

# transform!

european network for alternative thinking  
and political dialogue

From now on the **transform! europe** newsletter will be published regularly once a month. It will contain information about the activities of our network, its members and observing members and about important initiatives of social movements we are taking part in.

On occasion of the United Nations Climate Change Conference and the Peoples Climate Summit Klimaforum09 **transform!** published a special issue of its magazine (no. 5a/2009) which will be distributed during the events in Copenhagen.

Please find it under: [www.transform-network.net/uploads/media/Transf\\_A3\\_5a08\\_mz\\_screen.pdf](http://www.transform-network.net/uploads/media/Transf_A3_5a08_mz_screen.pdf)

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# Editorial

From now on the **transform! europe newsletter** will be published regularly once a month. It will contain information about the activities of our network, its members and observing members and about important initiatives of social movements we are taking part in.

*transform! europe* was founded in 2001 by six organisations in the context of the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre. Today it consists of 16 organisations, political foundations and journals in 13 European countries. Most of its members are linked with parties which have united to form the Party of the European Left, others are associated with parties of the Nordic Green Left Alliance and a third group of members defines itself as politically independent of parties.

Since 2007, *transform! europe* has been acknowledged as the political foundation of the Party of the European Left. This fact implies a special and close relationship and political responsibility. At the same time, *transform!*

*europe* maintains its commitment to social movements and its autonomous character and understands itself as a common good of the Left in the broadest sense of the word. Since 2006 the *transform! european journal for alternative thinking and political dialogue* has been published twice a year, by now in the following eight languages: English, German, Greek, French, Portuguese, Italian, Spanish and Hungarian. Further editions are planned for the year to come.

The assembly decided that *transform! europe* will realise two major projects in the year 2010. One of these projects deals with the crisis of the capitalist system, the other one with strategic perspectives of the radical political Left.

Both projects will be described in the newsletter and will be accordingly linked on the website.

For further information we invite you to visit our website [www.transform-network.net](http://www.transform-network.net), where you can also find the archive of our network that is currently being set up.

We hope our newsletter will provide you with relevant information and would be glad to receive your ideas, comments and reactions.

**Walter Baier**

(co-ordinator of the network)

**Eva Himmelstoss**

(editor of the newsletter)

## Subscribe to the transform! newsletter

The *transform!* newsletter is published monthly and is a free e-mail service of our network, delivered directly to your inbox.

To sign up just send an e-mail to: [office@transform-network.net](mailto:office@transform-network.net)

In case you want to unsubscribe also send an e-mail to: [office@transform-network.net](mailto:office@transform-network.net)

## New Release

# Journal *transform! europe* Issue No. 5

**On 17 November the English, French and German editions of issue number 5 of the *transform! european journal for alternative thinking and political dialogue* were presented at the Garcia Lorca Cultural Centre in Brussels.**

The focus of the issue is Global Crisis – Resistance, Proposals and Strategies. Taking part in the presentations were members of the editorial board Walter Baier (editor-in-chief), Elisabeth Gauthier (editor of the French edition),

Elfi Böhlke (editor of the German edition), Haris Golemis (member of the management board) and Stephen Bouquin (sociologist and author).

The evening was organised by the newly founded initiative group *transform! Brussels* / International Community. The representative of the Belgian *transform!* member organisation *Association Culturel*, Joseph Jaquemotte, members of GUE, the group of the Left in the European Parliament, members of the Party of the European Left and rep-

resentatives of a preparatory conference of Enlazando Alternativas IV currently meeting in Brussels were among the guests of the evening.

The **pdf-file** of the issue 05/2009 and former versions of the journals can be found under: [www.transform-network.net/en/home/journal-transformeurope.html](http://www.transform-network.net/en/home/journal-transformeurope.html)

An **order form** for the *transform!* journals is enclosed (separate attachment).

# **transform! europe Meeting in Brussels**

**From 18 to 20 September 2009 the European *transform!* network had its annual general meeting at the recently opened office of the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation in Brussels. Following an agreement with the RLF, a particular space in these premises will also be the future official seat of the network.**

The series of discussions was opened by a public event taking place at *Espaces Marx* in Brussels with prominent speakers such as Pedro Paez, advisor to the President of the Republic of Ecuador, member of the *UN-Commission on Reforms of the International Monetary and Financial System* and former finance minister of Ecuador; Francois Houtart, director of the *Tri-Continental Centre* and co-founding activist of the *World Social Forum*, Marcello Ossandon, former professor of the Free University of Brussels, Jean-Pierre Michiels, President of the *Association Culturelle Josephe Jaquesmotte* and Ruurik Holm and Walter Baier from the *transform! europe* network.

On Saturday, 19 September, the official programme of the general meeting started with the unanimous decision to accept as full members the organisations *Association Jaquesmotte* (Belgium), the *Society for a European Dialogue – SPED* (Czech Republic) and *transform! Luxemburg*, all of whom had been observing members of the network until then.

The meeting was attended by 26 persons, representing the following organisations: *ACFF* (Belgium), *CMS* (Sweden), *Cultra* (Portugal), *Espaces Marx* (France), *Fondation Copernic* (France), *Lasalle Center* (Poland), *Left Forum* (Finland), *Manifest* (Norway), *Nicos Poulantzas Institute* (Greece), *RLS*

(Germany), *Sozialismus* (Germany), *SPED* (Czech Republic), *transform! Austria, Italy, Luxembourg*.

Discussions focussed on the two major projects *transform! europe* wants to tackle next year:

- **A research project on the political and strategic perspectives of the Left in Europe**, which was conceived and presented by Haris Golemis (*Nicos Poulantzas Institute*, Greece). The decision-finding process also included a project proposed by the *Centre for Socialist Studies* about organisational and communicative strategies of the European Left.

- **The project on the global crisis** which is co-ordinated by Elisabeth Gauthier (*Espaces Marx*, France).

Please find further details about the projects on the *transform! europe* website: [www.transform-network.net](http://www.transform-network.net)

As the next initiatives a workshop on the crisis and the role of the state within the project on the global crisis taking place in Vienna on 15 and 16 January 2010, was adopted as well as a seminar about the project on the strategy of the Radical Left in Europe taking place on Mallorca in February 2010.

Among the events in which *transform! europe* decided to take part was the "Free Culture Forum" (from 29 October to 1 November in Barcelona) and the conference on "Economic and

Social Aspects of Transformation" in Warsaw.

Based on the activity report of the management board and the external financial audit which has been transmitted to and confirmed by the European Parliament, the general meeting granted an unanimous discharge concerning all financial matters to the Management Board (Ruurik Holm, Elisabeth Gauthier and Haris Golemis) and other liable persons.

The general meeting was also presented with the network's calendar of action for the year 2010. Besides other initiatives and the continuation of its own projects, the network will participate in the following initiatives:

- the Left Forum in New York,
- the European Social Forum in Istanbul, and
- the preparation of events in the context of "Enlazando Alternativas III" at the occasion of the EU-Latin America-Summit in May 2010.

(For the complete calendar of the initiatives and actions please refer to our website).

On the basis of this plan, *transform! europe* decided on a budget for the year 2010. Further details of the budget can only be given after we have received a final frame for the subsidies we can expect from the European Union.

# The Crisis Project

**In its members' meeting *transform! europe* decided that it will in 2010 continue the debate on the world economic crisis and social, political and ideological consequences. In this respect five subjects for seminars, articles or main topics of the magazine were identified.**

It was also decided to develop our cooperation with trade unions (e.g. on precarisation), the GUE/NGL and the EL about the future of Europe. Furthermore the first seminar of the project "Political and Strategic Perspectives of the Left" will be dedicated to the upheavals caused by the crisis and the political responses forwarded by the Left.

On 15 and 16 January a seminar entitled "The Crisis in Europe. Depression Economics – Social Crisis – State Policy – Alternatives" will be held in Vienna.

In 2010 we will focus our debates on five main topics:

## **1. The Understanding of the Crisis and the Alternatives**

We might be confronted in 2010 with a third eruption (after the outbreak in the financial sector and in the real economy) caused by growing unemployment, shrinking demand and toxic credits, meaning that "depression economics" (Krugman) has not come to an end yet. For that reason we must deepen our

understanding of the crisis ("overaccumulation of capital") and the medium-term perspectives ("stagnation") as well as we ought to develop systemic proposals against the crisis.

## **2. Renaissance of the State – Intervention and Welfare**

Currently, we are undergoing a contradictory process: on the one hand we see attempts to introduce some elements of a new accumulation regime (as the neoliberal dream of self regulation by markets has become a nightmare), and on the other hand we have growing public deficits which shrink the possibilities of further state intervention and may lead to so-called exit strategies. The question how to relate with the fastly growing public debt and how to defend social security will ever more become a subject of public debate and social conflict.

## **3. The Labour Market – The Challenge of Precarisation**

In this context the precarisation and the decomposition of the working classes constitute the biggest threat. The crisis on the labour market shifts the power balance between labour and capital in favour of the latter. We therefore have to develop strategies to protect jobs (e.g. new initiatives in respect to work time policy), not only in a short-term perspective but also by introducing structural changes (e.g. conversion of

the car industry) and progressive steps towards economic democracy.

## **4. The Future of Europe in the (New) World Economic System**

De facto we undergo a reconfiguration of Europe in which Germany and France constitute the core, the CEE countries are peripherized and a number of states in the South is on the decline. Despite its fragility and its disputed character (e.g. due to Germany's enhanced "beggar-my neighbour"-policy) this will be the basis for the new Lisbon strategy (2010-2020). Proposals for the revitalisation of a new European welfare state are one track we should follow.

We also have to see Europe in the context of the currently emerging new world economic system in which China will play a major role. We must have a look at these geo-political changes in the search for alternatives to IMF, WTO etc.

## **5. The Ecological and Food Crisis**

The global food crisis in 2007 was an omen of future developments. Its roots lie in both economic speculation and the deepening of the ecological crisis. The so-called "green new deal" is an issue calling for closer examination and socialist alternatives.

*Elisabeth Gauthier*  
*Richard Detje*

# Strategic Perspectives of the European Left

## Introduction

The recent economic crisis has, among other things, shown the serious crisis of the European Social Democracy, as well as the inability of the Radical Left (with some interesting exceptions) to increase its influence in society. This can be seen not only from the fact that the agenda for facing the crisis is set by the conservative European political forces, but also from the election results for the European Parliament.

The EP elections have shown that the electoral performance of the Radical Left parties was different in various countries, ranging from relatively bad (i.e. in Finland) to relatively very good (i.e. in Portugal), with most of them ranging somewhere between these two extremes.

This development brings back a set of crucial questions: What is the reason of the relative failure (or success) of the Radical Left parties in various European countries, not only in elections but also in their presence and effectiveness in society? Are the bad election results and the weak influence of some parties mainly due to their bad policies, organizational structure, leadership, national particularities etc., which would mean that all these parties have to do is simply to learn from the experiences of their relatively successful counterparts? Or, alternatively, the relative success of some parties is only a conjunctural phenomenon and in fact the European Radical Left as a whole is facing serious strategic difficulties?

As one can see from the contents of the project, the intention is that the various political foundations discuss collectively and freely (i.e. not reproducing a party line) various issues related to the strategy of the European Radical Left

and, in the end, try to arrive at a synthesis.

The methodology proposed for the project is the following:

1. There is a person responsible for each separate "chapter" of the study.
2. Before the start of the study of every chapter, the person responsible for it together with the person responsible for each "sub-chapter" will set a number of specific questions to be answered by participating *transform!* partners, within a certain prescribed period.
3. Independently of the number of answers received, the persons responsible will prepare background papers which will be presented in the 3 workshops proposed. This background paper will, hopefully, be sent to all *transform!* members at least ten days before the workshop.
4. The persons responsible for each chapter of the project will take the responsibility of organizing the workshop together with the Vienna office and the people of the *transform!* member in the respective country.
5. The results of the project will be published in a *transform!* publication.

## Strategic Prospects of the European Left

### 1. The effects of the present crisis on the ideological, political, programmatic and cultural orientation of the European social and political actors

- a. Social and political effects
- b. The role of the states
- c. The role of the European Union and international organizations (IMF, WB, OECD, WTO etc.)
- d. Geo-political tensions and conflicts between countries and regional blocks

### 2. Rethinking the meaning, the subjects and the spaces of transformation

- a. The meaning of transformation
- b. Transformative social and political actors (traditional working class, precarious workers, unemployed, women, youth, political parties, trade-unions, feminism, social movements)

### 3. The present and the future of the parties of the European Radical Left

- a. A typology of the European Left Parties
  - Ideological and political identity
  - Culture
  - Social basis
- b. The struggle for hegemony
- c. Alliances, coalitions and conflicts (relations with the Social Democrats, the Greens, the Revolutionary Left and the Anarchists)
- d. Connecting today's struggles and programmes with the vision of socialism, democracy and freedom; the policy towards European integration
- e. Searching for the most effective party structure
- f. Communicative practices (old and new instruments of communication, new information technology etc.)
- g. The Radical Left in Government: "To be or not to be". Theoretical concepts and practical experiences

### 4. Synthesis and Conclusion: The desirability and possibility of a common strategy for the European Radical Left

- a. The articulation of struggles and political and programmatic proposals at the national, the European and the global levels
- b. The question of Central and Eastern Europe
- c. Towards a European political programme? The role of the EL, the NGLA and the GUE

# transform! europe Activity Report

## Warsaw: International Seminar on Transformation in East-Central Europe

A seminar entitled "The Transformation in East-Central Europe 1989-2009. The Critical Perspective" was organised by the *Ferdinand Lassalle Centre for Social Thought* (CFST) in cooperation with *transform! europe*, on 2 October in Warsaw.

"The 20th anniversary of the beginning of the transformations in our part of Europe is the perfect time for summaries and extensive analyses from a leftist perspective. That was the goal we had in mind when organising our conference," says Michał Syska, director of the CFST.

The participants of the seminar, academia members and the representatives of the editorial offices of leftist periodicals and publications, discussed the political, social and economic aspects of the transformation, and the parties and party systems in post-communist countries.

Grzegorz Konat, an economist from the Institute for Market, Consumption and Business Cycles Research, presented the guidelines of the neoliberal economic reforms in East-Central European countries after 1989 and pointed out their negative effects.

Stefan Zgliczynski (Le Monde Diplomatique) analysed the foreign policy of the former Eastern Bloc countries. Peter Damo from the Romanian Social Forum and Jiri Malek from the Czech Society for European Dialogue provided an analysis of the processes and the effects of free-market transformations in their countries.

Dr. Maciej Gdula (University Of Warsaw, Krytyka Polityczna) presented the results of a research on the changes in the class system of the Polish society during the last two decades.

Dr. Jarosław Klebaniuk (University Of Wrocław) examined the conclusions of a psychological research on the social acceptance of inequalities.

Michał Syska (The F. Lassalle CFST) focused on the formation and institutionalisation processes of political parties in postcommunist countries. Dr. Anna Paczesniak (University Of Wrocław) summarised the results of a research concerning the political views of the members of the Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej (Democratic Left Alliance) and Platforma Obywatelska (Civic Platform).

Jiri Hudecek from the Society for European Dialogue presented the formation process of the party system in the Czech Republic after the year 1989, while Peter Damo discussed the characteristics of the Romanian political scene. Christine Mendelsohn from the French foundation Espaces Marx talked about the politics of the European Union and the need for cooperation between leftist forces from both parts of Europe.

Walter Baier, the coordinator of *transform! europe*, presented research projects on the economic, social and ecological effects of the crisis, and the situation of leftist parties in Europe; projects currently being prepared by *transform!*.

The Ferdinand Lassalle Centre (CFST) is an association founded in Wrocław in 2005. It has organised numerous seminars, conferences and colloquia (e.g. on the subject of rightist populism, the historical politics of the Left, the socialists of "Solidarnosc", the relationship between the U.S. and the UE, the publications of David Ost, Jacek Zakowski and Artur Domoslawski (including meetings with the authors)). The association provides trainings for young activists (Young Leftist Academy) and coordinates the "Hospitals for people, not for profit!" social campaign. In 2007 the CFST published the book *Ile oj-*

*zyn?* Ile patriotyzmów? (How many motherlands? How many patriotisms?).

**The Ferdinand Lassalle Centre for Social Thought – Wrocław / Osrodek Myśli Społecznej im. F. Lassalle'a we Wrocławiu**

Internet: [www.lassalle.org.pl](http://www.lassalle.org.pl)

e-mail: [biuro@lassalle.org.pl](mailto:biuro@lassalle.org.pl)

## The *transform!* magazine is also available in Hungarian

In September 2009 the first Hungarian issue of the *transform!* magazine was published. The thematical focus was approached under three aspects: the global perspective, the situation in Central and East European countries and the effects of the crisis on social democracy. The latter seems to be of practical importance for Hungary. Inside the Socialist Party – popular in terms of having governed the country during three periods within the last twenty years – the neoliberal conception remains undisputed.

This results in the increasing abstention of left voters and in an apparently unstoppable rise of the extreme Right. This situation requires the Left to forward its social and economic alternatives not yielding an inch of space to a more and more fascist Right.

## Slavoj Žižek in Finland

Slovenian philosopher and the Elvis of Cultural Theory, Slavoj Žižek visited Helsinki from 30 November to 1 December. He held two very popular public discussions and two Žižek movies were displayed. *Left Forum* was part of the collective that invited Žižek to Finland.

## The CMS at this Year's Socialist Forum

The Socialist Forum is probably Sweden's biggest left meeting space and though the figures are not yet known for this year, it usually draws around 2-3000 people. On 28 November the *Center for Marxist Social Studies (CMS)* participated in the seminars at the Socialist Forum with, among other things, a discussion about left party strategy.

The discussion, entitled "European Left in movements and governments", included participants from the Dutch and the Norwegian socialist parties as well as the party secretary of the Swedish Left party.

It turned into a really interesting discussion on the differences between and similarities of left parties in Europe. Parts of the discussion in English were filmed and will be displayed at [www.cmsmarx.org](http://www.cmsmarx.org).

## The Gramscian Challenge for Politics

*Left Forum* and *The KSL Civic Association for Adult Learning* organised a joint seminar on the thinking of Antonio Gramsci and his concept of hegemony on 28 October. Two international guest speakers, Peter Thomas and Sara Farris, were present and Mikko Lahtinen from the University of Tampere also gave a presentation.

The seminar "The Struggle for Power – the Gramscian Challenge for Politics" took place on Wednesday, 28 October. The themes discussed were: 1) Peter Thomas, "Confronting the Crisis: Gramsci and the Politics of Hegemony", 2) Sara Farris, "The emergence of the far-right in Europe. Hegemonic project or fragmentary reaction to the economic crisis?", and 3) Mikko Lahtinen, "Hegemonic struggles and the dilemmas of democracy".

Video footage and articles on the content of the seminar are to be published on the Left Forum website: [www.vasemmistofoorumi.fi](http://www.vasemmistofoorumi.fi)

# Upcoming Events

## Dedicated to Nicos Poulantzas

**On 3 October 1979, Nicos Poulantzas died in Paris, under tragic conditions, at the age of 42.**

A self-acclaimed "Left Eurocommunist", Poulantzas was described by Bob Jessop as the most important Marxist political theorist of the post-war period (B. Jessop, *Nicos Poulantzas: Marxist Theory and Political Strategy*, Macmillan, London 1985). Thirty years after his death, *Nicos Poulantzas Institute (NPI)* commemorates the memory of this typical organic intellectual of the Left, by organizing two events on the premises of the Athens Goethe Institute.

The first event is the **3<sup>rd</sup> Nicos Poulantzas Annual Memorial Lecture**, delivered this year by Judith Butler. Her lecture under the title "Performative Politics and the Critique of State Violence"

will take place on 16 December 2009, at 18.30 Greek time.

The second event is an **International Conference**, under the title "Poulantzas Today", co-organized with *transform! europe*, which will take place on 17 and 18 December 2009, from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. 36 persons will participate in the Conference, in which key note speakers are Alex Demirovic, author of *Nicos Poulantzas, Eine Kritische Auseinandersetzung* (Argument-Verlag, Berlin and Hamburg 1987) and James Martin, editor of *The Poulantzas Reader* (Verso, London 2008). The Greek edition of the Reader, co-financed by *transform! europe* under a Cooperation Agreement with NPI, will be presented during the Conference. A round table will also take place under the title "Nicos Poulantzas, An Organic Intellectual of the Left",

with Poulantzas' friends, colleagues and comrades from the Paris of the '60s and '70s (Makis Cavouriaris, Michael Levi, Constantine Tsoukalas, Costas Vergopoulos) participating. At the end of the conference, composer Thanos Mikroutsikos will play the piano and sing his synthesis "Malignant Melanoma" (1980) in verses by poet Alkis Alkaios, devoted to the memory of Poulantzas.

Both Butler's lecture (Wednesday, 16 December, 18.30 Greek time or 17.30 CET), as well as the last part of the Saturday, 19 December conference (from 16.45 Greek time or 15.45 CET, until the end) will be **transmitted on-line** on the NPI website: [www.poulantzas.gr](http://www.poulantzas.gr)

# Poulantzas Today

## Conference in Honour of Nicos Poulantzas

18-19 December 2009

Goethe Institute, Athens (Omirou 14-16)

### PROGRAMME

#### Friday, 18 December 2009

10.15-10.30

**Haris Golemis** (Director of Nicos Poulantzas Institute)

#### SESSION 1

10.30-11.30

**Chair: Stelios Mpampas** (Sociologist)  
**Costas Eleftheriou** (University of Athens): *"Dominant Mass Party" and "Cartel Party". Late Poulantzas and Modern Theory*

**Giannis Balabanidis** (Panteion University): *Political Representation and Political Alliances: Poulantzas in the Greek Conjuncture*

**Dimitris Tzanakopoulos** (University of Athens, Secretary of the Youth of Synaspismos): *Capitalist State and Revolutionary Strategy*

Discussion

12.30-12.45 Break

#### SESSION 2

12.45-14.45

**Chair: Dina Vaiou** (National Technical University)

**Haris Golemis** (Director of Nicos Poulantzas Institute): *Ten Years from Seattle. Some Thoughts on the Resistances to "Globalization" Based on the Work of Nicos Poulantzas*

**Thanassis Tsakiris** (University of Athens): *Poulantzas and Social Movements: the Case of Workers' Trade Unionism*

**Eleni Portaliou** (National Technical University): *Social Movements and the Democratic Road to Socialism*

Discussion

14.45-16.15 Break

#### SESSION 3

16.15-18.15

**Chair: Constantin Stamatis** (University of Thessaloniki)

**Dionysis Gravaris** (University of Crete): *Moments of the Concept of State in the Marxist Critique of Political Economy*

**Stavros Konstantakopoulos** (Panteion University): *Nicos Poulantzas and the Contemporary Extreme Right*

**Aris Stylianou** (University of Thessaloniki): *The State in Poulantzas' Theory: A Spinozist Approach?*

Discussion

18.15-18.30 Break

#### SESSION 4

18.30-20.30

**Chair: Marica Frangakis** (Economist, EuroMemorandum Group)

**Costis Hadjimichalis** (Harokopeio University, Athens): *Geographies of the State: Poulantzas in Contemporary Approaches on Spatial Organization*

**John Milios** (National Technical University): *Capitalist Mode of Production and the Imperialist Chain. Nicos Poulantzas vis-à-vis the Theories of Imperialism*

**Iraklis Oikonomou** (Ghent University, Belgium): *Nicos Poulantzas and European Integration Theory*

Discussion

20.30 -20.45 Break

#### SESSION 5

20.45-21.45

**Chair: Ioanna Kaftantzoglou** (University of Athens)

**Apostolos Dedoussopoulos** (Panteion University): *State Theory and Employment Policy*

**Christos Laskos** (Economist): *Classes in Contemporary Capitalism – Thirty Years After*

Discussion

#### Saturday, 19 December 2009

#### SESSION 6

10.30-12.30

**Chair: Maria Karamesini** (Panteion University)

**Valia Aranitou** (University of Crete): *Searching for the Petty Bourgeoisie Portions in Greece Using Nicos Poulantzas' Analysis*

**Giannis Balabanidis** (Panteion University): *Political Representation and Political Alliances: Poulantzas in the Greek Conjuncture*

**Vassilis Rogas** (Political Scientist): *The Relative Autonomy of the Army in the Power Block*

Discussion

12.30-12.45 Break

#### SESSION 7

12.45-14.45

**Chair: Michalis Spourdalakis** (University of Athens)

**Aristides Baltas** (National Technical University): *Althusser's Program and the Role of Nicos Poulantzas*

**Dimitris Karydas** (Institute of Critical Theory - INCRIT, Berlin): *Conjuncture and Theory: Why Poulantzas Today?*

**Gerassimos Kouzelis** (University of Athens): *Ideology and Reality: Poulantzas Reading Marx*

Discussion

14.45-16.45 Break

16.45-18.15

**Chair: Nicos Petralias** (University of Athens, President of Nicos Poulantzas Institute)

**Alex Demirovic** (Technical University Berlin): *Materialist State Theory and the Transnationalization of the Capitalist State*

**James Martin** (University of Lancaster, UK): *Hegemony as an Argument: Comparing Poulantzas and Gramsci*

Discussion

18.15-18.30

**Walter Baier** (Co-ordinator of transform! europe)

**Nicos Petralias** (President of Nicos Poulantzas Institute)

18.30-19.00 Break

19.00-21.30

**Round table:** *Poulantzas: An Organic Intellectual of the Left*

**Chair:** **Alkis Rigos** (Panteion University)

**Kostas Vergopoulos** (University Paris 8), **Makis Kavouriaris** (University Paris 8), **Michael Löwy** (National Center for Scientific Research - CNRS, École des Hautes Études en Sciences

Sociales - EHESS), **Constantinos Tsoukalas** (University of Athens)

21.30

**Thanos Mikroutsikos** plays the piano and sings his synthesis "Malignant Melanoma" (1980), lyrics by Alkis Alkaios, dedicated to Nicos Poulantzas

With the kind support of Goethe Institute.

## The Crisis in Europe

### Depression Economics – Social Crisis – State Policy – Alternatives

#### International Workshop by *transform! europe* Vienna, 15-16 January 2010

Europe is fighting against the deepest recession since the great depression in the 1930s. After the financial turmoil starting in 2007 and the crash of the real economy in 2008/2009 we are now facing a severe social crisis with rising unemployment and growing pressure on what has been left of the welfare states after the neoliberal regime.

In this process the state and the central banks played an active role and stopped the free fall of the economy. But: this is not the end of the crisis yet. And without illusion: the political Left is not the winner of this "game". Wage earners and normal tax payers shall pay to save the assets of the wealthy. The casinos opened again.

The *transform! europe*-workshop will focus on four topics:

1. the causes of what has to be characterized as a systemic crisis
2. the role of politics and the state in the world economic crisis,
3. the social consequences of the financial and economic turmoil and
4. alternatives and transformation strategies proposed by the political Left and progressive social forces.

Although this crisis is more global than every economic crisis before, the workshop concentrates on the situation in Europe in the first place.

To get a deeper understanding the workshop starts with a more theoretical debate. The first topic is the theory of overaccumulation of capital which is widely accepted but understood in quite different ways. The second topic is the tension between the renaissance of the nation state and the internationalization of the state.

### AGENDA

#### Friday, 15 January 2010

13.00–13.15

Welcome and opening by **Elisabeth Gauthier** (transform! europe)

13.15–14.45

**Joachim Bischoff** (editor of the monthly review "Sozialismus"): *Overaccumulation of Capital: What does it Mean for the Understanding of the Current Crisis?*

14.45–15.00 Break

15.00–16.30

**Bob Jessop** (Lancaster University): *The Role of the State Today: Internationalization and the Nation State*

16.30–17.00 Break

17.00–20.00

**Francisco Louça** (Lisbon, tbc): *Europe in the World Economic Crisis: Comeback of Keynesian Politics or Launching of a "Financial Coup d'État" (D. Harvey)?*

Interventions by **Euclides Tsakolotos** (University of Athens), **Peter Fleissner** (Univ. Prof. em., Vienna), **Jiri Malek** (transform! Czech Republic) and others (Spain, Italy etc.)

#### Saturday, 16 January 2010

9.00–11.30

**Maria Karamessini** (University Pantheon, Athens): *The Social Crisis in Europe: Politics of Precariousness or Shift to a New Social Model of Regulation*

Interventions by **Stephen Bouquin** (University Amiens, France), **Asbjörn Wahl** (Norway, Trade unionist, tbc), **Lutz Brangsch** (Rosa Luxemburg Foundation, Berlin)

11.30–12.00 Break

12.00–15.00

*What are the Lessons of the Crisis and how can They be Communicated? Proposals and Projects of "the Left of the Left"* – Round table with:

**Thomas Händel** (MEP), **Jürgen Klute** (MEP), **Miguel Portas** (MEP) and **Francis Wurtz** (former leader of GUE/NGL in EP);

Inputs from transform!, European Left Party and members of GUE/NGL-Group;

**Walter Baier** (transform!) is chairing the debate.

**Languages:** English, German, French

**Registration:** Up to 20 December via e-mail: [office@transform.or.at](mailto:office@transform.or.at). A registration form is enclosed with this newsletter (separate attachment).

**Venue:**

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## We Mourn for Joerg Huffs Schmid (1940-2009)

**On the morning of 5 December 2009, Joerg Huffs Schmid passed away. With him we lose one of the world's most important economists of the post-war era.**

In 1975, Joerg Huffs Schmid founded the *Workgroup on Alternative Economic Policy / Arbeitsgruppe Alternative Wirtschaftspolitik*, together with Rudolf Hickel and Herbert Schui, and for more than 35 years set its discourse on economic policy. For many decades he contributed to developing its political orientation in the drafts outlining the annual memoranda, for the last time in February 2009.

Already in 1969, Joerg had presented the book *Die Politik des Kapitals. Konzentration und Wirtschaftspolitik in der Bundesrepublik / The Policy of Capital. Concentration and Economic Policy in the Federal Republic*, published by Suhrkamp, which is an analysis still worth reading today and is by many regarded as a predecessor of the later memoranda.

In 1995, Joerg was a founding member of and driving force behind the *Workgroup of European Economists for an Alternative Economic Policy in Europe*, who will present their EuroMemorandum 2009 in a few days.

In 2000, Joerg Huffs Schmid was a member of the Enquête Commission on "Globalisation of the World Economy – Challenges and Answers" of the German Federal Diet. He was also the co-editor of the political scientific monthly *Blaetter fuer deutsche und internationale Politik / Sheets on German and International Politics* and was a member of the monthly journal *Wissenschaft und Frieden / Science and Peace*, of the *Bremische Stiftung für Rüstungskonversion / Bremen Foundation for Arms Conversion*, of *Z. Zeitschrift für marxistische Erneuerung / Z. Journal for*

*Marxist Renewal* and of the anti-globalisation network *Attac*.

In recent years he helped the members of *Die Linke* hone their positions on the financial market crisis and on their demands for concrete measures of bank and financial market regulation.

Joerg's death should spur us all to increase our efforts of fighting mass unemployment and poverty, ecological destruction and social insecurity and to be instrumental in bringing about concrete measures in favour of social justice and social security.

(Translated from a text by **Axel Troost**, abr.)