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The Dilemmas of Germany's PDS

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This article examines the evolution of the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS), successor party to the former ruling communist party in East Germany, the SED (Socialist Unity Party). The PDS has enjoyed an electoral renaissance in the eastern half of Germany since the mid-1990s, and now plays an extremely important role in the national party system in the Federal Republic as well as in state party systems in eastern Germany. Nevertheless, this article argues that the PDS is faced with two important dilemmas as it attempts to secure its long-term future in German politics, dilemmas illustrated in the make-up of its membership and voters, its party identity/ideology, and – above all – its policy positions, all of which are analyzed in detail here.

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