



The new face of European resistance

**- Protests at the EU summit in Gothenburg 2017
and political background - part 1**



“only united can we achieve change”



“The EU bears responsibility on so many levels - from the current economic system that’s devastated our planet to human tragedies due to climate change. What we have also been seeing in the past couple of years is a humanitarian crisis - or better said- a crisis of humanity. We need collective action for social transformation. We need a systemic change in order to achieve climate justice. And this change, this transition, needs to be driven by principles of justice. Because we do not want to replicate the current system that is exploiting people. We need to build a better one, a more human one. What needs to be done to make this happen is movement building. And this movement needs to be inclusive and collaborative. A movement that is not just an environmental one. But which brings together all the injustices created by the system. Which recognises that some are suffering more than others as a result of these injustices. And which says: Refugees welcome. Black lives matter. Gender justice. Social justice. Because only united can we achieve change. Another Europe can and will be possible because people have the power.”

Maruska Mileta

*at the Alternative Summit manifestation at Gustav Adolfs Torg
in Gothenburg 17th of November 2017*

Why the EU protests in Gothenburg 2017 makes a difference

1. Movements from all of Europe came together. From the East and the West, from the South and the North.

2. Popular movements independent from political parties took the leading role in connecting issues building both alliances across established parliamentary issue sectors as well as going much further criticizing the whole development model and the present world order. With the support of MEPs.

3. Rural and urban movements were equally important, ecological issues as important as social.

4. The coming together of all movements had its roots in growing cooperation between popular movements uniting peasant, environmental and solidarity organizations struggling for food sovereignty; these movements together with trade unions against TTIP and CETA; peace, trade unions and environmentalists against militarization and for climate transition; refugee becoming more EU-critical connecting to other movements and in general movements democratizing society and building for alternatives to EU austerity politics.

5. EU politics was challenged at all levels, from social policy to the EU growth model, the two official summit issues.

6. The follow up possibilities are many at all levels from the local to the international. Especially on transversal issues and in general for all-European cooperation including both non-EU and EU countries, both East and West as well as the next World Social Forum in Brazil March 2018.

Content

p2 “only united can we achieve change”

p3 Op-Ed and content

p4-7 Activities during the Alternative Summit

p8-13 Social rights & fair jobs everywhere!

p14-15 Another Europe is possible

p16-19 EU - The dictatorship of capitalism. EU history and whose interests it serves

- Kajsa Ekis Ekman
- The case of Greece
- Bike action against corporate EU

p20-25 Stop Corporate power!

- Lora Verheecke
- CEO articles

p26-31 Refugees Welcome!

- International Call for PPT
- Emancipation with refugees, not from them! CEESF in Wroclaw
- The rise of the far right
- Closing borders to refugees and migrants is unjust and dangerous!

p32-43 Peace on Earth - Peace with Earth

- Dave Webb
- Militarization of information: NATO and EU propaganda is now called Strategic Communications
- Building peace in Warsaw
- EU loves NATO
- Anti-militarism and socio-ecological transition in unity
- We need a new critical and independent peace movement

p44-47 System change - not climate change!

- Maruska Mileta
- Climate transition
- COP23: EU acts as if climate change a distant prospect
- COP23: From the coal mine to the conference

p48-55 The EU and agroindustrial threat to family farmers and society

- Ole Jacob Christensen- Via Campesina Europe articles

p56-65 Alternatives to EU austerity politic

- Basic income workshop
- Matyas Benyik
- Marko Ulvila
- The hidden agenda of the European Union
- Keynes and his critics in the same boat
- Austerity measures in Central and Eastern Europe, especially in Hungary
- The Collaps of the Eastern EU model

p66-69 Just transition & No to EU growth model

- EU-critical economic theory

p70-73 EU a tool for neocolonialism

- EU rewrites history

p74-79 The Future of EU

- Black Swans Queiung in Europe

p80-93

The road to Gothenburg

- Resisting EU in Sweden
- Time to build resistance in Europe
- Internationalism more necessary than ever
- Movements challenging the European Crisis
- Another internationalism is possible
- Left projects in Western Europe
- No Future without peasants!
- Behind the scenes

p94-95 Call for unity

p96-104

The road from Gothenburg

- World Social Forum – Alternative to Capitalism
- A new people’s global initiative
- Another Europe in the Making
- Reflections after the alternative EU summit



**Alternative Summit
13 - 18 November 2017**

Monday, November 13th

Voices from Catalonia - A seminar on a democracy that is now forbidden; ANC-Catalan Assembly

Tuesday 14 November

The EU threatens social and trade union rights, No to EU

Wednesday November 15th

How is Swedish gender equality threatened by the EU?
Communist Party

Thursday, November 16th

Resistance at power
To combat neoliberalism
Alex Mero, Assistant to Podemos MEP
Socialist Party

Friday, November 17th

¿Adonde va Cataluña?
¿Una lucha por la libertad y la democracia o un callejón nacionalista sin salida?, Socialist Party

The EU growth summit raised protest against corporate rule

The Environmental movement criticism of the EU Summit on Growth and fair jobs was summed up by a banner that the Friends of Earth raised when EU Commissioner Cecilia Malmström, EU and Trade Minister Ann Linde and Left Party chair Jonas Sjöstedt were debating the EU's future at the World Culture Museum.

It is hardly a coincidence that Cecilia Malmström is from Sweden. The Swedish trade union LO is unlike the unions in other countries for TTIP and other trade agreements in the interests of corporations. Sweden is at the forefront of negotiating these agreements that give the big business power over democratical decision-making by putting a coyote on parliaments. Decisions to abolish privatizations or increase environmental requirements that could reduce profits on major companies' investments can be threatened with billion fines, an effective way of implementing corporate rule.

Banner message:

*Perpetual growth creates no fair jobs! Leads to the fall of democracy and total climate collaps.
Stop EU neoliberal politics.
Stop deportations, militarization, privatization, CETA, TTIP.
Support what is common and Just climate transition now!*

Editorial

This report is made by Friends of the Earth Sweden. It mainly reflects activities were Friends of the Earth played a role. The texts do not necessarily reflect the opinion of Friends of the Earth or other organizations and people that have coorganized different activities. Editorial texts by Tord Björk. Most photos by Jöran Fagerlund or Tord Björk.

The Alternative EU Summit

On November 17, EU leaders gather at an informal summit in Gothenburg on Growth and fair jobs. The EU has so far been an instrument for neoliberal policies. That's why both EU critics and EU opponents have created a critical network in Gothenburg. The network is called The Alternative EU Summit wants to critically review EU policies and provide opinions for alternative roads. The network organized seminars, street actions, discussions, debates and a joint manifestation November 17th at Gustav Adolfs Torg. The network will brought forward a different policy than that which is carried out from Brussels.

The network addressed the EU's negative attitude towards common welfare, which means that welfare is privatized and offered in a market where EU citizens only have the right to welfare at a reasonable cost.

Criticism is also aimed at ensuring that employers can unilaterally execute a deregulation of the labor market as presented in a document before the summit in Gothenburg.

Platform

- Defend union rights - No to wage dumping and unsafe jobs
- Re-establish the common welfare - Towards privatization and market adaptation
- Fair Trade - Stop TTIP, CETA and other major business agreements
- Combating environmental degradation - Nature and climate are no commodity
- Defend the right to asylum - No to Fortress Europe
- Solidarity and cross-border cooperation - For peace and detente

/ Coordination Network for the Alternate EU Summit Göteborg 2017



Friends of the Earth arranged a Bike action for social rights and just transition in support of workers' rights and protest against the power corporations increasingly get through their influence over the EU. The bicycle action ended at the EU summit were also refugee activists protested to stop deportations. Photos below and above.

Videos from the bike action in English you find here: <https://alternativaemotet.wordpress.com/2018/01/06/cykelprotest-mot-eu-toppmotet>



The EU threatens trade union rights

Friday, November 17th

Seminar organized by No to the EU, Corporate Europe Observatory, Friends of the Earth Sweden



A solidarity Europe can not be built by the EU's capital

Saturday, November 18th

130 people attended when workers representatives from Sweden, Britain and France discussed the resistance to the Union and its labor-oriented policies. Sean Hoyle, chairman of the British Confederation of Transport Workers' Association RMT, Axel Persson, CGT for railway workers in Trappes, Fransisco Acosta, garbage man from Stockholm and Ulf Nilsson, plate maker and union secretary of the Communist Party. Organized by the Communist Party





Kajsa Ekis Ekman - journalist



Lotta Angantyr – Revolution



**Ullman Boye – trade unionist,
No to EU / Norway**



**Lora Verheecke – Corporate
Europe Observatory**

Manifestation

It was cold, it was dark, it started to rain and spirits were high.

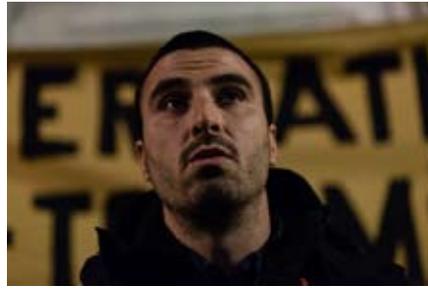
With all movements present from many countries the expression of international solidarity across all borders and issues. Here were the trade unionists from Norway and France and the left wingers from Podemos, the Communist Party and the youth organization Revolution. And here were the speakers from the internationalistic EU-critical seminar, refugee and peace activists, free trade and corporate protester, Friends of the Earth Croatia and the EU opponent Kajsa EkisEkman. With No to EU in Sweden as the main coordinator of the Alternativ EU Summit.

The manifestation at Gustav II Adolf square in Gothenburg when Kajsa Ekis Ekman is speaking. Written on the banners are in the middle: Save Lives, to the right: Tear down the walls of EU, to the right in the back: We also want to have a referendum about EU. 300 participated.





**Hanna Jadenius,
– Kommunistiska Partiet**



**Alex Merlo – Podemos,
assistent, EU-parlamentet, Spain**



**Dave Webb – International
Peace Bureau**



Matilda Brinck-Larsen – Volunteer organization Agape

Matild Brinck-Larsen brought the refugees with her on to the stage at the foot of the statue of king Gustav II Adolf, the founder of Gothenburg who waged wars against many countries in the 17th century during a period when Sweden was an imperialist country.



**Speaker from CGT, France
helped by Axel Persson
for translation**



**Maruska Mileta
– Friends of the Earth Croatia**



The most lively demonstrators at the manifestation were the refugee activists in a rubber boat

Social rights & fair jobs everywhere!



Above from the right Kenneth Haar from Corporate Europe Observatory (CEO), Jan-Erik Gustavsson, chair No to EU Sweden and Boye Ullman from construction workers union in Norway at the trade union rights seminar organized by No to the EU, Friends of the Earth Sweden and CEO.

Trade union rights and fair jobs plays a central role in the protests against the EU Summit. Several articles were written by No to EU to analyze the way the EU model for the job market creates unstable job conditions and even includes deregulation of job security in the proposed social pillar. Boye Ullman added how the stationary directive is threatening the rights of workers to get extra payed when working outside the normal work place. Kenneth Haar added knowledge how EU social policies are influenced by corporate lobbyists. Friends of the Earth questioned the whole EU growth development model who cannot provide fair jobs.

To read: Corporate Eutopia – how new economic governance measures challenge democracy, Kenneth Haar:
<https://corporateeurope.org/eu-crisis/2011/01/corporate-eutopia-how-new-economic-governance-measures-challenge-democracy>

EU pillar for "social greenwashing"

Per Hernmar
Vice chair No to EU

Allan Larsson who wrote the text has succeeded in writing a text that does not add something that is not already in the EU's earlier documents - except for the proposal to deregulate and cyclically adjust the employment protection which was attempted in the text with words such as security and justice reforms. The same proposals have sparked massive criticism from trade unions in France.

The EU pillar of social rights will not give Europe's citizens any significant social improvements. On the other hand, it can bring about strengthening competence of the EU in the social field. The EU Treaty stipulates that the Union and the Member States have shared skills in the social field. Through the new pillar, the EU can move forward its positions into the social area. An example of this is the ambition to introduce a common social contribution standard. An EU-led harmonization of

social systems in Europe has nothing to give to the Nordic welfare countries. On the contrary, such harmonization poses a threat to the Nordic welfare model, i.e. welfare as a right as a citizen.

Jobless growth

At the EU summit in Gothenburg, growth will also be discussed. The main means of creating growth for EU leaders are free trade agreements such as CETA with Canada and JEFTA with Japan as necessary to create growth and new jobs. TTIP, paused by US President Trump, was not mentioned but still exists if the United States changes its mind. These "Free Trade Agreement" have raised very strong criticisms. The ISDS Investment Facility was notified to the European Court of Justice. But the "regulatory activity" (see below) has been reported to the European Court of Justice in violation of the EU Constitution.

The growth envisaged will lead to structural rationalization where small and medium-sized industries and businesses are eliminated and replaced by major international corporate conglomerates. This may hit hard against rural areas and

Bike action for social rights and just transition

In Gothenburg, the future labor market is created when the big company APM Terminals owned by the Danish billionaire family Maersk seeks to create precarious working conditions in the port. While EU politicians talk about fair jobs 3 km away, the labor market is deteriorating nearby.

Ellie Cijvat and Matyas Benyik supporting the workers struggle for the rights at the Gothenburg APM Terminal during the bike action.



Välkommen till

- ANVÄN
- ANVÄND SKYDD!
- ANVÄND VARSE
- LEGITIMERA

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POWER.
NOW.



Friends of
the Earth
International



smaller industrial areas and imply a marginalization of large areas and populations. The pressure on the major urban regions will therefore increase further at the expense of rural areas. The issue of socially sustainable development does not exist in the objectives of these trade agreements.

CETA, TTIP and JEFTA lack all sorts of targets to change industry, trade and consumption to sustainability, to counter the increasing climate change and the very major humanity problems that it may cause.

Trade agreements before national democratic institutions

The TTIP trade agreement was criticized for its ISDS investment mechanism, where secret corporate-settled conciliation committees would settle disputes between international large companies and individual states. The European Court of Justice decided in spring 2017 that the EU Commission, which has a mandate to terminate trade agreements, has no mandate to terminate supranational agreements on investment protection for individual countries. Therefore, the European Commission is working on setting up formal investment protection agencies, MIC, to replace the estimated approximately 3,500 existing investment protection agreements. These will not be as secretive as the original conciliation committees, but will remain supranational and able to make decisions that interfere

with the autonomy of individual countries. This can in turn have consequences for both social and union rights. There is a risk that these courts will be added at a later stage to the trade agreements that the EU makes all over the world.

The trade agreements CETA (and TTIP) also contain “Regulatory” cooperation. There will be “dialogue” in each industrial sector on the establishment of common standards. This dialogue may be previewed by national legislation so that it does not violate business needs. It may result in regulatory constraints on environmental issues and social issues. There is a risk that trade union rights may also be hampered by decisions in these industrial councils. As a reminder of the strong criticism of farmers, France has strongly criticized the regulatory activities because it lacks the environment, climate and social perspective. Even though the regulatory activity becomes transparent, it becomes supranational - out of reach of national democratic institutions. Both the regulatory activities and the investment protection mechanism are likely to entail comprehensive preventive caution in their own independent national legislation.

European deregulation of employment protection

The EU Social Pillar contains a point on deregulation of employment protection. In order to make it easier

for companies to tailor their personnel costs in conjunction with economic fluctuations, employment protection should be cyclically adjusted. This means that the EU at the European base will try to deregulate employment wage for wage earners. This at the same time means a serious restriction of union rights to safeguard employee rights. It is strange that such a clause is included in the EU Social Pillar.

Changes in the Posting of Workers Directive

The EU is preparing a change in the posting directive. The resistance to a change has been massive. In 2016, the Commission’s proposal was suspended by parliaments in 11 countries. However, since wage dumping has been one of the main causes of Brexit, as well as criticism of the undemocratic and sovereign EU, awareness of the necessity for the EU to implement a change has forced a formally changed attitude. In autumn 2017, therefore, only four countries voted against the change. However, experience can determine how far such an attitude change is worth in reality. As usual in matters that are fundamentally controversial, the new writing is vague. The central change in the posting directive means replacing the word “minimum wage” against “equal pay and other remuneration”. Compensation is a vague concept and the whole change may be reviewed by the European Court of Justice. The task

of the European Court of Justice is to make interpretations in accordance with the EU Constitution. The EU Constitution make preference for the four freedoms; free movement of goods, capital, services and work. The European Court of Justice has shown in numerous judgments to give priority to corporate interests prior to employment protection and trade union rights.

The principle of equal pay can only be applied fully if it is the national union that defines the tasks and how they are to be paid.

Although the change of the posting directive at first sight may seem positive, there is no need to assess any changes in advance. The process up to an approved directive can be long; First negotiations between the European Parliament and the Commission after which the Council of Ministers will deal with the issue. The European Court of Justice may also want to take part in the process. The directive will then be fully implemented in four years. With many opposing stakeholders, it may be a compromise. But the insight into what drives the British option could also lead to a breakthrough in the new round of the posting directive. But conflicting interests can certainly find other ways to handle the issue. The number of non-officially posted workers is as many as they officially registered and for them EU legislation is no help. The fight against wage dumping has been incom-

plete. What has been noted has been wage dumping on larger buildings and workplaces. Those who worked for example in the home market with renovation of private housing or working for small employers has not been noted. In that case interest in changing the directive has been minimal. The EU machinery also prepares a new E-register for companies with posted workforce. Perhaps it may also be a loophole for companies and countries that want to continue to make use of wage dumping.

New electronic company register

The EU is preparing an electronic registration of companies operating in other countries. Registration must be made by the home country. Union critics believe that it makes it easy for unscrupulous companies to register in their country of residence, thus getting EU-approved and able to display an E-Card. This could be an opportunity to circumvent possible improvements to the Posting Directive.

Internal wage dumping

In many countries in the EU there are extensive numbers of workers with wages below the subsistence level. This is a form of internal wage dumping that helps keep payroll down. This contributes to the number of poor or almost poor in the EU reaching 116 million people. Wages below the subsistence level are often referred to as

“a way of entering the labor market” but are in reality a veritable poverty trap. The Union’s Social Rights Pillar talks about this, but emphasizes at the same time that “... incentives for seeking employment are maintained” - that is, minimum wages must not be too high and not equal to the overall wage situation.

EU in war with dockers

The Commission has twice tried to find out that Europe’s ports do not have to be manned by port workers but can use labor from low-paid ship crews. This failed in 2003 and 2006. However, the Commission did not give up, but instead demanded it for countries in financial difficulties, such as Greece, Portugal and now Spain.

Inclusion and exclusion

The Social Pillar talks about an inclusion policy. EU policies have led to social segregation and increasing social tensions. The countries of eastern Europe have been structure rationalized and large parts of the social security network have been abolished. Countries like Greece have been thrown out in an economic and social crisis. The EU Social Pillar doesn’t mention this.

The possibility of end exclusion and segregation within countries is not possible without government transfer systems. The possibility of breaking the economic gap between surplus countries in the north and deficit



*Per Hernmar
at EU
critical
seminar
2016*

countries in the south is not possible by imposing one austerity package after another.

An equal and equal society requires a large public sector. This is effectively prevented by the EU's financial restraint requirements. The size of Member States' budget deficits is regulated by the EU Constitution. Sweden participates in the EU's CF-SPs where Member States' budgets are pre-examined by the EU before they are sent for approval by the national parliament.

No inclusion of "illegal" migrants

Through the Schengen Agreement, an internal passport union has been established, but an external wall has been built. Despite the wall being built, refugees and emigrants still come through. Today there are between 2.8 - 8 million "illegal" migrants, economic and political refugees in the EU countries. Nobody knows for sure as these are not registered and forced to live in a shadow presence.

This is not mentioned in the EU's social pillars:

Europe's Roma are not mentioned

In the EU, there are 12 million Romas living. Racism and discrimination of the Roma are very common and large groups of Romas live in open misery. The EU has not made any effort to fundamentally change the

living conditions of Europe's Roma. This is not mentioned in the EU's social pillars

The women's problems are not mentioned

In large parts of the EU member states, the public sector is under-dimensioned. This means that there is no childcare and elderly care. Therefore, many women can not gain employment but are forced to take care of children and the elderly. This is not mentioned the EU's social pillars.

The EU's constitutional economic policy prohibits additional resources during a recession or economic crisis. The only medicine available is cutting and tightening. This hits hardest at the public sector, which is a major employer for women as well as an important part of relieving women from the traditional task of main responsibility for care. This is not mentioned the EU Social Pillar.

Without a strong public sector that guarantees care and welfare for all, equality between men and women is not possible.

Tightening creates labour environment problems

The EU's institutionally based policy to solve economic problems by austerity and the EU's negative view of public activities has led to the tightening of the public sector. This is an important reason for increasing problems of understaffing and

stress.

Deregulation of the public sector with large-scale privatization often results in inefficiency and leads to reduced productivity while increasing costs. The liberalization of the public sector serves as a cost-increasing wren. Deregulation and market adaptation strongly contribute to segregation, favouring those who are most able to use eligibility while at the same time starving publicly-driven activities or force them to specialize in high-cost activities. Deregulation leads to detailed control in order to measure services. This creates major labour environment problems where staff work is more supervised and stress increases. The EU and social pillars' ambition to transfer public welfare services to a "social market" implies a threat to an equal, inclusive, efficient and cost-effective social sector.

Poor pensioners

The EU recommendation to deregulate pension funds has led to the commercialization of the Swedish pension administration. Instead of increasing payments to the pension system, the remuneration has been dependent on the fund's return and the remuneration has been reduced. This affects primarily economically weaker groups and especially women who often have a longer life expectancy than men. Women's pension rates will be lower when they are payroll-discriminated and receive lower pension points through the

main responsibility of children. The pension system thus promotes the emergence of a large group of poor pensioners - often women. This is not mentioned the EU's social pillars.

Unemployed

The EU Social Pillar addresses the unemployed. The pillar talks about "appropriate activation support ... appropriate unemployment benefits over a reasonable period of time in accordance with their contributions." And it concludes that "Benefits must not be a negative incentive for rapid return to employment". Here the EU pillar is far below 1966 Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Recognizing the Right to Work, Social Security and Satisfactory Living Standard. Placing a point of providing only minimum unemployment in a social pillar means a devaluation of the principles of the Economic, Social and Cultural Convention.

Flexurity and housing shortage

Many people live today under very uncertain living conditions and lack permanent employment and have to work as temporary substitutes. A growing share of the workforce is being employed by staffing agencies who manages ordinary jobs next to regular employees. The EU pillar of social rights mentions this and wants to ban "abuse of atypical forms of employment" while talking about promoting "inno-

vative forms of work"

Many young people find it difficult to find housing and forced to move between homes with insecure contracts. The EU has abolished the possibility of conducting a social housing policy in the public domain. Instead, most of the housing is produced for the market with expensive condominiums and rental apartments.

Can the EU system reform itself?

From a neoliberal point of view, the EU project has been a success in many aspects. However, there is much more to do to further strengthen the neoliberal visions. Of the EU's 116 million citizens who are poor or at risk of poverty, the EU wants to lift 20 million from poverty. However, some special initiatives or action programs are not applicable. For the future of the EU, there are entirely other tasks at the center. The United States deletes its military presence in Europe and calls for EU countries to up to 2% of their GDP to comply with NATO rules. The EU is preparing for this task to launch an embryo for defense ministry and the issue of expanded military cooperation is now the major issue. After Britain's exit from the EU, the pace of military cooperation within the EU increases. The EU is now launching a permanent defense assembly, Pesco,

This means that the EU wants an even greater grip

on Europe's finances and therefore the issue of a EU finance minister and a budget for the EMU area is also at the heart of the discussions about the future of the EU and how this military arming can be financed. It is doubtful that the EU in this situation would have a greater scope for social and trade benefits. Instead, the EU's "European Pillar of Social Rights" fulfills a function, full of non-mandatory catchwords. Instead of real action, the EU pillar serves as a cheap solution - social greenwashing.

*Trade unionist
Boye Ullman
speaking at
the Alternative Summit
manifestation*



The original article in Swedish and several more you find at: <https://alternativaeu-motet.wordpress.com/artiklar>. The views on the social pillar divided political forces in Sweden both on the left and the right. The Left party supported the decision while No to EU argued against. <http://flamman.se/a/social-pelare-en-vattendelare>



Another Europe is possible

Breaking with EU politics:

Yes to just transition, common welfare, peace, environment and antiracism

Saturday November 18th Seminar

Themes and speakers, plenary:

EU - The dictatorship of capitalism. EU history and whose interests it serves.

- Kajsa Ekis Ekman, journalist.

Break the corporate power and the way it is helped by the EU!

- Lora Verhecke, Corporate Europe Observatory.

No to cooperation between the EU and NATO - Popular cooperation for peace, environment and solidarity!

- Dave Webb, vice chair International Peace Bureau and Chair Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament UK.

Parallel seminars or workshops

- Stop corporate trade policies and undemocratic power! Lora Verhecke, Corporate Europe Observatory, Maruska Mileta, Friends of the Earth (FoE) Croatia.

- The peace role of EU, militarization and hybrid war in collaboration with NATO, Dave Webb, IPB, My Leffler Women for Peace, Tord Björk Activists for Peace.

- Alternatives to EU natural resources, agricultural

and forestry policies, Ole Jacob Christensen, mountain farmer from Norway and Itza Orosco, chair Latin American Groups.

- Climate transition, Jennie Nyberg, Fossilgasfällan, Gertrud Ingelman, Klimatsamverkan Göteborg, and Dave Webb, IPB.

- Alternatives to EU austerity policy, Marko Ulvila, The Greens Tampere and Siemenpu foundation, Benny Andersson, Clarté, Matyas Benyik, Attac Hungary.

- Basic income, Gunilla Weibull och Lilli Johansson, Basic income network.

- Local democratic transition, Birgitta Hedström, Small Seeds, Jakob Zethelius, Democratic transition.

- International refugee movement in Europe and the role of EU, Matilda Brinck-Larsen, Volunteer organization Agape.

- The future of EU, Tord Björk, FoE Sweden, Max Andersson MEP (mp), Malin Björk, MEP (v).

Final plenary, group and common discussions Final key note speakers: Ole Jacob Christensen, Via Campesina member and Maruska Mileta FoE Croatia

Above: Max Andersson Green MEP

To the right above: Workshop on corporate power and trade. Panel from the right - Marko Ulvila, Maruska Mileta and Lora Verhecke, moderator Lars Igeland.

To the right: Ingela Mårtensson Women for peace to the left and Malin Björk Left party MEP.





EU - The dictatorship of capitalism. EU history and whose interests it serves.

Kajsa Ekis Ekman started the seminar Another Europe is possible. Here speech had the title given above. You find her arguments on this and next four pages including a presentation of her background.

It's time to leave the EU

Kajsa Ekis Ekman
Metro 21 Nov 2017

The EU is being marketed as a peace project, but if you read the treaty that led to the coal and steel unions in 1950, it's not about peace, but about prices, Kajsa Ekis

Ekman writes.

This weekend, the European bigwigs met in Gothenburg. Previously, the ruling class often met in summer, but there were always great protests, and for some reason they are now always holding meetings in wintertime. The newspapers were full of headlines as "The EU Summit is underway - so are you affected". Then they did not mean how we were influenced by the political decisions. It's about the traffic situation.

This is symbolic for how we are expected to relate to the EU. We are not supposed to interfere in what the lofty

elites do, but to be annoyed of having to take another way to work.

Despite all talk about "now social rights are on the way", the EU has always been the capitalists' projects. The EU is being marketed as a peace project, but if you read the treaty that formed the basis of the Coal and Steel Union in 1950, it's not about peace but about prices. It is about creating a common market for coal and steel corporations that would build Europe after the war, to abolish customs and secure labor demand.

Another intention has been to secure Europe's control

over the rest of the world. The organization was not at all formed in peacetime, but during a fierce colonial war. EC became Europe's way of trying to preserve control in Africa, as Stefan Jons-son and Peo Hansen write in their book "Eurafrika". And it was Volvo's PG Gyllenhammar and other capitalists who took the initiative to develop the EC to the EU. The corporations had grown and needed a bigger market to play within. They did not have time to wait for the

almost all the fears that the Swedish EU opponents had during the referendum in 1994 have been fulfilled. Un-employment has increased, the trade unions' influence has decreased and Sweden's independent voice in inter-national affairs has been silenced. Now I think we have given the EU enough time. Time to leave!

different governments of Europe to do what they wanted, but saw in the EU a shortcut around democracy: a state where popular influence was minimal.

And so it has also become. In the European Union, big business and bureaucrats are settling and deciding without asking or even knowing what's going on. In fact,



Kajsa Ekis Ekman

Kajsa Ekis Ekman writes editorials for ETC, the main leftwing newspaper in Sweden. She is also an activist and prominent EU opponent. In her book *Skulden - Eurokrisen sedd från Aten* (Debt: the euro crisis seen from Athens) she criticizes EU for being a tool for the financial interests of the core countries.. Kajsa Ekis Ekman is also an investigating journalist on issues as the weapon lobby's power over the EU's border policy. She has a background as an activist in Klimax, Feminist network No to Surrogate Motherhood, Greek solidarity network and has been imprisoned by Israel for participation in Ship to Gaza. She participates in various newspapers such as DN, The Guardian, Truthdig, Feminist Current and the Anarchist magazine Brand, where she is a member of the editorial board.

Debt - Euro crisis seen from Athens, Kajsa Ekis Ekman,
<http://www.leopardforlag.se/bok/skulden>

Kajsa Ekis Ekman's texts including some in English. <http://kajsaekisekman.blogspot.se>

Everybody talks about capitalism -- but what is it? | Kajsa Ekis Ekman | TEDxAthens

Left - Do not be afraid of Brexit!
<https://www.etc.se/ledare/vanstern-var-inte-radda-brexite>

“Has the EU suddenly become a popular democratic institution? No, rather the opposite. It's enough to look at how the euro handled the euro crisis and the refugee crisis. The EU is and remains a union created for the interests of large-scale capital, and where industry and banks not only influence decisions, but sits at the table when they are taken, make the documents the decision are based upon and make sure that their own company is benefiting. ... Of course, there are good things with the EU, as well as freedom of movement and the opportunity to study and work in other countries, but it does not remove the fact that The construction as such is extremely undemocratic. “

“When the right-wing realizes that they are wrong, they do not exercise self-criticism. No, they just silence and turn their eyes away.

Take the case of Greece. ... Only the IMF and the EU had free hands to reform the country, everything would be fine. Olli Rehn, EU Commissioner for Economic Affairs, said in 2010 that a “Greek Renaissance” was in progress and that Greece would soon have higher growth than expected. Seven years later they have quieted. Probably it has become apparent even for them that all their forecasts completely wrong, their programs gone to hell and that the crisis is not a step closer to its solution today.

Greece entered the programs with an unemployment rate of 13 percent and a government debt of 120 percent. Now unemployment is 26 percent and central government debt 175 percent. Youth unemployment is highest in Europe, 47 percent. Retirement has been reduced, hospitals have cut so much that volunteer clinics have had to start to help emergency patients. The misery has become everyday.

Responsibility for this is the troika, as it is those who administered Greece during these years. All governments, including the present, have had a single task: implementing the dictation of the EU and the IMF.

.....
Seriously, there is a very logical explanation that

Greece's situation has only deteriorated over the past seven years. And that is, the agreement is designed so that it can not be met.

The agreement thus means that Greece will always receive new loans to repay the old loans. It is the same institutions that lend money that Greece pays back to. The debt is now distributed so that Greece owes the euro-denominated funds 60 percent, the IMF 10 percent, the ECB 6 percent and the rest to its own and foreign banks and lenders. A condition for Greece to receive the new EUR 86 billion loan from the fund is that they now pay back EUR 2 billion to the fund and another 7 billion this summer.

It is thus the same money that goes around and which constantly creates more interest, which is why the central government debt grows. Only 10 percent of the loans have gone to the Greek state - the rest has gone to settling old loans. To access this artificial respiration, Greece must cut into welfare and privatize. “

From ETC February 2, 2017:
When the right is silent, you know that they have lost their minds
<https://www.etc.se/ledare/nar-hogern-tystnar-da-vet-man-att-de-har-gjort-bort-sig>

Corporations formed the EU

“According to Kajsa Ekis Ekman, the EU can be described as the dream state of capital and is an order of the capitalists themselves. At that time, PG Gyllenhammar, the Volvo CEO, took, in 1983, ten years after the oil crisis, the initiative to form the EU by arranging a meeting with the most important capitalists in Europe. Together they wrote the Europe 90 manifesto, which was then the basis of the Maastricht Treaty. According to Ekis Ekman, the EU is totally in favor of capital’s interests, and companies and politicians decide together for almost everything.



Both within the EU and within the national states, Ekis Ekman considers it clear how the state helps companies more actively. This development can not be defined as neoliberalism. Instead, it’s about capital having driven its interests forward and using and infiltrating the state. An example in Sweden is profits in the welfare sector, where capitalists receive money from the state to then profit from running schools. Another example is how the institution SIDA has changed from helping developing countries and supporting freedom movements to actively work to help Swedish entrepreneurs abroad.“

Quotes from Kulturdelen March 9 2016, Magnus Gustavsson: Kajsa Ekis Ekman drog fullt hus i Örebro, Translated by editor: <http://www.kulturdelen.com/2016/03/09/kajsa-ekis-ekman-drog-fullt-hus-i-orebro>



Action against corporate EU

Friends of the Earth arranged a bicycle action to support workers’ rights and protest against the power the big companies increasingly get through their influence over the EU.

The action began at Volvo. It was Volvo CEO PG Gyllenhammar and other big business executives who took the initiative to develop the EC to the EU in the early 1980s. The companies had become bigger and now wanted to control the market more. They did not have time to wait for the different governments of Europe to do what they wanted, but in the EU, they saw a shortcut around democracy: to create a political union with minimal domestic influence. The European Roundtable of Industrialists organization was formed to impose an internal market, social cuts and large-scale infrastructure projects such as highways.

The environmental movement opposed the big business executives as soon as their plans were presented in the 1980s and went to direct action against their highway constructions. Now the environmental movement goes beyond that. The action at Volvo drew attention to the fact that Volvo workers demand just transition. The car plants can be switched to the production of sustainable transports such as public transport and renewable energy production.

The second stop was at the harbor. The privatization of ports supported by the EU creates labor conflicts across Europe when privatized port companies seek to restrict workers rights and set aside employees. In the port of Gothenburg, throughout 2017, there has been a major conflict in which the Hamnarbetarförbundet implemented a short-term overtime block for the right to sign agreements, followed by a long-term lockout from APMT.

The bicycle action ended at the EU summit where the activists from Friends of the Earth and Attac Hungary made a statement side by side with refugee activists who also protested against the EU summit.

Videos in English from the action: <https://alternativaeumotet.wordpress.com/2018/01/06/cykelprotest-mot-eu-topppmotet>

Stop Corporate Power!



Photos: Above, Anti-CETA activists during the EU Summit in Gothenburg.

To the left, and next page Lora Verhecke

Below, Lora Verhecke making her keynote speech at the Another Europe is possible seminar.

Lora Verhecke from the Corporate Europe Observatory and Maruska Mileta from Friends of the Earth Croatia kicked off the discussion on democratisation of economic policies and international agreements. The case in point was the EU-Canada CETA-Agreement that would introduce unacceptable privileges for international investors over the rights of states to regulate. At the same time the EU has proposed a Multilateral Investment Court to institutionalise such privileges globally, in a similar line to the defeated MAI treaty of the 1990s. The meeting affirmed movement



representatives intention to block such agreements. At the same time commitment was expressed to advance at the UN human rights regime the binding treaty to prevent and compensate violations by transnational corporations.





Lora Verheecke

Lora Verheecke works as an investigator and campaign activist for the Corporate Europe Observatory (CEO). It is an organization that monitors and reveals the big business's privileged influence over EU policies. She has a background as a communications officer for the international trade union movement and has contributed to a chapter to the European Union Movement book on Green Growth and the need for a paradigm shift in which she brings up just transition. Lora Verheecke has been involved in issues like land-grabbing, tax evasion, criticism of emissions trading as a solution to the climate issue and trade agreements such as TTIP and CETA. She is French and 32 years old.

Lora Verheecke recommends

A World Court for Corporations : new report exposes dangers of proposed Multilateral Investment Court

December 4, 2017 A World Court for Corporations : new report exposes dangers of proposed Multilateral Investment Court 2017-12-04T15:39:28+00:00

Berlin/Brussels/Geneva/Washington – A new report released today warns that the European Commission's proposed Multilateral Investment Court (MIC) threatens to lock in an undemocratic investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) scheme that undermines national democratic authority and prioritizes corporate profits above all else.

<http://www.s2bnetwork.org/world-court-corporations-new-report-exposes-dangers-proposed-multilateral-investment-court>

The great CETA swindle

November 16th 2016 International trade

With a fast approaching European Parliament vote on the EU-Canada trade deal CETA and potential subsequent rows over its ratification in EU member states, CETA continues to draw heavy criticism. A close look at the text of the agreement – and recent declarations designed to reassure critics and gain support for its ratification – shows that concerns over CETA are well-founded. Behind the PR attempts by the Canadian Government and the European Commission to sell it as a progressive agreement, CETA remains what it always has been: an attack on democracy, workers, and the environment. It would be a major mistake to ratify it.

<https://corporateeurope.org/international-trade/2016/11/great-ceta-swindle>

<https://prezi.com/0i24qa0rwuc9/how-do-we-fight-against-ceta-corporate-european-trade-agree/>

Lora Verheecke explains the danger of big business influence on the EU for Bulgarian website "The MEPs who approved CETA made the big business very happy": <http://www.duma.bg/node/141600>

On landgrabbing when she worked for the International Trade Union Movement 2014: World Bank: when "Doing Business" means land grabbing

<https://www.equaltimes.org/world-bank-when-doing-business#.Wfm-qyPhD4U>

On tax evasion 2017: One year after the Panama Papers, tax evasion in Europe is still a pressing issue

https://www.equaltimes.org/one-year-after-the-panama-papers#.Wfm_IiPhD4U

Lora Verheecke's broad scope is shown in this link to some of her articles:

<https://www.equaltimes.org/lora-verheecke?lang=en>



A useful campaign website to dismantle corporate power:

<https://www.stopcorporateimpunity.org>

Brussels' most powerful lobbyist?

Step forward BusinessEurope



November 21st 2017

The power of lobbies

Name:

BusinessEurope the Confederation of European Business.

Appearance:

A well-funded, smooth-talking lobbying behemoth – plastered in corporate logos.

Age:

59 or thereabouts.

As BusinessEurope gets ready for its annual private parley with Commissioners today, Corporate Europe Observatory takes a look at Brussels' most influential lobbyist.

Ever since European countries started to collaborate closely after World War II, there has been a business body set-up to lobby them. The Union des Industries de la Communauté européenne (UNICE) started life in 1958 soon after the European Economic Community of six member states was created. In 2007 UNICE became BusinessEurope, a name which it says expresses “more clearly what it does and where it does it”.

So, what do they say they do? According to its website: “BusinessEurope is the leading advocate for growth and competitiveness at European level, standing up for companies across the continent and campaigning on the issues that most influence their performance. A recognised social partner, we speak for all-sized enterprises in 34 European countries whose national business federations

are our direct members.” And what do they actually do? BusinessEurope is one of Brussels' most powerful lobbyists. It spends over four million euros every year to influence both the overall direction of the EU and its specific policies, on everything from the rules of trade deals that put corporations in the driving seat, to watering down concerted climate action.

Who's behind it? BusinessEurope represents about 40 national business organisations (including the Confederation of British Industry, the Bundesverband der Deutschen Industrie, and the Mouvement des Entreprises de France) which are already big lobby players in their own right, as well as corporations such as Bayer, BMW, BP, ExxonMobil, Google, Microsoft, Pfizer, Shell, Total, and Volkswagen. When it comes to membership, it isn't very fussy, with British American Tobacco, Japan Tobacco International, and Philip Morris all included. And while it claims to look out for the interests of small and medium businesses, the reality is that its policies are often driven by, and will benefit, its powerful members.

And when you say BusinessEurope is powerful...? It's the most significant corporate lobby group in the EU and its policy papers routinely end up as sounding eerily similar to official EU positions. Working on its own, or

with other corporate lobby groups, it has consistently lobbied for pro-big business policies.

Just look at the EU-US trade negotiations (TTIP), and the sister deal CETA with Canada, where the proposal on ‘regulatory cooperation’ (which is deeply controversial as it would put the business community at the table with regulators “to essentially co-write legislation”), was copy-pasted from BusinessEurope and its allies.

On climate action, BusinessEurope's lobbying has ensured that targets on renewable energy and energy efficiency have been watered-down in favour of a focus on emissions trading. Alongside lobbyists from energy intensive industries, it has ensured that firms continue to receive as many subsidies, in the form of pollution permits, as possible. That's a lot of influence. And there's more! On austerity, the EU's post-crisis ‘economic governance’ reforms were developed in the aftermath of the 2007-08 crash and mirrored many of the proposals that BusinessEurope had been lobbying for. And on deregulation, Commission advisers drew up plans whose tone, emphasis, and recommendations were an almost exact replica of big business demands, including those of BusinessEurope. Much of this has now been implemented as ‘Better Regulation’, aka corporate-friendly deregulation

in disguise.

We could go on and on, but you've probably got the picture. As you can see, BusinessEurope not only provides some of the policies that are proposed by the Commission, but sometimes even the political vision that inspires them too. And we find that rather dangerous. And what are they up to today? 21 November 2017 is BusinessEurope's annual powwow with the Commission. Held every year (you can read about the events held in 2016 and 2015 but they follow a wearily familiar pattern), a number of Commissioners and BusinessEurope bigwigs meet for exchanges on strategy and the overall direction of the EU. This year's agenda includes sessions with EU Commissioners Gabriel (responsible for EU digital economy policy), Moedas (research), Šefčovič (energy), Commissioner Oettinger (EU Budget), plus a working dinner with Katainen (competitiveness). In a signal of how warm the Commission feels towards BusinessEurope and its corporate backers, the event is hosted at the Commission's HQ, the Berlaymont. It's corporate capture in action!

Sounds cosy. Can I come too? No. Well, not unless you are a top executive at one of the world's mega corporations, and have paid to "enjoy an important status within BusinessEurope" by becoming a member of its Corporate Advisory and Support Group (ASG). Perks of this group include "High-level contacts with the EU institutions (Commissioners,

Cabinets, MEPs, Ministers)" and "Participation in four high-level meetings a year, with guests such as Commissioners, Presidents of EP political groups, Ministers". Only ASG members can attend today's event; the total annual EU lobby spend of the 26 corporations which hobnobbed with the Commission at last year's event amounted to more than €31 million.

The Commission – which one's that again? The European Commission is the EU's executive arm. If the Council of the EU (representing the 28 member state governments) and the elected European Parliament get to decide on legislation, it is the Commission that drafts new laws, oversees implementation, and effectively sets the EU's policy agenda. It's a magnet for lobbyists and since December 2014, BusinessEurope has had over 170 lobby meetings with the elite in the Commission, namely Commissioners, their immediate staff, and top civil servants.

How do you know that? Because the Commission publishes lists of lobby meetings held by these people. It's highly likely BusinessEurope has had hundreds of other lobby meetings with the lower echelons of the Commission, but these meetings are held in secret so it is impossible to know for sure. Current hot topics for BusinessEurope lobbyists include: EU industrial policy, digital policy and data protection, energy policy, trade, and others.

So BusinessEurope must have a lot of lobbyists?

Yes, BusinessEurope alone declares 30 individual lobbyists, 22 of whom have passes to enable them to come and go as they like in the European Parliament. But more broadly in Brussels, there's at least 25,000 lobbyists and it's estimated that at least 70 per cent of them also work for business interests.

And this is bad because...? Well, how long have you got?

For starters, the head honcho of the Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker told his commissioners when they took office that they "should seek to ensure an appropriate balance and representativeness in the stakeholders they meet". BusinessEurope's annual shindig with the Commission clearly breaches that. After all, do you know of any equivalent events for civil society or trade unions?

But it is not just the privileged access that makes this problematic; it is also the influence on policy-making which comes with it. BusinessEurope acts in the interests of its members and its promotion of austerity and how-low-can-they-go regulatory standards impacts us all. The EU makes policy and laws which affect more than 510 million people across Europe and too often those policies are made in the interests of big business, not in the interests of citizens. Do say: 'Smile' for today's "networking cocktail and family photo" and 'bon appetite' to Commissioner Katainen at the working dinner. Don't say: "Commissioners should not provide privileged access and undue influence to big business".

Carmageddon: EU driving financial markets the wrong way

October 23rd 2017 Economy & finance

The EU is about to adopt new rules that will help trade in securitised loans, the very financial instruments that were a main cause the 2008 financial crisis. Despite warning signs of a new 'subprime bubble' in car loans coming from the US, carmakers and financiers have lobbied the EU to make it easier to speculate on such loans.

On the 26 of October the European Parliament plenary will vote to confirm new rules on complicated financial instruments, and before long, the Council is set to agree as well. 'Securitisation' – loans that are bundled and sold on – is to become easier in order to support economic growth, proponents say.

Yet there are rumblings of trouble in the financial press. Eyes have been on the trade in financial instruments linked to car loans to private customers, particularly in the US. Large numbers of loans have been granted to people with poor credit ratings, often without even looking into their financial situation, and the loans have been repackaged and sold on with little transparency and oversight from the authorities. The dreaded 'sub-prime bubble' could burst and affect significant parts of the

The Great Gas Lock-in Industry lobbying behind the EU push for new gas infrastructure

October 31st 2017 Climate and energy

A new report by CEO shows why the fire-power of the gas industry makes it a powerful and effective lobbying force in Brussels and national capitals. Meanwhile, public interest groups have just a fraction of the resources and access.

read the report here

Industry spent more than €100m in 2016 according to the voluntary transparency register, and deployed over 1000 lobbyists plus an army of PR and lobby consultancies, who helped to organise events in the European Parliament, secure high level meetings with the Climate and Energy Commissioners, follow policy and, among other things, push the myth that gas is a 'clean' fuel to partner renewable energy. Industry proximity to decision-makers and their financial power has seen them capture the agenda, with their own profit motives placed before the interest of the climate and the livelihoods of communities along the supply chain.

European Commissioner for Climate and Energy Miguel Arias Cañete came from an oil and gas background and still has close ties, and alongside Vice-President for the Energy Union Maroš Šefčovič, is driving forward

Big Data is watching you The industry lobby battle against ePrivacy

October 17th 2017 The power of lobbies

This week, MEPs on the Civil Rights Committee will vote on the ePrivacy regulation, which will determine how secure our data is when we are online. For the past 16 months, industry lobbies, including all those who collect or use citizens' personal online data for advertising purposes, have been vigorously opposing new proposals on ePrivacy. On the other side of the debate, digital rights campaigners demand that citizens should enjoy optimum data privacy when online.

Industry has used tried and tested techniques straight out of the lobbyists' playbook to influence the outcome of ePrivacy deliberations in the Commission and the Parliament. These tactics have included one-to-one lobby meetings, coordinating industry sign-up letters, mobilising corporate members, commissioning research to support industry positions, and holding or sponsoring elite events. A pro-privacy version of the Commission's proposal which was leaked in December 2016 pumped further adrenalin into the corporate campaign, concerned about how its bottom line would be affected. Evidence indicates that member states in the Council such as Germany could be promot-

Open doors for forces of finance 500 financial lobbyists at large at the ECB - by invitation

October 3rd 2017 The financial lobby

ECB advisory groups are used as lobby platforms by the financial industry, as our new report shows. 'Open door for forces of finance at the ECB' reveals that the advisory groups counselling the European Central Bank are dominated by representatives of some of the most influential global financial corporations.

Like many other EU institutions, the European Central Bank (ECB) actively seeks exter-

Beneath the Glyphosate headlines, a crucial battle for the future of EU pesticide approvals

October 24th 2017 Food and agriculture

“A non-re-authorisation of the substance would be a disaster for the industry”, reads a note from a March 2016 meeting between pesticide industry lobbyists from the European Crop Protection Association (ECPA) and members of Agriculture Commissioner Phil Hogan’s cabinet.

The “substance” in question? Glyphosate, the active ingredient in Roundup, the world’s most widely-used pesticide and Monsanto’s flagship product. True enough, a European Union ban on this key ingredient in many weedkillers would be a major blow to the biotech and pesticide industry, its shareholders and its future owner Bayer.

Since the World Health Organisation’s International Agency For Research On Cancer (IARC) declared glyphosate a probable human carcinogen in 2015, the decision as to whether this weedkiller deserves another license for the EU market has been closely scrutinised. In addition, lawsuits against Monsanto in the US regarding Roundup’s health effects have enabled the release of internal company documents, which show how the company ghostwrote studies signed by ‘independent’

The creeping privatisation of healthcare Problematic EU policies and the corporate lobby push

June 2nd 2017 The power of lobbies

Author: Rachel Tansey for Corporate Europe Observatory

Privatisation in its various guises is “spreading across Europe’s health services like a rash”, writes John Lister of Keep Our NHS Public and Health Campaigns Together. EU member states’ health systems are broadly split between those based on employment-related health insurance and those financed via general taxation.

But both have been subject to political and policy pressures, including from the EU-level, that have created conditions conducive to a growing role for private sector companies in this traditionally public service.

The threats to public healthcare (cartoon)

The threats to public healthcare

Squeezing profits for shareholders out of health services risks deteriorating working conditions; worse pay, reduced staff levels, greater workloads, more stress, all of which negatively impact on safety and quality of care. Greater health inequality is fostered as private, for-profit providers ‘cherry-pick’ lower-risk and paying patients, whilst higher-risk and poorer patients, or those needing emergency care, remain

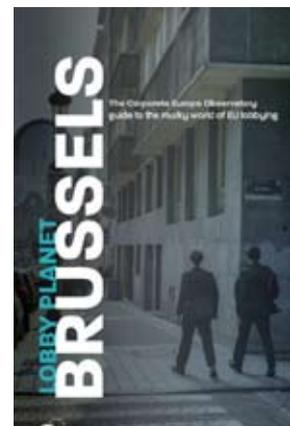
Lobby Planet: Our guide to the murky world of corporate EU lobbying

There are an estimated 25,000 lobbyists working in Brussels; most of whom are representing the interests of corporations and their lobby groups. Lobby Planet takes you on a tour of the EU Quarter to explain the many – and often shady – methods of corporate lobbying used to influence decision making in the European Union.

Lobby Planet traces the invisible lines of political power that criss cross the city to give you an idea of how lobbyists work, who the biggest players are, where they meet, and what issues they focus on. It has over 135 entries of groups representing different industries’ interests including agribusiness, finance, digital, big energy, tobacco and proponents of free trade.

As well as a geographical and thematic guide to corporate lobbying, it provides you with a jargon-busting dictionary so you can decipher what the EU’s economic and political elites are talking about.

It ends with suggestions of what you can do to challenge the corporate capture of democracy. Corporate lobbying tends to thrive in the absence of public scrutiny. So the more of us who are watching, getting informed and taking action, the better!



CONTENTS

02	ABOUT THIS GUIDE
04	LOBBYING THE EU IN BRUSSELS – AN OVERVIEW
06	How are EU laws made?
08	Meet the lobbyists
14	Corporate lobby tactics
16	Public scrutiny of lobbying?
20	GEOGRAPHIC GUIDE
21	The EU quarter: an urban planning catastrophe
21	Getting there & away
22	Avenue Royal/Park Schuman
22	Place Paul-Lévy/Place de Luxembourg and area
49	Avenue Louise/Place de Nieuw
56	On and around the Petite Ceinture
100	How do the EU and other streets
112	Behind the EU quarter
129	EU lobbyists without Brussels offices
130	THEMATIC GUIDE
136	WHAT YOU CAN DO!
140	JARGON-BUSTING DICTIONARY

download a pdf version of the Lobby Planet Brussels at CEO web site:

<https://corporateeurope.org/lobbyplanet>

Refugees Welcome!

The movement for refugee and migrant right is growing and developing in Europe. This was very clear in the protests against the EU Summit in Gothenburg 2017. Both in the main manifestation and outside the summit conference building in the harbour the refugees and solidarity activists played a prominent role. It is also evident that both coorganizers of the seminar as Corporate Europe Observatory as well as speakers like Maruska Mileta from Friends of the Earth Croatia and Matyuas Benyik from Attac Hungary address the need for solidarity with refugees.

Speaker at both the common manifestation and the seminar was Matilda Brinck-Larsen from Volunteer organization Agape, a well known local group struggling practically and politically for the refugees. This movement is part of a continent wide effort to change the way Europe address the refugee and migrant

issues under the banner refugees welcome.

The presence of this movement in the EU-critical manifestations and seminar can be seen as the politically most important renewal of the resistance against an increasingly militarized neoliberal EU development model.

Internationally this renewal has been expressed during 2017 by the The Permanent Peoples Tribunal on the Violations of the Human Rights of Migrant and Refugee Peoples launched in Barcelona on July 7-8, 2017. It was co-convened by more than 30 migrant and refugee organisations and endorsed by 100 movements, networks and organisations.

How it came about and the call is presented on the following pages.

Photos: Top to the right; Matilda Brinck-Larsen speaking at the main manifestation surrounded by refugees. Below; Refugee activists at the main manifestation at Gustav Adolfs torg 17th of November 2017





Background to the Permanent Peoples Tribunal (PPT) on the Violations with Impunity of the Human Rights of Migrant and Refugee Peoples

Four key pillars make up the framework of this PPT:

Root Causes of Forced Displacement & Conditions of conflict and war leading to outmigration and refugee Hazardous Journeys and closing down of legal routes Border regimes of exclusion/walls/immigrations policy Fortress Europe – experience of precarious migrant status and exploitative conditions of work within Europe

Gender, Youth and Racism are identified as cross cutting issues across these pillars.

The PPT is a process that is being built from below, with the people most involved and most directly affected.

The process is being initiated as a journey where many can participate from the borders of Europe and from the countries of origin, transit and destination. That is why it is important to socialise the whole process among migrant and refugee organisations and communities; and the networks and platforms that support the work of denouncing the violations of human and peoples' rights taking place along the multiple borders and the daily struggles of migrant and refugees. Therefore, the mobilisation of the migrant and refugee peoples in the conceptualisation, development and implementation of the PPT is crucial.

The overall goal is to strengthen the role of Migrant and Refugee peoples as key protagonists and social actors in the articulation of the conjuncture, the naming of the violations of their human rights and in proposing alternatives.

The PPT also aims to facilitate migrant and refugee movements to develop new alliances with other social movements and with the research, academe and other related sectors.



International Call for the Permanent Peoples Tribunal

On the Violations with Impunity of the Human Rights of Migrant and Refugee Peoples Migrants and refugees over decades have contributed enormously to the economic and political development of Europe as well as to their countries of origin. Some have undertaken hunger strikes for basic rights such as family reunion and led struggles against detention and deportation. Many today affirm their huma



Refugee protesting at the EU Summit 2017

rights in struggles such as undocumented migrants and their undocumented children, those working as domestic workers and the care sector, as agricultural workers on Europe's farms, in the informal sector, as construction workers building our homes and offices, as workers in service industries such as hotel and catering and tourism, sexual work or as seafarers on Europe's ships and as workers on Europe's oil rigs.

It is also evident, but not sufficiently acknowledged, that many of Europe's policies – in a colonial strategy – promote extractivism on a grand scale (agriculture, mining, fisheries and oil). Likewise,

the free trade and investment agreements imposed for the benefit and profit of transnational corporations result in mass dispossession of land and sources of livelihood and the expulsion of thousands of people in our countries of origin. In addition, it is equally important to acknowledge the impact of the capitalist system of production and consumption that generates climate change as well as the ongoing wars impacting the most vulnerable of our peoples.

In Europe, those of us who are migrants and refugees from all the regions of the Global South and from Central and Eastern Europe (some of us have lived and worked here for forty years and others arrived more recently) have lived through the various stages of the building of Fortress Europe. We have seen Europe's policy of exclusion being constructed year after year – a policy that has resulted in a sweeping rollback of people's human rights; the encampment, forcible detention and deportation; and criminalisation at the militarised southern and eastern borders of Europe. The most visible act is the disappeared persons and the death of thousands of children, brothers and sisters during their journey to reach the borders of southern and eastern Europe: an intolerable crime against humanity. The increasing trend towards the criminalisation of migrants and refugees – particularly those in an irregular situation

– means that they are more likely to face discrimination, exclusion, exploitation and violation of their rights during all stages of the migration process. Frequently there is little contextualisation of the realities that force people to leave their home country to avoid death. The constant stereotyping and simplification of these realities leads to the intensification of intolerance, racism, xenophobia, islamophobia, lgbtphobia against migrant and refugee peoples which is sometimes manifested in extreme violence towards people in transit as well as in countries of arrival.

We register our protest in this space where human rights are denied or severely violated. We also register our protest against the ongoing crime against humanity when thousands die in the Mediterranean Sea and throughout the many journeys towards Europe. However, alongside our protest, we reclaim the shared and common human treasure of the Peoples' Rights that have been forged with so much struggle in recent decades by our own peoples in our countries of origin, by ourselves as migrants and refugees and by European citizens.

The Transnational Migrant Platform Europe (TMP-E), Centro Filipino, ACATHI, Transnational Institute (TNI) began last December a process of preparation to convoke the Permanent Peoples Tribunal (PPT) with the aim to give clear visibility to the

al (PPT)

migrant and refugee peoples from all backgrounds as subjects of fundamental human rights; to identify and judge the chain of co-responsibility in the violation of those rights experienced throughout the whole migratory journey and to urgently identify and promote appropriate mechanisms for access to justice.

In this context, the Tribunal will:

Receive and document rigorously the testimonies of the communities of migrants and refugees including their proposals to advance a rights-based approach and an alternative framework.

Listen and make visible the cases of violations of the rights of migrants and refugees. Analyse jointly the root causes (including trade and investment agreements, global extractivism as well as the global production chain) of the forced displacement of migrants and refugees.

Determine the responsibilities of governments, including the European Union and other official European bodies.

Focus the role of transnational corporations in the global labour chain, as well as in the border regimes, and in detention and in deportation.

This is a process that we seek to build from below, with the people most involved and most directly affected. That is why we also undertake this process together with other migrant and refugee organisations and communities; and the networks and platforms that support the work of denouncing the violations of human and peoples' rights that take place along the multiple borders and the daily struggles of migrant and refugees. The PPT Session will be launched in Barcelona on 7th and 8th July, 2017 and will hold its first Hearing in December 2017, with plans to hold a second Hearing in 2018. We are initiating this as a journey where many can participate from all sectors not only from Spain, but from the borders of Europe and countries of origin, transit and destination.

More information: <https://www.stopcorporateimpunity.org/permanent-peoples-tribunal-barcelona>



Emancipation with refugees, not from them!

“One of the two parallel sessions in the morning of the last day of the Social Forum was about the anti-fascist and anti-racist struggle in the context of the refugee question. In this session, Matyas Benyik from Hungary focused on the rise of the overtly-Nazi Jobbik party and the threat created by these conditions to refugees. Tatyana Ondzikowa from Slovakia pointed out that their government was hostile towards refugees and accepted only four of the demands of asylum. She said that she and her organization were conducting activities to be in solidarity with refugees, ranging from psychological support to aid campaigns. Hermann Dworzak from Austria drew attention to the rise of fascist parties in Europe, but also pointed out the non-negligible extent of solidarity campaigns with refugees. He said that they had organized a sixty-thousand strong demonstration in Vienna in support of refugees. He emphasized the need for a common initiative in the whole of Europe and suggested a conference on the refugee question.”

Part from Redmed report: Social Forum of Eastern Europe in Wroclaw 2016: <http://redmed.org/article/voice-revolutionary-marxism-heard-social-forum-central-and-eastern-europe>

The rise of the far right

The enormous international rise of the far right is not “new”. We have seen this rise in the last decades. In Austria for example 20 years ago the far right (FPÖ) got 25 % of the votes. Afterwards there were similar developments in Netherlands, Denmark etc. We can say that the far right went from the borders of society to the middle.

The main reasons for this rise: combination of crises of capitalism (social, economic, ecological, political); “fear”, “uncertainty” in the society; also the traditional left took over the neoliberal dogma (austerity; destruction of the “welfare state”...); in the former Soviet Union and in Eastern Europe: the burden of stalinism- which leads to extreme nationalistic governments often cooperating very close with right wing forces (Orban in Hungary; PiS in Poland;...); and in the third world the fact that after the formal decolonization these countries still are in neocolonial dependency.

So there is an giant ideological and political vacuum. The far right (in all its forms: from right wing populists to open fascist forces) is -successfully- entering in this vacuum: Le Pen, Jobbik,..... Islamic- and Hindu-fundamentalism,.... Trump.

What could be answers to this dangerous development? Counter-information is important but NOT enough. Politics in the interest of the masses is necessary so that they do not follow the social, nationalistic and xenophobic demagogu of the far right.

Hermann Dworzak

Closing borders to refugees and m

Portraying the refugee situation we've witnessed since summer 2015 as a 'migrant crisis' (as is often done by the media and by politicians) is incorrect. It is a humanitarian crisis and a moral crisis for the European Union. Closing borders, racial profiling, deportations and xenophobia are all manifestations of this crisis.

In 2015 and 2016 over a million people have come to Europe, most came through the so called 'Balkan route', with almost 4,000 people having lost their lives trying to cross the Mediterranean in 2015 alone.

Zelena Akcija/FoE Croatia joined a national initiative called 'Welcome' which was formed with the aim of supporting refugees on the ground, and putting political pressure on Croatian and EU institutions to change restrictive migration policies. The initiative brings together more than 60 civil society organizations, one football club and over 400 volunteers.

We have organised a number of actions in Croatia since the formation of the 'Welcome' initiative – from standing in solidarity with refugees on the Slovenian-Croatian border, to marching on the streets of Zagreb against xenophobia and fascism. We are calling for an open Europe for all.

All along the 'Balkan route', hundreds of volunteers and

civil society organisations have been helping refugees on the ground for months, as well as holding governments and the EU accountable for their decisions. Actions and marches have also taken place in Serbia, Hungary and Slovenia, and activists from these countries and Croatia have been working together on many things – including organising actions and helping refugees to monitor the authorities on the ground.

Only a few Governments have taken responsibility and welcomed refugees, while some western European states, like France and Great Britain, have cracked down on migrants and refugees. The EU and the countries along the 'Balkan route' decided to close their borders to all refugees and migrants. This came after previous measures aimed at either reducing or slowing down the arrival of people to Europe were implemented.

Some countries have even started deporting people. It is important to remember that refugees - especially women and children - who manage to enter Europe can face further violence during their difficult travel to their final destination. But some don't manage to get there – there are reports of thousands of missing children.

Currently, there are 500 million people living in Europe – but we cannot accept 2 million people who are in

need of help? Closing borders is unjust and it's endangering human lives.

Why we need to stand in solidarity with refugees

It's a complex story when it comes to reasons why people are fleeing to Europe - they are running from war, political persecution, economic distress, famine, environmental degradation etc.

But all these reasons have one thing in common - rich developed countries (predominantly European) are ignoring their political and environmental responsibilities. Instead they are fueling the climate change that is having a devastating impact on the everyday lives of people from developing countries.

Refugeeism is one of the most visible manifestations of environmental and climate injustice, because many of the refugees lost their homes due to the unwillingness of rich countries to acknowledge and act according to their responsibilities.

To broaden our understanding of migration, we need to recognise it's historical background. This Tipping Point Collective article explores the root causes of migration, and clearly sends a message that migration is not a bad thing.

'People by and large do not want to leave their homes,

Migrant rights is unjust and dangerous!

loved ones, ways of life, and cultures in order to suffer horrific journeys across desert and sea only to become subject to hostility, racism, and scapegoating once they enter Europe. But they are forced to, by many compounding, interlinked and not always obvious reasons, both “push” and “pull” — including conflict, political or religious persecution, development projects, dictatorships, poverty, and climate change.’ – Tipping Point Collective

We should point out who is responsible and why. Some developed countries continue to finance wars, and it’s our role (as a climate justice movement) to also stress that inaction on climate change will inevitably worsen the situation.

Communities in the Global South that have already on some level been experiencing injustice, be it exploitation of natural resources, wars etc, are now also being faced with having to deal with climate change impacts. 27 million people are displaced by climate - and weather - related disasters each year, and although many of those are internal and temporary migrants (e.g. people rebuild their homes), they undergo huge social and economic consequences. Furthermore, UNHCR predicts that up to 250 million people will be displaced by 2050 as a result of extreme weather conditions, dwin-



dling water reserves, degradation of agricultural land and also due to conflict over natural resources.

Some areas with ethnic, religious, political and other divides coincide with the regions that will be first and worst affected by climate change. To emphasize again, connections can be made between violence, conflicts and climate change. Predictions are that failure in tackling climate change will mean not only disastrous weather events, but also add to national instabilities and lead to further armed conflicts.

We condemn the closing of the ‘Balkan route’. We need to continue to put pressure on developed countries to

open the borders – towards an open Europe for all.

*Maruška Mileta,
Zelena akcija/FoE Croatia*

Conscientious Climate
The Moral Imperative to
Support Migrant Rights
Struggles
[https://worldat1c.org/
climate-of-conscience-
d75c0b751b49](https://worldat1c.org/climate-of-conscience-d75c0b751b49)

Failure to act on climate
change means an even bigger
refugee crisis.
[https://www.theguardian.
com/environment/2015/
sep/07/climate-change-glob-
al-warming-refugee-crisis](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/sep/07/climate-change-global-warming-refugee-crisis)

*This article was written
a year ago and has been
slightly modified*

*Photos
above and
below from
refugee
solidarity
actions in
Croatia*



Peace on Earth - Peace with Earth

The peace movement has a central role in the cooperation between people's movement jointly struggling for social justice, environmental transition and against militarization. It has the strength of a central 126 year old organization, the International Peace Bureau (IPB). An organization which is acknowledged as the main international for the peace movement. An organization working on an issue that makes also main stream organization radical in a time of armament and militarization. Today challenging war or armament has become highly controversial in many countries.

In his keynote speech Dave Webb from IPB introduced the broad range of peace issues of today from the need to oppose NATO and the militarization of EU to movements uniting for just transition to solve the climate crisis. An issue IPB is working so he also could contribute substantially in a workshop on climate transition. The workshop on peace was started by interventions from My Leffler, Women for Peace, Tord Björk, Activists



Peace bloc in the anti G20 mass demo in Hamburg 2017, Peace had a prominent role in the common platform

for peace and Dave Webb. My Leffler spoke about her visit to Stratcom in Riga together with Agneta Norberg. The people in charge of the center were not very happy about the visit. The new propaganda units - East Stratcom started by EU in Brussels and Stratcom started by NATO in Riga with Swedish support - were discussed and new to people. This together with several other issues as the role of EU in Ukraine, Libya and the general militarization of the union.

Dave Webb making his keynote speech at the seminar



Dave Webb

Dave Webb is a peace activist from Yorkshire in England. He is the vice president of the International Peace Bureau, the world's oldest and largest peace organization established in 1892. 300 organizations in 70 countries are affiliated with IPB, the broadest peace movement in the world. The organization's main campaign now is disarmament for sustainable development. The organization received The Nobel Peace Prize already in 1910 and 13 elected representatives in the organization have also received the award over the years. Dave Webb is also chairman of the British Campaign on Nuclear Disarmament, which started in the 1950s and became the driving force behind anti-atomic bomb marches that spread to many countries. Campaigning against nuclear weapons continuous in many countries. Dave Webb is Professor Emeritus in Peace and Conflict Research at Leeds Beckett University. He actively participates in local struggles against British Trident nuclear submarines and to close US bases in Yorkshire, Fylledale missile base and The NSA Spy Center in Menwith Hill. He also participates in support of local struggles in many countries against the militarization of space from Rovaniemi in Finland to Rammstein in Germany and Ukawa in Japan. He is the coordinator of the Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space and is active in the discussion on ways to overcome the confrontation in Europe and build a new period of cooperation and common understanding.

Dave Webb is interviewed in conjunction with the G20 meeting in Hamburg, July 2017. Why peace issues are important in protests on economic and environmental issues. About politicians who start war: "They do not stop terrorists, they create terrorists". <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hqBcVJXKCQg>

Dave Webb: Report from Germany - Stop Ramstein! and Anti-Bases Meeting, September 8 - 10, 2017
http://www.space4peace.org/reports/ramstein_17.htm



My Leffler above, speaks about war in space. Sweden has a central role in the global system for aiding the Western war machine. In the North space installations help guide US military. Sweden have also a central role in the Cyber war with Russia helping the US.



Militarization of information: NATO and EU propaganda is now called Strategic Communications

by Christopher Schwitanski

Over the past few years, especially since the Ukrainian crisis, NATO has visibly ramped up its efforts in effective political and military propaganda. At first this propaganda acted against Russian propaganda and hoaxes, but there have increasingly been debates within NATO about how opinion, perception and assessment of NATO could be effectively and purposefully influenced within the NATO member states' own populations and also in reference to the population of enemy actors. Although various NATO concepts and concrete actions already illustrate that their reporting are not meant to be objective, but should influence public opinion to the benefit of their own position, NATO is anxious to avoid propaganda and similar negatively connoted terms at all costs. Instead, NATO calls it "Strategic Communications" (Strat-Com), and there is a growing body of demands within NATO to massively expand it: "In today's information environment, inform, influence and persuade functions should be as instrumental to the force package as deploy, fight, and sustain elements."¹ This development is particularly problematic considering that NATO and its member states were

as central actors involved in various conflicts violating international law or they have added to their escalation in the past. If NATO's "Strategic Communications" manage to gain and maintain more interpretational sovereignty over the activities of the alliance in media and public, these war politics could come more naturally to the Alliance in the future.

Strategic Communication: Genesis

Developing a consistent communication strategy within NATO has risen in importance during the war that has been going on in Afghanistan since 2003, when the alliance officially took



*Peace message in the G20-
demo in Hamburg 2017*

the lead of International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in the country. The first efforts towards this goal took place as early as 2004. This is because the anticipat-

ed support for the operation by the Afghan people did not occur.² At the 2008 NATO Summit in Bucharest, the term Strategic Communications was mentioned and the expansion of the NATO HQ Media Operations Centre and the enhanced use of the Alliance's online TV channel were welcomed to support it.³ As early as at the next summit in the following year, it was established in Strasbourg/Kehl that "it is increasingly important that the Alliance communicates in an appropriate, timely, accurate and responsive manner on its evolving roles, objectives and missions. Strategic communications are an integral part of our efforts to achieve the Alliance's political and military objectives."⁴ This definition illustrates what has already been hinted at: that the purport of Strategic Communications is not to convey objective facts but to support NATO's political and military goals.

The concept has gained traction within the scope of the Ukrainian crisis, when NATO felt massively threatened by Russian reporting. This reporting is classified as part of a so-called hybrid warfare on the part of Russia. The concept not only includes Strategic Communications but also covert military operations.⁵ Thus, the objective of Strategic Communications has increasingly been to counter Russian propaganda: "We will ensure that NATO is able to effectively address the specific challenges posed by hybrid warfare threats [...]. This

will also include enhancing strategic communications”.⁶ Without doubt, Russia’s reporting is a form of massive propaganda against the veneer of objectivity readily deployed in the EU, but that does not diminish the problem. NATO cannot justify conducting propaganda on its own, neither with reference to Russia nor regarding the presentation of its other policies.

The elevated importance NATO currently attributes to Strategic Communications manifests itself in the Center of Excellence specifically established for this purpose: the Strategic Communication Centre of Excellence (StratCom COE) in Riga, which began its work in 2014 and is financed by seven Sponsoring Nations – with Germany among them. Its focus is the analysis of enemy propaganda – currently the focus is primarily on Russia and ISIL – as well as developing concepts and recommendations for the use and implementation of Strategic Communications within NATO and its member countries. Regarding the Alliance’s previously mentioned “communication deficits” during the war in Afghanistan, the centre published a comprehensive study analyzing the efforts NATO had undertaken concerning this matter during the war, deducing various “Lessons Learned” for the future. The report divides NATO’s communication process during the war in Afghanistan into two campaigns: 1) Seeking acceptance by the public in the 51 nations participat-

ing in the operation; and 2) Gaining the support of the Afghan population in the war zone. In the “Lessons Learned” section, the author’s main argument is to establish Strategic Communications permanently and more effectively within NATO’s operational areas; among other things, he recommends to

“[e]stablish deeper, more mutually beneficial relationships with private industry and news media.”⁷ Beside these actors, NATO also seeks to “intensify engagement with other international organizations, including with the EU”.⁸

One should note that co-operations like these already take place and that the increased activity in the Strategic Communications field is not confined to NATO as an actor. There has been a simultaneous increase of StratCom activities within allied organizations and governments. Since these parties contribute substantially to the StratCom issue, merely focusing on NATO would make little sense here. Thus, activities by the EU and by the German Federal Government in this regard are taken into account in the following, as well. The propaganda activities of NATO and its allies can be divided into two main categories, as the example of Afghanistan already illustrated: 1) propaganda within to win the favor of one’s own population; and 2) outward propaganda to convince the population of enemy actors of one’s own perspective.

Strategic Communications within

The German Federal Government commented upon a minor interpellation by the Leftist Party: “Strategic Communications and issues of cyber defence rank among the tasks of NATO and the Federal Armed Forces.”⁹ Thus, it is hardly surprising that the Bundeswehr University Munich is already conducting research on the implementation of NATO concepts about Strategic Communications into the Federal Armed Forces and that the Federal Government is engaged in this field itself. Consequently, NATO was not the only institution to publish a paper during the Ukrainian crisis. The German Ministry of Foreign Affairs also released an 8-page document, entitled “Realitätscheck” (reality check) directed at its own staff, at German politicians and media. Its aim was to “correct” 18 allegations from Russia. The first Russian “allegation” was that “[t]he West has barged into internal affairs of Ukraine and contributed to Yanukovich’s legitimate government’s dismissal from office.”¹⁰ The “correction”, on the other hand, states that the Ukrainian population had taken a peaceful stand for constitutionality and against corruption out of frustration about the suspension of the EU Association Agreement, whereas the government had taken violent measures against it. With regard to Yanukovich’s escape, the document further directly

cites the viewpoint of the Ukrainian government that he had “eluded his official duties in an unconstitutional way”. Violence used by fascist groups on the part of the demonstrators is omitted in the counter statement, as well as the various cases of factual western influence on the conflict and the participating actors. The purposeful funding of the Udar party by the CDU-associated Konrad-



Photo: Peace activist in the G20 mass demonstration in Hamburg 2017

Adenauer-Foundation, as well as the massive financing of pro-western groups by the EU, for example, would have been worth mentioning.¹¹ There is a lot of room for gratuitous continuation of the list of possible additions to the respective corrections.

In addition to the Federal Government’s efforts, the EU established its own task force, assigned to counter Russian hoaxes: the Eastern Strategic Communications Team. The answer to a minor interpellation by the Leftist Party about this task force read that it was “engaged in developing ‘positive narratives and communication

products’ in Russian language and set EU’s point of view against ‘Russian narratives’. This ‘Eastern Strategic Communications Team’ is supposed to become active in the internet, for example, and ‘inform proactively about EU’s policies and values via websites and social networks’ in Russian. It is supposed to assess Russian media, ‘identify obvious lies’ and issue reports with commentary about them to EU member states. Another task of the ‘task force Russia’ also is to ‘support independent media in Russia.’¹² Furthermore, the answer to the interpellation in question illustrates that the EU is planning “to establish networks with journalists and media representatives, among others,” as well as co-operations with “EU member states, international organizations, such as NATO OSCE and the European Council, EU partner countries, and actors within civil society”.¹³ As for co-operation with NATO, communication with the Strategic Communication Centre of Excellence in Riga is already in progress.

Although dealing with Russian information politics is the most distinctive issue to the public eye, NATO’s Strategic Communications are not confined to this area. They are currently compiling a study for the NATO Joint Air Power Competence Centre, Kalkar, which is supported by the StratCom COE, concerning the question of how to handle “disinformation campaigns” directed against the airpow-

er. The study criticizes the belief, which is “mistakenly” prevailing in the media and the public opinion, that bombardments would result in high casualty figures among civilians, whereas drones “are generally disliked, as the public sees them as some kind of unfair or immoral weapon.”¹⁴

The situation in Germany is depicted as especially problematic with regard to the opinion on (aerial) wars: “the Germans are far more susceptible to disinformation campaigns and anti-military campaigns than most other NATO nations.”¹⁵ The resulting recommendations include one that it would be helpful to more strongly influence the reporting to direct such reservations to the benefit of a positive perception of airpower.

Strategic Communications out of area

Beside the efforts to influence the public opinion within the NATO member states, NATO and the EU have also undertaken various endeavors to convince the Russian population and Russian minorities in the eastern European member states of their narratives. Because the latter primarily obtain their information in the Baltics from Russian media associated with the Kremlin, NATO is trying hard to create alternative media in Russian language. As part of this, Estonia initiated its own TV channel in Russian language in September 2005. Latvia and Lithuania also strive to enhance the

number of Russian speaking TV channels and have made arrangements to cooperate with Germany's international broadcaster, Deutsche Welle, which is providing content in Russian language in both countries.¹⁶ NATO Deputy Secretary General Alexander Vershbow favorably emphasized the intensified commitment of Deutsche Welle in a speech at the Public Diplomacy Forum 2015: "Individual Allies are taking the information challenge increasingly seriously. [...] And in Germany, the government is increasing its financial support for Deutsche Welle, to allow it to broadcast in more languages and throughout Central and Eastern Europe."¹⁷

The coordination of different European media falls within the EU Communications Team's remit: "It is a task of the EU EAST STRATCOM Task Force to better interlink the EU member states and to better coordinate the different activities in the countries of the Eastern Partnership in Russia. [...] The goal is to identify potential synergy effects and, thus, contribute to an enhanced coherence."¹⁸ Apart from that, the European Endowment for Democracy, EED, financed by the EU member states to support democratic and civil society groups in European countries and their neighbor states, is a party to the funding of pro-Western media in Russian language at EU level. As its model, which is the National Endowment for Democracy in the US, the EED is criticized

for serving as a continuation of EU foreign policy.¹⁹

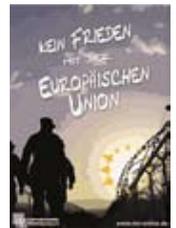
At first, efforts to pluralize the media landscape are, in principle, welcome, as are the efforts to intensify the social integration of partly excluded Russian minorities in the Baltics. However, once one understands that many of these initiatives are financed by EU grants and coordinated by the EU and its associated institutions with the aim to support "positive narratives" about the roles of EU and NATO, it seems appropriate to criticize the pursuit of counter-propaganda and the undermining of the independence of the sponsored media, which are additional results of the funding. One of the recent incidences in the propaganda war between Russia and NATO was the exploitation of the 2016 European Song Contest. Russia had criticized its outcome as a political choice. NATO had also encouraged this interpretation by introducing the Ukrainian winner of the contest in a very positive way on its Youtube channel long before the beginning of the contest and by posting the video after the ESC decision on Twitter, as well. Thomas Wiegold, who runs a pro-military blog, properly observed: "Thus, NATO lets itself in for the Russian interpretation that the decision in this contest was a political one. The Alliance is discovering culture, music and this transgressive event as a means for the information war against Russia."²⁰

Conclusion

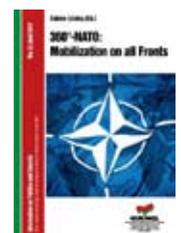
Apart from the various developments regarding the expansion of NATO propaganda, it is important to observe that media reporting often already contains a "positive narrative" concerning militarism and the policy of the Alliance. This development reached its unprecedented climax in Germany at the beginning of the Ukrainian crisis, when lopsided and distorted reporting about the conflict characterized the discourse across various German leading media.²¹ Developments such as these are especially menacing not in the least because wars in the past had always been initiated on the basis of lies and hoaxes. Whether it was about the accusation in 2003 that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction at its disposal or the assessments in 2011 that there was an imminent mass murder in Libya, these hoaxes proved to be false. Developments like these are being encouraged when media adopt and endorse the interpretations of military actors instead of relying on critical reporting. This is a tendency that could increase with the enhancement of NATO's Strategic Communications. If NATO wanted to meet its official requirement to feed the public with objective facts, a critical reconsidering of its own role would be as necessary as the willingness to leave the assessment of its own policy to critical and independent journalists without deliberately impinging on them.

IMI

At the German website Die Informationsstelle Militarisierung (IMI) e.V. you find a lot of useful peace and antimilitarization material also in English. See link below. A booklet on EU and peace the different aspects of EU is addressed, unfortunately only in German: Kein Frieden mit der Europäischen Union



The article is from the book: "360°-NATO: Mobilization on all Fronts



You can download this article and find footnotes to this article at:



No to NATO

Six organizations of the Polish peace and social movements together with the international Network No to War – No to NATO conducted the alternative summit “No to War – No to Militarism – Yes to Refugees” and the demonstration “Money for the Hungry not for Tanks” in Warsaw from July 8th to 10th. Aim of the protest actions was the continuous delegitimization of the largest military organization of the world which is permanently and worldwide engaged in wars. The international network No to War – No to NATO has been conducting actions of protest and discussions around each NATO Summit since 2009.

The seizure of the protest actions was positively surprising after several months of preparation and learning of the specific and difficult situation of the Polish people and social movements particularly of those being in opposition to NATO. More than 150 people from 18 countries – among others from Russia, GB, Belgium and Spain – discussed about actual wars and conflicts, the constitution of peace, social justice and common security in Europe at the counter summit. The demonstration was conducted with more than 300 participants. Considering the Polish repressions against “Putin understanders” and people in opposition to NATO and militarization, the demonstration was surely a success. The police’s tension expressed itself among others in the hindrance of a group of anarchists “armed” with baguettes to participate in the demonstration. Only after 90 minutes the demonstration was able to move towards its destination to the Vistula River.

Building peace in Warsaw

In Central and Eastern Europe international social movements are building hope for the future. The region is at the forefront of international civil society cooperation in 2016 for peace, against austerity and uniting peasants and the environmental movement. At the Social Forum in Wrocław in March experiences were exchanged between CEE countries, Southern Europe, North Africa, West Asia and Latin America uniting the periphery against the center. At the NATO alternative Summit in Warsaw in July the global peace movement met welcomed by Polish social movements to unite against militarization of politics. “Money for the hungry, not for the tanks” was the slogan on the streets of Warsaw. Right to housing, social security and yes to refugees was seen as the road to peace against the growing armament and cooperation between EU and NATO. At the European Food sovereignty meeting in Romania in September another important step to unite movements was taken building a historical alliance between peasant and urban health and environmental interests against corporate rule.

Statement on Ukraine from workshop at the Alternative Summit in Warsaw 2016.

We participants at the NATO Alternative Summit “No to War – No to Militarism – Yes to Refugees” are inspired by the reports from opponents of war in Ukraine. We demand an end of the systematic violations of human rights in Ukraine often directed against anti-war activists. There must be an end of the killing, sending to prison and silencing peace opinion by governmental or far right violence. We demand an end to selective defence of human rights and stress the need of

addressing violations equally in any country.

We call especially upon support for civil society dialogue across the frontline in the Ukrainian conflict. This needs much more attention together with humanitarian aid efforts supporting all victims. Economic links and humanitarian contacts across the present-day frontline should be restored. War mongering interference of different kinds by foreign powers should be replaced by peace building!

The participants were united in their demand of the dissolution of NATO. The participants were concerned about the actual dangers of increasing militarism and the increasing militarization of Eastern Europe, particularly because of the permanently rotating troops, the aggressive manoeuvres and NATO's so called missile defense shield. Many participants reflected that a scenario of a "great war in Europe" is not unthinkable anymore. The participants agreed that the peace movement faces its greatest challenges in years. The NATO infused confrontation with Russia, the global projects of armament like the so called missile defense shield and the modernization of nuclear weapons must be terminated in order to give a process of cooperation in Europe a chance. The deployments of NATO-military structures to the western boarder of Russia as well as Russia's reaction bear the danger of a consciously triggered war or a war by accident. The alternative is a common and cooperative system of security which focusses on the needs of the people. The final plenary of the counter summit demanded the strengthening of OSCE and a new edition of the Helsinki Process as well as a strengthening and democratization of the UN system. A peace-

ful development is only possible via cooperation of peoples.

The demonstration against NATO happened under the slogan "Money for the hungry not for tanks – No to War and NATO Bases – Moscow Has Already Been, We Do Not Want Washington – Yes to Refugees and international solidarity". More than 300 protesters demonstrated colorfully and peacefully, starting at Charles de Gaulle Square, passing the US embassy and ending at the shores of Vistula River in sight of the national stadium, the location of the NATO Summit. Ann Wright, pensioned Colonel of the US Army, called on the US government to disarm and to actively engage in peace with Russia. The rally in front of the US embassy was a highlight of the protests.

On Sunday the participants of the alternative summit discussed about networking and future actions of the peace movement. The discussions centered around international networking and exchange. The weekend of protests was a positive example of both. In the eye of the expansion of NATO military bases to the East exchange between people from Central and Eastern Europe is particularly important. The organizers decided to continue their work in a Polish-German peace network. One idea are common actions of protest at the bases of the so called missile defense shield. A new military base for "Aegis Ashore" is being built in Redzikowo.

Some media institutions stated after the summit that NATO is flexing its muscles. The inner city of Warsaw offered insights in what this means: more than 10,000 police men and security forces turned the city cen-



ter into a high security area. Blocked main roads lamed the city for hours. The citizens who could afford it spend the weekend elsewhere. At times the city seemed to be in a state of emergency, seemed to be dead. The close connection with the military-industrial complex could be viewed opposite to the Cultural Palace: the weapons manufacturer Raytheon advertised largely for their "Layered Missile Defense – Partnership for Protection".

NATO announced the next location for their summit. Brussels was perceived positively by the participants. In Belgium and Brussels well connected grassroots organizations and a strong peace movement exists. Larger protests seem possible, our preparations have already begun.

Kristine Karch, Lucas Wirl and Reiner Braun from No to War – No to NATO

A report by a US activists, Videos, Pictures, and more can be viewed on www.no-to-nato.org.

Photos by Lucas Wirl, and Tord Björk

Food not bombs! was the message on the banners of the anarchists at the demo. When they were not carrying baguettes to make their point as on this picture



Below: Warsaw-graffiti against Frontex war against refugees now to be a joint EU-NATO military effort.





The EU plans for the NATO summit in Warsaw July 2016 were withheld to not cause disturbing questions during the Brexit referendum. Afterwards they are now disclosed. The plans follows the clause in the EU treaties calling for an "ever closer" cooperation, after Lissabon explicitly more and more so on foreign police and security issues.

Military cooperation has become a key area for strengthening the idea of an ever closer union after the Brexit vote. NATO is seen as a key actor to unite EU in a common hybrid strategy against Russia. This is outlined by Deputy Secretary General of NATO, Alexander Vershbow: "The spectrum of hybrid threats, from political to economic, from cyber to disinformation" is a threat against stability. He stress that some of "the tools to address these threats belong more to the EU than NATO, and that is why it is important to co-ordinate our efforts."

EU seems more than willing. Different papers written by the German government and the EU foreign policy chief Federica Migherini calls for developing cyber warfare capabilities. Non NATO members as the EU member state Sweden joins NATO initiatives as Stratcom based in Riga directed against Russia claimed to counteract desinformation. A Russian cyber warfare is the argument most commonly used for the cooperation between EU member states and NATO.

At the NATO Warsaw summit it is expected that cyber strategy issue will play and important role. The Summit is according to the peace research institute SIPRI likely to designate cyberwar the fifth domain of warfare (the others being air, sea, land and space). The distinction is important because it suggests that NATO would have the option to treat certain cyberattacks as military attacks, and respond collectively in response.

Critics see a danger in conflating so called manipulation of both main stream media and social media, spying and war. A mixture enabling branding opposition against war as war in the interest of the enemy.

Another way militarization has become a key to unite EU after the Brexit are calls for making the Rest-EU making further steps towards integration motivated by security motives. Many draws the conclusion that now is the time to integrate EU further by fostering militarization of EU.

German and French foreign ministers have jointly prepared a paper calling for an EU army, a Common European asylum and migration policy, including EU borders guards and the creation of a EU Asylum Agency and common fiscal policy. All different policies that in each area has been discussed and step by step are implemented but now when presented together gives a clear picture were the EU elite is heading. The paper caused objection when revealed by TVP Info

in Poland. Handing over national sovereignty to a union dominated by foreign big actors is not what any former member of the Soviet Bloc especially appreciates. The result was watered down when Migherini presented a negotiated paper at a EU meeting on 28 June.

This paper doesn't explicitly mention the creation of an EU army. That would require a change to the European constitution and international treaties. But it actively calls for removing all barriers that could hamper the union's military capabilities.

It also stresses a point were NATO and EU are united by calling for more money to defense including a slight touch of upholding an independent position. The paper calls for "systematically encourage defense cooperation and strive to create a solid European defense industry, which is critical for Europe's autonomy of decision and action." Thus step by step EU and NATO jointly help each other in militarizing Europe.



Stop them!
Start building a European wide global peace movement now!

Build peace now by uniting all movements!



Above: Dave Webb, IPB at the EU seminar

Below: My Leffler, Women for Peace in Sweden speaking at a workshop



The EU development model is cracking up. The days of "ever closer" state centric union organized from above are over. To organize Europe in the export interest of corporations in a few countries in the center while letting the rest become deindustrialized and depopulated has no popular support. People have had enough in a Greece pillaged by German and French banks, in a Latvia pillaged by Swedish banks, in a Ukraine with a war where the government bombs its own people in areas planned to be deindustrialized in the interest of Western corporations. People have had enough in a Moldova where EU friendly politicians organized one of the greatest frauds in history, in the working class districts of England and Wales, in France among millions of demonstrators against new labor laws imposed by the Socialist government in accordance with EU treaties. People in the countryside everywhere in the EU faced with the threats against both small peasants and any family farmer by trade agreements as TTIP and CETA.

In this situation the parliamentary system is in severe crisis. Liberal and right wing political parties supporting an authoritarian state centric solution in the EU or in their own country in the interest of corporations are on the rise. Political parties that once supported popular movements like social democrats defending workers or Centre parties defending the interest of the countryside have been turned into administrators of a neo-liberal world order. When social, economical and migra-

tion issues splits nations an outside enemy is presented as the cause of the troubles. As the British prime minister Cameron stated ahead of the British referendum to say no to EU is in the interest of Putin and IS. Militarization against this outside enemy by jointly organized EU and NATO efforts is now more than ever after the Brexit vote presented as central to create unity.

Faced by this development new and old popular movements and NGOs try to become single issue oriented addressing one issue at the time. This prolongs the crisis. Instead, uniting the interests of those working in rural and urban economies which is the way to bring hope to Europe. What is needed is to confront the EU development model by democratizing economic relationships. Build cooperatives for workers or farmers and consumers together while defending and expanding labor rights, stop land grabbing and support food sovereignty. It is to unite behind the demand to end austerity policies by public investments into a just transition of our rural and urban societies supporting ecologically sustainable models for centuries to come.

Only by explicitly becoming part of such a broader historical alliance between rural and urban people, between the people in the periphery and the centre and both Eastern and Western Europe, a movement against militarization, corporate rule, food insecurity, racism and austerity can have a lasting success.



Above: Frank Bsirske, chairman of the German trade union ver.di

Anti-militarism and socio-ecological transition in unity

When the International Peace Bureau IPB invited to the World Conference in Berlin, the idea was to bring the issue of military spending into broad public debate and to strengthen the global community of activism in the broad peace movement where IPB is a unifying force for the past 125 years.

The purpose was seen as even broader than that. It was about the relationship between global militarization and war on the one hand and on the other the need for a great transition. The official aim of the World Conference reads: "To put it bluntly, without overcoming militarism, is a socio-ecological transformation with the goal of equitable international social order a failure."

How then World Congress with the high goals? The will of the leaders of IPB was very clear. In addition to the goal of stopping the war former IPB president Cora Weiss from the US addressed the need of an alliance with the climate movement as the central task of the peace movement today. She stated that she had tried to get Bill McGibben leading the influential climate movement 350.org interested in an alliance, but was turned down.

The peace movement of to-

day does not dream of quickly becoming the leading mass movement as it once was in the 1960s and 1980s. The movement known as large today among young people in Europe, is in addition to climate activism those addressing refugee policy and racism. The peace movement of today understands that it is weak. But on the other hand, the peace movement, perhaps better than most other movements has been going through ups and downs. In Berlin the movement showed its strength with one thousand participants from 80 countries.

The most electrifying speech at the conference was held by Philipp Jennings, General Secretary of the global salaried workers union. He left no bones about the difficult position that the popular movements are facing today and not least the labor movement. But with his emphasis on the importance of mass mobilization against TTIP, climate change and war, as well as the importance of social movements cooperation he made the day. Sharan Burrow, General Secretary of the international trade union movement, the ITUC made it equally clear that the trade union attendance behind the goals of the conference was strong and that the unions' interest in the peace movement is growing. Chairman of the German TUC highlighted the transformation of the submarine shipyard in Emden which was taken over by the employees and started to manufacture wind turbines instead

as a model. Here, perhaps the conference aims to focus on the social side of the transition that is needed away from militarism and the climate is at its best.

The environmental movement's response to the peace movement's invitation was notably small. The International Friends of the Earth President Jagoda Munic from Croatia and Katie Kiria from Friends of the Earth in Georgia came and discussed extravism, climate injustice and militarism. The environmentalists went much further than the more influential pacifist peace movement debate that tends to stop at the economic aspect.

For environmentalists, the relationship is more than that. Munic pointed out that an increasing number of environmental activists are killed annually when the social environmental conflicts increasingly becomes militarized. The environmentalists also differs clearly from more geopolitical and state-centered approach to peace in antiimperialist and pacifist movements.

The realization that all social movements need to see themselves as part of the same movement is growing. Thanks to the conference in Berlin the peace movement showed their will to be part of an emerging general political movement with the strength that can respond to global threats with a constructive program.

Tord Björk



IPB action in Berlin, Photo: Lucas Wirl



Jagoda Munic, then chairwoman of Friends of the Earth International at the peace meeting in Berlin

More information: <https://www.ipb2016.berlin>

We need a new critical and independent peace movement

In times where nationalism, chauvinism and right wing populism/ extremism is growing and growing internationalism and international solidarity is necessary more than ever.

Not only the neoliberal offensive is going on- politically far right politicians are winning ground and wars are spreading. The war in Ukraine lead to more than 10 000 dead people in Syria the figure is going into the direction of half a million.

The so-called “solutions” in these wars from above are deals between international big players and national oligarchs. The interests of the people are ignored the deals have the function to guarantee -geopolitical- influences.

A real solution will come from below- through civil activities and movements. Such activities



Leo Gabriel from WSF and PS2 engaging in dialogue with women from Homs and Latakia about the International Peace in Syria Initiative (IPSI) at the peace congress in Berlin.

from the people themselves need international support from peace activists around the globe.

Instead of thinking in “camp”-categories a new international peace movement has to be critical and independent. From case to case has to be evaluated who can be supported.

Who if not the WSF (and the IC) can be the motor to make first steps in that direction?! The WSF is the largest cooperation of movements on world scale. It should not only analyse (which is very important!) but become an ACTOR again- as it was in the past at several important moments.

After exchanging info and analysing the WSF (IC) should focus on one or two central international conflicts and start with concrete peace activities- for example support of peace initiatives in the western and eastern part of Ukraine or support of still existing civil activities within Syria to end the bloody war.

Hermann Dworzak

Stop NATO!

At the IPB meeting in Berlin actions against NATO were also discussed. On the photo to the left is a session preparing protests at the NATO summit in 2017. The call for protests stated:

NATO is now, more than ever, a destabilizing war machine threatening peace and security in the world, not least because it continues with its first strike nuclear policy. This war machine is plundering the treasuries of member states, and is jointly responsible for the fact that millions of people are fleeing from war. The lucky survivors arrive in Europe and succeed in their applications for asylum – but increasingly often they do not even survive the Mediterranean crossing. In addition, NATO must also bear responsibility for the destruction of ecosystems and threatening food security for entire populations.

The plans were carried out with demonstrations at the NATO Summit. Struggle continues to be organized by the No to war - Not to NATO network: <https://www.no-to-nato.org>



Demonstrators at the NATO Summit in Brussels 2017

Arms industry lobbying in Brussels

On 4 December 2017, the arms industry and the EU came together for the European Defence Industry Summit: a lobbying event aimed at “Debating defence from the industry perspective”. Our new infographic was published with Vredesactie, Agir Pour la Paix and the European Network Against Arms Trade explains how arms industry lobbying in Brussels is shaping the EU’s ‘defence’ agenda.

<https://corporateurope.org/power-lobbies/2017/12/arms-industry-lobbying-brussels>

System change - not climate change!

Maruska Mileta

Maruška Mileta works at Zelena Akcija / Friends of the Earth in Croatia. She is engaged in class court issues, activism and communication. She has previously been a member of the Young Friends of the Earth Europe Steering Group and has organized meetings for the Balkans Youth Climate Movement. Keywords for her are intersectional feminism and solidarity across borders. She participated in the Ende Gelände campaign against lignite open pit mining ahead of COP23, the climate summit in Bonn in early November this year.

Links:

Real World Radio, Interview with Maruska Mileta, Young Friends of the Earth Europe
<http://www.radiomundoreal.fm/8059-world-s-civil-society-mobilizing?lang=es>

<https://twitter.com/maruskamileta>

Young Friends of the Earth Europe
<http://www.foeeurope.org/yfoee>

Friends of the Earth in Croatia
<http://zelena-akcija.hr>



Climate Transition

Below: Li Vinthagen, one of the participants raising her voice in the workshop discussions.



One of the workshops at the seminar dealt with climate transition. Speakers were Jennie Nyberg, Fossilgasfällan (Fossil Fuel Trap) talking about radical action against fossil fuels leave it in the ground and EU's fossil gas policy. Gertrud Ingelman, Klimatsamling Göteborg (local coordination for climate groups) talked about local and national cooperation, Dave Webb, International Peace Bureau about the linkade to peace issues and Maruska Mileta, Friends of the Earth Croatia talked about COP 23 in Bonn and the civil disobedience action Ende Gelände.

Climate change is already here, and they affect those with few resources extra

hard making climate justice necessary.

At the same time as both the EU and Sweden try to pretend having a good climate policy build highways and gas pipelines are built - while public transport becomes more expensive and many European night trains do not run anymore.

The workshop addressed issues as what can we do to demand a climate justice change in Sweden and in Europe? How does the environmental movement work with other movements? Can we solve several crises at once? How can we achieve the drastic emissions reductions that are needed while increasing equality in society and including everyone?

COP23: EU acts as if climate change a distant prospect

17 NOVEMBER 2017

As two weeks of UN climate talks draw to a close in Bonn, Germany, Friends of the Earth Europe pointed to actions by civil society and developing countries which helped push through progress on short-term emissions reduction commitments. But it said that, on the whole, rich countries including the European Union had once again shown poor leadership and acted as if climate change is a distant prospect, when in reality it is already destroying people's lives and livelihoods around the world.

Jagoda Munic, director of Friends of the Earth Europe, said: "The world's remaining carbon budget is shrinking with every year of insufficient progress. The European Union claims to be a climate leader but this does not hold true as long as its economy is still based on fossil fuels. Next week the EU is set to announce plans for up to 90 new gas infrastructure projects – these are totally incompatible with the Paris Agreement. People power was visible here in Bonn and that strong people's movement is where the real climate leadership is."

During the COP23 talks it was reported that global greenhouse gas emissions are rising again after several years of stagnation and that 2017 is set to be one of the hottest three years on record.

Celia Zoe Wicher from Young Friends of the Earth Europe said: "Our countries' leaders are failing us by favouring corporate interests and their own profits over the livelihoods of people already suffering from the impacts of climate change today and also those of future generations. They are not leaving us with many options but to challenge them, as youth, in the streets, at elections, and in court." [4]



The 2018 talks, COP24, will take place in Katowice, Poland. Urszula Stefanowicz of Friends of the Earth Poland concluded: "Next year's climate talks will be hosted by Poland for the third time in ten years – this puts our government in a position of great responsibility for the whole process. Poland needs to be more than a good host. In Katowice the Polish presidency has to ensure the delivery of urgent climate action and it needs to demonstrate that coal regions like Silesia can shift away from fossil fuels in a socially just way."

During the COP23 in Bonn, Friends of the Earth International, its member groups and allies staged a

flurry of creative actions. More than 25,000 people marched through Bonn in the biggest anti-coal protest in German history, and a protest in front of Kraftwerk Köln-Neurath lignite power station demanded an end to coal. These actions echoed displays of 'people power' against dirty energy across the world and supported by Friends of the Earth International.

A new study released at the beginning of the talks by Friends of the Earth Europe showed that fossil fuels, including natural gas, can have no substantial role beyond 2035 in an EU energy system compatible with limiting global warming to 2°C.

COP23: From the coal mine to

November 8th 2017 Climate and energy

Negotiations are now underway at COP23, the 23rd round of UN climate talks in Bonn, Germany. But the day before countries sat down to the arduous task of tackling climate change, 3000 people were taking matters into their own hands, occupying

status of 'climate leader'. Many point to the German transition to renewable energy, or 'energiewende', as a key example. However, the talks are taking place in the heart of German coal-land, and just a few miles down the road is Europe's biggest open-pit coal mine, also the continent's single biggest source of CO2.

people stood on the edge in solidarity, led by the Pacific Climate Warriors whose island homes in the South Pacific would be underwater if fossil fuel use continued. You can watch a video of the Pacific Climate Warriors and activists from around the world using their bodies, their culture and their spirits to demand an end to the era of fossil fuels near Bonn ahead of COP23 here. [<https://www.facebook.com/350.org/videos/10155987740257708/>] The Pacific Climate Warriors recently launched their Declaration on Climate Change, in which the message to world leaders was clear: end the era of fossil fuels and kick big polluters out of the climate talks. Profit should not come before people and the planet.



a coal mine only a few miles away from the conference centre. However, despite the relatively small physical distance, the two groups may as well be worlds apart. While the protestors call for an end to the age of fossil fuels and want to break industry's grip over the negotiating process, those in charge want to keep that message well away from the talks.

At the UN climate talks, the EU is accustomed (by contrast to the US) to the

Since the energiewende, Germany's consumption and export of brown lignite coal has increased. That's why thousands of people took the decision to break the law and enter the mine together in an act of civil disobedience to call for an immediate phase-out from coal. If Germany and the EU were not going to stand up to the coal industry and protect the climate, then they would.

As well as those who entered the mine, over a thousand

Yet back at COP23 here in Bonn, which is officially hosted by the Pacific island of Fiji, big polluters are among the sponsors: BNP Paribas and Iberdrola. BNP recently announced it would no longer finance fracking or tar sands activities, which is positive news, but it remains committed to fossil fuel projects such as Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) terminals which don't primarily deal in fracked gas. Iberdrola has also been on a big PR offensive to rebrand itself as a clean energy giant, but is still betting on not-so-natural gas - a fossil fuel with a devas-

the conference

tating climate impact that has no role in a clean energy future, according to a new scientific study.

As well as sponsoring the talks, big polluters profiting from climate change are stalking the corridors. However, Fiji's COP23 President has called for a special 'Open Dialogue' session during the negotiations to discuss the issue of conflicts of interest and whether those causing the problem should be having a say on how to solve it. There's a big push from civil society group and governments to address the issue, but the EU and US have been blocking progress, more concerned with protecting their fossil fuel industries than the climate. Talking to a Dutch negotiator on Tuesday, he argued that oil and gas company Shell (one of the world's biggest polluters) should be part of the process, and was against excluding them. Shell has friends in very high places: at national level, the new Dutch finance minister even used to work the oil and gas major, before taking a spin through the revolving door to government. Recent research from CEO showed how influential the gas lobby has been in Brussels, with Shell as one of the biggest spenders. The industry as a whole spent more than a hundred million euros in 2016 and employed over a thousand lobbyists, with the

result that the EU appears to be locked into 40-50 more years of fossil fuels.

The negotiator also admitted that the Dutch government had accredited the Confederation of Netherlands Industry and Employers (VNO-NCW), the national member of BusinessEurope, a notorious blocker of climate action. Not only does VNO-NCW get to attend closed-door negotiations, it also gets a daily briefing from the government. With the fossil fuel industry so present in policy making, it's no wonder the talks - and climate action - are moving at a glacial pace. That's why it's time to end their grip over climate and energy policy. There are still two weeks of negotiations to go, and whether you're inside the talks trying to kick big polluters out or inside a coal mine shutting down the diggers, the battle lines are drawn: polluters and their profits vs people and the planet.

For further reading, take a look at our latest report, The Great Gas Lock-In, which looks at the fire-power of the gas industry and its presence as an effective lobbying force in Brussels and national capitals. Another recent publication released in time for the COP, Polluting Paris, assesses how Big Polluters are undermining global climate policy

"Greening the economy or pursuit of the greenback?"

Two years ago, the Indian environmentalist Vandana Shiva argued that the "green economy" was a term coined to disguise a grim reality: making money out of the environment without respecting people's rights.

She referred to how seeds, land, water, forests and biodiversity reserves are being given a price and a market for exchanges.

Take carbon markets. They were established by the 1997 Kyoto Protocol. The principle is that carbon markets will raise billions for investments to reduce carbon emissions and slow down climate change. But the reality is somewhat different.

As a recent Bloomberg article asserts, "Wall Street firms are investing in businesses that will profit as the planet gets hotter."

Carbon markets have entirely failed. Furthermore, according to a report by Carbon Trade Watch, the European carbon market "contributes to human rights violations and environmental crimes in the North and South, and makes climate policies dependent on the same unstable financial markets that brought us the recent economic crisis."

Lora Verhecke

https://www.equaltimes.org/greening-of-the-economy-or-the#.Wfm_fCPhD4U

The EU and agroindustrial threat to family farmers and society



Nature cultivation, rural societies and EU was discussed by Itza Orozco, Latin America groups, Ellie Cijvat, Friends of the Earth, and Ole Jacob Christensen, Farmer from Norway.

The EU's agricultural policy as well as agricultural / rural policy in Sweden was criticized for promoting large scale industrial farming as well as drastic reduction of self sufficiency, in Sweden more than 50 % the last decades. EU trade policies was addressed with its drastically negativ consequences for small farmers in other parts of the world. Then solutions were discussed, what organization and mobilization can become a counter force, what model of food supply we want to see. What elements are important for creating a sustainable, small-scale and fair farming / food production?

CPE – ECVC: 30 years of unified peasant struggle

In 2008, the organisations formerly gathered in the Coordination Paysanne Européenne (CPE – European Farmers Coordination) merged with the COAG (Coordination of Farmer and Livestock Owner Organisations from Spain) and other farmers' organisations to form the European Coordination Via Campesina.

It was in 1986 that after five years of efforts, the process to bring European farmers' organisations together culminated with the creation of the Coordination Paysanne Européenne.

1986 Madrid peasant encounter

The idea that farmers should be linked as partners and not competitors, pushed a group of progressive farmers organisations seeking alternatives to productivism to work together. In 1986,

after much preparation, they met in Madrid the 4th of December and -through the signing of a common declaration- officially established the CPE. The new platform sought to:

Explain and denounce the consequences of agricultural policies (e.g. CAP) on the majority of farmers and consumers ;
serve to put forth proposals for a new kind of agricultural policy in the service of farmers ;
act together with other social forces to promote this new agricultural policy ;
exchange experiences among member organisations to better understand each other's situation, and foster international solidarity with other countries.

From the start, the new coalition took on major issues such as the CAP and the 1986 Uruguay round of the GATT, which in 1994 would lead to the creation of the WTO. In little time,

the voice of European peasant-farmers was involved in the public debate regarding agricultural policies in the European institutions.

Convinced of the necessary unity and solidarity between farmers from the global North and from the South, in 1993, the CPE co-organized in Mons, Belgium the global peasant-farmers conference –event that launched Via Campesina. For the following 3 years, the CPE would assume the first turn of VC's rotating secretariat.

Through its participation in grassroots mobilizations and demonstrations as well as in a number of civil society spaces like the European Social Forum, ECVC has grown to become one of the largest farming grassroots movements in Europe, comprising 27 organisations from across the continent, in struggle together to change agriculture policies, defend food sovereignty and peasant rights.



Ole Jacob Christensen

Ole Jacob Christensen is a mountain farmer from the village Røn in Valdres in Norway. Together with his wife Yvonne he cultivates their fields so steep they cannot use a tractor. He participates regularly in public debate on agricultural issues and is a member of Norges Bonde- og Småbrukarlag/Via Campesina in Norway as well as regional board member of The Green Party in Oppland.



EU-MERCOSUR FTA: The EU will be sending European farmers to the slaughterhouse

Brussels, November 28, 2017 – The next round of negotiations on the free trade agreement between the European Union and Mercosur* will take place from 4 to 10 December. These countries include major beef exporters such as Brazil, Uruguay and Argentina, which represent the top 3 beef exporting countries to Europe.

The current rush of the EU and Mercosur, which have been negotiating this agreement for the last 17 years, is no coincidence: on the one hand, the EU is taking advantage of trade opportunities created by US protectionist policies and, on the other hand, Mercosur's largest economies are now being led by zealous followers of the free market. As Macri in Argentina progresses with its social cuts and privatizations, the neoliberal and illegitimate government of Temer in Brazil, the result of a putsch, holds the temporary presidency of Mercosur and seeks international support in the forthcoming Brazilian elections. (more information [here](#))

The negotiations cast aside the needs of farmers, workers and consumers on both sides of the Atlantic. The proposed treaty will be a dangerous advancement for the neoliberal model and a flagrant violation of the social and environmental rights of all. Moreover, this agree-

ment would show that the commitments made at COP 23 for a sustainable economic model were nothing more than rhetoric from the Heads of State; distinctly lacking in policy coherence.

As was the case in previous Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations, the deal with Mercosur threatens to undermine standards on health, the environment and animal welfare in the European Union. One thing that is clear is that our farmers will not be able to compete with overseas imports, whose prices are unrivalled.

The investments and economic development implemented by this FTA could only be exploited by large companies and agribusiness with business strategies reliant on international trade. The needs of citizens for quality food, a healthy environment, social rights and cultural diversity, are completely undermined and will be subordinated to the mercantile zeal of big international capital.

This agreement with Mercosur at the agricultural level will, among other things, increase import quotas on high value beef products coming from the South American bloc. Through this agreement, Mercosur is focusing its ambitions, among others, on the European beef sector. To this end, its asking for an export quota of at least between 100 000 tons and 130 000 tons of beef to be imported into the European Union. In exchange, Eu-

ropean negotiators want nothing less than the reduction of import tariffs imposed by South American countries for EU manufactured products, undermining the prospect of autonomous economic and technological development of the regional bloc. This is demanded by the EU in addition to access to public procurement and preferential market conditions for services in Mercosur countries: telecommunications, internet, financial services and transport.

Europe is acting as it did for the agreement on CETA and TTIP: in a silo, without consulting the sectors concerned. For ECVC and its members, the EU- MERCOSUR agreement must be stopped.

In a context where multinational corporations systematically violate human, social and environmental rights with impunity, such an FTA will only exacerbate violations by failing to include binding clauses for the protection of these rights. Conversely, it will enable multinationals to prosecute states that act against their interests. Our future ability to protect our rural areas, a dignified life for producers, to protect against social injustice and regional integration will therefore be seriously compromised.

We must seek agreements that give priority to the needs of the people. We can't provide the industrial sector and transnational corporations with land, water, workers and peasants on a silver platter. The agreements we need are those that help us get closer to Food Sovereignty and through that path address the challenges facing our region and the world: climate change, the defense of rural communities and food security.

* Mercosur is the Southern Common Market, which brings together Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay; with Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru as associates. Full member in July 2012, Venezuela has been suspended since December 2016.

The solution to the climate crisis is in our peasant struggle for Food and Energy Sovereignty!

Brussels, 20 Oct 2017
La Via Campesina – Call to Action

The next United Nations conference on climate change will take place from the 6th to 17th of November in Bonn, Germany 2017 – with Mother Earth heating up dramatically and humanity plagued by unprecedented adverse weather and rising sea levels. The capitalist system, fuelled by the profit greed, is not capable of addressing the current climate crisis. Even the COP21 Paris Agreement and its inadequate proposals to keep temperature increases below 2 degrees celsius is in limbo, with the recent pull out by U.S. President Donald Trump.

This year we witnessed the increased impacts of climate change both in scale and intensity: hurricanes (Harvey, Irma, Maria, etc.), floods (India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sierra Leone, etc.), storms, droughts, heat waves and more. Hundreds of thousands of people displaced, thousands killed, and total disappearance of some island territories. In many cases, peoples have lost all the resources needed for living. The most affected: peasants, poor people, rural workers, the indigenous, the fisher-folk.

We know the cause of this

climate crisis: the global industrial food system is responsible for over 50% of greenhouse gas emissions through intensive use of agrochemicals, toxins, fossil energy, freight land grabbing and forest degradation through plantations, mining, logging etc. Perpetrators of the crisis, using their “monetary muscle”, now lobby and push for false solutions: “climate-smart” agriculture, GMOs, REDD and REDD+, “blue carbon”, and all other green economy schemes that seek the financialization of nature and its services. Multinationals pollute the climate negotiations and make them the place of economic and financial power over peoples, to the detriment of our rights.

As the COP23 draws nearer, we reaffirm the importance of struggling for public policies that promote and support agroecology, local community-controlled energy systems and collective action for a just transition away from fossil fuels and against the false energy solutions that encourage corporate capture of our natural resources. Our peasant agroecology feeds the soil with organic matter, conserves and recovers biodiversity, using the knowledge of our peoples and our Mother Earth to feed us. We reject any attempt by agribusiness to co-opt agroecology and commit ourselves to defending and promoting our peasant agroecology!

For Vía Campesina, our lands, our knowledge, our

seeds, our rights are not negotiable! We call for the strengthening of all mobilizations against this system that engenders the current and future climate crimes. We must fight against all free trade agreements and disastrous oil, gas and mining projects as well as all exclusionary mega projects (dams, highways, airports, plantations, etc). We must urgently transform the financial, social and ecological production systems, as well as the sharing of labor and wealth, the preservation of common goods such as water, land, flora and fauna.

We call upon our allies, friends and social movements to mobilize together with the civil society outside the UN climate talks in Bonn, spreading our voice and our true solutions.

Let us mobilize at COP23 for the convergence of struggles!

For Peasant Agroecology and Food Sovereignty!



La Via Campesina

La Via Campesina comprises about 164 local and national organizations in 73 countries from Africa, Asia, Europe and the Americas. Altogether, it represents about 200 million peasants, small and medium-size farmers, landless people, women farmers, indigenous people, migrants and agricultural workers from around the world. viacampesina.org

Ole Jacob Christensen speaking at a Nature cultivation conference (NBK) in Hälleknis, Sweden in 2014. NBK brings together family farmers, environmentalists and solidarity activists each year in Sweden since 2010.



Toolkit on land grabbing and access to land in Europe

Brussels, 27 Apr 2017
How did we get to the Own Initiative Report? The struggle against land grabbing and for access to land in Europe

Land concentration and land grabbing are dramatically increasing across Europe. Despite its clear competences on agricultural policy, land use and food security, the EU and many of its member States treat agricultural land as a commodity like any other. This has led to adverse situations around land concentration and land grabbing in Europe where 2.7% of farms (over 100ha) control 50% of arable land.

However, most work and production in Europe is carried out on small and very small farms. Europe has 12 million farms, with 25 million people involved in agricultural production. 69% of farms have less than 5ha and the average size is 14.2ha. These small farms are an essential pillar for food production, rural employment and protection of the environment.

Ignoring peasants' fundamental role, the EU has pushed for direct and indirect land policy at EU and national level that overlook the variety of functions that land play. Public money has supported land concentration through subsidies paid under the Common Agricultural Policy as direct payments,

made per hectare, end up benefitting big landowners and exacerbating land inequality.

The absence of clear and fair land regulation at the European level has also facilitated land grabs across Europe for energy production, production of raw material for the food industry, extraction, infrastructure development and other commercial activities at the expense of our food security.

Social movements and peasant movements around Europe have strongly opposed land concentration and land grabbing at the local and national level. The European Coordination Via Campesina together with the Hands on the Land alliance and other producers and Civil Society Organisations, have mobilized at different level to unite local land struggles and to bring the land issue to the door of the EU institutions.

Political mobilization at local, national and transnational level resulted in the approval of the Own Initiative Report: "State of play of farmland concentration in the EU: how to facilitate the access to land for farmers?". This report is the result of a long process which began in 2012 and it is both a victory and a point of departure for small-scale farmers organisations.

More information:

<http://www.eurovia.org/toolkit-on-land-grabbing-and-access-to-land-in-europe>

In support of Cédric Herrou: STOP the criminalization of migrants and migrations

Brussels, August 16, 2017 – The European Coordination Via Campesina expresses its solidarity with Cédric Herrou, the French peasant in the Roya valley, given the suspended sentence on Tuesday 8 August to four months' in prison for having helped some 200 undocumented migrants. If by this he has transgressed French laws, he has above all respected great values: solidarity and humanity.

While only goods and capital can travel freely in Europe, people are subject to increased discrimination, which we, the agricultural workers and peasants members of ECVC, can't tolerate.

No one is illegal, and he/she who helps people in need should not be prosecuted, but should instead be recognized for their humanitarian contribution.

Just as sailors have the duty to save the shipwrecked at sea, we, workers of the land, have the same responsibility on the mainland.

However, a paradox persists: on the one hand, Italian and European institutions need NGOs to compensate for their own shortcomings in helping migrants, but on the other hand they put in place restrictive measures which prevent NGOs from acting, to the point that it often hinders reaching wrecked migrants.

The European Union, which won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2012, should learn from our colleague Cédric Herrou and all the associations, NGOs and individuals who, for various reasons, come to help migrants and other vulnerable people.

With Cédric Herrou, the association Roya Citoyenne and all the men and women who help migrants, we say:

STOP the criminalization of migrants and migrations!

STOP the persecution of people committed to Humanity!

La Via Campesina calls for an immediate end to EU-Japan Free Trade Agreement

Brussels, 24 May 2017

The International Peasant Movement La Via Campesina and its members, the European Coordination Via Campesina (ECVC), together with Japan Family Farmers Movement (NOUMINREN) are calling for an immediate end to the negotiations for the Free Trade Agreement between the European Union and Japan. The undersigned peasant movements stand for Food Sovereignty as a base for public policies related to food and agriculture.

Across the European Union and in Japan, transnational corporations (TNCs) are using their grip on governments to impose another so-called “free” trade agreement that will make life worse for the peasants of all affected nations. Launched in 2013, the EU-Japan FTA has already gone through 18 rounds of highly secretive negotiations.

With the U.S. pulling out of the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) and Transatlantic Trade Investment Partnership (TTIP), the corporate media reports that Europe and Japan, warning against protectionism and supporting “free” trade, are “seriously committed” to ratifying the agreement by year’s end, signalling a warning against protectionism and supporting “free” trade.

When it comes to farmers and food systems, agribusiness TNCs from Europe – which already export about 5.3 billion euros in agri-food commodities to Japan – expect the deal to end tariffs and regulations on Japan’s agricultural products and processed foods, worsening the already disastrous effects of the corporate food system.

European food companies want to sell whatever they can in Japan and the EU claims that the exports to Japan could solve the problems in its dairy and pork sector.

We, the peasants of the world, know that these false promises will not improve our lives. We have nothing to gain with this type of export agriculture, and will instead be forced to compete with the same subsidised corporate commodities that are currently poisoning the people of this planet while displacing peasants everywhere.

Meanwhile, Japanese industries want the EU to remove tariffs on vehicles and electric products, poised to launch an offensive of massive exports to Europe and make life easier for Japanese capital to operate. Japanese agribusiness wants to sell more beef, tea, processed food (sauces, instant noodles or rice snacks) and rice wine in Europe.

The global peasant struggle against the WTO helped bring this organization into paralysis, stranded the TPP and TTIP, and our campaigns

and mobilizations around the world continue to educate our fellow citizens about the threats to our food systems written into each and every FTA.

Under these circumstances, the EU and the Japanese government, as the guardian of “free” trade, are promoting the EU-Japan FTA. We, peasants and small family farmers across Europe and in Japan, together with all of La Via Campesina, demand an end to this desperate attempt at another FTA, and instead call for Food Sovereignty Now!

“Japan’s Abe government even sacrifices its people and domestic industries for the profits of TNCs, with agriculture and food as main targets. The EU-Japan FTA will significantly increase agricultural imports, inflicting extreme hardship on family farmers. The deal could even go beyond the TPP, the worst-ever agreement to destroy agriculture. A further devastation of Japan’s agriculture will make it difficult for the ordinary people to stably obtain safe and affordable food, thus threatening their lives. Japan is the only country with a population of more than 100 million and a food self-sufficiency rate of less than 50%. If Japan further rely on imported foods and take food away from other countries, stable food supply around the world will also be hindered and poverty and the gap between rich and poor will rise. Food Sovereignty is a solution to rebuild local markets which have been deteriorated by the global market economy and the outdated food security insitutional framework.” says, Yoshitaka Mashima, Vice Chair of NOUMINREN

LA VIA CAMPESINA STANDS FIRM WITH OUR MEMBERS IN EUROPE AND JAPAN!

NO TO THE EU-JAPAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT!

FOOD SOVEREIGNTY NOW!

European Coordination Via Campesina:
www.eurovia.org

Japan Family Farmers Movement: www.nouminren.ne.jp/en

Eastern European peasants join international demand for their rights be recognized

Brussels, 16 Nov 2017

The fruit of decades of struggle : Eastern European peasants join international demand for their rights be recognized

Bucharest, November 16, 2017 – After a day of informative discussion, debate and reflection, the public Conference „The Rights of Peasants: The role of Eastern Europe in the negotiation process for the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and other people working in rural areas’ drew to a close yesterday in Bucharest, Romania. The event, hosted by Eco Ruralis Association and the European Coordination Via Campesina, brought together a robust crowd from across Eastern Europe and beyond. Speakers included the State Secretary of the Romanian Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Mr. Daniel Botănoiu, the Deputy State Secretary of the Hungarian Ministry of Agriculture, Mr. Péter GÁL, the representative of the FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia, Ms. Darya Alekseeva, the Counselor of the Permanent Mission of the Plurinational State of Bolivia in Geneva, Ms. María Natalia Pacheco Rodriguez, as well as civil society organizations, and Romanian peasants from across the country. The conference sought to send a wake-up call to Eastern

European states, introducing the peasant rights declaration process, demonstrating its relevance and importance for Eastern Europe, and demanding that their governments engage constructively in the process.

Tremendous responsibility lies in the hands of Eastern European governments, as the region contains the largest population of peasants in geographical Europe. For Romania, this is particularly the case, as it hosts 4 million active peasants, half of the number present in the entire European Union. Failure to act would be giving the blind eye to the systematic discrimination suffered by peasants and rural workers, and deepen rural poverty and underdevelopment, accelerating rural depopulation, and destroying vibrant local and national cultures and traditions. It would also leave Eastern European landscapes vulnerable, as peasants have time and again proven to be the superior stewards of healthy rural environments[1]. All of these factors endanger the food security and food sovereignty of Eastern European states.

“Considering that the adoption of the Declaration will be by vote, it is of extreme importance to ensure positive support from as many countries as possible. States need to be convinced of the importance of all the issues faced by peasants, so that they support the Declaration. There is a lot of work to do in Europe and Eastern Europe.”, declared Mrs. Maria Natalia Pacheco Rodriguez. “Peasant producers in East-

ern Europe are the backbone of regional food systems, and of rural society. Without peasants, our national food sovereignty is under serious threat, and so is the cultural heritage of our rural communities. Our governments in Eastern Europe must step up their game at the international policy level. They must show that they are serious about protecting the rights of their civilians by sponsoring the declaration of peasant rights.”, declared Ramona Duminićoiu – Coordination Committee member of Eco Ruralis and the European Coordination Via Campesina.

The conference concluded by demanding that Eastern European states engage more actively with the Declaration’s process. They must be active in Geneva, as well as in reaching out to civil society to better understand the relevant issues on the ground in their countries. Partnerships also need to be forged between states in the region, in order to take a stronger and more coordinated regional stand. Civil society must be active in spreading knowledge on the process, and must unite to form a solid network pushing for the recognition of peasant rights. They must also actively link up with governments in order to help them engage in the process in an informed and effective way. Peasant producers from across the region demand that their rights be recognized and respected, and therefore demand that their state governments sponsor the peasant rights declaration in Geneva.

On behalf of the Hungarian Ministry of Agriculture, Mr. Péter GÁL, declared that Hungary is still formulating its position on the topic, but it is committed, several members of the Ministry being highly engaged, and with high chances for the country to have a positive position.

The State Secretary of the Romanian Ministry of Agriculture concluded that as almost half of the Romanian population is rural and peasants represent a significant part of it, supporting the peasants is needed. He added also that the rights of peasants is an important issue and ensured the audience of a big yes from the Ministry side.

Genevieve Savigny – member of the Coordination Committee of the ECVV

Alternatives to EU austerity politics

What are the alternatives to the present EU austerity policy. This was discussed in a workshop by Matyas Benyik from Attac Hungary, Benny Andersson from the socialist magazine Clarté and Marko Ulvila from the Greens in Finland and the degrowth movement.

Matyas Benyik talked about the Hungarian experience with a right wing government shunning austerity and opting for populist economic measures. A so-called „unorthodox policy” was introduced by Victor Orban in 2010 by stop cooperating with IMF.

Replacing aid from IMF with aid from other countries did not work but meanwhile, total export to non-EU countries grew by over 20 percent. The „unorthodox policy” also included a mixture of steps that the IMF highly recommended and some that the IMF clearly opposed. The former included a higher value-added tax and a reduction of many social benefits. Among the economic initiatives that neoliberal economists did not like were nationalizing strategic assets, primarily in the energy and financial sectors, and levying higher taxes on the banking, telecom, insurance, and retail sectors, as well as on foreign-owned media. Moves that drastically increased the role of the state in the economy. Although the reforms in Hungary created statistical growth, they did not solve Hungary’s structural economic problems. Even worse, they did not improve people’s daily lives.

Basic income workshop

Basic income is discussed by many activists as a way to make life less precarious. This



was discussed in a special workshop on the subject at the seminar.



Above: Marko Ulvila

Below: Benny Andersson



Both Benny Andersson and Marko Ulvila stressed the need for public investments for ecological and social purposes. Both also stressed class aspects of the transition needed to overcome the neoliberal austerity policies.

Marko Ulvila puts the transition into a global context. The overconsuming global class needs to decrease its consumption while the power of the struggling poor classes needs to be increased. By struggling for social justice and change of power relations rather than for everyone to reach the consumption level of the rich can it be possible to create a transition built on degrowth enriching everyone’s life in a society where the lifestyle of the wealthy is not the role model.

Matyas Benyik

Matyas Benyik is the chairman of Attac Hungary, the national branch of the movement that acts for democratic control of the financial market and its institutions.



He is also active in the Hungarian Social Forum, the Social Forum Network Pragvåren 2 against High Extremism and Population and the Western Sahara Solidarity Network, the Central & Eastern European Alliance for Solidarity with Saharawi People. He is an economist and specializes in trade policy issues and economic integration. For several decades he has worked for Hungarian trading companies and has been a trade attache in Turkey and Syria. Matyas Benyik became an early Marxist and active in the Youth Communist Movement and Hungary's Socialist Workers Party. He is now in the Hungarian Karl Marx Society. He has participated in several international campaigns against GATT and the WTO. He was an active member of the European Social Forum early in the year, and served for stronger Eastern European influence in the social forum process. Pragvåren 2 still has the European Social Forum Initiative in central and eastern Europe since European social forums have been closed down. In this network he has organized protests against corruption and persecution of environmentalists in Russia in connection with a Moscow highway building and the organization of Eastern European social forums. Now, Matyas Benyik is taking part in preparations for a resistance meeting in February next year in Budapest for more and more in Europe before the World Social Forum in Salvador, Brazil, in March 2018.

In the wake of an increased social injustice
<https://www.hd.se/2008-09-17/i-sparen-av-en-okad-social-orattvisa>

Refugee crisis and Hungary
<https://www.transform-network.net/en/blog/article/refugee-crisis-and-hungary/>,

Attac Hungary: <https://www.attac.hu>

Marko Ulvila

Marko Ulvila is a carpenter and chairman of the Siemenpu Foundation, founded by 15 Finnish environmental and development organizations to assist civil society



environmental projects in the South. He is an environmental party candidate in Tamersfors and has previously served as State Secretary for Assistant Minister Satu Hassi. Marko Ulvila has worked on development projects in Tanzania and India and is part of the civilization critical network Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, which means taking everything into consideration in Hindi. This network has organized celebration of the 75th anniversary of the Salt Marsh in 15 places in the Nordic region, translated Gandhi's book Hind Swaraj into different languages and participates in the International Committees of the World Social Forum. Marko Ulvila is also active in the Friends of Earth and the organization of the Tampere Social Forum and the Finnish Social Forum. He has been chairman of the Network Institute for Global Democratization (NIGD) and is active in the international nervous / degrowth movement. Together with his wife Jarna Pasananen, he has run the project Sustainable Futures: Replacing Growth Imperative and Hierarchies with Sustainable Ways. Marko Ulvila participates in a forthcoming World of Helsinki Festival in Helsinki, describing a scenario for the overconsuming global class while increasing the power of the struggling poor classes.

Class, Degrowth and Transition to Just and Sustainable Society
<https://www.degrowth.info/en/catalogue-entry/class-degrowth-and-transition-to-just-and-sustainable-society/>

Sustainable Futures: Replacing Growth Imperative and Hierarchies with Sustainable Ways, Marko Ulvila, Jarna Pasanen
http://www.ymparistojakehitys.fi/sustainable_societies.html

<http://www.siemenu.org/en>

The Hidden Agenda of the European Union

An article by Mikael Nybrg from 2000 still relevant with basic arguments typical for the left in Nordic countries.

It is commonly assumed, nowadays, that the state and the market are two opposed forces. People tend to think, that the essence of the neo-liberal policies in the last decades has been an urge to lessen state power. This is a misunderstanding. Big business does not want a weaker state. It wants a stronger state, a state that is strong enough to do without welfare schemes and other concessions to the demands of working people.

To achieve that aim, big business has to weaken the democratic institutions regulating the governing of state power. That is the major reason, why leading businessmen all over Europe are so fond of the European Union.

In 1975 the Trilateral Commission, a top-level organization for politicians, academics and company leaders from North America, Europe and Japan, created by David Rockefeller, published a famous report: "Crisis of Democracy". The main point was that a "surplus of democracy" had developed in Western societies. Irresponsible groups, the authors said, were assaulting governments with demands for better welfare, social equality, peace in Vietnam and other horrible things. In order to strengthen "authority" in society some "restraint in democracy" was necessary.(1)

A few years later 17 of Western Europe's most powerful businessmen created their own private club, the European Round Table of Industrialists (ERT). The problem they set themselves to deal with was this "crisis of democracy".

"If we wait for our governments to do anything, we will be waiting for a long time", explained Wisse Dekker, the director of Philips, and later chairman of the group. "You can't get all tied up with politics. Industry has to take the initiative. There is no other way."(2)

Leaders of industry were demanding a change of policy away from the welfare state, but it seemed like governments could not deliver. Progress was only possible by

freeing state power from the shackles of national democracy. That is, by making a new major thrust in the development of the European Union.

The EU is well suited to deal with the "surplus of democracy".

First of all, decision-making power is not even formally located in a publicly elected parliament. Major decisions are instead made in secret diplomacy by ministers from different governments.

Secondly, the bureaucracy of the EU has a unique position. It is much more powerful than bureaucracies at the national level. Making proposals for decisions is the prerogative of an un-elected body of administrators, the Commission, and with the European Monetary Union (EMU) a major part of economic policy – adjustments of interest rates and money supply – has been transferred to bankers, who by law are not allowed to take advice from democratically elected institutions.

Thirdly, the basic treaties of the European Union assure the pre-eminence of big business interests, cloaked as "free trade" and "free markets". With the euro and its stability pact, the Union has introduced major legal obstacles to the re-emergence of the welfare state. Percy Barnevik, chairman of ABB and member of a consulting group for competitiveness which the EU established, declared in the Stockholm daily, Dagens Nyheter, 10 July 1995: "The greatest value of EMU for industry is perhaps the fact that external pressure is put on national governments to take necessary, though not always popular measures."

Thousands of peddlers of different business interests have noticed the possibilities opening up in Brussels, but the main problem is not the lobbyists but the insiders. Leaders of large corporations do not have to wait in the lobby for a chance to influence decision makers. They are, quite often, sitting behind the closed doors themselves.



The author Mikael Nyberg from Clarté at an EU critical seminar in Gothenburg 2016.

”This is not just another lobby organization”, Pehr G. Gyllenhammar, then president of Volvo, said while establishing the ERT in 1983.(3) The Roundtable group works in symbiosis with the bureaucracy in Brussels. It is regularly consulted on important issues and represented in committees and working groups. It wrote the script for the Internal market, and its members have been instrumental in the launching of the common currency.

In December 1993, then-president of the EU Commission, Jacques Delors, presented a White Paper on employment and competitiveness. It claimed that unemployment now topped the EU agenda.

The White Paper was for the most part a slightly revised copy of proposals from the Roundtable directors. Delors had regularly met with the ERT, and in a press conference he himself pointed out the similarities between his White Paper and the ”wish lists” of large corporations. The key word in the ERT’s program for the labour market is ”flexibility”; flexible salaries, flexible working hours, and flexible terms of employment, which actually means that working people should forgo increases in salaries, fixed working hours and job security.

The public sector and the small and medium-sized companies, employing two-thirds of the workers in the EU, are to be starved for the sake of the corporate giants. The rationale can be read between the lines in ERT documents: ”Positive policies to improve the viability of small and medium sized businesses are supported by all large firms, which need to focus on their core business and to an ever increasing extent depend on a large number of subcontractors.”(4)

Keynes and his critics in the same boat

Excerpts from an article by Benny Andersson in *Clarté*, 1/09

”The root cause of the 1970s problem was not Keynesian fiscal policy. On the basis of the prevailing technology, the assembly line, the tempo work, etc. reached the limit of what could be achieved. As productivity did not increase to the same extent as before, the government’s attempt to bridge the crisis through fiscal policy led to higher inflation, without unemployment showing signs of decline. ...

Therefore, Keynes is not dead. On the contrary, he is more current than for a long time. But one must realize that his reliance on national solutions no longer works. ... What is needed to alleviate the current crisis is both national efforts and an internationally coordinated stimulus policy. Such a policy should have at least four main objectives:

1) Monetary policy must be subordinated to fiscal policy. Full employment is more important than combating an inflationary threat that is currently unavailable and whose potential future is greatly exaggerated ... National rules on budget balance and independent monetary policy must be changed. This also applies, and in particular, to corresponding EU provisions.

2) A reallocating fiscal policy (type of progressive taxation, support for municipalities

and county councils) must be given a major role. It must be combined with measures aimed at modernizing the infrastructure and building a greener world.

3) The financial sector must be tied to new restrictions that can prevent continued excesses. ... In the long run, the state must regain its control over the financial markets.

4) In the future, a new international currency system that can replace the dollar should also be prepared and negotiated.

However, such a policy can not even restore the balance between work and capital. Over the last decades globalization has meant a sharp shift of power to the capital’s benefit. ...

But we must not forget that every crisis raises the question of the legitimacy of the current social system on the agenda. The long-awaited debate about an alternative to capitalism must therefore be revived. The current crisis is just a moment in the general crisis of late capitalism. Other aspects of the crisis, such as the ecological crisis and the hunger disaster in the poor countries continue to exist and worsen.”



In competition with other large corporations, European concerns are dependent on extracting as much capital as possible from subservient suppliers. They demand that their subcontractors deliver ever cheaper and better components "just-in-time", but this demand conflicts with government and trade union regulations. The small and medium-sized companies find it difficult to serve the large corporations, unless they are allowed to lower salaries, extend working hours and fire people as they wish. From another perspective, the more flexible the regulations regarding salaries, working hours and general conditions of employment, and the lower the taxes and social welfare contributions, the further the large corporations can push their demands. Thus, using their suppliers as "front men", the giants demand "positive policies" to their own advantage.

At the Lisbon Council Meeting, 23-24 March this year, leaders of the EU proclaimed an agenda for economic renewal and "modernization" of social protection systems, driven by "the new knowledge economy".

This hype about an information society, where most people will have pleasant, creative and well-paid jobs, hides a type of production that depletes working people and the environment even more than before. Contrary to common belief, monotonous, production-line work in manufacturing industry is on the increase. The conveyor belt is not on the way out. It is being introduced into stages of production where it has not been used before, and its principles are being extended to more and more areas of the economy. The stockpiles that were buffers during swings of supply and demand are being eliminated. With deliveries between companies being made "just-in-time", the production process from subcontractors to assembling factories and market outlets functions like a huge conveyor belt.

Similar pressures on workers are introduced in the service sector, with call centres and fast food restaurants as the most glaring examples.

The model is called "lean production" by business consultants. Trade unionists in the

US have given it another name. They call it "management by stress".

In lean production, work is intensified while places of refuge are fewer since peripheral activities are transferred to other firms. Over-time and under-staffing are the rule. Thus, it is hard to find time for personnel enrichment. The ERT has noticed a growing conflict between the short-term demands of competition and the long-term needs of industry.⁽⁵⁾ The physical wear-and-tear of the labour force is greater than before and corporations find it more difficult to make use of and develop the knowledge of their staff. They soon find themselves in a situation where they have employees who both physically and intellectually are unfit for their needs.

For these reasons, the Roundtable businessmen have for a long time promoted the concept of "life-long learning". This is now a hot topic on the EU-agenda for an "eEurope".

Life-long learning has nothing to do with any general increase in the knowledge requirements of working life. Of course, the large corporations need researchers, specialists and skilled workers, but the workers they are most interested in have other aptitudes. Schools should deliver "large numbers of very adaptable individuals able to tackle anything", writes ERT. When these flexible, standard educated blue- and white-collar workers have been worn out, the corporations want to be able to exchange them for a fresh, updated batch.

"The new ways of structuring and managing business to ride through times of economic recession have... rendered obsolete the concept of life-long employment in large companies", states ERT. "Life-long learning, on the other hand, opens the door to allow people to move easily to another job..."⁽⁶⁾

Lifelong learning is not a life of all-round, creative work. It is a few decades of rushing between temporary employments and re-training, ending in unemployment and premature retirement from working life.

Coupled to the talk about a new knowledge economy are the promises of green capitalism. Large corporations are promoting

themselves as environmentally conscious information enterprises, and new environmentally safe products and systems for emission control and recycling seem to confirm the picture. However, while the multi-billion dollar market for green goods develops in the rich countries, the corporations continue their destructive activities on a global scale.

European infrastructure is increasingly designed to meet the interests of industry. The members of the ERT are behind the bridge between Denmark and Sweden, as well as the Eurotunnel under the English Channel. These projects are part of a programme of Trans-European networks (TEN), promoted by the association since the mid-1980s, and together with the Commission in Brussels, guided all the way to the decision-makers in the Council of Ministers. A total of 55,000 km of new roads are to be built, 12,000 km of which are to be motorways.

Car companies and other industries dependent on private car transport dominate the ERT. Traffic congestion threatens their cash flow, but new transport links, particularly motorways, are also a precondition for lean production. The relocation of peripheral parts of production to specialized subcontractors results in shipping increasing amounts of components ever-longer distances, and just-in-time deliveries to shops and factories with minimal stockpiles multiply the number of shipments.

The programme of the Roundtable businessmen is a programme for growth, but growth in a special sense: the large corporations grow bigger and more powerful. The struggle for new markets in the South and East is a key element in the strategy, formulated both in ERT documents and in Delors' White Paper.

The Roundtable corporations are worried they are lagging behind in the chase. The US has an edge on the EU, with its bilateral arrangements, the NAFTA trade agreement and its control over institutions like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Japan is working hard, particularly in Asia, and is demanding more influence in international aid agencies. However, the Roundtable businessmen complain, the EU's

sphere of influence does not extend beyond its immediate surroundings.(7)

The weakness is not economic but political. The global economic interests of the EU-based corporations are vulnerable, unless they are accompanied by a comparable political influence. Thus, the ERT calls for the EU to develop a capability to defend its interests globally: "Industry and the people working in industry ... expect their [political] leaders to exercise a proper influence on the world and cannot accept that their Community should be relegated to the margins of international politics..."(8)

European-based corporations see military rearmament and a common European military force as a means to secure their global interests. This demand is now on top of the EU agenda. With the Common European and Defence Policy the freeing of state power from democracy will get a familiar imperial touch.

1. Michel Crozier, Samuel P. Huntington & Joji Watanuki: *The Crisis of Democracy. Report on the Governability of Democracies to the Trilateral Commission* (New York 1975).
2. Newsweek, 28 March 1983.
3. Newsweek, 18 April 1983.
4. ERT, *European Competitiveness* (15 November 1995), p. 6.
5. ERT, *Lifelong Learning* (June 1992), p. 6.
6. ERT, *Education for Europeans* (November 1994), p. 9 and 13; and *Lifelong Learning*, p. 6.
7. ERT, *Survey on improvements of conditions of investment in the developing world* (May 1993), p. 10.
8. ERT, *Reshaping Europe* (September 1991), p. 58.

Mikael Nyberg, 2000



The Green Capitalists – A Report about Large Corporations and the Environment. 129 pages. Paper back. Illustrations by Robert Nyberg. Friends of the Earth, Sweden, 1998. Out of print. Pdf-copy can be downloade at: <http://mikaelnyberg.nu/english>

Austerity measures in Central and Eastern Europe especially in Hungary

2015 was a difficult year for the European Union (EU). The Euro crisis reached yet another climax with the currency area staggering on the brink of Grexit. The Ukraine conflict has become entrenched, while diverging expectations and interests among EU partners have become evident. Since August 2015, additionally, the EU has been confronted with its biggest challenge so far: the influx of refugees. As no solution has been found yet, those predicting the collapse of the EU have become more numerous.

The EU is largely viewed as a cornerstone of European stability and prosperity. Currently, however, the EU faces a range of political and economic pressures, including slow growth and persistently high unemployment in many EU countries, as well as the rise of populist political parties, at least some of which harbor anti-EU or „euroskeptic” sentiments. Such factors are complicating the EU’s ability to deal with a multitude of internal and external challenges. Among the most prominent are:

- 1.) the June 2016 vote in the United Kingdom (UK) in favor of leaving the EU;
- 2.) the Greek debt crisis and lingering concerns about the eurozone;
- 3.) ongoing migrant and refugee flows;
- 4.) a resurgent Russia; and
- 5.) a heightened terrorism threat.

Amid these difficult issues, the future shape and character of the EU are being increasingly questioned.

EU’s New member states (NMS) of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) and the candidate or Associated West Balkan have had a growth-rate in excess of the EU average in the 2000s. This trend was broken or translated these countries into 2008 the global crisis that reaches the second half of Southeastern Europe, which is like that United States and Western Europe from the banking sector but soon spread to the real-economy also. However, the banking sector is not only „infected

from the outside” but in the construction fever of most countries including the repayment difficulties of borrowed loans. The crisis by similar Keynesian methods, as in the old EU countries. However, they do well they may be more limited than those (joined before 2004) Old EU member states (OMS), on the one hand, because of this the economic strength of the countries was smaller and on the other hand high budget deficits, and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the European Central Bank and European Investment Bank.

Due to their borrowings from the bank, the EU and the IMF have reduced their deficit obliged them. Their lack and indebtedness - similarly to several previously joined members - has increased further during the crisis. Therefore, as opposed to deficit reduction measures, they need more resources to get out of this situation to recover and to build their old growth path.

Since 2010 Hungary has worked under Prime Minister Viktor Orban to adopt a managed and centrally planned form of capitalism, namely an „unorthodox economic policy”. What are the main characteristics of the unorthodox economic policy? Breaking off the neoliberal economic policy; the interruption of taxing the population, the enterprises, groups with lesser

advocacy power, common bearing of public financial burdens, the conscious, rational influence of the state on the economy, the strengthening of state regulation and control, and the positioning of domestic enterprises and the population.

These are the essence of the Hungarian model, which has historical origins and were also about the development of internal resources, namely: the post-compromise Hungary, the two world wars, or even the first Orban government’s Széchenyi Plan between 1999 and 2002.

Thus, the Hungarian state consciously, reasonably entered the economy, and regulated and coordinated there.

What are the main characteristic of a neoliberal economic policy?

According to neoliberal philosophy, market players can create economic growth and financial equilibrium with unlimited automatism, but this is not true; in the United States in 2007, in Western Europe in 2008 and in Hungary in 2006, the over-withdrawal of the state from the economy caused an economic crisis.

In the neoliberal state, under the pressure of capital, the state does not take the taxes needed to operate the welfare state. The state is first financed by issuing sovereign

debt, and when it becomes problematic, the formation called by Streeck a „debt state” becomes a „consolidation state”. In practice, this means continuous and brutal constraints, which also hit small people. Budget constraints, however, run out of demand in the economy, which the neoliberal state tries to counteract monetary policy. This is followed by quantitative easing of central bank printing programs. With these successive phases, the neoliberal state really tries to expel the crisis of capitalism in time.

Viktor Orban introduced his so-called „unorthodox policy” in 2010 by breaking off cooperation with IMF, whose aid of 20 billion euros he intended to replace with investment from eastern countries such as Azerbaijan, China, and Russia, which would not come with such strict terms. The decision turned out to be a somewhat poor one, since the eastern opening never brought the economic fruit expected by the government: no major new investment materialized during this time, with the possible exception of a controversial deal with Russia on the construction of two new blocks at the Paks Nuclear Power Plant. Meanwhile, total export to non-EU countries grew by over 20 percent, a proportion that could have been easily achieved without the change of political orientation.

The „unorthodox policy” was not just an aid play. In fact, it also included a mixture of steps that the IMF highly

recommended and some that the IMF clearly opposed. The former included a higher value-added tax (increased from 25 percent to 27 percent in 2012) and a reduction of many social benefits, such as unemployment benefits and pension bridges, both reforms to bring the budget under control.

Among the economic initiatives that neoliberal economists did not like were nationalizing strategic assets, primarily in the energy and financial sectors, and levying higher taxes on the banking, telecom, insurance, and retail sectors, as well as on foreign-owned media. The Orban government even proposed an Internet tax that spawned public outrage and did not go into effect. To improve Hungarians’ purchasing power, the government also pegged the national currency, the forint, to the euro and Swiss franc at an unrealistically favorable exchange rate. All of these moves drastically increased the role of the state in the economy.

The public protested some of Orban’s moves, but owing to the lack of a credible opposition that could make use of the public’s discontent, not much happened up to now. According to Transparency International and Freedom House corruption has increased while media freedom has further deteriorated.

Orban’s „unorthodox policy” exacerbated his already poor image abroad, but it has since started to bear some fruit. The program has also slowly

attracted some supporters in central Europe—for instance, in neighboring Slovakia, where the government seemed to be using Orban’s playbook when it adopted a 0.4 percent bank tax, introduced legal restrictions on foreigners acquiring agricultural lands, and tried to nationalize part of the pension system. Even the region’s largest player, Poland, might have picked up on the Hungarian vibe. In 2014, the government of Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk radically changed the second-pillar pension system, while the newly elected conservative president (Andrzej Duda) promised to raise taxes on banks and said that he considers foreign ownership of banks to be detrimental to the country’s economy.

Although the reforms in Hungary created statistical growth, they did not solve Hungary’s structural economic problems. Even worse, they did not improve people’s daily lives. The dissonance between impressive upticks in economic indexes and the stagnant standard of living is shocking. According to Eurostat, over 30 percent of Hungarians are at risk of poverty and the TARKI Research Institute suspect that more than 40 percent of people are already living below the poverty line. Meanwhile, entrepreneurs can more easily make a profit thanks to a flat income tax of 16 percent, but their earnings are subject to a 27 percent value-added tax, which is the highest rate in the EU. Things are especially bad for Roma population, one of the most significant ethnic minorities in Hungary.

Orbanomics, the unorthodox and much-criticised policies of Viktor Orban, seemed to be working over the past seven years — Hungary has been among Europe’s best economic performers even though its approach has put it at loggerheads with the EU and the IMF. However, a surprise contraction has now left Budapest considering fresh stimulus measures. The figures are a blow to Orban’s approach of shunning austerity and opting for populist economic measures — an approach being watched by other European countries such as Poland, which has adopted similar measures to please voters.

*Budapest, 12 November 2017.
Matyas Benyik*

The collaps of the Eastern EU model

It would bring happiness and prosperity. The idea of European values with inherent cultural superiority. If only more and more countries adopted these European values claimed to underpin the EU's model of economic policy and the way to govern society would wealth, peace and democracy follow automatically. Corruption and authoritarianism would become a thing of the past through this European cultural model, the separation of powers doctrine and enlightened legislation. That did not happen.

Instead one can summarize the situation as follows: Forget about the transition identity in Europe, welcome the common interest among rural and urban periphery against the centre. We can now claim that the transition period for former planned economy countries is over. Only transition countries with some ten percent of the population have the chance to reach what was hoped for, a standard of living comparable to the West. Many still have not reached the level they had when the Soviet Union collapsed. But interestingly, they share their destiny after 2008 with several countries in the periphery of Western Europe.

It is especially the case of Finland that shows that since 2008 nothing helps if you belong to the periphery. Finland has one of the lowest levels of corruption in the world and well functioning democratic institutions and schools. Yet in spite of having these qualities said to be necessary and when achieved would grant transition countries the same wealth as Western Europe Finland have developed along the same negative path as the rest of the Eastern periphery after 2008 albeit from a higher level at the starting point. Your destiny as a nation in the periphery within the present EU model whether you are inside or belong to neighboring countries is the same, a widening gap compared to the core

countries of EU able to control the economic model in their favor.

The situation can be summarized in a chart showing the GNP development of all these countries showing how countries in the centre like Sweden and Germany leaves all periphery countries behind whether they are long time members of EU like Finland, Cyprus and Greece, newer members or seen as neighbours on their way to become members or getting a regulated neighbourhood agreement. It is my hope that by this show that so called Eastern periphery have an important role and can contribute by finding common interest among the periphery in all of Europe and also by making crossborder alliances between peripheries inside core EU countries. An alliance including the countryside and working class urban areas in the West against the economic and political power centres.

There has not been any doubts that the economical side of the model was the right one. Already in 1957, the market economy was inscribed in the Rome treaty as the basis for EU. One idea when implemented in full meant that increasingly functions in society would completely be controlled by who is the strongest on the market.

The EU continued to expand along this main trajectory. What was needed was ever closer cooperation and further enlargement. The EU summit held in Gothenburg 2001 had the eastward enlargement as a major theme. 2004, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovenia and Cyprus became members, in 2007 Romania and Bulgaria.

Eastern Partnership

With growing economic problems it became clear that there was a certain fatigue in the EU regarding further enlargement. Thus a new model for extending EU influence was launched in 2004 called European Neighbourhood Policy. Coun-

tries was invited to accept becoming part of the EU economic model but not have the right as a member state to influence EU decisions. In May 2008 Foreign ministers from Sweden and Poland brought such an initiative called the Eastern Partnership to the EU General Affairs and External Relations Council and later the same year to the European Council. It aimed to promote Euro-

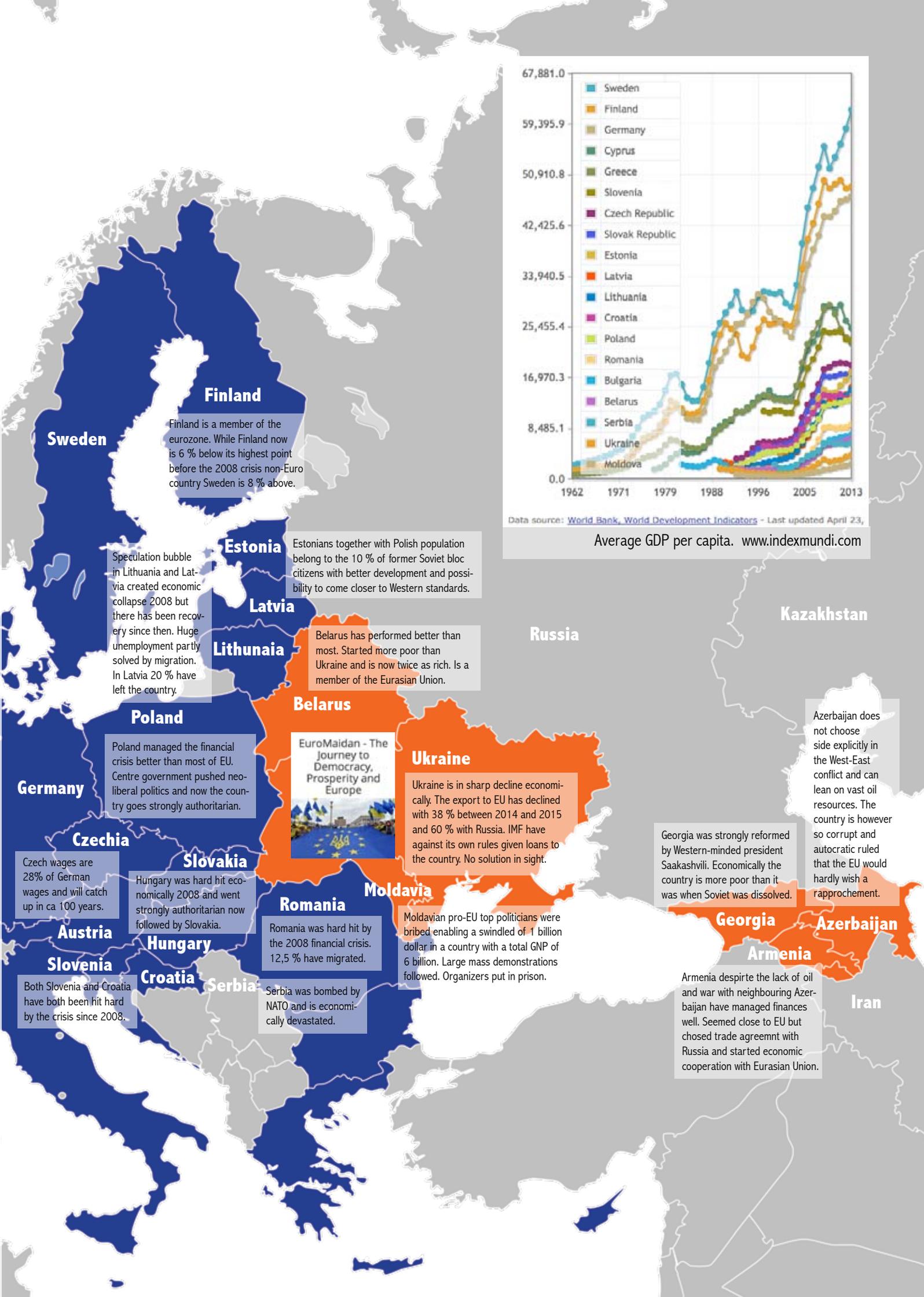


Swedish foreign minister Carl Bildt speaking to Polish foreign minister Radosław Sikorski.

pean "common values", "collective norms" and "joint ownership". The countries that came to be included were Moldova, Ukraine, Belarus, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan. The partnership was seen as part of efforts to establish association agreements with the EU, where particular adaptation of their economies to the EU model was central but without offering the countries membership. It would appear that it also included clauses about military cooperation with security complications and demands that the countries opted out economic cooperation to the benefit of just having free trade with the EU. Hopes were sometimes of countries on visa-free travel to the EU and the membership in the long term.

Today we can see the results of the Eastern Partnership policy with foreign ministers Bildt and Sikorski as its foremost promoters. In country after country this project often achieved the opposite of what it claimed would become the result.

Tord Björk



Sweden

Finland

Finland is a member of the eurozone. While Finland now is 6 % below its highest point before the 2008 crisis non-Euro country Sweden is 8 % above.

Speculation bubble in Lithuania and Latvia created economic collapse 2008 but there has been recovery since then. Huge unemployment partly solved by migration. In Latvia 20 % have left the country.

Estonia

Estonians together with Polish population belong to the 10 % of former Soviet bloc citizens with better development and possibility to come closer to Western standards.

Latvia

Lithuania

Belarus has performed better than most. Started more poor than Ukraine and is now twice as rich. Is a member of the Eurasian Union.

Poland

Poland managed the financial crisis better than most of EU. Centre government pushed neo-liberal politics and now the country goes strongly authoritarian.

Germany

Czech wages are 28% of German wages and will catch up in ca 100 years.

Czechia

Slovakia

Hungary was hard hit economically 2008 and went strongly authoritarian now followed by Slovakia.

Austria

Slovenia

Both Slovenia and Croatia have both been hit hard by the crisis since 2008.

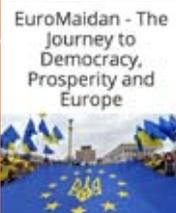
Hungary

Croatia

Serbia

Serbia was bombed by NATO and is economically devastated.

Belarus



Ukraine

Ukraine is in sharp decline economically. The export to EU has declined with 38 % between 2014 and 2015 and 60 % with Russia. IMF have against its own rules given loans to the country. No solution in sight.

Moldavia

Moldavian pro-EU top politicians were bribed enabling a swindled of 1 billion dollar in a country with a total GNP of 6 billion. Large mass demonstrations followed. Organizers put in prison.

Romania

Romania was hard hit by the 2008 financial crisis. 12,5 % have migrated.

Georgia

Georgia was strongly reformed by Western-minded president Saakashvili. Economically the country is more poor than it was when Soviet was dissolved.

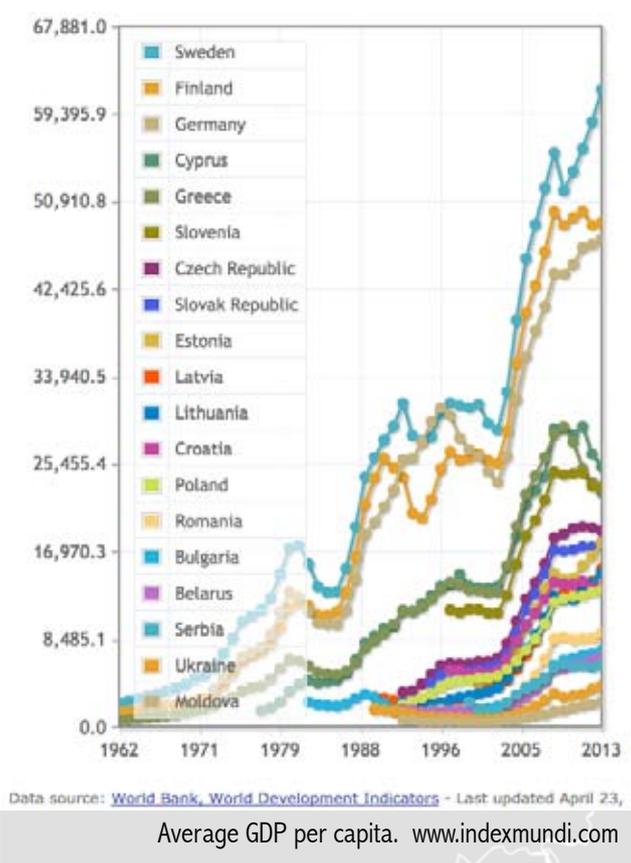
Armenia

Armenia despite the lack of oil and war with neighbouring Azerbaijan have managed finances well. Seemed close to EU but chosed trade agreemnt with Russia and started economic cooperation with Eurasian Union.

Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan does not choose side explicitly in the West-East conflict and can lean on vast oil resources. The country is however so corrupt and autocratic ruled that the EU would hardly wish a rapprochement.

Iran



Just transition - No to EU growth model

“The challenge of the XXI century to consolidate mechanisms to ensure it is the people, and not corporations and transnational enterprises, that determine the social and political course of the [world] (...). Joint efforts should aim at building genuine social alliances which converge in a counter-hegemonic development agenda that is able to contain and express all these voices”

Trade Union Confederation of the Americas (TUCA) Development Platform of the Americas (PLADA). 2015

The world is facing many related challenges that threaten the lives and livelihoods of billions of people: climate change, the global energy crisis, biodiversity crisis, agri-food system crisis, inequality and injustice crises.

We cannot shy away from the scale of the problems that need to be addressed. We are breaching all kinds of ecological limits and already feeling the wrath of climate change. We have to actively work to allow the earth to support all people and all living beings.

A Just Transition Joint Statement created by FoE Scotland with Scottish trade unions states:

“The need for action is urgent in order to avert the environmental and economic costs of climate change and to re-balance the economy to one which provides enough decent jobs making things in clean ways. ”

Friends of the Earth Netherlands/Milieudefensie says:

“A just transition increases the ability of people and communities to retake control of their own lives. ”

The discussion in Friends of the Earth and many other movements on just transition is gathering momentum. Friends of the Earth Sweden sees a need for more concentrated and specific effort for a just transition. We have strong links since ten years with trade unions for small farmers on just transition including the Swedish member of Via Campesina.

We have pushed for just transition within the climate justice movement. We have linked to just transition campaigns in other countries by having speakers from FoE South Africa and environmentalists and trade unionists from Denmark speaking at meetings. But we have so far failed in getting Swedish trade unions interested. At regional level we are in contact with trade unions in Denmark and Norway. Together with them we have tried to get the main Swedish trade union interested in just transition and a plan to jointly organize a Scandinavian seminar with environmental and trade unions on just transition but have not succeeded so far.

Our conclusion is that trade unions alone are not a strong enough actor for just transition neither in Sweden or at the international level. In Sweden the reluctance is to

strong in spite of pressure from sister trade unions in other Scandinavian countries, furthermore the Swedish main trade union is one of the most pro TTIP trade unions in the world and strongly aligned with a export oriented economy within a frame work of corporate led development model and trade unions as a junior partner. At the International level The International trade Union Confederation (ITUC) is not a democratic organization trying to represent the global working class but an organization dominated by the North in sharp contrast to both Via Campesina and Friends of the Earth. Thus trade unions are important as defenders of workers rights in the formal sector of economy and remain the most important actor in defence of the welfare state. But lack a global democratic culture as Northern trade unions have more influence than Southern unions in ITUC. This trade union international also lacks enough motive due to its Northern bias to challenge the present development model.

It is not enough to build alliances and in general talk about re-balancing the economy or create decent jobs. Friends of the Earth Sweden has now started another way of promoting just transition by questioning the very basis of the present economic model including the kind of planned economy used in the communist bloc during

the cold war based on industrial interests. The different conditions of agriculture and forestry in scale advantages compared to industry must be addressed. The tendency to mainly focus on redistribution of wealth or technical solutions is insufficient, sometimes even a hindrance.

A just transition have to include the need to redirect economy in such a way that land based economic activity and industrial activity is regulated in such a way that both are ensured a central place. Not as now, the land based economic activity is used as a way to accumulate financial capital for centralizing economy and strengthen the power of the metropolis. This at the cost primarily of land based economy but also industry benefitting global speculators. The Norwegian economist Erik Reinert outlines this economy in his book *How Rich Countries Got Rich . . . and Why Poor Countries Stay Poor* published in 19 countries.

By questioning the basis of economics the material basis for a historical alliance between those working in land based economy and those working in industry and urban based economy can be better understood. Thus by addressing both family farmers/peasants at the same time as workers/wage earners is crucial for success, something that has to be done from the local to the global



level. Here an alliance with Via Campesina is as essential as with ITUC. Another strategic actor is the peace movement with International Peace Bureau as a key actor who already last year invited FOEI and ITUC to address the issue of climate transition jointly. A way to further strengthen a historic bloc for just transition confronting the militarization of socio-ecological conflicts that is now killing more and more environmental activists while at the same time being an instrument for maintaining Western corporate control of natural resources.

To this end we are positive towards the Via Campesina initiative to initiate regional movement meetings connected to the International Assembly of the Peoples which will take place in Caracas. We are also positive towards the regional Assembly of Resistance taking place in March 2018 in Budapest linked both to the World Social Forum in Salvador in March and the FOEI meeting with trade unions in November 2017 to discuss cooperation to support Just Transition.

At the national and local level FoE Sweden will continue to strengthen our work for just transition together with family farmers, solidarity movements, trade unions and environmentalists. To this end we continue with conferences on land based economies, organize together with others a climate people's parliament ahead of next election while at the same time developing our own understanding of just transition and campaigning.

Based on a letter from FoE Sweden to FOEI

“Our vision is of a peaceful and sustainable world based on societies living in harmony with nature. We envision a society of interdependent people living in dignity, wholeness and fulfillment where equity and human and peoples' rights are realized. This will be a society built upon peoples' sovereignty and participation. It will be founded on social, economic, gender and environmental justice and free from all forms of domination and exploitation, such as neoliberalism, corporate globalization, neo-colonialism and militarism.”

Friends of the Earth International System Change Guidance, adopted at BGM 2014

Above: FoE Sweden bike action protesting at the entrance of Volvo against corporate EU power in support of workers demanding a just transition.

Green growth and the need for a paradigm shift

Exiting from the crisis: towards a model of more equitable and sustainable growth
Annabelle Rosemberg and Lora Verheecke:

” Just transition: Although there is a general consensus around the idea that social justice cannot be achieved without environmental protection, the means by which a ‘win-win’ approach could become reality are still unclear. How can environmentally-friendly policies become supportive of the livelihoods of workers and communities which make a living out of the degradation of the environment? How can we deal with the impacts of the transformation of our economies? Those issues are at the origins of the ‘Just Transition’ framework, developed by the trade union movement as a tool for ensuring that ambitious environmental actions integrate social and societal needs.

Just Transition refers to the need for long-term sustainable investments which could create decent jobs and transform those in traditional sectors; pro-active training and skills development policies, social dialogue with unions, employers and other stakeholders, research and early assessment of social and employment impacts of environmental policies, the development of social protection schemes and the need to develop local economic diversification plans (Rosemberg 2010).

How could a ‘Just Transition’ framework contribute to a paradigm shift? First, it

would eliminate the apparent contradiction between the protection of livelihoods and the protection of the environment. Second, it has the advantage of highlighting the importance of anticipating and planning industrial and development policies and allowing for a reflection in the mid and long run. Ultimately, as a ‘transitional tool’, it makes the shift towards a different economic model possible.

Conclusion

Several groups in society acknowledge the need for a paradigm shift if we are to achieve social and environmental goals. Nonetheless, this thinking is still divided into ‘silos’.⁴⁴

If some opportunities for jobs and growth emerge from the ecological modernisation theory, it is important to consider what will be and who will pay for the consequences of the growth paradigm for our societies and our natural resources. New ideas linking both dimensions are emerging, but are still incomplete.

Although the trade union movement has advanced significantly in its understanding and actions on environmental issues, proposals such as those included in the concept of Just Transition have still not reached consensus outside the labour movement. Environmental degradation and the current economic crisis have opened a critical space for trade unions to raise their voice and offer a more comprehensive alternative framework.”

EU-critical economic theory

Why are some countries rich and others poor? And why have farmers almost always and everywhere problems with profitability? Believe it or not - the answer to both questions is the same.

The first one to consider these questions systematically was an Italian, Antonio Serra. It was during the Renaissance, when some towns were (by the time) amazingly rich, while others remained in poverty. Serra lived in a poor country, Naples, wondering why others, like Venice and Florence, earned so much money.

Serra concluded that Venice and Florence became wealthy because they had industries, while Naples lived from agriculture. And the reason why it was so profitable to have industries was, Serra thought, that with these there are economies of scale - the more you do, the cheaper each new unit becomes. While agriculture has dis-economies of scale - the more you grow, the worse soil one has to use, and the more expensive each new unit becomes.

Serra’s idea really hit. For four hundred years, it was clear that a country has to industrialize to get rich. That is why the Swedish chancellor Axel Oxenstierna imported steel industry experts from Wallonia in the 17th century,

and that is why the Swedish state supported L.M.Ericsson with orders to build telephone systems in the early 20th century. As late as the 40's, all countries engaged in industrial policy, and it was an internationally recognized goal for poor countries to industrialize to get out of poverty.

Then came the oil crisis in the 70's. The already rich countries began to be wary. They began to see it as a threat that poor countries got into their markets, and they hit the brake. From the 1980s, the rich countries have jointly pushed through prohibition of industrialization policy, through WTO rules, and enforced exemplary punishment of countries trying to depart, for example Iraq.

Industrialization policy is now only allowed if the initiative comes from rich countries' industrial corporations as component manufacturing where wages are low, while the profits of this are shifted to the companies' home countries.

The same policy is also applied throughout the EU, by the rich core countries towards EU's poorer peripheries.

Only very big and strong poor countries like China and India dare to break that ban, and apply the same industrialization policy that the rich countries used when they were poor.

**

Thus, the economy's surplus is almost exclusively generated in industries with economies of scale. It will also do if the industries are based on new ideas about smarter products and smarter methods of producing, and thus contain a measure of monopoly. Those who do not work with such things - it may be in poor countries or in rich - can gain share of the increased prosperity only through concerted union struggles.

This is old news to those who sell labor, but it is equally true for those who sell products with no economies of scale, such as painters, hairdressers, bicycle repairers and farmers.

Their products may be useful or even vital - the lack of economies of scale and newsworthiness will nevertheless condemn them to poor profitability as long as the market alone determines. Use value and exchange value are simply two completely different things.

Union battle for reasonable income even outside the monopoly started seriously just over a hundred years ago. However, agriculture used mainly the political way, through parliamentary mobilization for government regulations - which may be unfortunate in the long run. For the result was, in many ways, that when the states obey a global WTO regime, agriculture is exposed to the worst sides of both capitalism and state socialism - unrestricted competition from

low-wage countries (which are not allowed to industrialize to become wealthy) as well as detailed government rules forcing farmers to hold on to cheap bulk production of identical products, so-called "perfect competition".

And even the beginner's course in economics tells us that in perfect competition the profit drops to zero.

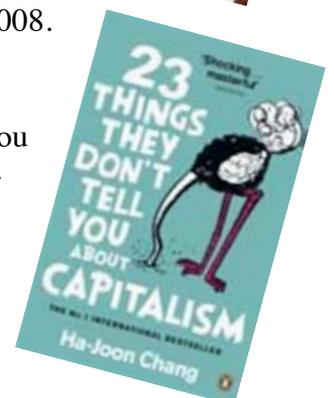
It is likely that farmers can get out of parts of their economic crisis by leaving bulk production and diversifying, much like wine producers already do. Competing with a brand is more profitable than competing with price.

But the question is how far you will go if you don't get rid of low wage competition. That is, without poor countries being allowed to industrialize so that their peasants can also win an equal salary for their work through union struggle.

Probably not very far. There is a limited space for niche products.

To read:
Erik Reinert: How Rich Countries Got Rich . . . and Why Poor Countries Stay Poor, PublicAffairs, 2008.

Ha-Joon Chang: 23 things they dont tell you about capitalism, Penguin Books 2011.



EU a tool for neocolonialism

Transatlantic slave trade clarifies the role of the EU

The first major joint European economic project was the transatlantic slave trade. Whether a country was directly involved or sold goods to the slave trade nations, the vast majority of European countries were involved in the project. Fabrics, iron pieces and rifles were manufactured throughout Europe, and were sold in Africa in exchange for slaves. These were transported, via slave fortresses like the Swedish Carlsborg, and across the Atlantic. The slaves were then put to work to produce goods that were then brought back to Europe. All supported by superior military power.

This founded a racist world order, profitable for Europe. We still live with the military, social, cultural and ecological consequences of this world order. Only if we can clearly show that Europe has broken the power concentration thus created in the center, it will be possible to meet people in other parts of the world on equal terms. This will be necessary sooner or later, as countries with a European population no longer occupy the same dominant role as before.

Slavery and oppression by a center of a periphery have existed in many parts of the world. What was happening with the European slave order was that European dominance became global, driven by a constant capital accumulation at the heart. Accelerating environmental degradation followed and racism became the over-ideology of the world order. This was accomplished by colonialism, which was directed both towards countries beyond the seas and internally like in Sweden towards Norrland and the countryside.

The contradictions between super powers unequally far gone into the competition for regions to colonialize led to two World Wars. The populations of the colonized countries rebelled. The direct European exercise of political power in these countries became too costly. A more effective method was needed to continue the European supremacy. The pioneers for a more economically ori-

ented, new form of colonialism, backed by seemingly superior military resources, were the European settlers in the United States. The emergence of what was to become the EU occurred with the 1957 Rome Treaty. This also became a way for European states to jointly strengthen their position in the new form of economic colonialism.

The myth about the EU is that it is a peace project. The cooperation between great powers to strengthen economic neo-colonialism made military confrontations out of date, which can be seen as positive.

The difficulties were still there and would come back. It became apparent with the war in what was then the southern province of France - the present Algeria - took even more momentum. In total, nearly 1 million people were killed in this war until 1962, and almost all Algerians, 2 million people were put in concentration camps the same year as the Treaty of Rome was written and a few years to come. This great war within one of the EU's founding states is often hidden through false historical maps.

Later, EU countries have become involved in other wars. This through support for separatism during Yugoslavia's disintegration, against Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya and other countries. The EU has

also reintroduced more direct forms of colonialism in Europe where now the Bosnia's and Kosovo's economies are governed by the EU.

However, the main method used by the EU has been the inclusion of the more modern form of Western World domination through the control of global trade and investments, combined with continued financial and military supremacy. Instead of direct governance, the richer countries have joined forces to ensure that they control by restricting access to international trade and currency. Those who do not bend for the rules the rich countries set up risk being bumped out of the international economy.

These rules have meant that we get an ever-shrinking circle of multi-billionaires who own more than half the world's population does. The means to achieve this is that all countries are forced to let their production of goods, natural resources and public assets be parts of global speculation chains. Those who work in the bottom of this global economy under perfect competition as wage earners or as self-employed workers, see the benefits of their work being sucked upwards. This through a system, rigged by the EU and other rich countries, so that capital owners in small and large are getting richer. The system constructed by the EU, together with the United States and Japan,

is based on international institutions such as the IMF, the WTO, the World Bank, various bilateral trade and investment agreements and banking rules. These are because other countries than those who have already become rich will remain subordinated. The kind of versatile economic development through state industrial policies like rail construction or production of its own

specialize in the type of industry, natural resources and services that are easier to work with. They do not give the same benefits as advanced state-of-the-art technology and the swelling financial sector, as well as PR and media industries, which are increasingly reserved for a few cities. The entire system is pumped up by an ever-increasing debt burden and accelerated

this system. China is a clear example that seriously challenges Western dominance. China's concern also led to countries such as Japan, South Korea and Taiwan being allowed to pursue a protectionist policy while building an export-oriented industry.

For many countries, however, it has stood still and sometimes gone backwards. Particularly affected are two billion small farmers who account for 70 percent of food for humanity. They are threatened within and outside the EU by the fact that the international rules allow the agro industry to take over their farms. These become a part of increasingly global production chains, depending on fossil fuels, chemicals, antibiotics and monoculture that expel biodiversity, with mass unemployment, water shortages and conflicts as a result. At the same time, their country or region is not permitted to develop any further processing or other advanced industry. This means that those who become unemployed do not have any place to go if they do not choose to become beggars, slave workers in the sex industry or become part of a growing group of temporary workers. Squeezed by the financial crisis, the rich countries are also increasingly militarizing their model of debt-financed, resource-heavy growth. NATO is not longer a defensive alliance, but is given the right to violate the UN Charter and start a war of war. They are also given the self-imposed right to defend their own countries' access to natural resources in countries outside the West. In countries often populated by people with a skin tone which racistly means NATO countries do not give them the right to defend their own interests. Or, arbitrary internal conflicts are identified as the basis of an attack or other forms of Western intervention in so far as it fits its own economic and geopolitical interests. The wars that once France and the United States took care of themselves are now increasingly shared by the Western countries, even with Swedish participation. The UN is set aside or called in afterwards to clear up the mess created by the war of the Westerners like refugee crises and collapse of states with once effective welfare.

The colonialism that the transatlantic slave trade built up, therefore, still exists in a new

False map supporting fake EU peace myth



Correct map of the founding member states of the EU in 1957 including Algeria, than Southern France. Source: Wikipedia

Founding Member States



False map of the founding member states of the EU excluding Southern French departments. Source: <https://europa.eu>

Inside the founding EU member states nearly 1 million people were killed in a war until 1962. EU makes false maps to promote the fake myth about being an unquestionable peace project by excluding this part of reality. Instead the EU official website put focus on how Soviet tanks were used to put down protests in Hungary were some thousands were killed while making no mentioning of the killing of nearly one million inside the EU "peace" project. Then even wipe the place from the map.

food - followed by most rich countries - is now forbidden for new countries. They should have to go the same way as we did, but will now have to put up with these international institutions and the rules the EU set up for its Member States.

The rules imply that countries in the peripheries of the EU and the world must

recovery of non-renewable resources such as oil. It can for some time make some to feel like winners if they have acquired a capital surplus. The massive need for cheap commodities can also create temporary upswing even in economies in parts of the periphery.

A country of its own weight can partially withstand

form. It is not only hidden by the myth of the EU as something fundamentally other than the transfer of colonialism in new forms. It is also hidden by active indoctrination, to avoid social and ecological analyzes of the EU's role and changes and conflicts in the world. Such analyzes are replaced by false myths about their own inherent special European ideology and values superior to others and, in particular, decoupled from the material relationships that made the positive features possible. Other countries' views outside the EU and the US are depreciated. Often, too, views outside the center of power in the western country's own periphery.

Against this background, it is understandable - but inexcusable - that the efforts within the UN to recognize human rights for Africans affected by slavery and colonialism suffers from such a resistance among EU countries. In other parts of the world, countries are fighting to hold regional meetings on the recognition of slave trade victims. In the European and North American region there was no country that was willing, so the meeting is held in UN offices in Geneva instead at 23-24 November. Together with other states in the world within the framework of the UN, addressing their own story is necessary to be able to participate in the construction of a world where everyone's equal worth is the foundation. The work accomplished by Awad Hersi in the committee to commemorate Swedish

transatlantic slave trade, Sissela Nordling Blanco, Fi, chairman of the Stockholm City Council's Human Rights Council, the environmentalist Valter Mutt in the Riksdag, Jan Lönn from MR focus and others, to draw attention to the importance of This question is therefore of crucial importance. Racism can never be abolished if its material and historical roots are not recognized. Equally, the militarized growth model that the EU is now propagating for can only be seriously questioned when focusing on the fundamental question of how the superior economic and military power was constructed that allows much of the repression to continue while the environment is being destroyed.

The EU's attempt to give the summit in Göteborg a veneer of social responsibility for this growth model must be challenged. As long as the EU does not change its policy of strengthening the transfer of values from those who work in the nature management, industry and service to capital owners and increase the gap between the center and periphery, social problems will not be solved. They will only be resolved when Europe's countries choose to become an equal part of a new social and ecological fair world order recognizing the historical debt implied by the transatlantic slave trade and its colonial continuation.

*Tord Björk Coordinator EU Committee
Friends of the Earth Sweden*

<http://www.un.org/en/events/africandescent-decade>

<http://www.un.org/en/events/slaveryremembranceday/2017/events-world.shtml>



Jan Lönn from MR-Forum to the left discuss a joint event on slavery with Itza Orosco from Latin American groups at the seminar.

EU rewrites history

To support militarization a rewriting of history is central in an anti peace campaign creating enemy images organized by states and business interests all over Europe. Earlier lessons learned are now seen as old fashioned ways of hiding new truths.

In this new world social conflicts and wars can be described as the result of a new popular term for something age old, hybrid war. Russian hybrid war that is as if other states och corporations never have been able to organize disinformation campaigns obfuscating history while also using other means in their interest.

Right wing extremist celebrated this year the anniversary of the killing of 1500 workers from the Arsenal factory in Kiev when they rebelled against the nationalistic government 28th January 1918. President Poroshenko added his support by saying that the Kiev workers' struggle was nothing else then a Russian hybrid war. The nation is everything and rebellion can never have social roots, it can only be seen in nationalistic terms.

Ahead of the NATO Summit in Poland similar rewriting of history is presented in the Polish magazine New Eastern Europe. Here the message is clear. WWII is primarily implementation of a Soviet plan to organize yet another attack on Western Europe, the first being their attack against Western Europe in 1919 stopped by

Poland. In this rewriting of history the attack planned during the 1930s was implemented by a temporary alliance with Nazi Germany to remove the obstacles that had stopped the Soviet past attempts to realize this plan: Poland. Stalin's plan was to join Hitler's war against the Allies and bring the revolution as far west as he could.

This Polish view presents Russia/Soviet as eternally expansionist no matter how much people in the country rebelled and even made a revolution. That the communist regime gave independence to countries like Finland while the exile tsarist government in Paris protested is of no concern in this biased view. The intervention by soldiers from dozens of Western countries in attempts to overthrow the communist government in support of the exile government with its Russian imperialist policies is not mentioned.

The Ukrainian and Polish rewriting of history is part of a general trend in the EU. Eastern European governments with some support especially from the conservatives and liberals in Europe organized a large scale rewriting of history.

It started ten years ago in the Council of Europe set up in 1948 as one of several international institutions to support human rights in a broad sense of the time. Here the conservative group started a campaign in 2006 to "strongly condemn crimes of totalitarian communist regimes". The Swedish conservative politician Göran Lindblad initiated the resolution which

did receive most of the votes but not the necessary two-thirds majority.

In 2008 the Prague Declaration on European Conscience and Communism was signed calling for "Europe-wide condemnation of, and education about, the crimes of communism." Central to the declaration is the call for an "all-European understanding that both the Nazi and Communist totalitarian regimes [...] should be considered to be the main disasters, which blighted the 20th century." The declaration or its proposals have received support from EU and other bodies of the European Union, many CEE countries and from the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. Calls were made by the European Parliament proclaiming a European Day of Remembrance for Victims of Stalinism and Nazism with overwhelming support.

Criticism has come from a variety of groups claiming that this is obfuscating the memory of the Holocaust turning and as in the Lithuanian case turns survivors of the Holocaust into perpetrators of genocide.

In 2001 the strongest institutional organization in the follow up on the Prague declaration is formed with Göran Lindblad as president. It is called The Platform of European Memory and Conscience. It is an educational project of the EU. Its goal is described as helping "prevent intolerance, extremism, anti-democratic movements and the recurrence of any totalitarian rule in the future." The chairman Lindblad is known for his close

connection to the authoritarian family ruling Azerbaijan to whom he was a consultant. He has also in an interview claimed that "The French Revolution was terrible the Paris commune being the forerunners of Communism." Demanding 8 hours working hours a day and universal voting rights as the communists did before they were massacred is to this leader of rewriting European history seen as a starting point towards totalitarianism.

The same ideas put forward by Lindblad is also part of an educational programme by a Swedish history department. It started as an institution for remembering the Holocaust but has especially since 2006 also focused upon writing a new history of communism. In the educational material it is claimed that Karl Marx started a communist learning process due to his conclusion that the terror against the Paris Commune next time have to be met by counter terror. This statement is stated as being a process ending with the genocide in Cambodia. That it was the communist regime in Vietnam that invaded and is seen as the force that stopped the terror under Pol Pot and that he was supported by the US is excluded from the lengthy material.

Concentration camps used as terror is also seen as a communist invention by Lenin in the autumn 1918. Earlier concentration camps organized by the Brits in South Africa and by the US in the Philippines are claimed to be more innocent ways to isolate families so they could not help those fighting for independence. The Finnish concentration camps where tens of thousands of Reds were killed after the civil war in the summer 1918 is wiped out of history. Western regimes cannot commit crimes, only the others.

The EU also have a similar project as the Swedish about European history with the help of a museum in Brussels and information material. It is based on the ideology of opposing totalitarianism. In its scientific founding paper the Russian revolution is claimed to be a coup d'état. The cost only for preparing this project has been 50 million euro. The museum called the House of European History was finally opened May 6 in Brussels 2017.

Tord Björk

The Future of EU



Above: Left Party MEP Malin Björk

“We will not be content with a social pillar that, every time there is conflict, will be run over by demands for market freedom” commented Malin Björk the EU Summit. Yet it was clear that the Left Party supported the Swedish government in initiating the social pillar while others as No to EU put forward criticism, see beginning of this report.

Below from the right, Andersson, Björk and Björk

What future is there for the EU? This was discussed at the seminar with the help of a panel including Tord Björk, Friends of the Earth Sweden, Max Andersson Green MEP, Malin Björk, Left Party MEP both from Sweden.

The difference between a people’s movement criticism and party criticism of the EU was addressed by the panel. FoE Sweden has based its no to EU as well as pragmatic building of EU-critical alliances including those in favour of EU on a critique of the EU development model. Political parties have had the tendency to focus more upon national sovereignty.

The panelists could share a concern for how several of the issues addressed in common at the EU Summit in Gothenburg 2001 had worsened. They also shared opposition against further federalization of the EU and ideas concerning ways of developing flexibility discussed in the leftist Plan B process and at seminars like the one initiated by FoE Sweden in Gothenburg. But FoE and Greens seemed more interested in building broader alliances than the left which showed itself also during the Alternative Summit.



Flexibility - a third way out of the EU's crises

There must be a third path between Europe's United States and a return to restricted nationalism. We advocate a flexible EU where groups of countries can deepen their cooperation, but where there also is an possibility for countries to leave, for example, the monetary union. Writes Max Andersson, EU MP (MP) and German social reformer Peter Wahl.

The EU Commission has presented different scenarios for the future of the Union. The proposals show that they are impressed by Brexit and realize that the plans for an EU state are unrealistic at the moment. Much indicates that after the referendum round the Commission will prioritize as follows:

- The extension to more Member States is frozen for an indefinite period
- New laws and regulations are mainly limited to a few strategically important areas (migration, security and competition)
- an EU at two different speeds.

It is a good thing if the European Commission is forced to dampen its ambition of "an ever closer union" with increasingly sovereign EU power. We also do not believe in the idea of an EU at two speeds where

some nuclear countries like Germany and France are building an EU state that the others are expected to join in eventually.

The realist realizes that our different countries are the basic democratic element in the EU. This has been clear during the economic crisis, when many countries first and foremost prioritized national interests. The democratic root of the EU project is also weak.

Meanwhile, it is unreasonable to convey EU criticism to right-wing parties. They have no reasonable answers to present questions about global climate threats, growing gaps and unemployment. There is no way back to a limited 19th century nationalism. Europe's countries need cooperation - inside and outside the EU.

We reject an EU state but also say no to nationalism with closed borders. Instead, we want to propose a third path for a flexible EU as follows:

1. Selective harmonization of laws

This implies supranationality in certain areas such as environment, climate and energy conversion, but also the opportunity to bring power back to the Member States on other issues. For example, some countries could have the opportunity to leave EMU. Free movement should no longer be superior to environment and human rights.

2. Coalitions between those who want it ("variable geometry")

There is already a formal opportunity in the EU for "enhanced cooperation" where groups of Member States can merge if more than 75 percent of EU countries approve it. This possibility can be simplified and encouraged, so that the space increases for those countries that want to introduce common rules, such as basic income, financial transaction taxes or refugee reception over a minimum.

3. Opening to the outside world

The flexible solutions also allow for a new openness to the outside world, where countries like Britain and Norway can participate in some parts without being forced to participate in all. To become a leading force in managing global challenges such as climate issues, regulation of the Internet, tax evasion, peacekeeping and more, the EU should open up less stringent agreements with the countries around. The new association agreements should not be block-forming and advocate a certain economic policy, but rather flexible and adapted to suit both parties.

These proposals for flexible solutions may seem utopian, but in fact, they are more credible than those who dominate the debate. Continuing as today risks deepening the EU crisis, and the extreme options of an EU state or introverted nationalism are unrealistic. A flexible EU where countries can choose how and in what areas they want supranationality, but also be able to get out of partnership, is a more reasonable way forward. It is also a road that is significantly more attractive than an EU at two speeds.

If we allow Brexit to be an alarm clock and seize this chance of change, the growth of the introverted right-wing populism will be able to be hardened.

Max Andersson, MEP (MP)

Peter Wahl, Chairman of the German Thinktank WEED

Flexibility must never be an excuse

“Center party students agree with the debates that it is a good idea to let those member states that want to go very far in the cooperation do so. A future example could be the defense policy in the Baltic Sea area, where we have obvious shared interests.

However, we are concerned about how vague Andersson and Wahl describe what kind of cooperation they want to see. An EU based on flexibility is described as a way away from in-depth integration in crucial areas. But “more flexibility” should not be an excuse for not bringing together common solutions in issues that cross national borders. This includes not only the environmental policy proposed by Andersson and Wahl, but also areas such as foreign, security and justice. EU cooperation in these crucial areas must be developed, not settled.

EU cooperation at different speeds must also not excuse member states to escape responsibility “

Simon Palme, chair Center party students

The future of the EU requires much thought

“We agree with the Center party students that countries sometimes blame the EU when they are themselves who do not address serious problems or comply with international agreements.

We also agree with Palme that member states wishing to continue collaborations should be able to do so within the framework of the EU, as long as everyone is at minimum levels. That is, a group of countries can tighten for example environmental or trade union rights, but they should not be able to go together and introduce wage dumping or reduced environmental requirements.

Palme writes that we are vague, and it is true that we do not have complete solutions to what flexible EU cooperation will look like. It takes a lot of thought and maybe a trial period to be valued. But it is clear that the EU is breaking down in the conflict between those who want more nationalism and those who want more federalism in the form of an EU state. Something must happen, and then we mean that flexible cooperation between groups of countries on different issues is better than an EU at two speeds where the nuclear countries choose the way forward. A situation where Germany and France in practice decide on the future of other countries is something we want to avoid.

The special thing about our proposal is also that it opens up more collaborations with non-EU countries, regardless of whether it is Norway, Britain, Russia, EU candidate countries or nations in Africa. And that it should also be possible to leave cooperation. For example, it would probably be good for Greece to leave the euro-zone, and that is an opportunity that should be available.

We hope more people want to think about new ways for the EU and international cooperation. “

Max Andersson, MEP (The Greens)

Peter Wahl, Chairman of the German Thinktank WEED

In response to Peter Wahl

All plans concern possible and (more or less) likely futures. By assessing systematically the odds in favour or against a possible outcome, we can develop more credible plans. For instance, a controlled and cooperative dismantlement of the euro seems less likely than an uncontrollable surge of events through unilateral decisions. Peter Wahl from WEED in Germany agrees that this can be dangerous. He also accepts that we do need common systems of governance both in Europe and globally.

In Copenhagen, Wahl summarised the basic arguments of his recent article “Between Eurotopia and Nationalism: A Third Way for the Future of the EU”. He argues that there is a third way: flexibilisation through selective integration in certain areas and selective disintegration in others, based on variable coalitions of the willing. Perhaps flexible re-arrangements of the EMU is the way to go, but is this process any more controllable than a full dismantlement of the euro?

Will differentiated integration not lead to a total disruption at the end? I do not think so, because the existing links, in particular in the economy and the respective interests are so strong, that cutting them would lead to economic suicide. Furthermore, neighbouring countries have common interests



Hans Linde, Left party foreign policy spokesperson speaking at an EU-critical seminar in Gothenburg 2016

per se: in trade, in infrastructure, movement of people, etc. Of course, much would also depend from an appropriate set up of the remaining institutions. If they succeed to really serve as a facilitator in the new framework and prove to be beneficial for all, such a type of European Union would find more acceptance than the present model.

Wahl's idea is that if a country opts for austerity, it can do this for itself, but austerity cannot be imposed anymore to others. Opening the EU treaty in order to selectively disintegrate the Union may nonetheless spell trouble. The problem is twofold. First, also Wahl's third way seems to require treaty changes, which are difficult to achieve and would take a large coalition of the willing, including Germany and other surplus countries. Second, unintended consequences could easily dominate the process, despite Wahl's appeal to the common sense ("everyone

should and will avoid economic suicide"). Countries do not always avoid suicides or catastrophes. It is not that long ago when Germany chose, through multiple elections, political manoeuvring and violence, and finally referendum, a path that led to a total moral, military and economic disaster.

There seems to be a need for many plans, each for different contingencies. The left can try to build coalitions, both in national and European elections, either for plan A or for Wahl's model of selective disintegration. Both cannot be achieved simultaneously. Treaty changes could, in turn, be achieved in two different ways. The conservative way consists of first organizing an inter-governmental convention and then having the outcome ratified in national parliaments. The process involves at least some national referenda. This way accords with the principles and procedures of classical international law. It is also the hardest possible

way to change anything. To get the simultaneous support of all the 27 member states (or their representatives) for any particular reform proposal is difficult at best. Any change to any direction is likely to trigger wide resistance in one or more countries. Meanwhile the rise of rampant nationalism and the process of disintegration may well continue unabated.

But there is an alternative. A more cosmopolitan and democratic way is to convene an assembly of directly elected citizens' representatives. The outcome would be a constitution legitimised through an EU-wide referendum. This constitution can be made implementable by setting up adequate democratic procedures, where also national parliaments (or a new second chamber of the European Parliament) play(s) an important role. This possibility is fully consistent only with plan A.

As I have argued elsewhere (see also our introduction to the Brexit special forum), the main problem for the cosmopolitan project appears to be time and timing. Even if a strong political drive to transform the EU develops, perhaps as a result of the next economic crisis, it is likely that the transformation process will take years. Moreover, until such a collective will forms, the process of 'completing the EMU' is likely to proceed in accordance with the scheme of the five presidents' report (this might change only if the social-democrats and greens withdraw their support from these plans). This means that the Union must muddle through something like a decade or more before the effects of the transformation could become tangible in the everyday lives of European citizens. Meanwhile new crises are likely to erupt and new shifts in the political landscape to occur.

I thus agree with Jonas Sjöstedt, the chair of the Swedish Left Party, who argued in his closing speech that tumultuous and regressive times seem to lie ahead of us.

Heikki Patomäki

<https://patomaki.fi/en/2016/11/plan-b-in-copenhagen-in-november-2016/>



Black Swans Queiung in Europe

A small group gathered at Christiansborg in Denmark early Saturday the 19th of November 2016. We are international guests of Søren Søndergaard, the Folketing member of the Red Green Alliance and a veteran socialist MEP. It is the first physical meeting of Lexit, a left appeal to leave the euro, written after the EU crushed the Greek people's will to fight austerity summer 2015.

Soon, the guests would participate in the much more prestigious and well in advance fully booked Plan B meeting the rest of the weekend with the Red Green Alliance and the Left Party of Sweden as hosts. But the question is if it was not on Lexitmeeting as a more qualified approach could come to light against the current EU crisis.

Lexit is a European appeal that looks uneven and hierarchical power relations between center and periphery as a dangerous element in EU integration. A design that has resulted in Germany dominating the EU's economic policy, especially after the financial crisis of 2008. This says the petition has put pressure on weaker economies grouped in the euro zone to dismantle the welfare state, privatizing the public sector, allowing social dumping, subjected to tax competition, undermine collective agreements and attacking unions and public employees' terms and conditions. According to the appeal this is not due to unanticipated design flaws in the construction of the euro zone. It is part of the neo-liberal design. Right wing criticism against the euro is seen as a wish to control immigration while capital still freely should

flow across borders to push down wages, a synthesis Lexit calls "xenophobic neo-liberalism".

The main focus of the meeting was criticism of the euro and the development of alternatives. Yet the discussion could not fail to go into major events since the appeal was written for more than a year ago as Brexit and the outcome of the US presidential election. Events that were individually considered almost unbelievable that they would happen and collectively show a volatile situation. Something Peter Wahl, president of the World Economy, Ecology and Development in Germany called black swans.

Several such black swans can be expected as a series of election campaigns in different EU countries are approaching with the Italian referendum on a new constitution in December with a possible consequence on the form of a euro zone exit. This is followed by presidential elections in both Austria and France, in both cases with strong right wing extremism and populist candidates. A volatile situation in the neighbouring areas with possible changes globally contributes to instability. The volatile situation is also within different groups, both on the Left and the Right disagreeing on what needs to be done. Even the European elite is divided.

The German Finance Minister Schäuble was taken as an example. He is openly advocating that what is needed for the whole euro zone is a "czar" who has control over the budget. The Russian autocracy before it was overthrown in 1917 is suddenly seen as a model for an increasingly federalist eurozone state. On the contrary EU Commission President Junker talks about flexibility and the need for investments.

In such a situation it can be easy to become paralyzed confronted by the major threats

that are conjured up. The Lexit did the contrary, without hiding the different approaches of the participants. Christina Asensi from May 15 direct democratic movement in Spain which inspired the leftwing Podemos party said that the euro and Europe are so closely linked that there must be a strategy not only to leave the euro, but also the EU. She stressed that the transfer of wealth and power from the many to the few enforced by the EU and the euro developed very rapidly in recent years. This is because, she said, the way the euro zone and the EU Treaties deliberately are designed and is no unfortunate mistake.

Wahl focused on a response to the conflict between membership in the euro zone and an end to austerity policies not only need to be seen as unilateral secession. It can also be done through international negotiations to move to the type of bond, such as Denmark has, with its currency linked within an interval to the euro and earlier to the German mark.

At the meeting were also socialist Vijay Pratap from India who brought a global dimension to what is going on. Finance capital that become rich thanks to the way the EU treaties and the euro zone has been designed also affects India. The recently introduced demonetizing reform strongly stregntehns financial capital and the way Western banks can control India. The reform means that higher valued banknotes has been taken out of the market without notice in order to organize all of the very large informal sector, small business owners into the bank control.

There is a need to see the EU in a broader context. Even when you look at Europe, said one participant, it is now quite clear that what is happening is about more than economics. With the statements coming from the EU elite, it is clear that there will be no more enlargement of the EU.

Next Plan B Summit, will be held in Rome, 11-12th of March 2017, as a counter-summit to the 60th Anniversary of the Treaty of Rome. With elections in France and Germany and ratification of CETA – which could end up being rejected if just one national parliament says no – 2017 will be an important year for Europe.



Christina Asensi from May 15 direct democratic movement in Spain at the Lexit meeting

In addition, all EU countries face the need to meet the criteria in the EU treaties. This means that sooner or later confronted with the requirement to join the euro zone, only Denmark can stay outside when requested and obtained an explicit exception while Sweden and another non euro EU countries have to join sooner or later.

The larger Plan B meeting began with more general speeches from prominent leftists as Pernille Skipper from the Red Green Alliance, Luka Mesec from Slovenia, Zoe Konstantopoulou from Greece, Jean-Luc Mélenchon in France and Tiny Kox from the Netherlands.

As the conference went on to discuss the more specific question of how European monetary union works and what are the alternatives took participants on Lexit meeting completely once more was at the centre stage. The audience was also well prepared. Susan George of ATTAC got the opportunity to ask the panel what would happen after a euro withdrawal.

Wahl explained in more detail how his model would work and why it was credible. Extreme stress can arise from a unilateral withdrawal from the euro zone. In a crisis situation currency devaluation is often a necessary means. It has often proven to be a useful to get out of a crisis of a country. But it brings up the existing foreign debt and the need for negotiation of these. This will be necessary in all cases regarding Greece's debt that never will be paid according to Wahl as the economy of Greece cannot recover under the present terms.

There are also risks of accelerating inflation, capital flight, bank rush and for third parties in the form of countries outside the euro zone. These problems were considerably less or not applicable to the solution he advocated. It would be based on international negotiations to set rules for the exchange rates

and how the aid package could be designed to avoid collapses. Wahl said that this solution was not a choice between something good and something bad, but rather a matter of choosing the slightly less bad than the option to continue on a wrong path.

The weaknesses of the meeting were several. One was the low participation of from CEE countries. But finally at least one CEE politician was part of a central panel at a Plan B meeting, Luka Mesec, MP, from Inicijativa za demokratični socializem, Slovenia. He pointed at the great risk claiming that EU institutions had failed. This could help the right wing populists and extremists. A woman from Razem in Poland addressed the issue in similar way. She claimed that to many in Poland EU is like a socialist dream and it would be negative to say no to that dream. This was questioned by Wahl and others in the panel claiming that one cannot cling to illusions and furthermore a socialist vision is never limited to Europe, it calls for people and more explicitly proletarians in all countries to unite. Organizers claimed they were looking for EU skeptical politicians in CEE countries but that they were hard to find.

Another weakness of the conference was the lack of rural voices. One ecological farmer in the audience made agriculture visible, but that was all. This reminded a panelist to speak that also a transition of agriculture could be included in the ideas of public investments for a just transition of societies.

Costas Lapavistas, professor of economics in London and former Greek MP for Syriza, pointed out that the discussion has matured compared to the initial Plan B meetings. It may seem strange when the situation in many areas worsened and increased instability seems to be a hallmark of the time we live in now. But something historic is about to happen.

The superstition that existed in the popular movements and the many parties that the EU could become a global social model through an ever-closer cooperation is no longer prevalent. The large geographical variations in popular movements and centre-left wing parties with more EU skepticism in the Nordic countries and more federalist minded continental Europe is becoming possible to bridge. It was this gap that prevented the peoples' movements European Social Forum to develop. Now the red-green Nordic Socialist parties and their sister parties throughout Europe unites in a more flexible EU criticism and rejects the current design of the euro zone. There is even a sense that it necessary to support the international struggle against the neo-liberal content of the EU treaties recognized as their core.

Jonas Sjöstedt from the Swedish Left party summed up the situation with the words stop being loyal to the European Union. He also called for the need to develop alternatives to the euro model. It is positive that the left parties develop a more coherent EU criticism. It can be helpful to a corresponding development of European social movements. Many also stressed the importance of maintaining a policy against neo-liberalism internationally throughout Europe, where movements in both outside and inside the EU can participate together. Overall Lexit and Plan B summit in Copenhagen are hopeful signs when it comes to strengthening peoples movements and left parties economic policies and leave single issue politics for a more coherent general policy for non-EU and EU Europe and the future of our societies.

Tord Björk

Links:
<http://lexit-network.org>
<http://euro-planb.dk>
This was written a year ago. Later Plan B meetings have rather distanced themselves from movements then uniting.

Resisting EU in Sweden

Resisting EU has a long history in Sweden. A No to EU organization was established in 1988. A EU membership referendum was lost in 1994 with a small margin. The next peak in the EU-critical mobilization took place at the EU-Summit in Gothenburg in June 2001. Unfortunately conflicts between No to Swedish membership and internationalistic EU-criticism initiatives ended in a severe split. Repressive police tactics ended in riots.

Friends of the Earth Sweden tried to bridge the gap by initiating internationalistic EU critical gatherings with activists from environmental, peasant, social rights and peace movements in Gothenburg including No to EU 2011 and 2015. The result were several EU-critical initiatives during 2017.

Time for Peace!

The first was Dags för fred! (Time for Peace!) organized in Stockholm in May challenging the single issue limitations of the peace movement. Rather than limit the movement to be against weapon export or against US or Russian imperialism Swedish imperialism and the role of EU's aggressive economic expansion and militarisation in cooperation with Nato was addressed.



Just transition

Friends of the Earth Sweden held a conference on just transition of rural and urban societies to build a constructive programme to confront the ecological and social crisis. It took place in Broddetorp on October 20 in conjunction with Naturbrukskonferensen.

Agriculture and rural economy conference

Naturbrukskonferensen is a gathering of peasants, environmentalists and rural activists. Both conferences in Broddetorp challenged the present EU development model.



United Alternative summit criticizing the EU summit on growth and social rights in Gothenburg

This EU summit gave rise to a broad initiative uniting different movements. Organizations that confronted each other with opposing positions how to be critical towards EU at the EU Summit in Gothenburg 2001 are now cooperating. Another Europe is possible was one of the activities.



EU-critical meeting in Gothenburg June 2016

Make Internationalistic EU criticism stronger

We participants from different movements at the EU critical strategy meeting in Gothenburg January 7, 2017 call for resistance to the EU's neo-liberalism and militarization. In Sweden and Europe there is a need of an internationalist EU criticism. The dream of an ever closer merging towards a federal Europe has been shattered. Instead, needed is a flexible cooperation in Europe and neighbouring countries of solidarity, peace, social justice and the environment.

We have discussed such an internationalist EU criticism in several areas. It has applied common welfare and social rights, the increasingly dense interweaving of the EU and NATO, the polarized the West-East conflict and the need for peace, trade and investment agreements that TTIP and CETA, racism and refugee crisis and the EU criticism is progressive, euro and debt crisis, and the EU project as a whole, federalism, back to the nation state or a third option.

Our ambition is that the meeting can be the starting point for better coordination of the necessary progressive EU criticism in Sweden. We invite to the continuous coordination to disseminate information and organize activities in Sweden and internationally.

*Max Andersson, MEP, Tord Björk,
Ellie Cijvat, Birgitta Hedström,
Lars Igeland, PO Larsson, Friends of the
Earth Sweden, Ansa Eneroth, Per Hernmar,
Peoples Movement No to EU,
Joel Holmdahl, Via Campesina Sweden,
Gustav Landström, Clarté,
Hans Sternlycke, Miljömagasinet*

Background to activities at the EU Summit in Gothenburg 2017

2011 and 2015

“Refugee policy, militarization and increased gap between center and periphery in Europe thanks to the euro and neoliberal EU policy makes all the issues that people struggled for 2001 equally relevant today, if not even more.”

Ellie Cijvat, board member Friends of the Earth Sweden.

This was the motivation to organize two meetings in 2011 and 2016. They were initiated by Friends of the Earth and organized together with others 10 and 15 years after the large protests at 2001 EU Summit in Go-

thenburg. The purpose was to update the criticism put forward by a hundred movements in 2001 and look forward. From these two meetings originated the Another Europe is possible seminar in Gothenburg 2017.

In particular, Nordbruk/Via Campesina Sweden has held a similar view as the FoE Sweden against the EU development model. In this view it is not enough to be against EU membership but also actively engage in internationalistic EU criticism. No to the EU and other organizations previously opposing the internationalistic EU criticism promoted by

FoE Sweden now started to cooperate. The strong opposition in 2001 from organizations that only wanted No to EU membership as a platform towards the broader coalition initiated by FoE Sweden became history.

New alliances were possible again enabling the cooperation resulting in both the Another Europe is possible seminar and the Alternative Summit platform with many activities.



Above: The meeting in 2016 was supported by MEP Max Andersson.

Below: Another Europe is possible banner used at several EU summits 1997-2002, here at FoE Sweden summer camp.



Previous Background

1971 - FoE Sweden and FoEI

Friends of the Earth Sweden is founded with individual membership the same year as also environmental groups form MIGRI, the Environmental Protection Group's National Federation. The most active MIGRI groups form the Environment Association in 1976. The Friends of the Earth International is also founded this year at a meeting in Stockholm.

1972 - No to EEC

The first UN environmental Summit is held in Stockholm. Alternative City, later Friends of the Earth Stockholm, plays a central role in organizing protests and call for decentralized international actions. Also FoE International is very active. Later the same year an EU referendum is held in Norway. The majority of the people says no to EU against the will of all big political parties, organizations and



Rolf Groven No to EEC poster from 1972 Right wing leader at the laps of social democratic leader. In the background environmentally destructive industry and depopulated countryside.

mass media. The victorious Norwegians comes to the first Nordic environmental camp. These camps came under ten years to strongly influence both the Swedish and other Nordic countries' environmental movements. Norwegian newly formed environmental movement snm, the environmental and conservation group contributed strongly with a developmental criticism of the EEC. The People's Movement No to the EEC became a model throughout the Nordic region for EU resistance against seemingly overwhelmingly strong opponents.

1983 - ERT

Pehr G. Gyllenhammar, the CEO of Volvo initiated The European Round Table of Industrialists (ERT). This club of corporate CEOs became highly influential in strengthening corporate rule by promoting EU as a union built on social cuts, highway projects and an inner market in 1992 regulated by the Maastricht treaty. Environment association immediately initiates international movement cooperation against the corporate project.

1987 - Tree huggers

As part of the ERT vision Gyllenhammar is able to influence political decision-makers to build a highway at the west coast of Sweden. Direct civil disobedience against the project involves thousands of people and some 400 are sentenced in the biggest political trial in Swedish modern history.



1988 - No to sustainable development ideology

A No to EU organization is formed in Sweden. It was characterized by parliamentary representatives. Ideology was diminished in favor of a smallest common denominator in order to maintain national sovereignty. In Finland, solidarity activists organized a meeting with activists from India. Together, the whole ideology is questioned behind the concept of sustainable development launched by the Brundtland report. It is seen as a way of simultaneously diverting the environmental movement from confronting corporations and offering good career opportunities within the framework of cooperation on sustainable growth in collaboration with industry.

1990 - SEED Popular Forum

The Environment Association organizes trips for The

Above: Demonstration in 1987 to stop the building of the highway. The activists soon became known as tree huggers inspired by the Chipko movement in India here marching as guests at the front under the banner.



The very first European Youth Forest Action Bike Tour is ready to leave from Bergen on it's way to Bugac in Hungary; on the 16th of May 1990. On the bike Tord Björk, the editor of this report.

many from eastern Europe to the meeting of the SEED Popular Forum, (Solidarity, Equality, Environment and Development) in Bergen. The aim was networking and to influence a European and North American preparatory meeting for the Rioconference on Sustainable Development two years later. Out of the SEED meeting, the global A SEED youth movement is established in 1992, making the first direct actions at an EU summit in Edinburgh the same year. In connection with the European Peace Movement's END Convention in Helsinki and Tallinn in 1990, Finnish and Indian Solidarity Activists set up a climate-rights march between Turku and Helsinki in a protest against the building of a highway.

1991 - Climate Action Days
Finnish Solidarity Activists and the Environment As-

sociation starts international climate action days to stop greenhouse gas emissions and deforestation. Actions are organized in 50 places in 70 countries. No major international environmental or solidarity organizations want to support or take over the extensive contacts built over three years. Instead, well-funded professional lobby organizations start to dominate. They prioritize with the support of major environmental organizations appeals to world leaders instead of climate action days' focus on supporting struggles in local conflicts and transition to a sustainable society.

1992 - Against the capital liberalization directive

8 farmers protest in front of the parliament against opening Swedish natural resources to global speculation. The parliament unanimously decides to adopt the EU Capital Liberalization Directive in order to prepare Sweden for the EMU. From these protests, the small organization NOrdBruk grows



in collaboration with the international peasant movement Via Campesina founded in 1993.

1994 - EU referendum
Referendums are held in Finland, Sweden and Norway. No-side loses in Finland and Sweden but wins in Norway again with the message No to the market state yes to the welfare state. Globally, the

Zapatistas begin in Chiapas armed insurgency against the NAFTA Free Trade Agreement and Neoliberalism.

1995 - No to Green capitalism

The Environment Association and the Friends of Earth Sweden merged. Both are opponents of the EU and the new organization continues this policy in contrast to most sister organizations in Europe. FoE Sweden publish the book Green Capitalism by Mikael Nyberg, editor of Clarté in Swedish and English. COP 1 in Berlin.

1997 - Amsterdam

A SEED organizes most activities in connection with



the EU summit in Amsterdam, which brings together major unemployment marches from all corners of Europe and a multitude of people's movements. The Friends of Earth are actively involved in both the unemployment march and a special magazine published for Amsterdam protests. A SEED activists also establish this year the Corporate Europe Observatory (CEO) that monitors the business impact on the EU.

1998 - PGA

People's Global Action Against WTO (PGA) is formed in Geneva as a

The EU critical demonstration in Amsterdam 1997 with the Swedish Another Europe is possible banner to the left.

follow-up to international anti-neoliberal meetings in Chiapas convened by the Zapatistas.

1999 - Seattle

At a summer camp in Falun the Nordic alternative movement gathered together with Norwegian trade unionists and the revolutionary Swedish syndicalists (SAC). This was accompanied by a decision at the Nordic People's Parliament in Jutland, to initiate the Gothenburg Action 2001, GBG2001. 87 Nordic organizations united against the EU summit in Gothenburg 2001, to stop aking public sector and the environment a commodity, no to the euro, no to Schengen and no to EU militarization. The Gothenburg Action wanted to continue previous internationalist movement cooperation at the EU summits. The anti-globalization movement mobilize aganst the WTO summit in Seattle. Broad collaboration with the trade union, environmental movement and many other forces contributes to

2001 - Gothenburg

GBG2001 with internationalist platform and the Gothenburg Network 2001, which demanded Sweden out of the EU, organized separate major demonstrations and meetings in connection with the EU summit in Gothenburg. The police stormed the GBG2001 conference, convergence center and lodging in connection with President Bush's visit to the EU summit. Confrontations continued during the summit and some fifty protesters



GBG2001 demonstration

were sentenced to lengthy punishments. This caused a split among the left. The same year, the World Social Forum starts in Porto Alegre, Brazil.

2003 - No to euro

Referendum in Sweden about joining the euro won by the No campaign. FoE and Attac Malmö initiates the Campaign Common welfare together with trade unions.

2007 - Food sovereignty

The Nyeleni meeting in Mali initiated by Via Campesina starts broader cooperation for food sovereignty. Friends of the the Earth International, Via Campesina and other global popular movements starts Climate Justice Now!

2008 - Malmö

European Social Forum is held in Malmö. Nordbruk, Latin American groups and FoE Sweden establish closer relationship which became a cornerstone for the EU critical seminar in Gothenburg. Start of the financial crisis.



Via Campesina banner at the climate summit demonstrations in Copenhagen 2009.

2009 - System change, not climate change

Via Campesina, leftwing radical activists and smaller ecological groups tries to challenge the NGO lobby hegemony with the message System change, not climate change at COP15 in Copenhagen.

2010 - Prague

ESF participants mainly from CEE countries starts the network Prague Spring 2 against right wing extremism and populism in Prague.

2011 - Square protests

Icelandic and Arab spring. This square protest movement succeeded in Icenald and Tunis but fails in other countries.

2014 - Peace revival

2500 participants meet at the Sarajevo Peace Forum signalling av revival of the peace movement 100 years after the start of WW I.

2015 - Greek crisis

The EU and IMF treatment of Greece motivates a number of new EU-critical initiatives as Plan B, Lexit and DiEM25.

2016 - Antimilitarization

CEE Social Forum in Wroclaw and No To NATO meeting in Warsaw shows a growing protest against militarization of NATO and EU. International Peace Bureau brings together FOEI and the International trade union movement to discuss climate transition. A European Nyeleni food sovereignty meting in Romania brings together the peasant and environmental movement.

2017 - Hamburg

The G20 protests in Hamburg brings together all movements from rights to the city to solidarity movements, peace, environmentalists and trade unionists. In Sweden Time for peace! in Stockholm, Just transition and Conference for Nature Cultivation (NBK) in Brodatorp brought foward EU-criticism and bccame stpes towards to EU protests in Gothenburg in November.



G20 demo

Time to build resistance in Europe!

Leo Gabriel reports from the World Social Forum meeting in Porto Alegre January 2017



From Prague Spring 2 newsletter issued by The Prague Spring 2 network against right-wing extremism and populism (PS2). It was set up in Prague 2010 as an all-European network. Many of the members have roots in social forums held in countries in Central and Eastern Europe. Right-wing extremism and populism was seen as an immediate threat but from the start PS2 put this issue in a broader ecological and social context supporting cooperation between different movements.



“We have to create a new economic structure by building forces from below”

“In the last meeting the International Council of the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, we took an important decision: We have to create a new economic structure by building forces from below, a structure which according to the different regions might be stronger or weaker, but which has the capacity to undermine the structure of this oligarchic system which nowadays dominates the world. It was decided to create so called “Assemblies of Resistances” where the people from the grass roots, the peasants, the marginalized, the students, the peace movement the ecologists the Human Rights organizations can join their forces on a local, regional and global level able to promote the necessity for a system change.

The “Assemblies of Resistances” are not political parties, and not a political platforms with the intention to take over the governments, it is

a coordinated effort to create a global network capable to obstruct the present system that rules the world through mass mobilizations. Interestingly enough this idea came up first in Salvador de Bahía where 80 percent of the population originally came from Africa and has preserved its communal roots, after the abolition of slavery more than one century ago.

Presently we are trying to build such an Assembly of Resistances also in Eastern Europe calling for an “Eastern European Assembly of Resistances”. As it always has been in the European Social Forum, Russia is considered to be a part of Europe; but also big movements like the one in Romania which just has taken place could converge towards a pole of “action oriented power” from below, capable to obstruct the functioning of the oligarchic system.

Challenges of the 21st century - the social vector of economy.

The 20th century has proven through the crises in 1929, 2008 and lately in Greece, that an economic system which has other priorities than the social welfare of the people, must fail.

Jean Ziegler, one of the most renowned sociologists from Switzerland, puts forward some global indicators of the economic system we are living in. He quotes that, according to the World Bank, 500 Transnational

Companies are controlling 50,8 percent of the wealth of the world. On the other hand Ziegler, who has been the Special Rapporteur of the United Nations against worldwide hunger, put forward the figure of 14 Million of children who are presently starving to death in Africa, whilst we are speaking here.

These are only two indicators which show us clearly that the so called Free Market System has failed. We should not forget, that in today’s world there are not only so called “failed States” but – if we analyze them carefully - there is always a “failed economic system”

behind them.

It has become even fashionable to talk about the need for a “system change”. This expression which originally derived from the revolutionary Left in Western Europe and Latin America has been taken up paradoxically by the extreme Right. Leaders who have never had anything to do with the discussions about the development an alternative to the so called Free Market System like Donald Trump, Marie Le Pen, Viktor Orban and many others seriously think, that we can change the system by going back to the roots of a nationalistic capitalism without taking into consideration the

Internationalism more necessary than ever!

Hermann Dworczak

Today we see an enormous rise of nationalism, xenophobia, racism- politically the rise of the far right in all its forms: right wing populism, right wing extremism, in some countries even the fascists are growing. In the UK the Brexit won- with an enormous wave of nationalism, even a labour deputy was killed who was against the Brexit. In the USA Trump became president: he stands for a social roll back and wants to create a wall at the border with Mexico.

*Below:
Activists
celebrating
peace in
Warsaw in
action against
Nato Summit
2016*

The main reasons for this horrible development are the combined crises of capitalism (ecological, social, economic and political). There is a lot of fear in the societies and the far right is using this fear for its demagoguery: scapegoats are created (refugees, "the" islam,...) and the reactionary illusion to go "back to the nation state"- with all its negative consequences: hate on "foreigners", construction of fences and walls etc.

Instead of going back in

history (the twenties and the thirties showed what that would mean!) we have to look into the future: international solidarity, international cooperation, support for the oppressed.

This - difficult - job will not be done by the bourgeoisie and its political forces. Also the traditional left failed (Holland!). Initiatives, movements, critical trade unionists and undogmatic left forces have to do it. Not through an abstract cosmopolitanism and just crying "Long live the international solidarity". But through hard concrete work (for example: support of refugees; support of the resistance in Greece against the blackmailing of the EU; support of defence of social and ecological rights; fight for peace in Ukraine and against the oligarchs in the Western and Eastern part) and international links.

The international network "Prague Spring 2" is acting in that direction for 8 years. We are preparing with comrades from CEE countries an "Assembly of Resistances" in Budapest. And we mobilize for the next World Social Forum which will be in Salvador de Bahia (Brazil) from March 13th- March 18th 2018.



need for economic and social transformations.

They are quite simply taking over the word "system change" as an abstract, backward oriented slogan, whilst we, from the radical Left, have been developing the alternative concept of an "economy of solidarity" which should be based on cooperation and not on competition, giving priority to the social and ecological demands of our times.

...

In these times when the oligarchic system is spreading so much political confusion it is more important than ever that we say NO, in a very articu-

late way - and to obstruct the process, by digital intellectual and physical means, of undoing the achievements of the working class, the ecological movements and the struggles of all the peoples of the world - many of them fleeing from one country to another in their despair of having lost the base of their material existence and their cultural identity.

At the same time we have to continue in putting into practice what we have learned from the indigenous cultures constructing an alternative to this failed economic system, a practice which is reviving and revitalizing an "economy of solidarity" capable

to implement the "Buen Vivir" based on a communal structure. Or said the other way round: we have to re-form our local communities in order to get the necessary strength within our own grassroots and not to wait till some miraculous leader or some kind of promising party appears to do the job we have got to do.

From Speech by Leo Gabriel, activist in Prague Spring 2 network and political anthropologist from Austria, member of the International Council of the World Social Forum, at the Saint-Petersburg Economic Congress on March 27th, 2017

Movements Challenging the European Crisis

Popular movements all over Europe are faced with a multi dimensional crisis. To meet this challenge several new initiatives has been presented by the Prague Spring 2 network in this report. In Central- and Eastern Europe Social Forum, peace, peasant and environmental movements gather strength of importance for all of Europe. In Western Europe new projects have been started by members of political parties of the left and Green spectrum with sometimes enthusiastic support from movements and new activists. In Athens against the euroregime, EU, imperialism and NATO. In Paris, Berlin and Madrid different shades of support for a more democratic federal social EU criticizing to varying degree the euroregime.

The limitation of Western European projects taking in the name of all Europe are several. One is an absence of speakers from Central and Eastern Europe at both Plan B conferences in Paris and Madrid. None of the politicians and movements representatives speaking at the final assembly launching the Democracy i Europe Movement 25 (DiEM) in Berlin came from the East, only two philosophers. In general rural and peasant issues are totally absent or strongly marginalized. Later Plan B and DiEM25 events has not changed this substantially.

One can also make the critical remark that popular movements have so far failed to establish a coherent common strategy to address the multidimensional crisis. Thus the new Left an Green party initiatives are most welcome. One can say that the essence of Plan B and DiEM 25 can be summarized bluntly: What we now have to learn from Paris to Berlin and Madrid is that the uppermost convergence of all struggles are not social change but a reformed EU. That has now been the core of many Green and Left initiatives during many decades all failing to mobilize broader support.

Rather than being only critical it is of importance to see that the support of the values shared by all the initiatives whether pro EU or against as the call Down with the euro from the meeting in Athens is an expression of a will to unite in common action. More vagues general initiatives like Altersummit has also not been able to mobilize broadly.

In common is the Western domination. With a joint intervention from Central and Eastern Europe including Russia and the environmental and peasant movement it is possible to go beyond the Western limitations and to use 2018 to build together with other movements a general economical, ecological, social and political strategy against false solutions and for a just transition of our societies.



Youth block at the G20-demo in Hamburg

Another internationalism is possible

-beyond leftism and NGO fragmentation

This report started by claiming that in Gothenburg movements independent from political parties took the leading role in connecting issues building both alliances across established parliamentary issue sectors as well as going much further criticizing the whole development model and the present world order. With the support of MEPs. Rural and urban movements were equally important, ecological issues as important as social beyond the Left and Green party.

In Hamburg during the G20 protests 2017 a similar broad cooperation was possible between groups working on local issues and international solidarity. 174 organizations jointly arranged a demonstration with 76000 participants. The Rights to the city Hamburg became spokesperson for the alliance, not an NGO specialized in international issues.

Joint struggle against TTIP and CETA have helped building alliances. It is time to build another internationalism struggling simultaneously in different countries whether outside or inside EU from the local to the global.

Below: Climate Justice action at a FoE Sweden meeting on system criticism in Falun.



Left projects in Western Europe

With many times greater resources than their Eastern counterparts the Left in Western Europe mobilizes in the name of the whole of Europe or at least in the name of movements in all of EU. This is done through several initiatives. Two with the goal to work for a social Europe, or more precisely a social EU. One by being prepared for an exit from the euro as a way to push more strongly for a social Europe hopefully being thus able to avoid an euroexit. The second initiative is similar but for those who see preparation for an euroexit as too radical, but only want to work for a social Europe through the democratization of the EU. Several initiatives by economists or wider liberal circles and NGOs support to varying degrees support these two initiatives. The third project is an anti-imperialist initiative to abolish the euro regime as a step toward creating another way for cooperation between the peoples of Europe than the undemocratic EU.



Down with the euro!

A more clear message comes from the International Forum for the Left and popular forces held in Athens 26 to 28 June 2015. The slogan of the meeting was Euro is the problem, exit is the solution. The initiators of the forum claims that the EU Lisbon treaty is based on the interests of the ruling classes of the West, Eurocentrism, atlanticism, capitalism and authoritarian attitude.

The meeting proposed to form a coalition for a real, clear plan to end the euro regime, which is also directed against the neoliberal internal market and also against NATO.

Characteristic for both this and the other more reformist left initiatives is that peasant interests are ignored.

Contrary to the other initiatives speakers also from Eastern Europe outside EU as Ukraine had a central role.

Plan B Paris

January 23 to 24 a Plan B in Europe conference was held in Paris. This initiative works for a complete renegotiation of EU treaties. This renegotiation is described as “our plan A for a democratic Europe “, which is backed up with a plan B to get out of “the iron cage of the Eurozone’s governance “rules”.

Four former ministers and a leading parliamentarian are the persons who Plan B put at the front of their initiative - Stefano Fassina from Italy, Yanis Varoufakis from Greece, Jean-Luc Mélenchon from France, Zoe Konstantopoulou who has been President of the Greek Parliament and Oskar Lafontaine from Germany.

Oskar Lafontaine from Die Linke opened the conference with a clear statement: Southern Europe can not wait for a change in Germany with its wage dumping politics, because it would be to wait forever. Liquidation of the euro and a return to a system of politically influenced exchange rates is an absolute necessity. Instead of quantitative easing in favor of the banks direct public investments are required.

Telling for the Plan B initiative is the total absence of Central and Eastern Europe among the 30 panelists in as well as peasants and the environmental movement despite the fact that climate justice was one of the headlines in the program.

DiEM 25 Berlin

Democracy in Europe Movement 25, (DiEM), was launched on February 9 at a meeting in the Volksbühne in Berlin. The purpose was similar to that of Plan B, a project were the initiator of DiEM, Yanis Varoufakis initially participated. The difference is that DiEM do not want to take seriously the possibility to withdraw from the euro. The initiative also has broader political support than Plan B with many Green and independent politicians involved.

Diem describe themselves as a movement, even grassroots movement sometimes, based on a common manifesto for the democratization of Europe. It sees itself not as a party, think tank or even an organization but a movement.

The immediate task is described in the manifesto as to create full transparency in the decision-making of different EU bodies. Within two years, DiEM want a Constitutional Assembly to take place deciding on a future democratic constitution that will replace all existing European treaties in 2025.

Speakers in the closing session of the meeting included 12 politicians only from Western Europe and two social movement organizers from Germany, IG Metall and Blockupy. Also included were two philosophers from Slovenia and Croatia and a US and Australian citizen.

Plan B Madrid

A third larger conference was held in Madrid 19-21 February. This conference referred in its invitation to both the Plan B conference in Paris and DiEM 25 as well as other appeals in the same direction. The call stated that “Social movements, such as Blockupy, the current campaign against the TTIP (Transatlantic Trade and Investment Agreement between the European Union and the United States) , the Alter Summit, the European general strike in 2012, the Euro-marches, or the massive amount of work carried out by numerous citizen groups and NGO’s make up valuable human, intellectual, and ideological capital in the defense of human rights, the respect of The Earth, and of the dignity of people over and above political and economic interests. However, we believe that better coordination and cooperation is needed in order to mobilize at a European level.”

Compared to the slightly more promising invitation the final declaration became more focused on reforming EU and less on “all-inclusive and international”, less “to create a convergence of all the people, movements, and organizations that oppose the current model of the EU” and more of “redefine and re-establish political and European institutions and treaties ” actually only meaning EU.

None of 100 speakers came from Central and Eastern Europe.

No Future without farmers

The meeting which gave the Another Europe is possible seminar in Gothenburg most social strength was held in a small village in rural Sweden four weeks earlier. Here is the statement from the meeting.



Stop transfer of capital from rural areas to big cities!

Participants at the Conference for Nature Cultivation (NBK) in Broddetorp, Falköping in 2017 stand up to safeguard the vital role of nature in the future of the countryside, Sweden and the world. We come from different parts of the country from peasant, environmental and equal right organizations. We oppose the decommissioning that occurs outside the metropolitan areas and the increasing gaps in society.

In today's global economic system, food, land and water have become a commodity like any other. As a consequence, only the big capital players gain access to land and thus power over the world's food production. Small farmers who account for 70 percent of food production in the world are subjected to land grabbing to the benefit of the agrobusiness. Our alternative is food sovereignty, where every nation should have the right to provide its population with basic food. It is necessary to exclude food and feed from the WTO and to re-nationalize agricultural policy.

In Sweden, historically, Norrland's inland has been particularly exposed to land grabbing, but today, the whole of Sweden's rural

areas is stricken. This development is reinforced by the fact that all parliamentary parties are embracing a policy where market economy interests override the interests of those who work in the fields, in livestock and in the forest. It opens up for private speculative interests to drain the countryside of people and resources.

In the town of Falköping, Carl Berglund formulated this insight as early as in 1910 in his appeal to rural people: "It is mainly rural people who, without the corresponding benefits of their small incomes, that pay the enormous wealth created by the big industry through monopolies and trusts. It is a tax far greater than that imposed by the state and municipality, and whose increase can not yet be overlooked. The wealth of the nation is thus gathered in a few hands, while the masses are becoming increasingly depleted."

The government parties, the Center and the Left Party were invited to listen to NBK's message and provide feedback. The criticism was sharp against the fact that all parliamentary parties do not see the central role of natural resources in their rural policy programs. The parties were invited to enter into a settlement with the devastating unanimous parliamentary resolution in 1992 to release

global speculators free to make short-term gains on natural resources in Sweden as part of adaptation to the EU. It makes it impossible for responsible management of natural resources.

Carl Berglund also wrote in the 1910 call: "The political parties will overbid each other with great phrases in the promotion especially of the peasants interests, while remaining in their deeds the humble servants of the power of money."

At NBK, it emerged that the small-scale associations and the Friends of Earth have been unanimous in their keen criticism of the government's food strategy and of the parliamentary Committee of Rural Issues, where all parliamentary parties participated. These advance gallery playing proposals that can marginally affect the development but do not change the negative main direction. There is no insight into how those who work with the nature management are crucial for both the rural and welfare state and how a country-wide policy can be created through a regulated mixed economy.

The historylessness that led to a system change in the early 90's is something that must be addressed immediately. We urge organizations and parties to support the



gathering and publication of the experience of how the dismantling was made of a Swedish agriculture that once could cope with the public supply and civilian preparedness.

After three days of talks, folk music, and discussions between people and organizations, one agreed on common strategies and follow-up of crucial issues for green industries, biodiversity, community preparedness, focus on modern rural communities and other future issues.

It was particularly promising that young people at the meeting began to prepare a network for young small-holders. The question of how young people can gain access to land for growing

was not least stressed as important.

It was also promising that small-scale organizations of all kinds participated strongly. This applied also to the pre-conference on Friday about fair change organized by the Friends of Earth on how the whole society should be changed. Almost half of the participants were food producers from small-scale and often organic farming who questioned the current economic systems. What is needed, instead, is an economy that is regulated, so that the economies of scale of the industry, including the financial industry, does not take over the use of natural resources, as well as public investment in a fair conversion of nature management,

industry, housing, energy and transport. It was also promising that a follow-up can take place in both Sweden and internationally. 6-13 November, the Food Sovereignty Week is organized throughout the country, organized by small-scale organizations, the solidarity and environmental movement. 17-18 November, an alternate summit in Göteborg will be held in connection with the EU Summit on Growth and Justice. Here, the small-scale organization NOrdBruk and the Friends of the Earth are active in promoting the interests of nature management together with participants from all over Europe who question the power of big business. With smallholders of all generations as driving force, the two meetings in Broddetorp for fair conversion and the use of natural resources have increased hope for the future. We hope to contribute to the emergence of an alliance between town and country that can change Sweden and why not the world?

Adopted by participants at the Conference of the Environment in Broddetorp, October 22, 2017

Behind the scenes



Above: Participants at the EU-critical January working meeting were alliances were built that helped the Alternatiuve Summit and the Another Europe is possible to take place. From the left Per Hernmar, Peoples Movement No to EU, Gustav Landström, Clarté, Joel Holmdahl, Via Campesina Sweden, Max Andersson, MEP, Hans Sternlycke, Miljömagasinet, PO Larsson and Birgitta Hedström, Friends of the Earth Sweden, Ansa Eneroth No to EU, Ellie Cijvat FoE Sweden , behind the camera Tord Björk



Friends of the Earth Sweden had a working group for the seminar. To the left: Ellie Cijvat, FoE Sweden board member at the Broddetorp meeting.



*Tord Börk, coordinator
FoE Sweden EU Committee*



*Lars Igeland
FoE Sweden EU Committee*



*Sofie Persson, FoE Sweden office,
here at the Broddetorp meeting*



Above: Latin American Groups was active in the central coordination of the seminar, here at their information stand.



Above: To the left Itza Orosco starting to write the Call for unity in the late night, in the middle Matyas Benyik and to the right Dave Webb.

Many more helped with the practical arrangements during the Alternative Summit, here Lars Henriksson at the manifestation as a conferencier



To the right: Jöran Fagerlund, communication coordinator at the FoE Sweden office at work during the seminar under a banner: Women for Peace. He has taken most photos in this report





A call for

On Saturday 18th November 2017, people from different movements came together at a seminar against EU-politics with the title “Another Europe is Possible” and the platform: Breaking with EU politics: Yes to just transition, common welfare, peace, environment and antiracism. It concluded with this call for unity:

Coming as we do from different ideological backgrounds, we see the urgent need to find a common ground. Coming also from the countryside, from cities, from the periphery of Europe from the unprivileged, we recognize the common interests that unite us in solidarity with the global majority and with generations yet to come.

However, EU-politicians have a different vision. Rather than solving the social and ecological crisis which has resulted from a development model built on ever growing debt, they try the same trick again. The heads of state gathered at the “Social Summit for Fair Jobs and Growth for the European Union” held in Gothenburg on the 17th of November 2017, claimed once again that the social promises they made three decades ago will finally come true once they have streamlined the EU according to the interests of the corporations.

In fact, the European Union began here in Gothenburg in 1983, when the European Roundtable of Industrialists was initiated from the HQ of Volvo in Gothenburg by Pehr G. Gyllenhammar, the head of Volvo at that time. This group of corporate leaders, that is still influential today, put together the blueprint for turning the European Economic Community into the European Union - a single market in the interests of the corporations, promoting social cuts to fund large-scale growth projects such as the building of motorways. This was sold to the public in Europe by claiming that an important social dimension would also be added - something that never really materialized.

Instead however, EU-policies have attacked the

rights of the workers. At the same time the adopted development model is causing a multi-dimensional crisis both inside and outside of the EU. Shaped by the Treaty of Rome from 1957, which gave special privileges to the values of a market economy above all others, the result has been a new way to organize colonial relationships - changing the method of governance from direct political power to economic control. A kind of neocolonial rule, shaped by international trade and finance agreements and prolonging the current Western dominated world order. This neocolonialism also enables the centre to exploit the periphery, both at the domestic level within the EU countries and between EU member countries. The way in which Greece is treated is a clear demonstration of what the centre is willing to impose upon the periphery.

This model built on ever-increasing debt, created growing tensions and finally resulted in the financial crisis of 2008. Once again, corporate interests want to further increase oppressive measures to lower the price of work and lower the cost of natural resources. The rights of workers are under attack and family farmers and others, working under the precarious conditions of perfect competition, find themselves under extreme financial pressures.

The way the EU has shaped bilateral and other trade and investment treaties has enabled corporations to gain access to new markets while local business is given the role of providing resources and cheap labour. In addition, in order to maintain its privileged position in the present world order EU is centralising and becoming militarised in close cooperation with NATO. All of this is increasing tensions within and between countries.

This role of the EU has to be questioned and at our alternative summit we shared, discussed and developed different ideas and the aspects that we feel we need to take into account when it comes to establishing a political and economical system that serves people rather than the big corporations and their interests.

At the core of the seminar “Another Europe is Possible” held during the Alternative Summit was the understanding that the present political and economi-

or unity

cal conjuncture calls for unity and an understanding of the common interests shared between those working in the fields to grow food and those working in factories or the service industries. The economy must be regulated to allow agriculture, as well as industry and services, to flourish at the expense of financial interests. Equally important is developing international unity to oppose wars, militarism, the militarisation of the EU and its growing links with NATO.

Trade unions, refugee support groups, peace, antiracist, feminist, social and ecological movements must unite in a common struggle for constructive solutions and a transition towards just societies where everyone can have a fair share of Earth's natural resources.

Although our different struggles take on many forms and colors, we share the view that the following points are the root causes of our social, political, economic and environmental problems:

- The EU capitalist project has developed its economic model through deregulation, privatization and opening up of markets with treaties and agreements that mainly focus on growth of production and consumption to benefit large companies and corporations.
- Democratic institutions and processes have been undermined by authoritarian tendencies. Western countries have increasingly moved towards a representative democracy that begins and ends with the right to vote. Citizens are viewed as having a right to participate in the political area only at election time. The European Union has also moved core decisions further away from the people.
- Western nations have a long history of colonization. To understand and take into consideration the privileged status of western culture and some European nations is key to taking responsibility for the colonial legacy that maintains unequal power structures.
- The oppression of racism and patriarchy should be recognised as the core instruments of the colonial and capitalist agenda. For example, dualistic views are employed by the hegemonic forces that want to

strengthen border controls and cut immigration.

- Current western culture is based on an idea that humans are somehow placed above the rest of the nature. This belief has helped drive a system that extracts vast amounts of materials from Mother Earth and distances further humans from a close and caring relationship with nature.
- All forms of media are controlled by corporations and do not therefore provide citizens with facts that are unbiased and objective and help them become better informed and take responsible actions
- The current demonization of others and the militarization of societies has to be replaced by promoting both peace on earth and peace with earth.

We stand for:

- Localization
- *Economia solidaria*
- Food sovereignty
- Climate justice
- Strong citizen involvement, participation
- Equality
- Open borders for people in need (refugees)
- Critical thinking: independent research and media
- Return to an idea of common security: sharing common values.
- Culture inspired by *Buen vivir* and self reliance
- Peace

Therefore we participate in:

- Assembly of Resistance in Budapest (as a part of the World Social Forum) in February
- World Social Forum in Brazil 2018
- De-growth Conference in Malmö, Sweden 2018
- Norwegian Social forum September 2018
- Finnish Social Forum 2018
- Conferences on agriculture and forestry as well as food sovereignty week in Sweden.
- UN processes on small peasants rights, corporations and human rights, remuneration for slavery and colonialism and nuclear weapon ban convention.

*Participants at the seminar
Another Europe is Possible.*

The road from Gothenburg 2017

At the seminar Another Europe is possible links were established to coming activities. Some are here shown with a line from the Alternative Summit in Gothenburg to other places during 2018.



Many activists from different movements raised their voice at the seminar. Here a tenant activists questions the way EU limits member states possibility to support housing for people in common.

Via Campesina

Via Campesina in Sweden and internationally is a main global democratic movement having a key role in many mobilizations both on trade, climate justice, rural, health, peace and other issues. As conditions gets worse for family farmers and small peasants everywhere their class struggle is more unified across borders than among industrial workers giving Via Campesina a central role in the global struggle ahead.



Alternativt EU-toppmöte i protest

Brussels
Dec 4
Trade unions
FOEE and Left
Just

transition -
Investments for
Decent Jobs in
a Low-Carbon
Society

Catania
Dec 15-16
Solidarity is not a
crime - migration
conference

Jan 21
Anti-Trump
Day 2.0 -
Anticapitalist
feminism

Stockholm
Dec 28
Demo against
slavery in Libya
No to NATO

Barcelona
Jan 19-20
European
premeeting
Caracas

Munich
Feb 17-Protests
NATO "Security"
Conference

Ole Jacob Christiansen, a mountain farmer and member of Via Campesina Norway speaks at the final plenary of the Another Europe is possible seminar.

Friends of the Earth

Friends of the Earth in Sweden and internationally is a main global movement having a key role in many mobilizations. It is the largest international democratic environmental organization having a key role based on grass root group. With an interest in social justice Friends of the Earth has a key role in building alliances with other movements as trade unions and Via Campesina working from the local and national level to the international.

Maruska Mileta from FoE Croatia speaks at the final plenary.



Essen
Feb 2-4
Ende Gelände
Prepmeeting
2018

Malmö
August 21-25
International
Degrowth
Conference

Budapest
March
CEE Assembly
of Resistance

Helsinki
April 21-22
Finnish Social
Forum

Oslo
Sep 21-23
Norwegian
Social Forum

Salvador
March 21-25
World Social
Forum

Caracas
Feb 27 - March 6
International
Assembly of
People's Move-
ments and Orga-
nizations

May 1
International
Worker's
Day

March 8
International
Women's
Day

Degerfors
May 18-20
Nordic Peace
Talks

**June 24-
July 1** Stop
Airbase
Ramstein

tba
NBK
2018

April 17
International
Peasants Day
of struggle

Sweden
Nov - Food
sovereignty
week



World Social Forum – Alternatives

(As a starting point for a debate)
Közzétéve 2017.
november 26.

Mottos: “Capitalism, the capitalist market economy as a world system essentially is not a reformable system. Whatever is transformed in it, however its existence is extended by the latest, most sophisticated or brutal methods of repression, the main problems remain: the inconceivable inequalities that are the natural consequences of the given relationships of the production and the distributions, the poverty, the environmental degradation, the dissipation of the material goods on the basis of market logic, renewed outbreaks of violence and wars as the way of existence of the great powers, the unemployment, the gender inequality, and the permanent reproduction of institutions of oppression. This system can only be conquered globally! Do not occupy the streets, but the working places!”

Comandante 2017

The social forum movement seems to come to life again. One of the reasons behind this is that the so-called political or parliamentary left as part of the political management of the capitalist system is in a serious crisis

both in the European Union, and outside its borders, for example in the United States or Russia, not to mention the pro-Nazi regimes in Iraq, or Turkey. This time I would not speak about the economic factors of the crisis, but rather about the political crisis of the European left. These parties, including, of course, the Hungarian so called left-wing parties, do not have any original initiating power, they are in the final stages of spiritual depletion. In many places, like in Hungary, the most original initiative is to start “nursing” again, just like in 1989, an inexhaustible, but less meaningful idea of “catching up to the West”, which nobody believes in, since the bleeding of the welfare state has been taking place even in Sweden for a long time.

The crisis, of course, continues to favor the right-wing. Social democracy, not to mention the communist parties have suffered electoral defeats in Austria and Germany, too. No new left-wing whatsoever has emerged on the European political horizon.

Now the time for the social forum movement can come again if a realistic anti-systemic, anti-capitalist alternative is set up by the most active and most organized part of the civil society on pan-European and global level. The halt of its earlier

development and even its decline were partially linked to the failure of their organizing capacities – thanks to the parliamentary left-wing parties present in the forum – were dedicated to the illusion of the possibility of a good capitalism and they were wrong. Of course, in contrast, the concept and the idea of a socialist, beyond-capitalist world would in no way represent some abstract theoretical declarations, revelations, the proclamation of an abstract socialism. It can only break through concrete demands, ideas, plans, existing social movements, which can be shaped in every country according to national specifics.

The following program points can be considered by the civil organizations thinking in non-capitalist alternative, especially in the Eastern European region, where the “overthrowing” of the authoritarian regimes can be displaced in social dimensions only through a wide, massive social self-defense movement.

1. The basic problem, the starting and ending point for all other problems lies in the system change and then its amendment in 2010, when a completely distorted ownership structure, above all the “oligarchization” of (land) property came into being. The system must be attacked at these points, that is, for the wider groups of the society



Alternative to Capitalism

a plural property structure, i.e. the freedom for founding cooperatives (“the owner of the land is the one who cultivates it”). Job creation must be realized from the budget resources that governments have squandered for their own social background, their clientele, their collection of votes (giving money, armaments, police state, etc.). Instead of public-financing the stadiums, the churches, and capitalizing the relatives, the buddies, the party companions and the clientele in general, instead of the forced public work, investments needed for public buildings (eg community social and cultural infrastructure, etc.), public health-care and (upper) education. No need to nationalize, but to widen the job-creating needs and capabilities of local governments. A small step towards the multisectoral mixed economy ... Even capitalists do not be horrified, and the politicians of government, the political personifiers of capital will not scream at the denial of communism’s crimes ...

2. In the social field, the existence of millions of lower classes must be strengthened. Instead of nationalism, racism, ethnic insanity, persecuting the Roma and migrants it is perhaps the most important social task of the Left – independently of politics – is to root the cultural upheavals of the popu-

lation and the civilian “folk” educational structures and self-learning circles found in the Hungarian tradition.

3. The concept of political democracy needs to be complemented with the notion of economic democracy so that every person becomes part of the concept of ‘democracy’. The authoritarian regime of 2010 and its exclusionary constitution must be rejected. Social rights must be declared in the Constitution.

4. The basis of anti-capitalist left-wing politics in its endeavors involves the trade unions and the civilian self-organizations as the main organizational support. Namely, if the Left is above all not the advocate of the wage earners, the workers and the unemployed, it liquidates itself on the altar of a semi-peripheral capitalism that does not provide any prospect either for the Hungarian and the Eastern European societies, or for the vast majority of the societies of the world.

Fight on! Do not believe in parties, but in your own self, in your social organizations such as the (world) social forum.

This paper was written down by Gizella Madarász

Translated into English by Matyas Benyik

A new people’s global initiative

Convened under the slogan “Struggling for Peace, Equality and Popular Sovereignty”, the International Assembly of the Peoples will take place

in Caracas, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, between February, 27th and March 6th.

The Assembly builds on the historic emancipatory struggles of the peoples of the world, calling all popular forces to gather around an Action Plan and an anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist, anti-colonialist, anti-latifundism, anti-patriarchal, anti-racist and anti-militaristic Common Political Platform. Some 1,500 delegates from all continents will gather in Caracas to discuss the international context for popular struggles against capitalism and will put up a Common Action Plan. Furthermore, we will pay homage to historic struggles and fighters of popular internationalism of the XX and XXI centuries.

A preparatory meeting “Europe in Movement” will be held in Barcelona on January, 19th-20th. In Barcelona, we aim at creating an open forum for discussing and establishing a stable articulation among popular organisations and political coordination processes in Europe with those in the Global South. The goal of the Barcelona meeting is to engage European popular movements and organisations in the Caracas International Assembly of the Peoples, as well as to create a sustained internationalist political coordination with other popular political platforms in the world.

In the South has the preparation process involved many movements from 33 African countries 11 Arab countries and 28 countries in the Americas. In Asia Nepal and Thailand coordinates regional efforts.



João Pedro Stédile MST/Via Campesina is one of the initiators

Another Europe in the Making

Popular movements gathering in Gothenburg



Friends of the Earth Sweden together with several like-minded organisations gathered popular movement activist for an alternative EU summit in Gothenburg <<http://www.jordensvanner.se/2017/seminarium-alternativa-eu-motet-18-november>> on 18 November. The meeting was attended by more than hundred committed activists under the broad social forum slogan "Another Europe is Possible".

**ALTERNATIVT
EU-TOPPMÖTE
I GÖTEBORG**

13-18
november
2017



**Fackliga rättigheter
Gemensam välfärd
Rättvis handel
Rädda miljön
Försvara asylrätten
Gränslöst samarbete**



<https://alternativaeumotet.wordpress.com/>

On the day before, the EU leaders met in the same town for the "Social Summit for Fair Jobs and Growth". The choice of the slogan is telling: socially positive policies such as fair jobs can be advanced - but only if the contribute to economic growth. The European Pillar of Social Rights <[13129-2017-INIT/en/pdf> that was signed at the end of the summit documents nicely minimum level of social justice EU is committed to. However, the pillar is firmly put in a context for building a growth model, with the nice attributes inclusive and sustainable.](http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-</p></div><div data-bbox=)

The alternative summit took a different view. Societies have to become socially and ecologically just and sustainable, and economy needs to be put in the service of these goals. The gathering discussed several aspects of economy, including role of transnational corporations, basic income, alternatives to austerity and local transitions.

Lora Verhecke from the Corporate Europe Observatory and Maruska Mileta from Friends of the Earth Croatia kicked of the discussion on democratisation of economic policies and international agreements. The case in point was the EU-Canada CETA-Agreement that would introduce unacceptable privileges for international investors over the rights of states to regulate. At the same time the EU has proposed a Multilateral Investment Court to institutionalise such privileges globally, in a similar line to the defeated MAI treaty of the 1990s. The meeting affirmed movement representatives intention to block such agreements. At

the same time commitment was expressed to advance at the UN human rights regime the binding treaty to prevent and compensate violations by transnational corporations.

Trade and investment session worked out plans to democratise economy and its governance.

Other sessions of the seminar dealt with climate justice and situation of asylum seekers. One strong theme thought the gathering was peace. Senior peace movement leader Dave Webb from the International Peace Bureau highlighted how military spending is breaking records and tensions are building up. Therefore the need for active peace movement is greater than ever. A reference was made to the 2016 conference Disarm! For a Climate of Peace that built convergence among peace and environmental movements.

During the gathering a common future agenda was also discussed. This discussion included sharing information about events that bring together in a similar way people from diverse movements. The list for year 2018 includes:

- February, Assembly for Resistance in Budapest, Hungary (an initiative form the WSF process)
- March 21-25 World Social Forum, Salvador (Bahia), Brazil <<http://www.fsm2018>.



org/en>

- April 21-22, Finnish Social Forum, Helsinki, Finland
<<http://www.sosiaalifoorum.fi/>>

- August 21-25, International Degrowth Conference, Malmö, Sweden. <https://malmo.degrowth.org/>

- September 21-23, Norwegian Social Forum, Oslo, Norway. <<http://globalisering.no/>>

In the closing panel Ellie Cijvat and Tord Björk from FoE Sweden and MEPs Malin Björk and Max Andersson debated the future of Europe.

To conclude, the Gothenburg alternative EU summit was an energising and well informed get-together. Its range of movements and perspectives was wide, yet the agenda and discussions were focused and built a common agenda.

Key organiser of the event, Tord Björk stated in the end that peasant movements and trade unions, refugee and peace movements, rural and urban, antiracist and feminist, social and ecological movements have to unite in a common struggle. They need to work against false and for constructive solutions. A just transition where social justice is obtained within a fair share of the natural resources on Earth is one way to frame the common goal.

Marko Ulvila

Programme proposal for the World Social Forum

in Salvador, Bahia, Brazil, 13-17 March 2018

1) Fearless Cities as world political actors

In social justice, climate responsibility, migration policies and anti-racism, in building democratic, local currencies, in solidarity economies and in the fight against illicit financial flows and tax havens “transition cities and regions “ and “fearless cities” are quickly emerging as innovative actors. “Glocal” action -- local action with a global ambition -- brings new hope to all suffering the consequences of the authoritarian capitalist world system.

This session seeks to bring together activists from the fearless cities and regions movement to share ideas and inspire each other. The session may serve as the starting point for a global network of Fearless Cities for Just Transition Globally.

2) Why Did We Lose?

How Can We Make Another World Possible Again
Many of us predicted that neoliberal globalisation would lead to finance and climate chaos, conflicts, wars and hardship for oppressed people and nature. We were right, but sadly we, the movements connected to the World Social Forum, have not produced winning responses to the failures of the extractivist, patriarchal and racist world system. Instead, the political beneficiary so far is authoritarian capitalism: Trump, Xi, Modi,

Putin, Erdogan, Duterte, el-Sisi, May, Orban, Babiş and their likes are in power. Even in many countries in Latin American, which were beacons of hope in 2001, when the first World Social Forum was inaugurated in Porto Alegre, solidaric politics has lost ground.

We suggest that we can rise again only if we learn from the failures of the past years.

We therefore propose a space at the World Social Forum in Salvador, Bahia, Brazil, 13-17 March 2018 to address, during one, two or three sessions on consecutive days, the following:

Movement activists from different continents come together to

* share analysis of our failures and

* present experiences, strategies and action points, which will give many new hope and energy and open ways towards another world: a world shared by all in solidarity and peace.

We propose to focus especially on the relation between two different frameworks for solidaric politics which have met and shared work in the World Social Forum process. One framework is the traditional, progressive, technology friendly, and pro-modern radical left and green politics. In this tradition the centre of political thinking and action has, since the mid 19th century, been analysis and struggles focusing on economic issues and political institutions. Another framework is that of radical cultural politics, in which the hegemony of modern civilisation itself gets questioned in struggles over ontologies, basic values and meaning of life.

We propose that we see these frameworks as complementary more than as competing.

The sessions we propose takes forward the mutual learning processes that have started, also in the WSF movement, between marxists, socialists and greens with a “pro-modern” framework with indigenuous movements, eco-feminists, Gandhian socialists, local self-reliance movements, Liberation Theology/Spirituality approaches, degrowth activists and others who insist on the need to move beyond modern techno-science and anthropocentrism to more holistic political perspectives.

Thomas Wallgren

Reflections after the alternative EU summit

The alternate EU summit in Gothenburg showed that we have a great need for education and strengthening our network in order to make public influence possible. The Latin American group's chairman, Itza Orozco Svensson, was in place. On 17 November, EU politicians gathered in Gothenburg to discuss how the countries together could improve working condi-

tions and ensure economic growth.

The meeting was organized in Sweden, not only because Prime Minister Stefan Löfven offered to arrange it, but also to be seen as a "global model of social justice and gender equality", according to Donald Tusk, President of the European Council.

However, the discussion in social and traditional Swedish media was not about better working conditions, social justice and gender equality, but about how traffic would affect Gothenburg. But, of course, I think it's unreasonable that people's everyday lives should be set up so that the elite can get between their luxury hotels, I absolutely do not think this should have been at the center of the debate.

However, what should be at the heart of the debate is not going to reach EU top politicians ever since it is about the need for structural system change.

Therefore, I participated in the Alternate Summit in Gothenburg, which took place on 18 November. Here, representatives of different social movements from different countries in Europe gathered to discuss what we need to do to strengthen our criticisms of the EU and the system to reach decision makers and citizens alike. I saw with delight how an intersectional vision broke through our discussions, and that there was transparency for understanding post-colonial criticism and seeing

Photo: Latin American Groups (LAG) information table at the seminar while Dave Webb IPB is talking. Klara Knapp, Itza Orozco Svensson och Emelie Ericsson from LAG participated at alternative EU-summit in Gothenburg 2017



beyond the borders of the EU.

However, I saw that we needed more of this. We need to get together, act together.

I took up the struggle of Latin American groups to ban glyphosate within the EU and how this affects both us and Latin American farmers.

Dave Webb from the International Peace Bureau informed how they work to stop militarization and end the weapons industry. Lora Verheecke of the Corporate Europe Observatory shared how they combine research with activism on trade agreements. From their offices in Brussels they follow how the interests of large companies are integrated into regulations and laws. Jennie Nyberg from the organization Fossilgasfällan (The Fossil Gas Trap) informed about plans for five new fossil gas exposures in Sweden and actions they take to stop them.

Marija Mileta from Friends of the Earth Croatia inspired everyone to see how the fight for climate and human rights really is the same.

We saw in all these and more examples that we have a strong, grounded and critical movement but that we are few.

Strengthening the European system-critical movement is indispensable for reaching out and being seen. You and I can do this in many different ways, here are a few examples:

Share what you can! Feminist, anti-racist, environmentalist, etc.

Dare to be uncomfortable, you do not have to be an academic and have a complicated vocabulary to make you heard!

Follow us and other social movements in social media, share and disseminate information! We see that there are extremely many who do not know what is happening in decision-making bodies and how this affects them and others. If a situation or event arises that you feel needs attention, do something creative to share with others and show your support and solidarity with the struggle.

Participate in web seminars, study circles and mingles to get more knowledge about the issues you want to engage in. We at the Latin American groups are excellent at food sovereignty, Swedish investment abroad and everything that concerns smallholders and indigenous people in Latin America. Engage in the climate crisis and insert the system-critical vision. The biggest need is not to replace gasoline cars with electric cars, we need a LARGE redistribution of

resources to reach Climate Justice.

Read about the history of the EU and share how crazy it is that an organization that has always been at the core of the interests of the elites has ever more power over Europe's citizens. We who believe that another world is possible needs to be stronger, but never forget that we do this with love, empathy and solidarity. We do not want to crush ANYONE; We want that ALL who live and live on this planet will have the opportunity to enjoy a dignified, sustainable and loving life.

Itza Orozco

The seminar Another Europe is possible
was organized by:

Activists for Peace
<https://aktivisterforfred.wordpress.com>

Corporate Europe Observatory
<https://corporateeurope.org>

Friends of the Earth Sweden
www.jordensvanner.se

Latin American groups
www.latinamerikagrupperna.se

People's Movements No to EU
nejtill.eu.se

Max Andersson MEP

Malin Björk MEP

