

“EUROPE - WHAT’S LEFT? STRATEGIES AFTER THE COUP”

**BACKGROUND MATERIALS (AS A CONTRIBUTION TO THE
CONFERENCE FROM JUNE 2ND UNTIL JUNE 5TH, 2016)**

This reader should help you (and us) to come into and develop a common discussion on history, on current problems, trying to identify „building blocks“ for a possible common platform and strategy that may emerge.

It includes a text by Klaus Dörre, as well as some working papers (not to be quoted outside our debates).

This reader is one of the results of our EU experts' discussions started in 2011. You may find some more about them on our blog¹, as well as the text by Frieder Otto Wolf in this reader. The text by Klaus Dörre shows in an exemplary way how different theoretical approaches, as well as different kinds of understanding and practices of left policies could be combined in cooperation and mutual strengthening of converging efforts, while avoiding any theoretical and political arbitrariness. All texts aim at offering some help to understand the reasons for the present weakness of the left, as well as the problems we are facing and the challenges we shall have to meet while working on societal alternatives and political strategies.

For our current discussion, as it has started with the invitation to this conference we have established a forum.² You are invited to join.

This reader has been elaborated and edited by Judith Dellheim³ and Frieder Otto Wolf who have closely co-operated with Lutz Brangsch. In the final work-over some repetitions have been accepted in the interest of the readability of the texts included.

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4. „The Limits of Landnahme: Capitalism will not die by itself, but it can be overcome“ by Klaus Dörre
5. A not fully finished working paper “Theses on critical caesuras and critical scenarios“, further elaborated by Judith Dellheim in co-operation with Frieder Otto Wolf. It invites the readers to join the working process.

¹ <http://stocktaking-scenarios.blog.rosalux.de/> ; under <http://stocktaking-scenarios.blog.rosalux.de/history/> you may find not only some sentences of our series, but also the links to the blogs for the experts' discussions

² <https://stocktaking-scenarios.tem.li/> userword: stocktaking, password: scenarios; after a very formal confirmation you may use all functions

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INTRODUCTORY THESES: WORKING ON STRATEGY – SEVEN ROUGH POINTS AND SOME REMARKS FOR A DISCUSSION ON THE REASONS FOR THE WEAKNESS OF THE LEFT-WING FORCES

1. Questions of strategy

There is a certain misunderstanding obstructing the debate from the very beginning: In major English speaking discussions the term “strategy” is understood as “tactics”, while “tactics” is understood as “playing games”. But when we speak about “strategies”, we think about a time perspective of at least 10–15 years, focusing the debate on four questions which go far beyond tactical games:

- What is the current societal situation and which scenarios of the societal development are realistically possible within this time perspective on this basis?
- What is our political long term goal and what is our present situation?
- What is possible for us to achieve in reality while changing ourselves as subjects of action?
- How can we make the possible effectively real? Which are the main issues to be addressed?

The left wing forces within the EU and in Europe is very far from having or developing a common strategy, even a provisional one which would have to be improved continuously. Four key questions have to be answered urgently to even start the debate on strategies within the European left:

- a) Which are the main challenges at this very moment and which will remain central for the next few years?
- b) What is realistically possible to be achieved by our efforts and what does this mean in terms of further strategy building?
- c) How do we have to change ourselves for growing stronger and developing our ability for working successfully on which kinds of unity and political alliances?
- d) Do we see the need and the possibility to make first steps towards starting a common work on such a strategy? If YES, how can we effectively do so?

2. The present crisis of the EU

It is an expression of the weakness of the left in the EU that we are facing a European Union with such increased and multiplying problems and contradictions eight years after the open outbreak of the global financial crisis. Europe is now beset by diverse and overlapping social, economic, ecological and resource crises which are reinforcing each other, by increasing resort to violence, while its dominant policies are ever more ignoring human and citizen rights, and react more or less helplessly to exacerbated and still rising global problems.

More specifically:

- the EU and the Eurozone have been further moved in the direction of the neo-liberal paradigm of economic policy, which continuously destroys real economic potential,
- EU law has been changed in the same direction,
- EU institutions have been changed, the financial architecture and the institutions of the Eurozone have been “improved” in an, at the very least, rather contradictory way,
- a new Union method which is systematically undercutting democratic controls has been more and more put to use,
- a new type of Association Agreements and free trade agreements have been signed,
- inequality and poverty have increased, a humanitarian crisis is developing, new zones of exploitation are being tapped,
- solidarity and social fellow-feeling as elements of social and territorial cohesion are diminishing or vanishing,
- democracy has been destroyed in many respects and is still under pressure of further destructive processes,
- a general tendency towards ideological and cultural regression into racism and ethnocentrism is increasing in force,

- in the very neighbourhood of the EU violence and dislocation are taking an explosive turn, thereby also affecting the EU itself,
- repression, surveillance, and militarization are increasing within the EU,
- Germany has come out clearly to dominate within the EU, while
- the EU is constantly declared to be in a state of emergency or exception, and leading governments are acting on this basis, neglecting or transgressing its existing legal bases,
- the very existence of the European Union is more and more questioned by reactionary and nationalist forces.

In the course of events, until now there have been alternatives, i.e. real possibilities for different paths of development. In the beginning of the financial crisis, some different possible scenarios have been discussed, with a foundation in reality. They have not been realized, because the strongest agencies have been able of successfully acting in their very own short-term interests – thereby preventing any significant changes in the direction of a just and democratic, socially and ecologically sustainable development. They have, in fact, been able to realize effective breaks and major turns in the actual development of the EU, while openly advocating negative scenarios: In this direction, the memorandums as agreements between debtors and creditors, above all the Euro-Summit “Agreement” with Greece from July 13th (that has taken place while the majority of the left in the EU has let their comrades in Greece without the urgently needed solidarity) have clearly mapped out future developments. The same destructive attitude has been taken with regard to the policy of sanctions against Russia (to criticize this policy does not mean in any way to give support to Russia's own ruling policy), as well as in the unilateral declarations of EU representatives in support of Poroshenko. Such an attitude has also been prominent in the phasing out of deals against refugees, or in the tolerance extended to the exclusivist politics of Orbán, as well as to other nationalists. And the same attitude has been underlying the refusal to end the declared “unending war against terrorism”, or to limit or at least to post-pone the unrestrained pursuit of further free trade and investment protection projects, and likewise specific political decisions reinforcing “technological development”. All these developments and policies do in fact reflect the existing real balance of power in the course of actual developments: i.e. the inability and unwillingness of the ruling forces politically to challenge capitalist oligarchies⁴ in any way, or of struggling against the ensuing local hegemony of openly reactionary political forces and mass movements. All this sums up to a situation of strategic political defensive for the political left in its broadest acceptance, regardless of several good results or even victories in elections. But, as a general consequence, their remaining and still increasing problems, contradictions, and conflicts of interests will not allow the ruling forces effectively to achieve more security in the situation of complexity, as it is now urgently needed. This is even made ever more urgent by the crises in the ecological dimension which all converge in exacerbating insecurity. The question to be addressed will therefore be how the other different forces, especially of the broad left, are (and will become) able to develop and to implement effective strategies oriented by alternative interests and towards alternative aims, fully taking on board the urgent questions of ecology.

This leads to the question of scenarios as possible developments resulting from and within a contested reality. This “contested reality” means acting on one’s own initiative, while fighting agencies reflecting this reality (and especially the present situation of the society with its economy and with the prevailing balance of political forces). Many of the reflections and deliberations, present in this debate, are derived from ideologies and these ideologies are in turn connected with the kind of scientific approaches used for analysing this reality⁵.

3. The main *caesuras* in the development of the EU

The further development of the EU depends essentially on dealing with some issues of decisive importance. The events determining our ways of coming to terms with them are critical cuts and breaks in

⁴On the basis of capital owners Simultaneously co-operating and competing in the spheres of production and finance a special kind of capital – finance capital – has emerged. These capital owners organise co-operations with their managers, their partners ‘within the state’, ‘in politics’ and in civil society, in the judiciary, in the military and in the ‘security sector’, in consulting and accounting, in science and in culture, in the media and among the lobbyists. These forms of co-operation, or rather the capital oligarchies underlying them, reproduce themselves as such via the appropriation of the fruits of a third party’s labour (primary exploitation) as well as through redistribution and dispossession (secondary exploitation). Their property rights are guaranteed by the impersonal legal systems of a state in the possession of the monopoly of organized violence.

⁵ See <http://stocktaking-scenarios.blog.rosalux.de/files/2015/12/2pages7.12.2015.pdf>

the continuity of ongoing developments, which we shall call „caesuras“. Arriving in a critical stage, such „caesuras will further exacerbate on-going critical developments. The main „caesuras“ are linked to the following problems and issues:

- the “Case of Greece” and the euro crisis,
- the “Ukraine problem”,
- the EU membership of United Kingdom,
- arriving at an adequate understanding of the global role of the EU and of its “security” – which is especially raising the issue of its relations to the United States,
- the issues of free trade, intellectual property rights, and “investment protection”,
- the issue of immigration to the EU,
- the pressing issues of climate and biodiversity, especially in relation to the energy problems of the EU,
- the issues of “demographic pressures”, referring in reality to questions of gender relations, of inter-generation relations and of the inclusion of migrants,
- the overarching issues of human and citizens' rights, of democracy, of democratization and so also of the media⁶.

All these problems do of course refer back to a long specific history, but their current shape is in the first place determined by the developments occurring and the policies pursued since the outbreak of the global financial crisis, and especially by the crisis management implemented within the EU during the last five to six years. The history of the EU (from its very beginnings in the ECSC⁷) is above all determined by the interests of the main agencies within the US and within NATO and the main agencies within the EU and its member states – in the fields of „the economy“ and of „the (official and unofficial) policy“. The direct political influence coming from North America has changed and is changing; likewise within the EU, the role of the capitalist oligarchies who are actively „playing“ in a global and European perspective, as well as the social and political compromises to be achieved with them have changed and are changing. Looking at the near future of the EU, it seems to become a decisive question, how the deeply modified ruling agencies will become able to get rid their costs and risks from a broken Eurozone and a breaking EU? How will the left wing forces in their present political situation of strategic defensive be able to at least protect the existing democratic, social and ecological standards while they will be facing explicitly nationalist, revanchist and reactionary forces, on the one hand, and struggling against capitalist oligarchies, on the other hand, who need to defend their capacity of either compensating their losses from a breaking apart of the EU or even to gain from it?

4. The main strategic challenges of the left in Europe

Being in a political situation of strategic defensive and having been unable so far really to address the causes and the causers of the financial crisis (or at least to act in solidarity with the Greek left), we should have a closer look at the on-going political activities of emancipatory agencies and agents. It will be a crucial question, how to strengthen and how to connect these activities and, especially, how to link them on the EU level.

We have found three interrelated or at least inter-relatable fields of action with regard to which such a perspective may be developed:

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

The on-going as well as coming defensive struggles are (resp. will be) about defending democratic, social and ecological standards in order to prevent further projects of the capitalist oligarchies – economic and “security” mega-projects, further deregulation and privatization of the commons, of nature and of the

⁶ See <http://stocktaking-scenarios.blog.rosalux.de/2015/03/19/prediction-and-explanation-in-political-action-scenarios-and-political-strategies/>

⁷ European Coal and Steel Community

public sphere and in this connection free trade and investment protection agreements such as the CETA, TTIP, TISA. One of the crucial arguments in favour of them is “growth”, while forcing the development of destructive production and consumption patterns and driving processes of financialisation further on. But it will be of central importance to become able to demonstrate that there are viable perspectives and that the forces needed for their realization can be effectively mobilized. This will have to do with local and regional problem-solving in the housing economy, with the supply of food, energy and social services and with the transport sector, as well as with certain sectors of the construction and agriculture industries. Such perspectives of significant change may then begin to seep into the everyday life of citizens who could actually will start to challenge the reigning social consensus – as employees, residents, users, consumers, customers, or even as socially, ecologically, politically committed people, with their forms of organization and association.

This would require building local and regional alliances as well as constructing supra-regional, European, and transnational networks between these alliances. As a logical next step they will have to focus again on the preservation, democratization and expansion of the public sphere, as well on the introduction and implementation of democratic, social and ecological standards and, finally, on the struggles to open possibilities for an alternative local and regional development. This underlines why the comprehensive mode of living has to be put into the centre of work for developing programmatic left wing alternatives as well as the corresponding long-term strategies.

In this perspective, the engagement of the left with questions of strategy will have to be oriented towards everyday-life while simultaneously adopting a transformative perspective in terms of a vision of a structural roll-back of the present constellations of power or of overcoming the dominant mode of socialization through capital oligarchies.

5. Principles of political action of a radical left

The search for possibilities of political action and for the most effective use of them will be the most important challenge for each and every radical left (which principally aims at liberation from societal relations of domination). This search will have to overcome a basic dilemma: without exception, each of the existing forms of policy is at the same time constituting specific limitations for effective political action. A radical left therefore has at once to develop its agency within existing action forms, while at the same time struggling to overcome these very forms: Two different principles have therefore to be realized at the same moment in its actions: The principle to specifically oppose the actions of the dominant forces (and in this way clearly to opt for resistance and for radical opposition), on the one hand, responding and acting according to the existing conditions as such, within the power relations as they are given, while, on the other hand and at the same time, addressing the existing political power balance with a view to structurally change it. This is often reflected as a battle between a sterile fundamentalist tendency and a potentially opportunistic tendency towards „real policy“. It is often (falsely) discussed as an antagonistic contradiction (with an underlying tendency to consider political power as structurally dishonest as such, and therefore to refrain to refrain from effective political action. In the face of this, it will not be enough to state that such a view is false and strategically misleading. It also will be insufficient simply to accept that the left wing parties (and even more critical social movements) may of course criticize any measure taken by a left wing government under specific conditions which do in fact leave little choice. To the contrary, it will be necessary to distinguish between the functions, the possibilities and conditions of the different forms of political agency (social movement, political party, left wing government and left wing parties in a coalition government), in order to define ways of effectively working upon the contradictions involved in a complex political process. *On the other hand*, the strategic task to be addressed will be to determine clearly how far these forms can work autonomously, make use of contradictions and at the same time interact in debates as well as converge in practice. The basis for this is a principle of common solidarity, i.e. the very principle to protect and to increase the possibilities to act of every form of left wing and emancipatory action, while aiming at strengthening these different forms in a process of contradictory co-operation (and thereby building the power of the left wing forces as a whole).

The elementary pre-condition for this will simply be to be radically honest, self-critical and able to analyse, to think dialectically and to learn from actual experience, on the side of all participant agencies. A transformative policy of the left wing forces is to therefore not be conceived on the basis of imaging a crash of the existing political system and its ideological apparatuses which then would leave a political vacuum to be used for „re-starting from zero“, but as a complex transformative activities and struggles which will have to address the specific tasks resulting from the existing situation. Such an approach will enable the left wing forces to activate and mobilize new societal forces and to build up new possibilities to

act in new and changing methods and forms. Therefore, the double challenge will be to develop societal conflicts in a clearly emancipatory way within civil society and to act accordingly within the state apparatus by party as well as by government agency in effective ways.

Because this challenge is so complicated, really open debates among the left wing forces will have to take place and ruffled sensibilities will not be avoidable. It will be difficult to reach consensus and frankly impossible to reach consensus on every issue at every moment. A really critical and contradictory debate will be necessary here and the decisions arrived at will have to be realized in practice. Arriving at such decisions should, however, not mean putting an end to the respective debates, but rather to agree to observe a certain break which will allow to work effectively in practice. And this should not be understood to mean that different tendencies and sensibilities should or would vanish after a decision had to be reached, but rather as a way to find a culture and concrete ways to deal with them constructively without losing the capacity to act.

Whenever a left wing government has been effectively blackmailed and has agreed to something that it thought unavoidable to agree to, the left wing parties and the movements critically accompanying them may very well refuse to accept this, but even in such a case they can continue generally having trust in this government and therefore to support it.

Such a practice of productively making use of political contradictions has not existed, before the Syriza government came into power, and this historical short-coming is one of the reasons for the historical processes which have been moving social-democratic parties to the right and it has strongly contributed to bring communist parties to their end (or to the end of their real influence on their society), if it has not simply transformed them into social-democratic parties.

Regardless of all processes of „globalisation“ and „post-nation state“ politics within the EU of today the leaders of ruling parties especially in the large countries (which are net exporters and belong to the „old member states“) still dispose of an extraordinary power. They do decide without real control in official and in unofficial deliberation processes. EU issues, especially those related to the „crisis countries“, i.e. to Greece, will therefore have to be made a special issue in the election campaigns of left wing parties within all EU member states.

6. Fighting neo-liberal hegemony

Facing enormously strong neo-liberal counter forces the left will have to analyse the influence of neo-liberal ideology and its corresponding norms on the left itself. The majority of us has starting being politically active under „neo-liberalism“ and many of us have been even born under the reign of „neo-liberalism“ as it is based on a special historical constellation of the capitalist mode of production. This very fact constitutes an enormous cultural and intellectual challenge. It will therefore demand a special kind of radical self-criticism of the left, connected with critically studying and re-appropriating political economy in a critical Marxian understanding of modern society, of societal change and of politics. In our everyday life and in our policies, we often use such terms as society and policy in an understanding which is based upon abstracting from the power relations prevailing between the members of modern society. Politics is then only seen as connected with institutions, and not understood as dealing with societal power relations. Accordingly, working on political strategies will have to consist in analysing experiences from dealing with power relations, on the one hand, and in understanding analysing societal power relations as the elementary form of the metabolism between society (as constituted it by members) and nature. The members of any society also live in gender relations and they also have a specific societal, ethnic and cultural background and origin as political subjects. These constellations of different aspects in their complexity unavoidably constitute the starting point of any analysis of the contexts to be addressed for developing an adequate political practice of the left wing forces within the European Union and in the Europe of today.

7. Towards a democratic counter-strategy

In the face of this overall increase of the political capabilities of the dominant and governing forces to mobilize people and to make use of their extraordinary powers, in order to continuously reproduce existing relations of domination, the question of the strategical alternatives which the left wing forces will be capable of developing will be of decisive importance. An adequate in-depth analysis of the new dimension of European politics will be a much-needed first step into that very direction. And making use of existing networks and experiences of the left wing forces will then be required to go beyond this cognitive first

step, creating at least the beginnings of an innovative process of deliberation on how to confront the emerging constellation of crises and their more or less creative management (on the European, the EU and member state levels) in its multi-level reality. Such a democratic counter-strategy will have to begin by carrying the debate on European politics to the sphere of public deliberation within the member states, while aiming at common, solidarity based reactions to these politics from above. Such initiative can start this process well before it will be possible to have its claims articulated by more than one member state government. And we may well make use of already existing trans-national networks of mobilization and alliances in order to make the urgent European problems in our social reality the object of public deliberation and to propagate alternative approaches to their solution – in struggling to make them prevail within the public of our respective member states, while beginning to change the strategic orientations of political parties, and, via their intermediation, also of a hopefully growing number of member states' governments.

The strategic aim of such an approach to alternative politics on the scale of the EU can at least begin to be achieved, when it will be possible for movements and political parties anchored within the respective societies, in a new situation of emergency, to press for alternative demands addressing the European dimension of politics in a number of member states, and when convergent demands will be raised within the European public debates – and finally when a sufficient number of governments will take this up within the Council of Ministers. This will certainly not be easy and any immediate success is highly improbable. But it would constitute already a significant first step towards such an alternative policy to block the common exercise of their prerogative by the „heads of state and governments“ within and without the European Council“, thereby effectively putting an end to the „Merkel method“.

This would still be far from building an effective strategy of transformation in Europe – but it would be a decisive starting point for really developing such a strategy – in the face of the crises of the EU, and in face of the global crises of which they are a specific element. (See the text „How to use the present crisis for fighting for a constitutional process of the European Union“ by Frieder Otto Wolf).

Some additional remarks on the reasons for the weakness of the left-wing forces

We need to ask ourselves the following three questions and discuss them in depth:

Why did the neo-liberal 'revolution' triumph and structurally weaken the left, in particular during the 1980s?

Why, in the aftermath of the recent global financial crisis, which subsequently grew into a crisis of the euro and the EU, did the left generally remain on the defensive?

What are the causes behind the lack of solidarity provided by the left in the EU with the elected Greek left-wing government?

These are interrelated questions, because the same institutions and people caused and profited from the corresponding processes and/or problems: ideologists, think tanks, politicians and the mighty representatives of European finance capital. The left proved incapable of effective resistance. Dedicated organising and solidarity is what was required. The left could have attempted to create momentum by developing an attractive project and offering organisational structures that appealed to people with a material and/or ideational interest in such resistance: either, because these changes would or could have structurally improved their position in society and/or because these changes would or could have enhanced justice in society. Organisational structures become attractive when they effectively combine transparency and internal democracy with a meaningful purpose, and offer members and the interested public a welcoming space. If collective agreements and campaigns match an individual's drive and their motives for action, they can create an incentive and lead the person in question to experience the organisation as personally enriching. By convincingly promising enhanced consumption, new individual freedoms, and freedom from tax-financed paternalism, mismanagement, cronyism and low-quality public services, the neo-liberal block frequently came out on top. An emphasis on greater 'responsibilities' and a certain degree of cuts to social spending that initially only affected the 'unproductive' seemed a comparatively small price. The EU and its predecessor organisations did not spark much political interest, yet thanks to greater freedom of movement, they have made everyday life, leisure time and holidays more appealing. The fact that this did (and does) not apply equally to every EU citizen, was only of interest to a politicised minority.

Since the beginnings of the EU⁸, the left has been unable to highlight a number of important facts. This includes the points that the EU was never conceived as a peace-serving project, that brutal warmongering colonial powers were among its founding members, and that the EU's foundation was owed primarily to the considerations of Cold War NATO strategists and investment opportunities for concrete financial capital. However, these were not the institution's exclusive *raison d'être*, and sights were also set on securing a long-term, sustainable social consensus and growing 'cultural attractiveness'. As the left failed to make productive links to national liberation movements, the movement against the involvement of the US in Vietnam, for peace in Europe and the world, or the feminist, democracy and environmental movements, it was also unable to combine efforts towards solidarity-based forms of society with a project aimed at developing a European Community or European Union as a solidarity-based European or global player. Only marginal efforts have been made in this direction. Understandably, these efforts were radically critical of the USSR and the 'socialist camp' in general, and particularly of the violent suppression of the Prague Spring.

The neo-liberal offensive followed the 'aftermath' of the 1968 upheaval (the European and global women's and citizen rights and pro-democracy movements, the defeat of the US in Vietnam, the oil and economic crises, the end of the Bretton Woods system, and the development of new technologies, fields of accumulation for finance capital by those in power in the West). By ensuring success in global competition between corporations, financial institutions and business locations, as well as creating and demonstrating its capacity to project its power globally, the EU's predecessor organisations became an integral part of this process.

With a left-wing European project in hand centred around solidarity-based visions of society, and that would take on the role of a European and/or global player, the left, after the downfall of the 'socialist camp', could have created better conditions to disentangle the close relationship between the EC and NATO and deal with the social, cultural and territorial divisions in Europe. Such efforts could have led to new forms of organisation that appealed to people searching for social alternatives. However, even after the signing of the EU treaties directed at Eastern enlargement, the left never consistently followed a left-wing project such as this. A serious start has only been made in the context of the European Social Forum, a process that began after the failed French and Dutch referenda on the EU constitution. Unfortunately, however, the Charter of Principles for Another Europe⁹ was more of a compromise than the result of a true political process that could have provided momentum to a left-wing European movement. Once the euro and EU crises hit, the flagging European Social Forum process broke down, precisely because of its failure to produce encouraging progress towards an alternative European project. In January 2015, therefore, there were no effective structures, and no will to create them and effectively organise solidarity.

Finally, we also need to talk about our history and experiences and use current struggles against the ruling powers to develop joint strategies to support the victims of ruling policies as much as democratic opposition. Ultimately, this could provide the basis for further action and joint political strategies.

⁸Although the entry into force of the Maastricht treaty on November 1, 1993 has founded the EU, the EU's history actually goes back to the preparations for the European Coal and Steel Community, as agreed in 1951

⁹<http://www.fse-esf.org/spip.php?rubrique86>

LEFT WING POLITICS IN THE EU TODAY. THE STRATEGICAL SITUATION

Public trust put into the institutions of the European Union has plummeted dramatically; already hovering at a problematic 50 percent in 2004, it has dropped to an even more alarming 31 percent by 2015 (Eurobarometer 2015, 8). EU rulers increasingly ignore democratic demands, as vividly illustrated by their blackmailing of the Greek government in July 2015 and the utter lack of transparency on what has been going on during the TTIP negotiations. Nationalist and right wing populist forces are gaining momentum, staging violent attacks against anyone perceived as outside the confines of the 'national community' of the "autochthone people", thereby denying all those excluded any claim to even the most elementary human rights. In actual fact, these forces also question the continued existence of the EU itself. These forces are opposed, however, by social forces calling for a democratisation of the EU, politically articulated by initiatives like Diem25, as well as by a wide-spread practical solidarity with refugees and with all those socially marginalised much more generally.

This text seeks to aid in starting such efforts and in supporting their continuation, simply by providing a clearly articulated analysis of the present situation, and of the potential it is offering. Proceeding methodologically on the model of the critique of political economy in the Marxian sense, it adopts an historical and critical approach. The paper's guiding question therefore is whether or not – and if so, how – decisions reached concerning the EU (and its institutional precursors) have been, or still are, guided by an interest in reproducing existing global power relations, as opposed to the interest of solving social and global problems. As the following text specifically investigates the causes for the structural weakness of emancipatory-solidary social forces and seeks to draw adequate conclusions informing effective counter-strategies, it seeks to encourage the Left to collectively address and engage with the EU's history, and especially with its own history which has already been part of it at least since the 1980s. The paper will specifically address 'critical caesuras' and 'critical stages', focussing on three interconnected aspects which will be relevant in the coming debates:

- The opportunities for political and social action open to the left at the historical crossroads the EU has navigated so far, and for building adequate left-wing strategies to fully exploit such opportunities in order to influence the future development of the EU;
- the defining will of the left-wing forces to live a self-determined, solidarity-based, and ecologically responsible life as the point of departure and binding framework for any truly democratic politics, particularly for the building of alliances of relevant emancipatory social actors and agencies;
- probable and really possible scenarios for the future development of the EU in order to serve as a guiding orientation towards a solidarity-based co-operation on effective left-wing political strategies.

The text seeks to at least give some help for asking relevant and productive questions.

1. A critical and historical political-economic approach to the question of democracy in capitalist societies

'The advance of capitalist production develops a working class which by education, tradition and habit looks upon the requirements of that mode of production as self-evident natural laws... The silent compulsion of economic relations sets the seal on the domination of the capitalist over the worker.' (Marx 1976, 899). This kind of 'silent compulsion' emanates from a real and perceived existential dependence of the 'employees' on their 'employers', who in turn depend on their success against their competitors, that is, on 'the market'. They thereby appear to actually share common social interests, as the 'silent compulsion' affects the daily lives of both. In their struggles to both acquire and maintain competitive advantages, to maximise profit, to build their power and ability to realise massive projects both domestically and abroad, industrial and financial capitalists establish large corporations. These mark the co-operation between some capital owners who organise the direct appropriation of unpaid labour in the sphere of commodity production, and another group of capital owners who organise the indirect appropriation of unpaid labour via the movement of interest-bearing monetary capital. In the course of the on-going valorisation of their jointly accumulated capital, capitalists themselves are finding economic life ever more socialised. The simultaneously cooperating and competing capital owners in the spheres of

¹⁰ I have to thank Frieder Otto Wolf for his helpful comments.

production and finance organise and 'liaise' with their managers, their partners 'within the state', their supporters 'in politics' and within civil society, within the judiciary, within the military and within the 'security sector', as well as in the spheres of consulting and accounting, in the spheres of science and culture, in the spheres of media and among all groups of lobbyists. These forms of co-operation, or rather the capital oligarchies driving and underlying them, reproduce themselves via the appropriation of the fruits of a third party's labour (primary exploitation) as well as through redistribution and dispossession (secondary exploitation). The property rights of the capitalist participants in this process are guaranteed by the impersonal legal systems of a state in the possession of the means of organized violence. As they continuously are the most powerful actors on financial markets, these oligarchies are capable of mobilising payment bonds, incomes, assets, property, etc. in order to finance new projects. Thereby they are capable of increasing the number of those exploited and at the same time of further intensifying the practices of exploitation. Indeed, productive structures and structures of social reproduction are developing within this very process, and these are in turn building their relations to corresponding structures of consumption (diet, housing, mobility, recreation). In such a perspective it is possible to distinguish six mutually interrelated sectors which serve as bases of control over the overall societal constellation by these capitalist oligarchies:

- (1) the energy sector,
- (2) the transport industries,
- (3) the sector of agriculture, or rather of agribusiness,
- (4) the military-industrial complex, or rather the security sector, as well as
- (5) the financial sphere and
- (6) the fields of high-tech enterprise.

These areas taken together account for the largest parts in the consumption of both land surface as well as of natural resources, for the heaviest levels of pollution and, simultaneously, for the highest profits. They engender violence against living beings and largely determine everyday life, as well as the ecological footprint of the populations in the centres of the capitalist mode of production. Simultaneously, they work constantly towards organising a consensus in the direction of 'more of the same' among the socially, politically, culturally, ideologically, ethnically and sexually differentiated individual members of society. Citizens in general, in so far they are wage earning dependent workers (with differing qualifications and within rather diverse relations of employment), compete for 'work' (i.e. for dependent work which exists in a wide variety of forms concerning delivery and remuneration of 'services performed'). As taxpayers, as clients and as customers, as the takers of insurances, as owners of property, as wealthy people and as shareholders, they all have an interest in everyone else's labour being as cheap as possible, while they are themselves participating in expanding capital valorisation processes as much as possible. As voters, they tend to select the most adequate staff for administrating the existing *status quo*, as it is based upon capital accumulation. Many are extremely and myopically concerned in caring for themselves only or exclusively for their families, often specifically denying any solidarity to those who do not conform and choose to 'live differently'.

In a perspective of liberation, one is nevertheless inclined to think that the majority of these people should rather strive to free themselves from being unilaterally determined by such relations of competition, as well as from the dangers effectively resulting from desperation, from anger and from fundamentalist reactions on the part of the disadvantaged, and from the restrictive effects of on-going social and ecological destruction processes. Against this background, we may assume a potentially broad interest 'among the people' (and most certainly among left wing activists) in the question as to how 'our democracy' or 'our undemocratic conditions' are shaping and conditioning our possibilities of action and how deeply these conditions are linked to or even determined by the EU.

'Democracy', or rather 'democratic systems' are often defined – referring back to Abraham Lincoln – as a 'balance between the interdependent values of "freedom" and "equality"' and qualified as such by a degree of guaranteed 'control' (Bühlmann et al. 2012, 118). There are 'nine functions' which are thought to realise these values: 'Individual freedoms, the rule of law, public life, competition, checks and balances, capacity to govern, transparency, participation and representation' (ibid, 123). Two examples may suffice to demonstrate that these concepts as such, without further clarification, can easily imply very different things: if 'public life' is understood as public discussion and debate, as well as a relatively stable and rule-based administration and institution for the organisation and realisation of social cohesion, then this implies at least the possibility of coming into conflict with prevailing, i.e. "dominant", social relations of power and ownership (Brangsch 2010, Wolf 2012). Such means to ensure social cohesion effectively include the organization of education, of healthcare, of pension provision and of communication, as well as of the

media. But whose work and what kind of work is organised in these fields, by whom is it realised and by whom is it remunerated? Who is capable of appropriating the fruits of societal labour and of organizing a continuous gaining of profits from it? The 'capability to govern' is centrally determined by the capacity to maintain (or even produce) social consensus, which basically relies upon the capacity of continuously reproducing the *status quo* of the existing system of social relations. But whose interests are best served here, within a society in which the relation of capital and labour clearly is a relation of domination, and where other relations of dominations tend to be reproduced in a relative independence from it?

Democracy may be defined as a condition in which freedom, equality, control and the functions of their realization *formally* apply to all citizens, primarily to all commodity owners as such (with the formal equality of those without property guaranteed by treating "labour power" as a commodity which may be bought and sold). They are considered as free and equal members of society, although living within a system of social hierarchies which indeed obstructs freedom, equality and control for certain social groups within a specific geographic space. Bourgeois democracy may accordingly be criticised for contributing, behind the guise of an acknowledged formal equality of all citizens, to both the concealment as well as the reproduction of their actual inequality in the social process of labour, and, by consequence, within people's social and individual, public and private lives. This kind of obstruction and limitation of equality and freedom, while at the same time establishing heteronomous control over peoples' work and their lives, strongly affect and effectively limit citizens' options to shape their own lives and to make their own plans for their future. Taking into account an understanding of democracy as 'institutionalised control over decisions and standards of government by those affected by them' (Demirovic 2007, 62) and juxtaposing this to the context depicted above, the examples of the treatment of Greece by the leading Eurozone states and the clandestine conduct of the TTIP therefore are an expression of much more than mere 'democratic deficits', but they do in fact exemplify the powerful dominance of capital oligarchies as it is exercised much more generally. Democracy in its a reality should be judged by the criteria of whether existing social relations effectively allow for all those living in a given territory to function as actual members of society, each of whom is formally guaranteed freedom, equality and control over his own part in social reproduction. The real condition of democracy will then have to be assessed by measuring the actual opportunities for individual and collective actors not only to organize their own lives, but freely and equally to participate in all the decisions affecting the direction of development and mode of functioning of the society in which they live. The task of creating and exploring specific possibilities for initiating and implementing a socially and ecologically sustainable mode of socialisation and of individual and social life can be understood as a project of as 'social democratisation' which should be linked to a project of social-ecological transformation, in order to mutually reinforce both in terms of social support and long-term sustainability. Such a project would serve to overcome the dominant ideology, as it has been described as 'possessive individualism' by C. B. Macpherson, and thus provide first elements for a critique of bourgeois democracy that fetishizes formal individual independence by ignoring e.g. the material dependency underlying the capital-wage-relations. At the same time, such a project should lead us unavoidably to a critique of these capitalist relations of domination, as well as of the other relations of domination intertwined with them, and, in the long run, of hypostatized social hierarchies as a whole.

On this basis, we shall address the specific task of a critique of the European Union in its actually existing form, starting from the question of the nature of the EU's political and social structures of domination as they have shaped its development throughout its history.

2. The problematic of determining historical periods applied to the EU

Differentiating, effectively breaking, historical continuity down into segments, stages periods and epochs is commonly regarded as one of the central tasks of historiography. Such a segmentation is often carried out with the regard to certain special events, considered as 'caesuras', which in turn raises the questions of defining the determining factors – subjectively expressed as a *leitmotif* of discourse – and developing adequately corresponding criteria. These are evidently closely related to the own scientific orientation of many historians, i.e. to his or her claim to and understanding of history, as well as to his or her analytical method (Sabrow 2013). Similar to 'critical junctures', in which the development of institutions (organisations, formal rules, public politics, political regimes, economic policy) is linked to path dependency, these *caesuras* as they are defined by the mainstream of historiography do not correspond to the criteria of periodization as presented above:: they exclude the analysis and the critique of underlying and complex relations of domination and power, specifically as relations of primary and secondary exploitation, as gender hierarchies, as hierarchies within and between cultures and also in many particular ways within trans-national and international relations.

Marking a specific period of time in order to explain the development of social problems and power relations will be referred to here as introducing and articulating a *critical caesura*. Proceeding from the exemplary cases of Greece and TTIP, the question of critical caesuras throughout the development of the EU into a European and global actor will then be examined. Such a *critical caesura* then is to be analysed as the product of an accumulation of social factors which a highly diverse set of political actors must take into account. It is relevant to further social development, yet not determining an inevitable outcome. Until democracy has been established, other options for development (resulting from the socio-political balance of forces) have existed as well, each of them implying a distinct set of possible consequences which could be laid out as such. This is needed for making the different 'possibilities for action' and possible modes of behaviour for the Left, including both possible and actual effects, a topic for a productive debate. Rather frequently, a number of several relevant historical events that could be regarded as *critical caesuras* occur within a single historical period. Such a period will be referred to as a 'critical stage' in this paper.

The *critical caesuras* and critical stages as they are discussed in this text, are intended as mere suggestions for further discussion, which may then contribute to developing an adequate and politically left-leaning understanding of history which has been 'cleansed of any residue of mechanism and fatalism' (Gramsci, 1933, 1734) as a crucial premise for the renewed development of socialist politics.

2.1 Critical caesuras and critical stages in the development of the EU as a European and a global agency

Any glimpse at chronological tables or timelines referring to the evolution of the EU will show that they often limit themselves to marking the successes of official politics or to establishing chronological lists of more or less ideologically selected events. For instance, an overview of political education materials relating to 'European unification'¹¹ published by the German Federal Agency for Civic Education explains important dates in the histories of EU and NATO as parallel, but by no means related, events. 'The Timeline European Union'¹² provides a comprehensive and detailed overview of the institutional history of the EU, but e.g. the war against Yugoslavia, which marks an important break in European history and in which EU members have been actively involved, is not mentioned at all. Structurally the same is true for 'the History of the European Union' on the official website of the institution.¹³

Those critical caesuras which are marking important steps towards intensifying trans- and international relations of competition, global power imbalances, militarisation and war (or rather 'security policies') are, in fact, most interesting with a view to a history of the EU and its impact on the development and on the interaction of European and global social problems. Real possibilities for taking steps towards emancipatory solidarity oriented alternatives may have been present at the actual point in time of these caesuras, even if they would have required a different balance of powers between socio-political forces and a clearer perception of the strategical tasks to be addressed. Critical caesuras have existed at various points all over the history of the EU. So far they have related to the management of social problems by the ruling forces of the EU, to international events challenging the EU, and to the negotiation and implementation of international agreements. Two broad segments of time or hyper-stages can be identified with regard to the EU in this respect: (I) the stage of the duration of the Cold War which has been characterized by the 'historical compromise' of 'Fordism' in the West, and (II) the period following the collapse of the socialist experiments in Eastern Europe which has been paralleled by the hegemonic turn towards 'neo-liberalism' in the West.

The first period segment, then, can in turn be divided into two critical stages, as well as into a short time-span of the initial years of a third critical stage:

- a) the immediate prologue and foundation of the EU's precursors (from 1948 to the implementation of the Treaties of Rome in the early 1960s);
- b) the social conflicts of the 1960s and the global crisis of the 1970s, bringing about changes in Western Europe which threatened to break the 'historical compromise' of Fordism;
- c) the neo-liberal turn (from the mid-1980s to the second half of the 1990s).
- d) The second period, which has been going on until today includes the longer part of c) as well as two additional critical stages:
- e) the course towards the rise of the EU to the role of global agency, with a major expansion of NATO and EU (since the mid/end-1990s to 2007);
- f) the global financial and economic crisis, the euro currency crisis and the existential crisis of the EU

¹¹ <http://www.bpb.de/shop/lernen/falter/148505/zeitleiste-die-europaeische-union>

¹² <http://www.timelines.ws/countries/EU/ROUNION.HTML>

¹³ http://europa.eu/about-eu/eu-history/index_de.htm#goto_6

(since 2007).

The brief discussion on the following pages is confined to ascertaining the historical facts¹⁴ and to some closely related considerations. The text largely refrains from deliberations on the current state and performance of the left wing forces: Such a political analysis and critique should be developed together with committed and interested actors; and it could draw on many important works on the strategical experience of the last decades which are already available, such as *The Tailor of Ulm* (Magri 2011)

The debate has to be conducted on the background of the often stated disparity between the effective role of the EU in the present world and the claims articulated in its programmatic political statements, especially in relation to the on-going hegemony of the US.

'[We] have about 50% of the world's wealth but only 6.3 of its population.¹⁵ This disparity is particularly great [...] between ourselves and the peoples of Asia. [...] Our real task in the coming period is to devise a pattern of relationships, which will permit us to maintain this [...] disparity without positive detriment to our national security.' (Kennan 1948) Despite its war victories in the Second World War and its ultimate triumph in the Cold War, the magnitude of this self-proclaimed task of the USA has still grown only greater since the inception of US world hegemony in the wake of World War II. The questions that had cried out for answers in Western Europe during the Cold War (and later also in central and eastern Europe), and still continue to do so time and again, are the following: Is it desirable to be part of such a 'pattern of relationships'? Should our goal really be to pursue exclusively our own objectives – against the interest and the will of the majority of the world population – while relying on some rather distant global power or on capital oligarchies? Should existing opportunities for regulation of the economy really be left unexploited (Balibar 2011)? Is it actually in anyone's interest to implement policies which go against the vital interests of the majority? To what extent can relations of dominance and power, goals and methods be effectively changed and how can alternative concepts be realised within and starting from that 'pattern of relationships'? Any decision-making that affects the vital interests of others and any approach to the option of economic regulation will both necessarily lead to socio-political debates and contestations over ways of life and modes of production: these debates will have to include financial markets and social security systems, the ways of accessing economic resources and even the natural conditions of life, as well as living within (and thereby reproducing) specific structures of production and consumption.

2.1.1 The 'confrontation of systems', or Western European co-operation under US control

This period can be conveniently sub-divided into the following three phases of development:

a) New European actors emerge; Cold War is initiated (1948 until the implementation of the Treaties of Rome of 1957)

'As of 1950, the European Coal and Steel Community begins to unite European countries economically and politically in order to secure lasting peace. The six founders are Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands' (see footnote 3). The manifesto of Diem25 is also in line with this myth (Diem25: 2016, 4). Uniting the former enemies in Europe – i.e. (West) Germany and Italy, on the one hand, and the other Western European countries on the other – under a common project has been an accomplishment of indubitable merit. Nevertheless, the ECSC founding members were not only members of the European Council initiated in the USA, but also (with the exception of West Germany) members of the Treaty of Brussels (an anti-Soviet military alliance founded in 1948) and of NATO. All founding members were Marshall Plan beneficiaries, reinforcing US-American influence in Western Europe and boosting the power of US-American capitalist oligarchies. Since 1918, Germany had lost all of its colonies as a consequence of military defeat, while Italy had lost the majority of its colonies as well. Belgium, by contrast, supported by Luxembourg, France and the Netherlands, continued its brutal colonial policy for decades to come. This colonial policy has been particularly dependent on major projects closely linked to the coal and steel industries. The Diem25 manifesto rightfully identifies the 'cartel of heavy industry' (ibid)

¹⁴ Apart from my own studies, I draw on the following websites: wikipedia – <https://de.wikipedia.org/>, the EU – <http://eur-lex.europa.eu> and the German Federal Agency for Civic Education – <https://www.bpb.de/>.

¹⁵ The share of the global population currently stands at 4.4 percent for the USA, that of the EU at 7.1 percent. Asia accommodates roughly 60 percent of the world's population. At the same time, the USA account for almost 20 percent of global energy consumption and currently about 16 percent of global carbon dioxide emissions. Historically, its share of CO₂ emissions lies at about 30 percent. The corresponding current values for the EU are 12.5 and 10, respectively.

as an early step towards the formation of the EU. However, it then proceeds to separate this fact (with its close linkages to the problematic of capitalist oligarchies) from the military aspects of the Cold War and from colonial policies.

The implementation of the ECSC founding treaty leads to the emergence of new structures in 1952: the High Authority, the Common Assembly of national parliamentarians, the Special Council, and the Court of Justice. The High Authority is supported by an advisory committee in which labour is also represented. It submits proposals to the council of national ministers. Here, decisions can only be taken unanimously. The common assembly, made up of 78 delegates elected by their respective national parliaments, serves an exclusively advisory function and has rights of control and information.

Both labour representation as well as the dispatching of elected deputies challenges the left wing forces to search for scopes of action within the ECSC, with which it moreover must come to terms with more generally as well. The European Convention on Human Rights signed in 1957 also provides some important potential starting points for left wing politics.

In the midst of the intensifying Cold War, and simultaneous with the growth of successful political independence movements in the European colonies, the ECSC countries go on to found the EEC and the European Atomic Energy Community (EAEC or Euratom) in 1957. The EEC treaty aims to reduce and ultimately remove internal trade barriers and establish a common market within the following 12 to 15 years, including freedom of movement for goods and services, as well as for people and capital, based upon a common policy on tariffs and trade as well as a common policy in transportation and the agricultural sector. The construction of the EEC is analogous to that of the ECSC. And the structures of parliamentary observation and judicial control are merged between the three 'communities': The ECSC's Common Assembly and Court of Justice are from now on also responsible for any matters concerning the EEC and Euratom. The number of parliamentarians seated in the Common Assembly rises to 142.

This new set of European agencies significantly improves conditions for large corporations, and leads to major new economic projects. The corresponding public investment and 'security' requirements (particularly with regard to Euratom) lead to the centralisation of economic decision-making and a more centralised development of production. Moreover, they impact social consumption structures and ways of life and intensify destructive social consequences, not least outside of the EEC, as well.

b) Dramatic political contestations, the neo-liberal turn in the US, changes in Western Europe

While the conflicts of the Cold War (Cuban Missile Crisis, Vietnam War of the US) and those linked to colonial policy continue to grow, democratic protests against domestic elites also become more forceful. In the USA, as well as in Eastern Europe – particularly in Czechoslovakia – and in Western Europe at large, it is mostly university students who debate individual self-determination and social democratisation, discussing different modes of production and alternative ways of living. In 1968, the EC member countries (the European Community [EC] was formed by a fusion of ECSC, EEC and Euratom in 1967) agree upon the European Political Cooperation (EPC), albeit without a focus on civilian conflict processing and prevention.

In 1972 the Club of Rome issues its first report (*The Limits to Growth*) on the overburdening of global ecosystems, and once again calls for a closer examination of modern consumerist lifestyles. The left wing forces by and large welcome the European Social Charter of the European Council, the feasibility of which however is decisively undermined, when, in 1973, the Bretton Woods System collapses following the US-American budgetary and financial crisis resulting from the war in Vietnam. Under the impact of rising oil prices and after a significant increase in the power and influence of OPEC, raw commodity exporters now pour millions of petro-dollars into Western banks. Price hikes for consumer goods, speculation on the future of the US dollar and liquidity gains for the banks serve as pretext for calls for economic liberalisation and the opening up of new fields for investment through privatisations of the commons. Microelectronic technologies originally developed for the US security sector are introduced into civilian production, and transferred to the banking and insurance sector, or to pension systems and social security arrangements. The combination of new strategies pursued by the ruling elites with new technologies and new laws favouring the capacity to act of financial market actors ((or rather agencies, as exemplified by large multi-national corporations)) engenders a continuous increase in the involvement of ever larger parts of the Western populations in the mobilisation of sources of capital accumulation for the capitalist oligarchies. The global expansion of financial markets increases their relative autonomy. The social influence of the three largest rating agencies is being strengthened continuously. The role of TNCs in the world economy becomes ever more pronounced, while a system of liberalisation and deregulation, privatisation and

financialization proliferates, that is geared towards free trade and investor protection. This entails consequences for the development of life-styles across Western societies, in fact also including some new opportunities for claiming and realising individual rights.

Such developments in the US, which are entering a new round of the arms race simultaneously, trigger significant efforts among the most powerful within the growing EC (1973: accession of Denmark, Ireland, Great Britain; 1979: accession of Greece) to catch up with the US. Great Britain, to whom significant concessions had been granted during accession negotiations, accelerates the pace of neo-liberal domestic reforms at the same time. Simultaneously, however, some relevant EC actors prefer a stronger state-run sector, and are somewhat concerned with the noticeable indifference to the EC as it is to be seen among broader sections of the continental population. In order to remedy this, at least to some degree, direct elections to the European Parliament are introduced, which are, however, not based upon any deeper democratic consultation or any broader public debate. The first direct elections to the European Parliament are held in 1979 (435 deputies).

In the same year, the European Monetary System takes effect across the EC with the exception of Great Britain. This country also declines to join the Schengen Agreement (1985), which stipulates free trans-border mobility within the EC. Objectively, the pressure on the left wing forces to criticise the EC while simultaneously advancing alternatives which combine individual freedom, social justice and global responsibility, in fact increases dramatically. This is not adequately seen as a challenge, let alone effectively addressed by political initiatives on the part of left wing forces which remain ideologically divided and deeply bound to their respective nation state.

c) The EU's neo-liberal turn

In 1986 the Single European Act (SEA) is signed, going into effect in 1987. It pursues the development of the 'single market', the internal market of the EC, in order to bring about or at least further its rise to a major global actor by 1992 – strongly taking its orientations from the US economic model. The SEA pushes for the removal of capital controls and expands the competencies of the EU to include science and development, the environment and the EPC. The new opportunities of the EP (518 members) for participating in legislation are destined to boost public interest in this renewed project of 'more European commonality'.

In its pursuit of an alternative global political project which includes the claim for a different way of life, the left wing forces in their majority take Gorbachev's concept of the 'Common European Home' and the Brundtland Commission's report *Our Common Future* as central points of political reference. At the same time – immediately due to its defeat at the hands of NATO in the arms race and its relatively high levels of foreign debt – the 'socialist camp' is effectively rendered incapable of democratic renewal. By 1989/90, the elites in these countries are locked in struggles with one another over the private appropriation of public resources and over receiving credits and support from the Western powers. The granting of such credits is, however, closely tied to the dismantling of existing economic and socio-political capabilities. The conditions imposed on Middle and Eastern European countries have already been tested by IMF and World Bank in the debt-ridden developing countries of the "Third World": debt rescheduling and assistance in exchange for TNC access to the respective country's natural resources, 'budget overhaul', liberalisation and privatisation, a reduction in the price of labour services, cuts in social services and social repression. Majorities of the population in these countries in fact accept this perspective, in the hope of thereby advancing towards a Western kind of lifestyle.

The confrontation of the Cold War ends with a clear defeat of "the East" and the US set out on a massive course of expanding the 'pattern of relationships' just mentioned. Over the past twenty years, its military budget has grown consistently to almost 800 billion US dollars per year, while the number of military bases has increased from roughly 200 to 800. The intention of this build-up of military capability is openly declared to acquire the ability to intervene by military force wherever this seems to be advantageous. In a global perspective, policies of nation states in support of the mobilisation of accumulation sources for finance capital throughout globalised society have been crucial to this process. This continues to constitute a challenge for all left wing forces to fight for disarmament and civilian prevention and resolution of conflicts, while simultaneously organising 'windows of opportunity' for comprehensive socio-political alternatives.

2.1.2 The period since the defeat of the socialist experiments

In the summer of 1990, the rulers of the USA approve a military intervention in the Gulf region, an

unequivocal expression of their new principles of foreign policy. Eight members of the EC are directly involved in the military coalition supporting this initiative. Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary join these supporting countries. At the same time, the EC member countries and their political leaders continuously miss the historical opportunity to address the problems of an even and sustainable development within a broader European region, and utterly fail to address the growing social problems within its member states, without even conceiving long-term solutions to them, clinging to the neo-liberal mantra that market liberalization will take care of all problems in the long run. In 1992, NATO approves the possibility of future 'Out-of-Area' missions, and those ruling and governing Europe are clearly 'on board'. By further developing the EC, they aspire to join the 'winners of globalisation' and at the same time prevent unwanted migration. Signed in 1992 and implemented in 1993, the Maastricht Treaty (TEU), which founds the European Union and facilitates political integration, builds upon these developments. It stipulates the realisation of a domestic market, the introduction of a single currency by 1 January 1999 – including strongly enforced capital liberalisation, monetary convergence of national economic policies, the creation of the ECB and other institutions of the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU). The TEU lays the foundation for cooperation in six fields of policy: Trans-European Networks (TEN), industrial policy, consumer protection, education and vocational training, youth and cultural policies. It introduces EU citizenship, which is added to national citizenship in the member states, and it expands the individual rights of citizens. It postulates that decisions are to be taken 'as closely as possible to the citizens', and uses this to weaken political decision making in favour of an increasing role of market mechanisms. The rights of the EP, its participation in decision making and in the appointment of the European Commission, are extended. The terms of office of the latter are adjusted to the legislative periods of the EP. The role of European parties is recognised, highlighted, and used as a basis for financial supports. The regional dimension of co-operation within the EU is strengthened (although in the sense of exacerbated inter-regional competition), and the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) is set up. The new stipulations regarding decision-taking by qualified majorities in the European Council further widens its existing scopes of action. On the whole, the TEU bolsters the economic and socio-political power positions of the neo-liberal protagonists. Moreover, they accelerate the development of centralised and centralizing economic structures which are highly destructive socially and ecologically. At the same time, however, new opportunities to intervene and to operate within the framework of the official political system emerge for the political left wing forces. In the struggle for socially and ecologically sustainable development and corresponding ways of life, left wing forces in Europe can now draw on five documents passed at the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in 1992. They are, however, primarily confronted with and concerned by the need to respond to the war in former Yugoslavia in the form of protests, as well as alternative demands and conceptions.

d) Setting course for the anticipated global rise of the EU to become the most competitive and dynamic global economic region, with a major expansion of the EU and of NATO

In 1999 the first EU candidate countries among the group of Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries join NATO. The latter then bombs Serbia without a UN mandate. In 1999, the Euro currency is introduced to the system of international currency exchange and the Treaty of Amsterdam takes effect. It tightens rules on monetary convergence between national economic policies and amplifies its 'security policy' components. It generalises the Schengen Agreement. Decision-making in the European Council is simplified and the rights of the EP to participation are expanded. The Financial Services Action Plan (FSAP) is also passed in 1999, based on the US-American model of financial services. The Treaty of Nice follows the same year. It paves the way for a further enlargement of the EU while securing the ability of the European Council to meet the required quorum. Furthermore, it introduces the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) into EU Law.

In Lisbon, in the spring of 2000, the European Council (which up to the turn of the millennium consists almost exclusively of Social Democratic representatives)) agrees on a strategy programme which is conceived for ten years (until 2010). The EU intends to 'become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion' (European Council 2000). Liberalisation/deregulation, privatisation, free trade, and the protection of property and investment for members of the capitalist oligarchies are intensified. Simultaneously, a widespread belief persists that the EU's very restrictive social policy will allow it to compete out the USA.

As a reaction to the terrorist attacks of 9/11/2001, NATO invokes the collective defence clause, and new anti-terrorism laws are passed in its member states. A total of 15 EU members and 11 countries preparing

EU accession participate in the war in Afghanistan. In the fall of 2002, the NATO summit resolves to establish its Response Force with a standing capacity of 25,000 soldiers. In March 2003, the US and Great Britain begin forming the coalition of the willing for the war against Iraq. This coalition includes five EU members and, again, 11 candidate countries. The spring of 2004 then witnesses the accession of additional EU candidates from the group of CEE countries to NATO.

The enormous eastward expansion of the EU in May 2004 produces, even more markedly than in the case of its Southern expansion (to Greece, Portugal, and Spain), new EU member states with a second-class status (i.e. being granted only limited freedom of movement for citizens of these countries, scarce agricultural subsidies, and fewer appointments to executive institutional positions). At the same time, the terms of admission had already aggravated the economic and social problems of the new EU member states, and since 2004 both socio-economic and territorial contrasts and cleavages within the EU have further deepened. These aspects, combined with problems in the EU's immediate vicinity (which are likewise on the rise) clearly show that the TEU's orientation towards global competitiveness and increased capacity to act leads to an increase in conflicts on all levels and in all dimensions of the EU. The standards and the way of life, as it had been reached in the former ECSC states and in Great Britain, cannot be easily defended. And it is certainly impossible to generalise it to the new member states, albeit with major struggles, both in the 'old' and in the 'new' member states – which in turn raises the question of left alternatives all the more urgently.

e) The period since the outbreak of the global financial and economic crisis and the Euro and EU crises resulting from them; the Treaty of Lisbon and EU2020, bringing some 'sea changes'.

'A financial crisis hits the global economy in September 2008, leading to closer economic cooperation between EU countries. The Treaty of Lisbon is ratified by all EU countries before entering into force on 1 December 2009. It provides the EU with modern institutions and more efficient working methods' (see footnote 3).

The Lisbon Treaty regulates some aspects which had been left unresolved by the failed referenda on the EU constitutional treaty in France and the Netherlands: The Fundamental Rights Charter becomes binding through an amendment of Article 6 of the Treaty of the European Union, while Great Britain and Poland are granted clauses of exemption. The treaty broadens the rights of the EP (751 members) and introduces the European Citizens' Initiative (ECI): One million citizens who are 'nationals of a significant number of Member States' (European Union 2010: C115/21) can mandate the EU Commission to draft a thematically specific law for consultation. At the same time, the treaty firmly inscribes the neo-liberal orientation of EU development as a constitutional principle: 'the activities of the Member States and the Union' are 'conducted in accordance with the principle of an open market economy with free competition' (European Union 2010: C 83/96). And a further build-up of the military dimension is postulated by the treaty as well: 'Member States shall undertake progressively to improve their military capabilities.' (European Union 2010: C 83/38).

If the EEA, not to mention the Treaties of Maastricht and Amsterdam, had already tremendously complicated the possibility of one individual country changing its policies to any significant extent through an explicit commitment to free capital flows and the convergence of economic policies, the Treaty of Lisbon is explicitly designed to make any such political re-orientation at the national level constitutionally impossible.

For the political left wing, this further accentuates the contradiction between the increasing complication and difficulty of its conditions for action and an increase in its formal possibilities and occasions for action. Faced with a global financial and economic crisis, and its impact upon the EU which is modulated by the latter's own policies and corresponding legislation, the EU Commission and its partners are pursuing a strategic response that is designed to strengthen the EU as a global actor. Exactly this is what EU2020, the successor of the Lisbon Strategy, is again and still designed to achieve. Its aim is to improve economic policies and economic conditions for TNCs which are based in the EU. At the same time, however, EU institutions fail to exhaust available legal means to protect the Union against the effects of the crisis. Left wing demands to that effect with explicit reference to the context of crisis management¹⁶ go largely unheeded. Eventual corrections to official policy come too late and are incomplete, or fail to materialise at all and often they are even rolled back immediately after materializing.

In early 2010, the three largest US-American rating agencies, whose owners hold stocks in the most economically dominant US corporations, declare the Greek government bonds to be junk. The banking crisis therefore is immediately transformed into a 'Euro crisis'. New financial institutions are created

¹⁶ Such as the European Economists for an Alternative Economic Policy in Europe, www.euromemo.eu

outside existing EU treaties in close cooperation with the IMF, largely to protect the property and assets of the powerful few within the ECSC founding countries and Great Britain. These institutions provide financial resources – under strict conditions – to Euro countries experiencing problems of liquidity, as long as this serves the stability of the EMU. These conditions are set on the basis of macro-economic adjustment programmes following IMF and World Bank principles with regard to financial aid for developing countries and former ‘socialist’ states. To a certain extent, ‘crisis countries’ are thereby simply placed outside of European law. ‘In terms of its impact on European politics, the current debt crisis certainly amounts to what is commonly referred to as ... a critical juncture... The question this raises is (no less than) that as to how the future EU, faced with the supremacy of international financial markets seemingly cemented for the foreseeable future, the sharp differential between its member states, the economic and political dominance of Germany, and the already apparent loss of importance of the Commission as well as the neutralisation of national democracy through inter- and supranational institutions primarily serving the requirements of capital markets will deal with this’ (Beckert, Streeck 2012). In this way, governments and parliaments have struck a deal what benefits the wealthy, corporations, and banks, or rather financial corporations, in particular. They have thereby implemented an open hierarchization of EU citizens according to national citizenship. The determining factor here is the location of the respective TNCs. Following the fiscal pact of 2015 in combination with the Two Pack, the EU member states ultimately surrender their right to decide over their own national budgets. The entire set of existing rules concerning sanctions is further tightened. Alternatives (as proposed by Galbraith, Stuart, Varoufakis 2013) are not even acknowledged as such, even if the EU as a whole would clearly benefit from their implementation. It is the global capital oligarchies, then, who are on the winning side. The ‘agreement’ on Greece, which is the result of blackmail being exercised by an informal body, is supposed to demonstrate the downright impossibility of democratically mandated changes in the political orientation established under neo-liberal hegemony.

Even more drastic social problems in neighbouring Arab countries, aggravated by the global crises, have then resulted in what has become known as an ‘Arab Spring’, the democratic outcomes of which have been extremely vague and short-lived, while overall violence has increased dramatically. The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) of 2011 (reviewed in 2015), then, changes nothing about the primacy given to the interests of the EU in the development of these regions. Ever since 2008, but even more so since 2010 (NATO summit in Lisbon), NATO provocations vis-à-vis Russia have been escalating (‘anti-missile shield’), while Russia for its part acts and reacts in an openly imperial manner. The problems are subsequently aggravated tremendously by the coup d’état against Victor Yanukovich and the secession of Crimea from Ukraine.

Global elites view Russia above all as a BRICS state on European soil, and the BRICS alliance as a global rival. The association treaties of the EU and the corresponding projects for comprehensive and all-encompassing free trade zones, such as TTIP (with its strong military component) and other agreements on trade and investment protection, are all at least also directed against this rival group of competitors, the members of which are addressed by strategies of influence limitation and internal destabilization.

2.1.3 The present situation of Europe as a challenge for the left wing forces

This constellation of various problems (which are closely mutually linked via complex trans-national relations) has the overall effect of reinforcing the principle (which is actually dominant within the USA, in NATO and in the EU) that reads: ‘may the stronger seize each and every opportunity to strengthen his strength’. And this has clearly visible consequences: the destructive forces – from capital oligarchies to nationalists, right-wing populists and extremists – are reinvigorated and now begin to articulate their interests ever more strongly: more activity of the EU in the interests of the national ruling classes, less EU regulation and even more free trade, or dismantling the EU for the sake of ‘the national’. The military build-up in the West, an ENP oriented around the primacy of the own interests of the EU, as well as the military build-up of erstwhile allies have contributed to encouraging terrorists. At the same time these developments towards an increasing role of military power have reinforced the root causes of displacement and thereby exacerbated the refugee crisis. This, in turn, tends to trigger a reaction according to the principle: ‘the stronger uses all available options to protect himself from the effects of his own policies’.

The left wing forces in the EU have failed, and continue to fail, adequately and effectively to take up and to bring together emerging democratic protests against the dominant mode of ‘crisis processing’, the relative

successes and the acute problems of left wing comrades in Southern Europe, of local and regional practices of solidarity, of initiatives for the support of refugees, or for supporting the emancipatory struggles by Kurdish activists, of actions for peace and the antifascist struggle, and of political actions for climate justice and alternative energy supplies in a way that could decisively increase the overall impact of these issues on public discourse and life within European societies. One common starting point for this could be the democratic discussion around alternative ways of life and forms of living in society as it has been initiated around the problematic of debt. In spite of their indubitable ambivalences, the sustainability and climate targets agreed upon at the UN conferences in 2015 may actually be a useful reference and tool for initiatives and actions to this end.

3. Overcoming determinism without losing orientation: Looking at historical processes with a view of developing and ‚qualifying‘ political strategies

3.1 The determinist temptation

In the past, it has always seemed useful to rely on deterministic ideas about processes of ‘long duration’ – as e.g. Kautsky’s idea of a communist development inevitable in the long term, simply because of the inherent contradictions of the capitalist mode. And when, additionally, the upswing and the prosperity in the crisis cycle are going to be ever more short, a revolutionary movement to overcome capitalist mode of production will not be necessary any more. After the experience of the long 20th century such ideas of a linear determinism in history are hardly plausible any more. But in order to avoid falling into a simple “occasionalism” or “decisionism” instead, in which all the societal processes and policy actions are reduced to a chaos of arbitrary individual actions, the analysis of bound statistical time series has been developed. It takes up and continues the idea that historical processes influencing political action would have their own materiality, specific functional mechanisms and a certain continuity. However, it remains a serious misconception to derive the expectation from the descriptive histories, which can be constructed on this basis, that the historical process in all its complexity would not make any unpredictable leaps or would not be able to do so. Past revolutions or major wars have in fact constituted such leaps in the historical process. If the inertia effects in history should be understood, but also the possibility of transitions or transformations historical processes in retrospect should be analysed and prospectively also possible scenarios should be discussed. „Should be“, because this could allow the learning leftist to draw conclusions for possibly effective political tactics and strategies. The simple idea of systemic complexity alone does not help to ask the strategically as well analytically interesting question, under what conditions a specific chain of causes and effects could bring about a real transformation. The idea of an “over-determination” of historical processes seems to be more helpful in this respect: It allows to discuss a plurality of “lines” of determinations, explaining contradictions, battles and the development of societal resp. political agency, e.g. the anticolonial movements in the 1950s, the women’s movements in the 1960s, the ecological movements in the 1970s. After the deep crisis of the social democratic and communist movements and also of a special type of academic Marxism the left have to look for a new general theoretical articulation of structural determinations of processes realizing and reproducing power and domination. The Marxian critique of political economy is still virulent, but in need to be renewed and to be developed. It allows to study the relationships existing within specific historico-social formations, by analyzing the over-determined links between conditions and processes which could show possibilities to act open to different actors, agents, forces – in very different time periods, cultures, territories, states and regions. So the world-wide constellation of “Fordism” as “capitalism of the cold war”, as in the case of the “Euro capitalism” or the “Japanese” or the “American” capitalism can be explained in their historical complexities. Presumably, it is necessary to critically re-examine the many generalizations which have been developed since the beginning of the 20th century in order to understand the development of left wing thinking, of the Marxian and Marxist theories and of the real processes reflected by them. Examples for such conceptions are “monopoly capitalism”, “organized capitalism”, “state monopoly capitalism” which have tried to improve Marx’s theory of the revenue sources on the “surface” of modern bourgeois society. These conceptions were elaborated by such contradictory creative Marxists like Hilferding, Pollock and Varga. They have regarded the “organized” and the “state monopoly” capitalism as a form of the political mediation of processes of capital accumulation by state intervention. This has presupposed a critical theory of the independence of the modern state as a political form and as an institutional complex. In the 60s, the theory of state-monopoly has been capable of giving a progressive orientation to political alliances, but is has been causing disorientation by overlooking contradictions of interests among the different ruling elites. It has been capable of explaining some important oligarchic structures and some counter-reactions, but it

could not explain and make use of the really existing contradictions in their complexity. Therefore it is assumed that in this way only a theoretical core of such concepts can be worked out, while the majority of such “theories of the middle range” have formulated findings either purely empirical or within a country and/or a time period. An “empirical generalization” remains limited to a time or geographically localized constellation. There is a difference between a trend statement based on structural determinations which can have a prognostic value and a mere trend-looking statement formulated on purely empirical findings. The second type of finding cannot explain the possibilities of any deeper change of a complex historical and social reality. The scenarios method is based on purely trend-looking statements and as such it is of only limited prognostic power. However, it is in principle possible to examine critically presented scenarios to see which trends could be expressed by them – at least under the assumption that there is at least an elementary theoretical knowledge about the forms and structures that can explain the emergence of such tendencies. Only in this way, some predictions could be formulated and be made more resilient than scenarios merely based on trend information on the future development of the share prices. Only by means of a theoretically justified critical reading of existing scenarios and forecasts it will be possible to develop ideas about possible twists and choices which could be used for a starting point of a historical strategy. But all that has to be connected with a permanent analysis of real and potential political actors who decide about the real societal development. This means that we make use of the scenarios method in the two directions of history as of future.¹⁷ Referring to the proceedings above some first ideas might be formulated:

3. 2 First ideas on the possibilities and requirements for building a political strategy of the left wing forces for the EU

The starting points are objective contradictions, also producing uncertainties for ruling who have produced the contradictions and are increasing them, and the social and political activities of individuals and collective actors. The contradictions are related to interests, ecological and resource limits and objective systemic interrelations (e. g. concerning ecosystems and production patterns). In particular, the following three contradictions of the very process of capitalist dominance can and should be made use of, in order to build an effective counter-force in favour of a deep, structural change: The capitalist mode of production requires cooperation among people, and thus creates the possibility that people become capable of defending themselves to some degree against the pressures of heteronomy and isolation as individual workers who are producing social and ecological destruction; this is also true for those who are highly qualified. The development of new technologies and of financialisation does not only open up new fields for the accumulation of capital, it also creates new possibilities for building an individual and collective counter-force and for acquiring a relative autonomy against the dictates of capital accumulation. This is due to an increasing frequency of situations within working processes where people have to think and to act in a relatively independent manner. Thus, the new technologies do not only offer new possibilities to the capitalist oligarchies for the expansion of their power; they also do increase the potential to be activated in favour of those who are fighting the oligarchies and who are working towards bringing about real socio-political alternatives.

The manifold competing groups and individuals within globally linked societies are in fact living in very diverse social situations, but they do share strong common interests: They are interested in their own, or at least in their children's, health and education and they strive for achieving some kind of self-determination in their lives, which for most of them presupposes at least a reasonable job providing for a secure and sufficient income. Furthermore, in the last instance, they all need an intact natural environment, and they all are directly dependent upon a peaceful functioning of their everyday lives. Many people see themselves severely threatened by competition, by the destruction of nature, by social, national and global cleavages, as well as by various forms of political and religious fundamentalism. They are all, to various degrees, exposed to or threatened by an ever more extending practice of state surveillance, as well as by a growing militarisation not only of international relations. Many of these people have begun, individually or collectively, to refuse the political answers offered to them by their respective rulers. Under the conditions of the dominant capitalist mode of production, in its present neoliberal regime controlled by capitalist oligarchies, all those who in various ways participate in the political administration of society are being forced to submit to the logic of global competition. Accordingly, making use of a superior ‘quality of human capital’ and of relatively competitive national positions in terms of costs has become indispensable

¹⁷ <http://stocktaking-scenarios.blog.rosalux.de/2015/03/19/prediction-and-explanation-in-political-action-scenarios-and-political-strategies/>

for economic success. Likewise, a 'relatively reasonable' use value of the air, water and earth at one's disposal, as elements of the 'natural capital stock', has become a factor of growing importance in global competition. But this cannot eclipse the fact, that 'there is only this one world' – so that it will not be possible, in the long run, simply to shift the burden of destruction resulting from this deregulated competition towards the weaker groups and regions.

But willing to marginalise ecological problems and to „resolve“ them by technologies (1), continuing the profit maximising and „security“ oriented policies (2), trying to shift the burden of crises, short viewing EU, European and global policy to the weaker groups and regions (3) and hoping to escape problems by improving free trade and military/“securing“ alliances with the US (4), all problems have risen and the conflicts between the factions of capital have become significant. In context with that the EU enlargement rounds under neoliberal conditions and the efforts to deal with social, ecological and global crises under the priority of the economic interests of capitalist oligarchies anchored in the old EU member states have to be highlighted. The conflicts between the fractions of capital revolve around views on very different kinds of capitalist mode of production in the very EU, on the role of social and territorial cohesion of the EU and on wished scenarios for a future Europe in a future world. That raises a decisive question for the left: Whether and how 'certain overlaps of interests' between certain capital factions, groups of the population and the forces of the left may be used to break up the cohesion of the dominant classes, in order to build an ability for successful action against social and ecological destruction, and for imposing sustainable solutions to growing problems. Enabling such discussions means to engage for democracy – among the leftist and in the societies. The basis is rational analysis and understanding of problems, values and principles avoiding any concession to nationalist positions and feelings. This analysis has to focus on interests and societal structures, societal power relations, especially power relations in the economic life of the society.

On the one hand, it is to be investigated, how far different models of “capitalism” – as a particular combination of modes of production, ways of life and cultures/ideologies – can be identified with those groups of countries, especially within the eurozone and within the EU at large. On the other hand, the question should be investigated, how far a connection may be established between the weight and the type of TNC presence within particular countries and the attitudes prevailing with regard to gender relations, to migration, to intolerance or toleration of diversity, to the fulfillment of promises in the field of development co-operation, or to becoming aware and respecting ecological requirements. Doing so, we see a rising societal heteronomy in the EU while the rules of economic policy and “security” are becoming formally more equal. This increases contradictions in interests and produces new uncertainties. In further work on scenarios the following three questions will be of crucial importance: Will the basis for the future of the EU determined more by a common or more by a country based relation to the US in framework of the NATO and a TNC dominated economy? Will the common relation more or less mediated by Germany? Will any chances for an alternative EU development in the interest of the majority of its population, of the population of Europe with its neighbours and of the global population be rescued? In short: will the contradictions rise or will they start to be gradually sustainably resolved? A positive answer depends on the way left wing forces in the EU will develop their capability to act.

The further development of the EU will depend essentially on the prevailing ways of dealing with some issues of decisive importance. The events determining such ways of dealing with them are critical caesuras. Being in a critical stage, these caesuras will further reinforce it.

At such points we may find the following issues:

- the “Case of Greece”,
- and the eurocrisis,
- the “Ukraine problem”,
- the EU membership of United Kingdom,
- arriving at an adequate understanding of the global role of the EU and of its “security” – which are especially raising the issue of its relations to the United States,
- the issues of free trade, intellectual property rights, and “investment protection”,
- the issue of immigration to the EU,
- the pressing issues of climate and biodiversity, especially in relation to the energy problems of the EU,
- the issues of “demographic pressures”, referring in reality to questions on gender relations, inter-generational relations and the inclusion of migrants,
- the overreaching issue of human and citizens' rights, of democracy, and democratisation and so

also of the media (see also appendix 1).

All these problems are of course the outcome of a long history, but their current shape is especially determined by the developments which have been occurring and the policies pursued since the outbreak of the global financial crisis, and especially by the kind of crisis management implemented in the EU during the last five to six years. Certainly, it might surprise here, that the question about a breaking up of the Eurozone and of the EU is not formulated distinctly as such. The reason for this lies in the suggestion that the most important answers to these questions will already properly deal with the exemplary issues just mentioned.

The main conclusion to be drawn from the preceding argument therefore will be: Because the history of the EU is above all derived from the interests from the main agencies of the NATO and the main agencies of „the economy“ – of „active“ capitalist oligarchies operating globally and on the European level – in the form of „playing“ capitalist oligarchies and different societal as well as a political dimensions of compromises with them, the decisive question to be answered will be: How will the NATO and the capitalist oligarchies shuffle of their costs and their risks, as they will certainly result from a breaking/broken Eurozone and/or EU? How will the left wing forces in their situation of a political defensive become able to at least protect the existing democratic, social and ecological standards against facing deliberated outspokenly and determinedly nationalist, revanchist and reactionary forces, on the one hand, and against the capitalist oligarchies themselves who operate to find ways of compensating either their losses from the breaking of the Euro or even of the EU or even to derive profits /and gain from the process of abolishing the EU limits of the EU, on the other hand?

Specific possibilities and determinate ways of dealing with the problems referred to in the first point will depend, of course, on the balance of power between existing political forces which is, in turn, determined by the strength, hegemony and/or dominance of

- capitalist oligarchies which are all (to a different degree) “integrated by and into the EU”, more broadly “europeanised” and/or directly “globalised”,
- the political forces within the member states defending a more or less “national” and/or “ethnical” and also cultural orientation, and on the strength of their political, economic and social support,
- of the political forces within the member states defending some kind of an orientation towards gender, generation, European and global justice and solidarity, as well as on the strength of their economic and social support,
- of the political forces within the member states defending some kind of an ecological orientation, and on the strength of their economic and social support,
- of the political forces within the member states defending the interests of the socially and globally weakest, and on the strength of their economic and social support,
- as well as on the readiness and the ability of the different political forces to make use of violence, in its more obvious and open forms.

4. Strategic Conclusions

That an overview of the changes in the global role of the EU since its foundation *critical caesuras* and *critical stages* reads as if following a ‘set pattern’, and that despite the democratic rules adopted into EU law an ‘authoritarian constitutionalism’ (Oberndorfer 2014) has been taking root throughout official politics, is certainly due to the relative gain in overall power in the hands of global capitalist oligarchies. The role of democratically uncontrollable TNCs, or rather of financial markets, as well as of ‘security and defence policies’ has increased much more generally,. These capitalist oligarchies have managed to organise relations between their members and partners to the effect that the ‘silent compulsion’ (seemingly democratically legitimated) impacts the EU ever more deeply. The terms of a ‘market-conforming restriction of democracy’ (ibid.), the ‘end of liberal democracy’ (Cicero, Die Zeit), ‘post-democracy’ (Crouch 2008) or ‘sham democracy’ (Bofinger, Habermas et al. 2012) all more or less fail to include any reference to this form of symbiosis between globalised (finance-)capital, or of capital oligarchies and the dominant ‘pattern of social relations’. The democratic rules as they are expressly laid down in EU law hardly can impress the ruling class, nor does it give any real possibility to the left wing forces within the EU at large or on any national or regional level able to appeal to or to make use of these rules by integrating them into their own strategies – at least not in a way that would allow them to effectively challenge the prevailing relations of power and domination. Nevertheless, the ruling forces are finding it increasingly difficult to maintain a minimum of social consensus, particularly in the light of recent advances of anti-EU nationalist

and chauvinist forces, for whom the European Convention on Human Rights, the Fundamental Rights Charter, the UN Refugee Convention, all their inadequacies notwithstanding, already go much too far into a direction they are fighting against. The struggle against the ruling forces, and the governments controlled by them, but also against the chauvinist nationalists and the extreme Right, therefore centrally refers to the question of the ways of life made possible by a given society. In so far, as the left wing political forces throughout the EU have not yet come together to develop any long-term strategy for their struggle for ideological-cultural counter-hegemony, and at the same time for a new hegemony of their ideas of liberation, this will be the central strategic task of the present situation.

Could it be possible that this situation exists today, simply because the left wing political forces within the core countries of the EU still seem to believe that it must 'reach people where they are', and therefore plainly ends up by coming to terms with the prevailing 'structure of relations' – i.e. with the effects of the existing structures of domination – when engaging in the unavoidable day-to-day struggles around jobs and incomes? The 'bailout packages' for Greece illustrate this problem, because here '... German Social Democracy and even the German trade unions, above all the IG Metall, are demanding what they refer to as 'European solidarity', which to them implies that the recipients must let themselves be placed under trusteeship both fiscally and socio-politically,' (Beckert, Streeck 2012). This reality has changed very little, so far, despite the marked increase in social needs and even in explicit expressions of democratic will since 2010. Accordingly, the boundaries between coming to terms with the existing order and the experience of powerlessness are still extremely fluid.

In order to challenge the existing structures of domination, we should at least consider, discuss and answer, the following questions:

- What part do the left wing political forces play in the present socio-political state of the EU and in the ways it is building and deploying its own defensive counter-strategies? Which kinds of fetishisation have impressed and influenced their own political thinking, and when and why did this happen? How does 'neo-liberalism' impact and influence even the very thought and the behaviour of left wing political forces themselves?
- Why have the political forces of the left wing consistently failed to consistently ask (and to answer) the question of the modes of living prevailing within present society – despite the critique of these modes elaborated by the existing anti-colonial, feminist, ecological, anti-war and democratisation movements? May we find any reasons for the decline of the European Social Forum movement in this dimension as well?
- Which *critical caesuras* have left wing political forces failed to address and to take advantage of – and why and with what consequences has this happened – especially since the end of the block confrontation and the beginning of the global financial crisis?
- Which scenarios of a possible future development of the EU concerning the conditions for the left wing forces to engage in political work seem conceivable, possible and likely at this very historical moment?

Apart from the discussion around *critical caesuras* and *critical stages*, as we have proposed (cf. the text on this issue), a second debate should be carefully developed: A debate aiming more directly at practical action – namely, the deliberation on solidarity with refugees and the socially vulnerable, on protests against TTIP and other agreements on free trade and investment protection, on demanding debt relief for Greece and on the suspension of the ill-famed 'memoranda of understanding', etc. Furthermore, it does indeed seem to be called for to consciously develop: the discussion surrounding the complex of questions about what is stopping us from leading a self-determined life in solidarity and ecological responsibility, and how the answers to these questions may become starting points for political action at all the various levels: What can one do to 'move one step in the right direction' in everyday life? What obstacles can be identified at the local, regional, national, EU and global levels, and how can they be overcome? Which kinds of democratic bottom-up initiatives do already exist which can help to successfully pursue this goal? Which of them are directed towards social solidarity and against privatisation of the public sphere, against the charging of interest for the organisation of housing/education/social security, against the growing power of the TNCs and thereby against proposed agreements on free trade, property and investment protection, against neo-colonialism and militarisation, against a pervasive security doctrine, which is falsely linking personal safety to global repression? How can such initiatives be strengthened and motivated to support each other? How can the emancipatory-solidarity forces be linked together by a clearly focused network, capable of contributing to the expansion of occasion and scope for democratic mobilization and participation and thereby for meaningful and effective political action, and what should *we do right now* to

achieve this?¹⁸

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¹⁸ The author would like to thank Frieder Otto Wolf, Lutz Brangsch and Michael Brie for discussions on the manuscript of this paper.

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HOW TO USE THE PRESENT CRISIS FOR FIGHTING FOR A CONSTITUTIONAL PROCESS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

The European Union is an institutionalized association of member states which is functioning as a central element of the present global political and economic constellation of powers. Like this present constellation of powers on a global scale the EU is a structure of domination in which the capital groups dominating national and transnational societal processes have a determining role. The present „refugee crisis“ – overlaying the finance and debt crises to be managed since 2008, and presently overlaid by the crisis of „terrorism“ which seems to be drawing the EU into an undeclared and undefined war – is challenging the EU internally and externally. I.e. the unforeseen and foreseeably still growing „wave“ of immigration, i.e. of people fleeing to „Europe“, because life in their home countries (or in the countries of a first refuge) has become unbearable for them, poses a challenge to the EU and to its member states: The EU is being challenged to define internal mechanisms of coping (frontier administration, registration and distributions of people fleeing to the EU), and it is likewise being challenged to rethink and to change its role in the crises and conflicts ravaging the countries of origin, as well as in the neighbouring countries which are being used as a bridge of passage by the multitudes of people in flight. The „wave“ of uncontrollable immigration has to be understood as a kind of „backlash“ to European policies of the past which actively or passively have promoted destructive processes in these countries. On the side of the EU, this challenge is putting into focus again that the EU has long time ago ceased to be a mere international organization, evolving into a transnational entity with a de facto constitution, even though the attempt to formalize it as such has been unsuccessful. And that this result has turned out to be effectively irreversible: there is no way back to a mere international association of nation states – except by a catastrophic turn of events.

It seems to be clear now that the present „refugee crisis“ (to use a misleading current characterization as a short-hand term) has led to a state of exception on the scale of the EU. In this (very abstract) respect it has been comparable to the financial crisis of 2008 (and to the ensuing debt crises). This comparison may start from those immediately concerned: Then it were those poor people who had taken apparently „cheap“ loans (and who have not been from the very poorest groups of the population) and whose becoming „unable to pay“ triggered off the financial crisis by their sheer numbers. Today it is the great number of people who have (mostly in consultation with their families) decided to take flight to Europe (remarkably knowledgeable about the high costs and the hindrances and dangers involved). The governments of the EU member states (who had been challenged in their state function as ‚lenders of last resort‘ then) are now being challenged in their function of guarantors of the public order, which in modern democratic states always also implies the active defence of human rights.

The difference between the two situations, then and now, seems to lie in what is in between the immediately concerned and the EU member state governments: Then, those concerned secondarily have been the banks, as a central segment of finance capital, and today, they can be identified as municipal administrations and regional or local civil society networks. And this constitutes, apparently, a really large difference. It is true, that Angela Merkel has declared the state of emergency in Europe today, as it is de facto arising out of the mass initiative of people in flight, and that she has used this to step out of the Schengen regime. But in the case of the financial crisis saving the banks has been an imperative accepted by almost everybody, and it could be met by a limited number of measures to be taken by the council of heads of states and prime ministers (or by agreements between these representatives acting outside of the EU constitutional framework), which have then be continued and regularized by the „quantitative easing“ put into practice by the ECB. In the present crisis, however, as it has been triggered off by the mass initiatives of people in flight, the constitutional imperative of safeguarding the human rights of these people has remained a weak postulate (which had already been ignored by the EU Frontex regime these same people had effectively overrun. And, on a secondary level, saving municipalities (or regions) from bankruptcy or from integration breakdown will prove, lastly, unavoidable – which cannot count, for its implementation, on an instance of power comparable to financial capital. Therefore it seems plainly impossible to define and to implement a small number of central measures capable of coping with the refugee crisis, while it remains probable that this crisis will continue to develop.

In spite of all these differences we have to acknowledge, however, that in both cases the EU and its member states have been put into an exceptional situation, a situation of emergency, i.e. a constellation of

events which has occasioned and legitimized actions quite beyond the ordinary, with its established institutions and rules.

If we look more closely at what has happened in both cases, we shall see an emerging pattern of a strategy of „passive revolution“ so far in Angela Merkel’s ways of operating on these European levels, within and without the institutional structures of the EU. This may be seen, on the one hand, from her proven readiness „to change everything“, while, on the other hand, clearly aiming at achieving, as a final result, that everything will remain the same as it is – i.e. deeply transforming established procedures and models of action, while making sure that the dominant forces within European societies remain in control. And she has shown her capability to legitimize this pattern of action by invoking the exceptional situation as requiring exceptional measures. In this way she has so far been able to prove her own (viz. of the group of member states’ governments she is effectively leading) readiness and resolve to act, beyond the established rules and patterns. This way of creatively making use of exceptional situations is continuously safeguarding the effective reproduction of the economic, social and political structures of domination, as they exist within European societies.

In the face of this continuous practice of „passive revolution“ the question has to be asked, why it apparently is presently impossible to turn such exceptional situations into occasions for a practice of „active revolution“, i.e. for a practice challenging and changing these structures of domination themselves, at least in a perspective of a structural transformation going into a direction of overcoming domination and achieving at least first steps towards effective liberation.

Any adequate reply to this question will have to refer to a number of factors, and not just to one supposed key factor (as e.g. the historical defeat of the revolutionary left in the 20th century).

It seems to be unavoidable to address a simple cognitive factor as a first explanation of this inability. The left wing forces, as they really exist, evidently have considerable difficulties in understanding what is exceptional about these situations or which are the immediate reasons or causal factors for their emergence. And, by consequence, they seem to have even greater difficulties in grasping the ‚alternative‘ possibilities of action arising out of such situations of crisis. Reified ideas about how to distinguish between truly ‚revolutionary‘ and merely ‚reformist‘ politics, as they still dominate large strands of left wing thinking, seem to make it almost impossible to refer to the actual ambivalences and ‚contradictions‘ in adequate way, which could be grasped as occasions for taking specific left wing and liberatory initiatives and for opening effective perspectives of a societal transformation in the sense of liberation.

In the midst of a structurally unresolved constellation of crises it has not even been possible to build only a common horizon for advancing towards an effective unity of left-wing counter-powers, let alone to construct a common project for a left wing alternative, to find the needed common definitions and to implement them in common practice. Such a project would have to make it possible to find common reactions capable of constituting a strategy of counter-offensive against the practices of ‚passive revolution‘ implemented by the dominant powers. This lack of cognitive capability on the side of the left-wing political forces begins with the broad ignorance in face of the multi-level politics which have become characteristic of the European policy, as it is effectively constituted by the institutional structures and processes of the EU. Therefore, the skilful use made of multi-level politics made by leading politician and by European business leaders (now routinely combining „national“ and „European“ agency) does not yet find adequate answers from left-wing forces, at best just occasionally. Instead, especially critical situations tend to be met by debates on ‚dissidents‘ or ‚traitors‘, instead of looking for creative ways of combining different approaches to such moments of crisis. With regard to political parties or other organized forms of political agency common strategy debates are abruptly ended by splitting into organizations fighting each other – with the result that mutual propaganda takes the place of needed deliberation. As party organizations are an indispensable element for translating any kind of real initiatives into effective politics, mobilizing the specific power structures of the state, party splitting is especially disruptive for any conceivable politics of transformation (as it has recently happened to Syriza, with small political success, but enormous political damage) – because it does not only block any translation of radical initiatives into state politics, but in so doing indeed blocks societal learning processes in a decisive way. Instead of analysing defeats and setbacks by common processes of deliberation and instead of learning from such analyses in a subversive way, those who disagree from one’s own analysis are singled out and attacked as culprits – so that a splitting of common organizations becomes unavoidable. As a result, those who try to refer to given situations as they effectively present themselves are isolated as ‚pragmatic‘, who tend to remain restricted to mere tactics, while those who have the capability of critically going beyond mere tactical reactions towards a perspective of strategical action tend to constitute a „radical left“ which finally

,succeeds' in avoiding the challenges of any intervention into really existing situations, beginning by not taking on board any kind of situational experience.

These kinds of splits can be seen as a second factor: The left wing forces tend to split, instead of looking for (and effectively finding) a way of living with (and, of course, to overcome) such unavoidable differences and oppositions and submit them to argumentative deliberation processes. Many political activists (not only within political parties) seem to prefer withdrawing into organizations of like-minded which are only capable of relating to each other by ways of propaganda battles and block all possibilities of a genuine common deliberation beyond their own internal spaces of communication. This, however, is a factor which is well within the reach of left wing politics – even though the emergence and development of innovative politics of left wing forces actively searching and addressing such challenges will be certainly very difficult.

All this has a specific relevancy for the imbrication of EU and member states' politics, as it prevails today. Beyond the analysis of the constitutionalization of neo-liberal politics within the EU, as it has emerged since „Maastricht“, a new element has emerged in the form of the crisis management practices implemented by Angela Merkel. In fact, her practice of crisis management has taken a decisive step beyond the dynamic process of constitutionalizing neo-liberal politics within the EU as a political community ‚sui generis‘, as it had developed until now. She has developed a capability of making use of such ‚states of exception‘ for establishing a common practice of making use of the ‚prerogative‘ of the governments of member states far beyond the framework of the EU treaties. This has been done consciously and systematically, not only contingently and in an ad hoc way. This common exercise of ‚sovereign prerogative‘ has not only clearly gone beyond the established ‚acquis communautaire‘: In so doing, it also has clearly established an unprecedented hegemony of Germany within the EU (as relations of power are influencing such decisions immediately, without the rules and caveats of the EU institutions). And it has had structural effects beyond the frontiers of the EU, in neighbouring countries and spaces, as well as on the global level. As this new dimension of European politics has been in the interest of the participating governments as exponents of their respective member states it has been productive of a real situation of hegemony for the German government, reinforced by the interests of finance capital.

The existence of this new dimension of European and EU politics cannot be denied. It has tremendously increased the capability to act of Germany as well as of the EU so far. The big question (which is not yet fully answered) seems to be whether this new dimension, going far beyond regulated ‚inter-governmentality‘, will prove to be effectively applicable to new situations of crisis – from the so-called refugee crisis via the crisis of government agency in the face of terrorist attacks to the foreseeable crises of climatic processes.

In the face of this increase in the capability of dominant and governing forces to mobilize and to use extraordinary powers, in order to reproduce existing relations of domination, the question of strategical alternatives to be developed by left-wing forces will be of decisive importance. An adequate in-depth analysis of this new dimension of European politics will be a much-needed first step into that direction. And making use of existing networks and experiences of the left wing forces will be required to go beyond this cognitive first step, creating at least a beginning of an innovative process of deliberation on how to confront the emerging constellation of crises and their more or less creative management (European, EU, member state) in its multi-level reality. Such a democratic counter-strategy will have to begin by carrying the debate on European politics to the public deliberation within the member states, while aiming at common, solidarity based reactions these politics from above. This can start well before it will be possible to have its claims articulated by more than one member state government. And it may well make use of already existing transnational networks of mobilization and alliance in order to make real problems the object of public deliberation and to propagate alternative approaches to their solution – making them prevail within the public of member states, while beginning to change the orientations of political parties, and, by their intermediation, also of a growing number of member states' governments.

The strategic aim of such alternative politics can at least begin to be achieved, when it will be possible for movements and political parties anchored within the respective societies, in a new situation of emergency, to press for alternative demands addressing the European dimension of politics in a number of member states, and when convergent demands will be raised within the European public debates – and when a number of governments will take this up in the Council of Ministers. This will not be easy and immediate success is improbable. But it would be already a significant first step towards an alternative policy to block the common exercise of their prerogative by the „heads of state and government“ within and without the European Council“, thereby effectively putting an end to the „Merkel method“.

This would still be far from an effective strategy of transformation in Europe – but it would be a decisive starting point for really building such a strategy – in the face of the crises of the EU, and in face of the global crises of which they are a significant element.

THE LIMITS OF *LANDNAHME*: CAPITALISM WILL NOT DIE BY ITSELF, BUT IT CAN BE OVERCOME¹⁹

Capitalism has not only been talked about, but indeed actively complained about for quite some time now. Complaining – the original form of social critique – is widespread in everyday consciousness, to the extent that it even reaches the ears of economic elites. Correspondingly, the founder of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Klaus Schwab, spoke of a planet suffering from ‘burnout syndrome’, only to conclude that ‘capitalism, in its current form, no longer fits the world around us’ (CBC 25.01.2012). Pope Francis put it more radically, stating that ‘such an economy kills’ (MSNBC, 26.11.2013). If such arguments are already finding an audience among the elite, then capitalism must really be in bad shape. Voices predicting a slow withering away of the capitalist social formation are in fact growing within the social sciences as well (Wallerstein et al., 2013). Yet while the debate concerning an imminent end to capitalism has found its place in the mainstream of the social sciences (Streeck 2014), actually existing financial market capitalism continues to dictate social reality, in spite of the various crises associated with it. Phrases such as the ‘Strange Non-Death of Neo-Liberalism’ (Crouch 2011) suggest a ‘keep calm and carry on’ sort of mantra. Thus we find predictions of decay to our left, and continuity or even radicalisation of market fundamentalism to our right. How does this fit together? Is capitalism really coming to an end? Is it making way for, as some have suggested (Collins 2013), a post-capitalist society based on even more severe domination and exploitation? Is there any chance of a neo-social democratic variant of capitalism arising (Mann 2014)? Or could we perhaps be entering a window of opportunity for a transformation towards a democratic, egalitarian and ecologically resilient body politic? The following contribution grapples with these questions. It proceeds from the assumption that global capitalism is caught in a secular structural crisis, an economic-ecological double or ‘pincer grip crisis’ (Sarkar 2010, similar: Altvater 2010). Nevertheless, the capitalist social formation cannot simply be ‘abolished’. The voluntarist confession that capitalism ‘has to be done away with – because it destroys people, society, and not least nature’ (Lessenich 2015, p. 188) yields nothing concrete. At the very least, it seems safe to say that this formation will most certainly not be defeated by verbal radicalism alone. More likely than its sudden collapse, it seems as if this social formation will gradually wither away – presumably in the form of a co-evolutionary process lasting many decades, the direction of which is open to the political influence of collective actors and actions. To say it with David Harvey: capitalism will not die off by itself. We will have to do our part to consciously overcome it in favour of a better social order. This view will be substantiated over five steps. Starting with the question as to what capitalism actually is (1), I will then draw on the concept of *Landnahme* to illuminate the expansive dynamic of this social formation (2), as well as its crisis potential (3), before finally discussing the question of whether the capitalist mode of (re-)production can be overcome, and how and with whom this can be realised (4, 5).

1. What is capitalism?

If we are to identify a means of overcoming capitalism, we must first establish what we actually mean by the word “capitalism”. Before contemporary sociology completely abandoned ‘thinking big’, it was often content to spell out capitalism in the plural. Surely, there can be no doubt that different varieties of capitalism exist and that diverging institutional systems influence the basic rules according to which distinct capitalisms function. However, there is an ‘astonishingly resilient elemental kernel’ (Vogl 2014, p. 95) that can be identified throughout all varieties of capitalism. Capitalism is not confined to the sub-system of the economy. It is not a homogenous system, but rather ‘a particular way of organizing the relationship between economic processes, social order, and technologies of government in accordance with the mechanisms of capital reproduction’ (Vogl, 2014, p. 96). Understood in this sense, capitalism represents a social formation. Although Karl Marx (1982 [1867]) used the term only rarely,²⁰ he is widely seen as the father of social-scientific analysis and critique of capitalism. Classical sociological theories of capitalism, on the other hand, emerged largely only after and in analysis of Marx. According to Dobb (1950 [1946], pp. 1-32), three basic definitions of capitalism can be identified.

The first definition, perhaps most common in sociology, comes from Werner Sombart. According to Sombart, capitalism depicts a certain economic disposition combining the entrepreneur and adventurer with the calculating, rational ‘bourgeois spirit’. This economic mindset creates its own organisations and

¹⁹ Book chapter by Prof. Dr. Klaus Dörre, Friedrich-Schiller-University Jena, Institute of Sociology

²⁰ Marx generally spoke of the capital relation or the capitalist mode of production.

subjects (Sombart 1928, p. 25). Max Weber formulated this thought slightly differently: in his view, we can speak of capitalism if the fulfilment of the needs of a group of people is founded on rational enterprise: 'Where capitalistic acquisition is rationally pursued, the corresponding action is adjusted to calculations in terms of capital' (Weber 2005 [1930], p. xxxii). An enterprise can be said to be capitalist if its profitability is managed by calculative balances and accounting. According to Weber's definition, a capitalist mindset already existed in antiquity; it was only the modern nation-state, however, which allowed for a consolidation of capitalism in its modern-Occidental variant (Weber 1980 [1921], p. 815). Capitalism in its modern form becomes a 'fateful force'. 'Whoever does not adapt his manner of life to the conditions of capitalistic success must go under, or at least cannot rise', (Weber 2005 [1930], p. 344). One advantage of such a definition is its emphasis of the role that the capitalist spirit, the economic 'attitude' and the principles of rationality play in the emergence of the capitalist formation. If capitalism is reduced – against Weber's own intention, as it were – to a hegemonic 'spirit', the corresponding understanding of capitalism remains one-sidedly idealistic.

Such limitations are avoided by a second definition that describes capitalism as a system of trade, money economy or 'organization of production for a distant market' (Dobb 1950 [1946], p. 6). This definition stems to a large extent from the German historical school's theory of development. According to this definition, the expansion of market relations increases the distance a commodity travels from producer to consumer. It is only this spatio-temporal expansion of market socialisation that paves the way for an economic system in which the drive for profit becomes the prime motivator of a certain class of actors. Capitalism is an economy of exchange (see Pirenne 1936), the guiding principle of which is the unrestrained pursuit of profit. The emergence of capitalism is thus conflated with the development of merchant or mercantile capitalism in the 12th century.

Here we find parallels to Fernand Braudel's definition of capitalism (Braudel 1981-4) and to world-systems theory (Wallerstein 1983). According to Braudel, the capitalist money economy emerges in the northern Italian city states during the 16th century. Braudel makes a systematic distinction between market economy and capitalism. Capitalism signifies the exploitation of market society through networks of social power. According to Wallerstein, the opportunity to create profit is predicated upon the formation of monopolies. Real competition is impossible, for unmitigated competition would undermine the possibility of capitalist realisation of profits. The realisation of profits through the formation of monopolies not only requires solvent demand and state intervention, but also can only exist as a temporary possibility, as all monopolies inevitably disintegrate at some point over the course of competition. It usually takes roughly 25 to 30 years for monopolies in leading industries to erode. Following such a Kondratiev-A phase, a Kondratiev-B phase sets in, characterised by a financialisation of capital flows (Wallerstein 2013, p. 13f). The sphere of market economy, small-scale entrepreneurship and trades is not really capitalist production in the proper sense. It is interrelated with capitalism and can by all means be co-opted in a capitalist sense. Accordingly, capitalism – the sphere of large fortunes, capitals and enterprises – can never pervade society entirely, for there is 'a dialectic still very much alive between capitalism on the one hand, and its antithesis, the "non-capitalism" of the lower level on the other,' (Braudel 1984, p. 630f). Capitalism requires a hierarchy of social spaces and modes of production, and 'it takes up a position at the top of the hierarchy, whether or not this was created by itself' (ibid, p. 65). Particularly appealing about such definitions is the prominent role of money (the historical school) and their spatio-temporal focus, which conveys that capitalism is always an international system producing via a hierarchical structure of exchange relations between centre and (semi-)periphery. There is, however, no evidence for endogenous mechanisms that could engender any long prosperity waves ('Kondratievs'), and likewise the importance of monopolies seems a bit exaggerated, even though monopoly prices may represent an important source of profit.

The Annales School and world-systems theory address a third definition which has emerged from Marxian theory. For Marx, neither the pursuit of profit and calculative behaviour nor the emergence of long-distance trade, the credit system or certain classes of merchants and financiers represent sufficient preconditions for identifying capitalist socialisation: 'Men of capital, however acquisitive, are not enough: their capital must be used to yoke labour to the creation of surplus-value in production' (Dobb 1950 [1946], p. 8). Capitalism can thus be identified by the emergence of an economic mode in which, as runs the basic rule of capitalist production, accumulated money (M) is invested in commodities (C) with the aim of generating more money (M') – or M-C-M' – and the processes required for this aim (production, circulation, consumption) are continuously reproduced on an expanding scale. The transformation of labour power and natural resources into capital which is then fed back into the economic cycle with the aim of profit maximisation, that is to say, the increase of capital to be re-invested, is what characterises the capitalist social formation. According to Marx, capitalism begins to reproduce itself largely on its own foundations only with the onset of the Industrial Revolution. Its emergence requires the division of society into classes

of capitalists and wage labourers, respectively. Although the capitalist mode of production generalises the exchange of equivalents on commodity markets, it nevertheless rests on the exploitation of wage-earners by the class of owners of the means of production, who appropriate the surplus value that has been generated collectively. Class struggle, conceived of as the constant battle to reconcile conflicting interests, competitive relationships and conflicts among diverging groups and individuals with this pursuit of valorisation, represents one of the main driving forces of capitalist development.

In the following I draw on the Marxian concept of capitalism, which no doubt requires some revision, primarily of its value-theoretical foundations. That said, it can only be sensibly applied today by integrating central components of the other two aforementioned definitions. Some contemporary sociological conceptions claim to do so by addressing and combining the elements of classical definitions of capitalism in different ways (Fulcher 2004; Wright 2010). Boltanski and Chiapello's minimal definition of capitalism (2005, 2006), with which I generally agree, thus contains three characterising indicators: in reference to Marx (a), the necessity of unrestricted capital accumulation in a monetary form which gradually detaches itself from material-substantial wealth and thus becomes a kind of a Perpetuum Mobile; as a new element (b), a system of competition in which each actor is continually challenged by the actions of other actors, through which a situation of permanent restlessness is created, making '[s]elf-preservation [...] a very strong motivation for capitalists – [...] a never-ending catalyst for the accumulation process' and, based on Weber and Sombart (c), an ideology 'that justifies people's commitments to capitalism, and which renders this commitment attractive' (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2005, p. 241).

However, any given hegemonic 'spirit of capitalism' is not merely an instance of ideological 'superstructure' determined by the material 'base' of capitalist socialisation. Rather, this 'spirit' encompasses remarkably adaptive orientations and principles, which develop relatively autonomously and take on a life of their own while imposing limits on the accumulation process, as they allow, for example, for differentiation between legitimate and illegitimate profits (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2005, p. 292). The formula (or basic rule) of M-C-M' is thus the essence of an 'absurd system' (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2005, p. 290) which subordinates the activity of both capitalists and wage-earners to an abstract purpose separate from their actual life activity. For the mass of both wage-earners as well as small business owners, tradesmen, peasants, welfare recipients and their families, then, the rule of C-M-C' essentially applies. Members of these class fractions work in order to perhaps improve their life conditions at some point.

The transformation of absurdity into subjective meaning is the magic of the respective 'spirit of capitalism', or, more precisely: the institutions, practices and social conflicts in which this hegemonic spirit evolves. The actual hegemonic capitalist spirit (specific to each historical period) that varies and modifies the basic rules of capitalism and adjusts them to specific conditions represents the means through which capitalist principles intrude upon areas of society that actually conform to quite different principles of rationality. This spirit provides a capitalist formation with a relative coherency by permeating even non-capitalist areas, seizing upon and hierarchising social practices which originally followed very different aims than the reproduction of wealth. A capitalist society can first be identified at the point where 'capitalist principles exhibit a certain dominance' and tend to 'proliferate into other spheres beyond the economy' and influence even non-capitalist relations (Kocka, 2013, p. 12). Capitalist development thus implies the expansion of a capitalist social order, which in turn is variable, to previously non-capitalist sectors and milieus. Conversely, here we also find the first criterion for the transition towards non-capitalist social formations. Once the capitalist social order, in whatever variety, is no longer able to permeate relevant social sectors, to hierarchise them and engender subjective meaning, then markets, commodity exchange, money, domination, dependencies and inequalities may continue to exist, but we will no longer be able to speak of capitalism as a social formation.

2. Why does capitalism rely on ongoing *Landnahmen*?

This assessment has thus far referred primarily to that which is static in capitalist formations. But what about the process of accumulation, the driving forces of the capitalist dynamic? Part of the answer to this question leads to Jena's – I hope quite original – contribution to contemporary analysis. Capitalism is above all a processing, dynamic, and constantly changing society (Dörre et al. 2015). Programmed for the valorisation of capital, capitalisms of all varieties derive their dynamic from the ability of dominant actors to at least temporarily remove barriers to capital accumulation. Capitalism is 'nothing if it is not on the move' (Harvey 2010, p. 12). Should this crisis-driven form of movement reach limits insurmountable in the short term, then the survival of the capitalist system is only possible through the shedding of its own skin. Antonio Gramsci labelled the processes that revolutionise production models, accumulation regimes,

modes of regulation and social reproduction in order to preserve the capitalist social order passive revolutions. That is to say, social transformations in which, such as during the reign of Napoleon Bonaparte, progressive and restorative elements enter into a tense synthesis, or 'revolution/restoration' (Gramsci 1992 [1971], p. 110). Theories of *Landnahme* elaborate Gramsci's idea in more detail to the effect that industrial capitalism is understood first and foremost as a growth machine that remained highly successful for quite some time.

The category of *Landnahme* is crucial to theories that analyse and criticise capitalism as an expansive system. Uniting such theories is the notion that capitalist societies do not reproduce exclusively from within. Capital accumulation remains continually tied to 'noncapitalist strata' (Luxemburg 2015 [1913], p. 253), and capitalist development thus occurs as a complex internal-external movement. It always involves the internalisation of the external, the occupation of a non-capitalist or non-market Other. Capitalism in its purest form, the generalised exchange of commodities and a two-class social system as Marx himself used for his reproduction schemes (Marx 1992 [1885], pp. 486-64), cannot survive. Or, at the very least, such a capitalism does not exist (and never has existed) anywhere. Instead we find constant exchange, which areas directly subsumed by exploitation purposes cultivate with social sectors that are not yet (fully) commodified.

In the final analysis, every spurt of capitalist growth can be interpreted as *Landnahme* (Lutz 1984, p. 213). In contrast to an argumentation based on linear subsumption or modernisation theory, the *Landnahme* concept in the form I espouse emphasises the contradictoriness and asynchrony of such processes. *Landnahmen* come at a price, for the commodification of non-capitalist strata and activities cannot be implemented entirely. Market relations are always associated with other forms of exchange and social interaction. To put it more precisely: every *Landnahme* is accompanied by specific respective forms of 'land surrender' which manifest themselves as thrusts of de-commodification, either by detaching from or becoming excluded from market relations and processes of valorisation (Dörre 2015, p. 30). As time passes, *Landnahmen* undermine their own socio-economic preconditions, making each one historically specific. Once a specific exterior has been consumed, a non-capitalist Other can be actively manufactured into new shapes and forms (Dörre 2015, p. 257; Harvey 2003, p. 140). This is why *Landnahmen* may result in minor or even major crises of capitalist accumulation, although no automatism of breakdown is inherent in the economic cycles.

This fundamental idea, almost forgotten for quite some time, has experienced a surprising renaissance in discussions on globalisation and financial market capitalism. It is already being ascribed a status – perhaps somewhat prematurely – similar to that which regulation theory once assumed in the context of the analysis of Fordism (Backhouse et al. 2013, p. 11; Bischoff and Lieber 2013, pp. 158-75). Attempts to analyse capitalist development as "'land-grabbing" by the market' (Streeck 2014, p. 25) or 'accumulation by dispossession' (Harvey 2003, pp. 137-82), however, concentrate primarily on the finance-capitalist modus operandi of the state and the economy, whereas changes not only within waged labour but especially in reproductive activities are left under- or unconsidered. Feminist researchers (Federici 2012; Aulenbacher, 2013, pp. 105-26; Feministische Autorinnengruppe 2013, pp. 99-118) have criticised this weak point, as they consider the withdrawal of resources for social reproduction to be central to the new *Landnahme*.

The *Landnahme* concept I utilise as a research heuristic shares the assumption of an *ongoing primitive accumulation of capital*. In his engagement with contemporary interpretations, Marx denoted the transition to industrial capitalism as 'so-called primitive accumulation' (Marx 1982 [1867], pp. 873-94). At least in pre-industrial England, which Marx analysed as the most important case in this process, it rested on the violent appropriation of property, the destruction of traditional forms of production and life and on a disciplining of labour forces built on extra-economic coercion (Kößler 2013, pp. 18-37). Yet while Marx considered violence and extra-economic coercion to be transitional phenomena that would become a thing of the past as people grew accustomed to the capitalist mode of production, Rosa Luxemburg and, building on her insight, authors as diverse as Hannah Arendt, Maria Mies, Burkard Lutz or, more recently, David Harvey have analytically demonstrated the necessity of ongoing primitive accumulation. The decisive aspect here is not the open violence of primitive accumulation. The Fordist *Landnahme* of the traditional artisanal sector in the welfare-state capitalisms took place largely peacefully. Nevertheless, this *Landnahme*, in terms of its consequences for the traditional sector, its modes of production and life, can 'by all means be seen in analogy to the "external *Landnahme*" of imperialism' (Lutz, 1984, p. 213). Central to the topic at hand is that special extra-economic, political impulses were needed to occupy the traditional sector. The labour forces of this sector (but not only this sector), their qualifications, social identities and ways of life had to be adapted to the new Fordist mode of production. In this sense it is always a form of disciplining so as to render subjects attuned to a novel, technologically and organisationally 'superior' mode of

production. Such adaptations, however – this is a blind spot in many *Landnahme*-based analyses (Haller and Chorus 2013, pp. 64-72) – each involve a change in forms of social reproduction and care work. As Marx concentrated on the value form of labour and its significance for the production of surplus value, he indeed failed to consider the characteristics of care work as corresponding to wage labour. As a result, the productive function of emotional dedication and attention, as is typical for care work which serves the production of the labour force (Haller and Chorus 2013, p. 66), was completely overlooked by Marx. Such limitations can be overcome, however, if the concept of an ongoing primitive accumulation is expanded to apply to knowledge production through intellectual labour (Bittlingmayer 2014) and to reproductive activities. These activities can be regarded as an exterior of capitalist accumulation (Dörre and Haubner 2012, pp. 67-90) which can – to a certain extent – become the object of an internal *Landnahme*.

The internal-external dialectic of processes of *Landnahme* implies that a capitalist formation encompasses various modes of production, forms of life and reproduction, each of which must be specifically hierarchized and institutionalised. This includes *a parallel existence of internal capitalist as well as external non-capitalist markets*, a thought systematised by Luxemburg. For her, external markets are not necessarily markets outside of national borders, while internal markets are not equated exclusively with national relations of exchange. Rather, internal and external markets co-exist within national societies, remaining in a constant process of exchange (Luxemburg 2015, pp. 263-4). For Luxemburg, capitalist development dynamic is thus based on an interlinkage of different modes of socialisation and market relations. Within the sphere of internal markets, which are structured (at least at the level of formal contract relations) by the rationality of the exchange of equivalents, capitalist societies reproduce largely of their own accord. At the same time, however, they remain, both inside as well outside of national societies, dependent on non-commodified or not yet fully commodified regions, milieus, groups, activities, and ways of life, that is to say, on external markets. At best, the principle of the exchange of equivalents applies to this 'external' with limitations. Here, arbitrariness up to downright violence – as well as subtler forms of extra-economic disciplining – generally render the relations of exchange rather asymmetric. External markets are subjected to relations of dominance, meaning they do not imply relationships between free and equal contract partners even on the level of formal contracts; here exchange is always unequal.

The relations between internal and external markets are (3) structured by an expansive dynamic which can be described as the 'structural requirement of growth' (Jackson 2009, p. 121) of capitalist accumulation and reproduction. Only by assimilating non-capitalised labour power and land does capital acquire 'a power of expansion that permits it to augment the elements of its accumulation beyond the limits apparently fixed by its own magnitude' (Luxemburg 2015, pp. 256-7). Luxemburg only partially and unsystematically works out the reasons for capital's expansive drive. She correctly notes the micro-economic compulsion to rationalise resulting from competition as one of the main drivers of expansionism. In an anarchic capitalist economy, businesses are constantly forced to increase labour productivity in order to raise output per capital unit. In the process, and not least because it also increases the material output as well as the tendentially rising commodity prices, the micro-economic increase of labour productivity exacerbates, macro-economically speaking, the realisation problem.

In this context, the realisation problem concerns the already mentioned impossibility of profitably selling recapitalised additional surplus value product from the previous accumulation cycle as well as additional goods produced with the former's help exclusively within already existing internal capitalist markets. According to Luxemburg, the capitalist mode of production therefore 'does not merely generate the drive to endless expansion of reproduction through the hunger for surplus value of the capitalist, but it also transforms this expansion into a veritable law of necessity, an economic condition of existence for the individual capitalist' (Luxemburg 2015 [1913], p. 14). The compulsion to increase labour productivity and expand reproduction does not, however, affect all sectors equally. In trades and small-scale commodity production, other rationalities are largely dominant. Luxemburg explicitly rejects the notion that 'the history of the middle-size capitalist establishments proceeds rectilinearly in the direction of their progressive disappearance' (Luxemburg 2008 [1900], p. 53). Instead, she assumes that small capitals which oscillate between a tendency of rise and fall would assume 'the role of pioneers of technical change' (ibid). Luxemburg thus moves towards an understanding of capitalism that Braudel would later further develop into the systematic distinction between market economy and capitalism.²¹

The expansive access the capitalist mode of production has to valorisable resources therefore does not necessarily imply that the entire existent labour power reserves are integrated into commodity production

²¹ Capitalism evolves within a hierarchy of social spaces and modes of production, and 'it takes up a position at the top of the hierarchy, whether or not this was created by itself' (Braudel 1984, p. 65).

equally. From the perspective of the individual capitalist's interest in valorisation, it can appear quite reasonable to utilise segments of individual labour capacity as a gratuitous resource, or in the form of unfree labour. One reason for this is the variety of possibilities to increase labour productivity, another is the chance of obtaining additional profits or at least reducing reproduction costs through the use of precarious, socially devalued work. Rosa Luxemburg analysed this with reference to the 'the systematic, planned destruction and annihilation of any noncapitalist social formation that it encounters' enforced by colonial policies in France's Arabian colonies (Luxemburg 2015 [1913], p. 267), as well as to the introduction of 'forced wage labor', an instrument of Spanish colonial policies applied to exploit the indigenous population in the American and Caribbean colonies (Luxemburg 2013 [1925], p. 211). In contrast to Marxist orthodoxy, Luxemburg thus established a 'wholly original approach to the evolution of social formations' which 'breaks with linear evolutionism, positivist "progressivism"' (Löwy 2011).

The dependence of capital accumulation on internal and external markets structures not only the interrelations between wage labour and other forms of activity, but simultaneously implies a limited plurality of relations of exploitation. The term exploitation has been almost completely absent in sociological literature for some time now. Its use therefore calls for an explanation. In its general usage, the category of exploitation signifies a causal relationship between the 'good fortune of the strong [...] and the misery of the weak' (Boltanski and Chiapello 2006, p. 360). According to Dubet, one does not need to 'share the Marxist conception of value and added value to appreciate the intensity of the feelings of exploitation in an industrial society', as the 'experience of exploitation explains the success of Marxist interpretations of production relations, including those that are not of a strictly capitalist nature' (Dubet 2009, pp. 68-9).

Authors associated with the Bielefeldian 'housewifization approach' argued quite similarly in their expansion of Luxemburg's accumulation theory: 'Exploitation means to loot, to appropriate something by violent means, something that was not produced by one's own labour, to take something without giving something of equal value in return' (Mies 1983, p. 120). By referring to the violence involved in relations of exploitation, an aspect that surely applies to subsistence work, Mies thereby claims a universal validity and fundamental relevance of a mechanism that is *unspecific* to any social formation and which precisely does *not* correspond to the principle of capitalist exchange of equivalents. Exploitation in its basic form, located, so to speak, in front of the exploitation found in surplus value production, is regarded as fraud carried out by the already-powerful, as 'robbery'. Marxist theory, by contrast, seeks to explain why exploitation is possible in spite of the labour market's (formal) principle of contractual legal equality. In a capitalist enterprise, this principle can be realised and at the same time covertly violated because wage-earners receive the equivalent of their labour power and not that of the value product they produce. While Marx and Luxemburg argue that class struggle is necessary to even enforce the exchange of equivalents on the labour market, this exchange relation can, and neither Marx nor Luxemburg could have foreseen this, be 'pacified' (Habermas 1987, p. 352); exploitation can be attenuated through an improvement in the living standards of the exploited and reframed subjectively so as to be perceived as 'just' – because legitimate – inequality.

The institutionalisation of workers' power in the welfare state (Arbeitskreis Strategic Unionism 2013, pp. 345-75), in labour law and in collective bargaining has a market-forming effect, as it at least formally asserts the principle of the exchange of equivalents and does this at a level of income that is continuously de-coupled from the level of physical subsistence. I propose terming this case the *primary* form of exploitation, as it is exclusive to the capitalist formation. From this capitalism-generated *primary* exploitation we can then distinguish between mechanisms of *secondary* exploitation that are not specifically capitalist in nature. While relations of primary exploitation are commonly established via formal or informal contractual relations evoking the principle of the exchange of equivalents (labour power in return for fair pay) and therefore ideally function without recourse to extra-economic disciplining, forms of *secondary* exploitation create relations of equivalence of a different type. The interrelation between both variants of exploitation are largely engendered by the entanglement of paid employment and other labour capacities. The economically institutionalised dominance of gainful wage labour creates a contested hierarchy of labour capacities. By, for example, diverting flexibilisation requirements to the reproductive sector, tending to devalue care work, allowing for a comprehensive access to previously idle labour capacities and knowledge resources, or by demanding more and more time for coordinating or navigational labour (*Steuerungsarbeit*), it provides dominant actors (businesses, the state) with the opportunity of appropriating, through secondary exploitation, previously unused and partly unpaid labour capacities and other forms of activity.

In contrast to a model of primary exploitation embedded in an exchange of equivalents, secondary exploitation functionally rests on dominance and unequal exchange. It may be constituted via sexist or

racist discrimination, just as it can be the result of private appropriation of natural or knowledge-based resources through relations of domination. Secondary exploitation occurs when symbolic-cultural mechanisms of disciplining, or those sanctioned politically or by the state, are applied in order to preserve internal-external differences with the aim of pushing the workforce or the living standard of certain social groups markedly below the general welfare state-secured level of wages or reproductive resources – for example, by means of racism or sexism – or in order to create opportunities to partake of activities inside as well as outside the sphere of waged employment as unpaid gratuitous resource(s).

If external parameters and the inter-societal balance of forces allow for it, an intensification of secondary exploitation is a potential option for economic and political elites to react to stagnations in capital accumulation. In this sense, mechanisms of primary and secondary exploitation are not independent of one another. The exchange of equivalents within the sphere of surplus production and its institutional guarantees constitute the standard from which exchange relations that are based on extra-economic dominance and have their own trajectory independent of capitalism (racism, sexism), and which to some extent occur outside the capitalist enterprise and sphere of production (e.g. exploitation of unpaid care work), deviate. If, say, societal dependency on non- or only hardly rationalisable person-oriented services and care activities in the reproductive process increases, extra-economic mechanisms of disciplining can be employed in order to keep the price of this activity low or to continue to satisfy demand with a free resource. These forms of secondary exploitation do not exhaust themselves in methods of absolute surplus value production, by means of prolongation of the work day or deterioration of working conditions (Marx 1982 [1867], pp. 283-428), if only for the fact that many of the corresponding activities are only linked to the capital relation through numerous steps of mediation.

The analysis of different modes of exploitation leads me to a final thought concerning the 're-conquest of land'. Both exploitation and alienation are expressed by experiences of injustice. They engender a 'raw material' (Negt and Kluge 2014) of problem awareness that drives individuals and groups to obstinate responses. Precisely because capitalist subjection of labour capacities can never be of a total nature, attempts at occupation create frictions that may provoke counter-movements and struggles for the 're-conquest of land'. The 'surrender of land', in the sense of a decoupling from commodification or valorisation compulsions, becomes a goal pursued more or less consciously by collective social actors. Rosa Luxemburg's political sociology referred to counter-movements of the Marxian type, to socialist workers' movements, yet she ascribed significantly more importance to experience, spontaneity and democratic freedom of expression within these movements than was common of the Marxist orthodoxy and particularly the Leninism of her time. The recognition of the intrinsic value of non-capitalist modes of production and life forms moreover implies approximating a plural understanding of social antagonisms and anti-capitalist movements. If a pure capitalism does not exist, then neither can counter-movements be reduced to organised socialist or unionised workers' movements. Instead, Luxemburg considers spontaneous mass movements and thus non-class-specific movements of the Polanyian type which resist the 'maelstrom' of levelling market power (Silver 2003, p. 22) to be important social actors. As we will see, this plural understanding of counter-movements remains highly relevant in our town time as well.

To recapitulate what has been established thus far: capitalism is a social system resting on different market forms and mechanisms of exploitation, with an inbuilt growth compulsion. It survives only because it constantly annexes new 'land' – territories, mineral deposits, natural resources, labour forces, labour capacities, knowledge resources and modes of life. It is successful because corporations and the state constantly work towards overcoming barriers to growth. In the process, highly differentiated capitalist societies are marked not least by the ability to incorporate struggles for the 're-conquest of land', in order to at least temporarily ease the tensions in the relation between creative destruction and social embedding of market activities. Taking this into account, another criterion for the overcoming of capitalism emerges. Even if 'struggles for the re-conquest of land' suspend systemic growth compulsions and the associated forms of primary exploitation, (secondary) exploitation as well as (selective) growth could continue to exist in these societies. However, we could no longer reasonably speak of capitalism at this point.

3. Why should capitalism be overcome?

What could potentially motivate social movements and collective actors to not only fight against capitalism, but actually search for ways to overcome it? To my mind, the main motivation currently, at least in the capitalist centres, would be an escalating growth dilemma, which is in fact always present in industrial capitalism. That which for a long time guaranteed social prosperity and prevented social conflict today produces an epochal, economic-ecological double crisis. High growth rates are becoming increasingly difficult to achieve in the old centres. If capitalism ceases to grow or grows only slowly, then

inequality, precarity and poverty will increase. Once the growth dynamic, as is currently the case primarily in the Global South, picks up speed again, ecological dangers increase as well. The combination of the crisis dynamic intrinsic to capitalism with the 'carrying on' of ecologically and socially destructive economic growth constitutes an historically novel constellation which bears in it system-transforming potential, a secular economic-ecological 'pincer grip crisis'. How can this be explained?

Let us begin with a political economy of the crisis. Economic crises are part and parcel of the *modus operandi* of capitalist *Landnahmen*, they function as the 'irrational rationalisers of an always unstable capitalism' (Harvey 2011, p. 71). Crises are virtually indispensable for the stimulation of growth, as they cause capital devaluation and encourage innovation. This is equally true for the numerous minor and major economic turbulences that preceded the global recession of 2008-9. These crises functioned as efficient mechanisms of distribution from the bottom upwards. A crisis management underwritten (in sharp contrast to the ideological super-elevation of the free market) by massive state intervention ensured time and again that the state stepped in to rescue investment funds and banking institutions from bankruptcy. Systematic state intervention facilitated the privatisation of profits and the socialisation of losses. This 'irrational rationalisation', however, led to the development of a 'systemic "moral hazard"' (ibid, p. 10; Dörre 2015, p. 53) in the case of several important financial market actors, and in turn fed into the accumulation of crisis potential in the financial sector as a whole. Investors, bankers, hedge fund managers – essentially the entire 'service class' of financial market capitalism (Windolf 2008) operated under the impression that they could act at virtually no risk to themselves whatsoever, which of course encouraged their inclination toward practices of high-risk speculation even further. From the perspective of investment banks and their executive employees, equipped with unique insider knowledge (and thus essentially uncontrollable) as they were, it appeared absolutely rational when confronted with the prospect of high returns to take just about any risk imaginable. After all, they knew that others would cover any incurred losses in the case of failure, not them or their institutions. State-funded rescue packages in turn prevented market adjustments and seemed to render institutional innovation unnecessary, thereby blocking the crisis mechanism's function of economic cleansing and rectification. Financialisation's intrinsic crisis potential was allowed to expand and deepen until finally the flapping of a butterfly's wings was enough to trigger an explosion within the non-linear financial system that would come to shake the whole world.

How are capitalist *Landnahmen* related to economic crises? Let us take a closer look at this causal mechanism. Capitalist dynamic is mainly a result of the capacity of enterprises and states to turn seemingly absolute boundaries to accumulation into surmountable barriers, although it is important to 'understand the potentiality of displacement of one barrier by another' (Harvey 2010, p. 337). Crises are conceivable in any and all stages of capital flow (production, circulation, consumption). Their roots may lie in insufficient seed capital for capital-intensive innovations, labour force shortages, sectoral disproportionalities, resource scarcity, ecological imbalances, rapid technological changes, workers' resistance, under-consumption, or in the monetary and financial system. Every crisis is unique and cannot be adequately extrapolated from some abstract logic of capital nor from a universal imperative of escalation found within modern societies, but must instead be empirically investigated if its origins and trajectory are to be revealed. There is, however, one basic problematic of capital accumulation that reveals itself in every crisis in some way. In reference to Rosa Luxemburg, David Harvey has termed this basic problematic the '*capital surplus absorption problem*' (Harvey 2010, p. 94).

To put it in simple terms: an economy that grows during a production period must create markets capable of absorbing the additional surplus value during the subsequent period – a task only possible through market-expanding investments. Therefore, the rule of thumb reads: 3 per cent growth requires 3 per cent additional investment (Harvey 2010, p. 95). The higher a given society's level of wealth and the greater its economic growth, the more difficult it becomes to acquire and develop new markets. This *capital surplus absorption problem* represents the central socio-economic driving force of capitalist *Landnahmen*. It explains why the process of capital accumulation requires and demands the ability to 'mobilise world labour power without restriction' so as to 'utilise all productive forces of the globe' (Luxemburg 2015 [1913], p. xiii) – at least to the extent possible within the confines of surplus value production.

As Harvey and others have correctly observed, Luxemburg – who placed these considerations at the heart of her theory of accumulation – underestimated important stabilisation mechanisms of capitalist accumulation. These include the functioning of credit as well as the significance of process and product innovation in particular. If, in a capitalist economy, no other viable alternative solutions exist, then money is applied as a medium of payment in order to bridge the gap between yesterday's surplus product and today's re-investment(s). Should capital owners hoard their assets instead of directly re-investing them, then money creation by banks and deficit spending by the state are the most important means of countering the lack of solvent demand. Moreover, credit stimulates investment, and in the event of

successful implementation even leads to market expansion.

These two methods of resolving the *capital surplus absorption problematic* are so vital to the maintenance of the capitalist dynamic that special networks or configurations of relations and institutions are relied upon to ensure their smooth operation. Harvey names two institutional configurations: the state-finance nexus and the state-corporate nexus. Our list of self-stabilising factors would remain incomplete, however, should we fail to add a state-labour-reproduction nexus to the two 'central nervous systems' of capitalist accumulation. This institutional mesh regulates labour relations but is also the space in which labour capacities in their entirety are developed, qualified, nurtured and looked after, so as to ensure the proper functioning of social reproduction as a whole. The three actor-institution networks together constitute the magic triangle of expanded capital reproduction. Innovations not only require inventions and financing to facilitate market entry, but also rely on a specific type of capitalist spirit, on entrepreneurial thinking (Schumpeter 2011 [1912], 2005 [1942]). Entrepreneurial thinking is oriented towards future developments. A future-oriented mindset and corresponding economic habitus can only develop, however, when at least basic needs in terms of income and employment security are satisfied (Polanyi 2001 [1944], pp. 76-7). Entrepreneurial behaviours are thus predicated precisely that which itself can become the target of creative destruction. The tension inherent in this orientation towards the future is expanded by a speculative moment and thus further radicalised, as yields must anticipate tomorrow's earnings and rely on innovations, which in turn must be financed, and the financing of credits depends not only on assurances of future payment, but also imply debt (Minsky 2008 [1986]). If we combine the perspectives of creative destruction, credit-driven growth and social embedding, we discover an elementary form of movement of capitalist formations. The capitalist dynamic constantly moves, so to speak, between credit-financed creative destruction and social enclosure of market transactions. This relation of tension cannot be suspended within capitalist modes of production. On the contrary, the inter-temporal interconnections as calculated by those providing financing for investments in expectation of tomorrow's earnings explain 'how a financial crisis can emerge out of the normal functioning of the [capitalist] economy' (Minsky 2008 [1986], p. 5).

The way in which actor-institution networks and their inherent crisis potential are institutionalised can be used to indicate both varieties of capitalism (Amable 2003) as well as distinct types of crisis. It is necessary to distinguish, in a systematic way, between (minor) cyclical economic crises that arise every seven to eight years as well as other disruptions to capital flows, from a type of crisis that affects the entire ensemble of social regulations and the (re-)productive structures of society as a whole. Major crises can last for a long time, as the aforementioned actor-institution networks are no longer able to fulfil their economic regulatory function without new institutional configurations taking their place. In any case, 'major crises' result from the increasing incompatibility of accumulation regimes and modes of regulation. Thus they are always also crises of production models, the welfare state, social rules and, if existent, of democratic institutions. They can ultimately lead to an old, crisis-ridden *modus operandi* of capitalist *Landnahmen* being replaced by a new one, a process in which the state and politics are particularly challenged to act as central structure-forming forces. This suggests that transformative crises by no means necessarily lead to systemic crises of capitalism. Should an historic bloc of social forces emerge – not least as the result of concessions to the subaltern classes – that manages to revolutionise institutions and forms of socialisation without fundamentally challenging the capitalist social order, then the outcome remains a 'revolution/restoration'. The accumulation regime, the mode of regulation, production and reproduction models are all transformed in order to preserve the capitalist formation's core structure.

Equipped with such a heuristic, we can now determine a bit more precisely what is special about the sustained socio-economic crises. The New Depression of 1973-4 was interpreted by the dominant capitalist actors of the time as the consequence of an overall profit squeeze. Wage earners' power institutionalised in the developed welfare states appeared to be the main obstacle to accumulation and market expansion. Through the deregulation of labour markets, wage differentials, tax cuts for businesses and top earners, privatisation of public enterprises and the expropriation of social goods and the commons – in short, a new *Landnahme* of the social – the ruling historical bloc aimed to transform these seemingly absolute barriers to growth into surmountable hurdles. The state-finance nexus assumed the leadership role in this process, attempting to effect changes in the state-labour-reproduction nexus. From the elite's perspective this operation has been hugely successful: both the organised labour movement as well as the institutions designed to restrict market power more generally were weakened to such a degree that the fruits of credit-driven growth could be reaped by the already-privileged.

The erosion of trade union power, political representation of wage earners and welfare-state institutions also created a new barrier to further accumulation in the form of structurally deficient solvent demand. Money that could not be profitably invested in the productive economy was instead diverted to high-risk

investments in the financial sector. Furthermore, and particularly in the Anglo-Saxon capitalisms, the issuing of mortgage loans to low-income groups was intended to compensate for stagnant wage levels. This linking of the credit system to members of the wage-earning classes led directly to the catastrophe of 2008-9, as the crisis began in the financial sector. In the construction sector, credit institutions influenced both supply (loans to construction firms) and demand (mortgage loans to homeowners), which inevitably lead to a loss of control. The underlying problem, however, was and remains 'excessive capitalist empowerment' (Harvey 2011, p. 118.) vis-à-vis wage earners, their families and their organised interests as well as, this must be pointed out, a devaluation of reproductive activities and a general weakening of social rules which are actually prerequisites for functioning markets. Thus, the fundamental economic problem of the early 1970s has been effectively reversed. Triggered by a profit squeeze, the new *Landnahme* has, by eliminating a specific barrier to capitalist accumulation, created new barriers, i.e. structurally insufficient solvent demand and – looming behind it – a lack of profitable investment opportunities, which in turn has evoked the threat of deflation (price slump as driving force of economic recession) in the EU and which, moreover, carries within it the seeds of a new major crisis.

4. The social and ecological de-legitimation of the growth compulsion

Structurally deficient solvent demand and the difficulties of financing investment via public debt in order to then conduct market expansion are not the only set of causes behind the hollowing out of capitalism's basic mechanisms of self-stabilisation. The fact remains: capitalism will not come to an end as a result of intrinsic socio-economic crises. Nevertheless, the social and ecological de-legitimation of its erstwhile greatest strength, i.e. its capacity for a seemingly infinite production of wealth, is eating away at the capitalist formation's very foundations.

4.1 The social destructivity of (a lack of) growth

Economic growth unto itself no longer signifies the promise of a better future, particularly in the affluent societies of the North. This is primarily because re-distribution from the bottom to the top and the precarisation of entire social groups have continued unabated since the outset of the global crisis. Or, more pointedly: there is a causal relationship between the concentration of wealth in the hands of small minorities on the one hand, and the precarisation (resting on mechanisms of secondary exploitation) of conditions of life and work for broad layers of the population on the other hand. Using the words of Thomas Piketty, the capitalist dynamic contains a spontaneous tendency towards r (earnings on net capital assets) greater than g (rate of economic growth). Wealth usually generates even greater wealth. The spontaneous tendency towards wealth concentration can only be corrected by external shocks such as wars or through politically initiated redistribution. Should such corrections fail to occur, $r > g$ self-perpetuates (Piketty 2014). The *Landnahme* of the social has undermined mechanisms of re-distribution benefitting the unpropertied classes and structurally weakened those social and political forces which could reinvigorate such mechanisms. For this reason, the 'elevator effect' (Ulrich Beck), which in times of a functioning social capitalism allowed for a collective 'more' (albeit with persistent inequalities), has been replaced by a paternoster effect. Few ascend and become ever-richer, while for larger groups the path is strictly downhill, into poverty, social insecurity and precarity. Rather than the disappearance of a society divided into mass social groups, stark class differences are in fact re-emerging, even within the welfare-state capitalisms.

Today, around 80 super-rich people own about as much as half of humanity combined (Oxfam 2014). The capital-owning class fractions are not only growing in sheer numbers, but their wealth is moreover increasing in relation to all other major social groups (Piketty 2014). This trend is particularly pronounced in the Anglo-Saxon capitalisms, above all in the USA. Here, the top one per cent owns 35 per cent of all private assets nationally. The top tenth of the one per cent earns that which about 90 per cent of earners make in one year in the span of just one and a half days, while the top 20 per cent earn (after tax) more than the remaining 80 per cent of the population combined (Stiglitz, 2012, p. 24). The once relatively egalitarian 'German capitalism' has also moved towards similar levels of inequality. According to recent studies, the top thousandth of the German population owns 17 percent of overall wealth, while the richest ten percent own 64 percent (Bach et al. 2015; also Sauer 2015, Vermeulen 2014). If one was to devise a diagram in which one centimetre corresponded to 50,000 euros, then the average per capita wealth of all Germans would be displayed at 1.76 centimetres, while the assets of the recently deceased and for a long time wealthiest German citizen, Theo Albrecht (20.7 bn €), would be represented by a line measuring a staggering 4.14 kilometres (Moewes 2014).

The renewed increase in class-specific inequalities also accentuates the capital surplus absorption problem. The concentration of wealth in the hands of a few means that appropriated surplus is more difficult to reinvest, as capitalist consumption is of course bound by physical limits at some point. At the same time, the accumulation of money as a universal form of wealth fosters the accumulation of social power which can then be used politically to push the implementation and preservation of privileges in tax law. This distributive imbalance reduces the scope for productive state consumption, thus obstructing further public investment. While privately-held surplus capital is once again concentrated in the financial sector due to a lack of profitable investment opportunities in the so-called real economy, the state – particularly at the local and regional levels – lacks the necessary funds to implement urgently-needed ecological and social infrastructural investment. The creative destruction of Fordist social capitalism seems to have shaken not only the collective security systems, but even the social foundation of innovation and investment activity to a degree that this essential stabiliser of the capitalist dynamic's ability to fulfil its systemic function has been substantially impaired.

The consequences of the crisis-inducing dynamic presently affect mainly those who become the object of forced secondary exploitation – precarised groups, the new service proletariat, women in segments of politically devalued care work, migrants who are often illegalised or have an extremely vulnerable and uncertain residency status, and above all the populations of the countries of the Global South. Even in the advanced capitalisms characterised by sluggish economic growth, labour market integration occurs primarily via the expansion of precarious employment. In Germany, a precarious full-employment society has emerged in which a decreasing volume of paid working hours is asymmetrically shared between a record number of economically active people. The 'German job miracle' rests on a reduction of unemployment at the cost of protected full-time employment as well as through the expansion of 'undignified' (Castel, 2011, p. 63) – because precarious – (wage) labour (Dörre et al., 2013). This process of separation from social property and the means of reproduction previously guaranteed by the welfare state is what I term a *Landnahme* of the second order, or *Landnahme* of the social. It is a *Landnahme* of the second order because it re-occupies already 'conquered' milieus. The new *Landnahme* subjects market-restricting institutions and regulatory systems that emerged as a result of Fordist 'land surrender' to creative destruction. It sets labour forces free from socially secured wage labour and thereby creates a 'metabolism' between still relatively secured core areas and precarised outer layers of the labour market; through the selective dispossession of 'social property'²² it engenders amalgams of wage workers with the status of citizen and precariously employed 'denizens' (Castel 2011, p. 67, Standing 2011). This *Landnahme* of the second order rests on post-welfare-state variants of secondary exploitation. During Fordism's boom years, increases in income and welfare-state securities had de-coupled the living standard of the propertyless classes from the physical subsistence level to a degree that the notion of wages being restricted by the socially necessary costs of reproduction cannot be maintained. The newly established standards, based on the availability of social property, now allow for new forms of secondary – because based on unequal exchange – exploitation. It is founded on the undercutting of welfare-state standards or the circumvention of social rules, which promises extra profits for companies, but also for the state. The principle of exploitation as such is well known: while the salary paid is for a part-time position, the workload is that of a full-time position. The wages paid do not secure a living, but the state intervenes by supplementing low wages and thus enabling the companies' policy of unequal exchange. Only rarely does this *Landnahme* take on the form of violent 'trials of strength' (Luxemburg 2015 [1913], p. 329). It is implemented via certain tests which extend the principle of competition, originating in the profit-oriented private economy, to organisations and activities that actually conform to quite different rules and rationality principles.²³

Appearing as an externally-mandated austerity policy, the *Landnahme* of the social is progressing far more radically in the southern European crisis-ridden countries, in which economic growth has been absent for years. Take, for example, the case of Greece: in this capitalism, which was already weak before the crisis due to its clientelistic forms of organisation, the European Troika's austerity policy has triggered a process of economic contraction with dramatic consequences for the majority of the population. Let us look at the facts: since 2008, Greek GDP has continually contracted; the record low of minus 6.9 % was reached in 2011. More than 180,000 businesses are bankrupt or at least threatened by insolvency. The statistically

²² 'Social property can be described as the production of means of social security equivalent to that which was once provided by private property' (Castel 2005, p. 41f).

²³ Tests include both the power dimension of trials of strength and the moral dimension of tests of worth (Boltanski and Chiapello 2006, p. 96). *Landnahmen* are struggles over power and justice which are fought out by the social actors in field-specific tests.

established unemployment rate rose from 7.7 % in 2008 to 27.1 % in 2013. According to Greek labour market experts, however, the actual rate is five percent higher than the official statistic. This also applies to youth unemployment, which almost tripled from 22.1 percent to 59.1 percent during the same period. In 2010 and 2011 alone, the average wage earner's income fell by a total of 8 percent, while wage cuts in the public sector reached 20 percent - in some extreme cases even 50 percent. The share of employment relations not liable to social security payments has increased to 36 percent. Yet this figure only paints an incomplete picture of the extent of precarisation. Roughly a third of the officially employed work irregular hours and often only part time. Many do not receive the wages they are owed for months at a time. Protection against unfair dismissal is essentially non-existent. Only a small minority of the unemployed receive state support, as anyone who has been unemployed for over a year loses the right to financial assistance. Basic welfare benefits worthy of the name are effectively non-existent, and the family once again takes the place of the already deficient welfare state. Multiple generations of family members often live off of the pension of one person. In this context, recent pension cuts ranging from 14 to 48 percent have a particularly dramatic effect. Homelessness, which increasingly affects even the educated middle classes, is currently 45 per cent above pre-crisis levels. Even the suicide rate is hitting record highs: following an increase of 25 percent in 2009-10, it rose again by 40 percent in the following year. Yet despite the many sacrifices made by the population, Greece's indebtedness has risen from 120 % of GDP in 2010 to about 175 % of GDP in 2013; in the beginning of 2016 the national debt has exceeded 200 per cent of GDP.

Behind these figures lies the transition to a type of society previously unknown in continental Europe. Greece, along with other crisis-ridden states, has become a precarious society of capitalist slump: a European society that, in the wake of a 13-year growth period, is now marked by massive economic and social regression. Given that roughly three million people have dropped out of collective security systems, basic social services can only be provided through forms of self-help. At the end of the official work day, doctors attend to patients who cannot afford regular medical care. Material scarcity is promoting subsistence production, while networks of barter exchange secure basic provisions for the utterly destitute and informal social networks offer shelter to families who can no longer afford their rent in the form of crowded apartments or camp sites. In this way, a radicalised *Landnahme* of the social qua de-commodification generates a non-capitalist exterior which, paradoxical as it may sound, temporarily contributes to the stabilisation of capitalist relations of dominance while undermining the remaining welfare-state institutions in the medium term.

As the Greek example demonstrates, *precarious societies* (von Holdt 2012: 67-73) are now emerging in the heart of the Eurozone in which not only gainful employment, but indeed more or less *all* basic social institutions have become unstable. If we were to add social status insecurity and private indebtedness to this list, we could confidently state that a *majority* of people in these societies live under precarious conditions. Here, governance amounts to maximising insecurities while granting the bare minimum of social security required to avoid the threat of social unrest and revolt, or at least keep them under control (Lorey 2015, p. 39). Visible in an extreme form in these societies is that significant portions of the population no longer benefit from economic growth, even when it does manage to regain a modicum of momentum following years of contraction. As a result, the prospect of a shapeable future is often lost within these groups. Future planning as well as entrepreneurial thinking and behaviour are constantly threatened by decay, or cannot even emerge in the first place due to of a lack of basic securities. Rather than anticipating a better future, the social groups left behind by growth lose any hope of seeing real improvement in their lives for decades to come. If the 'denizens', those precarised half-citizens (Standing 2011, p. 14), have one thing in common, then it is this: they can expect nothing from economic growth, making the future appear as a mere prolongation of an already miserable present.

4.2 The ecologically destructive power of permanent growth

The social polarisation spreading throughout Europe and the capitalist world economy is dramatic for the very reason that it is accompanied by a problematic of the aforementioned 'keep calm and carry on' response. A vital aspect of an understanding of the ongoing crisis is the evolution of society's relation to the natural world. Finance-driven *Landnahme* implies that land, water, oceans, forests, clean air, and even properties of the human body itself are gradually subjected to the principle of competition. The commodification of nature, which really began with the emergence of capitalism itself, produces barriers to accumulation for which the term 'crisis' is not quite an adequate, yet nevertheless an indispensable, description (Foster et al. 2010, p. 399). Whereas crisis entails a condition that can (at least theoretically) be dealt with and overcome, the creation of global ecological dangers represents a continuous and ongoing

process. The beginning of permanent and accelerated interventions into the labour-mediated metabolism²⁴ of humanity and the earth coincided with primitive accumulation, the enclosures and the associated transformation of communal land into private property. Industrialisation and the systemic compulsion towards permanent economic growth triggered a kind of expansionism that negates the absolute limits inherent in any metabolism. One pivotal reason for this is the specific form of the capital surplus absorption problem as formulated in what is known as the Lauderdale Paradox. The Lauderdale Paradox posits that private assets in the form of land and natural resources can only be expanded through the elimination or destruction of public assets. This way a lack of X is actively created, where X is something that was once abundantly available as part of the commons, such as water, land, and clean air (Foster et al. 2010, p. 432). This form of primitive accumulation persists, and can be observed to this day. An end to these sorts of *Landnahmen* is nowhere in sight, at least not for the foreseeable future. Emissions trading is a striking example of how our very biosphere is being enclosed (through the creation of ownership titles) and assigned a monetary value. So far, the scarcity of natural resources has only been felt indirectly as far as purchasing prices are concerned, and becomes visible as a driver of economic crisis only in a mediated way, such as is the case with petrol prices. Reaching (at least, so it seems) 'peak oil' – that is to say, the point of maximum possible output of crude oil – has simply resulted in an increase in high-risk exploration and exploitation (fracking) of previously unprofitable reserves, also known as so-called 'unconventional oil'. Shortages, which are not expressed in price levels, are not taken into account during the accumulation process unless other regulations necessitate it – for these costs are usually externalised and passed on to the wider community as a whole. One fundamental problem of this externalisation mechanism is that it renders the over-stepping of the limits of natural systems invisible over long stretches of time and exempts it from economic calculations.

The ongoing commodification of the human as well as non-human natural world and the externalisation of the associated ecological risks, along with accelerated extraction of raw materials and pollutant emissions, has set in motion a development that is resulting in the over-stepping of planetary limits (Rockström et al. 2009, pp. 472–5). When measured against pre-industrial standards and the 'tipping points' based on them, we have already crossed a 'red line' of irreversible damage as far as climate change, biodiversity and the nitrogen cycle is concerned. Acidification of the oceans, lack of ozone, fresh water consumption, land use and atmospheric aerosol loading are all rapidly approaching the limits of planetary tolerance. The main polluters are the growth-driven capitalisms of the global North, even though larger emerging economies such as China are quickly catching up in this race. At present, a quarter of the earth's population – mainly located in the Global North – consumes three quarters of its resources and produces three quarters of waste and emissions. If the Global South is ever to have even a *chance* at development, then ecological re-orientation must begin in the historical capitalist centres. The term 'crisis' is appropriate to describe this predicament insofar as phenomena such as climate change are not subjected to any kind of linear principle of escalation; rather, complex feedback effects ensure that human-influenced natural systems can reach a point at which they are irreversibly destabilised.

This destabilisation, however, does not imply that ecological catastrophes necessarily or automatically bring about a 'final' crisis of capitalism. There are 'endless predictive uncertainties' with regard to the complex interactions between humans and the natural world (Foster et al. 2010, p. 425). Standard values and climate tipping points are dependent upon shared knowledge and definitions and thus are also sites of struggle over interpretation, political negotiations and social conflicts (Brand 2015). It seems safe to assume, however, that the time frame in which fundamental changes must be implemented in order to allow for a globally sustainable metabolism of the earth cannot be extended indefinitely. The method of overcoming economic crises that has been taken for granted since the Industrial Revolution, namely the generation of economic growth through utilisation of fossil energy sources, has now become a primary driving force of ecological destruction. Essentially, the world has been living beyond its means since the late 1970s – and not only in terms of the impact on the climate, but also with view to the actual consumption of finite resources. The ecological footprint, which measures resource consumption in comparison to the planet's overall carrying capacity, represents an important indicator of this. Even before the turn of the millennium, human resource consumption was about 20 per cent above the sustainability limit. The crisis years of 1980-83 were the last time that resource consumption approached the sustainability boundary. It has risen to such an extent since then that we are now approaching the limits of long-term economic growth, at least in the advanced capitalisms.

Given this historically novel accumulation and mutual interleaving of economic, ecological and social

²⁴ Foster et al. 2010, p. 402. Marx used the term to analyse the labour-mediated metabolism between humans and the natural world. Labour is understood here in a broader sense, as a life-giving process.

dislocations, it seems appropriate to describe the current constellation as an economic-ecological double crisis or 'pincer-grip crisis'. Neither ecological nor economic crises can be traced back to *one* sole cause or origin. The term double crisis depicts mainly a spatial and temporal synchronisation of highly diverse flashpoints and causes of crisis. What makes the current crisis constellation a true historical novelty, however, is that the growth dilemma of the advanced capitalisms is being exposed in a qualitatively new way. The tried and true, unquestioned method of overcoming economic crises as described above is currently (and necessarily) leading to an accumulation of ecological dangers. This is why the capitalisms of the Global North in particular are confronted with an historic decision, essentially between two alternatives: 'One is to make growth sustainable; the other is to make de-growth stable' (Jackson 2009, p. 128; Dörre 2012a). Probably neither is possible within existing finance-capitalist dominated societies. The expansive dynamic intrinsic to all varieties of capitalism drives the system 'towards one of two states: expansion or collapse' (Jackson 2009, p. 64).

However, as we have seen by now, there is no automatism to capitalism's possible collapse. The fact that capitalist societies are capable of sustaining even long periods of economic stagnation can be explained not least by the complexity of highly differentiated capitalist societies. Disruptions in the capital flow affect extra-economic social fields, institutions and action strategies *without* determining them. Harvey therefore distinguishes between seven action areas which co-evolve and mutually influence each other, without one necessarily dominating the other. In contrast to this notion, I prefer a model of field-specific tests in which is decided how specific crisis phenomena are processed. An analytically loose coupling of capital flow and extra-economic action areas is appropriate because it renders visible how, for example, social or ecological crisis phenomena may have an extra-economic origin, but can nevertheless – such as the nuclear disaster in Fukushima caused by a tsunami or the pathologies of an individualist urban lifestyle entailing high social costs for the public – cause disruptions of the capital flow. The most diverse crises are detached from their systemic causes in the highly differentiated social fields and tests, after which they are processed in detail politically. In this way, the growth dilemma of contemporary capitalisms can be processed politically in highly differing ways.

What seems conceivable, as in the case of Japan, is that capitalist relations of production are preserved despite lasting economic stagnation. One possibility is an intensified growth in the semi-periphery driven by extensive state intervention and devised for the long term. As the Chinese example shows, this can function very well for a long time in the absence of parliamentary-democratic institutions. As the examples of some Latin American countries demonstrate, economic growth is at least partially accompanied by an abandonment of market fundamentalism and re-distribution in favour of low-income classes. In the European crisis countries, by contrast, we find – in spite of economic contraction – prosperous capitalist corporations and sectors which prey on non-capitalist modes of production and life in a downright parasitical manner. All this goes to show that a wide range of possibilities to at least temporarily alleviate the outlined growth dilemma of advanced capitalisms exists. This range excludes the possibility of finding the *one* recipe that will lead to the overthrow of capitalism. The Latin American Socialism of the 21st century, for instance, offers no programme that could be easily copied by progressive forces on the European continent. Therefore, the question of systemic boundaries must be posed more precisely. We must clarify whether financialised continental European capitalism, which for the time being continues to provide large parts of the population with a relatively high standard of living, can be overcome in favour of a better social order.

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ON CRITICAL CAESURAS AND CRITICAL SCENARIOS – WORKING THESES AND FIRST APPLICATIONS (DRAFT)

0. Introduction

The notion of 'caesuras', as cuts in continuity and breaks in prevailing orientations, is needed in order to understand history as it really is, not as a field of unbroken continuity, nor as a context for ever prolonged orientations. The notion and the construction of scenarios are used to understand that the historical development has always already included alternatives (broken ore blocked by such caesuras) and that future developments are therefore still more or less „open“. Scenarios are also constructed and put into use in order to improve the capability of political (and police) machineries to avoid uprisings, specifically by preparing agents to react (and to act), in order to – ideally – to shape futures in a selected way. Therefore, both notions are necessary also for working on left-wing, emancipatory political strategies, but in order to be useful they have to be re-functionalized from their common and prevailing ways of being used by the political and scientific mainstream.

The tasks addressed in this paper are strongly complicated by the fact that there is at once a need to restructure the general strategic debate among the left wing forces, and to develop the debate on left wing strategies with regard to the EU which is still blocked by a number of factors, with the fixation of the left wing forces to national traditions of politics probably being the most important stumbling block (At least the tragic end of the “Greek spring” in 2015 has made this clear).

In this paper, the concept of 'society' is understood as the sum of individuals, belonging to and dealing with nature existing within a territory and *at the same time* as the complex of relations, especially power relations, as they exist between these individuals. Accordingly, the metabolism of humankind is going on in a societal form as relations between individuals, who are in turn members of specific societal contexts. In the present world, societal hierarchies are mainly determined by capitalist oligarchies and by the specific interrelations they are capable of establishing between societal, social, ecological and global problems, on the one hand, and the development of agencies like the EU (in its complex relations to the US, to NATO and to other global actors), on the other hand. The interrelations between these 'two hands' with and between their 'fingers' have to be analysed and to be implemented in *critical scenarios*. The term "*critical scenarios*" is specifically used for underlining a needed criticism of scenarios which 'abstract' from existing societal power relations, while they in fact refer to a given historical situation – as it is the case in the scenarios presented here as examples. Such *critical scenarios* will have to be based upon a specific analysis, referring to the social and societal interests marking the given situation, linking it back to a specific understanding of society, of the aims of research and to a specific perspective on conceiving as well as on making policy.

0.1 Establishing *caesuras in historical periodization* as a general task of strategy building

Breaking or cutting the seeming continuity of historical time down into segments, stages, periods and epochs is commonly regarded as one of the central tasks of historiography. This kind of segmentation is often carried out by referring to specific events, or 'caesuras', which mark the beginning or the end of a period under discussion. The identification and the choice of such marking events as historical 'caesuras' in turn raise the question of the underlying *leitmotif* and the corresponding criteria of identification. These criteria evidently are closely related to each historian's own political or cultural orientation, his or her claim to defend a specific way of understanding history, as well as to his or her analytical method. Such caesuras, as defined by the mainstream of historiography, tend to skilfully ignore the analysis and critique of existing complex relations of domination and power, i.e. of primary and secondary forms of exploitation, of gender hierarchies of power and function, of hierarchies within and between cultures and particularly in transnational and international relations. Making use of the reference of a limited period of time, and its points of inception or of ending, in order to explain the development of social problems and power relations will be referred to here as an explanation by some *critical caesura*. A critical caesura is the product of an accumulation of societal factors which a highly diverse set of political actors must take into account in defining and implementing its course of action or its strategy. It is relevant for further societal development, yet it does not present an inevitable outcome. Until democracy was established, other options for development (resulting from the socio-political balance of forces) have existed as well, each of

them implying a distinct set of possible consequences. This makes the different 'possibilities for action' and possible modes of behaviour for the left-wing forces, including both possible and actual effects, an urgent point for debate. Quite frequently, several relevant historical events which may be regarded as critical caesuras in this sense will occur within a single historical period. Such a historical period in its entirety can then be referred to as a 'critical stage'. The critical caesuras and critical stages proposed to be identified as such in the following text are intended as mere suggestions for further discussion, which may then contribute to the development of an understanding of history 'cleansed of any residue of mechanism and fatalism' (Gramsci) which is a crucial prerequisite for the renewed development of socialist politics within and through historical struggles.

0.2 Issues concerning the chronology of the EU

Any glimpse at chronological tables or timelines referring to the evolution of the EU clearly shows that they often limit themselves to marking the successes of official politics or simply offer chronological lists of more or less ideologically selected events. But in working on political strategies it is much more interesting to attempt to identify and to describe those *critical caesuras* which have effectively occurred in processes of intensifying trans- and international relations of competition, of changing global power imbalances, of exacerbating militarisation and warfare (or, rather more cautiously formulated, of 'security policies'). Some possibilities for taking steps towards emancipatory and solidarity oriented alternatives may have been present at the actual point in time of such *caesuras*, although their real possibility would have presupposed a different balance of powers actually brought about by the socio-political forces active within the historical process. Such *critical caesuras* in the history of the EU have so far related specifically to the dimensions of the ways in which the ruling forces of the EU have attempted to manage social problems, of their strategies with regard to international events and of the negotiation and implementation processes concerning international agreements (within the EU, as well as in its relations to the rest of the world).

Two broad segments of time (or hyper-stages of development) can be identified in the history of the EU: (I) the long period determined by the Cold War, and (II) the period following the collapse of the socialist experiments in Eastern Europe. The first segment may in turn be divided into two critical phases, as well as the initial years of a third critical stage: a) the immediate prologue and the effective foundation of the EU's precursors (from 1948 to the implementation of the Treaties of Rome in 1958, b) the social conflicts of the 1960s and the global crisis of the 1970s, with deep changes taking place in Western Europe; c) the neo-liberal turn (from the mid-1980s to the second half of the 1990s). The second segment, stretching until today, includes the longer part of c) as well as two additional, critical stages: d) the course towards the EU's rise to the role of a global agency, the major expansion of NATO and EU (since the mid/end-1990s to 2007); e) the global financial and economic crisis, the euro currency crisis and the ensuing existential crisis of the EU (since 2007).

(The brief discussion of these problems in the paper "The text by Judith Dellheim "Left wing politics in the EU today. The strategical situation" is attempting to establishing the main historical facts²⁵ and drawing some conclusions on strategy building.)

0.3 Mainstream scenarios of EU development

The Joint Research Centre (JRC) as the in-house science service of the European Commission addresses decision makers on different levels; it aims at the "mutual learning between foresight managers, practitioners, users and stakeholders of policy-making organizations in Europe"²⁶.

It explains a scenario as "a 'story' illustrating visions of possible future or aspects of possible future. This is the current understanding of the most emblematic *Foresight* or *future studies* method. But it is to be underlined that scenarios are not predictions about the future but rather similar to simulations of some possible futures. They are used both as an exploratory method or a tool for decision making, mainly to highlight the discontinuities from the present and to reveal the choices available and their potential consequences."²⁷

Foresight and working with scenarios have been introduced by the US military in World War II. The very

²⁵ Apart from our own studies, I draw on the following websites: wikipedia – <https://de.wikipedia.org/>, the EU – <http://eur-lex.europa.eu> and the German Federal Agency for Civic Education – <https://www.bpb.de/>.

²⁶ <http://forlearn.jrc.ec.europa.eu/index.htm>

²⁷ http://forlearn.jrc.ec.europa.eu/guide/4_methodology/meth_scenario.htm

term is closely connected to Herman Kahn's share of military and strategic studies conducted by RAND²⁸. It should not surprise anybody that (alongside the military) multinational corporations like the Shell company have used scenarios first. Since the oil crisis in the beginning of the seventies, the financial services industry, banks, insurance companies etc. have started to work intensively with the scenario method. They all use the Delphi method as developed by RAND. This method is aimed at constructing consensus among experts on foresight related to a special issue. But there are also other methods to get possible futures. In comparison to other international organizations, NATO has the best established foresight program. Within the EU, foresight activities have been expanded very considerably during the past two decades. The European Commission has played a significant role in this process. The ongoing ESPAS project is supposed to identify global trends likely to shape the world towards 2030. EU-GRASP, Global Europe 2050 and The EU in the World of 2030 (AUGUR) are other examples for foresight initiatives launched by the commission. Also different EU Commission directorates and EU member states execute their own special forecast projects (Dreyer, Stang 2013).

0.4 Towards critical scenarios of the future of the EU

The term "*critical scenarios*" is used here to mark a critical stance with regard to those scenarios which are 'abstracting from', i.e. simply disregarding, actual societal power relations, which unavoidably have a historical character. *Critical scenarios* are then connected with analysing and dealing with social and societal interests, with a specific understanding of society, as well as of the aims of research and politics, or with a specific, "technocratic" way of making policy.

In point 3 of "Working on Strategy – seven rough points for a discussion ..." ten specific issues of decisive importance for the further development of the EU are formulated. The events determining the way of dealing with them have to be understood as *critical caesuras*. Occurring in a critical stage, these *caesuras* will exacerbate this critical character, simply by pushing towards a conscious decision for one or another option. Specific possibilities and determinate ways of dealing with the issues referred to in this third point will depend, of course, on the balance of powers between existing political forces which is, in turn, determined by the strength, hegemony and/or dominance

- of capitalist oligarchies which are all (to a different degree) "integrated by and into the EU", more broadly "europeanized" and/or directly "globalised",
- of the political forces within the member states defending a more or less "national" and/or "ethnic" and also cultural orientation, and on the strength of their political, economic and social support,
- of the political forces within the member states defending some kind of an orientation towards gender, generation, European and global justice and solidarity, as well as on the strength of their economic and social support,
- of the political forces within the member states defending some kind of an ecological orientation, and on the strength of their economic and social support,
- of the political forces within the member states defending the interests of the socially and globally weakest, and on the strength of their economic and social support.

The readiness and the ability of the different political forces to make use of violence, in its more obvious and open forms, will play a decisive role in determining the outcomes of such confrontations – which may not be neglected and which adds to the difficulty of foresight studies.

1. Working Theses on critical caesuras and critical scenarios

The following working theses are no more than a first attempt to advance on largely uncharted ground. Proposals for modification, correction or further development are most welcome.

1.1 A tentative construction of a significant constellation of scenarios

If the starting point of the scenario construction is derived from the complex societal-political constellations as they seem to exist, five scenarios of EU development for the next 10-15 years could be arrived at (if the status quo plus/minus is regarded as only one) or six scenarios (if the status quo plus and minus is considered to constitute two different scenarios): catastrophe (see also appendix 2) as the end of the EU,

²⁸ <http://www.rand.org/about/history/a-brief-history-of-rand.html>

worsening/decline (as e.g. in the form of (losing members) and/or in that of rising conflicts among neo-liberal and openly nationalist forces), status quo plus, status quo minus, improvement/progress (as solidarity-oriented steps to mitigate and to begin to resolve problems) and open situations (with unforeseeable outcomes). And there are nine significant fields of indicators capable of describing these scenarios: economy (connected with technologies), ecology, gender relations, social structures within the EU member states, spontaneous ideological relations, formal and societal political relations, relations between EU members, international relations in Europe, international relations on the global scale. The indicators representative for the respective fields can be chosen in the conventional ways, as the data for them are most easily available – and still turn out to be significant.

- From a logical point of view, there are three types of *catastrophe*: total and non-reversible, huge and reversible with enormous efforts, selective and reversible;
- Three types of *decline/worsening* can be envisaged: with increasing dynamics, with a tendency to stability, with a tendency to improvement;
- In an analogous way, the *status quo* can be looked at under a tendency to worsen or decline, to stabilize or to improve/progress.
- Further on, three variants of improvement or progress might be envisaged: with a medium-term tendency towards decline or towards reaching stability be differentiated
- A fourth possibility has to be added to each of these variants, in order to be able to make use of it in constructing realistic scenarios: the emergence of an open situation with unforeseeable outcomes which again may leaps, again four possibilities can be observed: selective and reversible, selective and irreversible, totalizing and irreversible, and therefore, again, open.

The following table illustrates possible tendencies of EU development as results of different power balances. While the policies of specific agents and agencies reinforce, give support to, or oppose specific interests, leading to such results as catastrophe, decline/worsening, status quo, improvement/progress, open situation (as explained above) can be considered as results. The table shows which results can be expected from the working of the respective tendencies.

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

As any falling into playing games in an exaggeratedly technical mode should be avoided, the question to be discussed will be about the real power constellation of agents with concrete interests and about the conditions and tendencies of change, which can be analysed by making use of this grid.²⁹

²⁹ <http://stocktaking-scenarios.blog.rosalux.de/2015/05/18/27/>

The guidelines and the learning material provided by JRC are helpful to a certain degree, also for being critically used by emancipatory and solidarity-oriented actors aiming a society without the domination of the capitalist mode of production: they provide an orientation towards specifically analysing the real constellations of power structures, towards dealing with scenarios from the point of view of other actors, also of antagonistic social actors, towards discussing and collaborating with individuals as collective agents, towards motivating and organizing individuals, or towards building resp. empowering political alliances. But originally and still in general, JRC guidelines should motivate their partners in the EU to work on their scenarios to become more effective and resilient: "To be effective, scenarios must be plausible, consistent and offer insights into the future." (fn 3).

1.2 An attempt at anchoring such scenarios in the historical lines of development and placing them within the overall tendency of the EU

Making use of the EU in global competition, the capitalist oligarchies as the main agents of neo-liberal development have managed to increase their economic and political power (and they have strongly influenced or even determined the aforementioned developments). But in the moment of the outbreak of the global financial crisis, the crises of food and energy supply, of environmental degradation, of access to natural resources have been already in a dramatic stage of development (see also appendix 1). Urgent needs for reactions capable of dealing with these crises have therefore already existed for a long time. The 'mechanisms' of cyclical crises have been working effectively, as well as the accumulated disproportions of branches and sectors in the economy and the functional deficits or historical mistakes in constructing institutional projects in the , especially in the case of the eurozone, were also "working" rather heavily. NATO with its EU members has continuously worked upon encircling Russia.

The EU has forced through its neighbourhood policy which is clearly structured to follow its own interests exclusively - and in this way has effectively followed its own internal majority orientation towards 'gaining' the Ukraine as a market and as a 'security buffer'. But within the EU itself, neo-liberalism as an ideologically elementary orientation for economic policy has started (resp. continued) losing its attractiveness, especially in so far it is based upon the privatization of public goods.

At the beginning of the crisis and during its further development the crucial questions always and again have been the following: who will be able to use the crisis in whose interest with which consequences for the socially and globally weak, for the political and societal power constellations, for democratic, just and sustainable resolutions of finance, economic, food, environmental, energy resp. resource access crises? The capitalist oligarchies, especially the strongest groups within the United States and in Europe have wanted to avoid 'wasting' the crisis as a strategic opportunity for gaining further ground³⁰. In this way, they have exacerbated the essential societal and social problems, while the conditions for contributing to mitigation and the possible resolution of the food, environmental, energy and resource access crises as global problems have continuously been growing worse.

1.3 Structural combinations within the domination by the capitalist mode of production as determinants for the development of the EU

Within the EU, different kinds of combining cultural and social institutions of society with the domination of the capitalist mode of production (in a constellation shaped by the TNCs themselves) have emerged, which are developing in four different major constellations³¹:

- in a way determined by the TNCs located within the respective countries, shaping the economy, while open to gender equality, to wished-for migration, to trans-national cultural and political pluralism, respecting elementary citizens' and human rights at least to a certain degree – which does not mean the end of exploitation, social inequalities or repression -, and in a political attitude which is - compared to the majority of EU members - environmentally friendly, and responsive to international development commitments
- in a way determined by the TNCs located within the respective countries, shaping the economy, while open to gender equality, whereas regulating migration, still relatively open to trans-national cultural and political pluralism , respecting elementary citizens' and human rights at least to a

³⁰ „Never let a good crisis go to waste“, Winston S. Churchill should have said.

<http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/717228-never-let-a-good-crisis-go-to-waste>

³¹ There are other possibilities of combination of these elements, but the four selected seem to be the most probable, and therefore most relevant for further debates.

- certain degree for the citizens of the respective state, and in a political attitude which is - compared to the majority of EU members – relatively environmentally friendly, and relatively responsive to international development commitments;
- in a way determined by the TNCs located within the respective countries, shaping the economy, while open to gender equality, whereas sharply restrictive of migration, relying on a nationally oriented cultural and political pluralism , respecting elementary citizens' and human rights at least to a certain degree for the citizens of the respective state, and in a political attitude which is more environmentally destructive, and less responsive to international development commitments;
 - in a way determined by the TNCs located within the respective countries, shaping the economy, while open to gender equality, whereas sharply restrictive of migration, while less open to cultural and political pluralism, respecting elementary citizens' and human rights at least to a certain degree for the citizens of the respective state, and in a political attitude which is environmentally destructive, and totally nonresponsive to international development commitments.

This constellation and its potential tendencies of development can be summed up conveniently in the following table:

1 st scenario	TNCs shaping the economy	Open to gender equality	Open for wished-for migration	Open to trans-national cultural and political pluralism	Respecting elementary citizens' and human rights at least to a certain degree	Environmentally friendly	Responsive to international development commitments
2 nd scenario	TNCs shaping the economy	Open to gender equality	Open for regulated migration	Still relatively open to trans-national cultural and political pluralism	Respecting them at least to a certain degree for the citizens of the respective nation state	Still environmentally friendly	Relatively responsive to international development commitments
3 rd scenario	TNCs shaping the economy	Open to gender equality	Sharply restricting migration	Relying on a nationally oriented cultural and political pluralism	Respecting them at least to a certain degree for the citizens of the respective nation state	more environmentally destructive	Relatively irresponsible to international development commitments
4 th scenario	TNCs shaping the economy	Open to gender equality	Sharply restricting migration	Less open to any kind of cultural and political pluralism	Respecting them at least to a certain degree for the citizens of the respective nation state	Environmentally destructive	Totally irresponsible to international development commitments

As can be clearly seen from this table, there is no common, over-arching tendency resulting from the presence of the TNCs within the respective member countries of the EU. This could be interpreted to indicate that the agencies representing interests based on the accumulation of finance capital in TNC structures are behaving in a radically opportunistic way: Instead of pushing for 'modernization' or 'socialization' at least of the relations of production they seem to refer specifically to the specific situations existing within each country and to define their strategies on this basis alone – without even given preference to options of intensive capital accumulation (which would require processes of developing the productive powers) over extensive accumulation (which does not require this).

This structural heterogeneity of development under TNC domination does not allow to give general structural definitions (or grounded criteria for re-defining the EU) of economic stages of development which would justify EU integration as such or the participation in the eurozone. These questions have to be decided as political questions, based upon analysing the complexities of different situations and perspectives.

2. First conclusions from working with *critical scenarios*

Our first conclusions from our provisional construction of the scenarios presented so far can be strengthened by going through the state of the debate, limited and rather undeveloped as it, unfortunately, still is.

2.1 The state of the debate on critical scenarios

Working on critical junctions especially in connection with democratization processes, Giovanni Cappocia writes: „ ... scholars should read 'history forward' ..., identify the main decision makers and the dynamic of their interaction, and reconstruct which institutional alternatives were politically viable at the time" (Capocchia 2015:30). Such "institutional alternatives" as described by Capocchia are, in fact, scenarios. Cappocia does not analyse the complex causes of problems and the power structures behind them; he rather addresses scholars, not the already acting actors and agencies which are potentially emancipatory-solidarity oriented.

Two examples may sufficiently illustrate the work on scenarios, as it is executed particularly by the ruling forces and also strengthen the conclusions just summarized: (a) Having a look at the Chaillot Paper "Envisioning European Defense. Five futures" (ISS 2016b) as recently published by the European Institute for Security Studies (ISS) and (b) looking at the "Roadmap for moving to a competitive low-carbon economy in 2050" published by the European Commission.

Both examples provide a reflection on existing major global problems – i.e. on peace and on climate, in their being interconnected with other global problems – and on the extremely powerful agents behind these developments: the military, governments, energy corporations, and capitalist oligarchies. They are the main causers of the emerging global problems and they deal with the consequences of these problems in their own specific interests. The growing threats against peace and climate stability may only be limited (and then gradually resolved) by tackling the power of these agents, namely the capitalist oligarchies, while using contradictions among and within these oligarchies. In this context taking advantage of the potential of the EU as a global actor may turn out to be especially relevant. Strong arguments can be built to argue that because of recent historical developments – especially because of the interlinking of the development of power structures and technologies/production, consumption patterns, mass media – any direct system change could only be started and realised following a global catastrophe like war (Marcuse 1964: 236 pp) and/or the destruction of ecosystems. Hence, globally competing capital oligarchies in the US, EU and the other centres of the global industrial regions force defence, destructive production and consumption patterns including mass media are capable to work for a renewal of the social consensus, particularly via the interplay between individual lifestyles and work, between housing, mobility, education, nutrition, social security and recreational behaviour. A way of life has in fact emerged that buttresses and strengthens the dominance of the capital oligarchies of 'financial market capitalism'. This way of life as such has a lot to do with exclusion – both in the centres of financial capitalism themselves as well as, in particular, in a global extension to the peripheries. It functions as a comprehensive cause of systemic violence against human beings, of mass manipulation of individuals and of environmental destruction. In this modality individual and social life is increasingly permeated and determined by financial operations and financial market actors. Financialisation mobilises accumulation sources, the use of which drives socialisation forward.

However, it results in further isolation of individuals. They invest financial means, titles of ownership and payment bonds in order to secure their everyday existence, while building up savings to privately ensure their healthcare and retirement for later phases of their lives.

This isolation is accompanied both by new freedoms and enormous dependencies. The capital oligarchies who control the everyday life of large parts of the population actively make use of this to simultaneously organise a social consensus in their favour. Together with their partners in the nation states, in the existing supra- and trans-national state organizations, and in political life at large, they effectively constitute a system that accelerates the accumulation of finance capital (via deregulation, privatisation, state debt management and fiscal policy, increased options for borrowing, as well as free trade-, foreign- and 'security' policies). This comprehensive system of 'consumerism' increasingly shapes social life, reinforces the consumption of nature, the development of destructive energy and transportation systems, the agribusiness, the "security" complex, the high tech and finance spheres, as well as, more generally, militarisation and global warning (Dellheim 2015: 204 pp). The main causers of these problems do considerable work with scenarios, strategically making use of them to further their own interests.

2.1.1 The issue of defence as an example of future studies to be used

The five defence futures as elaborated in the study we have just mentioned are quoted in column (2) in the table below. The authors of the study describe every future under the following five categories: organisation, decision-making structure, financing, capabilities and operations, how to get there. Column (3) uses the formulations of the authors in quotation marks. Column (1) reflects the underlying political constellations and the economic situation within the EU member states, although the study does not discuss them. It focuses exclusively on the behaviour of governments.

Behaviour of governments (1)	Future of EU defence (2)	„How to get to this future“ (3)
Continuing to apply the same logic that they have followed since the end of the cold war	„Bonsai armies“	„Maintaining the current course“ - „ defence austerity“ is going on - defence won't be a top priority
Following through stated intentions over last few years	„Defence clusters“	„Hit the accelerator“ - a core group of countries do multilateral defence planning - other follow - increasing speed is necessary
Looking at a fully developed and equipped multilateral peace operation-oriented policy-making	„Peace operations“	„division of labour“ - member states give up their „defence integration“ commitment or - they are collectively willing to engage in long-term peace operations
Resigning from an autonomous military crisis management	European NATO	„More money, more guts“ - some member states abandon the project; a Brexit could accelerate this - member states shift further towards collective defence, away from crisis management
Looking at a EU playing a „meaningful military role“	European army	„Political will and hard realities“ - „the ever-increasing costs of defence and defence technology“ - a core group of member states could start, other will follow - France, Germany, Poland, Italy, Belgium and the Netherlands could start with a EDU ³² and use the EDA and other EU structures - a EU air force can form a first part of the European army; the EATC ³³ is a major driver

According to ISS 2016b

The Chaillot Paper is the result of a large cooperation and should support the work on the renewed

³² European Defence Union

³³ European Air Transport Command

Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) and on the EU Global Strategy on foreign and security policy (EUGS) that will be presented in June 2016. The paper reflects the present concerns of EU defence experts with regard to the intra-EU cooperation "despite the worrying security developments both inside and to the east and south of Europe" (Antonio Missiroli, director of ISS, in ISS 2016b: 5). Security and defence experts refer to a number of serious EU problems: "ageing populations, troubled economies, resurgent xenophobia and a deteriorating security environment on their borders. Europe's greatest strategic challenge, however, is recognising that it is no longer viewed by the US as the most important region of the world ...". Talking about the East here refers to Russia, about the South to the southern EU neighbourhood and more especially about the links between the terrorists there and the terrorists in the EU.

For the EU "US security cooperation will decline" as Washington have prevented a Soviet dominance in Europe successfully and now focuses on "keeping China from dominating Asia". In the EU China is not regarded as a threat and US security experts are not happy about weaponry exports to China by EU member states. These states resp. the EU "are capable of defending their territory and launching limited military missions outside. This optimistic assessment assumes Europe's major states remain united, but there is reason to doubt that they will remain so ... The long conflict over the euro and the recent refugee crisis have already exposed serious fissures within the European body politic, and mutual suspicions are likely to grow if European governments begin to act on their own ... EU member states may need a 'common foreign and security policy' more than ever before, but producing one might be a difficult task." (Stephan Walt, Professor of International Affairs at John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University in ISS 2016a: 9-10). Therefore, the ruling forces in the US have an interest in a united and strong EU³⁴, but they are also interested in keeping control on the EU. A strong and stable EU could provide more stabilizing potential, and, if needed, force, for crises in the neighbouring regions. But "America must lead. Strong and sustained American leadership is essential to a rules-based international order that promotes global security and prosperity as well as the dignity and human rights of all peoples. The question is never whether America should lead, but how we lead". (NSS 2015: i) For this leadership, US influence on global financial rules is seen as essentially. "Through the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (T-TIP), we are setting the ... United States at the center of a free trade zone covering two-thirds of the global economy. Our goal is to use this position ... to make America the production platform of choice and the premier investment destination. In addition to these major regional agreements, we will work to achieve groundbreaking agreements to liberalize trade in services, information technology, and environmental goods—areas where the United States is a global leader in innovation. And we will make it easier for businesses of all sizes to expand their reach by improving supply chains and regulatory cooperation. All countries will benefit when we open markets further and reduce inefficiencies in the global trading system through trade facilitation improvements." (NSS 2015: 17)

The EU leaders indeed follow this logic and this political approach. They make sure that scenarios are made use of for protecting and for increasing their own strength and their own advantages in relation to other agents active in the global arena – i.e. not for tackling global problems, or for launching a socially and ecologically sustainable development realising the interests of the majority of world populations, but exclusively following the interests of capitalist oligarchies and their partners.

2.1.2 The issue of carbon emission reduction as a key component for all EU future studies

As the ruling forces in the US also the ruling forces in the EU regard the production and supply of energy primarily as a factor for reproducing their global hegemonic role in economic competition and their security policy, and not as a social, ecological and global problem. No country like Greece which has to import the most of its needed energy, would be capable e.g. to leave the eurozone in order to reduce its energy bill without a fundamental financial and economic crash effect. But climate change (and therefore especially greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) and other emissions destructive for climate stability) also have a serious impact on capital accumulation and security. And therefore it is also in the interest of the ruling forces to reduce them. Many of them see the EU as committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions to 80-95% below 1990 levels by 2050. The Commission has analysed the implications of this in its "Roadmap for moving to a competitive low-carbon economy in 2050". Its "Roadmap to a Single European Transport Area" focuses on solutions for the transport sector based on destructive mega-projects. In the "Energy Roadmap

³⁴ „The McKinsey Global Institute estimates that the potential impact of an unruly Greek exit from the euro zone could cause eight times the collateral damage as the Lehman Brothers bankruptcy. Regardless of which solution is eventually chosen, progress will be needed on several fronts to restore euro stability. Doing so will take several years at a minimum, with many experts talking about a whole decade before stability returns.“ (NIC 2012: vi)

2050" the Commission explores the challenges posed by delivering the decarbonisation objective of the EU. At the same time, the objectives of security of energy supply and of competitiveness shall be ensured. The EU policies and measures to achieve the goals of the Energy 2020 strategy is supposed to continue 'delivering' beyond 2020 - by helping to reduce emissions by about 40 per cent by 2050. But even when staying on the current track, they will still be insufficient to achieve the 2050 decarbonisation objective of the EU defined as less than half of the decarbonisation goal shall be achieved in 2050. This shows the levels of effort and change which will be required to effectively realize the necessary reduction of emissions, "while keeping a competitive and secure energy sector. Today, there is inadequate direction as to what should follow the 2020 agenda. This creates uncertainty among investors, governments and citizens." (European Commission 2011b: 2) The scenarios in the "Roadmap for moving to a competitive low-carbon economy in 2050" suggest that if investments would be postponed, they will cost more and create greater disruption in a longer term. So the task of developing post-2020 strategies is regarded as urgent. Energy investments take time to bring effects. Infrastructure built 30-40 years ago needs to be replaced. Using scenarios, the International Energy Agency (IEA) has shown the critical role of governments again and the need for urgent action. The scenarios in the "Energy Roadmap 2050" explore routes towards decarbonisation of the energy system (European Commission 2011b: 2-3). They imply major changes in carbon prices, in energy demand, technology and networks: "If a technology-neutral approach is chosen, high prices of CO₂-certificates are the main driver for deployment of both RES (renewable energy services – J.D. authors) and NUC (nuclear energy – J.D.), but also for development of CCS (carbon capture and storage – J.D.). Therefore, GHG-ambitious technology-neutral scenarios generally show higher shares for RES and NUC, except when NUC and CCS are excluded from the beginning." (European Commission 2011a: 109)

Table 22: Share of fuels in primary energy consumption in %

	2005	Reference scenario		Current Policy Initiatives		Decarbonisation scenarios	
		2030	2050	2030	2050	2030	2050
Solids	17.5	12.4	11.4	12.0	9.4	7.2-9.1	2.1-10.2
Oil	37.1	32.8	31.8	34.1	32.0	33.4-34.4	14.1-15.5
Gas	24.4	22.2	20.4	22.7	21.9	23.4-25.2	18.6-25.9
Nuclear	14.1	14.3	16.7	12.1	13.5	8.4-13.2	2.6-17.5
Renewables	6.8	18.4	19.9	19.3	23.3	21.9-25.6	40.8-59.6

Source: European Commission 2011a): 17; solids: energy production from use of waste

Table 16 Measures included in all decarbonisation scenarios

	Measure	How it is reflected in the model
1	Additional strong minimum requirements for appliances	Progressive adaptation of modelling parameters for different product groups. As requirements concern only new products, the effect will be gradual.
2	High renovation rates for existing buildings due to better/more financing and planned obligations for public buildings (more than 2% refurbishment per year)	Change of drivers (ESCOs, energy utilities obligation, energy audits) influence stock – flow parameters in the model reflecting higher renovation rates (higher than 2% pa), with account being taken of tougher requirements for public sector through specific treatment of the non-market services sector
3	Passive houses standards after 2020	All new houses after 2020 comply with passive house standards - around 20-50 KWh/m ² (depending on the country) which might to a large extent be of renewable origin
4	Marked penetration of ESCOs and higher financing availability	Enabling role of ESCOs is reflected in lower discount rates for household consumers (from 17.5% to 16% in 2015, 14% in 2020, 13% in 2025 and 12% from 2030 onwards) and for industry, agriculture and services (from 12% to 11% by 2015 and to 10% from 2020 onwards)
5	Obligation of utilities to achieve energy savings in their customers' energy use over 1.5% per year (up to 2020)	Induce more energy efficiency mainly in residential and tertiary sectors by imposing an efficiency value for grid bound energy sources

		(electricity, gas, heat)
6	Strong minimum requirements for energy generation, transmission and distribution including obligation that <u>existing</u> energy generation installations are upgraded to the BAT every time their permit needs to be updated	Higher efficiency of power plants through removing less efficient items from the generation portfolio, allowing however for efficiency losses where CCS is deployed Less transmission and distribution losses
7	Full roll-out of smart grids, smart metering	Enabling more efficiency and decentralised RES; Reflected as costs in the distribution grid costs, electricity prices and overall costs of the energy system
8	Significant RES highly decentralised generation	More advanced power dispatching and ancillary services to support reliability of power supply Higher penetration of small wind, solar and hydro

Source: Source: European Commission 2011a): 4-5

In sum, this means, that the scenarios in the different official roadmaps to decarbonisation are developed and used in an above all technical way. They should help to harmonise – mainly by the activities of governments – the challenges derived from objective ecological limits and from the interests of corporations resp. companies. Looking at such expensive socially and ecologically destructive technologies like CCS, nuclear economy and at centralised projects of RES as solids, it becomes clearly obvious that capitalist oligarchies are not challenged, but asked for pushing through the required innovations and for helping to renew the social consensus. Therefore, agents with policies aimed at a transformation to a low-carbon society of individuals living in dignity, freedom, solidarity and in a healthy environment will have the priority task to prevent and to tackle the development and implementation of such technologies exclusively connected to the defence and the reproduction of existing specific power structures. These very structures demand anti- democratic security policies and serve to prevent any political strategies oriented towards social justice from emerging (or from becoming truly powerful). They are intimately connected to an approach which aims at reproducing global power in its centre, while integrating as much as possible of the (new and old) peripheries. This deeply political approach is intertwined with interests and processes concerning technologies/military, free trade, dealing with climate change, and global alliances. There is a strong interplay between global power structure and US as the hegemonic nation state. The capitalist oligarchies and the social consensus behind the dominant 'quadrangle' of energy and transportation systems, the agribusiness and the military industrial complex resp. "security complex" which is centrally relying upon the established the modes of production and consumption, are not challenged as such.

Dealing with 'security risks' (and in this perspective also e.g. with global warming) is understood unidimensional and it is then implemented in a way avoiding major consequences and leaving large possibilities for egotistic behaviour.

Both examples which we have presented here, may show that the use of scenarios is in fact closely connected with specific political aims, in turn reflecting social and societal interests, a specific approach to society and to technologies as well as to specific scientific enquiry. „Who wants and why to use a scenario in whose interest and with which aims?“, always is the decisive question. The answer to it and the corresponding approaches to society are further connected with the understanding of society and societal change and, in this indirect way, to philosophy and ideology.

2.2 How to make use of the scenarios proposed so far

Looking at the scenarios just roughly delineated, the following observations seem to impose themselves:

- a) There are two groups of scenarios: scenarios relating to the past and those relating to the future: Firstly, scenarios relating to the past should help to understand the present situation of European societies, focusing upon the problems of the social, ecological and global processes connected with the history of the EU or more specifically with that of left wing forces within the EU. Here, the main argument may be concentrated upon the structures of production and of consumption, as well as those of social relations and power relations, looking out to identify the main driving interests and the forces behind them. Secondly, the work on scenarios related to the future should help to avoid surprises and to qualify the work on strategies and the elaboration of societal alternatives. In both respects it constitutes a major challenge for the left to develop an own understanding of scenarios using the critique of political economy political economy in a Marxian perspective – specifically by identifying and analysing *critical caesuras* and *critical stages*.
- b) The notion of capitalist oligarchies is a key to understand and to analyse the power structures and the driving interests and forces behind these structures as well as the driving interests and forces behind them. It is therefore crucial for the work on political ideas, aims and strategies for societal alternatives.
- c) For any significant work on scenarios for the future, the analysis of the development of the EU, relations to the NATO and US, capitalist oligarchies, the balance of political forces, active and potential emancipatory-solidarity actors, the place of the left in the system of societal power structures are essential steps. These structures determine possibilities and practices of exploitation of individuals, repression, control and command of and over others, due to their place in the respective society – which is deriving from the ownership of resources for the production and reproduction resp. their ability to appropriate the results of the labour of others without an equivalent, from family relations, from their gender/sex positions, from their place of birth and living, from their ethnic origin, age, disability, religion, world view/philosophy of life. These factors are closely interlinked in contradictory ways and are continuously realized in the metabolism with nature. Societal power structures determine the ways and methods of societal dealing with nature and therefore constitute a central area of causes of ecological destruction processes – especially with regard to climate and to biodiversity.
- d) Any work towards a political strengthening of the left wing forces, will depend on their capacity for dealing with the problems named under (c). The first and elementary practical step always is and will be to look out for and go to where people are already struggling against such problems, here and now, in greater solidarity, and in a more socially and ecologically responsible manner than the dominant mainstream of our societies. These activities will have to be analysed with regard to the mode of living they imply and they are to be supported, strengthened and expanded with a view of effectively changing the existing balance of political forces, in the direction of specific process of liberation from structural domination.³⁵

Working on scenarios in a scientifically and politically serious manner will have to mean for the left wing forces to build a bridge between the work on scenarios related to the history with the work on scenarios related to the future. This demands to qualify one's own analyses of the history of society, as well as of the present times, in so far it is the reflection of one's own history as of one's own present activity. This

³⁵ Point (d) is not explicitly elaborated in part I, but in many papers before. Part I has also been written in having (d) in mind.

specifically also demands to critically overcome the reigning fetishization of capitalist societal relations, on the one hand, as well as to overcome the idealist illusions unavoidably linked to subjective activity, on the other hand – without submitting to the fallacies of determinism or of voluntarism – searching for and finding a realistically informed approach to the real possibilities inherent in any given situation.

This opens interesting perspectives also for a left-wing emancipatory politics: In a perspective of identifying first steps for building a renewed and deepened politics of the left wing forces four groups of action fields here and now seem to be especially relevant:

- The comprehensive issue of financial markets,
- The issue of the “special projects” of the ruling forces, such as privatization, public-private partnerships (PPP), mega-projects, and local and regional problems; these projects especially have to do with energy, transportation, agribusiness, and “security/defense” and hence with the competitive national positions of the causers of problems, and with concrete technologies and investments
- The issue of fighting poverty/social exclusion, discrimination and repression/violence – especially by advocating and implementing sustainable social, democratic and ecological minimum standards; and
- The issue of struggles against existing or planned socially and ecologically destructive projects/practices of governments and international institutions (EU, WTO), such as the TISA, TIIP, other agreements on free trade and investment protection, some recent EU directives on single market rules.

In order to be specifically relevant for left-wing political practice these issues need to be further analysed: Their inherent possibilities for socially relevant political initiatives and activities point to the possible consolidation of the over-determination of three interconnected strategic areas or fields of action, as they are referring to:

- the struggle for democratic, social and ecological standards,
- the democratization of the public space and of political decision-making processes, specifically over priorities and principles for the mobilization and the use of public finances, and
- the movements for active and participatory local and regional development.

These three areas also have to be interconnected and articulated in real political strategies addressing these fields of action in parallel, joining forces and acting at the same time. The general connecting links between them may be found in civil resistance against socially and ecologically destructive projects, in fighting for the introduction of the respect for participatory processes and in the struggles for the commons. Unavoidably they will turn out to be struggles against further financialisation at the same time – because it tends to reduce all the members of society to atomized individuals and thereby increases the power of those who already are the most powerful on the financial markets. In this respect, political engagement for the structural improvement of the living conditions of the socially and globally poorest and for the organization of the actors involved in these processes should be particularly emphasized. Networking processes of actors on and between the different levels – from the local to the global – should also to be particularly prioritized.

The debate on these possibilities need not start from zero. It can and it should make use of accumulated experiences which have at least partly been already discussed and analysed. Institutional experience can be especially helpful to bring out underlying trends and historical turns. In order to take up this experience, European and international – especially UN – documents could be made use of; but they should be analysed critically in order to overcome their silences, their blind spots, and their resulting ambivalence.

2.3 Deepening the debate on EU scenarios

As we have shown above (p. 6f.), if we take our starting point from the complex societal-political constellations, as they exist now within the EU, five scenarios of EU development for the next 10-15 years could be arrived at (if the status quo plus/minus is regarded as one) or six scenarios (if the status quo plus and minus are regarded as two different scenarios): catastrophe, worsening/decline, status quo plus, status quo minus, improvement/progress and open situations which may be used for a controlled change. And there are nine significant indicators capable of describing the elements of these scenarios: economy

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

The following table may serve as a further guideline for deepening this debate – especially as a research grid for identifying key developments, as they may be gleaned from existing (also statistical) material. The lines connect issues with tendencies (in columns). The table also illustrates the real significance of the mentioned critical caesuras (pp.) Moreover it concretizes the table and the arguments on the pp. 65-66 and in so doing helps to articulate some real tendencies. It confirms that status quo has a permanent tendency to worsen or to decline. The table also helps to make the role of a policy oriented at effectively addressing emerging problems in specific ways clear. And it again illustrates the key role of democracy for problem solving, on the one hand, and the over-all orientation of EU policies on US policies, on the other hand.

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

The central task will be to work on relating EU scenarios to reality. Here it is necessary to keep in mind that already before the global financial crisis has begun different developments have changed the EU and its neighbourhood.

Already before the global financial crisis had begun, different developments have changed the EU and its neighbourhood. They have worked and are still changing the EU both from within and without:

- Aiming at "gains from globalisation" the EU has had to improve the political, social and economic conditions for the TNCs and for other global players and realise a working societal compromise ensuring its own political unity, internal security, and social coherence. On the other hand, it has to respond to its "alliance responsibilities", to realise control over the neighbourhood and acquire or maintain a capability for global military action.
- At the same time confident and economically relevant powers are arising in the very

neighbourhoods of the EU. Such powers are now gaining leeway by building their own alliances among themselves and/or with powers like China. These powers partly build on seeming powerless subaltern movements (wage earners and farmers), which then seems to lead to the emergence of new variants of capitalism.

- On the other hand, especially in the countries of the centre, new ideological and cultural upheavals are emerging and expanding, specifically calling for political alternatives to the established powers. As relevant left wing political alternatives seem to be systematically blocked, these calls seem to be met ideologically by right-wing populism, by forms of fascism and by religious fundamentalism. At the same time political systems, state administrations and society at large seem to be generating a growing propensity for violence and repression.
- This in turn serves to reinforce the trend towards a 'new security paradigm' with an underlying tendency to make openly repressive and even military instruments for more 'security' politically legitimate and acceptable as such. Even more generally, social concerns are increasingly met by authoritarian responses, as social security reforms in several EU member states clearly seem to show.
- Ideological and cultural upheavals are more and more taking place under the hegemony of right-wing populism, neo-fascism and religious fundamentalism. States and society are generating a growing propensity for violence and repression. This leads to a new 'security paradigm', in the form of a tendency to accept openly repressive and even military means for more 'security' as politically legitimate.
- Social concerns are increasingly met by authoritarian responses, as social reforms in several EU member states reflect. These institutions together with the IMF determine neighbourhood policy principles and do in fact 'recommend reforms' to neighbouring countries. A certain historical welfare state compromise still appears to be centred on the middle class and this leads to crucial social questions being ignored or treated merely as questions of charity. Immigrants are systematically excluded from this compromise. But migration and escape from conflict have become a key reality defining today's social issues.
- The relationship between the EU and its neighbours is determined by changes of statehood and democracy within the EU, as well as in the neighbouring countries. This affects the development of an "EU statehood", as well as processes of state building (in the USSR successor states), of more or less destructive 'restructuring' of states (Syria, Iraq and Turkey) and the impact of independence movements (Kosovo, Crimea). The privatisation of the public sphere is more and more affecting the governments' administration and security services and this, again, leads to changes in the relationships and the exchanges between states. This ongoing process purports to seek a redefinition of democracy, while excluding any real participation and incorporation.

The EU institutions (together with the IMF) determine general principles of neighbourhood policy and "recommend reforms" to neighbouring countries. A certain historical welfare state compromise in many EU member countries under pressure is revealed to be centred on the middle classes, ignoring social questions crucial to reality or treating them as merely questions of charity. Most importantly, immigrants are excluded from this kind of 'national compromise'. But migration (and escaping from conflict) has become a key factor in the social questions of today.

The relationship between the EU and its diverse neighbours is determined by deep changes in the very notions of statehood and democracy within the EU and, in different ways, in the neighbouring countries. This affects the development of a kind of EU statehood, of the processes of state building (in the USSR successor states), of the deep restructuring (bordering on or going through the destruction) of states (Syria, Iraq and Turkey) and of independence movements also in Western Europe (Kosovo, Crimea; Scotland, Catalonia, The Basque Country). A growing privatisation of the public sphere has also affected the governments' administration and the security services provided by them, as well as it has changed the very relationships between states. This on-going process proceeds to redefine democracy while especially excluding participation and incorporation of increasing parts of the population (Brangsch 2015).

The EU has reinforced its neighbourhood policy looking only at its own interests and therefore exclusively laid out for 'gaining' e.g. the Ukraine as a market and as a 'security buffer'.

At the beginning of and during the open crisis the crucial questions have been: Who will be able/who is able to use the crisis in whose interest with which consequences for the socially and globally weak, for the political and societal power constellations, for democratic, just and sustainable resolutions of the still on-going finance, economical, food, environmental, energy resp. resources crises?

Democracy, even as understood in a mainstream sense and much more in the sense referred to in this paper, has remained under constant pressure and has been destroyed to an ever more far reaching degree. These developments and what is at stake in them can be described more specifically concerning some of the issues referred to (see also appendix 1):

Greece: The 'Greek case' was much more an effect of an agreement between Angela Merkel and Dominique Strauss-Kahn than a direct result of the banking crisis: States can indeed turn out to be unable to pay and banks can effectively fail. International recommendations especially from the UN can be applied in such cases in order to deal with such problems. There is the positive example of Iceland which could be referred to here. But Merkel and Strauss-Kahn were primarily thinking about the consequences for the value of the portfolio of the German and French holders of Greek state debt. The Greek population has been made the victim of their 'rescue-operation', which has been agreed by a Greek government serving the ruling forces, especially the oligarchs in Greece. The construction underlying this deal has not worked for the Greek economy and does not work for it, but it has reinforced existing hierarchies and it has contributed to establishing new hierarchies within the EU, while reinforcing repression and while giving neo-liberal, unsustainable answers to the problems of Greek society. These 'answers' were effectively responding to the needs of globalised finance capital, especially in the form of TNCs. Greece is not only used as a laboratory for neo-liberal policy, but as an example for dealing with governments which one would not wish to have, even though it is a NATO member which is located on an external border of the EU.

Ukraine: The 'Ukraine problem' also is the product of accumulated contradictions in diverse respects and issues: It is the result of a long history and especially of the ways in which the USSR has been brought to an end: This process has produced a variety of stereotypes which could be used to politically justify social and societal inequalities which had been exacerbated by diverse agents and agencies different in political, economic, ethnical and cultural character. These 'differences' then have also been integrated into existing and emerging power structures and into the power strategies of again very diverse European and global agents and agencies. The Association Agreement and the deep and comprehensive free trade area which has been created by them effectively correspond to the interests of agents and agencies connected to the most powerful agents and agencies of the EU. They are integrated into NATO structures, but effectively interested in maintaining peace in Europe. They want to control the Ukraine and to put Russia under pressure, on the way to increase their European and global influence, but they also want to avoid military conflicts within and on the borders of the EU. The ruling forces in France and Germany (in their co-operating as well as in their competition) are both continuously working in this direction, but the ruling forces of Germany have much more to gain from the success of such endeavours. They have to deal with russophobic nationalist forces in Eastern Europe which aim at increasing their political influence, in their home countries as well as in Europe as a whole.

BREXIT: Being a NATO co-founder and having benefited from the Marshall plan, the EU membership of the UK had been wished for by the many agents among the transatlantic strategic planners, especially in the US. But the UK as a privileged European partner of the US has been much more interested in its own role within Europe, especially regarding its stronger interest in free trade and in global financial markets which are gaining from the common and single market of the EU. These are aiming at a continuous surplus – which would mean economic gains from free trade, reduced economic commitments, standards differing from those of the EU and extra ('imperial') gains from a military role. The British elites are strongly globalised, but still more or less involved in the European economy. On the other hand, global capitalist oligarchies as such would lose economically from a Brexit, but many other leading forces in the UK have linked up with nationalist forces, in so far they tend to assess their potential surplus based upon a more or less total reduction of British EU commitments, especially touching upon the field of taxation. Looking at the British role in the EU, the left and the different 'supporters of EU integration' could indeed even be happy about a Brexit – as it would probably provoke a pro-EU campaign by Merkel and Hollande and the winner countries in the EU that could even help the Greek population. But a Brexit would be a nationalist success and would therefore contribute to an increase of all nationalist emotion within the EU and in Europe at large and this could have unforeseeable and destructive results. And a Brexit could also reinforce tendencies of regression towards a free trade area already existing in the EU³⁶.

³⁶<http://leftfootforward.org/2016/05/brexit-would-weaken-the-campaign-against-toxic-trade-deals-like-ttip/>

BRICS: Looking at the new global powers in Latin America and in Asia many economical agents in the EU see new markets and so new potentials of profit. But the strategic planners in the US and in the EU belonging to and/or serving the most powerful capitalist elites are looking at the shares of their territories in global national products (GNP), global trade and direct investment, consumption of resources and nature. Calculating on this basis, the powerful competing elites in the US and the EU want to continue and to deepen their co-operation. They want to keep and to protect their global role in a way that has not been possible and will remain impossible, even if the US (and the EU) can still successfully destabilize governments they consider not subservient enough (as the US have shown in Latin America and the EU in Africa). They have made the experience that arms races could weaken all the competitors, but inevitably leads to an increase in threats. The competitors have to be regarded as more or less significant or potential partners in dealing with "global dangers" above all with "terrorism" and global warming which could emerge and develop thanks to the own policies of the US and the EU. These policies are still is being continued, by economic international agreements, by NATO improvements, by agreements on cyberspace and "protection from terrorism/dealing with terrorism". Free trade agreements, CETA/TTIP/TISA, intellectual property rights, ACTA, "alliance commitments" are key ideas in this strategy.

Refugees: The "refugee crisis" is especially a result of the own policy: cooperation with dictators, exports of weaponry, free trade, Association Agreements, looking at the neighbourhood as: a space for the provision of resources, migration of wished labour force, use of low social and environmental standards, a buffer zone around EU borders (migration regimes, above all in North Africa), a factor in global competition as a market and production site, welcoming "importers" of consultants and experts shaping or influencing future elites and an the development of state and other institutions. But such an approach forces political and social contradictions. Emancipatory struggles of the oppressed, the destruction of economic, social and ecological living conditions, wars and offensive western media celebrating the own ways of life force people to escape from the territories and attract other to look for a better life in the EU. Both come to the causers of their coming, but are not wished for, because of economic costs, security risks and also due to ideological stereotypes. "Refugee-deals" or trapping camps, as e.g. in the case of Greece being looked at by the majority of member states' (and by the ruling forces of the EU) as a kind of huge detention camp, will not resolve the problems culminating in a lack of elementary solidarity among and within EU member states. But they will certainly increase the troubles and problems of the people directly concerned by these problems.

Carbon emissions: The EU share in global carbon emissions amounts to around 10 per cent. The great majority of it is related to Germany. This low share – in comparison to other global actors – is then regarded as an argument for limiting further European efforts to reduce Europe's own greenhouse gas emissions, while marginalizing the historical role of Europe in the building up of these destructive global structures and its on-going contribution to global ecological destruction in the form especially of the importation of energy and resource intensive goods and also of exportation of ecologically problematic goods (especially of cars). Car industry and car traffic are strong components of the economy and of social life within the EU, again especially in Germany and France. Car producers are interested in TTIP, in free trade and in mega-projects and they actively work for preventing any changes of production and consumption patterns which would be required for socio-ecological reasons. But the increasing negative impact of socio-economic development on climate stability also has an increasingly negative impact on 'security' and it leads to a further reinforcement of migration (resp. escape) from home countries in which natural or traditional living conditions are rapidly being lost.

Contradictions of neo-liberal inclusion: On the one hand, neo-liberal forces have responded to emancipatory demands and to social movements – of women, of people with different ethnic and cultural background, and even of people with different disabilities – asking to be granted access and become able to participate in the labour process and in the everyday life of their societies. On the other hand, these very forces have used these emancipatory efforts to reinforce competition and to further expand the domination of the capitalist mode of production into ever more dimensions of life. But the social and societal inequalities based on gender, ethnic and cultural origin, as well as the diversity of individual physical and mental constitution have not been addressed as such in any coherent and effective way, so that they basically continue working. Multi-disadvantaged people have to deal with extremely high barriers to enter the labour market and to participate in the life of their societies, but are in the worst possible situation to cope with this challenge. At the same time, and even increasingly, nationalist and reactionary forces aim at further sharpening existing inequalities and at abolishing the elements of relative success of integration and

of equal treatment which have been reached so far. Their authoritarian and, as it were, ostracizing approach generally leads to an increase in violence against individuals and social groups, exacerbating tendencies of aggression and underlying tensions within society.

Human rights and citizens' rights: The issues of human rights and of citizens' rights are closely connected to the issues discussed so far. In their different ways neo-liberal political forces which follow a much more global or at least European orientation and diverse nationalist and reactionary forces are converging effectively in a mounting pressure on human rights and citizens' rights. But they do it by way of different approaches: The neo-liberal address these issues in a seemingly more objective way, referring to the 'challenges of the markets' and to the requirements of 'security', while the more nationalist, authoritarian and reactionary forces take their positions in an openly ideological way, stressing a backward looking nostalgia and tending to plea for taking a corresponding ideological stance. But both are prepared to resort to exercising violence against all individuals who behave in a non-conforming way, i.e. in actual fact against all individuals and all groups who have an origin, a culture, as well as an understanding and a practice of politics which seems foreign or strange to them and is therefore perceived as a danger to themselves. All these neo-liberal or nationalist forces therefore are converging upon fighting against democracy (and even more against democratization), while their own preferences go into very different directions.

As a consequence of all these tendencies marking the present situation, the left wing forces which find themselves in a strategical situation of political defensive will have an urgent need to rank the kinds of danger presented by the neo-liberal hegemonic forces and by the nationalist forces challenging their hegemony, in order to develop its own possibilities to act politically against the more European oriented neo-liberal forces without giving indirect support to the nationalist bid for hegemony.

(These short descriptions of problems should be also be considered in relation to the last table offering a grid for understanding the connection between caesuras and scenarios.)

Being in a political defensive and facing a strong tendency towards the effective realization of worst case scenarios (see also appendix 2) and knowing that a more gradual worsening is to be made possible, the strategic challenges to be met in the present situation at the same time can be described as follows:

- To work for stopping the tendency to worsening the conditions for a democratic societal development, by improving living conditions and resolving social, ecological and global problems, and to work towards enabling processes to begin the counter-processes of a social-ecological transformation which will build the capabilities for breaking and overcoming the power of the capitalist oligarchies in place;
- To attempt to influence the more short-term developments relating to the "Case of Greece", to the Ukraine problem, to the concrete cases of attacks on refugees, on migrants, or on the socially weak, and to the launch of specific projects like CETA, TTIP, TISA, and such mega-projects as the NATO missile shield, while at the same time working on building broader, European and trans-national progressive political alliances;
- To build the capability of the left to fight politically and culturally against the most brutal and unscrupulously elements of the established forces, without giving any support to their right-wing populist challengers;
- To work strategically towards achieving a deepening split in the false and unconscious alliances with the capitalist oligarchies formed by nostalgic, backward looking and politically naive, short-sighted individuals or groups, by offering convincing alternatives for specific problems which can be addressed now and by helping to avoid new acts of violence and of injustice inflicted upon victims;
- To build and to develop a strategic political approach that establishes the connection between clearly formulated programmatic aims and strategic conceptions and specific scenarios for the potential societal developments in the next 10 to 15 years, while developing a clear awareness of the own real potential of political power and occasions for the left-wing, emancipatory forces.

In such a perspective a next group of questions to be addressed will be the following:

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

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

See also appendix 1 and 2

As the tables before this table illustrates that the critical scenarios of the future EU development are derived from forces and motions centrally dependent upon the population's gaining or losing from globalisation (and from EU integration) and evaluating the losses or gains related to the advantages of being or leaving a member of the eurozone and the EU. Such an evaluation will not necessarily be correct and it may turn out to be difficult to overcome ideological prejudice in these matters. And e.g. leaving the eurozone and the EU, while remaining a NATO member, will certainly not help to promote the needed process of demilitarisation. There are strong arguments that the TNCs based on exports to the European single markets will do a lot to convince the population and the (leading) politicians to stay within the eurozone. Citizens seeing their economic position closely connected with SMEs (seemingly) operating only on domestic markets could tend to a position against the eurosystem and against the EU itself, but they could be seriously mistaken in this, especially about the advantages to be gained from leaving – simply because of the complexity of the existing economical interrelations. But it is still much more relevant that

the demand resp. the wish to leave the eurozone³⁷ and the EU is in no way connected with efforts to elaborate, let alone convincing ideas of how to tackle urgent societal, social, ecological and global problems in a more just and solidarity-based, in a more democratic, and in a socially and ecologically more sustainable way.

3. First conclusions

Summarizing the observations on critical scenarios, we have arrived at so far, we may say that there are strong arguments for the conclusion that in the next few years the critical scenarios will be close to the current tendency and increase the pressure on democratic, social and ecological standards. The very much needed changes of direction with regard to asylum and migration policies, to the European neighbourhood and 'security' policy will not be addressed, let alone decided positively. The tendency towards an ever increasing recourse to repression could be partially be countered and at least slowed down by some concession to the struggle of Greece, but this will certainly not happen with regard to immigration. The nationalist and reactionary forces will not be weakened in the short run, rather to the contrary: They have not yet reached all their potential and may grow to be a significant menace. The hierarchies existing in the transnational and international system of the division of labour will not be tackled, nor will the ecological problems be properly addressed. The societal hierarchies based on the ownership of resources for the production and reproduction will be further accentuated. Even the societal hierarchies based on family relations, on gender/sex positions, on the place of birth, on ethnic and cultural origins or backgrounds will also continue to gain importance again – as a way of reacting to a complex crisis for which no solution has yet been found.

It will certainly not be possible to design such a solution at the designing table – the creativity exploding in actual confrontations will be needed for that. But looking at potential scenarios will help to improve the chances of actually "finding" relevant solutions in the heat of actual political, economic, and cultural/ideological struggles – by making the actors/agents aware of the interconnectedness and the complexity of their tasks and on the moment of unpredictability which is a common property of all historical events.

³⁷ See especially Heine, Frederic, Sablowski, Thomas (2015): Monetary Union unravelling? Trade and capital relations, causes of the crisis and development perspectives of the euro area, Berlin

Appendix 1

Referring to the issues of decisive importance, specific structural power relations structurally shaping societal living conditions as conditions for the potential activities for political actors should be addressed. These issues, as well as the power relations are linked to global processes no less globalised than the effective capitalist oligarchies. They are also more or less interconnected and/or overlaid resp. overlaying each other. The following outline illustrates this complex situation. It focuses on the very processes, the agents and the power balances.

Issue	Problems before the outbreak of the financial crisis	Crucial change of the issue since autumn 07	Decisive questions for the next years
„Case of Greece“, Euro crisis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - History of the beginning and development of the EU member state Greece: dealing with „communist danger“ and the alliance concluded with specific oligarchies and patriarchal structures - rising disdain related to southern EU states - construction of EMU must increase imbalances + produce reasons for crisis - EMU without necessary institutions - EMU forced deindustrialisation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Greece became a neo-liberal laboratory even in conflict with international and EU law - inconsequential improvement of EMU while strengthening repressions and inequality within the EU - destruction of social and democratic rights - social and economic destruction in „crisis countries“ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Will poverty and violence rise? Will the Greek citizens remain without any real possibility to begin and implement a sustainable development of their society? - Will the EMU be improved above all in favour of TNCs and of the global players making use of advantages of their locations? - Will the EMU break? Will the EU break? Will the EU get more divided, will it be reduced to a core or will it vanish?
The „Ukraine problem“	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An extremely complicated Soviet and post-soviet development that is still connecting back to the distribution and redistribution of the territory between different powers before the Soviet epoch - EU interest in the market and in a global strategic use of the Ukraine as a major neighbouring country 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - civil war in Ukraine - even military conflicts between Ukraine and Russia - Association Agreement, deep and comprehensive free trade area - de facto joining to NATO - increase of tensions in the transnational region - political and economic sanctions against Russia, aiming at its weakening 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Will the Ukrainian population get peace and sovereignty - Will the current track be continued and will even war be calculated? - Will militarisation of EU member as NATO members be forced? - Will the contradictions about its future course increase within the EU? - How will CSDP and EUGS be developed? What will be the consequences?

British EU membership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EU membership of the UK began later than that of France and Germany. It started with concessions in favour of the former old (and at that time still) colonial power - UK is the anchor for an even much stronger EU orientation towards financialisation, free trade and military policy; it is the EU champion in exemptions and opt outs from social and integration standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UK was and is the driver of neo-liberal and nationalist answers to the crisis - UK is the driver for reducing social standards, financialisation, free trade and militarisation - the referendum in June is set up without any emancipatory element 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Will a further British EU membership strengthen the neo-liberal tendencies of the EU? - Will a Brexit strengthen nationalism in the EU and Europe? - How will the biggest winners from a EU membership react to a Brexit? What will this mean for the „Greek case“ and for the EU in general?
Global role of EU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The development of the EU is itself based upon European capitalist history in its colonialist dimension - the EU has contributed to increasing all global problems, while aiming at „gains from globalisation“ and implementing neo-liberal policy and development - it has inconsequentially supported some reasonable international agreements, but often weakened the drafts - it has strengthened the global role of NATO - it has been a supporter and a competitor (and even moderator) of the global policy of the US 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The EU has continuously strengthened its free trade and „investment protection“ activities - it has inconsequentially supported agreements on regulating global finance markets and fighting climate change - it has pushed for militarisation - it has improved its „protection“ from illegal migration and refugees - it has responded to US demands in contradictory ways - it has a significant share in the agreements on climate protection and the SDG³⁸ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How will the EU realise the climate deal and the agreement on SGD? - How and with which consequences will the destructive tendencies be continued? - Will the EU shrink from using force to impose its solution for the „Ukraine problem“ and will it go towards further militarisation projects? - Will the EU respond to demands of the US and of TNCs for free trade, intellectual property rights, investment protection, and military „activities“? - How will the relations of the EU to the US develop?
Immigration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The EU has a colonial history - it has „protected“ itself from illegal migration and refugees - member states have been more or less liberal and moderate in diverse ways, as e.g. interested and active in brain drain - member states are very differently attractive for refugees and migrants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The EU has harmonized regulations and improved its law, with gains and losses for migrants and refugees in relation to different member states - it has strengthened its restrictive and repressive course - it has enlarged its co-operation with anti-democratic forces for ‚control‘ of migration and ‚escape‘ to EU - internal border controls in the EU have been re-established 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Will the EU continue to aim at keeping and strengthening co-operation with anti-democratic forces to ‚protect itself from ‚unwished-for‘ people? - Will the standards to protect and integrate migrants and refugees be further reduced? - Will the relations between EU member states worsen and push towards desintegration? - Will the xenophobic, politically and religious fundamentalist forces

³⁸ Sustainable Development Goals, updating the Millennium Development Goals

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - solidarity within the EU especially in relation to Greece and Italy is refused by significant political actors - xenophobia, racism, and fundamentalism are rising 	<p>strengthen themselves?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Will the EU break up over the issue of migration and asylum? - Which will be the diverse consequences for the ENP?
Environmental issues especially in connection with energy security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The EU has been much more ecologically oriented than the US, but it has not significantly responded to the objective challenges - it has contributed to exacerbating all environmental problems - the own interests in exports and success in global competition dominate sharply over ist concerns in social and ecological responsibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EU2020 is oriented towards profits from exports of ‚environmentally friendly‘ technologies and from reducing the dependence from energy imports for energy consumption - the proclaimed transition to a low-carbon society is not conceptualized in detail - ecological standards are being set far from the requirements and even further reduced - free trade and mega-projects counteract ecological concerns - austerity policy blocks needed investments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Will the present orientation towards ‚gains from globalisation‘ and a crisis management on this basis, with all of its ecologically destructive consequences, further be strengthened? - Will the contradictions of interests in a possible ecological transformation further increase in the EU? - Will a breaking (or broken) EU bring about a sharpening of ecological problems?
‚Demographic pressures‘, indirectly referring to gender relations, inter-generational relations, issues of the inclusion of migrants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The EU has set standards which have meant an advantage for the majorities of the population in many member states - the impact of ‚protecting from and acting against terrorism‘ has had some effect - the UK has reached opt-out concessions - the differences between member states with regard to democratic standards and citizens‘ rights are enormous - the deficit of comprehensive EU strategies has been (and remains) important 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The European Charter of basic rights and social standards has come under the permanent pressure of austerity policy; the compression of public social spending especially affects women, children, refugees and migrants - social repression is rising - many young people in ‚crisis countries‘ do not see any future there - policies related to the different issues referred to – like the ‚Greek case‘, or immigration by refugees – continue to increase social and societal problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Will the destructive tendencies continue to be effective and will they even be strengthened? - What would be the impact on the ability of the EU and its member states of being successful in global competition and in ensuring ‚security‘? - What does this mean for the relations between member states on the level of the interaction of their citizens as members of diverse societal formations? - How will the problems referred to interact – especially in relation to mounting xenophobia, sexism, nationalism, racism, as well as political and religious fundamentalism? - Do these problems produce or reinforce tendencies of breaking up the EU?
Human rights and citizens‘ rights, democracy, democratisation and the	The EU has brought an increase in rights and in democratic standards to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Crisis management, especially austerity policy, the ‚Greek case‘ and the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Will these tendencies continue and even be strengthened?

<p>democratic opening of the mass media</p>	<p>citizens of many member states, but its development is not aimed at an on-going process of democratisation of the life of European societal, especially not at the democratisation of the economy and of ‚security‘ apparatuses, but at responding to ‚the challenges of globalisation‘</p>	<p>cases of other ‚crisis countries‘, the propaganda (as well as the sanctions) against Russia, the deals and policies to manage migration and the ‚refugee crisis‘, the policies to ‚protect against and deal with terrorism‘ and the measures to prevent a Brexit have reduced democratic standards as a comprehensive effect</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the influence of the capitalist oligarchies on the mass media has been further strengthened - the above mentioned tendencies of xenophobia, racism, and neo-fascism are rising 	<p>- Will the negative and destructive processes additionally be reinforced by a Brexit or/and a breaking up of the EU?</p>
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Appendix 2

Proceeding from these remarks, two further questions should be asked: Which are the forces and power constellations we can find to underlay the worst case scenario? Which are the conditions for “worsening more gradually” than in the worst case scenario and what could this mean for working on alternatives which could effectively stop this process of worsening, in order to develop an ability to begin a process of socio-ecological transformation. A worst case scenario does not correspond to the interest of one concrete group of agents. It does not suppose that such a scenario has been planned or wished for as such, but it can just be the result of uncontrolled dynamics of struggles. It can also result from a mistaken awareness of their own interests on the side of some agents having to act in a highly opaque complex of circumstances and forces.

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

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

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