

Change of Mood Forms against Rightward Development of the Government: Accept Challenges – Strengthen Forces!

Interview with Gabi Fechtner,
Chairwoman of the MLPD
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The fourth plenary session of the MLPD Central Committee was held recently. The *Rote Fahne* has already documented excerpts from the resolution adopted there, "Strengthen the fight against the rightward development of the government, develop a deep understanding of the strategic significance of the situation and resolutely seize the opportunities that are opening up". The results of the discussions have also been incorporated in several leaflets, brief statements and other publications.

The *Rote Fahne* editorial staff now had the opportunity to talk to the party chairwoman of the MLPD, Gabi Fechtner, about discussions and resolutions of the conference. Gabi Fechtner also answers questions that arose about them in the discussions and in the struggle for their practical implementation in these eventful times.

Rote Fahne: *After the deepest open political crisis in the Federal Republic of Germany, is stability now returning to political life?*

Gabi Fechtner: Certainly the government is currently able to act again, which means that the **open political crisis has been overcome for the time being**. But when Angela Merkel says that she now "firmly" assumes that the cooperation of the grand coalition will carry through the entire legislative period¹, it sounds more like whistling in the dark. The contradictions that led to the open outbreak of the political crisis have deepened if anything. The dispute between Merkel and Horst Seehofer actually was not about *whether* to pursue a reactionary refugee policy.

Seehofer had demanded national unilateralism, with border closures. CSU Secretary General Markus Blume justified the motto "*Germany first*" in principle: "*We must avoid the impression that German interests have to be second to the interests of other member states.*"² He received support from, among others, large sections of the CDU/CSU's so-called small business association. On 29 June, however, the four German monopoly associations (BDI, BDA, DIHK and ZDH)³ intervened in an unusual joint declaration and decided the dispute in favor of the Chancellor.

Above all, they called for "*maintaining our competitiveness on a global scale*" and demanded for that purpose a "*stable and determined government*". They pointed out that "*Europe's economic importance is enormous, especially for Germany*". That is why they are "*convinced that national unilateralism does more harm than good*". The majority of the solely ruling international finance capital in Germany insisted on not laying the ax to the foundations of internationalized capitalist production. Especially the internationalized monopolies in Germany fear a logistical loss of

1 „Farbe bekennen“, TV interview of ARD, 4 July 2018

2 Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 26 June 2018

3 BDI = Federation of German Industries, BDA = Confederation of German Employers' Associations, DIHK = Association of German Chambers of Commerce and Industry, ZDH = German Confederation of Skilled Crafts

1.5 billion euros per year⁴ as a result of border controls. Cynical as they are, they prefer to see refugees brutally stopped not at Bavarian borders but at African and non-European borders.

The intervention of the business associations is *not* directed against the rightward development of the government. Rather, this development should take place within the system of the petty-bourgeois mode of thinking as the main method of government. The more the worldwide contradictions intensify, the more the pressure within the ruling class will increase to replace it with an openly reactionary internal and external course. On an international scale, we are already vividly experiencing this predominant method of government through Trump's policy. In terms of rightward development, almost all of the monopolies here are already tightening the exploitation screw against the workers, insisting as a majority on "robust measures" in international competition. This **dispute over the main method of government** is therefore still smoldering – as an incendiary issue in the Merkel/Seehofer/Scholz government.

Nevertheless, the open political crisis that erupted at the end of June was resolved relatively quickly. Was it really as deep as claimed by the MLPD?

Indeed! Open political crises used to occur much less frequently. It is remarkable that this is the second time we have had an open political crisis in Germany since the 2017 federal elections. Above all, however, in earlier open political crises, even if they sometimes even led to changing the chancellor, the global political environment was considerably more stable. In the meantime, the **proneness to crisis of the imperialist world system** has **spread and deepened** enormously. It unfolds on the whole range of issues: such as the progressing transition to a global environmental catastrophe, the intensification of social conflicts and rifts, the political crises, and crises of confidence – and especially the **general tendency to imperialist preparation for war**.

The crisis of confidence in the bourgeois parties, bourgeois parliamentarianism and its institutions has reached a new peak. 78 percent declared in July 2018 that they were "*dissatisfied*" with the government, a sharp increase of 15 percentage points in just one month⁵. This was particularly evident in the district administrator and mayor elections in Thuringia. Only 47.2 percent of those eligible to vote took part in the elections, and almost half (45.7 percent) of them voted for voter alliances outside the bourgeois parties, which partly couldn't even put up enough candidates.

It doesn't look any more stable on the world stage. The summit meeting of the largest Western imperialist powers, the G7, recently failed even to reach a joint final declaration. The biggest "success story" at the last NATO meeting was that the US is not leaving NATO. These associations used to be stability anchors of world imperialism! So the government is very unstable. And you can bet that the next disagreements and open political crises are not far away.

International social **upheavals** are looming, **the likes of which we have not experienced since the Second World War**. Recently, the 4th plenum of the Central Committee met. It found that these developments **have the potential** to lead to **revolutionary fermentation**. In its discussions, the plenum concentrated on the question how the self-change of the MLPD and its Central Committee must be geared to the strategic dimensions of this development.

The MLPD has issued the slogan: Resignation of the government and new elections! Does this not create the illusion that the rightward development can be stopped this way?

4 Stuttgart Zeitung, 19 June 2018

5 ARD Deutschlandtrend poll, July 2018

First of all, it is important to **demand the resignation of the entire Merkel/Seehofer/Scholz government**. Seehofer's resignation is often demanded – the MLPD was the first to demand this – and is, of course, overdue. Although Merkel is more moderate in style and language, the government agrees on the basic lines of the rightward development. The shift to the right, begun in 2015 by the incumbent grand coalition, has meanwhile expanded into a far-reaching and increasingly **all-round rightward development of the government and the bourgeois parties**.

Minor concessions are still being made in family policy or labor law. A frantic attempt to stop the erosion of the severely diminished mass base. At the latest, however, when the surplus in the federal budget melts away in the event of a new crisis or when the huge national debt spills over due to a rise in interest rates, the attacks on the social interests of the masses will increase. We are already feeling a rollback in environmental protection, increased exploitation in the companies and the destruction of jobs and training places.

We say quite clearly: this **rightward development can and must be stopped**. Of course, the tendency to open reaction in imperialism is governed by law. It is becoming increasingly apparent with increasing rivalry, imperialist wars, etc. However, this fundamental development cannot be equated with concrete government policy and the method of governance. Wars are also law-governed in imperialism – and yet concrete wars can and must be prevented. You have to reckon with the masses and their struggles! They do not want to and will not surrender without resistance to this rightward development.

There are many examples in history, or even today, in which the decline of right-wing and backward governments was initiated – or they were overthrown – by mass struggles. In Mexico there have been repeated mass struggles in recent years against the ultra-right-wing President Peña Nieto. In early July he was replaced by López Obrador. For the first time in the country's history, he won the election as a presidential candidate who calls himself left-wing. "*A clear left turn in conservative Mexico*," commented *Stern* magazine.⁶

Of course, we encourage no illusions that by fighting against a concrete rightward development, the reactionary nature of imperialism will be eliminated. On the contrary, the MLPD stands precisely for combining the fight against the rightward development with the anchoring of the necessary revolutionary social change. But it is precisely **in order to be able to wage this struggle that we defend every democratic right, every freedom that has been fought for**, and we are fighting for the extension of democratic rights and liberties and against the fascization of the state apparatus.

To achieve this, **the workers' movement must move even more clearly to the forefront of the struggle against the government's rightward development**. The rightward development is particularly directed against the international coordination and revolutionization of the class struggle. This role of the working class is already building up in the role of the MLPD in these struggles, in the good participation of workers' delegations and outstanding speeches of their representatives, in important mass discussions on this at works meetings and in the trade unions. The demonstrations against the police laws were also supported by thousands of football club members, many of whom had not previously been politically active workers.

The working class has a strategic responsibility here: in 1920 it was in particular the miners who, with the general strike and armed struggles in the Ruhr area against the Kapp putsch, prevented the fascists from already taking power. Mine workers' struggles under the legendary slogan "The Fat

Man must go" ushered in the end of the ultra-reactionary Kohl government in 1997. All aspects of our work must therefore be directed towards the struggle against the rightward development – and here, too, our main fighting line must be realized.

In any case, the fact that the Internationalist Alliance, including its workers' platform, began to be built over two years ago proves to be absolutely right. We really had the lead here! **Strengthening this alliance further and building it as a school of a future united front is fully in line with the times.**

Some argue that the AfD would benefit from new elections?

Firstly, it is fundamentally wrong to spare an anti-people policy simply because there are even more extreme anti-people positions. Secondly, the aggravated demagogic, proto-fascistic, racist and nationalist AfD itself is the foster child of the rightward development and drives it forward. If the struggle for the resignation of the government is successfully developed, this will certainly be one of the best antidotes against the AfD. Thirdly, it is not right to avoid necessary social controversies – instead you must seek confrontation on the terrain on which you are strong yourself. And in the mass discussion in the politicized mood of election campaigns we are always strong! Within a few days the MLPD distributed over 115,000 leaflets on the issue of the resignation of the government and the demand for new elections. They met with much positive response in the polarized discussion.

By the way, the AfD is not upgraded through its activities in the election campaign on the street among the masses of people. Financially it is fattened up by state subsidies, with 400 million euros over the next four years alone. The "issues" of the AfD are deliberately brought forward in the bourgeois media. Political advisor Johannes Hillje has meticulously examined how the "*problem descriptions and interpretative approaches* [of the AfD] *are taken up by the media and other parties*"⁷. He criticizes e.g. the TV news program *Tagesschau*. It adopts the AfD's framework of interpretation that "*the party's positions are 'systemic criticism'*". In other words: the AfD does not need an election campaign – it profits through media, financial and bourgeois propagandistic upgrading.

Street election campaigning is our métier! Bourgeois parliamentarianism, as organized by those in power to deceive the population, is, of course, the terrain of those in power. People increasingly reject it. But the election campaign we conduct – street campaigning among the masses – we use for a tactical offensive for genuine socialism and against modern anti-communism. **We** would use this on a massive scale to debate the socialist alternative. **We** have the campaign capability. **We** have highly trained members. **We** are trained to start an election campaign from a standing start if necessary. Such an advantage in speed should not be underestimated. In direct debate, the MLPD is far superior to the bourgeois parties, including the ultra-reactionary variant AfD. So we will undoubtedly be able to use such new elections to work systematically on **breaking through our relative isolation – which is pursued by those in rule**. We will fight a mass struggle over the mode of thinking and for opinion leadership.

We actually experience to this day how the excellent election campaign of the Internationalist List / MLPD of 2017 continues to have an impact. It has increased our profile tremendously. Some people come back to us now because they remember that we fought this rightward development even before it became so obvious to everyone. None of the major bourgeois parties want new elections at

the moment – because they are all afraid of the opinion of the masses of people. Not us! These are the reasons for our demand for new elections – and not any considerations influenced by the petty-bourgeois parliamentary mode of thinking.

Mass protests with the demand for the resignation of the respective governments are also developing, completely justifiably, on the international level. They form important foundations for strengthening active popular resistance and the revolutionary forces. For example, general strikes in Argentina against the Macri government, mass protests in Eastern Europe, large workers' and popular demonstrations against the reactionary Austrian government and so on.

The "accustomed" world order is increasingly disintegrating, and the signs are pointing to preparations for war. Isn't that very dangerous?

Yes, we are in a phase of a **new quality of proneness to crises in the imperialist world system**, which is pushing towards a **violent redistribution of international spheres of power and influence**. This increases the general danger of a 3rd World War. At \$1.74 trillion, global military spending in 2017 was at its highest level since the end of the Cold War. Whenever armament is pushed so hard, this is an unmistakable sign that the rulers are preparing to continue their policies by means of war.

Inter-imperialist rivalry has become the main aspect. New constellations and alliances are constantly emerging. The US trade war is mainly directed against China, but also against the EU as the second decisive economic competitor of the US. At the same time, the US is also dependent on allies against China. That is why Trump even tries to "flirt" with Putin in order to break him out of the Shanghai alliance. It is hypocritical, however, when the EU depicts itself as a victim of the USA and a guarantor of freedom, free world trade and democracy. The EU itself is building up joint military units, tightening its customs policy and aiming to become the world's number one power.

Global economic development is characterized by a fluctuating stagnation with strong upward and downward swings. In April 2018 – ten years after the outbreak of the last global economic and financial crisis – industrial production in the countries of the euro zone reached only 95.3 percent of pre-crisis levels. In April 2018, the USA only reached 101.9 percent, and Germany is also only at 103.8 percent despite the export offensive.

In this situation, the spread and intensification of an open, global trade war could **trigger a new world economic and financial crisis**. Because an unfolded trade war can shake entire corporations and burst the already overexpanded speculative bubbles on the stock markets. The big problem for the rulers will then be that their **unique, joint and internationally coordinated crisis management, as practiced in 2008 and the years after, will hardly be practicable**. If only because the enormous state resources required for this are lacking. Global public debt has already reached record levels today. They represent 225 percent of global economic output. The trillions for rescuing banks and for government investment programs, such as for cushioning open mass redundancies and short-time work, are no longer so easily available.

The worst thing for the imperialists is not even the economic crash, but the fear that the **law of the unity of economic and political crises could this time have a more direct impact**. The contradictions have accumulated in such a way that the grown potential of a revolutionary world crisis can then come into effect: in a worldwide upswing in workers' and people's struggles – against the open shifting of the crisis burdens onto their backs.

The Marxist-Leninists and the other revolutionary forces must prepare for this universally. **The importance of a strong ICOR and strong revolutionary parties is thus growing considerably.** The experiences of the November Revolution 100 years ago impressively show: historical chances are lost if you take on the task of party building too late.

So what is the main tendency in social development? In June/July the rightward development of the government reached a new climax – but the protests against it did too...

We have a polarization unfolding on both sides. Of course, among some of the masses and the workers with low class consciousness, the propaganda that the AfD is a protest party still has an effect, or also the hatemongering against refugees. This always also means that class contradictions as a decisive "compass" for what is right or wrong, right or left, are suppressed.

But especially in the last few weeks it has become increasingly clear that **in the social polarization the progressive change of mood among the masses is the main, strengthening aspect.** In the first half of 2018 there were already 625,335 participants in 463 popular struggles, almost as many as in all of 2017. In all, 370,000 people took part in political protests and fighting actions explicitly against the government's rightward development this year in at least 150 actions. In July alone, 134,000 people demonstrated against it in 88 actions – and that in the middle of summer and during the holiday season. Since June, in 75 actions 50,000 people, the majority of them young people, have taken part nationwide in the activities of the "Seebrücke statt Seehofer" (*Sea bridge instead of Seehofer*) campaign against reactionary refugee policy. Major protests are directed against the new police laws – with over 100,000 participants so far, especially in Bavaria and North Rhine-Westphalia. In the first six months 142,000 people participated in anti-fascist actions, more than in 2017 or 2016 as a whole.

It should be noted that most of these **demonstrations were self-organized.** The demonstration on July 7, 2018, in Düsseldorf was prepared broadly and above party lines by numerous groups with the participation of the MLPD and other revolutionaries – and only supported by groups from the Greens, the Left Party or ver.di and the trade union IG BAU. However, it was not organized by the major trade unions and associations with buses and massive financial and logistical support, as were the major demos against TTIP 2016, for example. Thus, a **mass movement against the rightward development of the government is forming**, increasingly with elements of active popular resistance.

Especially among young people there is an intensive search for awareness and a lively debate about the necessary organization. Among adults, you notice that old bonds are increasingly dissolving and the willingness to enter into new ones is increasing. The growing breadth of demands and also the subjective motives why people go to these demonstrations became very clear at the demonstration "#ausgehetzt" on July 22 in Munich with 50,000 participants. This was the first mass demonstration **against various aspects of the government's rightward development.** There were different thematic meeting places and demonstration routes: groups that "*deal with migration and asylum and engage themselves against racism and war*"; people of the alliance "*#noPAG - NO to the Police Tasks Law*"; groups of "*all those who come from social conflicts*" or "*people whose subject is the equal treatment of all sexes and sexual identities*".⁷ Qualitatively significant are activities of refugees themselves who organize in solidarity, address the population in their area and stand up for unification against the repressive and criminalizing refugee policy of the government.

Naturally, an **intensive process of clarification must take place** in this movement. The demonstration in Munich was clearly positioned against Seehofer and the CSU. Some participants, however, tended to take Chancellor Merkel and the government as a whole – with SPD participation – out of the line of fire. We must promote this forward-looking movement, work actively and on an equal footing in it and, of course, also develop **Marxist-Leninist educational work about illusions such as those in the supposed "constitutional state"**. It is particularly important to continue to come to grips with the petty-bourgeois anti-communist mode of thinking in the progressive movements.

Cancellations of accounts, attacks by the state apparatus on the occasion of the Rebellious Music Festival, ban on use of the Cultural Hall in the Horster Mitte... What exactly is going on in the proceedings of the ruling powers against the MLPD?

First of all, it has to be said that all these attacks were reactions of the rulers to **our** successful work. It is no coincidence that the progressing criminalization of the MLPD since the tactical offensive for the 2017 national election campaign has been directed against focal points that express the particularly close connection between the MLPD and the masses. The attack by the state apparatus on the occasion of the Rebellious Music Festival at Whitsun in Thuringia, which was directed primarily against the MLPD and leading officials such as Stefan Engel and their youth league, marks **a new quality of the attacks against the MLPD**. It was carried out directly by Seehofer's Federal Ministry of the Interior.

In this situation, we immediately organized a "small" tactical offensive – even before the other side could start its propaganda campaign. In the surrounding places this was *the* topic of conversation – full of sympathy for us. In view of this, the press also reported positively, regionally and nationwide. On Friday morning – in the evening the festival was to begin – the police attack was already in full swing. Two hundred-strong police contingents encircled the area, carrying out checks in the surrounding areas. A contingency plan had been drawn up, assuming numerous serious injuries. Even when the Meiningen Administrative Court ruled in favor of the festival, the responsible police forces were not willing to withdraw at first. Apparently, consultation with "the very top" was also necessary for this. And it wasn't until Friday afternoon that they declared their pitiful capitulation.

A violent police operation on this basis would have ended in disaster for the state apparatus. They had to abandon their offensive – and in the strategy and tactics of warfare this is the weakest moment of the opponent. I would like to congratulate the whole party, our youth league and all supporters and fellow fighters, allies and artists on this **100 percent victory against Seehofer's Federal Ministry of the Interior!**

The result of the fight against these police attacks is in sharp contrast to the situation after the G20 protests in Hamburg. There the rulers succeeded in spreading a reactionary agitation throughout the country about allegedly violent "left-wing extremist" demonstrators. On this basis, a wave of criminalization began, with public hounding on the Internet, international arrests, etc. **Against the attacks on the Rebellious Music Festival** it was very important to strictly pursue the mass line on the basis of **confidence in the masses**. Also against the widespread misconception that people in Thuringia are above-average right-wing. The fact that **determined and well-considered** work was done here, that trust was placed in the masses and the party, and that **opinion leadership was systematically achieved** are important lessons for future similar disputes.

Shortly after this defeat, the politically motivated **ban on the use of the Cultural Hall of the Horster Mitte** in Gelsenkirchen came, with flimsy justifications. This aims at the heart of the party with its party headquarters. This only shows that the rulers are not willing to stop defaming, criminalizing and depriving the MLPD of its rights. Here, too, we immediately went on the offensive. Many people in the district and throughout Gelsenkirchen now regard this as an attack on themselves, on *their* cultural hall and *their* interests.

How does the new quality of the attacks on the MLPD fit in with the alleged insignificance repeatedly attested to by state and other bourgeois institutions in recent decades?

More and more people have recently **changed** their **perception of the MLPD**; they have respect for our backbone, and our determined spirit gives them courage. This growing respect also builds on the experiences that people have had with us in recent decades: the important role of the MLPD in leading workers' struggles, the selfless commitment with the ICOR to build up the health-care center in Kobanê/Northern Syria, its forward-looking youth work, its consistent environmental policy position, that it does not give in with regard to the refugee issue, the solidarity and cohesion. Even if the MLPD is undoubtedly still a small force and there is still a lot to be done so that the masses can deal successfully with modern anti-communism.

Another key element of the developing change of mood is that many **increasingly view the MLPD with fewer reservations**. There are significantly fewer fears of contact. We notice this at various demonstrations, where many, especially young people, meet us personally for the first time and notice that the distorted, anti-communist image, which, emanating from the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution, extends as far as the petty-bourgeois left-wing movement, does not work.

Criminalization and threats against Stefan Engel similar to those against a terrorist "*dangerous person*"; terminations of accounts on suspicion of "*terrorist financing*"; alleged endangerment of "life and limb" in the Horster Mitte Cultural Hall: this is certainly **heavy artillery in the manipulation of public opinion**. It is certainly a high requirement to make a struggle your own which the rulers defame as support for terrorism. In view of this, it is impressive how **broad, self-assured and well-founded the solidarity with the MLPD against attacks and criminalization** is.

Modern anti-communism only works if someone has confidence in the prevailing capitalism and feels attached to it. They say it has to be defended against terrorism. This "problem" has not remained hidden from the rulers either. Up to now, for example, the reports on the protection of the constitution have deliberately spread the unreal picture of the MLPD as a completely insignificant, notoriously unsuccessful party. In contrast, North Rhine-Westphalia's report on the protection of the constitution published in July must now state (in the same vein as some from other federal states) "*a considerable increase in voters*" in the 2017 federal election campaign, and it observes "*intensive billposting activities and a high level of mobilization*" as well as "*an exceptionally high willingness to donate*". It is no coincidence that the successful establishment and development of the Internationalist Alliance is also being closely monitored.

Of course, the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution does not do this because it feels that this is worthy of recognition. From the point of view of the intelligence services, the

registration of our successes is intended as a reminder to various government agencies **not to underestimate the revolutionary potential of the MLPD.**

We **will not be intimidated** by such attacks. Of course, attacks on democratic rights and freedoms, accounts or houses are also intended to harm us, impair us and, in the eyes of the masses, degrade and criminalize us. That is why we **should not underestimate such attacks.** The rulers are apparently still at odds about how the MLPD is to be dealt with at present: Should it continue to be treated as "not relevant" and thus kept in relative isolation as far as possible? Or should it be openly attacked, criminalized and suppressed – at the price of a mass debate about the Marxist-Leninists that we would make good use of?

At present, we do not yet have a general change of tactics towards the MLPD, but it is obviously being prepared. For example, the public prosecutor's office in Gera strictly refused to open criminal investigations at all into the criminalization and discrimination of the MLPD and its leading representative Stefan Engel. Allegedly, the behavior of the police was justified because they had worked on the basis of information from the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution. In addition, the police and the letter to Stefan Engel as a "dangerous person" have a "margin of discretion", because the MLPD stands in the public eye for the "*revolutionary overthrow of the free, democratic basic constitutional order*". In this way, **far-reaching possibilities are to be created and legitimized in the style of repressive laws punishing people for their political convictions, in order to take arbitrary action against the MLPD.**

The open state attacks against the MLPD are one side of the coin. The other is that the state apparatus is increasingly trying to extend its reactionary corrosive work against the MLPD within the progressive movement, too. The state, for example the Ministry of Family Affairs, is investing a great deal in the divisive "anti-German" foundations and organizations. These in turn are increasingly directing their main thrust towards the MLPD. They work closely with government agencies and bourgeois parties. In 2014, for example, the Amadeu Antonio Foundation received 870,000 euros in government grants. It publishes the Internet magazine *Belltower*, which is currently the driving force behind the demand to exclude the MLPD from anti-fascist alliances. The newspaper had been specially renamed in 2017, because "right-wing extremism was no longer only in view". It is no coincidence that the President of the Office for the Protection of the Constitution of Thuringia, Stephan Kramer, sits on the Board of Trustees of the Amadeu Antonio Foundation.

A few liquidators in Thuringia promptly split the "anti-fascist counsel" there by excluding the MLPD. An absolutely destructive act in view of the fact that especially in Thuringia, as a concentration point of the fascists, a strong non-party aligned anti-fascist movement is necessary. And it was precisely these anti-German forces who capitulated to the neo-fascist concerts in Themar in 2016. This "front" must therefore also be taken into account in the future. Not because the "anti-Germans" are particularly strong or influential, but because this shows us what covert means and methods the state apparatus employs that only seemingly come from the movement.

Shortly after the termination of the police mission at Whitsun, you issued the slogan of "follow-up". How far has the MLPD come in this – especially in Thuringia?

The occurrences around the Rebellious Music Festival confirm our assessment of **Thuringia as the weakest link of the ruling class.** From their point of view it is, of course, highly problematic that we now successfully launched a tactical offensive there, of all places, on May Day, with partnerships of all MLPD *Land* associations with regions of Thuringia. We appeared at 16 locations

on May Day, organized ten local film and discussion events for Karl Marx's 200th birthday and made many new contacts. This is also a preparation for taking part in the 2019 state elections in all of Thuringia with the Internationalist List / MLPD.

Undoubtedly, the attack in connection with the Rebellious Music Festival was also an answer to this. After our tactical victory, we had to follow up to take full advantage of **the opponent's weakest moment, the interruption of his attempted offensive against us**, and to deal him further blows. At first, this was not understood everywhere in the party and was approached rather hesitantly in some regions. These tactics proved to be 100 percent correct: young people in particular find it very good to stand up to the right-wing government with its police force – and even gain victories. Victories against people like Dirk Löther are, of course, a source of great pleasure and spark interest and curiosity in an in-depth discussion. He, former head of the Saalfeld State Police Inspectorate and one of those responsible for the failure to clear up the NSU scandal, is now the failed head of operations against the Rebellious Music Festival and the MLPD.

So what will happen now in Thuringia?

Of course, the work in Thuringia is a special school for learning to work correctly in the polarization of society. Here the progressive change of mood is particularly pronounced, as is the infamous demagogy of the AfD and other proto-fascist or even openly fascist forces. We must learn to do the work correctly in this situation: To exploit the great potential for organizing especially young people by showing a clear profile in the polarization. To intensify polarization against the openly reactionary forces, government and monopolies, To strengthen unity within the workers' and popular movement and help to cope with the different variants of the petty-bourgeois mode of thinking. To make clear the ineptness of the Left Party with its illusions about "taming" capitalism, but not treat it as the main opponent – and strengthen the unity of action against the rightward development together with committed members.

All this can be achieved with surety only through the conscious application of the dialectical method. The tactical offensive in Thuringia is understood and will be implemented by the **entire party as a school of party building**. It is of nationwide importance to inflict further defeats on the rulers at their weakest link and to strengthen the revolutionary forces significantly. This must be expressed in particular in stepping up **Marxist-Leninist youth work as mass tactics of party building and the building of strong *Rebell* groups**. For this, the party must first of all align its structures and strengthen the existing *Rebell* groups in the youth rebellion with party members in the youth league.

*Young people seem to be clearly left-wing in this social polarization. Is this already reflected in the strengthening of *Rebell* and MLPD?*

Since the beginning of the year we have seen a clear revival in the critical, self-critical debate on this issue, an increase in youth policy activities and a sensitization of the party to invest more energy in youth work – and also significantly more interest and applications from young people for admission. The offensive against the criminalization of MLPD, *Rebell* and the festival has forged closer bonds among all participants. The **main field** of our Marxist-Leninist youth work is the **organization of the youth rebellion**, currently mainly against the rightward development of the government. Marxist-Leninist youth work as mass tactics of party building cannot be successful if separated from this.

The rebellion of youth is reviving. The majority at the large demonstrations against the police laws were young people or young adults. On 22 June, there was a school boycott "They're deporting – we're striking", with activities in Dresden, Leipzig, Würzburg, Munich, Kassel, Nuremberg, Berlin, Düsseldorf, Münster and elsewhere, in which often hundreds of young people took part. The necessary and also possible **mass groups of the *Rebell*** cannot be built up separated from that. More and more often situations arise in which such large groups can be won. The decisive question is then their consolidation.

The **scientific method of organizational and cadre work of a new type** then means, with regard to the concrete people in the concrete group, to realize the correct organizational forms and "tailor-made" cadre work appropriate for the concrete tasks in struggle. It takes place in the dialectics of the development into an organized *Rebell* and a Marxist-Leninist. The three fundamental interrelations between MLPD and *Rebell*, the ideological-political leadership by the party, the practical cooperation and the promotion of the organizational independence of *Rebell*, can only **be successful with the participation of all party members**.

In this context it is said again and again– especially by comrades in youth work – that above all the system of youth work now must be developed. But this does not go far enough. Put into practice, this would just mean "perfecting" the separate area of responsibility 'youth work'. Conversely, **youth work must be done on the entire spectrum of the system of rank-and-file work** – and must be understood as mass tactics of party building. On the main line of struggle, the work in and at the training workshops, vocational schools, trade union youth work; in the residential areas, building up the *Red Foxes* and work with parents; in environmental work and in active popular resistance, to put the rebellion of the youth in the center, etc. etc. etc.

This is also the aim when every comrade is encouraged to take an active part in youth work, plus the target figure of 30 percent of the forces that fully concentrate on youth work. This is, of course, a **far-reaching self-change of the entire work**, and we have set the task that each group must develop a "battle plan" for this purpose.

There are also considerable "battles" in society in the ideological field. How is the MLPD positioning itself for this?

The **essence of the progressive change of mood is the search of the masses for a societal alternative**. Among the masses, this is also essentially a process of **ideological reorientation**. We must do justice to this through our theoretical work and provide answers to the questions of the masses. But also so that our members and functionaries will become better and better able to conduct the complicated debates over world outlook in a convincing manner. This means that in such a situation we should not limit ourselves to political arguments, activities and so on. This would not meet the need for ideological clarification.

Today's prevailing forms of bourgeois ideology and the system of the petty-bourgeois mode of thinking systematically **obliterate the differences** between proletarian and bourgeois ideology, materialism and idealism, especially in the natural sciences. In this way, the rulers manipulate the thinking, feeling and acting of the masses comprehensively. Positivism, pragmatism, postmodernism and so on are given a progressive nimbus and presented as something that is a *kind of third ideology*, beyond proletarian and bourgeois ideology. But these are all forms of bourgeois ideology. In a class society, all ideas and world views bear the stamp of a class. The attempts to

obliterate this are basically nothing new. In his work *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, Lenin already took them apart systematically.

In the Central Committee we discussed that we must first develop an orientation movement for the elaboration of **issues 36/37** of the theoretical organ *Revolutionärer Weg*: "**The Crisis of Bourgeois Ideology, and the Doctrine of the Mode of Thinking**". Among other things, we study the foundations of Marxism-Leninism and our ideological-political line in relation to these questions and base our entire work on them. Otherwise there would be the danger of being influenced by this ideological chaos.

Applying the new type of **organizational and cadre work as a scientific method** has proven to be the right guideline: It mediates between theoretical and practical work and also carries out cadre work so that more and more comrades are enabled to further develop the ideological-political line. Also to enable the whole party to adopt the ideological-political line critically and self-critically and to put it into practice creatively. So the most important thing for the whole party in this situation is to do **ideological-political work** much more intensively. For this we need more public study groups, principled evaluation of experiences, fundamental discussion, more intensive self-study, more dialectics courses – also in the *Land* associations – and a stronger concentration of the Central Committee on the drafting of issues 36/37 of the organ *Revolutionärer Weg*.

You warned against underestimating the changes that are afoot and the challenges they entail. And at the same time you propagated more calm and thoroughness in work. Isn't that like trying to square the circle?

It is not at all easy to work properly in these situations: quickly, but without becoming a pawn in the constant distortions and manipulative maneuvers of the rulers. Comprehensively – and at the same time grasping the key links. Offensively – but not without taking the necessary defensive measures. Ambitiously – but also keeping calm, clear and thinking things through in depth and perspective, right up to planned action. Weigh the ideological-political side as the leading factor, combine it with the training and consolidation of new people and the creation of the right forms of organization.

This conscious dialectical approach to work has been the subject of **important critical and self-critical discussions** in our leadership work in **the practical test of the recent months**. One can say: The Central Committee, the whole party and the youth league have passed a baptism of fire here! We have learned a lot, but also learned about limits that we still have to overcome. Such culminations express in particular the strengths and weaknesses of each individual, the collective, etc., and it is worth evaluating them carefully and drawing conclusions. In the coming weeks, the Central Committee will also visit the party and the youth league and discuss these questions.

It is important to concentrate the **forces on the essentials**. In some cases, important new developments were not recognized in our *Land* associations and, under the premise of the "fight against actionism", they have not directed their work effectively and flexibly towards them. In the fight against the worship of spontaneity, on the other hand, it is crucial *how* we use these tasks to strengthen the party. Comrades from Berlin-Mitte reported that they failed to distribute the leaflet adequately immediately after the Rebellious Music Festival, but at the same time worked under great strain. They evaluated this and, for the leaflet on the resignation of the government, deliberately combined their forces and included friends and contacts. They succeeded in distributing many thousands of leaflets in Berlin, half of them by people who are not party members up till now.

I also discussed critically with comrades from Stuttgart why the work at a demonstration mainly attended by young people was not primarily used to ask everyone whether he or she wants to become a member of the *Rebell*, and to actively anchor the *Rebell*. That is how you strengthen your forces in the struggle, grow together, learn from each other – new people become active carriers of the work – instead of wearing ourselves down because the same "hard core" of people always does the work. This also strengthens the concern addressed by the respective protests, because the degree of organization and awareness grow.

Above all, the situation requires many more active participants in our ranks – in the struggle for genuine socialism. Only then, in the face of the rapidly changing world situation, the emerging struggles and the growing demands on the Marxist-Leninists, will we be able to accept the new challenges, strengthen our forces and master our important tasks well!

Thank you very much for the interview!