

# Marika Tändler-Walenta

**CV:** Sociologist, parliamentary-scientific advisor to the chairman of the left group at Saxony Parliament – Rico Gebhardt. From 2011 to 2014 she was parliamentary assistant to the chairman of the GUE/NGL group at European Parliament – Prof. Dr. Lothar Bisky. Since 2014 she is also a member of the executive party board of DIE LINKE.

## **Political consequences of migration from a leftist perspective – Germany/DIE LINKE.**

According to current forecasts from the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF), Germany will record in 2015 between 800,000 and one million refugees. Those are impressive numbers that represent provinces and local governments for a huge logistical challenges. Reason for hysteria are not represented in the hard facts:

In Germany 81 million people live, including 8.3 million foreigners (ten per cent of the total population). From January to the end of October 2015 362.000 refugees in Germany registered for asylum - which were 100,000 more than in the entire previous year.

First, the refugees come to initial reception- a first recording location. After their applications for asylum were actually registered they receive some pocket money. According Asylbewerberleistungsgesetz (AsylbLG) which adds up to 143 euros per month for single persons or heads of household. As soon as the refugees leave the initial reception/first location towards communal asylum accommodation or own flats they have a maximum of 362 euros a month for a livelihood. That's less than the standard rate for Hartz-4 receiver with currently 399 euros.

Only when an asylum application has been recorded and a personal interview has taken place, refugees can move into a house where the local authorities (Kommunen) and administrative districts (Landkreise). This may take several weeks.

Accordingly, many of the refugees are still waiting in the gyms that their applications are ever taken.

The current peak in 1992 during the Balkan war with 438,000 asylum applications will in 2015 definitely be exceeded. Should Germany actually record one million refugees it would correspond 1.2 percent of the total population.

Currently there are mainly Syrians, who come from a destroyed country to us. Projected to the whole year, there was in 2015 in Germany far more applicants from the Balkans (almost 100,000). Recently, however, fewer and fewer people from South East Europe were recorded.

At the same time, the number of racist violence rose sharply - by 40% in Germany.

In statistics, the number of right-motivated acts of violence lead by Berlin with 111, followed by Saxony with 86 and Brandenburg with 73.

In Saxony, the number of racist violence increased for example in Dresden about 89%.

The most of these racist attacks in Dresden were committed only in the last three months of the year 2014. This increase is apparently related to the racist atmosphere that has been generated by anti-asylum demonstrations and PEGIDA. The attacks were directed against asylum-seekers and migrants who lives in Dresden.

## **Pegida: Patriotic Europeans against the Islamization of the West**

On 20. Oktober 2014 'Pegida' was established for the first time under the slogan "violence free and united against faith and proxy wars on German territory" with 300 participants in Dresden. Under the guise of PEGIDA, Pegida is used against the radical Islamism and the activities of the IS, against asylum abuse, poverty immigration, gender mainstreaming and for the defense of the values of the Christian West. But at the core the apparently conservative alliance 'Pegida' fight for restricting the asylum law, nationalistic values and outdated role models.

## **Our theses on Pegida are:**

Thesis 1: There was no radicalization of PEGIDA. This movement was from the beginning a racist event.

Thesis 2: PEGIDA managed a rebranding as a demonstration of "concerned citizen".

The open criticism of PEGIDA – also in the media - as openly racist event already began very early. PEGIDA responded with a "rebranding" of the movement to a movement of "concerned citizen". The speeches were more moderate and media coverage of PEGIDA transformed by reaching federal-level political attention. It transformed from a racist to a asylum critical movement.

Thesis 3: Not everyone who participate on PEGIDA was automatically a racist.

With the rebranding of PEGIDA the movement became more and more able to tie "normal" population. Especially at the peak of the movement at the end of 2014 and the beginning of 2015 were not "only" racists with PEGIDA on the road, also citizens with concerns and people with completely different problems than those postulated by PEGIDA. But with the growth of the movement the racist basic motives of PEGIDA organizers have not changed.

Thesis 4: The ambiguity of the ruling policy class has brought growth to PEGIDA.

The myth of radicalization could therefore only arise because PEGIDA was too long ignored by the ruling policy, then Pegida was played down and trivialized, then contacted and at the end condemned.

Thesis 5: The recent repeated increase of PEGIDA is not surprising.

The recent growth of PEGIDA has a lot to do with the policy of the leading class, which is still in trying to reproduce the arguments of the right-wing populist.

Thesis 6: The position of DIE LINKE - is in the face of PEGIDA on a clear edge. This unambiguity will be our strength.

We take people's fears seriously, try to convince and educate without adopting the positions of the populist.

Of course we will lose with our human position a part of our electorate.

Of course there are people who have elected us in spite of our asylum policy. However, the asylum policy is a principal left setting: People are in the focus of our actions as DIE LINKE. We fight for a perspective for *each* person living here.

## **The Alternative for Germany (AfD) as the political arm of Pegida.**

The demarcation strategy of the AfD is a cultural struggle. The first level of the cultural struggle is the cultural separation of the own from the strangers. Inspired of the concept of ethnopluralism from the 'New Right'. And the myth of a homogenous nation. Conspiracy theories are well served as anti-establishment attitudes and hostility towards migration. The second level of the cultural struggle is based on an economic field. The idea is a cultural struggle between achievers/working class and precariat/beneficiaries. The AfD offers the 'exclusion' or clear the 'delimitation' as a possible solution.

The AfD have no solution-oriented concept as its politics based on the fear of people.

The board of DIE LINKE has decided to establish a working group for the preparation of recommendations for action in dealing with the AfD.

Recommendations from the working group are:

### 1. Against Normalization of AfD

The political action against the AfD will be guided by counteracting a "normalization" of the party.

Not only by the media we have to ensure that is repeatedly pointed out that the AfD is not a democratic alternative. Political, organizational and personnel overlaps with the extreme right will be scandalized. The AfD must not become a normal partner for the public, for the media and for politics. From this our political action deduces.

### 2. No application, agreements or even alliances with the AfD

In particular we need a high level of political attention. More specifically, we have to clearly analyze and reject trials to ingredients right ideology in social policy or, for example, oriented to protest proposals.

### 3. With regard to the AfD, we reject a restriction of democratic rights

#### 4. Material for content and political debate

All members of the parliaments, staff and supporters of democratic organizations are invited to lead a content and political confrontation with the AfD. Appropriate materials are to develop for socially-public debate in collaboration with partners.

#### 5. Analysis

DIE LINKE will continue to analyze why the AfD can reach over 10 percent of voters and how AfD can be weakened (at forthcoming elections). At the same time there must be no assumption of positions of the AfD.

#### **Summary:**

First, we can state that it was able to organize with 'Pegida' a first right-movement outside of the parliament in Germany. Under the guise of PEGIDA people participate from our immediate environment: neighbors, work colleagues, just the "ordinary citizens". Here, the bourgeoisie makes an alliance with the right-wing scene, which is not new, considering the events of Rostock Lichtenhagen in 1992.

Specifically in Saxony, the last 25 years dominated by the party of Angela Merkel CDU, it soon becomes clear that Pegida is a birth of the ruling elite. After the transformation process in '89 many biographies were broken. The people of Saxony were affected by unemployment and the fear of unemployment. Connected to the Agenda 2010 and the introducing of Hartz 4 the social and cultural exclusion led in subsequent years to a political exclusion. As a result the representatives of the working class distinguished themselves from the top, especially the political elite and from the bottom (recipients, refugees, homeless people). At the same time houses trains and villages orphaned. In recent years, the unemployment figures have fallen (1999 = 17.2%; 2005 = 18.3%; 2009 = 12.9% and 2014 = 8.8%), wages increased slightly and the people in Saxony were increasingly more satisfied. Now come the alleged "migratory flows".

But: The problem is not the refugee. Welfare, education, health and self-employment have become to goods that are no longer available from state, it have to be fought for by the individual. Particularly serious, it seems as if now people are provided with grants that supposedly does not include: refugees and migrants. So Refugee policy is also social policy.

Angela Merkel said "We can do it" , but she does not said how.

Our task is to articulate clear answers, this means that we must formulate concrete concepts. One possibility would be the idea of an "immigration enabling law" or the proposed by Katja Kipping & Bernd Rixinger "Fleeing assessment" (Fluchtumlage) at European level.

The theme of refugees and asylum is the essential issue at this moment and will permanently change our society. It is already clear that Europe will be changed.