

European Social Forum 2008

Malmö, Sweden

transform-network

Seminar 18. September 2008

***How to fight against the hegemony of the new neoliberal right
Which strategy for the left in Europe?***

The forthcoming elections in Austria and beyond

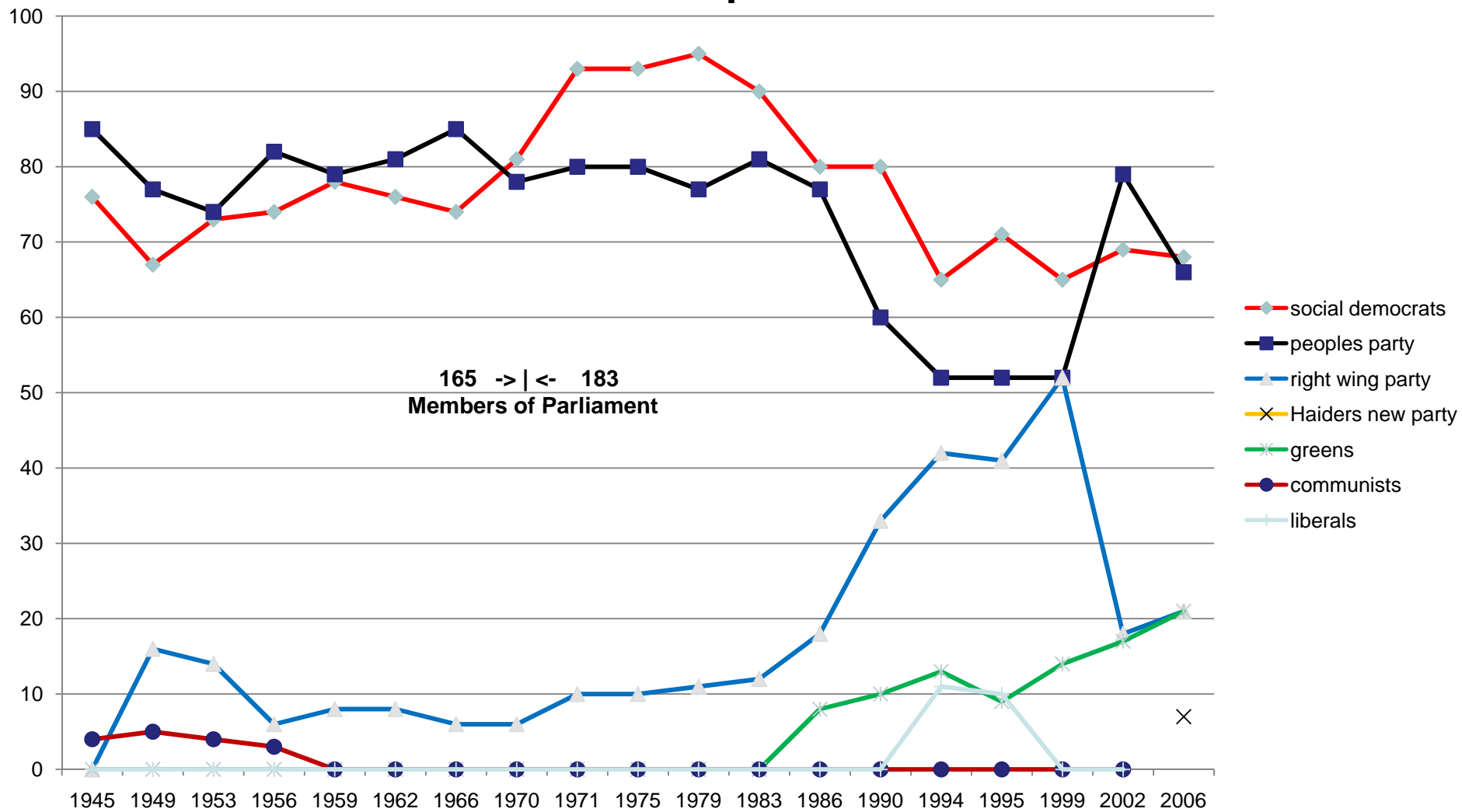
Peter Karl Fleissner, Vienna, Austria

<http://transform.or.at>

MPs in the Austrian Parliament

Year	social democrats	peoples party	right wing party	Haiders new party	greens	communists	liberals	others	Total
1945	76	85	n.k.		n.k.	4	n.k.		165
1949	67	77	16		n.k.	5	n.k.		165
1953	73	74	14		n.k.	4	n.k.		165
1956	74	82	6		n.k.	3	n.k.		165
1959	78	79	8		n.k.	-	n.k.		165
1962	76	81	8		n.k.	-	n.k.		165
1966	74	85	6		n.k.	-	n.k.		165
1970	81	78	6		n.k.	-	n.k.		165
1971	93	80	10		n.k.	-	n.k.		183
1975	93	80	10		n.k.	-	n.k.		183
1979	95	77	11		n.k.	-	n.k.		183
1983	90	81	12		n.k.	-	n.k.		183
1986	80	77	18		8	-	n.k.		183
1990	80	60	33		10	-	n.k.		183
1994	65	52	42		13	-	11		183
1995	71	52	41		9	-	10		183
1999	65	52	52		14	-	-		183
2002	69	79	18		17	-	-		183
2006	68	66	21	7	21	-	-		183
Sept 2008 % ??	26,5	25,5	17,1	7,2	11,7	1,0	5,0	6,0	100%

MPs by Parties in the Austrian Parliament 1945 - present

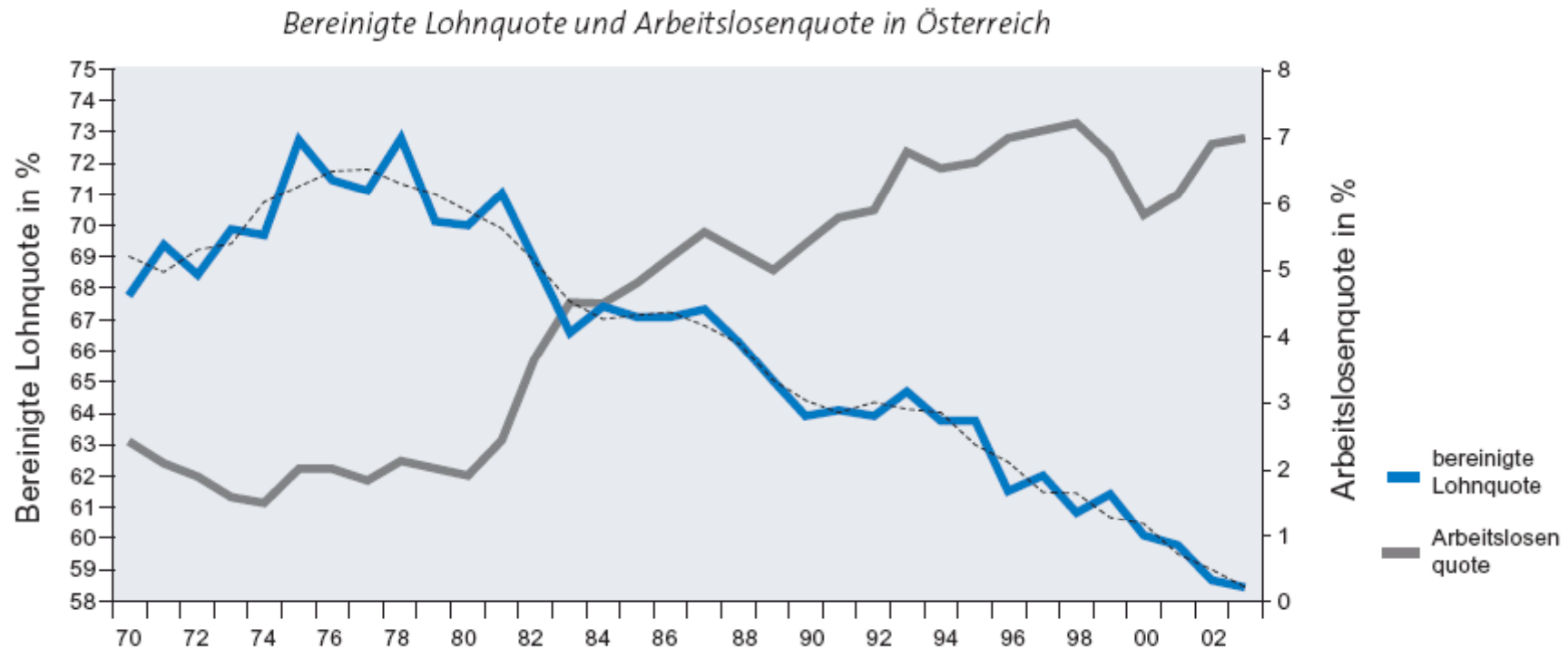


Year	Government	Percent	Number of MPs	Types of Governements in Austria after WW2
1945	VP-SP-KP coalition VP-SP since 1947	94,4	161	
1949	VP-SP-coalition	82,7	144	
1953	VP-SP-coalition	83,3	147	
1956	VP-SP-coalition	89,1	156	
1959	VP-SP-coalition	89,0	157	
1962	VP-SP-coalition	89,4	157	
1966	VP on its own	48,4	85	<u>Legend</u>
1970	SP minority gvmt	48,4	81	VP: conservatives
1971	SP on its own	50,0	93	
1975	SP on its own	50,4	93	SP: social democrats
1979	SP on its own	51,0	95	
1983	SP-FP-coalition	52,7	102	KP: communists
1986	SP-VP-coalition	84,4	157	
1990	SP-VP-coalition	74,9	140	FP: right wing party
1994	SP-VP-coalition	62,2	117	
1995	SP-VP-coalition	66,4	123	
1999	VP-FP-coalition	53,8	104	BZÖ: new Haider party
2002	VP-FP-coalition	52,3	97	
2005	VP-BZÖ-coalition	-	"	
2006-2008	SP-VP-coalition	69,7	134	

Recent tendencies

- On 28 Sept (general elections) there is a window of opportunity for new parties
 - In Vienna one can choose from 12 (!) parties
- because of large scale dissatisfaction with the political process
 - lack of efficiency to control poverty and social inequality
- and broken promises of social democrats.
 - no fees for students, not to buy Euro-fighters, less poverty
- For the time being there is only a very small margin left from social democrats (different from Germany)
 - a Left Party was established recently, but separated from the Communist Party

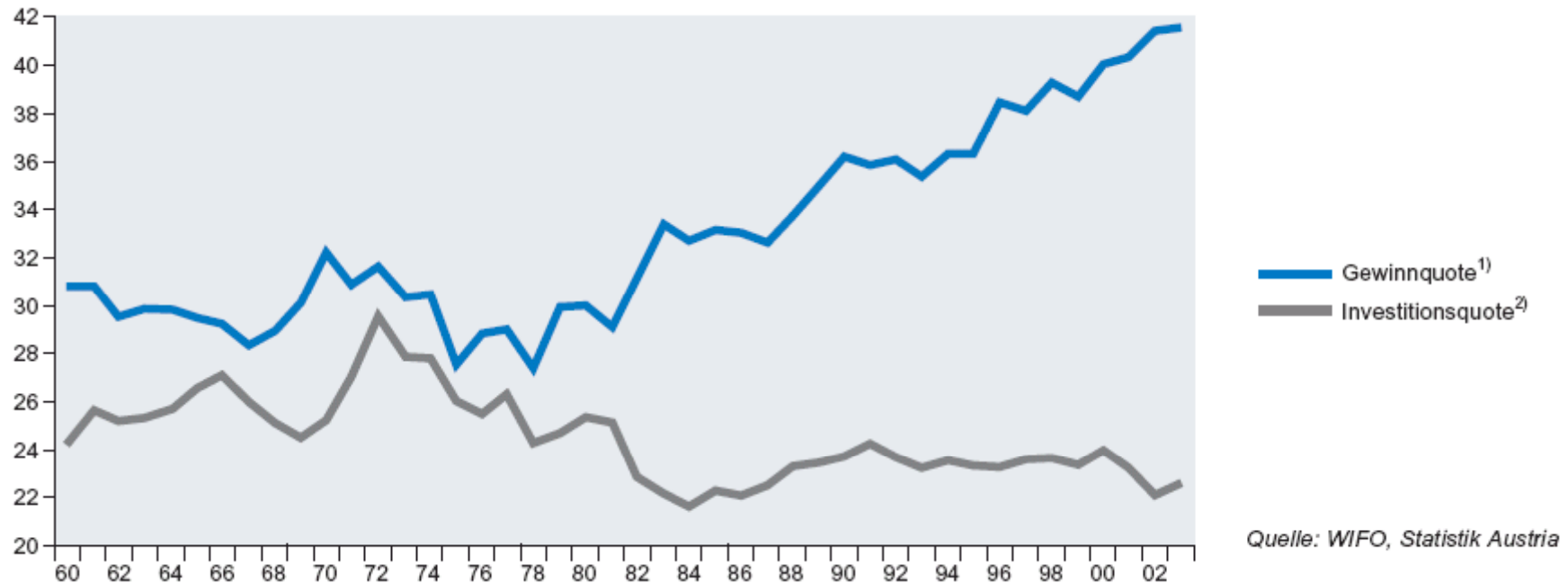
Wage Rate and Unemployment Rate in Austria, in % of National Income



Quelle: WIFO, Statistik Austria

- Source: Bericht über die soziale Lage 2003 – 2004, Bundesministerium für soziale Sicherheit, Generationen und Konsumentenschutz, Wien 2004, S. 260

Profits and Capital Investment in Austria as a Fraction of GDP



- Source: Bericht über die soziale Lage 2003 – 2004, Bundesministerium für soziale Sicherheit, Generationen und Konsumentenschutz, Wien 2004, S. 263

What to do in such a situation?

- Longer term orientation
 - around the issues of
 - ✓ equality (gender, nationality, sexual preference)
 - ✓ social and educational inclusion
 - ✓ peace, ecological, social and cultural sustainability
 - establishing alternative curricula for education and research
 - working on a strategy for the presence in traditional and electronic media
 - developing projects with possibly large scale participation and agreement
 - - e.g. a „Left-project“, participatory budgeting, reshaping the welfare state, basic income, diversity management, Charta Virtualis....

Example: Charta Virtualis

- should function as a collection of fundamental rights for the cyberspace
- by regulating the behavior of users towards more reliability, safety and security

Proposed contents:

- right to control all information related to oneself (**Informationelle Selbstbestimmung**)
- Right to encrypt (unbreakably)
- Right to anonymity/pseudonymity of personal and private communication
- universal access to information (e.g. Open Source, free/libre software, GNU, no patents on software)
- Limitation of the terms of Intellectual Property Rights
- Right to participate in the shaping of the cyberspace

Designing and experimenting with new types of organisations

Examples: Targeted Intelligence Networks (TINs)

- "*Peer Group Care*"
 - complementary structure for the elderly, poor, disabled and other outsiders;
 - "*Study Circles*" *
 - to complement traditional schools;
 - "*Workers' Health Assurance Groups*"
 - to improve the occupational ill-health status, and
 - "*Intrapreneurial Groups*"
 - against alienation on the workplace
- as examples to illustrate how self-empowerment and auto-determination can be trained, based on equal footing and democratic behaviour

* See paper by L. Karlsson & P. Fleissner (ed.) [Study Circles in Targeted Intelligence Networks](http://www.jrc.es/home/pages/detail.cfm?prs=329), Institute for Prospective Technological Studies of the European Commission, Seville, Spain 2000.
<http://www.jrc.es/home/pages/detail.cfm?prs=329>

Side conditions for implementation

The examples show that it is not impossible to implement TINs

- It will depend
 - on the level of income,
 - on the amount of leisure time left over after the necessities of work.
 - on the psychological status of the majority of people.
 - on increased experience of crisis symptoms,
 - on increased feelings of anxiety and stress,
 - On the availability of political support
- TINs make possible the more direct experience of the dark side of life, of the destructive tendencies of societal change.

Challenges of Implementation

- Other already existing social activities should be complemented by TINs, not replaced
- Society's responsibility should not be taken away, but increased (in particular financial resources should be available, private–public partnerships)
- Identification of NGOs needed
- Move the pendulum of history away from nationalisation one step further towards socialisation (“Vergesellschaftung statt Verstaatlichung”)
- Important issue: how to monitor and control the TINs to create a process of self-improvement
- In real life there are already very successful implementations, even if the use of ICT in these cases is not very strong yet.

*Thank you
for your attention!*

E-mail: fleissner@transform.or.at

Personal Homepage <http://members.chello.at/gre/fleissner>

Homepage transform!at: <http://transform.or.at>