Party Programme: DIE LINKE. English pages

Programme Of The DIE LINKE Party

Resolution of the Party Congress, Erfurt, 21 to 23 October 2011, approved through a vote by the party membership on December 2011

DIE LINKE as a socialist party stands for alternatives, for a better future. We democratic socialists, the democratic left with different political biographies, ideological and religious influences, women and men, old and young, established and immigrants, people with and without disabilities, have come together in a new left party. We cling to the dream of mankind that a better world is possible.

We are not and will not be like those parties that obsequiously submit to the wishes of the economically powerful and for that very reason can scarcely be told apart. We pursue a concrete goal: we fight for a society in which no child has to grow up poor, in which all men and women can live a selfdetermined life in peace, dignity and social security and can democratically shape social relations. To achieve this we need a different economic and social system: democratic socialism.

We want to use the grandiose ideas, the visions and creative forces of men and women for convincing political projects, to overcome hunger and poverty, to get the consequences of climate change and environmental disasters under control.

We are not prepared to accept a world in which profit interests determine the prospects of millions of men and women and in which exploitation, war and imperialism cut whole countries off from hope and the future. Where profit rules above all else, there is little space for democracy. The untrammelled freedom of the big corporations means bondage for the majority of men and women.

We proceed from the traditions of democracy and socialism, of the struggles for human rights and emancipation, against fascism and racism, imperialism and militarism. We want to overcome all social relationships in which people are exploited, disenfranchised and deprived of the right to make their own decisions and in which the social and natural foundations of their lives are destroyed.

We want to use the new possibilities of knowledge acquisition, cultural exchange and communication for a future that is worth living. We want to expand the rule of law and the welfare state so that women and men can make sovereign decisions concerning their working and living time and can seize opportunities to participate, to acquire education and to be there for one another socially.

Limitless wealth for the upper echelons, humiliation for the growing mass of the poor and decreasing prosperity for the vast majority are not the result of the internationalisation of production and trade but of global capitalism. The consequences for Germany are omnipresent: a growing lowwage sector, annihilation of jobs, cutbacks in social benefits, impoverished municipalities, the lack of training places, social privileges in education, twotier medicine, elderly people in poverty or without decent care. Current politics has been subordinated to the interests of corporate bosses and the wealthy. This agenda runs counter to the interests of the majority of the people. We believe in global cooperation rather than the concept that might makes right. A world under the diktat of an omnipotent global capitalism is not a world worth striving for. Business and politics must be centred on the vital needs and interests of the majority of the people.

We want to help turn passive resentment into active resistance. We put up resistance to wage dumping, the robbing of welfare recipients and the selling off of public property. We want to change the balance of social power, and are fighting for a different policy. Democracy. freedom, equality, justice, internationalism and solidarity are among our fundamental values. They are inseparable from peace, the conservation of nature and emancipation. We are fighting for a system change because capitalism, which is based on inequality, exploitation, expansion and competition, is incompatible with those goals.

We have united in a new political force that stands for freedom and equality, fights resolutely for peace, is democratic and social, ecological and feminist, open and plural, militant and tolerant. Together with citizens in Germany, in Europe and throughout the world, with trade unions and movements, we are looking for alternative solutions and social alternatives. We want to build a society of democratic socialism in which reciprocal recognition of the freedom and equality of every individual is the condition for the development of all in solidarity. We are fighting for a change of course in politics that will open the way for a fundamental transformation of society, that will overcome capitalism.

Three basic ideas are linked together in our Programme:

- individual freedom and personal development for everyone through a socially equal share in the conditions for a selfdetermined life and solidarity; we consider that to be the first guiding principle of a solidaritybased society. In it, the dominance of profit is overcome and reliable and good living conditions for all are the goal of economic management;
- the subordination of the economy to development in solidarity and the conservation of nature. We regard that as the second guiding principle. It requires a social and ecological conversion to sustainable development instead of profitoriented growth.
- The realisation of these two dimensions is a long emancipatory process in which the dominance of capital will be overcome by democratic, social and ecological forces and the society of democratic socialism will emerge.

DIE LINKE fights

- for a different, democratic economic order that subjects the market regulation of production and distribution to democratic, social and ecological framing and control. It has to be based on public and democratically controlled ownership in services of general interest, of the social infrastructure, in the power industry and in the financial sector. We want the democratic socialisation of further structurally relevant areas on the basis of state, municipal, cooperative or workforce ownership. Business must be subject to stringent competition control. Effective employee rights and codetermination rights must be assured in all enterprises.
- for a socioecological transformation in the direction of sustainable, resourcesaving and environmentconserving economies and lives. We need regulated, sustainable development in conjunction with more social justice. We want a change in energy policy based on renewable energies, without nuclear power, that is not at the expense of the people in the global south and is not attained through the destruction of further environmental resources.
- for the right to a good job providing an adequate livelihood. Good work for everyone, but less work for each individual – that is what we want by way of new full employment. DIE LINKE stands for the redistribution of work through shorter working hours, for equal pay for equal work and a statutory minimum wage providing an adequate livelihood. We stand for comprehensive protection against dismissal and we fight against cheap jobs, starvation wages and the replacement of the regular workforce by temporary agency work or bogus selfemployment.
- for an inclusive society in which every man and woman finds overall conditions in which they can develop their skills, capabilities and talents, no one stands outside society and everyone can make a contribution.
- for fair distribution of all jobs between the sexes. There should be enough time in the lives of men and women for gainful employment, for the family, care for children, partners and friends, for political engagement, for individual continuing education, leisure and culture. DIE LINKE advocates that all people should be given more scope to decide how to spend their lives. Advocacy for being able to dispose of one's time is our response to a history of oppression, domination over labour and disposal over others.
- for a life in social security, for a penaltyfree, povertyproof guaranteed minimum income and comprehensive protection against dismissal. Hartz IV has to go. Everyone has the right to work and the right to reject concrete job offers without having to fear suspension of benefits or other penalties.
- for a povertyproof, solidaritybased statutory pension for all gainfully employed persons that is funded equally by employees and enterprises, ensures maintenance of one's standard of living in old age and, unlike private pension provision, does not depend on the vagaries of the financial markets. A society that condemns millions of elderly people to live in poverty is inhuman. To combat poverty in old age, we want a povertyproof, solidaritybased minimum pension for elderly persons within the framework of retirement insurance.
- for solidaritybased citizen insurance for health and care that all people pay into depending on their income and that covers all medical and nursing services in case of need. Medical care must not be a question of one's personal wallet – we reject the unequal treatment of patients.
- for good, free education accessible to all from the daynursery through training and higher education to continuing education. Education should create the foundations for a selfdetermined, solidaritybased life, active participation in society and democratic engagement.
- for cultural diversity and the participation of all in the cultural riches of society, for cultural education from the very beginning. All people should have the possibility of cultural selfexpression and of participating in cultural communication. The state has the obligation to protect and promote culture.
- for a fair taxation system that reduces the burden on low and medium earners, increases the load on top earners and draws substantially more on large fortunes, inheritances, capital gains and corporate profits to finance the common weal and socioecological transformation. We want to redistribute income and assets from the top to the bottom and ensure and improve the funding of public services.
- for the implementation of democracy and the rule of law, against the extortionate power of big corporations, for the prohibition of corporate donations to political parties and the incompatibility of political and economic mandates, for more direct democracy in the form of referenda and in other forms, for the enforceability of one's rights regardless of one's ability to pay, for political strikes and the general strike as employees' weapons, for the expansion of civil rights and the democratisation of all spheres of society. Capitalism destroys democracy by means of economic power. We therefore say: democracy and freedom in a society of democratic socialism without exploitation and oppression.
- for the abolition of every form of discrimination based on gender, age, social status, philosophy, religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation and identity or based on disabilities of any kind. For DIE LINKE, active antifascism is linked with the struggle against warmongering, antiSemitism, Islamophobia, racism and national arrogance
- for restarting the European Union as a democratic, social, ecological and peaceful union, for giving priority to social rights over domestic market freedoms, for high and better European minimum standards of social and environmental protection and of corporate and wealth taxes, for a democratically controlled European Central Bank and a coordinated and democratically controlled economic policy that counters competitive undercutting through degradation of wages, working conditions, social benefits and environmental standards. An EU that counts on locational and other competition and the dumping race and military backup for it discredits the European idea.
- for peace and disarmament, against imperialism and war, for a world without weapons of mass destruction, the prohibition of arms exports and the conversion of the arms industry to civilian production, i.e. the promotion of weapons conversion. DIE LINKE will never agree to German participation in a war. War does not solve any problems, it is always part of the problem. The Bundeswehr must be withdrawn from all foreign operations, its domestic deployment must be strictly forbidden; the State of Emergency laws providing for and allowing domestic deployment of the Bundeswehr must be repealed. DIE LINKE demands respect for international law and human rights, the strengthening of civilian development support, conflict prevention, peaceful conflict resolution and an end to the economic exploitation of the Third World.
- For international solidarity and cooperation in improving living conditions for all people. The world is rich enough to sensibly feed the whole of mankind. We stand in solidarity with all those who fight for peace, social and political justice and the realization of human dignity.