

Program of the DKP German Communist Party

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*by the 17th National – **Congress** of the DKP – German Communist Party*

We are at present living in a period of time in which the continuing internationalization of economic processes and the scientific-technological revolution allow immeasurable possibilities to spurn mankind's creativity and to develop its productive forces. Hunger and poverty could be vanquished from the face of the earth; the fundamental right of secure and worthy labor could be implemented on a world-wide scale. It would be feasible to reduce working hours enabling sensible out-of-work activities, allowing all to have time for family, friends, education, culture, for creativity. Our present level of productivity could enable mankind a life in dignity. It could be feasible to sustain the earth as a viable ecological system for future generations. The increasing possibilities of communication could open new perspectives for overall development of culture and for the emancipation of mankind.

However, capitalist preconditions serve only the purpose of leashing productive forces and globalization for the increase of capitalist profits. The scientific-technological progression is abused to the aim of increasing the profits of the proprietors of productive forces, the capitalists. Workers and employees are increasingly being coerced into yet longer and harder working conditions. Labor is being cut back; mass unemployment is continually on the rise. The social standards that the working class had long struggled for are being dismantled. Class antagonism has become more explicit; class struggle tougher.

The 21st century follows in the wake of the 20th century. A shrinking segment of human kind derives use of the wealth generated by society at large. The disparity between developed imperialistic states and the so-called "Third World", the gap between rich and poor deepens from year to year. Today, more than 2 billion people are absolutely excluded from any form of economic participation in society and condemned to subsistence in poverty. War, ecological catastrophes, mass impoverishment and exploitation in large parts of the world, mass unemployment and social dismantlement in the industrial nations are the realities of capitalist society. "New Poverty" is characterizing the beginnings of the new century.

In the developed countries, only a small minority is able to participate in the process of growth; the large mass is continually sliding and slithering into a condition of helplessness and despair. The Imperialist forces make use of brutal force in implementing their hegemony and in securing the prevalent preconditions, thus insuring dependency of those nations and peoples to be exploited. The ever-increasing impoverishment of people goes hand-in-hand with the ecological destruction of natural resources, the fundamental preconditions of life for future generations.

Science and technology are being perverted in the development of weaponry for mass destruction. The leading imperialist powers' claim to global hegemony, their struggle in the allotment of the sources of raw resources, markets and spheres of influence continue to create military conflicts all over the world. War is becoming a permanent situation.

The capitalist private-profit principle has become the largest threat to the survival of mankind. "Capitalist production thus develops the technology and the combination of society's processes by the undermining of the sources of its own wealth: the exploitation of both the earth and the worker."
(K. Marx "Capital")

There is now growing resistance in the labor movement, in the peace and anti-globalization movements as well as in the protest movements in the underdeveloped countries of the world against the threats that imperialism has created: The slogan "A different world is possible" mobilizes people of entirely different political viewpoints and social backgrounds from all over the world.

The communists of the DKP, the German Communist Party, are consequent participants in these movements. They are actively involved in the struggle for their immediate goals. They strive for the unity of these various forces. They strive for a resistance which can lead to a

united offensive for the interests and needs of all those exploited and oppressed by monopoly capitalism. A different society is necessary and possible.

Only a revolutionary breach with capitalist power and private property structures will finally eliminate the sources of exploitation and estrangement, war, impoverishment and the destruction of our natural environment. The implementation of elementary human rights for the entire population will only be possible in a society based on public ownership of the productive forces and in which democracy is being realized by the political power of the working people. This society is Socialism, the first stage of the communist formation of society.

In its struggle for a better world the working class movement has achieved important gains but also suffered bitter setbacks. But even the most serious defeats have never stopped working people from continuing their struggle for justice, solidarity, peace and social security.

The destruction of socialism in Eastern Europe was the most serious defeat the international working class and progressive forces, even the bourgeois enlightenment have ever suffered. They have to this day not yet recovered. The protagonists of capital today are proclaiming socialism's final defeat and that history has achieved its goal. Capitalism is to be seen as ever-enduring and without alternative. But it is capitalism that has no future. Its incapacity for solving its inherent contradictions becomes increasingly evident. Only class struggle for a new formation of society, for socialism can overcome these. A new society doesn't develop all by itself – it must be fought for.

The DKP as a revolutionary party of the working class has its roots in the struggles of the German working class tradition against capitalist exploitation and oppression, against militarism and war. The DKP is also rooted in the tradition of revolutionary German Social Democracy and of the Communist Party of Germany (KPD). The party is heir to anti-fascist struggle and endeavors for an anti-fascist and democratic rebirth after being liberated from Hitler's fascism. The DKP today has a rich background that encompasses both the experiences of struggle against the division of the two Germanys, against remilitarization, the protest movement of the late 1960ies and the class struggle of the former FRG (Federal Republic of Germany) with the experiences of the construction of a new anti-fascist and democratic social order and of Socialism in the GDR (German Democratic Republic).

The insights formulated by Marx, Engels and Lenin, further developed by other Marxists, in scientific socialism, dialectical and historical materialism as well as in political economy, constitute the fundamentals of and serve as political compass for the politics of the DKP today. The DKP applies these lessons in Marxism to the preconditions of class struggle today and contributes to their further development.

The working class of all countries has the same present and future interests. Their realization is dependent on solidary and internationalists collective action above and beyond all national boundaries and encompassing all continents. This becomes increasingly true in the face of intensive imperialistic internationalization in the interest of transnational monopoly capitalism and integration processes of the European Union called globalization . It is thus the politics of the DKP to combine both the struggle for the interests of the people in Germany with consequent acting according to the principles of proletarian internationalism.

The DKP expresses active solidarity with all progressive forces struggling against imperialism. The DKP does everything the party can for a closer collaboration of communist parties bilaterally, in the European Union as well as globally.

The ultimate aim of the DKP is socialism/communism. With the precondition of public ownership of the means of production and production planning it will over the process of history be possible to develop a society in which "...the free development of the individual

becomes the precondition for the free development of all.” (K. Marx/F. Engels “Communist Manifesto” 1848) To win the working class and the majority of the other working people for this aim – this is what the DKP stands for.

I. IMPERIALISM TODAY

Foundations of capitalism

In the struggle against feudalist oppression for economic and political power, the emerging bourgeoisie at the turn to the 19th century promised “Freedom, Equality, and Brotherhood”. This soon proved to be a deceptive “heroic illusion” as private ownership of the means of production remains the economic basis of capitalism. The class owning these means or with them at their disposal, the bourgeoisie, i.e. the class of capitalists, acquires the results of production. The working class has to acquire its means of existence by selling its only realizable property in the production process, working power, to the owners of the means of production.

The position of the working class in capitalism can only be improved by the struggle for better conditions in the sale of their labor and for a higher share in the values created through their work. The capitalists, on the other hand, are interested in keeping wages low in order to acquire as much surplus value or profits as possible. Therefore, a “partnership” between the working class and the class of capitalists is not possible. Their interests are conflicting. The contradiction between capital and work is the irreconcilable class contradiction of the capitalist society.

The products produced in capitalism are the results of a synthesis between the workers in their respective workplaces and the division of labor between workplaces and the branches of production. Capitalist production is a social process.

The private ownership of the results by the owner of the means of production stands in contradiction to this. The contradiction between the social character of production and the private acquisition of the production results represents the fundamental contradiction of capitalism. It deepens with the growing expansion and socialization of production on the one hand and the accumulation of capital, i.e. turning profits into additional capital, on the other hand. In this process, the capitalists are driven both by the chase for ever-growing profits and the relentless competition between each other.

The accumulation process of capital, growth and technological progress can only exist through repeated economic and political crises. This involves increasing inequality in the distribution of social wealth and – as a trend – increasing poverty and pauperization.

These conditions imply that

- the necessary production of the social conditions of existence is only possible through the cooperation of the two basic classes, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat under the command of capital;
- the relationship between the two basic classes is at the same time a hostile one because each one of the classes can only achieve its share in the social wealth at the cost of the other one;
- there is a permanent competition between the owners of the means of production over the biggest shares of profits;
- the compulsory growth of capital and production of surplus value on an enlarged level leads to the permanent turning of profits into additional capital and to a centralization of capital;

- the means of work and consumption, technology and social structures are continuously turned over. "The bourgeoisie cannot exist without continuously revolutionizing the instruments of production, i.e. the production conditions, i.e. all social conditions." (*K.Marx/ F.Engels: Manifesto of the Communist Party*)

Stages of capitalist development

Since its origin, capitalism has undergone different stages of development. The most important change - which happened after the time Karl Marx did his research work on capitalism and which he foresaw - is the fact that in the wake of accumulation of capital and due to their competition continually expanding enterprises and corporations developed. At the end of the 19th century and along with the development of the productive forces (for example chemistry and electrical technology) and the concentration and centralization of capital enterprises came into existence, which dominated production and markets. Thus the fundamentals were laid for the formation of monopolies as a social relationship of power and as a decisive relationship of production and ownership. The monopolies grew more and more influential in the shaping of political relationships. Monopolist capitalism emerged as the economic core of imperialism.

The essential characteristics of this new stage of development of capitalism were summarized by Lenin as follows: Imperialism is: "...

1. the concentration of production and capital, which has reached such a high level of development that it creates monopolies, which play the decisive role in the economy;
2. the merging of bank capital with industrial capital and the emergence of a financial oligarchy on the basis of financial capital;
3. capital export is gaining crucial importance, as opposed to the export of goods,
4. international monopolist associations of capital, which divide the world amongst them, are emerging and
5. (...) the territorial division of the world amongst the greatest capitalist powers is completed." (*W.I.Lenin: Works, vol. 22, p.270*)

In the wake of this new level of socialization Lenin characterizes the place of imperialism in history as "transitional capitalism", as a material preparation of socialism.

Due to its economic fundamental characteristics being the rule of the monopolies, imperialism inevitably shows its tendency of exterior aggression and interior inner reaction. The worst expression of this were the two imperialist world wars and fascism.

The monopolistic stage of development of capitalism goes hand in hand with other processes of development. The requirements of the socialization of production, the competition between the two systems capitalism and socialism and the struggle of the labor movement made a more and more direct intervention of the state in the economic process in the interest of the monopolies necessary. The power of the monopolies and the power of the state merged into state monopolist capitalism.

But this process, too, continues to develop: In the past decades, yet more important changes in monopolistic capitalism have come about. These are interrelated with a new step of development of the productive forces resulting from the scientific-technological revolution and a new stage of capitalist internationalization.

At the same time, alongside the serious defeat of the revolutionary workers' movement at the end of the 20th century, political barriers to the new expansion dynamics of capitalism were removed.

Marx and Engels already described the fundamental orientation of capitalist internationalization in the “Manifesto of the Communist Party”: “The bourgeoisie has through its exploitation of the world market given a cosmopolitan character to production and consumption in every country. To the great chagrin of reactionaries, the national ground on which industry had stood was made obsolete. All national industries established a long time ago have been destroyed or are being destroyed daily. They are being dislodged by new industries, whose introduction becomes a question of life-and-death for all civilized nations, disrupted by industries that no longer work up indigenous raw material, but draw raw material from the remotest zones; replaced by industries whose products are consumed, not only at home but in every quarter of the globe. Former wants and needs, until recently satisfied by national, domestic production are being replaced by new ones; their satisfaction requiring the products of distant lands and climates. In place of the old local and national seclusion and self-sufficiency, we have intercourse in every direction, universal inter-dependence of nations.”

What sort of Capitalism do we live in?

Today, we are experiencing both a deepening of the processes described by Marx and Engels and developments of a new quality. They are taking place on the background of revolutionary changes in the productive forces, especially within the information, communication, and transport technologies.

Since the mid-1970s there have been an increasing number of crisis symptoms in the capitalist countries. The capitalist world economy remained stuck in inflation and stagnation. Profit rates dropped. Monopoly capital and the state have tried to find a way out by decreasing the importance of domestic demand in the accumulation model in favor of a shift giving priority to world market orientation.

More and more, the last barriers of the national markets are being torn down. The world market is increasingly turning into the single global field of capitalist competition. The new stage of internationalization no longer only implies a further interrelationship of trade and markets. The new communication technologies today make it possible to establish a network of production processes and cash flow all around the globe. Central to world-wide competition is the struggle for monopolist profits by achieving positions dominating markets and products and by leading the competition of innovations. The fast-moving internationalization of the economy falls into contradiction with the restricted possibilities of national economic politics. These economic processes and the political and cultural developments implied are called globalization. They mark the appearance of imperialism at the beginning of the 21st century without changing its nature.

Transnational corporations and transnational financial conglomerations have become the dominating manifestation of capital on the world market and have formed capital preconditions crucial for the structures found in the present developmental stage of monopolistic capitalism. The transnational corporations organize the production process in worldwide networks according to the most favorable conditions and globalize the production of surplus value. They are able to thwart the economic politics of states and blackmail them. The states are thus forced into a relentless battle of competition over conditions most profitable for the transnational corporations.

Speculation has always been fundamental to capitalist economy. But in the new phase of monopolist capitalism it has become a decisive element and embraces all areas of economy and politics. The capitalist over-accumulation leads to financial speculation becoming a central instrument of the transnational corporations' use of capital.

With immense mega-mergers of banks and insurance corporations by which huge monetary assets have accumulated in investment funds, pension and other funds; the financial institutions have attained a new stage of power. Monetary capital circles the globe in search of the highest profit rate possible. Its hunger for interest can only be satisfied by the relentless increase of share prices and the looting of public funds of states and municipalities, which are being driven into growing debt, increasing their dependence on the financial institutes.

Speculation has reached a new scale, whereby no longer share values and companies alone but also the currencies of the countries have become objects of speculation. The international financial markets dictate national economic politics.

The export of capital has reached even greater importance. – There are, however, new tendencies here as well:

- a bigger part of foreign investment goes into the industrial field and today serves less and less the purpose of building up new production facilities, financial, service and trading companies but the acquisition or participation in already existing ones instead.
- *Another tendency is the changed direction of capital flows : the overwhelming part of worldwide foreign investment activities by companies of the so-called “triad” the USA, the European Union and Japan – today no longer flows into “underdeveloped” countries but is mostly kept and used in the imperialist metropolitan centers themselves. The “rest of the world” is – even if to a varying extent – being more and more abandoned, especially as regards modern technologies. This is particularly true of the African countries.

The result of today’s concentration and centralization processes is not only a new, even higher level of monopolization and the socialization that goes hand in hand with it . Even more than in Lenin’s times, the material preconditions necessary for the overcoming of capitalism by socialism are being created.

The economic developments in today’s phase of monopoly capitalism continue in the midst of the contradiction of interests, of growing competition, of conflicts between the transnational corporations, as well as those between them and the national monopoly capital, between the monopoly capital and the non-monopolist capital. Depending on their origin and their economic anchoring corporations and capital groups are also mobilizing non-economic means. Here, states and supranational institutions are playing a special role.

Capitalism and State

Capitalism and the modern state have emerged in a complicated historic process; their development has been interdependent.

The task of the state is, above and beyond capitalist competition, the organization of the bourgeoisie as the ruling class and securing its rule. The state provides the repressive means for the implementation of the capital interests and uses them to suppress resistance. The function of the state is to establish the hegemony of the ruling class through consensus and force; it is a ruling instrument and the field of class struggle in one.

In the beginning the state had the economic task of securing domestic free market competition and of protecting domestic capital from foreign competition. This was mostly implemented by the imposition of protectionist tariffs, tolls and other protectionist measures. The forming of monopolist capitalism implied the advancing of monopolization and the development of new areas of expansion for monopoly capital by conquering markets and colonies. These policies have resulted in the battle for a new division of the world and in imperialist wars of conquest.

More and more, the monopoly capital has only been able to reproduce itself with the help of consistent direct economic activity of the state. State monopolist capitalism has become the necessary condition of existence for capitalism.

After World War II, the existence of strong trade unions and the pressure exercised by the competition of systems also forced upon bourgeois and conservative elements the insight that state interventionism and social compromise were necessary to maintain inner stability. This so-called "welfare state compromise" however, did not only have a socio-political aspect but was also useful for economic development: the securing of mass incomes during weak economic periods contributed to the dynamic development of the domestic market and made the swift spreading of a way of life and consumption according to the principles of Fordist mass production possible.

In the past decades, there have also been changes in the instruments of state monopoly capitalism. Direct entrepreneurial state activity was cut back by the privatization of state property. This is, however, offset by other forms of state intervention: by tax reliefs and subsidies, by sponsoring research and development for the monopolies etc. This was mainly directed at strengthening international competitiveness.

Since the 1970s, more and more international forms of state monopolist capitalism have emerged. In Europe, an increasing number of regulating functions have been conveyed to the EU.

In the context of globalization, initial beginnings of a global state monopolist regulation system have appeared with the function of keeping the crisis potentials of a capitalist world economy and the inter-imperialist contradictions under control. The important roles here are played by IMF, World Bank, WTO, and the G7 i.e. the G8. These institutions are aimed at the enforcement of the common goals of international monopoly capital. At the same time they are a place of harsh competition and the clashing of contradicting interests of transnational corporations, imperialist states and blocs. The main element of this economic-political-military apparatus of power under construction, however, are the national states, which in the course of this process are subject to deep changes in the roles they are playing.

The strategy of Neoliberalism accelerates the process of internationalization of state monopoly capitalism. Neoliberalism is the ideology and politics with which the radical changes of work and life, of the conditions of production are being conducted to the aim of their adjustment to the new standards of productive forces under capitalist conditions and the provision of capital with improved conditions of financial realization.

This involves conflicts within the ruling class, a crisis of the national states and of bourgeois democracy. The state turns into the administrator of politics decided upon beyond the realms of its sovereignty in most cases. As a power instrument of the monopoly bourgeoisie the state more and more bluntly enforces politics against the interests of the majority of the population. Social integration is replaced by confrontation. The bourgeois state tends to lose its ability to social and political mediation, because the basis for the organization of stable social compromises between greater parts of society gets increasingly lost. Thus, the bourgeois democracy is undermined and becomes devoid of its fundamentals. While keeping up formal democracy, the "welfare state" is being transformed into an authoritarian "security state".

The domestic reactionary tendency of imperialism is growing. In Germany, this finds its expression in the attacks on the social and democratic achievements of the working class. Pressure to lower incomes, deregulation and flexibilisation in labor, the dismantling of social welfare systems, the impairment of bargaining rights and the restriction of trade union rights are all supposed to prepare Germany for the ever harsher competition going hand in hand

with globalization. The expansion of the police state and the possibility of domestic deployment of the German Army on the pretext of the “war on terrorism” are supposed to create conditions to suppress any serious resistance against social-reactionary and war politics. The constitutional conformity of stricter “security laws” is simply established by according amendment of the constitution. And should it be deemed necessary, there is the emergency legislation already drafted for quick legislation. Domestic reaction is last but not least manifested by the closure of the “European Fortress” against the growing streams of refugees trying to escape the foremost results of imperialist globalization: war and misery.

These processes are accompanied by the mass media. Their role is to form the consciousness of the people in the sense of the ruling forces, integrating them into capitalist society ideologically.

Tendency to Aggression

Together with globalization, there is not only a growing power of the monopolies but also their tendency towards aggression.

The formation of an international socialist system and the collapse of the imperialist colonial system after World War II endangered the continued existence of the capitalist order of exploitation. In view of this background, the inter-imperialist contradictions were temporarily put behind the common interests directed against the global expansion of socialism and the national liberation movements. After the defeat of socialism in the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries in Europe, they are now clearly visible again.

But still there are common interests. So, for the imperialist metropolitan centers one main task they have in common today is the removal of the last barriers to the total domination of the world market by the transnational corporations. Where ever economic measures do not show the desired effect, the imperialist war machinery is set going. Due to their economic, military and political power, the United States is the decisive imperialist world power. The aggressive military alliance NATO, dominated by the USA, relentlessly ignores international law; sovereign states which do not submit themselves to its dictate are bombed or occupied. Common interests link the imperialist states both in their efforts to carry the counterrevolution to the states which still maintain their socialist orientation as well as in their neoliberal politics against the working class.

At the same time, rivalries between the imperialist metropolitan centers and blocs are unfolding. However, the battle for the new distribution of the world and spheres of influence, which is waged in the context of uneven development in imperialism, today is carried out mostly with economic or political weapons or with “proxy wars”, which are fought by other countries against each other or in civil wars. Increased armament, the export of weapons and the provoking of tensions and conflicts in various regions of the world increase the nuclear threat and the danger of a war fatal to mankind as a whole. This does not exclude the danger of war conflicts between the imperialist metropolitan centers arising anew due to further shifts in economic and military power relations and the increasingly more aggressive scrambles for fewer readily available resources and world hegemony.

Crisis, militarization and war are the fundamental characteristics of capitalist globalization. This implies securing access to key resources to ensure the worldwide rule of monopoly capital. Resistance against oppression and poverty is to be kept under control by military force.

The European Union

Europe is larger than the European Union. But the European Union essentially determines the economy and politics of the rest of Europe. The construction of the European Union, the common market and the monetary union combine the interests of corporations for one big market freed of all restrictions, boundaries or regulations. Other markets are being attacked from this position of power in Western Europe. After a phase of fusing capital at a West-European level – with an excessive share of German investments in other EU countries - , an accelerated process of transatlantic and international mergers has now begun.

Europe is being subjected to the profit and power interests of the transnational capital without the contradicting interests of the transnational and national bourgeoisies being reconciled. The integration process is thus a field of competition and political conflicts. European integration remains not only a field with conflicts between different forces of the bourgeoisie, but, above all, one of class struggle.

Due to its bigger economic and financial potential, Germany has acquired the role of a decisive leading power and is at present trying to exercise this position together with the leading circles in France. Based on this role, German monopoly capital is again acting according to the old strategy of German imperialism, an aggressive economic, political and military expansion policy directed towards the East and Southeast of Europe up to the Caucasus and into the Near and the Middle East.

The economic and political dynamics press the EU into obtaining the basis of a supranational state apparatus. The European Union has developed into an independent economic, political and military center alongside the USA. Their mutual relationship is characterized by cooperation and competition. The close economic entanglement, especially in regard to foreign direct investment (FDI), intensifies transatlantic integration and at the same time harshness the competitive situation between the transnational corporations on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean.

The EU strives for a change in the forces of balance without being capable of questioning the domination of the USA in a foreseeable future. The strongest European economies – above all Germany – have increased their importance in world politics and on the world markets under the European flag. The German government in Berlin, therefore, is trying to urge EU unity as regards foreign politics and military affairs in order to thus obtain more influence. The planned strengthening of its own military forces serves this purpose. The EU is striving to become an independent, globally acting imperialist world power alongside the USA.

The expansion of the EU to encompass 25 countries and even more in the future is also aimed at the alignment and submission of the states of eastern and south-eastern Europe. This entails the inclusion of their economic resources and workforce as a dependent periphery of global expansion politics embraced by the EU. The result is the formation of highly-productive core regions in the West and the East while the rest of Europe will increasingly impoverish by being just the suppliers of cheap labor and cheap products within a widely dying industrial environment. The competition of production locations is used by companies to continuously depress wages, worsen working conditions and destroy social standards all over Europe.

The incorporation of the Mediterranean countries is destroying their local economic structures and is leading to increased poverty, loss of future perspectives and to social tensions. The EU is trying to keep the migration triggered by this under control by military means.

At the moment, the governments of all countries of the European Union are leading a general attack on the social standards previously achieved in hard struggles by dismantling and privatizing social security and pension schemes, by introducing market laws for important public services such as health, education, culture, as well as for common goods such as

water and other natural resources, by deregulating the job market. In today's Europe, there is a continuous increase in unemployment and precarious jobs, outward-bound militarization and domestic repression by laws depriving the people of their civil rights. Trade unions and other forces of resistance are treated more and more harshly, immigrants are being criminalized.

The dramatic cuts in welfare and the social destruction caused by neoliberal politics lead to political frustration and resignation in increasing parts of the population. The hopelessness of those affected by this development produces fear, despair, and is making many prey to irrational, ultra-right to fascist political slogans. Right-wing demagoguery, racism and anti-Semitism experience a revival.

A different Europe is possible – a socialist Europe is necessary

Europe, however, is not only the Europe of transnational corporations but also of the people's collective historic consciousness of the catastrophes of fascism and war. Europe is also heir to the cultural and political experience as well as to the social struggles through which the workers movement obtained social and democratic rights from capital by fighting. In one part of Europe it was proven that a society without capitalist exploitation is possible.

The social-democratic concept of the "Third Way" has failed in Europe mainly because it does not counteract neoliberalism but instead has fostered it. This creates new opportunities for the Left desiring to change the present world and at the same time increases the responsibility of the Left.

The further development of the European Union will depend on the extent of common action that the labor union and political workers movement, the movement of globalization critics, the democratic forces take and their successes in restricting the domination of EU institutions by the monopoly capital, in democratizing them and in winning influence on their decisions. The imperialist character of the EU construction, however, is turning any expectation of a chance to transform this European Union into a democratic, united and civil counterpart to US imperialism without a fundamental break in its social relationships into a gross illusion. Only a Europe striving against neoliberalism and for peace in the world could decisively change the international forces of balance. In order to achieve this, the power of the transnational corporations has to be broken and the struggles must be linked on both national and European levels.

II. GERMAN IMPERIALISM

Once again military violence and war are means of German foreign politics. The new military role of Germany is to decisively increase the importance of German imperialism in the international arena also in comparison to the other imperialist competitors. The logic of this goal implies aggressive economic, political, cultural and also military activities as well as the participation in aggressive wars contradictory to international law. The war against Yugoslavia was used to allow Germany to appear a power of order in eastern Europe and to underline the claim of German imperialism to a permanent seat in the UN Security Council.

No country threatens Germany. But the ruling circles have been staging the most vast armament projects of recent history. These consume the funds for social reforms, are a danger to democracy and threaten world peace. There are differing opinions among the monopoly bourgeoisie and its political pressure groups about how to best achieve their respective goals in foreign politics, foreign economics, and military politics. One important role here is played by the tension relations between an "atlantic" and a "European"

orientation. There is agreement among the ruling class on the indispensability of the alliance with US imperialism. This, however, collides with the fact that the US administration tends to ignore important German and West-European interests. This leads to contradictions reaching far into the government and the monopoly bourgeoisie.

Today's politics, which is hostile to peace and unsocial to a new extent, has been made possible only by the elimination of competing systems, the socialist countries of Europe. The East of Germany today is one of the structurally weakest regions within the European Union. This is the result of an unprecedented process of social cutbacks, plundering and restoration which openly started after the counterrevolution in 1989/90 with the Economic and Monetary Union beginning in July 1990 under the auspices of the West-German capital. In the first years after that the East saw a historically unique process of liquidation of economic and scientific-technological potential as well as the removal of work places - all in the interest and in favour of above all, monopoly capital. The industry of the GDR (German Democratic Republic) was – apart from some few “core bits” – destroyed, many viable state and other cultural institutions were “closed down”. Hundreds of thousands lost their jobs. The scientific-technological potential of the GDR was largely destroyed in the years after 1990.

The process of expropriation continued with ongoing attacks on the land reform, with the sale of public and municipal property, with the pension legislation and unequal wages in the East and in the West. Inequality manifested itself in long years of political prosecution. Special legislation for East Germany in fact annulled the constitutional principle of prohibition of back-dated punishment.

In the West, in the FRG (Federal Republic of Germany), the old economic and political power relations had already been restored after 1945. Still the trade union movement had been able to win important social achievements and compromises from capital. On this basis, reformism and the ideology of “social partnership” had had the function of smoothing out class conflicts. Reformist politics had encompassed a great scope of society, and with this background, was able to obtain the political and ideological hegemony in the West-German workers movement. Times now are over when social struggles nearly regularly led to an improvement of social rights and to the strengthening of the negotiation powers of trade unions. Now very hard struggles are necessary even for the defence of achievements won in the past, results being open even then. Social compromises are in contradiction to the logic of today's capitalism.

The search for social compromise is replaced by social polarisation and confrontation. The lower the costs the higher the profits are. The growing number of unemployed people is used as a means of pressure to weaken the labor movement, to depress regulations in the job market and break social and governmental protection of the work force, to undermine trade union work contracts, to deprive the working people of their dignity, and to redistribute the socially created wealth in favor of capital. The lack of wages as a factor of demand on the domestic market is to be set off by increased competition and export capacity – the absolute central focus of all measures. Even though labor productivity today is increasing as never before, social wealth becomes increasingly drawn out of the distribution struggle. Transnational capital tends to fight social investments that serve common welfare and which affect the maximizing of profits - this being considered as the withdrawal of necessary resources needed for competition on the world market. Thus, growing and increasingly persistent poverty has become a structural and functional part of this world market-oriented model.

This, however, also deprives reformism of its economic basis. The Social Democratic Party (SPD) is caught in deep crisis and has become a neoliberal party.

Winding back civilization

Uncertainty in one's professional career, irrespective of training or the degree of qualification, insecure life perspectives, the compulsion to enter into unforeseeable risks are becoming omnipresent and characterize more and more the life experience of the working class in today's capitalism. After a couple of decades of relative security, a situation has now returned in which everybody can suddenly be a loser and nobody can be sure about what to do. Many achievements towards equal rights for girls and women have increasingly been dismantled, questioned or – in the wake of downwards adjustment – turned into the opposite by neoliberal politics.

For the first time in recent history, the younger generations are worse off than the generations before them. The interrelation of productive progress and social development, previously enforced in class struggles, is being lifted. Infrastructural social achievements, such as child day-care and education are dismantled and the privatisation of public property is being enforced. We are experiencing social and civilitory regression.

With its neoliberal concept of considering work being solely a cost factor, capitalism not only destroys labor but also more and more the humane character of labor. Labor is not only decisive for the material reproduction of a human being; but also for his and her identity and social integration. Man has become man by his labor, has historically developed by labor. Labor is part of his nature, part of his creative skills. It is the expression of life, the life activity of a human being.

Only human beings gain the conditions of their existence by labor, by purposeful activity in order to create values of use for the satisfaction of their needs. In this process they not only change nature but also themselves, develop a material and intellectual culture, form a personality.

Alongside nature, labor is the decisive source of social wealth. This is true of all social orders. In capitalism, however, labor is at the same time both the source of value and surplus value, the working power is a commodity. The personal dignity of an individual is reduced to the exchange value of his labor.

The point is not about "liberation from work" but about the liberation of the working class from capitalist exploitation. Only then man can develop as a cultural being. Culture grows where a person can unfold his gifts and talents beyond the satisfaction of the immediate needs of life. Society will only be a truly humane one if it establishes this "realm of freedom" in which the "realm of necessity" is lifted. (K. Marx: "The Capital")

All cultural activity is a preparation of this humane future; it is critical as far as it exposes the reduction of humanity in a class society. It is an essential element of class struggle and of communist consciousness.

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In the framework of the conditions of capitalist production, the impacts of this system, which is hostile towards humans and nature, cannot be remedied. They inevitably originate from the laws of capital accumulation. Therefore a different social order is necessary – and this order is Socialism.

III. Socialism – the historic alternative to capitalism

The socialist goal

The goal of the DKP, socialism, is the fundamental alternative to capitalism. It is the breach with the history of systems based on exploitation. This perspective has its objective foundations in the contradictions of today's capitalist society and its subjective preconditions in human acting.

As the first phase of a communist society socialism is also a stage on the way to communism: a society in which classes are eliminated, in which labor for public benefit has become the first need of life and in which products are no longer a commodity. Socialized production and the universal human development will then have reached such a level that the principle "everybody according to his or her abilities – to everybody according to his or her needs" can be realized. The transition to communism will be prepared during a long historical process of the development of socialism.

The socialist order requires the obtaining of political power by the working class in alliances with other working people. It is based on socialized ownership of all decisive means of production, of financial institutes and of natural resources. This will thus make a planned use and increase of social wealth for the good of the public and a continually improved satisfaction of cultural needs possible.

The chaotic capitalist economy of competition, organized for profits and shaken by crises, will be replaced by a scientifically planned economy – its fundamental principles being those of social responsibility and solidarity. Socialism will eliminate class privileges and overcome exploitation of mankind by man while building the new society.

All this characterizes the nature of the socialist society. It realizes the principle "everybody according to his or her abilities –to everybody according to his or her needs."

The DKP presumes that socialism will be the result of joint effort of all those who share the goal of overcoming the capitalist profit-orientated mode of production, as different as their political and philosophical backgrounds might be. The philosophical fundament for the socialist goal of the DKP is scientific socialism, the theory put forth by Marx, Engels and Lenin. Other accesses can stem from religious or generally humanistic convictions or from antifascist, feministic, pacifistic, antiracist, anti-globalization or ecological motives. The contradiction between capital and labor remains the irreconcilable class contradiction of capitalist society resolvable only by a socialist revolution. But today the breach from capitalism is also fundamental for solving the global problems threatening the existence of mankind.

It is thus not only the working class that has an objective interest in socialism because of its position in production. Other social forces can come to the same insight – capitalism has to be overthrown by socialism - for differing reasons. The working class will of course still play the decisive role in a successful struggle for socialism, due to its specific place in the relations of production. Only if the working class is in its vast majority convinced of the necessity to overcome capitalism and struggles for this goal consciously can it become a magnet for including other social strata and political forces in the struggle for socialism and the building of a new society. The DKP sets itself the task to further this process.

Socialism can only be the result of the intention and action of the working class and its allied forces; the result of democratic mass action. It requires the consent and active shaping by a majority of the people and the organizing power of a revolutionary party. With the decisive political power of the working class and its allies, along with social ownership of all important means of production socialism will give those democratic and social rights a real social

basis, which were already fought for under capitalism but only formally installed or never secured.

Socialism guarantees the right to work, develops sustainable social safety and makes true equal rights and women's liberation possible. Socialism guarantees trade unions and other organizations of working people as well as each individual the right and the real possibility to form social life in common. Socialism guarantees equal chances in education and the access to humanistic culture for all. Socialism furthers continuous education, literature, theatre, the building arts and music, sports and other creative activities. Socialism thus creates the requirements for human beings who are educated universally, politically well-informed and who can develop themselves freely for a self-determined and self-created life in peace, freedom, justice and solidarity, in social security and prosperity for all. Socialism means a new and at the same time higher stage of democracy.

All this, however, can only be developed and held if the decisive means of production are taken away from the capitalists and thus the possibility to subjugate society under the logic of profits is abolished. It will thus be necessary to forestall all efforts of the then de-instated class of capitalist to re-instate the capitalist order of exploitation - which is incompatible with the constitution and the laws and the socialist state – on the basis of socialist lawfulness.

The DKP sees the task of the communist party in socialism in winning the confidence of the people as well as decisive influence every time anew by putting forward the best political ideas and initiatives together with other progressive forces. Its task will also be to work out the strategic orientation for the further development of socialism and to win majorities for this orientation. It is the task of all communists to develop socialist consciousness in the masses; to encourage them to build up a socialist society in an emancipatory and creative process and to mobilize for its defence against all efforts to restore capitalism.

No one can foresee exactly how socialism will look like. Much will depend on the respective preconditions, on the further historical developments and on the continually changing economic, political and cultural framework as well as on the will and action of those who will have achieved that breach towards a new society. But it will be indispensable to change to a new type of economic development which will make a raising of the standard of living, the realization of the right to work in dignity and social security possible but will also take responsibility for the material natural resources.

In the countries of 'real socialism' – an early stage of socialism - the decisive means of production were mostly owned by the state and cooperatives. It can be expected that in the revolutionary process of a struggle for socialism new forms of social and democratic control will crystallize alongside forms proven worthwhile in the past. It is the task of communists to oppose bureaucratic dangers, to strengthen public control over legislative and over juridical powers as well as over media, education and research and to extend direct rule of the people.

In the face of the further internationalization of the economy and the integration process of the European Union the DKP assumes that it will probably only be feasible to built up a socialist society in the framework of similar revolutionary processes in the other important countries of the European Union, given the resulting change in the international balance of forces.

Socialism will only have made its definitive breakthrough as a higher form of civilization in contradiction to capitalism if it creates a productive and consumptive political system on a world wide basis which can be generalized for all of mankind, one which puts an end to the destruction of nature; one which corrects the scandalous inequality and injustice capitalism has brought forth. Building up socialism on a world wide scale will thus definitely take a long historical process.

Experiences with socialism

Future socialist societies will differ considerably from those first built up in 20th century Europe as their historical preconditions will differ. But both the negative and the positive experiences made in and with these societies are a treasure hold of insights to be used in the future.

Achievements of socialism

The October revolution of 1917 marked the beginning of constructing a socialist society. The revolution gave a signal to mankind to break through to a new historical epoch. Impressive achievements were made under severe preconditions, first in the Soviet Union, later in other socialist countries.

The socialist societies proved over many decades that production without capitalists and the principle of profit is possible as well as following a strategic economical planning. They curbed the aggressiveness of imperialism. A consistent peace policy began with the 'Decree on Peace', the first decree of soviet power in 1917, and was continued by the decisive contribution of the Soviet Union to the overthrow of Hitler's fascism. The disarmament initiatives of the Warsaw Pact countries are further links in the chain of socialist peace endeavors. The historic achievements of socialism also include the solidarity and support of the people in the fight for national sovereignty, against colonialism and neo-colonialism.

Socialism attained social achievements that have never been achieved by even the richest imperialist states: homelessness and unemployment were intrinsically overcome, there were equal educational opportunities for all; fundamental employment of all women, free basic health care as well as a highly developed culture accessible to all. Social security and confidence in the future was the mainstay of life.

The existence of socialism and its achievements also enhanced the preconditions for the struggle for social and democratic reforms in the developed capitalist countries. Due to the confrontation of the rivalling social systems, the bourgeoisie and their governments were forced to make important concessions. This held especially true for the rulers in West Germany.

Under the leadership of the SED the German Democratic Republic imposed restrictions on German imperialism. For four decades the rule of monopolies and banks was broken in one part of Germany. Liberation from Fascism had opened the way towards an antifascist and democratic order of society in all of Germany. This chance, however, was only taken in a consequent way in the eastern section of Germany, that of the occupation zone of the Soviet Union which later became the GDR.

With the GDR a socialist alternative to German imperialism came into being on German soil. The GDR, its consistent antifascism, its initiatives for peace, its policies of détente and disarmament as well as the realization of fundamental social rights belong to the biggest achievements of the German working class movement and is part of the humanistic heritage in Germany.

Reasons for defeat

Despite all its truly historic achievements socialism in Europe was defeated. The defeat has internal and external, economic, ideological and political, objective and subjective reasons.

Evaluation has not yet been completed; the DKP is still in the process of studies and discussion.

From today's point of view one of the important factors has its beginnings in the very difficult preconditions of the Russian Revolution. A weakly developed industry and underdeveloped agriculture coupled with partial illiteracy, the lack of a bourgeois-democratic tradition, a population still mainly consisting of peasantry and a working class which had evolved under these - in comparison to developed capitalist industrialized countries – relatively backward conditions. These factors all decisively influenced the development of economy and politics in many countries which took a socialist path.

This situation as well as the permanent threat of the external imperialist forces made it indispensable for the Soviet Union to centralize all their forces in the building up of a modern industry and to start a cultural revolution – all that in a very short time. This in turn had the effect that the supposed predominant role of the working class was for the present largely substituted by the leading role of the communist party .

But even though industrialization and cultural revolution had changed preconditions, this situation remained upheld. Party and State more and more amalgamated, forming an administrative-bureaucratic apparatus. The process of socialization stagnated at the level of nationalization. The result was a growing alienation from socialist property.

State penetration of all areas of society impeded initiating activities of the people. Lesser and lesser real social debates were held on perspectives. It was during this period the party lost credibility and with that finally hegemony as well. The political and organizational principles of the CPSU were more and more abolished; inner-party democracy, collectivism and solidarity were substituted by authoritarian measures.

This process took place under the preconditions of external threat, subversion, economic blackmail and hard international class conflicts. Due to the missing development of a bourgeois-democratic juridical tradition the principles of socialist democracy were massively violated by the disregard of socialist law, by repression, mass persecution and criminal offence. This was contrary to the humanist nature of socialism. Uncountable numbers of persons, including members of the CPSU, the Red Army and the Communist International were thus sacrificed. This has caused massive damage to socialism and its prestige.

These insights and the consequences since derived have become integral part of the political and organisational self-perception of the DKP; this process is still ongoing.

The administrative-centralistic "Model of Socialism" was transcribed to those countries that after WW II adopted a socialist course of development. Although at first this type of socialism permitted these countries to achieve important economic success it ended up being an impediment to the recognition of the fundamentally new challenges of the scientific-technological revolution and hindered flexible reaction on these challenges. The result was that the level of work productivity and the material standards of living in the socialist countries increasingly fell further and further behind those of the developed capitalist countries. This had to destabilize.

The socialist countries failed to achieve a type of development of productivity appropriate to socialism. In addition socialist values could not be established for good among most people.

Alongside important new developments and insights, dogmatic stagnation in social sciences set in. These were stripped of their powers to develop substantiated orientation for action by means of founded scientific prognosis in dealing with new contradictions and the furthering of the development of a socialist society. The capability of criticism and self-criticism in the

party and in society was mostly lost. Communists in West-Germany supported many incorrect assessments as well.

The main internal reason for the defeat of 'real existing' socialism in Europe lies in the growing stagnation of social relationships. It was not achieved to give socialism always new revolutionary thrusts of development appropriate to the already reached level.

The defeat of socialism is at the same time the result of both internal and external counterrevolution. From the beginnings the Soviet Union and later on the other socialist countries were permanently confronted with attacks and intervention by the imperialist forces. The line of severe aggression began with the intervention of the 14 imperialist States against the young Soviet power (1918-1920) and continued with economic isolation, trade embargoes, the threat of the Antikomintern pact of the fascist states of Germany, Italy and Japan, the war of total destruction waged by fascist Germany. All these efforts were accompanied by subversive activities. This was continued by the politics of embargoes and the weakening armaments race during the Cold War, reinforced by atomic threats. The imperialist forces left nothing untried – even to the point of counterrevolutionary strategies - to destabilize and destroy socialism.

Increasingly sharpening social problems, external influence and the growing inability to solve the social tasks of the day resulted in the narrowing of the radius of activity. In some socialist countries, especially within the CPSU, revisionist forces won the lead in this situation of crisis. This proved at the end to pave the way for the defeat of socialism.

The DKP is faced with the task of uncovering the causes for the defeat and to draw the conclusions necessary for future socialist developments, for the defeat of the socialist countries in Europe does not mean that Socialism is impossible and that capitalism has the last word in history. In face of the destructions capitalism has caused, mankind must and will find solutions for the problems beyond capitalism. Today more dramatic than ever the alternative is "Socialism or barbarism!" (Rosa Luxemburg)

IV. Our Road to Socialism

Socialism can not be reached by mere reforms but only by far-reaching changes and the revolutionary overcoming of capitalist power and private ownership. Precondition for this is a fundamental change of the balance of forces in favor of the working class and its allies.

Social balances of forces however do not change on their own but by class struggle. Counter-power must be built by strengthening the organization and the ability to fight of the trade unions, by labor action and by the activities of democratic and social movements.

The more changes toward self-determination in work and in society, towards more democratic control, towards demilitarization and democratization of state and of society are achieved, the more influence the democratic and socialist forces gain wherever opinions are formed, the better the chances in the struggle will be to push back the power of monopoly capitalism and to open the road to socialism.

For a change to democratic and social progress

At present the protection of constitutional rights, the protection of those social and democratic achievements already achieved by the working class against the neo-liberal onslaught of state and capital power are on the agenda. We are also called to restore and protect our natural resources from being threatened by unbridled striving for profits, to shield

peace against the war politics of US-imperialism and to combat the hegemonial strivings of both German and European Imperialism.

Under present conditions, struggles of defense will be the focus of an entire phase of struggles. And even these struggles will only prove successful if a truly higher level in the mobilization of the labor forces both in productive and the administrative sectors, of the unemployed and pensioners, of all those suffering from the demolition of social and democratic achievements is reached and if a new and forceful momentum in the peace and progressive social movements can be achieved. At the same time in these struggles to defend what was achieved the forces for progressive reforms, for a change to democratic and social progress can and must be collected. Joint action and international networking has an increasingly higher level of importance in the framework of globalization.

The DKP assumes that the scope for social and democratic reforms has been much reduced due to global economic networks and the power of transnational corporations as well as to immense state debts and the disappearance of pressure for progressive reforms due to the demise of the socialist states in Europe. This however does not mean communists are to give up the struggle for reforms. Politics for reforms cannot elude but must seek political confrontation with the power of capital - especially that of transnational capital. This requires at least encroachments on capital's power to have the property at its disposal – and it puts the question of property ownership on the agenda. Traditional social and democratic reforms are thus thrust closer to the necessity of fundamental anti-monopolistic change.

No effective social resistance will develop without seemingly realistic alternatives; without resistance all progressive ideas are deemed illusionary. It is thus necessary to combine beginnings of resistance with perspectives of changes and reforms based on:

- peace and disarmament politics, international cooperation and a world-wide order of the economy based on justice
- opposition against the domestic deployment of the German Army, against the militarization of society, against racist and fascist ideologies, their organizations and parties
- extermination of mass unemployment, the reduction of precarious labor and social discrimination, the installation of social security systems based on solidarity as well as the struggle against individual and overall pauperization and the restoration and protection of the environment.

Economic efficiency shall not be measured by capitalist balance sheets or in the reference numbers of international competition but by the improvement of the working and living conditions of the majority of the people. Ecological reforms and qualitative growth must be the fundamentals of programs of state and municipalities against mass unemployment and for well-aimed reorganization: housing schemes, attainable public health care for all, extension of public transportation, building up of new educational and cultural institutions as well as supporting existing ones, free education, qualified fulltime and free childcare, integrated all-day schools for all children and the restoration of the environment. The financial means are to be found in the treasuries of corporations and banks, are available in the military budget and can also be taken from the non-invested speculative wealth of banks, insurance companies and corporations.

It is all about

- democratic influence on the state monopolistic regulatory mechanisms in both a national framework as well as in the European and other international state-monopolistic institutional frameworks
- trade union action and international treaties against social dumping and competition of workplaces
- support of human behavior based on solidarity against the prevailing elbow-mentality and against neo-fascism and racism which is hostile to mankind

- installment of guiding principles in public education dedicated to the goal of developing critical and responsible citizens rather than to the training of a subordinate labor force which can be hired or fired on demand
- democratic supervision over the development and use of science and technology.

In the period ahead it will be necessary to bundle much broader social forces than just those on the left in the resistance against neo-liberal politics. Only the formation of broad alliances comprising different social forces capable of continuing their own recurring reconstruction over new and different issues and in which the working class plays the decisive role can bring forth the preconditions to stop society's move to the right and the neo-liberal reconstruction of society. And only if these alliances develop into stable coalitions and become a solid social and political bloc against Neo-Liberalism will the balance of forces be changed to a position of offering a viable perspective to the struggle for social alternatives.

Without anti-monopolistic encroachments it will be impossible to carry out reforms to achieve the required redistribution of wealth from above to below, from private super-profits to public cash-boxes, from the rich to the poor countries.

The DKP presumes it feasible and necessary for the anti-monopolistic struggle to result in these and other anti-monopolistic structural changes that lead to a weakening of the omnipotence of monopoly capitalism, thus widening the scope of influence of the working class and its allies to open the road to the further struggle for socialism.

The decisive step must be the conversion of the banks, insurance companies and corporations dominating production and markets in other strategically important sectors of economy into democratically controlled public property.

Opening the road to socialism through anti-monopolistic upheavals

This struggle can lead to anti-monopolistic transition, the prerequisite being the formation of an anti-monopolistic bloc with such strong power and influence both in and out of parliament as to allow for the building of a government representing the common interests. With the support of strong forces out of parliament, of the organizations of the working class and with the formation of a new democratic power it will be possible to start deep political and economic changes resulting in the break of the power of monopoly capital.

The DKP has always viewed anti-monopolistic and socialist revolution as interlacing stages of development in a unified revolutionary process of transition from capitalism to socialism.

Anti-monopolistic upheaval means a period of revolutionary struggle in which elements of capitalism will still be existent and the seeds of socialism are already visible. In the beginning the elements of the old will prevail; in the process of class struggle the elements of the new society will have to achieve more and more preponderance - otherwise the counterrevolution will succeed in suffocating the revolutionary process.

The concrete formation of this process will depend in great part on the power of the working class, the stability of its alliances with other democratic forces, the influence of communists as well as the forms of reactionary opposition. Our experiences in class struggle have taught us that the monopoly bourgeoisie has always tried to hinder social progress with all their might – even to the installment of fascist dictatorships and civil war - when their powers and privileges were endangered. Their inevitable resistance will have to be overcome in hard struggle and the balance of forces will thus be changed in favor of the forces striving for socialism as to hinder the reactionary forces in resorting to force, which will allow the working class and its allies to carry through the most favorable road toward socialism.

V. Forces of Resistance and Progress

As a result of the economic and political processes in the developed capitalist countries, including Germany, an ever-increasing polarization of society has taken place. On the one side you have a small group of business tycoons, bank directors and multi-millionaires. On the other side stand the overwhelming majority of workers, white-collar employees, civil servants, agricultural laborers, intellectuals, freelancers, as well as small and middle-size entrepreneurs. All of these are in the economic and political grip of monopoly capitalism's rule. Social insecurity, unemployment and poverty, social division and marginalization have steadily increased.

A great variety of new social protagonists emerges and unfolds itself. Antiracist movements, groups taking up the cause of gender equality, environmentalists and peace activists, as well as organizations dedicated to one or many other causes are acting autonomously. The existence of a large stratum of exploited and marginalized people makes it necessary and possible to bring all these disadvantaged people together in an alternative political and social project, to unite them in their totality, while maintaining their diversity and autonomy.

The more these social blocs that evolve at the national level act and link up with each other internationally, the more power they will have to enforce socio-political alternatives.

At the international level states with a socialist orientation, as well as governments, which – supported by their populations – seek an alternative to neo-liberalism and struggle against the domination of US imperialism in international politics, can be counted among the forces of resistance and progress. Opposition to the hegemony of the centers of capitalism is growing within the WTO (World Trade Organization). The movements of globalization critics may help to prevent the USA, the European Union and Japan from an uninhibited enforcement of their interests.

Cuba is especially important because of its role in defending socialism against all capitalist attacks under exceedingly difficult circumstances. By what it stands for, Cuba inspires above all the people of Latin America and the Caribbean Islands in their struggle against neo-liberalism and US domination.

The Working Class – the decisive Force

The working class constitutes the decisive force in the struggle against the power of capital and for socialism. Within capitalist society it is the class which due to its position in the social system of production experiences capitalist exploitation in the most direct manner. Not being the owners of the means of production, workers and employees are forced to sell their capacity for work. Society couldn't exist without their work. In our highly industrialized country they are the main producers of all value. The working class has no particular interests divergent from the interests of mankind at large. It is from this social status it derives the power to become the main force in resistance and in the changing of society.

Workers and employees constitute the vast majority of the population of Germany. The millions of workers who have an immigrant background have been augmenting the ranks of the German working class. As do their family members, they often experience discrimination at work and in every day life. The unemployment rate has reached a staggering dimension; many adolescents and young adults search in vain for employment or vocational training. These all belong to the working class.

The number of women in the work force continues to rise but the majority of female workers does not have an income that fully secures their existence: part-time employment in various

forms, an especially high share of jobs in the low and lowest wage sector as well as a disproportionately high quota of unemployment characterize the job situation of most women. As a rule women are paid less than men. This constitutes an additional source of profit and at the same time intensifies pressure on men's wages.

Growing unemployment, which hits women particularly badly, and the fear of becoming unemployed increase their dependency and constitute an extra burden and form of oppression.

This results in women of all age-groups being particularly affected or threatened by poverty.

The growing flexibility of work as well as longer working hours make it more difficult for people with children to participate equally in the work force. The question of juggling job and family remains a private problem of the families, most often of the women. Hence, the traditional allocation of roles perpetuates itself. And the tendency to push reproductive work into low-wage sectors in the proximity of jobs related to house-keeping will predominantly affect women.

The working class has undergone significant structural changes during the last couple of decades mainly under the influence of the scientific and technological revolution. Professional profiles and qualification characteristics have changed. Sectors of work in which employees have not been wont to consider themselves working class - although objectively so-, have become more and more important.

In the fields of technology, science and administration a growing stratum of working intellectuals is emerging. These frequently distinguish themselves from industrial workers, or from simple employees in administration and educational institutions only by the tangible tasks they perform. Their job is often endangered, too. Many of them are forced into humiliating work contracts.

The workers and employees in the large industrial corporations and in certain sectors of transportation are still the best-organized workers with the most experience in the struggle. However, under current conditions employees in banking, the service sector, the public service, as well as in the communications field are playing an increasingly important role in the struggle of the working class.

As a result of new scientific-technological developments the labor actually performed by human beings in the direct work process has diminished by automation and the use of robots. This, however, has not lessened the pressure on the workers. On the one hand, more and more jobs are being cut back. On the other hand there are longer working hours, the intensity of work is raised and the employers attack workers' and bargaining rights. At the same time the number of people in the low-wage sector increases, as does the number of those with work limited in time and precarious labor contracts. In these sectors the negotiated tariffs are as a rule being violated and protection against unlawful dismissal is missing. Women, adolescents, and the handicapped are the ones most affected by this.

The working class in our country is quite heterogeneous in regard to its composition, to the work pursued, to labor conditions, to overall general conditions of life, to the cultural origins and traditions as well as to the experience gathered in labor struggle. In the organized labor movement there is a number of varying political and philosophical outlooks to be found. Regardless of all differences, what objectively unifies the class is far stronger than what divides it. The working class has common class interests. It is confronted by big capital, a mighty class opponent that is highly organized, acting in unity, having at its disposal all means of power and manipulation of public opinion. Social progress is conceivable only if the working class acts in unity and is prepared to enter alliances. It is necessary and also possible for workers, employees, public servants, those sustaining themselves by precarious

working conditions, the unemployed, those in vocational training, and pensioners – regardless of nationality and origin, of different outlooks, and different party affiliation – to act in unison.

The international working class, which formed national departments according to the different production and living conditions, developed with capitalism.

With increasing standardization of the conditions of production the preconditions grow for the global unification of the working class, even if the consciousness for this process has not yet matured. The material basis is the intensification of the international division of labor. As a result the employees enter more and more into direct cross-border cooperation in the process of production. The de-industrialization in one part of the world and a simultaneous building-up of highly advanced production facilities in other parts becomes a global phenomenon in this process. Capitalism in turn exploits this by playing off workforces of different locations and national divisions of the working class against each other. Communists counteract this by taking a determined internationalistic stance. This means that the working class movement has to organize itself in international networks along the lines of the global production networks in order to be capable of developing opposing power within the transnational corporations. The support of cooperation of the working class with its full strength, the stressing of common interests, the advancement of unified action, and the contributing to the development of class-consciousness – that is the task and principle of the DKP.

The DKP and the Labor Unions

Labor unions play a key role in organizing the working class and in the distribution of power between the classes. The German Trade Union League (DGB) with its sub-trade unions is the most comprehensive class organization of workers, employees, and public servants, the organized expression of their common class interests.

The principle of politically united unions, not separated by different party affiliations, was an essential precondition for the working class in this country in enforcing and defending significant social and democratic achievements in the past. In the formation of these unions communists played a significant role after the liberation from Hitler-Fascism and they always contribute actively to them.

As an “invisible negotiation partner” for West German workers the existence of the GDR (German Democratic Republic) used to be an important ally in the labor struggle. It is for this reason, too, that the defeat of socialism in Europe has deeply affected the organized labor movement, especially the labor unions in the German Federal Republic.

The DKP is convinced that strong labor unions orientated on the needs of the working class and taking up the struggle on its behalf will continue to be indispensable in the future. It acts in order to strengthen labor unions. The Party defends bargaining rights and relating legislation and it fights against all attacks on the unions by employer associations and other reactionary forces set on obliterating the fighting power of the labor unions in order to weaken resistance against the reactionary restructuring of society.

We oppose the abuse of labor unions by luring them into a “modernization coalition”, a concept aimed at making ‘Location Germany’ attractive for domestic and international capital and creating the optimal conditions for profit by means of social and democratic cutbacks. We object when parts of the union leaderships still allow themselves to be integrated into such policies. If unions want to have a future, they must put an end to their subordination under the SPD (Social Democratic Party), commit themselves to independent political representation and become, as a political force in their own right, part of a mass movement

against unemployment and neo-liberal destruction. Labor unions are indispensable for the formation of a forceful political counterweight in enterprises and society.

The DKP strives to help overcome contradictions and inconsistencies within the policies of the labor unions in order to improve their image and regain credibility and fighting power. Members of the DKP join a union wherever possible. They will do what they can to develop the unions into independent and fighting class organizations, capable of combining the varying political and philosophical outlooks. Communists make theoretical and practical contributions in strengthening the class orientation within the unions, develop anti-capitalist positions to this end and propagate the realization of a socialist society as necessary and feasible.

The DKP wants shop stewards also representing the young adults in vocational training and labor councils to be strong and combatant. It supports labor union cooperation at the European and the international level to prevent national workforces being played off against each other and to enable them to act jointly in the class struggles.

Democratic Parties and Movements

Cooperation with other Left Parties

The political landscape in Germany is undergoing key changes. The major parties and the political system, determining factors in Germany's course for the past decades, are losing their integrative power. Right parties and rightist positions are gaining ground. Left-wing influence within the SPD (Social Democratic Party) and the Grünen (Green Party) has even more declined. The years of their coalition government were characterized by social cut-backs, the undermining of democratic rights, and the aim of establishing Germany as a world power.

This context has made room for political movements picking up social reformist ideas jettisoned by the SPD, voicing opposition to the deployment of German military forces and attempting the defense of the social and democratic rights achieved in the past.

Elected representatives of leftist parties and coalitions, especially the communists use their platforms in parliament to propagate anti-capitalist alternatives, inspiring out-of-parliamentary struggles. By the same measure leftist parliamentarians need the support and the pressure of these out-of-parliamentary groups to the end of their respective political efficacy.

The activities of leftist forces, parties, and organizations have increased. The chances of bundling these diverse forces through cooperation of social and political movements launching joint demands and instigating common initiatives have improved. There are many jointly shared viewpoints and common interests in the struggle to defend social achievements and democratic rights and liberties, as well as in the struggle to preserve peace. Their criticism of the established order frequently makes visible a similarity in outlook. In many activities and also in elections they cooperate or act in parallel or supportive manners.

At the same time the DKP differs from these other groupings in its ideological stance, in its self-understanding as a political party, in its program, and in its understanding of reform and revolution which thus partly leads to different practical policies.

The DKP will continue to participate in the ongoing discussions between parties and organizations of the Left and other anti-capitalist Leftists. It strives to conduct discussions in ways that will promote united action rather than complicate it.

Communists and Democratic Alliances

Opposition is growing against social cut-backs, the undermining of democracy, militarization and politics of war, against racism and against neo-fascist perils in our country and in other centers of imperialism, against the consequences of imperialist globalization for the people of the poor countries.

The members of the DKP participate actively in democratic movements, alliances and in local initiatives. The DKP is aware that all these movements determine the content and form of the struggle themselves. Members of the DKP will commit themselves with all determination for the goals worked out in common, while contributing to the debate on strategies and social alternatives their own ideological and political positions.

The DKP supports equality and partnership in cooperation with all participants involved. It respects the political motives, the ideological outlook and the organizational independence of its allies and expects these to show the same attitude towards the DKP. When they are participating in initiatives, the members of the DKP ask the fundamental question of the ownership of the means of production as the key question of each and every movement.

The imperialist politics of war in the Balkans, in the near and Middle East, in Central Asia, in Africa and the alarming interventionist and armament projects of the USA, the European Union and Japan have made the formation of a broad alliance within the peace movement a top priority. This has become even more urgent since the disintegration of the Soviet Union has left the centers of imperialism without an opposing equally strong international power acting as a peace keeper. As long as the European socialist states, especially the Soviet Union, existed, imperialist military adventures could be kept under control.

The DKP fights in and together with the peace movement for a world in which international relations are based on equal rights, non-intervention in domestic affairs, on the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of all states. The DKP calls for the strengthening of the UN and of international law. To this end it is mandatory to make the UN more democratic. Every kind of imperialist and interventionist power politics is to be banned. The DKP particularly opposes the conversion of the German armed forces into an interventionist striking force to be deployed around the globe, as well as the activities to develop the joint military force of the European Union. It calls for the banishment and destruction of all weapons of mass destruction. The DKP demands the immediate end to international deployment of the German armed forces and opposes the domestic deployment of the military forces.

Many initiatives, alliances, and movements are fighting against the cut-back of social and democratic achievements as well as against the privatization of public property. In doing so, they develop novel organizational forms and strategies. New in this development is the growing disposition of labor unions, social protest movements, as well as peace movements and movements for democracy to join forces in order to discuss alternatives and courses of action, to work out common strategies and to act in unity.

Neo-fascist groups have become stronger. Weekly parades, militant terror, and their establishment in a number of federal state parliaments show this clearly. Members of the DKP are active in anti-fascist organizations and alliances. They seek community with these groups and initiatives – above all with young people – taking a firm stance against fascism, racism, and war, as well as against the further infringement of constitutional democratic rights, fighting for the rights of immigrants and refugees seeking asylum.

The DKP defends the antifascist legacy – including the legacy of the anti-fascist resistance between 1933 and 1945, the struggle of the anti-fascists after 1945 in the German Federal Republic, and the anti-fascist stance of the GDR. It defends the anti-fascist intentions of the

German constitution. Together with other anti-fascists we demand that fascist parties and organizations are dissolved and banned.

In Germany millions of immigrants have founded their own political organizations. Most of them belong to the working class. Many address themselves to current tasks within the context of the struggle of the Left in Germany. Some have long-term socialist goals. Political refugees and anti-fascists are found in their ranks. In the spirit of proletarian internationalism the DKP is committed to solidarity with them and seeks political cooperation with them.

We share the concern for the preservation of our natural environment with ecologists. Communists join the resistance against the causes of the climate catastrophe, the destruction of ecological systems, the waste of resources, the control and exploitation of energy resources by the monopolies and against the transportation of nuclear waste. The DKP calls for immediate abandonment of the use of nuclear energy. The DKP demands democratic consultation and vote on the implementation of high risk technologies such as genetic and biological technologies.

The role youth will play in the political and social struggle of the future is of decisive importance. Considerable numbers of young people have no prospects of receiving vocational training or holding a steady job. Therefore never before in the history of Germany has the call for the right to an education and to vocational training, the right to work, to social security and equal rights, to meaningful leisure time, health care, the right to participate in democratic processes as well as the right to live and work in peace been more urgent than today. The DKP wants working class youth to join forces with their elder colleagues in their struggle in enterprises and in the unions. It wants to convince students and young intellectuals that they can only reach their aims if they are united with the working class movement. To this end the DKP works closely together with the German Socialist Workers' Youth (SDAJ) and with the Association of Marxist Students (AMS), seeing that there is common ground as to ideological foundations and political conviction. All members of the DKP have a special responsibility to support the SDAJ and the AMS.

The DKP supports women fighting for their rights and strives for cooperation with all groups and initiatives struggling for the preservation and advancement of social and democratic rights of women. The repression of women has been an integral element of capitalist exploitation. Hence, women's emancipation can only succeed through close cooperation with the working class and the labor union movement. This is in the interest of the entire class. True emancipation, i.e. women's liberation cannot be realized in a society based on exploitation. True emancipation is only possible within a different, a socialist society.

The DKP pleads for the recognition and legislative equality of alternate lifestyles not necessarily in correspondence with the bourgeois concept of marriage. Self-determined lifestyles are to receive full recognition. Hence, we stand side by side with movements fighting for emancipation and against the discrimination of minorities in society.

A world-wide movement against capitalist globalization has developed. It is challenging the power of the transnational trusts, the inhuman policies of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). It is exposing the role the G7 nations play and the responsibility they carry regarding the conditions of life on this earth. It protests against the reactionary policies of the European Union.

This movement represents a number of different political and social forces. New organizations have emerged. The international character of these protests and their growing networks represent a new quality in the movements of protest. The DKP participates in this international network of counter forces, mainly by working within the social forum movement and by cooperating with other Communist parties and Left organizations.

The efficiency of the social and political movements of protest against neo-liberalism and the consequences of capitalist globalization will depend upon:

- § the re-enforcement and coordination of the resistance of workforces and labor unions at the domestic and the international level;
- § the degree of success in combining international class struggles with actions of the social movements against the consequences of imperialist globalization in addition to the degree of success in mobilizing against the common main adversary: the transnational corporations;
- § the degree of success in developing strategies, as for example international strike networks adequate for the achievement of proclaimed political aims;
- § the degree of success in strengthening the revolutionary part of the movement fighting for the changing of society.

VI. The DKP – Party of the working class

The DKP is dedicated to the future and general interests of the workers and employees as a class, acting as a politically conscious and always constructive part of the movement. It is conceived as a revolutionary party

- § upholding the interests of the vast majority of the people in this country – especially the working class and the other working people, the unemployed as well as those dependent on social welfare - against the power and profit-oriented politics of big capital
- § dedicated to the working class as the decisive power changing society as well as to the development of its class struggle and its class consciousness.
- § contributing towards strengthening and uniting the various social forces in their resistance to neo-liberal politics
- § continually developing its scientific foundation, the theory of Marx, Engels and Lenin, according to the conditions of today's struggles
- § aiming for the breach with the capitalist conditions of property and power and for socialism.

The DKP is a party of resistance against the social-reactionary, anti-democratic and peace-threatening policies of the ruling circles and a anti-fascist....party of proletarian internationalism.

The goal of the DKP is socialism/communism. To win a majority for this aim – this is what the DKP stands for.

The historic road of the communists

The DKP stands in the traditions of the communist movement and has developed as result of the more than 150 years of struggles of the German and international working class movement against capitalist exploitation and oppression, against militarism and war. The DKP stands in the tradition of the "League of Communists", of revolutionary social democracy, the Spartacus League and the KPD, Communist Party of Germany. Since its reconstitution in 1968, the DKP has made considerable contributions to the struggles against German and international imperialism in struggles of the working class, in the peace and other movements. The DKP continually learns from the experiences of the international revolutionary working class movement. It was always closely associated with the SED (Socialist Unity Party of Germany), the result of the unification of the KPD and the SPD (Social Democratic Party) in the Soviet occupied zone in 1946.

The DKP fights in the spirit and tradition of August Bebel, Wilhelm Liebknecht, Franz Mehring, Rosa Luxemburg, Karl Liebknecht, Clara Zetkin, Ernst Thälmann, Wilhelm Pieck and Max Reimann.

From the beginnings of their movement, communists have fought against oppression and exploitation, against the privileges of the ruling circles at the cost of the impoverishment of the masses, against warfare, intellectual manipulation and being made stupid. They strive towards the emancipation of the people, for social progress, for a world of peace, for the rights of all to participate in the cultural wealth both of history and of the present. They are the keepers of the traditions of past progressive movements, continue the philosophical ideas of enlightenment and stand for the ideas of humanism, condensed by Karl Marx in the revolutionary claim to "overthrow all conditions in which man becomes a humiliated, an enslaved, a forsaken, a despised being".

It is our task as communists to gather the historical experiences of our movement and of the construction of socialism if we now aim for a socialist society under new conditions. We reject anti-communist falsifications. We defend the legitimacy of our movement which has inspired millions and millions of people to fight for their rights and for peace. We commemorate these struggles but are at the same time conscious on the fact that mistakes, wrong and crimes flank our history. These must be prevented in future.

The DKP stands for a critical reflection of its past in order to overcome ways of thinking and structures that contradict the humanistic approach of our idea and philosophy.

What we want is conclusions on the question of how a communist party has to look like today, a party that conducts the revolutionary struggle and strives to build a new society together with the working class and all willing allies.

Communists were and are in the front line all over the world in the struggle for social and democratic rights, in the fight to overcome capitalist society and to establish a socialist society as an alternative to the hegemony of capital, in the struggle against imperialist wars, fascism, colonialism, for the improvement of the living and working conditions, for social security, for broad education and for basic political and civil rights. Communists have always been reliable as internationalists in these struggles.

Today in Germany we can learn from the experiences of two systems of society.

The 40 years of socialism on German territory in the GDR were a practised alternative to the capitalist system in the FRG. For the first time in history the working class had broken the political and economic power of capital. The most important means of production were transferred into public ownership. Efficient agricultural cooperatives were developed. Regardless of financial status, everyone had access to education and culture as well as to a functioning health system. Important political and economical preconditions for the equality of women were created.

The DKP stood alongside the GDR, the State in which for 40 years corporate and bank powers were abolished; an anti-fascist State which, for the first time in Germany history, consistently struggled for peace and against war, consistently practised solidarity with the peoples of the developing countries and was consistently anti-fascist. Despite the weaknesses connected with this development the foundations of a new society were recognisable.

In the FRG it was different: communists, together with others, spent those 40 years fighting the restoration of the political power of capital, developing resistance against the incorporation of the Federal Republic into the imperialist camp, against remilitarisation and West Germany's being tied into the NATO, against armament and the deconstruction of democracy and for peace and workers' rights.

It was due to its stance against remilitarisation and for German unity the FDJ (Free German Youth) and later on, in 1956, the KPD were prohibited in 1956.

The different lessons learned by communists in both countries - the experiences of class struggle in a capitalist society and the treasure of experiences about the construction of socialism – constitutes both a chance and a challenge for the DKP to utilize them in a critical and constructive way and collect them for the development of a historical perspective.

The DKP expresses its solidarity with all those persecuted, imprisoned and/or discriminated against by class justice for their efforts to build the GDR. The DKP demands their rehabilitation as well as the rehabilitation of those who in West-Berlin and in West-Germany struggled for peace and Socialism and were persecuted for this. It demands the lifting of the prohibition of the KPD. The DKP also expresses its solidarity with all those who fell victim to or are currently being threatened by “Berufsverbote” (since 1971 left-wingers have been excluded from public jobs for their political beliefs) and demands their rehabilitation as well as the immediate ending of this renewed undemocratic and unconstitutional practise in some parts of Germany today.

Philosophical foundations

The philosophy, the politics and the organisational principles of the DKP are based on scientific socialism as founded by Marx, Engels and Lenin, which must continually be advanced in order not to fall behind new realities. The DKP fights for the unhindered spreading of Marxism-Leninism.

The DKP contributes to the scientific analysis of society in order to gain the necessary insights for political action. In this process it seeks discussion and cooperation with other Marxist forces. It is on this basis the DKP develops its political strategies and tactics.

One of the foremost tasks of the DKP is to spread and deepen insights within the working class as to its class position and to illuminate the inherent and irreconcilable contradiction between its class interests and the power and profit interests of big capital. The DKP propagates the socialist ideas. Communists introduce class positions into trade union and social movements.

The DKP strives to reduce the influence of bourgeois ideology and reformist positions in the working class. It is determined to combat anti-communism and nationalism. This necessarily includes the arguing with racist and fascist positions as well as the reflection of their ideological and social causes.

The DKP links the furthering of education and political information, of...the propagation of its goals as closely as possible to the purpose of active support and advancement of political action on this basis.

Principles of inner-party life

A common philosophy and common political aims determine the principles of inner-party life of the DKP. This agreement is also the precondition for the DKP's development as a unified community of people thinking alike and fighting together in solidarity. Thus differences of opinion, agitated discussions and joint action in solidarity build a unity. The members of the DKP are led by the principle that only unified activity agreed on by the whole party can form the basis for capable and effective action and strength. Preconditions for this are discussions based on solidarity and the achieving of agreements. This is why broad inner-party democracy is linked to the principle of unified centralized action in the DKP.

The principles of inner-party life include the electoral eligibility of all leaderships from below to above, the accountability of those elected; the inclusion of the entire party in the development of both politics and programs; central, unified action based on the binding authority of the decisions made by the elected bodies for the subordinate leaderships and the membership. They also include the organisation of the party in branches and the duty of each member to participate in a party branch, to take part in struggles within society as far as possible and to further his or her own theoretical political education.

Communists act on the principle that party life is characterized by collective action and, at the same time, personal individual responsibility.

Proletarian Internationalism

Under the conditions of imperialist globalisation and the further formation of the European Union the internationalisation of class struggle increases. This puts the necessity of an international answer from communist parties and organisations as well as the need for an understanding within the world-wide anti-capitalist movement on the agenda.

The comprehensive assaults on the achievements of the working class demand joint action of the international working class movement and other progressive forces. The knowledge that only a common struggle will lead to a socialist perspective underlines the necessity of intensifying the international co-operation of anti-capitalist forces.

The DKP is guided by the experience that the strengthening of the international revolutionary movement results in the strengthening of the revolutionary forces within the borders of the different countries. The DKP links the consistent work for the cause of working people in its own country with solidarity and support of the progressive forces all over the world. The DKP acts on the basis of the principle that each communist party develops its own policies independently and is responsible to the working class and society of its own country as well as to the working people in all countries.

The DKP is bound in solidarity to those countries clinging to a path of socialist orientation, choosing such a path today or walking on it tomorrow. At the same time it supports progressive developments and anti-imperialist movements in other countries in solidarity. The DKP will especially continue and strengthen its practical solidarity with socialist Cuba.

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In order to change the world it must be understood. The desire for liberation can only be fulfilled in the company of comrades. Whoever wants to develop power has to organize. Whoever desires to gain a free and humane life, the future, must fight.

The German Communist Party has not been founded for its own sake. It strives together with and within the working class for the future interests of humanity.

Social security and justice, democracy and freedom, peace and socialism – these are the goals the German Communist Party is fighting for.

“Proletarians of all countries – unite!...”

*Adopted on April 8th, 2006
by the 17th National congress of the DKP – German Communist Party*