

# THE LEFT AND THE INTERNATIONAL ARENA

**Since the birth of the European labour movement, the international dimension has been crucial to the definition of the political and economic outlook of left-wing organizations. To the tendency of capitalism to extend its influence and field of action beyond state borders, socialist theorists and leaders responded with the prospect of an international alliance of workers. Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Left's perspective on these problems has constantly evolved. The international organization of politics, society and the economy has represented a key variable in the ideological developments of left-wing parties and movements, whether in government or in opposition, in phases of development or crisis, in times of peace or war. It influenced their splits as well as their search for alliances, partnerships or models across national borders.**

This seminar proposes to explore the history of the socialist, social-democratic and communist political families by looking at their international and transnational relations. Combining different focuses and approaches, the seminar will try to analyse political history in a larger international perspective, and to emphasize the importance of international and transnational relations in shaping national and regional political cultures. This framework can help us understand crucial aspects of the history of socialism and communism, and clarify present-day political developments. In spite of diverging attitudes vis-à-vis the globalization process, the tension between the national dimension of politics and the global dimension of the economy is in fact a major component of the current 'structural' crisis of the Left, both in Europe and worldwide.

The seminar will focus on three main fields of research:

- a) The formation of networks and the circulation of information, actors, experiences and expertise within and between the socialist and communist movements, on different scales and with different approaches and geographical focuses (European and Transatlantic as well as East-West, North-South and South-South). This includes the alternative projects of various political currents in their struggles for ideological hegemony.
- b) The Left and foreign policy: the elaboration of foreign policy programmes by left-wing parties and organizations; the foreign policy initiatives of socialist and communist governments; the development of a 'parallel foreign policy' by left-wing forces in opposition.

- c) The relations that the Left developed with international, supranational and intergovernmental organizations, both those that aimed at reforming capitalism and/or the international order (as, for instance, the League of Nations, the International Labour Organization, the United Nations or the European Union) and those that aimed at challenging them and structuring a global alternative (as in the case of the Comintern or of other organizations born in the Communist world during the postwar years).

## APPLICATION GUIDELINES

The seminar will take place at the Sciences Po Center for History (Paris) during the academic year 2017-2018, on a monthly basis. We encourage researchers working on the international history of socialism and communism in the 20<sup>th</sup> century to send paper proposals. Each proposal should include (in a single file):

- Name and affiliation of the applicant
- An abstract, in French or English, of approximately 2500 characters
- A brief, 2-page academic CV

Please send proposals to [gauches.international@gmail.com](mailto:gauches.international@gmail.com) by 15 July 2017. Participants will be asked to circulate a paper one week before their presentations. Presentations and discussions will take place in French and/or English. Depending on the funds available, travel and accommodation expenses will be partly or fully covered.

## CONVENORS

Michele Di Donato, Mathieu Fulla, Bruno Settis

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