

Programme of the Party of Democratic Socialism

Resolution
adopted by the 2nd Session of the 8th PDS Congress
on 26 October 2003 in Chemnitz

Preamble

We, the members of the Party of Democratic Socialism, adopt this programme with the intention of setting forth our goals and speaking with others about the paths that lead to a peaceful and just society, a society in which all men and women can live self-determinedly and in social security and in which the phrase is honoured with which the Basic Law for the Federal Republic of Germany begins: "The dignity of man is inviolable". We seek co-operation with all who share these goals, and want to determine our own place in that co-operation.

It was the claim of the human rights declarations to bring about circumstances in which human dignity would be inviolable. The labour movement, the women's movement, socialist and anti-colonial movements have fought for concrete advances towards the implementation of that claim. Today that claim justifies our renewed socialist policy.

Growing unemployment, social insecurity and poverty, hunger und wars, heteronomy and violence are affronts to human dignity. The achievements of two and a half centuries of social struggle for emancipation are being destroyed by the neo-liberal policy of transforming all areas of life into profit-driven markets and enforcement of that policy by authoritarian, imperial and military means. With its imperialist policy, with political and economic blackmail and with wars of aggression, the US Government is pursuing the geostrategic goal of world-wide supremacy.

We socialist women and men, members of the PDS, want to take part in the resistance to this policy and work with others towards the evolution of an alternative that has freedom, equality, justice and solidarity as its goals.

We adopt this programme in the tradition of the struggles against capitalist exploitation, ecological destruction, political oppression and criminal wars.

But we do it also in unreserved disputation with the crimes that were committed in the name of socialism and communism and in rejection of any attempt to achieve progress by means of dictatorship. . We are united by the irreversible breach with disregard for democracy and political liberties as were practiced by no small number of left parties, including the SED.

Proceeding from the solidarity-based and egalitarian aspiration of the social democratic and communist movement of the 19th and 20th centuries, and taking up the emancipatory and libertarian traditions of earlier socialist movements, we strive for a radical renewal of socialist politics. In that spirit we seek dialogue with different democratic forces in society in working our alternatives. We take up contemporary and future-oriented ideas of trade union, church, intellectual, ecological, feminist and other modern criticism of capitalism. We join the global capitalism and domination critical movements in saying: The world is not a commodity. Another world is possible.

In the diversity of movements and political forces in favour of another world of solidarity, we are not a force free of contradictions either. We, the members of the PDS, have differing views on many issues. But we are united in resisting political incapacitation, dismantling of welfare systems and disregard for human dignity. We are united in the struggle against a

policy of capitalist globalisation, against war and militarisation, against the weakening of the welfare state and of democracy. The civilisatory gains we have fought for must be defended and extended. We take a resolute stand against patriarchal domination, sexism and all forms of discrimination against "others", against nationalism, racism and anti-Semitism. Committed to anti-fascism, we resist neo-Nazi politics.

We see the causes of the threat to human civilisation, of violence and war, social distress and the crisis of the world ecosystem in the profit and domination interests of the internationally most powerful sections of capital and in the drive to develop the "north" at the expense of the "south", at the expense of nature and future generations. We want these social structures to be repressed and ultimately overcome so that humanity can find a way out of this devastating development logic. In this sense we are consistently anti-capitalist.

In a socialist society such as we strive for, the means of production, distribution and consumption serve the purpose of making available all the conditions for a self-determined and solidarity-based life. To achieve this we strive for a change in the type of economic growth and scientific and technological progress that will stop the destruction of the natural environment and leave a habitable world to the succeeding generations. In this prospect we stand for the unity of constitutional state and welfare state; for internal peace and solidarity in the context of a world-wide order of peace, justice and welfare.

With this Programme we want to make clearly discernible who we are, what we want and how we seek to achieve our goals. We want to explain what socialism means to us, where we see the fundamental problems of the contemporary world, what our ideas of socialist policy are and how we want to develop the PDS further as a part of the great contemporary emancipatory movements.

Socialism – Goal, path and values

For us, socialism is a necessary goal – a society in which the free development of each and every woman and man is the condition for the free development of all. For us, socialism is a movement against the exploitation of man by man, against patriarchal oppression, against the despoiling of the natural environment, for the preservation and development of human culture, for the implementation of human rights, for a society in which citizens, women and men, settle their affairs democratically.

For us socialism is a system of values in which freedom, equality and solidarity, emancipation, justice, the preservation of the natural environment and peace are inseparable.

The idea of socialism has been damaged through its misuse to justify dictatorship and oppression. Our experience of the GDR, including our realization of the reasons for its collapse, imposes on us the commitment to re-examine our understanding of socialism.

1. Our goals and values: freedom, equality, solidarity

Our programmatic goals start from a simple question: what do people need for a self-determined life? The struggles of exploited, oppressed and degraded social groups have shown that people need the opportunity to decide for themselves and jointly with others on the social conditions of their lives. They need peaceful coexistence with other people. They need clean air to breathe and clean water to drink. They need jobs and fair distribution. They need education and culture, leisure and recreational opportunities. They need social security

and health care. For hundreds of millions of people it is still just a matter of one elementary need: to overcome absolute poverty. They need their daily bread so as not to die of hunger.

People have to be able to develop their skills and needs in order to develop productive powers and moral standards. Whether people are free or not free depends on whether or not they have these assets at their disposal. These are fundamental freedom assets. The claim to an equal share in them is at the same time a claim to enjoyment of fundamental human rights. It was the International that made the struggle for these human rights its global message.

As we see it, socialism does not come about as a result of an abstract historical plan but arises from social realities, the real needs and interests of people. For that reason the PDS does not develop its programmes in isolation from the men and women citizens and activists of social movements, organisations and initiatives. Socialism comes about in democratic struggles that are waged in order to resist and overcome the structural conditions for lack of freedom, inequality and exploitation and the relationships of power and ownership on which they are based. We want to contribute insights and experience to those struggles.

Freedom is the benchmark for socialist policy. For this policy, equality is the degree of participation in fundamental freedom assets. Freedom is for us the possibility to shape our own lives and society ourselves and jointly with others. Equality without freedom is oppression. Freedom, equality and solidarity comprise the substance of justice.

Justice requires that the fundamental freedoms that social groups avail themselves of can become the freedoms of all others. Freedom is to be achieved not as egotistic having but as solidarity-based doing. That is how we define the socialist values that we agreed on in our 1990 and 1993 programmes. We make them the basis of our policy.

Such a policy requires a different regulation of the economy. More leeway for women and men citizens to decide their own affairs independently can stimulate and promote the creative activity of workers and the self-employed, of engineers, scientific workers, management and administrative staff in production plants, in the service sector and in social management. Greater influence on the part of democratic forces in civil society, general socio-ecological conditions for the market that have to be reshaped, and future-oriented national and international policy must be combined to form a new mode of social regulation.

The social dominance of the logic of profit is therefore incompatible with the social obligation that property entails as set forth in the Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany.

Entrepreneurship and profit interests are important preconditions for innovation and economic efficiency. But when innovation and economic efficiency are limited to the business management logic of individual enterprises and subject to the drive for profit of individual capital, they become their opposite. Socio-ecological business management presupposes social control and democratic co-determination. Without co-determination, without countervailing trade union power and welfare state regulation, private entrepreneurial interests lead to undesirable developments that are costly to the economy and socially and environmentally destructive.

We defend this basic socialist conviction in the face of the ominous difference between world-changing productive forces and their limited controllability owing to the present power and property relationships and the patterns of thought and behaviour that have become second nature to the majority. The patenting of the human genotype and the alteration of human beings through genetic engineering is becoming reality. Profit-oriented growth interests are compromising the natural foundations of human life. It has been possible for some time to wipe out humankind through the use of modern weapons systems.

We would like to see a dynamic flourishing of the productive forces of society strengthen the material bases for an alternative economic, social and environmental policy. We want to get out of the blind alley of socially and ecologically destructive growth and instead take the path of growth within the framework of sustainable development.

Radical ecologisation of society, the concomitant new kind of economic growth, of scientific and technological progress require an alternative mode of producing and living. A self-determined life, a world of work freed of alienation and a just distribution of wealth require alternative societal structures that are characterised by the realisation of community interests and have overcome the dominance of private capitalist property.

Democratic decision-making processes are a precondition for real socialisation. Strategic decisions about the directions and standards of social, scientific and technological, ecological and cultural development have to be consciously and democratically formed and require the participation in decision-making of producers, consumers, municipalities and social movements.

We members of the Party of Democratic Socialism stand for the use of peaceful means of sustainable conflict prevention and conflict resolution. We have been and continue to be staunch opponents of the militarisation of international affairs and foreign policy, we reject on principle war as a policy instrument as well as terror as an instrument of political struggle and also condemn the so-called "war on terror" as an attempt by the US administration to expand their own world domination. We are against all forms of aggression and especially so-called pre-emptive wars. We support responsible action in the service of the establishment and preservation of peace on earth as an elementary prerequisite for the universal validity of civil and human rights.

2. Our path: democratisation of society

A more humane society will be brought about not by peace with those who rule but by the resistance of the oppressed and disadvantaged and all those who take a stand in solidarity with them. The methods used in these conflicts must correspond to the goals of non-violence and democracy, since otherwise they will be the starting-point for new domination and oppression. However, there is a legitimate right to resist wherever persons, groups and states disregard human dignity and themselves use force.

We act in concert with those who want democratic participation and restructuring in politics and are no longer prepared to let politics be increasingly subservient to the interests of the most influential financial institutions and businesses.

That is why we fight for parliamentary influence as well and are prepared, if the balance of power is right, to nominate women and men representatives of our Party for government office.

In open and critical dispute and in direct dialogue with the women and men citizens, we shall see whether the means selected correspond to our most important goal, to bring about a change of direction in politics so that it will centre on the social and democratic interests of the majority of the population. The PDS is always facing the task of ensuring that its work in parliaments and in the executive is in line with its strategic goals.

The property question as one of the cardinal issues of the socialism movement is above all a question of actual disposal over economic power resources, in the arrangement of which legal titles play an essential role. What is decisive is the real content and social effect of concrete property claims.

The alternative to capitalist property therefore lies not in all-embracing state property but in democratic decision-making concerning fundamental social processes and concerning the promotion of forms of ownership that most readily permit basic human assets to be efficiently provided and equitably distributed.

All forms of ownership – cooperative, communal, private, state and others – that develop the natural social and cultural bases of life and facilitate access to the basic conditions of human life must be promoted; others which undermine or destroy the foundations of life and hinder or prevent such access should be repressed and overcome. We hold fast to the possibility provided by the Basic Law of nationalising land, natural resources and means of production and bringing them under public ownership or other forms of social economy and are in favour of exercising that possibility if in the opinion of the majority of the citizens this would contribute to social justice and effective provision of basic social assets. We want to stop the global diktat of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) over the framework conditions of business and the privatisation of public services and knowledge and gradually reverse it where this corresponds to the public weal.

Property matters are matters of power and the balance of forces in society. The transformation of property relationships must be brought about by countervailing powers. It is important to gradually subject control of highly concentrated share capital and financial funds to social criteria. Welfare-state and environmental policy arrangements will have to be made for that purpose and implemented through a changed taxation, structural and research policy, through greater influence on the part of trade unions and works councils, the municipalities, and environmental and consumer organisations. We resist the policy of deregulation and the self-release of shareholders from their social obligations.

We stand for the protection of public property and its expansion if and when this is meaningful in the interest of the public. We want to strengthen cooperative ownership. We reject the limitation of public power of disposal connected with the progressive privatisation of public property. We demand the strict orientation of that power of disposal on the interests of the citizens and constant accounting for the use of public property. The condition for that is that the state does not lose its influence over the decisive processes affecting the common weal and retains the power to assert the interests of the public.

We see this as necessary especially and specifically when public welfare tasks are delegated to private or cooperative firms.

We support placing state property at the disposal of other institutions if and when such institutions work together in an economically effective, socially and ecologically oriented manner and if the power of disposal is strengthened in the interest of the public weal. That presupposes government-planned framework conditions.

The policy of the PDS should contribute to the weakening of capital investment interests and ultimately overcome them and change the power and property relationships on which they are based. Chances for more far-reaching transformations should arise from that policy.

Democratic socialism arises in and out of society – or not at all. It fails as an isolated project of small groups or as a dictatorship. It is a worldly movement towards a worldly goal. It stands for asserting emancipatory and solidarity interests of society against all others. Democratic socialism points beyond capitalism. It is a process that can only materialise in a broad social discourse and through joint action of those involved.

II. The present world

1. The neo-liberal offensive

By the end of the 1960s, a crisis of the welfare systems in post-war capitalist countries, the existential crisis of Soviet-type socialism on the horizon and the failure of “catching-up modernisation” in the so called Third World ushered in the end of the entire international post-war order.

This development is combined with the quest for how to handle the societal contradictions that have broken out in new dimensions. Predatory competition in the global markets and the intermingling of international economics and politics create big problems for any attempt at preserving social aspirations and extending them against all forms of resistance. A major transformation in the relationship between society and individuals vis-à-vis nature has turned into a matter of survival.

The great wave of introduction of new technologies has triggered not an increased demand for labour but massive unemployment. The process of individualisation, which while increasing the opportunities for vital individual decisions at the same time dissolves social environments and common ground between people, is changing the conditions for collective action. The bigger share of older people in the population thanks to social and medical progress causes questions about the integration of changed older generations in society and the use of their qualifications, as well as the search for appropriate pension schemes, for different services in the fields of health care, education and culture.

However, the struggles for changing the economic, social, political and security structures that emerged in the capitalist world after 1945 soon met with a major neo-liberal counter-reform starting with the US-backed fascist putsch in Chile in 1973. That was the time when the long economic upswing of capitalism after World War II ended. Lower profit rates first appeared in the U.S.A. and soon swept across the developed capitalist countries as an expression of a gradually aggravating structural crisis in which real incomes dropped or stagnated and long-term investment became ever less profitable. Given the worsening conditions for investment in productions capital investments were more and more focussed on finances. The international currency and loan system hitherto intact turned into shackles. The ruling classes reacted by resorting to rather neo-conservative and neo-liberal processes of transition to a new type of capital accumulation which was dominated by US-led finance capital. The distribution relations were shifted in favour of capital owners, a different class structure took shape.

In many western countries the compromise between capital interests and interests of the organised working-class movement was annulled. Capitalist globalisation, capital interests permeating society, a reduction of welfare state responsibility, the lifting of controls over capital movements, increased repression and a decline of democracy, subordination of World Trade Organisation, International Monetary Fund and World Bank to the interests of the most powerful capital agglomerates as well as growing weight of transnational corporations, militarisation of international relations and the US supremacy with imperial goals are marking the development.

To a considerable degree this was boosted by the crisis and demise of state socialism. Its existence had caused the western world to be somewhat hesitant in the use of military force. It promoted liberation struggles in the so-called developing countries and social reforms in the industrialised capitalist countries. The disappearance of that external counter-power gave rise to a deep historical change in the capitalist camp - coupled with negative world-wide effects.

The neo-liberal offensive accelerated the breakdown of the Soviet Union and its allies. The countries of the Third World were forced to accept a policy of opening their markets for international corporations, deregulation and lowering social standards while they are still barred from western markets. Many of these countries got trapped in huge debts and to a large extent lost sovereignty over the basic political, social and economic conditions of their development.

Neo-liberal capitalism promised the wage-earners capital appreciation and private freedom through shares and real estate funds too. In reality the distribution of social wealth is taking place from the bottom upwards, the gap between rich and poor, between South and North is growing at an accelerated pace. Power is being concentrated globally in the hands of internationally operating corporations and finance centres whose exercise of power is assuming unprecedented features of global dictation. International relations are being militarised in the service of this rule. Social movements, trade unions and the political Left have not been able yet to halt this development.

Neo-liberal capitalism promised the integration of the socially disadvantaged. In reality this is made dependent on their usability on the markets. From the point of view of those markets, however, many population groups and even large regions appear "superfluous". Those who cannot be used to ensure the functioning of a high-performance capitalist society are excluded. Urban ghettos and rural areas without prospects are emerging. Social exclusion has become the fate of millions of people. It threatens the unemployed and those who sink into the low-wage sector. People are becoming disposable.

The privileged position of employees in the high-wage sector of the labour market procures them new possibilities of making private provisions for hard times and at the same time makes them more exposed to crises on the capital markets. Information workers as a large new income-dependent social group find that the hoped-for ascent and self-reliance goes hand in hand with massive losses. Other large groups - not least migrants - become servants of the new middle classes. But considerable segments of the middle class and many of the new dependent labour entrepreneurs are also threatened with social descent. Society is being split in a new way. Social insecurity and the fear of descent to society's lower depths is becoming the most important means of disciplining people and subordinating them to the interests of capital utilisation.

Neo-liberal capitalism promised an epoch of new economic dynamism and global affluence through deregulation and a global policy of free trade. In reality, the gap between centres and periphery of the world capitalist economy is growing. While international networking is stepped up between North America, Japan and Europe entire regions are actually being excluded from world trade. The ascent of a number of newly industrialising countries is accompanied by the descent of many others. One billion people are living in complete misery. Globalisation has led to new kinds of social polarisation.

Neo-liberalism promised equality of men and women. Increasing employment of women is a chance for emancipation. It is accompanied, however, by the general spread of precarious jobs for women and men. Poverty as before primarily affects women and children. The commercial exploitation of women and children has become a global business.

Neo-liberal politicians have not adhered to their social promises. For three decades economic growth rates have been declining in the western world. For three decades, pressure on incomes of the masses as well as the cancellation of social achievements has been the capitalist response. For three decades, this reduction of mass demand, environmental destruction and speculative capital investment in international financial markets have further lowered growth rates. The new boost of the "terror of the economy" is connected to the ascent of weaponry terror in the arsenals of imperial policy.

2. Capitalism in the age of information and communication technologies

The crisis of the post-war order, the radical neo-liberal offensive as well as the profound changes in terms of needs, values and life styles have revolutionised the technological mode of production and given rise to new class, strata and social relations structures in the highly developed capitalist societies. Information and communication technologies take the lead and permeate industry as the basis of modern production. New productive forces are being created and integrated into the structures of capital utilisation. The economics of physical production is being completed and transformed by the economics of information and communication. Not only large workforces but also individuals showing good performance and cooperation between smaller groups are becoming important sources of social wealth and producing ideas for alternatives.

Modern information and communication step up social change, networking and complexity of modern societies and the globalisation process. Flexibilisation and individualisation are becoming basic processes of modern societies and a challenge to the Left.

Through supplier and buyer networks small and medium-sized businesses depend on major corporations which shift many risks to them. As soon as these businesses are active in regional markets their interests differ substantially from those of the globally active corporations. With their regional customers they share the interest in strengthening domestic markets and are often victims of rationalisation and the pressure of costs which they pass on to their employees. More than the major corporations they contribute to tax revenues and the creation of jobs.

The most important form of social cooperation in capitalism earlier on was subordination to a command. The most important forms of cooperation in present-day capitalism are network structures in core areas, flat hierarchies in the labour process and a concentration of strategic decisions in top management. While information workers are expected to show self-motivation and self-control, cooperation and creativeness, the great dependency on short-term investment interests undermines these potentials. Competition among employees, self-exploitation and overwork are the consequence. While direct labour organisation is more and more left to the employee it is directly gauged by profitability. While self-responsibility is a technological requirement and both supervision and control must be at least partly shifted to the employee the most important decisions are still out of their reach and labour rights are reduced. For large groups of wage-earners the old division of labour including monotonous works prevails apart from performance pressure and increasing social insecurity.

To an unprecedented degree, information capitalism exploits people's cultural resources. General work which produces immaterial assets is the basis of cultural resources. In contrast to material assets immaterial assets do not wear when being used. Frequent use increases their productivity and their contribution to society's wealth. Private monopolisation of this wealth contradicts their essence as public goods. Only if cultural wealth is generally accessible it can be developed and productively used.

The increasing alignment of all relations with the dictatorship of money contradicts the creative interest of employees in work and free cooperation. The coercion of having to orientate one's life at quickly usable performance is confronted with the need of many people to follow their own interests in life. The overriding goal to increase both return on investment and share value contradicts not only the interest in the common good but also the necessity of long-term market development and corporate strategies that are fit for the future. The reduction of societies to markets destroys the natural, social, political and cultural conditions of productivity and innovation. Progressing innovation and internationalisation within the European Union is also accompanied by an upsurge in new nationalism and strategies of disintegration in other regions.

Socialist policy addresses all contradictions of capitalism aiming to use the new potentials of society in emancipation and solidarity. Marx's observation that in bourgeois society each thing is pregnant with its opposite still applies.

Present-day capitalism produces potentials that are of the greatest importance for solving the problems of mankind, but at the same time it binds, deforms and destroys them. They are needed for socialist policy and for changing the balance of forces, however, and must be used for those purposes. The accumulation of social wealth, when it takes place without harm to the environment and the wealth is distributed fairly, can provide scope for creativity; greater productivity means more time for self-determined ways of living, as long as it is accompanied by humanisation of the world of work and shorter working hours; increased knowledge and information improves the conditions for the conscious shaping of society; internationalisation makes for easier access to other cultures; regionalisation, world-wide networking by means of the Internet and global actions, if they involve alternative protagonists, increase the chances of democratisation "from below".

The contradiction between the development of new productive forces and their subjugation to the bigoted dominance of capital investment is ubiquitous. The utilisation of the new possibilities of human civilisation for the social and ecological reorganisation of social relationships is becoming the focus of emancipatory actions. A new anti-capitalist global movement has been emerging since the end of the 1990s. Trade unions are more and more expected to show decisive resistance to the worsening situation of the working people, the reduction in wages and the abolition of solidarity-based redistribution structures. A new force may arise from the combination of globalisation-critical and other social movements to which the political Left has to make a contribution.

3. The global social problems

At the beginning of the 21st century, the Die crass antagonisms within capitalism have become global threats to the existence of world society. Twenty per cent of the world population in the North produce and consume more than 70 per cent of the goods and services world-wide. Large parts of the world population are without regular employment and have no access to safe drinking water, food, elementary health care and education. The natural foundations of their lives are being destroyed. The ecological crisis is growing to global dimensions. A process of disintegration of elementary community and state structures has gripped entire regions of the world. Wars shatter all hopes for a decent livelihood in many countries. Africa's share in world trade has sunk to one per cent. Dictatorships, nationalism, corruption and extreme forms of patriarchy prevail in many countries.

The imperial hegemony of the USA and NATO, their concept of wars of aggression is meant to guarantee the preservation of the exploitative and destructive structures, at the same time deepening the causes of the real dangers. It increases social, economic and cultural destruction and ecological devastation. It provokes the refinement of weapons of mass destruction and offensive military concepts. It leads to political discrimination against states, also under international law, the spread of regional conflicts, war and international terrorism, contempt for human rights, the marginalisation of the UN and its Charter.

The governments of a few states, the leaderships of some world corporations and top echelons of financial capital have attained extensive control over the most important international institutions. They are striving for absolute rule and a reshuffle of power in their interest. An alliance of armaments, financial, raw material and energy corporations and the US administration are playing the leading part. In the countries of the capitalist periphery, the governments are increasingly turning into implementers of the decisions of institutions of international capital such as IMF, World Bank and WTO. A new totalitarian reign of

transnational economic and political groups is emerging with the help of monetary and trade policy instruments, economic and political pressure and superior imperial military strength.

4. The European Union

The PDS is in favour of European integration and the enlargement of the European Union on a democratic, social, ecological and non-military basis. It sees in it the chance for a supranational organisation which can contribute to promoting peace, freedom and equality for the citizens of the European Union and world-wide. The peaceful living together of their nations and states is a civilisatory asset to the preservation and development of which the PDS devotes itself. That is why it campaigns against all tendencies towards turning the European Union into a military power, destroying the welfare state and reducing democracy.

For capitalism-critical, trade union and other social movements and left political parties the European Union increasingly becomes a political field for defending, renewing and developing the welfare state and for present-day anti-capitalist struggles. They want to make joint use of their ample experience.

In terms of its foreign and security policy the European Union stands at a crossroads. It can take a stance for a world-wide order under international law, for civilian conflict prevention and a peaceful settlement of conflicts as well as solidarity and development. It can also contribute to a further extension of an imperial US-led world order and take own contour as junior partner having big-power ambitions. At the moment it tends to do the latter. The EU has started to build up a hi-tech intervention force and claims to be able to carry out military operations internationally in breach of international law if need be. For ideological justification it refers to the New Labour doctrine of "liberal imperialism" according to which in armed operations in so called failure states the principle of non-intervention must stand back to the principle of international responsibility. But the contradictions within the transatlantic alliance and between the European Union members increase.

The PDS will work towards giving the European Union an independent role in international politics by putting up resistance to the US hegemony ambitions and converting the EU into a community of states in which foreign policy and foreign trade relations are subject to the principles of joint security, which relies on disarmament and civilian conflict prevention and makes an active contribution to developing a world community in solidarity through more development aid and fair trade.

With the treaties of Maastricht and Amsterdam the European Union has developed into even more of a competition zone dominated by the interests of banks and trusts. The national governments and the European Commission have stepped up their efforts at deregulation and privatisation. Contrary to what the PDS – although in favour of the joint currency -, trade unions and other social forces demanded the common currency was introduced as part of the attack on European welfare-state traditions and in disregard for the requirements of economic, social and employment policy. Mass unemployment and poverty are still among the main problems of societies in Europe. We will contribute to using the potential of the single European market and of the monetary union for making the globalisation process social and ecological.

Currently however, the European Union confronts its citizens, above all, as a bureaucratic, antisocial and undemocratic reality. Important sovereignty rights of the states are being handed over to the EU and withdrawn from national democratic control, without democratising EU decision-making processes and, above all, extending the rights of the European Parliament. According to the PDS the comprehensive democratisation of the European Union and its social orientation is and continues to be the key to building a Europe of the citizens. It supports the process of adopting a European constitution. Despite a desired strengthening of civil rights the progress made so far is not sufficient enough to overcome the

social and democracy deficit. The Schengen Agreement and its trade and agricultural policy have shown the EU to be a fortress against the needs of the South and East. We want an open and democratic Europe that opens its borders for people in need and bans racism and anti-Semitism.

The PDS formulates an integration project as our alternative to the neo-liberal and military power claim of the EU, one that will firstly overcome the EU's democracy deficits, secondly give a social and ecological orientation to European integration, and thirdly use EU enlargement as well as the revision of the relationship to Russia to guarantee a cooperative and lasting peace-keeping system in Europe under the umbrella of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation. With such a policy we want to give continuity to the welfare state provisions which in most of the states of Europe are more far-reaching than in the Anglo-Saxon countries and to the greater influence of trade unions and social movements on social development.

The PDS will work towards a further development of the European Union's Charter of Fundamental Rights and especially an actionable right to a social safeguard based on the real needs. It demands the reorientation in favour of a policy of social and ecological innovation which includes sustainable regional development and the overall conditions for a new kind of full employment. Public provisions for people's livelihood must be extended and not remain subordinated to EU competition rules nor the neo-liberal market logic and the privatisation pressure from the GATS agreement in the WTO framework.

We note that some of the European Commission's approaches to employment, environment, social and regional policy and to political cooperation in the EU offer opportunities to combat national narrow-mindedness and to promote social interests. In particular, we see in a European orientation of the PDS the chance to draw on the great historical and current wealth of different national experiences in the confrontation with capitalism, militarism and global neo-liberalism and to fight for a peaceful, democratic, social and open Europe.

The 20th century ended with the first war in which the EU was formally involved, the war against Yugoslavia. The 21st began with invasion of Afghanistan by the NATO states and the war which the U.S.A. and Britain waged against Iraq in defiance of international law. The PDS takes a stance for banishing war both in Europe and elsewhere and making sure it is not waged on European or any other territory in this century.

5. The Federal Republic of Germany

In the 1990s a policy of privatising public utilities as well as economic and social deregulation was pursued both in Germany and in the European Union. Neo-liberal policy gained the upper hand. The change of government in 1998 initially led to some modification of the neo-liberal project of rule, but ushered in a new phase of its comprehensive implementation later on. The hopes for a change for a social and ecological policy were not fulfilled. It was the beginning of the rift with the trade unions. The Left in the SPD and the Green party found themselves marginalised. In a grand coalition with the conservative parties and the top capital forces in Germany neo-liberal changes to the structure misleadingly called a reform have been pushed ahead deepening the economic and social crisis, sharpening mass unemployment and lowering the living standard of those dependent on wages and many other groups. Stagnating domestic demand harbours the danger of a depression, more public debt and impairs the state's scope for action. This has also been encouraged by handing over important decisions to the EU and the international economic organisations as well as the liberalisation of the world economy.

Various Social Democratic 'Third Roads' in response to prevailing neo-liberalism have not only been proved ambivalent, they are also incompatible with implementing social, political

and cultural rights of the people and do not pass the test when it comes to solving the decisive problems of the 21st century.

In contrast to classical neo-liberalism they recognise the representation of social interests vis-à-vis capital as legitimate. The consistency of the counter-forces can, therefore, be weakened by integrating the trade unions and environmental organisations in the neo-liberal political routine on the one hand. On the other trade unions and environmental organisations have the opportunity to effectively represent important social and ecological interests. The present promotion of civil society for self-organisation can be used, too, to strengthen societal interests against capital investment interests, patriarchal conditions of rule and racism. However, these chances arising from the ambiguity of the Social Democratic project have hardly been used so far. The effort of doing the splits between adaptation to the diktat of world markets and partial preservation of former Social Democratic values tended towards neo-liberal developments at the beginning of the new century. How much influence left Social Democratic resistance can produce remains to be seen.

The solidarity-based social insurance schemes have been sacrificed to capitalist conversion and far reaching privatisation which will lead to a lasting exclusion of millions of people and a deep social division, although the material opportunities in society have grown considerably.

The change of political strategy went hand in hand with the overt abandonment of restraint in terms of power politics which in the past encouraged European nations to overcome their mistrust and civilised German politics to a certain extent. The sovereignty regained on the basis of the 2 + 4 Treaty of 1990 served as an argument for “normalising” German foreign and military policy, for claiming a more dominant role in the EU and for an active involvement in wars. Important achievements of the movement of 1968 have been dismantled and experience from the peace movement in the 1980s has been negated. The contributions made by social and democratic movements in the Federal Republic of Germany prior to 1989 have been marginalised in united Germany. In the year 1990, the word of the Federal Chancellor that peace would go our from united Germany stood. In fact, however, the militarisation of the Federal Republic of Germany has been accelerated since 1990. Social Democracy and the Alliance 90/The Green party have departed from their origins in the working class movement and the grassroots, radical democratic and peace-oriented movement.

German unity presented the east German population with a representative parliamentary democracy, individual rights as German subjects, the rule of the law, a modernisation of the infrastructure and a western style of consumption – but not justice. The ruling elites of united Germany have ignored the historical heritage of the GDR and its peaceful popular movement of 1989/90 in order to maintain their own predominance and prevent social and democratic reforms in an enlarged Germany. Their policy also involved a violation of the basic principles of the unification treaty. As a result there are growing social inequality and political as well as legal disadvantages for east Germans.

The experiences of people, resulting from other social conditions after 1945 in the second German state, have been largely ignored. This applies to experience women made in a society of full employment, the integration of production with social and cultural tasks in enterprises, cooperative farming in agriculture, integrated health services, the positive results of a comprehensive education system, independence of the academic middle-structures at universities and colleges, multidisciplinary teaching at universities, broad support for cultural and sports facilities, day-care facilities for children and youth clubs. A one-sided adaptation to west Germany was demanded and largely imposed.

A host of wrong decisions has destroyed the foundations of a self-reliant upswing in east Germany for a long time to come. Quite a few regions in east Germany are gripped with underdevelopment. During the decade after 1990 1.5 million people at employment age left

east Germany with their children. Without a new beginning in terms of economic, environmental and employment policy large parts of east Germany are going to be a disaster area.

III. Reform alternatives: democratic, social, civil

Socialist policy arises from the struggle for justice and an equal share in all social freedom assets for everyone. It opposes the marketing and incapacitation of people and opposes war. It develops within broad-based social and political alliances. Today it is directed towards changing the balance of forces, creating the necessary preconditions for a change of direction in politics and the restructuring of property and power structures that this involves. It is an internationalist policy.

Socialist policy means action for the democratic participation of all, since peace and freedom require the democratisation of power.

Socialist policy means action for peace, since the right to life is the most elementary precondition for the freedom of all.

Socialist policy means action for a change of direction in economic policy, for social and ecological efficiency and justice, since the unbridled craving for profit endangers the life and security of all.

Socialist policy means action for preservation of our natural environment, since nature is the most endangered asset of mankind.

Socialist policy means action for a society in which full employment is restored, since work that ensures a livelihood and is socially recognised and ecologically oriented is the basis for individual freedom and social solidarity.

Socialist policy means action for the solidarity-based renewal of the social security systems, since social security is a central condition for a life in dignity.

Socialist policy means action for unhindered access for all to knowledge, culture and information, since this determines as never before the possibilities of the individual and the future of the society.

Socialist policy means action for a renewed development concept for strengthening the underdeveloped regions in the eastern and western parts of Germany, since equal opportunities in life are a basic feature of solidarity.

Socialist policy means overcoming the social dominance of men over women and fighting for the genuine equal status of the sexes in politics, the economy and the society.

Socialist policy means rejecting every form of discrimination based on age and respect for the lifetime achievement of elderly people. Socialist policy means abolishing discrimination against people of other national, religious or ideological origins.

The present balance of forces is characterised by the hegemony of neo-liberalism and the offensive of those forces that are working for even more complete capitalisation of society. Socialist policy must proceed from these preconditions. The creation of conditions for a change of direction in politics is a long-term task. Protest and resistance must be coupled with a commitment to tangible reform projects. The purpose of such reform projects is to improve living conditions, take steps towards more justice and democracy and prepare to

enter upon a more comprehensive restructuring of property and power relationships that will break the dominance of profit over society.

1. Democracy

Extension of the individual and collective rights of women and men citizens / democratisation of local government / economic democracy / democratic world order

Democratisation of the state, the economy and the society is for the PDS the crucial question in any reform alternative. This requires unlimited opportunities of public information and at the same time presupposes education, knowledge, protection from economic repression and financial safeguards against risks of poverty.

For the PDS, fundamental individual and collective political rights, parliamentary democracy, political pluralism, the separation of powers and the rule of law as well as local self-government are indispensable gains from past struggles for equal rights for all. The PDS endorses the conviction expressed by Rosa Luxemburg in 1918 that the democratic forms of political life in each country are indeed extremely valuable, even indispensable foundations for socialist policy. The PDS stands for the embodiment of social rights in the Constitution to supplement the basic political rights.

The democratic gains achieved thus far are in jeopardy. In the wake of the upgrading of military force in international relations, anti-democratic tendencies are gaining ground in domestic policy. Civil rights are being restricted in favour of government intervention in the private sphere and police and secret service powers are being excessively extended. The large corporations and financial organisations, the World Trade Organization and the International Monetary Fund are undermining the decision-making sovereignty of the parliaments of democratic states and curtailing human rights. Media groups to a large extent evade democratic control.

We want the employees in all large enterprises and their trade unions to be able to participate in economic and social decision-making on a parity basis. In the regions, in the states and at the federal level, economic and social councils should be set up with rights of informational, initiative and advisory rights with regard to economic and social policy. Employers and trade unions as well as social, environmental and consumer associations should work in such councils. Co-determination should be guaranteed and expanded in transnational corporations at the European level as well.

The reinforcement of parliamentary rights and democratic countervailing forces vis-à-vis the interests of the corporations, large banks and investment funds is one of the basic conditions for peoples' sovereignty. The PDS considers economic democracy to be an urgent requirement for socio-ecological restructuring. Employees, trade unions, consumer and nature conservation associations, citizens' initiatives, local and parliamentary representative bodies have to be enabled to defend the vital social, ecological and cultural interests of present and future generations against economic marketing interests.

Decentralisation and stronger social activity from below are necessary. The PDS supports demands for the coupling of representative democracy with effective forms of direct participation of women and men citizens at the local, regional and state levels. At the federal level and in the framework of the European Union there should be referendums with low entry thresholds. The PDS works for the introduction of comprehensive popular lawmaking as well as for round-tables and regional economic and social councils. Democracy is experienced first at the local level. The PDS supports the development of the municipalities

into citizens' municipalities that can decide on their own affairs with a high degree of autonomy. It stands for the direct participation of women and men citizens in budgetary policy (participative citizens' budgets) and in decision-making concerning the safeguarding of public welfare services. The capacity of local government to take financial action must be restored. It is a basic precondition for regional business cycles. The municipalities need their own reliable sources of funds. Business must not be allowed to evade its responsibility. One of the most important local government policy demands of the PDS is that when the federal and state government assign new tasks to local government they should make sure they always allocate the funds for carrying them out at the same time (connectivity principle). Citizens and their organisations vis-à-vis government and business need to be defended. This involves individual rights as set forth in the Basic Law vis-à-vis government intervention, legal reviewability of government action, guarantee of access to the courts and independent bodies monitoring the activities of the state security organs. With the comprehensive definition of the right of individuals to determine by themselves what is done with data and information affecting them, the omnipresent trends towards a surveillance state and towards the marketing of such information can be resolutely repulsed. We insist on the strict separation of police and military and will not accept the domestic deployment of the Bundeswehr.

It is the task of the state to provide protection against criminal violence. Well-trained and humanely motivated police forces are better suited to fighting crime than video cameras, bugging systems, violations of the privacy of correspondence and other civil rights restrictions. At the same time the social and political causes of crime must be removed in the long term and violence must be socially and culturally outlawed. Education for non-violent conflict resolution starts in the family and the school.

Young people must experience a society that is not indifferent to their fate, that no longer puts up with the backwardness of schools, the closing of cultural establishments and the lack of apprenticeships and jobs. Children and adolescents need more chances to participate in decision-making. We want the age of eligibility to vote and be elected to be lowered to 16. Schools, leisure centres, sports facilities, young people's communication places and the local government infrastructure have to offer them opportunities to decide for themselves to get involved in things that interest them, to discover their individual strong points and talents and to work on their own life projects. In desolate and marginal regions in particular, prospects must be offered to the young generation that give a purpose to their remaining in the home region and provide the basis for non-violent resolution of conflicts.

As long as women and men do not have equal status in all social spheres and no redistribution of gainful work in favour women and of social and family work in favour of men is experienced, democracy and human rights will remain an unfinished project in Germany and the European Union. We stand by our demand for a woman's right to self-determined pregnancy without qualifications, and we continue to intercede for the repeal of § 218. We oppose every form of discrimination against lesbians and gays. We take the position that no form of life may be privileged over another.

Democratisation of society also involves overcoming those social barriers that stand in the way of the equal participation of people with disabilities in social life – be it in communication, in the existence of prejudice, in mobility, in school and vocational education, in the work process or in social economy.

The brutalisation of political culture, intolerance, racism, anti-Semitism and violence towards other modes of living are major threats to democratic co-existence. Right-wing extremist and neo-Nazi forces gain influence in particular where the duty to give everyone the chance of a decent life is neglected. With an eye to German history and the German present, the PDS dedicates itself to uncompromising antifascism and flatly rejects any form of right-wing extremism and right-wing populism.

The PDS calls for an open and tolerant society that accords equal civil and human rights under harmonised material and social conditions to all people living and working in Germany and the other countries of the European Union. Human rights are not divisible into political and social, individual and collective, women's and men's, into human rights for Germans and non-Germans, for people with and without disabilities, nor into human rights for people with this or that sexual orientation.

The borders of Germany and the European Union must be open for people in distress. Together with representatives of left-wing forces in the European Parliament, the PDS resolutely opposes further erosion of the right to asylum and demands harmonisation of immigration policy in the context of the EU on the basis of internationally recognised human rights. In this connection it continues its resistance to those parts of the Schengen Agreement that violate human rights and to their integration into the Treaty of Amsterdam.

The members of the minorities that have been living in Germany for centuries – Sorbs, Danes, Friesians, Sinti and Roma – must be able to articulate and realise their specific claims and interests on terms of equality. They should be fully involved in all decision-making processes affecting them and comprehensive framework conditions must be provided by the federal and state governments to ensure the preservation of their identity, language and culture. That is the only way they will have a future Germany.

The same must apply to immigrant minorities of other origins so that they can find social recognition as women and men citizens with full rights and duties. For integration is a two-sided process that makes equal demands on the society and on the new members of society who have immigrated.

Capitalist globalisation is being imposed by means of imperial power. Socially equitable globalisation is not possible without a new democratic world order. The PDS supports the demands for the strengthening and democratisation of the United Nations, for equal influence for the South and East in the World Trade Organisation, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, for the regulation of financial markets, the introduction of internationally effective foreign currency turnover and capital transfer taxes and guaranteed control over large movements of capital. The sweeping implementation of universal human rights, the introduction of internationally applicable social and ecological standards and a solidarity-based development policy belong on the agenda of a renewed democratic world order.

2. Peace and non-violence

Joint security / Non-military conflict prevention and solution/ Broad alliances against imperial and martial rearrangement of the world / Comprehensive demilitarisation and disarmament

The protection of life is an elementary good to which all people have an equal claim. The PDS is passionately committed to ensuring non-violence at home and peace for the outside world.

The PDS is a resolute anti-war party. Breaking with the traditional political logic of military deterrence, threats and warfare is constitutive for the PDS. For the PDS peace is programme and mission in word, text and deed, congruent in parliamentary action and extraparliamentary commitment. Together with forces of the peace movement and other opponents of war, the PDS continues to intercede for just peace and the overcoming of military alliances.

We want the European Union to remain non-military, we want NATO to be dissolved and replaced by an all-European international security system.

Peace is more than the absence of war: Lasting peace is built on global justice and the civilisation of international relations. Today, peace policy is development policy as well. It is a matter of preventive conflict avoidance and non-military resolution of conflicts, directed towards eliminating the roots of violence – inhuman living conditions, social injustice, disregard for human rights. Arrogance and arbitrariness are an obstacle to the construction of a peaceful, just world.

From the struggle for power, markets and maximum profits, for economic, political and cultural supremacy, from poverty and underdevelopment, the disintegration of states, from ethnic and religious conflicts, the scarcity and unjust appropriation of natural resources, from the possession and propagation of weapons of mass destruction, from terrorist networks grows the threat to world peace in our time. The pretension of the USA to attain hegemony over the world by military means in the name of the global war on terror leads to the anti-civilisatory arrogation of so-called preventive wars and destroys international law.

Security today can be obtained neither militarily nor unilaterally. The socialist response to the US claim to world control does not lie in striving for new blocs in competition between Europe and the USA. The PDS is against a heavily armed European Union and demands a corresponding change in the foreign and security policy of the EU. The socialist alternative is: A world of equal peoples and states, international movements, cultural diversity, respect for human rights, equality of the sexes, ideological tolerance, cooperation and openness to dialogue, non-military security around the world.

Global justice entails no longer wasting financial resources on armaments but using them to overcome poverty, hunger and epidemics. The ruthless ecological exploitation of nature must be stopped and education and gainful employment must be accessible to all. The PDS advocates that the United Nations be strengthened and reformed. Asia, Africa and Latin America should have a greater voice in the United Nations and the Security Council.

For the PDS it is a matter of strictly observing and implementing international law as set forth in the Charter of the United Nations, of the prohibition of violence in international relations, the observance of human rights, respect for the sovereignty of states; These cornerstones of modern international law must be guaranteed without exception for all states, defended and implemented. It is crucial for the legitimacy and authority of the United Nations that political decisions should be consistent with the Charter. Not all the decisions of the Security Council have met this requirement. The Security Council must not abuse the right assigned by the Charter to it alone to use military means when non-military means are exhausted to avert a threat to world peace under pressure from and in the interest of the big powers. Equally, no state in the world and no alliance of states must be allowed to usurp that right; the United Nations must resist such usurpation.

The PDS stands for enforcing universal human rights through the strengthening and respecting of international jurisdiction, through dialogue of cultures and civilisations in all countries. Human rights must not be used as a pretext for military interventions.

The PDS advocates that the international institutions be placed in a better position to help resolve conflicts by non-military means. The Federal Republic of Germany could contribute to this by setting up a federal institution for non-military conflict prevention and conflict handling and by establishing an international relief and disaster service that could be deployed world-wide.

No war must ever start from German soil.

In consistent recognition of Article 26 of the Basic Law, the PDS continues to reject any participation of the Bundeswehr in UN-mandated military intervention with reference to

Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, regardless of the stands taken by the states represented in the UN Security Council.

That obligation must be restored and made inviolable. The PDS opposes the creation of German and European intervention armies. The prohibition of the production and use of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction must continue to exist in Germany. The development and production of new offensive weapons, international arms trading and arms exports must be stopped. More stringent and transparent controls and sanctions are needed to implement these demands. The Federal Republic of Germany must take a stand for far-reaching international disarmament agreements, reduce the size of the Bundeswehr, abolish compulsory military service and other compulsory services, renounce new armament projects and reduce the military budget. Germany should set an example, even if it stands alone.

Germany's responsibility for two world wars makes an absolute peace obligation imperative. The Federal Republic of Germany is obliged to use its economic power and its international prestige as a non-military power. A world without wars, a disarmed and socially-oriented Europe, a Germany without an army are long-term goals of socialist policy.

3. Economy

Social and ecological regulation / support for trade union demands / public investments / environment-oriented technology policy / taxation equity / rural economy

The dominant policy is subjecting the economy and society more and more ruthlessly to the laws of the market, dismantling the welfare state, limiting domestic demand, leading to higher unemployment rates and preventing socially-minded and ecologically sustainable growth. Instead of solidarity-based and equitable renewal of the social systems, the path of privatisation is being chosen.

The basic assumptions of the dominant economic policy to justify this are based on false diagnoses. Although many small enterprises really do have too heavy a load to carry, it is not the case that the economy of the Federal Republic of Germany as a whole is paralysed by excessive wage costs, overly high business taxes and exaggerated employee benefits.

Dynamic economic development is in fact being prevented above all by the primarily neo-liberal nature of monetary, financial and taxation policy, by the weakness of the domestic market, by destruction of the environment and the absence of ecological restructuring, by speculative capital investment on international financial and foreign exchange markets and by deficits in education and research.

What is needed to find a way out of this policy is for decisions on economic policy to be made with the effective participation of the democratic public. Autonomous citizens' projects, grass-roots initiatives, consumer associations, trade unions, non-governmental organisations and social movements as well as alternative scientific bodies are called upon to develop alternatives and fight for their implementation.

In submitting our proposals, we know that the conditions for alternatives are poor and will remain so for the foreseeable future. There are many indications of persistent slow growth. The enormous cost of servicing the national debt imposes extreme limits on the scope for government action – for whoever wants to use that scope. Internationally operating corporations and major players in the international financial markets exert pressure on national policy. Many decisions are made at EU level and under the influence of the global predatory competition in any case. The left has not yet found successful counter-strategies on an international scale. International trade union cooperation and the cooperation of the parties of the left are not keeping pace with the structures of trans-national enterprises.

The PDS sees itself as a part of the movements of protest against all blockades to progressive social change. In the medium term, it pursues a concept of dynamic economic development which, directed towards greater value added, is subordinate to those social, ecological and employment policy goals and would contribute to a more equitable economic order.

The basic elements of such an economic concept are the creation of new jobs, the redistribution of state revenues for the benefit of wage and salary earners and the socially disadvantaged and the assurance of public welfare with no one being excluded. From the vantage-point of an alternative economic policy like that advocated by the PDS, economic growth is needed to resolve social and employment policy problems and to overcome poverty. It has to be directed towards the expansion of the infrastructure for a self-determined way of living, towards quality services and towards the social and ecological restructuring of society.

Alternative economic policy has difficult problems to cope with: growth is indispensable for overcoming global poverty. In Germany as well, economic growth can contribute to solving social and employment policy problems and achieving the stabilising of public budgets. But the way development has taken place up to now destroys the environment and deforms modes of living and consuming. It is necessary to focus on ecological restructuring, on quality people-oriented and knowledge-oriented services and the infrastructure for self-determined ways of living.

The PDS attaches the highest importance to increasing mass purchasing power through calculated reduction of joblessness in order to strengthen the persistently weak domestic market. It rejects any curtailment of wage compensation payments or social transfers as detrimental to the economy and society. It demands the introduction of minimum wages and supports trade union struggles for higher wages. The PDS stands by its demand for equal pay for work of equal value.

The PDS regards it as urgently necessary to reverse the trend towards reduction of the share of public investments in the gross domestic product. A future-oriented investment programme for jobs, education, environment and infrastructure is a good way of stabilising the domestic market in times of economic downturn. The employment and environment oriented promotion of small and medium-sized enterprises can also invigorate the domestic market. It is a matter of urgency to improve their chances through rigorous reduction of bureaucratic hurdles. Government-supported allocation of loans to business start-ups and small enterprises is indispensable.

The economy must be guided onto sustainable forward-looking paths with the aid of a socio-economically defined government framework and international agreements. The PDS rejects subordination to the prevailing dogma of privatisation and deregulation. It demands that concentration and merger processes in the economy be stringently monitored and that monopoly power be markedly limited.

The PDS intends to pay close attention to technology and innovation policy in the future. It stands for the introduction of low-risk, environment-friendly technologies that contribute to the facilitation and humanisation of work, the enhancement of economic efficiency and value added and the utilisation of regional resources. The accelerated passing on of modern technologies to so-called developing countries inline with their own requirements corresponds to common world-wide interests.

Ecological restructuring requires binding targets from which technology policy tasks for the state and business are derived. Framework conditions for the promotion of research and technology must have long-term applicability. Innovations and improvements in procedures

must be introduced in consideration of how they effect society as a whole and not solely on the basis of business management considerations. The PDS opposes the progressive commercialisation in basic research and advocates critical monitoring by the social sciences of the technological innovation process.

Climate protection and the expected shortage of energy make it necessary to move the solar energy revolution into the centre of a new socially and ecologically oriented technology policy and to bring about an environment-friendly change in transport policy.

Intensive debates about the opportunities and risks of biotechnology and genetic engineering are needed, since research and technological development in these fields can both bring irreparable damage to health and the environment in their wake and be of service in feeding the world, in the treatment of diseases, in cleaning up the environment and in ecological farming.

The freedom of research guaranteed by the Basic Law comes up against social limits when it conflicts with fundamental individual rights and especially with the inviolability of the dignity of every human being. The PDS uncompromisingly opposes the patenting of genes. This practice threatens to lead to a catastrophic rush to monopolisation and commercialisation. The mass deployment of genetically engineered plants on the seed and agrochemical market has had the effect that millions of farmers, especially in the countries of the "south", have become dependent on the corporations and the foundations of their lives have been destroyed. The PDS demands that the Federal Republic of Germany join the moratorium of other western European states excluding the release of genetically manipulated organisms.

The rural areas and farming are of growing importance for the social and ecological renewal of the Federal Republic of Germany and the European Union. The existing bases for and approaches to ecological production should be intensively expanded and the competitiveness of the ecological farms should be preserved and improved.

Farming in the Federal Republic of Germany, in the opinion of the PDS, must develop beyond the mere assurance of a healthy nutritional basis in the direction of providing alternative raw materials and energy sources, the expansion of integrated and ecological agriculture, intensified protection of nature, species and animals, the preservation of cultivated landscapes and the continued displacement of animal feed imports. Retention and consolidation of healthy business structures with different ownership forms and vocational prospects for the rural youth are the precondition for this.

As a socialist party the PDS supports agricultural cooperatives, which enrich the variety of cooperative movements in Europe. The establishment and expansion of producers' associations and regional producer chains increases the competitiveness of enterprises and promotes scientific and technological progress. In further steps towards its democratisation, contract agriculture can be one way of limiting the dominance of the food industry and the power of the big marketing chains.

The PDS wants no further liberalisation of the agricultural commodities market, which is one-sidedly geared to the interests of the industrialised countries, and no continuation of the redistribution of natural resources from "south" to "north". International regulation to protect the weaker belongs on the agenda of the European Union. If it defends its declared model of multifunctional agriculture against WTO attacks and tailorsredirects its support system away from export incentives and towards regional development and towards economic, ecological and social sustainability, the PDS will approve.

In the opinion of the PDS, democratic control of the financial markets is indispensable. Together with other social forces, the Party resists the policy of undermining public welfare services, commercialising and privatising hitherto public goods such as health and education

and turning modern knowledge into monopoly-like property by means of General Agreements on Global Trade in Services (GATS) and on the protection of intellectual property (TRIPS).

The PDS supports demands for codetermination in trans-national corporations, for limitation of speculation in securities and foreign currency, European agreements on containment of the transfer of capital to tax havens and EU-wide harmonised steps towards minimum taxation of returns on capital and corporate profits. International negotiations should bring about minimum social and ecological standards in the world economy – with compensation for the resulting disadvantages for poor countries. International agreements on measures to secure the basic rights of the people to public goods such as education, health, food, water, knowledge and biological diversity must be bindingly implemented. One of our objectives is that the so-called developing countries be able to collaborate on an equal footing in international economic organisations.

The PDS endorses demands for democratic control and redefinition of the tasks of the European Central Bank. In addition to ensuring monetary and currency stability, the Bank must assume a share of the responsibility for growth and employment policy in the European Union.

In budgetary policy, the reduction of deficits is a medium and long term objective that already has implications for the present. The reduction of the government expenditure rate, however, is not a PDS goal. It therefore opposes the rigid austerity policy, one-sidedly focusing on the spending side to the detriment of social expenditures and at the expense of the socially disadvantaged. Budget resources must be generated through improvements in public revenues, successful employment policy, efficient use of resources, the combating of white-collar crime, the reduction of bureaucracy, a break with the waste society and better thought-out use of incentive funds.

We strive for a radically simplified and easily understood social tax policy that will help the state to perform its necessary tasks. We strive for taxation equity, placing a greater load on high incomes and wealth and counteracts their migration to tax havens and their speculative investment. We want tax relief for small and medium incomes, for small and medium-sized enterprises. Ineffective subsidies and tax privileges must be curtailed. Tax abuses must be resolutely combated. The PDS demands the re-imposition of a redesigned wealth tax, a more equitable and graduated inheritance tax on large personal fortunes, the introduction of a corporation tax pegged to profits, the abolition of exemption from taxation of profits from the sale of company shares and taxation of foreign currency transactions and stock market earnings. The PDS advocates the abolition of the splitting of income between spouses.

4. Environment

Joint solution of ecological and social problems / change in ways of living / environment-sparing regional economic cycles / energy saving, energy efficiency, renewable energy sources / drastic transport turnaround

The ecological reorganisation of the present mode of production and living will be more comprehensive and complicated than any previous upheavals and reforms in human history. If Germany wants to make its contribution to preventing a climate catastrophe, the emission of greenhouse gases will have to be reduced by 90 per cent by the middle of this century. We urge that carbon dioxide emissions in the Federal Republic of Germany be reduced by 35 per cent by 2010 in comparison to 1990 and that the preconditions for further rapid reductions be created. The consumption of important non-renewable raw materials must also be reduced in the same period by a comparable magnitude. Decisions to be taken in this connection cannot be long delayed. Energy and raw materials consumption have to be

regulated with the aid of the tax and duty system and through government structural policies. From now on there must be financial rewards for ecologically friendly behaviour and sanctions for behaviour causing ecological damage.

The PDS advocates a policy that goes beyond the limits of traditional ecological repair policy and aims at a reorganisation of society. Twenty per cent of the world population must no longer be allowed to consume 80 per cent of all resources. Environment policy is inconceivable without pressing ahead with the solution of urgent social problems. Development policy is environment policy as well. Poverty is destructive to the environment. Without social security there will be no readiness to change ways of living. Resolving the social question has become a condition for resolving the ecological question. Preservation of the environment is only possible in peace.

What is needed is not just an efficiency revolution in production and consumption but also a break with the idea that it is possible to keep increasing consumption even above a certain level of prosperity. This requires a radical cultural change. Although many people need an increasing income even in the wealthy countries so that they can obtain the necessities of life, more and more women and men citizens are starting to place the richness of relationships between people, wider education horizons, self-determined living space, culture and a secure existence above increasing material consumption. Environmentally compatible alternative ways of living should therefore be supported. The struggles of the future will essentially be struggles for new ways of living.

The remaining remnants of contiguous natural spaces, for example Antarctica, the oceans and the rain forests, have to be protected from further plundering by international law. That requires limiting the latitude of international corporations and increasing payments by the "north" to the "south".

The PDS demands an environmentally oriented international division of labour. A sensible international exchange of goods and services, world-wide information exchange, regionalisation of material and energy cycles and human services on site must supplement one another in a considered manner.

The solar energy turnabout plays a key role in ecological reorganisation. Energy saving, increased energy efficiency and the development of renewable sources of energy point the way out of the impasse of the atomic and fossil fuel energy industry. In our view this development should be promoted by means of a socially equitable primary energy tax on atomic and fossil fuel energy. The development and use of renewable energy sources offers favourable conditions for the social and ecological development of the municipalities and regions, for the preservation and creation of viable jobs. It is absolutely necessary to opt out of nuclear energy more quickly than is presently planned.

An ecological turnabout in transport policy is unavoidable. Transport, structural and regional planning must finally be merged so that people's manner of pursuing economic affairs and their lifestyle will gradually adapt to shorter distances and above all so that there will be a significant reduction in road goods traffic. That requires the expansion of regional rail networks, in contrast to the present policy.

The development and use of regional value added chains in the new federal states is a special concern of the PDS. These include modern infrastructures and agricultural structures, the development and production of environmental technologies, especially the use of combined heating and energy plants to produce electricity and heat and of solar and hydrogen technology. Regionalisation is likely to intensify the democratic participation of women and men citizens in the restructuring in their living spaces.

We prioritise the avoidance of waste over materials and energy recycling and disposal. The supply of high quality drinking water to the population and ecological waste water disposal at affordable rates are among the environmental and social policy priorities of the PDS.

In the opinion of the PDS, ecological agriculture and forestry must be expanded. This will lead not only to new employment opportunities. Better integration of agriculture, forestry and fisheries in regional trade and materials cycles will also be possible. Where there are restrictions on land use for agriculture for nature conservation reasons, a sensible policy would be to make the farmers affected responsible for conservation and reimburse them for their efforts. The PDS supports the call for creation of a coherent Germany-wide and Europe-wide system of reserves to maintain ecological and biological diversity (biodiversity). We advocate comprehensive and effective protection of animals and the assurance of respect for other living beings.

The PDS calls for democratic planning, monitoring and veto rights in ecological matters for environmental organisations, consumers' associations, trade unions, societies and other forces of civil society.

5. Work

Retention of area-wide wage agreements / a shorter working week and working life / social safeguards for transitions between gainful and unremunerated occupation / gender justice / stabilisation of the domestic market / public and publicly supported employment / a new kind of full employment

Work is still the most important condition for social prosperity and social integration. But since paid labour is still non-self-determined, dependent work for 90 per cent of the labour force, the yield of which is to a considerable extent appropriated by the shareholders, social domination and dependence relationships, conflicts of interest and clashes are inevitable.

Under the pressure of open and hidden unemployment affecting almost one billion people world-wide and seven million in Germany, the proportion of discriminatory, inadequately safeguarded or unprotected employment relationships is growing. This entails unhealthy pressure to compete, existential anxiety, personal dependence relationships, low earnings, inadequate social safeguards and limited opportunities of vocational advancement. A life with children becomes a risk of losing one's job and lapsing into poverty.

In the long run, profit must not remain the decisive standard for the allocation, organisation and evaluation of work. The shortage of useful and recognised jobs is not social but capitalistically determined. The PDS therefore continues to pursue the long-term goal of converting dependent work from a coercive economic relationship into a condition for real freedom. If the existing new suggestions for employment policy are merged, in the opinion of the PDS, work providing a livelihood will be available to all who wish to share in it. The more flexible organisation of work processes must lead to more space for a self-determined and family-friendly life.

A decisive condition for the reduction of unemployment is an economic policy that creates new, socially useful jobs and devotes close attention to the solidarity-based renewal of social security systems. On that basis the shortening of the working week and working life takes on the greatest significance for the equitable distribution of work. Flexible collective agreements on the universal introduction of the 35-hour week without cuts in pay and, in the longer term, their extension to a 30-hour week are essential steps towards a new kind of full employment. Jobs will only be created in this context, however, if as a result of a new balance of power between trade unions and employers the compensation of shorter working hours by greater work loads is ruled out and hiring guarantees are agreed on. A legal limitation of the

maximum normal working week to 40 hours should provide short-term help in implementing this course of action. Economic growth alone will not overcome mass unemployment.

The voluntary rotation between gainful occupation, active work, further education and social engagement and phases of self-determined combination of these different activities form a further basis for a more equitable division of labour, for vocational advancement and for a life with children and persons needing care. A need-oriented minimum level of income will facilitate and safeguard such transitions.

In world-wide competition as well, area-wide collective agreements negotiated by trade unions able to act are an indispensable precondition for regulating remuneration and working conditions, ensuring that dependent employees receive their share of the national income and thus stabilise domestic demand. The PDS condemns the misuse of the prevailing need for reform and the abolition of the priority of flexible collective agreements in favour of company agreements that deviate from them, putting the workforce under pressure in order to obtain one-sided concessions for the shareholders. Where new flexible arrangements are needed they have to be negotiated by the bargaining units and safeguarded by a trade union right to take representative action.

Instead of allowing further deregulation of labour law, the PDS advocates a modern revision and extension of codetermination at plant level. The more diversified the production and work requirements the more indispensable are codetermination by the works councils and trades unions and labour legislation that guarantees social and family compatible working hours, facilitates the integration of women in the work process on terms of equality, compensates for discrimination and expands health protection. Paid work must also be available for people who cannot meet the usual requirements for gainful employment.

The new kind of full employment requires an increase in environmentally consciously used mass purchasing power in domestic markets. The PDS therefore supports the trade unions not just in defending area-wide collective agreements but also in the disputes over the introduction of minimum wages, the utilisation of all the scope there is for distribution, and the European coordination of wage policy.

A new socio-ecological path of development, coupled with an innovative technology policy, will open up new opportunities for gainful employment, especially through the ecological restructuring of the economy and society and the expansion of qualified human-oriented and science oriented services.

The provision of federal, state and local government services in the public health system, in care, education, guidance, assistance, sport and culture requires the defence of this purposeful public employment. It is indispensable both for reducing mass unemployment and for organising socially useful work. The PDS vehemently opposes further privatisation of these services of general interest. Publicly promoted employment sectors (PES) between state and private business could to a special extent provide room for useful and self-determined work and new ways of living, for research and development, technical, technological and social innovations, gender equity, social integration and qualification. Publicly promoted employment should foster cooperative projects. It can promote regional social and ecological development, the encouragement of new fields of work, useful links with the primary labour market and socially safeguarded combinations of gainful occupation, do-it-yourself work and honorary work.

The PDS sees in the reinforcement of regional economic integration important opportunities to create new jobs. It works to strengthen regional economic connections and local government investing power.

6. Social security and health

Renewal of the welfare state and the pension system on the basis of solidarity / relating employer contributions to value added / against the privatisation of risks to life and two-tier medicine / introduction of a need-oriented minimum level of income

Social security encompasses the right to work that ensures a livelihood, to universal access to education and training, to prophylactic, and therapeutic medical care, and after-care, to affordable decent housing, to mobility and safeguards against life contingencies. The PDS advocates a social policy that meets the needs of people to realise their individual life projects. For that very reason it emphatically defends the solidarity-based character of the social security systems, demands their expansion and is a resolute opponent of the privatisation of social security systems. To ensure their need-oriented quality and effectiveness, it calls for a reform of those systems on the way to democratisation, the consolidation of self-government, the expansion of their preventive and supportive character and the solidarity-based renewal of their financial foundations.

To finance the social security systems, the PDS considers it necessary to raise the income thresholds and extend the obligation to contribute to all those who are not yet covered. In retirement and unemployment insurance we want to extend the obligation to contribute to all income from gainful employment, that is, to cover civil servants, freelancers and the self-employed. The employee insurance schemes should be turned into insurance schemes for gainfully occupied persons. This would be a renewal of the fundamental idea of solidarity of all gainfully employed persons vis-à-vis risks resulting from loss of work or old age.

As the PDS sees it, for sickness and care insurance schemes we propose the extension of the obligation to contribute to all income categories, including income from monetary assets and real estate. These two insurance schemes should become insurance coverage for all. Illness and the need for care affects everyone, regardless of their type of income.

The PDS proposes that the employee contribution to social insurance schemes be based not on the amount of wages but on gross value added, so that economic capability is taken as the yardstick instead of rewarding those who reduce jobs in order to increase capital intensiveness.

In view of the longer training periods, the erratic course of working life and demographic change, more social solidarity going beyond the large degree of coupling of social security systems to gainful employment is essential. Public resources must be used for social security, for the financial consequences of longer working lives, for the costs of new possibilities of medical treatment and for warding off the risks that arise. The so-called non-insurance benefits, such as the costs of German unity, maternity benefit and vocational qualification have to be funded not from contributions but from taxes.

Democratic socialist women and men see demographic change as a fundamental challenge to society. The PDS faces the consequences arising from it for the world of work, science and research, education and continuing education, architecture, urban planning and the services. Under conditions of demographic transition as well, the cities should continue to be centres of urban economic and cultural life. This demands regional and urban renewal that corresponds to changing social and economic structures and must be government-supported.

To the PDS, the step-by-step introduction of a minimum level of income geared to need is a central element in the further development of social security systems. Its expansion into a civil right represents a support for individual freedom. The need-oriented minimum level of income rules out poverty and is commensurate to the intellectual, cultural and material wealth that has been created in Germany. In order to pave the way for the minimum level of income, the PDS supports the demand for the introduction of minimum wages. Arrangements to prevent child poverty are urgently needed. The minimum level of income in old age and for

those unfit for work and arrangements to provide safeguards for the unemployed require immediate need-oriented expansion.

Adequate housing and self-determined living are among the most important conditions for social security and human dignity. Housing must be affordable for all citizens. This implies socially balanced tenancy legislation, rents based on residential value, and housing allowances that are regularly revised. The basic right to housing belongs in the Basic Law, at least as an objective of the state.

We regard the promotion of sports and the maintenance and expansion of the sports infrastructure as an important condition for a desirable quality of life and health.

The services of the public health system are among the elementary reconditions for social justice. The objective of the PDS continues to be health care that is equally accessible to all in which greater importance is attached to prevention and aftercare. The road must be barred to two-tier medicine. The funding of a modern public health system would be relieved if health centres like polyclinics were promoted, if cooperation between private practices, community facilities and hospitals were improved, if medical services were assessed more fairly and if a positive list were introduced for drugs. The working conditions of medical personnel must be improved. Stable quality assurance measures are urgently needed. Another important task is to advance the self-government of standardised health insurance companies. The influence of the pharmaceutical industry and apparatus manufacturers on medical services and costs must be curbed.

With solidarity-based design instead of privatization the statutory pension scheme can meet the challenges of demographic transition and face the consequences of upheavals in the world of work. Flexible entitlements to benefits and flat-rate pensions are a good way of balancing out the risks of unsteady careers.

To improve provisions for old age for women and in the case of family member employment, recognition of child-rearing time or the granting of assessment points for simultaneous child-rearing and gainful employment has to be extended.

It is reasonable to introduce life work accounts instead of setting rigid age limits for retirement.

Supplementary company pension schemes contribute to security in old age; they should therefore be given greater attention.

We demand that the discrimination that still exists in pension law for East Germans be finally abolished and that acquired pension claims be fully recognised.

7. Education, science, culture, media

Against social inequality in participation in education, culture and information / public funding of education systems, no to privatisation/ modern higher education reform / preservation of state support for culture

One cultural achievement of European societies is their system of socially and culturally balanced institutions and the related ethics of social duties and responsibility for the weak. But the dominant policy weakens the welfare state instead of renewing it. The result is that the equality already achieved is lost and the inner stability of society is thereby endangered. This leads to limitations of the ability of many citizens to take part in cultural life, to acquire education and knowledge and to participate purposefully in the exchange of information.

The PDS opposes such a policy: The cultural aspirations of all social and ethnic groups must not only be respected, they must be turned into a vested right to their own culture and participation in cultural communication. The chances in life of every woman and man today depend equally on free access to information and knowledge and on the possibility of getting an education and of dealing with the arts and the media.

There are people from almost all the world's cultures living in Germany, a country of immigration. The PDS advocates a cultural policy that strictly prevents the defamation of other cultures and effectively promotes understanding between ethnic groups and nations. In the culturally differentiated multi-ethnic world of the Federal Republic of Germany, it is the task of politics to offer everybody the chance of development and make possible the dialogue of the cultures, a cosmopolitan outlook and exchange. The PDS is preparing proposals of its own for more up-to-date concepts and structures in the field of culture, education, science and the media. It sees all social forces that want to preserve and multiply cultural wealth as its allies.

Education

The PDS advocates a broad social discourse on the reorientation of the education system and calls for an experience-open concept for a democratic education reform with the goal of ensuring equal developmental and educational opportunities for all, independent of the social status of the individual. It includes the individual promotion of the gifts and talents of young people and compensation for social and cultural disadvantages. The PDS rigorously opposes every form of discrimination based on gender or physical, ethnic-cultural or religious differences.

Society has the duty to guarantee a life worth living to all children and young people. That requires the overcoming of the scandalously spreading child poverty and the serious discrimination against adolescents on social grounds. Education policy and social policy must form a unit.

Today's public education system is in a deep crisis. Reduced funding, too large classes, overworked teachers and higher-income strata sending their children to private schools are symptoms of this crisis. Above all the socially selecting structure of the present school system which determines the children's chances in life at a very early age must be rapidly overcome.

The PDS wants a humanistic education system that teaches young people the value of freedom, equality and solidarity and encourages them to work in a spirit of responsibility, community and tolerance for peace, justice and democracy even if it requires resistance and civil disobedience.

As the PDS sees it, humanist education should produce sovereign and critical personalities. The content of education must be determined essentially by the real problems of the society. It is important to link a broad general education with the promotion of special gifts. The PDS sees as further benchmarks the solidity of education in the sciences, the imparting of knowledge as a doorway to understanding social and ecological problems, the acquisition of methodological capabilities of independently acquiring new knowledge and of competencies for mastering modern possibilities of information and communication.

The PDS stands for an integrated education system that contributes above all to reducing social injustice. It should make possible the common education of girls and boys, women and men, people with and without disabilities, and people with different learning prerequisites and at the same time individual, differentiation promotion and compensation for disadvantages. The PDS attaches great attention to the education of immigrants. Life-long learning requires closer links between pre-school education, school, university or college, vocational education and continuing education.

The PDS advocates the strengthening and expansion of the public taxpayer-funded education system. It opposes all attempts to privatise education costs, to restructure educational institutions on the pattern of commercial enterprises and to control education processes according to business management criteria. It is a government responsibility to

create a framework and to ensure uniform educational requirements between and in the federal states leading to generally recognized school leaving certificates. This is the only way the diversity and independence of schools and other educational establishments in public, free not-for-profit and private forms can be preserved in the long run. The rule must be to give teachers, learners, parents and schools as much competence and decision-making scope as possible and the federal, state and local governments and their administrations as much decision-making power as necessary.

The PDS advocates a need-oriented supply of all-day education all over Germany for children in child-care facilities starting in their first year of life. We want the supply to be expanded in its content and to be gradually made available free of charge, starting with the one pre-school year. But over and above the common elementary school for all children the PDS strives for the lengthening of common learning until the start of vocational training or entry into a university entrance preparatory institution. It calls for more all-day schools on the basis of demanding pedagogic concepts. More permeability in the given school system should enable more young people – especially those from socially disadvantaged strata – to complete higher education.

The PDS wants the working conditions of school and pre-school teachers to be noticeably improved. More time must be available for direct work with the pupils. The training of teachers at all levels requires greater realism, and this requires that the pedagogic task is decisive from the beginning.

In the Federal Republic of Germany substantial training deficits contrast with a considerable demand for qualified trained persons. This society, if it is to survive, must afford the right to vocational education for all young people and guarantee them a suitable job for a certain period once they have completed their training. In the view of the PDS, if business and administrations cannot offer enough adequate training opportunities, enterprises that are financially in a position to prepare young people for a trade but evade that obligation should have to contribute to a country-wide solidarity-based assessment financing scheme.

The training courses must be adapted to new future-oriented skills requirements. This involves systematising and improving the quality of the great variety of extra-company, school and substitute training courses, which vary widely in quality today.

In continuing education, the PDS opposes its reduction to economic usability and calls for a broad supply of general, cultural, political and vocational continuing education accessible to all. Country-wide minimum standards must be linked with federal education structures and local possibilities. The funding of continuing education by the state, by individual companies and by the participants must be socially just. Everyone, independent of their personal ability to pay, has the right to be able to receive education throughout their lives.

Science and innovation

In the 21st century the sciences are a social potential of more decisive importance than ever for survival and for the future. Scientific research and university education are decisive in determining what new possibilities of technical and social organisation will open up in the future and what insights will be available for averting new threats to individuals and society. An acceleration of scientific development, continued structural change in the economy, upheavals in the worlds of work and life and high demands on media, communication and cooperation skills require to a hitherto unknown extent the ability to acquire new knowledge independently. It is becoming a necessary prerequisite for participation in work and for civic engagement.

The growing importance of academic education in the long term requires that the ability of universities to receive more students be increased, the intensity and creativity of studies improved and the range of subjects expanded in consideration of the growing continuing

education requirements. The PDS rejects the further aggravation of social selection through the introduction of tuition fees in all their forms.

The PDS regards it as a core science policy task to work towards the gradual reinforcement of scientific work on crucial unsolved problems of society, which are determined only inadequately by scientific development at present. That is prohibited by the increasing subjection of university and research establishments to pure business management criteria. Scientific policy must deal with the tension between the challenge to protect science from subjection to profit interests and at the same to contribute to the development of regions of innovative and employment-generating interlocking of scientific institutions and business enterprises.

The orientation of teaching and research towards overall social utility requires as the minimum precondition open-ended self-government structures and constant dialogue between science and the public. That means redefining the relationship of science and research with the state and society. The scientific institutions should be given a large measure of autonomy from the state, . linked with democratisation through improved co-determination within the institutions. The task of the state is to ensure adequate funding for research and teaching as well as to create general legal conditions without exercising unnecessary control over details. Within those legal standards, science must be free of paternalism. However, society still has the right to transparency and enlightenment about the aims and consequences of research and new technologies.

Research is a field of activity in which the general risk features of human behaviour come to a head. On the one hand its social purpose is to broaden the scope of risk-free social action by adding to existing knowledge. On the other hand, research itself is extremely risky. One can respond to this neither with prohibitions nor with one-sided antiquated technology promotion policies. Modern and viable societies must make available the greatest possible variety of technological options. If human rights are violated by research and development, limits must be set. But to guarantee that these remain absolute exceptions the existing research promotion systems should be examined for their openness to social and sustainability criteria. New technologies gain acceptance through publicity and social access. We want to avoid a digital division of society on the basis of social borderlines and limited sharing of information on opportunities and risks by upgrading the skills of the individual.

Increasingly, legal questions regarding science and research are being settled at the European or global level. To prevent these arrangements from being dominated by business considerations, institutions such as UNESCO have to be strengthened and the emancipatory aspects of the Bologna process must be accentuated.

Culture and art

Guaranteeing the freedom of art and science, research and instruction is a constitutional obligation. It imposes the duty to make the Federal Republic of Germany a civilised state and to officially promote cultural life in the interest of all social strata. Diversity of sponsors is an indispensable precondition for the cultural wealth of a society as well as for the flourishing of widely differing cultural currents and subcultures.

Cultural policy must make possible a network of public facilities, free projects and private initiatives with something to offer to all citizens. The cultural spheres that serve the community and its democratic structuring but cannot finance themselves need long-term safeguards and adequate public support. In addition, the PDS wants private engagement oriented to the public weal to be supported.

The PDS reckons on the expansion of the culture business and acknowledges the democratising tendencies of the industrial mass production of cultural goods and services. As a mediator between cultural production and acquisition, the market requires regulation to

limit profit interests as well as the processes of concentration in the cultural and media landscape in the public interest.

The promotion of culture is the joint responsibility of the federal, state and local governments. There is no alternative to cooperation between the federal and state governments in the field of promoting culture. The responsibility of the federal government, in the view of the PDS, resides above all in defining the general regulative conditions and – increasingly – in directly supporting cultural institutions and projects. On the other hand, cultural federalism has to be preserved. It contributes to cultural diversity and counteracts nationalist tendencies. The PDS advocates a modern continuation of cooperative cultural federalism in the European context. There are cultural policy reasons as well for restoring the financial capability of local government to perform its functions.

State cultural promotion is of crucial importance for preserving and expanding the cultural infrastructure in East Germany. The continued engagement of the federal government will be indispensable here for the foreseeable future. The PDS therefore advocates its stabilisation. The weakening of social ties caused by the extraordinary shortage of jobs makes it necessary to provide special cultural offers that counteract the feeling of being unwanted and excluded and help preserve the cohesion of the society. Make-work programmes have facilitated the transition of the cultural life of East German communities to the new conditions and allowed the emergence of a diversified landscape of projects sponsored by not-for-profit supporting institutions. These must continue to be supported until new solutions are implemented to ensure the uninterrupted work of this cultural sector.

The freedom of individuals and their social engagement are conceived and experienced in all their inconsistencies through art in its diverse trends. Because art is an essential aspect of the great social debate, the PDS wants to safeguard and protect the very own worlds of the arts as autonomous spaces, testing fields and sanctuaries. It sees in new artistic trends impulses for an expanded understanding of the world and of society that ought to be nurtured as much as possible. Whoever wants rich contemporary artistic production must intercede for government support for the conditions of production of artists. Support for the arts is worthwhile and justified only if the cultural education of all social strata is supported in equal measure. It is therefore a cultural policy objective of equal value.

The PDS continues to regard it as a government task not only to retain the large art cultivation institutes but also to make the social experience preserved by them in the works of art accessible to all.

Religious communities

Die PDS advocates the religious and ideological neutrality of the state and municipal institutions. The PDS regards people's beliefs as a part of their dignity and stands for freedom of the religions and their exercise. Because socialist policy was entangled in confrontational thinking in the past, it underestimated the need for dialogue with the religious communities, including international movements of religious socialists.

In the age of extensive intercultural contacts, discrimination against people on grounds of religious convictions is a grave threat to peaceful and democratic coexistence. The PDS demands equal political treatment of religious and ideological organisations, seeks dialogue and cooperation with men and women representing religious communities and emphasises shared values and goals that have to do with human dignity, social justice and the safeguarding of peace. It decidedly opposes the exploitation of religion for political purposes. The PDS is preparing concepts for the unbiased treatment of people's real values in all policy fields.

Media

The PDS notes that the political power of media operating internationally is increasing and that neo-liberal theories are being published to an increasing extent. Alternative views appear only marginally. Monopoly conditions usually prevail in the local newspaper markets.

Since the German public media are in the clutches of the ruling parties and under the pressure of ratings, the commitment of women and men journalists to ensure factual information and critical publicity in order to safeguard freedom of information and opinion as a public good must be rated highly and reinforced.

In the age of digitalisation, especially of the Internet, traditional differences between public and commercial, old and new media as well as those between private and public, between information and advertising are dissolving. Media content is increasingly being produced under the control of international media groups. It is traded world-wide and staged and distributed to create buyer markets for the products being promoted.

Since numbers alone do not ensure variety, the PDS supports all efforts to construct an autonomous, independent, self-organised media sector not influenced by the government that provides knowledge and information as public goods. The PDS demands that public offerings be created or retained in all media that have an influence on democratic opinion-forming and decision-making. It supports the reinforcement of public broadcasting that has as its precondition a fundamental reform, especially of its work structures and supervisory bodies. It recommends a media foundation financed from advertising contributions from the commercial stations and publishing houses that supports new suppliers.

The antitrust laws are to be adapted to the new developments in such a way that journalistic competition remains possible in the media market and its sub-markets.

Variety, competence, critical publicity, a comprehensive basic supply of authentic, verifiable information, universal free access to news and culture and priority goals of democratic media policy. The media must give society the chance to express itself democratically in many voices; it must promote enlightenment and educational processes and help enable women and men citizens to monitor private and state power and to participate in political decision-making. Only then will the media be public spaces for the communication of citizens with one another.

8. East Germany

Development of the new federal states into a model region of socio-economic renewal / more effective business development / against continuing discrimination against East Germans in wages, salaries, pensions and working hours / EU eastward expansion as an opportunity

The unity of Germany is incomplete. The dramatic westward migration of young qualified people in particular shows that the mostly market-economy administration or administration based solely on West German experience cannot resolve the complicated problems of economic, social and ecological development in East Germany – despite the continuing massive transfer of government funds financed primarily by the wage-earners.

Because all the unsolved problems of the Federal Republic of Germany as a whole are especially acute in East Germany, the PDS proposes: The eastern part of Germany must become the starting point of social reforms for socio-ecological and democratic change. Greater government and civil society responsibility for the political shaping of East German development is overdue. This includes active structural policy, better coordination between business, labour, technology, science and research policy, long-term local government programmes for investments in the infrastructure and an reinforcement of business-related research. The new federal states cannot become viable as a low-wage region. Their viability must rest on innovation, supported by a federal fund for community social, ecological and cultural tasks. The PDS wants "local agendas 21" citizens' budgets and regional development guidelines to come about in a democratic process through the co-determination

of women and men citizens. On that basis, state development programmes having a positive effect on employment could be worked out in East Germany, and linked together they could culminate in a forward-looking programme for the socio-ecological restructuring of the east.

The increased self-confidence of many people in the new federal states, their more pronounced capitalism-critical attitude in comparison to the majority of the West German population and their greater longing for social equality are good preconditions for that.

The post-2010 investments in the context of Construction Programme East provided for in Solidarity Pact II should to a large extent be moved forward to the period before 2010. The available resources ought to be bundled, coordinated and used more effectively for higher value added through more effective business development and future-oriented economic policy. The priorities should be: innovative changes in the economic structure; priority development of regional economic grids; unbureaucratic support for small and medium-sized enterprises and especially of regionally and extra-regionally oriented enterprise networks; closer linkage of scientific institutions and production enterprises; attractive vocational training that offers interesting job prospects to young women and men.

Support must be given so that innovative goods and services can find markets: through stronger mass demand, through adjustment of wages, salaries, working hours and pensions in the east to those in the west, better marketing and support for the opening up of export markets. Regional development potentials should be developed in such a way that an economically and ecologically rational division of labour emerges in and between the East German regions, in the Federal Republic of Germany and in Europe.

The improvement of the investment capacity of local government through better funding is particularly important for East Germany because a large number of small enterprises are highly dependent on local government contracts.

We are in favour of effective farms in eastern Germany. The government land policy and appropriate old debt arrangements must provide safeguards for their existence.

East Germany should be purposefully developed into an important integration area between the existing and the new countries of the European Union. However, there is a danger that it will degenerate into a mere transit region between Western Europe and the new Member States. Small and medium-sized enterprises require adjustment assistance and support for cross-border cooperation. The Brussels "Border Regions" action programme has fallen behind expectations. The border regions need a substantial increase in EU special support and a decided improvement of the transport infrastructure. The linkage of the various European and national incentive programmes and access to them must be made substantially easier.

Considerably more resources are needed for youth exchange, bilingual education and training and the nurturing of cross-border contacts between social and cultural institutions. In the course of eastward expansion of the European Union, East Germany can become a location for protection of nature and the environment and for the further development of gentle tourism. By expanding technologies for the generation of renewable energy, by developing new environmental programmes and by designing important science parks, we have to prove that the transition to alternative and viable ways of producing and living is possible.

IV. Changes with the PDS – Changes in the PDS

The Party of Democratic Socialism emerged from the SED in the political upheavals of the autumn of 1989. At its extraordinary party conference in December 1989 it broke with the

antidemocratic SED view of politics and parties and the Stalinist distortions of the socialist idea. Since then we, the members of the PDS, have pressed ahead with a sustained process of change within our Party, influenced in part by experiences of West Germans and other Europeans on the left. Our goal is a modern socialist party that is consistently democratic and emancipatory and operative in all of Germany. In the eastern part of Germany the PDS has to assume a special responsibility deriving from historical facts.

As democratic socialist women and men we remain committed in particular to those traditions of the labour movement – the trade unions, the social democratic and communist parties – that came into being in the struggles against nationalism and militarism, against imperialism and fascism, and that proved their worth in 1945/1946 in joint action for the antifascist-democratic restructuring of Germany. Historical experience leads us to take a resolute stand against every form of anti-social-democratism and anticommunism.

No one has to wring the critical analysis of our history out of us. It is our responsibility, our interest, a part of our contribution to reclaiming democratic socialism as a politically significant and influential movement in our country in which we want to participate.

We do not judge the history of the GDR solely from the perspective of its failure and do not yield to the prevailing total criticism. That history is a source of important lessons and experiences gained in the struggle for socialism which must not be forgotten. Above all the personal commitment of many people to a different Germany must not be ignored. We reiterate our conviction: After 1945, millions of people in east and west strove to overcome the fascist heritage. They worked for a peace-loving Germany and the erection of a better social order. That intention needs no apology in east or west. The antifascist and democratic changes in the eastern part of Germany and the later endeavour to shape a socialist society stood in legitimate contrast to the continuation in West Germany of the capitalism that had been weakened and discredited by the crimes of German fascism, crimes unequalled in human history. The history of the GDR includes remarkable achievements and valuable experiences in the struggle for social justice, for the setting of production goals in the interest of the population, for the participation of large parts of the population in education and culture and for a solidarity-based and peaceful polity on German soil.

As a nation-wide socialist party the PDS also endeavours to process and absorb the conflicting experiences of left movements, organisations and political parties in the old Federal Republic of Germany. The culture and the programmatic insights of broad and socially effective movements against rearmament and the restriction of democratic and social rights as well as the emancipatory and ecological ways of living are indispensable connecting factors for us. The weakness of the political left in "the West" is reason enough for us to undertake a critical reassessment of its history and its manifold causes.

Owing to the concrete historical conditions, the SED as the ruling party focussed from the beginning on the model of socialism that had emerged in the Soviet Union and on unwavering adherence to the policy of the Soviet Union. It was neither able or willing to couple socialism with democracy and freedom. Its road was therefore paved with painful errors, civilisatory omissions and crimes. We are left with the bitter realisation that no few members of the SED – for the sake of grand ideals – helped bolster structures of oppression and permitted or even supported the persecution of dissidents. We therefore share with others a moral responsibility. Accordingly it is our natural duty to defend the basic rights established in the Basic Law for the Federal Republic of Germany. There is no end, however honourable it may be, that could justify the violation of fundamental human rights and universal democratic principles.

We fought for the unification of the two German states on terms of equality and will go on taking consistent action in the future to ensure that East Germans in the common country have equal rights and independent development opportunities and that the significant cultural

riches of East Germany are retained and utilised. We resisted the exclusions of the PDS and many East Germans in the first years after 1990 and opened up our Party to society. We were partners in the social and political struggles of the potash miners of Bischofferode and other East German workforces. We resist every kind of participation of the Federal Republic of Germany in warfare. We take a resolute stand against racism and right-wing extremism. We get involved in the movements for plebiscitary democracy and defend the land reform of 1945.

In the coming years as well, our place will be in the ranks of the social movements against the capitalisation of society, the dismantling of democracy and war. We defend the gains of emancipatory movements and want to help overcome capitalist profit dominance and break through its patriarchal, authoritarian and militarist safeguards. As socialist women and men we intend to become an acknowledged part of social resistance to neo-liberalism and to help reinforce strong social reform forces with our own concepts and projects.

We strive for political alliances that do justice to those goals.

Our most important political goal is to make our contribution to the formation of a broad social and political alliance for a radical policy turn-about in Germany and Europe. We see the social base for such an alliance in connecting people who are socially better off but do not want to put up with mass social exclusion in society with those who are already being pushed by the prevailing policy into social insecurity and impoverishment as well as those who are taking action for a more equitable society as a condition for a self-determined life of their own. To make such a policy turn-about possible, we want to work towards a change in the balance of power in society through our activities.

The PDS wants to be a part of a broad alliance opposing a policy that has the goal of attaining harmony with the economically powerful at the expense of the socially weak. We work to overcome the intellectual and political hegemony of the neo-liberal ideology and policy in Germany and in the European Union. We want to establish socialist policy lastingly as an independent self-confident political project so that future-oriented democratic, social and ecological alternatives can be implemented.

As a socialist party we are prepared to work in the long term for a centre-left alliance directed towards such changes.

As a political party, the PDS battles for parliamentary strength. We fight about how we can develop our profile as a socialist party, get the beginnings of social and democratic alternatives accepted and assume political responsibility in parliamentary opposition as well as in government coalitions. We want to help design a democratic politics of and for women and men citizens and prove that real shifts towards more democracy and justice are possible.

Though its policy, the PDS shares responsibility for the development of the Federal Republic of Germany and for its role in the European Union and the world.

Since 1990 we have been working to have the welfare state and the social market economy expanded rather than being further destroyed. We have fought against military interventions with the participation of the Bundeswehr. We have opposed the erosion of asylum policy. We have come out against political persecution, exclusion and discrimination against East Germans at all levels. We have made the economic, social, democratic, libertarian and civic advances in our country our own; we are among their staunchest defenders and want to expand and renew them.

We see reliability in the eyes of the women and men who vote for us as a commitment. With effective parliamentary opposition policy at the state, federal and European levels, with the

toleration of a minority social democratic government and with the formation of SPD-PDS governments in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania und Berlin, our party has demonstrated its political qualifications under difficult conditions.

Its activity in the area of conflict between its own socialist concepts, the expectations of women and men citizens and attainable compromises is a constant learning process. Tensions result when extreme budget deficits make it necessary to take responsibility for constantly balancing the different interests of various social groups and organisations. That demands of the PDS a maximum of transparency of the problems to be resolved and the participation in decision-making of those affected. The need to fight for a just taxation policy to increase budget revenues does not alter that fact.

We members of the PDS want to take a more active part than we have up to now in democratic, social and political movements: in local councils, in trade unions and businesses, in the women's movement, in anti-fascist, anti-racist and anti-militarist organisations, in unemployed and environmental initiatives, in youth and student groups, in gay and lesbian, transgender and queer communities, in Third-World groups, in disabled persons' associations, in tenant and consumer associations, in social, cultural and sports pressure groups. We respect and support the ethical commitment of women and men citizens who are active in churches, religious communities and church social facilities. We see in the multitude of international and globally active social and especially globalisation-critical movements crucial countervailing forces against unbridled capitalist modernisation. The PDS wants to make its contribution to the emergence of a common party of the left in Europe.

Various left democratic forces work together in the PDS. Both people who put up resistance to the capitalist society and fundamentally reject the status quo and those who link their resistance with making positive changes to and gradually overcoming the status quo have a place in it. Our advocacy of democratic socialism is not tied to any specific world view, ideology or religion. The PDS is a pluralist party of democratic socialist women and men. Democratic majorities decide on its path, its goals and its political profile. It accords minorities the right and opportunities to defend their convictions and aims within the scope of the principles and democratic socialist orientations of the statutes and this programme. It unites in its ranks women and men irrespective of their nationality. The PDS wants to recruit members and women and men sympathisers from all social strata who have the intention to work in the spirit of this programme.

Respect for other democratic political orientations is an expression of the political culture that we labour to achieve. We expect others to deal with our party accordingly. Criticism, argument, tolerance and fairness characterise our relationship with politicians in other parties. We combine the defence and further extension of parliamentary democracy and the democratic separation of powers with the conviction that fundamental social changes cannot be brought about without social and political struggles and without overcoming the cultural hegemony of neo-liberalism and the existing balance of power and without reducing the dominance of capital over our society, to which extra-parliamentary movements make a decisive contribution.

We are aware that the demands on our political activity that we ourselves have formulated have not yet been fully met and have not adequately contributed to dissolving the social blockades in the Federal Republic of Germany. We will change that. Through its action in the local councils and in extra-parliamentary movements and organisations in particular, the PDS can gain the trust and recognition of the citizens. We want to dedicate ourselves wholeheartedly to defending the interests of the socially disadvantaged and excluded people in this society. We have not resigned ourselves to the increasing social division.

Citizens rightly apply stringent ethical standards to the policy of socialists. Those are our standards as well. In our minds, politics and morality cannot be separated. The political word

must match the political deed. the chosen means of politics must not come into conflict with the declared goals of our party. Dealing honestly with facts and being ready to draw the right conclusions from them form the basis of credibility.

Critically attached to the traditions of the Enlightenment, the heritage of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, the diverse currents of the German and international labour movement and the various revolutionary and democratic movements and committed to anti-fascism, we want our Party of Democratic Socialism to become a politically competent socialist alternative.

We offer resistance whenever social and political reaction, militarism, racist cynicism and human rights violations demand it. We are ready for social cooperation wherever progress leads to greater justice. We struggle to overcome capitalism because we want to live in a society of freedom, equality and solidarity.