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# ACTION PROGRAM

of the  
Social Democratic Party of Germany

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# **ACTION PROGRAM**

of the

**SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC  
PARTY OF GERMANY**

Adopted by the Party Conference at Dortmund,  
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Preface by Dr. Kurt Schumacher

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## Preface

The Social Democratic Party of Germany has since 1945 been guided by the idea of creating a Germany which will bar any repetition of the horrors of the past. To this end it considered it necessary to seek cooperation with the other forces of freedom in the world but in no circumstance to let the Germans sink to the position of a subjugated people.

German Social Democracy is animated by Léon Blum's conception "There is no free proletariat in an enslaved people. There are no free men if all men are not free and there is no free fatherland if all fatherlands are not free."

The democratic order to the Social Democratic Party represents an opening for the Germans in political, human and national terms, and for the world to maintain peace.

When people in Germany today pretend that everything that has been achieved since 1945 is due to the activities of the present Federal Government it is necessary here to point out that there was no Federal Government between 1945 and 1949 and that the German stand on basic matters was defined during that period. Nearly every time the Social Democrats alone formed the group that took an unequivocal position.

As early as 1945 the Social Democratic Party declared the Oder-Neisse line to be unacceptable as a frontier.

In repelling the endeavour of the occupying Soviet Power to enforce the merger of the Social-Democratic and the Communist Parties the Social Democratic Party battled alone without help from any side.

It was always clear to the Social-Democratic Party that their fight against the totalitarianism of the East and for the spiritual alignment of the Germans with democracy would be possible and have lasting value only if the struggle were to be waged in a spirit of democratic and national self-confidence. The policies of German democracy cannot evolve as derivatives of the occupying forces of the West.

The preparation of the Basic Law of 1949 provided the testing ground. If the insight and attitude of the political parties who make up the present Federal Government, above all the Christian Democratic Union and the German Party, had prevailed, a new Federation of the Rhine would have arisen along the lines wanted by at least two of the three western allies. It was the merit

of the Social Democratic Party alone that a Basic Law came about which made it at all possible for the present Federal Government to operate.

The Social Democratic Party considers as its supreme task to create, not a national community restoring the past, but a new Germany with new political and social content in which the citizen will in fact be a partner to decisions regarding his fate in all respects. The policies of the present Federal Government aim at the exclusion so far as possible of the people from participation in government. The policies of the Social Democratic Party aim at active participation by the people in shaping their destiny. The Administration tries to keep Parliament out of the picture and to establish the authoritarian rule of its bureaucracy. Even the budget control of the Bundestag is now in danger.

Only a Germany permeated with a sense of citizenship and social justice can succeed in repelling totalitarian trends. The strength of freedom does not reside in the number of divisions alone.

National freedom of decision and international cooperation on the basis of effective equality are twin pillars of Social Democratic policy. In this regard there is no dividing line between home and foreign affairs.

The contention that the Social Democratic Party would pursue the same policies in office as the present Federal Government is irresponsible propaganda. The assumptions of the Social Democrats are quite different and lead along other roads to other goals. German unity is no distant goal to us but an immediate one.

The overall conception of the Social-Democratic Party of Germany is based on the premise that the future of the German people depends on its productive capacity. Twice in one generation the German workman has had to clear away the mountains of rubble left behind by the insane operation of power politics. Workers, technicians and scientists have again and again by the excellence of their work had to regain the respect which the German people lost because of nationalist megalomania.

German youth must not come to feel that democracy and national decline go hand in hand.

Therefore and as a national necessity we are enemies of the class struggle waged from above which in today's Germany destroys every move toward the creation of a true community. It is necessary to break down the overwhelming power of the large concentrations of wealth and of their supporters in order to free the path for the evolution of free men and citizens and of a free nation.

German unity in freedom and peace is the great national goal of this day as seen by the Social Democratic Party. The Party will fight against attempts

to integrate any part of Germany with other nations in advance of German reunification. We want the greater community. But community to us means community first with the inhabitants of the Soviet Zone of occupation and of the Saar.

What has happened so far in the various parts of Germany is only provisional. These provisional arrangements cannot assume final character in relation to the German nation as a whole. Only a united people is entitled to determine and give final shape to its future policies and economy.

The German working class refuses to regard the economic structure in the Soviet Zone of occupation as socialisation. With equal firmness it rejects any policy of return to private interests and restoration of previous conditions.

We have presented concrete proposals and offers to pursue a common foreign policy to the Federal Government on a number of occasions. Our proposals have always been rejected by the Federal Government and its constituent parties more speedily than by the Allies and in fact always when it was a question of securing equal rights in international treaties. This refusal of the necessary national community of approach to foreign affairs on the part of the Federal Government and the coalition parties has been based on motives of selfish class interest.

A national community based on democratic socialism is therefore the most favorable basis for successful policies of equality and cooperation with other nations.

The Social-Democratic Party sees its function in being the political party of the German patriots and international socialists. Its conception of internationalism implies cooperation between nations effectively equal in rights and in mutual esteem. Today as always Social Democracy holds to this internationalism. The Party therefore repudiates the policy of national capitulation which is being demanded of the Germans now even by Germans. The Social Democratic Party refuses to let the working people of the nation atone for what the propertied interests incurred before and after 1933.

At issue is the creation of a new spirit of national self-confidence in the German people, equally far from the irresponsible arrogance of the past and from the widespread disposition of this day to see a revelation of the European spirit in every allied request. Only the nation which asserts itself can be a valuable member of the larger community.

Bonn, July 28, 1952.

Kurt Schumacher.

*A living democracy and true national feeling demand constant participation by the citizens in national affairs. Such participation presupposes that the elected parliament can influence the basic decisions of the government.*

*Social Democracy in office will view parliament not only as a legislative body but also as its own constant counsellor and critic.*

*A Social Democratic Federal Government will create the bases of a social order which allows the citizens to evolve from mere pawns in the inexorable play of economic forces into the role of masters of their way of life.*

*A Social Democratic Federal Government will act in such a manner at home and abroad that the German people can approve its conduct without any abandonment of self-respect.*

### Assurance of Peace in Freedom

The supreme aim of Social Democratic foreign policy is to assure peace. The Social Democratic Party of Germany works for a democratic reconstruction of Europe as a community of equals and for the progressive liquidation of national sovereignty. It rejects curtailments of sovereignty which in practice devolve on Germany alone.

The Social Democratic Party opposes the plans for a conservative and capitalist federation of the miniature Europe of the six Schuman Plan nations as they hamper the democratic unification and evolution of Europe. Europe must not be split in the West as well. The German Social Democratic Party will in consequence seize and support any initiative calculated to promote intimate links between Great Britain and Scandinavia and the nations of the Continent. It pursues policies of full employment, improvement in standards of life and close economic cooperation for Europe as a whole.

The first task in the reconstruction of Europe is the peaceful reestablishment of German unity in freedom. This can be realized only by means of free elections in all occupation zones and in Berlin. The Social Democratic Party will therefore persist in striving to establish the prerequisites of elections covering the whole of Germany. They alone can produce a free government for all Germany, that must act as an equal partner in the negotiations for a peace treaty.

The unilateral detachment of territories which belonged to Germany in 1937 has created new injustice rather than new law. The Social Democratic Party does not recognize it.

A Social Democratic Federal Government would pursue policies in foreign affairs different from those of the present Federal Government not only in method but also in substance.

The system of treaties promoted by the Federal Government has endangered the Saar and by implication weakened the claim to the German territories east of the Oder and the Neisse. Without serious resistance it has accepted the refusal of equal rights for the Federal Republic and made the consequent second-class status of Germany a part of treaties which are to bind the German people for fifty years. By signing the Bonn Agreement and the agreement on the European Defense Community it has made the peaceful reunification of Germany insufferably difficult and placed the Federal Republic in the position

of a unilateral tributary to the Atlantic Pact without achieving bases for its own security.

The Social Democratic Party therefore rejects this treaty system and opposes its ratification. It will strive for a radical revision of the treaties as concluded by means of new negotiations on a new basis. It aims at an effective system of collective security in which Germany will participate as an equal and without endangering her reunification.

In government the Social Democratic Party will seize and support every initiative directed toward international agreements that can promote economic cooperation among the nations on the basis of equal rights. A first aim is the reduction of customs and trade barriers and the reestablishment of an international monetary system.

The Social Democratic Party knows the mortal danger of Soviet policies to all of Europe. Today the instrument of these policies is the cold war. The free world must win in this cold war because it is the only way to prevent a new world catastrophe. The rearmament of Germany as planned does not further matters; rather does it endanger the goal because it threatens to paralyze the most effective defence contribution of the Federal Republic in the cold war, namely the consolidation of democratic powers of resistance by policies of social justice.

The Social Democratic Party declares its adherence to the conceptions of freedom of the democratic nations. It rejects any association whether in general or in particular matters with the janissaries of the totalitarianism of the East. It sharply opposes attempts to enroll Fascist forces in the freedom front.

A Social Democratic Federal Government will entertain normal relations with all nations.

The Social Democratic Party strives for the solidarity of all nations. It will in consequence endeavor to secure friendly relations for the German people with all forces that are prepared to defend democratic liberty.

The Social Democratic Party will support all measures calculated to promote self-determination and social progress for under-developed countries.

These policies will bring welfare and peace to Germany and to Europe.

## Humanity for POW's and Displaced People

In a spirit of humanity help must be afforded to prisoners of war and to displaced and interned civilians.

The Social Democratic Party of Germany will make every effort to bring home all prisoners of war and displaced people and to clear up the fate of

all missing people. The Party supports efforts for a generous amnesty and for pardons for the convicted German prisoners of war. The humane solution of the problem of the prisoners of war and of displaced people and the support of the humanitarian organisations working in this field is viewed by the Social Democratic Party as a political charge on the Federal Republic.

Soldiers of the second world war can no longer be kept imprisoned as hostages and pawns in order to redeem errors in politics and diplomacy. Reparation must for humanity's sake be made for the effects of the application of conceptions of collective guilt. All sentences by military courts must be reviewed with the authoritative participation of neutral personalities of experience and standing in international law. Penalties must only apply to prisoners and interned persons who broke laws applicable at the time of the deed.

Work performed by prisoners of war and by displaced and interned civilians after hostilities ended and while they remained in detention must be recognized as part of German reparations. The Social Democratic Party supports the claim of returnees to suitable compensation and considers this as one way of providing security for returnees and of their integration. Everything must be done to reunite released prisoners of war and displaced and interned civilians with their families.



## *Berlin Again the Capital*

For the Social Democratic Party Berlin continues as before to be the capital of Germany. Until Germany is reunited, Berlin remains the outpost of democracy.

A Social Democratic Federal Government will treat Berlin in every respect as a federal state (Bundesland). As long as Berlin, as the result of Allied objections, has not been fully integrated into the Federal Republic, the Social Democratic Party advocates that federal law be applied in Berlin as in any other land. Wherever the adoption of the financial and legal system of the Bund implies a reduction in the social achievements and progressive standards of Berlin, this will be restored in the reconstruction of the Federal Republic as projected by the Social Democratic Party.

The Berlin members of the Federal Parliament (the Bundestag) must be directly elected and must have full voting rights.

A Social Democratic Federal Government will see to it that Berlin is enabled to give its people work and social security. It will make use of existing productive capacity, extend Berlin's economy and encourage low cost housing.

A Social Democratic Federal Government will give Berlin every consideration when distributing orders for the Federal authorities, the Laender and the municipalities. It will make sure that industry fulfills its duty towards Berlin. Berlin is to receive a large share of foreign and interzonal trade.

A Social Democratic Federal Government will, to a larger extent than has been done hitherto, move federal offices to Berlin. It will also concern itself with the population of the Eastern sector of Berlin. It will encourage everything designed to maintain cultural unity with the population of the Eastern Zone. It will continue to make energetic efforts to obtain the release of political prisoners and people abducted into the Soviet Zone.

A Social Democratic Federal Government will pay special attention to Berlin's refugee problem.

In international negotiations and until the reunification of Germany, Social Democratic Government policy will seek to strengthen the political and legal position of Berlin.

## *Home Affairs*

### **A Free Republic**

Human dignity, freedom, justice, religious and political tolerance, and individual responsibility towards the nation are the bases of every democratic constitution. Social Democratic policy ensures freedom of opinion, freedom of speech and freedom of political activity in public life. But there will be no freedom to destroy freedom.

The German Republic must be a federal state with a unified government.

Until the restoration of German unity the freedom of action of the provisional Federal Republic will be strengthened and extended.

A Social Democratic Federal Government will democratise the administration and give it a clear and simple structure. Social achievements must not be infringed by an administrative reform.

### **Free Municipalities in a Free Nation**

The foundation of any free and democratic national community are free municipalities that assume independent responsibility for the welfare of their citizens. Social Democratic policy therefore aims at constitutional safeguards for the basic rights and freedoms of German local government and at the restoration of local freedom of action in the social, economic, cultural and financial spheres.

To further this aim a Social Democratic Government will:

Extend the guarantees of local self-government provided by the Basic Law so as to recognise the municipalities and associations of municipalities as the third pillar in the structure of the state;

Unify the legislation on municipal government and transfer to the Federation authority for determining at least the legal framework of municipal activity;

Broaden democracy in the municipalities by developing the council form of government with the elected municipal council as the supreme authority, by expanding honorary functions, and by enlisting citizens in municipal work;

Transfer largely to the municipalities and to municipal unions the independent execution of local transactions;

Limit or transfer to local government the task of the special government agencies;

Limit government supervision to the examination of the legality of administrative action;

Safeguard the rights of the municipalities in constitutional courts;

Include the municipalities as a third party, along with the Federal and the State Governments, in a compensatory joint fund arrangement, to be based on social considerations and secured in the Basic Law, providing their share by way of an integrated tax system and participation in the yield from the income and corporation taxes;

Admit the demand of the municipalities for sufficient long-term credits as part of the compensatory joint fund arrangement;

Give municipalities and associations of municipalities an adequate share in the distribution of credits and secure their representation in agencies concerned with the execution of financial and economic policies;

Restore to the municipal banks their original function in financing municipal enterprise and local tradesmen;

Strengthen municipal enterprise (public utilities and transport) by economic and technical expansion, and resist attempted retransfers to private interests.

The municipalities have increasingly been deflected from their essential function, namely to secure the welfare of all citizens, by the tremendous destruction caused by the last war, by the immense accumulation of unsatisfied needs and by the financial discrimination caused by the system of fiscal equalisation and the distribution of tax revenue. A Social Democratic Government will see to it that freedom of action and service will be speedily restored to the municipal authorities.

## **Civil Service is Service for the People**

The progress of democracy in public administration requires that all citizens, irrespective of social origin, religion, sex or race have equal access to the civil service and equal chances of promotion.

The employment of applicants from the sphere of private enterprise will be encouraged. Those penalised by the Nazis will have priority in re-employment.

The civil servant is the servant of the people. Only those who are committed to the democratic order and to parliamentary democracy as established in the Basic Law and who are prepared to defend democratic freedom will be employed in the public service. This applies in particular to the judiciary and to executive services such as the police and the frontier guards.

The Social Democratic Party will support all those who serve the democratic state sincerely and without reservation. Members of the civil service may carry on political activities and organise in trade unions. They are to participate in management with those modifications which result from the special nature of the public service and from the rights of parliament.

The basis for employment, promotion and remuneration is performance. Social circumstances will be taken into account in the determination of salaries.

## **Debt of Honour of the German People**

Reparation of the injustice committed by National Socialism is a debt of honour for the German people and a basic precondition of any democratic rebirth. Reparation will prove that the German people condemns the crimes committed in its name.

Federal restitution legislation is to remedy the disjointed character of present restitution law. Sufficient funds are to be set aside to provide the reparations and relief stipulated by law but delayed for years in the execution.

Undue hardships resulting from the reparation measures of the Allies must be remedied by governmental action.

## **Democracy Also in Economic Life**

In a democratic state every citizen has the same political rights and obligations. However, in our present economic system the owners of the means of production or their agents have a monopoly of power, over which there is almost no control. A democratic economic order demands participation by the workers in decisions on social, personnel and, above all, economic matters.

The Social Democratic Party therefore supports the endeavour of the trade unions to serve the economic and social interests of their members, to gain complete recognition for the value and the rights of labour, and to achieve equal rights for all workers and employees in industry, state and society. The Party supports the unified trade-union structure which embraces all workers and employees irrespective of political and religious views.

Participation in management involves the following features:

In all supervisory organs of business undertakings the workers are to have equal representation. They must have the right, in cooperation with the trade unions, to choose also people who do not work in the firm.

The right to participation in management cannot be replaced by profit-sharing.

Democratisation is not assured by the mere transfer of an enterprise to public ownership. The decisive factor is the organisation of the structure. The Social Democratic Party therefore demands participation in management for the workers also in public enterprise, with due regard to the right of the political agencies of supervision.

Participation in the individual plants must be supplemented on higher levels of economic coordination. The workers and employees must be represented in the Chambers of Industry and Commerce, of Crafts, of Agriculture and in the Economic Chambers.

A Federal Economic Council should be placed at the summit of arrangements for participation beyond the individual enterprise. It should on request advise the Federal Government, the Federal Parliament and the Federal Council. It may on its own initiative take a stand on questions of economic and social policy and submit proposals. Legislation itself remains a solely parliamentary prerogative.

Since 1945 a number of Länder (States), in the main those with Social Democratic majorities, have adopted legislation on participation in management. The Social Democratic Party opposes the weakening of this legislation by way of the Industries Management Act (Betriebsverfassungsgesetz) as passed by the Federal Parliament. In government it will fight for legislation which secures the reconstruction of our economy in democratic terms.

## Economic Affairs

The economic policy of the Social Democratic Party seeks the economic liberation of the individual. That is why democratic socialism is the program of the workers, employees and civil servants, of the professions and the middle classes, of the farmers and of all people who live by the yield of their work. Only when all exploitation has been overcome will man gain his full rights and be able to develop his personality in genuine free competition.

The economic policy of the Social Democratic Party aims at:

Raising and securing the living standard of the people by increased productivity and full employment;

Reconstruction of the economy through a combination of national planning and competition in the individual areas of the economy;

Socialisation of the basic materials industries;

Just distribution of the national product.

## Increased Production and Full Employment

The integration into productive life of all who want to work requires an active economic policy mobilising all resources (labour, capital, raw materials) and directing them particularly to those fields which have fallen behind in the development necessary to the economy.

To achieve these aims a Social Democratic Federal Government will employ the following measures:

Expansion of the basic industries (coal, iron and power) which have hitherto been neglected, and removal of bottlenecks, e. g. in shipbuilding, railway and road construction;

Increase of house building in areas short of manpower and establishment of new and viable industries and workshops in the centers of unemployment.

A planned transport policy to provide better communications between the depressed marginal districts and the centers of industrial production.

A national investment program, combining all the hitherto uncoordinated works, distressed-area and priority programs within the framework of a national budget.

The capital for the required investments can be obtained through an investment loan, to the extent that the industries concerned cannot find the capital themselves.

## Planning and Competition

Increased production and full employment, as well as the measures projected for these ends, require coordination in a common council of the now disconnected top agencies of economic policy (Ministries of Economics, Finance, European Economic Cooperation, Agriculture, Housing, Transport, Refugees, the Central Banking System and the Bank for Reconstruction). This council will have the task of establishing an annual national budget and of watching over its use, employing fully developed statistical and business-cycle research in the process.

The tasks and the structure of the Note-Issuing Bank are to be defined by federal legislation in such a way as to tie its monetary, credit and interest policies to the basic lines of the national budget. To safeguard its currency control function, the Bank will be conceded rights calculated to prevent steps which might lead to inflationist developments or might endanger the exchange rate.

In order to increase capital formation, particularly by way of small savings, tax incentives, legislative and administrative measures to encourage savings for special purposes, and capital formation by the public authorities are necessary. The present unhealthy degree of self-financing by means of investments ploughed back from profits is to be limited in favour of investments created from capital funds accumulated in nonprofit-making, public and private credit institutes.

The investment policy of these credit depositories is to be adapted to the requirements of the national budget (investment control). Capital issues are to be subject to the rules of an improved investment control act, which is also to be applied in line with the national budget. The rates of interest for the investments envisaged by the program are if necessary to be varied according to the branches of the economy.

Such a planned monetary and credit policy presupposes a healthy currency and a corresponding foreign trade policy. In order to obtain a sufficient supply of raw materials and to supplement our own food resources it is necessary further to expand our foreign trade and to lower the trade barriers. Special efforts must be made to regain the eastern markets. Our foreign trade policy will be conducted from the start in such a way that it promotes a genuine European economic community.

The Social Democrats reject the police-state economy and are in favour of free consumers' choice. They will promote genuine competition in all suitable economic fields. For this it is necessary for the government not only to supervise the inevitable monopolies, but also to safeguard free competition by law. It must in particular encourage all forms of enterprise which stimulate free competition, such as the cooperatives, in particular the consumers' cooperatives, in their capacity of consumer's self aid.

## Private and Public Ownership

A Social Democratic Federal Government will sustain small and medium scale private property.

A steady increase in the supply of basic raw materials, such as coal, iron, steel and power, is the precondition for full employment. This supply is guaranteed only if the basic materials industries are transferred to public ownership, the only means of assuring investment policies keyed to the national economy and the necessary measures of rationalisation.

Only thus will industries of such importance to the national economy be prevented from serving private capitalist interests and from being again misused for political ends.

A socialization of the basic raw materials industries is particularly necessary for the German economy, since by order of the Allies a destructive decartellisation has been carried out, and, by Germany's membership of the Schuman Plan, discrimination against the West German coal and iron industry has been contractually stipulated. Through socialisation it will be possible to repair at least part of the damage done by those measures.

## Distribution of Income

A higher living standard for the whole people as projected by the Social Democratic Party, requires not only an increase of the national product but also a fairer distribution of income. The primary means to achieve this is a social tax policy.

It is to be supplemented by a social price policy based on constant scrutiny of market prices and rigorously opposing price usury.

An ample supply of consumers' goods, to be assisted by the organisation of agricultural marketing, is one means against unjustified price increases. Exorbitant prices are to be counteracted by adequate imports. The cooperatives also have to perform an important function in the field of price control.



## The Handicrafts in the Economy

The Social Democratic Party of Germany will seek to do justice to the economic and social importance of the handicrafts.

The following steps will further this aim:

The master's certificate authorised by law entitles to the maintenance of a workshop, to the training of apprentices and to the title of master craftsman.

Self-government in the handicrafts as recognized by law is designed to secure the economic and social interests and the vocational training of everybody engaged in the handicrafts whether in an independent or in a dependent capacity.

Market research and vocational guidance are means of directing labour to the individual branches of production and crafts as required.

In orders for public authorities the handicrafts are to be considered according to their importance.

Credit facilities for the handicrafts is a hitherto much neglected field, which must be developed with the aid of public credit institutions. The grant of credits must be based on the personal capacity and reliability of the handicraftsman as their most important presupposition. Credits are to be extended or guaranteed from public funds.

## Farming and Food

The Social Democratic Party demands the application of agricultural policies which will help agriculture to increase production. That is the way to improve nutrition generally, and to create sounder social conditions on the countryside.

Farmers and workers in industry constitute one great community of interests. As real income increases in the cities the people on the land can market an increasing volume of production. Increasing purchasing power on the land on the other hand ensures a steadily expanding market for industrial products.

### Stabilisation of Prices and Markets

Agricultural production depends on stability in management and its preconditions. This requires the following measures:

Regulation of the prices for grain, animal fodder, sugar, cattle and meat, oil and fats, through public importing and stock-piling agencies.

Energetic steps to remove economically unjustified processing and trade margins.

Safeguards to channel the goods by the shortest way from the producer to the consumer.

Closest cooperation between the agricultural and the consumers' cooperatives.

### Land Policies

The Social Democratic Party recognises the right to the ownership of farmland for those who, with their families, perform the main body of the work needed to make the unit produce to capacity. The fight of the Social Democratic Party is directed against the proprietary interests of the large landowners, not against the working property rights of the farmers.

In government the Social Democratic Party will therefore seek:

Federal legislation unifying the land reform legislation of the Länder.

Acceleration and an early completion of land reform.

Transfer, as a rule to the occupying tenant and avoiding any infliction of hardships, of the ownership of tenant land and landed undertakings, which for more than thirty years have been leased from private landowners.

The construction of homes for landworkers in greater number, either to be made the property of the landworkers, or to be municipal property.

### Promotion of Agricultural Production

Increased agricultural productivity requires:

A thorough consolidation of farmland by modern procedures, improvement of arable farmland by measures of soil treatment;

increased mechanization and rationalization on the farm;

support for agricultural research;

improved schools on the countryside;

regular agricultural schooling with final examinations;

development of vocational schools for agriculture;

maintenance and promotion of the Cooperatives.

## Healthy Housing for All

The economic policies of the Federal Government have created a dangerous crisis in the construction of low-rent public housing. Home-building has not benefited from the general economic boom. By contrast, housing construction

will be an essential part of the general economic policy of the Social Democratic Party in office.

The financing of housing construction on a current and adequate basis is the decisive question. Only as investment capital is secured can the federal Housing Construction Act be made to work.

Public housing must therefore be furthered not only by budgetary allocations but by the continuous supply on equal terms of financial resources made available by general investment control in order to make long-range planning of housing construction possible. Public funds that have been allotted to public housing must remain so reserved.

Uniform directives on housing construction must be established for the federal, state and municipal authorities. Among the objectives are the creation of homes for the average-size family that will remain adequate as to size and equipment, and priority in promotion according to need of cottage settlements, socially obligated ownership, and dwellings sponsored by non-profit building societies. The capacity of the building materials and housing construction industries will be expanded within the general investment program; in the process the general economic policy will make certain of construction costs in harmony with the national economy.

The Social Democratic Party rejects an overall, rigid system of rent control. It advocates a revision of the rent structure as a whole and in regard to individual classes of housing. Part of the increased rents following from rent adjustment for old housing, for housing constructed between the wars and for new housing property should be applied to housing repairs and to new housing. In order not to endanger the standards of life of the broad masses of the population rent adjustments must be coupled with the maintenance of real income and must be made socially viable for pensioners and recipients of relief by rent subsidies.

## Financial and Taxation Policies

Financial stability, particularly in the public domain, and the orderly administration of income and expenditures by the public authorities demand a sound system of taxation, which distributes the burden fairly and justly. Having regard to the stability of budgetary and currency arrangements taxation must also conform to the aims of economic and social policies. Taxation and budget policies must also serve to counteract fluctuations in the trade cycle and to influence market conditions in the interests of an economic policy with social objectives.

## Tax and Fiscal Reform

The present system of taxation which was taken over from the Third Reich and maintained by the tax policies of the Occupation Powers and the Federal Government, must finally be reorganised and changed from the ground up.

A presupposition for the success of a tax reform is a unified federal administration of the public finances and the removal of the ten individual fiscal administrations of the Laender. Only a federal administration of finances can assure the equal and just collection of taxes in all the Laender of the Federal Republic and with hope of success meet the challenge of dishonesty and fraud in the field of taxation. The principle of economy in administration can also be applied more easily by a federal administration. An increase in revenue, without a rise in the levy, of more than 1,000 million DM is expected to result from higher receipts and from economy in administration.

## Social Adjustment of Income Taxes

Wages and income taxes are to be revised basically with a view to reductions for small and medium incomes, to a more just assessment and to far-reaching simplification.

The following measures are among those to be applied to this end:

A scale of taxation established on social principles will apply a basic tax rate unchanged for all incomes up to a specified amount; only incomes above that level will be subject to a progressive tax rate.

The tax-exempt income will be increased gradually up to an amount of about 1,500 DM for each taxpayer, 1,000 DM for the spouse and 1,000 DM for each child. Millions of taxpayers will in consequence be free from taxation. Thousands of tax officials can in the process be transferred to more essential tasks within the administration of the nation's finances. The system of tax-exempt incomes is to be harmonized with the social reform program.

In addition to the increase in the tax-exempt incomes the following important concessions will remain:

Alleviations in the taxation of savings and investments necessary to the national economy, in particular for housing construction.

Alleviations in relation to outlay for the aged, in particular and also for members of the professions and the middle classes as a whole.

Alleviations in relation to supplementary outlay on professional and vocational education and on in-service training of successor generations.

The joint assessment of wives working independently and their husbands will be abolished.

Salaries and wages will be assessed lower than capital interest and income from funded property.

Tax inequality between persons assessed for income tax and those liable to wage tax will be abolished; the same applies to the inequality in treatment between one-man firms, limited companies and joint-stock companies, as far as the business has to pay an income tax which is higher than the corresponding corporation tax would be. In this connection the practice of avoiding taxation by overcharging the expense account as encouraged by present tax law is to be counteracted.

## Turnover Tax Reform

Next to the income tax, the turnover tax needs basic reorganization. The present turnover tax, which is levied repeatedly on the same commodity, will be replaced by a tax to be levied only at one point on the road from the producer to the consumer. This turnover tax is to be levied at rates varying for essential goods and luxury goods.

The aim is to free the first group altogether from taxation. Such a turnover tax could incorporate almost all taxes on consumption; this would also greatly simplify the present tax system.

If the tax system is thus simplified and the rates are graded according to social considerations, the most important task of the new federal fiscal administration would be the equal and fair collection of taxes. There is no excuse for tax evasion; it is a crime against the whole people because each DM by which the state is defrauded, reduces its capacity to perform its extensive range of duties.

## Social Affairs

The Social Democratic Party is determined to pursue policies which ensure the existence, the freedom and the dignity of all citizens. Every person capable of work has the moral duty to perform work and a right to employment that guarantees an adequate existence.

This program demands interaction between social, economic and financial policies. Leeway to cover increased costs and the progressive development of social security will be available in

- the expansion of the national product consequent upon full employment; increased productivity due in particular to improved health conditions and productive capacity;

- the rationalisation of the social services according to the social reform program.

A socialist policy of social security will assure increased returns from the national product for the working citizen.

## Social Security

The present confusion of the social service structure and of benefit arrangements under social insurance, welfare and care services is intolerable. The administration is largely unconnected and therefore expensive. Most benefits are inadequate. The health services do not conform to medical possibilities. Hundreds of thousands of employable people are absent from work through no fault of their own. By way of public health services, full employment and an increase of the national product millions of DM can be made available for improvements in the social services.

In order to disentangle and improve the system of social services the Social Democratic Party in office will apply, in terms understandable to the general public,

a social reform program

embodying

- public health services that include preventive health care, medical aid, hospitalisation, medicines and treatment in health resorts;

- adequate benefits, to be provided from one source, in case of partial or complete unemployment, advanced age, or the death of the family earner;

- maternity care and child benefits;

- economic security for the duration of unprovoked or limited employment. These benefits will constitute claims under law.

Local, area and central agencies of self-government will ensure direct administrative contact.

As so established social security must embrace:

- Wage- and salary-earners and housewives;

- Crafts- and tradesmen, farmers and members of the professions according to their need for protection.

## Relief

Relief as a charge on municipal self-government will benefit as the social service system in its several branches undertakes the general disbursements of social security. The municipal relief services can in consequence more successfully concentrate on their essential task of intervention in cases of individual need, aided by practical neighborly and self-aid, also through the private welfare agencies. Municipal relief will constitute a legal claim with no counterclaim for repayment.

Municipal relief supplements the social security services when the latter are inadequate to meet and overcome an individual emergency. It has a duty to take preventive action and is responsible for institutional and home care that is consonant with human dignity. It takes care of families as entities and makes adequate provision for the care and protection of the young. It must develop the capacity for self-aid of those in its care and work together with them in overcoming the individual emergency.

## Industrial Protection

The Social Democratic Party will develop industrial protection as a minimum right in particular to secure the health of the worker

Wherever mechanization and methods of work make it possible working hours are to be further reduced with full adjustment in wages and salaries.

## Labour Law

The Social Democratic Party of Germany fights for progressive labour legislation. It is to be brought together in a labour code of law. Tariff



agreements must override legislative rules. The Minimum Labour Standards Act secured by the Social Democratic Party must above all assure the following against inadequate pay: landworkers, home industries workers and workers and employees in small industries as well as domestic workers.

## Care for War Victims

The Social Democratic Party commits itself anew to national responsibility toward war victims and their families, and toward the dependents of the dead of two world wars.

A Social Democratic Federal Government will therefore

- adjust the benefits provided by the present Federal Care Act to the increase in prices and make sure that the basic benefits are not counted against other benefits and pensions;

- strengthen the professional and health care services;

- secure effective aid for the school and vocational training of the children of war victims, legitimate and illegitimate;

- establish legislation in favour of the heavily disabled with adequate protection against discharge. The aim of all measures in favour of the heavily disabled must be to reintegrate them into productive life.

## Health Policies

Every citizen has a right to the maintenance or restoration of his health to the maximum extent afforded by modern medical knowledge.

This goal can only be reached by means of the development of preventive and curative medical aid within a comprehensive health service. Freedom of medical decision in the free exercise of the medical profession is to be maintained and protected also in the interest of securing the necessary confidence between patients and the doctors of their selection.

To the importance of the medical function must correspond economic guarantees for the existence also of the independent doctor, exercising his profession, in case of invalidity or advanced age.

## Displaced Populations Policies

### The Right to a Homeland and to Aid

Expellees, victims of war damage, evacuees and Soviet Zone refugees have a right to aid from the community.

The Social Democratic Party fights for the reparation of the injustice inflicted upon the victims of the Potsdam decisions on expulsion. The Party affirms their right to their homes in the east and to an existence in the west.

The Social Democratic Party stands for the right of all people to their homeland, their folkways, their language and their culture. The Party will therefore promote the possibility of peaceful return for all displaced people, whether they once lived outside or inside the prewar German borders.

The Social Democratic Party seeks the integration of all expellees, victims of war damage, evacuees and Soviet Zone refugees into a sound German economy.

A Social Democratic Federal Government will accordingly carry through a policy of resettlement within the nation with a view to social balance and the sound distribution of the population. It will attach major importance to a combination of employment opportunities and housing. A planned credit policy will ensure a sound development of the refugee industries. It will pay special attention to maintaining cores of skilled workers and to the export capacity of displaced industries.

New independent and auxiliary farming units are to be created for the displaced farmers and landworkers by accelerating the land reform in the whole of western Germany and by the planned development of waste lands on an increasing scale.

By the removal of bureaucratic obstacles, by systematic consideration in resettlement projects and by the extension of credits the establishment of the refugees in the crafts, trades and free professions will be encouraged.

Equal opportunities for displaced youth is a special and primary task. There must be no discrimination against expellee children in school and vocational facilities.

The Social Democratic Party will seek friendly cooperation with all organisations of the victimised section of the population that are dedicated to the special social concerns of their membership. It will contribute to the care and maintenance of the cultural heritage of the expellees.

## Equalisation of Burdens

An element in the right to aid from the community is the process of compensation. The Compensation Act (Lastenausgleichsgesetz) passed by the Federal Parliament does not meet the need from a social point of view, neither in the levy nor in the distribution of the resulting means. A Social Democratic Federal Government will improve this Act.

In the administration of the Compensation Act priority must be accorded in the distribution of means for

- compensation for the loss of household goods,
- restoration of dwelling space,
- reintegration into productive life.

The means of compensation must be released by way of a planned, advance extension of credits, as the process of compensation will be of value for the victims and for the community only if it is afforded speedily.

## Cultural Affairs

### Freedom, Tolerance and Social Responsibility

The Social Democratic Party of Germany is committed to the basic principles of tolerance and of respect for human dignity in regard to all people who accept these principles as binding also for them. These principles are to guide community life and the handling of differences among the several religious and political groupings of the German nation.

There must be full freedom of faith and of conscience, full freedom for the arts, for research and for all teaching. The Social Democratic Party of Germany opposes all misuse of church or scientific institutions for party purposes.

The Social Democratic Party of Germany accords primacy to the following tasks in the cultural field:

The arts and the sciences, research and teaching will be given generous support in the spirit and in the means afforded. The artistic and scientific treasures accumulated over thousands of years must be made accessible to all.

Without regard to denomination and in a common spirit of mutual respect German youth is to be educated in schools and high schools toward a sense of social responsibility and dedication to the ideals of democracy and understanding between the nations.

Religious instruction will be given in accordance with the stipulations of the Basic Law. Beyond that religious instruction remains the concern of parents and of the churches.

The schools are to be developed in such a way that all children are united in one organic school system and each child is enabled, independently of its social status, to get the education for which it is fitted. Free schooling and free school books and instruments are to be the rule and adequate educational support to be accorded.

The dearth of school space caused by the war must be made good as quickly as possible by means of a large-scale building program for the Federal Republic, the Länder and the municipalities. In urgency it is to equal low-rent housing construction.

In the interests of progress in education experimental schools, Land and rural boarding schools and similar institutions must be encouraged.

Parental participation in the work of the schools and participation in school management by the pupils are projects for suitable development in all schools.

Particular efforts must be devoted to the present elementary school system. The lack of teachers must be overcome by improving the material conditions of the teaching profession, in particular of the young teachers. Classes must not exceed thirty-five children. A ninth school year is to be made general. The aim is to provide the same size of classes, number of teachers, and allocations for teaching and study equipment for pupils in the same age brackets corresponding to the present secondary and high-school education.

The vocational schools must broaden the range of technical knowledge and educate for social responsibility. Vocational school legislation will oblige the Laender, the areas and the municipalities to establish public vocational schools. Weekly attendance at the vocational schools must cover at least 12 hours.

Teachers in all types of schools must receive at least six terms of college education. They are to receive pedagogical training of the same quality. Exchange arrangements with other countries for advanced instruction and teacher exchange must be expanded.

A comprehensive university reform is being planned. University students are to be given not only education in their special fields but also general education enabling them to grasp the connection between their special training and the community as a whole.

Tuition fees are to be abolished at the universities. Financial guarantees for new research and teaching generations are to be provided.

Present channels of education must be supplemented by further possibilities for entry into the universities without regard to previous schooling for those qualified scientifically, artistically or technically.

Independent adult education must receive official recognition and financial aid. Education for democracy is the main task of the people's high schools. They should receive legislative support and security.

Immorality in literature and in the press cannot be fought effectively by way of prohibitions. The best protection against baseness in literature is good schools, worthy conditions of life and the extensive development and expansion of the system of public libraries supported by legislative action.

Freedom of opinion for the press entails lawful access to the information necessary. The penal laws suffice to cover misuse of the freedom of the press.

Broadcasting must remain a public service. It must not become the propaganda medium of any one party, faith or philosophy, nor of the government of the day. Democratic control of its independence and finances is to be secured.

## Women and Family Life

The Social Democratic Party has always fought for equal political, economical and social rights for women, and for their equality under the law. The Social Democratic Party demands a marriage law reform and the right of women to employment and access to all professions corresponding to their capacities and desires. No mother with children at school or under school age should be forced by economic need to seek employment.

Wages and salaries must be determined solely according to the nature of the employment and not according to the sex or age of the person employed. The so-called typical women's jobs must be evaluated anew and fairly.

Within her frame of work a woman must have the same opportunities for promotion as a man. More women must be engaged and trained in public service, also in the higher ranks of administrative and legislative work. Measures discriminating against women in the civil service are to be removed.

Protective labour legislation must take account of the special situation of the working woman and mother. Constant control of the application of relevant legislation must be assured by expanded factory inspection in which women with work experience must have a part.

The Social Democratic Party seeks legislation providing maternity care for all working women including those in the public service and independently employed, with corresponding care for all non-working mothers. It fights for children's allowances, and for adequate maternity and infant protection. Mothers must be protected from excessive burdens, and their children from physical and moral danger, by the creation of kindergartens, children's playgrounds and nurseries, and recreation homes for children and mothers.

In housing construction the needs of healthy family life and of rational housekeeping and hygiene must be taken into account. Housing projects must include a specified number of bachelor's dwellings.

In marriage and social legislation the work of the housewife must be treated as employment. In cases of pregnancy, illness and convalescent absence domestic help must be provided for the housewife. The establishment of

advisory offices on education, above all to assist the solitary mother, and of advisory marital offices, is to be promoted.

Only by the application of the Social Democratic program can marriage and family life be safeguarded.

## The Rights of Youth

Youth has been especially hard hit by the war and its consequences. It is therefore entitled to measures which take into account its exceptional needs both of the spirit and of sheer existence.

As an essential part of a comprehensive youth program the Social Democratic Party will put through the following minimum measures:

For the conquest of unemployment and vocational want among the young, —

Job and housing procurement

Expansion of vocational training facilities for youth of both sexes in public and private enterprise;

For the protection of working youth, —

Protective legislation for youth in industry, including provisions for adequate holidays

Progressive legislation on vocational training

Inclusion of workers under twenty years in the legal protection against unwarranted discharge

Inclusion of apprentices in unemployment insurance;

For the promotion of group activities —

In order to advance spiritual and cultural interests and activities among the young and to strengthen the forces of social cohesion, public funds on an adequate scale are to be made available for —

The work of the youth associations

The political education of the young

International youth exchange arrangements

The construction and expansion of youth hostels

Youth recreation activities

Rambling and hostels

Sports

Cultural institutions

Youth literature

In the execution of this program the Social Democratic Party of Germany will help the young generation to secure its place in the life of the nation. It will ensure the nomination of young candidates for elections. It will employ its full strength in order to provide a larger measure of influence and responsibility for younger men and women in economic and in public life. It will call upon qualified young talent as aids to responsible personalities in order to give the former a chance to prove themselves and to counteract the accumulation of functions on a few hands.

In its turn the young generation can only assert itself if it recognises the responsible nature of its obligations in the community and is prepared to cooperate constructively in furthering its destiny and future.

*The Social Democratic Party of Germany calls upon the nation to pursue the aims laid down in the Action Program. Its realisation depends on the approval of the nation.*

*The Social Democratic Party of Germany is guided in its struggle by the aims and tasks of democratic socialism as defined in the declaration adopted by the Socialist International at Frankfurt/Main on July 3, 1951:*

*Socialists work for a world of peace and freedom, for a world in which the exploitation and enslavement of men by men and peoples is unknown, for a world in which the development of the individual personality is the basis for the fruitful development of mankind.*