

## **Success in “Securing the Victory” depends essentially on *HOW* we work!**

**Shortly before the end of the year we had the opportunity to talk to Gabi Fechtner. The Chairwoman of the MLPD reports on some of the results of the last meeting of the Central Committee (CC).**

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### **What in the view of the MLPD Central Committee is the background to the current open political crisis in Germany?**

Even three months after the federal elections, no new government could be formed. This is unprecedented in the postwar history of Germany. In this process, the system of the petty-bourgeois mode of thinking as method of government has at times also experienced an open crisis. And this despite the fact that the leading forces among those in power hold fast to it. However, every new attempt to achieve a stable situation fails. This is associated with growing contradictions in and between the bourgeois parties.

The decisive background to this development: inter-imperialist competition is intensifying. The “old” imperialist and new imperialist countries aggressively compete for spheres of influence and world market leadership. A characteristic feature is the markedly uneven economic development of the various countries and the international supermonopolies. In his new “Security Strategy”, US President Donald Trump officially declared China and Russia to be strategic rivals. And he speaks of a “new era of competition”. This finds expression in a massive arms race. The US alone is increasing its “defense” budget to 700 billion US dollars (approx. 586 billion euros)<sup>1</sup>. The founding of PESCO<sup>2</sup>, the military union of the European Union (EU), represents a new stage in the coalescence of this imperialist bloc. The explicit justification for PESCO is its greater independence and positioning vis-à-vis US imperialism. The 23 member states commit themselves to increasing their arms expenditures annually. With the offensive strategy for the expansion of a “new Silk Road”, new-imperialist China is undertaking to replace the USA as the world's number one economic power. It is about expanding transport and economic links between Asia and Europe. The aim is first to exert influence on the present spheres of control of other imperialists, and then to conquer them. To this end, China has begun cooperating with numerous Eastern European countries. At the same time, the Chinese rulers take advantage of the contradictions between the Visegrád Group<sup>3</sup>, led by Hungary, and the leading imperialist states in the EU.

The imperialists try to safeguard and extend economic and political positions of power also through a significant increase in cross-border mergers and acquisitions of international (super)monopolies – as in Germany with PSA/Opel, Air Berlin/Lufthansa, ThyssenKrupp/Tata. In this situation, the monopoly associations in the Federal Republic of Germany are pushing for a stable government, preferably with Merkel at the top. After the failure of a “Jamaica” coalition [CDU/CSU, Free Democrats FDP and Greens with party colors black, yellow and green, hence ‘Jamaica’; the translator] they favor a remake of a Grand Coalition – also in order to secure influence on the working class with the help of the Social Democratic Party (SPD). In an open letter, Siemens CEO Joe Kaeser bluntly urged the SPD and Martin Schulz to do their part to make German imperialism fit for international competition. Otherwise others would have the last laugh, “above all China and India”.<sup>4</sup>

German imperialism wants to position itself for this situation. Not one of the monopoly parties has fundamental objections to this. After all, the caretaker government of Christian Democratic CDU/CSU and SPD continues to run the affairs of government the whole time – as a matter of course and with this aim in view.

However, for various reasons, this task collides with the respective mass base of the potential government parties. The SPD almost tears itself apart in an attempt to stop the dwindling of its mass base and at the same time implement the stronger shift to the right. Angela Merkel has already signaled a hard line against the fulfilling of “social” promises of the SPD in a coalition government. The CSU insists on its reactionary core positions with a view to the state elections in Bavaria in the autumn of 2018. It is quite the farce that the SPD presents itself as the “left wing” of such a government. For more than 100 years the SPD has been working as a compliant servant to implement monopoly interests.

A **further shift to the right and intensified internal and external reaction** can be expected from a **new government**. As counterpart to the “left-wing extremism” campaign, this includes **increased efforts to give the neo-fascist element a facade of respectability**. Since the election, the “Alternative for Germany” (AfD) has moved even farther to the right – it is paving the way for fascism. It also plays a central role in the fascization of the state apparatus – not only through propaganda, but also in the form of personal interpenetration with the police and the rest of the state apparatus. On the other hand, it represents only part of the German bourgeoisie. In its campaign strategy for the Bundestag elections, however, the CDU deliberately decided *not* to attack the AfD, but to direct the main thrust at the left.<sup>5</sup> We must also make the role of the AfD clear to the considerable number of AfD voters who, subjectively, cast their votes in order to supposedly send out a signal of protest.

Death threats – such as those against Monika Gärtner-Engel – represent the worst of fascist attacks against the MLPD to date. With anti-communist agitation, various media try to provide an ideological justification for the attempts to criminalize the MLPD. We also see increased state repression and anti-communist attacks against forces allied with us. Vigilance and solidarity also will have to focus on that in the coming months. You can feel the concern of those in power about increasing workers' struggles and a strengthening of revolutionary forces. Not least of all for this reason, the working class and the rebellious youth movement also are sitting at the conference table, in a manner of speaking, when the prospects for a coalition are explored.

### **How do you assess the increasing working-class struggles in recent months?**

The MLPD forecasted correctly: After the elections there will be aggravated attacks on the workforces – and these workforces will take up the fight. Many have entered the fight for every job with confidence, as at ThyssenKrupp, Siemens, Bombardier or Air Berlin. The current struggles are mostly led by the trade unions, but often are the result of pressure from the rank and file in enterprises and unions. Tens of thousands participated in warning strikes in connection with collective bargaining disputes in November/December. 8,000 on the steelworkers' day of action – combined with strikes – in Andernach. Hundreds of colleagues take part in independent actions at Volkswagen plants. In these struggles, independent elements are increasing. When important struggles take place, the MLPD is actively involved because of its decades of influence and its patient work among the rank and file.

In the development of class consciousness new characteristics begin to emerge: **trade union consciousness is developing on a broad scale**. In various collective bargaining rounds there is a growing willingness to strike, and the demand to turn trade unions into fighting organizations is spreading. Colleagues cope better with the influence of the petty-bourgeois social-chauvinist mode of thinking. With their struggles they give expression to the

fact that they are not willing to sacrifice their class interests for the expansion of the power of the German supermonopolies. Struggles increasingly also are directed at splitting maneuvers – such as those between temporary workers and “permanent staff”, or between East and West. In this connection the struggle at various Volkswagen locations to get temporary workers taken on as regulars is remarkable, because the class collaboration policy in the Volkswagen Group has been particularly strong for decades. Increasingly, workers also reject anti-communist attacks and refuse to let them dictate their actions, for example on the occasion of the works council elections. This requires, however, that our workplace party groups fight out this struggle over the mode of thinking offensively and on a massive scale.

The struggle to align wages in East Germany with those in the West is objectively a political movement. After all, all the governments of recent decades have broken their promises to equalize wages, pensions and working hours. In this confrontation, of course, the struggle over the mode of thinking in the working-class movement unfolds. Thus, the SPD is trying to regain influence and fuel illusions in the working class. Sigmar Gabriel currently is complaining demagogically that the SPD is “equated with an unidentifiable postmodernism”. He contends that the SPD must again focus more on jobs – instead of on environmental and climate protection.<sup>6</sup>

But quite in the spirit of “postmodernism” the SPD has long since renounced the working class<sup>7</sup>, and it has also trampled underfoot the interests of the natural environment. In this situation, the MLPD must self-confidently declare its claim to be THE revolutionary workers' party and, in developing and expanding its new social role, above all **further strengthen its workplace party groups!** We will develop special initiatives to this end in Eastern Germany.

### **2017 was an eventful year for the MLPD. How will things continue in 2018?**

The purpose of the “tactical offensive for genuine socialism and against modern anti-communism” was to have all those looking for a social alternative find us in 2017. This hit the mark in view of the initiated progressive change of mood among the broad masses as a determining factor in the social polarization. Now the important thing is to “secure the victory”. In strategy and tactics, this stands for strengthening our forces in the long term and thus turning the achieved successes to account in a lasting way. We therefore want to forge organized links with all those people who have found and will find us, who are open to socialism and who have been active for progressive causes in recent months and years. We have achieved initial successes in this respect. The MLPD was able to strengthen its ranks by eight percent; our youth league *Rebell*, even by 50 percent. But there is still plenty of room for improvement for both. To this end, the party must learn even better in 2018 to implement the scientific method of **Marxist-Leninist organization and cadre work of a new type.**

### **What does that mean?**

It is about getting things done, but not just *any way*. We must work in a way that strengthens the forces, involves new people and trains them to liberate themselves. *HOW* the work is done is therefore the essential point. The **core of this is the new-type cadre work.** In recent years the MLPD has conquered important new fields of its rank-and-file work. In part, however, there was a tendency to action for action's sake in tackling this. When this happens, existing forces are put under heavy strain – but new forces often are not won in an adequate way. Such manifestations also are due to the fact that petty-bourgeois – for example petty-bourgeois parliamentary – standards are applied to the work.

For us, every single person we have been able to convince to vote for us is crucial; every person who has become active in one or another progressive way. And our yardstick is not election mathematics<sup>8</sup>. People are the focus of all our work, of course. However, if these

people who have become active sometimes even are referred to as “helpers”, then this violates the principle of cooperation among equals. It depreciates their decision to get involved, and their abilities as well. In the **work among youth**, too, and especially there, **cadre work is absolutely essential**. Whether we can strengthen and stabilize the many new young people, but also the young people in the party, stands or falls with this cadre work. Whether they become able to solve the complicated questions of our times with the help of Marxism-Leninism and orient themselves independently. This cadre work is also the real core of Marxist-Leninist youth work as mass tactics of party building. Making this cadre work a habitual part of **every** activity of **every** party member is a central question in *HOW* work is done.

All successes notwithstanding, apart from objective hurdles and obstacles there are also a number of subjective obstacles to accelerated party building. For instance, the party must correctly allocate its forces. In the Central Committee we had a critical and self-critical discussion about a notion of “objective tasks” of the party that dictate the rhythm to us. But what we do, we consciously determine on the basis of the dialectical analysis of the development of the objective **and** subjective factors. Based on this, it must be determined which links are to be grasped. Only if we keep this in mind can we consolidate and develop our system of rank-and-file work in an all-around way. This includes breaking with the tendency to push aside important basic elements of work.

In the activities on the anniversary of the October Revolution in St. Petersburg, we were once again impressed by the role which our ideological-political line plays. In Russia – and beyond – the translation of Willi Dickhut's book, *The Restoration of Capitalism in the Soviet Union*, has been available for years and been sold in thousands of copies. This prepared the ground for us to exert growing influence on forces with revolutionary aspirations. However, **sales** of works containing our **ideological-political line** have been **neglectfully treated** in many organizational units, except for certain sales offensives. It is also a bad petty-bourgeois intellectual habit when we sometimes heap our many experiences and knowledge on new people we get to know. Surely the point is to *empower* them to **read the books of the *Revolutionärer Weg*<sup>9</sup> series themselves, thereby acquiring an ideological-political foundation with which they can orient themselves independently**.

For this purpose we have decided also to launch a campaign to attract trial and regular subscribers to the *Rote Fahne Magazin*. In addition, we are planning initiatives in the field of training and education, for example such as those implemented in an exemplary manner at the summer camp: always aimed at ensuring that young people in particular learn *HOW* exactly to work, and how to organize work – in addressing, fortifying and convincing people. In this way, they become bearers of our systematic rank-and-file work and persuasion work. With this in mind, many of our CC departments and regional leading bodies will have to go to the grassroots more often in the future.

In short, **the whole year 2018 will be a year of “securing the victory”** – with the scientific method of Marxist-Leninist organization and cadre work of a new type. *HOW* one works is the yardstick for the mastery of the dialectical method at the level of the doctrine of the mode of thinking and of systemic thinking.

**If theoretical work plays such an important role, the Central Committee surely has decided on further projects for it?**

The Central Committee is giving priority to the preparation of issue **36/37** of the *Revolutionärer Weg* series: **“The Crisis of Bourgeois Ideology, and the Doctrine of the Mode of Thinking”**. This will be a preliminary ideological skirmish to future revolutionary class struggles.

We have observed in this context: modern anti-communism launches its fiercest attacks against Stalin. The MLPD has an accurate, well-elaborated line on Stalin as a classic of Marxism-Leninism. However, this knowledge has not yet been further developed in a comprehensive way on the basis of the doctrine of the mode of thinking, and naturally could not yet be used to counter the peculiarities of today's massive anti-Stalin campaign. The CC held a seminar on this question. After the new *Revolutionärer Weg* is completed we will publish **Biographical Reflections of the MLPD on Stalin**, in which we will discuss the great achievements – as well as mistakes and problems – of socialist construction under Stalin's leadership dialectically. In this way, we want to help the masses deal successfully with the smears against Stalin and the use of them to spread reservations about socialism/communism.

### **How does the decision to conduct a tactical offensive in Thuringia fit in with the “securing of victory”? Isn't that a contradiction?**

The Central Committee has decided on a **concentrated tactical offensive in Thuringia** in connection with the candidacy for the state elections in 2019, and here too it is important to know *HOW* we go about this task. We will do this work as a **school of systematic party building for the whole party**. In Thuringia, with its industrial character – and not least its revolutionary tradition – the search for a social alternative is particularly strong. Here, too, the main thrust of our work is directed against the shift to the right by the Federal Government and the bourgeois parties. However, we must also target the state government in Thuringia. It is led by the Left Party, which is in a latent crisis there. The claim that by voting for the Left Party one can change things in a fundamentally positive way has failed to materialize here as elsewhere, but here most obviously. So, in a way, this makes room for us on the left – and we offer a perspective.

Nevertheless, the ideological influence of the Left Party must not be underestimated. Helping people cope with the effect of the petty-bourgeois revisionist mode of thinking even gains in importance. This thinking finds expression, for example, in waiting for “someone who will improve our lives”. There are important enterprises in Thuringia, including the biggest concentration of potash mining operations. Thousands successfully demonstrated against a planned “territorial reform” in 2017. At the same time, the social polarization is particularly acute. In Thuringia the openly fascist wing of the AfD is concentrated. The youth in particular rebel against this. MLPD and *Rebell* have won recognition and in part a leading role in anti-fascist protests.

In our concentrated tactical offensive, we want to train **HOW we must work to accelerate the building of the party and the *Rebell***, promote the self-run organizations of the masses and build the Internationalist Alliance. Here too, the main construction method is Marxist-Leninist work among youth as mass tactics of party building. Of course, with this offensive we want to put greater emphasis again, in the whole party, on **building work in the East**. In the new *Land* party organization in Thuringia the entire party will work – among other things with partnerships – to overcome the weaknesses that have arisen in that area, and learn for the work “at home”. Our local groups and the anchoring in different companies are good starting points for this, as is the holiday and leisure complex “Im Waldgrund”, where the summer camps of the youth league *Rebell* take place, and where the *Rebell* will co-organize the **3rd Rebellious Music Festival** in 2018. We are still looking for many organizers who will support this work on site in Thuringia temporarily or permanently.

**In the international revolutionary movement, currently the cards are being reshuffled, so to speak. What tasks arise from this according to the MLPD?**

Various revisionist forces – in Germany and internationally – are in a veritable process of disintegration. Some even take sides with one of the imperialist camps – like China or Russia. Not least for this reason, the German Communist Party (DKP) has gotten into an existential, open party crisis. The revisionist thesis of the “peaceful pushing back of the power of the monopolies” does not stand up to social reality. At the same time, internationally a revolutionary wing is emerging in the hitherto neo-revisionist camp. In connection with the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the October Revolution it is clearly drawing closer to or returning to revolutionary positions. The MLPD and the Internationalist Alliance, and internationally the ICOR, have gained considerable influence as a revolutionary pole. Tapping this potential entails a major self-transformation for all those involved. That is why we are critical of the fact that, in some regions of Germany, too little progress has been made in building up the Internationalist Alliance, and thus many opportunities go unused. We must invest **more effort in international work** and win over other parties for it.

### **Where does the great unanimity in the MLPD come from, when all other parties engage in fierce infighting?**

The objective situation forces everyone to change. The MLPD, in contrast to the bourgeois parties or petty-bourgeois forces, is willing and able to change, and provided impressive proof of this in 2017! In such a situation, anyone who – like the DKP at the moment – is not prepared to reconsider, or even discuss, obviously wrong positions must come to grief.

Of course, a continued process of self-transformation also is necessary in the MLPD. For this purpose we even organize a whole criticism and self-criticism campaign, because for us it is a **revolutionary principle to work on ourselves**. There is no other way to master the new challenges at the highest level of party building that we have achieved so far! If we realize what we have set out to do in our self-transformation, next year can bring important progress towards a new upsurge of the struggle for socialism!

I would like to take this opportunity to express my **sincere thanks** to all our comrades for their tremendous commitment during the past year and for their good support in mastering the generation change in the party leadership. Forward to joint success in the year 2018!

**Thank you for the interview!**

1 It was still USD 611 billion in 2016.

2 PESCO = Permanent Structured Cooperation

3 Alliance of Hungary, Poland, Czech Republic and Slovakia within the EU

4 *Handelsblatt* of 23 November 2017

5 See *Rote Fahne Magazin*, No. 26, 2017, p. 14

6 *Der Spiegel*, No. 51, 2917

7 Postmodernism asserts among other things that reality ultimately can neither be recognized nor explained – certainly not by Marxism-Leninism – and that the working class is disappearing and class struggle is outdated.

8 Evaluating of election results in terms of pure numbers

9 Theoretical organ of the MLPD