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AEPF11 Ulaanbaatar night: BREXIT, is it the end or beginning?

Tuesday 12 July 2016, by [KULKE Roland](#) (Date first published: 5 July 2016).

Greetings! Sharing with you 2 write ups from the AEPF11 Ulaanbaatar Night discussion on BREXIT last July 5. Some photos are posted on AEPF facebook page.

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This open discussion was attended by about 60 networks from Asia and Europe, with discussants Andy Rutherford (UK), Roland Kulke (Belgium), Bernd Schneider (Belgium), Sanchir Jargalsaikhan (Mongolia), Jay Jay Denis (Malaysia), and interventions from Farooq Tariq (Pakistan), Tom Kucharz (Spain), David Hall (UK), Oxanna Chelysheva (Ukraine/Finland), Judith McKnight (UK), Maris dela Cruz (Philippines), Dong Huy Cuong (Vietnam), Andy Whitmore (UK), Daniel Chavez (Uruguay/Netherlands), Christophe Aguiton (France), Koen Detavernier (Belgium), Birgit Daiber (Italy), and Matthijs Peters (Netherlands) among others.

The 2-hour dynamic/lively exchange was moderated by Madeleine Dresche (Austria).

Warm regards,

05 July 2016

Maris

BREXIT, is it the end or beginning?

The challenges of the BREXIT and its impact on other world regions were discussed on many different levels. At the beginning we focused on the UK's inner developments and especially the rising racist attacks after the Brexit. The danger exists that the exit of the EU might open the way to even more radical privatization policies (NHS) and the UK will now become a new ultra-neoliberal player in the game of FTAs negotiations. Furthermore it might lose whatever sovereignty it might have gained towards the USA very soon, both economically and military. Other views were expressed which understand that an independent UK outside of the EU single market has a greater autonomy to govern its society for the wellbeing of all citizens. The basic difference is whether the EU is perceived as a rather independent actor vis-à-vis the nation states or if it is rather perceived as a kind of "rescue of the nationstate" insofar as the EU would be dominated by the council, which is

the body in which the memberstate administrations are represented. Anyhow the Brexit was perceived as a chance for the left to gain more influence in favor of an reformed EU as the most neoliberal memberstate will leave the EU. Migration was one of the main, or even the main topic in the referendum, but aspects of class, age and city vs. countryside also have to be considered. A lot of the discussion concentrated on the question where the policy room for the left would be stronger, in or outside the EU.

From the South East Asian perspective, with its own integration process, which unfortunately copies the European integration process, the "lessons learned" after the BREXIT would be: don't get into integration if you haven't yet started, but once you are inside a regional integration process, an exit doesn't seem to be a viable solution. From both, the South East Asian and the Latin American position the BREXIT seems to have rather negative effects on these regions. This is in terms of trade to the UK, affecting the poorest in Vietnam negatively, in terms of discussion on regional integration process in the Global South and the above mentioned new brutally neoliberal trade actor. In the conclusion it became clear that the international left must work on alternative forms of regional integration in the capitalist world system as the fundamentals of this system the power of the corporations and their value chains are foremost one thing: global. So to control these corporations and their chains of production regional integration processes might be a legitimate answer. How this answer should look like the left has to work on.

Roland Kulke, RLS-Brussels

Brexit: Left Movements Need to Rise to the Occasion

A single referendum which has divided the British people in the UK after a narrow victory to leave the European Union has also created a major split in the EU left.

Shockingly, the sphere of debate on whether Britain should remain or leave the EU was dominated completely by right-wing groups who capitalised on the Left's lack of a clear and coherent message.

It is paramount that the Left in Britain and across Europe locate the jump-start cables to bring back to life a left agenda for a socially just integration project focused on alternative regionalism.

Some of the proposals which are being pushed by movements within the 11th Asia-Europe People's Forum are as follows:-

1. Left parties must step up to the plate to have a more democratic control of the integration project.
2. Create a more inclusive message and find common grounds while realising differences.
3. Widen the debate on an alternative regionalism project.

Also, ASEAN governments must not copy and paste the EU integration model.

From here on in, civil society movements and the people at large should be at the centre of any regionalism project governments in ASEAN and across the globe plan to adopt.

We must learn from the EU experience and not repeat it.

The referendum has now legalised racism and has gone on to cause fear and uncertainty within the British population, especially including those from the Global South who have been tremendously harassed for their cultural backgrounds.

This must stop.

In the short term, the after effects of a possible Brexit include the tightening of visa restrictions which jeopardise those who are living in the UK.

Other concerns include the impact on trade deals like TTIP, EU-ASEAN and CETA agreements which have been rejected by civil society.

One thing is clear; the world's biggest neoliberal project through the EU framework has failed.

It has failed to create a socially just and people-centred Europe.

Instead, it has successfully created a volcanic environment of discontent within classes of people within the UK.

The shattering question before us is this; will the left stand up to be counted by setting a new agenda, or will it be destroyed?

Jay Jay Denis, Monitoring Sustainability of Globalisation - Malaysia
