that "the next parliamentary elections will see their victory"<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/dec/05/defeat-austria-far-right-norbert-hofer-hope-europe>

¹⁶Europe of Nations and Freedom =><http://www.enfgroup-ep.eu/>

¹⁷ The neofascist group Ordre Nouveau (gathering many former "collaborators") was at the origin of the foundation of the Front National, while the first leader of the FPÖ, Anton Reinthaller, was a former SS and former Minister in the Nazi Government during World War Two

¹⁸<http://www.transform-network.net/focus/radical-far-and-populist-right/news/detail/Programm/-0209af7471.html>

¹⁹ Mudde, Cas, *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe*, Cambridge University Press, 2007

²⁰ Bischoff Joachim, Gauthier Elisabeth, Müller Bernhard, *Droites Populistes en Europe : les raisons d'un succès*, Editions du Croquant, 2015

in becoming the first French political party and why it has its chances in the forthcoming elections.

A fast electoral increase

First of all, it is important to revisit the electoral progress of the FN since 2007 in order to apprehend the extent of its progression²¹. In 2007, when Nicolas Sarkozy was elected, the Front National gathered 10.44% of the votes. While Jean-Marie Le Pen arrived second in the first round of the election in 2002 (thus qualifying for the second round), in 2007 he arrived fourth. The Front National lost 1 million votes in comparison with the 2002 presidential election (3.8 million votes while it aggregated 4.8 million in 2002). At the time, Sarkozy appropriated some Front National topics, especially those related with immigration and national identity, and succeeded in translating this into electoral results. Many voters of the Front National turned to Sarkozy. However this was short-term politics and it only validated the Front National core issues and put them on top of the official and institutional political agenda. It destroyed the ideological barrier between the classical right and the Front National, just as the electoral “cordon sanitaire”.

During the local election of Sarkozy’s mandate, the Front National regained many voters as Sarkozy’s policies were disappointing the right-wing electorate. In order to keep the FN voters, Sarkozy decided, in the 2011 local elections to break the “front républicain”. This expression refers to the withdrawal of the classical right or left candidate (PS or UMP) if she or he arrives third in an election. With the two round elections system, when the FN succeeded in accessing in the second round, it implied for the candidate of the eliminated government party to withdraw and to give the voting instruction to “stand in the way of the FN” which means vote for the other government party (PS or UMP) in order to get them elected instead of the FN. The PS candidate in the 2002 presidential election, Lionel Jospin thus called for voting for the UMP Jacques Chirac. The “front républicain” appeared with the emergence of the FN in the 1980s and was enforced by the whole political spectrum since the end of the 1980s. 2011 marked the end of this electoral rule for the classical right as Sarkozy stated that the classical right should not choose between the FN and the left. It did not save the electoral position of Sarkozy and the UMP but had strong consequences.

The 2012 election is a turning point as it marked the beginning of the winning over of growing sections of the classical right electorate among workers and employees by the Front National. Marine Le Pen made 18%, the best result of the FN in a presidential election as well as two of their candidates being elected into Parliament. The period from 2012 until now is characterized by the ascension of the FN. Their strategy was to develop their local implantation through local elections and to challenge the PS or the UMP for accessing the second round of the elections. For long, the two round election system was a major institutional obstacle for the Front National, which reinforced bipartism.

Since 2014 it is no longer the case, as the Front National succeeds in passing the first round. This situation is particularly complicated when we have a second round between the PS and the FN as the classical right electorate is increasingly voting for the FN. The normalization of the party (initiated by Marine Le Pen since 2011) made it acceptable for traditional right voters as a choice in second round. The implantation strategy functioned particularly well: in

²¹ Albertini Dominique, Doucet David, Histoire du Front National, Tallandier, 2014

2014, in local elections, they gained 11 city halls, and achieved the election of 1500 city councillors. Moreover, the FN used the local elections to convert their support membership into activist membership. They built a dense network relying on well-trained activists and city councillors who organized local structures and recruited members. The FN had a notably weak activist tradition and a low membership; over the past years it has changed drastically. In the European election of 2014 they succeeded in gathering a quarter of the voters and became the first party of France. They now have 24 MEPs, among 74 French members. In the regional elections of 2015, they achieved their best results ever; they placed first in 6 of the 13 regions and were second in the others. Because of the “front républicain” strategy (still used by sections of the left, especially the PS), they do not rule any regions but they gained very high scores in the second round (42 % in the Nord Pas de Calais – Picardie and even 45% in Provence Alpes Côtes d’Azur)

Henceforth, the Front National stabilized its electorate between 5 and 6 million voters, in elections with a low participation rate. In addition they created an unprecedented local implantation, increased their membership and are now a party with a lot of elected representatives. All these elements are completely new and have a strong impact on the political situation. The situation now, in the polls (for the 2017 presidential election), is a Front National in second position, between 24-26% while François Fillon, the candidate of the right is between 26 and 29% and the PS is between 10 to 12%. For now, in every scenario, Marine Le Pen is in the second round of the presidential election.

The normalization strategy: from marginality to credibility

The origin of the Front National dynamic is 2011, when Marine Le Pen became President of the Front National, succeeding her father, Jean-Marie Le Pen. Since 2002, Marine Le Pen was implementing a « dédialisation »²² strategy in her stronghold, in Hénin-Beaumont, a small town in the North of France hit by deindustrialization and high unemployment. However with her accession to the presidency of the party, she was in a position to extend this strategy to the whole party. Before 2011, the entire political spectrum was demonizing the Front National, denouncing its links with hard-line far right groups, its links with neo fascist movements, its support to colonialism, Jean Marie Le Pen’s antisemitic and racist remarks. This demonizing approach was based on a moral denunciation of the far right assimilated with Vichy and the French collaboration during the Second World War. Marine Le Pen’s strategy was to normalize her party and in order to do that, she transformed the party’s discourse and propositions.

The first aspect of this normalization strategy is the eradication of the discourse and elements linking the FN to the traditional far right. Marine Le Pen formally cut all the official links with the far right radical group, especially the neo fascist groups. She banned racist and antisemitic language and decided to systematically exclude activists who publicly supported the Vichy regime or the French colonization of Algeria from the Front National. Several activists, candidates and even high ranked leaders of the party were excluded for transgressing these rules. The most visible consequence of this cleansing was the suspension of Jean-Marie Le Pen from the Front National. Even though he founded the Front National and is the father of Marine Le Pen, he was excluded from the Front National in 2016 because of one

²² Dédialisation will be translated as normalization

distasteful Holocaust joke targeting a Jewish French singer. However the FN still has unofficial links with the traditional far right²³; neo-fascist groups are still in the FN's orbit, for instance they serve as security personnel for FN public events. In coherence with the normalization, the FN abandoned some of its more radical propositions, especially on societal issues, as they distanced themselves from catholic fundamentalists. They are now not dissimilar to a conservative party, with similar positions than the classical right: they oppose gay marriage but tolerate homosexuality; they want to reduce the right to abortion but no longer suppress it.

The second characteristic of the normalization strategy is the restructuration of the FN with the formation of a local network, based on well-trained activists and elected representatives. The normalization led to a progressive purge of all members deviant from Marine Le Pen's political line, in the local elections of 2014 and 2015, the FN withdrew several traditional party candidates because they had made anti-Semitic, negationist or racist speeches. The FN replaced these candidates and local leaders with a new generation of highly trained activists. The militant training program was centralized and placed in the hands of experts who produced argumentative notes on a wide range of subjects, from the communication on social networks to specific aspects of the program. In the last 5 years, the FN managed to create a new generation of presentable candidates who also manage the skills and knowledge of the political field. Particular attention was given to the headhunting of activists from other parties in order to increase the attraction of the party and its respectability. There is no doubt that this effort of the FN to recruit, train and professionalize a new political elite is unprecedented and their success in such a small period is unique in the French political sphere²⁴. It required the formation of an ideological apparatus with thematic commissions filled with newly recruited experts. Florian Philippot is the most well known example of those recruited among technocrats and academics. The party discipline was extended in order to make possible such a large replacement and Marine Le Pen increased the centralization of the party, as well as the division of work. This rationalization of activism helped the FN to change its image; the party is increasingly perceived as credible for managing a city, a region and even the state apparatus. Since 2011, the party also expanded its membership, reaching nearly 52 000 contributing members at the 2015 congress. The professionalization of the party is a self-reinforcing tendency: in the first place it helps the party to win elections and therefore FN activists become city, departmental or regional councillors but with these elective positions come along several posts as political professionals, such as parliamentary attaché or political advisors. Ten years ago, the FN was lacking expertise, nowadays they are succeeding in gaining all the signs and symbols of a governing party.

We should not make the mistake to interpret normalization as a sign of a moderation of the Front National, clearly we are observing a strategy to modify the perception of this party in order to break its marginality and put the Front National in a position to access power. Moreover such a strategy is not new; in the history of the Front National, the leadership of

²³ Lebourg, Nicolas, *Le Front National et la galaxie des extrêmes droites radicales*, in Crépon Sylvain, Dézé Alexandre et Mayer Nonna, *Les Faux-Semblants du Front National. Sociologie d'un parti politique*, Presses de Sciences Po, 2015

²⁴ Igounet, Valérie, *La formation au Front National (1972-2015). Son histoire, ses enjeux et techniques* in in Crépon Sylvain, Dézé Alexandre et Mayer Nonna, *Les Faux-Semblants du Front National. Sociologie d'un parti politique*, Presses de Sciences Po, 2015

the party implemented normalization strategies several times²⁵. In the mid 80s, before Jean-Marie Le Pen's qualification of the Holocaust as "a detail in the history of World War II", the Front National tried to be perceived as respectable. At the time, the normalization strategy sought to make possible electoral alliances with the classical right²⁶.

The shift in the discourse and the election platform

However the normalization is not the only causal factor of the rise of the Front National; Marine Le Pen also changed the program and the discourse of the party²⁷. This change was very subtle as it mixed the conservation of identifying elements, a radical modification on other elements and the introduction of new themes.

Firstly the FN developed its "anti system" rhetoric and cleverly articulated it with the normalization strategy. The Front National claims to belong neither to the right nor to the left and explains (through the use of the "UMP-PS" catchphrase) that the left and the right have no substantial differences as they are implementing similar policies. In this rhetoric, the FN is the only true defender of the people, of the French Nation that is threatened by the political conformist oligarchy. This populist argument seems more and more accepted as the classical right and social democracy proposes and implements the same neoliberal measures. Along with their anti system discourse comes a victimization discourse, the FN claims to be the victim of the establishment which is composed, in their logic, by the UMP and the PS but also mass media categorized as conformist and disconnected from the "real" concerns of the people. The FN is therefore targeting mass media and the whole journalist profession, while since 2011 they have by far the best media coverage and the most air time on TV and radios. Prior to the normalization of the FN, this persecution and anti-system discourse was not that efficient as it was easy for mass medias and political opponents of the FN to justify its ostracizing with the racist, anti-Semitic, xenophobic and neo-fascist elements of the party. The anti-establishment rhetoric is nowadays a key asset for the FN, in a context of strong decrease of confidence in political institutions among the French population.

The heart of the ideological shift of the Front National lies in the adoption of the insecurity thematic which is declined in 3 different ways: cultural insecurity, social insecurity and traditional insecurity caused by delinquency. In order to explain the alleged increase in feelings of insecurity, the FN relies on one scapegoat, globalization. They denounce neoliberal globalization as responsible for social insecurity as it caused deindustrialization and high rates of unemployment (through social dumping) but is also responsible for the rise of immigration as the neoliberal agenda includes opening borders (thus confusing freedom of movement of commodities with freedom of movement of people). The FN states that immigration brought millions of foreign workers to France who took jobs and social benefits at the expense of the pureblood French workers. In addition, these foreigners are accused of importing their Muslim culture and their religion (Islam), thus threatening the cultural and religious identity of the French nation. Finally, they theorize that immigrants are increasing delinquency as they have no patriotic loyalty and that they cost a lot through state hand-outs. This ideological

²⁵ Dezé, Alexandre, La « dédiabolisation ». Une nouvelle stratégie ? in Crépon Sylvain, Dézé Alexandre et Mayer Nonna, *Les Faux-Semblants du Front National. Sociologie d'un parti politique*, Presses de Sciences Po, 2015

²⁶ Gombin, Joël, *Le Front National*, Eyrolles, 2016

²⁷ Alduy Cécile, Wahnich Stéphane, *Marine Le Pen prise aux mots. Décryptage du nouveau discours frontiste*, Le Seuil, 2015

mix is extremely dangerous as it formulates a coherent answer to the fear of large segments of the French population hit by precariousness, unemployment and social relegation. The key elements of the prior FN program remains but are included in a broader ideological framework that addresses the popular classes and the victims of the neoliberal policies.

The shift on immigration from biological racism to cultural and postcolonial racism should not be interpreted as a form of moderation, it coincides with the diffusion of the conspiracy theory of the “grand remplacement”, the idea that the Christian white population of Europe are being replaced by Muslim immigrants from Africa, Maghreb and the Middle East. With this discourse, the FN fed and took advantage of the gradual rise of islamophobia at the same time, of the refugee crisis and also of the terrorist attacks perpetrated by Daesh in 2015. They were able to produce a clear and simplistic argument about these events by designating immigration as the cause of all thesephenomenon. The islamophobic rhetoric also led them to change their position on women’s rights, from a very conservative position to the appropriation of the defence of women’s rights as Islam supposedly threatens these rights. Their islamophobic discourse goes along with the defence of a traditional French identity based on essentialism, which would be attacked by multiculturalism. In addition they theorize a connection between delinquency and immigration, in a culturalist perspective: as immigrants do not share the traditional Western values of honesty and respect, they are responsible for the supposed increase of anti-social behaviour, offenses and crimes. The mobilization of the cliché of a nation threatened by an outside invasion, which will destroy its culture is a very classical political far right manoeuvre; however it worked in the past years in France (the impoverishment of the lower classes probably played a strong role in the acceptation of this narrative). In addition, the FN did not have much to change in its electoral platform; they kept the propositions of closing the borders in order to reduce immigration, expelling illegal immigrants and implementing a national preference (the idea that French citizens should have priority over foreign residents when accessing public services, jobs). Finally, the attempts of the classical right, and particularly Sarkozy, as well as the immigration policies of the PS governments since 2012 legitimized the FN discourse as they partly validated their analysis.

The main transformation lies in the economic framework, as in the 1980s and 1990s the Front National glorified the Thatcher and Reagan reforms and defended a neoliberal program. Marine Le Pen personifies this shift to a more social vision of economic issues but the shift began before her accession to leadership of the FN. Since the mid 2000s, the FN is defending an economic vision based on the defence of the welfare state and of the national interest but also of the market economy²⁸. One of their key propositions is a form of nationalist capitalism (or welfare chauvinism²⁹): through the implementation of the national preference, the cutting of benefits and the expulsion of illegal immigrants, the welfare state will not be in deficit anymore and French unemployed will get back the jobs of the expelled undocumented workers. The FN justifies this xenophobic proposition with the necessity to preserve a functioning welfare state that intends to cut the costs linked to immigration (while in

²⁸ Ivaldi, Gilles, *Du néolibéralisme au social-populisme ? La Transformation du programme économique du Front National* in Crépon Sylvain, Dézé Alexandre et Mayer Nonna, *Les Faux-Semblants du Front National. Sociologie d’un parti politique*, Presses de Sciences Po, 2015

²⁹ Kitschelt, Herbert, *The Radical Right in Western Europe : a comparative analysis*, Michigan University Press, 1995

fact, France is economically benefitting from immigration³⁰). With the collapse of the radical left in France in the 80s, 90s, 2000s and the conversion of the PS to neoliberal policies, the FN succeeded in positioning itself as the defender of the working class and claims to have a social discourse on economic issues. But the global picture reveals a kind of bismarckian approach of economic issues: they intend to help French firms to invest and create jobs by reducing fiscal pressure, they plan to reduce the debt and public expenditures (especially in culture and education) and at the same time maintain social benefits. The other main source of income in order to finance this program is the reinstatement of tariffs and taxation of foreign commodities. One feature of this bismarckian project is the adoption of a protectionist agenda by the FN, which is coherent with their vision of the EU.

In the new framework of the FN, the European Union is a synthesis of unrestrained immigration and neoliberal deregulation; the party is benefiting from a growing eurosceptic feeling and therefore has increased its criticisms towards the EU. The FN is axing its European discourse about the idea of regaining the sovereignty lost in the European construction: monetary sovereignty, commercial sovereignty, the control of borders but also economic and juridical sovereignty that is to say the refusal of a supranational order. The FN moved from anti EU rhetoric to a critique of the EU mixed with the demand of a "Europe of Nations" built on national sovereignty. The EU is presented as being responsible for a high unemployment rate from social dumping generated partly by the Bolkenstein directive. Marine Le Pen raises the threat of a Frexit if she cannot succeed in transforming the EU into a Europe of Nations; if elected she will call a referendum on EU membership and, in a second phase, start a negotiation process with Brussels. Furthermore she advocates for an exit from the Eurozone in order to regain the possibility to devalue the currency for boosting competitiveness.

The ideological shift of the Front National from neoliberalism to bismarckian, xenophobic capitalism allowed them to address impoverished workers and employees through a simplistic rhetoric designating two enemies: the immigrant and the European Union. The combination of islamophobia and the demand for the restoration of fantasy traditional cultural values and French identity (as well as the authority of the state) forms a nationalist and populist discourse which convinces far beyond their traditional electorate. The articulation of the three forms of insecurity gives the FN the possibility to gather very different electorates, by playing and capitalising on people's fears. However their social discourse is incoherent, besides being xenophobic, as it does not address the question of financial markets, of purchasing power or the rise of wages. It does not include anything on the development of public services nor on stimulus packages. Furthermore their diagnosis lies on a false assumption that the social security contribution of immigrants living in France is much higher than the social benefits they are receiving. Nevertheless, this new electoral platform reveals the move from a traditional far right party to a right wing populist party which is a sovereignist, conservative, eurosceptical, anti system, nationalist and islamophobic party.

What is the composition of the electorate of the Front National?

We previously said that the new ideological framework of the FN is successful and we described its electoral progression in the last five years. In order to understand the link between these two elements we need to analyse the electoral basis of the Front National.

³⁰<http://en.rfi.fr/africa/20130614-immigrants-contribute-more-they-cost-oecd-reports-finds>
For the latest OECD report =><http://www.oecd.org/els/international-migration-outlook-1999124x.htm>

If we adopt an approach based on social categories, we can identify three FN electorates. The first component is a well off group, belonging to the bourgeoisie, with a strong anchorage among the traditional values of the far right (fundamentalist Catholicism, nationalism, xenophobia, homophobia). Then there is a middle class group, mainly artisans and storekeepers, attracted by the protectionist and “poujadist” discourse, which has a very critical perspective on economic globalization as well as on the decline of French national identity. The third group belongs to the lower and working class, with a strong social downgrading feeling, characterized by a high level of precariousness and unemployment. This last group raises many questions for the left, as several editorial writers said that former radical left voters (mainly former communist voters) are now voting for the FN. This assumption has not been verified; the generally accepted explanation among academics is that the workers and employees who were voting for the right shifted to the far right while working class people who traditionally voted for the PS and the PCF growingly abstained. In the last 20 years, among working class voters, we can observe a severe decrease of the vote for the classical right and social democracy, combined with a sharp rise of abstention and a deportation of traditional right voters to the FN. The consequence is that the FN currently represents 30 to 40% of working class voters, in a context of massive abstention of the lower classes. It is interesting to observe that the Front National succeeded to increase its electoral basis by attracting non-voters as well as a part of the right electorate and particularly the popular classes’ voters of the right. The attraction of voters who previously voted for the left is marginal in relation to the losses of the right or the gain among non-voters. The working class FN’s electorate is also a particular electorate, as it is almost exclusively composed of private sector workers who are not affiliated to trade unions.

Another interesting approach in order to apprehend the structuring of the vote in favour of the FN is its geographical repartition. Firstly there is a constant aspect: an East-West division; the FN is much stronger in the East of France than in the West. This division is explained by structural factors: the existence of a left based Catholic tradition in the West for instance or the strong presence of descendants of the pied-noirs (the French colonists in Algeria) in the South East. The new aspect is the strong progression of the FN in rural and suburban areas. These territories were the most hurt by deindustrialization and are gathering high levels of unemployment and precariousness, combined by a lack of public services and social cohesion³¹. On the other hand, the FN is unsuccessful in the metropolis and the city centres and even in the poor suburbs, which are melting pots gathering many descendants of immigrants from first generation. This weakness in the suburbs, shaped by multiculturalism, should be connected with their high results in suburban areas; several academics tend to say that it shows the efficiency of a xenophobic and islamophobic discourse from the FN on social groups who are not confronted with the reality of immigration on a daily basis but are afraid of it and consider immigration as a cause of their social situation.

We should notice that even though the social diversity of FN voters is an old characteristic of the party³², in the last 10 years, the Front National succeeded in keeping their well off electorate as well as increasing their low middle class electorate and attracting a vast part of the voting working class. This dynamic shows that the ideological reorganisation did not cause

³¹ Gombin, Joël, *Le changement dans la continuité, géographies électorales du Front National depuis 1992*, in Crépon Sylvain, Dézé Alexandre et Mayer Nonna, *Les Faux-Semblants du Front National. Sociologie d’un parti politique*, Presses de Sciences Po, 2015

³² Mayer Nonna, Perrineau Pascal (dir), *Le Front National à découvert*, Presses de Sciences Po, 1996

the departure of the traditional bourgeois or poujadist middle class electorate from the FN and in fact managed to galvanize three very different groups, with various electoral motives, around the new populist right party.

Perspectives on Left strategies against the FN and Right Wing Populism

From an activist perspective, we first have to be aware of the impact of the change in discourse, propositions and electoral platform of the FN. These shifts are similar to the evolution of other populist right wing parties in Europe, like the PVV or the FPÖ³³³⁴. We should not make the mistake to understand them as a sign of a moderation of the Front National, clearly we are observing a strategy to modify the perception of this party in order to break its marginality and put the Front National in a position to access power. The combination of a fake social discourse on economic issues, the position of sole champion of French national identity and the islamophobic rhetoric are the consequence of a radical change in the FN that have been materialized by 2011's turning point, when Marine Le Pen took over leadership of the party. However the FN has had a strategy of conquest of power, based upon the conquest of hegemony, for a long time and we should not forget that the current success of the FN can be explained by endogenous factors (the ones explained in this paper) but also by exogenous factors, and among them is the weakness of the radical left and the historic process of convergence of social democracy, neoliberalism and financialised capitalism.

In order to confront the FN in a successful way, the radical left requires an accurate strategy, which combines defensive and offensive aspects. The defensive strategy refers to the actions needed to stop the progression of the FN, mainly the deconstruction of its discourse and the diffusion, on a large scale, of analysis about what they are really proposing, but also how to campaign against them. On the other hand, we also have to take back the offensive with a progressive agenda of our own in order to change the balance of forces.

The first step of the defensive approach is a very thorough and exhaustive analysis of the various aspects of the Front National: their electoral platform, their achievements in parliament and in the local government, their links with neo-fascist groups, their statistical justifications of their analysis etc ... The idea is to move from a moralist condemnation of the Front National, from a demonizing approach (that does not work anymore) to a rational, precise and massive deconstruction of their analysis and propositions in order to show what they propose, who they are and change their image as well as hurting their credibility (thanks to their fanciful estimations of the costs of immigration and their fancy of an Islamization of France). In order to demystify the FN's "neither left nor right" catchphrase this analysis shall include the policies defended by the Front National MEP and members of the French Parliament as well as the ones implemented in the local authorities they manage, in order to point out their alignment with austerity and neoliberal policies³⁵. This ideological struggle requires a massive diffusion of the leaflets and books produced with the analysis. We already have some structures like VISA (Vigilances et Initiatives Syndicales Anti-fascistes³⁶) which is an association gathering the main unions on the left (CGT, FSU, Solidair-

³³Wagner Markus, Meyer Thomas, The Radical Right as Niche Parties? The Ideological Landscape of Party Systems in Western Europe, 1980-2014, Political Studies, June 2016

³⁴De Lange, Sarah, A New Winning Formula? The Programmatic Appeal of the Radical Right, Party Politics, July 2007

³⁵VISA, Lumière sur mairies brunes, Editions Syllepse, 2015

³⁶<http://www.visa-isa.org/>

e-s) in order to fight the far right. In addition to the existing structures, the deconstruction struggle needs to extend to small size companies, to working-class areas with door-to-door campaigning. A field campaign for an unlimited duration is essential, especially because the FN discourse is widely spread in the media. Secondly, the radical left needs to change some of its political habits in order to eradicate political behaviors that are validating the FN analysis of the political spectrum. We must abandon the “front républicain” tactic; this tactic is creating a gathering of the entire political spectrum, with no common program or platform. It just appears as a dogmatic opposition to the FN, and the FN can easily characterize itself as anti-system while it assimilates the political parties taking part to the “front républicain” as the establishment defending the status quo.

If these measures can restrain the progression of the FN and even put them on the defensive, they will not assure a change in the cultural hegemony, in the ideological balance of forces. The starting point is to acknowledge that the FN is partly right: social democrats and the classical right are implementing the same policies, and in some ways, Hollande is even worse than Sarkozy (the Labour Law, the debate about the deprivation of nationality, the European Fiscal Compact, the state of emergency). The PS and the UMP (now renamed as Les Républicains) are sharing a consensus about neoliberal economic policies and excessive security measures; this consensus is hegemonic. The heart of the problem is that the FN appears as the contestation of this hegemony. And it is easy for them to appear as an alternative to the “establishment” if the left is one homogenous block. The FN’s narrative is bipartism; the political spectrum is divided in two blocs: the FN and the establishment. Since 2012, the PS is using the rise of the FN to reshape the political narrative towards tripartism. The political spectrum would then be divided between: the left, the right and the far right. This narrative implies the unity of social democracy and the radical left. The right adopted this narrative as it suits them. In these narratives, the radical left is merged with the PS, that is to say the political party which had been implementing neoliberal policies for the last 4 years, which persecuted trade unionists and demonstrators protesting against the Labour Law, which expelled more illegal immigrants per year than Sarkozy ... It is obvious that the FN’s position as contestant of the dominant neoliberal hegemony will remain unchallenged unless the radical left break up with social democracy. If the radical left continues to appear as an auxiliary force of social liberalism, there will be no challenge of neoliberal hegemony from a left perspective. The split with social democracy is the only possibility for us to create a counter-hegemony based upon social transformation. We need to appear as a credible alternative to neoliberalism and right wing populism (which also implies no compromise on our emancipating values, especially on immigration, on multiculturalism or in the struggle against islamophobia, which remains today a diving line within the radical left).

The combination of a long term deconstruction campaign and the emergence of a clear left alternative can flow back the FN, as it will allow the radical left to challenge the dominant hegemony. I am deeply convinced that, when the radical left appears as the solution to the problems of the lower classes, we win and the FN is losing ground. During the social movement against Labour, the FN was inaudible; they were no longer defining the political agenda or the dominant thematics in mass media. Why? Because the trade unions, the radical left political parties and the student movements were at the time in a position of strength. It is not only through direct struggle against the FN that we will confront them successfully; it is also through the emergence of a strong, credible radical left.

Lichtenberger, Hanna

The Decline of the Social Democrats and the Rise of the political Right in Austria

Austria was spared, barely, from far-right candidate Norbert Hofer being elected its next president.¹ All the more painful, though, has been the debate about the rise of the radical right in general and the Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ) in particular. Bourgeois minds like to reduce the causes of the right's rise to popular dissatisfaction with the on-going dispute in the country's grand coalition (consisting of the Social Democrats (SPÖ) and the conservative, center-right Austrian People's Party (ÖVP)) and the government's lack of commitment to pursue reform efforts. Those on the left are demanding more civic education for what they perceive as the uneducated, racist FPÖ-voters and the center is convinced that the decline in the number of voters is due to communication problems. After all, it is easier, apparently, to follow the FPÖ's lead and give simple answers to seemingly difficult questions.

Below I will show that the current success of the FPÖ is causally related to the effectual implementation of neo-liberal ideas into politics and the economy and the resulting changes to the Social Democratic Party. My central point is that the Social Democrats have been undergoing a major overhaul under the premise of the neo-liberal model for the past 30 years. This and the accompanying changes to the Austrian labor market have created the conditions that contribute to the long-term rise of the *Freedom party*.

Social Democrats under Fordism

After the British Empire lost its global supremacy in the decade after the First World War, the United States went about asserting its hegemonic position not only with military, but also with economic power. This was primarily due not least to the promotion of *Fordist production methods and lifestyles*. These had taken over in the United States by no later than the 1920s, yet the heyday of Fordism in Europe came with the post-war reconstruction under the US-funded Marshall Plan. On the one hand, Fordism was characterized by mass production and mass consumption. Durable industrial goods such as cars, washing machines and dishwashers had become affordable for the broad working class because mass production had pushed prices down as wages increased, creating the conditions for mass consumption. Key companies of the national economies were state-owned – at least in Europe. In particular, the public monopoly on infrastructure kept the state's unique position as guarantor of the widest possible access unquestioned.

On the other hand, Fordism was also shaped by the emergence of a broad service sector. Fordism was characterized by the expansion of wage labor and the decline of traditional trades and farming. National economies began to approach full employment, jobs were secure, social safety nets were created and expanded, and wages grew to provide a living to a large part of the population. Even when unions, work councils and shop stewards had influence on management decisions – thanks to their high membership levels – the means of production were not owned by the workers.

Fordism was not the victory of the workers' movement over capitalism, but was instead the compromise of the working class that accepted capitalism, which, after all, was and is organized for those who own the capital and not for the sake of making painful economic concessions to the workers.

Antonio Gramsci gave an apt description of this tension: the ruling class also rules with hegemony and not just coercion or repression. Here, hegemony means the ability of one class to universalize its own interests by selectively integrating the corporate interests of other classes into its policies. Any economic concessions made were designed to keep the subaltern classes within the system. These concessions never undermine the foundations of the capitalist mode of production: "there is also no doubt that such sacrifices and such a compromise cannot touch the essential; for though hegemony is ethical and political, it must also be economic, must necessarily be based on the decisive function exercised by the leading group in the decisive nucleus of economic activity." (PN 13, §18, 1566-1567)¹

The large public sector made it possible to take countermeasures against economic recession or otherwise balance out periods of recession. At the same time, other measures such as environmental protection or advancements of women in the workplace could be expedited in state-run enterprises. This type of capitalist state has been called the *fordist welfare state*. It takes anti-cyclical actions against economic cycles and makes investments during phases of slow economic growth. But this also meant that political decisions could have an immediate impact on the work force. In Austria, the history of Fordism is inextricably linked to that of the Social Democratic Party. Under its hegemony, a comprehensive modernization project was completed in the late 1960s. While Fordism suffered a crisis between 1973 and 1975, we can speak of a "late Fordism" in Austria. (Unger 2001, 48 f)¹ Social Democracy was present with its grass-roots organizations in the municipal housing projects and villages. Its manifold hegemonic apparatuses that had played a central role already back in the 1920s (Duma/Lichtenberger 2016)¹, were politicizing every phase and aspect of life. In addition to television, it was these functionaries and members who were the central mediators of social democratic policy. Many people still associate the social advancement they personally experienced with the name Bruno Kreisky (Social Democratic chancellor of Austria from 1970 to 1983). The comprehensive reforms in the country's education system (such as opening up the gates of the universities, free textbooks for all students, free transport to school, etc.) together with the numerous reforms in labor law (such as the introduction of the 40-hour work week, the increase in minimum annual vacation), pension increases, and tax breaks for people with low incomes changed the lives of many people in concrete terms.

The women's organization within the SPÖ joined forces with the "autonomous women's movement" to push for the decriminalization of abortion within certain time limits and other milestones towards legal and social equality between men and women. Here are just a few of these milestones: the recognition of parental leave as replacement time for pension insurance, the expansion of the Maternity Protection Act, the abolition of the gender-based wage differentials in collective bargaining agreements, the introduction of a mother-child passport, the right to separate bank accounts, and many other achievements in family law such as the end of discrimination against illegitimate children in inheritance law and an end to the husband's exclusive right to determine the residence of all family members. The criminalization of homosexuality was largely, although not completely, overturned.

With increasing prosperity, lifestyles and the conditions for reproduction began to change and the resulting social dynamics created the conditions for new social movements in the late 1960s, which politicized a broad range of social issues.

These included the women's and environmental movements, with the latter eventually giving rise to the Green Party. The Social Democrats were also understood by many movements as a vehicle for social change. They both criticized and entered into dialogue with the SPÖ politicians and accepted the party's challenges in return.

With the second oil price shock in the early 1980s the crisis of Fordism also reached Austria. The government's usual crisis management tools – previously applied by the ruling Social Democrats – were no longer effective. This created discursive and strategic openings for the conservative and neoliberal arguments of both the ÖVP and the FP, back then a political proponent of economic liberalism. Specifically, not just among their traditional target audiences, but also among the middle classes, in other words, precisely that group which had prospered under the policies of the SPÖ. At the latest, the Social Democratic-reformist hegemony was over by the 1986 elections (Atzmüller 2002, 2).¹ It was replaced with a right-wing conservative hegemony. This hegemony was characterized by the fact that, struggles between different capital fractions became the most dominant and crucial political and social conflicts.

The economic changes in post-Fordism and their impact on the labor market and the labor processes

Since the deep crisis of Fordism, there has been a massive shift in the balance of power to the detriment of the subaltern classes. The stagnation of wages has put households in the US, Europe, and also Japan in debt, a "secondary mechanism for exploitation" (Sablowski/Demirović 2012, 81)¹. In addition to the changes in the organic composition of capital and the emergence of a finance-dominated accumulation of wealth, privatization and liberalization have been hallmarks of post-Fordism and mechanisms for managing the crisis of Fordism. In the 1980s, state-owned industries were either outsourced and organized according to business principles or otherwise fully privatized. In the early 1990s, this was followed in Europe by the neoliberal transformation of public services, such as the privatization and liberalization of postal services, local and national mass transit, and utilities. The privatization policies caused prices to skyrocket and the policymakers' direct ability to control pricing was lost.

This was not only to the detriment of consumers; it also resulted in fundamental changes to the day-to-day functioning of the workplace. Neoliberal rationalizations of operations led to downsizing, increased competition among workers, the decoupling of pay and work hours, loosening up of working hours regulations, and increasing pressure to perform. Between 1996 and 2002, the number of employees in the electricity sector, for example, had dropped by at least 40 percent, while the postal services saw at least an 18 percent cut and the Austrian national railways experienced a loss of at least 20 percent. (Atzmüller/Hermann 2004, 66)¹

As post-Fordism was unleashed on society, unemployment and the unequal distribution of wealth in society began to rise rapidly. The class compromise of Fordism was dissolved and corporatist models were terminated. Precarious, atypical jobs (part-time, temporary con-

tracts, temporary work, freelancers, and the marginally employed) gained importance: today only a very few young people will find a permanent full-time position when starting their professional lives.

Shifts in the political relations – Authoritarian statism

It was not only the relations to the means of production and the organic composition of capital that were undergoing change, there were also profound transformations taking place within the state and in the political sphere. Political theorist Nicos Poulantzas coined the term *authoritarian statism* to describe these changes in the capitalist state. Authoritarian statism, which is correlated to the structural changes in both global and national relations of production, is a simultaneous weakening and strengthening of the state. Contradictions within the power block (*Block an der Macht*) begin to require greater intervention, which in turn leads to politicization processes and political upheavals. (Poulantzas 2002, 233 ff.)¹ Poulantzas outlines some characteristics of such authoritarian statism:

- the decline in the rule of law and gradual dissolving of the separation of powers (state's legislative, executive, and judicial branches of the state are increasingly fused)
- the strengthening of the executive's power and a power loss of parties and legislators. In particular, economic apparatuses (such as the economic and finance ministries) gain importance.
- The increasing personalization of power;
- transformation of the legislature. One aspect of this is the loosening up of parties' ties to their traditional base, political parties no longer fulfill their traditional functions in policy-making
- This also results in a process of distancing between the administration and lawmakers
- Through the development of autonomization of state bureaucracy, it drafts government policy and leads the political decision making process
- Parties only serve as intermediaries for decisions already made by the executive and are no longer responsible for the real drafting and negotiation of policies. Parties lose their function as representatives of certain social groups.

The structure of the European Union is a clear reflection of this transformation process: the right of initiative lies with the executive (the European Commission) and the European Parliament has played no important role in European policy making. (cf. also Lichtenberger 2015 on the neo-liberal character of the EU)¹ The relevance of (political) parties in the reproduction of hegemony and consensus takes a back seat. What were once "people's parties" that emerged from social movements have morphed into voting blocks and their functionaries have become intermediaries between state apparatuses and voters. Stephen Gill uses Gramsci's concept of hegemony briefly described above to argue – like Poulantzas did as well – that post-Fordism is reproduced "less with hegemony [...] than increasingly a policy of domination." (Gill 2000, 41)¹ "Disciplinary neo-liberalism" results in governments striving to meet three key criteria in order to put (the) power in the hands of capital: consistent policies, building public confidence and credibility, and representing particular interests. The point is convincing the "shy deer" in a world of finance-dominated accumulation of wealth to invest capital by demonstrating "the persistence of law and order, the protection of property, the application of rules, and predictable macroeconomic policies." Stephen Gill attributes a new "market civilization" to the post-Fordist society that is influencing all sectors, privatizing and

individualizing them or otherwise commodifying, monetizing, and opening up new spaces for economic exploitation.

Market discipline and macroeconomic assumptions such as competitiveness, efficiency, and discipline are becoming inherent to all relationships within society. This includes the commodification of discourse, where further aspects of life are being driven by market principles. Neo-liberalism, Alex Demirović argues, has no strategy of wanting to become hegemonic, instead it is a "strategy that tries to dominate [...] while making as few concessions as possible" (Demirović 2008, 20)¹. Neo-liberalism, according to Demirović, is not seeking a new compromise with the lower classes, but is instead pursuing its short-term and immediate profit interests, discursively substantiated by "economic constraints, i.e. the mute compulsion of economic relations" (ibid).

Neo-liberal Social Democrats and the rise of the right

The ideological and organizational decline of European social democratic parties in light of these developments is reflected most clearly in the fates of the British Labour Party and the German SPD with its "third way." The SPÖ has also not been immune to these changes. In 1991, under the leadership of Franz Vranitzky, the party changed its name from the *Socialist Party of Austria* to the *Social Democratic Party of Austria* (both with SPÖ as an acronym). The 1998 party program listed key phrases of the so-called "third way" as the party's new, important values. "Equality" became "equal opportunities" and "justice" became "equal participation of all in society." The term "meritocracy" ("solidarische Leistungsgesellschaft") found its way in the party's communication. The *Sektionen*, the smallest units of the SPÖ, lost their importance and were limited in their activities or decoupled from the party. Strategic debates took place in small gatherings of external experts and consultants. The profound and broad intellectual debates like those once known in the Austrian workers' movements stopped. The party instead now began functioning like a PR apparatus creating political communications with barely any direct contact with working class people. It exists to win elections, not to involve people in politics.

The SPÖ has not responded to the changes in the class structure in Austria since the 1970s and does not reflect these changes in its own structures. This is noticeable when one looks at the social composition of members of important committees or at those elected to parliament. This is why the SPÖ can no longer be said to represent the Austrian working class as a whole. Many workers hold the Social Democrats jointly responsible for privatizations. Those deeply neoliberal policies had been legitimized by the need to preserve the competitiveness of Austria. In the 1990s, transnationally oriented class fractions of capital began to support the rise of Jörg Haider, the leader of the *Freedom Party*. When the FPÖ was in government with the ÖVP after the 1999 national elections, it set about fully implementing those neoliberal policies in Austria, that had taken hold across Europe, policies that even the neoliberal third-way SPÖ had refused to implement.

In the meantime, the Social Democrats, stalled in opposition, were unable to formulate a credible program or vision, and thus missed the chance to make the party a vital place for organization and debate. The rhetorical recourse to social issues in the 2006 election campaign guaranteed the SPÖ a first-place finish, but it did not lead to a re-politicization and sustainable strengthening of the party's structures. The SPÖ-ÖVP coalition under Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer also did not reverse any of the privatization measures that had been taken during the previous ÖVP-FPÖ government. It was unable to stop the transformation of

the state and politics; indeed, it became a part of these processes. The SPÖ suffered a rift between the government and bureaucracy on the one side and its base on the other. The party continues to function as the conveyor belt taking decisions already made by the executive or administration to parliament for formal approval.

After the FPÖ was taken over by its German-nationalist, far right wing and its candidate Heinz-Christian Strache, the party added the phrase "*Soziale Heimatpartei*"¹ to its logo since the 2006 campaign. This was a tactical realignment of the party after the Haider years and its participation in the neo-liberal reforms of the ÖVP-FPÖ government from 2000 to 2007. The FPÖ combined social issues with racism (especially anti-Muslim). The fact that it had been the ÖVP-FPÖ coalition government of the past six years that had completed the economic, labor, and social policy transformations in Austria in line with the neo-liberal agenda was virtually ignored with the party's rebranding. This strategy appears to be working. Unfortunately, there is a lack of critical research into the class-based motivations for the voting choices made by Austrian voters. But the media continually bring up the high approval ratings the FPÖ apparently enjoys among the working classes. Even if these numbers are not easily transferable from a critical perspective, it is not really surprising that many workers feel that things are getting worse. Even the government admitted a few years ago that workers had suffered a drop in real wages of 14 percent between 1998 and 2014.

Under Strache, the FPÖ positioned itself as the political alternative to the sluggish parties now in government (SPÖ and ÖVP). And indeed, the SPÖ is now seen as being state supporting and over-identified with the management of the status quo.

The SPÖ has long since ceased to be a movement driven by a shared mission for a fundamental change in society. It is also no longer the place where such movements can come together to join forces to effect such change. In line with the core of neo-liberal politics, the SPÖ focuses only on the small details and there is no great political project in the works. Even the Greens are unable to formulate a credible social project that can mobilize wider sections of society.

We are experiencing a turn to authoritarianism. It is not coming all at once, however. It is coming gradually, quietly, but also continually pulling one social group in after another. The Austrian left has failed to offer interpretation of inequality and the causes of the current crisis as well as offering alternative narratives of a democratic society to a broader audience. We failed in creating a future perspective for which the majority of people are fighting and for which they get organized.

If we want to stop the ascendancy of the FPÖ, we must start thinking big again and build a political movement that puts social issues at its core. We need to make politics something that gets people involved and offers the prospect of profound change in society. We need to become capable of acting across Austria and find a new form to make this happen. We need to reexamine our old certainties and move beyond those of our behaviors that have become bad routine. In other words, we need to make sure that we are continuing only the best practices and begin to learn from one another and assemble our knowledge into something greater. We need to find those things we have in common, those things that can link us one to another, and learn to listen to one another instead of insisting on our own positions over everything else. We need to stop reproaching others for what they cannot do or what they are lacking. Instead, we need to create a vision of a future to believe in and fight for side-by-side.

Caccia, Beppe

THE “THREE ITALIAN POPULISMS” (AND A MISSING PEOPLE) *

From a progressive and emancipatory point of view the Italian political history was often described as an “anomaly” among Western capitalistic countries. This “positive anomaly” was marked in the Seventies by the strongest cycle of workers' struggles and in the early Twenty first century by the widest anti-globalization movement in Europe. Conversely, the political developments of past five years must be presented as a rather negative variation upon the theme of an “Italian anomaly” in our continent, characterized by the weakness of class conflicts, the fragmentation of social movements and the marginalization of the political Left. Instead of inserting it in the general framework of the crisis and decline of European social democracy, the Renzi phenomenon must therefore be interpreted in the context of this renewed “Italian anomaly” and within the emergence of “three populisms” as a structural component of this situation.

For brevity's sake we only briefly dwell on the “right-wing populism”, and we will focus closer on the other two forms of politics, that make a direct appeal to “the people” considered as an organic and homogeneous whole, beyond any real social and class difference¹.

The first right-wing variety has in fact more to do with the unresolved transition of the reactionary political-field in Italy, after two decades of Berlusconi hegemony: there is a leadership issue, revealing a deeper social and political identity problem. The internal competition taking place within the right has brought forth Matteo Salvini, leader of the Northern League, who turned a regionalist and separatist party into a nationalist and xenophobic force, more similar to the Front National or AfD, so far obtaining significant and scary election results, even though not reaching extremely high numbers (about 14 per cent, if data are projected onto national level).

On the other hand, the political stage is firmly occupied by both the “*ambiguous populism*” of the Five Star Movement (M5S) and the “*populism in government*” of Renzi and his Democratic Party¹.

The latter was able to visibly interrupt the line of continuity in the history of the former Communist Party, marginalizing the leaderships that had grown inside the party's youth organizations, and that, since 1989, managed its transformation into a social democratic political force (PDS, then DS), subsequently merging with the more socially-oriented left-wing Catholics (inside the PD).

With the slogan of “scrapping” this old leadership, Renzi has turned the Democratic Party into a highly centralized party, oriented towards an exclusive national government action, driven by the goal to introduce alleged reforms with a structural neoliberal inspiration, and by the prospect of building a catch-all centristic “Party of the Nation”.

Renzi thus proved to be one of the main political actors in Europe when it came to the attempt of “normalizing” the crisis emergency management, within a more structured regime of accumulation, characterized by strongly un-balanced social relationship of forces, growing permanent precarization, and polarization in the redistribution of wealth. This happened, for example, with the labour market reform called “Jobs Act”: a bill that, in terms of dismantling historically acquired social rights, is far harsher than the Loi Khomri in France. Next step was

the risky attempt by the referendum on Constitutional reforms, inspired by the logic of parliamentary representation impairment (combined with a strongly majoritarian electoral reform), which aimed at strengthening the executive powers and at centralizing the State organization against any room of self-government for regional and local autonomies.

But Renzi's narrative and his communicative rhetoric supported by an impressive media propaganda machine were all about innovation, optimism and hope, therefore marking a discontinuity with the European austerity policies. Combined with some demagogic measures, this allowed him to obtain an extraordinary success (more than 40 per cent for the PD) in last elections for the European Parliament in May 2014.

That consensus has already been dissipated, as the results of the June 2016 municipal elections show. The defeat of Renzi's candidates, i.e. the ones of the Democratic Party, as mayors of Rome and Turin, showed that the historical social constituency of the center-left vote was disarticulated by his "populism in government", while a new constituency had not been yet created.

Even the heavy defeat suffered by Renzi in the referendum of 4th December 2016 (59.1 per cent NO, 40.9 per cent YES) was caused by a wave of social rejection of government policy, which goes far beyond the content of the constitutional reforms. But the defeat certainly does not mean the end of the "Renzi phenomenon", which will still play a new role in the complex political phase that is opening up now.

On top of that, Renzi found on his way the "ambiguous populism" of Grillo and M5S as his main competitor. For the Five Stars it was easy to show how the Renzi phenomenon had already gone from being "innovation" to having become "establishment". Most of the demands for "change" have resulted in voting for them. And in every round of balloting, second round of local elections, most of the votes of right-wing candidates and parties converged on the M5S' candidate mayors opposing the PD candidates too. This is very likely to happen even in the next general political elections, scheduled in Spring 2018 and which could be held earlier.

But by calling the Five Stars "ambiguous", we are not referring only to the many contradictions we can detect in their speeches and in their programs, such as, for example, their wavering views on issues such as migration and racism, or their subaltern approach to economic powers and to capitalistic market logic, nor to the equally heterogeneous composition of their leadership and activists, which involves both people with a leftist and a far-right background. We are rather referring to the fact that, beyond the "anti-system" label, they have so far revealed themselves as a last resource of systemic legitimation.

As argued, among others since 2013, by Wu Ming writers collective¹, "the M5S has effectively defended the present system, acting as a force that has quelled rebellion and stabilised the system". In this sense, they were able to blow new life into the wilting political representation. And, together with other factors that it is not possible to mention here, their growth from 2011 onwards has produced the effect of "freezing" conflictual social dynamics in Italy.

As opposed to what happened in Europe and all over the world with the movement cycle of "the squares" - from Syntagma to Puerta del Sol, from Tahrir to Occupy Wall Street - in Italy a large proportion of such "indignation" was intercepted and converted in pure electoral consensus by Grillo and Casaleggio - two wealthy men in their 60s with a background in the

entertainment industry and in marketing. “They created” – Wu Ming continue to argue – “a political-economic franchise with its own copyright and trademark, a movement rigidly controlled and mobilised from the top, hijacking slogans and ideas from social movements and mixing them with apologies for an “ethical” capitalism, with superficial statements centred on the honesty of the individual [...]”

Along with the effect of “block” they produced in social dynamics, in the political initiative of M5S the “parasitic” relationship developed by the latter with grass-root and self-organized social movements is quite clear. Even in local struggles contesting infrastructural projects or defending the commons (as, for example, in the case of NoTav movement, against high-speed train), they never question the contents voiced by the movements, but they mechanically replicate those contents in the institutional context. Photocopying complaints and proposals of the movements, but not allowing any “intrusion” from below in the institutional choices of their closed structure, they reproduce a strict “division of labour” between grass-root initiatives and political representation. And they confirm the rigid separation of the “social” from the “political” and reaffirm the principle of “delegation” as indisputable. Combined with their hierarchical and corporate form of organization, this ultimately results in a true conservative role in national politics. And it makes any comparison with the Podemos experience unfitting.

But my concluding question is: starting from these given conditions, is there in Italy any political space for a “*fourth pole*”? In other words, is there room for a new Left which, in our European context, can cope with the issues – a Left that is capable of effectively counteracting both the neoliberal “big Center” and the “nationalist populisms” – raised by Walter Baier’s and Mario Candeias’ introductions to the RLS-Transform seminar last July? A Left able of translating the majority of “social NO” recorded by the constitutional referendum in a credible political perspective?

I really do not know. There is a real risk that any “traditional left” option may prove irrelevant, as happened so far in Italy, crushed by these three populisms. My conclusions have therefore more to do with potentialities and hypotheses than with certainties. It will be difficult but not impossible to break the current enchantment, the “spell of the three populisms.”

Whatever we share or not the idea that a sort of “left-wing populism” is needed, we have theoretically to admit that the most important “empty or floating significant” brought into play in the Spanish situation of last two years are already deployed in Italy¹. First: “neither right, nor left” has already widely characterized all the “three populisms” rhetorics. Second: “the new versus the old” was the main argument in Renzi’s “scrapping” of the previous center-left leadership. Third: “below versus high”, i.e. “the people against the *casta*”, is the crucial point, a kind of trade-mark, of any Five Stars political discourse, although they attribute this definition only to “the politicians” avoiding any attack against the élites understood in a broader sense as economic-financial, media and political oligarchies.

But this line of thought carries the risk of too mechanical a use of “populist methodology”, one that is abstract from a substantial processing of the relevant contents.

The real dynamics of recent months are in fact opening more political spaces worthy of being acted out. On one hand, in the current economic stagnation (European, and especially Italian), we are facing the failure in practice of any illusionary wealth redistribution, as prom-

ised by Renzi's government, spreading a wider social discontent. On the other, penalized by the death of the guru Casaleggio and by the resulting internal factional struggles, we reckon in the Five Stars a controversial need to accredit themselves with the dominant economic and mediatic establishment in the hope of winning the next political elections, and their parallel inability to handle adequately, in the case of Rome, the newly-conquered local government.

Although it is too early to pass a definitive judgment, in fact the last few months M5S' experience on metropolitan level is showing and amplifying all the contradictions mentioned above: on one side the announcement by these new mayors of the will to fight against "big infrastructural projects" and "big events", which have extractive and speculative purposes, defending instead the commons from privatizations and opening first forms of dialogue with the urban movements; on the other, the "waterlogging" in their legalistic attitude with bureaucratic power structures, often compromised with prevailing economic interests.

These contradictions show new possibilities for an innovative left-wing approach.

It is the case of a few early examples in the recent local elections, particularly the experience of Naples, where Luigi de Magistris won a second mandate, running for mayor as "independent" and qualifying his administrative experience as "rebel city" in an open and productive dialectic relation with social movements, citizen's protagonism and self-organized initiatives in neighbourhoods, concretely defending basic rights and taking some local political decisions that effectively disrupt and challenge the dominant neoliberal paradigm and national government's policies, sometimes even forcing – i.e. "disobeying" the rules imposed from above and by external powers – the boundaries of local authority's competence.

We see in Italy several experiences of local platforms – at an embryonic stage and yet with similar aims - which attempt to combine a radical municipalistic attitude with the involvement of "old and new" left-wing political forces aiming to join together. There are obviously different approaches in different local contexts and none of these can be defined as a "model": from the creation from below of "new institutions" as popular or neighborhood assemblies, capable of an open conflictual dialectic with local institutions, up to new "citizens platforms", capable of building political and electoral coalitions.

In this perspective, even the process of constitution of a new party for the Left in Italy could be a useful space of convergence. This can happen, if it does not remain mired in a sterile debate over "center-left alliances" or if it will not simply re-assemble the political class defeated in the last fifteen years. This process could be successful if it manages to experience an unprecedented relationship with social dynamics and municipalist laboratories, radically innovating its form of organization in a "confederalist" manner. It could succeed if it manages to address more directly the popular material needs and claims for change. And if it will look for partners and interlocutors, acting together with a similar attitude on the European level.

This is clearly not an easy path to follow, but try we must: we know from the lesson of Gramsci that "the people" does not exist as some pre-formed entity before its mobilization. The notion of people itself can take shape only through common struggles. And the political definition of a "missing people" can not be matter of passive representation of a phantomatic "organic whole", but organizing "a part", the socially majoritarian one, carrying its own specific class interests against others.

In this sense, the “three Italian populisms” must be considered both as “symptoms” of the disease that plagues the status quo in Europe, and as conservative “pathogen agents” in the same condition, which they intend to perpetuate without real alternatives. On the contrary, we need to invent new forms of political subjectivity and action, capable of speaking to, and organizing a “missing people.”

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Malek, Jiri

The European reality, East-West, The role of the Left

The numerous cases witnessed that practically every common concept actually consists of several various ideas. Ignoring this diversity may lead to a failure to reach a common goal. This is also true for the common pan-European leftist policies that are striving to overcome the neoliberal conceptual base of the contemporary European *"real-politik"*.

If we talk about the impact of this policy in CEE we need to take into consideration the process of this region's transition from "socialism to capitalism". But – pay attention! – to the neo-liberal type of capitalism. The type of capitalism that had been anticipated by the significant part of the CEE population (probably by the majority of it) at the time of social transition in the late 80's and 90's was very different from what it actually turned out to be. My judgement primarily relates to Czech, partly Slovak realities due to my detailed knowledge of the local situation and the availability of relevant data. But it is evident that many aspects of my analysis are rather common and can be observed in the other countries of the former socialist block - at least in the "Visegrad 4 countries" (V4) (naturally in different extent and intensity of symptoms). A known Czech philosopher has described the situation the following way :

"In the year 1990 we have been a poor country with hope, currently we are relatively rich country without hope"

The facts and feelings of the people rising from their everyday lives do actually show that paths of the East and the West, despite the loud statements of politicians, never came close starting in the early 90's. At certain moments they actually diverged or went in parallel, failing to affect each other in a significant way. The West drifted from the model of welfare state to the neo-liberal project. The East, on its turn, was a place where a "Washington consensus" ⁱ was implemented in full scale and with all relevant consequences.

Ironically, the aspirations of the majority of people there were actually related to the welfare state. The successful PR campaign of new elites has managed to convince the citizens of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) countries to accept the solution that was never actually desired by them. In Czechia the first signs of doubt have arisen in the first half of 90's. The emerging new neoliberal elite had, from the very beginning, eliminated every single reminiscence of political and economic solutions that have been based on the concept of so-called "Prague Spring" (The idea of the third way, the socialism with a human face). This "Third Way" was unacceptable for them - hence any type of discussion on this topic, even among experts, not talking about citizens was not tolerated. The sceptical position was primarily taken by those unsuccessful, the ones that have not managed their perspective and "benefits" in transition from socialism to capitalism.

The Washington consensus was an important factor even from a political aspect. It was an indicator of the "progressivity" of one's positions. Whoever hovered doubts or disagreed with this concept was graded as a person who does not understand the dominance of such requirements of modernity as the "invisible hand of the market" and the neo-liberal, individualistic philosophy. Some of those people were labelled as "supporters of the old (communist) rules". This was possible due to the absence of mechanisms, not speaking about the

brakes that would have prevented certain limits to be exceeded and borders crossed. In the West the dismantling of the welfare state took the form of a process where different social and political forces collided and certain pressures from trade unions, civil structures, traditional political parties, including Left, have been applied thus influencing the entire process in terms of content and dynamics. In the East the entire transformation was based on a totally different performance of social forces. In essence, no "slow-down" of the transformation process, let alone its possible modifications had been allowed (a concept of "TINA" – politically and economically). Criticism and modification requirement had been kept in the framework of the chosen concept whose key parameters remained untouchable. The same democratic processes seemed to be needless complication. All political processes in the Czech republic were subordinated to neoliberal economic transformation. The citizens of the former Eastern post-socialism bloc got used to certain standards of the social security provided by their countries and tended to consider them to be "automatic". Even many supporters of the defeated "communism" had not been able to imagine that this defeat would bring an end to an automatic validity of social guarantees (of course, their content, quality and scope is a subject open for discussion). Subsequently, many of those were astonished by the easiness and speed of these guarantees' disposal and by the fact that this process went practically beyond the possibility of being influenced by citizens. Alongside this dismantlement process the new measures of social security had been introduced in accordance with the concept of neo-liberal capitalism - very different in many ways from the former ones in terms of content and forms. However, their average level was lower than the level of similar "guarantees" being in force at the same time in countries of the West.

Contrary to the expectations of theorists of the post-industrial society since 80's the proportions of produced wealth distribution in favour of a "higher" strata of society kept growing. This fact has also determined the trajectory of development in post-communist/socialist countries. Here, however, this process went without disguised (?) and masking usually employed for preventing an increase in social tension. A process of a blunt grab of the accumulated property took place on a dramatic scale. The emerging elites were aware that any resistance would be small and easily surmountable. Any process differences between the individual CEE countries did not affect the extent of the content. However the V4 states fared much lighter in this process compared to the excesses that took place in Ukraine, Russia as well as in the Balkans.

The offensive against the fundamentals of employment policies begun rather disguised in the West and hard and indiscriminately in the East. If in the West an argument for the need of a greater efficiency and competitiveness in a global world was employed, emphasizing individual freedom as the basis of the increase in wealth and further liberalization of the market as the only viable way forward. In the East, very often the only deployed argument was the need to combat the so-called "remnants of communism" in people's mentality, with the idea that only the complete departure from past practices would ensure a transition to a bright (capitalist and neoliberal) future. Given the fact that in the East, the middle class (in the Western sense) was virtually non-existent, there was no need for traditional approaches to be taken into account.

For many Western experts it is very hard to comprehend how differently East experts and the general public understand several phenomena, terms and theoretical postulates.

The main issue that was tackled by the Western Left essentially for the whole period of coexistence of two opposing systems was how to make the social transformation relate to overcoming capitalism. They relied on many theoretical postulates that were almost unknown in the East- the works of Gramsci, the concept of the "historic compromise", the concept of euro-communism as such, dialectics of revolution and evolution within societies respecting the principles of democracy etc. The East at the same time firmly relied on the traditional concept of Marxism-Leninism. Although within it there had been studies of processes used by theorists of the West, the center of gravity rested on the issue of ensuring possible changes in the West. However, the East lacked knowledge of "real capitalism". The West, on its turn, experienced the lack of information about "real socialism". After the transformations that took place in CEE region the Left have not been able to agree between themselves, each side talking about something somewhat different and using a slightly different language. And unfortunately, even after more than a quarter of a century both parts of Europe's radical Left had failed to integrate and let their synergies contribute to the promotion of leftist solutions.

The attitude toward European integration in the countries of CEE - V4 and specifically in CZ reflected, in a certain way, the transformation process and the evolution of citizens' expectations. In the beginning, immediately after the changes, the interest in European integration significantly prevailed – with a "Back to Europe" motto proving popular. Many people could not understand the lukewarm character of the West's response. They assumed that if the condition of "the communism overthrow" has been fulfilled there would be nothing to prevent their path to the Western community. In the Czech Republic even some sort of feeling of superiority that "we are better prepared" prevailed for some time among other things. This also played a role in the fact that part of the Czech population was willing to easily part with Slovakia. In the 2nd half of the last decade there has been some weakening of pro-European tendencies. Especially supporters of the radical left took an increasingly critical approach against the fact that accession to NATO was given a clear priority. This priority was fiercely supported by the ruling Czech circles (in close collaboration with the dominant elites of the USA) as part of a new geopolitical structure being built in the context of a unipolar world. The process of association with NATO was taken out of democratic mechanisms where a highlighted civic opinion could have been applied and thus remained fully in the hands of the elites.

A significant evolution of views on the EU actually took place: In the Czech Republic the level of highest confidence in the UE has culminated in the year of 1999 with 62 % of support and stayed practically unchanged for the following years. A significant decrease has occurred with the onset of the crisis (2008) bringing the support level slightly below 40 %. Further descent occurred in 2016 to the level of 29 %. There are several reasons for this decline; however it has certainly shown that citizen's expectations regarding the positive benefits of the EU accession failed to materialize. The vision of some EU leaders; that the threat of withdrawal of financial transfers would change the civic opinion, only testified to their ignorance of CEE (Czech Republic) reality. This tool can have an impact on those who enjoy the real benefits from these transfers, but if the majority of citizens do not feel that this financial stream is reaching them in one way or another and on the contrary benefits only the few (with all stories of alleged and proven corruption, suspicious financial transactions etc.) then they are willing to forego these transfers.

There is a growing indication that the long-term misunderstanding of significant substantive differences in the political development of the East and West, as well within content and direction has not received a reflection in the formulation of the European radical left-wing politics and in their implementations. This currently results in the tragic weakening of the Left in the East and the inability of their Western colleagues to effectively assist in overcoming this weakness (in contrast to other political forces - the right-wing, liberal, etc., who enjoy strong and stable positions in the East and whom have had long lasting support from the West). The existing all-European leftist concept with small exceptions do not take these deepening rift effects into consideration, not speaking about the strive to overcome it.

¹ The consensus (as originally stated by J. Williamson -1989, as a "standard" reform package promoted for crisis-wracked developing countries) included ten broad sets of relatively specific policy recommendations:

Fiscal policy discipline, with avoidance of large fiscal deficits relative to GDP;

Redirection of public spending from subsidies ("especially indiscriminate subsidies") toward broad-based provision of key pro-growth, pro-poor services like primary education, primary health care and infrastructure investment;

Tax reform, broadening the tax base and adopting moderate marginal tax rates;

Interest rates that are market determined and positive (but moderate) in real terms;

Competitive exchange rates;

Trade liberalization: liberalization of imports, with particular emphasis on elimination of quantitative restrictions (licensing, etc.); any trade protection to be provided by low and relatively uniform tariffs;

Liberalization of inward foreign direct investment;

Privatization of state enterprises;

Deregulation: abolition of regulations that impede market entry or restrict competition, except for those justified on safety, environmental and consumer protection grounds, and prudential oversight of financial institutions;

Legal security for property rights

Freire, André

The fall of the Berlin Wall 26 years later: the state of the left in Portugal, 2015-2016

Introduction

The global and economic crisis has had potentially disturbing consequences for democratic political systems, especially in Southern Europe, an area characterized by growing electoral volatility, significant party system change, the emergence of new political parties, the mobilisation of new social movements, increasing governmental instability and a decrease in satisfaction towards democracy (Bermeo and Bartels, 2014; Freire et al. 2015; Matthijs, 2014; Freire, Lisi and Viegas, 2015; Freire and Lisi, 2016b).

While these challenges have led to a deep crisis for social-democratic parties, the effect of economic turmoil on radical left parties (RLPs)³⁷ is still unclear. First, this is because this international crisis and the European sovereign debt crisis have revealed the failure of neoliberal ideas and policies (the Washington consensus, hyper globalisation, the huge reduction of state functions, deregulation of financial and other markets, etc.), as well as the institutional problems with EU economic and monetary integration (Blyth, 2012; Rodrik, 2012). Second, it is because the Socialist / Social-democrat party family, specifically in the EU, has converged with many of these orientations and policies, contrary to RLPs that have always fought them. Third, the implementation of the austerity packages in different countries, but especially in Greece and Portugal, has had devastating socioeconomic (rising unemployment and economic decline), financial (rising public debt ratio vis-à-vis the GDP) and political (governments more or less obliged to violate their electoral commitments, parties governing against their genetic code in terms of policy orientations) consequences. Fourth, this context has revealed the difficulty of changing the EU status quo through democratic means (Alonso, 2014), and thus has revealed the need for radical democratic change in Europe, a topic that has always been in the front line of RLPs' proposals. Fifth, although in Greece the radical left Syriza has benefited much from this set of conditions and in Spain *Podemos* seems to be benefiting as well, in many countries it is more the radical right than the radical left that has benefited from the crisis (Bermeo and Bartels, 2014). Still in other countries, like Portugal, neither the radical left nor the radical right seems to be benefiting much of the crisis at the electoral level (Freire, 2014 and 2016; Freire et al. 2015; Freire, Lisi and Viegas, 2015; Freire and Lisi, 2016b). However, and this is our sixth consideration, specifically concerning the Portuguese case: if a new politics of alliances between the radical left and the centre-left can be put forward, as is the case with the XXI constitutional government in Portugal (a minority socialist government, by PS – Portuguese Socialist Party -, supported by parliamentary agreements with the radical left BE – Left Bloc -, PCP – Portuguese Communist Party -, and PEV – The Greens), then the balance of power can begin to change the neoliberal status quo. This may especially be the case if this new politics of alliances is adopted in other EU countries and, thus, the likelihood of changing the EU status quo is also increased.

From this context we derive our three research questions. First, what are the major impacts at the ideological and electoral level of the crisis upon the radical left in Portugal? Second,

³⁷ See Luke March (2008 and 2011) for a definition of the radical left (see also March and Freire, 2012, 27).

have RLPs benefited from the crisis, namely at the level of the (hegemony of the) narrative and/or at the electoral level? Finally, what are the reasons behind those changes and/or benefits (or the lack of them)? To answer them, this Part of the chapter is structured as follows. In the following section we examine how the crisis has influenced the ideological and programmatic adaptation of RLPs in Portugal. The third section analyses the changes (or lack thereof) in RLPs' strategies in terms of coalition politics. In the fourth section we describe the process of government formation after the October 4, 2015, national elections and the fundamental measures agreed between left-wing parties to assure parliamentary support from the radical left (BE and PCP and PEV) to the centre-left PS government (the XXI constitutional government). The paper ends with some concluding remarks and discusses the main challenge that RLPs in Portugal have to face in the foreseeable future.

The Great Recession and Ideological Change among the Portuguese Radical Left

The emergence of the economic crisis has strengthened three main problems that have characterized the experience of the radical left in Portugal over the democratic period. The first is the high level of fragmentation within the left spectrum, which contrasts the stability and simplicity of the supply on the right camp. The second is the lack of cooperation between left-wing parties until the end of 2015 (following the October 4, 2015, national elections and the more or less surprising cooperation among the left parties for the formation of the XXI Constitutional government), while the third is related to the great divide between PS and the radical left until the end of 2015.

Portuguese democratisation led to the marginalisation of PCP³⁸ with regard to the main government parties (PS, PSD and CDS)³⁹ and the formation of several extreme-left groups, which have almost always remained excluded from parliamentary representation (the former Maoist UDP was one exception, until 1987, although with only one seat in some legislatures). Therefore, PCP has played the role of an "anti-system" party, while PS has adopted moderate positions, especially with regard to socio-economic issues (Bosco, 2001). The distance between the communists and socialists was based mainly on their attitude towards democracy, the EU, and the legacy of the Carnation Revolution, in particular with respect to the nationalisation of big private companies, estates and banks. Despite the erosion of PCP's electoral and parliamentary support (see below: Figure 4.1), the communists have been able to resist competition from the extra-parliamentary left and to be the main institutional alternative to the left of PS.

Notwithstanding some attempts to revise and moderate communists' ideological orientations before and after the collapse of the Soviet Union, PCP is still one of the most orthodox communist parties in Western Europe, fitting the "extreme-left" (March, 2008) or "conservative communist" categories (see also Keith and Charalambous, 2016). The institutional predominance of PCP within the radical left was challenged in 1999 when BE was able to elect

38 Portuguese Communist Party (PCP) / Ecologist Party «The Greens» (PEV) together in the pre electoral coalition Democratic Unitarian Coalition (PCP and PEV: CDU), extreme left, 'conservative communist' or 'orthodox communist', depending on their designations. It is a member of the GUE/NGL in the EP.

39 Socialist Party, centre left, member of the Socialist and Democrat group in the European Parliament (EP). Social Democratic Party, centre right, member of the European Popular Party (EPP) in the European Parliament. Social and Democratic Centre-Popular Party, conservative, right, member of the European People's Party (PPE) in the European Parliament.

representatives into Parliament for the first time⁴⁰. BE was the merging of two RLPs (PSR, UDP) and one political movement (*Política XXI*). Despite their strong anti-capitalist positions, BE differed from PCP with regard to two main issues: on the one hand, it aimed to reform democracy by enhancing participatory channels but accepting the main liberal institutions; on the other, it showed a very critical view of the USSR and defended a new transnationalism based on the proposals of socio-political movements for an alternative globalisation. In 2007 party leadership sought to de-radicalize some economic policy proposals by re-launching as an “ecosocialist” party. The ecology issue was now tackled through a global perspective in domestic terms – energy policies related to public service, citizens’ rights and sustainable development – as well as in its international dimension, especially reducing unfair trade and promoting an increasing convergence between North and South.

The 2005 elections marked the beginning of a new period of socialist majorities (2005-2011), during which both RLPs oppose most of the reforms implemented by PS, especially with regard to welfare policies. Yet the distance between PCP and BE remained significant on the issue of EU integration. The communists continued to present an ideological Euroscepticism, with very clear nationalist tones and a very negative evaluation of the effects of European integration (Lobo, 2007). By contrast, BE aimed to reform Europe by strengthening supranational policies and proposing an alternative left-wing internationalist cooperation to change the process of European integration (March and Freire, 2012). This position was due mainly to the 'right-wing' faction within BE led by Miguel Portas, one of BE's founders and the first MEP of the party elected in the 2004 European elections.

Following the 2009 elections, PS formed a minority government after the failure to find a compromise with other parties. With the worsening of the economic and financial situation, the socialist government was forced by EU institutions to implement austerity measures through the adoption of several Stability and Growth Programmes (PEC — *Programa de Estabilidade e Crescimento*). Three PECs were adopted during 2009 and 2010, all approved with the support of PSD, whereas both radical left forces rejected them. The response of EU partners and institutions led to an increasing convergence among the radical left, harshening their criticism towards the process of European integration.

Following the defeat of PEC IV and the prime minister’s resignation (23 March 2011), the upward pressure on Portuguese debt interest rates became even greater, forcing the government to request external assistance. Despite the memorandum between the government and the Troika having been signed at the beginning of May 2011, in reality it was negotiated and agreed by PS, PSD and CDS-PP. The parties of the radical left not only opposed the agreement: they actually refused to meet the Troika. The agreement has a strongly neo-liberal flavour: a wide-ranging programme of privatisations, ostensibly to pay the debt and to promote competition in monopolistic sectors; the extensive and profound deregulation of the labour market, allegedly to promote economic competitiveness by increasing labour flexibility and reducing labour costs; reducing the size of the state through pay freezes (salaries and pensions) and a moderate and phased reduction in the number of public sector employees. However, the programme also called for the rationalisation of the state (reduction in the number of local authorities and balancing the deficits in public companies; reform of the

40 In 2000 the FER (Revolutionary Left Front) joined the party and became the fourth ‘organized’ component within the party. BE is a member of the Confederal Group of the European United Left/Nordic Green Left (GUE/NGL) in the EP.

pension system; renegotiation of public-private partnerships [PPP]) and for a reduction in the cost of red tape to companies (streamlining the justice system; reducing excess costs in utilities, etc.). Finally, it called for the recapitalisation of the banks, not only in order to comply with the new capital ratios demanded by the European Union (EU) in the aftermath of the 2008 crisis and its aftershocks, but also in order to make credit available again to businesses. (For an overview, see Freire, 2016a.)

What are the consequences of the Great Recession, the bailout and the enforcement of the MoU for the ideological positioning of the Portuguese radical left? According to the electoral manifesto for the 2011 national and for 2014 European elections, as well as the new program and statutes approved in the XIX Congress and the Electoral Manifesto for 2015 (see the ideological orientations of the left parties, 2011-2015, in their respective party manifestos: BE, 2011-2015; PCP, 2011-2015; PS, 2011-2015), five major elements underline a further radicalisation of the Portuguese extreme left (PCP). First, because all the previous 35-40 years of democracy, associated with the rule of PS, PSD and CDS-PP, are all characterized by the predominance of right-wing policies and also by being behind the current crisis. Second, because there is an increasing sense of nostalgia with the times of real socialism under USSR influence, even if serious problems of functioning are acknowledged. Third, because the PCP's Euroscepticism, with a strong nationalist tone (see Freire and Lisi, 2016a), has not only increased but the communists are now asking for "the dissolution of the European Economic and Monetary Union", which means the end of the Euro or, at least, implies Portugal's exit from the Euro. Fourth, there is a defence of extensive re-nationalisation of strategic sectors of the economy (banks, utilities, etc.). Fifth, the Communists defend the renegotiation of public debt (in terms of volume, interest rates and maturities). It is also worth underlining that the party supports a diversification of financing of the country's public (and private) expenses, both at the domestic and international levels. Additionally, the fight for equality and for fairer distribution of income between capital and labour, with a strong and progressive fiscal policy as well as with an anchoring on social rights, still lies at the core of PCP's ideological orientations.

Concerning BE («radical left»), the situation is the following. Except for some issues (e.g. contrary to PCP, BE does not show any nostalgia for the USSR era, and does not defend the collapse of the EU process of Economic and Monetary Integration; moreover, the party does not defend extensive re-nationalisation of strategic sectors of the economy), BE's policy orientation in the times of the Great Recession are not that different from those of PCP (see BE, 2011-2015b). First, like PCP, the party also rejected the Troika bailout, and proposes a renegotiation of Portuguese public debt (in terms of volume, interest rates and maturities) following an audit process. Moreover, as in the case of PCP, the need of an alliance of peripheral EU countries, especially those most affected by the debt crisis, to fight the EU's neoliberal approach to it ("expansive austerity"), is very much emphasized. Additionally, like PCP, BE also argues for greater fairness in the distribution of income between capital and labour, anchored in a strong role of the state and public sectors in society and the economy, and in strengthening public investment and social rights.

The major ideological difference between BE and PCP, besides the two issues already mentioned, is in terms of attitude and policy orientation of BE vis-à-vis Europe. Thus, although the party presents a radical critique of EU integration, BE supports an alternative left-wing and progressive vision for Europe, not anchored to nationalism (like PCP). Namely, besides the alliances between peripheral EU countries to fight austerity policies, the party proposes

an EU that is more focused on growth and employment, an increase in the EU budget, common management of European debt, the creation of Eurobonds and a European rating agency, the exclusion of public investment from the calculations of the public deficit, a tax on capital transactions, and a strategy to ban the off-shores within the EU in order to better fight tax evasion.

The evolution of the national economic conditions and of the Greek crisis during 2015 has led to an increasing convergence of the BE and the PCP in terms of criticism towards EU integration. The 2015 general elections have shown that the difference between PCP and BE with regard to European integration is now perhaps more a matter of degree rather than substance. Both parties maintain that the EU has been detrimental to Portuguese development and the country's interests. According to PCP, the European Union is experiencing a deep social and economic crisis, which stemmed from the crisis of capitalism, leading to a growing impoverishment of European countries to the benefit of big business (banks, multinational industries, financial markets). On the other hand, BE claims that the main failure of the European Union is the lack of convergence among European countries, while national egoisms and an unbridled competition have led to a general decrease in salaries and people's living conditions. Both PCP and BE rejected the further loss of national sovereignty and the need to recover important instruments of economic, financial and social policies. Both parties consider supranational decision-making processes in a negative way, not only because they foster the dominance of foreign capitals and the transfer of national resources outside the country, but also because supranational actors have progressively emptied the social and economic rights protected by the Portuguese constitution. It is worth noting that the EU's crisis management policy has strengthened the euro-scepticism of BE, fostering internal divergences, especially compared to the cohesion of the communists (Hooghe et al., 2010). However, PCP's harsher criticism with regard to the EU is visible in the defence of a planned exit from the European Union, while BE emphasizes the need for debt restructuring but without taking the hypothesis of an "exit" option seriously. All in all, the diagnosis of the crisis for both RLPs is very similar, although they slightly differ as far as the solution is concerned.

The Difficult Road to Cooperation: Strategic Responses of Portuguese RLPs

Until the end of 2015, after the October 4 national elections and the formation of the XXI constitutional government (27-11-2015), Portugal was one of the few West European countries where the RLPs had not been included in left-left governments (either as members of a coalition and/or as parliamentary support parties for centre-left governments) since the fall of the Berlin Wall (March, 2008, 2011; Bale and Dunphy 2011; March and Freire 2012; Freire, 2017). Before 1989 the Portuguese case was much in line with most West European countries, and the only exceptions with left-left (or rainbow) governments were Iceland, Finland and France. Besides the geopolitical reasons, similar to the ones in other countries, other factors contributed to explaining the lack of institutional integration of PCP (see March and Freire, 2012, Part II, for further details and sources): first, the legacy of the proto-hegemonic impulse during the democratic transition, which created a significant level of mistrust of PS vis-à-vis PCP; second, democratic centralism and the ability to control internal dissent; third, the ideological centrism of PS and its pivotal role in the party system, which allowed the party access to government positions through distinct formulas (single-party, coalition or minor-

ity governments); third, some maximalist demands for inter-party government cooperation from PCP, which meant that PCP was open to cooperate but only if the communists could be the hegemonic force in the deal; fourth, PCP belong to the subgroup of the more orthodox communist parties in Western Europe, which means that it is also pretty well aligned with the USSR (contrary to the Eurocommunists); fifth, the relative electoral and organization strength of PCP, when compared with PS, was much higher than since 1987-1989 and that did not help an agreement because at that time PS was more afraid to ally with such a strong entity.

According to the typology of RLPs (March, 2008 and 2011; March and Freire, 2012; Freire, 2017), the 'radical left' BE was expected to show more willingness to cooperate with the socialists than the 'extreme left' PCP. Yet, neither PCP nor BE have been able to establish any form of collaboration with PS nor to create new government solutions, neither before nor during the current crisis. Besides the ideological and policy divergences, the legacy of democratisation, incapacity to achieve a compromise at the elite level and strategic considerations are also important factors that account for the lack of understanding. Other salient factors are worthy of mention. There was no relevant pressure for cooperation between centre-left and the radical left from the unions front, like in other countries (Bale & Dunphy, 2011 and 2012; Dunphy & Bale, 2011), because Portugal has two major union confederations, one more closely allied with the radical left, the largest and stronger one (CGTP-IN), and another one that is a permanent centre-left (PS) and centre-right (PSD) coalition in the social arena (UGT). Neither did the almost complete lack of left – left coalitions at the local or regional levels (only Lisbon, 1989-2001 and 2007-present date; and Funchal, 2013-present date) help to boost this type of agreement at the national level. Finally, the lack of true willingness to compromise from the part of the three parties' leadership, until the end of 2015, was also a relevant chapter of the story of the inexistent centre-left – radical left agreements for government until late 2015.

How has the economic crisis influenced the patterns of cooperation between left-wing parties? We start our analysis by looking at the overall ideological placement of parties in the left-right continuum before and after the crisis. According to MP surveys conducted in 2008 and 2012-2013, there is a clear move of right-wing parties (PSD and CDS-PP) further to the right, while left-wing parties (PS, BE and PCP) moved further to the left (Freire, Tsatsanis and Lima, 2016; Freire, Lisi and Lima, 2015). Thus, the system is now more polarized than ever, but this has occurred only at the elite level, not at the citizens' level. This means that after the crisis (2012-2013) policy incongruence between the parliamentary elites and the voters is higher than before (2008). Additionally, on the left this mismatch between elites and voters is larger for RLPs than for PS, i.e. the latter is more in tune with its electorate than BE and/or PCP (Freire, Tsatsanis and Lima, 2016; Freire, Lisi and Lima 2015; for previous periods but with data pinpointing in the same direction, see March and Freire 2012, Part II). Additionally, a recent study found that although PS' MPs are now closer to radical left MPs, both in terms of left-right self-placement and fundamental policy preferences, the truth is that on average the legislative behaviour of PS in Parliament, 2011-2014 (as before, 2005-2011), was much closer to the right than to the legislative behaviour of RLPs (Freire, Lisi and Lima, 2015). The overall picture is the same when we consider substantial policy issues. Moreover, the campaign for the 2015 general elections showed that there are still significant divergences between PS and the radical left with regard to crucial policies such as debt renegotiation, re-nationalisation of strategic sectors and the reform of the EU. These findings were

confirmed when we observed party behaviour at the institutional/parliamentary level (see De Giorgi et al., 2015).

In any case, the absence of left-left government solutions in Portugal created an enormous mismatch between the voters (clearly in favour of agreements) and the parties/the political elites (much more sceptical about it), similar to the one we found for ideological orientations. The results presented in Table 4.1 show that a majority of PCP and BE voters and a large plurality of PS voters are overwhelmingly in favour of left-left governments. Moreover, these results are similar to the ones found for 2009 (March and Freire 2012, Part II) and 2012 (Freire, Lisi and Lima, 2015). And the new Portuguese red-green party, *Partido Livre* (Free Party)⁴¹, was trying to fill precisely this gap by putting a great effort on agreements between all left-wing parties in Portugal (Livre, 2013; Livre – Tempo de Avançar, 2015; see also Freire and Lisi, 2016a).

Table 4.1 -Portuguese attitudes towards a left-wing government, 2014, by party sympathy – % of each group total

‘Imagine that tomorrow Legislative Elections would be held and that PS would win without absolute majority. Which one of the following options would you consider to be better for the country (choose only one option)? It would be better for the country that PS would...’

	CDU/PCP	BE	PS	PSD	CDS-PP
Rule in minority	11.1	12.8	21.1	19.3	11.9
Coalesce with the radical left	69.1	66.7	41.8	7.5	7.2
Coalesce with the right	2.5	5.2	21.6	54.1	57.2
Coalesce with all the parties	17.3	15.4	15.4	19.3	23.8
N	81	39	227	161	42

Source: Data elaborated by the author based on a survey of a representative sample of the adult Portuguese population living in the mainland, N = 1205, fielded between June and October 2014 (see Belchior, Silva and Queiroga, 2014).

⁴¹ This is a radical left party formed in 2014 by ex-BE MEP Rui Tavares, running for the first time at the 2014 European Elections and obtaining 2.2 percent of the vote. Like BE, it can be considered a left libertarian party and it is member of Green Party Family at the EU level.

Table 4.2 - Elections to the Portuguese National Parliament, 2015, 2011, and 2009

Parties	2015			2011			2009		
	Seats		Votes	Seats		Votes	Seats		Votes
	N	%	%	N	%	%	N	%	%
PàF	107	46.5	38.56	-	-	50.4	-	-	39.5
PSD	89	39.0	32.0	108	46.9	38.7	81	35.2	29.1
PS	86	37.4	32.3	74	32.2	28.1	97	42.2	36.6
BE	19	8.3	10.2	8	3.5	5.2	16	6.9	9.8
CDS-PP	18	7.8	6.56	24	10.4	11.7	21	9.1	10.4
PCP/PEV	17	7.4	8.25	16	6.9	7.9	15	6.5	7.7
PAN	1	0.43	1.39	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	0	0.0	5.16	0	0.0	4.4	0	0.0	3.1
Invalid and blank votes			4.14	-	-	4.0	-	-	3.1
Total	230	100	100	-	-	100	230	100	100
Turnout			56.1			58.0	-	-	60.5

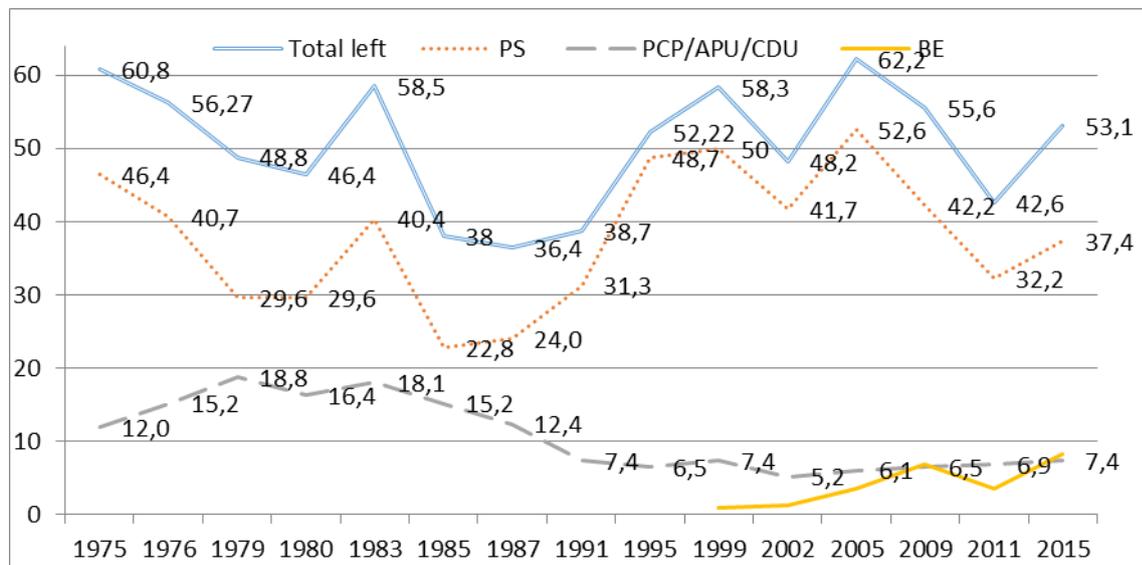
Sources: data elaborated by the author from the official results published in www.cne.pt

Notes: 1st) In Portuguese elections invalid and blank votes are counted as a percentage of the total vote;

2nd) PàF – Pre-electoral coalition between PSD and CDS-PP (except in Madeira, where they ran separately: votes are summed anyway); 3rd) PàF total votes (38.56) were disaggregated using the proportion of the coalition's seats (107) each party has (PSD: 0.83; CDS-PP: 0.17) as a multiplier. PàF, i.e. PSD and CDS-PP only ran together in 2015, but for the sake of comparing the electoral strength of the right across elections we also calculate it for 2011 and 2009. PàF reads as «*Portugal à Frente*» which means «Portugal ahead».

However, the situation in Portugal changed significantly with the results of the October 4, 2015, national elections (see Table 4.2), and especially with the subsequent formation of the XXI constitutional government. According to the results of these elections, the right-wing parties (PSD and CDS-PP), which ran in a pre-electoral coalition (PàF) and won the election with a plurality, had the following results: 38.56% of the vote and 46.5% of the seats (a bonus in the vote-seat transformation due to the pre-electoral coalition and the operation of the electoral system). PS was the second party in electoral and parliamentary strength: 32.3% of the votes and 37.4% of the seats. However, the totals for the left (BE, PCP-PEV, PS) summed up absolute majorities at both the electoral and the parliamentary levels: 50.75% of the votes and 53.1% seats.

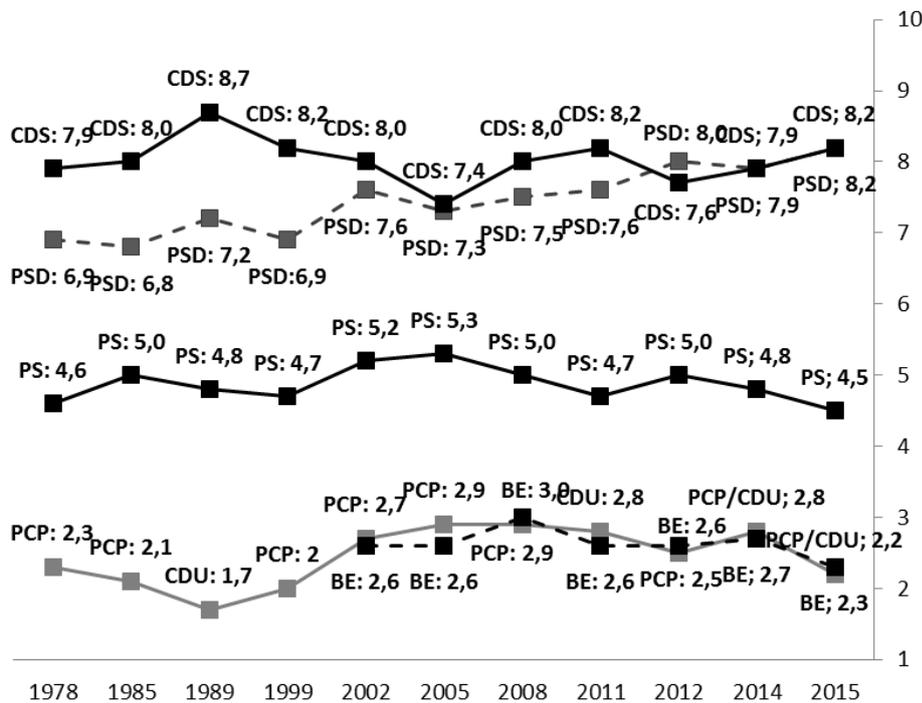
Figure 4.1: National Parliamentary Performance of Left Parties – Legislative Elections, 1975-2015



Sources: data elaborated by the author (2015) and taken from March and Freire (2012, p. 204) – 1975-2011-, always bearing on the official results published by CNE (National Electoral Commission): see www.cne.pt

As we mentioned before, according to several mass surveys in the past there was already wide voter support for left-wing coalitions / parliamentary agreements, especially among left-wing voters (from BE, PCP-PEV and, to a lower extent, from PS), at least since 2009 (March and Freire, 2012, Part II); again revealed in mass surveys fielded at the end of 2012 (Freire, Lisi and Lima, 2015), mid-2014, and mid-2015 (Freire and Lisi, 2016a, Freire, 2017). What lacked before was party elite support for that kind of governmental solution because, as the reader can see in Figure 4.1, in 1975, 1976, 1983, 1985, 1995, 1999, and again in 2009 there were left-left majorities in Parliament matched with a PS plurality of seats but no left-left agreement for government.

Figure 4.2 – Portuguese Political Parties' Left-Right Position (from 1, left, to 10, right) according to voters' perceptions of parties' ideological locations (based on representative mass surveys), 1978-2015



Source: 1978–2008 data elaborated by the author from Freire (2010) following different sources: Bacalhau, 1994; 2011 & 2015: *Portuguese National Election Study* (2011 and 2015); 2012: Freire, Viegas and Lisi (2012); 2009 & 2014: *European Election Study (EES) 2009 and 2014*.

Thus, the new PS minority government (i.e. the XXI constitutional government) supported by the radical left parties, BE and PCP & PEV (three separate agreements), is an absolute novelty in Portuguese politics: a kind of fall of the Berlin Wall in Portugal 26 years later. Here some clarification about what is meant by the expression «the fall of the Berlin Wall in Portugal 26 years later» is due. In a piece written in 2008 for the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, Luke March (2008: 13) considered that fall of the Berlin Wall brought major changes for center-left – radical left governmental cooperation in Western Europe «the biggest change in far left strategy since the Cold War is in its attitude to government participation. Whereas between 1947 and 1989 only the Finnish Communist Party was a regular participant in government – more than the remainder of the West European far left combined – since 1989 there has been no example of a left party in advanced liberal democracy that has turned down a realistic offer to join a government coalition». In fact, during the period of the Cold War (1947-1989), only in three countries (Finland, France and Iceland) there have been Governments (a total of 11 governance solutions at about 37 years) with the participation of parties of the extreme left (mainly Communists) or radical left (left Socialists, etc..), be they leftist Governments of «the plural left» type or Rainbow coalitions (Freire, 2017: Part II, for the relevant data). On the contrary, after the end of the cold war (1989-2015) in twelve countries (Cyprus, Denmark, Spain, Finland, France, Greece, Ireland, Iceland, Italy, Norway and Sweden) there have been Governments (a set of 26 governance solutions at about 26 years) with the participation of the radical left parties (Communist, left-wing socialists renovators, green

alliances-red, green, etc.). Therefore, in this area the effects of double fall (of the Berlin Wall, 1989, and of the USSR, 1991) could not be more clear and illustrate what Luke March calls 'the passage of the "parties of the extrema left" and the «parties of the radical left» from Marxism and/or marginality to mainstream. Portugal was, however, the latecomer in this second group, because the alliance only occurred 26 years after the Fall of the Berlin Wall.

After the parenthesis for the clarification of the expression that it is used to name the present chapter, we pass to government formation. Namely, following the rejection of the right-wing minority coalition government, the XX constitutional government in Parliament which lasted 11 days, the Portuguese President was more or less 'obliged' to nominate the prime-minister and the party that, despite having come second in the October 4 elections, was to receive wider support in Parliament: the XXI Portuguese government, nominated around fifty days after the elections. Thus, this is an event of major significance: as it was said, it represents a kind of fall of the Berlin Wall in Portugal, 26 years later vis-à-vis what happened in Berlin in 1989. The question is why only now? We believe that there are seven major factors that should be considered as explanatory.

Table 4.3: Left-Right (L-R) ideological distances between pairs of parties in Portugal, 1978-2015

	Mass surveys' date for measuring L-R parties location					
Distances between Parties	1978	1989	2002	2012	2014	2015
PS – CDS	-3,3	-3,9	-2,8	-2,7	-3,1	-3,7
PS – PSD	-2,3	-2,4	-2,4	-3	-3,1	-3,7
PCP – PS	-2,5	-3,1	-2,5	-2,5	-2	-2,3
BE – PS			-2,6	-2,4	-2,1	-2,2

Sources: data computed by the author based on the L-R parties' averages presented in Figure 4.2 above; please consult the sources there.

First, there was a significant move to the right made by the right-wing parties during the Troika years, especially between 2011-2012, which made agreements between the centre-left and the centre-right less likely (see Freire, Tsatsanis and Lima, 2016; Freire, 2017). More recent data, based on citizens' perceptions of Portuguese parties' locations in the left-right scale (1, left, to 10, right; or eleventh point scales, 0-10, but converted in ten point scales, 1-10), between 1978 (data from Bacalhau, 1994) and 2015 (data from Lobo and Magalhães, 2015; Portuguese National Election Study/PNES 2015), among several other sources (see Figure 4.1), confirms a significant move of PSD to the right at least since 2012. In 2012, with a score of 8,0 PSD not only reached its position furthest to the right in the democratic period, it also surpassed CDS-PP (usually the most conservative party of the system) to the right-wing, and remained overlapping with CDS-PP in both mid-2014 (data from the *European Election Study*, 2014) and by the end of 2015 (data from PNES, 2015: post electoral survey),

with scores of 7,9 and 8,2, respectively. Thus, according to the Portuguese voters' perceptions of parties' left-right locations there was a clear move of PSD to the right, moving the party further apart from the median voter (about the mean and median left-right locations of Portuguese voters – and party elites - across time, see Freire and Belchior, 2013; Freire, Lisi and Lima, 2015; and Freire, Tsatsanis and Lima, 2016). Additionally, both PS and the two RLPs moved further to the left in this period (see Figure 4.1).

Thus, centre-left and centre-right in Portugal are now (2012-2015) further apart than ever, at least in left-right ideological terms. Moreover, using the same data we computed the left-right distances in average placement of pairs of parties: PS versus CDS & PSD; and PS versus BE & PCP (see Table 4.3). The data shows that between 1978 and 2002 PS was closer to PSD than to each one of the two RLPs; the opposite is true since 2012, i.e. PS is now closer to each one of the two RLPs, in pure left-right terms, than to PSD. These moves and distances clearly illustrate the greater difficulties in reaching a 'grand coalition' (PS-PSD) in Portugal since the Troika years, and the less difficult situation in this respect in the left quadrant. Of course, pure left-right divides do not exhaust the relevant ideological gaps between the parties in Portugal: for example, on European issues, the gap is perhaps higher between PS and the RLPs than between PS and PSD. Moreover, some might ask: but is the left-right divide in Portugal also related with parties' and voters' substantive policy orientations? We know that this is indeed the case, although much more strongly for parties than for voters (Freire, 2004, 2006, 2015a; Benoit and Laver, 2006; Budge et al, 2002; Kligemann et al, 2006; Freire and Belchior, 2013); furthermore, we know that left-right self-placement is clearly and strongly related with Portuguese citizens' electoral behavior/voting choices.

Second, there was the harshness and the asymmetry of the austerity measures, and on top of all that, we had an austerity led by the right-wing parties (PSD and CDS-PP) that went far beyond the Troika requirements and the political mandate received from the voters in 2011 (much higher cuts in salaries, cuts in pensions, cuts in public employment, cuts in the welfare state, and much more extensive privatizations) (see Freire, Lisi, and Viegas, 2015). Indeed, the policy outputs do show that there was a very high level of asymmetry in the enforcement of austerity measures (see Freire, 2016a: 180): «At the end result of this asymmetrical austerity, according to data from the European Commission cited by Abreu et al. (2013: 74), the share of wages in gross domestic product (GDP) has fallen from 58.4% in 2010 to 55.6% in 2012, and was forecast to fall to 54.1% in 2014. Recent data from the National

Statistics Institute (INE) show that between 2011 and 2013, while there has been a reduction in inequality as a consequence of the slight reduction in the Gini index (the result of the squeeze on middle-class salaries, particularly those of public sector employees and pensioners), the disparities between the rich and the poor have greatly increased, as have levels of poverty and of 'severe material deprivation' (Bancalheiro and Aníbal 2014). It also showed that Portugal was the EU country that made the most cuts to social programmes during the period being examined (Suspiro 2014). Additionally, very recent EU data published in the Portuguese press at the beginning of 2016 showed the following: the share of Portuguese wages in the country's GDP has fallen from 58.4% in 2010 to 55.6% in 2012, and to 51.9% in 2015; and in 2015 Portugal was the sixth worst country in the Eurozone in this respect: moreover, during the Troika's intervention, Portugal reached the worst wages to GDP ratio since the 1960s (Aníbal 2016).»

Third, there were the strong incentives of the PS party leader to stay in power: António Costa, the leader of PS, knew very well that either he was to become prime-minister of a centre-left with the radical left government or, it was for the PS to support a right-wing government (the plurality winners in 2015): another PS top official would be better suited than Costa for that role.

Fourth, the Portuguese President (in the Portuguese semi presidential system) cannot dissolve the Parliament in the six months before new presidential elections (January 2016) and in the six months of new parliament (i.e. until April 2016).

Fifth, this left-left governmental solution was a way to put the party elites' willingness to support such a solution (limited until now) in tune with the voters' preferences on the left vis-à-vis this type of solution (widespread since a while ago) (recall Table 4.1 above).

Sixth, the perception among PS leadership of a serious risk of electoral collapse due to alliances with the right-wing parties (like the Greek example of PASOK showed in the 2012 and 2015 elections in Greece) and/or due to excessive ideological centrism (as has been happening with several socialist /social democratic parties in Europe: for the example, the French PSF, the British *Labour*, the Hungarian MSZP or, more recently, the Spanish PSOE) might have also contributed to the choice of this type of alliance instead of supporting a right-wing (PSD and CDS-PP) government.

During the cold war, and especially after the proto-hegemonic drive of the communists during the democratic transition ('Verão Quente'), a deep mistrust of the socialist leadership vis-à-vis agreements with PCP was raised. This element, however, might have had a generational component, that more or less 'traumatized' the historic PS leaders, i.e. those who had experienced the turbulent times of the democratic transition, and the tough fights between PS and PCP. However, a new and fairly leftist generation (Ana Catarina Mendes, Pedro Nuno Santos, João Galamba, Pedro Delgado Alves, Duarte Cordeiro, etc.) behind the current leader of the party, António Costa, did not experience those days, and the lack of that 'genetic trauma' might have helped the psychological conditions to arrive at such an agreement.⁴² This is the seventh explanatory factor put forward here.

The process of government formation and the flagship measures of the new centre-left and radical left political solution

The XXI Constitutional government in Portugal, a PS/centre-left minority government supported in Parliament by the radical left (BE, PCP and PEV) is a complete novelty in Portuguese politics for three major reasons. First, as we mentioned before, in terms of government profile and patterns of cooperation on the left: as can be seen in Tables 4.4 and 4.5, no constitutional government in the Portuguese democracy had had such a profile until late 2015, and that is one of the reasons why we referred to it in terms of the fall of the Berlin Wall 26 years later. If it proves stable and able to deliver, vis-à-vis the usually adverse EU (neoliberal EU integration) and global (neoliberal globalization) environment, this new political solution (37.4 of the seats for PS; 53.1 of the seats for this whole post-electoral left front) has the potential to open up a new chapter in Portuguese politics, a new era of greater in-

⁴² This argument was put forward in a public debate I had with members of PS, in a session associated with their XXI national congress (3 to 5, June, 2016), by the Socialist MP Isabel Moreira, whom I would like to thank for the idea.

clusiveness (including also in the government decision-making process the radical left voters and the radical left political elites) and more responsibility (the radical left will be asked to deliver in often adverse socioeconomic and political circumstances, and severe EU constraints) (see Costa, 2015 and 2016).

Table 4.4 - Portuguese cabinets, 1976-1985*

Prime Minister and governing period	Composition	Partisan support (per cent of MPs)	Duration** (months)	Reason for Termination
Soares I (1976-77)	PS	40.7	17	Rejected motion of confidence
Soares II 1978	PS, CDS	56.7	6	Dismissal by president
Nobre da Costa 1978	Non-partisan (President's initiative)	---	1	Rejection of Go. Programme
Mota Pinto 7(1978-79)	Non-partisan (ditto)	--	7	Rejection of prime minister
Pintassilgo 1979	Non-partisan (ditto)	--	5	Elections
Sá Carneiro (1980)	PSD, CDS, PPM	51.2	11	Elections after prime minister's death (***)
Balsemão I (1981) ^(a)	PSD, CDS, PPM	53.6	8 (28)	Resignation of prime minister
Balsemão II (1981-82) ^(b)	PSD, CDS, PPM	53.6	20 (28)	Resignation of prime minister, Elections
Soares III 1983-85	PS, PSD	70.4	24	Resignation of prime minister, Elections
Cavaco Silva I 1985-87	PSD	35.2	18	Approval of motion of censure

Source: adapted (and updated) by the author from Freire (2005: p. 22).

Notes: * Only the Constitutional period is considered; ** Normal parliamentary mandate: 48 months. (a) & (b) Balsemão I and II's governments have precisely the same partisan support, and no elections took place between them. In terms of cabinet durability, therefore, they are considered to be the same executive; this explains why it is here considered to have existed for 28 months. *** Freitas do Amaral, from CDS-PP, took the function of prime-minister after Sá Carneiro's death.

Table 4.5: Portuguese cabinets, 1987-2016*

Prime Minister and governing period	Composition	Partisan support (per cent of MPs)	Duration** (months)	Reason for termination
Cavaco Silva II (1987-91)	PSD	59.2	48	Elections
Cavaco Silva III (1991-95)	PSD	58.7	48	Elections
Guterres I (1995-99)	PS	48.7	48	Elections
Guterres II (1999-02)	PS	50.0	24	Resignation of prime minister
Barroso (2002- 04) ^(a)	PSD, CDS	51.8	27 (35)	Resignation of prime minister (appointed as president of the EU Commission)
Lopes (2004-05) ^(a)	PSD, CDS	51.8	8 (35)	President dismissed parliament and called for early elections
Sócrates (2005-09)	PS	52.6	54	Elections
Sócrates (2009-11)	PS	42.2	20	Prime minister resignation; president dismissed parliament and called for early elections
Passos Coelho (2011-15: mandate)	full PSD, CDS	57.3	51	Elections
António Costa (November 27, 2015 – present date)	Minority PS Government (with parliamentary support from radical left parties, BE, PCP +PEV)	37.4 (53.1)	-	

Source: adapted (and updated) by the author from Freire, 2005, p. 22, and 2016a, p. 177.

Notes: * Only the Constitutional period is considered; ** Normal parliamentary mandate: 48 months. (a) Barroso and Lopes have precisely the same partisan support, and no elections took place between them. In terms of cabinet durability, therefore, they are considered to be the same executive; this explains why it is here considered to have existed for 35 months.

The second major reason for the innovative character of the Portuguese XXI constitutional government is related to the process of government formation. Several elements are worth underlining here. On the one hand, although this is a familiar element in many democracies (especially of a non-majoritarian type: see Freire, 2007 and 2012a, for definitions about the majoritarian vs. consensual models of democracy, and the major patterns and trends concerning this typology in the Portuguese case, 1975-2009), it was the first time ever in Portugal that the winning party (in this case the centre-right liberal PSD, member of EPP, European Peoples Party, at the EU level) did not lead the government, and, moreover, is not even in the new cabinet. Another element worthy of mention here is related to the role of the Portuguese President in government formation. Portugal has a semi-presidential regime (i.e. a political system where a popularly elected President coexists with a prime-minister that is politically responsible before Parliament), and the President has some significant constitutional powers (the power to nominate the prime-minister, taking into account the electoral results for the national legislative elections, suspensive veto powers, power to ask the Constitutional Court for judicial review of laws and decree-laws, power to nominate several top officials in the armed forces and the judiciary, power to dismiss the cabinet, power to dissolve the Parliament and call for early legislative elections, etc.: see Neto and Lobo, 2009). However, especially since the 1982 constitutional revision, the cabinet is not politically responsible vis-à-vis the President, it is only politically responsible vis-à-vis the chamber; and that is why the President can only dismiss the cabinet if 'normal democratic institutional functioning' is at stake. Where the President has powers with fewer political restrictions is in matters concerning the dissolution of Parliament and the capacity to call for early legislative elections: he/she can do it almost without restrictions but for two exceptions, i.e. the President cannot dissolve Parliament in the first six months of Parliament's term; the President cannot dissolve Parliament in the last six months of the President's term.

Both conditions apply here, and that is why although the Portuguese President (former leader of the centre-right PSD, and supported by the two right wing parties, PSD and CDS-PP, in the 2006 and 2011 presidential elections) did not want to nominate PS and its leader, António Costa, supported by the radical left, in the end he was more or less 'obliged' to do so. The President expressed doubts about the post electoral 'left front' for two major reasons (because the radical left might call into question Portugal's international alignments, in the EU and NATO, and because the plurality winner party was PSD & CDS-PP list, and not PS), and that is why he first nominated the incumbent right-wing prime-minister to form the XX constitutional government (see Silva, 2015a and 2015b). However, the XX constitutional government, a minority coalition of the right wing parties (PSD and CDS-PP, both members of EPP at the EU level), could not survive in Parliament because its programme was rejected in 'the investiture' by both PS and the RLPs (see Cruz, 2015). Thus, in the end the President was forced to accept the post electoral 'left front' political solution (see Cruz, 2015, and Silva, 2015b). One further note is worth mentioning here. In fact, the President is right in at least one respect: both BE and especially PCP are Eurosceptic parties, and very critical of NATO (they both defend Portugal's withdrawal from the alliance); but what this new left-left agreement shows (and here the President seemed not to understand it) is that the smaller RLPs were now available to compromise on some priority issues (defending the welfare state, defending the rights of workers, halting privatization, recovering workers' income, etc.) and mute some other relevant differences between PS and the radical left (on Europe

and NATO, for example). Moreover, these remaining differences formed one major reason for the type of cabinet solution found: a minority PS government with support from the radical left and not a proper left – left coalition (see Luís and Garcia, 2015).

The third major reason for the innovative character of the XXI constitutional government is in terms of the policy orientation of PS, and the fundamental leaning of the political system due to this type of political solution: a 'policy contamination' of PS by the radical left. Although the Portuguese democratic transition back in 1974-1976 originally caused the political system to lean towards the left, after constitutional normalization (April 1976 and after), the system was leaning to the right due to coalition politics (Freire, 2011a and 2012a; see also March and Freire, 2012, Part II; Freire, 2017); i.e. whenever the socialists won the national election with only a plurality (i. e. always since 1976 except in the 2005 national elections), they relied on right-wing support (either from PSD or from CDS-PP), formal (coalition) or less formal (parliamentary support), to survive politically in Parliament and to pass fundamental pieces of legislation (including, notably, the budget). This meant, according to my standpoint, a bias in the political system to the right in terms of locating policy orientations (Freire, 2005, 2007, 2011a, 2012a; March and Freire, 2012, Part II). For example, data from several surveys (expert surveys, mass surveys), in different periods (for example 2004, 2009, 2014), locating political parties in the left-right scale (and other dimensions of competition) persistently showed that the Portuguese Socialist Party, PS, was (and still is) among the least leftist parties within the social democratic party family (full EU comparisons) (March and Freire, 2012; see also the Part II of the present book). Moreover, since 2005 and at least until 2009 PS moved precisely to the centre (5.5 in a 1-10 left-right scale, LRS), according to Portuguese voters' perceptions of parties' locations in the LRS; and before 2005, PS was almost always located close to the centre (Freire, 2010). And it is this bias that is about to change with this new post-electoral 'left front', especially if it lasts and proves stable and successful.

The mandate of the right-wing coalition during the Troika years, 2011-2015, was marked by a very strong neoliberal orientation that went far beyond the requests of the bailout agreement, MoU – Memorandum of Understanding (see Freire, 2016a). Namely, cuts in salaries of civil servants, cuts in pension, cuts in public employment, cuts in the welfare state, extensive privatizations went far beyond the 2011 MoU: around three or four times more. Moreover, many of those measures even violated the electoral commitments of the 2011 election winners (see Freire, 2016a). And this very strong neoliberal policy orientation of the incumbent government was one of the reasons why the left was able to compromise: to reverse it (see the agreements in Cruz, 2015).

Some of the flagship measures include the following (see Cruz, 2015; Luís and Garcia, 2015; Costa, 2016). First, raising the minimum salary, which was already enforced for 2016 and 2017. However, here there are currently some tensions between the PS and the RLPs because to achieve the employers' agreement to that raise in the minimum salary, the PS offered in exchange a reduction in corporations' social transfers and that is contested by the RLP that might defeat the PS in Parliament if the right does not support the socialists (see Tiago, 2016; Lima and Almeida, 2017; Campos, 2017). Additionally, that agreement included the government, the employers and the more right-wing aligned union confederation, the UGT, excluding the more left-wing (and major) union confederation, the CGTP.

Second, reverse the salary cuts in the public sector during 2016 while PS planned to do it within only two years (2016 and 2017): already completely enforced in 2016.

Third, unfreeze the pensions immediately as of 2016 (something PS was planning to do: keep them frozen): already under enforcement.

Fourth, collapse measures proposed by PS in its manifesto (PS, 2015) to simplify the dismissal of workers ('despedimento conclitatório').

Fifth, collapse measures proposed by PS in its manifesto (PS, 2015) to reduce employers' social transfers (these measures were only preserved for low income wage workers). Although this was indeed collapsed, following RLPs demands, it somehow returned as an exchange currency to raise the minimum salary (see above), and that is creating tensions between the PS and the RLPs (see Tiago, 2016; Lima and Almeida, 2017; Campos, 2017).

Sixth, reverse the reductions in corporate tax proposed and enforced by the right but with the agreement of PS, 2013-2014. Already enforced.

Seventh, recover the 35-hour working week for civil servants.⁴³

Eight, recover the four public holidays suspended by the right during the Troika years, a measure that was already enforced in 2016 and remains for the future.

Ninth, stop any further privatizations and reverse some of the ongoing ones (in TAP Air Portugal and Public Transport at the local level/major cities; in water privatization). In public transport, privatization was already reserved due to legal problems in the privatization process.

Tenth, invest more in public services (social security, education, health) and recover its eroded quality; stop further externalization of these public functions to the private sector and / or to the third sector. This has been done since 2016, although in a very moderate way due to EU budgetary restrictions.

Eleventh, severe limitations on the expulsion of people from their homes when they fail to pay their mortgages (for justified reasons: e.g. unemployment or financial difficulties) were introduced; a measure already enforced.

Overall, this left-left alliance meant PS was 'forced' to move further to the left on the left-right spectrum, reversing the right wing bias in Portuguese politics (described above).

Some critics, particularly from the right but also in the mainstream (mainly conservative) press, make contradictory criticisms vis-à-vis the new left government. On the one hand, the

⁴³ This measure was finally approved in 2-6-2016, by the Parliament, and shortly after by the President of the Republic. It has been implemented since July 1, 2016. Although the measure is very important to reestablish the *status quo* before the Troika, and that was a central part of the agreements between PS and the RLPs to fight 'asymmetric austerity', the truth is that the measure is very limited in scope especially because it excludes the civil servants with individual contracts which form a considerable part of the new generation of new civil servants (since the beginning of the years 2000). Thus, not only does the measure not apply to private workers, neither does it apply to many civil servants. Thus, if a more progressive approach in terms of working time is really desirable to, and considered feasible by, the post electoral left front, then further measures will be needed in the future.

government is accused of radicalism and of being in the hands of the RLPs, especially BE⁴⁴. However, while it is true that, as can be determined from the flagship measures described above, the policy orientations are leftist, they can be easily framed within a merely social democratic progressive approach. Moreover, they are in many cases a simple return to the *status quo ante* the Troika years, 2011-2014, and their ban was supposed to be only temporary (according to the Portuguese Constitution, and above all decisions by the Constitutional Court). Thus, in many cases, in the end, the bulk of the controversy is about the timing of at least some of the measures. On the other hand, the government and the RLPs are accused of having lied to the voters: they promised to end austerity but they are being very conservative in fiscal terms and, thus, in practice they have not ended austerity. This is in part true, not least because the impositions from the EU are rather strong and the government is committed to complying with EU requirements. However, this also reveals that the left-wing government is not really being radical. The PS government even had to rely on the right (PSD) vote in Parliament (December 23, 2015) for a correction on the 2015 budget law to comply with the EU requirement to avoid another bank collapse (Banif) with taxpayers money, but obliged to privatize the bank shortly after the rescue.⁴⁵

Summing up, even if the government and the RLPs that support it are somehow maintaining some level of austerity, and being fiscally conservative to strive to comply with the EU rules (much more than they had wanted to, largely to be able to stimulate economic growth). The truth is that the change in the pattern of austerity, from 'asymmetrical austerity' to a more balanced effort - distributed between capital and labour - is not at all irrelevant. On the contrary, it is of crucial importance because this is the way to restore some equilibrium between capital and labour that the right-wing parties tried to break during the Troika years.

Moreover, unlike the position of those critics, the left-wing Portuguese electorate, as well as those people without partisan sympathies, shows a positive evaluation of this governmental solution and its policy performance. According to data collected between May and June 2016, under a panel survey (2016-2018), from a sample of the Portuguese population (this is an internet panel and, therefore, a sample with a certain under-representation of lower class in the face of the Portuguese population), there is broad support for a political solution embodied in the XXI constitutional Government (see table 4.6) and to its policy performance (see table 4.7).

⁴⁴ See, for example, the declarations of the leader of PSD in this vein, June 4, 2016: http://www.jornaldenegocios.pt/economia/politica/detalhe/passos_coelho_acusa_governo_de_ser_comanda_do_pelo_bloco_de_esquerda.html

⁴⁵ See «PSD abstém-se e viabiliza Orçamento Retificativo», RTP, 23-12-2015: http://www.rtp.pt/noticias/politica/psd-abstem-se-e-viabiliza-orcamento-retificativo_e883442

Table 4.6 — Attitudes of the Portuguese vis-à-vis the centre-left and radical left (support) Government, April – June 2016, by party sympathy — % of the total in each group.

«As with the right-wing parties in Portugal, the left-wing parties (PS, BE and PCP/PEV) did well by reaching an agreement to govern? »

	Voters' party sympathy						Total
	BE	PCP-PEV	PS	PSD	CDS-PP	Without party sympathy	
Totally disagree	1,4	1,7	0,8	33,1	35,5	8,6	11,6
Disagree	5,0	5,0	3,9	24,9	23,6	12,8	12,5
Neither disagree, nor agree	10,9	17,6	11,1	23,0	19,1	34,1	26,6
Agree	37,3	34,5	49,4	16,5	20,0	33,0	32,4
Totally agree	45,5	41,2	34,9	2,4	1,8	11,5	17,0
N (100%)	220	119	387	417	110	1362	2897

Source: data computed by the author from Freire, a., Lisi, & Tsatsanis (2016). Unweighted data.

Table 4.7 — Attitudes of the Portuguese vis-à-vis the centre-left and radical left (support) Government's general performance, April – June 2016, by party sympathy — % of the total in each group.

«Thinking about the OVERALL PERFORMANCE of the current Socialist Government, supported in Parliament also by the BE and by the PCP-PEV, how would you rate the work of this Government? Would you say that the Government has done a very good job, a good job, bad job, or a very bad job?»

	Voters' party sympathy						Total
	BE	PCP-PEV	PS	PSD	CDS-PP	Without party sympathy	
Very bad	1,8	3,4	1,3	19,4	20,9	7,9	8,6
Bad	14,1	16,0	7,0	48,2	54,5	39,9	33,7
Good	73,6	77,3	81,1	31,4	23,6	50,7	54,1
Very good	10,5	3,4	10,6	1,0	0,9	1,5	3,6
N (100%)	220	119	387	417	110	1362	2615

Source: data computed by the author from Freire, a., Lisi, & Tsatsanis (2016). Unweighted data.

Conclusions

RLPs in Portugal have played an important role in the political system, not only at the institutional level but also in terms of mobilisation. After several years of neoliberal measures and a four-year term of a right-wing government, anti-austerity discourse has gained strength among the electorate. The victory of the centre-right coalition in the 2015 general elections, although only with a plurality, call for a cautionary note with regard to the “success” of the RLPS. If we look at the 2015 results, it is worth noting that the overall score is very close to the one obtained in the 2009 general elections, that is, just after the beginning of the eco-

conomic crisis. This suggests that at the level of political discourse, not so much has changed since then. The RLPs' message is only relatively successful among the electorate, meaning that it is perhaps more related to dissatisfaction towards the incumbents than to the possibility of creating a new alternative solution and experimenting new government practices. One of the reasons for this may be the strong pressure coming from the EU and the example of the Greek situation, which has limited the options for proposing credible alternative orientations. From this viewpoint, not only has the electorate remained strongly favourable to the maintenance of the country in the euro-zone, but there are also clear signs that no radical changes are possible and the way is open only for moderate and gradual reforms. In addition, the failure of RLPs to influence the political discourse may also be explained by the widespread "TINA" ("There Is No Alternative") approach adopted by Portuguese mass media (Freire, 2015c; Luís, 2015). In any case, the entrance of the RLPs in the sphere of governmental decisions, with the XXI constitutional Government, marks a growing influence of BE, PCP and PEV in Portuguese society and in politics, a passage of «marginality» to the «mainstream» (as it was called here: March, 2008, 2011; March and Freire, 2012), which is not only unprecedented in the past 40 years of the Portuguese polity, as it is highly relevant from the point of view of the (policy and political) influence of RLPs.

As far as the electoral relevance is concerned, the insights on Portuguese RLPs are twofold. On the one hand, the crisis seems to have benefited the overall performance of this party family, 2011-2014, thus reverting the marginalisation of the ideological block experienced in the period of the crisis. On the other, RLPs in Portugal perform much better in second-order elections than in legislative contests (see Freire, 2016a). Another important lesson from the Portuguese case is that RLPs may follow distinct electoral trajectories. Overall, BE has registered more volatile electoral results, while PCP has been much more stable in its performance (see March and Freire, 2012; Freire 2016a; Freire and Lisi, 2016a).

All in all, it is worth noting that the crisis – and in particular the implementation of the MoU in 2011 – has had three main effects on the RLPs in Portugal. First, there has been an increase in the nationalist and patriotic tones of the RLPs' discourse and a growing criticism towards the EU, especially among the communists (PCP). Second, both RLPs in Portugal have been consistent in criticizing the 'cartelisation' of the party system and the similarities of the (until 2015 only) three governing parties (PS, PSD, CDS-PP) arguing that they represented the "national troika". This had accentuated the divide between the radical left party family (BE and PCP-PEV) and the more moderate parties of the left (PS). RLPs in Portugal do not differ in their explanations for the 2008 crisis and its aftermath, while the policy reforms they propose to deal with the crisis are clearly differentiated from those of other parties (PS, PSD and CDS-PP). The final aspect is the fragmentation of the radical left camp. The "great recession" also had the effect of instigating divisions within the radical left party family, increasing not only competition for office but also strategic and programmatic divergences. This change has its roots not only in circumstantial and national reasons but also in the international context. Indeed, the success of *Syriza*, in Greece, and *Podemos*, in Spain, was an important factor that prompted the emergence of new political actors and alternative models of mobilisation and organisation beyond those experienced by the PCP, the PEV and the BE.

During the campaign to the 2015 legislative elections the latter seemed to have deepened the problems of the radical left in Portugal, which are mostly based on its fragmentation, lack of cooperation (among themselves and especially with the PS) and its marginal position

at the institutional level. PS and the radical left seemed unable to compromise to create a left-left alternative to the right-wing parties, even if some small signs in the campaign pointed in the opposite direction (the declared unwillingness of the PS leader to coalesce with the right; the pragmatic proposals of BE to coalesce with PS – see the TV debate between Costa and the BE leader, Catarina Martins, on 14-9-2015; a similar openness of PCP to coalesce with PS, in 23-8-2015). From this viewpoint, it is a case of “old challenges, new responses” (see Freire and Lisi, 2016a). Before the 2015 elections, there seemed to be no relevant move either in terms of policy proposals and/or strategic orientations that could place left-wing parties (PS, PCP and BE) closer to each other in order to create an alternative governmental solution to the right-wing coalition (PàF: PSD and CDS-PP pre-electoral coalition). However, somehow surprisingly, after the 2015 legislative elections and with the right holding only a plurality in the vote and in Parliament (seats), we watched the fall of the Berlin Wall in Portugal 26 years after 1989. The XXI Constitutional government is a left-left government with the PS in the cabinet, and the BE, the PCP and the PEV as support parties in Parliament (in fact, this is a minority PS government with RLPs as support parties). The stability and robustness of such a solution is yet to be fully tested, particularly in a pretty adverse international setting (neoliberal globalization and Europeanization, the rules of the Euro, the pressure of international capital markets, etc.), but more than a year has passed and, until now at least, things are going pretty well both in terms of policy performance, and compliance with EU rules, and citizens’ satisfaction, especially among left-wing constituents (and among people without party sympathy).

In any case, this fall of the Berlin Wall 26 years after 1989 has a fundamental relevance for at least five reasons. First, as a matter of inclusiveness: the RLPs in Portugal represented around 8% to 18% (in the last 40 years) and, until now, have been excluded from governmental decisionmaking. Second, for the sake of the quality in political representation: this left-left governmental solution aligned party elites’ preferences with voters’ preferences on the left in terms of the type of government. Third, again for the sake of the quality in political representation: this solution increases the clarity of left versus right party-policy alternatives by setting the centre-left apart from the centre-right. Fourth, this also means more responsibility for RLPs: they now must prove what they are able to deliver in a particularly difficult European and world context. Finally, this is a convergence of the Portuguese left with the left of Western Europe since 1989.

Two fundamental European implications (for the new centre-left and radical left government in Portugal, the XXI constitutional government) can be envisaged: first, will this major change in Portugal have a contagious effect in other European countries? If yes, can those changes (current and eventual) contribute to changing the neoliberal status quo in the EU? This is something that is yet to be seen. The Spanish case, where after two inconclusive elections in less than a year (December 2015 and July 2016) and the inability of the PSOE to dialogue with the radical left and, above all, with the Catalan nationalists (from the left and from the right), led to the renewal of the right-wing government of the PP (with a plurality of the vote and support from the PSOE in the form of abstention), points out, however, at least for the time being, for a limited contagion of Portuguese solution out. I.e., the solution found in Spain, with the PSOE tolerating the continuation of the right-wing government after the 2016 summer elections, shows a limited influence of the Portuguese solution. The same can be said for the situation in the United Kingdom, in France and even in Italy, where the radical

right and/or (right-wing) populist movements seem to be better able to capitalize with the crisis than the various forces of the left, unable to dialogue among themselves ... perhaps: *et pour cause*.

At the domestic level, the XXI constitutional government has introduced at least three major innovations. First, in terms of government profile and patterns of cooperation on the left (centre-left minority government with support of the radical left): no constitutional government until late 2015 had had such a profile. If it proves stable and able to deliver, this new political solution has the potential to open up a new chapter in Portuguese politics, a new era of greater inclusiveness and more responsibility. The second major innovation is related to the process of government formation: it was the first time ever in Portugal that the winning party did not end up forming the government, and, what is more, is not even in the new executive. Third, in terms of the policy orientations of PS, and the fundamental leaning of the political system due to this type of political solution: a 'policy contamination' of PS by the radical left. Overall, this post electoral 'left front' alliance meant that the PS was 'forced' to move further to the left in the left-right spectrum, reversing the right wing bias in Portuguese politics (see above). Ultimately, this new pattern in coalition politics may bring about a fundamental change in Portuguese politics, reversing the historical right wing bias, if it proves lasting. Again, if followed abroad, this could have important implications in Europe: new coalition politics on the left to revert the neoliberalization of social democracy due to permanent alliances with the right/centre-right, either in office and/or in terms of policy orientations... That European influence of the Portuguese example is yet to be seen, but the example is there to be emulated... In fact, some data shows that the Portuguese solution is being increasingly observed by social democrats across Western Europe as a source of inspiration.⁴⁶

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⁴⁶ See Paul Ames (2017), «European left wants piece of Portugal's contraption», Politico, 24-2-2017, http://www.politico.eu/article/antonio-costa-ps-socialists-european-left-wants-piece-of-portugal-contraption/?utm_content=bufferb1910&utm_medium=social&utm_source=facebook.com&utm_campaign=buffer

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Katrivanou, Vasiliki

It is a reception crisis and not a refugee crisis. Thoughts for the intervention of the Left

We tend to identify what is happening in Europe as a refugee crisis, but I think what is really happening is a reception crisis, that turns into a crisis around integration, social cohesion, and solidarity, which started after the closure of the Balkan passage in March 2016. We can't really defend the point that the Europe of half a billion people cannot receive one million refugees who arrived in 2015. This number is slightly smaller than the number of Syrian refugees that Lebanon - a country of 5 million people- received. At the same time, Turkey hosts around 3 million refugees. So, the real message of Europe has changed from welcoming refugees in the beginning to "we don't want more refugees, we can't receive them".

After the summit of the European Council in February 2016, the term "refugee" has been abolished from the official texts. They refer just to migration flow, which is incorrect because most of the people fulfill the conditions to be defined as refugees: 45% that entered the EU in 2015 are Syrians, 25% are Afghans, 20% Iraqis. What really show cases that they are mainly refugees is the fact that about 40% are children and 20% women. We could state that the way we face the refugee/migration issue is based on stereotypes and biases and that has nothing to do with the sheer facts themselves. It is a certain ideological approach that creates upheaval in countries with few or no refugees, such as Poland, where most of the political discourse before the last elections in 2015 was focusing on the refugees through a xenophobic perspective. This example demonstrates that it's not about overwhelming numbers of refugees, but really about the xenophobic ideological perception in a country, which can be completely irrelevant to the facts. As Dimitris Christopoulos, President of FIDH (International Federation of Human Rights) mentions, the refugee issue is not about the inability of Europe to receive refugees, but it's about a certain ideological and political choice.

SYRIZA's Government implements a friendly migration policy.

I want to focus on Greece as an example, not just because I come from there, but for two main reasons: a) because in 2015 Greece was the main entrance point for refugees and migrants to EU and b) because Greece happens to have in this particular time a left government, which created a shift on the policy making for the reception of refugees not only in Greece, but also for the whole Europe, at least in the beginning.

Before SYRIZA became government (before January 2015), the main policy on migration of the coalition right-wing -socialist government of Nea Dimokratia-Pasok, was the repulsion of people on the borders, push backs, police operations against the immigrants and confinement in detention centers for uncertain times, more than 18 months, which is the maximum temporary custody according to the Greek constitution. The message of the former Prime Minister A. Samaras, to the Greek people was: "we have to recapture our cities from the immigrants." The message of the Head of the Police Department to the police force at that time was: "you have to make the lives of the immigrants as difficult as possible, so that this

will send the message to the others not to come to Greece". The detention centers were full not only with immigrants with no papers, but also with refugees-asylum seekers, unaccompanied minors, victims of tortures etc. Migration policy was under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Public Order.

When SYRIZA came to government, a paradigm shift occurred. SYRIZA created for the first time a ministry for Migration, which changed the policy and the main public political discourse. From labeling everyone as an illegal immigrant, Greeks started talking about refugees, stating the need for legal and safe passages and talking about the reception and the welcoming of refugees. SYRIZA's government voted the law for citizenship for the second-generation immigrant youth, which consists of an ideological **breakthrough**. The pushbacks stopped, the detention centers opened, and the majority of the people detained were freed. This radical change happened with no consensus from the other political parties; on the contrary, there was serious opposition, both from the central left, PASOK and POTAMI, and from the Media in the beginning as well. There was a lot of criticism, accusing SYRIZA that this policy, which is implemented, created a pull factor for illegal migration to Greece. They didn't even acknowledge that the majority are refugees and that this was a European issue and not a Greek, national issue.

This policy and this message from the government supported the rise of a really big solidarity movement, which already existed in small numbers in Greece. A huge solidarity movement was created that included people from different paths that didn't necessarily belong only to the Left. This started again to inspire hope and meaning to the Greek people who were involved. Because, after June 2015, when the left government of SYRIZA was forced to sign one more memorandum of austerity, there was a strong feeling of hopelessness and dis-engagement among the Greek people, since the spirit of TINA (There Is No Alternative) had prevailed. But now people were engaged and motivated in the solidarity movement again.

So, SYRIZA's government change of policy, even without the general consensus in the beginning, changed the political discourse and focus, supported solidarity movements and motivated the people. This new state's policy in Greece creates a new reality in Greece, but also in Europe, as a welcoming entry point mainly for the refugees, but also for the immigrants as well.

SYRIZA's government brings forward the need for solidarity and for the sharing of responsibility among the countries of the EU. A main question posed by the Greek government to the EU was: when anyone speaks about the patrolling and policing the Greek borders in the sea, they have to be clear that the person in the sea risking their life has to be saved first, and then we can continue with any other procedure to identify who they are and what are their rights. That means that the main priority should be to save human lives and not do push backs, that drown people and are illegal according to the international law. So, the core question when someone speaks about policing the borders in the sea is do they want people dead or alive?

Another important factor in this process is the support by the society for this policy. This is extremely crucial, because, without the consensus and the support of the people, no government can continue with a certain policy. A left government needs the people active and engaged. Just the implementation of a certain policy is not enough.

Something that the Greek government did not do at that time, as it promised before the elections, was to create a safe and monitored entrance at the Evros River, at the north borders of Greece with Turkey, so that people can have a safe access to seek for asylum, as the international convention and state law requests.

The shift of the Greek migration policy after the EU-Turkey Agreement

There was a shift in Greek policy, which started when the government accepted Nato ships in the Aegean sea, in February 2016, in order to cut the refugee flows (a move that mainly has to do with the involvement to the war in Syria). This contributed to a militarization approach to the refugee issue. However, the refugees are not enemies from which a country should be protected, but asylum seekers, people in great need, fleeing from war and death. The major shift of policy happened in the end of March 2016 with the signing of the EU-Turkey Agreement. This major shift marked the change of European migration policy from the reception of refugees to the refoulement, to the return. It's an inhuman, illegal agreement, against international law, the Geneva Convention and the EU acquis, since whoever flees from war, disaster or persecution will not receive the due and needed protection.

This agreement referred to irregular immigrants. But according to UNHCR, in 2015 the 90% of the flow is refugees, therefore it is mainly refugees that will be prevented from accessing Europe via Turkey. Refugees will be the majority that will be "sent" back, meaning, actually, subjected to refoulement. This agreement explicitly refers that for every Syrian who is deported from Greece to Turkey another, Syrian will be resettled from Turkey to Europe.

The Agreement implies that Turkey is a safe country, which is de facto recognized by Greece, after receiving huge pressure from EU. So asylum requests are rejected on the ground that they come from a safe third country. But Turkey is not a safe third country for refugees or for the Turkish people, especially after the failed coup and the hardening of Erdogan's regime. Turkey does not have an asylum system for other than Europeans and provides contemporary protection only for Syrians. So what will happen with Afghans, Iraqis, Eritreans and other refugees? Turkey hasn't ratified the Geneva Convention and the NY protocol of 1967.

There have been reports of onward refoulement of refugees from Turkey (Syrians back to Syria, Afghans, back to Kampoul, where their lives are in danger). Independently if Turkey is a safe country or not, the real problem is that Europe refuses to accept refugees and push them away from EU territory, transferring the responsibility to countries outside Europe.

The Greek government presented this agreement as a success, focusing mainly on geopolitical issues (like Cyprus and the issue of national sovereignty), which I consider as a huge mistake. I believe that it should have been named as a bad agreement, which the Greek government was pressured to sign, without any alternatives. It's a bad agreement because it violates human rights, the Geneva Convention and international law. At the same time this is not a solution. The right direction is according to what UNHCR and all international organizations propose: a) a large resettlement from Turkey approximately 500.000 refugees per year, not just 72.000, b) that the relocation must work, that we need a Common European Asylum System (CEAS) and effective and sustainable policies around integration.

The fact that the Greek government presented it as a success not only shows a certain “cynical realism” based on geopolitical issues, a “cynical realism” that is against human rights, but also creates a very negative impact on Greek society, undermining the previous paradigm which was based on a welcoming policy of solidarity and respect for human rights.

The Left and the migration policy in Europe.

I would like to conclude by focusing on an issue, which I consider crucial and that concerns us all: which is the position of the left towards the refugee and migration issue?

We definitely need a more active European Left on the migration policy and the refugees, which for example would have created campaigns against this agreement. All the criticism and initiatives against the EU-Turkey agreement was carried mainly by international organizations for human rights, such as UNHCR, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch etc.

We really have to ponder on the question: why the Left didn't create a large campaign against the agreement, supporting a safe passage for refugees and solidarity with them? Why the main criticism and campaign was carried basically by the international organizations for human rights? Of course, the people of the Left have been very active and engaged in the solidarity movement, but the presence of the Left in terms of organizations, parties, and youth organizations was, I would dare to say, rather inadequate.

During the last months of 2016, there is the discussion of the Commission to reactivate the Dublin Agreement. According to the Dublin Agreement the country, which is responsible to grant asylum to an asylum seeker, is the country of the first entrance, which means Greece and Italy for the majority of refugees. The reactivation of the Dublin Agreement would mean that refugees from all over Europe would-could be returned to the countries of first entrance, which implies that Greece and Italy would become a buffer zone and a storage space for thousands of people. This is a tremendously unfair measure for the refugees and for the two countries where they will be returned. What will happen to all these people? It also is an extremely inadequate measure for EU to confront the refugee issue, especially in a period with such extended refugee flows. Such a development would transform the whole picture of migration, so it's extremely crucial for the Left to intervene.

The Left in Europe has to create broad campaigns against the EU-Turkey agreement, against the reactivation of the Dublin agreement, against the creation of the European coast guard. Europe has to take its responsibility for the reception and safe passage of refugees.

Further more the Left in Europe has:

- a) To promote strategic and visionary elements of the Left such as the end of the war in Syria, to speak about the roots of what creates immigrants and refugees, that it is not their fault but are forced to leave their countries because of wars and disasters.
- b) To support the co-creation of an active solidarity movement together with the immigrants-refugees, against the fascists and the neo-Nazis, as well as to develop antiracist and anti-fascist work in neighbourhoods and the local communities.
- c) To work on the crucial issue of integration of immigrants and refugees and, of course, to do this work together with immigrants and refugees. To share good practices and policies

around integration on all levels: governmental, on the level of municipalities and the grass-root movement.

d) To adopt the main agenda of the international organizations and the solidarity movements, which includes:

- the safe passage and reception of refugees,
- broad resettlement from Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan,
- relocation from Greece and Italy to the rest of Europe,
- a Common European Asylum System (CEAS),
- protection of unaccompanied minors,
- a broad definition of family reunification and a quicker process about it, and
- affective and sustainable policies around integration.

c) To fight against exploitation and misery and combine this struggle with the fight for the rights of immigrants and refugees, against xenophobia and racism. To speak about the need for a collective struggle and mixed unions among locals and immigrants.

d) To formulate an alternative logic about migration, on how the newcomers are a source of richness for Europe and for future generations, to speak about welcoming refugees. And how this attitude comes from a sense of wisdom and realism and it's not philanthropy.

The refugee issue and the migration policy will be one of the main factors that will affect and change our societies, economies and mentalities in Europe. The Left has to elaborate its proposals and develop initiatives that will be positive rather than just defensive, which will highlight migration and solidarity as a source of richness for our societies.

Mauzé, Gregory

Radical left and Refugee Crisis

This text outlines the contents of an address given at the 'State of Affairs in Europe Conference' held at the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation headquarters in Berlin, on 7th, 8th and 9th of July.

The saddening regularity with which the dead have been accumulating at the gates of Europe only constitutes the tragically most visible part of a failing policy. The European left has responded in a number of ways. Most of them aligned with human rights defenders: the end of the besieged fortress logic and rigorous defence of asylum rights blithely disregarded. The large influx of refugees into Europe in the summer of 2015, triggered by the Syrian crisis, however, revealed a certain unease on the left with regard to the issue of migration, and further revealed a fracture within political organisations who align themselves with the fight against neoliberalism.

Before going in to a deeper analysis of the radical left's reaction to the refugee crisis, we will focus on the origins of such an unease that the left has maintained with regard to the issue of migration. Such questions are difficult to apprehend and politicise in accordance with their values, something that is reflected in the difficulty when formulating proactive programmatic proposal in this area.

The following will first bring a historical perspective about the roots of the current discomfort of the left regarding migrant issues. It will then discuss what the asylum crisis says about the state of the left on this issue. I will then conclude with the challenges that the Left has to face.

Workers movement and migration

To understand the position of the workers' movement in relation to immigration, we have to understand the position of employers. To begin, let's tackle this common idea saying that migration is always in favour of employers and against the rights of local workers. This is simply not true. It's important to stress that, because it's often a key argument from the new social-chauvinist far-right saying that the radical left cannot be the movement of the workers because of their positions on immigration.

As a general rule, international capitalism favours the immobility of workers from the periphery. Combined with a maximal mobility of capitals and goods, this makes it possible to guarantee low wages in these countries (and then to practice outsourcing), since the emigration of the available labour force can make the remaining workers more expensive. For example, we heard a lot during the referendum on UK membership of the EU about the fact that employers used foreign workers to restrain wages in the UK. That is true. But it is also true that the departure of workers from Eastern Europe following the entry of those countries into the Schengen area, led to penuries of workers in a lot of sectors, forcing local employers to raise wages. The departure of workers to western Europe forced employers to increase the minimum wage to 20 percent in Poland, and to increase the average wage to 21% in the Health sector in Estonia.

Nevertheless, when necessary, employers can have recourse to immigration in developed countries, in particular for sectors that cannot be transferred offshore. They will then do everything possible to establish unequal social rights for the new arrivals.

Thus, the workers' movement has historically been skeptical regarding international mobility of workers that was implemented by states to the demand of employers. That was the case during several periods since the industrial revolution, notably after World War II when the penuries in coal industries were obvious in most western countries. At the same time, the workers' movement was for the most part conscious of the aim of those policies that wanted to divide the working class. Thus, even if they fought politically the politics of massive importation of workers from abroad, they tried to defend the equality of rights and of wages for all workers.

This paradigm is not relevant anymore since the economic crisis that started in the 70s in a context of unemployment, employers didn't need anymore import of foreign workers to increase competition and to reduce wages, given the existence of another "industrial army of reserve", namely jobless people.

In this context, the opposition of trade-unions to the arriving migrants changed. Rather, they tried to fight for the rights of irregular migrants, whose administrative precarity was highly praised by employers. That's why a lot of trade-unions in Europe are now on the first plan to support movement of irregular migrants. That's also partly why inside the left and far left movements we can find most supporters of the migrant cause.

The fear of the Extreme right

Does it mean the left supports migrants all the time? No, mainly because the extreme-right profited from their anti-immigrant program. This left a profound fear within the left to tackle this issue.

As analysed by Dr Dan Keith from university of York in a paper on this topic, the rise of the extreme-right has led the left to three main positions: a) **(holding)**, which opposes xenophobic discourse with a strong defence of immigrants; b) **(defusing)**, in which the left avoid to talk about this issue, without adopting a programme hostile to immigrants. c) **(adopting)**, in which a party adopts language – or enacts policies – hostile to new arrivals.

Basically, we can say that the strategy of following the far-right on migration issues was not really successful, given the fact that voters generally prefer the original to the copy. On the contrary, the victory of Syriza has shown that a party ready to confront the dominant economic interests can come to power while remaining resolutely on the side of immigrants, refugees, and ethnic minorities.

Unfortunately, the majority of left parties have chosen to "defuse", and choose not to tackle the issue because they feared losing voters to the Extreme right. That was notably shown during the referendum that led to Brexit. That also led to a poor reflexion on this issue in a lot of left parties, who cannot really justify to their voters why they are defending them. The contrast between radical left and the green movement is pretty obvious, given the fact that the support of migrants is rather seen as a major pillar of their identity.

The impact of the refugee crisis.

For the record, the EU was totally unprepared to welcome the afflux of people resulting mostly because of the war in Syria, and conducting to the asylum crisis we have seen since mid-2015. That led to a global violation of the Geneva Convention. That was notably illustrated by the agreement with Turkey that is literally burying humanitarian principles by sending every single refugee arriving back to Turkey after the ordeal. The “besiege fortress” strategy tragically raised the number of deaths at European borders: Almost 4000 officially died trying to join Europe in 2015, and more than 5000 in 2016.

Politically, this crisis led to a general shift to the right. We assisted in the implementation of policies that we were not even thinking about years ago, like the return of control at internal borders, the building of walls, and the implementation of hard xenophobic policies.

The radical left generally supported the rights of migrants and refugees, as the stances of the political group of the GUE/NGL in European parliament have shown. But a part of Left movements were to some extent also concerned by this shift to the right. Basically, this part of the left stresses upon the fact that we need to act on the causes of departures, ending wars, and western imperialist exploitation of the South. True, but it's too often a way to avoid talking about what we do now, to face the current humanitarian challenges.

In Germany, some grassroots members of Die Linke continue to support refugees, but some are very hostile to them. This position is illustrated at the national level by the member of parliament Sara Wagenknecht, who asked to fix a limitation on the number of refugees in Germany. A stance that looks totally irresponsible given the emergency crisis, and the fact that the departure of refugees from Syria is often a matter of life and death.

In France, the candidate for the presidential election of the Front de Gauche in 2012 Jean-Luc Mélenchon, who used to be highly supportive of immigrants, is now highly ambiguous on its migration platform for 2017. He notably said that we need borders, and criticized the welcoming policy of Merkel. Still, we must understand the attitude of M. Mélenchon more as defusing than holding, following the typology exposed below. Despite a clear discomfort with the issue, M. Mélenchon has said on many occasions that welcoming refugees is a moral obligation. He is also one of the few candidates who support the regularization of all irregular immigrants, as did the movement who support his campaign, France Insoumise.

It's more concerning in some countries of Central and Eastern Europe, where there are historically few immigrants as well as a low tradition of supporting immigrants inside the left parties. Regarding that, the position of the Communist Party for Bohemia and Moravia in the Czech republic is really wondering, since they reject any fairer sharing of refugees through Europe. It's pretty understandable to oppose the quota principle in the Czech republic when we know that less than 1 refugee for every 10 000 inhabitants was proposed by the European Commission. Fully in line with the right-wing consensus, the Communist party even asked to reinforce the external border controls for the Schengen area, something that is highly controversial in a context where the policy of closing borders is the main cause of mortality of refugees.

The case of Greece (see the contribution of Vasilikí Katrivánou) is also noteworthy. Syriza came to power with a radically pro-refugee platform, and did indeed a lot for them. Then, with the rising of international pressure to stop the afflux of refugees, it slightly changed. The shift is particularly obvious if we compare former minister on migrations Tasia Chris-

todoulopoulou, in full accordance with the program of Syriza, and the new one Yiannis Mouzalas, who replaced her in august 2015. Mouzalas, with Tsipras, actively supported the deal with Turkey, and rejected the welcoming of the so-called “economic immigrants”, reducing notably their judicial possibilities to appeal expulsions. The point is not to say that Syriza would have been able to act differently regarding international pressure, but to say that this shift is a really bad signal for the pro-immigrant left, because it sends the message that the policies they promote in migration matters are not realistic.

Future challenges

An internationalist movement struggling for the emancipation of workers regardless of their origins should tackle three main challenges in Europe: humanitarian, socio-economic and political. The humanitarian one is to end the silent slaughter happening at the borders of the Union, which means to allow the ones who want to come, to do so freely, and to allow the majority who don't want to come, to live in safety and respectfully of their fundamental rights in their countries of origins. That also means to make sure that foreigners can benefit from those rights in the welcoming country.

The Socio-Economic challenge is to advocate policies that would ensure that the newcomers would not serve as an “industrial reserve army” for capital, which means to fight in favour of the full equality in terms of wages between newcomers and local workers. That is indeed the only way to avoid internal social dumping. For those reasons, the regularization of all irregular workers should be one of the main struggles of the workers movement.

The political challenge is to find a way to include migrants and national people who have a migrant background into the general struggles of the left, what is until now far from obvious. This implies finding a way to make the social struggle a logical continuation of migrant struggles, and to make migrant struggles part of the social movement. With regard to this, some trade-unions in France, Belgium and Italy for example are doing a wonderful job by taking into account the claims of migrants as part of their own struggle. That implies, first and foremost, to allow migrant associations to put their own claims, and to take care to avoid paternalism and instrumentalisation of migrant movements, and to be respectful of their autonomy. That also means taking into account the claims and specificities of foreigners’ communities, something that is often lacking in left organizations.

Finally, they have to stop trying to convince the voters to become pro-migrants on a moral basis, considering that it is a matter of societal question, when it is actually a social question that we have to understand regarding the class struggle. In other words, we have to convince them that it is of their own interest to support newcomers.

Bouma, Amieke

The Socialist Party (SP) in the Netherlands

Founded in 1972 in the south of the Netherlands, the Socialist Party (SP) is playing an increasingly important role in Dutch politics. Originally a tiny Maoist group, the party soon abandoned its ideological origins, and in the early 1990s it broke with Marxism-Leninism. In 1994 it gained its first two seats in parliament. Since 2000, the SP's ideology changed from a rejection of capitalism to a push for establishing an "other", "more humane" society based on the welfare-state model, enabling the SP to present itself as a viable alternative to the government. In 2002, the party abandoned its protest-party image when it changed its campaign slogan from "vote against!" to "vote for!" With a new vote- and office-seeking strategy to make the SP acceptable for broader strata of society and ultimately a candidate for governing coalitions, the SP won a respectable 25 parliamentary seats (out of a total of 150) in the 2006 national elections; and from 2007 to 2009 the SP even boasted over 50.000 party members (currently 39.550).⁴⁷ While becoming stronger in national politics, the SP continues its active involvement in neighborhoods.

The SP's priority now is the defense of the traditional welfare state, with a specific focus on health and social care – and people working in these sectors form an important constituency of the party. This also shows how far the SP of today has become removed from its erstwhile radical agenda; and with its populist image and its claim to represent the "common people", the SP also partly fishes in the same pond as the '50+' pensioners' party and the Freedom Party PVV of right-wing populist Geert Wilders, which combines a nationalistic and islamophobic agenda with vocal opposition to the government and calls for the preservation of the welfare state, and to which the SP seems to have lost voters in recent years despite very obvious disagreement on fundamental issues.⁴⁸

In the words of long-time party leader Jan Marijnissen, the SP are now "social democrats with a little extra",⁴⁹ and the party benefits from the fact that the Labour Party (PvdA) has lost much of its social democratic identity, and of its electoral appeal, in the course of coalition governments that it entered (see below). From the start, the SP also built a strong presence in old workers' districts and disadvantaged neighborhoods, where party activists provided help and advice to inhabitants with health, social, financial, and administrative issues. This hands-on support and accessibility contrasted with the image of the PvdA, which was increasingly seen as distanced from the people. The other rival party on the left, GroenLinks, has developed from an erstwhile coalition of four small radical left parties into a "progressive liberal" party.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Documentatiecentrum voor Politieke Partijen, "SP ledentallen per jaar (1992-)". Accessed 12 May 2017: <http://dnpp.ub.rug.nl/dnpp/content/sp-ledentallen-jaar-1992>.

⁴⁸ http://opiniepanel.eenvandaag.nl/uitslagen/55656/waar_is_de_linkse_kiezer_ (accessed 8 January 2016); <http://www.ipsos-nederland.nl/ipsos-politieke-barometer/winst-en-verlies/> (accessed 08 January 2016).

⁴⁹ Quoted in Kustaw Bessems, "# Marijnissen: Socialisme is bezoedeld". In: *De Ondernemer* (10 November 2011); cited in: Alex de Jong, "The Long March of the Dutch Socialist Party", *IIRE Working Paper Number 35* (January 2014), p. 16. Accessed 27 January 2017: http://fileservier.iire.org/working_papers/IIRE%20Working%20Paper%2035.pdf.

⁵⁰ De Jong, "The Long March of the Dutch Socialist Party", p. 10.

In 2008 Marijnissen was succeeded as SP parliamentary faction leader by Agnes Kant, a former medical researcher who had risen to prominence as a spokesperson on health and social care, which are core issues to the party. Yet Kant failed to fill the void left by the charismatic party veteran Marijnissen, and after disappointing results in the 2010 local elections she was succeeded by Emil Roemer, a former school teacher with ample experience as local governor for the SP in the small town of Boxmeer. Roemer's very accessible image certainly contributed to making the SP attractive again to broader voter groups, yet the disappointing results in the 2012 and 2017 elections have led to increasing calls for his replacement by someone with a more prime ministerial image.

A Note on the Dutch Party System

Dutch politics are characterized by a large number of relatively small political parties. This is facilitated by the absence of an election threshold and by the habit of coalition governments. This enhances chances for new parties to enter parliament and increases the relative impact of small parties. After the September 2012 elections, the 150 parliamentary seats were divided over 11 parties. While the two largest parties scored 41 (VVD) and 38 (PvdA) seats respectively, five parties were represented in parliament by five or less MPs, and four parties scored between 12 and 15 seats.⁵¹ In the March 2017 elections, Dutch voters could choose between no less than 28 parties on their ballots; 13 of which obtained enough seats to enter parliament. In addition to the 11 parties represented in parliament after the 2012 elections, these included two new parties: the right-populist "Forum voor Democratie" and "Denk" (Think), a party established by two erstwhile PvdA parliamentarians of Turkish descent that seeks to represent Dutch citizens with immigrant backgrounds. Of the parties currently represented in parliament, the VVD is the biggest with 33 seats, followed by the PVV (20), the Christian Democrats (CDA; 19) and the center-right liberal party D'66 (19). SP and GroenLinks both obtained 14 seats, while the PvdA was decimated from 38 to a mere 9 seats. The remaining six parties all obtained between 2 and 5 seats. Since mid-2013, not a single party has polled more than 30% support rates.⁵² Simultaneously, Dutch voter preferences are extremely volatile, and tend to fluctuate even stronger during election campaign periods. This should be taken into account when considering the SP faction size and support rates mentioned below.

Party Responses to the Global Financial Crisis

The onset of the global financial crisis gave the SP's confidence a new push; the crisis seemed to confirm the party's calls for reigning in neo-liberalism. Yet this did not translate into improved election results: in 2010, the SP even lost 10 of its 25 seats. In the run-up to the 2012 national elections, however, polls suggested the SP would become the largest party in the Dutch parliament, with up to 37 seats.⁵³ Yet in the last two weeks before the elections the SP entered into a free fall, largely due to Roemer's clumsy media performances: at prime

⁵¹ In the subsequent years, 8 parliamentarians split away from their parties to form 6 new 'parliamentary groups' – thus increasing the number of parliamentary factions represented in parliament until the March 2017 elections to 17.

⁵² Ipsos, "Trend" (19 January 2017). <http://www.ipsos-nederland.nl/ipsos-politieke-barometer/trend/>.

⁵³ Marije Willems, "SP en VVD blijven grootste in peilingen", in: *NRC* (5 August 2012). Accessed 8 October 2015: <http://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2012/08/05/sp-en-vvd-blijven-grootste-in-peilingen/>.

time television he was unable to smoothly explain his party's election program, which raised doubts about his capacities to run a coalition.⁵⁴ This was quickly seized upon by other parties, leading to a swing in votes from which especially the Labour Party (PvdA) profited. The PvdA presented itself as the only credible and experienced governing party on the left, and was successful in winning over a substantial part of the left electorate that decided to vote 'strategically', with an eye on keeping the liberal-right party VVD out of government. Eventually the SP 'only' managed to keep its 15 seats in Parliament; in light of the projected support, this was a rather disappointing result.⁵⁵ The PvdA obtained 38 seats, and, to the great dismay of many of its 'strategic supporters', entered a coalition under PM Rutte of the VVD (41 MPs).

The coalition's austerity measures contributed to a further reduction of the welfare state and thus continued the attrition of the PvdA's image. Accordingly, since 2012 the SP has become harsher in its criticism of the PvdA, while at the same time signaling its willingness to enter coalitions with all parties except the PVV.⁵⁶ In municipalities the SP successfully participates in various coalitions; in Amsterdam, for instance, in 2014 the SP joined the two liberal parties VVD and D'66, dethroning the PvdA that had been in power in the capital city for half a century.

At the same time, the SP's office-seeking strategy makes the party less attractive for anti-establishment voters. This might explain why on the national stage the SP has hardly profited from its opposition role: in the March 2017 elections, the party lost one of its previous 15 seats, despite the staggering loss of the PvdA. Here it should be noted that the SP electorate is remarkably volatile, also when compared to other parliamentary parties in the Netherlands: only 41% of its 2017 voters had also voted for the SP in 2012.⁵⁷ In the 2017 elections, the SP reportedly gained 4 seats due to votes of disillusioned PvdA supporters, yet these were not enough to compensate for the loss of support elsewhere.⁵⁸ At the same time, former SP voters supported a wide range of different parties in the 2017 elections, from GroenLinks and D'66 to the CDA and PVV.⁵⁹ Although all these parties were part of the opposition from 2012-2017, their political differences seem to suggest that voting for the SP is, in the eyes of many voters, indeed one of the many mainstream political options, rather than support for a radical alternative.⁶⁰ Consequently, it is not surprising that those voters

⁵⁴ The SP campaign of 2012 has been recorded in a documentary movie by Coen Verbraak: "Emile Roemer - tussen pieken en peilen" (VARA, 23 December 2012). Accessed 10 October 2015: http://www.npo.nl/emile-roemer-tussen-pieken-en-peilen/POMS_S_VARA_124085. This documentary suggests that a lack of organized critique within Roemer's campaign team caused them not to prepare properly for important media events and debates. There has however been debate about whether the documentary fully reflects the reality of the campaign.

⁵⁵ The 2012 election results also attested to the fragmentation of the Dutch electorate: SP (15 seats), PVV (15), CDA (13) and the liberal party D'66 (12) all obtained between 8 and 10 percent of the votes.

⁵⁶ Freek Staps and Oscar Vermeer, "SP wil in kabinet en is bereid tot compromissen". In: *NRC* (1 June 2012). Accessed 8 October 2015: <http://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2012/06/01/sp-wil-in-kabinet-en-is-bereid-tot-compromissen/>.

⁵⁷ NOS, "PvdA gedecimeerd, waar zijn al die stemmers gebleven?" (16 March 2017). Accessed 12 May 2017: <http://nos.nl/artikel/2163443-pvda-gedecimeerd-waar-zijn-al-die-stemmers-gebleven.html>.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.* Erstwhile PvdA supporters were moreover more inclined to support GroenLinks or D'66 rather than SP, or even not to vote at all.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

who are looking for radical change sometimes leave the SP and no longer vote at all.⁶¹ Other former SP members and sympathizers have moved to the Partij voor de Dieren (Party for Animals), which grew from 2 to 5 seats, and to a newly established anti-racism party ("Artikel 1"), which however failed to win a seat in the elections.

Yet that the SP has not been capable of attracting the support of disappointed voters suggests that to them, the SP's opposition to the governing coalition was not forceful enough. The party is aware of such sentiments: According to former SP leader Jan Marijnissen, reflecting on the growth of the PVV, the PVV is successful in attracting voters who are disappointed with politics in general because this party's radical opposition to government policy is unhindered by considerations of policy feasibility (or, one may add, of appearing acceptable as a possible coalition partner) – in contrast to the SP's "sometimes nuanced" position.⁶² This quote reflects the problems that the SP has in being at the same time a radical left opposition party and a potential coalition partner within the Dutch parliamentary system.

In 2008 the SP reluctantly accepted the decision of the government (at that time a coalition of Christian Democrats [CDA], PvdA and the Christian Union [CU]) to bail out two big Dutch banks, in order to avoid bigger social costs – the banks were deemed 'too big to fail'. At the same time the SP demanded to reduce the bonus system in the financial sector, as a factor that led to risky decisions and disasters that then needed to be covered by the treasury.⁶³ Likewise, the SP pushed for limitations of salaries in public and semi-public offices. These were very popular positions, but in the end these measures were implemented not by the SP but by the subsequent governments (and in 2015 the previously nationalized ABN Amro Bank went back to the stock market).

The crisis in Greece put the SP into a more difficult situation, since it got stuck between its commitment to international solidarity and the defense of its Dutch constituency's financial interests. The party initially claimed it would be possible to cancel Greek debts without affecting Dutch taxpayers' money, by placing the burden on foreign (predominantly German and French) banks as well as on international investors; but this approach was difficult to explain, and contributed to Roemer's plight in the 2012 elections.

The SP is continuously hard-pressed to demonstrate that if it were in power, it would not squander the state budget by enlarging social programs which, how other parties claim, would destroy the international competitiveness of the country. The party is quite vulnerable to this allegation by its competitors. Under the VVD-PvdA government of 2012-17, the SP responded by accepting the necessity of budget cuts, but by criticizing the government's austerity measures for being too severe, and for disproportionately targeting people with low incomes. At the same time the SP grudgingly accepted the government's

⁶¹ In the run-up to the March 2017 elections, polls consistently showed that large group of erstwhile SP voters planned not to vote this time. The SP is aware that disillusioned voters are less inclined to cast their votes, and in several elections has directly addressed people planning to stay home with the slogan "staying home doesn't help, voting SP does!" See e.g. this tweet from Lilian Marijnissen, third on the SP's election list, on 15 March 2017: <https://twitter.com/MarijnissenL/status/841931674376105985> (accessed 12 May 2017).

⁶² See: MAX, "Recht van Spreken: Jan Marijnissen" (6 January 2016), 27:10 – 27:44. Accessed 7 January 2016: http://www.npo.nl/recht-van-spreken/06-01-2016/POW_03047756.

⁶³ Daniel Keith, "Failing to Capitalise on the Crisis: The Dutch Socialist Party". In: Luke March and Daniel Keith (eds.), *Europe's Radical Left. From Marginality to the Mainstream?* (London: Rowman and Littlefield 2016), pp. 155-172; here pp. 159-160.

gradual raise of the pension age to 67, which for a long time had been a red tape in the SP. This turn – induced by polls suggesting that most voters understand the necessity of this move⁶⁴ – left the populist defense of pensioners' interests to the PVV and a new pensioners' party (50+). The continuing focus on the weak in society is reflected in SP proposals to invest over 3 billion Euros in social care and poverty reduction, health care, and education – the costs of which would be covered by raising taxes on higher incomes, on capital and on profit of businesses.⁶⁵ Polls on the 2017 Election Day indeed indicated that SP voters were most concerned about the themes of social security, care for the elderly, and pensions. Interestingly, these polls also showed that GroenLinks voters primarily based their choices on exactly the same themes, and GroenLinks won 10 seats with this agenda.⁶⁶

Linkage: from Protest Movements to Trade Unions

The SP continues to cooperate with all sorts of protest movements, from Occupy over anti-austerity protests to anarchists, on local levels; generally, it sees participation in common campaigns as an opportunity to present itself in public. Yet there is less cooperation at the national level. The SP makes no secret of its claim to have a monopoly on the anti-capitalist movement in the Netherlands,⁶⁷ which leaves little room for equal partnerships with independent social movements and organizations. To this day, the SP maintains a strongly centralized party culture, in which the party leadership takes important decisions with little room for diverging opinions. This centralized organization model makes any social movement appear as fundamentally uncontrollable.

The party has however been drawing closer to the Dutch trade unions, responding to the latter's disappointment with the PvdA and the unions' more activist course in recent years.⁶⁸ In 2010 the SP met with the largest Dutch federation of trade unions, the FNV, to discuss the crisis, which then led to joint protests against cuts in healthcare services (2010) and against austerity measures (2013, 2014). Relatively many SP members are also trade union members, and there is also overlap in cadres: a very long and well-organized strike of cleaners in 2014 was led by (former) FNV official Ron Meyer, who from 2006 headed the SP's local chapter in the southern town of Heerlen.

⁶⁴ Ibid, p. 163.

⁶⁵ See the SP's alternative budget for 2016: SP, *Alternatieven 2016. Een eerste stap naar een sociaal en duurzaam Nederland* (13 September 2015), pp. 3; 7. Accessed 27 January 2017: https://www.sp.nl/sites/default/files/sp_alternatieven_2016.pdf.

⁶⁶ Ipsos, "Waarom stemden mensen wat ze stemden?" (16 March 2017). Accessed 12 May 2017: <http://www.ipsos-nederland.nl/ipsos-politieke-barometer/persberichten/2017/waarom-stemden-mensen-wat-ze-stemden>.

⁶⁷ See Tiny Kox, Senator and member of the SP's 2012 election campaign team, in a 2013 interview with Daniel Keith, as quoted in: Keith, "Failing to Capitalise on the Crisis", p. 161.

⁶⁸ Considering the SP's focus on social and economic issues, the main question seems to be why such links were not established earlier. Previous hesitation seems to have been caused by the SP's Maoist roots which "made it distrustful of the trade-unions it accused of being in cahoots with capital and the state." De Jong, "The long march of the Dutch Socialist Party", p. 4.

The November 2015 Leadership Elections

The union successes contributed to Ron Meyer's rise to leadership in the party. Reflecting also the party's increasing ties with trade union activism, in the run-up to the election of a new leadership in late November 2015 (when Jan Marijnissen stepped down as party leader), Meyer was openly endorsed by the SP board as its preferred candidate. Meyer's only (and initially unexpected) competitor was long-time SP parliamentarian Sharon Gesthuizen, who in her campaign advocated more attention for international solidarity, human rights issues and environmental sustainability, and called upon the party to be more visible in difficult debates – including specifically debates on the European refugee situation. Gesthuizen also called for more cultural, gender and sexual diversity within the party, and challenged the party top by advocating more internal party democracy.⁶⁹ While Meyer remained neutral on the latter issue, Jan Marijnissen openly spoke out against a change of how the party is run. In an interview in September 2015, he scornfully rejected a call for change in the party's leadership style as “dumb”, and argued against the “ultra-democratism” of giving lay persons decision powers against expert opinion.⁷⁰ Gesthuizen seemed to have acquiesced in the party board's decision, and in the run-up to the elections her debates with Meyer were of a rather amicable nature.

In the SP's first ever elections to party leadership, only delegates to the party congress had a vote, each of whom represented 50 members.⁷¹ In the run-up to the party congress, the two candidates thus vied for the support of the local chapters and their respective delegates. Yet the unease about the election procedure grew steadily throughout the campaign period. Various representatives of local SP chapters complained publicly about the national board's open endorsement of Meyer's candidature, and especially about the aid he was given in organizing and running his campaign, including through memos instructing delegates how to promote Meyer as the ideal candidate in their constituencies.⁷² This contributed to Gesthuizen's rise in popularity in the last weeks before the elections; and she also gained the support of party prominents such as Ewout Irrgang, a long-term SP member and former MP (2005-2012) who is known for his 'moderate' views, and who rose to particular prominence as the SP's spokesperson for monetary and financial issues during the economic crisis.⁷³ In the run-up to the elections, Irrgang sharply criticized the organizational support for Meyer, and characterized the elections as being “perhaps free, but not necessarily fair”.⁷⁴ This is

⁶⁹ Gesthuizen published a “four points program” to this extent: “Mijn visie: Een betere SP begint hier”.

Published on Gesthuizen's facebook page (28 September 2015). Accessed 7 January 2016:

<https://www.facebook.com/>

[permalink.php?story_fbid=1476442939326274&id=1469669526670282&substory_index=0](https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=1476442939326274&id=1469669526670282&substory_index=0).

⁷⁰ Ally Smid, “Jan Marijnissen: Democratie kun je ook overdrijven”. In: *Volkskrant* (6 September 2015). Accessed 10 October 2015: <http://www.trouw.nl/tr/nl/4492/Nederland/article/detail/4136740/2015/09/06/Jan-Marijnissen-Democratie-kun-je-ook-overdrijven.dhtml>.

⁷¹ Thus, over 900 people were allowed to vote in the trapped elections; and many local chapters are represented by several delegates (up to 50, in Amsterdam). This also allows for a division of support over both candidates. Some chapters determined how their group of delegates were to vote proportionally on local party meetings, whereas others left this decision up to their delegates.

⁷² Annemarie Kas and Thijs Niemantsverdriet, “Een SP'er kiest vrij en met ongemak”. In: *NRC* (12 November 2015).

⁷³ Ewout Irrgang also wrote the SP's 2008 program on the economic crisis: Agnes Kant en Ewout Irrgang, *De Lessen uit de Kredietcrisis* (Rotterdam 2008). Accessed online 27 January 2017:

<https://www.sp.nl/rapport/2008/lessen-uit-kredietcrisis>.

⁷⁴ Kas and Niemantsverdriet, “Een SP'er kiest vrij en met ongemak”.

noteworthy, as up to that point the SP had always managed to keep internal discord out of the public eye: more isolated critiques of the party line were generally depicted as the position of misguided or disgruntled minorities. Thus on the one hand, the party top sought to control the first-ever leadership elections, and was clearly anxious to avoid public bickering that might harm the party. Yet on the other hand, the elections did indeed facilitate discussion on party organization and democratization within the SP.

Eventually, at the Party congress of 28 November 2015, Meyer was elected as the new chairman of the SP with 529 out of 899 votes, corresponding to 59 percent of the ballots. The remaining 370 votes, or 41 percent, went to Gesthuizen. This was more than the party top had expected, whose strategy had been to largely ignore her campaign until it became impossible. Immediately after the elections, the struggle for interpretative authority on this election outcome erupted. His supporters, including Jan Marijnissen, celebrated Meyer's win by a "big lead" and concluded, in the words of former MP Krista van Velzen, that a "large majority is thus not supportive of Sharon [Gesthuizen]"⁷⁵ – suggesting that Gesthuizen's election program could now be safely ignored.⁷⁶ Roemer, chief of the SP faction in parliament, expressed his happiness with the outcome of the election. He admitted that he and Meyer had already been closely cooperating for "a very long time", adding "[w]e already were a tandem. Now this has also become official"⁷⁷ – thus retrospectively admitting that the party top had influenced the elections. Meanwhile, supporters of Gesthuizen interpreted the election outcome differently. While some optimistically suggested that the "large minority" of votes cast for Gesthuizen, and thus against the party top's preferred candidate, evidenced a break with long-established centralism in the SP that would lead to more openness and party democracy, others criticized the way in which the party top swiftly proceeded to discard Gesthuizen's reform agenda after the elections as a sign that little had changed.⁷⁸ Gesthuizen herself was quick to congratulate Meyer on his victory, but objected to the idea that this had been a win by large margins. Instead, she stated that it would be a "sign of fear" to ignore that 41% of the votes had gone to her: "Just like I am not afraid to acknowledge that I lost [...], it is better for those who had hoped for a truly 'big lead' to acknowledge that things are changing within our beautiful party. Let us embrace this reality together! Because through acknowledging such developments one can forge the unity that we need."⁷⁹ In March, Gesthuizen announced that she would leave parliament after the March 2017 elections.

⁷⁵ Annemarie Kas, "SP hoopt dat strijd is gestreden". In: *NRC* (30 November 2015).

⁷⁶ Marijnissen: "[Ron Meyer] doesn't have to do anything with these votes [for Gesthuizen], no. ... They [Gesthuizen's supporters] do not have a majority." Quoted in: Maartje Bakker, "Ron Meyer geeft SP weer hoop". In: *De Volkskrant* (29 November 2015). Accessed 11 January 2016: <http://www.volkskrant.nl/binnenland/ron-meyer-geeft-sp-weer-hoop~a4197914/>.

⁷⁷ Cited in Kas, "SP hoopt dat strijd is gestreden".

⁷⁸ On 9 January 2016, Kevin Levie, SP chair of the Netherlands' second-largest city, Rotterdam, resigned from his post out of frustration over the outcomes of the 28 November party congress. In an explanatory letter posted on his personal blog, he lamented the SP's centralized organizational model and the party's invisibility on important but difficult debates (including on the refugee crisis), and criticized the party top's choice to ignore proposals for change by Gesthuizen and her supporters as a sign of continued stagnation. Kevin Levie, "Ik stop als voorzitter van de SP afdeling Rotterdam. Dit is waarom". Accessed 11 January 2016: <http://blog.kevinlevie.nl/post/136944778702/ik-vertrek>.

⁷⁹ Sharon Gesthuizen, published on facebook (28 November 2015). Accessed 07 January 2016: <https://www.facebook.com/Sharon-Gesthuizen-1469669526670282/?fref=nf>.

2017 Elections: Program and Outcomes

The 2015 leadership elections were obviously also a choice between two different visions for the future of the party more broadly – and in this, the outcome is clear. With Ron Meyer, a union activist from the southern part of the Netherlands, the SP has chosen to stay close to its traditional left constituency, and to focus on developing its strengths as an activist party with strong local ties.

This renewed focus on activism was also visible in the party's 2017 election program, called “#GrabThePower” (*#PakDeMacht*), which is furthermore characterized by a more populist tone and directed “against the politics of the elite”.⁸⁰ This theme runs through the program, with every chapter starting with a list of aggrieved questions that rhetorically ask the reader why (s)he is being wronged. Chapter 1 starts off with the question “Who is the boss in this country? The governors or the people?”⁸¹

The programmatic focus of the SP is however a token of stability, with health care remaining the party's central issue. Not only has this long been an SP priority, it is also an issue of increasing concern for many Dutch voters. In mid-2016, the SP launched a plan for an inclusive “National Health Care Fund” (*Nationaal Zorgfonds*) to replace the current and very unpopular system of privatized health care insurances. This plan soon gathered enthusiastic support, including from other opposition parties (the pensioners' party *50+* and the *Partij voor de Dieren*, a small party that has animal protection as its central issue) as well as from the health care and senior citizen trade unions of the FNV.⁸² In November 2016, a manifestation in favor of the *Nationale Zorgfonds* signaled the start of the SP election campaign.⁸³ Other focal points of the SP's program comprised an economic investment package that includes the construction of affordable rental housing and an increase in minimum wages, state support and living standards, as well as the option to retire at age 65⁸⁴ – a retreat from the SP's previous lukewarm concession that work until 67 might be needed in the future (the purpose of which was to show the party's readiness to enter a coalition). Proposed investments should be paid for by classic distribution policies – including a millionaire's tax and a fair taxation of multinationals. The SP furthermore advocated a national “people's bank” and an investment bank, to “end the usury” of the current banks.⁸⁵

Cooperation with (center-)left parties

The SP program thus focused on the classic left issues of community and equality. Yet cooperation with both PvdA and GroenLinks is difficult. The SP remains extremely wary of the PvdA after the latter had, in 2012, managed to win over a great part of the SP's electorate as “strategic voters” but then entered a coalition with the liberal VVD. In the run-

⁸⁰ SP, *#PakDeMacht. Programma voor een sociaal Nederland voor de verkiezingen van 15 maart 2017*. Accessed 26 January 2017: https://www.sp.nl/sites/default/files/sp_verkiezingsprogramma_2017_definitief.pdf.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁸² See the website of the *Nationale Zorgfonds*, under “Deze organisaties steunen de actie”. Accessed 26 January 2017: <https://nationaalzorgfonds.nl/>.

⁸³ SP, “Enthousiaste landelijke aftrap Nationaal Zorgfonds”. Accessed 26 January 2017: <https://www.sp.nl/nieuws/2016/11/enthousiaste-landelijke-aftrap-nationaal-zorgfonds>.

⁸⁴ SP, *#PakDeMacht*, p. 6.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

up to the March 2017 elections, Meyer repeatedly called upon the PvdA to promise its voters not to renew the coalition with the VVD. The SP also rejected a voting list alliance with GroenLinks and PvdA because these parties refused to block possible coalitions with the VVD. Such a promise would have increased the credibility of GroenLinks and PvdA's stated preferences for a left coalition, but it would also have reduced their opportunities for governing. In the March 2017 elections, SP, GroenLinks and PvdA together won 37 seats; one less than the PvdA alone won in 2012, and not even half of the 76 seats needed to form a majority coalition. This gloomy picture on the center-left side of the Dutch parliamentary landscape is not changed when we add the Partij voor de Dieren, which grew from 2 to 5 seats in the latest elections. At the moment (May 2017), GroenLinks is indeed engaged in coalition negotiations with the VVD, D'66 and CDA. Obviously, the political majority of the right combined with the division of the political left greatly reduced SP's chances of governing at the national level in the near future. This provides extra reason for the party to become more vocal in opposition to the upcoming government, and to remain strongly focused on local ties and activism.

Challenge from right-wing populist parties

On the right, the SP continues to suffer from other parties that have taken over (parts of) its socio-economic program but which have different political ideologies or target audiences, including specifically the PVV (core characteristics: islamophobia, anti-immigrant agenda, anti-EU) and 50+ (which targets voters over 50 years of age). Also the partial overlap in campaign issues with new and upcoming right-wing Eurosceptic populist groups causes unease among SP cadres. Especially after the national referendum on the Ukraine—EU Association Agreement of April 2016 (which resulted in a rejection of the Agreement), party activists complained that the SP had done too little to distance itself from the referendum's initiators of *GeenPeil*; an initiative that grew out of the right-wing media platform "*GeenStijl*". The fact that the SP was campaigning against the Agreement from a different perspective remained largely unnoticed by the Dutch public, despite the inclusion of Ukrainian activists from the radical left in the SP campaign.

Referendums

The SP has been an advocate of more referendums, as a form of direct democracy, for a long time. Notably, the SP also booked several successes in referendums. In 2005, the party campaigned successfully against the "European constitution"; and in 2016, the SP was one of the parties that campaigned against the EU Association Agreement with Ukraine, which was indeed rejected by the Dutch referendum.⁸⁶ Immediately after the Brexit referendum in the

⁸⁶ This was a non-binding referendum. On 16 December 2016, the Dutch government eventually approved of the Association Agreement after the EU's Council of Ministers on 15 December adopted a legally binding interpretation of the agreement that stipulated it cannot be regarded as a EU commitment to an eventual Ukrainian membership candidature, does not include Ukraine in the European system of collective security, and does not offer Ukrainian citizens rights on the European labour market. Rijksoverheid, "Kabinet stemt in met wet inwerkingtreding associatieakkoord EU en Oekraïne" (16 December 2016). Accessed 12 May 2015: <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/associatieakkoord-oekraïne/nieuws/2016/12/16/kabinet-stemt-in-met-wet-inwerkingtreding-associatieakkoord-eu-en-oekraïne>.

UK, the SP called the Brexit “an excellent chance for a downsized and democratic Europe”⁸⁷ and floated the possibility of a referendum on the power of the EU in the Netherlands.⁸⁸ This is consistent with the SP's Eurosceptic stance over many years. The SP wants to move to an intergovernmental system without the power to interfere with national budgets and social policies. To this end, the SP seeks to abolish the European Commission, and to grant individual member states the right to restrict the European internal market. The general public should first approve any future delegation of powers to the EU through referendums. Suggestions that this might also include a referendum on EU membership (for a “Nexit”) – which the right-wing PVV was quick to demand after the Brexit referendum – were rejected by the SP for the moment, but explicitly left open as a possibility in case EU reforms are not forthcoming.⁸⁹ This once again shows the SP's difficulties in walking a tightrope between a continued commitment to anti-establishment policies and keeping distance to right-wing populist contenders, which partly vie for the same voters.

Cleavages and Chances

The delicate balancing between an anti-establishment program and office-seeking strategies, and between socio-economic issues and libertarian and ecological issues, also takes place within the party organization. The rapid growth of the SP after 2000 led to an influx of new party members, who soon also formed a considerable part of the party's activists and representatives. These newcomers often had an academic background, and tended to focus more on issues such as ecology, anti-discrimination policies and international solidarity. It is primarily this group that was most attracted to the program of Gesthuizen, and that remains dissatisfied about the party's traditionalist agenda and leadership.

New party activists are also less willing to automatically follow the party top's directions. This is visible in the growing signs of public discontent. Roemer's loss of support in the run-up to the 2012 elections remains a sour point within the SP. While party cadres stress that the SP won in the subsequent local (2014), European (2014) and provincial (2015) elections, these successes did little to improve Roemer's credibility as candidate for the job of the prime minister, and dissatisfaction with his leadership reignited with the disappointing results in the March 2017 elections. Already in December 2016 several anonymous SP MPs admitted to the *AD* newspaper that they saw Roemer's leadership as a liability, and believed the party would have better chances in the elections with a new leader.⁹⁰ These MPs also complained about the party top's lack of room for critique, its “one-sided focus” on healthcare and the “unbalanced” candidate list, which would feature many “friends of Meyer” in the top-10.⁹¹ Although internal criticism was quickly silenced in the run-up to the

⁸⁷ SP, “Roemer: ‘Brexit uitgelezen kans voor afgeslankt en democratisch Europa’” (27 June 2016). Accessed 26 January 2017: <https://www.sp.nl/nieuws/2016/06/roemer-brexit-uitgelezen-kans-voor-afgeslankt-en-democratisch-europa>.

⁸⁸ NOS, “Ook SP wil referendum, maar dan over de macht van de EU” (24 June 2016). Accessed 26 January 2017: <http://nos.nl/artikel/2113180-ook-sp-wil-referendum-maar-dan-over-de-macht-van-de-eu.html>.

⁸⁹ Thijs Niemantsverdriet and Mark Kranenburg, “Na Brexit komt Nexit, hopen de EU-critici”. In: *NRC* (25 June 2016). Accessed 26 January 2017: <https://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2016/06/25/na-brexit-komt-nexit-hopen-de-eu-critici-1629004-a1504649>.

⁹⁰ Edwin van der Aa en Jan Hoedeman, “‘Roemer kan geen fractie leiden, laat staan Nederland’”. In: *AD* (14 December 2016). Accessed 26 January 2017: <http://www.ad.nl/binnenland/roemer-kan-geen-fractie-leiden-laat-staan-nederland~a80ce85b/>.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

elections, these complaints were reiterated by local SP activists after 15 March 2017.⁹² SP members also differ in their approach to refugees: the party's official standpoint favors a strict asylum policy and calls for refugees to be helped in their regions of origin, while a substantial group of SP members favors a more generous asylum policy. Activists from inside and outside the party moreover complained of the SP's apparent blind spot when it comes to ethnic diversity - and point to the loss of voters to *Denk*.⁹³ Such open disputes about the direction of the party are new to the SP, and signal the party's difficulties in reconciling its old constituency, and especially the self-image of the party's first-day activists, with the political understandings of a newer member group. As such, these tensions are an outcome of the party's steady growth over the past two decades and reflect the SP's transition from a marginal party to one of the core parties of the Dutch parliament. As the only radical left party in parliament, the SP has the potential of attracting a large and diverse group of voters. The reconciliation of the party's different constituencies will be a central challenge to the SP in its quest to see the virtual support levels of 2012 materialize in political power on the national stage.

⁹² Joost de Vries, "SP gaat uitslag evalueren, maar graag zonder externe commissie". In: *De Volkskrant* (25 March 2015). Accessed 12 May 2017: <http://www.volkskrant.nl/binnenland/sp-gaat-uitslag-evalueren-maar-graag-zonder-externe-commissie~a4479123/>.

⁹³ Ibid. Both issues were also raised in Gesthuizen's campaign. For a critique from outside the party, see Ewout van den Berg, "De SP heeft een antiracismeprobleem". *Socialisme.Nu* (10 January 2017). Accessed 27 January 2017: <http://socialisme.nu/blog/nieuws/51714/de-sp-heeft-een-antiracismeprobleem/>.

Morea, Roberto

Analysis of the Italian referendum vote

To understand the referendum vote and what it opened in Italy in the new political phase is certainly useful when making a careful analysis of the bases that have determined it. The bond between Italians with their Constitution must be understood right from its origin. There was a time when the forces, that had fought to bring down fascism, came together in writing common rules, principles and values founding our nation. The best minds among liberals, catholics, socialists and communists have been able to produce a text in which each culture found its space and its recognition. An alliance that De Gasperi (DC) and Togliatti (PCI) had built in the partisan brigades and had led to the end of the war to the affirmation of the Republic against the Monarchy.

The Cold War would have started a little later, and the US intervention had not yet explained its wings. Our resistance gave us the opportunity of a self-management of after the first World War and the birth of the Republic. A system that provides a broad representation with the election of 630 deputies and 315 senators. The Senate at the time of the birth of the republic was actually asked by the Christian Democrats to avoid the parliamentary victory of the Left that, if they could count on a majority in the House, would have more difficulty in reaching a majority in the Senate. A parliamentary system with a so-called perfect bicameralism where government confidence and the passage of major laws must pass between the two chambers.

The constitution thus cannot be perceived as "biased" and certainly contains elements of social progress that are ill-combined with the desire to cancel any role that states have towards the economic and financial powers which would like today govern the world without the obstacle of politics, i.e. democracy. Although, in many respects the articles of the constitution are in the facts disregarded and the real constitution underwent a broader redefinition of values, the cancellation and the centralization of power inscribed in the Boschi-Renzi reform was rejected mainly as opposition.

The challenge of Premier Renzi rests on the desire of a whole Italian and international ruling class, who goes from the former President Napolitano, to Chancellor Merkel, and the investment bank JP Morgan, to simplify and centralize decision making in the hands of government, in particular in the hands of the prime minister. With the combined provisions of the new electoral law, that would allow party leaders to choose whom to put on the electoral list, and with a large political majority, would have allowed Renzi to maintain and tighten even more around himself both his own party (PD) and the government, in a tripolar clash with the right wing (Lega Nord and Forza Italia), the confrontation with the M5S and absorption of the moderate right in their own lines.

The election campaign was supported on a widespread feeling of contempt for the political class, privileges and corruption under which many are suffering. This is why the design of centralization of powers is accompanied and in a way hidden by the transformation of the Senate, but instead of the cancellation of the institution was maintained with number of 100 senators no more elected but appointed by regional political forces. The campaign did discuss in detail the customization with which the head of government wanted to give to the reform, so far as to submit his political career to the positive result. A populism from above, as it is called, made by the same political class that is increasingly perceived as distant from

the daily lives of people and unable to reverse a disastrous course in economic and social terms. From the birth of the economic crisis of 2007/8, it continues to deteriorate in terms of employment and working conditions.

The political forces in favor and contrary to the reform have thus traced directly the forces that supported the government on one side and all the other political forces in opposition on the other. In favor of reform the Democratic Party, the deserters of Berlusconi's right wing, as Alfano and Verdini.

The question of the constitutional reforms has given a further twist to the story inside the PD, after an initial timid internal resistance, some of the leading figures of the party, former Secretary Pierluigi Bersani to the founder Massimo D'Alema, have lined up for the no, exacerbating an internal rift that will drag on until the next congress with a minority increasingly marginalized. The deployment of the SI (YES) has nevertheless received the support of all media, including Mediaset (Berlusconi) networks and Rai networks (public television).

Berlusconi's attitude was ambiguous until the polls made it appear the victory of NO more than provable. Only then, a few days before the vote, he appeared on TV supporting the campaign for the NO, with fairly weak arguments and in some ways accusing the reform to have been too timid in centralization of powers choices. We have to remember in fact that he himself was the promoter of the first constitutional reform presented in 2006, which provided a kind of indirect presidential system, which was soundly rejected by 61% of voters in a referendum, however, we saw then the participation of 52% of eligible voters. In reality at the beginning of the legislature, Renzi and Berlusconi had established an agreement (called the Nazarene Pact, from the name of the street where the direction of the Democratic Party is located) on various issues, including the constitutional reform itself, which in fact was voted first by Forza Italia (Berlusconi' Party). After the election of the President of the Republic without the agreement of the right, Berlusconi breaks the Pact and takes sides in opposition.

To this it should be added that the Constitutional Court has defined illegal the election law with which the same parliament was elected, this threw a lawlessness light to the reform proposal made by this parliament.

The campaign for the SI has received huge financial resources and the support of industrial and public figures who crowded television programs and newspapers, Marchionne and Industrial Confederation, actors, opinion leaders and journalists. The support, as we said, by world figures in politics and international economics from the German Interior Minister Thomas de Maizière to the Financial Times, in short the entire establishment has sided.

If we analyze the vote it is clear that those who voted for the NO were especially young people struggling with jobs ever more precarious and without guarantees for the future. They were joined by the weaker sectors less and less guaranteed and excluded by social security and the suburbs of the big cities as well as in the poorest areas.

Geographically the south, including the islands, was the biggest gap with 70% tips to the NO. Only two regions, Tuscany and Emilia Romagna, strongholds of the Democratic Party, did they see a narrow victory of YES, accompanied by the province of Bolzano (South Tyrol). For the rest, the sign of a refusal was predominant. All these factors have led many commentators to call this a "social NO" before political, and there is no doubt that expulsion

of the reform has had social character, but, in my view, also been seen as a "rapprochement" with political themes many of which they have so far chosen not to attend. 19 million people have chosen to express themselves through a vote, within those 19 million many were disappointed, even people who usually do not participate in elections. A rapprochement that can be read as an interest in Politics with a capital P, which found in the constitution a flag and a desire for democracy, to count in the choices.

Immediately after the referendum defeat Renzi submitted his resignation to the President of the Republic whom, in absence of a "constitutionally" correct election law, has given the task to a member of the same outgoing government to form a new government. Paolo Gentiloni, former foreign minister Renzi's government, has thus built a new executive "photocopy" of the one just resigned representing the same parliamentary majority and almost entirely the same ministers.

The mandate seems explicitly "business as usual", anesthetize the referendum vote and continue with the policies produced since.

The framework instability factors, however, are far from few. On the one hand the limited resources and lack of economic growth adds to the difficulties to respond to the banking crisis, on the other, the offensive putted in field by the main Italian trade union, the CGIL, which has promoted a series of referendums which directly affect the precarious labor relations system, seem to affect the smooth sailing of the government.

The authoritative statements of government ministers, such as those of Economy Minister Padoan, seem to presage a willingness to continue the legislative path to its natural end, which will be in 2018. But the internal conditions of the PD and the same will recur to Renzi who do not want to leave the field, it may give precedence to an acceleration to the vote. As well as the view of the judgement of the Constitutional Court that by amending the electoral law, it did delivering an immediate opportunity to go to vote.

At the moment the possible scenarios are thus two. The first is where the establishment (Italian and European) tries to take time and continue with usual economic policies, without taking into account the referendum vote, or rather trying to "numb it," leading up to the natural expiry of the mandate and the legislature (2018). The second is that there will be a new electoral law going quickly to the vote. In this second scenario, however, we have two variables. Maintain a majority trim with ballots in the event of failure to reach the percentage required to reach the majority premium, or instead have a proportional electoral law that leads in parliament all the political forces in order to build a majority and a political program in parliament.

In favor of the first hypothesis, former premier Renzi, sees in the second case, the proportional, the definition of an Italian edition of the grosse koalition. In fact, the biggest supporter in parliament of proportional law is Silvio Berlusconi, who has spoken of this voting mode, awaiting the decision of the European Court and in the hope of a favorable outcome that would enable him to return to play a political role.

It is evident that the situation cannot be described as stable.

Kolač, Nika

The Fight for Equality – The First Trial for the United Left

Introduction

In the early election in July 2014, the United Left, a coalition of 3 smaller leftist parties, managed to reach the 4% electoral threshold by securing 6% of all votes, thus obtaining 6 out of 90 parliamentary seats in the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia. For the Slovenian left, this was an important event, as it meant that after 25 years, a socialist left-wing party would be in the parliament again, a party with a clear agenda: the democratization of society, the opposition to privatization and the advocacy of socialised management, fairer distribution of wealth, environmental transformation, as well as the abolition of all kinds of discrimination and subordination.

The United Left, composed mainly of politically inexperienced cadres, mostly young activists, thus faced great challenges. The securing of parliamentary seats was expected by few, most saw its participation in the election as a smaller step towards the attempt of building a socialist movement. The result that public opinion polls predicted for the United Left ensured state funding, and thus a material basis for the work of organization, which until then had worked mostly on a voluntary basis. The next step was supposed to be the local elections in the fall of the same year, but the mostly unforeseen success turned everything upside down.

The first 6 months

After the election, the United Left carried out pro forma talks about entering the coalition government with the party of the current Prime Minister, Miro Cerar, but the talks ended quickly due to fundamentally opposing views on privatization. A centre-left government was formed, comprised of the Prime Minister's Modern Centre Party (36 seats) the Democratic Party of Pensioners of Slovenia (10 seats), and the Social Democrats (6 seats). The United Left remained in opposition, along with two right-wing parties, New Slovenia (5 seats) and the Slovenian Democratic Party of the former Prime Minister Janez Janša (21 seats), as well as the liberal Alliance of former Prime Minister Alenka Bratušek (4 seats).

In its role of the opposition, the United Left decided on a double strategy. On the one hand, to continue pressing for crucial issues that were addressed in the election campaign, and on the other, to open up new questions, which the liberal governments for various reasons were unable or failed to properly address in the past.

The main subject during the first six months of the United Left's activities was the fight against privatization. We carried out several far-reaching campaigns, primarily against the sale of Telekom Slovenija. This specific privatization is currently still blocked. Besides that, the United Left managed to acquire support for the founding of a parliamentary commission of inquiry regarding the construction of the 600 MW thermoelectric plant TEŠ 6, worth an astonishing 1,4 billion euros. The inquiry into this contentious project, which was overpaid by nearly twice its worth, was one of our pre-election promises as well.

On the other hand, the United Left proposed two measures during that time, both having great support among the centre-left public, but which the centre-left government did not dare to implement. The first was the official recognition of the Palestinian state. The National Assembly voted for a resolution that obligated the Government to execute the recognition (the Government, however, has unfortunately not done so to this day). The second measure was a legislative proposal, which would grant equal rights to same-sex couples, in December 2014. The latter, as it later turned out, would greatly determine the functioning of the United Left in the following year.

The Marriage Relations Act

When the Marriage Relations Act was forwarded into parliamentary procedure, the situation in Slovenia was not favourable to granting equal rights to same-sex couples. On the one hand, public opinion polls showed that most citizens of Slovenia did not support the complete equalization of rights and duties. On the other hand, parliamentary parties wanted to improve the situation only to a small extent, but did not want to achieve definitive regulation of the rights of homosexual people. The United Left proposed the only just solution, aiming to change the public discourse on LGBT rights.

The United Left sought for a solution that would fully address and resolve all the situations which same-sex couples are facing in everyday life, trying to end legal discrimination completely.

Historic Context

The debates concerning the regulation of rights of same-sex communities have been present in media and politics for more than 25 years, but during this time, the only thing that managed to pass through the National Assembly procedure was the Registration of Same-Sex Partnership Act, which was passed by the government of Janez Janša during his 2004–2008 mandate, without the support of LGBT organizations. The support of centre-left parties existed all this time mainly nominally, but when the situation called for concrete action, that support was in question. This can be clearly seen in the way the LDS government handled the passing of the law, as well as in the case of the Family Code:

- The whole procedure took more than a year and a half
- It separated the institutions for same-sex and opposite-sex partners
- It did not allow for adoption by same-sex partners
- The parties that supported the Family Code at the time were not very active in the campaign

The above reasons led to a certain scepticism by the representatives of the LGBT community, therefore, they were not fully supportive of the solution. Many supposed that the solutions in the Family Code were less radical, and were still barely passed in parliament while failing completely in the referendum, which implied that the proposed solution would fail again, if not in parliament, then certainly in the referendum.

The government was also reserved towards the passing of the bill: they had prepared a less radical solution, which would lead to only partial equalization of same-sex and opposite-sex

partners' rights. On 3 March 2015, the ZZZDR amendment was passed with 51 votes for and 28 against. The National Council did not vote for the expected veto, but in line with the expectations, the referendum initiative was launched and thus the whole referendum story began.

Constitutional Amendment

Compared to 2012, when the Constitutional Court allowed the referendum on the Family Code, the circumstances had changed, since the **referendum legislature at the constitutional level** had also changed until then. A quorum was introduced that had not existed in 2012 (besides the majority of votes, the party opposed to a certain law needs to secure 20% of all voters to vote against it). Among other things, the following was added to Article 90 of the Constitution: "A referendum may not be called on laws eliminating an unconstitutionality in the field of human rights and fundamental freedoms or any other unconstitutionality." Most constitutional lawyers thus held the opinion, that the Constitutional Court would not allow the referendum on the ZZZDR amendment to be called.

Taking into consideration the results of public opinion polls and the results of the Family Code referendum, it was expected that if the referendum were to happen anyway, and the majority would vote on the rights of a minority, the ZZZDR would most likely fail. The political parties and ruling coalition were expected to stand behind the law in case of a referendum, actively and financially supporting the campaign in favour of the law, and seriously join the campaign. This was also the message they sent. We wanted: on the one hand to play an integrative role between the LGBT community as well as the rest of civil society and the political parties, and to form a coalition (financial, media, ...) as broad as possible, which could address a large part of the voting body. On the other hand, we were considering how we could outline a socialist line within the common campaign, and an independent line of the United Left.

Liberal Parties renounce their Support of the Law

After the Constitutional Court made its decision, which was merely procedural and not substantive, it soon became clear that the government would give up on the law. It wavered whether it would even participate in the referendum campaign (in the end, it did not, consequently the anticipated funds from the budget were not available). The non-support was made more obvious when the referendum was called, despite several pleas, including those by the LGBT organizations, on the 20th December – the date the opposing side hoped for (the so-called Christmas family referendum). In that instant, the United Left saw that, in order to unify the campaign for the equality of rights of same-sex and opposite-sex couples, its role was to establish a wide front of civil-society movements and liberal political parties. Since the liberal parties had renounced their financial support to the Čas je ZA (Time for YES) campaign, the United Left found its main ally in the LGBT community.

The Realisation of the Campaign and its Shortcomings

The civil society wagered on a campaign, similar to the Irish »Ireland says Yes campaign« (certain elements of that campaign are in fact interesting for the building of a socialist movement):

- The use of speakers from everyday life (belonging to different social groups)
- The use of simple language, emotional speech
- Door-to-door campaign
- The use of social networks

However, it turned out that the campaign was the first project that revealed the actual scope of the left and its various shortcomings which appeared at the level of field-work:

- We lack the skill of communicating our ideas to the media.

The support for the opposing side by the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches was extremely strong. Besides having activists in every village, square, parish, who ushered people from pulpits to polling stations, they also had the public television. Even POP TV, especially in its evening news, and Planet TV, reported on the lies of the opposing side as relevant opinions, not as homophobia. One of the main problems of the campaign was the fact that mainstream media assented to the discourse of the opponent of the law and in some cases even adopted it. Their statements were not demystified, but rather taken as a neutral starting point of the discussion.

- We do not have a developed rank-and-file network; the case is similar with liberal and social-democratic parties.

During the campaign, it turned out that a strong rank-and-file network was provided only by the United Left. Liberal parties did not want to participate in the campaign, or their network is no longer active. It also became clear that there was a huge deficit in the number of civil-society and LGBT organizations on the periphery of Slovenia. Certain areas of Slovenia were thus completely overlooked.

- We were unable to incorporate systemic criticism into the campaign itself.

On the 20th December 2015, the voter turnout was 623,544 or 36,38% of all voters. 226,879 or 36,53% of people voted for the amendment, while 394,254 or 63,47% voted against it. The law was therefore rejected, as there were more votes against than for, and at the same time, the quorum for rejection was reached, as more than 20% of voters voted against.

When analysing the success of the referendum campaign and trends in the field of the support for LGBT rights, parallels are often drawn between the ZZZDR referendum and the Family Code referendum, which was rejected with 233,268 or 45,45% FOR and 279,937 or 54,55% AGAINST. The conclusions of a large share of these analyses of simple counting are, that the opponents gained about 100 thousand votes, while the supporters of LGBT people lost about 7 thousand.

Therefore, we did not achieve the desired goal of the implementation of the ZZZDR amendment and thus equal rights for same-sex couples. It is possible to establish on the basis of the results of the referendum that the right managed to successfully mobilize an adequate number of voters. Considering the organizational and financial resources of SDS and its satellite, the Coalition for Children, as well as NSi and the Roman Catholic Church, this was to be expected, especially in view of the fact, that neither the government nor the coalition parties committed themselves in favour of the law. The Čas je ZA campaign and the United Left as the proponent of the amendment, despite all this, achieved a huge leap forward. The number of supporters of the complete equalization of rights of homosexual people has in-

creased. This is an important development, as it mitigates the continuation of the struggle for equality.

Conclusion

The analysis of the referendum campaign is also useful for the understanding of the Slovenian political space: in Slovenia, there are no longer any strong liberal and social-democratic parties. These parties no longer have strong rank-and-file networks, and when in power, they usually completely forget about the realization of basic commitments of their programmes.

The socialist left is currently faced with various problems, which are to a great extent the consequence of its longstanding marginal status. It does not have a developed rank-and-file network, and it also lacks backing in a diverse and connected network of civil-society organizations, which would enable the spread of ideas and our activities outside the urban areas across the whole country. It would be easy to console ourselves with the fact, that the right had been building its network for 2000 years, and that we should therefore aim to instate one party cell for every belfry, thus reducing the problem to merely an issue of resources and organization. Unfortunately, however, the problem is deeper. The leftist critical public is becoming more and more fragmented. It is difficult to expect that a critical community might be built around the precariously employed in various NGOs, who are in mutual competition and largely dependent on the government. The left needs to initiate the rebuilding of its institutions.

The second problem the left is facing is much worse, as it concerns the area, in which it has always considered itself superior – and that is the discursive struggle. During the referendum that was analysed in this contribution, it became clear that we had not developed a clear strategy to confront the approach of the right – their lies determined the discursive space, while we did not have an adequate counter weapon. Their arguments are based on lies, beliefs and prejudice – our arguments, on the contrary, are based on knowledge, which is much harder to communicate. We need to confront the fact, that we currently do not have appropriate discursive solutions for the lies launched by right-wing neoconservative movements. The ZZZDR referendum was the first real trial for the United Left, the adversary was too strong, but we emerge from the struggle stronger than when we entered it.

From defeat to defeat, to the final victory!

Jochen Weichold

Die europäische Integration, der Euro und die (radikale) Linke (deutsch)

Statt einer Einleitung: Gegensätzliche Reaktionen auf die Brexit-Entscheidung

Der Ausgang des Brexit-Referendums im Vereinigten Königreich, bei dem am 23. Juni 2016 rund 52 Prozent der Insel-Bewohner für einen Ausstieg aus der Europäischen Union (EU) stimmte,⁹⁴ hat unterschiedliche, ja gegensätzliche Kommentare hervorgerufen. Die auflagenstärkste tschechische Tageszeitung *Mlada Fronta Dnes* wertete das Referendums-Ergebnis als Zeichen dafür, „dass die Vision des europäischen Commonwealth auf dramatisch falschen Annahmen gründet. Die europäische Integration ist eine überkommene geopolitische Konzeption.“⁹⁵ Die führende norwegische Zeitung *Aftenposten* schrieb dagegen, Großbritanniens Rückzug sei eindeutig eine Krise vom schlimmsten Kaliber: „Aber diese Krise ist auch eine Chance, die Partnerschaft wieder neu zu erfinden, einen Neustart zu machen, zu definieren, was die EU wirklich sein soll.“⁹⁶

Die Unsicherheit darüber, wie es nach dem Abschied Großbritanniens von der EU weitergeht, wie lange sich die Austrittsverhandlungen hinziehen und welche Ergebnisse sie bringen werden, ließ jedoch zunächst Börsenkurse einbrechen, führt zur Zurückhaltung der Unternehmen bei Investitionen und hemmt die Konjunktur. Vor diesem Hintergrund hat das Deutsche Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung seine Konjunkturprognose für Deutschland für 2017 deutlich um 0,5 Prozentpunkte gesenkt.⁹⁷

Auch die Reaktionen aus dem Lager der (radikalen) europäischen Linken sind konträr. Eine Reihe Politiker und Wissenschaftler aus dem linken Spektrum, die sich in einem *Lexit*-Netzwerk organisiert haben, nimmt den Brexit zum Anlass, um auf einen „linken Ausstieg“ aus dem Euro (left exit) zu drängen. Nur darin liege die Möglichkeit „zur Verteidigung und Wiederherstellung der Demokratie“. Das Euro-System sei nicht reformierbar. Das gegenwärtige europäische Integrationsprojekt sei „zu einem Hindernis für Demokratie und Souveränität“ geworden.⁹⁸ Der Bundessprecher*innen-Rat der Strömung *Antikapitalistische*

⁹⁴ Vgl. Frankfurter Rundschau, Frankfurt am Main, 25./26.06.2016.

⁹⁵ Zit. in: Internationale Presse: Nach dem Brexit. In: Neues Deutschland, Berlin, 25./26.06.2016. – Der bekannte Finanzinvestor George Soros schrieb nach dem Brexit-Votum, die Auflösung der Europäischen Union sei praktisch irreversibel. Vgl. Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Frankfurt am Main, 27.06.2016.

⁹⁶ Zit. in: Internationale Presse: Nach dem Brexit, a.a.O.

⁹⁷ Vgl. Süddeutsche Zeitung, München, 25./26.06.2016 und 27.06.2016. – Klaus Busch, Professor (i.R.) für Europäische Studien an der Universität Osnabrück, verweist darauf, dass die wirtschaftlichen Folgen des Brexit keineswegs klar abzuschätzen sind, sondern bei verschiedenen Szenarien und Annahmen unterschiedliche Ergebnisse zeitigen können. Vgl. Klaus Busch: Das Versagen Europas. Die Euro- und die Flüchtlingskrise sowie die „Brexit“-Diskussion, Hamburg 2016, S. 75/76.

⁹⁸ Vgl. Demokratie und Souveränität statt neoliberaler Integration und gescheitertem Euro-System (2016). URL: <http://lexit-network.org/aufruf> (abgerufen am 05.07.2016). – Zu den Unterstützern der *Lexit*-Initiative gehören die Ökonomen Heiner Flassbeck und Costas Lapavistas, der deutsche Europa-Abgeordnete Fabio De Masi, die Bundestagsabgeordnete Inge Höger, der frühere italienische Vizeminister Stefano Fassina, der Soziologe Wolfgang Streeck, der britische trotzkistische Filmemacher und Autor Tariq Ali und die Attac-Aktivistinnen Peter Wahl und Steffen Stierle. Vgl. ebenda.

Linke in der Partei DIE LINKE, darunter die namhaften Trotzisten Lucy Redler und Thies Gleiss (beide Mitglieder des Bundesvorstandes der Partei), bezeichnete unter der Überschrift „Keine Zukunft für und mit EU“ die knappe britische Mehrheit für einen Austritt aus der EU als „einzig angemessene Antwort“. Wer bei dem Referendum für den Verbleib stimmte, der habe „einen schweren Fehler“ begangen und „sich gemein mit der herrschenden Elite des kapitalistischen Europas und seiner aktuellen Politik gemacht“. Es gebe keine Zukunft mit der EU und für sie.⁹⁹

Die britische radikale Linke Laurie Penny meint dagegen (bei aller berechtigten Kritik an der EU und ihren Institutionen), der Verbleib in der EU war „die beste Option, die wir je hatten“¹⁰⁰. Katja Kipping, Co-Vorsitzende der Partei DIE LINKE, erklärte, jetzt müsse für eine soziale und demokratische Europäische Union geworben werden. Es stelle sich die Frage, „ob wir von links zum Beispiel mit der erstarkenden Linken in Südeuropa die Verständigung über eine neue Verfassung Europas anschieben können“¹⁰¹. Gregor Gysi, bis 2015 Fraktionsvorsitzender der Fraktion DIE LINKE im Deutschen Bundestag, forderte nach dem Brexit-Votum: „Jetzt muss die Linke meines Erachtens um die Rettung der EU kämpfen und das verbinden mit Vorschlägen, wie sie endlich demokratischer, sozialer, ökologisch nachhaltiger, transparenter und unbürokratischer sowie von der Bevölkerung akzeptiert wird.“¹⁰² Selbst die Co-Vorsitzende der Fraktion DIE LINKE im Bundestag, Sahra Wagenknecht, sonst für andere Töne bekannt, erklärte: „Wir wollen Europa so verändern, dass es nicht weiter zerfällt.“ Die EU-Politik sollte so verändert werden, „dass die Menschen wieder ihre Hoffnung mit einem gemeinsamen Europa verbinden“.¹⁰³

Ökonomische Grundlagen der europäischen Integration

Um sich Klarheit über das künftige Schicksal der Europäischen Union zu verschaffen, kann ein Blick auf die ökonomischen Grundlagen der europäischen Integration helfen. „Das Bedürfnis nach einem stets ausgedehnteren Absatz für ihre Produkte jagt die Bourgeoisie über die ganze Erdkugel. Überall muß sie sich einnisten, überall anbauen, überall Verbindungen herstellen. Die Bourgeoisie hat durch ihre Exploitation des Weltmarkts die Produktion und Konsumtion aller Länder kosmopolitisch gestaltet. Sie hat zum großen Bedauern der Reaktionäre den nationalen Boden der Industrie unter den Füßen weggezogen“¹⁰⁴, schrieben Karl Marx und Friedrich Engels Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts. Sie machten

⁹⁹ Vgl. Antikapitalistische Linke: Keine Zukunft für und mit EU. **Erklärung des Bundessprecher*innen-Rates der Antikapitalistischen Linken in der LINKEN am 25. Juni 2016 zum Ausgang des EU-Referendums in Großbritannien.** URL: <http://www.antikapitalistische-linke.de/?p=1390#more-1390> (abgerufen am 05.07.2016).

¹⁰⁰ „Ja, es ist Panik“ (Interview mit Laurie Penny). In: taz – die tageszeitung, Berlin, 01.07.2016.

¹⁰¹ „Es kann in der EU kein ‚Weiter so‘ mehr geben“. Gespräch mit Katja Kipping. In: junge Welt, Berlin, 27.06.2016.

¹⁰² „Es gibt überhaupt keinen Anlass zur Freude“ (Interview mit Gregor Gysi). In: taz – die tageszeitung, Berlin, 27.06.2016. – Gregor Gysi hatte bereits im März 2016 in Auseinandersetzung mit Positionen der Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) erklärt: „Die rassistische Abschottungspolitik der AfD, die Rückkehr zum alten Nationalstaat ist nicht nur inhuman, sondern unmöglich.“ (Gregor Gysi: Den Rechtsruck in Deutschland stoppen. In: SUPERillu, Berlin, 17.03.2016.)

¹⁰³ Wagenknecht fordert Referenden über EU-Verträge (Interview). In: WELT ONLINE, Berlin, 28.06.2016. URL: <http://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/article156624985/Wagenknecht-fordert-Referenden-ueber-EU-Vertraege.html> (abgerufen am 04.07.2016).

¹⁰⁴ Karl Marx/Friedrich Engels: Manifest der Kommunistischen Partei. In: Karl Marx/Friedrich Engels: Werke, Bd. 4, Berlin 1974, S. 465/466.

darauf aufmerksam, dass der Drang nach Herrschaft und Unterwerfung des gesamten Erdballs dem Kapital von Geburt an eigen ist.

Seit den 1960er und 1970er Jahren führten die Veränderungen und Entwicklungen in den Produktivkräften und Produktionsverhältnissen zu – im Vergleich zu den Zeiten von Marx und Engels – neuen Dimensionen in der Internationalisierung des Kapitals. Diese neu entstandene Stufe der Internationalisierung des Kapitals war Ausdruck der Anpassung kapitalistischer Produktionsverhältnisse an die Entwicklung der Produktivkräfte, die insbesondere seit dem siebenten Jahrzehnt des 20. Jahrhunderts von der wissenschaftlich-technischen Revolution geprägt war. Die wissenschaftlich-technische Revolution, schrieb der Ökonom Heinz Petrak 1993, erfordere die Überwindung der „Nationalökonomien“, die Überwindung der Zersplitterung in Nationalstaaten.¹⁰⁵

Die neu entstandene Stufe der Internationalisierung des Kapitals war eine Reaktion auf die objektiv gewachsene Notwendigkeit, die ökonomische Tätigkeit der Wirtschaftssubjekte im internationalen Maßstab immer enger untereinander zu verflechten, da viele Probleme der Produktion und Forschung nicht mehr im nationalen Rahmen gelöst werden konnten, und stellte zugleich die Anpassungs- und Entwicklungsfähigkeit des Kapitalismus unter Beweis. Der Internationalisierungsprozess „wird durch das Wirken des allgemeinen Gesetzes der Übereinstimmung der Produktionsverhältnisse mit dem Charakter und dem Entwicklungsniveau der Produktivkräfte vorangetrieben“¹⁰⁶. Der Politikwissenschaftler und Historiker Wilfried Loth verweist mit dem Blick auf das Westeuropa vor allem der 1950er Jahre auf „zahlreiche Bestrebungen zur Schaffung größerer Wirtschaftsräume, die dem unterdessen erreichten Entwicklungsstand der Produktivkräfte gerecht wurden und der Tendenz zur nationalstaatlichen Abschottung der modernen Interventions- und Wohlfahrtsstaaten entgegenwirkten“¹⁰⁷.

Die Internationalisierung des Kapitals äußerte sich insbesondere zum einen in der Entwicklung internationaler Monopole (auch als trans- bzw. multinationale Konzerne bezeichnet), zum anderen in staatsmonopolistischen Integrationsformen wie der Europäischen Wirtschaftsgemeinschaft (EWG) und der Europäischen Freihandelszone (European Free Trade Association – EFTA) und zum dritten in internationalen Organisationen wie Weltbank und Internationalem Währungsfonds. Ende der 1980er Jahre entfielen auf die 600 größten multinationalen Konzerne ein Fünftel bis ein Viertel des Wertes der Produktion in der kapitalistischen Weltwirtschaft. Allein die US-amerikanischen transnationalen Gesellschaften realisierten 90 Prozent der Außenhandelsgeschäfte ihres Staates, wobei mehr als 40 Prozent auf den sogenannten intra-firm trade entfielen, der sich an der Oberfläche als Außenhandel der USA mit anderen Ländern darstellte.¹⁰⁸ Die hierin zum Ausdruck

¹⁰⁵ Vgl. Heinz Petrak: Die Sache mit der Nation. Nachdenken über ein für Linke schwieriges Thema. Positionspapier zur Fachtagung „Nationale Frage und wirtschaftliche Entwicklung“ am 27.11.1993 [...], Berlin 1993, S. 6.

¹⁰⁶ „Multis“ – Proletariat – Klassenkampf, Berlin 1981, S. 17.

¹⁰⁷ Wilfried Loth: Der Weg nach Europa. Geschichte der europäischen Integration 1939-1957, Göttingen 1990, S. 134.

¹⁰⁸ Vgl. IPW-Berichte, Berlin, 1990, Nr. 7, S. 59. – Die Zahl der transnationalen Konzerne (TNK) stieg von 32.000 im Jahre 1990 auf 82.000 im Jahre 2008. Vgl. Melani Coni-Zimmer, Annegret Flohr: Transnationale Unternehmen: Problemverursacher und Lösungspartner? (19.12.2013). URL: <http://www.bpb.de/apuz/175496/transnationale-unternehmen-problemverursacher-und-loesungspartner> (abgerufen am 15.08.2016). – Im Jahr 2010 generierte die Produktion der TNK weltweit nach UNCTAD-Angaben

kommende Vorherrschaft der internationalen Konzerne war Ausdruck einer neuen Stufe der Konzentration und Zentralisation des Kapitals.¹⁰⁹ Während die USA über einen großen Binnenmarkt mit rund 180 Millionen Konsumenten verfügten (1961), der schon allein die Existenz international konkurrenzfähiger Konzerne gestattete, und auch Japan auf über 93 Millionen Verbraucher kam,¹¹⁰ erwies sich in Westeuropa der nationalstaatliche Rahmen für die dort ansässigen Konzerne als zu eng.

Der Marburger Politikwissenschaftler Martin Beckmann erinnerte 2005 an die Kontroverse zwischen dem belgischen Wirtschaftswissenschaftler Ernest Mandel und dem französischen Sozialisten Jean Jacques Servan Schreiber, in der Mandel 1968 darauf hinwies, dass der Verflechtungsprozess zwischen den westeuropäischen Großunternehmen die ökonomische Grundlage für die politischen Integrationschritte konstituiert habe.¹¹¹ Sehr zugespitzt (und damit zwangsläufig vereinfacht) schrieb Ernest Mandel damals, dass das Besitzbürgertum heute der täglichen Intervention des Staates in Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft bedürfe, um das durch innere Gegensätze immer mehr bedrohte Privateigentum erhalten zu können. „Der Aktionsradius des bürgerlichen Staates muß jedoch mit jenem der Produktivkräfte und der Produktionsverhältnisse konform sein. Solange die wichtigsten Produktionsmittel eines Landes Eigentum des Besitzbürgertums dieses Landes sind, ist der Nationalstaat adäquates Selbstverteidigungsinstrument des Großkapitals. Beginnt sich diese Lage jedoch zu ändern, setzt eine Tendenz zur wachsenden internationalen Verflechtung und Verfilzung des Kapitalbesitzes ein, so hört der Nationalstaat auf, ein wirksames Instrument zur Verteidigung der Interessen dieses sich mehr und mehr internationalisierenden Großkapitals zu sein. Eine neue Staatsform muß dann der neuen wirtschaftlich-gesellschaftlichen Wirklichkeit entsprechen. Dies ist die historische Chance der supranationalen, europäischen Institutionen.“¹¹²

Gegenläufige bzw. widersprüchliche Tendenzen erwachsen aus der Konkurrenz zwischen den verschiedenen Kapitalgruppen in den an der Integration beteiligten Ländern, sind diese Kapitalgruppen doch bestrebt, „ihre“ jeweiligen nationalen Schutzmechanismen (wie Zölle, Normen und Standards) aufrecht zu erhalten und gleichzeitig diejenigen der Konkurrenten zu schleifen, was zu schwierigen und langwierigen Aushandlungsprozessen führt. Jene Unternehmen hingegen, deren wirtschaftliche Aktivität nach wie vor weitestgehend auf den nationalen Rahmen beschränkt ist, sehen sich zum einen durch die „negative Integration“ (Abbau von nationalen Schutzzöllen usw.) bedroht, und empfinden zum anderen Maßnahmen „positiver Integration“ (wie das Setzen europäischer Regeln z.B. beim Umweltschutz) als Hemmnis ihrer Unternehmenstätigkeit. Das wirtschaftliche Gewicht dieser

ca. 25 Prozent des globalen Bruttoinlandsprodukts, und auf die ausländischen Tochtergesellschaften der TNK entfiel rund ein Drittel des Weltexports. Vgl. UNCTAD: World Investment Report 2011, New York and Geneva 2011, S. X und 25.

¹⁰⁹ Vgl. Internationalisierung des Kapitals und Gewerkschaften. Situation, Position, Aktion, Berlin 1980, S. 12.

¹¹⁰ Vgl. Welthandbuch. Internationaler politischer und wirtschaftlicher Almanach, bearbeitet von Sándor Radó, Budapest 1962, S. XV und XIX. – Die alte BRD hatte dagegen 1961 nur rund 53 Millionen, Frankreich knapp 46 Millionen, Italien 51 Millionen und die Benelux-Staaten rund 21 Millionen Einwohner, die sechs Staaten zusammen immerhin 171 Millionen Einwohner. Vgl. ebenda, S. XI, XII, XV und XVI; eigene Berechnungen.

¹¹¹ Vgl. Martin Beckmann: Marxistische Politische Ökonomie. In: Hans-Jürgen Bieling / Marika Lerch (Hrsg.): Theorien der Europäischen Integration, Wiesbaden 2005, S. 118.

¹¹² Ernest Mandel: Die EWG und die Konkurrenz Europa – Amerika, Frankfurt am Main 1968, S. 45.

Unternehmensgruppen dürfte allerdings deutlich geringer sein als das der hegemonialen Kapitalfraktionen, die von der europäischen Integration profitieren.

Natürlich müssen alle Schritte staatsmonopolistischer Integration politisch vereinbart und umgesetzt werden. Staatsmonopolistische Integration verläuft nicht im Selbstlauf. Wenn allerdings der ökonomische Druck groß genug geworden ist, sehen sich die politischen Akteure in aller Regel zum Handeln veranlasst. Eindrucksvollstes Beispiel dafür war die „Eurosklrose“ und ihre Auflösung in der Einheitlichen Europäischen Akte (EEA) in den 1980er Jahren. Wie unten im dritten Teil zu den „Politischen Intentionen der europäischen Integration“ deutlich wird, resultierten politisch gegenläufige Tendenzen zur europäischen Integration vor allem immer wieder aus dem Unwillen von Mitgliedsstaaten, nationale Souveränitätsrechte an supranationale Organe abzutreten. Zudem gehören Identitätsfragen, nationale Vorbehalte, nationalistische Tendenzen usw. zu jenen Elementen auf der politischen Ebene, die dem europäischen Integrationsprozess entgegenwirken und ihn hemmen.

Der Sozialwissenschaftler Walter Lippens konstatierte für Mitte der 1950er Jahre ein Zurückfallen der (west-)europäischen Staaten gegenüber den USA in ihrer wirtschaftlichen Entwicklung. Mangels „einer voll ausgeführten Wirtschaftsgemeinschaft“ seien „die Vorsprünge der beiden Weltmächte in den modernen Technologien des Atomzeitalters, deren Kosten die finanziellen Mittel jedes europäischen Landes weit übersteigen, nur immer größer geworden“.¹¹³ Zwischen Frankreich und Deutschland habe damals „eine klare Interessenkoinzidenz“ hinsichtlich der Fortsetzung der wirtschaftlichen Integration der sechs Teilnehmerstaaten der Montanunion bestanden. Es ging darum, die sich aus der Zersplitterung Westeuropas in viele kleine und mittlere Nationalwirtschaften ergebenden Nachteile gegenüber „den kontinental-großräumigen Wirtschaftskörpern der USA und der Sowjetunion“ zu beheben.¹¹⁴ E. Strauss arbeitete heraus, dass die Benelux-Staaten nach dem Scheitern der Europäischen Verteidigungs-Gemeinschaft (EVG) als politisch-militärischem Integrationsversuch aus ihrem vitalen Interesse an der Ausweitung und Stabilisierung ihres Handelsraums die Initiative für eine Erweiterung der ökonomischen Kooperation der Mitglieder der Montanunion in Richtung einer fortschreitenden Integration der Nationalökonomien und der „Harmonisierung“ ihrer ökonomischen, finanziellen und sozialen Politiken ergriffen.¹¹⁵

So fand in Westeuropa die staatsmonopolistische Integration ihren Ausdruck in der 1957 gegründeten EWG bzw. den Europäischen Gemeinschaften (EG, auch im Singular

¹¹³ Walter Lippens: Europäische Integration. In: Richard Löwenthal und Hans-Peter Schwarz (Hrsg.): Die zweite Republik. 25 Jahre Bundesrepublik Deutschland – eine Bilanz, Stuttgart-Degerloch 1974, S. 520.

¹¹⁴ Vgl. ebenda, S. 536. – Der deutsche Delegationsleiter bei den Verhandlungen über den Gemeinsamen Markt, Carl Friedrich Ophüls, analysierte am 17. September 1956 in einer Aufzeichnung, dass ein „zersplittertes Europa“ zwischen den Supermächten USA und Sowjetunion stehe und weitere Weltmächte (China, Indien) sichtbar würden. Er schlussfolgerte, es liege auf der Hand, dass „gegenüber jenen weltpolitischen Blöcken [...] ein einzelner europäischer Staat nicht mehr in der Lage ist, seine berechtigten Interessen in der erforderlichen Weise zur Geltung zu bringen. [...] Nur wenn Europa geeint auftritt, um seine Rechte wahrzunehmen, kann es das Gehör finden, auf das es Anspruch hat.“ (Zit. in: Guido Thiemeyer: Europäische Integration. Motive – Prozesse – Strukturen, Köln 2010, S. 167/168.)

¹¹⁵ Vgl. E. Strauss: Common Sense about the Common Market. Germany and Britain in Post-War Europe, London 1958, S. 72.

gebraucht)¹¹⁶ und dann in der 1960 geschaffenen EFTA.¹¹⁷ Die EFTA war Produkt der Strategie Großbritanniens in den 1950er und Anfang der 1960er Jahre, ein Gegengewicht zur EWG zu schaffen. Mit dem Beitritt Großbritanniens zur EWG 1972 verlor die EFTA an Bedeutung¹¹⁸ und mutierte endgültig zu einer Rest-Kategorie, als Österreich 1989 und skandinavische Länder wie Schweden und Finnland Anfang der 1990er Jahre den Antrag auf Beitritt zu den EG stellten. Im April 1990 resümierte Wilfried Loth, dass die Europäische Gemeinschaft nicht nur Bestand hatte, sondern mit der Zeit auch für immer neue Mitglieder attraktiv wurde und an Bedeutung gewann – „wenn auch nicht in linear aufsteigender Linie. In der gegenwärtigen Umbruchsituation, die mit dem Ende des Ost-West-Konflikts neue Anstrengungen zur Gestaltung des internationalen Systems erforderlich macht, erscheint sie als ein Stabilitätsfaktor, der alle Chancen hat, künftig territorial erweitert und mit zusätzlichen Funktionen noch eine weitaus größere Rolle zu spielen.“¹¹⁹ Und Ende 1990 konstatierte der Ökonom Lutz Maier angesichts des Zerfalls des Rates für Gegenseitige Wirtschaftshilfe (RGW) einerseits und der EFTA andererseits: „Die EG und der von ihnen geschaffene Mechanismus der wirtschaftlichen Zusammenarbeit haben ihre Funktionsfähigkeit trotz vieler Komplikationen und noch ungelöster Fragen bewiesen. Sie üben eine zunehmende Anziehungskraft auf die noch nicht den EG angehörenden europäischen Länder aus. Man kann wohl davon ausgehen, daß die EG sich mehr und mehr zum Rückgrat und Modell künftiger gesamteuropäischer Strukturen entwickeln werden.“¹²⁰

Die entscheidende gemeinsame Interessenlage der herrschenden Kräfte in Westeuropa an der weiteren ökonomischen und politischen Integration Westeuropas war die Sicherung der Wettbewerbsfähigkeit und der Ausbau machtpolitischer Positionen gegenüber den beiden anderen damaligen Hauptkonkurrenten auf dem Weltmarkt – den USA und Japan, aber auch gegenüber der wachsenden Konkurrenz der südostasiatischen Schwellenländer, der „kleinen Tiger“.¹²¹ Gemessen am Bruttosozialprodukt nahm die EWG mit 4.060 Mrd. US-Dollar im Jahre 1988 den zweiten Platz in der Welt nach den USA mit 4.868 Mrd. US-Dollar und vor Japan mit 1.758 Mrd. US-Dollar ein. Das entsprach einem Anteil am Weltbruttosozialprodukt von 23,4 Prozent (USA: 28,1 Prozent; Japan: 10,2 Prozent).¹²²

Die EG schufen für Handel, wirtschaftliche Vernetzung, Technologiekooperation, Strukturpolitik, Koordinierung der Wirtschafts- und Währungspolitiken, Rechtsangleichung und außenpolitische Zusammenarbeit funktionsfähige Modelle und bestimmten damit die Vorstellungen über Inhalte und Formen gesamteuropäischer Integration maßgeblich mit. Die

¹¹⁶ Zur Vorgeschichte von EWG bzw. EG vgl. Wilfried Loth: Der Weg nach Europa. Geschichte der europäischen Integration 1939-1957, Göttingen 1990, S. 48-133.

¹¹⁷ Mit Wirkung vom 1. Juli 1977 waren die EFTA-Staaten durch ein Freihandelsabkommen im Bereich der Industrieerzeugnisse mit den EWG-Staaten verbunden. Vgl. Alfred Klose: Europäische Freihandelsassoziation. In: Staatslexikon. Recht, Wirtschaft, Gesellschaft. In sieben Bänden, hrsg. von der Görres-Gesellschaft, Sonderausgabe der 7., völlig neu bearbeiteten Auflage, zweiter Band, Freiburg/Basel/Wien 1995, Sp. 432.

¹¹⁸ Vgl. Guido Thieme: Europäische Integration. Motive – Prozesse – Strukturen, Köln 2010, S. 162.

¹¹⁹ Wilfried Loth: Der Weg nach Europa, a.a.O., S. 5.

¹²⁰ Lutz Maier: Wirtschaftsraum Europa – Perspektiven und Diskrepanzen. In: IPW-Berichte, Berlin, 1990, Nr. 11, S. 20.

¹²¹ Vgl. Jochen Dankert, Wilhelm Ersil, Hans-Georg Haupt: Die Europäischen Gemeinschaften und der europäische Einigungsprozeß. Studie, Berlin, August 1991, S. 15. In: Archiv Demokratischer Sozialismus (ADS), Bestand PDS im Deutschen Bundestag (12. Wahlperiode) (Kurzform: BT/12. WP) - 131, Bl. 10.

¹²² Vgl. Christine Kulke-Fiedler: Wirtschaftliche Realitäten im heutigen Europa. In: IPW-Berichte, Berlin, 1990, Nr. 6, S. 20.

wirtschaftliche Verflechtung der zwölf EG-Mitgliedsländer, insbesondere der Kernländer der „Neunergemeinschaft“, intensivierte sich damit erheblich. Die für einen großen Binnenmarkt aus zwölf Staaten kalkulierten höheren Stückzahlen erhöhten die Kapitalrentabilität ebenso wie die durch die Technologiekooperation geballte Konzentration auf neue technologische Entwicklungen und Fertigungen.¹²³

Die Handels- und Kapitalverflechtungen waren (und sind bis heute) die ökonomische Basis der europäischen Integration.¹²⁴ 1988 wickelten die zwölf Mitgliedsländer der EG untereinander 59,6 Prozent ihrer Exporte und 57,8 Prozent ihrer Importe ab und bestritten insgesamt bei den Exporten einen Anteil von 37,3 Prozent und bei den Importen einen Anteil von 36,7 Prozent am Welthandel.¹²⁵ Die wechselseitigen Direktinvestitionen der „Zwölfergemeinschaft“ nahmen zu. 1988 betrug der Bestand an Direktinvestitionen von BRD-Unternehmen in den anderen EG-Ländern 53,4 Milliarden DM, derjenigen von Unternehmen aus anderen EG-Ländern in der BRD 32,8 Milliarden DM.¹²⁶ „Der Grad der ökonomischen, finanziellen und sozialen Verflechtung sowie die supranationalen Elemente der Organisationsstruktur der Gemeinschaft haben inzwischen eindeutig irreversible Ausmaße angenommen“¹²⁷, schätzte der Ökonom Hermann von Berg bereits 1985 euphorisch ein.

Mit dem EG-Binnenmarktprojekt „Europa '92“ als Kernpunkt einer engeren ökonomischen und politischen Verflechtung der EG-Staaten, das mit der Unterzeichnung der Einheitlichen Europäischen Akte (EEA) 1986 anvisiert wurde, und der Schaffung einer Wirtschafts- und Währungsunion reagierten die EG-Länder auf die neuen Herausforderungen der Produktivkraftentwicklung und auf die Erfordernisse des Wettbewerbs mit den beiden anderen Zentren. „Das Integrationsinstrumentarium soll effektiver für Wachstumsstimulierung, Krisenmanagement sowie für die Erarbeitung und Umsetzung einer gemeinsamen Wirtschafts- und Währungspolitik genutzt werden. Auf diese Weise sollen neue Potentiale, Möglichkeiten und Handlungsräume für die Verfestigung der Kapitalherrschaft auf regionaler Ebene erschlossen werden. Diese Entwicklung ist die logische Konsequenz der bisherigen Integrationspolitik“¹²⁸, konstatierten die Wissenschaftler Jochen Dankert, Wilhelm Ersil und Hans-Georg Haupt 1991 in einer Studie für die PDS im Bundestag. Die Wirtschafts- und Währungsunion, unterstrichen die Autoren der Studie, sei eine notwendige Ergänzung zur Vollendung des Binnenmarktes, denn ein einheitlicher Markt benötige eine einheitliche Währung, ein einheitliches Äquivalent. Das 1979 geschaffene Europäische Währungssystem

¹²³ Vgl. Dieter Liehmann: Quo vadis, Europa? ... In: ADS, BT/12. WP - 006, Bl. 153.

¹²⁴ Vgl. auch: Frederic Heine und Thomas Sablowski: Zerfällt die Europäische Währungsunion? Handels- und Kapitalverflechtungen, Krisenursachen und Entwicklungsperspektiven der Eurozone. In: PROKLA, Münster/Berlin, Heft 181, 2015, Nr. 4, S. 564.

¹²⁵ Vgl. Statistisches Bundesamt (Hrsg.): Statistisches Jahrbuch 1990 für das Ausland, Stuttgart 1990, S. 95, 96, 235, 238 und 240; eigene Berechnungen.

¹²⁶ Vgl. Statistik. Daten zur ökonomischen Konzentration in der BRD. In: IPW-Berichte, Berlin, 1989, Nr. 12, S. 64. – Die Direktinvestitionen von BRD-Unternehmen im Ausland werden seit dem 1. Januar 1952 statistisch erfasst, die ausländischen Direktinvestitionen in der BRD seit dem 1. September 1961.

¹²⁷ Hermann von Berg: Die Analyse. Die Europäische Gemeinschaft – das Zukunftsmodell für Ost und West?, Köln 1985, S. 17.

¹²⁸ Jochen Dankert, Wilhelm Ersil, Hans-Georg Haupt: Die Europäischen Gemeinschaften und der europäische Einigungsprozeß, a.a.O., S. 38/39.

(EWS) habe sich bewährt, indem es die Stabilität der Wechselkurse verstärkte und sich fördernd auf die Integration auswirkte.¹²⁹

Dankert, Ersil und Haupt resümierten: „Die Einigung Europas steht objektiv auf der Tagesordnung der Politik. Sie entspricht der sich rasch vollziehenden Internationalisierung des wirtschaftlichen und gesellschaftlichen Lebens, der Notwendigkeit, europäische und globale Probleme gemeinsam zu lösen. Nun, da sie politisch erreichbar geworden ist, sollte linke Politik sich nicht nur für die Verwirklichung der europäischen Einheit einsetzen, sondern sie mitgestalten, mit der Verwirklichung ihrer gesellschaftspolitischen Ziele zu verbinden suchen. Politisch sollten sie [die Linken – J.W.] sich nicht die Frage stellen, ob sie für die europäische Einigung sein sollen oder nicht, sondern welchen Charakter das einigige Europa haben soll und wie es zu erreichen ist.“¹³⁰

Ähnlich äußerte sich damals auch der Ökonom Herbert Schwenk in einer Studie. In seinen Augen gab es keine grundlegende Alternative zum Binnenmarktprojekt. Dieses Projekt sei „das Ergebnis der Entwicklung moderner Produktivkräfte und der Internationalisierung des Wirtschaftslebens. Die EG hat sich als stabilster Wirtschaftsraum Europas erwiesen. Das Binnenmarktprojekt allein als »reaktionär« und im alleinigen Interesse der Konzerne liegend abzustempeln, geht an der Wirklichkeit vorbei. Die Vollendung des Binnenmarktes '92 eröffnet auch den Lohnarbeitenden Chancen und Möglichkeiten der Verbesserung ihrer Lebensverhältnisse. Die Strategie der Linken kann sich nicht gegen das Binnenmarktprojekt wenden, sondern muß auf eine aktive Mit- und Ausgestaltung gerichtet sein.“¹³¹

Die PDS folgte damals diesen Einschätzungen. Im Juni 1991 stellte die Partei in einem Papier mit dem Titel „Europa – Wandel und Neugestaltung“ fest: „Die Internationalisierung der Wirtschaft verlangt eine Internationalisierung der Politik. Die Einigung Europas ergibt sich daraus als objektiver Prozess.“¹³² Die PDS ging Anfang der 1990er Jahre davon aus, dass nicht nur die globalen, sondern auch die kontinentalen ökonomischen, sozialen und ökologischen Probleme nur noch über den Rahmen der Nationalstaaten hinaus im Zusammenwirken der Völker lösbar sind.¹³³ Bereits in dem Dokument „Zum Europakonzept der PDS“ von 1990 hatte die Partei für eine gesamteuropäische Integration¹³⁴ plädiert und dies wie folgt begründet: „Die Verflechtung moderner Gesellschaften und Volkswirtschaften und die Wirkungen heutiger und künftiger Produktiv- und Destruktivkräfte machen das Ziel eines Vereinigten Europas sowohl möglich als auch notwendig.“¹³⁵

¹²⁹ Vgl. ebenda, S. 40.

¹³⁰ Ebenda, S. 57.

¹³¹ Herbert Schwenk: Neue Rahmenbedingungen für das Wirken der europäischen Linken. Studie, [Berlin], August 1991, S. 72. In: ADS, BT/12. WP - 134, Bl. 19.

¹³² Europa – Wandel und Neugestaltung. Europapolitische Vorstellungen der Abgeordnetengruppe der PDS/Linke Liste (Bonn, 14.06.1991), S. 9. In: ADS, Bestand Parteivorstand der PDS – Die Ära Gysi (1989 bis 1993) (Kurzform: PDS-PV) - 030, Bl. 161.

¹³³ Vgl. Erklärung des Parteivorstandes der PDS zum „Vertrag über die Europäische Union“ (Vertrag von Maastricht) [29.05.1992], S. 1. In: ADS, PDS-PV - 125.

¹³⁴ Vgl. Zum Europakonzept der PDS. Entwurf. In: Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus: Dokumente, Standpunkte, Materialien. Auswahl – Januar bis Mai 1990, [Band 1,] Hrsg.: Kommission Politische Bildung beim Parteivorstand der PDS, Berlin 1990, S. 98.

¹³⁵ Ebenda, S. 99.

Die europäische Integration in einer veränderten Welt

Heute, ein Vierteljahrhundert später, hat sich die Weltwirtschaft gegenüber damals gravierend verändert. Zwar ist die Volkswirtschaft der USA immer noch die Nummer eins in der Weltrangliste, doch Schwellenländer wie Indien oder Brasilien sind mit Macht auf den Plan getreten. Während die Wirtschaft Japans seit zwei Jahrzehnten stagniert (aber immer noch den dritten Rang einnimmt), entwickelte sich die chinesische zur zweitstärksten Volkswirtschaft der Welt.¹³⁶ Finanzmarktakteure und Internet-Unternehmen wie *Google*, *Microsoft* oder *Amazon* mischten die Hitliste der Konzerngiganten auf. Und aus der EWG der „Zwölfergemeinschaft“ entstand im Verlauf mehrerer Erweiterungsrounden die Europäische Union mit nunmehr 28 Mitgliedsstaaten (EU28).¹³⁷ Zudem sind Island und Norwegen über den Europäischen Wirtschaftsraum (EWR) mit der EU durch Übernahme ihrer Regeln (aber ohne am Aushandlungsprozess dieser Regeln beteiligt zu sein) verbunden.¹³⁸ Gegenüber der „Zwölfergemeinschaft“ von 1990 betrug das Bruttonationaleinkommen (BNE) der 28 EU-Staaten 2014 mehr als das Dreifache. Nach Daten der Weltbank wuchs das BNE der EU28 gegenüber 1990 von 7.039 auf 18.740 Mrd. US-\$ im Jahre 2014 (d.h. um 166 Prozent auf rund das Zweieinhalbfache).¹³⁹

Während allerdings der Anteil der „Zwölfergemeinschaft“ am Welt-Bruttonationaleinkommen 1990 noch 21,08 Prozent betrug, lag der Anteil der 28 Staaten der Europäischen Union am Welt-Bruttonationaleinkommen 2014 nur bei 17,28 Prozent. Mit dem Austritt Großbritanniens sinkt der Anteil der Europäischen Union am Welt-Bruttonationaleinkommen (berechnet auf der Basis von 2014) gar auf 14,93 Prozent.¹⁴⁰ Damit sinkt das wirtschaftliche und politische Gewicht der EU in der Welt weiter.

Daran ändert auch nichts, dass die Bevölkerung (und damit die Konsumenten) von 326 Millionen in den Zeiten der „Zwölfergemeinschaft“ (1989) auf heute 507 Millionen in der EU28 (2014) gewachsen ist. Der Anteil der Einwohner der Gemeinschaft bzw. der Union an der Weltbevölkerung wuchs von 6,3 Prozent 1989 auf lediglich 7,0 Prozent 2014 und verringert sich durch den Austritt Großbritanniens aus der EU um 0,9 Prozent auf 6,1

¹³⁶ Vgl. Der neue Fischer Weltalmanach 2016. Zahlen, Daten, Fakten, Frankfurt am Main 2015, S. 613/614 und 641.

¹³⁷ Namentlich die Erweiterungsrunde von 2004, als zehn Staaten vor allem aus Ost- und Ostmitteleuropa der EU beitraten, erweiterte den Markt um 74 Millionen Menschen. Der damalige deutsche Außenminister Joschka Fischer erklärte dazu im Mai 2004: „Die Erweiterung wirkt wirtschaftlich wie Zuwanderung, ohne dass sie Zuwanderung ist. Schon vor dem Beitritt liegen unsere Exporte in die zehn neuen Mitgliedsstaaten fast so hoch wie die in die USA.“ Natürlich werde es durch die Beitrittsrunde auch in Deutschland Verlierer und Gewinner geben. Entscheidend sei jedoch der Saldo. „Und der wird für Deutschland sehr, sehr positiv sein.“ („Alptraum von Gewalt“ [SPIEGEL-Gespräch mit Joschka Fischer]. In: DER SPIEGEL, Hamburg, 2004, Nr. 19 [vom 03.05.2004], S. 48.)

¹³⁸ Auch die Schweiz, die zwar nicht zum EWR gehört, ist in ähnlicher Weise mit der EU verbunden. Zwischen der EU und der Schweiz bestehen mehr als 120 Sektor-spezifische bilaterale Verträge, die größtenteils dieselben Bestimmungen enthalten wie diejenigen, die durch die anderen EWR-Staaten in den Bereichen freier Personen-, Waren-, Dienstleistungs- und Kapitalverkehr verabschiedet wurden. Vgl. Europäisches Parlament: Der Europäische Wirtschaftsraum (EWR), die Schweiz und der Norden. URL: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/atyourservice/de/displayFtu.html?ftuId=FTU_6.5.3.html (abgerufen am 08.07.2016).

¹³⁹ Vgl. The World Bank: GNI, PPP (current international \$). URL: <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GNP.MKTP.PP.CD> (abgerufen am 29.06.2016); eigene Berechnungen.

¹⁴⁰ Vgl. ebenda; eigene Berechnungen.

Prozent.¹⁴¹ Auch der Anteil der EU-Staaten am Welthandel weist eine negative Tendenz auf. Betrug der Anteil ihrer Gesamtausfuhren am Weltexport 1999 noch 19,0 Prozent, lag er 2014 nur noch bei 15,9 Prozent.¹⁴² Ein ähnliches Bild zeigt sich bei den Importen: Belief sich der Anteil der Gesamteinfuhren der EU-Länder am Weltimport 1999 noch auf 19,5 Prozent, war er bis 2014 auf 15,5 Prozent zurückgegangen.¹⁴³

Gleichwohl haben die volkswirtschaftlichen Verflechtungen der EU-Staaten untereinander ein hohes Maß erreicht. Der Intra-Handel der 28 EU-Mitgliedsstaaten, d.h. der Handel der EU-Staaten untereinander (einschließlich des intra-firm trade), hat im Jahrzehnt von 2004 bis 2015 um rund die Hälfte zugenommen. Beliefen sich die Ausfuhren 2004 auf 2.087 Milliarden Euro, waren es 2015 bereits 3.070 Milliarden Euro. Betrugten die Einfuhren 2004 rund 2.010 Milliarden Euro, stiegen sie bis 2015 auf 2.980 Milliarden Euro.¹⁴⁴ Der Extra-Handel der 28 EU-Mitgliedsstaaten, d.h. der Handel der EU-Mitglieder mit Drittstaaten, entwickelte sich dagegen auf niedrigerem Niveau und langsamer. Betrugten die Exporte 2004 rund 945 Milliarden Euro, wuchsen sie bis 2015 auf 1.791 Milliarden Euro an. Beliefen sich die Importe 2004 auf 1.027 Milliarden Euro, hatten sie 2015 einen Wert von 1.726 Milliarden Euro.¹⁴⁵ 2015 machte der Intra-Handel damit 63,2 Prozent am Gesamtexport und 63,3 Prozent am Gesamtimport der 28 EU-Staaten aus.¹⁴⁶

Deutschland unterhielt 2014 seine intensivsten Handelsbeziehungen mit den anderen EU-Staaten. Gegenüber dem Vorjahr nahm der Handel mit ihnen sowohl bei den Exporten (+ 5,4 Prozent) als auch bei den Importen (+ 3,9 Prozent) weiter zu. 58,2 Prozent aller deutschen Ausfuhren gingen 2014 in die EU, und 58,2 Prozent der Importe kamen ebenfalls aus den EU-Staaten. Negativ war bemerkenswerter Weise der deutsche Außenhandelsaldo mit einigen osteuropäischen EU-Staaten (Ungarn, Tschechische Republik), mit denen intensive Zulieferbeziehungen in Schlüsselindustrien wie dem Automobil- oder Maschinenbau bestehen.¹⁴⁷ Dabei handelte es sich oftmals um sogenannten intra-firm trade, der sich an der Oberfläche als Außenhandel Deutschlands mit anderen EU-Ländern darstellt.

¹⁴¹ Vgl. Statistisches Bundesamt (Hrsg.): Statistisches Jahrbuch 1990 für das Ausland, a.a.O., S. 177; Statistisches Bundesamt (Hrsg.): Statistisches Jahrbuch 1991 für das Ausland, [Stuttgart] 1991, S. 34; Der neue Fischer Weltalmanach 2016, a.a.O., S. 519 und 573; eigene Berechnungen.

¹⁴² Vgl. EU-Anteil am Welthandel. URL: http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=ext_lt_introle&lang=de (abgerufen am 03.07.2016).

¹⁴³ Vgl. ebenda.

¹⁴⁴ Vgl. Intra-Handel der EU28, nach Mitgliedstaaten, Gesamtprodukt. URL: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/refreshTableAction.do?tab=table&plugin=1&pcode=tet00047&language=de> (abgerufen am 02.07.2016). – Großbritannien wickelt derzeit rund die Hälfte seines Außenhandels mit anderen EU-Staaten ab. Vgl. Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Frankfurt am Main, 27.06.2016.

¹⁴⁵ Vgl. Extra-Handel der EU28, nach Mitgliedstaaten, Gesamtprodukt. URL: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/refreshTableAction.do?tab=table&plugin=1&pcode=tet00055&language=de> (abgerufen am 02.07.2016).

¹⁴⁶ Der Politikwissenschaftler Frederic Heine verweist in einer Studie zudem auf die eindeutige Zunahme finanzieller Verflechtungen innerhalb der Euro-Zone in der Vorkrisenphase bis 2007/2008. Dies gelte vor allem für Frankreich und Deutschland, die insbesondere ihre Vermögenspositionen vorwiegend gegenüber der Euro-Zone hatten. Vgl. Frederic Heine: Der europäische Kapitalismus im Ungleichgewicht. Internationalisierungsdynamiken und innereuropäische Machtverhältnisse in der Krise der Eurozone. Studie im Auftrag der Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung (Reihe: Studien 02/2015), hrsg. von der Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung, Berlin 2015, S. 27.

¹⁴⁷ Vgl. Der neue Fischer Weltalmanach 2016, a.a.O., S. 620.

Die engen Verflechtungen der EU-Staaten untereinander zeigen sich beispielsweise auch darin, dass rund 3.000 britische Unternehmen in Deutschland aktiv sind¹⁴⁸ und mehr als 2.500 deutsche Unternehmen Niederlassungen in Großbritannien besitzen und dort 370.000 Mitarbeiter beschäftigen.¹⁴⁹ Der Bestand der Direktinvestitionen deutscher Unternehmen in Großbritannien beläuft sich auf rund 110 Milliarden Euro, derjenige britischer Unternehmen in Deutschland auf knapp 38 Milliarden Euro.¹⁵⁰ Allein für BMW arbeiten 24.000 Menschen auf der Insel.¹⁵¹ Der europäische Luft- und Raumfahrtkonzern *Airbus* produziert im Vereinigten Königreich die Tragflächen aller *Airbus*-Maschinen. Nach *Airbus*-Angaben hängen an der Tragflächenproduktion direkt oder indirekt 100.000 britische Jobs.¹⁵² Auch die Lieferketten der Auto-Konzerne ziehen sich quer über Europa.¹⁵³ Aufgrund der Freizügigkeit der Arbeitskräfte innerhalb der EU verdienen heute mehr als zwei Millionen Menschen aus Mitgliedsstaaten der Union ihr Geld in Großbritannien.¹⁵⁴

Wenn das niederländische staatliche Wirtschaftsforschungsinstitut Centraal Planbureau (CPB) die bis 2030 wegen einer Reduktion des Handels mit Großbritannien infolge des Brexit zu erwartenden Einbußen für die Niederlande auf 10 Milliarden Euro oder 1,2 Prozent des Bruttoinlandsprodukts (BIP) schätzt, bedeutet das im Umkehrschluss, dass die Volkswirtschaft der Niederlande in eben dieser Größenordnung von einer Europäischen Union unter Einschluss Britanniens profitiert bzw. profitieren würde.¹⁵⁵ Gleiches gilt für die Rechnung, die die Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Ende April 2016 aufmachte: Bis zum Jahr 2020 werde das BIP des Vereinigten Königreichs bei einem Brexit um mehr als drei Prozent kleiner ausfallen als bei einer Fortsetzung der EU-Mitgliedschaft Großbritanniens. Das entspricht einem Preis pro Haushalt von bis zu 2.200 Pfund (ca. 2.800 Euro, in heutigen Preisen), d.h. die Haushaltseinkommen werden um ein Monatsgehalt sinken.¹⁵⁶ Umgekehrt ist dies die Summe, die aus einer fortgesetzten EU-Mitgliedschaft für jeden britischen Haushalt erwachsen würde.

Das hohe Maß der Verflechtung der Volkswirtschaften der EU-Mitgliedsstaaten impliziert andererseits auch ein hohes Maß an wechselseitiger Abhängigkeit und Verwundbarkeit. Entscheidungen in einem Land (insbesondere in einem der wirtschaftlichen „Riesen“ innerhalb der EU) haben Auswirkungen auf die anderen Mitgliedsstaaten der Union.¹⁵⁷ Die

¹⁴⁸ Vgl. Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Frankfurt am Main, 21.06.2016.

¹⁴⁹ Vgl. Süddeutsche Zeitung, München, 25./26.06.2016.

¹⁵⁰ Vgl. Frankfurter Rundschau, Frankfurt am Main, 25./26.06.2016.

¹⁵¹ Vgl. Süddeutsche Zeitung, München, 25./26.06.2016.

¹⁵² Vgl. Süddeutsche Zeitung, München, 27.06.2016.

¹⁵³ Vgl. DER SPIEGEL, Hamburg, 2016, Nr. 24, S. 21.

¹⁵⁴ Vgl. Süddeutsche Zeitung, München, 25./26.06.2016.

¹⁵⁵ Vgl. Brexit costs for the Netherlands arise from reduced trade. CPB Policy Brief 2016/07, 9 June 2016. URL: <http://www.cpb.nl/en/publication/brexit-costs-for-the-netherlands-arise-from-reduced-trade> (abgerufen am 11.07.2016).

¹⁵⁶ Vgl. OECD: The Economic Consequences of Brexit: A Taxing Decision (27 April 2016). URL: <http://www.oecd.org/economy/the-economic-consequences-of-brexit-a-taxing-decision.htm> (abgerufen am 11.07.2016).

¹⁵⁷ Die OECD prognostizierte Ende April 2016, dass ein Brexit nicht nur ein großer negativer Schock für die britische Wirtschaft wäre, sondern mit negativen wirtschaftlichen Folgen für den Rest der OECD, insbesondere für die anderen europäischen Länder, verbunden sein würde. Das BIP der EU27 würde bis 2020 um knapp ein Prozent sinken. Vgl. OECD: The Economic Consequences of Brexit: A Taxing Decision. OECD Economic Policy Paper, Paris, April 2016, No. 16, p. 22. – Dazu kommt, dass mit einem Austritt Großbritanniens als wirtschaftlich

Institutionen der EU (insbesondere der Rat der EU, der Europäische Rat und die Europäische Kommission) werden versuchen (und das ist objektiv ihre Aufgabe), die Auswirkungen von Entscheidungen in einem Mitgliedsstaat auf die anderen zu begrenzen und so gering wie möglich zu halten. Dies schränkt die Möglichkeiten vor allem von Links- oder von Mitte-Links-Regierungen erheblich ein, eine Wirtschafts- und Sozialpolitik zu betreiben, die von der der anderen Mitgliedsstaaten der EU abweicht. Das Beispiel der SYRIZA-geführten Regierung in Griechenland spricht dafür Bände.

Die Wissenschaftler der EuroMemo Gruppe konstatierten zu Recht in ihrem „EuroMemorandum 2015“, dass unermessliche industrielle, finanzielle und kommerzielle Interessen mit dem europäischen Binnenmarkt und mit dem einheitlichen Wirtschaftsraum, den das Integrationsprojekt gebracht hat, verbunden sind. Es „ist bereits ein Ausmaß wirtschaftlicher Integration und gegenseitiger Abhängigkeit entstanden, das nicht einfach ohne enormen materiellen Schaden an den bestehenden Produktionsstrukturen und damit an den Interessen der europäischen Bevölkerung rückgängig gemacht werden kann. Es gibt eben keine Lampe wie bei Aladdin, mit der man diese Geister in ihre Flasche zurückzaubern kann.“¹⁵⁸

Die Europäische Union ist allerdings heute längst nicht mehr nur eine Wirtschaftsgemeinschaft, sondern sie hat sich zu einer umfassenderen politischen und Werte-Gemeinschaft¹⁵⁹ entwickelt. Verwiesen sei in diesem Kontext hier nur auf wenige Punkte: Nachdem in die EEA 1986 ein eher unverbindliches Sozialkapitel eingefügt und 1989 eine lockere „Sozialcharta“ mit lediglich empfehlendem Charakter verabschiedet und damit die Sozialpolitik lange Zeit nachrangig behandelt worden war,¹⁶⁰ wurde mit dem Lissabonner Vertrag die im Jahr 2000 feierlich unterzeichnete Charta der Grundrechte der EU zu einem Teil des Primärrechts gemacht.¹⁶¹ Zudem wurde mit diesem Vertrag die Institution der

drittstärkstem Staat in der EU28 (gemessen am BNE) ein Nettozahler in den EU-Haushalt wegfällt und dass dies durch Einsparungen oder höhere Einzahlungen der übrigen Mitglieder kompensiert werden muss. In den Jahren von 2010 bis 2014 hat das Vereinigte Königreich netto jährlich zwischen rund fünf und rund neun Milliarden Pfund zum EU-Haushalt beigetragen. Vgl. Joachim Bischoff, Hinrich Kuhls und Björn Radke: BREXIT – Britannien verlässt die EU. In: Sozialismus, Hamburg, 2016, Nr. 7-8, S. 23.

¹⁵⁸ EuroMemo Gruppe: Die Zukunft der Europäischen Union. Stagnation und Polarisierung oder eine grundlegende Neuausrichtung? EuroMemorandum 2015. Supplement der Zeitschrift Sozialismus 3/2015, Hamburg 2015, S. 8.

¹⁵⁹ Im Vertrag von Lissabon wird in Artikel 1.a ausgeführt: „Die Werte, auf die sich die Union gründet, sind die Achtung der Menschenwürde, Freiheit, Demokratie, Gleichheit, Rechtsstaatlichkeit und die Wahrung der Menschenrechte einschließlich der Rechte der Personen, die Minderheiten angehören. Diese Werte sind allen Mitgliedstaaten in einer Gesellschaft gemeinsam, die sich durch Pluralismus, Nichtdiskriminierung, Toleranz, Gerechtigkeit, Solidarität und die Gleichheit von Frauen und Männern auszeichnet.“ (Vertrag von Lissabon zur Änderung des Vertrags über die Europäische Union und des Vertrags zur Gründung der Europäischen Gemeinschaft [am 13. Dezember 2007 unterzeichnet], Artikel 1.a. URL: <http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/cae/servlet/contentblob/358380/publicationFile/3092/vertrag-von-lissabon.pdf> (abgerufen am 06.08.2016).

¹⁶⁰ Vgl. Fritz Franzmeyer: Der Binnenmarkt 1993 und die Europäische Wirtschafts- und Währungsunion. In: Cord Jakobeit/Alparslan Yenel (Hrsg.): Gesamteuropa. Analysen, Probleme und Entwicklungsperspektiven, Bonn 1993, S. 347.

¹⁶¹ Vgl. Vertrag von Lissabon zur Änderung des Vertrags über die Europäische Union und des Vertrags zur Gründung der Europäischen Gemeinschaft [am 13. Dezember 2007 unterzeichnet], a.a.O., Artikel 6; Hans-Jürgen Wagener und Thomas Eger: Europäische Integration. Wirtschaft und Recht, Geschichte und Politik, München 2014, S. 84; Peter Becker: Sozialpolitik. In: Werner Weidenfeld und Wolfgang Wessels (Hrsg.): Europa von A – Z. Taschenbuch der europäischen Integration, Baden-Baden 2016, besonders S. 387/388.

Europäischen Bürgerinitiative verankert.¹⁶² Das Europäische Parlament (EP), seit 1979 direkt gewählt und bei seiner Wahl 2014 durch die erstmalige Aufstellung von Spitzenkandidaten der europäischen Parteienfamilien sichtbar von der nationalen Ebene abgehoben, erlangte seit den 1970er Jahren nach und nach mehr Rechte bei Gesetzgebung, Haushalt, demokratischer Kontrolle und Genehmigung internationaler Abkommen.

Diese Rechte weitete insbesondere der Lissabon-Vertrag von 2007 deutlich aus. Seitdem kann ohne das EP kein europäisches Gesetz verabschiedet und kein internationales Handelsabkommen geschlossen werden. Die Stellung dieses Parlaments ist nicht zuletzt dadurch gestärkt worden, dass ihm die Aufgabe übertragen wurde, erstmals nach der Europa-Wahl 2014 den Präsidenten der EU-Kommission zu wählen.¹⁶³ Dem EP auch das Initiativrecht im Gesetzgebungsverfahren und das alleinige Haushaltsrecht zu übertragen, bleibt sicher eine Aufgabe, für die es sich in der Zukunft zu kämpfen lohnt. Nicht zuletzt ist das Europäische Parlament schon heute ein Ort transnationaler Demokratie, „an dem nicht Deutsche mit Franzosen streiten, sondern europäische Sozialisten mit europäischen Konservativen“¹⁶⁴.

Politische Intentionen der europäischen Integration

Bei der europäischen Integration handelt es sich um eine objektive Tendenz,¹⁶⁵ um einen Prozess im Wechselspiel zwischen ökonomischer Basis und politischem Überbau, dessen Ziel in der Verbesserung der Kapitalverwertungsbedingungen besteht. Die Durchsetzung eines objektiven Prozesses kann man behindern oder verzögern. Verhindern kann man sie nicht. Sie ist gleichwohl gestalt- und beeinflussbar. Wenn nun heute einige Linke meinen, man sollte aus dem Integrationszug aussteigen oder den eigenen nationalen Waggon abkoppeln, dann führt das in der Konsequenz nur aufs volkswirtschaftliche Abstellgleis. Es kann also nicht um das **Ob** der europäischen Integration gehen, sondern – wie bereits Anfang der 1990er Jahre festgestellt – um das **Wie** dieser Integration.

Und in der Tat war das **Wie** der europäischen Integration, ihre Art und Weise und ihre Finalität von Anfang an ebenso umstritten wie sich – über die Jahre des Integrationsprozesses hinweg – immer wieder ökonomische Erfordernisse mit politischen Intentionen vermischten. Da hier nicht die gesamte komplizierte Geschichte der europäischen

¹⁶² Vgl. Vertrag von Lissabon zur Änderung des Vertrags über die Europäische Union und des Vertrags zur Gründung der Europäischen Gemeinschaft [am 13. Dezember 2007 unterzeichnet], a.a.O., Artikel 8.b.

¹⁶³ Vgl. Der neue Fischer Weltalmanach 2015. Zahlen, Daten, Fakten, Frankfurt am Main 2014, S. 557.

¹⁶⁴ Steffen Vogel: Ein britischer Weckruf – für Europa. In: Blätter für deutsche und internationale Politik, Berlin, 2016, Nr. 8, S. 8.

¹⁶⁵ Die Wissenschaftler Jochen Dankert und Wilhelm Ersil gingen bereits 1992 in einer Studie davon aus, dass es sich „bei der EG-Integration prinzipiell um einen objektiv begründeten Prozeß der Umgestaltung der wirtschaftlichen, gesellschaftlichen und staatlichen Strukturen sowie der zwischenstaatlichen Beziehungen handelt“. Vgl. Jochen Dankert, Wilhelm Ersil: Von der Europäischen Gemeinschaft zur Europäischen Union – Konsequenzen für linke Politik, Potsdam, Februar 1992, S. 4. In: ADS, BT/12. WP - 134, Bl. 252. – Schon zuvor hatten die Ökonomen Horst Veith, Martin Anders, Herbert Schwenk und Lothar Winter analysiert, dass von der EWG aufgrund ihres ökonomischen und politischen Gewichts „starke Integrationstendenzen gegenüber den anderen kapitalistischen Staaten Europas“ ausgehen, „handelt es sich doch um einen objektiven Prozeß, der grundlegende Entwicklungstendenzen der kapitalistischen Produktionsverhältnisse in der Gegenwart zum Ausdruck bringt“. (Internationalisierung des Kapitals und Gewerkschaften, a.a.O., S. 43.).

Integration nachgezeichnet werden kann, sollen hier nur einige zentrale Aspekte dieses Prozesses exemplarisch hervorgehoben werden, die zumeist miteinander verwoben sind:

Erstens der Aspekt der *Friedenssicherung*: Nach den Erfahrungen des verheerenden zweiten Weltkriegs lag es nahe, dass sich Antifaschisten aller Parteien für ein vereintes Europa einsetzten, um den Krieg aus den Beziehungen der europäischen Völker ein für alle Mal auszuschließen. Beispiel dafür ist das „Manifest von Ventotene“, das eine Gruppe von jungen Gefangenen des italienischen faschistischen Regimes um den Kommunisten und Widerstandskämpfer Altiero Spinelli 1941 schrieb, und in dem die Zukunft eines föderalen und sozialistischen Europas entworfen wurde. Die erste anzugehende Aufgabe nach dem Sieg über den Faschismus und dem Ende des zweiten Weltkrieges „ist die endgültige Beseitigung der Grenzen, die Europa in souveräne Staaten aufteilen“¹⁶⁶. Die Gruppe um Spinelli ging von der Notwendigkeit einer „föderalistischen Neugestaltung Europas“ aus und plädierte für den Aufbau einer „europäischen Föderation“, der „Vereinigten Staaten Europas“.¹⁶⁷

Im „Manifest von Ventotene“ heißt es: „Es gilt, einen Bundesstaat zu schaffen, der auf festen Füßen steht und anstelle nationaler Heere über eine europäische Streitmacht verfügt. Es gilt endgültig mit den wirtschaftlichen Autarkien [...] aufzuräumen. Es braucht einer ausreichenden Anzahl an Organen und Mitteln, um in den einzelnen Bundesstaaten die Beschlüsse, die zur Aufrechterhaltung der allgemeinen Ordnung dienen, durchzuführen. Gleichzeitig soll den Staaten jene Autonomie belassen werden, die eine plastische Gliederung und die Entwicklung eines politischen Lebens, gemäß den besonderen Eigenschaften der verschiedenen Völker, gestattet.“¹⁶⁸ Die Gruppe um Spinelli war überzeugt: „Ein freies und vereintes Europa ist die unausweichliche Voraussetzung für die Durchsetzung der modernen Kultur, deren Entwicklung die totalitäre Epoche aufgehalten hat.“¹⁶⁹

Der französische Außenminister Robert Schuman schlug 1950 – im Bestreben, diejenigen Industriezweige zu kontrollieren, die ausschlaggebend für die Kriegsführung waren, und im Bemühen, Deutschland in supranationale Strukturen einzubinden, – vor, die nationale Kohle- und Stahlproduktion Frankreichs und der Bundesrepublik Deutschland sowie anderer europäischer Länder einer „Hohen Behörde“ zu unterstellen: „Die Vereinigung der europäischen Nationen erfordert, daß der Jahrhunderte alte Gegensatz zwischen Frankreich und Deutschland ausgelöscht wird.“ Die Zusammenlegung der Kohle- und Stahlproduktion werde sofort die Schaffung gemeinsamer Grundlagen für die wirtschaftliche Entwicklung sichern. „Die Solidarität der Produktion, die so geschaffen wird, wird bekunden, daß jeder Krieg zwischen Frankreich und Deutschland nicht nur undenkbar, sondern materiell unmöglich ist.“¹⁷⁰ Nach komplizierten Verhandlungen vereinbarten 1951 Belgien, die Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Frankreich, Italien, Luxemburg und die Niederlande die Gründung der

¹⁶⁶ Manifest von Ventotene. URL:http://www.europarl.europa.eu/brussels/website/media/Basis/Geschichte/bis1950/Pdf/Manifest_Ventotene.pdf (abgerufen am 24.05.2016). – Altiero Spinelli (1907-1986) war von 1970 bis 1976 Mitglied der Europäischen Kommission und ab 1976 Abgeordneter im Europäischen Parlament. Er war maßgeblich beteiligt am Vertragsentwurf für eine Europäische Union, dem „Spinelli-Entwurf“, den das Europäische Parlament am 14. Februar 1984 annahm.

¹⁶⁷ Vgl. Manifest von Ventotene, a.a.O.

¹⁶⁸ Ebenda.

¹⁶⁹ Ebenda.

¹⁷⁰ Schuman-Erklärung – 9. Mai 1950. URL: http://europa.eu/about-eu/basic-information/symbols/europe-day/schuman-declaration/index_de.htm (abgerufen am 16.07.2016).

Europäischen Gemeinschaft für Kohle und Stahl (EGKS), um einen gemeinsamen Markt für Kohle und Stahl zu schaffen. Mit dieser Montanunion, einer Vorgängerorganisation der heutigen EU, war nicht zuletzt beabsichtigt, die Märkte für diese Rohstoffe so sehr miteinander zu verflechten, dass es den Vertragsstaaten unmöglich werden sollte, sie jemals wieder dazu zu verwenden, um gegeneinander Krieg zu führen.¹⁷¹

Bis heute konnte die Europäische Union ihr Versprechen, einen Krieg zwischen ihren Mitgliedsländern wie einen neuen, von Europa ausgehenden Weltkrieg zu verhindern, einlösen. Gregor Gysi sieht denn nach dem Brexit-Referendum bei aller berechtigten Kritik an der EU „einen entscheidenden Grund“, die Europäische Union zu erhalten und zu verteidigen: „die Erhaltung des Friedens zwischen ihren Mitgliedsländern“.¹⁷²

Zweitens der Aspekt der *Stärkung der Konkurrenzposition westeuropäischer Konzerne auf dem Weltmarkt und der Einhegung der (innereuropäischen) Konkurrenz*: Die Europäische Union hat einen politischen Überbau über ihre kapitalistische Basis konstituiert und sich in den letzten 25 Jahren in vielerlei Hinsicht in Richtung einer supranationalen Staatlichkeit entwickelt – mit einer eigenen umfangreichen Bürokratie,¹⁷³ an deren Spitze die *Europäische Kommission* mit ihrem Präsidenten steht, mit Richtlinien (Rahmengesetzen), die von den Mitgliedsstaaten in jeweils nationales Recht umgesetzt werden müssen, mit Verordnungen (Gesetzen) und mit Beschlüssen. Es existiert mittlerweile ein ganzes System supranationaler Organe, das einerseits auf die Politik und auf die Wirtschaft der 28 Mitgliedsländer (insbesondere durch die Vereinheitlichung der juristischen Rahmenbedingung für das Wirken der Konzerne) Einfluss nimmt und diese andererseits als Machtgruppierung nach außen vertritt. So agiert die EU beispielsweise bei den Unterhandlungen mit Kanada über das *Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement* (CETA) oder mit den USA bei den Verhandlungen über die *Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership* (TTIP) als eigenständiges Völkerrechtssubjekt. Nach Auffassung einiger Wissenschaftler und Juristen trägt die EU mit der Währungsunion, der Gründung der *Europäischen Zentralbank* (EZB) und der Euro-Einführung,¹⁷⁴ mit der infolge der Aufarbeitung der Finanzmarktkrise geschaffenen Institutionen wie dem *Europäischen Stabilitäts-Mechanismus* (ESM) und der *Bankenunion* und mit dem Schengen-Abkommen durch die damit verbundene Übertragung nationaler Souveränitätsrechte bereits heute den Charakter einer Föderation.¹⁷⁵ Der Präsident des

¹⁷¹ Vgl. Martin Schultz: Europäische Gemeinschaft für Kohle und Stahl. In: Werner Weidenfeld, Wolfgang Wessels (Hrsg.): Europa von A – Z. Taschenbuch der europäischen Integration, Bonn 1994, S. 154.

¹⁷² „Es gibt überhaupt keinen Anlass zur Freude“, a.a.O.

¹⁷³ Der Personalbestand der EU-Organe betrug 2015 mehr als 40.000 Mitarbeiter. Vgl. Der neue Fischer Weltalmanach 2016, a.a.O., S. 562.

¹⁷⁴ Im Vertrag von Maastricht 1992 verpflichteten sich alle Mitgliedsstaaten der EU, den Euro einzuführen, sobald sie die Kriterien für seine Einführung erfüllen. Dies gilt auch für alle Staaten, die zu einem späteren Zeitpunkt in die EU aufgenommen werden. Ausnahmen gelten für Großbritannien und Dänemark, die über das Recht verfügen, sich dagegen zu entscheiden (Opting-out-Klausel). Schweden müsste eigentlich den Euro einführen, verletzt jedoch durch den Nichtbeitritt zum Wechselkursmechanismus (WKM) II absichtlich eines der Konvergenzkriterien, was bisher von der EU toleriert wird. Vgl. Der neue Fischer Weltalmanach 2016, a.a.O., S. 547; Eckart Gaddum: Wirtschafts- und Währungsunion (WWU). In: Werner Weidenfeld, Wolfgang Wessels (Hrsg.): Europa von A – Z. Taschenbuch der europäischen Integration, Bonn 1994, S. 349-352; Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Frankfurt am Main, 27.06.2016.

¹⁷⁵ Vgl. Selbst die Historiker Brendan Simms und Benjamin Zeeb sprechen von der „föderalen Natur“ der fiskalischen und ökonomischen Politik der Europäischen Union. Vgl. Brendan Simms, Benjamin Zeeb: Europa am Abgrund. Plädoyer für die Vereinigten Staaten von Europa, München 2016, S. 78.

Bundesverfassungsgerichts, Andreas Voßkuhle, sprach in diesem Kontext 2011 von einer „schleichenden Transformation in einen europäischen Bundesstaat“¹⁷⁶.

Die für den staatsmonopolistischen Kapitalismus in den hochentwickelten Staaten typische Verflechtung der Macht des Staates mit der der Monopole ist längst auch in Brüssel zu beobachten. Zum einen werden die Interessen der Mitgliedsstaaten und „ihrer“ jeweiligen „nationalen“ Konzerne über den *Europäischen Rat* (der Staats- und Regierungschefs) und den *Rat der Europäischen Union* (der jeweils zuständigen Fachminister) transportiert. Zum anderen tragen die europäischen Unternehmerverbände bzw. -aktionsgruppen wie *BUSINESSEUROPE*, *EUROCHAMBERS* oder der *European Round Table of Industrialists (ERT)*¹⁷⁷ – gewissermaßen als Vertreter des „europäischen Gesamtkapitalisten“ – neben mehr als 15.000 anderen Lobbyisten der Wirtschaft die Anliegen insbesondere der großen Konzerne an die zuständigen Entscheidungsträger in der Brüsseler Bürokratie heran.¹⁷⁸ In komplizierten und mitunter langwierigen Verhandlungen, bei denen die harten Realitäten nationalstaatlicher Einzelinteressen hervortreten, werden die divergierenden und oft konträren Interessen zu Kompromissen geführt, und viele wichtige Entscheidungen werden zunehmend nach Brüssel verlagert. Die Ökonomin Gretchen Binus weist darauf hin, dass in der Gestaltung des Regulierungsmechanismus der EU die mächtigen transnationalen Konzerne mit ihren Verbänden aufgrund ihrer Verfügungsmacht über die maßgeblichen Reproduktionsstandorte und -bedingungen in den Mitgliedsstaaten der Union eine ganz entscheidende Rolle spielen.¹⁷⁹

So legte der 1983 ins Leben gerufene ERT, ein Kreis von gegenwärtig rund 45 Vorstandsvorsitzenden der größten europäischen Konzerne mit einem ständigen Sekretariat in Brüssel, 1985 eine „Agenda for Action – Europe 1990“ vor, die das Binnenmarktprogramm der damals neu ins Amt gekommenen EU-Kommission unter Jacques Delors nachhaltig prägte. „Auch der Umsetzungsprozess wurde durch ein eigens eingerichtetes ERT-Gremium, das sich halbjährlich mit führenden Regierungsvertretern aller Mitgliedsstaaten traf, kontinuierlich begleitet und systematisch beeinflusst. Vergleichbare ERT-Initiativen, die wiederum durch die Einrichtung wissenschaftlich-politischer Beratungsagenturen flankiert wurden, galten dem Projekt der Währungsunion.“¹⁸⁰ Schließlich hat der ERT als Vertreter der größten europäischen Konzerne aus Deutschland, Frankreich, Großbritannien und Italien die 2000 beschlossene Lissabon-Strategie der EU in Aktion gesetzt, mit der die EU innerhalb von zehn

¹⁷⁶ Zit. in: Volker Müller: In gespannter Verfassung. Diskussion: Lammert und Voßkuhle loten die Rollen von Parlament und Verfassungsgericht im werdenden Europa aus. In: *Das Parlament*, Berlin, 2011, Nr. 48 (vom 28.11.2011), S. 11. URL: <http://www.das-parlament.de/2011/48/Innenpolitik/36786613/316176> (abgerufen am 25.07.2016).

¹⁷⁷ *BUSINESSEUROPE* ging aus der Union des Industries de la Communauté Européenne (UNICE) hervor, *EUROCHAMBERS* ist der Dachverband der europäischen Kammerorganisationen. Vgl. Hans-Wolfgang Platzer: Europäische Arbeitgeber- und Wirtschaftsverbände. In: Wolfgang Schroeder, Bernhard Weßels (Hrsg.): *Handbuch Arbeitgeber- und Wirtschaftsverbände in Deutschland*, Wiesbaden 2010, S. 430-432.

¹⁷⁸ Vgl. Julian Plottka: Lobbying und Interessenvertretung. In: Werner Weidenfeld und Wolfgang Wessels (Hrsg.): *Europa von A – Z. Taschenbuch der europäischen Integration*, Baden-Baden 2016, S. 344 und 346.

¹⁷⁹ Vgl. Gretchen Binus: Zum staatsmonopolistischen Funktionsmechanismus unter dem Zwang internationaler Kräfteverschiebungen. In: Wilfried Schreiber (Hrsg.): *Staatsmonopolistischer Kapitalismus*, Potsdam 2016, S. 157/158.

¹⁸⁰ Hans-Wolfgang Platzer: *Europäische Arbeitgeber- und Wirtschaftsverbände*, a.a.O., S. 432.

Jahren zum wettbewerbsfähigsten und dynamischsten wissensgestützten Wirtschaftsraum der Welt gemacht werden sollte.¹⁸¹

Zwei andere Beispiele: Bereits die Schaffung des westeuropäischen Gemeinschaftsunternehmens *Airbus Industrie* 1970 hegte nicht nur die innereuropäische Konkurrenz ein, vielmehr sollte dieses Unternehmen mit erheblichen staatlichen Subventionen zum konkurrenzwirksamen Gegengewicht zu den bis dahin führenden USA-Konzernen *Boeing* und *McDonnell-Douglas* entwickelt werden. Die drei Hauptaktionäre *Aérospatiale* (Frankreich), *British Aerospace* und der westdeutsche Konzern *Messerschmitt-Bölkow-Blohm* (MBB, als Teil des Imperiums von *Daimler-Benz*) gehörten zu den mächtigsten westeuropäischen Konzerngruppen, die damit ihre Stellung auf dem internationalen Rüstungsgütermarkt stärkten.¹⁸² Auch die Europäische Weltraumagentur *European Space Agency* (ESA) entstand seit 1975 als Konkurrenz zu den sowjetischen und US-amerikanischen Raumfahrtbehörden. „Hinter beiden Projekten stand die Idee“, schreibt der Sozialwissenschaftler Guido Thiemeyer von der Universität Düsseldorf, „dass ein einzelner europäischer Nationalstaat nicht das Potential hatte, eine nationale Raumfahrtindustrie zu gründen und deswegen in diesem Bereich das Gemeinschaftspotential nutzte.“¹⁸³

Drittens das Verhältnis von *westeuropäischer Integration und Ost-West-Konflikt*: In der Globalstrategie der USA gegen die Sowjetunion und die anderen Staaten des sogenannten real existierenden Sozialismus kam der westeuropäischen Integration eine wichtige Funktion zu. Die Internationalisierung des Kapitals und die europäische Integration stellten in gewisser Hinsicht das ökonomische Fundament für diese Strategie dar. Als „sich die militärischen Besatzungsgrenzen zwischen Ost und West zu Blockgrenzen verdichteten“, schrieb Wilfried Loth, sei das westeuropäische „Integrationsprojekt notwendigerweise zu einem Element westlicher Blockbildung“ geworden.¹⁸⁴

Bereits im beginnenden Kalten Krieg in der zweiten Hälfte der 1940er Jahre beschleunigte in diesem Sinne der Marshallplan das volkswirtschaftliche Wachstum in den westeuropäischen Ländern, förderte den internationalen Handel, „vergrößerte und festigte aber ebenso den Einfluß amerikanischer Kapitalgeber auf den expansionsfähigen europäischen Markt“¹⁸⁵. Im Mittelpunkt der Politik der USA stand damals das politische Projekt der Stabilisierung Westeuropas und der Zurückdrängung (containment) des „Vormarsches des Kommunismus“. Von daher betätigten sich die Vereinigten Staaten in den 1950er Jahren faktisch auch als Geburtshelfer der EWG.¹⁸⁶ Da der Exportanteil an der Wirtschaft der USA in dieser Zeit lediglich vier Prozent betrug, schien die ökonomische Konkurrenz einer Europäischen

¹⁸¹ Vgl. Gretchen Binus: Zum staatsmonopolistischen Funktionsmechanismus unter dem Zwang internationaler Kräfteverschiebungen, a.a.O., S. 158.

¹⁸² Vgl. Irene Gallinge: Zur Anpassungsstrategie westeuropäischer Konzerne an den EG-Binnenmarkt. In: EG'92. Binnenmarktprojekt der Europäischen Gemeinschaften. IPW-Forschungshäfte, Berlin, 1990, Nr. 2, S. 65.

¹⁸³ Guido Thiemeyer: Europäische Integration, a.a.O., S. 168.

¹⁸⁴ Wilfried Loth: Der Weg nach Europa, a.a.O., S. 136.

¹⁸⁵ Hanns Jürgen Küsters: Die westeuropäische Integration seit 1945. In: Staatslexikon. Recht, Wirtschaft, Gesellschaft. In sieben Bänden, hrsg. von der Görres-Gesellschaft, Sonderausgabe der 7., völlig neu bearbeiteten Auflage, zweiter Band, Freiburg/Basel/Wien 1995, Sp. 429.

¹⁸⁶ Die europäische Integration, schreibt irische Historiker Brendan Simms, der als Professor für die Geschichte internationaler Beziehungen an der Universität Cambridge lehrt, war „ein Projekt der doppelten Eindämmung, das Deutschland einbetten und Stalin abschrecken sollte“. (Brendan Simms: Brexit: Weg mit Schaden. Oder doch nicht? In: Cicero. Magazin für politische Kultur, Berlin, 2016, Nr. 8, S. 48.)

Wirtschaftsgemeinschaft offensichtlich ein Faktor zu sein, der vernachlässigt werden konnte, zumal führende US-Konzerne selbst von einer solchen Gemeinschaft profitieren konnten, weil sie – wie die Autokonzerne General Motors (Opel) und Ford – längst innerhalb Westeuropas produzierten.¹⁸⁷

US-Präsident John F. Kennedy sagte dazu am 6. Dezember 1961 in einer Rede vor dem US-amerikanischen Industriellenverband: „Der Gemeinsame Markt könnte und sollte unser größter und [...] einträglichster Kunde sein. Seine Verbrauchernachfrage wächst ständig, vor allem die Nachfrage nach jenen Gütern, die wir am besten produzieren [...]. Es ist ein geschichtliches Zusammentreffen von Notwendigkeit und großer Möglichkeit; in demselben Augenblick, in dem wir dringend eine Steigerung unserer Exporte brauchen, um unsere Zahlungsbilanz zu schützen und unsere Truppen im Ausland zu bezahlen, entsteht jenseits des Atlantiks ein gewaltiger neuer Markt.“¹⁸⁸ Und in Gesprächen mit dem französischen Präsidenten Charles de Gaulle hatte Kennedy damals deutlich gemacht, dass für die USA der Beitritt Großbritanniens zur EWG hohe politische Priorität habe, um Westeuropa (mit der oben genannten Zielstellung) politisch und ökonomisch zu stärken.¹⁸⁹

Wie sich heute besonders deutlich im Ukraine-Konflikt zeigt, messen die USA im Ringen mit ihrem imperialen Rivalen Russland (gewissermaßen eine Verlängerung des traditionellen Ost-West-Konflikts aus der Zeit des Kalten Krieges) einer möglichst starken EU große Bedeutung bei. Eine Perspektive, aus der die ökonomische Rivalität zwischen den USA und der EU zweitrangig erscheint. US-Präsident Barack Obama hat daher persönlich gegen einen Brexit argumentiert und sich dafür eingesetzt, dass das Vereinigte Königreich Mitglied der Europäischen Union bleibt. Obama hatte schon vor seinem Besuch in Großbritannien Ende April 2016 klargemacht, dass er durch einen Austritt des Königreichs bei einem Sieg der „Leave“-Befürworter im Brexit-Referendum im Juni 2016 eine Schwächung der EU befürchtete.¹⁹⁰ In einem Gastbeitrag für die britische Zeitung *The Telegraph* schrieb er, der Ausgang des Referendums „ist eine Angelegenheit von großem Interesse für die Vereinigten Staaten“. Obama betonte, dass die USA an einer starken Position der Europäischen Union in der Welt interessiert sind, für die seiner Ansicht nach Großbritannien nicht verzichtbar sei. An die Briten gewandt, unterstrich er: „Die USA und die Welt brauchen weiterhin Ihren verstärkten Einfluss – auch innerhalb Europas.“¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁷ Vgl. Winfried Wolf: Das Projekt der Vereinigten Staaten von Europa. Innere Dynamik und immanente Widersprüchlichkeit. In: Winfried Wolf, Jutta Klaß (Hrsg.): Festung Europa. Von den Freiheiten des Kapitals im EU-Supermarkt und weltweit, Köln 1994, S. 31/32; Guido Thiemeyer: Europäische Integration, a.a.O., S. 160/161.

¹⁸⁸ Kennedy über die Ziele der US-Außenhandelspolitik und das Verhältnis der USA zur EWG; Vorschlag, ein gemeinsames Team zu bilden, ohne daß sich die USA der EWG anschließen. In: Archiv der Gegenwart, Bonn/Wien/Zürich, XXXI. Jahrgang 1961, 07.12.1961, S. 9527.

¹⁸⁹ Vgl. Eckart Conze: Hegemonie durch Integration? Die amerikanische Europapolitik und ihre Herausforderung durch de Gaulle. In: Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte, München, 1995, Heft 2, S. 326.

¹⁹⁰ Vgl. Warnung vor Brexit: Obama empört britische EU-Gegner. In: SPIEGEL ONLINE, Hamburg, 22.04.2016. URL: <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/barack-obama-wirbt-fuer-britischen-eu-verbleib-a-1088627.html> (abgerufen am 23.07.2016).

¹⁹¹ Barack Obama: As your friend, let me say that the EU makes Britain even greater. In: The Telegraph, London, 23.04.2016. URL: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/04/21/as-your-friend-let-me-tell-you-that-the-eu-makes-britain-even-gr/> (abgerufen am 23.07.2016).

Viertens der Aspekt der *Machtbalance*: Als sich Anfang 1990 immer deutlicher abzeichnete, dass der deutsche Vereinigungsprozess rasch Fahrt aufnehmen würde, sah die Mehrheit der politischen Klasse Frankreichs im weiteren Ausbau und in der Stärkung der Europäischen Gemeinschaften den Hauptweg, um zu verhindern, dass Deutschland eine dominierende Rolle auf dem europäischen Kontinent spielen könne.¹⁹² „Nur durch den schnellen Fortgang des westeuropäischen Integrationsprozesses können nach ihrer Auffassung die Befürchtungen und Ängste in Frankreich und anderen Staaten über das Wiedererstehen eines ‚deutschen Hegemonismus‘ zerstreut sowie die Gefahren und Risiken für die Stabilität und Sicherheit in Europa beseitigt werden“¹⁹³, analysierte der Wissenschaftler Volker Neise. Jean François-Poncet, Außenminister Frankreichs von 1978 bis 1981, warnte vor einem „Bruch des europäischen Gleichgewichts zugunsten einer einzigen Macht“ und plädierte für eine Einbindung der größer werdenden Bundesrepublik Deutschland „in eine europäische und föderale Struktur“.¹⁹⁴

Angesichts der großen Dynamik des deutschen Vereinigungsprozesses wurde damals „eine Beschleunigung und Vertiefung des Integrationsprozesses der Zwölf“ gefordert. „Gerade weil die Lösung der deutschen Frage schneller voranschreitet, als anzunehmen war“, schrieb der französische Politologe Joseph Rovon, müsse „auch die westeuropäische Einigung schneller vorangetrieben werden als geplant.“¹⁹⁵ Auf die Frage, ob der damals angedachte wirtschaftliche Zusammenschluss der beiden deutschen Staaten zu einer Verlangsamung des Integrationsprozesses in der EG führen werde, antwortete der französische Außenminister Roland Dumas, dass ihn diese Frage in seiner Meinung bestärke, „daß wir den Integrationsprozeß innerhalb der Europäischen Gemeinschaft beschleunigen müssen. Aber wir müssen wissen, ob unsere Partner dazu bereit sind.“¹⁹⁶ Französische Politiker wie Jean François-Poncet befürchteten damals, dass der Prozess der Vertiefung der EG-Integration stecken bleiben könnte, „wenn er nicht durch einen politischen Impuls wieder in Schwung gebracht wird, und die Union wird zerfallen, wenn sie nicht rasch eine politische Dimension annimmt“.¹⁹⁷ Deshalb wurde von französischer Seite gefordert, in beschleunigtem Maße eine Wirtschafts- und Währungsunion zu schaffen und den Aufbau einer politischen Union in Angriff zu nehmen.¹⁹⁸

Allerdings hat die Art und Weise, wie dieser Plan umgesetzt wurde, die ursprüngliche Intention einer Einhegung Deutschlands im Rahmen einer größeren Einheit konterkariert. Die Schaffung einer Währungsunion nach „deutschen Regeln“ und bei Fehlen einer gemeinsamen Haushaltspolitik hat, statt „die Macht Deutschlands einzugrenzen, sie tatsächlich verstärkt“¹⁹⁹, wie der irische Historiker Brendan Simms und der deutsche Sozialwissenschaftler Benjamin Zeeb jüngst in ihrem Buch „Europa am Abgrund“ feststellten.

¹⁹² Vgl. Renata Fritsch-Bournazel: Europa und die deutsche Einheit, Bonn/München 1990, S. 240-242.

¹⁹³ Volker Neise: Wandel und Stabilität in Europa – zur Haltung Frankreichs. In: IPW-Berichte, Berlin, 1990, Nr. 6, S. 31.

¹⁹⁴ Vgl. Jean François-Poncet: Deutschlands Einheit, Europas Chance? In: Die Zeit, Hamburg, 16.02.1990.

¹⁹⁵ Joseph Rovon: Rückzug auf den Nationalstaat? Wieder einmal eine deutsch-französische Krise. In: Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Frankfurt am Main, 08.02.1990.

¹⁹⁶ Roland Dumas: Die deutsche Einheit ist nicht aufzuhalten (Interview). In: Die Welt, Bonn, 09.02.1990.

¹⁹⁷ Jean François-Poncet: Deutschlands Einheit, Europas Chance? A.a.O.

¹⁹⁸ Vgl. Volker Neise: Wandel und Stabilität in Europa – zur Haltung Frankreichs, a.a.O., S. 31.

¹⁹⁹ Brendan Simms, Benjamin Zeeb: Europa am Abgrund, a.a.O., S. 48.

Heute sei klar, „dass das elementare Gesetz, wonach eine Währungsunion nur funktionieren kann, wenn sie mit einer politischen Union verbunden ist, die automatische Transfers ermöglicht, nach wie vor gilt“²⁰⁰.

Fünftens die Frage der *Art und Weise der Integration und ihrer Finalität*: Bereits im Artikel 2 des EWG-Vertrages von 1957 wurde fixiert, dass zur Erreichung der Ziele der Europäischen Wirtschaftsgemeinschaft im Wesentlichen zwei Instrumente einzusetzen seien: *erstens* die „Errichtung eines Gemeinsamen Marktes“ und *zweitens* die „schrittweise Annäherung der Wirtschaftspolitik der Mitgliedsstaaten“.²⁰¹ In der Realität kam allerdings die Implementierung des zweiten Instruments kaum voran. Im Frühjahr 1989 kam der sogenannte Delors-Bericht (benannt nach dem damaligen Präsidenten der EG-Kommission, Jacques Delors) auf die genannten Instrumente zurück. Er stellte einerseits beträchtliche Fortschritte bei der Herstellung des Binnenmarktes fest, musste aber andererseits konstatieren, dass die wirtschaftspolitische Koordinierung unzureichend bleibt.²⁰²

Vor diesem Hintergrund entwickelte der Delors-Bericht als strategische Orientierung für die Integration Westeuropas mit dem Blick auf die 1990er Jahre die Grundzüge für eine stufenweise zu realisierende Wirtschafts- und Währungsunion. Wirtschaftsunion und Währungsunion wurden als zwei Bestandteile eines Ganzen begriffen und sollten daher parallel zueinander realisiert werden. In der Endphase der Verwirklichung sollte die Wirtschaftsunion folgende Hauptmerkmale aufweisen: „ein einheitlicher Markt mit freiem Personen-, Waren-, Dienstleistungs- und Kapitalverkehr; eine Wettbewerbspolitik und sonstige Maßnahmen zur Stärkung der Marktmechanismen; gemeinsame Politiken zur Strukturanpassung und Regionalentwicklung; eine Koordinierung der makroökonomischen Politiken, einschließlich verbindlicher Regeln für die Haushaltspolitik“²⁰³. Für die Währungsunion müssten drei Bedingungen erfüllt sein: „uneingeschränkte, irreversible Konvertibilität der Währungen; vollständige Liberalisierung des Kapitalverkehrs und volle Integration der Banken- und sonstigen Finanzmärkte; Beseitigung der Bandbreiten und unwiderrufliche Fixierung der Wechselkursparitäten“²⁰⁴.

Der Delors-Bericht stieß bei einer Reihe EG-Staaten auf erhebliche Vorbehalte. Besonders umstritten war die Übertragung nationaler Kompetenzen der Wirtschafts- und Währungspolitik auf EG-Institutionen wie das geplante „Europäische Zentralbanksystem“. Namentlich die britische Regierung erklärte wiederholt, dass sie eine europäische Einheitswährung mit einheitlicher Zentralbank für unvereinbar mit der Souveränität ihres Landes ansah. Dabei war Großbritannien bereits in den 1970er Jahren aus prinzipiellen Erwägungen nicht gewillt, nationale Souveränitätsrechte zugunsten der EWG bzw. der EG aufzugeben.²⁰⁵

²⁰⁰ Ebenda, S. 73.

²⁰¹ Vgl. Vertrag zur Gründung der Europäischen Wirtschaftsgemeinschaft, Artikel 2. URL: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/brussels/website/media/Basis/Vertraege/Pdf/EWG-Vertrag.pdf> (abgerufen am 02.08.2016).

²⁰² Vgl. Der Delors-Bericht. Bericht zur Wirtschafts- und Währungsunion in der EG, vorgelegt vom Ausschuss zur Prüfung der Wirtschafts- und Währungsunion am 17. April 1989. In: Europa-Archiv, Bonn, 1989, Nr. 10, S. D 285/D 286.

²⁰³ Ebenda, S. D 289.

²⁰⁴ Vgl. ebenda, S. D 288.

²⁰⁵ Vgl. Jutta Polzin-Walter: Liberalisierung des Kapitalverkehrs – Element des gemeinsamen Binnenmarktes der EG. In: IPW-Berichte, Berlin, 1990, Nr. 3, S. 28 und 31.

Zwischen den einzelnen EU-Staaten gab und gibt es nach wie vor tiefgreifende Divergenzen über das Ausmaß der anzustrebenden Supranationalität. Während Frankreich und Italien an einer Stärkung der politischen Integration interessiert sind, legen Großbritannien, Dänemark und Irland den Fokus auf den gemeinsamen Markt im Sinne einer Freihandelszone²⁰⁶ und sind wenig geneigt, nationale Souveränitätsrechte an supranationale Organe abzutreten, was auch darin zum Ausdruck kommt, dass das Vereinigte Königreich und Dänemark hinsichtlich der Euro-Einführung von der Opting-out-Klausel Gebrauch machten. Namentlich das britische europapolitische Konzept zielte stets auf einen Staatenbund statt auf einen Bundesstaat.²⁰⁷ In seiner Bloomberg-Rede vom Januar 2013 sagte der britische Premierminister David Cameron, dass einige Mitgliedsstaaten der EU „eine engere wirtschaftliche und politische Integration planen. Viele andere, einschließlich Britannien, würden sich dieses Ziel niemals zu eigen machen.“²⁰⁸ Großbritannien zeigte sich schon vordem nicht an einer Stärkung des Europäischen Parlaments interessiert und wandte sich vor allem gegen eine stärkere Verankerung der Sozialpolitik in der Gemeinschaft.²⁰⁹ Nicht zuletzt setzen sich die herrschenden Kreise des Vereinigten Königreichs – in jüngster Zeit gemeinsam mit den neuesten EU-Mitgliedern aus Osteuropa – „konsequent und mit am stärksten für eine dezidiert neoliberale Politik innerhalb der EU und deren Strukturen ein“²¹⁰, wie der Chefökonom beim Thinktank *New Economics Foundation*, James Meadway, feststellte.

In den französischen Überlegungen zur europäischen Integration spielte vor allem die Frage der Einbindung des mächtigen Nachbarn Deutschland eine zentrale Rolle – insbesondere seit der Einbeziehung des westlichen Deutschland in das Containment-Programm der USA Ende der 1940er Jahre, verbunden mit seiner wirtschaftlichen und militärischen Stärkung.²¹¹ Es ging Frankreich um die Etablierung eines internationalen Systems in Europa, das „die Kontrolle der ansonsten übermächtigen Deutschen garantierte, ohne zugleich durch einseitige Diskriminierung neuen Revanchismus und demzufolge neue gewalttätige Auseinandersetzungen zu provozieren“²¹². Im EWG-Vertrag von 1957 findet daher das Ziel

²⁰⁶ In der zweiten Hälfte der 1950er Jahre entstand in London das Konzept einer europäischen Freihandelszone zur Assoziierung Englands an den entstehenden Gemeinsamen Markt. Am supranationalen Einigungsprozess, der dann 1957 zu den Römischen Verträgen führte, wollte es sich hingegen nicht beteiligen. Vgl. Eckart Conze: *Hegemonie durch Integration? A.a.O.*, S. 315.

²⁰⁷ Der Historiker Gérard Bökenkamp verweist darauf, dass sich ohne große Schwierigkeiten aus den Reden und Grundsatzserklärungen von konservativen wie Labour-Premierministern „von den ersten Jahren nach dem Beitritt bis zur Gegenwart eine gemeinsame Linie erkennen“ lasse. Die britische Idee von Europa ziele „auf einen Staatenbund, in dem die Nationalstaaten als wichtigste politische Einheit erhalten bleiben, aber eng miteinander kooperieren. Die nationalen Parlamente bleiben die Basis der demokratischen Legitimation und Kontrolle. Im Zentrum steht der Binnenmarkt, der nicht nur unbedingt erhalten, sondern in vielen Bereichen wie Dienstleistung, Energie und Digitales noch weiter ausgebaut werden soll.“ Vgl. Gérard Bökenkamp: *Die britische Vision von Europa*. URL: <http://www.openeuropeberlin.de/die-britische-vision-von-europa-von-gerard-boekenkamp/> (abgerufen am 24.07.2016).

²⁰⁸ EU speech at Bloomberg. Prime Minister David Cameron discussed the future of the European Union at Bloomberg (23 January 2013). URL: <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/eu-speech-at-bloomberg> (abgerufen am 26.07.2016).

²⁰⁹ Vgl. Otto Schmuck, Maximilian Schröder: *Auf dem Weg zur Europäischen Union*, Bonn 1993, S. 17.

²¹⁰ *Schrittmacher für Neoliberalismus in Europa* (Interview mit James Meadway). In: *Neues Deutschland*, Berlin, 04.09.2015.

²¹¹ Vgl. Wilfried Loth: *Die Europäische Gemeinschaft – Entstehung und Entwicklung*. In: Cord Jakobeit/Alparslan Yenil (Hrsg.): *Gesamteuropa. Analysen, Probleme und Entwicklungsperspektiven*, Bonn 1993, S. 20 und 29.

²¹² Wilfried Loth: *Der Weg nach Europa*, a.a.O., S. 134.

der politischen Integration in der Formel vom „festen Willen, die Grundlagen für einen immer engeren Zusammenschluß der europäischen Völker zu schaffen“²¹³, seinen Ausdruck, und es ist im Maastrichter Vertrag über die Europäische Union von 1992 in ähnlicher Form in der Präambel aufgehoben, in der die Entschlossenheit ausgedrückt wird, „den Prozeß der Schaffung einer immer engeren Union der Völker Europas [...] weiterzuführen“²¹⁴. Es kann daher nicht verwundern, dass der britische Premierminister David Cameron in den Verhandlungen des Europäischen Rates Mitte Februar 2016 bestrebt war, aus dieser symbolischen Verpflichtung auszusteigen, um den Brexit-Befürwortern im Vereinigten Königreich das Wasser abzugraben.²¹⁵

In Deutschland haben sich derartige unterschiedliche Integrationskonzeptionen 2014 in den Europa-Wahlprogrammen von FDP einerseits und AfD andererseits gespiegelt. Hinsichtlich der Finalität der Europäischen Union positionierten sich FDP und AfD programmatisch auf gegensätzlichen Polen: Während die FDP die Auffassung vertrat, die EU sollte langfristig auf der Grundlage einer gemeinsamen Verfassung ein föderaler Bundesstaat werden,²¹⁶ lehnte die AfD einen europäischen Bundesstaat nach dem Vorbild der Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika ab, wollte die EU auf die Binnenmarktfunktion reduzieren und strebte im Sinne des Souveränismus lediglich einen Staatenbund an – einen „demokratischen, rechtsstaatlichen Bund freier, souveräner Staaten mit einem großen, leistungsfähigen Binnenmarkt“²¹⁷.

Die FDP sah in der EU eine unverzichtbare Antwort auf die Globalisierung und betonte die positive Wirkung der EU in der europäischen Geschichte. Nach ihrer Auffassung wäre ein föderaler Bundesstaat das erklärte Gegenmodell zum Rückfall Europas in eine nationalstaatliche Kleinstaaterei. In diesem Sinne sollte die europäische Integration schrittweise weiter vorangetrieben werden. Zu einer vertieften Integration gehöre eine zügige Fortschreibung der Verträge durch Einberufung eines Konvents, der nicht nur aus Parlamentariern und Regierungsvertretern, sondern auch aus Vertretern der Zivilgesellschaften besteht. So sollte die Diskussionen um eine europäische Verfassung wiederbelebt und behutsam weiterentwickelt werden. Am Ende dieser Entwicklung sollte nach Auffassung der FDP ein demokratisch legitimerter, föderaler, subsidiärer und dezentraler Bundesstaat stehen, über den die Bürgerinnen und Bürger in einer europaweiten Volksabstimmung entscheiden.²¹⁸

²¹³ Vertrag zur Gründung der Europäischen Wirtschaftsgemeinschaft, a.a.O., [Präambel].

²¹⁴ Vertrag über die Europäische Union (Maastricht-Vertrag). Vom 7.2.1992. In: Europa-Recht, München 1995, S. 286.

²¹⁵ Ergebnis der Verhandlungen des Europäischen Rates am 18. und 19. Februar 2016 war unter anderem, dass sich das Vereinigte Königreich nicht an weiteren Schritten der europäischen Integration beteiligen muss. Es muss auch den Euro nicht einführen. Damit verabschiedete sich Großbritannien vom Ziel einer „immer engeren Union“. Vgl. Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung, Frankfurt am Main, 21.02.2016.

²¹⁶ Vgl. Programm der Freien Demokratischen Partei für die Wahl zum VIII. Europäischen Parlament 2014. Beschluss des Europaparteitages der FDP, Bonn, 19. Januar 2014, S. 3 (EPT-Europawahlprogramm.pdf).

²¹⁷ Mut zu Deutschland. Für ein Europa der Vielfalt. Programm der Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) für die Wahl zum Europäischen Parlament am 25. Mai 2014, [Erfurt 2014], S. 25. URL: <https://www.alternativefuer.de/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Europaprogramm-der-AfD.pdf> (abgerufen am 25.03.2014).

²¹⁸ Vgl. Programm der Freien Demokratischen Partei für die Wahl zum VIII. Europäischen Parlament 2014, a.a.O., S. 3 und 5.

Die FDP wollte „weniger Bürokratie“ und „weniger überflüssige Regulierung“ – dafür aber „mehr Gemeinsamkeit dort, wo wir ein starkes Europa brauchen: Bei Fragen unserer gemeinsamen Währung, im Binnenmarkt, in der Handelspolitik, in der Energiepolitik, in der Rechtspolitik sowie in der Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik“.²¹⁹ Dagegen plädierte die AfD in ihrem noch von der Gründergruppe um den Volkswirtschaftsprofessor Bernd Lucke geprägten Wahlprogramm für einen geplanten und geordneten Ausstieg aus dem Euro und forderte eine Auflösung des Euro-Währungsgebietes. Stattdessen strebte sie die Rückkehr zur Währungszusammenarbeit wie im früheren Europäischen Währungs-System (EWS) an.²²⁰ In den Augen der AfD gefährdete der Euro immer stärker die Erfolge der europäischen Einigung: „Die Einheitswährung sät Zwietracht in der Eurozone, weil Südeuropa verarmt und die Gelder anderer Länder im Norden beansprucht.“²²¹ Prononciert bestand die AfD darauf, dass die Wirtschaftspolitik in der Gestaltungshoheit der Mitgliedsstaaten verbleibt, und lehnte die Schaffung einer europäischen Wirtschaftsregierung ab.²²² Wirtschaftspolitik sei „eine Aufgabe der einzelnen Mitgliedsstaaten“²²³.

Doch trotz der gegensätzlichen Fluchtpunkte plädierten FDP wie AfD für ein „Europa verschiedener Geschwindigkeiten“ und für mehr Marktwirtschaft, mehr Wettbewerb und mehr Privatisierung im Geiste des Neoliberalismus. Bezeichnender Weise wollten beide Parteien daher auch die Sozialpolitik ebenso wie die Bekämpfung der Jugendarbeitslosigkeit, die Arbeitsmarkt- und die Steuer- und Finanzpolitik in der nationalen Hoheit belassen.²²⁴

Sechstens hat sich die *Prozess der europäischen Integration* – wie wohl jeder historische Prozess – *nicht als geradliniger Weg erwiesen* und verlief einmal schneller und einmal langsamer. Er war immer wieder durch retardierende Momente, durch solche der Stagnation und durch Rückschläge (wie das Nein der Franzosen und der Niederländer 2005 zur Verfassung der Europäischen Union) gekennzeichnet. Erinnerung sei hier an die „Politik des leeren Stuhls“ Mitte der 1960er Jahre. Damals wollte die EWG-Kommission in Kompensation gegen die Umsetzung französischer Wünsche in der Agrarpolitik *zum einen* durch die Eigenfinanzierung der gemeinsamen Agrarpolitik und durch die Stärkung der Haushaltsbefugnisse des Europäischen Parlaments dem Gemeinschaftssystem mehr Eigenständigkeit und mehr Unabhängigkeit von den Regierungen der Mitgliedsstaaten einräumen. *Zum anderen* sollte bei dem für 1966 geplanten Übergang zu einer neuen Integrationsstufe des Gemeinsamen Marktes in wesentlichen strittigen Fragen statt des Einstimmigkeits- das Mehrheitsvotum gelten (Beschlussfassung mit qualifizierter Mehrheit). Der französische Präsident Charles de Gaulle, der dadurch eine Beeinträchtigung der nationalen Souveränität Frankreichs befürchtete, lehnte beide Integrations Schritte ab, und die französische Regierung blieb deshalb ab 1. Juli 1965 den Sitzungen des EGW-Ministerrates fern. Erst im Januar 1966 endete diese Krise mit dem sogenannten Luxemburger Kompromiss. Die anderen Mitgliedsstaaten verzichteten einerseits darauf, bei wesentlichen strittigen Fragen das Mehrheitsvotum einzuführen, und willigten ein, bei Fragen, die von einem Mitgliedsstaat

²¹⁹ Ebenda, S. 4.

²²⁰ Vgl. Mut zu Deutschland, a.a.O., S. 5.

²²¹ Ebenda, S. 2.

²²² Vgl. ebenda, S. 2 und 25.

²²³ Ebenda, S. 12.

²²⁴ Vgl. Programm der Freien Demokratischen Partei für die Wahl zum VIII. Europäischen Parlament 2014, a.a.O., S. 2, 3, 5, 12, 14, 16 und 19; Mut zu Deutschland, a.a.O., S. 2, 3, 5, 12, 13, 14 und 21.

als von grundlegender Bedeutung klassifiziert werden, das Einstimmigkeitsprinzip beizubehalten.²²⁵ Andererseits hatte der Luxemburger Kompromiss „die De Gaulle’sche Anerkennung des Vertrags zur Gründung der Europäischen Gemeinschaft mitsamt seinen überstaatlichen Institutionen, seinen Verfahren und seinem Binnenmarkt zur Folge“²²⁶.

In der ersten Hälfte der 1980er Jahre charakterisierte der Begriff der „Eurosclerose“ die entstandenen Erstarrungen, Verkrustungen und Hindernisse in den EG, „die der Umlenkung produktiver Ressourcen in zukunftsträchtige Bereiche (Strukturwandel), der Schaffung konkurrenzfähiger Konzernstrukturen (Konzentration und Zentralisation des Kapitals) und der Schaffung akkumulations- und expansionsfördernder wirtschaftspolitischer Rahmenbedingungen im Wege standen“²²⁷. Daher kam massive Kritik von Seiten der Großkonzerne und ihrer Verbände, die in gegeneinander abgeschotteten Märkten (insbesondere bei Staatsaufträgen), in kostenaufwändigen Grenzkontrollen und -formalitäten, in einer schleppenden Harmonisierung von Normen, in zahlreichen Hindernissen für den Kapitalverkehr (durch Aufrechterhaltung nationaler Bestimmungen und Schutzklauseln) und in einem kaum zu überblickenden Brüsseler Regulierungsdickicht entscheidende Hürden sahen, die sie gegenüber ihren Konkurrenten in den USA und in Japan ins Hintertreffen brachten.²²⁸ „Positionsverluste gegenüber den USA und Japan in ökonomischer und wissenschaftlich-technischer Hinsicht sowie das politische Interesse, in Grundfragen der internationalen Entwicklung sich abzustimmen bzw. zu kooperieren und dabei die spezifischen Interessen der beteiligten westeuropäischen Länder nachdrücklicher zur Geltung zu bringen“, analysierte der Ökonom Norbert Lehmann 1990, „führten Mitte der 80er Jahre zu einer Neubestimmung und -orientierung, deren wichtigster Ausdruck die Einheitliche Europäische Akte war, eine Erweiterung und Ergänzung der bis dahin gültigen vertraglichen Grundlagen, die im Juli 1987 in Kraft trat.“²²⁹ Die mit der EEA ins Auge gefasste Vollendung des Binnenmarktes bis 1992, der als ein „Raum ohne Binnengrenzen, in dem der freie Verkehr von Waren, Personen, Dienstleistungen und Kapital [...] gewährleistet ist“²³⁰, definiert wurde, und die Schaffung einer „Politischen Union“ als Fernziel dynamisierten damals die europäische Integration neu.

Die Geschichte der Europäischen Gemeinschaften wie die der Europäischen Union zeigt immer wieder ein Ringen zwischen zentripetalen und zentrifugalen Kräften, zwischen integrierenden und desintegrierenden Tendenzen. Aufgrund des objektiven Charakters der Internationalisierung des Kapitals und der staatsmonopolistischen Integration und des Wechselverhältnisses von Produktivkräften und Produktionsverhältnissen im heutigen

²²⁵ Vgl. Hans-Jürgen Wagener und Thomas Eger: Europäische Integration. Wirtschaft und Recht, Geschichte und Politik, München 2014, S. 47/48; Hanns Jürgen Küsters: Die westeuropäische Integration seit 1945, a.a.O., Sp. 423/424; Werner Weidenfeld: Europäische Einigung im historischen Überblick. In: Werner Weidenfeld und Wolfgang Wessels (Hrsg.): Europa von A – Z. Taschenbuch der europäischen Integration, Baden-Baden 2016, S. 21.

²²⁶ Mario Telò: Brexit oder Bremain: Für ein Kern-Europa der konzentrischen Kreise. In: Neue Gesellschaft / Frankfurter Hefte, Berlin/Bonn, 2016, Nr. 6, S. 11.

²²⁷ Norbert Lehmann: Eine neue Stufe der Integration – ihre wirtschaftliche und politische Bedeutung. In: EG’92. Binnenmarktprojekt der Europäischen Gemeinschaften. IPW-Forschungshefte, Berlin, 1990, Nr. 2, S. 10.

²²⁸ Vgl. ebenda.

²²⁹ Ebenda, S. 11.

²³⁰ Einheitliche Europäische Akte, Artikel 8a. In: Clio-Online / Themenportal Europäische Geschichte, Humboldt-Universität, Berlin. URL: http://www.europa.clio-online.de/site/lang__de/ItemID__498/mid__11373/40208215/default.aspx (abgerufen am 18.07.2016).

Kapitalismus ist davon auszugehen, dass „auf längere Sicht der Zwang zur Integration dominiert“²³¹ – eine Feststellung, die bereits vor 35 Jahren getroffen wurde und die sich bis heute bewahrheitet hat. Allerdings ist mit unterschiedlichen Wegen, Formen und Geschwindigkeiten der Integration in Europa (auch mit einer besonders engen Verflechtung und Politikkoordinierung einzelner Staaten bzw. Staatengruppen) zu rechnen, da die ökonomischen, sozialen und politischen Unterschiede zwischen den europäischen Staaten und ihrer Verflechtung noch immer beträchtlich sind. Stichworte dafür sind beispielsweise ein „Europa verschiedener Geschwindigkeiten“ oder ein „Europa konzentrischer Kreise“ mit einem „Kerneuropa“.²³²

Was tun nach dem Brexit-Referendum?

Die Widersprüchlichkeit der europäischen Integration hat aber nicht nur immer wieder Elemente der Stagnation und Erosion hervorgebracht, sondern sich auch als Motor der Entwicklung erwiesen. Auch die jüngste Krise, die das Brexit-Votum ausgelöst hat, kann eine neue Chance sein, die europäische Integration zu vertiefen und wichtige Bausteine dafür zu entwickeln. Der französische Finanzminister Michel Sapin forderte eine „Beschleunigung“ verschiedener europäischer Projekte, um die EU nach dem Brexit-Votum wieder attraktiv zu machen. Er verlangte, dass zur Förderung des Wachstums öffentlich geförderte Investitionen „jenseits des Juncker-Plans“ in Infrastruktur, Digitalisierung, Forschung und industrielle Programme ausgeweitet und verlängert werden. In steuerlichen und sozialen Fragen sei zudem mehr Harmonisierung in Europa erforderlich, beispielsweise eine gemeinsame Regulierung von Leiharbeit und Werkverträgen in der EU.²³³ Bemerkenswerter Weise hieb der französische Unternehmerverband *Medef* in eine ähnliche Kerbe: Neben „fairer Konkurrenz auf dem europäischen Binnenmarkt mit Bewegungsfreiheit für Personen, Waren, Dienstleistungen und Kapital“ brauche Europa „eine Vertiefung in politischen, wirtschaftlichen, finanziellen, steuerlichen und sozialen Fragen“.²³⁴ Frankreichs Präsident François Hollande setzte Ende August 2016 nach: Auf einem Treffen von sozialistischen und sozialdemokratischen Partei- und Regierungschefs aus mehr als 15 zumeist links regierten Ländern Europas in La Celle Saint-Cloud bei Paris schlug er vor, die im Juncker-Plan

²³¹ „Multis“ – Proletariat – Klassenkampf, a.a.O., S. 49. – Der Wirtschaftswissenschaftler Helmut Matthes konstatierte 2013: „Die Integration Europas entspricht den heutigen politischen Erfordernissen gesellschaftlichen Fortschritts. Eine Rückkehr zu historisch überholten Phasen dominanter nationaler Politik und Wirtschaft wäre nicht nur mit unvermeidbaren Konsequenzen verbunden, sondern würde auch im krassen Widerspruch zu den notwendigen Veränderungen der globalen Entwicklung stehen (Friedenssicherung und Abrüstung, Arm-Reich-Angleichung, Überwindung des Nord-Süd-Konflikts, Umweltschutz).“ (Helmut Matthes: Nichts als Krisen. Vergebliche Rettungsversuche und notwendiges Handeln. In: Die EU und die Eurokrise. WeltTrends Spezial, Ausgabe 10, Potsdam 2013, S. 24.)

²³² Der Politologe Wilhelm Ersil hat vor einiger Zeit die Konsequenzen derartiger Konzeptionen ausführlicher diskutiert. Vgl. Wilhelm Ersil: Die Europäische Union: Einheit, Differenzierung und Spaltungen. In: ebenda, S. 16-19.

²³³ Vgl. Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Frankfurt am Main, 25.06.2016. – Der deutsche Bundesfinanzminister Wolfgang Schäuble will dagegen den bisherigen Kurs „pragmatisch“ fortsetzen und erklärte kurz nach dem Brexit-Referendum, wer jetzt eine weitere Integration fordere, vor allem in der Eurozone, der habe den Schuss nicht gehört. Und: Eine Vertiefung der Einheit der Union „ist jetzt nicht das Gebot der Stunde“, war sich die deutsche Bundeskanzlerin Angela Merkel mit Schäuble einig. Vgl. DER SPIEGEL, Hamburg, 2016, Nr. 27, S. 13 und 14.

²³⁴ Vgl. Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Frankfurt am Main, 25.06.2016.

vorgesehene Summe von 315 Mrd. Euro für Investitionen in Europa für die Jahre 2015 bis 2018 zu verdoppeln.²³⁵

Ebenso wie die französische hat auch die italienische Regierung Vorschläge für eine Reform der Eurozone vorgelegt, die in entscheidenden Punkten identisch sind. Beide plädieren für einen Finanzminister für die Euro-Zone, der über ein eigenes Budget verfügen und selbst wirtschaftspolitisch aktiv werden soll. Bestandteil dieser Reformkonzepte ist die Möglichkeit, finanzielle Transferzahlungen an ökonomisch schwächere Euro-Staaten zu leisten.²³⁶ Bereits im Vorfeld eines Treffens führender Sozialdemokraten Mitte September 2015 in Wien war ein ganzes Paket mit ähnlichen und darüber noch hinausgehenden Vorschlägen bekannt geworden: (1) gemeinsames Brüsseler Budget mit Transferunion, (2) Abkehr von der Austeritäts-Politik, (3) gemeinsame europäische Wirtschafts- und Arbeitsmarktpolitik, (4) offensive Wachstumspolitik, (5) Lockerung des Stabilitäts- und Wachstumspaktes, indem öffentliche Investitionen aus dem staatlichen Defizit herausgerechnet werden können, (6) härtere Besteuerung von Kapital und weniger von Arbeit und Abschaffung der Privilegien für transnationale Konzerne und (7) Einführung einer Finanztransaktionssteuer und Bekämpfung von Steuerbetrug.²³⁷

Im Positionspapier „Europa neu gründen“, das kurz nach dem Brexit-Referendum veröffentlicht wurde, plädierten EU-Parlamentspräsident Martin Schulz und SPD-Chef Sigmar Gabriel für eine Politikwende in Europa. Notwendig sei nun ein neuer Impuls für die europäische Integration: „Wir brauchen jetzt den Mut, etwas Größeres zu wagen. [...] Wir brauchen einen ambitionierten, kräftigen Schub und kein ängstliches Stückwerk, damit die EU die Probleme lösen kann, die die Bürgerinnen und Bürger beunruhigen.“²³⁸ Vorrang müsse jetzt ein neuer wirtschaftlicher Aufschwung in Europa haben, denn die „Überzeugung, dass Europa für alle ein Gewinn ist, kann nur dann wieder stark werden, wenn wir endlich

²³⁵ Vgl. Neues Deutschland, Berlin, 29.08.2016.

²³⁶ Vgl. Steffen Vogel: Der Aufstand gegen Merkel fällt (vorerst) aus. In: OXI – Wirtschaft für Gesellschaft. Die Monatszeitung, Berlin, 2016, Mai, S. 17.

²³⁷ Vgl. DER SPIEGEL, Hamburg, 2015, Nr. 37, S. 39. – Der Fünf-Präsidenten-Bericht vom Juni 2015, der vom Präsidenten der Europäischen Kommission „in enger Zusammenarbeit“ mit dem Präsidenten des Euro-Gipfels, dem Präsidenten der Euro-Gruppe, dem Präsidenten der Europäischen Zentralbank und dem Präsidenten des Europäischen Parlaments verfasst wurde, entwickelte zwar auch einen weitreichenden Strategieplan zum politischen und fiskalischen Ausbau der Wirtschafts- und Währungsunion, mit dem die wirtschaftspolitische Steuerung Europas vorangetrieben werden sollte, und schlug die Schaffung eines euroraumweiten Schatzamtes („treasury“), einer Art Euro-Finanzministerium, vor. Doch setzte er zu einseitig auf die Stärkung der Wettbewerbsfähigkeit, auf die Schaffung einer „competitiveness authority“, die mit politischen Empfehlungen auch für Tarifverhandlungen massive Eingriffe in die Tarifautonomie und erhöhten Druck auf die Löhne befürchtete ließ. Kritiker des Strategieplans vermissten zudem eine ausreichende Weiterentwicklung der demokratischen Kontrolle dieser wirtschaftspolitischen Steuerung Europas. Vgl. Europäische Kommission: Die Wirtschafts- und Währungsunion Europas vollenden. Vorgelegt von: Jean-Claude Juncker in enger Zusammenarbeit mit Donald Tusk, Jeroen Dijsselbloem, Mario Draghi und Martin Schulz, (Brüssel 2015), besonders S. 9. URL: https://ec.europa.eu/priorities/sites/beta-political/files/5-presidents-report_de_0.pdf (abgerufen am 06.07.2016); Thomas Händel: Junckers „Sozial-Pläne“. In: Neues Deutschland, Berlin, 10.12.2015; Wolfgang Lemb: Business as usual? Der Fünf-Präsidenten-Bericht und die Pläne zur Einrichtung nationaler Wettbewerbsräte. In: Sozialismus, Hamburg, 2016, Nr. 1, S. 53/54; Roland Kulke: Der Koalitionsvertrag der europäischen Eliten. Standpunkte, hrsg. von der Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung, Berlin, 2016, Nr. 10, S. 4.

²³⁸ Sigmar Gabriel, Martin Schulz: Europa neu gründen. SPD-Website, 24. Juni 2016. URL: https://www.spd.de/fileadmin/Dokumente/Sonstiges__Papiere_et_al_/PK_Europa_Paper.pdf (abgerufen am 04.07.2016).

einen Ausweg aus der ökonomischen Krise finden“²³⁹. In diesem Kontext müsse Europa die Gerechtigkeitsfrage beantworten. „Ökonomische Prosperität und soziale Gerechtigkeit bilden die Grundlage einer starken Union nach Innen und Außen.“²⁴⁰

Schulz und Gabriel setzten sich in ihrem Papier daher für eine wachstumsfreundliche Gestaltung des Stabilitäts- und Wachstumspakts und für größere Spielräume der nationalen Haushalte für eine offensive Investitionspolitik ein, die auf der europäischen Ebene verstärkt und ergänzt werden sollten. Die dafür notwendigen Initiativen und Investitionen sollten von den europäischen Struktur- und Kohäsionsfonds sowie dem Juncker-Plan (EFSI-Fonds)²⁴¹ zur öffentlichen und privaten Investitionsförderung gestützt werden. Darüber hinaus forderten die beiden Sozialdemokraten eine aktive Industriepolitik auf europäischer Ebene, Schritte zur Harmonisierung der Unternehmensbesteuerung (gemeinsame Bemessungsgrundlage mit Mindestbesteuerung) und des Steuervollzugs in Europa, eine europäische Sozialpolitik, eine gemeinsame Einwanderungspolitik mit einem gemeinsamen europäischen Einwanderungsrecht und einer gemeinsamen Asylpolitik sowie ein gemeinsames Vorgehen bei der Aufnahme von Bürgerkriegsflüchtlingen und Zuwanderern.²⁴²

Ein Kernpunkt des Papiers von Schulz und Gabriel ist der Umbau der Europäischen Kommission „zu einer wahren europäischen Regierung“, die parlamentarisch durch das Europäische Parlament und durch eine zweite Kammer der Mitgliedsstaaten kontrolliert wird. Wer zukünftig mit der EU unzufrieden sei, müsse sie dann nicht mehr grundsätzlich in Frage stellen, sondern könne durch Wahlen eine europäische Regierung durch eine andere ersetzen.²⁴³

Die europäischen *Grünen* forderten nach dem Brexit-Referendum einen „Neustart“ („reset“) für die Europäische Union.²⁴⁴ Bereits auf ihrer Frühjahrs-Ratstagung Mitte Mai 2016 verlangte die *European Green Party* (EGP) angesichts der Krise der EU eine Abkehr von der

²³⁹ Ebenda.

²⁴⁰ Ebenda. – Der prominente SPD-Europaabgeordnete Jo Leinen war im Februar 2016 noch einen Schritt weiter gegangen und hatte erklärt, dass wir in der Finanzkrise gelernt hätten, „dass die Währungsunion nur auf einem Bein steht und wir dringend eine Wirtschafts- und Finanzunion brauchen“. („Der Zerfall vollzieht sich schleichend“ [Interview mit Jo Leinen]. In: Neues Deutschland, Berlin, 17.02.2016).

²⁴¹ Gemeint ist der *Europäische Fonds für Strategische Investitionen* (EFSI), der 315 Milliarden Euro an Investitionen in „strategische Infrastruktur“ mobilisieren soll, in dem die öffentliche Hand die Funktion als Organisator profitabler Kapitalanlagen übernimmt. Vgl. Werner Weidenfeld: Die Bilanz der europäischen Integration 2015. In: Werner Weidenfeld/Wolfgang Wessels (Hrsg.): Jahrbuch der Europäischen Integration 2015, Baden-Baden 2015, S. 18. – Der EFSI hat die Funktion, Garantien oder Gelder in Höhe von mindestens 21 Milliarden Euro zur Absicherung von Risiken bei privaten Investitionen zu vergeben, „die aufgrund von Marktversagen oder suboptimalen Investitionsbedingungen nicht über den freien Markt finanziert werden können“. (Julian Plottka/Yvonne Braun/Franziska Wild: Glossar aktueller Begriffe. In: Werner Weidenfeld und Wolfgang Wessels (Hrsg.): Europa von A – Z. Taschenbuch der europäischen Integration, Baden-Baden 2016, S. 492.)

²⁴² Vgl. Sigmar Gabriel, Martin Schulz: Europa neu gründen, a.a.O.

²⁴³ Vgl. ebenda. – Martin Schulz hat diesen Kernpunkt allerdings wenig später insofern relativiert, als er erklärte: „Dass meine Vision eines europäischen Zwei-Kammern-Parlaments nicht morgen umgesetzt werden kann, ist mir bewusst.“ Und EU-Kommissions-Präsident Jean-Claude Juncker sah in dem Vorschlag „ein Langzeitprojekt, das man angesichts der Stimmung auf dem Kontinent derzeit nicht umsetzen kann“. („Tödlich für Europa“ [SPIEGEL-Gespräch mit Martin Schulz und Jean-Claude Juncker]. In: DER SPIEGEL, Hamburg, 2016, Nr. 28 [vom 09.07.2016], S. 31).

²⁴⁴ Vgl. Brexit won: EU has to reset [Press release by Monica Frassoni and Reinhard Bütikofer]. URL: <https://europeangreens.eu/news/brexit-won-eu-has-reset> (abgerufen am 01.07.2016).

neoliberalen Austeritäts-Politik. Im Rahmen einer breiteren demokratischen Reform, mit der das derzeitige Defizit von Entscheidungsfähigkeit und Legitimität überwunden werden könne, müsse die EU ihre wirtschaftspolitische Steuerung ändern. Erforderlich sei eine Roadmap mit einem Zeitplan für eine Reform der Europäischen Währungsunion, einschließlich ihrer Demokratisierung. Insbesondere sei es notwendig, die Macht der Euro-Gruppe zu begrenzen, ihre undurchsichtigen, informellen Verfahren und unkontrollierbaren Entscheidungen abzuschaffen und sie an die Regeln der normalen EU-Entscheidungsfindung zu binden. Darüber hinaus müsse das Europäische Parlament in die Lage versetzt werden, sich in vollem Umfang am Entscheidungsprozess zu allen wirtschaftlichen und finanziellen Fragen zu beteiligen.

Die europäische Konstruktion müsse ein gemeinsames Projekt und eine gemeinsame Perspektive sein, erklärte die EGP, eine demokratische Union, die auf gemeinsamen Werten basiert und deren Selbstzweck nicht in Währungen endet, sondern ein Instrument, um eine gerechte, sichere und nachhaltige Gesellschaft aufzubauen. Es bedürfe mehr als eines gemeinsamen Marktes oder einer einheitlichen Währung, um den Frieden zu festigen, die Globalisierung zu zähmen, Bürger- und Menschenrechte zu verteidigen und mit einem Green New Deal einen Übergang zu einem nachhaltigen grünen Wirtschafts- und Sozialsystem zu organisieren. Keine dieser entscheidenden Herausforderungen könne mit einer Rückkehr zu Nationalismus und Chauvinismus bewältigt werden. Es sei Zeit, „Kampfgeist zu zeigen und ein tapferes Gefecht um den europäischen Traum zu wagen“.²⁴⁵

Brendan Simms und Benjamin Zeeb sahen schon vor dem Brexit-Referendum Europa „in seiner tiefsten Krise sehr mehr als fünfzig Jahren“²⁴⁶ stecken. „Die gemeinsame Währung und die Institutionen, die es zusammenhalten, könnten jeden Augenblick implodieren.“²⁴⁷ Ihr alarmierendes Fazit: „Kurz gesagt, unser Kontinent steht am Abgrund.“²⁴⁸ Europäische Probleme wie die Flüchtlings- und Migrationswelle erforderten statt einer konföderalen Antwort eine föderale Lösung.²⁴⁹ Unentschlossenes „muddling through“ helfe nicht mehr weiter: Entweder wagten die Europäer den Sprung in die vollständige politische Union oder die EU werde wieder in ihre Einzelteile zerfallen,²⁵⁰ prophezeien die beiden Wissenschaftler. Eine rein „nationale Lösung“ gelte es abzuwenden, denn dann würden auch die größeren Staaten der Union zu Zwergen auf der internationalen Bühne. Simms und Zeeb sehen dagegen offensichtlich *jetzt*²⁵¹ den Zeitpunkt dafür gekommen, die Vereinigten Staaten von Europa zu schaffen (so ihr Plädoyer im Untertitel ihres Buches): „Wir Europäer müssen eine

²⁴⁵ The European Union (EU) on the brink – Time to show grit. EGP Resolution, adopted at Utrecht Council, 20-22 May 2016. URL: <https://europeangreens.eu/utrecht2016/european-union-eu-brink-time-show-grit> (abgerufen am 24.05.2016).

²⁴⁶ Brendan Simms, Benjamin Zeeb: Europa am Abgrund, a.a.O., S. 33.

²⁴⁷ Ebenda.

²⁴⁸ Ebenda, S. 34.

²⁴⁹ Vgl. ebenda, S. 76.

²⁵⁰ Vgl. Brendan Simms und Benjamin Zeeb: Warum die Europäische Konföderation Europas Krise nicht lösen kann. In: Berliner Republik, Berlin, 2016, Nr. 2, S. 54. – Der Essay beruht auf dem Buch „Europa am Abgrund“, spitzt aber einige Aussagen deutlich zu.

²⁵¹ Simms und Zeeb weisen darauf hin, „dass erfolgreiche staatliche Unionen, entgegen der Überlieferung und Kultur der EU, nicht durch schrittweise Konvergenzprozesse unter verhältnismäßig günstigen Umständen entstanden sind, sondern durch Brüche in extremen Krisenzeiten“. (Brendan Simms, Benjamin Zeeb: Europa am Abgrund, a.a.O., S. 78).

vollständige politische Union errichten, die in der Lage ist, unsere kollektiven Interessen mithilfe demokratisch legitimierter Institutionen zu verteidigen.“²⁵²

Wie eingangs bereits angerissen, sind die europäischen Linken in der Frage des Integrationsprozesses in Europa traditionell zutiefst gespalten. Klaus Dräger, langjähriger Fraktionsmitarbeiter der Linken im Europaparlament, machte 2014 einen Spannungsbogen aus, der „vordergründig durch die Pole »Föderalismus« versus »Souveränismus« geprägt“²⁵³ sei. Auf dem „souveränistischen“ Pol verortete er unter anderen die griechische *Kommounistiko Komma Elladas* (KKE), die *Partido Comunista Português* (PCP), die schwedische *Linkspartei* und die *Rot-Grüne Einheitsliste* aus Dänemark. Bei unterschiedlichen Motiven und Argumentationslinien sähen diese Parteien ihr langfristiges Ziel in einer europäischen Integration, die eher als Kooperation zwischen souveränen Nationalstaaten gestaltet werden soll. Auf dem „föderalistischen“ Pol sah Dräger – bei vielen Unterschieden im Detail und bei einer ganzen Reihe offener Fragen – die Mehrheit der Mitgliedsparteien der *Europäischen Linken* (unter anderen die griechische SYRIZA, DIE LINKE, die spanische *Izquierda Unida* und die *Parti Communiste Français* [PCF]) stehen. Die EL fordere u.a. die Stärkung der Rolle des Europäischen Parlaments durch ein legislatives Initiativrecht und wolle den Euro erhalten.²⁵⁴ Dabei geht der Riss in der Europa-Frage durchaus auch quer durch einzelne Parteien hindurch.

Heute wollen die einen unter den Linken – wie das *Lexit*-Netzwerk oder die Initiative *Eurexit* – aus der Europäischen Union und/oder dem Euro aussteigen. In ihrem Aufruf „Eine Alternative zum Euro“ plädiert die Initiative *Eurexit*, zu deren Erstunterzeichnern Oskar Lafontaine (Vorsitzender der Fraktion der LINKEN im Landtag des Saarlands), sein früherer Staatssekretär im Bundesfinanzministerium, Heiner Flassbeck, der Gewerkschaftssekretär Ralf Krämer (Mitglied des Parteivorstands DIE LINKE) und Diether Dehm (MdB, Schatzmeister der Europäischen Linken) gehören, für „eine einvernehmliche Auflösung der Einheitswährung zugunsten eines neuen europäischen Währungsregimes“: „Unabdingbar erscheint uns, dass einzelnen Staaten oder Staatengruppen ein geregelter, solidarisch abgefederter und freiwilliger Ausstieg aus dem Euro-System ermöglicht wird.“²⁵⁵

Die Co-Vorsitzende der Fraktion DIE LINKE. im Bundestag, Sahra Wagenknecht, schreibt in ihrem Buch „Reichtum ohne Gier“ zum Euro: Die „Idee einer transnationalen Gemeinschaftswährung hat sich nicht bewährt“²⁵⁶. Eine gemeinwohlorientierte Geldordnung setze voraus, dass es ein Gemeinwesen gebe, das die Hoheit über sein Geld habe und frei über dessen Verwendung entscheiden könne. Die Währung sollte deshalb auf einen demokratisch gestaltbaren Raum begrenzt sein. Die Euro-Zone sei hingegen nicht demokratisch gestaltbar, sie verfüge nicht einmal über demokratische Institutionen.²⁵⁷ Dem

²⁵² Brendan Simms und Benjamin Zeeb: Warum die Europäische Konföderation Europas Krise nicht lösen kann, a.a.O., S. 59. – Ähnlich, aber nicht so prononciert vgl. Brendan Simms, Benjamin Zeeb: Europa am Abgrund, a.a.O., S. 50.

²⁵³ Klaus Dräger: „So wie einst der Commandante?“ Die europäische Linke vor der Europawahl 2014. In: Z. Zeitschrift Marxistische Erneuerung, Frankfurt am Main, 2014, März, S. 130.

²⁵⁴ Vgl. ebenda, S. 130 und 132.

²⁵⁵ Eine Alternative zum Euro (verabschiedet im Juni 2016). URL: <http://eurexit.de/aufruf> (abgerufen am 25.07.2016).

²⁵⁶ Sahra Wagenknecht: Reichtum ohne Gier. Wie wir uns vor dem Kapitalismus retten, Frankfurt am Main 2016, S. 226.

²⁵⁷ Vgl. ebenda, S. 226.

Vorschlag, die Fehler, die bei der Einführung des Euro gemacht wurden und die in nicht ausreichenden regulatorischen und finanzpolitischen Instrumenten für die Steuerung der Gemeinschaftswährung liegen, durch eine vergemeinschaftete europäische Wirtschafts- und Finanzpolitik und die Schaffung einer Transfer-Union zu „heilen“, erteilt Wagenknecht indirekt eine Absage, indem sie erklärt, dass die Haushaltspolitik und die Wirtschaftspolitik in die Souveränität der Mitgliedsstaaten gehören. „Und das schließt ein, dass man dann auch für seine Schulden selber haftet.“²⁵⁸ Wagenknecht verkennt, dass der Rückzug auf den Nationalstaat die bereits vorhandenen nationalistischen Tendenzen verstärkt und „die Entfesselung Deutschlands von der kontinentalen Ordnung“²⁵⁹ bedeutet. Nationalismus aber gefährdet den Frieden. Friedenserhaltung war jedoch die wichtigste politische Prämisse für die europäische Integration.

Zudem hat der Volkswirtschaftler Carsten Hefeker, Professor an der Universität Siegen, in einer Studie schlüssig nachgewiesen, dass die Einführung der Europäischen Währungsunion wesentlich ökonomiegetrieben war: „Die Logik der europäischen und der internationalen Integration von Handel und Kapitalströmen macht die EWU zum logischen Bestandteil der europäischen Integration.“²⁶⁰ Zwar wäre diese Union gegen den Willen der Politik nicht durchsetzbar gewesen, aber die EWU ist „das Ergebnis eines sich selbst verstärkenden Prozesses der handelspolitischen Zusammenarbeit und Integration in Europa“²⁶¹. Die fortschreitende Integration der Handelsbeziehungen habe zugleich stabile Währungsbeziehungen immer wichtiger gemacht, denn Handel und Wechselkurse seien nicht unabhängig voneinander. Eine hohe Variabilität von Wechselkursen mache die Kalkulationsgrundlage für handeltreibende Industrie und grenzüberschreitende Investitionen unsicher und schränke daher grenzüberschreitende Aktivitäten ein. Es sei heute weitgehend Konsens, dass eine gemeinsame Währung handelsfördernd wirke.²⁶² Letztlich habe die Politik – so Hefeker – auf den Druck einflussreicher Interessengruppen, auf eine geänderte Wahrnehmung dessen, was Geldpolitik überhaupt erreichen könne, und auf die Logik der europäischen Integration, die stabile Währungsrelationen erfordere, mit der Europäischen Währungsunion reagiert.²⁶³ Eine Sicht der Dinge, der sich Sahra Wagenknecht offenkundig verweigert.

Der bereits eingangs erwähnte Thies Gleiss redet de facto einem Ausstieg aus der Europäischen Union das Wort, wenn er behauptet, eine linke Bewegung habe „als erste Aufgabe, das EU-Projekt scharf zu kritisieren und jede Illusion, es könnte von innen heraus saniert werden, zu zerstören“. Links müsse heute heißen: „Ein neuer Internationalismus, eine neue politische Internationale und ein sozialistisches Europa von unten.“²⁶⁴ Jean-Luc

²⁵⁸ „Ich will nicht, dass die EU in Nationalismus zerfällt“ (Interview mit Sahra Wagenknecht). In: Deutschlandfunk, Köln, 11.07.2016. URL: http://www.deutschlandfunk.de/sahra-wagenknecht-ich-will-nicht-dass-die-eu-in.868.de.html?dram:article_id=359666 (abgerufen am 15.07.2016).

²⁵⁹ Brendan Simms: Brexit: Weg mit Schaden, a.a.O., S. 53.

²⁶⁰ Carsten Hefeker: Die Europäische Währungsintegration nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg: Politik, Ideologie oder Interessen?, Hamburg 2006, S. 2.

²⁶¹ Ebenda, S. 4.

²⁶² Vgl. ebenda, S. 15/16.

²⁶³ Vgl. ebenda, S. 25.

²⁶⁴ Thies Gleiss: Es geht um wirklich linke Regierungen. In: ND online (Neues Deutschland), Berlin, 26.02.2016. URL: <https://www.neues-deutschland.de/artikel/1003131.es-geht-um-wirklich-linke-regierungen.html?sstr=> (abgerufen am 26.02.2016).

Mélenchon von der *Parti de Gauche* in Frankreich plädiert in seinem Taschenbuch „Die Ära des Volkes“ für einen Plan B, mit dem der „Ausstieg aus den Verträgen“ der Europäischen Union zumindest vorbereitet werden soll.²⁶⁵ Der griechische Ökonom Costas Lapavistas, der heute der SYRIZA-Abspaltung *Laiki Enotita* angehört, sah schon 2014 „keine realistische Perspektive zur Reparatur der Eurozone“ und meinte: „Für Länder wie Griechenland, Portugal, Spanien und Irland wäre die beste Option ein kontrollierter und verhandelter Ausstieg aus dem Euro.“ Ein mit der EWU ausgehandelter Ausstieg wäre zwar besser, aber wenn sich eine Übereinkunft als unmöglich erweist, „sollte die Linke auch einen unilateralen Exit einzelner Länder vertreten“.²⁶⁶

Andere Linke in Europa möchten als Reaktion auf die Probleme der heutigen EU die Union weiterentwickeln zu einem europäischen Bundesstaat. Für den Mitbegründer der *Wahlalternative Arbeit und soziale Gerechtigkeit* (WASG), den Ökonomen Herbert Schui, konnte das Ziel nicht im „Zurück zum alten Nationalstaat“ bestehen, sondern im Vorwärtsschreiten in Richtung Bundesstaat mit seiner klassischen Aufgabenteilung. „Dies setzt eine Verfassung voraus, die die Zuständigkeiten der nationalen Parlamente und des Bundesparlaments regelt. Das Parlament dieses großen »Bundesstaates EU« setzt die Regierung als ausführendes Organ ein – oder ab. Ein neuer Vertrag ist hierzu nicht notwendig, wohl aber eine verfassunggebende Versammlung.“²⁶⁷

Auch die vom früheren griechischen Finanzminister Yanis Varoufakis und Mitstreitern aus zwölf weiteren Ländern Europas ins Leben gerufene neue pan-europäische Bewegung *Democracy in Europe – Movement 2025* (DiEM 25) bekennt sich ausdrücklich zu der „außerordentlichen Leistung“ der europäischen Integration, die allerdings nun durch eine „Verschwörung kurzsichtiger Politiker, ökonomisch naiver Beamter und in Finanzdingen inkompetenter »Experten«, die das Projekt „sklavisch den Beschlüssen der Finanz- und Industriekonzerne“ unterworfen hätten, in Verruf geraten und von einer „gefährlichen europafeindlichen Stimmung“ bedroht sei. Die Lösung des Problems liege jedoch nicht in einem „Rückzug in den Kokon unserer Nationalstaaten“, sondern in einem „demokratischen Aufbruch“, in einer „echten“ Demokratisierung der Europäischen Union. Neben mehr Transparenz gehe es um den Umbau der EU-Institutionen auf dem Weg über eine „Verfassungsgebende Versammlung“, die aus Vertretern besteht, die über transnationale Listen gewählt werden. Diese Versammlung werde die Befugnis haben, über eine künftige demokratische Verfassung zu entscheiden, die innerhalb eines Jahrzehnts die bestehenden europäischen Verträge ersetzen soll. Ziel sei es, Europa spätestens bis 2025 in eine „voll entwickelte Demokratie mit einem souveränen Parlament“ zu verwandeln, welches die

²⁶⁵ Vgl. Bernard Sander: Kein Gesicht, keine Partei. Tragödie der Sozialdemokraten, Niedergang der Kommunisten. In: Neues Deutschland, Berlin, 11./12.06.2016.

²⁶⁶ Costas Lapavistas: Der Euro und die Linke. In: realistisch und radikal – das Debattenheft der Sozialistischen Linken, Berlin, 2014, 1. Quartal (Nr. 3), S. 21.

²⁶⁷ Herbert Schui: Vorwärts Richtung Bundesstaat EU. In: junge Welt, Berlin, 20.01.2016. – Warum Schui aber die Währungsunion beenden, also in dieser Frage rückwärts laufen wollte, ist in sich nicht schlüssig. Schui schrieb, dass das Anliegen, dass stärkere Länder aus der Währungsunion austreten sollten, bisweilen als rückwärtsgewandt kritisiert werde, „als eine Umkehr zu vielen kleinen europäischen Nationalstaaten, zu einem schwachen und in sich zerstrittenen Europa. Soweit aber Einigkeit darüber herrscht, dass die Währungsunion eine machtvolle neoliberale Einrichtung ist, die sich gegenüber den Parlamenten durchsetzt, sollte das Ende der Währungsunion verstanden werden als ein Zugewinn an Demokratie. Mit etwas Glück ist es zudem der Beginn eines neuen europäischen Föderalismus.“ (Ebenda.)

nationale Selbstbestimmung respektiert und die Macht mit den nationalen Parlamenten, mit Regionalversammlungen und Gemeindeparlamenten teilen soll.²⁶⁸

Katja Kipping hatte sich bereits Anfang September 2015 gegen Stimmen gewandt, die – wie Jean-Luc Mélenchon und Oskar Lafontaine – lautstark erklärten, man müsse auf das Problem mangelnder politischer Gestaltungsmöglichkeiten in einem neoliberalen Europa mit Ausstiegsszenarien aus der Gemeinschaftswährung antworten. Kipping unterstrich, ein linker Grexit sei ein Irrtum. Sie verwies darauf, dass die Umstellung auf die Drachme in Griechenland vor allem die Reichen stärken würde, die ihre enormen Vermögen im Ausland in Euros angelegt hätten und dann vom sehr günstigen Wechselkurs profitieren würden. Nationale Ausstiegsszenarien würden angesichts einer global agierenden Finanzwelt und Wirtschaft keine politischen Spielräume schaffen, argumentierte Kipping zu Recht. Schließlich würde DIE LINKE in der Außenwahrnehmung in eine konservativ-rückwärtsgewandte Ecke eingeordnet, was mit dem Blick auf die junge Generation verheerend wäre. In Europa sei eine junge Generation herangewachsen, die Europa aus tiefster Überzeugung lebe. „Eine Linke, die in Verruf kommt, sie würde auf Re-Nationalisierung setzen, wird den Anschluss an diese junge, widerständische europäische Generation verlieren.“ Die europäische Linke müsse mithin alle ihre Kräfte in die Konstitution eines Gegenmachtakteurs, eines europäischen Demos investieren, statt ihre Strategie „auf das stumpfe Schwert der nationalen Souveränität“ zu gründen. „Nicht der Grexit, sondern der Austerix, der Austritt aus der Austerität, ist also die Losung, hinter der sich die Linke in Europa versammeln sollte.“²⁶⁹

Étienne Balibar, einer der prominentesten linken Philosophen und Autoren in Frankreich, hat mit Nachdruck darauf hingewiesen, dass eine Desintegration der Europäischen Union „kurzfristig bedeuten würde: noch weniger Demokratie im Sinne von geteilter Souveränität der nationalen Bevölkerungen; noch weniger Handlungsmöglichkeiten gegenüber den globalen wirtschaftlichen und ökologischen Herausforderungen; und weniger Hoffnung, eines Tages die mörderischen Nationalismen zu überwinden, vor denen sie uns zumindest theoretisch schützen sollte“²⁷⁰. Und Gregor Gysi insistierte als scheidender Fraktionsvorsitzender der LINKEN im Bundestag darauf: „Statt für den Austritt Deutschlands aus der Gemeinschaftswährung und/oder der EU oder für ihre Auflösung zu kämpfen, ist es Aufgabe der linken Kräfte in der gesamten Bevölkerung der Union, Mehrheiten für eine andere Politik der EU zu gewinnen [...]“²⁷¹

Die *Partei der Europäischen Linken* (EL), in der sich dieses Spektrum der unterschiedlichen Meinungen widerspiegelt, hat sich hinsichtlich des europäischen Integrationsprozesses bisher lediglich auf einige Grundsätze und wichtige Einzelforderungen²⁷² verständigen

²⁶⁸ Vgl. Ein Manifest für die Demokratisierung Europas. URL: <http://diem25.org/de/> (abgerufen am 17.02.2016).

²⁶⁹ Katja Kipping: Austerix statt Grexit. In: [neues-deutschland.de](http://www.neues-deutschland.de/artikel/983600.austerix-statt-grexit.html), Berlin, 05.09.2015. URL: <http://www.neues-deutschland.de/artikel/983600.austerix-statt-grexit.html> (abgerufen am 07.09.2015).

²⁷⁰ Étienne Balibar: Als sei bereits Marine Le Pen an der Macht. In: *Neues Deutschland*, Berlin, 05./06.03.2016.

²⁷¹ Zit. in: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, Frankfurt am Main, vom 18.11.2015.

²⁷² Zu diesen Einzelforderungen gehören die Ausrichtung der Europäischen Zentralbank auf die Kriterien Beschäftigung, soziale und ökologische Entwicklung, die Einführung einer Tobin-Steuer und eine Vergesellschaftung (Nationalisierung) der Gemeinschaftsgüter und strategischen Wirtschaftsbereiche einschließlich des Kredit- und Finanzwesens. Vgl. *Gemeinsam für den Wechsel in Europa! Plattform der Partei der Europäischen Linken für die Wahlen zum Europäischen Parlament 2009*. URL: <https://www.die->

können. Sie schrieb in ihrem gemeinsamen Wahlaufufruf zu den Europawahlen 2009: „Die Europäische Linke steht für eine Politik, die auf wirtschaftlichem und sozialem Fortschritt und dem Schutz der Umwelt beruht, die die Verteidigung und Weiterentwicklung sozialer Errungenschaften anstrebt.“ Sie setze auf eine Strategie, die auf den Werten von Solidarität und Zusammenarbeit, auf demokratischer Teilhabe, auf dem Schutz bürgerlicher Freiheiten und Menschenrechte und auf Vollbeschäftigung basiert. Europa brauche einen Wirtschafts- und Sozialraum, der kein europäisches Land ausklammert. Die EL trete für ein weltoffenes und einwanderungsoffenes Europa ein. „Die Partei der Europäischen Linken will ein Europa, das friedlich ist und zivil handelt, das sozial und ökologisch nachhaltig wirtschaftet, das feministisch ist und sich auf der Grundlage von Demokratie und Solidarität entwickelt.“²⁷³

Die Europa-Abgeordnete der LINKEN, Martina Michels, konstatierte angesichts derart magerer Aussagen: „Auch die Linke in Europa kann kaum sagen, ob die Integration in Richtung einer internationalen Organisation, eines Staatenverbundes oder Bundesstaates gehen soll. Einzig Teil einer Freihandelszone soll die EU nicht werden. Wie Weltoffenheit und lokale wie globale Solidarität durchsetzbar werden, dafür fehlen jedoch konkrete politische Konzepte und Durchsetzungsstrategien.“²⁷⁴ Offensichtlich schlagen auch in der Frage der europäischen Integration die gegensätzlichen Positionen in der Linken zur bestehenden kapitalistischen Gesellschaft durch – nämlich Fundamentalkritik versus Gestaltungsanspruch. Zusätzlich mischt sich dies mit der Reflexion diffuser Ängste in der Bevölkerung der europäischen Staaten vor der Globalisierung wie vor einer modernen Welt mit einem neuen Lebensstil und – insbesondere in kleineren Ländern – vor dem Verlust der nationalen Identität. Vor diesem Hintergrund übernimmt ein Teil der Linken das gängige EU-Bashing, anstatt deutlich zu machen, dass die Probleme in der Europäischen Union und mit ihr zum großen Teil an der Politik der nationalen Regierungen liegen und nicht an der EU „an sich“.

* * *

Aus all dem oben Dargelegten ergibt sich, dass es für die Linke wie für DIE LINKE nicht darum gehen kann, einem Ausstieg aus der Europäischen Union und / oder aus dem Euro das Wort zu reden. Das wäre nur Wasser auf die Mühlen der europafeindlichen bzw. europaskeptischen politischen Rechten. In einer multipolaren Welt verfügen zudem nur die großen Mächte – seien es Einzelstaaten wie die USA, China oder Indien oder regionale

linke.de/politik/international/europaeische-linke/dokumente/gemeinsam-fuer-den-wechsel-in-europa/
(abgerufen am 20.07.2016).

²⁷³ Gemeinsam für den Wechsel in Europa! A.a.O. – Auf ihrem IV. Kongress im Dezember 2013 in Madrid konnte sich die EL nur auf „Thematische Schwerpunkte (Achsen)“ als Programmatische Plattform der Partei für die Europawahlen 2014 einigen. Diese Achsen waren: 1. Widerstand gegen Austeritäts-Politik – für ein neues Entwicklungsmodell, 2. Ein neues Modell sozialer und ökologischer Entwicklung, 3. Die Macht zurück zum Volk – für eine Revolution der Bürgerinnen und Bürger, 4. Für ein soziales Europa, für ein gerechtes Europa, 5. Für gerechten Welthandel – Gegen das transatlantische Freihandelsabkommen, 6. Für ein Europa des Friedens. Eine umfangreichere Version mit dem Titel „Grundlagendokument der thematischen Schwerpunkte“ gilt als Arbeitsdokument. Vgl. Programmatische Plattform der EL für die Europawahlen 2014. In: Change Europe! Gemeinsam für eine linke Alternative in Europa, demokratisch, sozial, friedlich, ökologisch! 4. Kongress der Partei der Europäischen Linken, Madrid, 13.–15. Dezember 2013, (Berlin 2014), S. 42. URL: https://www.die-linke.de/fileadmin/download/europaeische_linkspartei/madrid2013/parteitag_el_madrid_2013_reden_beschluessue_broschuere.pdf (abgerufen am 20.07.2016).

²⁷⁴ Martina Michels: Zwischen Erweiterung und Brexit. In: Neues Deutschland, Berlin, 09.06.2016.

Zusammenschlüsse wie die EU – über das notwendige wirtschaftliche und damit auch politische Gewicht, um die ökonomische und politische Weltordnung als Akteure gestalten zu können, anstatt sie lediglich als gegeben hinnehmen zu müssen,²⁷⁵ wie das auch für die größeren europäischen Staaten wie Deutschland, Frankreich oder Italien gelten würde, wenn sie die Europäische Union verließen. Ein Ausstieg Deutschlands aus dem Euro und eine Rückkehr zur DM würden zu einer massiven Aufwertung der DM führen. Die Exporte Deutschlands würden weltweit einbrechen, weil die hier produzierten Güter zu teuer wären, um weiterhin konkurrenzfähig zu sein. Die Wirtschaft und die Arbeitswelt in Deutschland nähmen Schaden, und die ökonomischen Belastungen würden auf die Beschäftigten abgewälzt.²⁷⁶ Der Volkswirtschaftler Axel Troost weist zu Recht darauf hin, dass eine Rückkehr zu nationalen Währungen letztlich auf eine Unterwerfung unter den internationalen Kapitalverkehr hinausläuft.²⁷⁷ Ein Rückzug in die nationale Wagenburg wäre also weder ökonomisch sinnvoll noch eine linke Antwort auf die zu lösenden Probleme.

Statt aus der EU und / oder aus dem Euro auszutreten, kommt es vielmehr darauf an, die politischen Kräfteverhältnisse innerhalb der EU so zu verschieben, dass eine progressive Reform der Europäischen Union erreicht werden kann.²⁷⁸ Immerhin sprechen sich nach Umfragen rund sechzig Prozent aller EU-Bürger für mehr politische und wirtschaftliche Integration in der Europäischen Union aus, und 42 Prozent von ihnen sind dafür, die EU zu einem Bundesstaat auszubauen. Gäbe es ein gemeinsames Referendum, sprächen sich 71 Prozent der Menschen in der EU dafür aus, dass ihr Land weiterhin Mitglied der Europäischen Union bleibt. Aber gleichzeitig sind 72 Prozent der Bürger in den EU-Staaten mit der Art und Weise unzufrieden, wie die Europäische Union derzeit arbeitet. Eine Mehrheit wünscht sich eine starke Union, mehr politische Kooperation und ein soziales Europa.²⁷⁹

Angesichts dessen ist die politische Linke gefordert, eine gesellschaftliche Utopie eines gemeinsamen Europa zu entwickeln, die Menschen mit der Vision einer neuen Europäischen

²⁷⁵ Vgl. Mario Telò: Brexit oder Bremain, a.a.O., S. 11.

²⁷⁶ Vgl. dazu im Detail: Hartmut Elsenhans: Für eine Erneuerung des Kapitalismus. In: Die EU und die Eurokrise. WeltTrends Spezial, Ausgabe 10, Potsdam 2013, S. 9.

²⁷⁷ Vgl. Axel Troost: Überschätzte Spielräume. In: ND online (Neues Deutschland), Berlin, 26.08.2015. URL: <http://www.neues-deutschland.de/artikel/982480.ueberschaetzte-spielraeume.html> (abgerufen am 26.08.2015). – Troost erläutert: „Die Befürworter einer Renationalisierung überschätzen die Spielräume nationalstaatlicher Politik. Vor dem Hintergrund freier Kapital- und Warenströme sowie einer gemeinsamen Währung können nationale Regierungen in den zentralen Feldern der Wirtschafts-, Sozial- und Lohnpolitik keine progressive Politik im nationalen Alleingang durchhalten.“ (Ebenda.)

²⁷⁸ Der italienische Politikwissenschaftler Sandro Mezzadra und der Philosoph Toni Negri notierten bereits 2014 in einem gemeinsamen Artikel, dass uns nur „der neoliberale Zauber“ dazu bringen würde, „die Unumkehrbarkeit des Integrationsprozesses mit der Unmöglichkeit zu verwechseln, dessen Inhalte und Richtungen zu verändern und innerhalb des europäischen Raums die Kraft und den Reichtum einer neuen konstituierenden Hypothese bzw. strategischen Option in Gang zu setzen“. (Sandro Mezzadra und Toni Negri: Kampffeld Europa: Den neoliberalen Zauber brechen. In: europolinks. Beilage der Tageszeitung Neues Deutschland in Zusammenarbeit mit der Zeitschrift LuXemburg, Berlin, 2014, Februar, S. 21.) – Und Joachim Bischoff, Hinrich Kuhls und Björn Radke schreiben, dass die auf Austerität ausgerichtete Wirtschafts- und Sozialpolitik der Mehrheit der bürgerlichen und sozialdemokratischen Regierungen und Politiker durch eine proeuropäische Politik der linken Kräfte unter Druck gesetzt werden muss. „Daher ist es unverzichtbar, dass auch die Linke ihrer Reformvorstellungen für ein europäisches Europa weiterhin massiv in die Debatte einbringt.“ (Joachim Bischoff, Hinrich Kuhls und Björn Radke: BREXIT – Britannien verlässt die EU, a.a.O., S. 31.)

²⁷⁹ Vgl. Elisa Rheinheimer-Chabbi: Auf der Suche nach dem neuen Wir. In: Publik-Forum, Oberursel, 2016, Nr. 13, S. 13 und 15.

Union zu begeistern.²⁸⁰ „Utopien sind ein Kompass für gesellschaftliche Entwicklungen, denn ohne eine Idee davon, wie die Dinge sein könnten oder *eigentlich* sein sollten, ist keine Politik zu machen“²⁸¹, schreibt die Politikwissenschaftlerin Ulrike Guérot in ihrem neuen Buch „Warum Europa eine Republik werden muss!“, das den Untertitel „Eine politische Utopie“ trägt, zu Recht. Ihrer Meinung nach haben die Nationalstaaten als Akteure der europäischen Einigung ausgedient.²⁸² Guérot entwickelt die Utopie einer transnationalen europäischen Demokratie,²⁸³ „ein Netzwerk aus europäischen Regionen und Städten, über die das schützende Dach einer Europäischen Republik gespannt wird, unter dem alle europäischen Bürger in ihren bürgerlichen und politischen Rechten gleichgestellt sind“²⁸⁴. Etwas irdischer war die Vision Lothar Biskys, langjähriger PDS-Chef und von 2007 bis 2010 Vorsitzender der *Partei der Europäischen Linken*. Sie bestand in der Konstituierung der Vereinigten Staaten von Europa: „Vereinigte Staaten von Europa – das wäre ein neuer Qualitätsbegriff. Das Modell der Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika, das sage ich jetzt bewusst als Linker, ist kein schlechtes Modell. Weil dort die Staaten eine relativ hohe Selbständigkeit haben und gleichzeitig in wesentlichen politischen Fragen zusammengehen und dafür die Institutionen geschaffen haben.“²⁸⁵

Die Erzählung von einer erneuerten Europäischen Union, von einem „Europäischen Traum“ muss in jedem Fall verbunden sein mit einem glaubhaften Versprechen von Wohlstand und Teilhabe und unmittelbar spürbaren realen Schritten in diese Richtung. Dieses Versprechen muss messbar sein an der realen Verwirklichung der Bürgerrechte, Grundfreiheiten und aller Menschenrechte, an der Verbesserung der Lebensqualität und der Sicherung des Friedens. Dazu gehört der Abbau der sozialen Ungleichheit innerhalb der Europäischen Union insgesamt wie innerhalb seiner Mitgliedsstaaten. Es bedarf einer Abkehr von der Austeritäts-Politik wie von der neoliberalen Politik insgesamt. Es bedarf einer vergemeinschafteten

²⁸⁰ Étienne Balibar betonte: „Es wäre wichtig für die Linke, nicht nur dem antieuropäischen Ressentiment zu widerstehen, sondern darüber hinaus konstruktiv zu sein, alternative Visionen und Vorschläge hervorzubringen, so kohärent und konsistent das eben möglich ist.“ (Von Europa ist nur der Euro geblieben. Der Philosoph Étienne Balibar über die fehlende soziale Dimension der EU und gefährliche Kritik von links. In: Neues Deutschland, Berlin, 08.04.2014.) – Mario Candeias und Wilfried Telkämper von der Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung schrieben, es brauche „eine orientierende Perspektive, [...] gewissermaßen eine Realutopie für ein sozial-ökologisches, solidarisches Europa“. (Mario Candeias und Wilfried Telkämper: Bauplan für ein anderes Europa. In: Neues Deutschland, Berlin, 14.04.2014.)

²⁸¹ Ulrike Guérot: *Warum Europa eine Republik werden muss! Eine politische Utopie*, Bonn 2016, S. 256.

²⁸² Vgl. ebenda, S. 21.

²⁸³ Vgl. ebenda, S. 22.

²⁸⁴ Ebenda, S. 82. – Ulrike Guérot variiert diese Beschreibung der Europäischen Republik in ihrem Buch immer wieder, um ihre Utopie offen zu halten. So heißt es bei ihr dazu auf S. 149: „Die Europäische Republik der Zukunft wäre also ein horizontales Netzwerk aus autonomen Provinzen und Metropolen, die über eine einheitliche europäische Infrastruktur und einen zu definierenden fiskalischen Föderalismus miteinander verbunden sind. Über ihr Haupt spannt sich gleichsam der gemeinsame Rechtsrahmen einer Europäischen RePublik, der die politische Gleichheit aller europäischen Bürger garantiert.“

²⁸⁵ Vereinigte Staaten von Europa – das wäre ein neuer Qualitätsbegriff. In memoriam: Interview mit Lothar Bisky. In: Stefan Liebich/Gerry Woop (Hrsg.): *Linke Außenpolitik. Reformperspektiven*, Potsdam 2013, S. 33/34. – Wie Stefan Kunath und Sebastian Wormsbächer herleiten, bedürfte es dazu eines europäischen „Philadelphia-Moments“. Es geht dabei um „die Übertragung der wirtschaftspolitischen Souveränität der quasi-konföderierten Euro-Staaten an eine zentrale, demokratisch legitimierte Gewalt“. (Stefan Kunath/Sebastian Wormsbächer: *Vereinigte Staaten von Europa. Zur Begründung eines europäischen Souveräns*. Standpunkte, hrsg. von der Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung, Berlin, 2014, Nr. 4, S. 2.)

europäischen Wirtschafts- und Finanzpolitik²⁸⁶ und der Schaffung einer Transfer-Union,²⁸⁷ um die Fehler, die bei der Einführung des Euro gemacht wurden, zu „heilen“. Es geht um mehr Solidarität, um mehr soziale Rechte und um mehr soziale Sicherheit. Notwendig ist eine Angleichung der sozialen Sicherungssysteme²⁸⁸ wie beispielsweise durch die Einführung einer europäischen Arbeitslosenversicherung in allen Mitgliedsstaaten der EU.

Erforderlich sind eine Harmonisierung der Steuersysteme insbesondere bei den Unternehmenssteuern, um den ruinösen Dumpingwettbewerb um die niedrigsten Steuern zu beenden, und einheitliche Umweltvorschriften. Dem Grundsatz der Sozialpflichtigkeit des Privateigentums an den Produktionsmitteln müsste ebenso Geltung verschafft werden wie einer Regulierung von Kapitaltransaktionen. „Für eine europäische Demokratie braucht es eine europäische Öffentlichkeit, die durch ein europäisches System öffentlichen Fernsehens und europäischer Zeitungen (einschließlich Netzzeitungen) herzustellen ist“, schreibt Andreas Fisahn, Professor für Öffentliches Recht, Umwelt- und Technikrecht und Rechtslehre an der Universität Bielefeld. „Es braucht europäische Parteien und ein einheitliches Wahlsystem, das den Grundsatz der Stimmgleichheit berücksichtigt.“²⁸⁹ Es bedarf einer zweiten Kammer der Mitgliedsstaaten oder besser der europäischen Regionen, um – bei Einführung des Grundsatzes der Stimmgleichheit für die Wahlen zu einer ersten Kammer – deren berechnete Interessen zur Geltung bringen zu können.

Ohne den Anspruch auf Vollständigkeit zu erheben, sind dies alles Bausteine für ein wirklich gemeinsames europäisches Haus – für die Verwirklichung des „Europäischen Traums“. Wenn es heute möglich ist, im Europäischen Parlament für einzelne Sachfragen über Fraktionsgrenzen hinweg Mehrheiten zu organisieren, dann könnte es auch gelingen, zu einzelnen Schritten hin zu einer tieferen Integration der Europäischen Union derartige Bündnisse zu schmieden. Dann muss der „Europäische Traum“ kein Traum bleiben.

Berlin, 6. Oktober 2016

²⁸⁶ Die Wissenschaftler bzw. Politiker Lutz Brangsch, Judith Dellheim, Frieder Otto Wolf und Gabi Zimmer plädieren für die Schaffung einer Wirtschaftsregierung im Rahmen der Wirtschafts- und Währungsunion und für die Nutzung des EU-Rechts, um eine sozialere Politik umzusetzen. So schließe der gerade von Linken viel gescholtene Lissabonner Vertrag ein vorübergehendes Aussetzen repressiver Direktiven – etwa der Regeln des Stabilitäts- und Wachstumspaktes – nicht aus. Die EU verfüge zudem über eine Nachhaltigkeitsstrategie, „die eine Grundlage bietet, um gegen die Finanzialisierung des wirtschaftlichen und gesellschaftlichen Lebens und gegen die Privatisierung des Öffentlichen vorzugehen“. (Lutz Brangsch/Judith Dellheim/Frieder Otto Wolf/Gabi Zimmer: Die „Europäische Frage“ und die Linken. Wer heute die Debatte bestimmt und wie eine andere Richtung eingeschlagen werden könnte. Standpunkte, hrsg. von der Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung, Berlin, 2014, Nr. 5, S. 4.)

²⁸⁷ Der renommierte Historiker Heinrich August Winkler konstatierte unlängst in einem Essay: „Die Bildung einer Währungsunion ohne gleichzeitige Errichtung einer Fiskal- und politischen Union ist die tiefere Ursache der Probleme, mit denen sich die Eurozone befassen muss.“ (Heinrich August Winkler: Folgen einer Fehlentscheidung. Die Griechenlandkrise enthüllt die Mängel von Maastricht. In: DER SPIEGEL, Hamburg, 2015, Nr. 32 [vom 01.08.2015], S. 117.)

²⁸⁸ Vorstellbar wäre eine Untergrenze, über die die sozialen Sicherungssysteme der einzelnen Staaten angehoben werden müsste, oder ein „Korridor“ der Harmonisierung dieser einzelnen Systeme.

²⁸⁹ Andreas Fisahn: Für eine Solidargemeinschaft. Neustart der EU? Ein echter Politikwechsel müsste mit der europäischen Konkurrenzordnung brechen. In: Neues Deutschland, Berlin, 11.07.2016.

Abkürzungen

ADS	Archiv Demokratischer Sozialismus
AfD	Alternative für Deutschland
Attac	association pour une taxation des transactions financières pour l'aide aux citoyens; seit 2009: association pour la taxation des transactions financières et pour l'action citoyenne / dt.: Vereinigung zur Besteuerung von Finanztransaktionen im Interesse der BürgerInnen
BIP	Bruttoinlandsprodukt
BNE	Bruttonationaleinkommen
CETA	Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement / dt.: Umfassendes Wirtschafts- und Handelsabkommen [zwischen der EU und Kanada]
CPB	Centraal Planbureau / dt.: Zentrales Planungsbüro (Niederländisches Büro für wirtschaftspolitische Analysen)
DiEM 25	Democracy in Europe – Movement 2025 / dt.: Demokratie in Europa – Bewegung 2025
EEA	Einheitliche Europäische Akte
EFSI	Europäischer Fonds für Strategische Investitionen
EFTA	European Free Trade Association / dt.: Europäische Freihandelszone
EG	Europäische Gemeinschaft(en)
EGKS	Europäische Gemeinschaft für Kohle und Stahl
EGP	European Green Party / dt.: Europäische Grüne Partei
EL	Partei der Europäischen Linken
EP	Europäisches Parlament
ERT	European Round Table of Industrialists / dt.: Europäischer Runder Tisch von Industriellen
ESA	European Space Agency / dt.: Europäische Weltraumagentur
ESM	Europäischer Stabilitäts-Mechanismus
EU	Europäische Union
EU27	Europäische Union mit 27 Mitgliedsstaaten
EU28	Europäische Union mit 28 Mitgliedsstaaten
EVG	Europäische Verteidigungs-Gemeinschaft
EWG	Europäische Wirtschaftsgemeinschaft
EWR	Europäischer Wirtschaftsraum

EWS	Europäisches Währungssystem
EWU	Europäische Währungsunion
EZB	Europäische Zentralbank
FDP	Freie Demokratische Partei
IPW	Institut für Internationale Politik und Wirtschaft
KKE	Kommounistiko Komma Elladas / dt.: Kommunistische Partei Griechenlands
MBB	Messerschmitt-Bölkow-Blohm
Medef	Mouvement des entreprises de France / dt.: Bewegung der Unternehmen Frankreichs
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development / dt.: Organisation für Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung
PDS	Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus
PCF	Parti Communiste Français / dt.: Französische Kommunistische Partei
PCP	Partido Comunista Português / dt.: Portugiesische Kommunistische Partei
PV	Parteivorstand
RGW	Rat für Gegenseitige Wirtschaftshilfe
SYRIZA	Synaspismos Rizospastikis Aristeras / dt.: Koalition der Radikalen Linken
TNK	transnationale Konzerne
TTIP	Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership / dt.: Transatlantische Handels- und Investitionspartnerschaft [zwischen der EU und den USA]
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development / dt.: Konferenz der Vereinten Nationen für Handel und Entwicklung
UNICE	Union des Industries de la Communauté Européenne / dt.: Industrieverband der Europäischen Gemeinschaft
USA	United States of America / dt.: Vereinigte Staaten von Amerika
WASG	Wahlalternative Arbeit und Soziale Gerechtigkeit
WKM	Wechselkursmechanismus
WWU	Wirtschafts- und Währungsunion
