

# ATTAC Germany

## **Another Europe is possible:**

**Democratic – Peaceful - Ecological – Feminist – Solidarity Based**

**Congress: 5th - 7th October 2018, University of Kassel**

### **1. Why a congress on Europe?**

In the official Brussels language usage, but also in the German discussion Europe tends to be reduced to only the European Union (EU). Europe is, however, more than just the EU. The continent of Europe is comprised of approximately 750 million inhabitants in almost 50 states. In the EU excluding Great Britain there are about 420 million people in 27 states. But Europe is, in fact, more than just a geographic entity. Europe is a communicative, cultural, economic and political agglomeration, which has established itself from the Atlantic to the Urals since the Middle Ages. Part of the European bitter past has been of conflict and wars, which found its catastrophic climax in the twentieth century. Verdun and Stalingrad are representative symbols of Europe's catastrophes. Europe has been playing a major role in shaping world history for hundreds of years. Capitalism and the modern nation state emerged in Europe. It is in Europe that the modern concepts of democracy and human rights, the Enlightenment, critical social theory and socialism originated. Europe's history also brings with it a trail of blood involving genocide, plunder and subjugation across the planet, which spans from the time of the crusades to colonialism and further to imperialism.

When we talk about a different Europe then we mean Europe in its entirety. In doing so, we give special consideration to the EU and the Eurozone in which Germany plays a dominant role. When we discuss Europe then we do so with regard to the charged relationship between the whole of Europe, the EU and the Eurozone. Due to the era of globalization Eurocentrism is even less compatible than ever before with emancipatory internationalism. We, as a globalization critical organization, think about Europe always in the context of its role in the world and with regard to globalization. The nation state is still the dominant form of socialization. For that reason, the relationship to forms of international, transnational or supranational integration must be an important and central aspect in our discussions.

The nation state and capitalism are historically inter-related. Within the framework of the nation state essential prerequisites for the economy but also for the social cohesion of societies were brokered and regulated. In the EU national regulations in the participating countries have been partially eradicated and instead elevated to the supranational EU level. These processes are being carried out under the hegemony of neoliberal forces. In the course of this, for the most part, the interests of the wealthy, the banks and corporations prevail, whereas, wage earners suffer the consequences of these neoliberal measures. Moreover, the transfer of powers from the national parliaments to the EU institutions has led to a partial dismantling of democracy. A good example of this is the implementation of austerity policies in countries, which did not already have these policies. In this regard, a spearheading role is played time and time again by the German Government.

After the Second World War it seemed that Europe could have become a more peaceful place. But the Cold War led to new divisions. The confrontation between NATO and the Warsaw Pact brought the world periodically to the brink of a nuclear war. Also at the end of the Cold War armed confrontation did not cease. With the collapse of Yugoslavia and the conflict in Ukraine armed hostilities have returned to Europe. The relationship between the EU and

Russia has taken on confrontational dimensions. Furthermore, aspirations from within the EU to develop it into a military and geopolitically operating major power have intensified. Peace policies look quite different.

At many levels there is, however, opposition and different approaches concerning another Europe. The successful campaigns against water privatization, the EU-wide citizens' initiative against TTIP and CETA, the movement in opposing the EU's austerity policies, the Right to the City movement, the solidarity with refugees and the climate movement are just some of the various forms of resistance.

With the congress we not only want to express our criticism of the prevailing politics in Europe and particularly in the EU, but also to discuss our vision for a democratic, socially just, ecological and peaceful Europe. However, we do not want to just leave it at that. Criticism remains blunt and visions are not of much use in the absence of a strategy for the transformation of the political institutions and when there are no concrete political projects for their implementation. Therefore, at the congress, on the one hand, we will discuss the various ideas for a solidary, socio-ecological Europe, as well as, the relevant transformation approaches concerning, among other things, a solidary agricultural sector and economy. On the other hand, we will examine already existing proposals and ideas with regard to the Council of Europe, the OSCE, the "*Common House of Europe*" and further suggestions and ideas with regard to their emancipatory potential. It is important to us that during the congress controversial positions are clearly articulated.

Our subject matter is very contentious not only among the left in Germany but also among the left in Europe as a whole. In the context of a pluralistic mosaic left all the European currents will be debated. In that regard, the congress takes on an important function beyond the confines of Attac as a place for debate in handling controversies in the spirit of solidarity. In doing this, the focus must always be directed towards where the differences can be bridged and also, where the different currents of opinion can be unified and therewith yield common demands and campaigns. Resulting from the congress we hope not just for a better understanding of the various standpoints, but also for awareness of the positions that unite and of the potentiality for joint political projects.

## II. The structure of the congress

1. With regard to the time structure, the congress will be divided into three blocks which build on one another.

### *A. Critic and Visions*

The first block will deal with the central points of criticism of the prevailing politics and social conditions. This will include criticism of production and property relationships, gender relationships and the relationship to the environment in Europe. Consequently, we will further explore which visions we have for an alternative, democratic, peaceful, environmentally friendly, feminist and solidarity based Europe.

### *B. Transformation strategies*

The second block will address what the conditions for a successful transformation of society are and also address the question how we can bring these about. Thereby, the political and social relationships and the questions of class and gender relationships as well as the roll of ethnic and other forms of discrimination will play a crucial role. In addition, also the questions of concrete utopias and the agents of change will be an important component of our discussions.

### *C. Campaigns and projects*

Finally it should become specific. Which current political demands, campaigns and projects could contain the potential through which social movements as part of transformational movement might emerge? Where are the points of contact between them and how can they be linked?

## **2. Thematic focus:**

We want to discuss Europe and the EU from the angle of five topic areas, which are in close conjunction with one another and, in doing so, work on the following questions. Whereby, the list can of course be extended.

### *a. How can we achieve more democracy in the EU and in Europe?*

- How can the democracy deficit in the EU be overcome?
- What sort of architecture is required for the EU and throughout Europe as a whole? Which structures and institutional arrangements would be necessary in order to make the continent more democratic?
- What is the situation with regard to democracy in the relationship of the nation state to the supranational level and to the local and regional levels?
- How can the dominance of the economy over politics be driven back and the democracy-free zone of the economy be democratized.
- Can the EU be democratized at all and, if so, what would be the prerequisites for achieving this? If not, what could the consequences be?
- Is reorganization or something completely different needed?
- How can we confront the rightwing developments?
- What does an emancipatory asylum and migration policy look like?

### *b. How can we set to rights the economy in the EU and in Europe?*

- What role does the EU play with regard to the hegemony of neoliberalism and in our destructive production model?
- How can we ensure a good life for everyone by reducing resources consumption?
- What sort of impediments stand in the way and how can they be overcome?
- How can the financial markets, transnational production, global trading and data traffic be democratically regulated and channeled in a meaningful way?
- Which progressive alternatives and flexible approaches are there to monetary integration which goes beyond the tight constraints of the euro and which allows essential scope for preserving sovereignty with regard to economic and social policies in the periphery regions of the EU?

### *c. What will the new approach to social security in the EU and Europe look like?*

- Can a stable welfare net extending beyond national borders be accomplished? If yes, what could it look like?
- Is a welfare state in the globalized world still possible at individual state level?
- How can the fruits of digitalization be made available to benefit everyone?
- How can the tendency towards more inequality be overcome?
- What significance does the tax system play in this regard?

### *d. How can we end the destruction of the environment in Europe?*

- What has happened to the leading role of the EU on the issues of climate and environmental protection?
- What institutional and supranational regulations are needed in order to carry through a genuine energy transformation?
- Where are the opportunities and limits for EU or European environmental policies?
- Which contribution can an alternative agricultural policy make?
- What contribution can Europe make to climate justice?

*e. How will peace be secured in Europe and what place do we envisage for our Continent in the world?*

- How can we halt the militarization of the EU and its attachment to NATO?
- How can we bring to an end the tensions between the EU and Russia and avert a new Cold War and arms race?
- How should a Europe-wide system for peace and collective security look like?
- How can the cooperation of the EU to neighboring regions such as North Africa and the Near East be constructed?
- How can Europe develop a solidarity based relationship to the Global South?
- How can we create a Europe supportive of people fleeing and that takes them in rather than erecting barriers to them?

Gender equality shall be an across the board issue in all subject areas. Structural violence, exploitation and discrimination due to gender, sexuality and the chosen way of life have by no means been done away with. On the path to “another Europe” these forms of discrimination should not be regarded and treated as minor contradictions.

### 3. Working methods

The congress works with different formats.

#### *Central podiums:*

The podiums are to take place at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of the congress. They should concentrate and sharpen all topics and be prominently filled. The makeup of the podiums is to reflect the various political positions. In addition to the podiums, there will not be any other parallel meetings.

#### *Forums*

The forums should concentrate and sharpen the discussions with respect to a specific thematic block. They can also take the form of podiums. However, other forms allowing for more participation are desired. The conceptual form of the forums is to reflect the respective broadness of perspective on the topic. The forums can also be held parallel to the workshops.

#### *Workshops*

Workshops will focus on particular aspects of a topic. Invitations will be made for the organization of the workshops. Supporters of the congress may also carry out their own independent workshops. By thematic overlapping workshops can be combined and in the case of an excess of workshops they may also be rejected.

### *Special forms*

Further forms of activity with regard to the topic of Europe such as performances, cultural inputs and so on are also to have their place.

#### 4. Timetable:

Time

Block

Sessions

Friday evening

(from 6pm)

Arrival and introduction of the participants to the Forum of Opportunities

Friday evening

(8pm to 10pm)

A

Opening podium

Working title: The Europe we know is not the Europe we want.

Saturday morning

(10am 12pm)

Workshops and two forums

Launch break

Saturday afternoon

1pm to 3:30pm

B

Workshops and two forums

Saturday afternoon

4 pm to 6pm

Plenary session

Working title: Paths to the Europe we want

Evening meal

Saturday evening

from 7pm

Cultural program: European culture of protest: music, theatre, film clips, short interviews

Sunday morning  
(9am to 10am)

C

Workshops and two forums

Sunday morning  
(11am to 1pm)

Closing podium:

Working title: Initial steps toward the Europe we want.

### III. Cooperation partners and supporters

#### *Cooperation partners*

We are aiming to attract cooperation partners from organizations and groups which will participate in both the content-related and financial planning of the congress.

#### *Endorsers*

We want to attract endorsement and support from organizations and groups that will offer workshops and who will promote the congress.

The congress is to take place from 05.10 to 07.10.2018 in Kassel, Germany.