Quistioni

PEACE IS OUR VICTORY

Magazine of the European Left

N°5

EuropeanLEFT

Quistioni

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Dear reader,

What you are reading is the fifth issue of *Quistioni*, the quarterly magazine in three languages of the European Left. Our purpose is to create a public space for discussion and debate between those who want to build the alternative to this neo-liberal world. For this reason, it will include contributions from the member parties of the European Left, from intellectuals and movements.

The magazine is titled *Quistioni* (referring to the way in which Antonio Gramsci indicated the matters, the problems), because in each monographic issue of the magazine we want to tackle a problem and contribute, in this way, to the building of a common alternative project at European level.

We are very interested in your opinion, feedbacks and suggestions: you can write us at magazinepge@libero.it

Paolo Ferrero

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No second-order election

Walter Baier

The European Parliament elections are taking place at a time when social conditions are deteriorating for many people. Almost half of Europeans say in surveys that they have difficulties making ends meet with their money.

90% fear poverty and social marginalisation. This also has political implications. Fear of the future is feeding the growth of the neo-fascist right, which is knocking on the door of power almost everywhere they are not already in governments.

The fight against the radical right, against anti-Semitism, racism and misogyny, for humanism and international solidarity is and remains a moral and cultural obligation. Shirking and political compromise do not apply.

But defeating the extreme right requires more than liberal anti-fascism is prepared to give, namely the elimination of social inequality and precarious living conditions, that is: living wages, welfare state protection, equal rights for women, affordable, decent housing and efficient and accessible public services, from health and education to public transport.

A fundamental right is also to live in a healthy environment for present and future generations. The consequences of the ecological crisis caused by the capitalist system of production driven by profit and accumulation have now reached the privileged societies of the global North. Apart from the climate change deniers on the radical right, there is a consensus on phasing out the burning of fossil fuels and transitioning to an ecological, nature-friendly economy.

Greening and digitalisation require a radical change that cannot be imposed by avant-garde minorities, but must be accepted by the majority of the populations as their concerns. For this, they must be fair, socially secured and democratically shaped. Ultimately, it is about the interests that are given priority in this restructuring: those of the owners of large fortunes or those of the wage-dependent majority of the populations.

The ruling class is well connected at the European level. It can use the European treaties, the European Central Bank, the Stability and Growth Pact - which is temporarily suspended but ready to be reactivated.

Therefore, the wage-earners and social movements must also organise at the European level to fight for positions of counter-power.

Europeans are not submitting to the deterioration of their situation without resistance. This was shown by the big mobilisations in France against Macron's pension reform, the strikes and demonstrations in the UK, Portugal, Spain, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Romania and other countries.

The left parties and the European Left Party have supported these mobilisations. They also support the European Trade Union Confederation's campaign to end austerity policies once and for all and were actively involved in the Europe-wide trade union day of action on 13 October.

The EL and the left MEPs support all reforms that can make people's lives easier: the demand for a Social Progress Protocol that gives priority to labour and social rights over the freedoms of the internal market. Also Yolanda Díaz's proposal to measure social indicators at the same level as macroeconomic imbalances within the framework of the European Semester.

Editorials

We do not underestimate the progress achieved by the MEPs of the Left in the European Parliament such as the minimum wage directive and the directive on salary transparency between men and women. The suspension of the Stability and Growth Pact by the European Commission and the provision of funds for the reconstruction after the pandemic and for greening and digitalisation by the EU were also reasonable. There must be no backtracking on this.

But we are under no illusions. For a social, ecological and feminist Europe, we need new EU treaties, a different construction of the Union that takes employment, ecological sustainability, social security and women's rights as its yardsticks instead of the freedom of the markets. Achieving this will be a long struggle.

The question of "more" or "less" Europe is wrong. The correct question is: what kind of Europe do we want? Despite an expansion of the European Parliament's say, the EU is still run by a non-transparent system of bureaucracy and technocracy, at the top of which heads of state and government meet at summits to negotiate weak compromises between the national egoisms. But this is not enough to solve Europe's major problems. The many avoidable victims of the pandemic and the EU's inability to develop an asylum and immigration policy that complies with human rights and shows solidarity are proof of this. Remember: the EU will be democratic or not!

All politics in Europe today is overshadowed by the war in Ukraine and its possible expansion. The tragedy triggered by the Russian attack should not make us overlook the wars being waged simultaneously in Palestine, Kurdistan, Armenia, Syria, Yemen and many other places. The Pope was right when he called this state of affairs a "world war in instalments".

It is always the peoples, the working class, women and men who pay for the wars and the armament programmes of the rulers.

One year of war in Ukraine. Despite hundreds of thousands of victims, millions of refugees and hundreds of destroyed towns and villages, no decision is in sight on the battlefield. Unim-pressed by this, Ursula von der Leyen announced in her State of the Union address that she would support the continuation of the war "for as long as necessary". Weapons deliveries instead of peace initiatives, that was what her speech boiled down to.

The world has turned into a nuclear powder keg. Europe and its neighbourhoods are about to provide the fuse to explode.

Joschka Fischer, former German Foreign Minister and prominent Green politician, recently wrote in an Austrian newspaper: "Now is war. Arming Europe has top priority, everything else must wait: the rehabilitation of public budgets or new social programmes" (Joschka Fischer, *Der machtpolitische Nachzügler Europa, "Der Standard"*, 6 September 2023).

In his own way he is right. Bread or guns, that is the choice to be made!

The left must state its choice clearly. It demands from the governments and the EU, which are among the main supporters of Ukraine, political initiatives to end the war, for a ceasefire, for negotiations and the withdrawal of Russian troops.

The war has presented us with a clear choice. We can allow Europe to be transformed into a continent rigid with weapons, where hostile armies face each other, ready to annihilate each other at any moment. None of the ambitious goals of a social and ecological transformation will be achieved in this conditions. However, Europe can also take the difficult path of a relaxation of military confrontation in a system of common European security in which the security of each is guaranteed by the security of all. This is the path that the European Left proposes.

Social policy, peace policy, European policy must be put in the hands of those who have to bear their consequences, the wage-dependent men and women and the young people who fear for their future in the face of the environmental crisis.

The gains of neo-fascist parties in all parts of Europe are alarm signals for the entire European left. Now, at the latest, we must realise our responsibility to oppose the neo-fascist right

with a strong, solidarity-based, community-based left.

Walter Baier was National Chairman of the Communist Party of Austria (Kpö) from 1994 to 2006. He is currently President of the European Left Party.

The times are changing

Paolo Ferrero

This special issue of *Quistioni* is devoted to the debates of the Party of the European Left in preparation for the European elections. The main part consists of 9 papers prepared by EL working groups, which we call "thematic clusters", and form the basis for the drafting of an election manifesto of the Party of the European Left.

This manifesto is to be presented to the public in February.

The "working" papers are the result of a collective work process, complemented by an article by Cornelia Hildebrandt, co-chair of the network transform! europe, the think-tank associated to the Party of the European Left. In this article Hildebrandt sketches out the political lines of conflict before the European elections, based on Eurobarometer data.

EL President, Walter Baier summarizes the political conditions under which the Party of the European Left prepares its electoral campaign.

In addition to the paper on ecological transformation, *Don't change the climate, change the system*, Fréderic Boccara, French economist and member of the EL Executive Board, deals in his article with the political economy of ecological and social transformation.

Tom Unterreiner, chairman of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament in UK contributes with an article on European Security Politics.

Roland Kulke, transform! europe's representative in Brussels and facilitator of the Working Group on "Productive transformation", reports from a forum on digital technologies in the communist governed Indian state of Kerala in order to give an impulse to the debate in the EL. As it is quite evident, this issue comes out at a very critical stage, in which it is becoming increasingly clear that we are experiencing the first fires of a possible third world war. This underlying tendency to war, with Nato as the main driving force, is strongly intertwined with the crisis in world balances and the Western attempt to counteract any change.

In fact, over the past decades, neo-liberal globalisation has expanded capitalist social relations on a global scale and - dialectically - set the conditions for a greater economic balance between the different areas of the world, challenging the privileged position of the Western countries and, in particular, of the Usa.

Faced with this risk, the Trump administration initiated a deglobalisation aimed at restoring pre-existing power relations. In the context of the war in Ukraine, the Biden administration greatly expanded the sanctions system and Russia - the target of the sanctions - began to experiment with alternative forms of international trade to those managed through the dollar circuit.

Similarly, the Brics phenomenon, which involves the major non-Western economic powers and the major oil-producing countries of the Middle East, has developed greatly and is causing a change in the world's balances and fracture lines. Significant in the Brics is the trend towards the use of alternative currencies to the dollar, increasing the possibility of the latter losing its highly advantageous position as the world's reserve and trading currency.

In this context, the economic sanctions, and the break of all economic relations between Europe and Russia have heavily penalised the European economy and particularly the German economy, which had built one of the elements of its economic competitiveness on the supply of cheap raw materials. Europe thus finds itself

weakened, deprived of a strong centre of government, more divided than in the past and more subservient to the will of the Usa.

Our elaboration, therefore, revolves around a focal point: how can we work to build another Europe that is a factor of justice and peace within it and in a world that we want to be multipolar? This is what we discuss in this issue of the journal, and we will return to it in future issues.

Paolo Ferrero, director of Quistioni*, has been vice-president of the European Left Party. He has been national secretary of the Party of Communist Refoundation, Italy, and minister of Welfare in the second government Prodi.*

THEMATIC
CLUSTERS

Peace is our Victory!

Thematic Cluster: Peace and Security

A major war is raging on the European continent – the Russian invasion of Ukraine has already caused the deaths of thousands of people, injured many more, and displaced millions, mainly women and children. Vital infrastructure has been destroyed, land contaminated, and the future of the people blighted. Prices of energy and food have skyrocketed internationally as a result of the war. Those who have been hardest hit are the poor, and those living and working under precarious conditions. The risk of the war expanding is considerable – whether on the ground to neighbouring countries, or through the use of nuclear weapons, which would cause hundreds of thousands of deaths and impact the lives of every single one of us.

This terrible war is a tragedy, and one that must be brought to a speedy conclusion. We wholeheartedly condemn the aggression of the Russian Federation, and we recognise that every day this war continues, more innocent civilians will die. We demand a ceasefire – an end to the killing – now. Russian troops must withdraw and there must be negotiations to bring peace to Ukraine. Part of bringing peace to Ukraine must be a recognition that existing European structures failed to prevent this war from happening and are currently failing to stop it. The war in Ukraine has created a new and uniquely dangerous situation, not just in terms of warfighting. It has also altered the political balance in Europe, and is accelerating its militarisation, which will have a profoundly negative impact on our societies. The far-right is feeding off nationalism, generated by warmongers on all sides, and glorifying militarism, exploiting the refugee crisis, as well as stoking racism and xenophobia. This is not the future we want for our continent.

We do not want an increasingly militarised and brutal Europe. We need to see a new approach to security in Europe out of the ashes of this war. One that is based on dialogue and political agreement, and a recognition that no state or community can be secure without others experiencing that same level of security. This is a concept whose time has come.

We can build a Europe of peace, cooperation between peoples, democracy and progress, but this means a change in approach by the European Union (EU) and by its Member States. We are seeing them putting more money into military spending and less into social spending. This will increase the danger of war for us all, and decrease our wages and living standards at a time of great hardship. We do not want more missiles and tanks, guns and mines: we want better schools, hospitals, homes and jobs. Changing where our money goes is part of building a Europe at peace – and for peace.

Military expenditures and the military burden, by region 20011 – 2020 in USD at (2019) constant prices and exchange rates (1)

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Europe	325	328	323	327	336	348	339	346	336	378
Central Europe	19,0	18,7	18,5	19,7	22,3	22,6	24,4	27,5	31,1	33,6
Eastern Europe	58,6	67,5	70,6	76,2	82,4	87,0	71,9	70,5	74,3	76,8
Western Europe	247	242	234	231	239	243	248	258	268	273

1. Peace in Europe

We missed a big opportunity to put peace in Europe on a stable footing at the end of the Cold War. When the Warsaw Pact was wound up in 1991, there were hopes that Nato would be dissolved too and international relations

would be founded on a new basis, putting the principles of the UN Charter into force. After decades of tension, there was great hope for a more just and peaceful world, built on political agreement, and not on military alliances. It was also hoped there would be a peace dividend, with vast sums going from the military into social spending.

This did not happen. Instead, the US devised a new strategy – the Wolfowitz Doctrine of 1992. This stated that the US was the world's only remaining superpower and proclaimed its main objective was to retain that status. That approach has determined US actions ever since – and Nato, which was now redundant in terms of its initial mission statement as a Cold War alliance, was repurposed to support the US in that objective, expanding its remit and its territory. Europe has been caught up in that process ever since. But that US goal ignores how the world has changed: that we now live in a multipolar world, and trying to force it to remain unipolar will just lead to more wars. We should not be the US's ally in that goal any longer – to remain so makes Europe a likely battleground.

The war in Ukraine makes that very clear – there is an increasing risk of nuclear war in Europe. The peoples of Europe feared a nuclear war between the US and what was then the Soviet Union, in the 1980s. There was massive popular protest and most nuclear weapons were removed from Europe. Now they are coming back. The US is bringing new upgraded nuclear weapons to several countries in Europe, and Russia is bringing them to Belarus, claiming that if it is Ok for the US to do that, then it is Ok for Russia. These weapons put us all on the front line and we must get rid of them once again. The same goes for foreign troops present in Europe – there are over 63,000 US troops stationed here, over half of those in Germany, having been there for many decades.

2. Europe as a force for peace in the world

Europe must make its own way in the world, and determine its own relationships, based on peace, respect between nations, and respect for human rights. We need to have strategic autonomy from the US, to be an independent continent; not to be even more militarised, but to play a constructive global role to face and resolve crucial issues, like the climate emergency, pandemics, scarce resources, and population movements. Collectively, humanity is facing existential threats and we need to understand ourselves as part of a global community to deal with them.

Nuclear weapons constitute one such threat and Europe has the opportunity to help eradicate nuclear weapons and the risk that they present – total annihilation. The UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (Tpnw) came into force in 2021, initiated by the countries of the Global South, to outlaw nuclear weapons. Many countries support that Treaty, but most European countries do not, despite the risks they present. It is time for the EU and all countries of Europe, to stand against these weapons, and secure the de-nuclearisation of our continent – kicking out nuclear weapons and signing up to the Tpnw. It is not acceptable that nine States with nuclear weapons – two of them in Europe - have the capacity to destroy us all. All nuclear weapons must be eradicated, and the resources released must be deployed to better the lives of us all.

Since the end of the Cold War there has been a steady reduction in nuclear arsenals globally, but this has now changed and since 2022 they have been increasing. Arms control treaties have been abandoned and the risk of unrestrained nuclear activity is looming. Nato, as a nuclear-armed military alliance with a first-use policy, needs a change of course and its European members must exert pressure to this end. At the moment Nato is a big part of the nuclear problem, not part of the solution.

Nato membership ties European states into the US agenda and this is currently taking Europe into confrontations that are not of its people's choosing. While the US/Nato focus is primarily on Ukraine, its long-term orientation is towards a military build-up in the Asia-Pacific region to

prevent China from emerging as a global power and maintaining US dominance. Nato will now treat China as a "full-spectrum systemic rival, rather than a purely economic player". The great danger is that Nato's policies have not only backed Russia into a corner through military expansionism, but that they will now also do the same with China. This approach will not help stop a war – instead, the danger is it will start one.

Europe does not need to make more enemies on the back of a subordinate relationship with the US. Europe needs peaceful and strong relationships worldwide, good trading links, cooperation on education, sport and culture, supporting even global development, and ending its legacy of colonial relationships in the Global South. Europe must be a good partner for peace and prosperity, not a continent that brings war and catastrophe to others.

3. 21st-century security – environment and peace

War is a big polluter and the war in Ukraine is no exception – military emissions are sky-high. According to calculations by the Dutch climate researcher Lennard de Klerk, the war in Ukraine caused 120 million tonnes of CO_2 emissions in its first year, which is equivalent to the annual emissions of a country the size of Belgium (2). The UN Environment Programme has pointed to a toxic legacy for generations to come, with thousands of possible incidents of air, water and land pollution and the degradation of ecosystems, including risks to neighbouring countries. In addition, there are serious and lasting consequences from some of the weaponry in use. Depleted Uranium munitions, supplied by the US and UK are known to bring cancers, birth defects, and other lasting health impacts to local populations. The impact on agricultural land affects food supplies far beyond the war zone, impacting on many peoples.

But the impact of military emissions on Europe is not confined to times of war – even in normal times armed forces are among the biggest polluters on the planet. Yet they manage to avoid scrutiny. Because of a let-out in the Paris climate agreement, governments do not have to provide full data on greenhouse gases being emitted by armed forces. The total of the world's militaries, together with the industries that manufacture their equipment, is estimated to be responsible for around 6% of all global emissions, and Europe plays a part in that - its military sectors have an annual carbon footprint equivalent to emissions from at least 14 million cars.

Nato organises regular massive exercises over and across Europe which contribute to this footprint, as well as contributing to military and political tensions. The recent *Air Defender 23* is the largest deployment exercise of air forces in Nato's history. It involved 10,000 participants from 25 countries with 250 aircraft – 100 from the US - undertaking training operations in European airspace under the command of the German Air Force.

The CO_2 emissions of this large-scale manoeuvre amount to 220,000 tonnes, which is equivalent to the annual emissions of a city of 30,000 inhabitants.

At a time when the world faces catastrophic climate change, war and military activities not only contribute to the problem, they also divert resources from solving the problem. And they make it more difficult for a global solution to be found when major States that need to work together to resolve so many challenges are in a state of conflict.

Now more than ever we need to adopt a broad concept of security, which addresses the two existential threats that we face – climate change and nuclear war. And we need policies and actions that will reduce and eventually remove those threats. Our concept of security is one of genuine human security, not of killing and increased militarisation, or the further expansion of military blocs, but of human rights, respect for all, dignity and meeting people's needs. This is our vision for Europe – a continent at peace and for peace.

Thematic Clusters

Notes

1. Sipri, Yearbook 2021 Armaments, *Disarmament and International Security,* p. 251

2. Zdf, *Klimaforscher berechnen Emissionen Diese Folgen hat der Krieg (7th June 2023)* https://www.zdf.de/nachrichten/panorama/klima-fussabdruck-ukraine-krieg-russland-100.html

The Thematic Cluster was coordinated by Claudia Haydt and Kate Hudson.

Life before profits

Thematic Cluster: Cost of living, housing, education, social protection, health, economy of care and public services

Europe is a place of considerable confrontation between those who own everything and those who have almost nothing. Social gains have enabled inhabitants to access services regardless of their resources. Public services and social protection serve as deferred and socialised wages for the working class.

This system is under attack by capitalist liberal reforms, and we need to be clear: the European institutions, with the active complicity of the governments of the Member States, have put themselves at the service of this dynamic and have enshrined this logic in text after various treaties. Access conditions for populations are deteriorating, while access costs are rising, which degrades the standard of living of inhabitants. In this context, the European Union does not know how to respond to economic and social needs. Competition, liberalism, and opposition to public investment remain relevant in European integration instead of putting people at the heart of public policies.

Yet new potentialities can open up based on social movements. In Europe, we are living in a moment of renewed struggles over wages, pensions, housing, feminist issues, and ecological demands. Social movements are vital points of support.

1. Protect, develop, and create social shields against the crisis. The answer to basic needs requires public services and social protection

The cost of living in Europe has steadily risen over the last few years, making it increasingly difficult to access everyday consumer goods, manufactured goods, and services. All services, from culture to health, via postal services, telecommunications, audiovisual services, local public services, and public research, are under attack from all sides, despite being the key to building a society of human progress. Energy is a vital need, but subjecting its supply to market laws leaves the field open to speculation. The transport of goods and people is central to the planet. Access to passenger ground transportation is now more than ever a fundamental issue: how can we tolerate the fact that Europe's major capitals are no longer connected by direct rail lines and that air travel is the primary means of transport for the citizens between Member States? Access to quality food at low cost has become an economic, environmental, and public health issue, particularly in terms of poverty.

Poverty and extreme poverty are widespread in Europe, and all public policies must be mobilised to eliminate these scandalous inequalities. It is imperative that the EU finally adopts an integrated European anti-poverty strategy that tackles the multidimensional problem of poverty and social exclusion.

Public services must provide access to fundamental rights. For the vast majority, increased provision of public services is the only social shield to reduce the cost of living. The inflation caused by first capitalist speculation and then war shows the will of the European ruling classes to transfer the costs of the crisis to the population by putting upward pressure on prices and maximising their profits, while real wages fall and social and economic inequalities

grow at a dizzying pace.

The right to housing. Housing is a critical issue, with high prices and a lack of supply. Gentrification, speculative investment, the scarcity of affordable land, declining public funding for social housing, and inadequate regulation of the housing market are all contributing to the housing crisis. Millions of homes are unoccupied, and buildings stand empty without being repossessed. The housing crisis results from the neo-liberal policies of the EU and its member states. The results are: more precarious housing conditions, increased evictions, repossessions and homelessness, and gentrification of neighbourhoods. More than 20% of the total population in Europe is affected by this serious insecurity. In addition, the urban building stock has a significant impact on the urban environment - regeneration and reduction of land use are a priority for climate neutrality.

The right to education. Inequalities in access to and outcomes from education are very worrying, with significant gaps between students from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds and those from more advantaged backgrounds. Public schools, under attack from liberal policies, are deteriorating, while the expensive for-profit private sector, which also benefits from unjustifiably large amounts of public funding, is a booming market for the wealthy. Education should prepare citizens for the future and be free of any prejudice based on social origin, ethnicity or gender. Inequalities in access to information and communication technologies, educational resources, and appropriate learning spaces threaten the educational success and well-being of students. Schools must be free of charge and free from the influence of private or religious interests. We are fighting against the reproduction of sex and gender stereotypes in education. Universities and research institutes must be free from economic pressure. We reject the Bologna Process, which promotes the privatisation of higher education by imposing extremely high tuition fees for university studies, forcing students to pay huge sums for housing or materials for their studies. We fight for the possibility of international exchanges for students and for research, which should not be dependent on their economic capacity.

The right to health. Health systems, including hospitals in all European countries, are suffering the adverse effects of policies to reduce public spending, and are seeing financial criteria take precedence over the quality of patient care in their management, resulting in the exhaustion of the sector's workforce and causing a loss of purpose in their professions. The global effort to develop and distribute vaccines has also highlighted the challenges of international cooperation and intellectual property in the health sector. The pandemic has highlighted the problems associated with the outsourcing of our industry and the lack of public control over strategic issues such as research and the production of pharmaceuticals like medical supplies. This is a strategy to create shortages. The oligopoly of pharmaceutical companies has allowed them to reap enormous profits from this pandemic without being willing to provide universal access to vaccines and medicines. The biomedical research system, as indispensable as it is, is being diverted from its mission of defending the health of humanity and is being directed solely towards the centrality of maximum profit for the pharmaceutical oligopoly.

Social protection is a major issue in Europe. Social security coverage for health, pensions and unemployment insurance significantly reduces poverty rates. All social protection systems, including pensions, are called into question by the orientations of the Member States and the orientations of the European Commission, which promotes a privatisation strategy. We reject this approach of imposing privatisation, especially of pension funds. Reforms that claim to strengthen the "financial sustainability" of social protection systems are dictated by the search for capitalist profitability and call into question social gains and citizens' rights instead of organising a social shield.

2. Organisational principles of the public sectors

The European institutions, along with governments committed to the theses of

neo-liberalism, have used all their weight to break the specific logic of public services and prioritise the interests of the financial markets over the general interest. The European treaties and the legislation or jurisprudence they have generated have served as vectors for this effort, to reduce public spending at all costs and provide multinationals and the financial markets with new fields for the profitability of capital. A deteriorating service, higher prices, poor access, poorer living conditions for users, and poorer working conditions for employees: the collective consequences of these policies have been disastrous. The crises have revealed the serious dysfunctions on the European continent and have raised awareness of Europe's unpreparedness for a major crisis.

For new economic, social, and environmental efficiency, public services must make it possible to concretise access to fundamental rights. This characteristic implies that they must be accessible to all, in all areas. Therefore, a massive investment plan is needed. It also puts into perspective the need and the role of the State as an employer.

The increasing precariousness of working conditions is mainly manifested in the process of "uberisation", which we challenge by demanding that everyone, employers and workers, including digital platforms, enjoy equal rights and obligations. This uberisation mainly affects young people and immigrant workers.

Austerity policies and the transformation of the labour market, with the rise of self-employment and temporary contracts, have made it harder for young people to secure stable, well-paid jobs. They are more affected by educational inequalities and mental health problems, including pressures related to academic performance, economic insecurity, and exposure to social networks. We refuse to allow young people to be used to violate labour rights through unpaid internships.

Women make up most of the public service workers, especially in the social sector. This has historically allowed them to enter employment and secure contracts, but wages are very low. The precariousness of female workers is evident: more than 95% of childminders, domestic

workers, home helpers, and home assistants remain women. Unpaid domestic and care work allows capitalism to reproduce generations of male workers with minimal domestic labour and maximum profit at the expense of women. Women make up 91% of care assistants, 87% of nurses, 73% of cleaners, 76% of cashiers and shop assistants, 71% of teachers... Hand in hand, patriarchy and capitalism benefit from the devaluation of women and their work. The whole organisation of our society is based on these two dominations. Women bear the majority of informal care responsibilities, making them particularly vulnerable to changes in the care sector and exposing them to increased risks of poverty and social isolation. Women are the first to suffer from the weakening of public services. The public sector must massively recruit, be a good employer, pay properly, listen to employees on how to organise work, and not impose part-time work. Resources and funding must be sufficient to ensure that work is emancipatory and that workers no longer bear the ethical burden of a job poorly done.

Artificial intelligence (AI) can be a huge asset in solving increasingly complex social and environmental problems, but it can also be a danger if used by malicious actors, or if left to the capitalist market. This means establishing European sovereignty in this field and defining ethical criteria for its use. We want public control of AI, defining a set of rules to authorise the use of algorithms. Beware of the illusion of the dematerialisation of public action, which, under the guise of facilitating procedures, contributes to sideline entire sections of the population and is often designed to disguise a decline in public services.

3. The concrete and applicable proposals to which we are committed

Cost of living:

1. The development of social protection by increasing social rights and guaranteed incomes.

2. Higher minimum wages, security of employment contracts, job development, and a systematic right to quality paid training for workers and the unemployed.

3. Energy pricing rules must be replaced by a cooperative approach and prices in line with production and development costs.

4. A European Pillar of Social Rights based on twenty principles relating to equality and access to training and the labour market, fair working conditions, social protection, and inclusion. These principles, together with an action plan, should lead to concrete initiatives in favour of citizens.

5. Economics of care/social protection: we take up the concept of "Just transition" (1) defended by the trade unions, which combines ecological transformation with social protection.

6. We call for the extension of social protection from childcare to pensions.

Public services:

1. Massive investment in infrastructure to improve the quality and accessibility of services. The construction and renovation of buildings financed by the Ecb through interest-free loans to States and local authorities.

2. Public investment programmes focused on the environment to promote the ecological transition.

3. A process of democratic transformation. Users and local representatives must have effective powers over their strategic orientations, over the ways in which needs are met, over the material and human resources to be deployed, and over the evaluation of management according to criteria of collective, social and environmental efficiency.

4. Resources for training and recruiting staff in sufficient numbers, with working conditions that enable them to carry out their duties. They must be given new powers over management, investment and research decisions and over the organisation of work.

5. The definition of the scope and missions of public services must be a matter for parliaments and even for popular consultation.

6. The creation of an independent observatory of public services in Europe, within the bodies of the European Commission, to measure and evaluate improvements or deteriorations in these services.

7. A European fund for ecological and social development, public services and employment, financed by the creation of money by the Ecb at zero or even negative interest, as Article 123.2 of the Lisbon Treaty allows, and with democratic governance.

8. European cooperation between the main national public services. Cooperation in Europe and throughout the world must be promoted through solidarity-based approaches.

9. Europe must achieve equal rights for women and men in terms of pay, working conditions, career development and participation at all levels, especially in all public services.

10. Democratic governance of artificial intelligence with ethical criteria must be established. Provide ethics training for all links in the "algorithmic chain" (designers, professionals, citizens). Digital literacy must make algorithmic systems comprehensible by strengthening existing rights and organising mediation with users. Set up a European platform for auditing algorithms. Encourage research into ethical AI. Strengthen ethical controls within companies.

Housing:

1. Progressive taxation of empty dwellings, expensive properties and large dwellings, removal of incentives and subsidies for surpluses arising from the exchange or abandonment of properties, and the power to take over long-term empty buildings in public ownership.

2. The revenues from these measures will be redirected to public housing and energy programmes.

3. Exempt public housing funding from

internal market and competition rules.

4. EU funds for investment in social housing must be used in the public interest - not at speculative prices.
5. Structural intervention to increase the supply of social housing and the use or conversion of empty public buildings - such as military sites.
6. Reversing the financialisation and securitisation of housing debt.
7. The creation of European instruments to cap rents, restrict short-term rentals and regulate the property market, to break speculative prices and prohibit foreclosures and evictions when a Member State fails to provide adequate housing.
8. Public investment to end energy poverty and improve the energy efficiency of buildings.
9. Linking housing policy to social cohesion, energy saving, and ecological transition.

Education:

1. A major plan for cooperation and concrete action against all forms of discrimination and against social inequalities in educational success, to combat educational difficulties and promote the unconditional acceptance of all migrant children.
2. The generalisation of compulsory, public and secular education for children and young people and effective free education in all EU countries.
3. Maintain or develop, depending on the country, a vocational secondary education with public status, not influenced by employers.
4. Include European cooperation modules in the training of teachers, to promote exchanges and the production of research, and the development of practices aimed at combating social inequalities in educational attainment and discrimination.
5. A European cooperation plan for the development of higher education and research.
6. European study and research grants for students, based on social criteria, promoting and facilitating European exchanges

in training courses from secondary to university level.
7. Quality public funding for all schools and universities in Europe and a ban on public funding for private schools in Europe.
8. The European harmonisation of diplomas must no longer take place from the bottom up; training must escape from the imposture of competence-based training, which individualises the recognition of diplomas vis-à-vis future employers: the diploma must be a collective guarantee.

Health:

1. Establishment of a European Public Health Centre to coordinate activities in this sector in the public interest.
2. Ensuring universal and free access to care, and strengthening public health systems to reduce inequalities.
3. Increased support for health professionals, recruitment, training time and salary increases.
4. Strengthening and democratising the care economy by promoting greater recognition and valorisation of informal care work, supporting family assistants and developing home care and support services for professionals. We fight for migrant workers to have the same rights.
5. Democratic control of the pharmaceutical industry and guarantee of its operation according to criteria other than the rate of profit; creation of a European public medicines hub that intervenes throughout the cycle of medicines, technologies and vaccines at affordable prices at the service of humanity.
6. The protection of the environment and ecology must be integrated into a health strategy.
7. We raise the health issue of access to sustainable and quality food to counter the choices of the market.
8. Demand free patents on vaccines and unequivocal support for the "No Profit on the Pandemic" campaign.
9. Defend reproductive rights, free and

open family planning, including the right to abortion. We want Europe to regain sovereignty and independence in the production of abortion pills.

Conclusion

For the Party of the European Left, it is a matter of urgency to combat the poverty into which the peoples of Europe are sinking. All the peoples of Europe must be guaranteed upward alignment in all areas of human rights and social protection. We want to support the creation of new public services everywhere in order to extend these areas of protection against capitalism and thus promote a new economic, social, and ecological efficiency. Public services and social protection can be valuable points of support in the process of overcoming capitalism, essential for human progress to find a way out of the systemic crisis and the challenges of the historical period we are experiencing. Public services are existing furrows to dig new paths for humanity.

Notes

1. "Just transition means transforming the economy in a fair and inclusive way to ensure that good quality jobs are maintained and created" (IndustriALL, *Just Transition Manifesto*).

The Thematic Cluster was coordinated by Hélène Bidard.

Don't change the climate, change the system

Thematic Cluster: Climate and social crises, economy and ecology, industrial transformation, and energy transition

1. The capitalistic structure of the market created the problem

Climate change caused by human activity finds global scientific consensus, but the politics of the *status quo* knows only the laws of the market and is unable to present solutions. In fact, they look at the problems they cause today as something that tomorrow's technology will solve. Some political fringes, inspired by Trumpism, want to turn the issue into a cultural war.

Capitalism is incompatible with sustainable human development respectful of the planet and by the same mechanisms creates social inequality, a huge gender gap, and threatens the sustainability of the planet. Those who have contributed the least to climate change are the ones who suffer the most from its consequences. It was also this model that caused extreme poverty, an enormous accumulation of wealth and inequality.

The extractivism and the burning of fossil fuels, the grabbing of common goods and the destruction of carbon sinks through these processes and intensive livestock farming and agriculture, are all linked. It is life itself on the planet that they threaten.

The left recognises the climate crisis as an emergency and is committed to transforming the economy away from the carbon paradigm, ensuring job creation, a fair distribution of wealth, elimination of the gender gap, robust and universal public services and public ownership of the commons for a fairer, participatory and democratically planned society.

2. The carbon market created the rich

The false solution of the *status quo* policy was the creation of the European Emissions Trading System (EU Ets). According to the Carbon Market Watch report, the free allocation of greenhouse gas emission allowances under the Ets has enabled, between 2008 and 2019, speculative profits of 50 billion euros for the European intensive emissions industry. Another mechanism of the financialisation of the climate response is carbon offsetting, which has been central to the advertising of big polluters.

This is the picture of green capitalism. Historical polluters were given wealth. When the super-rich are disputing a space race, when a few multinationals are the main parties responsible for greenhouse gas emissions, it is neither fair nor effective to ask for sacrifices and extra costs from the working class. The transition is social justice for a better life.

- We propose to change the current capitalistic paradigm of combating climate change. The carbon market and the matrix used to offset emissions do not respond to the problem and should be abandoned. The change in the consumption and production model must be reorganised and democratically planned to meet social needs, ensure fair distribution of wealth, reduce emissions, and protect biodiversity.

3. The left is the answer for equality and democracy

The first ecological transformation is to decide that the economic system is not driven solely by profit, even at the cost of destroying the planet. The purpose of the economic system is to meet social needs and give a fair and dignified life to the entire world population, and to do so within the limits of the planet. Democracy is the key.

- Gdp is an indicator that does not take into account much of the social and environmental impacts, so we propose to focus on alternative indicators that include societal, environmental and equality criteria.
- Increase the European Union's target for reducing greenhouse gas emissions from 55% to 65% in 2030 and bring forward the date for the European Union's climate neutrality from 2050 to 2045.

4. Transforming production is transforming labour

- We propose a reduction of the working days (without loss of remuneration) and that the increase in productivity is used for this purpose and for reorienting production towards social needs.

4.1 - Undoing the international division of labour

- We propose to build localised, sustainable productive capacity, adapted to regions and short consumption and production cycles, freeing the planet from a large part of the transport of goods by boat and trucks. This means a strong industrialisation (or reindustrialisation) of European countries with the guarantee of work with a fair wage and with production that respects the planet and is oriented towards social needs.
- Creation of a public body to identify the industrial sectors that are essential for

society and the ecological and energy transition in order to set it up or relocate it, recognising and addressing the need to decolonise social relations.

5. Public control of the commons

- Public control of common goods like: water, sanitation and their services; hydrocarbons and other energy sources; energy production and distribution services. Furthermore, a change in the criteria for their operation, so that the priority is no longer the remuneration of shareholders but the guarantee of accessible public and universal services that meet the needs of society and that respect the limits of the planet and the preservation of biodiversity. And that any profits be used to improve or transform production and distribution systems.
- Guaranteeing universal access to water and sanitation, declaring them fundamental rights, also addressing UN relevant decisions. Penalise excessive use.
- Guaranteeing free access to the first quantities of energy considered essential to life, taking into account the climate and season of the year. Penalise excessive use.
- Ensuring that the social and environmental function of water, air, energy and food takes precedence over large private property rights.

5.1 - Keep it in the ground

- We propose, immediately, not to exploit new fossil fuel reserves and to abandon the exploitation of reserves located in risk areas such as the deep sea and polar areas. Declare the total abandonment of hydrocarbon exploration as a goal to be achieved, namely in the EU policy and in the official resolutions of the climate COPs.

5.2 - Energy production

- We propose that public energy companies reinforce renewable energy production with the objective of achieving a renewable energy mix.
- Implement programs of self-sufficiency energy to territories. Add micro-management or decentralised processes to the transition.
- Strategic role of the State, utilising the institution of pre-competitive innovative procurement in flagship innovation initiatives, in the fields of energy transition, environment, social housing, green transport, etc.
- Exit from the Energy Charter Treaty.
- Vat on energy must be reduced and harmonised across Europe.

5.3 - Industrial conversion

- The big companies and the multinationals should account and publish their direct and indirect emissions, with priority for the big polluters such as energy production, cement production and construction, transport and heavy industry.
- Creation of a public organism to certify this carbon accounting and suggest alternative methods, techniques and materials for production, in order to reduce the consumption of energy, raw materials and emissions.
- Ending all subsidies, incentives and tax benefits to big companies that are environmentally and/or socially perverse.
- Continental transport of goods should primarily be done by railways.

5.4 - Planned obsolescence

- Introduce mandatory eco-design rules for products to ensure their sustainability and allow for the integration of upgrades, guaranteeing increased warranty periods and services of repairs and part replacements.

5.5 - Green jobs

- The reconversion of production sectors necessarily makes some jobs obsolete. But these jobs and workers are essential for the ecological and energy transition. Therefore, no worker can be left without work because of the transformations due to the ecological and energy transition. Their work is important, they must have adequate support and training for the transition functions. Therefore, we propose a massive investment plan for training and creation of green jobs based on the relaunch of essential public sectors and reindustrialisation in the areas of energy, transport, and urban rehabilitation, and in public services such as health and education. This is what we call lifelong job security and training.

5.6 - Zero-carbon, efficient houses

- Financing programmes, at no cost, for the transformation of houses for zero-carbon and energy-positive neighbourhoods, with thermal insulation, local and cooperative generation of renewable energy, and the use of ecological building materials.

5.7 - A new mobility model, the alternative to the Suv economy

- Construction of electrified public rail links between major European cities.
- Strong public sectors in public transport, refusing the model of competition in the installation or the use of railways, favouring a logic of integration and development of the territories. European funding for decarbonised transport networks.
- Creation of on-demand public transport services in low population density areas.
- Create free public transport programmes.
- Electrification in transport and green public transport.
- Dismantling of the Suv economy with rules to car production that guarantee decarbonisation, less consumption and a design more compatible with the most

vulnerable road users.

- The end, by 2026, of the production of new cars powered by fossil fuels in the UE.
- Reinforcement of charging points for electric vehicles.
- Developing car sharing programs, since cars spend most of their time stationary, thus reducing the need for vehicle production and the space and infrastructure needed to accommodate them in an urban environment.
- Banning flights in private jets, except for health or national security reasons.
- Interdicting the use of air connections between cities that have rail connections up to 3 hours, guaranteeing the investment in the densification and modernisation of the offer of these public transports.
- Creating incentives for commuting between home and work in sustainable mobility, on foot, bicycle and/or public transport.

5.8 - New urban organisation

- In cities and areas of high population density, urban planning should allow, at most within 15 minutes walking distance from each residence, all the services relevant to social life – such as public services like schools and hospitals, public transports, shops and markets, leisure areas, cultural structures, sports facilities and workplaces – by promoting also a green and digital transition of the public services for all, as well as access to disabled people.
- In areas of low population density these facilities should be located within 15 to 30 minutes away by public transport or, if not possible, by car.
- Integration in the urban environment of dedicated bicycle infrastructures, such as incorporation into public transport and bicycle parking facilities.
- Promotion of green areas in residential areas and green corridors across the cities.
- Reorganising the urban space by creating shelter areas in every city or village and ensure sufficient capacities at national and local levels, so as to handle the results of

events such as forest fires, flooding or earthquakes.

6. Recovering ecosystems

Restoring and maintaining ecosystems and conserving biodiversity have been sidelined in the climate response and treated as if they were a separate crisis. Biodiversity loss and the climate crisis are interdependent: ecosystem degradation removes or reduces carbon sinks, keeping more greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. Climate change reduces biodiversity.

- Encouraging public forestry acquisition through the public right of preference. Promoting and financing forestry cooperatives of small producers.
- Guaranteeing and promoting short production and transformation cycles, guaranteeing the creation of jobs in rural areas.
- Ensuring the traceability of wood imports and banning imports from areas of tropical deforestation.
- Banning the patenting of living organisms. Prohibit the cultivation, import and sale of genetically modified products.
- Ensure that the protected areas of the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 are based on their ecological importance and that economic interests do not dictate the exclusion of areas of central importance. Strengthen cross-border cooperation to act more effectively to protect and restore the areas covered by the Natura 2000 network.

6.1 - The Common Agricultural Policy

The Common Agricultural Policy (Cap) is one of the major financial envelopes of the European Union budget and for the period 2021-27 it will have 387 billion euros. The Cap is a failure for farmers, for the climate and for biodiversity. Over the decades, most Cap funds have been directed to big farmers, consisting of income that made richer those who were already rich.

Small farmers and farm workers have not benefited from the Cap model that continues to fund large destructive models, without adequate space for nature, biodiversity, fair remuneration and ecosystem repair. This model also has a wide gender gap, women receive less than a third of the aid.

- We support, in collaboration with social movements and progressive farming organisations, an agroecological policy model of the Cap concerning the three Pillars of sustainable agriculture, namely economic, environmental, and social. It must be focused on producing quality food and ensuring food sovereignty, as well as helping mitigate climate change. The Cap must be transformed by progressively eliminating its system of fund allocation by surface area, and redirect the funds towards environmentally friendly and labour-intensive sustainable agriculture, with added value and social equity and justice through agriculture.
- Remuneration of ecosystem services to smallholders to ensure the preservation of biodiversity and compensate for the disadvantages of permitted uses.
- Support the social economy and cooperatives promoting fair, healthy, and sustainable food supplies, which require healthy soil, water, marine ecosystems, renewable resources, energy communities, and biodiversity conservation.
- Implement integrated crop protection and progressively abandoning the massive use of pesticides.
- Implement short agricultural production and consumption chains to combat food waste and reduce the carbon footprint.
- Prohibit payment to agricultural producers below the production price and guarantee controlled price limits for production and consumption, regulating consumption margins of big distribution, guaranteeing fair revenues for agricultural work and fair prices for consumers.
- Implement awareness and training programmes for public agents to reduce the

consumption of animal protein and promote vegetable protein like legumes. Provide a voluntary exit programme for farmers who wish to change from animal agriculture to plant food production or ecosystem services.
- Increase the quality of food by guaranteeing a basket of fruit and vegetables with high nutritional content, of the season and of local production, with controlled price and zero Vat.
- Ban all live exports outside the EU of livestock, strengthen controls within Europe.
- Develop a plan for European food sovereignty and security, especially planning for inevitable shortages given climate change and ecosystem degradation.
- Reduce importing soy and maize from the Global South for animal feed, stopping unsustainable animal production that depends on massive imports and threatens the economy, the rainforest and even the human alimentation in the global South.

6.2 - Saving the oceans

- Promotion of sustainable and environmentally friendly fishing gear. Intensive enforcement of rules against illegal or destructive practices.
- Stop pushing pressure on fishing fields outside the EU and promote sustainable consumption of fisheries.
- End of bottom trawling.
- A 30-year *moratorium* on deep sea mining and subsequent re-evaluation.
- Integrate the port areas in the railway network for the transport of goods.
- Implement marine renewable energy programmes in the public renewable energy strategy, taking into account the progress of marine spatial planning in each country. Energy production should be balanced with other economic activities, taking into account a fair share of resources and the revenues of small fishing communities.

7. Internationalist Solidarity

- To meet historical justice and the present climate crisis, we propose that the focus of funding for climate change policies should no longer be on mitigation but also on adaptation, loss and damage, assistance in the face of extreme climatic phenomena and the preservation of carbon sinks such as tropical forests.

8. Civil protection

- Invest in the education and training of the people, and create public civil protection services adapted to the risks of each territory and able to work in cooperation and in solidarity in the EU and in the world.

The Thematic Cluster was coordinated by Luis Fazenda.

To respond to the common emergencies of humanity: a Europe that acts for another world order of sovereign and associated peoples

Thematic Cluster: World economy, decolonisation, global transformation. A Europe acting to transform the world order

Faced with the scale of the crisis of capitalism, the exacerbation of competition, the fragmentation of capitalist globalisation, the seriousness of the militarisation of international power relations, the conflicts/wars, the victimising of vulnerable groups and the common challenges for humanity – such as the climate, health and food crises, and their interdependence – international action is a crucial requirement, in the sense of the common interests of sovereign and associated peoples. There will be no national or European solution alone. In the current convulsions, another world order is being sought. There is potential, also due to more in-depth information/understanding, to fight and open up gaps in the capitalist and imperialist domination, to bring forward a new system of international relations based on the principles of the UN Charter, on collective and global security. The recomposition of the world, and the challenge to the hegemony of the United States by several states in the South, require Europe not to lock itself into a disastrous bloc policy but to be an actor for a future of justice and international solidarity, without aligning itself with a given bloc. A recast European level can bring together States that want to act for a different world order. Such an objective implies several political initiatives.

1. Co-development to break with capitalist and imperialist domination

To break with the policies of domination, a refounded European Union acts to establish new economic, commercial and financial relations for a different world order based on mutual development and not on capitalist competition. The creation of instruments of economic and trade cooperation acting in this direction will be an instrument of a global transformation.

- Free trade treaties must be denounced. New international treaties to control trade and investment in the service of common goods, food security and the economic, industrial and agricultural sovereignty of peoples – allowing the development of cooperation and fair trade, aimed at human, social and ecological development – are being negotiated. The Energy Charter Treaty must be abolished.

- Diplomacy in Europe acts for a reform of international institutions in the direction of true multilateralism and equality between sovereign states. Rich country clubs like the G7 and G20 do not have the legitimacy to govern the world. The UN must therefore be reformed in the direction of democratisation, by strengthening the weight of the General Assembly for the benefit of the countries of the South. The resources of UN agencies and operators must be strengthened. Mobilisation of funds is necessary when related to humanitarian aid to those in need, for an immediate response in case of urgent /major crisis. Given its structural crisis, the Wto must be abolished. The Imf and the World Bank must be profoundly reformed

so that they are part of a logic of cooperation, and no longer of a neo-liberal logic: aid plans must no longer be conditioned by structural reforms that are devastating for peoples and States, and the de facto right of veto enjoyed by the United States over their decisions must be abolished.

- The sovereignty of peoples in monetary matters must be respected, for true economic development at the service of people and the environment. The Cfa/Eco franc, which is linked to the euro, must therefore be abolished in favour of monetary cooperation that the sovereign peoples of the states in the zone will freely choose.

- Europe is committed to the de-dollarisation of international trade and is working to build a common currency for international trade, independent of the dollar and of any attempt at unilateral domination. It supports initiatives in this direction, through an alliance with emerging countries. The Imf's special drawing rights – which would be used to finance long-term, low-interest development loans to all countries of the world, to fund projects that meet the development needs of the common good and employment – can serve as a basis for such an initiative.

- In line with the annual vote of the UN General Assembly over the past thirty years on the need to end the US economic, trade and financial blockade of Cuba, governments and the EU are called upon to take concrete action against the blockade and the effects of the extraterritoriality of US law in Europe. Council Regulation (EC) No 2271/96 of 22 November 1996, calling for an end to the financial blockade, must be implemented. The EU acts for the removal of Cuba from the list of state sponsors of terrorism. The European Commission must lodge a complaint with the Wto against the violations of international trade law and the US sanctions against Cuba and Venezuela. It should also fully implement the EU-Cuba Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement.

- A global debt conference will be convened under the aegis of the UN to assess a rescheduling of debts so that they are no longer an instrument of international, inter-state or speculative market and bank domination of state policies. As a first step, EU countries do not charge for pandemic-related debts. The Covid debt must be cancelled. Credit must be put at the service of employment, training and ecological transition. In addition, poor countries of Global South, whose resources have been fiercely exploited by rich North, have also fallen into a foreign debts trap. Debts of the poor countries to international finance organisations and rich countries of global North should be abolished and invalidated.

2. The application of international law against policies of force

Against the politics of force and imperialist policies, diplomacy and international law are the foundations of other international politics.

- Diplomacy in Europe acts in defence of those universal principles which are those of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 and the European Convention on Human Rights of 1950 and its additional protocols. The defence of human rights, individual and collective rights and freedoms, freedom of expression and opinion, freedom of the press and the fight against persecution, the fight against racism and anti-Semitism apply in all circumstances and are not variable geometry. Extreme right-wing governments must be isolated.

- UN resolutions are the basis of international law. Diplomacy in Europe acts to ensure that they are respected: for example, in Palestine, and in Western Sahara. The EU condemns Moroccan military interventions in the Sadr and demands a binding referendum on self-determination to ensure the sovereignty of the Sahrawi people.

- Diplomacy in Europe acts for a just

and lasting peace between Palestinians and Israelis, for the recognition of an independent and viable state of Palestine, in accordance with the European Parliament resolution of December 2014, alongside Israel, based on the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital. This includes the dismantling of Israeli settlements, the end of the blockade of Gaza, the return of refugees, the international protection of the Palestinian people, an end to the ongoing annexation process and an end to the apartheid regime applied to the Palestinian people in the occupied territories and in Israel. The EU acts for the international protection of the Palestinian people. To this end, the EU-Israel Association Agreement must be suspended.

- Achievement of the goals set out in the UN Charter and the UN Sustainable Development Goals, such as the goal of gender equality and the defence of women's rights, the eradication of poverty and hunger and the full implementation of the Convention on Children's Rights especially in crisis situations. Each European Commissioner will have to draw up a roadmap on how his or her departments intend to achieve them and thus reach the 2030 Agenda.

3. Europe as a lever of change for global human security

- Europe engages in feminist diplomacy. The EU is proposing to the UN that the Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence becomes an international treaty. It fights against human trafficking. Gender issues must be taken into account in all EU external policies, to avoid reinforcing gender inequalities or creating new ones. The EU is committed to a new target of 20% of funding prioritising gender equality (as recommended by the Oecd), up from the current 5%. A feminist fund to support international policies against violence against women and in favour of gender equality is created as an integral part of the EU's official co-development assistance policy.

- Breaking with "Fortress Europe". Migration policies must respect international law: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. Abolition of the Dublin agreements, dissolution of Frontex, respect for international law in the reception of migrants, support to countries of entry including monitoring of the implementation of international treaties/refugee conditions, establishment of legal and safe channels for migration. The European Council Directive 2001/55/EC of 21 July 2001, establishing temporary protection of the EU, must be applied equally to all human beings fleeing war, persecution and political repression. Neither origin nor skin colour can determine whether or not one has access to the guarantees offered by the EU. Ensure that fundamental rights are taken into account in the framework of agreements or declarations of cooperation on migration. Refuse to make Oda conditional on the good cooperation of third countries on readmission policy, as specified in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005), the Accra Agenda for Action (2008) and the Busan Partnership (2011).

- Effectively combat tax evasion at the international level by creating a new, democratically managed institution under the aegis of the UN to coordinate the fight against tax evasion at the global level. A global Cop (Conference of Parties) will be proposed for social and tax justice, under the auspices of the UN.

- Taxation of international financial transactions: European taxation of transactions on the foreign exchange market and on the financial securities markets and their derivatives will be strengthened and a global negotiation will be conducted for the generalisation of this system.

- Reform of public aid for co-development,

in a context where humanitarian needs have increased by 25% compared to 2022 and where, according to the World Bank, up to 95 million people have fallen into extreme poverty in 2022 because of the Covid-19 health crisis. EU countries are encouraged to increase the amount of official co-development assistance to at least 0.7% of their gross national income. Great attention will be paid to the ownership and implementation, by the States, companies and civil society of the countries concerned, of their economic, social and human development projects, as well as their ecological transition policies. At least 50% of the aid will be devoted to the Least Developed Countries (Ldcs) and basic social services. Member States are encouraged to sign the Call for Humanitarian Action. Sanctions regimes and anti-terrorism policies cannot prevent or limit official co-development assistance. UN Resolution 2664 (2022) on humanitarian exemptions to sanctions regimes should be applied to sanctions taken by the EU and by Member States.

- Global cooperation to make medicines and vaccines a universal common good fully accessible.
- Strengthening the prerogatives of the Ilo. Its conventions and resolutions must become binding on States, as well as on transnationals and multinationals.
- The EU establishes relations with the international cooperation frameworks of the G77.

The Thematic Cluster was coordinated by Vincent Boulet and Maite Mola.

A Feminist Agenda for a Feminist Europe

Thematic Cluster: Feminist policies

The Party of the European Left believes that a feminist political position is fundamental to imagining and creating a Europe based on peace, self-determination, freedom and equality.

We believe that feminist power is a constitutive force for new European institutions. We fight for a European constitution and a new idea of citizenship based not on borders, the market and discrimination, but on freedom, equality and self-determination of peoples: for a Europe free of capitalism, patriarchy and war.

From a feminist position, we advance a critique of the neoliberal and patriarchal political economy and propose a feminist economic policy based on overcoming the gender gap at all levels, in wages and incomes. Working life must be reformed to overcome gender boundaries.

We fight for a transversal feminist approach in all political actions emanating from the European Parliament (EP) and the EU institutions in order to guarantee a real democracy. The feminist perspective permeates all our policy proposals. Our electoral programme for the EP elections combines left-wing principles with a strong feminist perspective.

We adopt a materialist and intersectional feminist political perspective, fighting against all lines of oppression: class, gender, race, sexual identity, sexual orientation, ability, age. This distinguishes us from the liberal feminism that occupies the European institutions and risks being elitist. We don't want equal opportunities in a world as it is, we are feminists who want to change the current state of affairs.

We unite struggles: anti-capitalist, feminist, for environmental justice, against homo-bi-lesbo-transphobia, against ableism and ageism. Our programme addresses key areas such as ending gender-based violence, ensuring access to the labour market and a robust welfare state, promoting peace and fighting fascism, recognising the intersectionality of struggles and building bridges between people in movements, securing self-determination and sexual and reproductive rights, and advocating for the rights of Lgbtqia+ people. Women's rights and Lgbtqia+ rights are human rights. We want them to be binding and guaranteed for all, without exception, in the EU Treaties.

We propose that our group in the European Parliament adopt the colours red, green and purple.

1. Peace, anti-fascist and anti-racist fight

The European area is in danger of being redrawn by the ongoing war in Ukraine. A war that, apart from causing death and devastation, is in danger of finally wiping out the remaining possibilities of a "political Europe". We want Europe to be a player for peace, a mediator in a multipolar world, instead of relegating the European area to a subordinate role to Nato's militarism and its expansionism. War and militarism are also the product and poisoned fruit of patriarchal violence. As a feminist political force, we want "war out of history" and fight for a Europe that rejects war as a means of resolving international disputes.

As a European feminist party, we are the driving force for a different Europe, an alternative to

the one represented by the militarist forces. The logic of war, which really pervades Europe, benefits those governments, such as the Polish and Italian governments, which are both the most warmongering and the main opponents of women's self-determination and freedom. We want to counter the danger that the most conservative forces in the European Parliament will be strengthened by the winds of war. As a feminist force, we fight against the idea of a Europe of nations as well as against European nationalism and supremacism.

We want a care-based economy as an alternative to a war-based economy. The increase in military spending, which affects the EU and most of its member states, translates first and foremost into cuts in public services and basic rights such as health and education. It translates into an increasingly privatised social burden on the shoulders of women. Ending wars and promoting peace and civil conflict resolution would have an immense impact on women. Indeed, it is women who are most harmed by being used as spoils of war, by being vulnerable to trafficking networks for sexual exploitation, by being left without resources or by being displaced.

The rising rhetoric of Western supremacy and the return of nationalisms go hand in hand with a worrying increase in neo-fascist violence in Europe, as the EP resolution on the rise of neo-fascist violence in Europe already noted (1). Post- and neo-fascism, as well as the logic of war, reproduce stereotypes and gender roles and directly attack women's rights. We fight against the idea of women's bodies as the incubator of the nation and consider feminism as the most radical antidote to any form of post- and neo-fascism, hate speech and patriarchal culture.

Migrant women are often rejected by "Fortress Europe", and left to die in the Mediterranean or along the Balkan route. Gender discrimination makes migrant women vulnerable both in the country of departure and in the country of arrival, due to the gender gap in employment, the risk of becoming victims of abuse or trafficking, and the lack of a gender approach in EU asylum and immigration policies.

We therefore propose:

- European observatory analysing the impact of wars on women.
- - Feminists as part of the negotiating tables for the resolution of military conflicts.
- Implementation and full enforcement of the European Parliament resolution on the rise of neo-fascist violence in Europe.
- A migration pact and asylum policy with a gender perspective to build an alternative to Fortress Europe.
- Strengthening anti-fascist policies and legislation, combating hate speech, xenophobia, racism and discrimination in all its forms.

2. Stopping gender-based violence

We fight against all forms of sexist violence suffered by women: domestic, sexual, psychological, socio-economic, cultural, institutional, obstetric, proxy, physical; cyber violence, female genital mutilation, forced marriage, trafficking; labour, sexual and reproductive exploitation and feminicide. It is important to name feminicide because the neutral term homicide ignores the reality of inequality, oppression and systematic violence against women.

In 2023, the European Union finally acceded to the Istanbul Convention, the most comprehensive international human rights treaty to prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence. The Convention is a fundamental instrument for preventing and combating violence against women in all its forms. It requires data collection, prevention and a gender perspective in many areas, from education to asylum and reception policies. While all Member States (MS) have signed the Convention, challenges remain in relation to its ratification in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary and Slovakia. In 2020, Eurostat recorded 788 female victims

of homicide by a family member or intimate partner in the 17 EU Member States that provide the data.

The EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (Fra) and the European Institute for Gender Equality (Eige) will conduct a survey on violence against women (Vaw II) in eight EU Member States (CZ, DE, IE, CY, LU, HU, RO, SE), which will complement the Eurostat-led data collection on gender-based violence and other forms of interpersonal violence (EU-Gbv) in the remaining countries. The use of a common methodology will ensure the availability of comparable data across all EU Member States. The data collection will be completed in 2023 and the results will be used to update the violence domain in the Gender Equality Index 2024 and its thematic focus on violence against women.

We propose:

- Monitoring of the Istanbul Convention, its full implementation at the EU and MS level and its ratification by all Member States, as repeatedly requested by the European Parliament and the Femm and Libe Committees.
- A comprehensive EU policy framework to eliminate all violence against women: strengthening the legal framework to combat gender-based violence, ensuring full implementation of the forthcoming EU Directive on gender-based violence at Member State level; legal provisions on feminicide, such as legal recognition of the term "feminicide" in the EU and in the MS; a common definition of rape in the EU and in all MS, based on the absence of consent (in some MS the use of force or threat is required).
- Support for women and Lgbtqia+ survivors of gender-based violence by providing funding for the establishment and maintenance of specialised shelters, training for professionals involved in reception activities, counselling services and helplines for survivors of all genders.
- A comprehensive policy framework for gender education to help eradicate patriarchal culture and implement educational programmes in schools (for students, teachers and technical staff) and communities to promote healthy relationships, consent and gender equality, with a focus on tackling harmful gender stereotypes and promoting gender studies at all levels.
- Invest in training on gender stereotypes and unconscious bias.
- Recognise and address the interconnected nature of different forms of oppression, such as sexism, racism, ableism, classism and homophobia; promote intercultural dialogue, tolerance and solidarity among diverse communities.
- Promote cooperation and solidarity between social justice movements, recognising that progress in one area is linked to progress in others.
- Strengthen the voices of marginalised communities and ensure their representation in decision-making processes at all levels.
- Care for victims of trafficking: Require all EU countries to respect the Palermo Protocol (2000) on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings from a human rights and gender perspective. Victims should not be punished for crimes they have been forced to commit, nor should they be repatriated without prior reparation or against their will.
- Oppose any sectarian violence against women, children, secularism and freedoms, as well as its patriarchal and anti-equality regressive policies.

3. For a feminist political economy: closing the gender gap!

At the European level, there is still a double exploitation of women in the productive and reproductive spheres: the neo-liberal and the

patriarchal exploitation. The non-recognition and unequal redistribution of women's care work go hand in hand with the increasing privatisation of public services. This is compounded by the persistence of the gender gap in income, wages and pensions; the crystal ceiling in careers and horizontal segregation; the precariousness and privatisation of the sectors of work with the highest rate of female employment. Policies are urgently needed to guarantee equality and non-discrimination in the different spheres of women's lives and to strengthen and expand the welfare state, including affordable and accessible health care, childcare, housing and social security systems to support individuals and families. A feminist economic policy based on care, not profit, is necessary to combat all forms of gender inequality.

We propose:

- Address gender gaps in labour laws at the national level and advocate for fair and inclusive labour laws that guarantee equal pay for equal work, combat discrimination in the workplace and ensure work-life balance.
- Close the gender payment gap by extending the standard set by the EU Pay Transparency Directive to all organisations employing workers.
- End the gender pay gap through policies to tackle inequality and by completing the EU Pay Transparency Directive. We support a statutory minimum wage at Member State and EU level.
- Extend the mandatory requirement to develop and implement a Gender Equality Plan (now required for Horizon Europe applications) to all EU funding programmes.
- An EU directive for an unconditional basic income for self-determination.
- Promote vocational training, education and career development programmes that prioritise marginalised communities, including women, migrants, Lgbtqia+ people and people with disabilities.
- Design and provide parental leave provisions for different types of household

composition; define a minimum standard for parental leave and establish equal standards for paid parental leave across Member States; establish a mandatory minimum period for both parents.
- Increase public investment in quality, affordable and accessible childcare facilities, care for the elderly and support systems for people with disabilities.
- Promote public care systems through a directive as a guiding framework for the development of public care systems in the EU as a pillar of social protection and equality. Funding of projects to develop national public care systems from a human rights and gender perspective to achieve shared responsibility models of care between the state, the community and between men and women.
- Implement measures to promote work-life balance, including flexible working hours, parental leave and support for carers.
- Support bottom-up participatory urban and transport design and planning, including Lgbtqia+ people, women's, disabled people's, youth and migrant associations, to ensure that everyone has access to quality employment, education and social and cultural life.
- Guarantee decent work for women: equality policies must be designed to improve access to training and/or job opportunities and guarantee equal opportunities for women and men, overcoming the existing stereotypical culture of employing women in the lowest-paid or most precarious jobs.
- Stop the privatisation of social security systems, which increases the gender pay and pension gap. Pensions must be increased and guaranteed for women.
- Include a Social Progress Protocol in the Treaties to ensure that workers', trade union and social rights take precedence over economic freedoms in the event of conflict.
- Ensuring coherence and recognition of care work: making visible the unpaid care of children, elderly and disabled family

members and its importance for society (2).

- Require all Member States to ratify and implement Ilo Convention 189 on Domestic Workers, which recognises their significant contribution to the global economy.
- Women's rights must be binding and guaranteed for all, without exception, in EU treaties: the right to free and easily accessible contraceptive services and safe abortion, respect for sexual orientation and gender identity, equal rights in terms of pay, working conditions, co-responsibility, career development and participation at all levels.
- Women's rights, social and environmental standards must be binding in EU trade agreements. The right to free and easily accessible contraceptive services and safe abortion, respect for sexual orientation and gender identity, equal rights in terms of pay, working conditions, co-responsibility, professional development and participation at all levels (3).
- The regulation of teleworking.

4. Empowerment for all: women's rights and Lgbtqia+ rights are human rights

We consider women's empowerment and freedom, the right to sexual and reproductive health and safe abortion, and the civil rights of Lgbtqia+ people as fundamental human rights. Yet they are under attack in some EU member states, such as Poland, Hungary and Italy. Instead, we see the 'Ley Trans' passed in Spain as a reference point for future European legislation.

We propose:
- Include the right to abortion in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.
- Ensure the right to free and safe abortion in public health services and sexual and reproductive health. We want to decriminalise abortion and remove and

combat the remaining legal, financial, social and practical restrictions that still hamper access in some Member States.

- Ensure the right to self-determination, including the right to choose and access comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services and rights, including safe and legal abortion and reproductive technologies. We call for the full respect of women's right to decide about their motherhood and their bodies. EU Member States should guarantee access to safe, legal and free abortion services, pre-natal and maternal health services, voluntary family planning, treatment and support, without discrimination.
- Promote gender-sensitive health care, including accessible and affordable gender-affirming treatments and surgeries.
- Implement legal gender recognition, civil marriage, and child adoption rights for Lgbtqia+ couples in all EU Member States.
- The legal recognition of Lgbtqia+ identities as grounds for asylum and protection.
- The banning of conversion therapy and trans de-pathologisation.
- The promotion of anti-discrimination legislation and the definition of hate crimes/ hate speech.
- Ensure respect for diversity and non-discrimination of rights based on disability, single-parent families, Lgbtqia+, age and origin.
- Advocate for the removal of all barriers to access to reproductive health care, including financial, legal and geographical barriers.
- Advocate for comprehensive legal protection against discrimination on the grounds of gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression, guaranteeing standards and a decent life for all people in the EU.
- Support the recognition of diverse family structures, including same-sex marriage and adoption rights, while promoting inclusive education and combating Lgbtqia+ bullying and harassment.

Thematic Clusters

Feminist power liberates all!

Notes

1. European Parliament resolution https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2018-0428_EN.html adopted on 25/10/18

2. Oxfam, *Time to care* https://www.oxfam.org/en/research/time-care

3. European Parliament report on gender equality in EU trade agreements adopted on 13.3.2018: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-8-2018-0023_EN.html

The Thematic Cluster was coordinated by Eleonora Forenza.

Good jobs in a strong and green economy

Thematic Cluster: Labour Rights

30 years of the Single Market has failed to deliver fair competition and adequate livelihoods for all individuals. The European Social Dialogue has failed in its aims. The lack of balance of power in negotiations with multinationals makes European Work Councils meaningless. Abusive practices and social dumping reign all over the place thanks to subcontracting in cascade. High staff turnover and lack of proper training lurk behind the ramping staff shortages, while the super-rich pay the lowest-ever tax rates...

Workers and the working class ought to be placed at the forefront of a novel European Union, one that is fortified by a robust and ecologically sustainable economy. To this end, the Tune (Trade Unionists' Network) and The Left in the EU Parliament propose 16 critical points that must be implemented during the 2024-2029 term. The aim is to make true the slogan "Nobody is left behind".

With these 16 points, we try to give visibility to many of the reasons behind the progressive distancing of the working class from the EU project. Giving the right solutions to these demands will undoubtedly become a major step in the right direction to building the ever-announced and never-found "Social Europe".

Workers and the working class must be at the centre of a new EU.

These are the 16 points for the EU Parliament and for the decision-making bodies to deliver during the 2024-2029 term:

1. Just Transition (green and digital): "Nobody left behind". A Just Green and Digital Transition achieved by embedding a culture of engagement of trade unions and civil society in drafting and implementing all relevant investments.

2. Fair salaries for decent living standards for All (salary or conflict): "No more working poor!"

3. Empowered European Social Dialogue with a balance of power granted, so workers' representatives can effectively negotiate beneficial terms for workers.

4. The right to European actions/strikes must become a fundamental axis towards an EU collective bargaining and a people-oriented EU, where social rights must be at the centre of a new European Social Dialogue and be the foundation of European Works Councils.

5. Fighting abusive practices and social dumping: introduction of joint and several liability in subcontracting chains; introduction of a legal obligation to make companies' compliance with applicable collective bargaining agreements and/or labour law a mandatory award criterion in public procurements; implementation across the EU of Ilo Convention No. 81 on labour inspectorates.

6. Anticipation to change: re/up-skilling of workers. High social development (in the shape of skills, job security and wages) must be at the centre of an empowered EU autonomy with a position of relative strength, while building a multilateral global economic scenario.

7. Fair taxation: achieving a more effective EU fiscal cooperation and fiscal solidarity is a must, together with a more stringent control of the public money given to enterprises, chiefly aimed at redistributing the risks inherent to the current economic

turmoil and dispersing it away from citizens and workers.

8. Migrant workers welcome on equal terms and conditions: they must be guaranteed the right to work under the legal conditions and rights of the country where they perform the work when not respected by the employer.

9. An EU push for public ownership of key companies (energy, health systems, transport, food etc.) with the purpose of both reducing existing quasi-monopolistic practices and spreading a scenario where States can regain a balance of power to benefit workers and citizens facing the growing power of private corporations and investment funds.

10. Mitigate competition's undesired effects by avoiding social dumping, bogus self-employment, outsourcing and race to the bottom of salaries (maintaining and enhancing workers' rights is more than ever necessary).

11. Fair and inclusive European welfare system that provides broad and well-organised access to sickness, education and unemployment benefits, thus combining social protection and social investments.

12. Mandatory sectoral agreements negotiated by country: in a new EU of the Peoples, there cannot be room left for anti-union practices – therefore collective bargaining must be protected at the highest possible levels, including public procurement.

13. Tackling violence and harassment against women everywhere, including at work. Many women are affected in one way or another by violence and harassment because of their employment status, the type of work they carry out, or because of the conditions in the sector they work in. Just and fair policies and practices must be implemented to eradicate this scourge.

14. Improving working conditions in platform work: those working in the platform economy are workers too! Workers' rights are not negotiable! All forms of collective representation must be guaranteed so that platform workers can find the most appropriate way to union recognition.

15. Fair pension systems across the EU to support retired people: put an end to longer working lives and favour the stabilisation of a general working time reduction.

16. The EU needs to deliver a Social Progress Protocol giving priority to workers' and social rights over economic freedoms, a Protocol to channel the future frame towards an EU of the Peoples.

All the above requests are necessary, but first and foremost Peace is needed to deliver the positive effects of any of them. The Tune calls for the EU to open all channels for diplomacy and facilitate an immediate round of peace talks. Wars and an arms race will not bring a better world. Only dialogue and understanding do.

The Thematic Cluster developed the document in collaboration with Trade Unionists' Network Europe. It was coordinated by Enrique Carmona.

Socialism or barbarism (fascism)!

Thematic Group: Fighting the Far Right

The multiple crises that the world faces today – climate catastrophe, war and economic crisis - have helped create an increasingly fertile context for a surge in support for the far-right. They have exploited the intensifying hardship and suffering across our societies and communities, building the politics of hate and fear. The traditional parties of the right and the ruling class have embraced much of their narrative; far-right policies have become the new normal, even in mainstream governing parties as they look for an authoritarian way out of the crises. New alliances are being forged between the right and the far-right, racist and xenophobic polices are being advanced across Europe and the abuse, mistreatment and scapegoating of refugees and migrants has reached profoundly shocking levels. Whether in government office or armed in paramilitary gangs on the streets, the far-right attacks the rights and liberties of us all, our diverse communities and our democracy.

The European Left stands together united with all those committed to creating a different society where there is no space for fascism in any of its forms: a society of equality, justice, and peace. We recognise that there are huge new challenges to achieving this goal. The war in Ukraine has created a new and uniquely dangerous situation, altering the political balance in Europe, and accelerating its militarisation, which will have a profoundly negative impact on our societies. The far-right is feeding off nationalism, generated by warmongers on all sides, and glorifying militarism, exploiting the refugee crisis, as well as stoking racism, antisemitism and xenophobia. The far right also feeds on religious feelings and traditions to support their reactionary views. It is further developing in this new context, deepening cooperation across Europe – indeed far-right and neo-Nazi forces are building an international network, with a strong focus in the countries of central and eastern Europe.

1. A time of crisis

We recognise that humanity continues to face multiple crises – climate catastrophe, war, pandemic and health emergencies, economic chaos, inflation, and impoverishment for the many; there is real anger and despair caused by the neoliberal policies and actions of the ruling elites. The far-right has exploited the economic crisis to build its social and political base, weaponised the pandemic for its own political interests, utilised fake news and anti-science conspiracy theories to deny climate change, and cancelled achievements for women, minorities and the Lgbtiq+ community in many European countries. But the major political gains of the far-right are not just built on the current crises – they have long roots in decades of neo-liberal economic policies, de-industrialisation, and the retreat of popular sovereignty in the face of capitalist globalisation and its effects. Working together we are able to share our analysis, and understand these developments and what is required to defeat them.

2. Against the war

In many ways, we are at a turning point for our societies, and we state that we reject the

brutality, hatred, and oppression that war fever, generated by our leaders, has brought about. We reject the untold damage it will cause the working class and our diverse communities, particularly through the strengthening of the far-right, enabled by the culture of war. The war in Ukraine has attracted fascists and neo-Nazis from all over Europe; with their return home, we will face thousands of brutalised people, who will be challenging peace in our societies with their knowledge of weapons and warfare.

3. Fighting back

We are united in our determination to challenge both the far-right and the warmongers and to defeat them. We will fight back with all our strength, building the movements, uniting across borders, and defending and strengthening trade unions. Fascism will grow and strengthen more quickly in countries where trade unions and left-wing parties are weak and the social protection of workers is destroyed. We will work together in action for international solidarity, with migrants, women, Lgbtq+ communities, disabled people and all those under attack. And in this time of war, we will work with the peace movements to end this war and end the militarism which blights and distorts our societies.

4. Winning

Our parties and movements have strong traditions against fascism and war. We find strength in that, and we will also build upon and extend the hard-won victories of today, in Latin America and elsewhere, where the people mobilise for a different vision of society and defeat the hate and fear. Anti-fascist and left forces must build international cooperation to support and popularise that vision - and to reject the increasing anticommunism and historical revisionism which goes side by side with the rise of the far-right. Part of this is building a strong left in the European Parliament – we cannot countenance a right/far-right majority in that parliament or any other. As Rosa Luxemburg said, we face a choice: socialism or barbarism. Let's strengthen and deepen our commitment to building that alternative vision of socialism – and together make it a reality.

We propose the following initiatives:

- an antifascist coordination centre in Europe.
- the banning of neo-Nazi organisations in EU member states.
- an information and education centre in every country, to share knowledge about fascism, racism and xenophobia.
- requiring national intelligence services to coordinate more effectively against far-right terrorist cells.
- requiring national governments to include the historical struggle against fascism in their educational programmes.

The Thematic Cluster was coordinated by Attila Vajnai.

Culture for all, right away!

Thematic Cluster: Culture

Culture is an essential good. It allows us to understand the world in all its facets. It makes it possible both to distinguish the peoples and to bring them closer together. Because if we identify it very often with creators, artists... it is also (and perhaps especially) what makes it possible to understand society, the world; to position oneself and express a critical, citizen look; in short, to emancipate oneself.

1. Full-fledged workers

Artists and other cultural workers are workers in their own right. They are permanently so because intermittency is not a moment of idleness, it is also a time of repetition, composition, study, research… A time that leads to creation, representation, dissemination...

The EL will work to ensure that the EU encourages the States to create a statute for both creative and performing artists. A status that will provide them with a sufficient income and get them out of a precarious situation inconceivable in the 21st century. Examples already exist in different European countries, so the EU can build on these experiences and promote them.

2. Financial resources for the development of culture

If national sovereignty must be respected within the EU, we cannot accept a situation that contributes to the belief that culture is a matter for the rich, the privileged. The obstacle is often the lack of financial means. Every woman and man, whatever their social condition, is the bearer of a culture that is the product of their working and living conditions. Through culture, many associations strive to get out of the isolation and despair of the men and women that the system rejects. These associations must be supported.

The EL supports the proposal put forward in a motion widely adopted by the European Parliament to devote 2% of the Union's Gdp to support culture.

Uberisation, i.e. the undermining of labour laws that are protected by joint agreements controlled by the trade unions, is affecting certain sectors of commerce and seems to be spreading to other professions, including those linked to culture.

The EL will spare no effort to ensure that labour law is rigorously respected and extended where it is still lacking. There can be no question of tolerating the precariousness of work for the sole benefit of capital.

3. The question of gender is also a cultural question

Violence, harassment and discrimination against women affect all sectors of society. The cultural world is no exception. Discrimination is particularly blatant in the fees paid by artists, and in the highlighting of female roles in

relation to male roles. It is also very important in the allocation of positions of responsibility in cultural institutions. The management of museums or theatres is systematically assigned to men.

The EL has made the fight against violence against women a priority. It also fights tirelessly against all forms of discrimination.

4. Culture cannot be a weapon of war

In a world where war spreads to our borders, it is fundamental that the cultures of peoples are respected and continue to work for their rapprochement and therefore for Peace. The works of some ancient artists do not only belong to their homeland of origin, they are part of the heritage of Humanity.

The EL opposes any ostracism against artists who have no responsibility for the ongoing conflicts and strongly condemns the repression of Russian artists who oppose the war.

5. Migration has always been an enrichment for culture

Today, Europe represents a vital hope for women, men and children fleeing poverty, hunger, wars and dictatorships. Tomorrow, it will be people fleeing the consequences of climate change. A dignified reception policy is the most beautiful sign of a democratic and humane society. The fact that governments deliberately allow hundreds of people to die at sea is a sign of genuine barbarism.

Life has shown, however, that the contribution of migration has often been beneficial for welcoming peoples. Culture itself has been enriched. An indigenous culture is itself the result of very ancient migrations whether artistic, gastronomic, architectural, musical... Far from being competitors, new cultures enrich themselves and peoples.

The EL is committed to promoting an inclusive cultural policy within the EU that is both respectful of indigenous cultures and welcoming to new cultures.

6. For another political and cultural approach to digital technology in education

The development of new technologies is a revolution comparable to the industrial revolution of the 19th century. It fundamentally changes the way we live and profoundly transforms whole sections of society. This is the case for teaching, which deserves special attention and real vigilance because of the repercussions of the Covid 19 crisis.

Indeed, this and the ensuing lockdown have put forward distance learning. A breach has thus been opened to profoundly transform education itself. This transformation should prompt us to reflect in depth on the impact that the intensification of the use of digital technology could have. Capitalism has understood that these digital tools could completely transform the very orientation of education, which would no longer be to educate young girls and boys to become full citizens, with scientific and cultural tools to be actors in society, but future workers trained for the needs of the company. School curricula would no longer be developed by pedagogues, but by private companies at the service of capital.

Digital capitalism is on the march. Far from rejecting the progress that digital technology can represent, education must help students to master it and not suffer it. Capitalism, which insidiously imposes itself, must be opposed by another cultural approach that must remain at the service of working people and not replace them.

7. For a multiple culture without taboos

Whether in the cities it governs, or in the states where it is brought to power, the extreme right attacks culture, reducing it to manifestations exalting narrow nationalism, or leaving it without means if this culture wants to be critical and innovative. It censors books in the name of moral or religious principles of another age.

For the EL, the EU, which is in itself a melting pot of diverse cultures, must support artists and artistic creation without taboos.

The Thematic Cluster was coordinated by Jean-Pierre Michiels and Olga Athaniti.

The EL Youth Network (Elyn), in view of the next EU Elections in 2024, puts forward some proposals

Thematic Cluster: Youth

The EL Youth Network (Elyn), in view of the next EU Elections in 2024, puts forward some proposals, grouped into the following topics:

Right to education

Stopping the privatisation of higher education and research institutes; abolition of tuition fees (including for the non-European students); tackling precariousness of students and employees in academic sector; making students independent from parents' income, adopting welfare measures; implementation of anti-discrimination measures (numbers instead of names on exams, workshops for staff etc.); schooling and workshops for teachers and professors regarding the gender binary and possible diverse gender identities; regulating the system for assigning scholarships at European level in order to make the university accessible to all; recognize the status of PhD students and researchers as workers in all EU countries; abolition of admission tests, especially in life-sustaining fields such as medicine, care work, for midwives, psychology, etc; prevent the use of spaces in public schools and universities by organizations that refer to fascism and national socialism; anti-violence workshops in schools, especially for boys, in order to contrast femicide.

Social rights and welfare

Guaranteeing free access to health (including mental health and access to abortion) for everyone, including non-European citizens; facilitating access to housing (rent control, an increase of housing benefits…); unified social benefits that guarantee a humane life, creating a European minimum wage for youth, to make young people independent and less susceptible to blackmail with precarious jobs, aligning the minimum wage with the cost of living in each country; removing obstacles on EU-level for labour unions to act internationally, they should be made stronger in EU levels; subvention only of socially progressive projects; establishing a European program for student housing

Safety and repression

Fighting systemic racism and police violence; rigorous protection of all marginalized groups, such as Sinti & Roma; creation of European programs to allow refugees to reach Europe in complete safety.

The Thematic Cluster was coordinated by Vincenzo Colaprice and Bex Kivisto.

INTERVENTIONS

A triple social, ecological, and democratic challenge for Europe

Frédéric Boccara

Europe faces a triple challenge: social, ecological and of peace. It calls for a deep transformation of the economy. Because economic activity lies at the heart of these three needs.

For a social, ecological, and democratic conversion of our economy, we need to break with austerity and with the domination of capital, which serves financial profitability, profits and accumulation. We need to move towards a new culture of cooperation, democracy and economic, social and environmental efficiency. This requires a transformation of the institutions and an overhaul of the treaties to create new powers over companies, banks and their decisions, including the powerful Ecb.

The first challenge concerns social needs: poverty, purchasing power, overexploitation, unemployment, and precarious employment, but also demands for new living conditions, emancipation, culture, training, health and free time, demands for freedom and intervention on one's own life or on in the world.

To achieve this, neo-liberal austerity policies must be abandoned. We need to change the behaviour of companies and banks to promote new forms of production and put social issues at the heart of their business model by tackling the levies that capital imposes on them and promoting spending on employment, training, higher wages, research, and social protection instead of constantly pushing for a reduction in the so-called "cost of labour". But we must also promote public services (including social protection) and challenge "free and undistorted" competition as the central principle of the EU, dominating all the rules.

We must aim for job, training, and income security for all, instead of neo-liberal flexi-security. We need to strengthen employees' social rights, as well as the right to intervene in the management and investment, production, and research decisions of major groups, in conjunction with civil society, instead of denying citizens' and workers' skills and ability to make proposals.

Similarly, a profound and systemic transformation must be carried out to guarantee a public democratic appropriation of the control over society's productive forces. New democratic institutions are needed to enable strategic, democratic planning - combining incentives and penalties - of economic activity in response to the needs of people and the planet, emancipated from the domination of profit and capital.

At European level, this planning must be articulated with national popular sovereignties. Our production capacity must seek to satisfy the real needs of the population. This means moving towards mastery of the European production apparatus through mutually advantageous cooperation, both in Europe and with the rest of the world, and moving towards genuine popular sovereignty in countries over research, industrial production potential and services, as opposed to their domination by globalised financial capital. This requires a new type of nationalisation and social appropriation of key companies and sectors.

The second challenge is ecological needs: climate emergency, pollution, biodiversity, ecosystems, and the depletion of natural resources. We need to forge a new relationship between humankind and nature. We urgently need to take effective measures, on a European scale, with a clear objective: carbon neutrality

by the end of this decade. We also need to move towards an ecological and cultural overhaul of our modes of production and consumption. This is one more reason to bring about deep changes in the behaviour of companies, banks, and the culture.

The ecological challenge reinforces and broadens our battles rather than decentralising them. Enterprises must decarbonise their production and break with their logic of accumulation and material and financial waste. Changing production in favour of new products and services means changing consumption patterns and lifestyles. We need a culture and systematic criteria for saving material and natural resources, rather than blaming people.

Social and ecological issues are indissociable, because it is women and men who build and will build ecological solutions, through their work, their inventiveness and their needs. The "social dimension" is not simply a downstream result of economic activity; it is a fundamental determinant upstream, otherwise it will fail. This is all the more true given that the information technology revolution is giving a decisive role to the capabilities of women and men to achieve a new kind of productive efficiency, economic, social and ecological. "Social" is not a forced and coerced accompaniment for the people to "swallow the pill". Nor should it be a pretext for subsidising profits and maintaining high prices on the pretext of offsetting costs. Finally, social anticipation of changes must be thought out with the people concerned, where human capacities and employment are the priority, not the capital.

We are opposed to the headlong rush towards even more market and relieving capital of responsibility with the European Emissions Trading Scheme (Ets), which does not even aim to reduce emissions. Similarly, the carbon tax is an illusory response. Its main effect is to increase product prices, while concerned enterprises do not significantly decarbonise their production. They even trasnfer part of the cost of the carbon tax to employees, by reducing their salaries or social spending in "return".

The third challenge is the need for peace and co-development. These two needs are closely linked. We are opposed to the tendence towards a "war economy", where the European economy is bowed to the aggressive strategic options of Nato and the United States. We certainly need a military industry, but focused on defence, not external aggression, and that is not dependent for its economic balance on weapons' exports and international markets.

We are in favour of a deep reorientation of the production system, in the service of peace and co-development. This is fundamental for a peaceful world.

The EU must establish other international economic relations, particularly with the East and the "global South", based on cooperation, sharing and co-development of common goods and employment. This means calling into question the current free trade and investment treaties, the aim of which is to develop international trade and investment, and therefore economic warfare, and even financial and natural resource predation.

We are in favour of treaties to control international trade and investment, the aim of which would be the shared development of employment and common goods. International trade and foreign investment would only be means subordinate to this goal, and therefore evaluated and judged in relation to it. This means a different role for multinationals in Europe and the rest of the world. It means sharing technologies, especially patents, and rejecting the patenting of living organisms.

Finally, this requires a genuine common world currency, as an alternative to the dollar, enabling the financing of public services, social protection and the development of employment throughout the world by means of shared monetary creation, as well as an in-depth reform of the international financial institutions, particularly the IMF, by changing its governance and extending its mission to include this financing, by money creation using extended Sdrs (Special Drawing Rights).

Common principles to meet the triple challenge

Meeting these three needs calls for a common approach: reversing the logic by starting with employment and training. Material investment must accompany and support these, but it must no longer dominate.

In this way, we would begin to profoundly change the supply side, both in companies and in public services, and we would simultaneously support demand, i.e. income and purchasing power - but a completely different demand, geared towards a different relationship with nature and towards public services.

This dual support must be provided immediately, by mobilising the powerful potential of advances provided by money creation (currently 7,000 billion euros) instead of appealing to the financial markets, and therefore to capital and its criteria, as *Next generation* is doing.

The repayment of these advances will be based on increased development and wealth. This is the virtuous circle that we are promoting and that must be initiated in Europe.

A vital social-ecological and democratic pact

Considering employment, workers' rights, and public services not just as a necessary outcome but as a decisive lever for achieving ecological transformation broadens the concept of "just transition" defended by the trade unions (1). We could talk about a "broader just transition", or a "just and effective transition".

We could promote a social-ecological and democratic pact, in which the social dimension is both an objective and an essential means. This would set it apart from other conceptions. Organised citizens and workers must be able to intervene and exercise control.

Financial resources based on a new selectivity and rejecting austerity

Taking action to develop employment and incomes and to promote ecological transformation requires a different kind of selectivity in monetary policy. This selectivity would be based on precise criteria and conditions: securing incomes and maintaining employment, saving materials and reducing pollution, effectively creating added value. This would be complemented by a tax on financial speculation.

It is time to move forward on two important proposals of the EL:
- a European fund for ecological and social development based on solidarity, for the expenditure of public services in the member States, financed by money creation by the Ecb at zero or even negative interest, as permitted by Article 123.2 of the Lisbon Treaty, and with democratic governance.
- elective refinancing by the Ecb of bank loans to businesses at rates that are all the lower when the material and research investments financed are all the more likely to create jobs and reduce CO2 emissions; at rates that are all the higher when these investments reduce employment, increase carbon emissions and relocate.

Why not organise a "European convention on the Ecb, public debt and the use of the euro in solidarity for social, ecological and citizen's needs"?

At the same time, instead of competition rules, we need rules to encourage cooperation between companies, or with public services. They must be promoted for environmental and social conversion, through non-capitalist cooperative agreements, and aimed at the balanced distribution of production in EU countries. This requires elements and the sharing of technologies.

These various means will help to change the management criteria of companies, so that their priority is no longer shareholder remuneration but social and ecological efficiency.

In this way, we would begin to free European institution from its subjection to the financial markets. Changing the treaties will take time, but that should not be a precondition for taking

immediate action.

Notes

1. "A Just Transition means transforming the economy in a fair and inclusive way to ensure that good quality jobs are maintained and created" (IndustriALL, *Manifesto for a Just Transition*).

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The new conflict lines and their perception based on the data of Eurobarometer 97 - 99

Cornelia Hildebrandt

The general conditions in the run-up to the 2023 European elections

The political situation is about to change fundamentally compared to the situation in 2019 as a result of Russia's war of aggression on Ukraine. This war is an expression of intra-imperialist contradictions and represents a historical caesura not only in relation to Russia, but even more in relation to the changing global balance of power in the struggle for spheres of influence and resources under the conditions of incipient climate crises with social, economic, political and ecological consequences worldwide. At the same time, the political balance of power has changed in favor of a strengthened political right and a growing weight of far-right parties.

While it is open whether the left will be able to form a left-wing government again after the elections in Greece or whether it will be possible to participate in a government as in Spain, the extreme right is ruling in Italy. In France, Le Pen reached for power as the second strongest party; in Finland, True Fins are now part of the government; in Sweden, the three right-wing parties have agreed on a new government and are supported by the Sweden Democrats. But in other EU countries, too, the extreme right remains at a high level or is growing stronger. In Belgium, the parties of the extreme right (Vlaams Belang, N-VA) are stable in polls at a total of 40%, in Austria the Fpö is at 29%, in Germany the AfD is at 20%, in Bulgaria Rival is at 14%, in the Netherlands the Pvv is again at 14%, in Spain the Vox is currently at 11%, close to Sumar at 12%, and in Portugal the Chega is also ahead of the Bloco at 13%.

However, the shifts to the right also took place within the people's parties, such as the Danish Social Democrats or even the liberals like Macron's Lrem, for example, on the issue of migration and immigration. This became visible with the asylum decision of the EU interior ministers to de facto abolish the right to asylum within the EU. This was also supported by co-governing Greens from Germany. With Ukraine war, the militarization of the EU became visible as a second issue with majority support. Political majorities - including the Greens in Germany - stand for the militarization of the EU for the of 2% Gdp target for military spending in alliance with Nato.

This means for the Left in Europe and especially in the European Parliament, where it is the smallest parliamentary group with 37 deputies, that it can hardly count on political support from other party families in formulating counterstrategies on the migration issue and even more on the peace issue.

In terms of peace policy, it is currently politically isolated and, in view of the weak peace movements in most EU countries and the high approval ratings of EU citizens in almost all EU countries toward the measures on Ukraine (there is less than 50% approval only in Bulgaria, Cyprus, Slovakia and Greece), also socially in the minority. However, with the duration of this war and its aftermath and the ongoing crisis phenomena, as well as the continued threat of inflation, economic crisis, and the increased consequences of climate change, this can change quickly. To this end,

however, the left must further develop its peace policy profile, point out independent peace and security policy alternatives and work on new alliances at all levels.

The war medially obscures lines of conflict within EU countries

It already became apparent in 2019 that there will be no policy in the sense of a "grand coalition" in the long term, but rather, due to the lack of majorities of social democrats and conservatives, action with changing majorities - depending on the topic - including the left, the Greens or, if necessary, the extreme right.

The agenda is determined on the one hand by new political majorities, as in the case of the migration issue, but also by external factors, such as climate change or pandemics. In 2020 to 2023, these in particular opened a window for measures that previously seemed unthinkable. These included the suspension of the Stability, and Growth Pact, the establishment of the Next Generation Pack to strengthen the sustainability and resilience of EU countries (green, digital, a little more social), the "Fit for 55" plan with the EU's goal of reducing net greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030. There was an expansion of the social pillar with concrete action plans of 2021, the decision Child Guarantee (a minimum basic income for children), on the minimum wages 2022 and programs to work out long-term care and intergenerational integration.

Minimum standards for social infrastructures are also discussed, as well as a minimum income. That is, there was a window of opportunity between 2019 and early 2023, under pressure from the Brexit momentum, pandemic, and climate change, in which neoliberal austerity policies could be pushed back via majorities in the Parliament, Commission, and EU Council – a temporary changes in the course of European policy from above, not as the result of powerful demonstrations or leftist interventions. Von der Leyen, as President of the EU Commission, focused on the global competitiveness of the EU in her state of the Union speech on 13 September. Social issues played no role in this speech.

Nevertheless, these experiences and changes must be taken up and worked on from the left and, even more, defended. Changes and even social improvements are possible.

The war and the various crises are changing the view of the EU, Nato and climate change

People in Europe feel the impact of the multiple crisis and the powerlessness or inability of the political classes to respond to it. Consequently, the optimism index (Eurobarometer) in 2021 was at a negative level similar to 2008 - the year of the financial market crisis - at minus 35 percentage points. This figure was minus 24 in 2022, significantly worse than in 2019 (between -4 and -19). This value is "only" minus 16 in 2023. However, it is not just the value alone, but the successive uncertainties of the crisis, austerity policy or the policy of the Troika and its social consequences, of climate change with forest fires, floods, droughts, and temperature records, and from 2022 onwards by the war and its consequences.

65% of people in the EU in 2022 believe that the war in Ukraine will change their lives: 90% in Greece, more than 80% in Cyprus, Lithuania, Slovakia, more than 70% in the Czech Republic, Latvia, Estonia, more than 60% in France, Belgium, Slovenia, Germany, Hungary, the Netherlands, Portugal, Bulgaria, Hungary, Finland, 60% in Poland, more than 50% in Austria, Luxembourg, Sweden, Romania, Denmark, Italy, less than 50% in Malta and Ireland. 69% of people in the EU completely or somewhat agree that the capacity to produce military equipment should be strengthened. 84% want to reduce dependence on Russian energy.

In light of global developments and the war in Ukraine, the EU is increasingly seen as a

protective and security space. More than 6 in 10 Europeans (62%) believe their country's membership in the EU is a good thing, 72% believe their country benefits from EU membership, 22% do not. From the respondents' perspective, they associate their countries' EU membership with:

- 36% with more peace and security,
- 35% with cooperation between member states,
- 30% with economic growth and
- 23% with more jobs/freedom of movement,
- 23% with more importance in the world as an EU member state and
- 18% with raising living standards,
- 16% with measures against climate change
- 15% with strengthening democracy.

79% support European cooperation to secure sustainable infrastructures, 77% support a common defense policy and 70% also support a common foreign policy. Over 70% of respondents support a common trade and monetary policy - over 80% in the euro zone. These high approval ratings for a common defense and foreign policy must be viewed in the context of risk of an expansion of the Ukraine war. Among the most important problems, in addition to the growing cost of living (93%), the risk of slipping into poverty and social exclusion (82%), are climate change and the spread of the Ukraine war with 81% each. I.e., global warming and expansion of the war are equally weighted; the social issue is directly related to the war in Ukraine and its consequences.

I.e., the social question is dominant again, but unlike in 2014, it is not tied to a crisis of capitalism, but to the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, i.e., to war and the consequences of war. That is, the new austerity policy can establish itself as a narrative of the price of freedom, and at the same time war is normalized as a legitimate instrument for the enforcement of Western interests and the defense of Western values.

For the left, which is well aware that the majorities in most countries of the EU are behind the measures of the EU to support Ukraine up to the arms deliveries, the necessity arises to expose the class character of this war and its consequences and to formulate the question of a sustainable peace as an existential social question. Investments in public infrastructures, the protection of social benefits and services are not possible with the new edition of austerity policies, even against the background of the massive increase of military budgets to at least 2% of Gdp.

But that is exactly what the people of the EU want - the expansion of public services. The 10 most important problems in the EU in July 2023 for 45% of the people in the EU are inflation and the cost of living, improving their economic situation (18%), climate change (16%), solving the problems of migration (14%), health care (14%), and housing, pension security and protection against unemployment (10% and 9% respectively). Thus, the social issue is on the agenda and dealing with climate change is equally significant. 85% support massive investments in renewable energies such as wind and solar power (50% fully agree). So, there is a social basis for a left social green deal. The highest values with over 90% agreement are in Denmark, Ireland, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden. The lowest (under 80%) agreement, are in Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Romania, Slovakia. 82% are in favour of improving the energy efficiency of buildings, transport and goods, and the same number are in favour of independence from Russian gas as soon as possible.

The social issues dominate in all EU countries - with differences

The fundamental problems of today's developments are seen by EU citizens in all countries and reflected in the context of Ukraine war, yet they are weighted differently by EU citizens in their countries. Most people in the EU - with the exception of Ireland - assume that the war will change.

The following are cited as important problems:
- 37% Fighting poverty and social exclusion (first-named priority in Portugal, Greece, Lithuania, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Belgium, and Luxembourg)
- 34% Public health (first priority Cyprus, Spain, Ireland, Slovenia, Hungary)
- 31% Climate change action (first priority in Sweden, Netherlands, Denmark, France, Austria, Malta)
- 27% Democracy and rule of law (first priority in Finland and Germany)
- 24% Defense and security (first priority in Poland)
- 17% Autonomy of industry and energy (first priority in Czech Republic)
- The social situation is worsening in all EU countries: 46% get by halfway, 36% have "some problems", 9% have "a lot of problems"
- In Malta, Hungary, Cyprus, Romania, Italy, Portugal, Bulgaria and Greece, about 50% have problems paying their bills,
- Over a third in Slovenia, Spain, Latvia, France, Estonia, Belgium and Ireland.
- Over 25% in Germany, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia, Austria and Lithuania.

46% have reduced their spending as a result of the Ukraine war especially in Cyprus (70%), over 60% in Greece, Malta and France, over 50% in Portugal Spain, Belgium and UK, over 40% in Czech Republic, Ireland, Croatia, Estonia, Hungary, Italy, Slovakia, Germany, Lithuania and over 30% in Romania. Only 14% EU-wide do not expect to have to reduce their standard of living.

Expectations of the EU were focused on relief and compensation measures, especially in times of pandemic. Basically, these expectations are linked to the role of the EU member states within the EU and political influence, to their economic and social resources and, with the Ukraine war, to their geographical location.

Cooperation between EU countries, for example, is a top priority for EU citizens in Sweden, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Belgium, Italy and Austria. In Bulgaria, Croatia,

Hungary, Romania, Czechs and to some extent in Estonia, it is the job opportunities through the free movement of workers. For Malta, Ireland, Lithuania, Slovenia, Luxembourg, Spain, Portugal and to some extent Poland, the priority is economic growth, and for Germany, Greece, Cyprus, Latvia and France, it is the common security policy.

The attitudes towards EU policies depending on country, social status, education and age

The view on EU policies differs depending on age, education and social status: the younger the respondents and the higher the formal education level, the higher the trust in the EU. For the generation of 18 - 24 years this is almost 60%, for the following generations it is below 50%. For the generations over 55, it is lowest at 43%. For today's young generations, the Lisbon Treaty and even more so the Maastricht Treaty of 1992 are history, possibly a defeat of earlier struggles in which they were not involved, the treaties are no longer the result of struggles but the starting point of future EU policies. Schoolchildren and students are much less critical of European policies or policies communitarized at the EU level. The approval ratings for foreign, security and trade policy, but also for other policy areas such as tax or energy policy, are well above 80%; for climate policy, minimum wages, taxation of large companies, defense of European values and freedom of movement, they are above 90%. However, there is one value that clearly stands out: 25% of the students surveyed oppose Frontex. This is one of the highest disapproval ratings to Frontex after upper-middle-class executives at 26%.

Almost in contrast to these values, the approval ratings for European policies can be read primarily by workers, housewives and the unemployed. More than one in four in these groups opposes a common foreign and immigration policy, and one in five workers opposes a common defense and asylum policy

- for this, disapproval is significantly lower among housewives and the unemployed.

Workers are also more opposed than average (16%) to measures against the gender gap, climate change and cooperation measures for public infrastructure, immigration regulation and European asylum policy. For just under half of workers, democracy in their country is not good and their vote in the EU does not count. This figure is even higher among housewives and the unemployed, at about 60%, and among those who are among the poor in the EU (those who almost always have trouble paying their bills - a category in Eurobarometer), it is 70% - about 10% lower at the national level.

However, there are high approval ratings of well over 80 to 90% among groups of housewives and unemployed, slightly weaker among workers, the poor (who cannot pay their bills), the working class and our middle class on measures against the gender gap, against climate change, on taxation of big business. There is over 90% approval for the minimum wage. In other words, the social question can and must be placed centrally and used as a bridge to the other issues.

Conclusion and consequences for the election campaign

The cleavages structures have changed at the national and European level since the 2014 European elections and have repercussions on the development of the national and European balance of power.

The 2014 European elections were characterized by struggles against austerity policies with their social and environmental consequences, but without prioritizing the environmental issue. In 2014, priority issues included 1. unemployment as a dominant problem across Europe, 2. rising cost of living, 3. immigration, 4. health and social security, 5. economic situation, 6. pensions.

In 2019, the socio-economic issues were no longer dominant issues: the "policrisis" led to a polycleavages landscape without a dominant issue: unemployment, cost of living, migration, health social infrastructure, the economic situation of the people, the country and the EU, the issue of pensions were more or less equally weighted.

In 2023, the social issue becomes dominant again, but coupled with the Ukraine war and its global consequences, especially in the form of rising energy and living costs.

In 2023, 93% see the rising cost of living as the biggest problem. 82% fear social decline or a slide into poverty. 81% fear the impact of war and just as many fear the impact of climate change. 74% see the risk of a nuclear catastrophe. For 70% - also linked to war and climate change - migration is an unsolved problem and possibly a threat. At the same time, 72% of EU Europeans fear the loss of democracy and European values - whatever is understood by this.

The associated uncertainty is made visible in the Eurobarometer data by the optimism index, which is at the same level as in 2012, although it is unclear how the successive crises since 2008 are being dealt with. Looking at political developments, the far right is benefiting while conservative and social democratic parties are losing ground. The left seems to be stable - looking at the currently projected mandates approx. 44 (currently 37). But the forecasts do not take into account the uncertainties with regard to the Left in Germany after the last elections and in view of the threatening split of parts of the Left and the foundation of a possible Wagenknecht party and the new developments of Syriza.

According to EU surveys, the radical left could enter the EU Parliament in 2024 with up to 50 members. However, this increase is mainly linked to the strengthening of the left in Ireland (Sinn Fein), in France (Nupes - currently at 10% in the polls, but Le Pen at 24%), in Belgium (Ptb currently at 20% in the polls). In Spain, the continuation of a centre-left government with the radical left led by the Socialists depends on whether Sanchez succeeds in forming an alliance with the two Catalan parties. This, however, makes it more difficult for the left Sumar under Yolanda Dias to implement

authentically left politics.

Alexis Tsipras failed with the attempt to form a government project of a "progressive left". To comprehensively analyse the development of Syriza and the failure of a progressive alliance for a left-centre government is one of the difficult tasks Syriza faces.

Cyprus' Akel is losing slightly - the other parties are more or less unchanged - and have limited opportunities to enter the EU Parliament due to the country's small number of seats. The situation in Germany is completely open.

Two challenges are already apparent at the European level for their representation in the European Parliament: the left-wing parties from the Central Eastern European countries are not represented in the European Parliament. Secondly, parliamentary strong parties in the future EU Parliament are only with observer status with the European Left Party (EL) like La France Insoumise or are not EL member or observer parties like Sinn Fein, the Belgian Ptb and the Swedish Left Party.

In other words, the Left urgently needs to strengthen and intensify its cooperation capabilities at the European level between the Left parties in Europe and between the European actors: party, EU Parliament, EL Foundation Transform.

Whether the perpetuating insecurity caused by wars and crises, the political and media business with fear drives further to the right, and the response to neoliberal-influenced individualization and isolation drives people in search of security-giving and hope-giving answers into the clutches of patriotic-nationalist pied pipers, thus further promoting authoritarian tendencies in the content of the EU, or whether the search for collective solidary answers and the formation of counterforces succeeds, depends to a large extent on the left. In the conflicts, it must pose the class question along the concrete lines of conflict in a concrete way that is comprehensible to everyday life and relevant to action, and to this end it must strategically combine its national and European political approaches. Without concrete practical value for the people of Europe, there can be no national or European solution.

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The four day long "Freedom Fest 2023" on digital technologies in the communist governed Indian state of Kerala

Roland Kulke

The current government in Kerala is headed by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan from the Communist Party of India (Marxist) (Cpi(M)). Normally, the Cpi(M) and Congress party governments in Kerala take turns. However, 2021 was the first time that the Cpi(M) government was re-elected by the voters.

The government, in collaboration with numerous NGOs, organised the four-day "Freedom Fest 2023" in Trivandrum, the capital of Kerala, from 12 to 15 August 2023.

At the opening, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan spoke about the background and objectives of the forum:

"In this era of rapid technological growth, there is a tendency for access to some knowledge to be confined to certain sections of society only. It sets back the very vision of sustainable development. Knowledge should be used as a common weapon for the advancement of mankind, rather than as a tool for profiteering. The concept of freedom of knowledge is well accepted in Kerala, because the people here have a tendency to imbibe positive, progressive developments from around the globe. But we have some financial and spatial limitations in acquiring and applying modern technologies. Kerala chose to work with the idea of free software to overcome these limitations." (The Hindu, 12 August 2023).

Cpi(M) and the South Indian State of Kerala

Before we take a deeper look at the forum, attended by more than ten thousand participants (*Indian Express*, 16 August 2023), let us briefly talk about the background of Cpi(M) and Kerala.

Kerala is located on the southwest coast of India and has been marked by progressive social struggles since the 19th century. Indian feudalism, the Hindu caste system, patriarchal oppression and British colonialism led to inhuman exploitative structures in what is now Kerala. Social reform movements began early on to oppose both the exploitative structures of their own Indian society as well as those of the British colonisers. This struggle came to a head with the founding of the Indian Communist Party in Kerala in 1939. The Communist Party of India (Cpi) became the second communist party in the world (after San Marino in 1945) to win a government election in free elections in Kerala in 1957. This was obviously too much for the Congress Party, which dismissed the democratically elected government and put the state and federal level "President's Rule" in 1959. This could not prevent the success of the then later Cpi(M) in Kerala, which has been the ruling party regularly ever since.

The success of the Cpi(M) did not fall from the sky. To a large extent, it is based on the

organic interweaving of the party with large sections of civil society. These linkages could be well observed at the forum. Even though the state government and the state administration were essential pillars and stimulators of the conference, this forum could not have been organised top-down. In the debates and workshops, it became clear again and again how deeply staggered Kerala's (but also India's in general!) progressive civil society is.

What the Forum was about

At the forum we could hear grassroots organisations from the regions of Kerala, academics from universities or research institutions as well as representatives of different Ngos from the Ict sector. But the most outstanding features of the forum were, on the one hand, the hundreds of teachers, staff and employees from the IT sector who actively participated in the forum for training and discussion. On the other hand, the forum had another wonderful feature. In addition to the many discussions, there was a fair where practical applications of Ict and Ai products were presented. The exhibitors were start-up companies, but mainly government institutions and student groups, who presented their latest research results to the public. This forum was anything but a dry academic debate about the future of digital capitalism. For this very reason, thousands of pupils from school IT clubs (`Little Kites It Clubs`– Largest Ict network of students in India managed by Kerala's Educational Technology arm, Kite) were bussed to the fair every day to show them practical applications of Ict and AI - and thus whet their appetite for more.

This fair can perhaps be called the heart of the forum. While there were fantastic discussions and presentations, the aim of the discourse on the future of digital technologies driven by the Cpi(M) is a practical one that looks to future. Put that way, the last sentence could have been taken out of a conservative election manifesto.

But the difference with the Cpi(M)'s programme is manifest. While conservative and neoliberal forces want to integrate their own markets, and thus their own populations, into international value chains to increase the profits of a few private companies, the focus of the Cpi(M) is completely different.

"Across the world, there is a growing demand to make knowledge free and accessible, instead of making it more proprietary. Kerala's transformation into a knowledge society should, therefore, focus on ensuring access and inclusivity while adopting trailblazing technological advancements in the development of the State", says Dr. Thomas Isaac, who is the Ex-Finance Minister of Kerala under Cpi(M) and Chairman of Freedom fest Academic Committee. Seeing the success of this programme, we will have this in every two years, Dr. Isaac added.

Cpi(M), civil society and the digital sector

Not for nothing was Kite one of the main organisers of the forum. Kite stands for "Kerala Infrastructure and Technology for Education". The Ceo of Kite, Mr. Anvar Sadath, did not pull all the strings of the forum for nothing. It was no coincidence that an explicit educational organisation, which also rendered outstanding services in adapting Kerala's education system to the sudden need for home-schooling during the Corona pandemic through its Kite Victers educational channel, which is first of its kind in India, was at the centre of the forum. Kite considered to be the world's largest free and open-source software (Foss) based Ict education deployment in a particular region and by deploying Free and Open source in 200.000 laptops in school it saves Rs 3000 Cr which is equivalent to US$ 400 million. (*Financial Express*, 14 May 2019).

The Cpi(M) made a strategic decision back in the early 1990s. Kerala should neither remain a low-wage country nor seek its economic

Interventions

fortune in polluting economic sectors like the chemical industry. Consequently, the Cpi(M) saw a way out in the new digital technologies. Since in these technologies almost all the states start from the same starting position in this sector, the old industrialised nations do not have a comparative cost advantage. Therefore, it is easier in this sector to catch up with the established industrial societies than in other sectors.

Just outside the capital Kerala lies the "Technopark" with 70.000 employees in different enterprises. It was inaugurated by the late Cpi(M) Chief Minister of Kerala in E. K. Nayanar in 1990. We can thus call the Technopark a foster child of Cpi(M) politics. We can also see the strong development of Kerala's progressive civil society in the example of the Technopark. The Technopark was built in parts by the world's second largest cooperative (after Mondragon). Uralungal Labour Contract Cooperative Society (Ulccs) was founded in 1925 by workers from the road construction sector. At that time, this was not a technologically advanced sector, but consisted of the hardest manual labour. Over time, this cooperative expanded into other business sectors and now invests even in Ict in the Technopark.

Kerala - no place for Big Tech

We can echo the Chief Minister's words here. The Cpi(M)'s effort to make Kerala a digital technology hub is not about making Kerala a link in Big Tech's value chains. On the contrary, the aim of making Kerala a digital technology hub is precisely to protect Kerala's citizens, workers, consumers, and students from the grip of the digital monsters from California. The Cpi(M) governments have consistently banned proprietary applications from schools and government structures since 2007. It is no coincidence that Cpi(M) Chief Minister Vijayan inaugurated the Freedom Fest along with the Vice-President of the Asia Pacific Linux-Foundation.

Digital Industrial Policy à la Kerala

While the consistent further development of open software offerings is a central working tool of the Cpi(M)'s digital strategy, the backbone of this strategy is the valorisation of the local knowledge of workers in government agencies, cooperatives, and enterprises.

Kite can be taken as an example. It connects all levels of school education and was programmed by employees of the Kerala state administration, based on free software. Why is this relevant?

1. On the one hand, the result means in practical terms that no royalties whatsoever must be paid from Kerala to the shareholders of the Big Tech companies.
2. Secondly, the software programmes can be quickly adapted to changing circumstances. It was this local knowledge, among other things, that enabled Kerala's schools to adapt to the covid pandemic much more quickly than, for example, in large parts of the Eu.
3. Furthermore, however, and this is the "holy grail" of any state industrial policy, technological learning effects occur locally. Technological progress is much more likely to occur in the factory, in active application, than in universities. Technological learning then stays also locally and hence can further stimulate future local development.

"Without Foss we could not empower 5 million students in Kerala through the Digital way, and we would like to share our experience and to support educational institutions worldwide.", says Anvar Sadath, who was also the convenor of Freedom fest.

The Cpi(M) has succeeded in transforming the state apparatus and civil society of Kerala into a centre of excellence for modern digital technologies. Kerala has thus achieved what one can only dream of in a digital desert like

Germany, or in the neoliberal poster child of Estonia. Kerala is on the way to a self-determined appropriation of modern digital technologies that serves workers and citizens, not the other way around.

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Wars and threats of war seethe all around us

Tom Unterrainer

Wars and threats of war seethe all around us. The end of the Cold War, far from bringing a new era of universal peace, gave place to a frenzied new drive to build more powerful and deadly weapons, a "war on terror" and now a developing "New Cold War". The international system of organisations, treaties, agreements and laws that – we are told – constitute a "rules-based global order" grew out of a post-World War II settlement which favoured the "victors" of that war and embedded their imperial and colonial interests and ambitions. The intervening decades have demonstrated how this "rules-based global order" actually functions. The "rules" involved, who they apply to and who they do not, vary and have developed over time and as new global dynamics developed.

The end of the Cold War presented opportunities and a challenges. Some saw opportunities for a lasting peace, common approaches to security and development; opportunities for a new global approach to eradicate poverty, threats to the environment and to annul the prospects for war. Others saw a different set of opportunities: the opportunity for global hegemony, unchallenged influence and crushing of any potential rivals.

By the 2000s, US doctrine had transmuted into an agenda for a "New American Century", "Full Spectrum Dominance" – unchallengeable superiority in any contest in any arena. Old treaties went down like skittles and a new arms race – in part fuelled by emerging technologies – ensued.

We will examine two ways in which the US and allies in the nuclear-armed North Atlantic Treaty Organisation have acted to systematically undermine prospects for a different approach to security. The first, with respect to nuclear arms control, shows how the international system that constitutes the "nuclear order" has been undermined by outright non-compliance and legal manoeuvre. In the second example, we will see how the US uses effectively unilateral initiative to subvert and destroy the systems of global governance they claim to uphold.

We will conclude by considering a very different approach to security and suggest ways in which what remains of the global institutions and conventions might bring about such an approach.

Nuclear regimes

The Preparatory Committee of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty convened in Vienna, Austria, at the start of August, 2023. In her opening address, Izumi Nakamitsu – United Nations High Representative for Disarmament Affairs – warned of an arms control regime that is crumbling and that "there is nothing to replace it" (1).

When something "crumbles" it breaks apart into smaller and smaller pieces and, as the process continues, it becomes unrecognisable.

As we know, "things" – be they atoms, cake or international treaties – do not break apart into smaller and smaller pieces by magic. Forces are applied, deliberate actions are taken or actions are not taken. If the arms control regimes have indeed "crumbled" then someone or something has deliberately made it so. How has this all operated?

Take, for instance, the very first Resolution passed by the United Nations General Assembly (2). Part (c) of the "Terms of Reference" of this

resolution commits UN members states to work for "the elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons and all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction". This Resolution, agreed in London on 24 January 1946, has never been honoured. Indeed, when – some decades later – the non-nuclear world took insurgent action to create a UN Treaty to "ban" nuclear weapons (3) the nuclear-armed states – UN members all – did not just ignore these efforts but have undertaken a deliberate and coordinated effort to fundamentally undermine it (4).

In a process that some have interpreted as active and honest engagement with the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (Tpnw), its structures and meetings, members of the nuclear-armed North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (Nato) have deliberately deployed an artefact of international law – "persistent objector" status – in an attempt to undermine the Tpnw. The Chatham House think-tank in the UK produced a report, *Nato and the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons*, which gives context to these attempts:

"While it is a general principle of international law that treaties do not create obligations for third states, it is also an accepted principle that a rule set forth in a treaty could, under certain conditions, become binding on a third state as a customary rule ... However, this is not an automatic process. Two distinct concepts are relevant here: the concept of so-called "specially affected states", and that of "persistent objectors" ... As the ICJ has explained, a lack of consent from specially affected states may have the effect of preventing the required general state practice from emerging, preventing the rule from coming into being in the first place. There is a strong argument that states with nuclear weapons and those in a nuclear alliance would be specially affected by a proposed ban on nuclear weapons. Even if a rule is indeed created, states that have objected to a certain degree to its emergence - so-called persistent objectors - will not be bound by it" (5).

At the First Meeting of States Parties (1Msp)

to the Tpnw, a succession of Nato-member states used the opportunity afforded to them as observers to 'persistently object" to the treaty. For example, the representative from Norway (a Nato member) delivered the following message:

"Norway is attending this conference as an observer. This is not a step towards signing nor ratifying the Tpnw, which would be incompatible with our Nato obligations. Norway stands fully behind Nato"s nuclear posture" (6).

So Norway is clear: Nato membership and Nato's avowed commitment to nuclear weapons trumps a UN disarmament treaty. Germany's statement offered even greater clarity on the situation:

"As a member to Nato – and as long as nuclear weapons exist, Nato will remain a nuclear Alliance -, and confronted with an openly aggressive Russia, which has not only invaded Ukraine but is threatening the rules-based international order and peace in Europe, Germany cannot accede to the Tpnw, which would collide with our membership in Nato including nuclear deterrence. As non-member to the Tpnw we are not bound by its provisions, nor do we accept the claim that its provisions are applicable under customary law – now or in the future" (7).

It is almost as if the Germany Foreign Office did an internet search of "persistent objector" and crafted their statement to the 1Msp in order to precisely comply with the definition.

It is clear, then, that the Nato and soon-to-be Nato states in attendance at the 1Msp maintained a deliberate and coordinated approach. None of these states is itself nuclear-armed but both The Netherlands and Germany host US nuclear bombs under "nuclear sharing" arrangements. Sweden, in its letter of intent to join Nato, scrapped decades of neutrality and opposition to nuclear weapons for an explicit recognition and acceptance of the fact that Nato is a nuclear alliance.

Where does this leave the Tpnw? As events in Vienna demonstrated, the majority of the world stands in opposition to nuclear weapons.

The global majority wants such weapons to be abolished. Unsurprisingly, the minority of states with nuclear weapons and the non-nuclear states with which they are aligned have no intention - despite repeated claims otherwise - of ever giving them up: at least, not without a fight.

If the Tpnw is to move from a voluntary treaty to a customary rule under international law, then the persistent objectors will have to change their tune. This would involve a coordinated challenge to not only their possession of nuclear weapons but also to the foundations and the dynamics of the global system they do their best to control. The challenges presented by this should not be underestimated, as the fate of the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (Inf) Treaty demonstrates.

In its 2018 Nuclear Posture Review, (Npr) the United States made the following "commitment" to "Strengthening Deterrence in Europe":

"The United States will make available its strategic nuclear forces, and commit nuclear weapons forward-deployed to Europe, to the defense of Nato. These forces provide an essential political and military link between Europe and North America and are the supreme guarantee of Alliance security. Combined with the independent strategic nuclear forces of the United Kingdom and France, as well as Allied burden sharing arrangements, Nato's overall nuclear deterrence forces are essential to the Alliance's deterrence and defense posture now and in the future" (8).

The bulk of "analysis" in the Nuclear Posture Review is given over to highlighting the "risks" posed by Russia in particular and the growing "risks" associated with China's rise as a global power. The commitment to maintaining the "availability" of US strategic nuclear forces (9) as the "supreme guarantee of Alliance security" – above and beyond the nuclear capabilities of Europe's two declared nuclear powers – emphasises the degree to which the US dominates the European defence and security agenda via its status as "superpower".

Note also the clear intertwining of "Europe" and "Nato". It is no secret that the majority of the 28 EU member states are also members of Nato, with exceptions including neutral Austria and Ireland. From 2001 onwards, relations between Nato and the EU were institutionalised but the scope of the relations does not extend to nuclear weapons (10). It should be assumed, then, that the EU was not consulted in any substantial way before then-President Trump announced withdrawal from the Inf Treaty despite the importance placed on "protecting Europe" as outlined in the latest Npr and despite seventeen years of institutional relations between Nato – in which the US is the major force – and the EU.

In fact, the text of the Nuclear Posture Review, Trump's high-handed conduct at the 2018 Brussels Nato summit (11) and his unilateral withdrawal from the Inf Treaty are rendered comprehendible by simple acknowledgement that the US has enjoyed the status of an unrivalled hegemonic power – sole superpower status – since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Under Trump, prior to his Presidency and subsequently, the US is taking reckless measures to shore-up its position in response to the emergence of rival centres of global power. As the global situation develops from a unipolar to a multipolar order, as the risks of nuclear confrontation grow (12) and in the absence of countervailing political will – governmental or otherwise – the US will likely continue to assert itself in this manner. This means that Nato as an organisation and individual Nato member states will continue to be subjects of US dominance. In the context of a substantially expanded and expanding Nato, which pushed to the borders of Russia after the collapse of the Soviet Union against previously stated intentions of the organisation (13), the dominance of the US within Nato structures is pointing European states and their armed forces towards increasing confrontation with Russia (14).

We have seen examples of the "lawyer" approach and the "bulldozer" approach to undermining international treaties and agreements that amount to a now unstable "nuclear regime".

Both approaches have common drivers: the imperatives of the United States in its efforts to maintain hegemonic control, the realities of global politics and economics that are challenging this hegemony and the US's reckless reactions.

Nato's war in Europe

Between March 24th and June 10th 1999, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation unleashed an aerial bombardment on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. 38,000 sorties were launched, of which almost 10,500 were air strikes. Estimates of those killed vary between 400 and 600. No deaths of Nato forces were recorded. This bombardment was undoubtedly "illegal": it clearly contravened the fundamental principles of the United Nations Charts, which calls on all members to refrain:

"…from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state" (15).

The Charter also calls on all members to:

"Bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace" (16).

The United Nations Security Council was in no way involved in Nato's decision to bombard Yugoslavia. In failing to involve the UN, Nato members states in fact breached their own Treaty which commits the organisation to follow:

"faith in the purpose and principles of the Charter of the United Nations" (17)

As Ken Coates argued:

"To be sure, attempts have been made and will continue, to create a new "customary" rule that Nato, meaning in practice, the United States, is entitled to intervene militarily against states to which it is hostile" (18).

The events of March to June 1999 did indeed set a precedence for future US actions, most notably the subsequent illegal war against and invasion of Iraq. They also destroyed what remained of the credibility of US and Nato appeals to "international law", the "rules-based order" and similar. That the US and allies continue to parrot these lines only demonstrates that any use of such "laws" and "rules" will not involve bringing US and Nato leaders to justice. What does such a state of affairs imply? Taken together with the US's reckless approach to nuclear treaties, the examples of 1999 and 2003 suggest that the post-Cold War consensus – and indeed the post second world war consensus – has been shattered. In such a set of circumstances, we must consider and implement alternative approaches – as well as definitions – of security, order, rules and laws. To do so, some facts and challenges will have to be confronted.

Security

If, as we have seen, the US and allies uses legal trickery to undermine international law; bulldozers away laws that are no longer convenient for their project of maintaining hegemony or bomb their way to new "customary rules" then the central tenet of their conception of security must be scrutinised and overturned. What is this central tenet? That security is divisible: that the "security" (dominance) of the US and allies can only be achieved at the "expense" of others. This fundamental conception explains why much of the architecture that was dreamed of in the post-Cold War world has either not been constructed or has – bit by bit – been undermined and largely destroyed.

In place of such an approach, we should be clear that security cannot be achieved at the expense of others. This is the kernel of what Europe referred to as "common security" (19) and what China is promoting as its "Global Security Initiative" (20).

It will not be possible to construct a new security infrastructure until this basic idea is adopted and until the US drive to maintain global dominance is arrested. For this to happen, socialist parties, organisations and movements must begin to

clearly identify the drivers of "insecurity" – states, trends and realities such as the acute nuclear threat and the reality of the climate catastrophe – and integrate this identification into an overall analysis and political strategy. We should not be surprised by the next reckless move. We should put every effort into stopping it.

Notes

1.   https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/prepcom23/statements/31July_HighRep.pdf
2. Resolution 1(I), ESTABLISHMENT 0F A COMMISSION TO DEAL WITH THE PROBLEMS RAISED BY THE DISCOVERY OF ATOMIC ENERGY, https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/032/52/PDF/NR003252.pdf?OpenElement
3. Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, see https://www.icanw.org/the_treaty for more information.
4. 'Persistently Objecting", Tom Unterrainer, END Info 33, August/September 2022, https://www.endinfo.net/blog/persistently-objecting
5. *Nato and the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons*, Steven Hill, International Security Programme Research Paper, Chatham House, January 2021. See https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/2021-01/2021-01-29-Nato-Tpnw-hill.pdf
6.   https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/nuclear-weapon-ban/1msp/statements/22June_Norway.pdf
7.   https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/nuclear-weapon-ban/1msp/statements/22June_Germany.pdf
8. *Nuclear Posture Review*, United States Department of Defense, 2018, p. 36
9. Strategic nuclear forces include weapons and weapon systems trained on territory away from an immediate battlefield according to a systematic, strategic plan. A chilling example of such a plan, *the Strategic Air Command Atomic Weapons Requirements Study* for 1959, which includes detailed assessments of projected casualty figures, can be viewed online at the US National Security Archive: https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/nukevault/ebb538-Cold-War-Nuclear-Target -List-Declassified-First-Ever/
10. "Relations with the European Union", 18th July 2018, Nato website. Source: https://www.Nato.int/cps/en/Natohq/topics_49217.html
11. For a taste of what transpired, see https://www.bloomberg.com/graphics/2018-Nato-summit/
12. See https://thebulletin.org/doomsday-clock/current-time/
13. See Sarotte, Mary Elise (2014) "A Broken Promise? What the West Really Told Moscow About Nato Expansion", *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2014 for a survey of evidence on what assurances were made about Nato expansion and for a lively engagement with counter-claims
14. See extensive literature on the dynamics of Nato expansion and its relationship with Russia's war in Ukraine
15. United Nations Charter
16. Ibidem
17. North Atlantic Treaty
18. "Nato and the New World Disorder", *Empire No More!*, Spokesman Books, 2004
19. See the Common Security dossier in *Our Common Security*, The Spokesman 151, edited by Tony Simpson and Tom Unterrainer, Spokesman, 2022
20. See "Global Security Initiative", Eurasia in the World, The Spokesman 154, 2023; Jenny Clegg, 'Proffering Chinese Wisdom" and Tom Unterrainer "China and the Bomb" in *Oppenheimer in Mind*, The Spokesman 155, 2023.

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