

"Many things have been set in motion ..."

"Rote Fahne" interview with Stefan Engel, chairman of the MLPD

December 2012

Rote Fahne: First of all, congratulations on your re-election as party chairman! An eventful year 2012 is coming to an end. What significance did it have for the MLPD?

Stefan Engel: For more than four years the world economic and financial crisis has been continuing. This has let the imperialist destructive forces unfold enormously and set many things which were seemingly unalterable in motion. The structures of state-monopoly capitalism, carefully built up after the Second World War, are no longer functioning properly. Neocolonialism is facing a deep crisis. The spheres of influence and domination of the old imperialist countries are being openly called into question by the democratic uprisings, as well as by imperialist competition. The balance of power among the ruling imperialist countries has shifted in a far-reaching way: The center of capitalist world production has shifted from the old world to Asia. The previous central transatlantic axis between the USA and Europe has been replaced by a new leading transpacific axis between Asia and the USA.

The relative calm in class struggle is coming to an end, as well. The mass strikes and demonstrations, especially in Southern Europe, have worldwide repercussions and give new self-confidence to the working class, the popular movement, but also to the youth movement. Those in power have great problems maintaining their influence on people through their manipulation of opinion by means of the system of the petty-bourgeois mode of thinking. Clashes with the state apparatus are increasing. The masses have become deeply skeptical of the ability of the capitalist social system to function. Hectic crisis management determines the actions of the solely ruling international finance capital, the imperialist states and their governments. Their activities to extinguish the various smoldering fires in the world economic and financial crisis are having less and less influence.

The MLPD has analyzed and predicted this general proneness to crisis for a long time and correspondingly prepared itself for the changed situation ideologically-politically and organizationally. The party has well adapted itself to the new developments with the two books "Twilight of the Gods – Götterdämmerung over the 'New World Order'" and "Dawn of the International Socialist Revolution", which the organization has intensely studied meanwhile. The 9th Party Congress showed the consolidated substance of the MLPD and manifested its great potential for successfully solving all problems and tasks that it is facing. I firmly believe that in the year 2012 important objective and subjective prerequisites have matured for a qualitative new leap in the development of the MLPD towards the party of the masses.

Rote Fahne: Let's talk about the world economic and financial crisis. The federal government has already been trying to convince us for two years that the world economic crisis has been overcome since 2009/2010 – so to say as the confirmation of its "successful crisis management". What do you think about such evaluations?

Stefan Engel: There is no doubt that the German economy underwent a phase of temporary recovery between 2009 and 2011 and could almost reach the level previous to the crisis. Nevertheless, it is calculated propaganda to claim that the world economic and financial crisis

or also the economic crisis in Germany have been overcome. What has happened? When in 2008 the world economic and financial crisis broke out in connection with the collapse of the biggest banks in the USA, an up to now unprecedented international crisis management emerged. All inter-imperialist contradictions were temporarily put aside in order to solve the most important problem: to come to grips again with the world economic and financial development – and thus prevent an uncontrollable destabilization of the capitalist world system and the emergence of a revolutionary world crisis. This was, in fact, managed temporarily in 2009/2010 with great efforts. The world financial system could be maintained artificially once again by means of a gigantic injection of capital with trillions of dollars. After the world economic slump, which was unprecedented regarding its speed, extent and depth, the economic downturn was slowed down by means of comprehensive measures. In this way the process of the destruction of capital, which usually takes place in an overproduction crisis, was stopped. The leading international monopolies transferred their surplus capital to the so-called BRICS countries and to other more developed national economies like South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, Argentina, Mexico, Turkey etc. In these countries an economic recovery took place partly or even developments similar to a boom. Other countries – mainly the old imperialist countries – remained in the crisis, some countries were driven into an even deeper crisis. The epicenter of these negative developments is, of all things, the capitalist "model" Europe. The euro crisis since 2010 shows that the world economic and financial crisis could only be checked and controlled temporarily, but **could not really be overcome**.

One "bail-out package" followed the other. For two years everything has been focused on preventing the euro from collapsing and preventing an even deeper and uncontrolled economic downturn in Europe, which can no longer be stopped by any power in the world. The temporary tendencies of economic recovery and upturn in one part of the world are therefore only the counterpart of the continuing economic decline of another part of the world economy within the framework of the world economic and financial crisis. These are two sides of the same coin of the persisting world economic and financial crisis in today's divided world economy! In the same way, the aggravation of the financial and currency crisis in Europe is only the expression of the continuing economic decline.

The **BRICS countries** have benefited from this crisis management. They could more than double their share in the world social product from 8.9 percent in 2000 to 20.2 percent in 2011. With that they have become an important factor in the world economy. The share of the OECD countries has declined correspondingly in the same period from 81.2 percent to 65.9 percent. This has various reasons: in these BRICS countries, which are mostly former colonially dependent countries, the investment policy of international finance capital, oriented towards the international production centers within the framework of the reorganization of the international production, has been accelerated enormously. The process of the transformation of agricultural countries into industrial countries has also been forced up in pace. This led to the emergence of **new growth markets** which have a magnetic effect on all international monopolies. In the world economic and financial crisis most of the investments were concentrated exactly on these countries. They were an important outlet for the solely ruling international finance capital in the world economic and financial crisis. In the old imperialist countries in most of the OECD states, investments yielding maximum profits were scarcely possible any more. In the meantime, after a short peak, the BRICS countries have also been drawn into the whirlpool of the world economic and financial crisis again. This shows **that a real solution of the problems of the world economic and financial crisis has not taken place**. There was only a shift and transfer of the problems of the crisis, which are now breaking out again openly with full force.

In the meantime, **Germany** has also been affected by a decline in industrial production due to

the decline of the world economy, after it could benefit from the investment push in the BRICS countries in particular between 2009 and 2011. The effect of the international crisis management of the end of 2008 has obviously fallen flat and the crisis is continuing its destructive work with new, elemental force.

Rote Fahne: But the government has just put together a new bail-out package and transferred 44 billion euros to Greece. It claims that it has now gained control of the problem.

Stefan Engel: It is a complete illusion to be able to annul the overaccumulation of capital, which is the cause of the world economic and financial crisis, by such monetary measures. On the contrary. Artificially maintaining the circulation of money and the process of production and reproduction actually hampers the destruction of capital, a law-governed necessity in the capitalist crises. Only this can be the starting point of a new crisis cycle.

Instead of this, the **state debt** has increased dramatically everywhere. The official debt of the 27 EU states has risen from 7.8 trillion euros in 2008 to 10.8 trillion euros in the second quarter of 2012. This is an increase of almost 40 percent. The state debt of the USA rose during the world economic and financial crisis from 10 trillion US dollars before the crisis to 16 trillion US dollars on 30 September 2012. This is an increase of 60 percent. This has enormously aggravated the general tendency towards state bankruptcy.

Greece was the weakest link in the chain of countries threatened by state bankruptcy. It broke there first. The tendency towards state bankruptcy involves more and more countries. In the meantime, it has seized almost the whole of Southern Europe: from Cyprus to Greece, Italy, Spain and Portugal. Since the measures to prevent state bankruptcy are simultaneously having inhibiting repercussions on the economy, the economic decline is most pronounced in these countries. There is scarcely any leeway for countering a new world economic downturn within the framework of the economic and financial crisis. For this reason the attempts will also fail to stop the aggravation of the world economic and financial crisis and especially to prevent the political destabilization of the countries.

Because of the manner of the international crisis management a whole series of speculative bubbles has emerged, which has contributed to the temporary recovery of the economy. Now that the negative economic development has again come to the fore, the bursting of the speculative bubbles can lead to additional dramatic slumps. This is also the reason for the so-called "bail-out packages". They are at least supposed to dampen such developments and try to control them. All governments have prepared themselves for future economic and financial crises. The general crisis management has become the most formidable task of all honorable managers of the monopolies.

Rote Fahne: However, this state debt cannot be extended arbitrarily?

Stefan Engel: There are, of course, no absolute limits for this. Japan has a state debt of 250 percent of the GDP (gross domestic product). It has been in a deep financial and debt crisis for more than 20 years. Nevertheless, the country was the second strongest economic power of the world for years. However, when the GDP is lower than the state debt, it is extremely difficult to ever be able to pay back these debts. This is the relative limit of state debts. Such a situation is pushing inflation enormously. This in turn is a factor for the destabilization of the social relations.

Rote Fahne: But we are not noticing much of an inflation?

Stefan Engel: Here in Germany and Europe we are not at the moment, because the world economic and financial crisis also has the effect of commodity devaluation, which temporarily

eclipses the inflation. However, at that moment when there are certain tendencies of a recovery and of upturn, you notice immediately that various prices are rising. We have experienced that in the meantime, when the prices for raw materials and food rocketed temporarily last year. If we look at the BRICS countries, where tendencies of an upturn were taking effect between 2009 and 2011, we observe high inflation rates everywhere – up to two-digit figures.

We assume that this economic and financial crisis will continue for some time and that it will mainly deepen. Bourgeois economists assume that the downturn in the automobile industry in Europe alone is deeper than in 2008/2009 and can not be reversed again into a positive development before the year 2016. This shows for which periods of time we have to be prepared. Temporary measures like short-time work, halt in recruitment etc. are unsuitable measures for bridging such long periods of time of drop in production. More shutdowns and mass dismissals will follow which, of course, will correspondingly aggravate the class contradictions.

The former joint crisis management has disintegrated and become a ruthless competitive struggle for shares in the world market. Thus the registration of new vehicles has risen from 58.9 million to 66 million cars worldwide between 2007 and 2012. The share of the EU, however, has dropped from 27 to 19 percent. In North America it fell from 32 to 26 percent, while the producers in the Asian and Pacific region could increase their share from 25 to 37 percent. In the automobile industry alone, ten car plants in Europe are on the list of plants to be closed down. Furthermore the earlier shutdown of black coal mining threatens in all EU countries.

Rote Fahne: In Europe the situation remained relatively calm between 2009 and 2010. But when the euro crisis began, the struggles increased as well.

Stefan Engel: The struggles increased at that point when the class contradictions clearly emerged. The gigantic bail-outs for the banks and the bail-outs for the state budgets in Greece, Portugal, Ireland, Italy, Spain etc. have basically only served the international monopoly banks, whereas the masses got a 20 to 30 percent reduction in pensions, wages and earnings and growing mass unemployment. In Southern Europe the burdens of the crisis have been totally shifted to the masses. Consequently a very fast change in the mood has developed there. Economic and political mass strikes and demonstrations dominate the scene. Open political crises have already led to a number of changes of governments. The still existing relative strength of the ruling apparatus of power and deceit and the relative weakness of the Marxist-Leninist parties and of their influence on the masses are the reason why these political mass strikes have not yet turned into a revolutionary ferment. However, the potential for a revolutionary world crisis has grown further.

Rote Fahne: What do we have to pay special attention to in the development of the class struggle in the time ahead?

Stefan Engel: Since the spring of 2012, the international industrial proletariat is increasingly appearing as the leading force of the working-class and peoples' struggles against the shifting of the burdens of the crisis. Its struggles have already taken on a formative influence in Greece, in Spain or in South Africa and have given the struggle against the shifting of the burdens of the crisis its direction against international finance capital, too. The first cross-border general strike in Europe on 14 November 2012 shows that internationalist consciousness is becoming stronger and stronger. In some countries there were general strikes, and in altogether 28 countries there were union strikes and demonstrations or solidarity protest actions. The MLPD

doubtlessly did pioneering work for this - together with other ICOR organizations. For years now we have pointed out the importance of the internationalization of the class struggle and again and again have established cross-border connections with the workers' struggles and movements. Now this is increasingly being taken up, and the drive for international cooperation is already becoming a part of the spontaneity of the workers' struggles.

Rote Fahne: Doesn't the planned closure of Opel in Bochum in the year 2016 mean a concrete change in tactics of those in power, compared to their previous maneuvers to dampen and conceal things?

Stefan Engel: Quite correct! The whole time General Motors has tried to dampen the class contradictions with the workforce in Germany by means of social plans, creeping destruction of jobs, outsourcing and so on. With the open announcement to close down the Opel plant in Bochum in 2016 this has changed. Especially the arrogant and provocative way in which this was done clearly shows the transition to a harder approach in shifting the burdens of the crisis onto the backs of the automobile workers. And on top of this, they apparently see themselves forced to openly challenge one of the most militant workforces in Germany – the Opel workers in Bochum. Everyone knows: if the monopolies have the Opel workers suffer a defeat without struggle, this will have lasting negative consequences for the fighting spirit of the entire working-class movement in Germany. The militant Opel workforce in Bochum is part of **the soul of the class-militant direction of the working-class movement in Germany**. All workers are looking at Bochum to see what the Opel workers are doing. The attack upon the Opel workers also awakens the best emotions of solidarity amongst the broad masses in the Ruhr area, as well as in all of Germany, and even among class-conscious workers in other countries. Therefore it was of special importance that following the blunt announcement of the closure a first independent warning-strike was organized immediately on 11 December. This was a very conscious strike! The class-conscious workers have taken up the struggle against all attempts to prevent, oppress or demoralize such a strike. This way they also set a signal against the politics of capitulation and class collaboration of the reformist union leadership and the works councils. The atmosphere and message of this strike was not embittered and depressed, but proud, militant and self-confident. This was an important signal. Naturally this must be followed by the extension and higher development of the struggle. Let us not be misled by the rude actions of the Opel board. Although they appear to be so determined, their defensive and fear of the united workers is actually just as great. This is shown by their ridiculous cancellation of the "50th Anniversary Celebration Opel Bochum" last Saturday, in order to prevent a platform for so called "*left splinter groups*".

Opel Bochum was installed 50 years ago as a plant for miners leaving the mining industry and was correspondingly subsidized. With the end of mining in the Ruhr region, Opel also loses its locational advantage for getting subsidies to integrate the miners who are "turning away" into its production. Apparently General Motors wants to do without the Opel plant because of this, too. The fact that the closure of black coal mining in the Ruhr region and that of Opel Bochum are being planned for the same time should put it straight to everyone that these are two sides of the same coin of a gigantic destruction of jobs in the Ruhr region.

The struggle over Opel is a signal for the working-class movement and it can also become a signal for the workers' offensive of the international industrial proletariat all over Europe. The Party will do everything in its power that the class-conscious workers take up the struggle for each and every job in Bochum with all its strength and consequences. Correspondingly it will organize class solidarity nationwide and internationally. It has not yet been decided at all who will prevail in this class dispute.

Naturally we know that a struggle like 2004 can not simply be repeated. General Motors is better prepared, the right-wing union bureaucracy is better prepared. On the other hand, the class-conscious workers have drawn their lessons from the shortcomings of the struggle in 2004 – and the MLPD is better prepared, too. We will see what will be the outcome of these new constellations and whether General Motors is not a bit too high-spirited to be challenging just this workforce.

It is very apparent that in the last months in various countries miners are in the lead of fierce class disputes, partly defying death. This underlines the importance of the first International Miners' Conference in March 2013 in Peru.

Rote Fahne: The UN climate conference in Doha ended in a disaster. How should that be evaluated?

Stefan Engel: For the present year a new record level of 35.6 billion tons of carbon-dioxide in the earth's atmosphere is being expected. Despite this catastrophic development, environmental minister Altmayer even calls the embarrassing results of Doha "an important milestone with regard to effective climate protection". No wonder: According to the goals so far, the FRG would have almost reached its climate goals already!

By way of its mass media, the solely ruling international finance capital is already influencing public opinion massively to believe that today it is only a question of **accommodating to the looming environmental catastrophe**. Its greedy look is mainly directed to the plundering of mineral resources because of the melting of the permafrost soils and of the Arctic/Antarctica.

Either humankind will end the era of capitalism or capitalism will end the existence of humankind!

Rote Fahne: Did the international day of struggle for the environment and the international campaign of ICOR and ILPS for the shutdown of all nuclear power stations fulfill your expectations?

Stefan Engel: The ICOR day of struggle to save the environment was an important motor and initiator for the environmental-political activities in Germany on December 1st of this year. The almost complete retreat of the petty bourgeois dominated environmental organizations from the world climate day, which the environmental movement had formerly organized, was surely a higher obstacle for building up broad united action and justifiably met with great criticism. It is all the more important that altogether a stabilization and consolidation of the militant forces was attained on the environmental day of struggle. Partly with broader united actions like in Berlin, Braunschweig or Husum etc. Together we have to draw conclusions from that.

From the MLPD we could collect more than 30,000 signatures for the worldwide manifesto of ICOR and ILPS to shut down all nuclear power plants. This worldwide collection of signatures was the first joint environmental political activity of the international revolutionary working-class movement. You have to consider that so far many organizations haven't developed any environmental politics. So this campaign first had to help to sharpen an environmental consciousness in these organizations. Surely the MLPD could have collected more signatures, but the number is not so decisive. At the moment it is mainly important to be part of the strategy discussion of the environmental movement and to find sound forms of organization of the struggle for the defense of the natural environment. For the MLPD, the support of the initiative for the building of a militant environmental union is in the center of attention. This idea is taking root more and more within the environmental movement and winning supporters

Rote Fahne: The 9th Party Congress of the MLPD took place in October. What were its most

important results?

Stefan Engel: You can really say that it has been the **best and most mature Party Congress** so far. It dealt not only with the entire range of new ideological, political and organizational questions concerning the class struggle and party building. It was especially the expression of the clearly grown ability of the MLPD to answer all these questions completely and to solve the most complicated problems. The MLPD has developed an outstanding potential to advance the development of the party to a party of the masses in terms of quality and quantity in the foreseeable future. We see the **potential of a revolutionary world crisis** as dormant energy that is not openly active yet. Potential means that objectively, a basis is ripening here, but from the subjective side the preconditions do not yet exist to give revolutionary leadership to the arising struggles. The rapid changes will come for sure, this is law-governed! But whether they will lead ahead to the international socialist revolution essentially depends on the ripening of the subjective factor and is bound to a Marxist-Leninist leadership. The MLPD is excellently prepared for that.

It was the first Party Congress of the MLPD as an **ICOR member**. Correspondingly the Party Congress discussed all issues while the different representatives of the international Marxist-Leninist, revolutionary and working-class movement were attending. The Party Congress oriented the development of the MLPD towards the party of the masses all-sidedly **to the struggle for a new level of proletarian internationalism in theory and practice**.

It evaluated one of the **most complicated stages in party work**, in which the masses had to come to grips with comprehensive changes in the deepest world economic and financial crisis in the history of capitalism. At the same time, they came under the heavy fire of modern anti-communism. In this situation the **MLPD did good work**. It has stabilized itself, extended its mass influence and conquered new fields of work. Most of all, the party has developed outstandingly in the ideological-political field. We have a stable party basis, which has adopted the dialectical method.

The party congress captivated with its open and candid critical and self-critical discussion and the spirit of solidarity. It discussed the issues of yet unsolved problems in party building, like the shortcomings in leading our work among the petty-bourgeois intermediate strata, and gave new impulses for a positive change. The whole party has to learn to use the **system of self-control** in the same all-sided manner as it was put into practice at the party congress. The creative discussions and decisions of the Stuttgart Party Congress were based on the elaboration, the critical and self-critical assimilation and first experiences in putting into practice the strategy and tactics of the international socialist revolution in accordance with our book "Dawn of the International Socialist Revolution".

The Party Congress passed unanimously and without abstentions the report of the Central Committee, which was improved comprehensively with 1,640 motions, as well as the report of the Central Control Commission. The account of the financial officers of the CC was also unanimously accepted, and their management of the party finances was evaluated as being sound.

Rote Fahne: What tasks lie ahead for Marxist-Leninist environmental work?

Stefan Engel: The Stuttgart Party Congress confirmed the decisions of the 8th Central Committee and underlined that a struggle must be led to make environmental work the second most important line of struggle in all the party's rank-and-file work. We need a new quality of the environmental movement – the time is ripe for that! The environmental movement, which has been petty-bourgeois dominated up till now, has reached a turning point: Either to resign and

give up or to actively contribute to a movement of social change for a society which is free from striving for profit. For that, the illusions about an environmental insight of those in power must be buried.

To contribute effectively to that, the MLPD must change itself, too, and overcome every underestimation of the environmental question. In that respect we can learn from the successful new building of the militant women's movement. By the end of the year, we will have built up further new environmental groups.

Rote Fahne: What does it mean to learn from Marxist-Leninist work among women?

Stefan Engel: With its twenty years of systematic rank-and-file work in issues of women's policy, the MLPD has contributed to making a broad militant women's movement become a part of social reality in Germany. This was vividly depicted at the 10th Women's Political Counsel on 15-16 September in Ludwigsburg. Representatives from the entire spectrum of the women's movement "*from religion to revolution*" came together here for the first time. With the strengthening of the militant women's movement and its international influence it signified a new quality in the development of the women's movement in Germany. In the 1990s, the active basis of most of the women's organizations in Germany disintegrated. The women's movement was disoriented by petty-bourgeois feminism and was largely undermined through its integration in the state apparatus, foundations and NGO's.

We drew our conclusions and promoted the building of a genuine militant, *ueberparteilich* (above party lines) women's mass movement, which frees itself from the laming influence of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois feminism and pursues the path of the liberation of women. Comrades do active work in the *ueberparteilich* women's league Courage. In the book "New Perspectives for the Liberation of Women" we developed the strategy and tactics in the struggle over the mode of thinking of women. Women's consciousness is a reflection of the special exploitation and oppression of the masses of women. This is the material foundation for a women's movement in which the women of all classes and strata are united and struggle for their emancipation. At the same time, this demands that the proletarian mode of thinking be strengthened in the struggle against the petty-bourgeois mode of thinking, that the perspective of the liberation of women in genuine socialism be upheld and that you cope with the divisive influence of modern anticommunism. Therein lies an enormous amount of experience which can contribute to the militant environmental movement also becoming a broad *ueberparteilich* mass movement with great attractive force and social influence!

Rote Fahne: The MLPD has taken a positive development. What is its secret?

Stefan Engel: Like every good and high-quality work, the positive development of the MLPD is based on proletarian control and self-control. Neither the Central Control Commission of the MLPD nor its Central Committee, or even less an individual comrade alone, is capable of organizing the struggle over the mode of thinking that is necessary today to ensure that the work is being conducted on the basis of the proletarian mode of thinking. The 9th Party Congress showed a new quality in the sovereign and conscious application of the further developed system of self-control in the party to guarantee a positive development of the MLPD. The control from above through the CCC, the control from below through the rank-and-file, as well as the conscious self-control of each comrade – these three components of the system of self-control are organized as the scientific organization of work in the MLPD.

In its report to the Party Congress, the CCC could document that it had come to grips with its crisis of 2005 and overcome it. It was able to reclaim its independent control to the extent to which it integrated itself in the system of self-control of the party.

The Party Congress placed its entire trust in the CCC after it had become convinced that the CCC had learned from its mistakes and had developed a new relation to the party on eye-level. This is especially important because in the forthcoming great changes in the class struggle, the struggle between the proletarian and the petty-bourgeois mode of thinking will also unfold considerably. In such situations it is particularly important that the petty-bourgeois mode of thinking in party work cannot encroach unhindered and undermine or even destroy the proletarian character of the party.

The MLPD has always aspired to be a revolutionary working-class party of a new type. This is based mainly on the system of self-control and the CCC, which has been comprehensively developed for over 40 years. It is no coincidence that this fact was emphasized by most of the international guests at the Party Congress. Especially the delegations from Russia and the Ukraine emphasized the importance of independent control commissions and the system of self-control, which in their opinion would undoubtedly have contributed decisively to preventing the restoration of capitalism.

Rote Fahne: The Stuttgart Party Congress underscored the organizational-political focus on youth work. What does that mean for 2013?

Stefan Engel: The youth league Rebell is working with revolutionary youth organizations of various countries on an ever closer and broader scale. Highlights of youth work like the summer camp, Whitsun Youth Festival, the yearly demonstrations in Berlin in commemoration of Lenin, Liebknecht und Luxemburg ("LLL Demonstration") are putting "internationalism live" more and more into practice. Many young people also have special abilities and an interest in international work, in translation work, international solidarity actions, etc.

We will be extending this work in 2013. This will be expressed especially at the LLL Demonstration, at the Whitsun Youth Festival and the summer camp. However, it is decisive that the organizational-political focus be realized in all tasks and through each one of our comrades. This must be particularly expressed in our offensive for genuine socialism and against modern anticommunism, which will accompany us the entire year. Its entire content is the struggle for the future, and therefore it is directed especially to the masses of the youth. We will combine the election campaign in the federal elections with a special youth election campaign together with Rebell.

This orientation also has a strategic aspect: With the 9th Party Congress we have initiated a long-term change of generations. In the coming years we will be training numerous young people in order to position the party perspective. Every department in every field of struggle of our political work, every leading organ must review whether it is sufficiently directed to the youth and younger people and, with that, to the future.

Rote Fahne: You have elected a new Central Committee and determined its tasks. How do you evaluate these new elections?

Stefan Engel: The entire run-up to these elections was already "typically MLPD". In a very careful, but also courageous process, the entire rank-and-file of the party chose its candidates. No one can be elected at the Party Congress of the MLPD who does not have the approval of his county or local delegates' conference and the evaluation of his basic party unit. The ideological-political qualification, the personal steeling in the class struggle, the participation in the systematic rank-and-file work, the training of other comrades, the unselfish dedication, the close connection with the membership and the masses – these are all criteria which the comrades at the basis can evaluate the best.

To the extent to which the party dealt with the strategic goals of the international revolution, it

also became more and more evident before the party congress that we have to do long-term cadre work that is directed to the future. For this reason the party basis not only put up comrades for election who are well-trying and have a lot of experience, but also a whole number of young candidates with potential for the future. We should not experience what many parties of the communist movement did, when long-standing leading representatives leave and a break occurs because the new cadres and the continuity cannot be maintained on a high level. This style of long-range cadre policy was characteristic of Willi Dickhut, and we continued that at the Stuttgart Party Congress with determination.

The Party Congress had an impressive selection, a genuine surplus of qualified candidates to vote from for its CC. It placed great confidence in the former Central Committee and added a big reservoir of young comrades to its forces. So now we have the best prerequisites to train a qualified "3rd generation" in the Central Committee.

Rote Fahne: How is REVOLUTIONARY WAY 35 making progress?

Stefan Engel: The Central Committee has planned to do everything possible to finish this book in 2013 in order to make an active, creative contribution to the strategy discussion within the environmental movement.

Of course we have to start with our own strategy discussion. That includes the thorough study of the foundations of Marxism-Leninism regarding these issues, as they were already laid down by Marx and Engels. I am always amazed what a far-reaching struggle Marx and Engels already led over the unity of man and nature and also how they fought over this with ignorant petty-bourgeois and bourgeois trends within and outside the working-class movement to defend their viewpoint. At the same time, with their criticism of the alienation of labor and the alienation from nature, they also made important contributions to be able to imagine the creative negation of capitalism in a communist society.

In this context we have to deal with various conceptions and customs of the environmental movement. Here we have to distinguish carefully between unsuitable proposals like an individual way out instead of leading an active struggle against the destructive forces of the imperialist world system, or to be occupied only with yourself and reduce everything to a healthy diet and appropriate behavior. At the same time, we also have to change personal conduct regarding diet, health and life-style. We also already have to make use of the extensive knowledge about what the process of production and reproduction of immediate life could look like in a socialist, communist society in which the unity of man and nature would be the dominant line. All this needs time, thorough work, needs a fundamental approach, while we also have to question ourselves again and again. In short: in the work on this number of our theoretical organ we are in a progressing process of learning, the result of which also has to make sense. This is why the greatest priority will be attached to this in the coming time.

Rote Fahne: The participation in the federal elections in 2013 is being combined with an offensive for genuine socialism. What does that mean?

Stefan Engel: When we participate in parliamentary elections it is not with the illusion that society can be changed by way of the parliament. Today parliaments are important pillars of the dictatorship of the monopolies and to conceal their sole rule over the entire society. Systematic manipulation is already taking place in the elections. An ever larger role is being played by the opinion research institutes – or you might better call them opinion manipulation institutes – which already choose ahead of time which party is significant and which is to be considered as being insignificant and among the "miscellaneous" from the very beginning. We are hardly allowed to state our positions in the bourgeois mass media because of anticommunist

incompatibility rulings, so that a great part of the electoral population is hardly informed about what we Marxist-Leninists actually stand for in detail.

In spite of this, we will take on the parliamentary struggle in order to take part in the societal discussion about a better future. We will combine this with an offensive of genuine socialism, against modern anticommunism and thereby build up our party systematically.

We will take advantage of the massive obstruction of the elections, which forces us to submit about 40,000 authenticated signatures just to be able to participate, to win over new supporters for the party and conduct systematic persuasion work among the masses.

Of course we will fight for each and every vote because it expresses a conscious decision to support the Marxist-Leninists. The more votes we get, the less possible it is to maintain the general media boycott against our party. Up to now, only single comrades have experience with parliamentary seats on a municipal level, based on the trust that they receive in electoral alliances organized above party lines. There we have gained a lot of experience with the possibilities and limits of bourgeois parliamentarism.

The MLPD will campaign as "**radical left**" in demarcation to the parliamentary party "The Left". As a **revolutionary** working-class party the MLPD has no illusions about the ability of the capitalist society to be reformed and it pursues the **alternative of genuine socialism**.

130 candidates are running on 16 land-lists and as direct candidates. We have included forces from the militant opposition, the Monday demonstration movement, factory and trade-union work, the working-class and women's movements, the environmental movement and migrants on these lists. It is an honor for us to cooperate with these people and to conduct the election campaign together with them and to make their concerns known, too. Ours is a party which works together with many progressive people and organizations on the basis of struggle. We also do not aim primarily at acquiring seats in parliament.

Most important is the building of **voter action groups** in which masses of people can get to know the MLPD, thoroughly check the candidates and, at the same time, develop their own alternative ideas with regard to the societal relations in capitalism and bring them to bear. In the last six weeks before the elections we will conduct a spirited election campaign on the streets. We will conduct the opening event for our election campaign in the city of Kassel this time.

Rote Fahne: In the past you already referred to your offensive against modern anticommunism. What role does it play in the federal election campaign?

Stefan Engel: A campaign in the public for socialism at present would have practically no effect at all, if it were not closely connected to a principled criticism of modern anticommunism. This criticism must be done offensively and must be understandable for the masses.

Since 2006 we are witnesses of a campaign all over Europe, which was started by the Council of Europe. Its goal is to discredit and destroy the high esteem of socialism. Modern anticommunism likes to present itself as super-democratic. With a hypocritical air, it issues warnings against so-called "Stalinism" so it can avoid dealing with the theory and practice of the MLPD.

At the same time, modern anticommunism serves the division of the working-class, peoples' and youth movement. Especially on the occasion of the coming LLL Demonstration (Lenin, Liebknecht, Luxemburg) in early January, where ten thousands of people gather every year to express their sympathy for socialism, this time a so-called "anti-Stalinist" demonstration was initiated by the leadership of the Falken (*Falcons*), solid (youth league of the Left Party) and the Jusos (Young Socialists). In a hypocritical manner they make a claim on Rosa Luxemburg and

Karl Liebknecht but trample on their commitment to socialism, the dictatorship of the proletariat, the party of the Bolsheviks and the Russian October Revolution.

We witness anticommunist division at almost every demonstration, where there are attempts to thwart the MLPD. At the same time, modern anticommunism is utterly undemocratic. It claims to defend itself against the so-called undemocratic Stalinism and thinks it is completely justified to ban the MLPD from the unions, to deprive it of its right to organize and of its freedom of opinion or to impede that, or even to deny its general legal capacity. This goes as far as boycotting loans for our trustee. In several cases we had to strike back against arbitrary cancellations of accounts. And institutions that we are cooperating with are economically damaged and boycotted, as well.

These undemocratic and partly fascistic methods are so absurd that more and more persons from the petty-bourgeois or even the bourgeois camp are opposing the methods of anticommunism.

Modern anticommunism is getting more audacious, the fewer persons let themselves be kept from forming their own opinion about the socialist alternative and the MLPD. Naturally the campaign against modern anticommunism is also suited for spreading Marxism-Leninism among the people. Modern anticommunism is aiming mainly at keeping the criticism of Marx against capitalism – following the will of those in power – from being heard by the masses. The brilliant ability of Lenin or Mao Zedong to develop a revolutionary strategy and tactics of the proletarian revolution is defamed from the very start as senseless violence. Last but not least, the successful socialist construction under Stalin's leadership is being defamed as mass murder of opponents. Following the slogan: Who will really believe criminals, murderers or dictators? This scam should not be underestimated.

Aside from the spoken educational work, it is important as well, that our party is giving an example for socialist morale in practice and develops the respective attraction. Marxism-Leninism is an ideology of the struggle for liberation, which promotes the independent thinking, feeling and acting of the broad masses of the exploited and oppressed people and which, in the end, is superior to the most different shades of bourgeois ideology and religion. The more we succeed in putting modern anticommunism in its place and in helping the masses to cope with the petty-bourgeois anticommunist mode of thinking, the fewer problems they will have to join the proletarian class struggle and the building of the revolutionary party and to struggle for a new society of socialism.

On this occasion I want to heartily thank all comrades, friends, supporters, as well as critical companions of our work, for their great commitment in the year gone by. Through this they have given a practical example of genuine socialism and have given widely noticed signals for a way of thinking, struggling and feeling freed from petty-bourgeois self-interest! These valuable seeds of our work will grow sooner or later. I wish all the readers of the "Rote Fahne" relaxing holidays, resounding internationalist New Year celebrations in solidarity, good health and a fulfilled and militant New Year!

Rote Fahne: Many thanks for the interview!