

The Turbulences of the Imperialist World System Are Preparing the Ground for a Revolutionary World Crisis!

Rote Fahne interview with Stefan Engel, Chairman of the MLPD, 4 January 2012

In September 2008 a worldwide economic and financial crisis broke out with the collapse of the investment bank Lehman Brothers. Its course clearly differs compared with other world economic crises after World War II. What is the reason for that?

We already made the forecast at the end of 2008 that regarding extent, intensity and effect we will be concerned with the deepest world economic and financial crisis experienced by capitalism until now. At first it seemed to turn out differently. A unique joint international imperialist crisis management succeeded in preventing an uncontrolled collapse of the world financial system and slowing down the slump of the world economy. Above all, for the time being those in power could dampen the political upheavals which usually accompany such economic crises.

Three and a half years after the outbreak of this world economic and financial crisis a new economic crash is in the offing which would further deepen and aggravate the continuing world economic and financial crisis. The governments of the imperialist countries are facing a huge shambles. Nobody knows how to remove it. **The international crisis management has failed.**

Meanwhile the biggest problem of those in power is that they do not have the political effects of the world economic and financial crisis under control anymore. Thus the leeway of state measures to continue the crisis management is drastically restricted. Economic and political mass struggles are meanwhile dominating the scene in most countries of the world. The democratic rebellion movement with its starting point in North Africa has seized more and more countries. The masses worldwide have become more sensitive to solely ruling international finance capital, its exploiting and oppressing methods. **The cross-border struggle for freedom and democracy has become the most striking phenomenon** of our time.

The general proneness to crisis of the imperialist world system cannot be overcome; the world economic and financial crisis cannot be brought under control for the foreseeable future. Political thunderstorms will approach, speeding up the tendency to a revolutionary world crisis.

At the beginning of December already the 13th EU crisis summit since 2010 took place. The participating governments celebrated it as breakthrough in the "stabilizing of the European financial system"! Meanwhile nobody really wants to believe that.

Skepticism is appropriate! Actually, at the EU summit nothing more was done than to announce the intention to slow down the national debts in the future. Firstly, this is nothing but a declaration of intent, and secondly, this too could not solve the problems.

An essential symptom at the moment is the stagnation of payments. The banks hardly lend each other money, and loans are granted to trade and industry only hesitantly. Above-

average interest rates are being charged for new government bonds on the financial markets especially to those countries which have been least capable of dealing with the world economic and financial crisis – Italy, Greece, Spain and Portugal. This not only severely harms the solvency of these countries, but even drives them deeper into debt and further curbs their economic development. It is nonsense to claim that excessive national debts have caused the current situation. The real cause of the world economic and financial crisis is the chronic overaccumulation of capital which the capitalist mode of production has become caught up in with the reorganization of international production.

Isn't the overaccumulation of capital being countered by the measures of the government?

Chronic overaccumulation of capital means: The enormous accumulation of capital cannot be exploited continuously with maximum profit anymore. Thus the constantly growing speculative investments do not find sufficient markets to be turned over with maximum profit. China is an example. There, investments in real estate continued to be made speculatively via state subsidies. In connection with measures to boost mass consumption, this led temporarily to a strong economic upswing which revived the whole world economy and created the impression that the world economic and financial crisis was over. Now the speculative bubble is bursting with unforeseeable consequences for the Chinese and world economy.

The “self-healing forces” of the capitalist economy implored many times by Merkel do not work anymore. The cycle of production and reproduction only works by pumping more and more state money into it. The European Central Bank (ECB) contributed nearly one trillion euros at low interest rates to the banks in a historically unique occurrence in December 2011 to keep the financial system running at all and to protect the monopoly banks from the risk of a crash. The state contribution and thus the reduction in the cost of capital are intended to keep up the cycle of production and reproduction at least artificially. These measures, however, are like dancing on a volcano.

The price is further increasing state debts leading more and more countries to the verge of state bankruptcy and also fuelling inflation. The basic problem of overaccumulation of capital is not solved by this, but brought to a head.

When the effect of the state bailout funds wore out, the world economy started to get weaker again. The absence of economic growth, on which the whole capitalist world with its crisis management had speculated, concretely was the starting point of the liquidity crisis in Europe. As the loans could no longer be serviced by the reduced national budgets the financial crisis openly broke out again. This time, however, it did not come from individual monopoly banks as in 2008, but from the instruments of the crisis management itself – the national budgets. Chancellor Merkel's assumption that the waning “self-healing forces of the economy” only needed another push by state measures, then they would function again and trigger long-lasting economic growth, proved to be pure illusion.

The traded values of the stock markets peaked at 59 trillion US dollars at the beginning of 2011, but fell to 45 trillion by September. The foreign exchange market experienced a flight from the euro into the Japanese yen, the Swiss franc and the dollar. This in turn intensified the problems to pay back the loans from these currency areas. The banks again got into liquidity problems and a general bank crisis developed. IMF boss Lagarde legitimately describes the general situation on the financial markets today as more dangerous than before the Lehman bankruptcy in September 2008.

For which economic situation has the population to be prepared in 2012?

It has to be assumed that industrial production will collapse again. A simple repetition of the joint international crisis management then cannot be expected due to the tense situation of the public finances. In such a situation a chain reaction of state bankruptcies, bank collapses or even of the whole world finance system can hardly be prevented. One can imagine that this would mean mass layoffs worldwide, dismantling of wages and social achievements, which will further increase the rage of the broad masses against the governments. The Marxist-Leninists have to prepare themselves for measures unprecedented in postwar history. They will severely hit the living conditions of the masses. A dramatic intensification of the international class struggle will be the answer.

But isn't the economic position of Germany relatively solid compared to others?

Regarding the development in Germany, lipstick is being systematically put on the pig. After all, German industry also needed fully three years after the dramatic drop in industrial production by more than 15 percent at the end of 2008 to catch up to the 2008 level again in summer 2011. The reason for this is the export-oriented economy. Nearly every second euro in turnover is generated by exports today. But export also is the Achilles' heel of the German economy. If a worldwide economic downturn occurs there will be a disproportionately deep slump in Germany compared to other countries.

This is already foreseeable: The majority of the big imperialist countries like the USA, France, Great Britain or Japan have not yet reached the pre-crisis level of their economy even today, contrary to the temporary propaganda of a world economic upswing in 2009/2010. Other countries like Italy or Spain continue to be in a deep economic depression. China predicts a stagnation of its economy for 2012 and in connection with this announced it will not allow any more foreign investments in Chinese car production except for electric cars. The OECD warns in its latest economic preview that politicians in the whole world should *"be prepared for the worst case"* because the turbulences on the financial markets are growing massively and could *"end in absolutely catastrophic results"*. The OECD and the ECB already reckon with a dwindling economy in the euro zone this winter.

But the export economy would benefit from the weakening of the euro because its products get cheaper on the world market?

Capital export is decisive for the imperialist economy. This is the only way to expand its international positions and the strived-for leadership in the world market and also to increase its political influence. Of course, capital export also results in export of goods. So in the foreign production facilities investments are made in machines, high technology, etc. which are often bought in Germany. The weakening of the euro, however, limits the imperialist possibilities for capital export and thus weakens the EU position on the world market. The better their position on the world market, the more the imperialists are able to shift the effects of the world economic and financial crisis to their rivals and gain the biggest possible advantage for themselves. This rivalry between the imperialists is in the foreground again with the failure of the international crisis management, which coincided with the euro crisis.

What makes you so sure that the world economic and financial crisis will not in fact be overcome within the foreseeable future?

The contradiction between the surplus capital and the narrowing markets could not be

solved so far. This would have necessitated a much bigger destruction of capital than was allowed by the governments of the imperialist countries in their panic about an aggravation of the class contradictions. So the state crisis management in the end only had the result that the overaccumulation of capital leads much quicker to new crisis-fraught setbacks in the process of production and reproduction.

Of course, I don't want to rule out that especially the most powerful imperialist governments will try everything to find a way out of the crisis, e.g. by shifting the burdens of the crisis even more to the oppressed countries dependent on imperialism, through intensified exploitation of the masses, growing inflation, or even by sparking off wars. Nevertheless, this will not eliminate the tendency to chronic overaccumulation of capital, and the crisis might only be interrupted temporarily by small growth phases.

The UN World Climate Conference in Durban, South Africa, ended on 10 December. According to reports in the media one could get the impression that the German Federal Environment Minister Röttgen was in the end responsible for a success of the conference. How do you feel about this?

The "success" of the conference consists in the questionable agreement to work out the basic line of a possible agreement between all participants by 2015 which will perhaps come into effect in nine years. The alliance of the small island states rejected with justification this deal and declared: *"Why should we approve an agreement the result of which would be our long-term and unavoidable disappearance?"*

Durban stands for a declaration of bankruptcy of the imperialist environmental policy and promotes **with eyes wide open an aggravation of the world climate catastrophe endangering humanity**. The **official government climate protection** proves to be **totally unsuitable**.

One important background for the failure of this climate summit was that more and more governments have cut back the already concluded, totally insufficient measures for environmental protection against the background of the world economic and financial crisis. A drastic example is the government of Canada, which obviously dramatically failed to meet the CO₂ reduction targets which they had set for themselves. The government evaded the now payable fine by simply opting out of the agreements of Kyoto. This shows how little the paper is worth on which these agreements are written. Without the active resistance of the broad masses, without the superiority of class struggle over the imperialist environmental criminals the world climate will take a catastrophic development.

Which conclusions have to be drawn from this?

The reason for the failure of the imperialist climate policy consists in the fact that effective environmental protection is not compatible with the profit interests of international finance capital. The bourgeois guideline of the compatibility of ecology and economy in capitalism is a fatal dead end.

The Potsdam Institute for Climate Research recently published a new study about various scenarios of the climate development until the end of the 21st century. The scientists reach the conclusion that on all continents devastating changes will occur to the foundations of life.

With the book *Dawn of the International Socialist Revolution* we proved that the **environmental crisis today** has become a **law-governed manifestation** of the capitalist mode of production. **Capitalism** has reached a point where it is irreconcilable with the **preservation of the natural foundations of human life**.

The environmental issue can no longer be solved independently of the social issue. We need social conditions where production and distribution will not be for the profit of a tiny stratum of owners of capital, but where human existence and the protection of the natural environment are fundamental. Only a socialist/communist society uncompromisingly oriented to the general interests of all humanity will realize such a guideline of unity of man and nature.

In the environmental movement there is criticism that environmental protection was treated poorly in the former socialist countries.

Such a generalization is not correct. Measures for environmental protection, to save energy and resources, recycling, initial stages of a closed-loop economy, etc. also were realized in various ways in many socialist countries. The China of Mao Zedong put out the slogan that waste does not exist, but only raw material which can be reused. Such a slogan cannot be understood from the standpoint of the capitalist law of value, of course. In capitalism the overexploitation of the natural environment increases the profits. It was only the restoration of capitalism in the former socialist countries that dealt the good beginnings of environmental protection there the death blow.

Nevertheless, one has to realize that the environmental question has been underestimated as a tendency in the working-class movement – and also in the socialist countries. At that time, however, one could not yet assume the possibility of a global environmental crisis developing which would grow into an environmental catastrophe threatening humanity.

The Marxist-Leninists, too, had to rethink in this question. In the 1950s the peaceful use of nuclear energy was looked upon in the socialist states as a clean and effective way to generate energy. Meanwhile we know that nuclear technology, in spite of all technical progress, cannot be controlled. Dogmatic clinging to the views of the international revolutionary and working-class movement of the 1950s by the Marxist-Leninists would be disastrous. So it is of greatest importance that the International Coordination of Revolutionary Parties and Organizations (ICOR) and the International League of Peoples' Struggle (ILPS) decided to make a worldwide campaign well into 2012 to shut down all nuclear power stations, to do away with all nuclear weapons and to end the so-called peaceful use of nuclear power.

Couldn't the environmental movement in Germany achieve an important success with the resolutions of the Merkel government to shut down the nuclear power stations?

The government was totally isolated after Fukushima. It could have further pursued its already resolved extension of operating times only under penalty of ruin. At the same time, however, with its long operating times, until 2021, it adhered to further operating a number of atomic piles, above all gave free rein to further export, and thus perpetuated the worldwide threat to man and nature. The immediate shutdown of all nuclear power stations would not be a problem in Germany, neither economically nor technically.

Last year the anti-nuke movement in Germany played a certain cutting-edge role in the world regarding its broadness and its ability to enlighten people. Meanwhile, even in Japan, where the overwhelming majority of the population was for the so-called peaceful use of nuclear energy for a long time, the majorities have changed. Government and monopolies got into the defensive. In Japan the program to build more fast breeders had to be cancelled and in France the planned construction of nuclear plants had to be reduced.

But we cannot be satisfied at all with what has been achieved. We need worldwide protection against nuclear energy and its radiation, which remains deadly for millions of years. This includes stopping the export of nuclear energy installations from Germany and the financial support for them, and standing up for the shutdown of the related production. This must not, however, be done at the workforces' expense. Equivalent substitute jobs have to be created for them, of course. Environmental protection must not be realized at the working class's expense, but in accord with its interests.

In October an international environmental counsel took place in Gelsenkirchen. You put up the thesis there that a qualitative higher development of the environmental movement is necessary.

To stop the global environmental catastrophe a **superior force** must be opposed to solely ruling finance capital. The present environmental movement does not yet represent such a superior force. So far it has done a lot of educational work and has **strengthened the general environmental awareness in the population considerably**. Almost no bourgeois party can afford to campaign for election today without appropriate environmental demands. At the same time this environmental movement is extremely fragmented, locally and nationally limited, has a low grade of organization and thus only a limited ability to fight and assert itself. The responsible persons of the present environmental movement increasingly set their hopes mainly on influencing the responsible people in the top management offices and the bourgeois parties through reasoning, and hope for changes from that. Underlying this is the illusion that the environmental crisis could be overcome in the frame of the capitalist society and in unity with the profit interests of the monopolies.

We need a **higher fighting strength and a clear course of confrontation against the profit economy** of the monopolies and governments, where the rapacious exploitation of the natural environment has turned into a factor for cost reduction and of competition.

We cannot continue allowing such ruthless production at the cost of the natural resources. This calls for more than success in one or the other project for the protection of the environment. This calls for an international front of resistance and an upheaval of the whole societal relations of production and conditions of life which lastingly opposes the imperialist profit system.

Such a gigantic task necessarily is society-changing. But we will not achieve a change of society without overcoming the dictatorship of the monopolies. Therefore, the **struggle against the imminent environmental catastrophe also is a struggle against imperialism** and for asserting socialist relations.

Is the present environmental movement able to do this?

Naturally it is clear to me that a part of the present environmental movement will vigorously protest against such a prospect; this is often connected with strong anticommunist reservations. But the overwhelming part of the environmental movement in the meantime has the position that enduring protection of the environment and profit interests are incompatible. Since Copenhagen and Cochabamba the worldwide environmental movement intensively debates about the necessary system alternatives. Whoever wants to pursue environmental protection in a resolute way must in the end

develop a **revolutionary spirit**. For that, much persuasion work and willingness to learn are needed, because we do not want to offend the present environmentalists, of course. They have accomplished much, and the worldwide environmental movement needs their know-how, their experience, their proposals for solutions and their practical idealism. But most important is that the **working class** grasps its historical role in the struggle for preserving the foundations of life in unity with its social liberation and that it strategically includes the **question of the environment in its struggle** for liberation from exploitation and oppression.

The environmental movement in this new quality cannot be locally or nationally limited, but must work in an internationally coordinated way. The environmental crisis does not stop at national borders. The causes of the catastrophic effects of the global environmental crisis often do not even lie in the respective country. In most cases the poorest of the poor have to bear the consequences of floods, droughts and other catastrophes for which they are not even responsible.

The necessary new quality of the environmental movement is nourished from three elements: **being organized, the system-changing perspective** and **internationalism**. A higher level of environmental movement needs a higher form of organization as well. The idea of building a **militant environmental union**, discussed at the environmental counsel, is very good. It reflects a form of organization which is familiar to the broad masses of workers and others in dependent employment as an effective instrument for their economic and social struggle. Such an environmental union naturally has nothing to do with an industrial union and does not compete with the present unions either. Its most important task would be to give the broad masses of the population an organizational form in the struggle against the different forms of rapacious exploitation and for measures for the protection of the natural environment, and to build up a superior force against those mainly responsible for the environmental catastrophe. But before such an organizational form can come into existence, the necessary **strategy discussion** in the environmental movement must be organized. Because everything a person does first must go through his or her head.

Did these new discoveries have practical consequences already?

On the occasion of the 3rd of December 2011 we successfully took practical responsibility within and with the world organization ICOR for the second time after 2010 to realize the **international day of struggle for the environment** adopted by ICOR when it was founded. In more than 45 cities of Germany we promoted protest activities and initiatives, rallies and demonstrations – partly based on broad local or regional coalitions as well. A giant step forward compared to the first day of struggle in 2010! Here at the base of the present environmental movement a growing willingness for cooperation with revolutionary forces expressed itself too. On the other hand, it must be criticized as irresponsible that for about the past two years the top level of several bigger environmental organizations like BUND, Greenpeace or Attac have laid aside the previous common World Climate Day in favor of intensified lobbying. This has a tendency of capitulation following the line propagated by those in power that at best the question is about “adapting to the climate change”.

The environmental movement must aim its main blow at the ruling monopolies and their

governments. The present leadership of BUND, Greenpeace or Attac apparently is not willing to do that.

Does the environmental issue not need further theoretical clarification as well?

Doubtlessly. The theoretical knowledge of the present environmental movement essentially is reduced to disclosures about damaging consequences of modes of production and consumption, technologies, products and so on. In the questions of society and world outlook, however, the movement is strongly caught up in **idealism and metaphysics**. Thus it is already everyday usage now to talk about the “destruction of the environment”. But it is not possible to destroy nature, it can only be altered – either in a way that the foundations of human life are preserved and developed or that they are deformed so much that humanity cannot go on living. The metaphysics which is widespread in the environmental movement doubtlessly is an important hindrance for grasping in an all-sided and creative manner the deep societal reasons and new perspectives in the struggle to prevent the global environmental catastrophe.

The Marxist-Leninists, too, will have to deepen their theoretical views further. The Central Committee of the MLPD is already working in a concentrated way on *Revolutionärer Weg*, No. 35, ***The Class Struggle and the Struggle for the Unity of Humanity and Nature***. In this work we start from the foundations of Marxism and observe, greatly impressed, how all-sidedly and with perspective Marx and Engels treated this issue. In the collection of articles by Frederick Engels entitled *The Dialectics of Nature* he proves **that the unity of humanity and nature is based on dialectical laws of motion** and can only be consciously created and developed to higher levels by applying the dialectical method. The MLPD now faces the task to analyze this dialectics on the level of the present highly complex level of knowledge and to draw conclusions.

We do not want to allow ourselves too much time for that because the necessity of the strategy discussion in the international environmental movement cries out for theoretical clarity, too, and we have to make our well-grounded contribution.

At the beginning of our talk you said that the essential appearance is the transformation of economic crises into political crises. What should we understand by this?

Economic crises interact inseparably with political crises. Political crises in turn have two essential sides which can find expression in a sharpening of the class struggle and destabilization of the political conditions as well as in a growing danger of war and the outbreak of wars.

Although there is no immediate link between economic crisis and wars, it is conspicuous that only shortly after the failed adventure of the USA and NATO in Iraq and Afghanistan new war-drums are beaten. The provocations against Iran have not ceased for months, their purpose being to create a pretext for armed aggression. The provocative reaction of Ahmadinejad, the head of government of the fascist Iranian regime, to block the Strait of Hormuz, if necessary, is increasing the danger of war from his side. We must bear in mind that 40 percent of the total world oil supply has to pass through this strait.

An issue in Germany and the EU is presently a stronger military involvement under the pretext of fighting piracy at the Gulf of Africa. The German minister of defense is pressing to have the military mandate of the EU troops widened to air raids and ground fighting in Somalia. But this increases the danger of a long-lasting war in Somalia. **The general danger of war surely is one of the biggest problems in the immediate future.** The struggle for the defense of world peace must be connected most closely with the struggle against the consequences of the world economic and financial crisis for the broad masses.

The main aim of the international crisis management was to prevent an open political crisis in Europe or even a revolutionary crisis on a world scale. This in the meantime has clearly failed – although with some delay in time: In about 50 percent of the countries of the world since 2010 the societal relations are questioned by mass demonstrations, mass strikes or even uprisings: 35 of 177 examined states in 2011 were regarded as "acutely" instable, in further 130 countries political stability is "threatened". In **North Africa** as well as in the **Middle East**, since early 2011 a **democratic movement of uprisings** in at least 23 countries is shaking the decades-old power structure, which is oriented to the interests of imperialism.

In **Europe**, the shifting of the burdens of the crisis onto the backs of the broad masses, starting from spring 2010, caused a **turnaround in the mood of the working-class and people's movement**. In Spain, Portugal, France, Great Britain, Hungary, Belgium, Slovenia and so on, mass protests unfolded based on the fact that people had digested the crisis management and now protested against its devastating effects. In most cases the youth is in the vanguard. Seven governments had to be replaced in the last months because of **open political crises**. In **Greece** a revolutionary ferment was developing. On 19 and 20 October 2011 the up to now biggest militant actions since the toppling of the military dictatorship in 1974 occurred there. They were aimed at the troika of EU, European Central Bank and IMF as main tools for the plundering by the supermonopolies.

With the upswing of the democratic and liberation struggle of the broad masses on an international scale the tendency to political reaction has increased as well. Today we witness how ruthlessly in Egypt they bash and shoot at the masses. In Kazakhstan, recently at least 70 oil workers were shot dead during disputes with the state apparatus and more than 500 were partly seriously injured. In Russia the Putin government tries to

defend its election fraud against the mass protest with intensified terror. Everywhere we also see the tendencies to the fascization of the state apparatus, which must be seen as a **preparation for state terror against the rebelling masses**. These two tendencies – on the one side the militant striving of the broad masses for democracy and freedom, on the other the intensified reactionary violence of the imperialist rulers and their local governors – are the **soil on which a revolutionization of the broad masses will develop**.

Lenin already pointed to the fundamental importance of the struggle for freedom and democracy for the class struggle for socialism: "*Capitalism in general, and imperialism in particular*," he said, "*turn democracy into an illusion – though at the same time capitalism engenders democratic aspirations in the masses..., but the awakening and growth of socialist revolt against imperialism are indissolubly linked with the growth of democratic resistance and unrest.*" ("Reply to P. Kievsky [Y. Pyatakov]," Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 23)

The struggle for freedom and democracy is, as we know from the history of the working-class movement, a necessary preliminary stage of the struggle for the revolutionary toppling of imperialism and the construction of a socialist society. Therefore, we must pay utmost attention to these democratic aspirations of the masses. Our enlarged internationalist slogan concentrates our tasks as follows:

Workers of all countries, unite!

Workers of all countries and all oppressed, unite!

But doesn't the calm in class struggle persist in Germany?

Since this autumn the **change in mood finally has arrived in the core of the industrial proletariat**, even though this important development often happens non-spectacularly. The workers' hate of the unbearably intensified exploitation, their offensive spirit, their solidarity and the closing of ranks with the MLPD have grown – this can be felt. The starting signal were independent actions at Daimler in Sindelfingen. The Opel workers in Bochum won a trial of strength against the planned and already announced threats of dismissals and the divisive maneuvers coupled with this, as well as against disgusting bullying and harassment. At Ford/Cologne there is ongoing resistance against the introduction of the wage-robbing program ERA, although the colleagues who work there right now are not directly affected by it.

Especially remarkable is the grown unity of old and young on behalf of unlimited employment following apprenticeship. The biggest union youth demonstration of the last years, with 20,000 participants, in Cologne on 2 October 2011, as well as the collective agreement in the steel industry – for the first time containing provisions for unlimited employment following training – marked an important signal for that growing unity. Also impressive were the militant initiatives of the rank and file before the union congresses of Ver.di and the metal workers' union, which manifested themselves at both congresses in the strengthening of the militant direction.

The environmental movement in Germany has grown to be the biggest movement of active people's resistance. With the struggle against nuclear power plants since spring 2011 it has put up an international signal. From 111,170 in 2009 the number of participants grew to 466,550 in 2010 – and until November 2011 alone to 1,184,130 participants! **The masses do not want to perish in the global environmental catastrophe.**

With the movement against "Stuttgart 21" Germany last year brought forth one of the most important mass movements in the postwar period. The militant women's movement in Germany made great contributions to the First World Women's Conference of rank-and-file women in March in Caracas, Venezuela, and has acquired a lasting international profile. In these activities of the working class as well as the environmental, youth or women's movements, a **system debate** is unfolding: Since the world economic and financial crisis, capitalism is the object of mass criticism in a way it hasn't been for decades. We notice how natural it increasingly is becoming to think about and discuss revolutionary changes. The task of the Marxist-Leninists is to **persistently work to bring about agreement between the objective and subjective factor** by heightening the consciousness and the level of organization of the masses. Only this agreement gives rise to the revolutionary situation in which the rulers cannot govern in the old way and the masses do not want to live in the old way.

How do those in power react to the growth of the trend to the left?

Their **main method** still is the **system of the petty-bourgeois mode of thinking** – in the meantime **internationalized**. But its carriers wear out quicker and quicker. After the parliamentary high of the Left party and later on the Greens, for a while the sympathies flew to the "Pirate Party", which gives the impression of being a grassroots, democratic, fresh force. In the meantime its first party congress has passed a trite bourgeois-liberal program.

In the "Occupy" movement heaven and earth are moved to guide the outrage against finance capital onto the mills of illusory hopes in the taming of "predatory capitalism". The Left party also feeds the illusion that by cutting back the rights of the banks capitalism could be tamed. The banks are nothing but an instrument to organize the process of production and reproduction and cannot simply be "operated away". To achieve that one has to overcome capitalism itself! Everything else remains an illusion.

The Council of Europe has been conducting an anticommunist campaign since 2006. How does this affect the consciousness of the masses?

This campaign of anticommunism was a reaction to the lasting high esteem for socialism among the masses. Pretending to be scientific in character, in fact it is very dubious in its arguments. As these campaigns would have it, there must be no public debate at all about the contents of the anticommunist articles and publications. Contradicting opinions and analyses are rigorously suppressed in the public media. Naturally that is a double-edged sword, because with undemocratic methods one cannot convince the people after all. The politics of isolation against the MLPD is being intensified at the moment so that the antipode to anticommunism does not appear in public at all. We must not accept this. Therefore, the MLPD has decided to carry out a militant campaign of education and information against modern anticommunism in 2012.

Modern anticommunism is not new. It is already defined in the program of the MLPD as the core of the system of the petty-bourgeois mode of thinking. Nevertheless a few things in the public presentation of anticommunism have changed.

As the petty-bourgeois reformist and petty-bourgeois revisionist modes of thinking have become worn out, those in power put the promotion of the petty-bourgeois anticommunist mode of thinking **at the center of the system of the petty-bourgeois mode of thinking** for influencing the masses. The dissemination of anticommunist prejudices and out-and-out falsifications of history via thousands of media channels became daily fact. Secret agents of the so-called Office for the Protection of the Constitution today can carry their anticommunist slander into school classes through schoolbook publishing houses. Their "proofs" normally consist in one anticommunist quoting the other and claiming this to be a scientific presentation.

Modern anticommunism does not at all mean only propaganda, but a **whole system of political manipulation and oppression**. It consists of ideological, political and organizational measures. This includes a whole reactionary arsenal, from bank boycotts against the MLPD to the incompatibility rulings which the leading body of the metal workers' union has adopted, along with several other ways of cutting elementary democratic rights and liberties.

This way modern anticommunism still succeeds in building up a dam against the MLPD and a revolutionization of the masses with its whole array of media, political and financial measures. Its effect amongst the masses in the form of a **petty-bourgeois anticommunist mode of thinking** still keeps many people away from getting active for socialism within and with the MLPD and *Rebell*.

The petty-bourgeois anticommunist mode of thinking amongst the masses does not express itself so much in political contradictions to our opinions, but mainly in prejudices, fears, vague apprehensions and wishes to dissociate oneself. The diffuse uncertainty as regards socialism and the Marxist-Leninists has become the most serious problem in the development of class consciousness and thus of the class struggle. Therefore we will carry out an **offensive against modern anticommunism** in the coming months, expose the dirty and scheming methods of the professional anticommunists and win new respect for socialism and its representatives from Marx to Mao Zedong.

How do you classify the publicly revealed connections between NPD, fascist terror networks and the "Office for the Protection of the Constitution"?

The information reaching the public clearly proves that there is a comprehensive system of toleration, promotion and covering of the neofascist killer commando called "NSU" by state institutions, as well as a structural connection of the state oppressive apparatus with the fascist forces. Those in power obviously **give more room** to the fascist terror and **partly promote it deliberately** since it has increasingly taken the working-class movement, leftists and revolutionaries as its target. A first peak was the brutal attack by 300 fascist thugs in 2009 against the May Day demonstration in Dortmund. Fascist threats and attacks on antifascists, leftists, unionists and colleagues who are thought to be from our party are increasing. This was a challenge eliciting broad indignation and solidarity.

As a tribute to the antifascist mass consciousness, now a new initiative to ban the NPD is brought into the discussion. But that is not enough. In the meantime there is a developed network and a structure of "division of tasks" as well as a system of national and international networks among the ultra-reactionary to fascist organizations, parties and terror squads. The NPD via its participation in elections is the fund raiser and spreads

ultra-right, protofascist thought in seemingly respectable guise in jacket and tie, while the terror squads and killer commandos do their dirty work. The only suitable remedy is the determined antifascist struggle for the **unequivocal ostracizing and the banning and dissolution of all fascist organizations and their propaganda**. This struggle is closely connected with the struggle against the fascization of the state apparatus and for the defense and extension of democratic rights and liberties.

The strongest antipode to fascism is internationalism. Over a year ago ICOR was founded as new world organization of revolutionaries. How has its further worldwide construction progressed meanwhile?

Before ICOR was founded the international revolutionary, Marxist-Leninist and working-class movement did not have an appropriate instrument for practical cooperation in all the many questions in which there is agreement. Since the founding of ICOR, great advances have been achieved, for instance in the common observance of international days of struggle on May Day, anti-war days or environmental days of struggle. However, all the forces participating in ICOR are aware that the revolutionary parties and organizations will not grow together from one day to the next, but have to come together and develop a deep mutual confidence step by step.

The one-year joint campaign of ICOR from 1 September 2011 to 1 September 2012, adopted by all ICOR members, is therefore mainly a school of practical cooperation, of coordination and cooperation beyond country borders, and of organizational construction. For this the member organizations combine their revolutionary practice in their countries with the common practice on the international level.

In the MLPD an intense activity for publicizing ICOR among the masses is already being developed. In the fund-raising campaign, often comrades with the lowest income are the first to make selfless contributions. This shows the moral **force of proletarian internationalism!** To give it a **new quality** is the decisive force so that the international revolutionary and working-class movement and its allies step by step can actually overcome what separates them and achieve the strategic superiority over the imperialist world system.

How is the further construction of ICOR being carried out and which practical projects are planned?

For the further construction of ICOR, it is now especially important that the meanwhile elected Continental Coordinating Committees (CCC) in Europe, Asia and America have taken up their work. They are closer to practice as far as the language, the concrete knowledge of the countries, the parties and organizations are concerned.

All continental coordinations are planning significant projects which will provide great impetus for the coordination and revolutionization of the class struggle. In **Asia**, a **Peasants' Conference in Delhi** in April 2012 is being prepared, and in Africa, a conference on **"The responsibility of the African youth in the face of the crisis and the question of migration"** at the beginning of 2013. Jointly with the MLPD, **ICOR Europe** will organize a **"Europe Seminar"** on 1/2 November 2012 on the development of the EU and its crisis as well as on the coordination of the class struggle and revolutionary party-building in Europe. The ICOR supports further international projects: the *ueberparteilich* (above party lines) organized **International Automotive Workers' Counsel** from 17 to 20 May in Munich, the **4th International Exchange of Experiences of**

the Dockers in September 2012 and the **International Miners' Conference** in March 2013 in Peru.

The MLPD will prove to be a reliable activist of ICOR, learn from the others and self-confidently bring forward its own experiences.

Several times you've described the youth as necessary practical vanguard of the preparation of the international revolution. How is youth work shaping up in the MLPD?

The **youth league *Rebell*** is well on the way to making **proletarian internationalism the guideline** of its entire work. This is closely connected with increased ideological-political work, the study of the *Dawn of the International Socialist Revolution* and more intense cooperation between MLPD and *Rebell*. In the cooperation with other youth leagues of ICOR parties the *Rebell* clearly declares its position under the slogan: "Give anticommunism no chance!"

What significance do you attach to the publication of the book Dawn of the International Socialist Revolution and how is it being received?

Since the publication of the book *Twilight of the Gods – Götterdämmerung over the "New World Order"* in 2003 we have had at our disposal a mature analysis of the reorganization of international production. With the book *Dawn of the International Socialist Revolution* we have now drawn **comprehensive conclusions for the strategy and tactics of the international socialist revolution**. This also entails changes in the concrete strategy and tactics of the MLPD.

Our members have expectantly, enthusiastically and seriously taken up the study and selling of the book. We experience an astonishing openness and growing need of many people to discuss the topic of the international socialist revolution. More than 2,000 persons attended the 36 public meetings to date on *Dawn ...*. The study movement is also developing well. So far more than 50 study groups have been formed as well as numerous smaller reading groups. More than 4,300 books have been sold up to now.

The strategy and tactics of the international socialist revolution has two aspects which are in dialectical interaction: It relates to the international revolution as common historical task as well as to the objective and subjective preconditions in the individual countries. From this follows: Every revolutionary has to assume responsibility for the development in other countries, and with this point of reference has to work actively to advance the class struggle in his/her own country. This is something new which we all have to fight through first. Thus the reading of the book also challenges everybody to effect an intense self-transformation.

In the international Marxist-Leninist, revolutionary and working-class movement as well, a debate on strategy has started about the future of the social development and the contribution of the Marxist-Leninists. The most important contribution of the MLPD to this debate is this book. For this reason we are working at full stretch for its **international distribution**: Already shortly after the publication in German the *Dawn ...* appeared in English and was published by an Indian publishing house. The Spanish edition has already been translated and will soon be printed. The French translation is at an advanced stage, the translation into Turkish, Russian, Arabic and Farsi is under way. The worldwide distribution of the book is awaited eagerly by many parties and organizations and will undoubtedly help to advance the process of the union of the revolutionary forces in the world.

Which theoretical tasks does the MLPD face in the near future?

I already explained above that presently the issue of the theoretical organ on class struggle and the struggle for the unity of humankind and nature is the focus of attention. Simultaneously we are already at work on a further issue of our theoretical organ with the working title **“The Crisis of the Bourgeois Ideology and the Doctrine of the Mode of Thinking”**.

The crisis of bourgeois ideology leads to the further destabilization of the imperialist world system. Who can still speak of a “social market economy” in view of the shameful role of the banks in the exuberant speculation? Who still thinks earnestly that the state, which in this situation is radically shifting the burden of the crisis onto the backs of the broad masses in more and more countries, is a “social state”? Also religion, which has the important task of keeping the masses in humility and restraint, is losing its effect in tendency. In science, the restriction to scientific activities oriented directly to profit comes in for more and more criticism. But also idealism and metaphysics are experiencing a disaster right now. We have to discuss all this in a principled way and propagate the superiority of the proletarian, dialectical-materialistic world outlook and mode of thinking. The bourgeois ideology could penetrate deeply into the masses, the working-class movement, party-building and socialism in a certain way by means of the system of the petty-bourgeois mode of thinking. However, it gives a one-sided negative orientation which can develop no positive ties to the imperialist world system. This marks the temporary character of the effect of the system of the petty-bourgeois mode of thinking.

It is very important that the Marxist-Leninists arm themselves also ideologically, for a new socialist society is not only a system that is a political and economic alternative to capitalism, but above all has to be based on a clear proletarian world outlook. It was one of the most disastrous experiences of the international revolutionary and working-class movement that the penetration of the petty-bourgeois mode of thinking into the leadership of the party, the state and the economy could have consequences that went as far as revisionist degeneration and the restoration of capitalism. One decisive condition for this was the low regard for the ideological aspect in the construction of socialism. This bitter experience has to be a lesson for us.

The MLPD begins to prepare its Ninth Party Congress. How must we imagine this preparation?

In the bourgeois parties the rank and file play only a minor role at best. At the party congress of the Left party in Erfurt the members got piles of party congress materials at the entrance which were then immediately discussed and voted on. In our party every member gets a personal copy of the draft report of the Central Committee some months before the party congress – for study, for checking it on the basis of his/her own experiences, as help to assimilate them, and connected with the right to elaborate motions for criticism and amendment. Every party group extensively discusses the draft of the report, adopted by the Central Committee in October, for some months and can propose motions which the delegates' conferences of the local groups or the county organizations transmit to the party congress. What we have practiced successfully since decades is unique in the German party landscape. Candidates for the central bodies are proposed by the rank and file and cannot stand as candidate without the consent of their county or local delegates' conference.

Such extensive rights of the membership, such an intense process of preparing the party congress are for us essential conclusions from the revisionist degeneration of former

communist parties and an important guarantee that the members really are the masters in the party.

Essential parts of preparing the party congress are the self-transformation of the party in the ICOR campaign, the realization of the work among youth at all times as mass tactics of party construction, and a process of reorganizing the party in line with the new tasks in the environmental struggle.

This party congress also will meet with more international interest than any before.

What is the present state of affairs of the party? How will it develop further?

The draft report of the Central Committee of the MLPD to the Ninth Party Congress takes positive stock of the development of our party. In view of the complicated circumstances the **solid development of the MLPD is a great success**, even though the party could not strengthen itself substantially in terms of membership during the past period. In the same period the MLPD has achieved enormous things and conquered new fields in its work. We have an important share in a militant environmental movement which is forming itself anew. We have built up our regional party organizations together with leading bodies and offices and thus given our party a “face” in the regions.

In order to concentrate even more and resolutely counter any repeatedly arising danger of dissipating our energies, we have initiated a process of reorganizing the party. That means: **more forces for the systematic work among the rank and file in general** and mainly **for the environmental work in particular!**

There are definitely also problems “of our own making”, and we have struggled constantly during the past years to overcome them. They include mainly **tendencies of the worshipping of spontaneity that have not yet been overcome**. The guideline of the worship of spontaneity is the hectic up and down of daily events instead of a strategic outlook and line of conduct. However, if the ideological-political aspect is the leading factor and the system of systematic work among the rank and file on the basis of the proletarian mode of thinking is developed, our work becomes sustainable and a superiority against the socially organized system of the petty-bourgeois mode of thinking is established in the respective situation, place and time.

The decisive internal factor for the successes was that during the last years the MLPD has trained and educated all functionaries and more and more members to **master the dialectical method at the level of the doctrine of the mode of thinking as well as systemic thinking**. The challenges are becoming more complicated and require a high capacity for independent orientation. The struggle of world outlooks as preliminary battle of future class struggles assumes central importance.

What's your outlook for the beginning year 2012?

The turbulences of the imperialist world system will sooner or later inevitably lead to a revolutionary world crisis! Perhaps the year 2011 was already a historical turning point for this. Those in power will do everything to counteract this development, to oppose the revolutionization of the masses by means of deception and force. In which period of time qualitative leaps in the process of the revolutionization of the masses will occur cannot, of course, be determined exactly. The fact of a global **mass movement for freedom and democracy is a qualitative leap** in the development of class consciousness compared to the relative calm in class struggle. The central question is whether or how long the imperialists get the main influence on this movement through their bourgeois propaganda and maneuvers of deception, or to what extent they speed up the process of the

revolutionization of the masses by their, in tendency, even increasing state terror for suppressing this mass movement.

It is most important in this dispute that the Marxist-Leninists and the revolutionaries of the whole world contribute to the development of class consciousness and class struggle. This works via an **international process of the coordination and revolutionization of the mass movements**. ICOR will experience its practical baptism of fire in this process. Will it already be able to realize a new level of proletarian internationalism in theory and practice? Will it grow into its internationalist responsibility quickly enough and resolutely contribute to the preparation of the international revolution? And will the process of the ideological-political unification of the international Marxist-Leninist and working-class movement advance at the same time? These are all important questions which history poses to us and which will play an important role in the discussion also during the preparation of the Ninth Party Congress.

I am firmly convinced that we are on the right track and I am proud of our party that it has proved to be a solid factor and point of orientation for more and more critical people in this country and partly also internationally in these complicated years.

I express my thanks to all our comrades for their great commitment, the high degree of practical solidarity and their selfless efforts in the past year! I hope that everybody will gain strength and can tackle the great tasks of the year 2012 after some restful days as well as lively New Year parties! I am looking forward to working together with them and wish all readers of the *Rote Fahne* a healthy, militant and successful new year 2012.

Many thanks for this interview.