

LINDAU MANIFESTO

Synopsis of the declaration by Attac Germany's scientific advisory board on the occasion of the 5th Lindau meeting on economic sciences with the participation of 18 Nobel prize-winners from 19-23 august 2014

Attac Germany's scientific advisory board takes the opportunity of the Lindau Meeting on Economic Sciences to express its views in a manifesto on the current situation and outlook for scientific science.

Since the 1970s, the economic sciences have not only departed in their determining direction from active economic actions, previously inspired by Keynes among others, and become receptive to neoliberal market dogma. They have also severed their roots in the social sciences and have since endeavoured to establish themselves as a leading science. The paradox, which is viewed critically even by many representatives from influential schools of thought, is now that, with the continuing enhanced value and dominance of economic sciences in society, their expertise and ability to solve problems seem to conversely decrease in direct proportion.

Where its influential direction in science and policy advice is concerned, the discipline has for years tended towards methodical and theoretical dogmatism, which allows neither for fundamental discussions about the suppositions of economics nor for genuine plurality and diversity of strategies. In light of this, the established economic sciences are not in a position to initiate debate about the changes needed in economic activity and lifestyle in order to counteract the socially and environmentally destructive methods of production and lifestyle. A key problem here has been the lack of any bearing on reality, which has been discussed for many years. Consequently, the boundary is increasingly disappearing between the continued fictional and always very specific results from extremely complex research in economic science and the transferability of these results to real life and their relevance for practical development and for economic conditions throughout the world.

This helps to create a climate of inviolability, linked to a clear message: whoever is unable or unwilling to follow the methodological approach of orthodox economics is neither entitled to criticise nor even in a position to make qualified judgement on economic phenomena and processes and they are strongly urged to therefore refrain from entering economic debate.

To make modern economics sustainable, a deliberate and fundamental break with the narrow-minded, free-market dogmatism of neoliberal provenance is called for. This is more difficult than it would seem, since, in spite of the major crisis, neoliberal thought in theory and practice has not just survived in all its disparate aspects from opportunist and stupid to blatant and unashamed through to radical and indifferent. It has even made a fresh attempt to crank up the cycle of radical free-market "reforms", as we have observed, for instance, in European policies for managing the crisis under German leadership.

Instead, real alternatives are needed. We need critical, political economics for a "good life", leading out of the impasse of neoliberal policy and, to use the words of Karl Polanyi, to prepare the ground for a new "Great Transformation": economically diverse, socially fair, ecologically careful and democratic and participative.

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