

Angelina Giannopoulou

**INTRODUCTION TO THE STRATEGIC SEMINAR OF
TRANSFORM AND THE ROSA LUXEMBURG
FOUNDATION**

“THE LAUGH OF THE MEDUSA: THE LEFT IN EUROPE

9-11 July, Vienna

The annual strategic seminar of transform! and the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation aims to give space for left-wing analyses and policy proposals who can challenge the neoliberal doctrine. We wish for debates on the most crucial issues of the European politics and the stance of the Left. The main goal of transform, as the political foundation related with the Party of the European Left and as network of more than 30 political foundation throughout Europe, is to bring the forces of the Left (political parties, political initiatives/campaigns, progressive trade unions and activists from the social movements) together in order to build a common space of dialogue and political resistance in Europe. We consider this step as fundamental for developing a radical strategy based on the interests of the European people.

Though it was not a common ground ten years ago, we all now share a common position: The European integration project was built on a very soft ground that resulted to a multi-level, multi-speed, financial and economical -not a political one- union where the peripheral economies are not an accident, but an essential part of such kind of development. In parallel, the Eurozone is everything but an optimum currency area because of the multiple speeds of productivity among the countries, but also because of the lack -the intentional lack- of a mechanism that can transfer capitals from the strongest economies to the less developed ones.

Ten years after the crisis' outbreak we are still not “back to normal”. But what is the normal? The Keynesian capitalism? The welfare state? The collective bargaining? That used to be the normal for capitalist accumulation. Now it is over. The “normal” now is precariousness, flexibility, flexicurity, minimum wages that cannot cover even basic needs, commodification of common goods etc. At the same time, this new normality has transformed the planet into a warming ball, the politicians have no idea how to react in front of the war refugees flows, we cannot even imagine what will happen some years from now with the climate migrants. The

reflective response would be , as it is now, authoritarianization, death deals with third countries, xenophobia and Machiavellian “real politik”.

The left forces have so far failed. We failed to organize, mobilize and politicize the European people to fight back neoliberalism and its political representatives. We failed because we could not prevent the far right of becoming a hegemonic force and discourse that actually sets the agenda of the political debate and pushes the whole political spectrum towards its direction. We failed because we could not transform all those various and promising movement (anti-austerity movement, solidarity to the refugees, the ongoing feminist uprising etc) that rose during the crisis to apolitical subject that shares a common consciousness and a common strategic plan. Many political developments of the recent years left us puzzled. The “NO” vote in the Greek referendum in July 2015, the refugees’ flows towards Europe, the terror attacks in various European capitals, the “Brexit” vote, the successes of the far right (the electoral and the parliamentary ones), the Catalunyan question, the formation of the German and , more recently, the Italian government and more. Meanwhile, the left in Euope is being restructured and new actors are emerging.

The “Ahora el pueblo!”/ “Maintenant le peuple” initiative of La Franse Insoumise, Podemos, Bloco de Esquerda, the Red-Green Alliance in Denmark, the Left Party in Sweden and the Left Forum of Finland, aims to form a paneuropean left front that will question the EU and its inner capacities of reform. On the other hand, Diem25 of Y.Varoufakis also presents a European platform for left - wing and progressive forces. It is still quite unclear how the Left is going to run for the European Elections in May 2019 and how this mosaic of actors would look like the day after.

Though what has been described so far sounds pessimistic, being a leftist and a marxist means that history never ends. The left parties have a specific role and this is also a common ground among us. They aim to power. To change the balance of class powers, hegemonize the political sphere and afterward to claim the power. We should therefore develop struggles and be engaged in struggles in every field where power is organized. This means the local level, the national, the regional and the European level as well. Consequently, there is no such field that is “unreformable”, because power is a priori “reformable”, a priori under continuous transformations. As we move from one level to another, political struggles is getting harder and harder and more complex. Nevertheless, this conclusion does not result to the argument of the “unreformability”. If the Left claims to be an internationalist force, then it also assumes the asymmetrical level of struggles and resistance and the fact that indeed, some appear to be more privileged than others.

However we need to work more focused and step by step both in the political and the ideological level. We have to present a holistic alternative to the neoliberal order. Provide with a new definition of humanity, of social relations and we must present a new vision that can understand , find themselves in it and embrace it so to fight for it. We cannot ensure that this seminar will give the “right answers”. What we want is to pose at least the right questions. Where do we want to go? How? With whom? Why? Lets hope that we can at least seek for a small piece of answer to those questions, having in mind that the left wishes to be the political representation of the popular classes to their way towards the social emancipation.