



Shortly after an important process of the unification and consultation of the Central Committee of the MLPD the *Rote Fahne* spoke with Party Chairwoman Gabi Fechtner.

## “In stormy times you build windmills and not shelter from the wind!”

**Rote Fahne: The MLPD has been in the focus of increased state anti-communist repression for several years. Did it now really have to go so far and attract the anger of the entire array of anti-communists by erecting a Lenin statue in front of its party headquarters?**

When you recognize a problem you have to "take it by the horns" and not try to evade it. Even if criticism of capitalism is clearly increasing, anti-communism is today the greatest obstacle to taking up the struggle for a liberated socialist society. In the broad public a distorted picture of socialism still prevails. This anti-communism cannot be skillfully circumvented or be overcome by carefully giving food for thought. People need to understand the content, motives and methods of anti-communism in its various forms. They have to come to grips with the petty-bourgeois anti-communist mode of thinking. At the same time **anti-communism itself is in a deep crisis**, which coincides with the deepest crisis of the imperialist world system in post-war history. The revolutionary path of the liberation of humanity from imperialist wars, exploitation, oppression, hunger, environmental destruction, and socialist construction as an alternative to the crisis chaos of capitalism are connected with the person of Lenin. This is not at all what the ruling classes need in such a situation. With the statue of Lenin we openly challenged anti-communism. From open fascists to the SPD, the whole range of bourgeois parties, mass media and historians feel obliged to take action against it. The fact that it came so openly on the table enabled us to tear anti-communism to pieces. Since February, we have been engaged in public in an open exchange of blows with anti-communists of every hue. **We** determined the topics and could keep the initiative on our side at all times in the debate, while Gelsenkirchen's city leadership was constantly responding. Suddenly, however, tens of thousands of people were faced with the challenge of positioning themselves. We did not leave this debate over to the spontaneous course of events. Thousands of fundamental discussions were held, film events were organized, brochures and literature by and about Lenin were sold, and Lenin was extensively made the top topic

in the social media. In the course of these mass discussions we succeeded in changing **the mode of thinking of a certain mass of people** about this fundamental issue and in **changing public opinion**. This was particularly noticeable directly in Gelsenkirchen, where really everyone was discussing this topic. We did not carry out the struggle in a provocative and sectarian way, but aimed at convincing people. With new arguments every day, no position of the opponent, no lie or slander and certainly no question remained unanswered. We polemicized offensively against anti-communist slander. Especially against the background of the apparent crises in the world, our demand for a **democratic discussion about scientific socialism was taken up**. Many people took a closer look at Lenin and the socialist Soviet Union for the first time. They began to question their reservations, the judgments which they had previously regarded as irrevocable.

Since its founding in 1982, the MLPD already organized many very good events, e.g. on the 100th anniversary of the October Revolution. However, the media presence of these events mostly went towards zero. That was different now. From more than 350 media reports, tens of millions of people in more than 50 countries learned about the erection of the artistic Lenin statue. The broad resonance cannot be explained by the event alone. These events document a **nationwide and lasting breakthrough of the relative isolation of the MLPD**. This in turn would not have been possible without the MLPD having already **previously fought through a new role in society as a whole**. Moreover, with the **movement "Don't give anti-communism a chance!"** we are hitting **a nerve of the time**. In view of the recent crises, more and more people are looking for a societal alternative to capitalism. This discussion and the moving ceremony strengthened the determined spirit of many critical, militant and revolutionary people. These offensive-aggressive tactics had a particularly strong impact on young people, who discussed the erection of the statue on the Internet thousands of times and came to the Lenin statue on the opening weekend in large numbers. This experience must be evaluated and creatively assimilated by the entire party. Not because we now want to erect statues everywhere – but this approach, this **new self-confidence opposing anti-communism must become widespread**. The unveiling of the statue of Lenin was not the climax of the "Don't give anti-communism a chance" movement, but only the brilliant start. The ground exists to come to grips with anti-communism on a massive scale! The time is ripe for the movement "Don't give anti-communism a chance!"

### **Rote Fahne: What is the aim of this movement?**

It is about the whole basic attitude towards a situation in which class **contradictions are greatly intensifying**. In such a situation, you can't shut yourself away and go into a defensive position. Instead, you must "build windmills", i.e. find the appropriate means and methods to transform the stormy winds into productive energy. Incidentally, a role in society as a whole does not mean that everyone agrees. It means that a growing part of the masses are coming to grips with anti-communism and **that our opponents also have to make special reference to us**. All attempts to prevent or discredit the statue by incitement, counter-demonstrations or fascist threats largely failed in the end!

**Rote Fahne: You have extended the slogan "Don't give anti-communism a chance!" by a further slogan "Don't give anti-communism, fascism, racism and anti-Semitism a chance!" What is the reason for this?**

It makes it clear that the struggle against **fascism, racism and anti-Semitism can only be fought resolutely on the basis of the struggle against anti-communism.** Anti-communism always appears as if it were an irrefutable truth. Basically, however, due to its crisis it must constantly change and appear to adapt to the spirit of the times. Since the end of the 1980s, a modern anti-communism had especially emerged, which presents itself as being very democratic and progressive. In the meantime, this form of anti-communism, as a dam against the influence of scientific socialism, has penetrated all forms of the petty-bourgeois workers', people's and youth movement. The latest variation of modern anti-communism is the assertion of a "leftist" anti-Semitism, which is intended to discredit the justified criticism of Israel's imperialist policy towards Palestine. With the rightward development of the government and the bourgeois parties, however, openly reactionary anti-communism has also become socially established through the rise of the AfD. Bourgeois anti-fascism and anti-racism, but also bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ecologism and bourgeois and petty-bourgeois feminism – they all have made modern anti-communism their foundation. And so they have become blunt swords in the struggle against fascism and racism, for the liberation of women or the struggle for the protection of the natural environment.

**Anti-communism is the core of bourgeois ideology** and has a record of dramatic historical crimes: German Hitlerite fascism, the pogroms with millions of murdered communists in Indonesia, persecution in Turkey or Iran, the purge of the McCarthy era in the USA or the KPD ban in Germany. All these crimes were justified with open anti-communism and leave a bloody trail through many decades of capitalist rule. Not everyone has to be a communist. But all progressive and democratically-minded forces must recognize the reactionary character of anti-communism and free themselves from these shackles. The broadly supported **non-partisan appeal of the Internationalist Alliance** is a good start, which must now be widely spread with tens of thousands of signatures from all social spectrums.

**Rote Fahne: Covid-19 still keeps the world in its grip. Officially over 600,000 have already died. What does that say about the state of society?**

The corona pandemic spread worldwide within a very short time. More than 18.5 million people have already been officially tested positive and more than 700,000 (as of 5 August 2020) have died from the virus. The imperialist countries of the world have failed in their crisis management. This already started by rejecting the warnings of the WHO about such a pandemic in 2012. The provision of masks and mass tests did not fit the orientation of the health-care systems to maximum profits. Most countries were then not prepared for this. The same applies to the shutdown of production facilities that are hazardous to health or comprehensive information and educational work on sensible social distancing and hygiene measures. **As if under a magnifying glass, the continued uncontrolled unfolding of the pandemic worldwide shows the decadence of the imperialist world system.**

So far, it is not foreseeable how the imperialists will get the corona crisis under control. This would only be possible in a truly sustainable way with a vaccine, whose development, effectiveness and availability for the masses, however, are still uncertain. Again and again there are alarming reports: that the virus not only causes a lung disease but also afflicts all organs, that it mutates and thus becomes more contagious and more difficult to treat, that subsequent to the illness immunity is not guaranteed, that it has various long-term consequences, including neurological ones. In order to clarify all these questions and to be

able to combat this new type of virus in a targeted manner, we would first have to carry out **a scientific analysis and qualify its character**. Instead, a real confusion prevails ranging from trivialization to panic, in the competition between the different schools of virologists and their research results, which in turn represent different interest groups.

Whoever wants to open up schools and day-care centers to the public without any conditions or restrictions, so that parents can once again be available for exploitation in the factories without any restrictions, simply spreads the message that there is no risk of infection among children. Virologists who contradict this are being tyrannized for it. The large demonstrations against wearing masks, corona tests and health care provisions, organized mainly by reactionary, fascist parties and organizations, together with esotericists and anti-vaccine activists, serve capitalist propaganda. The fact that these demonstrations also uphold some correct demands, such as the struggle against restrictions on democratic rights and freedoms, is no reason to attribute a progressive character to them or to take part in them. We see, particularly in the USA, Brazil or even in Great Britain, that downplaying of the pandemic has led to an explosive spreading. It is often not so easy to distinguish between a justified struggle for democratic rights and freedoms and, at the same time, the demand for comprehensive health protection, as the MLPD has done from the beginning. The task is to patiently persuade the masses and to oppose any inhuman, reactionary underestimation of the pandemic.

The confusion, which is partly deliberately created, is also an **expression of the crisis of bourgeois science**. As a counterbalance to this, an enormous solidarity, discipline and selflessness developed among the masses at the same time, such as in neighborly help, in the solidarity of the workforces, etc. This, however, must also be strengthened against this confusion and underestimation of the illness.

### **Rote Fahne: If even corona is not yet under control, when will the widely predicted "V-shaped boom" of the economy come?**

The imperialist governments have misjudged the economic crisis from the beginning by declaring it to be a consequence of the corona crisis. Since then, the forecasts of Minister Altmaier have been constantly renewed and corrected. In February, Altmaier declared that through the government's crisis management, nobody would be unemployed and that there would be an upward trend again starting in April, once the corona crisis was contained. In the meantime, economic output – the gross national product – dropped suddenly in the second quarter by the historic figure of 11.7 percent in Germany. And a rapid recovery of the economy is not in sight. The federal government's propaganda purposely aims at replacing a scientific understanding of the capitalist crisis of capitalism in order to reassure the masses. But that won't work. Fact is that the **global economic and financial crisis was already initiated in mid-2018**. Since then, the growth of industrial production and the gross domestic product has been declining in most imperialist countries. In 2018, an absolute decline of industrial production already began in all European imperialist centers and in Japan, from 2019 in further imperialist countries. However, the **permanent crisis management** of the ruling classes, which still results from the management of the last world economic and financial crisis, could initially prevent an abrupt collapse. Since the last world economic and financial crisis in 2008, the policy of "cheap money" ensured that the money flows were kept running artificially. At some point, however, the contradictions underlying the crisis had to unload themselves openly and uncontrollably: The concrete trigger for this was the corona crisis. **Since then, the global economic and financial crisis has unfolded internationally in an uncontrolled**

**manner.** In April 2020, industrial production in the USA fell by 16.3 percent compared to the previous year, in Japan by 15.3 percent, in Great Britain by 23.6 percent and in Italy by 43.3 percent. In Germany, the decline is particularly severe at 30.2 percent. Exports from Germany in April even fell by 33.6 percent compared to the previous year.

During the last major world economic and financial crisis 2008–2014, the supermonopolies shifted to the new imperialist countries, which recovered relatively quickly. But this time the new imperialist countries are also affected: In Brazil, industrial production collapsed by 25.6 percent in April 2020, in India by 22.7 percent in March, in China by 13.5 percent in January and February 2020 compared to the previous year due to the earlier corona outbreak. The real reason for this global economic crisis is the **chronic over-accumulation of capital**. This makes it more difficult to invest the simultaneously growing capital in a way that maximizes profit and must find vent in a crisis-like manner. This problem became **chronic** with the reorganization of international production.

The balance sheet capital of the 500 largest international monopolies still amounted to 105 trillion US dollars in 2007. By 2018, it had ballooned to 134 trillion. That is four times their turnover. In addition, various structural crises have an intensifying effect. A world financial crisis and international stock market crisis emerged. Behind all these naked figures are **serious consequences for the working class and the broad masses**. Worldwide mass unemployment is already rising dramatically. In the second quarter of 2020, working hours equivalent to more than 400 million full-time jobs were cut worldwide.<sup>1</sup> In Germany, in June there were officially already 637,000 more people unemployed than a year ago, a total of 2.9 million.

The situation of the masses in countries with openly **reactionary and proto-fascist governments** like the USA, Brazil, Turkey or Israel is almost catastrophic. With their fascist view of humanity they play down the catastrophic consequences of the pandemic until today and deliberately thwart the necessary measures to mercilessly fulfill monopoly interests. The burdens of the crisis are shifted to the masses with particular brutality. In the USA, by far the country most affected by corona, but also in Brazil, Great Britain or Israel, the health-care system is collapsing in many regions. With the anger of the population about this behavior, most of these governments – and with them various proto-fascist parties – have fallen into a crisis, which is expressed in increasing strikes and demonstrations.

**Rote Fahne: Doesn't the crisis management of the Merkel/Scholz/Seehofer government have to be described as reasonably sound compared to the situation in the USA?**

Governments which, as in Germany, still adhere to the system of the petty bourgeois mode of thinking as the main method of government have not dared to take an openly inhumane approach like Trump's. This is also a tribute to the growing critical consciousness of the population. As in other countries, billions are actually being spent to mitigate the consequences of the crisis. Nevertheless, for all its humble appearance, the government in Germany has ultimately fulfilled **its function as a service provider for solely ruling international finance capital**. From the very beginning, the aim was not primarily the health and social issues of the workers and broad masses, but the *"return to the growth path"* demanded *"the containment of corona infections"*, as the Institute for World Economy in Kiel gratefully openly puts it.<sup>2</sup> The Federal Government has tailored its national crisis program with a volume of 1.3 trillion euros primarily to the international supermonopolies from Germany. In the meantime, an abyss is opening up as to who is

actually being supported by the government measures. Take Wirecard, for example. The German government, various secret services, auditors and state control bodies are deeply involved in this further **case of state monopolistic crime** after VW. Wirecard's exposed "business conduct" reveals a decadent monopolistic way of thinking, to be prepared to do anything in order to belong to solely ruling international finance capital. Covered for years and internationally promoted by Merkel, Scholz, Altmaier, etc., Wirecard is now the **first DAX-30 company to file for insolvency**. Other groups such as Lufthansa, Kaufhof, TUI or ThyssenKrupp are also in an existential crisis and can only be saved with extensive state aid and structural reorganization on the backs of the employees. By the way, it is somewhat misleading when the Left Party denounces the fact that Lufthansa is carrying out mass redundancies **despite** state subsidies. On the contrary, the state subsidies and the mass redundancies have the common purpose of strengthening this German supermonopoly against imperialist competition, for example from Arab countries. At the same time, Merkel's crisis management has used the situation to get people to agree to **measures to reduce democratic rights and freedoms**. The government has given itself far-reaching decision-making powers for its crisis management, even without parliament, and can now take important decisions by decree instead of by law. While Merkel still called the absolutely sensible masks "virus sling shots" until April (BILD from 1 April 2020), on 22 March 2020 she already imposed a ban on meeting in public with more than two people! With the ban on demonstrations and larger events, she has intervened severely above all in the democratic rights and freedoms of the workers' movement. So the Federal Government is also pursuing a **reactionary crisis management**, which is increasingly going to the right.

**Rote Fahne: In the last global economic and financial crisis from 2008 to 2014, the ruling powers were still surprisingly successful in coming together with their internationally coordinated crisis management. What is different this time?**

For one thing, in the current crisis the bourgeois crisis management already met with immensely intensified inter-imperialist contradictions.

The failure of crisis management mainly emerges from the fact that **crisis-dampening measures with regard to the world economic and financial crisis and the corona pandemic cross each other out in capitalism**: What could boost the capitalist economy makes the corona infections skyrocket. What could effectively contain the corona infections inhibits the capitalist profit economy. And this problem affects all countries, no matter which concrete method of government they choose at present. The respective monopoly federations are promoting this competition, that whoever boosts his economy first is taking the lead in the inter-imperialist competition. Wherever restrictions have been hastily lifted without sufficient health protection, infection rates are now on the rise again. A **"second wave" has already begun in various countries** and is by no means ruled out in Germany either. Numerous countries such as France, the USA, Israel and also various regions of Germany have now had to resort to sharper lockdowns again. In Germany, too, the government had negligently and rapidly implemented the ultimatum of the monopoly association BDI<sup>3</sup>, issued at the end of May, demanding the loosening of restrictions and cancellation of important health measures. As a result, in recent weeks the pandemic has tended to develop again uncontrolled. Initially in hotspots in refugee accommodations, the meat processing industry, in companies with mass accommodations for employees, in retirement and nursing homes. **However**, probably as a result of tourism, the pandemic has also now spread **nationwide**, which is even more dangerous because it is so much more difficult to trace the chains of infection.

The early loosening of restrictions also sent a devastating signal to the masses that health protection need not be taken so seriously anymore. Of course it must be criticized if people behave unreasonably, but the government has at least a share of the responsibility for this.

There is another catch to crisis management: this is an international global economic and financial crisis and an international health crisis. But crisis management everywhere is largely geared to national interests. The enormous sums of money spent on national crisis management, which add up to more than 14 trillion euros<sup>4</sup> worldwide, are used to emerge as winners in international competition. UNO, EU, G7, G20, the WTO and NATO are largely incapable of action against this background. **It is impossible** that such **national crisis management can solve an international crisis!** For the German monopolies, this development is particularly devastating due to their great dependence on exports and dependence on functioning international trade routes and supply chains.

Crisis management also pursues as an essential goal the suppression of struggles against the shifting of the burdens of the crisis. The dismantling of democratic rights and freedoms carried out by numerous governments under the pretext of a "*threat situation in a crisis*"<sup>5</sup> goes as far as the introduction of fascist emergency regimes, such as that of Orban in Hungary or, in part, Trump in the USA. Thus, in contrast to the last crisis, a **tangible crisis of bourgeois crisis management** quickly emerged. This is an essential reason why a general societal crisis of the imperialist world system can develop in a short period of time.

### **Rote Fahne: What do you understand by a general societal crisis?**

A general societal crisis of the imperialist world system means a **comprehensive crisis occurrence**. It is characterized by profound shocks of the **economic basis and the political superstructure**. The mutually aggravating interaction of the world economic and financial crisis and the corona crisis is now already generating the deepest shocks in the imperialist world system since World War II. Globally seen, this crisis is not yet mature, and we are still dealing with a **tendency**. But it is accelerating with the crisis of bourgeois crisis management. **Crises of the entire social life** are developing. More and more people are pushed into poverty, even in imperialist countries. In connection with the current world economic and corona crisis, the German "Welthungerhilfe" predicts **one billion people suffering from hunger**. A quarter of them are threatened with acute starvation. At the same time, in an **open agricultural crisis** masses of food are being destroyed, prices are being pressed down and livelihoods in agriculture are being destroyed. In Belgium, for example, almost 750,000 tons of potatoes threatened to be destroyed or processed into animal feed in May<sup>6</sup>. The crisis of the **bourgeois state and family system** is intensifying as more and more social problems and the burdens of the crisis are being shifted onto individual families. Contrary to the appeasing trivialization of a "breather" in the global environmental crisis, the **transition to a global environmental catastrophe is accelerating**. However, the environmental crisis should not be reduced to the climate issue either. We are already experiencing the greatest extinction of species since the extinction of the dinosaurs. The oceans are more rapidly approaching a tipping point. The **world refugee crisis** is coming to a head. We will be experiencing tens of millions of people being forced to flee in the near future.

### **Rote Fahne: Didn't we already know these crises before?**

A **general societal crisis is more than the sum of these various crisis hotspots**. It signifies a **qualitative leap** in social development. A general societal crisis does not arise

solely from such **objective factors, but above all from the interaction with subjective factors**. The open inability of those in power to continue to govern as before is one side of the coin. At the same time, in a general societal crisis, the consciousness among the masses matures that they do not want to be governed in this way. The deeper the economic crisis shakes the economic basis, the sharper the vibrations of the political superstructure become. In recent years, we have already seen how open political crises have increased in frequency and depth.

The whole situation entails **a considerably increased general danger of war**. The danger of direct military clashes between imperialist powers and camps is intensifying in various hot spots such as the South China Sea, the conflict between Turkey and Greece/EU, Syria and Ukraine. The USA is still the main warmonger. Trump intensifies his course on almost all fronts, such as with **China**. This **conflict** is also being fueled by the fact that China's more effective crisis management – in comparison with the USA – has given it a boost in its efforts to challenge the USA's position as the sole superpower.

### **Rote Fahne: What is the perspective of such a general societal crisis?**

Lenin qualifies "*that no data about the crisis, even if they were ideally accurate, can in reality decide the question of whether a rise of the revolutionary tide is at hand or not: because such a rise depends on a thousand additional factors which it is impossible to measure beforehand.*" (Lenin, The Assessment of the Present Situation," *Collected Works*, Vol. 15, p. 278.) It is clear that such a development depends essentially on the **degree of consciousness and organization of the working class and the broad masses**. The **development in large industrial enterprises** and the formation of consciousness among the working class is thereby the leading factor. Because it is only through a qualitative leap in the class consciousness of the working class and the transition to a working-class offensive on a broad front that a **revolutionary world crisis** will emerge from a general societal crisis.

In such a situation the Marxist-Leninists must **follow the pulse of the entire social life, analyze the development of the mode of thinking of the masses**, develop completely convincing arguments and initiate and lead struggles. Spontaneous struggles will break out eruptively in perhaps surprising, up to now apparently unpolitical questions, as in the last months in the USA, but also in the youth upsurges in Stuttgart and Frankfurt against police repression. In such a situation, the **struggle for democratic rights and freedoms** will move to the center of political demands and slogans. Moreover, this is a **cross-border process**. The MLPD must and will resolutely extend its role in society in order to be able to achieve a clarity of purpose, consciousness-raising and an organizing role which are appropriate to the situation.

### **Rote Fahne: Is there already such a crisis in the USA?**

In the **USA** we are actually experiencing how quickly this can develop. In this imperialist heartland we are already experiencing the beginning of such a general societal crisis. After the racist murder of George Floyd, a wave of partly **uprising-like mass rebellion** broke out. Within one month, the masses organized more than 4,000 demonstrations nationwide. These were increasingly critical of society: against structural racism and the US President's proto-fascist contempt for humanity. The conflict was fueled by the massive rise in unemployment and impoverishment within a few weeks in the wake of the world economic and financial crisis. The masses did not retreat either when Trump sent the



National Guard. There were even armed mass confrontations in some cities. As a result, President Trump is in the **deepest crisis of his term of office** to date and his re-election in three months is seriously threatened.

Currently, imperialist **Israel** is heading for a general societal crisis. Mass protests against the reactionary Netanyahu regime have been continuing for weeks. At the weekend, 10,000 took to the streets again in Tel Aviv alone against corruption, unemployment and impoverishment and the failure of the health policy, which led to a renewed spread of corona infections. In these actions thousands of people also criticize the occupation policy against the Palestinians. This constellation is something new in Israel and has already led to an open crisis of the government.

### **Rote Fahne: How has the progressive change of mood developed? Has Merkel managed to reverse the crisis of confidence in bourgeois politics?**

Last year was a record year for the progressive change of mood, with over five million people involved in struggles and strikes in Germany and over 500 million internationally. This continued at the beginning of the year. In this situation, the ruling powers used the beginning of the corona pandemic for a **massive manipulation of public opinion**. For a **certain time**, the bourgeois media were **relatively synchronized** with regard to the corona crisis with daily special broadcasts, talk shows, expert panels, etc. At first the method of shocking the population was deliberately used. This was even openly declared in a paper from the Ministry of the Interior. This in order to win them over for "voluntarily" accepting the radical cuts in social life and in their democratic rights and freedoms. Initially, in rare unanimity, all parties in the Bundestag essentially supported the government crisis management. All other issues in which the masses opposed the government were treated as if they no longer existed. In this way, the ruling powers succeeded in temporarily **obscuring the crisis of confidence in bourgeois politics**. According to the ZDF political barometer of 31 March, 89 percent of those questioned attested that the government had done "good work" in the corona crisis. The CDU was able to struggle its way out of the low ratings. However, this does not mean that the fundamental criticism and mistrust of bourgeois politics that had developed over the years have been forgotten, or that the masses have even moved towards general support for government policies. And so it did not take long for the **first struggles of the progressive change of mood to break out again**. A first climax were the militant **May Day rallies in 100 cities against the government and monopolies** – independently organized in view of the open capitulation of the trade union federation (DGB) leadership. The MLPD took on a leadership role in reasserting civil democratic rights and freedoms.

The ruling classes were in alarm against the upswing of the progressive change of mood and **tried to direct the struggles onto reactionary paths**. As with "Pegida" in 2014/2015, channels like *n-tv* more or less openly called up to the right-wing so-called hygiene demonstrations. After a short time, however, surveys showed that more than 80 percent of the survey participants opposed these demonstrations, as the openly reactionary and partly fascist originators of these demonstrations had been unmasked. This was also an expression of the growing antifascist consciousness of the masses. With the so-called "*Querfront*" politics ("across the fronts"), the fascist wire-pullers of such actions aim at seemingly blurring the borders between left and right. That is one reason why they are still able to mobilize several thousand people for single actions like on 1 August 2020 in Berlin. But a "*Querfront*" is no middle thing between right and left – it is itself neo-fascist.

A militant opposition began to form against the crisis management of the government and monopolies. This development began with small strikes in various industrial enterprises, followed by protests by refugees and later by young people against bourgeois school policies, racism and police harassment.

### **Rote Fahne: What role does the working class play in this?**

The **working class and the industrial proletariat are even at the forefront of these struggles worldwide**. In Italy, for example, 900,000 workers went on strike around May 1. The class consciousness of the workers in Germany shows a high awareness when job cuts are announced, collective agreements are canceled, etc. Especially in the banks, insurance companies, the auto industry and in mechanical engineering, six-digit job cuts have already been announced. A survey by Gesamtmetall, the Federation of German Employers' Associations in the Metal and Electrical Engineering Industries, among 1,400 companies in the M+E industry showed that 40 percent intend to cut jobs. We must take a **clear position against the direction of union co-management**. In recent weeks, for example, various agreements with foul compromises have been negotiated about reductions in working hours without wage compensation, so-called socially acceptable job cuts, etc. The metalworkers' union (IG-Metall) leadership has announced that it will make zero wage demands, and the DGB leadership refrained from conducting May Day rallies and demonstrations. Initial small independent strikes and militant activities, often interspersed with trade union initiatives, show that the **working class will not sell out in this situation!** With the beginning of the apprenticeship year, a **destruction of apprenticeship places** is looming and some students are confronted with having to break off their studies for financial reasons. The real effects of the crisis are therefore still to become openly apparent. It will still take some time before the workers draw their conclusions and realize that only through a determined struggle will they be able to defend their wage and working conditions. The working-class offensive will then develop out of these struggles.

### **Rote Fahne: How is the international work of the MLPD developing?**

While the imperialists have closed the borders and put national interests first, we have placed great emphasis on **international exchange and aid**. In general, the international Marxist-Leninist, revolutionary and working-class movement is consolidating and strengthening. Many parties are at the forefront in organizing self-organization, self-help and struggles in their countries during the Covid 19 pandemic, against the rigorous restrictions on democratic rights and freedoms often connected with it, and the sometimes inhumane shifting of the burdens of the crisis onto the population. Forces from the ICOR or international associations of automotive workers, miners or women's organizations often acted as initiators of important struggles. We have also supported initiatives for solidarity pacts, for example for miners in the Congo, who were without any income for their families due to the crisis. The actual **international cooperation and coordination of the struggles will be the most important challenge**, so that ICOR can master the **test** of a general societal crisis of the imperialist world system and strengthen itself as a result. The movement "Don't give anti-communism a chance!" also has international significance. Only a few days ago, we saw how in Munich ten Turkish revolutionaries were sentenced to long prison terms for their **world outlook of Marxism-Leninism and their organization in the TKP/ML**. The court itself declared that the participation of the accused in specific crimes had been expressly rebutted. We also attack the close cooperation of German imperialism

with the fascist Erdogan regime in Turkey for this trial. In the discussion with our international friends it becomes clear again and again that in all countries of the world anti-communism in its various shades, in the form of modern anti-communism or openly counterrevolutionary oppression, plays an important role. However, uncertainty still exists sometimes about how to deal with it. The movement "Don't give anti-communism a chance" in Germany, as a heartland of anti-communism, should therefore also be a stimulus and encouragement for all these organizations to take the offensive against it.

As far as the internationalist movement in Germany is concerned, the most important event in recent months has been the founding of the "**Friendship Circle for Refugee Solidarity**" within the non-party self-run organization *Solidarity International*. Here experienced leaders of militant refugees join forces with German representatives of international solidarity. This is also of great importance in view of the planned tightening of the asylum law by Minister of the Interior Seehofer, the expected new waves of refugees, etc.

### **Rote Fahne: How has liquidationism against the MLPD, coordinated by the intelligence services, actually developed toward a system-compliant channeling of the various movements?**

The starting point is that state repression against the MLPD has increased considerably. This also included liquidationism steered by the intelligence services. In general, it was possible to clearly show this liquidationism its limits in the course of 2019 with broad educational work about its character. But also with the struggle for our democratic rights and freedoms, including charges against the police, but also against some of their helpers from NGOs, bourgeois parties, their youth organizations or anti-Germans, successes were achieved. Relatively simultaneously, in more than 60 cases and about 40 cities, and sometimes with the use of brutal force, attempts were made to prevent the MLPD from appearing in public. This corresponded exactly to the previously issued guidelines of the intelligence services and monopolies. We had to take uniform action to break through these attempts to factually abolish our coalition rights and criminalize the MLPD. In most demonstrations the MLPD can now appear again as a matter of course. At the same time, this liquidationism is **not a temporary thing that can be defeated once and for all, but will always come up again.**

Currently there are a number of inquiries from the AfD in various state parliaments about the allegedly necessary containment of the MLPD's influence. The state government in Baden-Württemberg responds to these inquiries by stating that the State Office for the Protection of the Constitution (LfV) "*perceives attempts by left-wing extremist groups to influence social alliance structures...*". They then claim that this alleged influence is "*... often not crowned with success. This is not least due to the successful information and prevention work of the LfV, which ... enables actors within the alliances – wherever necessary – to distinguish themselves in content from extremist groups.*" The dishonest influence of the MLPD insinuated here is an anti-communist insinuation, because the MLPD openly cooperates in such alliances on an equal level. All forces that have allowed themselves to be used for such action against the MLPD – whether deliberately instructed or out of anti-communist incitement – should change their course of action quickly, if they do not want to become cheap stooges of the intelligence services.

**Rote Fahne: In view of all these demands it is not so easy to orientate yourself independently!**

To have a clear assessment and prognosis at all times in one of the **most complicated crisis scenarios of recent decades** is first and foremost a **test of dialectics**. It is part of the repertoire of the system of the petty-bourgeois mode of thinking to spread the vague feeling that you cannot really see through such a situation and that you definitely cannot do anything. The more clearly capitalist class reality is seen through, the more clearly the workers also see what lever must be pulled to change it. This is exactly what the ruling class wants to prevent by hook or crook. The Marxist-Leninists and the broad masses have the greatest interest in the truth. In fact, the general societal character of the crisis gives us plenty of illustrative material for a deeper understanding of dialectics.

When new phenomena emerge, it is also necessary to develop **scientific work**. In this situation, it proved its worth that we assessed the situation regularly and discussed conclusions with a **staff that meets regularly**, guided by the party leadership, together with persons responsible for different areas of work in the Central Committee, doctors and lawyers. In addition, we organized the collective wisdom of the party and the democratic public in a **public Internet discussion forum** on the corona crisis and its interrelationships. In this situation there was great critical and self-critical initiative, vigilance and many competent contributions in order to give the right answers. This was all a **great common effort by our party**.

But it also requires the analysis and ideological orientation of the so-called "broad lines". Our **system *Revolutionärer Weg (Revolutionary Way) as a theoretical organ*** is the most important and proven guide for us. The editorial staff of *Revolutionärer Weg* and the Central Committee are therefore working intensively on the publication of ***Revolutionärer Weg, No. 36, The Crisis of Bourgeois Ideology***.

In view of the many political and economic crises you could ask: Why take on this task, too? But the question of world outlook ultimately decides which path will prevail: the proletarian, communist ideology of freedom with its clear perspective or the decadent, rotten, demoralizing bourgeois ideology representing a dying system?

In Germany, in the past decades monopoly capital has managed to bind the working class to capitalism in a fairly stable way through the life lies of the bourgeois world outlook. This was successful because many people were influenced to some extent by these views, for example the supposed "social market economy", "welfare state", "equal rights for men and women", "peaceful foreign policy" or that human dignity has utmost priority.

Against the background of the new quality of the imperialist crisis-proneness, this bourgeois world outlook with all its lies and systems of deceit has itself become part of the maelstrom of the crisis. The most important thing about that is certainly that modern anti-communism is also in crisis. But the crisis of bourgeois ideology does not yet automatically lead to Marxism-Leninism gripping the masses. The ruling powers are stirring up a veritable **mishmash** of different views and explanations and, above all, petty-bourgeois methods of approaching reality, too. Above all, they increasingly resort to **openly reactionary forms of bourgeois ideology** such as racism, fascism, chauvinism, fundamentalist interpretations of religion, etc. In such an atmosphere even the most abstruse so-called conspiracy theories can revive. It requires an intensive process of consciousness building, profound ideological-political debate and conscious processing of practical experience to come to grips with all the effects of bourgeois ideology. Today, bourgeois ideology appears mainly in the form of the petty-bourgeois mode of thinking. This seems to adapt itself to the proletarian mode of thinking and supports single

progressive views without, however, in its essence detaching itself from bourgeois ideology. For example, you often hear, even among workers, the view that the best of socialism and capitalism should be combined. Workers must understand that what appears to be progressive under capitalism are achievements gained in struggle or an expression of the revolutionary productive forces. But these must first be liberated from the laws of capitalism in order to develop their progressive benefits for society. In order to really fight for socialism, it is necessary to liberate oneself and completely come to grips with the various manifestations and effects of bourgeois ideology and the petty-bourgeois mode of thinking. Taking up the struggle for the revolutionary overcoming of capitalism requires a preliminary ideological battle. Therefore, in this situation we attach fundamental importance to **scientific polemics**. It is not so easy to distinguish between what is right and wrong, what serves which interests. Polemics help to clarify the fronts.

### **Rote Fahne: What are the upcoming tasks of the MLPD?**

The focus is now on gearing the entire party work – and also the mode of thinking, working and living – to the **unfolding of a general societal crisis**. This is the core of a **new phase of the criticism and self-criticism campaign on the path to the party of the masses**. That means that we must strengthen the party and the youth league *Rebell* considerably. Marxist-Leninist youth work must be implemented as mass tactics in party building in every task and in every sphere of work. We have significantly strengthened initiatives for this, also in order to accomplish the change of generations that has been successfully begun on all levels of the MLPD. In addition, we will expand the work on our main line of struggle in the large industrial enterprises. The movement "Don't give anti-communism a chance!" will permeate every sphere of work. We will greatly extend our system of education and training and gear it to new party members. We must place **greatest importance on consciousness-building party-building work and learn to combine every activity with organizational work and consciousness building**. Since political work must also be learned and tested, we promote non-party, self-organized movements and self-run organizations of the masses. This must also prevail against a tendency, which has partly established itself, to focus one-sidedly on our party work in the narrower sense.

This also applies, for example, to non-party personal election alliances that are currently running for office in the **municipal elections in North Rhine-Westphalia**. In its current report, the Office for the Protection of the Constitution of North Rhine-Westphalia once again denigrates this support as alleged infiltration by the MLPD. Currently, various personal election alliances, as well as the MLPD, have decided to take legal action **against the Office for the Protection of the Constitution and the spreading of these untruths!** In recent times, several such initiatives against the Office for the Protection of the Constitution have been successful, and we will inflict a defeat on anti-communism here as well. It is also necessary to develop new forms of organizing working-class solidarity, which is especially important in times of crisis.

The forthcoming **Anti-War Day on September 1** in Germany will certainly be a good opportunity to make the initiative for building an international anti-imperialist united front against fascism and war broadly known and to win new forces for it. We are looking forward to the **campaign for the state elections in Thuringia and the federal elections in 2021**. These will be an important field of consciousness raising under the current social conditions. The collection of signatures has already begun.

Last but not least, an **unshakable revolutionary optimism** is of fundamental importance in the coming times of great changes. There will undoubtedly be great demands, problems

and difficulties to be solved, sharp attacks, great successes, but also defeats in the coming years. Every revolutionary will perhaps be facing demands that he/she has never known before. Whoever wants to arrange a quiet life in capitalism will start complaining and lamenting about it, as you can currently see with politicians of the Left Party, the Greens or some works council chairmen. The revolutionaries must undoubtedly work hard and rise above themselves. They can **look to the future on the basis of revolutionary optimism!**

**Thank you very much!**

### **Sources & Links**

<sup>1</sup> ILO monitor: COVID-19 and the world of work. Fifth Edition. Updated estimates and analysis, 30 June 2020

<sup>2</sup> 13 March 2020 IfW Kiel

<sup>3</sup> Federation of German Industries

<sup>4</sup> GSA calculations

<sup>5</sup> 30 March 2020 cashkurs.com, Folker Hellmeyer

<sup>6</sup> www.daserste.de, Weltspiegel, 17 May 2020