

European Kairos Document

For a socially just, life-sustaining and democratic Europe

A call to faith communities, trades unions and all movements and individuals that are working for social, political and economic change, to build coalitions to work for the liberation of society from the stranglehold of the deregulated globalised economy and its competitive culture.

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INTRODUCTION

In Europe there are clear signs of change.

Unemployed people are no longer willing to be excluded and are taking the initiative. Trade unions are again active in politics and no longer allow their hard-won rights to be destroyed. Women's groups are tackling patriarchal structures. Students are protesting against cuts in education, the community against a health system that favours the rich and farmers against agricultural policies that benefit large companies and the owners of capital. Christians and even institutional churches are returning to their biblical roots and rediscovering their "preferential option for the poor". Congregations and citizen's action

groups are giving sanctuary to refugees threatened with deportation and taking further action. Non-government organisations (NGOs) are pooling their resources in various campaigns for justice between North and South. The peace movements have gone public again, and ecological movements fight vigorously against threats to the natural world. Intellectuals, artists and even middle class people are speaking up and saying, "This is enough!".

With this European KAIROS DOCUMENT, we would like to discern the meaning of these new movements in Europe, and play our part in the changes they seek.

In 1985 the repression of the majority of the population in **South Africa** by apartheid reached its height. At the same time resistance was growing inside and outside the country. Following their theological reflection, Christians involved in the liberation struggle called upon the churches to opt clearly for resistance and solidarity. This served to strengthen the world-wide anti-apartheid alliances. They called their challenge a KAIROS document. They understood Kairos as the Greek word used in the Bible with the meaning *opportunity for repentance and a change of heart, opportunity for change and for decisive action with the oppressed in a time of crisis or at the moment of truth*. In 1988, Christians in **Central America** were inspired by the South African document and produced their own Central American Kairos Document. In cooperation with the military regimes of the region, President Reagan had begun a "Total war against the poor" and their social movements. Those Christians among them formulated "Challenges to the Churches and the World". Finally Christians from the Philippines, South Korea, Namibia, South Africa, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Guatemala joined together to publish "The Road to Damascus - Kairos and Conversion". They called upon the churches and Christians, particularly in the North, to withdraw their support for the persecution of people (particularly in the South) and to renounce colonialism and imperialism - by analogy with the conversion of Saul to Paul on the way to Damascus, when he turned from persecution to establishing the Messianic community of peace and justice.

In 1989 ecumenical groups took up this call at the First European Ecumenical Assembly for "Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation" in Basel. They formed the European grassroots network **KAIROS EUROPA**. They had two particular concerns. Firstly, that injustice is not life-threatening only for people in the South. Neoliberalism, based on deregulated market forces, is leading to mass unemployment and social cutbacks in Europe too. It is not just a matter of the injustice that Europe meets out to other continents, but also of growing injustice within Europe itself, against which there is growing resistance. Secondly, such resistance can only be successful if people in solidarity with the excluded and disadvantaged in South and North, East and West, join together across the borders of different faiths and philosophies. This challenge, therefore, is not issued to Christians and churches alone. How did it come about? Since 1996 KAIROS EUROPA has invited groups, movements and individuals to develop a European Kairos Document. To date, over two hundred of them have shared in the process of discussion and in formulating several drafts. New responses, additions and amendments have been coming in every day, so it is clear that we cannot claim that this version is the last word. We wish to contribute to stimulating a process that goes beyond this document. **We invite you to think about this document, to sign it, to continue the discussion and, above all, to form alliances with others in order to change the present situation. The causes of unjust developments in Europe and world-wide have common roots. We can only tackle them with any expectation of success if we work together.**

Who are the people making this call?

The authors and signatories are people and groups of different kinds, with varying interests and political options, but with a common concern.

They include mainly **self-help organisations** of people particularly hard-hit by economic and social developments in Europe, along with **grassroots groups** and movements in solidarity with them. They work for social justice, peace and the environment; solidarity groups in partnership with groups and movements in Asia, Africa and Latin America; people struggling for social justice in central, western and eastern Europe; groups working against patriarchal structures and for just relations between the

sexes; groups combating racism on behalf of coexistence based on equal rights; peace groups and groups fighting against environmental degradation and for sustainable ways of living and working, and for sustainable attitudes and structures in all areas.

Among us are people who have been **excluded**. Their work has been taken away. They are in debt. They have lost their homes. They are recipients of social security and are lone parents. They are disabled. Women are especially disadvantaged in all groups. They are older people on small pensions. They are asylum seekers and migrants who suffer discrimination. They are victims of structural and sexual violence. They are excluded from society and the official churches, and from any possibility of influence, either directly or indirectly. Some of them even have no legal status. Many of them have retreated into ghettos, others suffer depression and others react with unaccustomed aggression. They seek to unite with others for the right to be included.

Among us are **people in insecure employment**. Many are afraid of being the next to lose their jobs. Therefore they allow their employers to pressurise them into accepting lower wages, to accept worse working conditions, even to abandon a sense of solidarity with others and to pursue their own self-interest. They feel under stress, fall ill more and more often, but may not do so without risking their work and income. They feel that they are fighting for survival and have little joy any more. Together with others they seek strength to hold their heads up high.

Among us are **young people** with no hope of a decent future. They receive education that is inadequate. Many of them are illiterate, others are not very competitive and will never have a regular job. Instead of going to school or college they struggle to make a living. They fight for survival by living on the streets, working for meagre wages and by prostitution. They fight as child soldiers against other child soldiers in the wars of others, or find themselves constantly fleeing from oppression. Carefree play and the opportunity to develop their talents has given way to drug-taking and a culture of violence. Among us also are groups working for street children, others for the ecological rights of children who have been poisoned in their mother's womb by environmental pollution. Young people watch the present adult generation stripping the earth of its resources as if there were no tomorrow. Since Chernobyl, an industrial disaster that recognised no international frontiers, they have lost all confidence in any responsibility being taken for future generations. They are searching, therefore, for partners with whom they can fight together for a future worth having.

Among us are **women** threatened by cultural violence, physically and mentally. They are often treated like objects and degradingly stereotyped by the media, in literature and other arts. They are subjected to sexual harassment in many work situations. Their contributions to work and home are often taken for granted and made invisible in a world where women are considered to be subordinate to men. Violated and excluded by economic, political and religious structures, women resist all these forms of oppression. With other excluded groups they wish to be full participants in these areas from which they have previously been excluded.

Among us are groups and **people from central and eastern Europe** who are in the midst of transition and sometimes dramatic change. Before the majority of people had any idea about what was happening, a minority with power and influence were quickly able to take advantage of the situation. There was no analytical debate about the failed experiment with state socialism or the structures of the market economy. Many of the people have lost out socially and culturally; many have been uprooted. They were looking for a better connection between freedom and justice.

They feel they have been forcibly colonised by a new power. They do not want a bureaucratic state in which all the structures are extremely well organised, but a state in which they can enjoy social and economic justice. So more and more people are now ready to oppose the dictatorship of the market. A voice from Hungary said, "We live under the third dictatorship in our lifetimes, Stalin, Hitler and now the world market."

Among us are **people of the middle classes** who have in some way or other suffered discrimination or poverty and so have become aware. They see that injustice, the dismantling of the social welfare system, violence and the destruction of nature are in the end damaging the whole of society and consequently their own children and grandchildren. It is now clear that poverty is increasingly affecting their social class. They too suffer illnesses caused by pollution, and are becoming spiritually empty. They are trying, therefore, not to get stuck in the ethical dilemma between understanding these issues on the one hand, and the pressure to keep up their standard of living on the other. They wish to join with others to bring about the necessary changes in society.

Whom are we addressing?

Many people have lost faith that they are able to do anything to correct economic or political mistakes through voting or through dialogue with those in power. Some have given up hope. Others, however, organise themselves in **civil society**, a term used internationally to describe organisations and actions by citizens in all spheres other than the private and public sectors and the armed forces. We are convinced that it is only through such civil engagement from below that practical alternatives can be developed, and that economics and politics can once again be placed in the service of human beings. For this reason this appeal does not go directly to economic and political institutions, but more indirectly by being addressed to people active in civil society. The concept of civil society is not unambiguous. There are those active in civil society working for the interests of the politically powerful and economically wealthy. We want to engage with those active in civil society working for people, nature and future generations - particularly those in conflict with those with power and money. We want to invite as many people as possible, given the very critical situation both in Europe and world-wide, to join (in their own interest) with these vital movements and, thereby, to send out signals of hope. Most self-help organisations and movements concentrate on a single issue or particular group of people, e.g. unemployment. Such a sharp focus is necessary, but because the urgency of the work itself is so great, activists sometimes have no energy or courage left with which to fight on a broader front or to get involved politically. Single issue organising is the best way to overcome the exclusion and discrimination against people in our competitive society. Single issue groups are unique resources of wisdom, experience and knowledge of strategies for action. A **fundamental change in our economic, political and value system** is necessary today. Because no individual can achieve that alone, it is paramount to work together. Our goal is to invite civil society groups like those mentioned above, as well as individuals, to engage in a process of reflection and action so as to reinforce their capacity to network and form alliances. It is not about building a new large-scale organisation, but the enabling of practical coalitions at all levels and with specific goals; local coalitions like Agenda 21; national coalitions like the solidarity with organisations of unemployed people in France; European alliances like the Euromarches against unemployment, job insecurity and exclusion. In order to strengthen the ability to form coalitions, and to actually form them, we propose **four steps** in this document:

- I. Seeing the truth of the situation
- II. Recognising the causes
- III. Making a judgement with our hearts and minds
- IV. Acting together

In this spirit we invite organisations and persons committed to a socially just, peaceful, life-sustaining and democratic Europe to reach agreements going beyond their single issue and, together with the victims, to support, or form, politically effective coalitions.

FIRST PART

I SEEING THE TRUTH OF THE SITUATION

1. Our experiences in the global context

Europe has enjoyed great prosperity, but now is an increasingly **deeply divided society**. It is well-known that, world-wide, 20% enjoy 80% of the income and resources, while 80% of the world's population share the rest. Just how extreme this contrast between rich and poor has become is shown by United Nations statistics published in 1997, which state that the net assets of the richest people in the world, 358 dollar billionaires, equal the total annual income of 45% of the world's population (2.3 billion people). This division, which is increasingly evident in Europe, is experienced not only in material ways. The entire lives of people who are excluded are characterised by difficulties, suffering, stress, insecurity, fears and abandoned hopes. Working people in the rest of Europe are being persuaded of the virtues of the British model of employment, following the pattern of the United States, and so are being prepared for **lower salaries and worse working conditions**. **Structural changes in agriculture** are rapid, farming is giving way to so-called agri-business. A small number of farms based on ecological principles will survive. Others are trying to save or develop cooperative farms. The majority of the small farms, probably in the long term more than 50%, will be forced out of business. Unemployment leads to a loss of self-respect and dignity and may result in a dependence on social security or even in homelessness. Women are particularly disadvantaged, and single parents even more so. The greatest problem in Europe and world-wide is undoubtedly growing structural unemployment on a massive scale. Nowadays we are witnessing not only 19th century style exploitation but also **exclusion**. We are very aware that 70% of excluded people are women. There is a growing current in society which dismisses those who are not winners in today's competitive world market. The same global mechanisms which led to 500 years of genocide, ecocide, slavery and colonialism are increasingly impacting on western Europe. We must not be surprised that **violence** is rapidly increasing, given the dramatic increase in **poverty and misery of people in the South, the East and the West**. Europe has a long tradition of violence; sexual violence against women, abuse of children, violence against nature and against people of other cultures who, disparagingly, have been labelled as primitive. The history of our culture and language is full of myths, symbols and expressions of violence. From these roots violence is again breaking out in schools, families and cities. Feelings of powerlessness can lead to hopelessness, which fosters the spiral of violence. Old hostilities between different population groups break out again and are artificially exacerbated, for example in the former Yugoslavia. The arms trade is flourishing. The manufacturing of security equipment for the police, security forces and prisons is that part of the economy with the highest growth rate. Although the East-West conflict is over in Europe, certain forms of military spending are still growing, e.g. for the Eurofighter (10 billion pounds in the next few years). We could even speak of a new militarisation of the West. New enemy stereotypes serve to justify the rapid reaction forces, e.g. Eurocorps, designed to safeguard the economic interests of western industrialised nations. We also witness structural violence, the erosion of democracy by multinationals and financial institutions, the tyranny of advertising and consumption, and discrimination against critical thinking in the media. With regard to issues of **ecology**, we are at a standstill. Despite Chernobyl, nuclear energy has regained respectability; reductions in CO₂ emissions and the saving of energy fall far short of the necessary targets, so that global warming proceeds apace. With the argument of needing to be competitive in the world market, ecological standards are being lowered, and the safeguards with regard to genetic engineering are being eroded. Enormous quantities of natural resources are mobilised for a production of goods and services which are only consumed due to the perpetual artificial stimulation of needs and addictions. The ecological question, considered globally, has a massive social impact. Poverty in the Two Thirds World is growing directly as a result of ecological degradation caused by the dominance of economic interests. For example, the clear reduction in the quantity of rain in the Sahel in the last two decades is to be understood in the light of global warming. Hunger in north-east Brazil is not just connected with land ownership, but also with the deforested coastal areas. According to estimates of the International Red Cross, there are already about 50 million environmental refugees. The forecasts for the immediate future are crucial. If ecological structural change is not tackled soon, the Fraunhofer Institute estimates an additional 900 million to 1.8 billion deaths from starvation by the year 2030. The rich 20% of humankind not only consumes over 80% of the earth's resources, but also causes over 80% of the toxic emissions, and consumes over 80% of the fossil fuels and most of the non-renewable resources.

2. The special situation of central and eastern European countries

It has become customary to interpret social and economic difficulties in central and eastern Europe as the legacy of communism. This is too facile, and misses the point. The intrusion of world market forces into these countries, however, has virtually denied them any possibility for **social and economic self-determination**. Many of them (especially Poland, Hungary and Yugoslavia) were already highly in debt to the West before the fall of the iron curtain and in this way they were victims of the same mechanism as the debtor countries of the Two Thirds World. After the fall of communism, however, resources were sold out to the West and the society divided dramatically into a few winners and many losers. To give only a few examples: In the former East Germany only 6% of productive assets have remained in the ownership of East Germans; the rest was bought up by agencies from the West that already owned capital. The north coast of Russia has been bought up almost entirely by large western enterprises because it holds large oil and mineral reserves, other raw materials and forests. In the rest of Russia, transnational companies (TNCs) benefit substantially from profits made from its natural resources. In exchange for loans from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to assist the election campaign of Boris Yeltsin, Russia reduced massively the export duties on its natural resources, thus depriving the impoverished country of a further source of foreign currency. The liberalisation of markets in countries of the former Eastern bloc has been a continuous drain on its wealth, because in free market trading the weak always lose out to the rich. The **division between rich and poor** in the countries of central and eastern Europe is dramatic. Unemployment is far above the level of western European countries. Structural adjustment programmes are hitting women in particular. The weakest in society are being pushed into abject poverty. The division of society is all the more dramatic as it is taking place so rapidly, joblessness and the severest forms of poverty having been hitherto largely unknown. A new disturbing development in the **search for peace** is the integration of central and eastern European countries into NATO. These countries are burdened with the need for new armaments in order to modernise their armies. The western arms manufacturers win, the people of those countries lose. There could have been a different approach that did not extend western domination, that of together making a completely new security programme. The necessary instrument already exists: the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). It only needed to be strengthened. The **environment** is a further area where the West must accept its share of responsibility. Western European countries have used countries of eastern Europe as dumping grounds for contaminated and dangerous refuse, so adding to the pollution caused by those countries themselves. Some organisations in the West are carrying out charitable work in eastern Europe. There are, however, very few statements, hardly any analysis and little political lobbying concerning structural questions. There is an urgent need for action in these respects.

3. The special situation of the European Union (EU)

In 1993 the **single market** was introduced in the European Union, using the argument that it would create jobs. It was immediately possible to see through this. When, in 1992, the Treaty of Maastricht decided upon Economic and Monetary Union (EMU), this was supported with the argument that this was a further step which would make political and social union inevitable. What has actually happened, however, is that monetary union has been ratified which is designed to achieve currency stability (or stability of wealth creation) only. It is not linked to any legally binding commitment to implement a common employment and social policy. Further, monetary union is not linked to a European policy for international financial and economic institutions. The goal of such a policy should be to regulate flows of capital, and particularly to curtail speculation and prevent tax flight. Instead, the convergence criteria for entry into monetary union, linked to public budgets which are over-indebted through tax flight, lead to austerity politics. Consequently, the people of Europe are forced into the same structural adjustment programmes as the IMF dictates to the over indebted countries of the South and East. The guiding interest of political action in the EU is to create the most profitable conditions for capital growth, and to position itself in competition against the US and Japan. The projects of the single market and EMU basically aim at concentrating capital for purposes of competition. The consequences are growing **unemployment, social cutbacks and the marginalisation of disadvantaged regions in Europe**. Consequently, the EU promotes further

liberalisation of world trade and erodes the favourable trading conditions for former colonies (as agreed in the Lomé Convention). This has serious negative consequences for the countries in Africa, the Caribbean and Pacific (ACP countries), which have already suffered enough through western European colonialism. It does not promote social and ecological standards in world trade, as is being shown again in negotiations on the Multilateral Agreement on Investments (MAI), which, in its present form, means the total abdication of social and political responsibility in favour of economic interests. It undertakes hardly any initiative to cancel the debts of formerly colonised countries, thus demonstrating that it is not prepared to face up to the responsibility of 500 years of colonialism during which there was a constant flow of resources from South to North. European countries have caused many political and social problems in the Two Thirds World, yet **refugees and migrants** from those countries are being rejected, in ever more brutal ways. **Racism** has thus been revived in Europe, and is increasingly violent. Through such policies and practices in 'Fortress Europe' we are losing our sensitivity to the worth of each person. **Ecologically** speaking, the EU presents a divided picture. On the one hand it adopts good legislation, e.g. on drinking water. On the other, developing the single market, which results in vastly increased flows of traffic, rather than regionalisation of the economy, makes no ecological sense. Most laws, however, are reducing ecological standards, e.g. recent legislation regarding genetic engineering. It is feared that the recent developments in genetically modified seeds for crops of wheat etc will massively increase the use of herbicides, which will lead to monocultures and a loss of bio-diversity. In the agricultural sector there is still no index that puts a visible cost against environmental damage. Such a measure would lead to a more ecological framework and less use of all agricultural chemicals (fertilisers, crop sprays, animal growth hormones and antibiotics) and to agriculture that would nurture the environment. Alternative/renewable energies are not receiving sufficient support. Agenda 21, launched at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, which should have been implemented long ago, is not given priority by the EU. In short, whoever had believed that Europe, which has much greater influence than any single country, would bring its old social traditions and its new ecological consciousness into play in the international community, must feel deceived. On the contrary, **the EU is a vehicle for promoting free market principles in Europe**. The EU and the governments of the member states give priority to optimising conditions for the financial markets. Already the market has triumphed over concern for social needs. The scope for democratic action remains limited in the EU. The European Parliament has little decision-making power, and the national parliaments are satisfied with accepting or refusing measures adopted by the Council of Ministers in conjunction with the European Commission. Without a fundamental policy U-turn, western Europe will again continue on a path of global destruction and injustice.

II RECOGNISING THE CAUSES

1. Roots in European culture

Deeply rooted in **European culture** is the **violent desire for domination and possession**. The roots of this can be traced back to the origins of patriarchy, namely around 2000bce. More recently, perhaps the most influential expression of this is the Hellenistic - Roman imperialism, as seen in the work of the Greek philosopher Aristotle in the fourth century bce. It is he, the tutor of the conqueror Alexander the Great, who set out the classical expression of the social system where there can be one ruler over subjugated peoples, or an emperor and superior race that dominate the barbarians. Within the family structure a similar paternalistic patriarchy was established, where a husband dominates his wife and family. Similarly owners dominate their slaves and humans the non-human creation. This system was inscribed in the statute book of Roman law and became the backbone of patriarchal western civilisation. Through the Emperor Constantine came Christianity's link with Roman law and empire(312ce). From being a small persecuted Jewish sect, Christianity, as the state religion, has acted violently against other peoples and faith communities, especially Jews and Muslims. This intolerance was expressed in such atrocities as the Crusades, the Inquisition and the genocide accompanying the Conquistadors in Latin America right up to the Shoah (holocaust) of the fascism of Hitler and the recent ethnic cleansing in Bosnia. For **the last five or six centuries**, the tradition

of cultural violence has been connected with the **violence of the capitalist monetary economy**, which has used **science and technology** to control nature. Violence towards women and people of other races, enshrined in Europe's myth, legend and symbol, erupted most notably in the burning of witches (Francis Bacon) and murderous forms of colonialism. **Today** the "West", which emerged from these traditions, has achieved economic, political and cultural dominance world-wide. Its latest name is '**globalisation**'. The economic sector and dominant political forces are promoting the following myth: the economy has become globalised and consequently all working people and all countries must 'adapt' themselves, as if to an unalterable fate. This is called 'structural adjustment', for which so-called reforms must be made. Whoever does not keep up with world market competition is left outside. This is presented as a principle just as valid as the natural law of evolution, with the 'survival of the fittest'. Following the classical liberalism of the 19th and early 20th centuries, this ideology of our political and economic leaders is called **neoliberalism**. It still disseminates the misleading opinion that it is in the interests of the weak when the strong are procured advantage. We would wish that the major political parties, the Socialist, Social Democratic and Green Parties in Europe, offered a clearer analysis and appropriate alternatives. The same is true for the majority of trade unions and the major European churches. We do see that they criticise the consequences of the system and make general statements against "pure market economy". However, they should name the culprit together with the consequences and have courage to make a detailed analysis of the mechanisms, structures and cultural and religious norms which make up the system. They do not attack the interests which lie behind these mechanisms, and they justify this by saying they cannot be changed. If they did, they would breath a liberating strength into many people, enabling them to overcome their feeling of helplessness vis-à-vis these structures and together to look for alternatives. This is precisely where our appeal comes in. We want to break through the diffuse anxiety about anonymous and apparently fatal powers by calling them by name. Thus we will be better able to develop alternatives of our own and influence policy makers.

2. Key points of our analysis

Global concentration of economic power

Globalisation is the playing field only of those people and systems that deal with flows of capital, which include finances, the economy (including technological development) and the media. The TNCs, banks and insurance companies, in conjunction with the mass media which they control, are the 'global players', and they successfully play off unionised workers and national governments against each other. They drive small and medium sized companies into merciless competition, and often into bankruptcy. The local communities affected have no effective say in the decision-making in these concerns, though they are sometimes drastically affected.

Playing the workers off against each other

New technologies result in higher productivity. Less work is needed for the same output. However, instead of using this situation of less labour and simultaneously increased profits to achieve a fair distribution of work and income for all, ever increasing levels of unemployment are used to increase the pressure on those still in employment to accept lower wages and more unfavourable working conditions. Every time large scale redundancies are made the stock market booms and the value of shares increases. The profits are seldom reinvested in innovative, viable businesses which both use natural resources sparingly and create 'good' jobs. More often they are channelled into increasingly speculative short-term financial transactions, a practice that runs the risk of leading to a crisis in the world economy.

Tax avoidance

The owners of capital use transnational freedom to make profits while bypassing the tax systems of states. They pay no taxes either on profits made from monetary assets.

Neoliberal politics reinforce this process through cutting taxes for capital-owners, with the argument that this leads to the creation of jobs, which has now been proved wrong. In fact, the increasing liquidity of capital is invested in rationalisation and speculative financial trading. Tax losses through mass unemployment, tax breaks for the wealthy and capital and tax flight are again the main reasons for the over-indebtedness of practically all public budgets. In this way the owners of capital profit twice, from their tax evasion, and from interest gained on money lent to the state. States, for their part, are withdrawing ever more money from social benefits in order to finance this tax evasion and their interest payments.

Financial speculation

Growing attacks by speculators have occurred during the past few years. Institutions like the IMF, being supported by the richer states, had to intervene more and more because they are anxious to avoid more global crises. Such attacks took place among the European currencies in 1992-93, against the Mexican currency in 1994 and the Asian currencies in 1997 and up to this day. These speculative movements have undermined both genuine economic activity and the social situation, and sometimes the independence of states. Thereby they have lost any possibility for making improvements in social justice. The ever growing volume of currency transactions on the world level (more than 1,300 billion dollars per day), of which a staggering 97% are merely speculative, is not only distorting macro and micro economic decisions. It is turning away, towards merely speculative goals, savings that could be invested for more useful aims. It also leads to intolerable instabilities in different fields, for instance in the prices of raw materials.

Economic crime

A further problem of the deregulated global economy is organised economic crime. Between 30% and 50% of the world economy is estimated to be accumulated illegally. This includes the arms and drugs trade; shipping under 'flags of convenience', which result in ecological catastrophes when tankers get shipwrecked; trafficking children for adoption and women for prostitution; and money laundering by means of bank secrecy and tax havens.

Socio-economic and military causes for migration

In poorer countries, terrible divisions have been caused by the contrast between the great wealth of a minority and the poverty of the majority, enormous national debts and structural adjustment. In addition there is the migration provoked by military activity, in which EU countries share the guilt. For example, they supply Turkey with weapons and treat the Kurds, expelled by these weapons, as criminals. Millions of people try to find a safe place and a future through emigration. Those who are able to penetrate the walls of 'Fortress Europe' are being blamed for the world-wide chaos that is the legacy of the last 500 years. Most of them are only able to immigrate 'illegally'. The 'solution', offered by our neoliberal politicians is not the elimination of the fundamental causes of misery in our countries and theirs, but to deport the people who are looking for refuge. Migration is misinterpreted as the cause and not the consequence, and the result is that the same people are victims a second time.

Neoliberal policies of deregulation and the erosion of democracy

Sine 1971, deliberate political decisions were made to stop regulating the capital markets. Responsibility lies with the governments of the seven richest industrial nations (G7) since the 1970s. They permit and support deregulation, liberalisation and privatisation, not just by means of their 'World Economic Summits' but via the Bretton Woods Institutions which they control. These are the IMF, the World Bank and the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the successor to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). If the MAI being negotiated now is passed in the present form, the TNCs could sue governments if their social or ecological legislation threatens their interests. In contrast, governments would have no such legal redress against the companies. This project breaches the UNO Charter

on the economic rights and duties of states (1974); "Each nation has the right to regulate the foreign investments and to control them." ***With such political decisions, democratically elected governments will have themselves abolished democracy at the international level in the most important matters of economic and financial policy.*** Politicians have themselves given power away and in the realms of economy and high finance they have thereby made people and natural life support systems completely dependent on the profit driven market economy. Politicians further coerce people by means of laissez faire competition and Structural Adjustment Programmes to accept the dismantling of social systems and eco-dumping. The UNO is being deliberately kept in check and manipulated by this coalition of market forces and the governments of the rich, and its reform proposals are not allowed onto the agenda.

Remilitarisation of foreign policy

In spite of the end of the East / West conflict, western politics support the profit orientated arms industry. At the same time, the West, led by the USA, serves its world-wide economic interests by having troops on the alert for rapid intervention in crises. The recent Gulf War was the first major example. Instead of banning military violence, regional conflicts are heated up, and the flames of war are fanned by the sales of arms. Wars would seem once again to be a legitimate means of politics.

The uniform culture of the mass media

The capitalist economy has taken over not only politics, but also the media. Except for small remnants they have been released from public, democratic control and aggressively privatised. The result is a gigantic concentration of power and the manipulation of "hearts and minds" into capitalist values and behaviour, acceptance of violence, sexism and general disinformation and illusion.

Economics as a system of belief

Neoliberal economic science spreads the belief among people, making them feel powerless, that the developments of world economy are fate, as unalterable as the laws of nature. The present system of power and control survives on that basis. Social scientists have proved that the dominant economy is no science but a system of belief, in which the growth of monetary wealth is 'God'. People are expected to subjugate themselves and the planet to this god, which has, of course, to be defended by a gigantic global military apparatus.

Rendering home economies invisible

Something which is completely ignored in neoliberal thinking and action is the home economy. If criteria other than those of monetary economy were to be used, it has been estimated that home economies constitute over 50% of the national product even in industrialised countries. Women's work is made invisible here, and so is the subsistence economy of the poor world-wide. For an alternative economy there is a great potential here for the self-liberation of people from the dictates of global markets.

Our own striving after consumption, wealth and power

We are aware that the structures of finance, production and distribution can only function because the majority of people support them through how they spend and invest their money. People strive for a healthy and fulfilled life. The market seizes upon this striving, as do the media, creating the illusion that all is possible. From a child's earliest years our education system encourages competitive behaviour and establishes a pattern of elitism. The personal liberation from pseudo-happiness to fulfilled life in community, from powerlessness to shared responsibility, is a great force for the renewal of society. How do we judge the role to be played by organisations and groups in society? How could trade unions, churches, religious communities, grassroots organisations and NGOs find a united

voice and the ability to form alliances? Are they not separated by fundamentally different philosophies and a history of mutual distrust?

III MAKING A JUDGEMENT WITH OUR HEARTS AND MINDS

It is scarcely surprising that the global coalition of finance, business, media and G7 governments can play its victims from all countries and all sectors of society off against each other so easily. Within our society there is a great need for self-reflection and mutual reconciliation, to enable us to counteract current destructive political, socio-economic and cultural developments, and to create alternatives. The following are some examples of the need to move from our conflict ridden history towards mutual reconciliation based on justice.

1. Old conflicts

Labour movements

As the industrial revolution got under way and people were exploited under harsh working conditions, the working poor organised themselves in various forms in the labour movement. In this situation, the charitable work of the churches tried to assist the working class victims of unbridled capitalism. It was only later, however, that the majority of the churches began to denounce the inhumane character of the system. To this extent, the atheistic reactions of Marxism, the trade union movement and communism are understandable. For its part, Stalinism has left many wounds in all camps. Bureaucratic socialism has showed no more interest in sustaining our natural world than has capitalism. It is obvious that our whole modern view of the world is in crisis. In the recent neoliberal period, the trade unions had tried to react to the transnationalisation of capital by closing ranks to become a European and even an international union movement. But because of organisational difficulties and also the short term differences between the workers of different countries, they have not yet formed an effective countervailing power. There is also a lack of adequate representation of the unemployed, which could achieve recognition of their vital interests. All these areas of conflict, both past and present, need to be given attention in order that we can today build effective alliances.

Women's movements

Discrimination against women is systemic in nearly all of Europe's social, political, economic and religious institutions, and has been formed and shaped by patriarchy. Indeed, patriarchy has been blind and deaf to the many historical forms this has taken. Since the nineteenth century, and more intensively in the last 30 years of this century, the women's movements have struggled in both society and faith communities for the full participation of women. They have fought to be involved in the shaping of society, at every level of its institutions, and in the reordering of unjust relations between the sexes in both public and personal arenas. Change demands:

- that society refuses to continue to stereotype women merely as victim and men as oppressor.

- that those in power situations, men or women, recognise and enable the agency of women as they work for the recognition of their contributions on the employment scene and in unpaid work.

- the taking of responsibility by both women and men for the dismantling of patriarchy. For men, moving forward requires an honest admission of the oppressive effects of discrimination and current models of power on women and other vulnerable groups.

- challenging the flawed stereotypes of both maleness and femaleness.

- the journey out of patriarchy for both women and men. This involves and is affected by making all the contextual connections with other forms of oppression, economic, racist and heterosexist.

Faith communities and cultures

There have always been many different cultures in Europe, and particularly so now, given the numbers of refugees and migrant workers, many of whom have settled here permanently. The critical and self-critical dialogue between the different value systems, cultures and religions, and the development of joint courses of action, has hardly begun. The mutual violations between the people of different faiths go back a long way. Since, for example, the Christian church linked up with the Roman empire, it has continually mixed the proclamation of the kingdom of God with political, economic and cultural interests. To give only a few examples; the Crusades in the middle ages; the conquest of North and South America legitimated by mission; the colonialism of Protestant led nation states. The European churches thereby became complicit in the exclusion, persecution and sometimes extermination of individuals, groups and peoples which did not want to subordinate themselves. Even church divisions were caused by this mixing of religious and political and economic interests, e.g. in 1054 between the eastern and western church, and in the sixteenth century between the Roman church and Reformation churches. The war in Yugoslavia, the conflict in Northern Ireland, and the tension between the Arab Islamic and western Atlantic worlds shows that the wounds have not been healed to this day. Religious motives can be misused to justify the resolution of conflicts through the use of force. Therefore dialogue between the faith communities and the different cultures in Europe is essential. Such dialogue should not lose itself in generalities, but have the specific aims of discovering new ways of living and working alongside each other, and new means of establishing justice and peace.

2. New possibilities

In order to overcome the effects of the European culture and its world-wide impacts, we need a very deep change. Two questions are particularly important. What spirit is shaping human relationships? And how do we move from a spirit of competition to a spirit of cooperation? The Brazilian liberation theologian and trade unionist Frei Betto, as did Ernst Bloch and Antonio Gramsci before him, claimed that Soviet style socialism, which was put forward as an alternative system, concentrated itself exclusively on the will and reason. It overlooked the fact that ***people have emotions, love beauty and want to transcend themselves and their world.*** Philosophically we speak here of aesthetics and religion, theologically of spirituality. If we neglect this dimension in people, particularly in a male culture, then capitalism fills the empty space with illusions and things that do not really fulfil us. In contrast to the religion of the market, and following the line of thought of Frei Betto, we can affirm that our alternative visions are inspiring. Working together to fulfil these visions is both challenging and fun. Work and celebration are kept in balance. We do not need to burn out in the struggle. A new culture of mutual support helps us, in spite of our painful inadequacies, to find energy both personally and in community for developing our alliances and solidarity. The history of human resistance helps us to learn not to lose hope even when we fail. A new spirit of cooperation cannot appear out of nowhere. It grows out of the hard experience of wrestling with community or other broader issues with other individuals and groups when there are many conflicts of interest. The following are some examples of successful, or incipient dialogues and **coalition processes** :

- the cooperation of Christian base communities, parts of the institutional churches, unions, peoples' movements and popular religions in Latin America in the spirit of liberation theology.

- the Zapatista coalition attempts, starting in Chiapas, Mexico.

- the French protest movement since 1996.

- efforts to form an extra-parliamentary opposition in Germany, instigated by the Erfurt Declaration in 1997.
- the church asylum ("sanctuary") movement.
- the Euromarch movement against unemployment, job insecurity and exclusion, beginning with the EU summit in Amsterdam in 1997.
- the European Women's College in Zürich that tries to promote an intensive networking and communication process between eastern and western European women.

In the **second part of this document** we give an **example** of self-critical theological **reflection** of the history and present situation of the churches in the context of the processes taking place in society, in order to strengthen their ability to form alliances. **In this spirit we request faith communities, human rights movements, unions, social, peace and ecological movements, women's organisations, regional groupings from eastern, western, northern and southern Europe and also from other continents, to share with us their view of the issues referred to here. Please write your stories, reflections and suggestions for action. These will all go into a supplement to this document which will be produced in 1999 with the purpose of stimulating a broader exchange of experience and a united political engagement.**

IV ACTING TOGETHER

After efforts at the national level to tame capitalism around the middle of this century, it seems that, since the 1980s, we have been immersed in a culture of neoliberalism and exposed helplessly to the power of global capitalism. The introduction of modern technologies has weakened the labour movement and the West no longer needs to take account of a competing socialist alternative. But this conclusion is wrong. It neglects two things:

- the history of resistance in Europe and world-wide.
- the fact that the current system is facing ever growing crises and so cannot go on as it is.

It is a myth that there is no alternative to neoliberalism, which is being maintained by the EU and its member states, the United States, Japan and the elites of other countries. Such ideas have contributed towards widespread mistrust of public institutions and limited people's freedom to lead self-directed lives in community with others. **This system can be changed.**

We invite you to consider the following possibilities

1. Recognition and acknowledgement

With the aim of liberation and making a new beginning, we can recognise and acknowledge our historical guilt, selfish attitudes and rigid structures and where we continue to make the mistakes of supporting the predominant development model.

This process of coming to terms with the past can and must take place on all levels, local, national, European and, not least, world-wide. In this, we must work together with committed groups in all continents.

The starting point is **listening to the victims** among and beside us. This is a crucial step. It requires patience. It builds trust and provides vital information and clarification that is essential before any action is taken. Alliances in local neighbourhoods, villages, towns and cities may begin by asking the questions:

- Who and where are the victims of the evils, of the past and the present, of violence, individual or structural injustice, and rape of the environment?

- Who are the victims around us, e.g. children, women, working people, farming families, unemployed persons, homeless people, people in debt, refugees?

- Who are the victims far away (North-South/West-East) ?

Listening to the pain of the victims, hearing the truth of their stories, and then giving them space in which to tell their own story in public, is the beginning of the healing process. This cannot reverse the injustice suffered, but can open up a pathway leading to new justice. So the process of reconciliation in society is begun.

Further, there should be an opportunity for the **admission of individual or collective guilt**. Particularly in western Europe there is no public pressure to force perpetrators to choose between legal prosecution or testimony before a truth commission with the possibility of subsequent amnesty. The apology of Bill Clinton in March 1998 to African nations for the historic taking of slaves would have been a positive step in this direction, had he not, however, stated "no aid but trade", in which he reinforced the economic servitude of Africa to the global economic players. Nelson Mandela understood this truth immediately, and said so. A few sincere, individual admissions of guilt would be of significant symbolic value. An admission of guilt by collusion from the churches and other key members of society for the mistakes in Europe and its nations could itself have a significant public impact.

This could lead to a healing dialogue of all parties concerned.

2. Refusal

We can refuse to take part in structures we have recognised as being violent and unjust towards people and the creation and reject the spirit, logic and practice of deregulated capitalist accumulation of monetary assets, with military protection.

In the sense of increasing capital, **money** is at the centre of the existing structures of injustice and violence. Its accumulation is the God of this world order. To say "No" to the accumulation of money in the broadest possible coalitions is the beginning of all resistance. In practical terms that means saying "No" to the deregulation of the capital markets which only have one goal, namely the accumulation of wealth, without any social, ecological and democratic commitment. Saying "No" to interest gained through speculation. Some of us say "No" to interest altogether and therefore ask for an alternative monetary system. Saying "No" to currency speculation. Saying "No" to a monetary system which is detached from equitable distribution of employment and justice in international trading. Saying "No" to an international order of finance, which is controlled only by the rich in their own interest and which enables tax flight and tax dumping. In practice we can boycott such commercial banks which have branches or business partners in tax havens and at the same time call upon union, church and public institutions to do the same.

Very commendably, the German Constitution requires that the owners of **property**, which includes both physical and monetary assets, carry social obligations. Today, however, this is more and more a rhetorical statement in view of the current distribution of property and the possibility of making tax-free profits on the transnational markets. We can together, therefore, declare the system of limitless and absolute ownership illegitimate. We can demand wealth reports as well as poverty reports in order to bring the scandal of unjust distribution into public discussion. We can also publicly denounce the increasing concentration of economic power in the hands of a few corporations and banks, as do the Religious for Peace with their weekly vigil in front of the Deutsche Bank in Frankfurt, and those organising other direct non-violent actions.

In order to protect the property of the wealthy, **equipment for internal and external security** is constantly being developed. Such a preoccupation with protecting wealth can

be condemned. Also, we can learn to live without arms. For young men that means conscientious objection to military service.

We can also resist the temptation of indulging in more and more **consumption**, encouraged as we are by advertisements and the media. This pressure to consume is motivated by the drive for economic growth and this in turn by the central purpose of accumulating wealth. In response, one can take part in consumer boycotts and seek a more simple lifestyle.

We can resist the widespread international **industrialisation of agriculture** and the policies which support this.

We can resist everything that destroys **bio-diversity**, i.e. the variety of species of plants and animals and their habitats. We must be informed about the dangers of genetic engineering, and the patenting of plant, animal and human genes, and resist wherever the welfare of people or the earth is threatened.

We call on all those people and organisations who have great concern about such structural injustices not only to condemn the consequences of the current system, but also to say a clear "No" to the underlying principles of the current global system. To say "No" also to its political implementation in their countries, in the EU and in the international organisations for which the G7 countries bear responsibility such as the IMF, the World Bank, the WTO and the OECD (MAI).

This means we must say "No" to political parties that support neoliberal policies. In this connection also, a broad-based debate on the spirituality of resistance and forms of civil disobedience is urgently required.

3. New visions

We can develop a new vision of an economy embedded in the social and ecological context.

Some helpful guidelines for action arose out of the ecumenical process of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation:

- the preferential option for the poor,
- the preferential option for non-violence, and
- the preferential option for endangered life.

This orientation offers a radical change of perspective.

The first goal of **economic activity** should not be the accumulation of monetary assets dictated by the global market, and therefore economic growth measured in monetary terms. Instead it should be the satisfaction of the basic needs of people living in a local area and in their social, cultural and natural environments, taking account of the life of future generations. From this point of view, economic activity is successful only if it also fulfils social and ecological goals.

We propose, therefore, a **dual strategy** for developing alternatives:

- local small-scale initiatives that are partially independent of the world markets, and
- building alliances for political intervention to "tame" the system.

4. Small-scale alternatives

We are able to realise life-giving visions in our own areas of activity by setting up small-scale alternatives.

With this approach, the invisible **home economy** takes on fundamental importance and likewise the **economies of local areas and small regions** .

A partial decoupling from the dictates of world markets is possible. We recommend here an international handbook for the strengthening of the local economy (see Richard Douthwaite (1996) in the resource list). He identifies different possibilities:

- **Local currencies, Local Exchange and Trading Schemes (LETS)** that need no cash, **credit unions**.

- the use of **alternative banks** and credit facilities (joined together in Europe in I.N.A.I.S.E.). instead of high street banks. In the churches' arena there is the **Ecumenical Development Co- operative Society (EDCS)**.

- In local communities become as self-sufficient as possible by using **alternative energies** (wind, sun, water, biomass).

- Become also as self-sufficient as possible in basic foodstuffs and clothing, by direct purchase from **organic farms, producer-consumer cooperatives, country to town partnerships** etc. The priority is to develop an environmentally-friendly local economy with strong local circulation of goods and services. Craftspeople and small companies with a social and ecological concern are valued as important partners in this approach.

Some of these concerns are combined in the initiatives connected with **Local Agenda 21** in Europe and the other continents (Chapter 28 of Agenda 21 of the Rio Conference on Environment and Development, 1992). This gives a good framework for forming alliances and developing self-critical dialogue far beyond the immediate locality.

Small-scale initiatives are also possible in, or can be aided by, the following:

Alternative economic activity is possible beyond the local sphere. The best-known means is through that of '**fair trade** ', in which fair wages are paid to the producers. Fair trade initiatives show that we as **consumers have power to be a counter force** . We can also take part in boycotts of TNCs which violate social and ecological criteria in a particularly flagrant fashion. Well known examples for such campaigns in Europe are those focussing on Nestle, Shell and Siemens. In contrast, we can affirm and prefer companies that consider social and ecological criteria.

A central area is **communication**. Groups in the Netherlands have begun to coordinate an initiative for open, honest communication called the "People's Communication Charter". Although computers, e-mail and the internet were developed for military and commercial purposes, and although the mass use of electronics is ecologically very damaging because of the problems of disposal, these instruments, particularly e-mail, can be used in building up countervailing power. A recent successful example is provided by the coordinated actions of the unemployed movement in France. Internationally too, communication between movements using e-mail and the internet is cheaper and can be more effective, in that they provide scope for better participation, including of poor people, provided that they can organise access to a computer. But caution is still called for. The priority must always be face to face contact.

We could also have more self-direction in the area of **education**. Education has become centrally organised. It is vocationally orientated, and focuses on academic success to the detriment of life skills. Schooling could provide excellent opportunities for developing an inclusive society, for example in the mixed schools in Northern Ireland. Education should cater for the whole person; it should include community and political education; an awareness of other cultures, faiths and minority groups; decision-making skills; and the development of critical thinking so that the rising generation can grapple with the crucial issues detailed in this Document. Such education would emphasise skills of cooperation rather than competition, and would give a central place to questions of the future.

In the **area of peace** there are also many possibilities of implementing small scale alternatives. Wherever conflict leads to violence at the local level we can assist in non-

violent conflict resolution and initiate healing processes. As part of the ecumenical process for justice, peace and integrity of creation, practical initiatives have been taken, including civilian peace services as alternatives to military service. In ideal circumstances, such civil peace services can reduce or even replace military interventions and violent incidents within nations. A voluntary "peace-tax" should be introduced in each European country, allowing citizens to make a public stand for a society committed to non-violence, in which conscientious objection and the resolution of conflict through mediation and other just and peaceful means both play an important part.

In all these areas there are great opportunities for the **churches, faith communities and trade unions**, as they are themselves controlling large amounts of money and are therefore able to begin to invest their money according to alternative economic, social and ecological criteria. In their own spheres they can distribute work and income fairly and develop open and trusting relationships with people, irrespective of their formal status. They can pursue ecological principles. They could become oases of love and justice within the wider environment of deceit.

Grassroots groups, alternative communities and cooperatives are strongest at the local level. With their commitment to concrete goals they can themselves begin to realise the vision of a new society: new patterns of behaviour between men, women and children; marginalised people being included; learning to view oneself from the perspective of other religions and cultures; sharing; solving conflicts without violence; cooperation instead of competition; taking individuals with their gifts seriously instead of classifying them according to their 'marketability'. In short, putting people and the totality of their needs at the centre, and valuing people and communities, rather than fostering competing individuals.

Small-scale initiatives are not to be misunderstood as being *the* alternative. They are limited in their scope. They also share in the ambiguities of the macro-system. For example, alternative banks are legally forced to deposit part of their capital as security in the general monetary system. Furthermore, the populations of a region naturally want to engage in economic exchange with those of another region. They should be free to trade in this way, as they choose, and not be forced to do so by monopolies to their disadvantage.

If, however, the macro-systems are meant to serve the local resident and not the other way round, they must be regulated democratically by social and ecological conditions. To struggle for that is the second essential part of the dual strategy.

5. Political involvement

We can engage in political involvement, through forming alliances for a socially just, life-sustaining and democratic Europe.

At the local level, alliances are needed to create and support, through **community based political activity**, a localised economy, social policies, ecological action and justice in North-South relations. As well as self-help groups, charitable organisations, churches, faith communities and trade unions, radical politicians and those with businesses at the local level are also important participants in this work. Kairos Europa has begun to network such local alliances. A very important alliance, which was especially mentioned by the Second European Ecumenical Assembly meeting in Graz in 1997, is the linking of the ecumenical process of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation with Local Agenda 21.

It is clear, however, that work at this level only is insufficient, given the globalisation of finance, the economy and the media. Even the **national level** is offering only very limited possibilities for action. It is therefore necessary to link political efforts at national level with parallel efforts at the **European and global level**.

What are the key areas of alternative policies and strategies for action about which committed groups should develop a consensus?

In order to achieve liberation from the grip of deregulated globalised finance and economy, our first target must be policies of tax and finance. At present, the major tax burden is on employment, while money, the ownership of property and the consumption of energy and resources, are only lightly taxed. It should be exactly the other way round. Changes, however, will not be possible unless there is a **framework for democratic, social and ecological reregulation of transnational capital at the level of international institutions**. That must be the starting point of any political campaign or engagement. Without such a measure, in the North and the South, the east as well as the West, we would foresee no more enlightened employment and social policies, no new approach to ecological issues, increasing numbers of refugees and migrants and an ever more precarious peace.

In the longer term, we must raise the fundamental question as to whether the need for peaceful, ongoing life on our planet for people and the natural world is compatible with a capitalist economy centrally geared to the accumulation of monetary wealth.

Out of these considerations, we campaign for change in the following specific ways in particular key (overlapping) policy areas:

Tax, Finance and Economy

- the linking of monetary policy to employment and social policies.
- the development of alternative economic indicators, that evaluate such matters as pollution and the consumption of natural resources, as well as the quality of jobs created etc., so that the concept of economic success is redefined.
- a limit to the private ownership of land and capital.
- an appropriate wealth tax.
- a capital gains tax, harmonised throughout the EU, raised at the source of profit, to end tax evasion and tax dumping, which occurs as governments compete with each other to offer tax advantages.
- the abolition of tax havens, which contribute significantly to the indebtedness of public budgets.
- the cancelling of debts of countries made poor by the North.
- global taxation of speculative transactions (Tobin Tax).
- a progressive taxation on natural resources and non-renewable sources of energy.
- a rethinking of the Multilateral Agreement on Investments, so as to give governments the right to put social and ecological conditions on investments and encourage local investment in initiatives that benefit local people.
- the setting of social and ecological parameters for world trade.
- the democratisation of the economy, ranging from joint decision-making in and self-ownership of factories to a UNO controlled reform of the international institutions, the IMF, World Bank etc..
- the development of an international legal system for the socio-ecological regulation of financial and economic questions, broadening the competencies of the International Court of Justice to include matters of socio-economic concern.

Employment and Public Services

- a drastic reduction of working hours (regionally adjusted), to help reduce unemployment. Loss of income should be compensated on a socially staggered scale, possibly with temporary state subsidies. The hours released in this way should be used for doing socially useful work in the community, and for pursuing vocational and political continuing education.
- an end to cutbacks in protective regulations for women, connected with pregnancy, child-birth, unpaid leave for family reasons and factories with periodic work.
- the introduction of an economic guarantee for every person, to prevent poverty, misery and exclusion for even greater numbers of people.
- the linking of employers' national insurance contributions to profits and not to the number and wages of people employed.
- a special 'sharing the load' initiative through a one-off tax payment on high levels of wealth in favour of a 'special fund for the abolition of mass unemployment', in particular to create jobs to carry out essential tasks in society which make no profit.
- an end to cutbacks in health and education.
- the redemocratisation of the media.

The Environment

- make a real commitment to the outcomes of the Rio conference of 1992, particularly with regard to CO₂ emissions and the use of synthetic nitrogen fertilisers, and to Local Agenda 21 and sustainability.
- the promotion of energy saving, and its production from renewable sources.