

# Europe as a Good Society

The joint transformation of the social democratic and European projects

by Neal Lawson



**Compass**  
together for a good society

**FRIEDRICH  
EBERT  
STIFTUNG**

Social Europe Occasional Paper

July  
2013

*If we are capable of compassion yet at the same time powerless, then we live in a state of irritability.*

## **Slawomir Sierakowski**

### **Overview**

- *The European social model faces the twin and interlinked crises of Europe and social democracy.*
- *The crises are not temporary or cyclical but structural and existential.*
- *Reforming existing policies and structures may help address some of the symptoms of the crises but they will not address the deep-rooted causes.*
- *European social democrats are going to have to be much more daring and imaginative to save their project and the European project.*
- *A radical twin track strategy is required of meaningful economic reforms that change the balance of power between people and capital, creating jobs (in environmentally sustainable areas in particular), economic security and much greater equality across Europe. This should be allied to deep-rooted democratic changes to European political institutions to ensure legitimacy and accountability for the new project.*
- *The economic and political transformation of the European project must go hand in hand, democracy is only meaningful when it is about a different vision of society and a different model of political economy – a Good Society. Each round of economic policy change must trigger a deeper set of democratic reforms, thus legitimising a further set of economic changes, and so on.*
- *In particular a ten point Emergency Economic Recovery Programme should be enacted to include the socialisation of debt, the creation of Eurobonds and a Marshall Plan for Europe.*
- *Structural changes to EU democratic institutions must take place such as the effective formation of a European government via directly elected representatives. Such reforms should take place through a ‘big bang’ event and not an unperceivable process.*
- *Time is running out for social democrats. The demise of PASOK stands as a stark warning to all social democrats about the price to be paid for lack of radical and fast action.*
- *For the British Labour Party the economic and democratic policies outlined in this paper provide both a feasible and desirable way out of its European dilemma and the pressure building for an In/Out referendum. Only by advocating a different type of Europe, one that is both social and democratic, will Labour be able to push for a referendum that it can win and that would be worth winning.*

## **The Nature Of The Crisis**

Every time you look out from under the bed covers the crisis continues and in many ways deepens. It is a crisis that is multi-dimensional; a crisis of Europe and European institutions, a crisis of economy, society, politics, the planet and, of course, a crisis of social democracy.

Analysis of such a deep-rooted set of overlapping and self re-enforcing crises, let alone the search for solutions, feels daunting, even prohibitive. Politicians do what they feel they can but not what is needed. Some symptoms of the crisis are addressed but the underlying causes remain undisturbed. Nothing has changed in the regulation of finance since the crash. The banks are still too big to fail, derivatives are still many times world GDP and private indebtedness, especially in the UK, is still fantastically high. So people start to give up on formal politics. Even anger dissipates because anger requires the existence of a target that you believe could make things better. No one believes the political classes can do anything so there is no target to be angry at. It is a crisis of powerlessness in the face these multi-dimensional crises. European people have compassion but live in a state of irritability because of this gripping sense of powerlessness.

Given the scale of the problems we first have to be honest, things will probably get worse, possibly much worse. Second, we have to 'fess' up and humbly explain we don't have all the answers. Third, we must patiently accept and explain that solutions will be complex and will take time, possibly a long time, to enact. Fourth, we must show clearly that we have at least some ideas and critically, deeply held values. Finally, we must recognise that history is not at an end but neither is it necessarily on our side. Instead history will be on the side of those who have the necessary vision, ambition and perseverance to create an alternative or maintain the status quo. Are we, the social democrats and fellow travellers of Europe, capable of creating an alternative?

## **The British Crisis**

From a UK perspective being positive is a tough ask. The rise of the UK Independence Party (UKIP) is a symptom of growing anti-Euro sentiment. Such political validity, in the polls and now real votes cast, triggers and legitimises the next wave of public hostility. UKIP are taking votes from all three main parties on the back of mounting economic insecurity and a profound rejection of the bland professionalization of politics. But Europe, in the minds of UKIP and its growing supporter base, is inextricably linked to immigration and therefore job insecurity, low wages and 'benefit cheats'. It is a toxic mix. In their promise of getting Britain 'out of Europe' (as if such a feat were geographically possible) UKIP speak to the emotional wounds of anxiety and injustice felt by many communities and do so in a language and style that connects. People feel positive about backing them, unlike the other three main parties who gain support as 'the least worst option'.

UKIP received 24% of the vote in recent English county council elections and are as high as 18% in one recent national poll – a poll that incidentally put Labour on 34% (down 4%), the Tories on 28% (down 4%) and the Liberal Democrats on 11% (down, yes you guessed it, 4%). UKIP support could melt in the early summer sun but it feels like the tide may now be turning against the old party machines. At the European parliamentary elections in 2014 UKIP are widely predicted to win the biggest share of the vote and could end up with a large block of seats in Strasbourg/Brussels. In a UK general election, because of our majoritarian voting system, they are unlikely to win any seats but this will just fuel the growing rejection of democracy and resentment against the mainstream parties. And while they split the right's vote they drag the whole tenor of the national debate into a reactionary, dark place. Without a single MP they are now, along with the relentless anti-European propaganda of most of the tabloid press, the key shapers of the British national political debate.

In the UKIP wake two Conservative Cabinet members have felt emboldened enough to come out and say they would vote to leave the EU in an in/out referendum. David Cameron is trying to allow a paving bill for the promised referendum if they win outright in 2017, just to head off the rise in UKIP support and quell the mood of rebellion on his own backbenches. One ex Tory Chancellor, Lord Howe, has said David Cameron has lost control of this party on the Europe question. What is clear is that appeasement of the anti-Europeans isn't working. This is an emotional mutiny not merely a policy disagreement.

It is unsurprising in this context that the British Labour Party has little that is positive to say about Europe and hopes Tory splits will do their work for them. Labour, in most part, is instinctively pro-European but feels unable for electoral reasons to live out such conviction and refuses to acknowledge past shortcomings. An acid test of their ability to learn from the past is their attitude to a Financial Transactions Tax (FTT), which they still oppose because they remain wedded, in essence, to the old economic model of trickle down from the City of London. Despite the crash of 2008 and the social carnage that has followed, the overwhelming desire is simply to hit the rewind button with just a few tweaks of old policy. What Labour cannot bring itself to say is that the economic gains of the last few decades were built on sand. Wealth was an illusion of debt and financial smoke and mirrors and that any promised return to such unreality must, by definition, be unreal. Labour cannot say the problem was not enough regulation and it cannot say the problem was not enough Europe. For Labour Europe is still 'another place', not our shared continental home through which we must build collective solutions to our shared European problems.

But despite all this, the right-wing Eurosceptics in the UK and elsewhere are right, on their terms, to reject the Union of Europe. That is because Europe does indeed carry the potential seeds of planning, regulation and cross-national solidarities necessary to put capitalism back in a social cage - much as it did after 1945 for three decades in a remarkably successful pan-continental venture of peace and growing equality. The fact that for the last three decades the EU has been embedding a free-market economic model, which created the crisis, does not

negate the feasibility or desirability of a return to that successful post-war formation, albeit in a modernised and radicalised form. While this possibility exists the right will vigorously fight it but will the left fight for a socialised and democratic Europe?

The British Labour Party is beginning to feel the squeeze of UKIP and a Conservative Party now aggressively pushing an In/Out referendum. It is hard to be on the side that denies the people a vote. Ultimately it has to be the wrong side. Europe will eventually thrive as a peoples project but inevitably die if it remains an elite project. Labour must change the terms of debate; not between 'this Europe' and exit, a Europe of austerity and free markets, but between a Europe that is properly social and democratic and exit. But to get to that point, and do it fast, Labour must face up to the crisis of 'this Europe'.

The UK and Labour, while suffering from a particular malaise, are far from alone. Nowhere in the western world is social democracy thriving. Quite the opposite! Despite the biggest crisis of capitalism since the 1870s it struggles everywhere. It is in opposition in Germany, Spain, Portugal and Sweden and where it is in government or coalition, such as France, Denmark and Italy, it is in meltdown. In some places, notably Greece, social democracy no longer exists as a viable political option. From government to oblivion in just two years! This is the fate of social democrats that will be replicated in other nation states unless real change happens.

This is because the underlying purpose of the European and social democratic projects are in existential crisis, not a temporal or cyclical crisis but a crisis of being. Let us be crystal clear: Europe has no future based on the project for which it was built nor in the manner in which it was built and neither has social democracy. Let's take each crisis in turn.

## **The Crisis Of Europe**

Modern Europe was built primarily to avoid further military conflict and the insecurity and political extremism that led to it. To paraphrase Mrs Thatcher, the economy was the means the goal was to avoid war. Economic integration would make profit from violent land grabs pointless. As time wore on and the threat of war did indeed disappear the technocratic means of building the Union were deployed not in the pursuit of economic and cultural integration but increasingly in the pursuit of neoliberal goals through neoliberal means. Hence, the great stabilising, unifying and humanising experiment of Europe has ended up promoting economic, social and political insecurity. In the UK it promotes reactionary populism in the form of UKIP, in Greece a more sinister political formation in the shape of Golden Dawn. These are just the early signs of looming political and social decay resulting from prolonged economic crisis. Europe is now creating the very conditions it was designed to avoid.

Without a set of economic policies to promote security across the EU and with no democratic legitimacy Europe is now a project built on the wrong foundations that

knows only technocratic fixes to continue the quest to do 'the wrong thing righter'. The design of the EU institutions since 1992 in particular has led to the creation of a 'shadow state' of unelected and unaccountable people and bodies who oversee an economic system run for finance not for people.<sup>1</sup> With the market setting interest and exchange rates democratic accountability has been going steadily backward.<sup>2</sup> The European Central Bank (ECB) is established in a way that purposefully denies the ability to act on behalf of the people of Europe and with a budget of less than 1% of GDP the Union has no means to express solidarity between nations. Such wrong means for the wrong ends were crystallised in European popular imagination over the imposition of technocratic administrations in Greece and then Italy and then the unbelievable humiliation of Cyprus over the terms of their bailout. This European shadow state, like the GIs in Vietnam, burns the village to save the village. With 26 million unemployed, youth unemployment surpassing 50% in some democratic nations and falling living standards everywhere (except for the elite who caused the crisis) it is clear that reform of this broken model is hopeless. It is honourable of the IMF to now say they got austerity wrong in Greece but it will be a message of little comfort to the Greek people. Today only the transformation of the European project will suffice.

The April 2013 a Eurobarometer poll found Euroscepticism soaring with lack of trust in the EU as an institution rising sharply to 72% in Spain and 69% in UK. National democracies are being subverted without being replaced by any form of European democracy. As Colin Crouch has written, we live in an age of post-democracy in which the trappings of formal democracy continue, such as open elections and the formation of administrations but nothing really changes – profit, privilege and power stay in the hands of the elite.<sup>3</sup> Decisions are made 'elsewhere' by an elite to serve only their interests. The globalisation of capital, arguably pursued in the name of integration has removed corporations from national democratic accountability and is now fatally undermining the legitimacy of the Union. The weakness of European democracy is that it has failed to develop in a way that could anchor companies in the societies they profited from. Corporate blackmail to go where taxes and regulation are lowest has trumped public interest. North is now set against South. The collusion to different degrees between social democrats and capital to deliver the impossibility of fairness from free market growth has ended in disaster.

The one moment in which it seemed like it was possible to challenge the elites and neoliberal orthodoxy was when George Papandreou proposed a referendum of the Greek people to decide whether to continue with austerity. It sent an electric charge through the dying body politic of Europe but it was too late. The politicians were too weak and the elites forced him out of office for his impertinence of trying to let the people in.

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<sup>1</sup> See <http://www.dw.de/european-shadow-state-faces-growing-resistance/a-16720690>

<sup>2</sup> See <http://www.opendemocracy.net/openeconomy/ann-pettifor/eurozone-crisis-what-way-forward>

<sup>3</sup> See Colin Crouch *Post Democracy*, Polity, 2004

## The Crisis Of Social Democracy

This separation of politics and power takes us to the crisis of social democracy, a crisis no less relenting. Like Europe it is a crisis not just of 'what' but 'how'. The 'what' is about the world we want to create. In a previous world of scarcity the imperative for social democrats was to put food on the table, shoes on our feet and a roof over our heads. By and large, in absolute terms, this project has been completed in Europe. But capitalism did two things while social democrats basked in the glory of their post war 'victory' over them: capitalism went 'up' and it went 'in'. It went up to the level of global flows over which individuals, parties and nation states had little or no control and it went 'in' to our psyche through the phenomena of turbo-consumption.

National macroeconomic levers could no longer be pulled to the same effect, as François Mitterrand found to his cost when he sought unilaterally to reflate the French economy out of crisis in the early 1980s. And capital's unending quest for new markets drove more and more members of the popular classes onto the 'hedonistic treadmill' on which they could only compare themselves negatively with their social superiors rather than valuing solidarity with their social equals. The good life was no longer to be collectively built but individually purchased – the worker's TV screen could never be big enough nor thin enough. The struggle was now fought out on the high streets and shopping malls across Europe – incidentally in the same cloned, chained and franchised shops. Social democracy could only hold out the promise of more stuff – enough would never be enough. Over time and in the face of an overwhelming cultural onslaught being lonely shoppers began to shape our daily lives and eventually our hopes, fears and the field of our political horizons. The very act of being consumers and not citizens fatally undermined not just notions of the public good but the necessary social solidarity to achieve it.

It meant that as capitalism broke away globally social democrats could no longer will the means through wage bargaining and state generosity to provide more material goods and services – which has become the primary goal of all establishment politics. Not only could the globetrotting corporations not be taxed but the people also wanted to spend their money as private consumers not as public citizens. Where social democrats intervened, as with tax credits in the UK, it was done by stealth to prop up private spending and subsidise the wage bill of the rootless corporations. The gap in individual and governmental purchasing power was made up by borrowing until, of course, the whole thing crashed in 2008. So the state was being largely bypassed but only until the crash happened, when only it could clear up the mess. But in so doing the state bankrupted itself – economically and politically.

The left that has come out of the crash in a much worse state than the right. The people never trusted the capitalists to do anything but maximise their profits (even recklessly) but they expected social democrats to apply the brakes to capital accumulation, not hit the accelerator. We were found out helping the wrong side and hurting our own side in the process. In a post crash world the right have decisively taken the advantage by maximising and exploiting the social, economic

and environmental chaos to push the market even further into the state and into our minds. The electoral price for social democratic collusion with free market economics is now being paid – possibly in existential terms.

The tailspin of social democracy is also caused by the decline of the nation state – or rather the medium-sized nation states of Europe in comparison to the global economic powerhouse nations of the USA, China, Russia, India, Brazil etc. This is no longer the 1950s; no one makes British cars for the British market any more. Social democrats have yet to truly face the fact that we live in an interdependent world in which we are better off together working with our neighbours if we are to have any ability to shape and influence the world.

This crisis of ‘what’ then tips into a crisis of ‘how’. Social democracy was a product of a mechanical and industrial age and as such its operating mode is that of the machine. If enough party workers went out and knocked on enough doors, enabling the election of enough MPs, then social democracy would be delivered by pulling the right levers from on high. If mistakes were made, different levers would be pulled in a different order next time. The party, the state and democracy were simply the means to the end of control. It is a style of politics that is technocratic, managerial and paternalistic.

But the industrial age has given way to the digital age. It is Facebook and not the factory that defines our cultural reference points. A culture in which people expect to be heard and to have many different identities, to join a variety of groups as they see fit, when they see fit. The ‘one leader, one party’ blind obedience of social democratic culture cannot be squared with this emerging worldview.

Social democrats are going to have to take a more humble role in the future of national and European politics as necessary but insufficient agents for change, leading broad alliances of political parties, movements, organisations and groups to act as countervailing forces to capital and its various interests. Vertical party structures are going to have to find a way of connecting with the new more horizontal, democratic and egalitarian forces. In the UK they manifest themselves as UK Uncut, Citizens UK, 38 Degrees, Transition Towns and a myriad of other grassroots formations that have their equivalents the continent. These formal and the informal political structures will meet their fate together because they need each other. The new informal groups need a governing project and the old social democratic parties need to connect to new sources of ideas and campaigning vitality.

In particular they must meet their joint fate by rejecting the preposterous notion that everyone can win the competitive battle to export their way to recovery – not least on the basis of low wages, low taxes and vanishing regulation.



## The Strategy For A European Good Society

The transformation of social democracy and the European project are going to have to happen in tandem because one cannot happen without the other. The values of social democracy, solidarity and equality, have never and maybe will never be more necessary. But equality of exactly what and how we secure social solidarity need to be urgently addressed and can only be done so within the European context. Europe, for all its deep faults, is still the world's leading hope for civility and humanity. It is the place that holds out the best possibility for a polis that can act as a counter to the power of financial and corporate flows. Europe is the crucible in which the form of our humanity will be moulded and shaped. Yes the local, national and global matter but without a Europe that is as social as it is democratic there is much less hope.

The transformation of the European and the social democratic projects must start with the question: what is a good life and a good society? Only by understanding and answering those questions can we build the political formations to enable such a society to exist.

A good society is not a world in which we value things we didn't know we wanted bought with money we don't have to impress people we don't care about. It isn't a world in which we are willing and competitive slaves to the cult of more with little regard for the way it dehumanises us socially just as it destabilises us environmentally. Instead a good society is built on the profound belief in our shared and equal humanity and the transformative potential not just of every person but of society itself. The goal is to realise and not frustrate our compassion. So our good society must make the world much more equal, democratic and sustainable. It is this transformative capability of the people by the people, for the people that the social democratic and European projects must now be turned into.

Social democrats must offer a richer vision of a good society, a vision that is about autonomy in its deepest sense; being creative and having the time to not just be a worker and a shopper but a citizen, friend, volunteer and family member – the opportunity to shape your world as you see fit with the people around you. We must be able to answer the question: what is it to be fully human in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? If the right offers private liberation through free markets social democrats must offer public freedom through democracy.

With such a goal in mind, the separation of power and politics means a solely reformist agenda for the intertwined European and social democratic projects will no longer do. Instead a profound set of democratic means have to be combined with a profound set of democratic goals to create the behaviour mode and the direction of travel towards a good society.

The problem, of course, is that we have to start this different journey, by different means in a different direction, from where we are now. We have to solve the crisis, transform the vehicle and change its destination while it moves in old ways in the wrong direction. In short we must address the symptoms of the crises of Europe

and social democracy while we deal with the causes. This is why the struggle isn't easy and this is why politicians facing short-term electoral tests refuse to face up to the challenge.

The strategy must be twin-track: developing policies that will actually make a difference to people's lives here and now to show them that change is possible, while at the same time transforming the democratic culture and structures of Europe so that new transformative powers can emerge - which are themselves democratically shaped and enacted by and for the people of Europe. So it is not just the democratization of existing or new institutions that is the challenge but enabling the democratic potential of the people of Europe to build and rebuild their common home – at work, in public services and through their communities.

It is this strategic iterative process that must be developed, of action and accountability that makes possible new democratic powers to overcome the elites who currently rule. As the saying goes 'we must do today so that tomorrow we can do what we cannot do today'. We must lift the restrictions on us and enable power and politics to be reconnected.

## Policies For Sustainable Recovery

The starting point has to be a new form of economy. Ann Pettifor describes the purpose of the European economy in this rather elegant way:

*A well-designed economy provides an outlet for human creativity and meets humankind's deep desire to work. It exists to nurture and protect the young, the vulnerable and the old – not just the fit and affluent. It helps a society meet and deal with major adversities such as climate change; and it enhances the pleasures of life for all those that live within it.<sup>4</sup>*

With such a vision in mind, the first priority is to end austerity and start the process of reconnection. What is required is an **Emergency European Recovery Plan** based around:

1. The collectivisation of European debt to help ensure stability, spread risk and dilute the influence of financial markets.
2. It is critical therefore that the moral hazard of banks that are 'too big to fail (TBTF)' is overcome. There must be full break-up of the banks, with a clear separation of retail from investment/speculative banking, and any bank that is TBTF must be diminished in size.
3. A self-funded bank bailout scheme so that a future financial crash can be avoided or endured with minimal costs to the public.
4. The introduction of a Financial Transaction Tax to minimise wild risk taking

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<sup>4</sup> See <http://www.opendemocracy.net/openeconomy/ann-pettifor/eurozone-crisis-what-way-forward>

- and secure funds for social welfare.
5. The creation of Eurobonds for green infrastructure investment to get the European economy moving again while lowering the throughput of raw materials and carbon emissions. Such a policy has the benefit of creating jobs where people are, diminishes the push and pull factors of migration and reduces the costs of the welfare state.
  6. Such a European Green New Deal would need to be the central plank of the kind of Marshall Plan for Europe being developed by the German Trade Union Confederation.<sup>5</sup>
  7. The creation of a European integration fund to help subsidise migrant workers.
  8. Raising real wages for low- and middle-income earners through a European minimum wage and eventually a 'Living Wage'.
  9. A level playing field on corporation tax so that corporations cannot blackmail governments into low tax and spend regimes and the end of European tax havens for similar reasons.
  10. The reintroduction of capital controls to enhance economic stability.

## Policies For Economic And Political Transformation

Alongside these shorter term measures to stabilise the European economy and start the process of building public confidence that change can happen we are going to need a longer term vision of 'what' and 'how' for a new Europe. The two must be linked and centred on the key theme of democratisation. Indeed, just by asking the question 'what is Europe for?' we can start the process of building a positive new continental polis.

David Schweickart, the American mathematician and philosopher, provides possibly the best contours of a new economic paradigm for radical social democrats.<sup>6</sup> In a paper called *Economic Crisis: Culprits, Causes, Solutions* Schweickart says:

*To my knowledge there does not exist a single comparative study that finds the authoritarian (i.e. capitalist) model superior to the democratic one.*

He goes on to outline the key features of a type of market socialism, a political economy which retains competitive markets but ownership is in public hands and control is socialised. These key features are the democratisation of labour through worker self-management and the democratisation of capital through a capital assets tax, which would eventually replace corporation tax, to allow public investment in the economy and therefore an emphasis not just on private returns but a balance between rich and poor, the regions and the planet. One element of the democratisation of finance must be the restructuring of the ECB as a publicly-

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<sup>5</sup> See <http://www.social-europe.eu/2013/05/a-marshall-plan-for-europe/>

<sup>6</sup> See his *After Capitalism Economic Crisis: Culprits, Causes, Solutions*, Keynote Presentation at Semana Economia Cooperativa, Barcelona, Spain, June 30, 2009, David Schweickart Loyola University Chicago.

backed central bank, one which can act as lender of last resort to invest in people and the infrastructure they need to lead civilised and dignified lives. In time tax and welfare powers must be pooled and integrated but this can only happen alongside much deeper democratic legitimacy.

Such economic democracy will help build indirect political power by making workers more influential while diminishing corporate and private lobbying might. But we need to transform institutional political power too in terms of direct or assembly democracy, representative democracy and what we might call 'monitoring democracy' through scrutiny. Europe must be owned by the people for the people. Europeans must live and feel the power to act and to change if Europe is to mean anything.

Brendan Simms makes the telling point that further integration cannot be viewed as an unperceivable *process*, a Europe built on invisible stealth but an *event* in the style of the successful historic unifications of the UK and the USA. It is in the pursuit of such a *democratic event* that Labour in the UK and others can justifiably resist the call for an in/out referendum on Europe as it is. Instead they can develop the options for a number of deep-rooted political reforms and then hold a referendum across the whole of the Union, the decision being to either go ahead in a new solidaristic and democratic fashion or break Europe up as a free trade free for all. Such features of a new democratic settlement, Simms argues, would include: an elected executive president, a legislative assembly elected by all the people of Europe and a Senate representing the member states.<sup>7</sup> Steven Hill has suggested a two-chamber structure – a directly elected chamber and an indirectly appointed chamber.<sup>8</sup> There are many possibilities to discuss. Democracy cannot be endlessly postponed. The people must be sovereign. But the need for real democracy demands real alternatives to vote on.

Of course the creation of a realm of popular European public affairs will not be easy – borders, cultures and language will intervene. But no one can say there isn't popular widespread and pan-European objection to the elites and the policies of austerity. Social movements like Occupy and *Los Indignados* (the outraged) have helped present an alternative through old forms of protest and the adoption of new social media that easily transcends borders. New entities like Finance Watch<sup>9</sup> have sprung up quickly to fill at least some of the gaps in information and influence across Europe. And the point is both trite and telling but Europe can come together over events like the golf Ryder Cup, when the British cheer the Germans and the Germans cheer the Spanish and everyone knows the common enemy is an American culture that is alien to the social market model.

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<sup>7</sup> Brendan Simms, Can Angela Merkel forge a United States of Europe? *Evening Standard*, 29<sup>th</sup> April 2013

<sup>8</sup> See <http://www.social-europe.eu/2013/06/europes-democracy-deficit-putting-some-meat-on-the-bones-of-habermas-critique/>

<sup>9</sup> See <http://www.finance-watch.org>

## Conclusion

We live in a utopia, the problem is it's not our utopia but that of the new right, the people who dared to dream and had the audacity and perseverance to create their world in an era when social democracy was dominant. Central to their dream is a free market Europe – without borders but no social, democratic or environmental controls either. They show us what is possible but only if we dare to dream, are equally audacious and show at least the same levels of perseverance. With every passing day it becomes clearer that tweaking the old social democracy won't work nor will patching up the old European project. The Europe of the elites is finished. The only future is a Europe of its citizens. Doing the same thing expecting different outcomes, as Einstein told us, defines insanity. Surely we social democrats cannot be insane!

**Neal Lawson** is Chair of [Compass](#), the good society pressure group, and was author of [Europe and the Good Society: After the Crash](#) with Thorben Albrecht, Head of Policy and Strategy at the SPD.

He would like to thank Robin Wilson and Jon Bloomfield for their comments on the paper and the participants of the FES inspired seminars on the Good Society in Lisbon in February 2013 and Budapest in April 2013.

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