

INSTITUTE FOR SOLIDARY MODERNITY (ISM)

SOCIAL-ECOLOGICAL RECONSTRUCTION ON THE PATH TO A SOLIDARY MODERNITY

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This text has been developed within the ISM's steering committee together with the active participation of other colleagues. Our aim is to advance the process of programmatic and strategic agreement, which is already under way in the social and political left as well as in critical scholarship and culture and which has recently gained new impetus from the turn in nuclear policy. In this, we are less concerned with a possibly exhaustive listing of the various single steps toward a social-ecological reconstruction. Rather, we would like to make clear that such a reconstruction can only be designed as a comprehensive social, cultural and political project, in the end as a project of another society – of a solidarity modernity. For the ongoing elaboration and carrying out of such a project, a broad alliance of diverse protagonists has to evolve. Through a discussion of the present text we would like to open up a first opportunity for such an alliance. The text itself is therefore conceived as an invitation to participation.

We are living through a transitional period. The revival of the anti-nuclear movement and the catastrophe of Fukushima have, in the space of a few weeks, not only placed on the agenda a phase-out of nuclear energy but, in the end, an exit from the whole fossil-fuel/nuclear mode of economy. Month-long demonstrations transformed the initially merely locally significant conflict around the construction of a new railway station into a confrontation relevant to the whole of society around the shape and future of democracy. Both developments revealed what is really behind «disenchantment with politics»: the unwillingness of ever more people to accept conditions and processes that have for decades been considered «without alternative». In this the repoliticisation of German conditions is in part different from, but in many respects similar to, the processes in Greece, Spain, Italy, Great Britain and North Africa or Latin America. Despite the differences in the immediate causes as well as in the present forms of protest, people are, under the common slogan «real democracy»,

articulating their right to participation and their claim to have a say in the conflictual organisation of their social institutions and their daily conditions of life.

With a broadly shared feeling of having to speak up while standing on the shifting and insecure sands of a transitional situation, a crisis dynamic is being expressed that is in itself very multi-faceted. If the modes of production and life prevalent in the global North have for centuries by now led to immiseration, social polarisation and finally mass mortality due to famine, disease and violence, the environmental and climate catastrophe, as well as the destruction of biodiversity, in the course of their mutual intensification and extension due to the financial and debt crisis, are threatening everyone. If despite this the economic ascendancy of the newly industrialised countries has lifted several hundred million people out of poverty and given them access to the mode of life and consumption level of the northern middle classes, their grip on natural resources and the explosion of greenhouse gas emissions have hastened the disaster of a model of production and consumption that can no longer be sustained. With the mutual escalation of the social, economic, ecological and political crises, the threat of war, and with it the danger of the deployment of weapons of mass destruction, is increasing. Along with this, the formal extension of democracy is frustrated by its substantive undermining, and the demand for democracy still has to face dictatorships and the spirals of violence in which terror and counter-terrorism alternate. In the process the governments involved since 2008 principally with the «bailout» of the international financial system, of indebted states and of the Euro and the management of the economy are not even now in a position to syntonise their various crisis policies. If sustainable and workable solutions are not in the offing, this is above all because the «crisis-solution strategies» do not touch the basic structures of neoliberal capitalism and refuse to take the risk of calling into question

the dominance of global financial markets and the transnational corporations which act without democratic control and regulation. In this the inadequacy of the short-term and one-dimensional standards of decision-making within the markets and within the parliamentary electoral periods becomes increasingly palpable in the face of the long-term character and complexity of the global multi-dimensional crisis. The world-historical development seems to be slipping away from the control of states and of civil society.

AT THE CROSSROADS – A TRANSITIONAL SITUATION

A contradiction full of absurdities is becoming deeper: never before has the scientific and technological basis for the transition to ecologically sustainable and socially and politically just modes of production and life been so developed as it is today, never before has the wealth of society been so great, and on this basis never have the possibilities for a dignified life for all people on earth been so within grasp, as they are in our time. Yet never before has humanity been heading so alarmingly for a disintegration of social ties and social cohesion and the destruction of its natural bases of life, a disintegration driven only by the competition for ownership and survival.

In Germany, already before the most recent financial and world economic crisis 56 % of the population saw economic conditions as unjust; only 15 % of Germans viewed them as being more or less just (Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach, in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, December 11, 2007). In the meanwhile, the economic decline resulting from the crisis, and the bank bailout and anti-cyclical programmes have dramatically increased the public debts of the industrialised countries. In summer 2011 the USA was on the brink of insolvency before it once again raised its legal limit for public debt by at least 1.2 billion dollars to 13.4 billion and at the same time drastically reduced social services. Also in Europe the costs of a destructive financial system, of failed economic and structural policies and the costs of continued military intervention was shifted on to society in the form of a lack of investments in the future and further cuts in wages, pensions and social services. Under pressure of the creditor countries, the EU Commission, the ECB and the IMF, this policy was put into practice with especial harshness in the debtor countries Greece, Portugal and Ireland, strangling not just economic growth there but the very survival even of the middle classes – in the way this already had happened in previous decades in many countries of the global South. After a brief public rejoicing over the German recovery, a slow-down in economic growth prompted still more «economising», even in Germany, on solutions for problems of the future, wage workers, the unemployed and the socially excluded. A new wave of privatisation is threatening to gut public basic services even more. The lack of a solidary economic, educational and social policy strengthens an increasingly violent ownership and survival competition, xenophobia, racism, attacks on the unemployed or homeless and thus prepares the ground for right-wing populisms. Recent British developments show with blinding clarity that under conditions of dwindling acceptance of its policies the regimes are relying on strategies of more intense repression – and have quite obviously been doing this now for some time.

If, despite the already-mentioned increase in social agitation, these tendencies have still not solidified into a serious political

crisis, this has first of all to do with the fact that a crash like that of the 1920s has so far been prevented by global cooperation. Even though the governing classes have, just like elsewhere in the world, lost legitimacy also in the Federal Republic, the enormous flexibility of the governing parties and the trade unions' corporatism were up to now able to fend off the widening of the crisis into a social crisis. Neoliberal capitalism is still benefitting from reforms, which in their substance are superficial and insufficient, from its extraordinary capacity for accommodation to changed conditions, from its still continuing productivity and, not least, from people's fear of the negative effects of breakthroughs into new social territory. If this fear arises mainly from the endless internalisation of neoliberal conditions and norms, it is also a reflection of the weakness of a left that has been segmented for a long time now and the lack of a convincing alternative societal project capable of mobilising people.

In this the present crisis resembles previous historic situations of transition, of crossroads and forks in the road. When the crisis of post-war Fordist social-state-regulated capitalism started in the 1970s to demand answers that could indicate new directions, the opportunity for an alternative social development was missed: Instead of opening the «social-democratic age» (Ralf Dahrendorf) to far-reaching reforms, instead of converting the culture shock precipitated by the 1972 Club of Rome report on «The Limits to Growth» into an emancipatory social-ecological turnaround, neoliberal capitalism and the social forces on which it rests decided the outcome of the «crisis of Fordist regulation» in its favour.

A similar fate befell the uprising of hundreds of thousands of people in 1989/90. The implosion of Eastern European state socialism opened up a broad space for social reorganisation and the possibility of a world-historical political moment of glory. Instead, the «Wende» was reduced to a triumph over state socialism and thus strengthened neoliberal policies: The majority of East Germans and Eastern Europeans did not want new experiments; they wanted a share in the freedom, democracy and standard of living of the West, which however by this time was already spinning out of control. The opportunity in the East for a double modernisation, of catching up to the potential for evolution and civilisation of bourgeois democracy, and for a simultaneous breakthrough to a common democratic renewal and to social-ecological sustainability East and West was missed: such a modernisation was «not capable of winning a majority» and was miles away from the thinking of the determinant power elites.

Just as in that time, we now confront in the present multi-crisis a choice between contrasting futures. Will the opportunity once again be missed – or can we succeed today in using the opportunity by building broad alliances for a solidary modernity and a social-ecological transformation of the social relations of nature?

THE CONTINUED DOMINANCE OF NEOLIBERAL CAPITALISM

Combined with reinforced state interventionism, the developmental path of neoliberal capitalism in the Federal Republic, in the other European countries and in the USA is taking on authoritarian features. The reconstruction of public budgets and the recovery of competitiveness in Europe are being carried forward in an extremely one-sided way in Europe, in that

the costs of the austerity policies are met by lower wages, further cuts in public services and continued privatisation and thus shifted from banks and the wealthy onto the state and the general population. In the process, the capacity of policy to deal at least to some extent with the urgent problems of the future is crucially weakened. Despite general condemnation of the speculative excesses in the financial markets, big banks and international investment funds have, after a series of half-hearted steps toward re-regulation, restored their power with the help of billion-Euro state bailout actions. The financialisation of neoliberal capitalism remains unbroken. Even raw materials and foodstuffs have been made into objects of speculation to previously unheard of extent – with fatal consequences for millions of starving people.

**A CONTESTED TREND:
RENEWAL OF NEOLIBERALISM THROUGH
GREEN ECONOMY, GREEN NEW DEAL OR
SOCIAL-ECOLOGICAL TRANSFORMATION?**

The concept of «green economy», like that of the «Green New Deal», outlines the most significant and hotly contested trend of social development today, in which diverse, partly opposed forces are trying to bring their interests to bear. It is still an open question whether in this highly conflictual mélange a comprehensive and broadly accepted emancipatory social project can assert itself: for this project we propose the concept of a social-ecological reconstruction.

One reason such a reconstruction is possible is that projects, shaped by neoliberal finance-capital, for a green capitalism confront a broad spectrum of forces ranging from green and left protagonists via social movements to strategically acting circles of entrepreneurs and large enterprises with profit interests in an ecological structural change. The decisive question for the future of all these disputes is in what social contexts and by whom can a green economy be realised. If neoliberal finance capital assimilates the green economy as an elixir of life, the modes of production and life would, it is true, become more ecological but not essentially different – not more just, not more social and not more democratic and without an essential change in the present structures of property, access, distribution and power, without space for sustainable and democratically shaped social relations of nature. If, instead of this, the international social relations of force are altered, along with a green economy, in favour of a post-neoliberal change of direction, and if it were possible to already introduce a new emancipatory epoch within the parameters of bourgeois-capitalist societies, Fordist social-state regulated capitalism and neoliberal regulated capitalism could give way to a far-reaching social-ecological transformation – with an outcome that remains open. What role will be assigned to the various proposals of a Green New Deal is not yet predictable. The first opportunities for such a development are appearing in the re-municipalisation of public utilities under pressure of referendums, in the network of towns that are striving for 100 % energy provision from locally available renewable energy or have already achieved this, in the form of «Solidarity Economy» including the preferential granting of public contracts to environmentally friendly companies, in the political activities of NGOs and ecological-social movements and, not least, in the everyday environmentally conscious behaviour of countless citizens.

If many conceptions of a green social reconstruction within the parameters of capitalism aim at possibilities of sustainable development through environmental-technological structural transformation and ecological modernisation, the urgency of changing the finance-capital dominated relations of property, access and power into Green New Deal concepts is hardly a topic, or is so only marginally. However, a Green New Deal can only become an emancipatory transformative project in coming decades if it succeeds, through shifting the social relations of forces, in linking an emancipatory social-ecological reconstruction of the economy with a renewal of democracy to produce an alternative project of society, which above all would prove itself in an all-encompassing solidarity of the North and the South.

Opposed to a Green New Deal understood in this way are all the forces for which the modes of production and life are indeed to become more ecological but should not be essentially changed. In this they focus on electric cars without a fundamental change in the structure of mobility, on projects of renewable energy in the hands of fewer corporations, on a harsh global struggle over every scarcer resources and a primarily security-policy «management» of the climate and food crises. In this perspective, private equity funds like Blackstone invest several billion Euros in offshore wind parks off German coastlines, state promoted and with favourable credits from the German Reconstruction Loan Corporation (Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau) (KfW). Here the pillaging of the planet is continued by other means; what could possibly be new in a Green New Deal is strangled by what's old in green capitalism, and the incentives to growth of green investments (in combination with further wage cuts and the continued shift from public to private basic services and care) are to raise German and core European export surpluses to a new level to be maintained for a long time. In line with this, ecological technology is not to be shared with others but be kept expensive through excessive patent protection.

If a green capitalism is dominated by neoliberalism, the potential of an already broadly shared consensus for a transformation in the modes of production and life and of the social relations of nature will not materialise. Since such a politics, due to its structural inconsistency, cannot become hegemonic it must, in order to secure its continued crisis-ridden existence, evolve authoritarian forms of domination, in which the erosion of democracy ends in its very elimination. A green capitalism embedded in this collides with its own substance, that of an emancipatory social reconstruction. Despite the continually narrowing window of opportunity for a truly social-ecological turn, the decision among the various options has still not been made; however, it will in no way occur automatically. The concept of a transitional situation, with which we began this discussion, points expressly to the undecided state of the struggle around an emancipatory social-ecological social reconstruction that, as such, leads beyond neoliberal financial-market capitalism.

**THE NEW RIGHT AND ITS REACHING OUT
TO THE «MIDDLE OF SOCIETY»**

In the USA the Republican right, supported and driven by the Tea Party movement, is pulling out all the stops in order to carry out a radical neoliberalism against Obama's original strategy of international cooperation, against attempts at ef-

fective bank regulation, against increased taxes for the rich and against social partial reforms as in the area of healthcare. A similar new right has emerged in many European countries, where it combines the hubris of the upper classes, the fears and insecurities of the middle classes and the resentment of socially excluded milieus and mobilises against whatever the convenient «other» and «foreigner» may be at the moment. In order to position «national interests» and in each case one's own «defining culture», resistant or marginal sectors of society are denounced as «extremists», «terrorists» or «Islamists» and subsequently consistently criminalised. The formation of «fortress societies» is the domestic counterpart of the permanent and normalised deployment of military power in international relations, as in the «defence of the outer borders» and the mobilisation of social-racist and anti-EU feelings in the current conflicts over the crisis of the Euro and country-indebtedness in the EU. The danger of this development, however, does not lie in the growth of the new right but still more in the speed with which its positions are picked up by the «political middle». Since this development necessarily blocks the processes of an emancipatory social-ecological reconstruction and the democratic engagement of social majorities needed to make it work, a real Green New Deal can in this perspective also only be conceived as both a solidary and a libertarian project, thus as a project that does not restrict people's liberty but only opens up the possibility of a good life. Converting the dangers of the current situation of upheaval into opportunities is the special task of the mosaic left and all democratic forces in Germany and Europe. Will it be possible, despite the current weakness and disunity of the European left, to form a countervailing power bloc against the dominant politics and introduce an emancipatory social-ecological transformation process? New turbulent conflict situations in coming years can unexpectedly precipitate quickly into different relations of forces. What could the contours of an emancipatory reconstruction of social institutions and modes of life be?

THREE DIMENSIONS OF AN EMANCIPATORY SOCIAL-ECOLOGICAL TRANSFORMATION

The social, economic and ecological problems of our time cannot be separated from each other. Injustice leads to destruction of the environment, whether driven by competition and the growth mania compelled by the logic of profit, or conditioned by the poverty of the exploited who often have no choice but to accede to the destruction of nature. Environmental destruction leads, conversely, to more injustice, because it affects the economically and politically powerful of the rich countries less and the poor and excluded parts of humanity most. Lying behind the interdependency of social, economic and ecological conflicts are often undemocratic relations of domination, power and distribution and consequently unsustainable consumer desires. An alternative social project therefore comprises an emancipatory whole made up of social and ecological as well as cultural transformation processes, which can only be designed and realised as the result of the self-empowerment and self-organisation of the various protagonists in the course of a renewal of democracy.

This leads to three intermeshed guidelines of an emancipatory social-ecological reconstruction on the path to a solidary modernity:

- A political turnaround and a profound change in the social relations of nature, which can be articulated solidarily, that is, in a socially and economically just way, only in an ecologically sustainable mode of production and life (ecological dimension);
- a just redistribution and social rights guaranteed equally to all (social dimension);
- a renewal of democracy as a condition of these two connected transformations and at the same time as an independent emancipatory goal in its own right (political dimension).

THE FIRST DIMENSION: A SOLIDARY CHANGE IN THE MODE OF PRODUCTION AND LIFE INTO ECOLOGICALLY SUSTAINABLE, ECONOMICALLY JUST AND DEMOCRATICALLY STRUCTURED SOCIAL RELATIONS OF NATURE

The first dimension of social-ecological reconstruction aims at a far-reaching transformation of the social relations of nature, away from profit-oriented growth and toward a new globally sustainable development. Instead of using nature as the object of the limitless pillaging, this would involve relations of nature in which the emancipation of society is also contained in the protection and maintenance of its natural bases of life. This requires producing, making available and using food, energy, mobility, communications and public space differently than has been the case up to now.

The capitalist economy moves within a dangerous contradiction: it grows while it simultaneously undermines its social and natural bases. This becomes dramatically manifest in climate change and in the ongoing destruction of biodiversity. At present, both affect above all the global South and the impoverished and excluded parts of world society. Climate policy is therefore also solidary development policy. The preservation of biodiversity especially includes the protection of indigenous groups from the predatory appropriation of their natural resources and their knowledge by pharmaceutical and seed corporations and, beyond this, their participation in the shaping of their relations of life – often subject to decisions taken elsewhere.

If the current trend of emissions of gases affecting the environment continues, a global warming of more than 2 degrees Celsius will lead to a rise in sea levels, to drought, flooding and extreme meteorological events. Two-thirds of the functions performed by natural ecosystems, and thus the elementary conditions of life for future generations, are considered by the «Millennium Ecosystem Assessment» to be already endangered today. Especially menacing is the reciprocal accumulation of an internal breakdown of the ecosystems already degraded by 60 %. In addition, more than a billion people could in a few decades be affected by water shortages and 600 million more by famine and acute malnutrition than are already so affected. With an average global warming of more than 2 degrees one and a half million animal and plant species are considered in danger of extinction.

Contraction and sustainable development: An alternative climate and energy policy therefore count among the biggest challenges of a social-ecological reconstruction. De-carbonisation and de-materialisation on the basis of renewable energies and raw materials are the two great goals. CO₂ emissions and the consumption of important finite raw materials must

be reduced by about 90 % in the industrialised countries by the middle of the century. The transition from a fossil-nuclear growth society to a society without substantial growth on the basis of renewable energies, energy storage technologies, efficiency technologies as well as renewable resources has become an existential challenge for all.

It falls to economic and social policy in connection with policy in other fields to accomplish a rapid shift of investments to renewable energies and zero-emission resources and technologies with the greatest possible resource productivity. In this drastic structural transformation a just distribution of the burdens and the gains of life quality must simultaneously be secured. In this way, during the transition to a mode of economy based on green technologies, a less destructive, more environmentally friendly growth can provisionally be achieved. However, if such an impulse really triggers the economy-wide growth hoped for by many, the probability would be high that this growth would be in turn be eaten up by the resultant increases in efficiency (rebound effect). Moreover, an unaltered profit-dominated growth without essential changes in the relations of power would reproduce the social deficits and gaps of capitalism. Therefore the industrialised countries and the post-industrialised countries have to use the relatively short transitional phase of a more environmentally acceptable growth in order to move to sustainable development without significant growth of GDP. The risk that GDP growth poses of relying on a permanent decoupling of resource consumption and the burdening of nature is too high. In a nutshell: On a planet with limited resources and capacities there can be no exponential growth in the long run. Even if the developing and newly industrialised countries cannot at first overcome poverty and famine without growth, the future viability of a world society requires in the end a global transition from profit-dominated growth to a sustainable development that must be legitimised on the basis of a global growth of quality of life, the growth of a worldwide common weal, of equal freedom and possibility for participation on the part of really all people. Thus in climate policy, binding maximum emission limits for climate-damaging gases have to be established. Its basis is in the long term the principle of equal per capita rights to environmental resources. State and private economic programmes are needed for the change to a solar energy basis as well as binding guidelines of a truly adequate financial and technical support for developing and newly industrialised countries in coping in an emancipatory way with social-ecological tasks. Tax justice to the detriment of large fortunes, big companies and speculative financial transactions must create the financial conditions for this. Because sector-specific instruments will not be enough to achieve radical reduction goals, the environmental-policy toolbox must also be completed with the option of price incentives via certificates and environmental taxes. How far and in what form a reformed emissions trade or also the tool of an eco-bonus could belong to this in the future is contested. What is urgent is to use the limited window of opportunity of non-growth in the western world for the socially sustainable deconstruction of the industries which most burden the environment, and for conversion processes, for the redistribution of work time through radical work time shortening and the transition to modes of life and democratic renewal that are viable for the future.

Part of this is the public promotion of environmentally oriented economic enterprises following the example, say, of the Renewable Energy Law, through tax policy, in the granting of public contracts and through other instruments. Where profit interests have an ecologically and socially destructive effect, they have to be limited and the dominance of profit pushed back politically in favour of social and ecological standards of economy. The possibility of doing so could be offered by a mixed economy with diverse property forms. The social-ecological reconstruction of the economy will for many years to come be associated with large-scale investments and new jobs. This creates big opportunities for future-oriented enterprises, engaged trade unions and sustainable investors.

New modes of life: Depending on the constellation of forces, it will require the most intense efforts to arrest the decades-long precarisation of working and earning conditions in the struggle for a minimum wage, working time reductions and the first institutions of a basic insurance or of basic income and thereby to introduce a turn from defence of equal social rights to their restoration or first-time realisation for all genders independent of citizenship. If such a turn is to do justice to the ecological challenges it must at the same time also be articulated in the construction of new modes of production and life. Only in this case will non-material conditions for the development of the individual and of all acquire much greater significance in relation to material consumption. In reality, most people now say the most important thing for them is the future of their children, health, security in old age and self-determination of their own lives. Having things will no longer be more important than that which will belong to a good life, of the individual as well of all: a mutual recognition that rests on the capacity of a simultaneously freely and solidarily lived life and not on the possession of the goods for an exclusive survival competition.

For future modes of life the radical reduction of working time with simultaneous redistribution of societal labour is of the greatest significance. Staying with the labour regime obtaining up to now contradicts various conceptions of an emancipatory relation of paid and care work, of social engagement and time for leisure and devotion to others – with gender equity for women and men (see the debate on the «Four-in-One Perspective» developed by Frigga Haug and others). We can be certain that sustainable modes of life in the future will entail the exclusion of things that are now taken for granted. However, this could mean a richer, freer development as a whole, more solidary behaviour, a life more worthy of human beings and more worth living and it could make a solidary modernity more attractive. At any rate, the rejection of the deeply internalised striving for ever «more» on the material level will require great effort by people in the Western world and a long period of cultural transformation. It is by no means certain where such changes can in the end lead: The «inner» cultural transformation will hardly be easier than the change in «external» social relations. Such a long-term process requires an open and public debate on what the contours of a better society and another life would be, and therefore a renewal of democracy as the political framework of sustainable development; it is not only in this context that an emancipatory-democratic educational policy acquires central importance (Frankfurt ISM Summer Factory 2010, «Demokratische Bildung»).

SECOND DIMENSION: SOCIAL RIGHTS

Redistribution of power resources, a just division and the comprehensive guarantee of social rights in a democratic social state of equal possibilities for the participation of individuals and of all – this is the second dimension of an emancipatory social-ecological social reconstruction, which cannot be separated from the first dimension. In addition, socialisation according to the profit logic and a generalised competition of ownership and survival must be replaced – through a conflictive process of the redistribution of material and immaterial resources – by a socialisation whose only standard is the guaranteed possibility of participation of all in the social and natural environment as a common world. Concretely, this includes equal access for all to the social infrastructure of education, information and culture, of healthcare, of dwelling, of mobility and public space, also a redistribution through the solidary renewal and expansion of the social security systems, and finally the redistribution of wage labour and care work in favour of the unemployed, of gender justice and the transformation of the mode of life. In short, the success of an emancipatory social-ecological reconstruction is oriented to justice, emancipation and democracy and therefore needs the solidary action of the individual and of all. Green politics can only be realised as a left politics of social justice and of the change in power relations, not merely through environmental technologies. Left politics only has a chance of being realised as an environmentally oriented green politics.

It is no accident that those who are disadvantaged by societal relations are the first to suffer and suffer the most from the destruction of the social and natural environment. A politics of social-ecological societal reconstruction therefore has the obligation to take care that this reconstruction is oriented to their needs and demands: Poverty and low income should no longer cut them off from access to social wealth. This begins, seen globally, with the right to access to drinking water and other survival resources, the right to healthy food, to adequate living space, environmentally friendly mobility and equal access to the solidary systems of basic services provision; this is therefore inseparable from the comprehensive guarantee of equal social, cultural and political rights. The social question cannot be separated from the ecological question and the right to equal opportunities for development and participation. Solidary redistribution, as understood in this way, necessarily comes up against the limits of the given relations of property and access to property, also against the limits of patriarchy and other hierarchies of domination and asymmetries of power. Changing them in the direction of a mixed economy resting on diverse property forms will therefore be an indispensable part of the emancipatory social-ecological transformation processes that lie before us.

Future viability requires a far-reaching and sustainable reduction of the inherited income and assets gaps, for the deeper the social trench between the rich upper classes, middle milieus and people in precarious and marginalised situations, the more violent and brutal is the pressure of the competition of ownership and survival on individuals and on all, the more inevitable is the structural ruthlessness as regards human beings and nature, the more unbridled are the speedups and performance stress, the more endless are the fears of falling down on the job and for one's existence and the more extensive are the psychic and physical illnesses.

Alongside guaranteed social rights, such as the right to a secured existence, to the opportunity for participation in society, to shelter, healthcare provision, education and to appropriately paid meaningful paid work, major weight has to be given, in a counter-strategy to ongoing privatisation, to the strengthening of the public sphere and especially of the public provision of basic services: this is the only way to assure to individuals as well as to all living in society equally basic conditions of a self-determined life: natural resources, educational and healthcare services, living space and mobility and the use of social and cultural infrastructures. It thereby strengthens democracy from below, while privatisation of what were up to now public goods supposes as a condition of access a certain level of individual bank balances and so erodes the material conditions for co-decision-making. Common goods or the commons will be given major importance for an emancipatory social-ecological social reconstruction.

THIRD DIMENSION: RENEWAL, DEVELOPMENT AND EXTENSION OF DEMOCRACY

The participatory renewal of democracy and its economic-democracy extension is the third dimension of a social-ecological societal transformation. Social indifference and ecological blindness must be superseded through an orientation to a free development of individuals and of all in a solidary relation to the common good as well as to the social and natural environment. This presupposes that in the plethora of democratic assessment and negotiation processes one would have first to establish, considering the full range of problems, what can in each case be taken to be the common good. In this, the emancipatory altering of social relations and also of the social relations of nature is a process that concerns not only the institutions but also the modes of life of individuals and of all. Such a fundamental transformation can be neither decreed nor merely administered, but must be democratically won. It is no accident accordingly that for a long time now there has been an accumulation of resistance activism directed against an administered world and an administered life. Only when individuals decide for themselves how they can and want to change their social mode of life and work together, will the social-ecological change of the social relations of nature turn into emancipatory progress in the relations of individuals to themselves, to each other and to society. Only when people participate themselves in decisions that change their lives and make this issue their own, will thinking about sustainability come alive. Gender justice is just as much a criterion here as is the guarantee of equal rights to all regardless of their citizenship of birth.

The comprehensive implementation of renewable energies, for example, requires a decentralised energy economy – including decisions by municipalities for their energy autonomy on the basis of locally available alternative energies, for power-heat coupling and their own municipal heat grids. The transition to a sustainable transportation system will only succeed if millions of people get involved in new forms of mobility, in which local public transportation, rail and bicycle acquire greater importance in relation to private automobile traffic.

A renewal of democracy cannot end at national borders. At present the representative democracy tied to nation-states is permanently eroded by the decisions of international finance

protagonists and transnational corporations. The global players have not only largely outgrown international control; their social policy determines the fate of millions of people bypassing parliaments, in disregard of a massive contradiction.

A democratisation going beyond the nation-state framework is overdue. Limited possibilities for this are offered by the development of global governance as the interaction of governments, multinational institutions, enterprises, NGOs, trade unions and other civil-society protagonists. Still, the power relations also of this nexus sets limits to real democracy, limits which can only be broken through to the extent that there is a change in the fundamental social relations of power. The renewal of democracy on the international level presupposes efforts for further democratisation of the European Union, far-reaching changes in international organisations such as the IMF and World Bank, which are now immune from any democratic legitimisation, and finally a reform of the United Nations and of its subsidiary organisations. For this what is first and foremost needed is the strengthening of an authentic international and European civil society and public space as well as the self-empowerment and self-organisation of transnationally networked social movements.

DEMOCRATIC CONTROL AND REGULATION – THE ENERGY INDUSTRY AND BANKS

Any renewal of democracy is confronted with the structures of property and access to property everywhere where economic power excludes democratic decision-making or makes it difficult, everywhere where profit interests block the solution of social and ecological problems, where necessarily long-term actions and solutions are undermined by short-term valorisation interests. Thus, for example, the monopolisation of the energy and rail grids obviously limits decentralised energy production and delivery and an integrated sustainable transportation system. On the other hand, many private companies are open to an ecological reconstruction and are contributing to it.

Energy industry: The transference of the electricity, gas and water grids, which by their nature are public goods, to the public sector is a requirement of an emancipatory social-ecological societal reconstruction and an important element in the renewal of democracy. Important steps on the path to social control and regulation of the energy industry are the deconcentration of monopoly-type energy-supply corporations and a state electricity-price oversight that impedes price misuse.

If energy policy has now become the central arena in the battle for a transition from the present fossil-nuclear foundations of production to renewable energies, this is because what is involved is the fundamental decision whether the phase-out of nuclear energy becomes the point of departure for a strategic reorganisation of the energy monopolies on a new technological basis, or whether this transition will lead to the weakening of these monopolies in favour of decentralised energy-industry structures and in favour of the democratic participation of the people affected – an either/or which also involves the ownership of local and supra-regional energy companies.

In the *Desertec* project for solar energy production in North Africa and the export of solar energy to Europe and in the investments of major investors in vast offshore wind farms

we see that the attempts of the Christian Democratic / Liberal coalition to defer the phase-out of nuclear energy will be used by the energy corporations to shore up their power on the basis of renewable energies. At the same time, principally the Vattenfall Corporation is looking to use the phase-out of the high-risk technology of nuclear power to go into another high-risk technology: the permanent disposal of CO₂ in the earth and the construction of new coal-driven power plants. This is opposed by citizens initiatives and other civil-society forces which advocate an alternative energy policy in which solar radiation, wind, geothermal energy, ambient heat and biomass distributed in a decentralised way across the whole country favour a multiplicity of property forms – cooperative and municipal property, co-ownership by citizens of a decentralised energy supply and local grids, the ownership by local private companies and mixed property. On this basis the earnings from renewable energies can be deployed in democratic self- and co-determination for the expansion of renewables, for energy-saving measures, local infrastructure projects and social purposes. Here it is precisely rural and marginalised regions which can profit from greater value added. The advocates of an alternative energy policy demand realistic and at the same time ambitious goals for increasing the share in energy consumption of renewable energy sources (100% by 2050). They advocate the intensive development of storage technologies, the buying back of electric grids by municipalities and regions when the license agreements expire and their common-good-oriented transference to the public or cooperative sector, the transfer of supra-regional grids to a federal and state grid operation enterprise under public control, re-municipalisation of privatised municipal utility works, the greatest transparency in the search for the permanent storage of nuclear waste and generally the substantial co-decision-making on the part of citizens in procedures of energy-industry planning and approvals. In an energy-policy turnaround, far greater weight has to be given to an increase in energy efficiency. A recycling management takes on great importance, one which aims at a complementarity of material cycles, the recycling of raw materials, reduction of traffic and the use of local capacities. An agricultural-policy turn has to exclude modes of cultivation that destroy nature, promote ecological farming and, with the increased availability of renewable raw materials, must give priority to healthier, more economical food.

The energy industry has become a key area of the decision on whether a neoliberal capitalism with green features or a social-ecologically founded solidary modernity will determine the near future.

Financial system: The financing of a sustainable energy and climate policy must not lead to further state over-indebtedness or occur at the expense of social services. It requires a fair tax policy putting the burden on financial transactions, big corporations, large-scale assets and environmental damage, and it demands an economic policy that includes incentives for the environmentally oriented investments of private enterprises.

Internationally acting private large banks, investment firms and rating agencies, very much decoupled from material production and from social service provision, extremely oriented to short-term and speculative business transactions and to the highest possible returns, have, despite an increasing in-

volvement in green investments, a blocking effect on a social-ecological transformation and have brought the global financial system to the brink of collapse. Financial movements throughout the world, steered by private capital interests, dictate their conditions to governments and make state action, no less than initiatives of participatory democracy, come to nothing.

Imperative for a renewal of democracy, therefore, is a break-up of financial empires, whose size and economic significance forces countries into crisis, to socialise the resultant losses to the detriment of tax payers after profits have accrued to large enterprises and personal fortunes. Instead of financing the work of a social-ecological reconstruction, banks are bailed out whose business standards block such a reconstruction. By contrast, what is needed is the separation of banking business – the making available of credit, the pooling of savings and the processing of payments – from investment activities, along with the strong state regulation of the latter under social control. The principle of liability for private economic actors has to be restored. Possible steps toward this are, among other things, the taxing of all capital transfers in order to counteract the short-term orientation of capital markets, transparency as a condition of effective oversight and regulation, the raising of the capital requirements of banks, license withdrawals for financial-market actors who process bank business with offshore centres, political agreements on the stabilisation of exchange rates, the introduction of orderly insolvency procedures for over-indebted countries with protective mechanisms for the affected citizens and with democratically requested investments in the future. Banks which are insufficiently capitalised should be nationalised at least temporarily. The regulation of financial markets has to be carried out with the major participation of civil-society forces, trade unions and social movements. The extent to which the financial system should be socialised, in order to set it to rights, is a matter of debate: The goals would be to favour investments in long-term-oriented social-ecological projects, to make short-term speculative investments unattractive and systematically to strengthen financial institutions that are structured in a decentralised and non-profit way.

The public sector: In the transformation of the relations of property and power, the strengthening of public goods, or the commons, acquires the greatest importance. What is characteristic for the commons is not mainly that many common goods such as water, forests or the climate have a public character because of their very nature, but that they are shaped through a common conservation and use as a commons. Against a political economy of the private a political economy of the commons has to be reinforced. At the same time, social-security institutions, precisely in the transition to a far-reaching economic structural change and deep changes in the conditions of life of millions of people, take on a greater importance than ever before. Part of a democratic transformation of the relations of property and power, therefore, is a decisive extension of public basic services and of social infrastructure. It is urgent that their further privatisation be stopped, that they be reappropriated where they have already been privatised and that the democratic influence of citizens on education, the healthcare system, childcare, caregiving, culture, on access to public spaces and information be strengthened. If in some cases this can be facilitated

through public ownership, in other cases the provision even by private enterprises of services having the character of public goods can work if the public sector guarantees it. In any case, the public – public goods, public provision of basic services, public property, public and publicly promoted employment, public spaces and the opportunity of the public to participate in decisions – takes on major importance for a solidary modernity. Because the public in its various forms puts the right of use by everyone without payment or with very low prices and fees in place of money-mediated access to public goods, the public itself becomes a basic condition of the freedom of the individual and of all: it becomes a medium of its solidary shared security, a condition of equal access to the elementary conditions of life and of equal possibilities of participation in the goods of freedom, i.e. education, healthcare provision, dwelling and mobility. The public becomes the mutual support of individuals against insecurity and exclusion and the guarantor of globally public goods, that is, the stability of the biosphere and especially of climate stability, protection from poverty, famine and treatable diseases and, therefore, peace.

Because democratisation is a fundamental condition of the social-ecological structural transformation and at the same time must be enforced against the short-term profit interests of enterprises and their interest in valorisation of capital invested in conservative technologies, the expansion of participation in decisions on the direction of development of plants and enterprises is necessary. The social compatibility of environmentally oriented conversion processes cannot be secured other than with the participation of the work force. Since an ecological structural transformation in the economy concerns the future of jobs, the infrastructure and the whole social framework of municipalities, federal states and the federal level, it is important that at all levels, beyond the work teams, civil-society actors gain economic-democratic influence, for example through the establishment of economic, social and environmental councils. An emancipatory-social-ecological social reconstruction is a complex task that requires the cooperation of actors in all political arenas. Economic democracy must therefore extend to the total economic framework and governance, which orient economic, financial and regional policies and the promotion of research and development.

SOLUTIONS TO THE STATE DEBT CRISIS

In the long term, an emancipatory social-ecological transformation of society will mean large-scale savings in the costs of reproduction. However, for the foreseeable future it will make great demands on the financing of this reconstruction. The financial system and societal reconstruction are therefore closely interwoven.

For now, in the wake of the change of form from financial crisis to state-debt crisis, what has come to the fore is how this crisis can be dealt with and at least mitigated. Up to now, bailouts for single countries, intended to fend off speculation on their sovereign default and the weakening of the Euro, have always meant relief for only a brief time, to be followed once again by dangerous turbulence. Future efforts at reform of the international financial system must be embedded in an emancipatory social-ecological transformation. This could entail the following steps:

- Steering a part of financial assets into the financing of the social reconstruction instead of their investment in new or old untransparent financial transactions.
- Instead of dealing with state debt in a one-sided way through radical austerity programmes in the expenditure side of state budgets, with the effect of strongly slumping growth rates, the financing of public investment programmes for a social-ecological reconstruction should be strengthened through a fair tax policy (higher taxes for large-scale assets and big corporations as well as a tax on financial transactions) on the income side. Furthermore, state incentives are needed for private investments in the ecological structural transformation. A European Investment Programme (a kind of Marshall Plan) for problem countries is under discussion, one that according to circumstances could be administered by a «European Bank for Public Loans», which, as a business partner of the ECB, would buy up state loans of Euro countries in the event of market turbulence and in so doing make means available to them for investment programmes.
- Reducing the imbalance in international trade relations: export-oriented surplus countries in Europe, especially Germany, would be obliged to import more from the deficit countries and to strengthen their own internal markets, for example by introducing legal minimum wages, through the pushing back of forced part-time work, contracted-out work and other precarious labour conditions.
- Prohibition of speculation against single highly indebted countries through common bond issuing on the part of the Euro-countries (Euro-bonds) at more favourable conditions than those that were dictated to single countries during the crisis. In the course of financial-policy solidarity, common rules for solidarity have to become binding such that the common liability for state debts does not aid and abet the irresponsible budget policies of single member-states.
- Participation of private banks and investment funds in debt rescheduling of highly indebted countries to be arranged in the future, with protective mechanisms for the affected citizens.

STRATEGIC CORE TASK: BROAD DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCES FOR THE EMANCIPATORY SOCIAL-ECOLOGICAL TRANSFORMATION

Emancipatory reform projects of a social-ecological societal reconstruction will remain in the dream realm if broad alliances of alternative protagonists do not ensure their realisation. Yet at present there still is no overarching concept capable of achieving hegemony, not even the idea that would tie together such an alliance of progressive forces and set it in motion. Still more: the decades-long practice and commitment to a political centrist position has already made the notion disappear that politics, in the truest sense of the word, only exists where substantive alternatives can be chosen through a conflictual process.

At the same time innumerable citizens are converging in many places and through a great variety of forms of activism around political self-empowerment and self-organisation – whether in initiatives for more daycare centres, more extensive collective learning and forms of schools appropriate for this, in the struggles for more gender justice, in alliances to prevent Nazi rallies, in the daily practiced solidarity with im-

migrants, in experiences with citizens budgets, in the most recent struggles for a nuclear phase-out and against a permanent repository in Gorleben and against CCS as also in various «Umsonst actions» (collective use of services or acquiring commodities without paying) against the metamorphosis of all social relations into relations between commodities and of the whole society into a commodity society, in local movements against the disregard for the political will of the citizenry, and last but not least in strikes around wages and workers rights which sometimes requires forcing one's own trade union into action.

At any rate, such initiatives and movement pursue their paths in isolation from one another. If common mobilisations are achieved, their level of agreement consists – as in the past decade of globalisation-critical movements – only in the vague assertion of the possibility itself of an alternative to neoliberalism («another world is possible!»). What is missing are the contours of an overarching emancipatory social project: concrete designations of what this other world is. And there is a lack of broad alliances of movements and parties for such a project. Furthermore, there is a lack of readiness and, before this, of capacity on the part of parties to have a relationship to movements for self-empowerment that is not one directed at media coverage and electoral tactics. Thus the Institute for Solidary Modernity aligns itself with efforts at the forming of such alliances and networks. They can only grow from the common action of people in social, ecological and civil-rights projects, from trade unions and civil-society associations, from non- and anti-institutional protest and institutional political bodies and from extra-parliamentary movements and parliamentary initiatives. They become an effective power with potential for changing society only through working out in common a conception of the better society that has long been possible because of the level of global wealth produced; it is a society that could be called a society of solidary modernity and, according to our proposition, will be a social-ecological society of the continued democratisation of all relations. In the party landscape of the left in the broadest sense of the term, some put relatively more stress on green roots and preferences and others on social questions and demands. However, all parties accept that an ecologically oriented social, cultural and democratic reconstruction of society cannot be achieved by one-sidedly favouring only one dimension of renewal to the detriment of the other. Whether it is a matter of parties or other political protagonists, some must learn that their ecological goals cannot be achieved without changing the economic relations of power and property, while the others have to understand that the sustainable development of freedom, equality and solidarity will only be possible in social relations of nature that are arranged for protection and conservation as well as democratic shaping, and not for the abuse, of life and nature, and which therefore includes the overcoming of patriarchal modes of life.

USE THE DIFFERENCES WITHIN THE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL POWERS THAT BE

A socially and ecologically sustainable development is a global problem of humanity. Climate change, the destruction of biodiversity, the de-solidarisation based on competition for ownership and survival and the resultant violence may affect the rich and powerful less than the majority of people, but

they are still affected. In so far as they do not act as simple representatives of structures of domination, not as a bourgeois but as a citizen, as thinking, feeling individuals, parts of these power elites are reachable for one or another form of Green New Deal – although only under great and continued pressure from below.

An important opportunity for an emancipatory social-ecological reconstruction consists of the fact that among entrepreneurs and the managerial elites politically significant processes of differentiation have begun. On the one hand, the destructive effects of the structural logic of profit and domination and of the interests connected to it ultimately lie behind the global dangers for humanity and the resulting conflicts. On the other hand, a social-ecological transformation also opens up new business areas to capital. Thus, for example, the electronic and information-technical industry is indeed intertwined with environmentally harmful branches, but due to its very own competences it is at the same time predestined to develop and produce new grid-control and power-storage technologies for an alternative energy industry. In view of peak oil the chemical industry could show considerable interest in the development of new materials from renewable plant resources and not least in the use of carbon dioxide as a raw material instead of its compression in the earth. The rail vehicle industry and railway companies were able to make expensive overhead power lines unnecessary with the development of locomotives that are driven by fuel cells. The shipbuilding industry and shipping companies are adjusting to onboard power generation from renewable energy from wind power or solar power plants. The construction industry can expect considerable stimulus from environmentally compatible building. Big markets are opening for the producers of technologies for the re-valorisation of raw materials and by and large closed raw material circuits. Small repair businesses can expect many new orders because of a rejection of the throwaway society. Agriculture has an opportunity for revival on the basis of a regionally integrated economy of food, plant energy and plant raw materials, in which the accumulating remnants in each case can be valorised as fertiliser and fodder.

Such partial interests in an ecological reconstruction – which however are in no way socially oriented – correspond to a long-term interest of far-sighted sections even of the power elites in the prevention of climate and environmental crises that cause extreme increases in their production costs, diminish their profits and aggravate social conflicts, which threaten the power structure. But these strategic interests of factions within the economic powers that be and the political class can only be brought to bear against the conservative market-radical factions when the pressure of the mosaic left and other democratic forces determines the direction of development, that is, becomes hegemonic. A strategic paradigm for this could be the federal government's decision to phase out nuclear energy – which it was compelled to do through a powerfully revived anti-nuclear-power movement and the shock of Fukushima – as long as it is possible to parry the consolidation of rule by «pacifying» the ecological problematic by continuing to politicise it and to prepare the way for a comprehensive social-ecological reconstruction of all social relations.

If such a «policy turn» becomes possible, then these and other differences within the actual relations of power must be so

mediated with and against each other that a new «hegemonic bloc», in Antonio Gramsci's sense, emerges, a hegemonic bloc which at first makes possible the opening of an emancipatory social-ecological transformation and does so, as seen from today's perspective, by becoming a «bloc of countervailing power». Citizens initiatives, consumer associations, associations of scholars and scientists, artists, teachers and educational workers, small and medium-size entrepreneurs, autonomous workers, municipalities and churches, NGOs and the critical forces in the left and green party spectrum have the double task of advancing concrete entry projects opening the way to social reconstruction and at the same time of making the concept of a coherent emancipatory social change the internal bond of the many single reconstruction projects. The trade unions are called on to break with the corporatist containment of their core area of competence in wage-level negotiations and protecting the core work teams and to become a society-wide force. It is the responsibility of the social movements to open up options of conflictual self-empowerment to a society pacified for decades by a lack of alternatives, by «TINA». The Institute for Solidary Modernity is committed to make its own contribution to the mediation processes needed for this transformation: by being a programme workshop in the crossover of the mosaic left.

OUTLINE OF A SOLIDARY MODERNITY

1. At the centre of an emancipatory social-ecological reconstruction of economy and society is the formation of a solidary middle-bottom alliance, which comprises people in precarious work and life conditions, wage-dependent core workforces and social-libertarian middle strata as well as socially-politically engaged milieus of the bourgeoisie. The emergence of such an alliance capable of hegemony requires an open agreement between all left forces – from movements, trade unions, associations and parties, as well critical science and culture, on common realisable transformation projects.

2. Entry projects for such a social reconstruction involve in the ideal case important unsolved problems of society and could thus express the concerns and interests of large social groups. They should be realistic, in other words realisable in the foreseeable future and should lead to tangible improvements for the people concerned, which are perceivable in everyday life. In this way they have the potential of pushing back the widespread feeling of powerlessness and can have a mobilising effect. What distinguishes future-oriented entry projects is that the change they realise in the present enables an opening for further-reaching developments, which shift the power relations in the middle and long terms to the left and that at the same time they become points of departure also for the cultural change in the modes of production and life.

In what follows, the list of political fields and concrete partial projects for an entry into transformative processes in no way represent a consensus within the Institute for Solidary Modernity; some of them are controversial among the members. An area of debate, for example, is whether an unconditional basic income is an indispensable component of a social-ecological reconstruction or whether a sanction-free basic insurance suffices to guarantee equal opportunities for participation to everyone. Beyond this, still to be discussed are the very beginnings of an agreement on security policy as

the field in which the differences are at present so great that no entry projects can be cited here. In the tabular list of reform projects it is first of all a matter of showing that conceptual basic ideas of a social-ecological transformation involve many single solutions for problems of the everyday life world and therefore are a pre-condition of a social reconstruction that has first to be negotiated.

3. A third key point of an emancipatory social-ecological transformation is the conceptual work on the contours of an alternative social project. Individual reform steps alone do not offer a horizon for hope. However, the tying of concrete partial projects to the realistic concept of a solidary modernity can mobilise social forces that are now blocked because of the lack of a convincing alternative.

| Central reconstruction projects | Entry projects |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Energy-policy turnaround | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Propagation of «100-percent renewable» municipalities- Re-municipalisation of privatised local power plants, more orientation to renewable energies, energy efficiency and power-heat coupling- Energy-efficiency law at federal level and corresponding guidelines at the EU level- Buy-back of the power grids by municipalities when the license agreements expire- Self-organisation of residents as co-owners of bio fuel and wind power plants – Low-cost expansion of short-range public transportation with the prospect of its becoming free of charge – Resistance to the compression of CO₂ in the earth and against new coal power stations |
| Solidary labour relations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Legislated minimum wages in reversing the wage trend of recent years/ decades- Considerable shortening of work times with the prospect of overcoming the gender-specific division of labour (Four-in-One Discussion)- Reinforcement of public and publicly promoted employment in the context of the expansion of public basic-care services |
| Renewal of social security systems on the basis of solidary financing and gender justice | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Introduction of an unconditional basic income for all or- Introduction of a poverty-proof, needs-oriented, largely sanction-free basic insurance for all, which can ensure a dignified life not through one’s own work- Introduction of a solidary citizens insurance in the healthcare system and in care provision |
| Top-quality education for all independently of social status | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Right to free daycare for every child- Special promotion of children from «uneducated strata» – Extended co-educational schooling (until the 10thgrade) – Personal development and democratic engagement as a primary educational goal |
| Renewal of democracy in society and economy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Participatory citizens budgets- Re-reform of public services – democratisation to counteract and eliminate the contracting out to private companies of the functions of departments- Stronger participation of workforces and trade unions in essential enterprise decisions- Reinforcement of the influence of civil-society protagonists on plant and enterprise decisions, for example through economic, social and environmental councils from the micro to the macro level- Reinforcement of parliamentary democracy and the pushing back of lobbying |
| European peace and security policy for a solidary world economic order opening the way to a worldwide social democratisation | |
| Cultural opening | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Opening of a broad public discussion on emancipatory alternatives and the need to tie them to a social-ecological reconstruction- Winning of prominent protagonists of movements, trade unions, parties, media, science, churches and the arts for various articulations of a mosaic-left process of agreement- Engaged participation in, and the discursive accompaniment of, processes of social self-empowerment and self-organisation- Communication of the multi-faceted processes of change of the social modes of production and life |

OUR OWN PLANS

The Institute for Solidary Modernity, after a first phase of its foundation and self-understanding, the development of an internet presence, the development of new communication processes and the preparation of the project «Solidary Labour Relations», sees itself, in a second phase, as committed to stimulating a public discussion of social alternatives. The Institute's own conceptual work is intended to contribute to the political contents of an alternative societal project. It aims at productively and critically accompanying the crossover of a mosaic left in a longer process of building the strategic capacity for action.

With a view to the Bundestag elections of 2013 and 2017, the Institute endeavours to measure green and left parties against the standards of an emancipatory social-ecological reconstruction and of the democratisation of social relations indispensable for this reconstruction: to measure them against their readiness for a just redistribution of social wealth from top to bottom, against their readiness to guarantee and first to restore social rights and to expand them in the future, against their readiness for a social-ecological democratisation of the economy and finally against their relationship to the many-sided processes of social self-empowerment and self-organisation. It will use the relative openness of electoral

campaigns to ascertain the cultural and political potential of positions of a solidary modernity. Beyond the short period of parliamentary confrontations, the Institute will at the same time try to become a strategic site of the cultural, scientific and political debate on social alternatives: for an emancipatory social-ecological democratised economy, for a solidary and emancipatory transformation of labour relations as well as of the modes of production and of life, for environmental justice, for education oriented to critical thinking, for a solidary renewal of the social state, for a solidary and cooperative internationalism and, bringing this all together, for the long overdue democratic opening up of a world society that has already existed now for a long time. The Institute knows that in such a breakthrough it will be only one protagonist among others and therefore aligns itself with the open crossover, to be developed over much time, of a social, cultural, scientific and political mosaic left.

The Institute of Solidary Modernity is a Programme Workshop. Its goal is to develop, across party lines, concrete and realisable political alternatives to neoliberalism. More information can be had at <http://www.solidarische-moderne.de/>

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