

We Urgently Have to Strengthen Our Forces

How do you judge the economic and political development at the end of the year?

In the middle of the year we drew the conclusion that the longest and deepest economic and financial crisis in the history of capitalism is coming to an end. The 5th plenary session of the CC could examine the **whole crisis cycle** for the first time.

We established that the crisis cycle had run its course between January 2008 – the peak of industrial production in Germany before the world economic and financial crisis – and July 2014. In July 2014 the pre-crisis level was reached again for the first time. In the time in between, however, there were remarkable developments: In 2011, for a short period the index of industrial production – compared to the highest level before the crisis = 100 – reached a level of 98.7. This induced chancellor Merkel to make out an economic upswing already in summer 2011. Actually, the economy fell back to 93.6 index points again. From that point in time, the index stagnated at around 95 points. This means that the recovery turned into a **fluctuating stagnation with sharp ups and downs** even before the level prior to the crisis had been reached permanently. This is an **important change in the crisis cycle**.

The pronounced fluctuations indicate a close interpenetration of political and economic events having relatively quick and distinct **repercussions**. Thus, due to the crisis in the Ukraine, industrial production in Germany fell by more than 3 percent in August. Exports even fell by 5.7 percent, the biggest drop since the crisis month January 2009.

Due to the chronic overaccumulation of capital it has generally become very difficult for international finance capital to realize maximum profits by means of industrial production. For this reason, the state policy of investments and subsidies in favor of these monopolies as well as the unrestrained speculation have become more and more a necessity for increasing maximum profits.

Both factors have led to an **immense plundering of the state budgets** and a **rapid expansion of the credit system**. Between 2007 and 2013 alone, the indebtedness of states and private businesses rose from 107 trillion US dollars to 150 trillion US dollars. Today Japan has a **national debt of 250 percent compared with the gross national product**. Nevertheless, after comprehensive, numerous state economic programs the Japanese economy has again slipped into a recession. This marks a great instability and poses the **constant danger** of an outbreak of a **new world economic crisis**.

Interestingly, due to the contradiction between the rapid accumulation of capital and the shrinking markets the relation between replacement, rationalization and expansion investments has changed considerably compared to previous crises. After the share of rationalization investments had doubled in 2009 from 10 to 20 percent compared to 2007, this share dropped again to 10 percent as of 2011. The expansion investments remained relatively constantly at a level of 25 percent after a short drop to 15 percent in 2010. That means that the **bulk of investments are replacement investments** as expression of the chronic overaccumulation of capital.

Monetary policy has further unfolded the contradiction between productive capital and the hugely inflated speculative capital and increased the instability of the economy as well. The **deflationary tendency**, which leads to the devaluation of goods, is slowing down economic growth and turns many loans into bad loans. All these are indications of **insurmountable problems of the imperialist world economic system** on the basis of the reorganization of international production, which continue to have an effect even after the end of the world economic and financial crisis.

It is striking that the US economy is significantly ahead of the other imperialist countries and has been growing relatively constantly for some time. How can this be explained?

In the USA there are fundamentally no other laws governing the economy than in the other imperialist countries. A special factor for the relatively stable and above-average recovery of the US economy is the **rapid expansion of environmentally destructive fracking**. Due to this the USA has become the biggest gas and oil producer in the world.

While the USA could increase its oil production from 2007 to 2013 by 45.8 percent, Saudi Arabia managed to increase its production only by 12.2 percent and Russia only by 7.2 percent. This entire development has brought about a real **glut of oil** on the world markets. It is a new main driving force for the deflationary development and has significantly strengthened the dollar compared to the euro, yen etc. We have to see the present sharp fall of the ruble compared to the dollar in this connection. It has sent the international stock markets on a downhill slide.

This success of fracking, of course, aroused the greediness of other imperialists. In Europe they try to follow suit with all their might and make fracking acceptable. Half of the DAX monopolies in Germany have invested in fracking in the meantime. This shows: capitalist production and consumption can only exist on the basis of a chronically crisis-prone destruction of the natural foundations of life.

The German government too has now given the green light for fracking despite all protests and statements to the contrary.

The draft bill published recently with the hypocritical affirmation of the protection of drinking water has only one central point: the **introduction of extensive fracking in Germany**.

It permits:

- Extraction of gas also above a depth of 3,000 meters if this is declared as "scientific test drills" and supposedly carried out with methods not harmful to water (!).
- From 2019 extensive "commercial fracking" is to be possible in addition. A 6-member committee of experts comprising geologists, environmental officials and geoscientists is supposed to confirm that there will be no danger of earthquakes and environmental impacts. This committee interestingly takes decisions by majority vote and not necessarily unanimously!

In the struggle against fracking in Germany, the militant miners' movement in particular has played a leading role from the beginning, also because fracking is accompanied by the closure of the hard coal mining industry.

The rejection of fracking reaches far into petty-bourgeois and bourgeois circles. Thus, in the meantime several city councils in North Rhine-Westphalia unanimously have rejected the introduction of fracking and declared their position against the dangers posed by the federal law. Among them, for instance, are Neukirchen-Vluyn, Gelsenkirchen, Bergkamen or Witten. In Gelsenkirchen an environmental platform has been formed consisting of more than ten organizations – including the Left party, the Pirates, the MLPD, the DKP – for coordinating, among other things, their struggle against fracking.

A mass revolt against fracking must begin, of course, with systematic educational work. Bit by bit, forms of active mass resistance, including strikes, mass demonstrations and blockades, have to be envisaged as well. The struggle against the introduction of fracking in Germany will be a test for the new environmental movement.

What are the consequences of the destabilization of the world economy after the world economic and financial crisis?

During the crisis the power balance between the old and new imperialist forces shifted. Thus,

the BRICS countries' share of the world social product increased during the crisis, at the expense of the old imperialist countries, to almost a quarter of world production.

The imperialists are therefore looking feverishly for new markets in order to transform their excessive production into profits. Everywhere there are negotiations over free trade agreements, by which the various imperialists and groups of imperialists want to gain advantages in the international competition. An expression of this rivalry is the planned TTIP agreement between the EU, the USA and further states, or agreements of the USA with Asian countries.

This rivalry ultimately is decisive for sparking off the Ukraine crisis. Russia responded by founding the Eurasian Economic Union and tries to force the countries of the former Soviet Union into this cross-border single market. The fact though that the Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia are pressing for EU membership does not at all fit in with the plans of the Russian imperialists. The struggle for spheres of influence has intensified and increasingly takes on an open, belligerent form. **This is the first time since the Cuba crisis of 1962 that such an acute danger of war has arisen.**

However, the inter-imperialist rivalry has other consequences as well. **Everywhere** in the enterprises "austerity programs" are being carried out. At the moment we have the biggest international wave of mergers since the year 2000.

In most of the imperialist countries large-scale **programs for dismantling social gains** are being carried out in order to relieve the state budgets. Because state-monopoly economic policy supports the international monopolies and has concentrated the limited resources on that, there is less and less scope for social reforms. This will sharpen the class contradictions and also advance the general destabilization of the imperialist world system. A new wave of mass protests including general strikes in several countries in Europe is a foretaste of this development!

Recent publications about the increase in global warming mark a dramatic acceleration of the development towards a global environmental catastrophe. How do the responsible people in the government and economy deal with this? And what role does the climate summit in Lima play?

The so-called climate summit in Lima, Peru, which just ended, is a pure provocation of humankind. In reality it was a summit of climate killers which didn't even give the impression of achieving binding results. The entire scenario was dominated mainly by the rivalry between the old imperialist states and the new imperialist states, which put the blame on each other and do not want to make decisive changes themselves.

In the dispute about who has to contribute more or less to the reduction of CO₂ emissions, the absurd "agreement" was reached that every country "should" explain to what extent it "is ready" to contribute to climate protection. Of course, without any control. A lesser degree of obligation is hardly possible! The imperialist environmental policy of the supposed compatibility of capitalist economy and ecology is more than ever doomed to failure.

The World Climate Council has only recently confirmed in its fifth specialist report at the beginning of November that the "warming of the climate system" is an incontestable fact, and that human influence was the "dominant cause of the observed warming since the mid-20th century"¹. The concentration of carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane and nitrous oxide in the atmosphere has reached levels which never before occurred during the last 800,000 years! The increase of these greenhouse gases resulted in the absorption of a vast amount of energy by the climate systems, of which more than 90 percent was stored by the oceans during the last 40 years, causing their warming. This in turn has tremendously accelerated the collapse of the ecosystems in the world oceans. Between 1901 and 2010 the sea level already rose by 19 centimeters due to the melting of the onshore ice and to expansion of the water as a result of the warming of the oceans.

As a consequence of the global warming, extreme weather and climate events are increasing, which we just now have experienced again with the typhoon "Hagupit", which swept across the island state of the Philippines with winds of more than 200 kilometers per hour. In our book *Catastrophe Alert! What Is to Be Done Against the Willful Destruction of the Unity of Humanity and Nature?* we already stressed the importance of such events: "*The regional environmental disasters are pacemakers on the way to a global environmental catastrophe.*"

The prognoses of the World Climate Council leave no doubt: if the emissions of greenhouse gases are not reduced immediately, the already existing risks for humans and the environment will be heightened and extended dramatically. However, there isn't even a hint of immediate measures.

If we look at the current "Forbes Global 2000" list of the biggest enterprises (in terms of revenues) we can understand why this is so. The oil and gas industries with Shell, ExxonMobil, BP, PetroChina, Total and Chevron, and the automobile industry with VW and Toyota at the top, take places two to nine. These supermonopolies will do everything to secure and extend their position in the world market – without regard for humanity and nature.

The only world climate agreement up to now, the so-called Kyoto Protocol, ran out in 2012. It was supposed to reduce the worldwide emissions of greenhouse gases until 2012 in relation to 1990 by 5.2 percent, which is totally insufficient. The result was an increase of 61 percent! What a disaster!

Only an **internationally coordinated active resistance of the masses** can stop and change the climate policy of the international monopolies. The struggle against the global environmental catastrophe has become a **priority task** of the international Marxist-Leninist and working-class movement.

How has the MLPD implemented the projects relating to environmental policy?

With the book *Catastrophe Alert! What Is to Be Done Against the Willful Destruction of the Unity of Humanity and Nature?* published in March, we have made an important contribution to the social **strategy debate**. The Central Committee determined in summer that a comprehensive, powerful **literature offensive** is initially the most important link for the promotion of the strategy debate. Since then, sales of the book – also in English and Spanish – have more than doubled to **10,021** copies.

However, on closer examination we are still far from realizing our potential: A good percentage of the comrades and basic units do not yet take part in the offensive selling of the book, while some activists have already sold more than 50 copies. The reasons for this are complex: Some shrink back a little from the discussions needed to sell the book, because they are, of course, also confronted with the effect of modern anticommunism. They occasionally lack the self-confidence to hold such discussions. This shows that, naturally, the study of the book and dealing with the environmental question are self-evident conditions for convincingly spreading and selling the book. Only in this way we will succeed in conducting a **real strategy debate** among the broad masses, among the workers, in the women's, youth and environmental movements. In this process, certain negative characteristics in our work have to be overcome. For example, in our work in factories and trade unions there is still in part a very narrow-minded understanding of this work. Actually the main task of the Marxist-Leninist work in factories and trade unions is, however, to raise **class-consciousness**. And the **environmental question** is an integral part of this today.

Other comrades are not yet able sufficiently to combine the environmental question with other social questions in which the party is active. For instance, some were hesitant to sell the book at the solidarity demonstrations for Rojava, but then it was no problem at all. The comrades in Rojava even take the environmental question into account in their self-determined society right from the start and learn from the mistakes of the international working-class movement.

Other comrades often get lost in the ups and downs of the struggles of the day, instead of giving in-depth answers with our literature to questions which are preying on the minds of people. Young people in particular – but not only them – often are not used to reading. They get their information simply from films or the Internet. **Independent thinking and acting, however, require reading and individual study.**

The responsible departments of the Central Committee must be more imaginative regarding the strategy debate. It makes me, and also many readers of the *Rote Fahne* (Red Flag), angry that usually only positive opinions about the book are published in the newspaper! It does not deal adequately with the numerous objections, questions, counterarguments. Quite often these are dismissed in a sectarian way. However, we need a really debate-provoking strategy discussion, with always new, convincing arguments.

Last but not least, it is not so easy to propagate the book especially in the environmental movement, because many people argue that they "already know all that". However, they are laboring under a misapprehension. It is actually a problem in the environmental movement (and its literature) that it is competent in many individual topics, citizens' action groups and individual projects, but also fragmented, and sometimes loses sight of the overall context and mainly of the threatening danger of a global environmental catastrophe. Here we have to wage a systematic struggle over the mode of thinking, which ultimately can be conducted only in an organized way. The environmental struggle will become more and more a society-changing force.

In this context I would like to congratulate the initiators and supporters of the founding of a new **environmental union** for the union's successful launch. With it a **form of organization of the new quality of the ecological consciousness and class consciousness of the workers** has emerged.

On 5th December the last Zafira left the production line at the Opel plant in Bochum. At a discussion at the Whitsun Youth Meeting 2013 you seemed firmly convinced that the Opel colleagues would go on strike. Was this a false estimation, and is the closure now a defeat?

The Opel colleagues, the class-militant forces and our comrades did not disappoint me. On the contrary! They fought courageously for two-and-a-half years, and in this struggle the **class consciousness of the Opel colleagues developed tremendously**. What was not achieved is an unlimited independent strike, the preparation of which, however, encountered partly unforeseeable obstacles or partly obstacles that could not be influenced.

In the same way as the militant forces in the working-class movement took the workforce of Opel Bochum as model – their adversaries too focused their attention on them! We can assume that there were instructions and arrangements from the highest levels – employers' associations, government, rightist union leadership – how this struggle could be prevented and the militant initiative of the workforce could be hushed up or suppressed.

The **Opel colleagues were to be defeated at all costs** to break the fighting spirit of the entire working-class movement in Germany. The closure was effected on the basis of blackmailing and coercion and was pushed through by the common action of GM, federal, Land and local politicians, media, government and trade-union leadership.

But most of all the **workers had to reorient themselves to know who is an ally and who an adversary**: All the time, since Opel was founded in 1962, Opel Bochum was always a center of independent struggles and strikes. At least 50 such strikes and militant actions are an **outstanding history of this workforce**. And the different forces always were involved and cooperated in these struggles. This time the group around the chairman of the works council, Rainer Einkenkel, together with his left-reformist supporters, constantly fought against, plotted against and whipped up sentiment against a strike. At the beginning they told the workers that it was "too early" – until, within seconds, it was "too late". In connection with both variants they launched a scheming anticommunist smear campaign against the works council group

Offensiv and also against the MLPD, which stood for setting off an unlimited independent strike and more and more met with approval.

The workforces of the other Opel plants were defamed and blamed for having let down their colleagues in Bochum. In several clear votes the Opel colleagues declared themselves in favor of a strike; but when the works council leadership refused to really support and organize this strike they were confused. They had not gotten to the point yet where they would now start and carry through a sustained, independent strike with the support of the militant works council group *Offensiv*, the various class-militant forces in the plant and among the shop-floor union representatives, as well as the MLPD.

The workforce of Opel succeeded in coping with modern anticommunism at a high level during the last years. In the end the workers developed a **real immunity against such intrigues and anticommunist attacks**. However, the fact that the left reformists, solely out of anticommunist motives, shamefully sided with the rightist trade-union leaders in order to put through a closure without struggle – that was something new for the Opel colleagues. This bitter experience with the corrosive effect of modern anticommunism has to be digested first! If this experience is assimilated within the whole working-class movement, however, it will also have a curative effect.

To be sure, we have to see the matter in a larger context. **Today the social system of the petty-bourgeois mode of thinking aims at hushing up the class contradictions at all costs.** And therefore everything is done to get the workers to consent "voluntarily" to such closures and their consequences. To achieve this, high compensation payments partly are given, outplacement companies founded, special provisions applied for the duration of unemployment, retraining courses financed, to accompany the supposedly "sole alternative" of job loss. All this naturally existed at Opel in Bochum in a very pronounced form.

To the bitter end the majority of the workers in Bochum – and that is the most decisive thing – rejected the plant closure and the policy of class collaboration used to achieve it.

The works council leadership and, all the more, the rightist trade-union leadership are discredited among the masses of colleagues, many of whom soberly draw the conclusion today: "*The Reds were right after all!*"

With that the **policy of class collaboration has failed at Opel Bochum** and the class antagonism has become evident with the closure. Nobody will associate the closure of the plant in Bochum with a "harmonious settlement" on the basis of the policy of class collaboration. **The workers have preserved their dignity and have upheld their militant role as an example to others.**

The Opel colleagues have preserved their class independence. They will carry their experience in struggle into their families, their circle of friends, neighborhoods, clubs, and naturally in particular into the enterprises in which they will work in future. They will assimilate and propagate the experiences of the workforce of Opel, and in the end more and more people will be able to cope with the anticommunist mode of thinking, reformist division and smear campaigns.

These facts were summarized in the rally of the Monday demonstrations in North Rhine-Westphalia on the 8th of December under the slogan: "*We never accepted the closure and will pass on the torch!*"

The secret of the success of the factory groups of the MLPD at Opel in Bochum rests on an **increasingly refined system of systematic work among the rank and file and a convincing strategy and tactics in the struggle over the mode of thinking** of the colleagues and their families. This ranged from organized collaboration with the different militant and class-militant forces in the plant and trade union, reliability at all times in any daily problems arising in the workplace, and unshakable solidarity, to a wide spectrum of political discussions; from constructive work in the trade union to imaginative, always new, convincing arguments and forms of organizations, to the diverse smaller or bigger independent militant activities, the close links with other locations and international friends. Last but not least, the solidarity

among the workers, in and with the families, was strengthened through common celebrations, outings, and personal friendships. Maybe not in the short term, but in the medium and in any case long term, such work is **far superior to the wretchedness of the destructive reformist policy of class collaboration with its anticommunist workplace bullying.**

Even though the plant will be reduced to rubble – the lessons from the struggles of the last years are indelible! **The MLPD will do everything so that these lessons are preserved for the working-class movement as school for its future conflicts.** For all that we have to realize that we are in a non-revolutionary situation and the class-militant and revolutionary forces within the working class movement are a small minority. Under such conditions it is in no way unusual that the workers cannot prevent such closures. As long as the working class is still on the defensive and capitalism exists, again and again it will have to accept serious defeats related to the concrete aims of its struggle. Today we have to strengthen the clarity and organization of the working-class movement and foil the policy of class collaboration between the monopolies and the rightist trade-union leadership. In this we succeeded very well. That is the **important victory that will continue to shine brightly.**

The class disputes at Opel stand out from the development of the industrial actions of the last few years!

Yes, that is right. In 2004, 538,000 people participated in trade-union strikes, and more than 135,000 in independent strikes. In 2012, during the world economic and financial crisis, only about 163,000 people took part in trade-union strikes, and 14,000 in independent strikes. And these mostly did not take place in traditional industrial enterprises. The Merkel government consistently continued its **policy of damping the class contradictions** against the backdrop of the particular economic strength of German imperialism. In addition, **the leadership especially of the Metal Workers' Union and the Mining, Chemical and Energy Workers' Union further shifted to the right during this period.** Co-management increasingly became their open guideline – and with that they more and more bluntly refrained from waging trade-union struggles of the workers for the defense and improvement of their working and living conditions. They adopted comprehensive measures to integrate previous left-reformist groups into the official trade-union policy, as happened at Opel in Bochum and Daimler in Stuttgart. As a result, the struggle within the trade unions has now polarized: As early as 2009 a criticism campaign in the trade unions developed around the "Declaration of Dortmund" for trade unions as fighting organizations, which has more than 13,500 signatories so far. Also, the call of Wiesbaden "For a political right to strike" or a present initiative "Revolt of union conscience" are expressions of this. The messages of greetings of the former vice-president of the German Trade Union Federation (DGB), Ursula Engelen-Kefer, or the chairman of the trade union ver.di, Frank Bsirske, at the rally in Bochum on 8th December also reflect the progressive current in this controversy. It is urgently necessary to reinforce resolutely this social discussion about the way of the unions as fighting organizations.

The MLPD takes the position of a **constructive trade union work.** We are opposed to it that colleagues, embittered and resigned, leave the trade unions. We instead hold the view that the workers have to turn the trade unions into fighting organizations. To achieve this, a broad discussion has to take place in the unions on the question what kind of trade unions we need, and that the shameless subordination of a large part of our trade-union leaders to the interests of the monopolies is simply no longer acceptable. Perhaps it was a certain weakness that sometimes we attached too little importance to constructive trade-union work related to the conflict at Opel. However, independent struggle and trade-union struggle form an indispensable dialectical unity. If we don't win the broad rank and file of the trade-union members we will not be able to win the decisive majority of the industrial proletariat for socialism either.

The monopolies are now demanding from the government the "end of the benefits". How

does chancellor Merkel react to this?

In view of the lowered expectations for economic growth and the unstable economic situation, leading representatives of the monopolies and several government officials have been calling since the fall of 2014 for an "end of the benefits". The president of the Federation of German Industries (BDI), Ulrich Grillo, demands from the government:

1. **A considerable reduction of energy costs within the framework of constant capital**, in particular through the supply of cheaper energy for the monopoly enterprises – mainly by pushing gas fracking.
2. **Opening up new possibilities for growth** through a comprehensive investment offensive, in particular in the field of logistics, subsidized by the state budget.
3. A more **intense exploitation of the existing markets and improvement of German access to the markets**, for instance by the free trade agreement with the USA (TTIP), Canada etc.

The **government is in conflict with itself**: On the one hand it has to meet the demands of the trade associations. On the other hand the monopolies and the government want to prevent major class disputes and the revival of the social and environmental movement.

At the end of November BDI chief Grillo, SPD chief and vice-chancellor Gabriel as well as IGM (Metal Workers' Union) chief Wetzel concluded a new class collaboration pact under the name "*Future of Industry*".

After that some comrades rashly spoke of the introduction of a change of tactics by the monopolies and the government. However, they were not right. Those in power still shrink from open attacks – for fear of reactions similar to what currently can be observed again in Belgium or Italy with the general strikes. They still rely primarily on the system of the petty-bourgeois mode of thinking, by which they manipulate the masses and hinder the development of class consciousness and environmental consciousness.

In Thuringia, for the first time a member of the Left party, Bodo Ramelow, was elected minister-president of a federal German state. Is this a victory of social progress?

Of course, there was the usual reactionary anticommunist outcry on the occasion of the election of Ramelow as minister-president, in particular from the CDU/CSU. There was even a partly hysterical scaremongering about a "threatening socialism in Thuringia"². The new Left party/SPD/Green state government, however, will not and does not wish to introduce socialism. As ticket to the three-party coalition of Left party, Greens and SPD, it had to be explicitly stated in the coalition contract that the German Democratic Republic was "*a state of injustice*". "*Collaboration with organizations which relativize the GDR injustice*" was excluded³. This in no way refers to the justified criticism of the spying by the Stasi (security service of the former East Germany), the restriction of the freedom of travel etc., but is directed also against all those among the rank and file of the Left party who stick to the idea of socialism and the defense of the promising beginnings of the construction of socialism in the first years of the GDR. Was depriving the Junkers and big landowners of power after the Second World War, was the expropriation of the monopolies in the GDR, were the systematic denazification and the beginning construction of socialism "injustice"? Such a falsification of history is totally unacceptable! The MLPD criticizes the bureaucratic capitalism introduced after 1956 under Ulbricht and Honecker with its extensive restriction of democratic rights and freedoms, the construction of the Wall, the spying by the Stasi, the nannying and gagging of the GDR population, and the suppression of Marxist-Leninist party building. This restoration of capitalism in the formerly socialist GDR, however, is not what is meant by the modern anticommunists. On the contrary, the negative experiences of that period are manipulatively ascribed to socialism. This makes it difficult for people today to distinguish between socialism and the betrayal

of socialism.

We will see how far the bowing down of Ramelow to bourgeois parliamentarism and the dictatorship of the monopolies in Germany will go, only to secure his position as minister-president. However, the more shabby compromises he agrees to, the more he opposes the demands and movements of the masses, the more **progressive people will open their minds to the social alternative of genuine socialism.**

How does the MLPD assess its own development in 2014?

All in all the MLPD developed very positively this year. With the publication of the book *Catastrophe Alert!* in March, we put in concrete terms and creatively further developed the Marxist-Leninist strategy and tactics in the environmental struggle for the prevention of the global environmental catastrophe, and with that at the same time the overall strategy and tactics in the preparation of the international socialist revolution. This theoretical work is an important foundation for a very profound process of self-transformation which the party has tackled. The party is learning better and better to wage the **struggle for the solution of the social question in unity with the environmental question.**

Against this backdrop we are in the process of gaining further influence bit by bit in the **environmental movement** and unfolding the strategy debate for a new quality of the environmental movement.

In the work at the **main fighting line in the big industrial enterprises**, especially in connection with the struggle against the plant closure at Opel, at Daimler and in the mining industry, we made important progress in our understanding of how to further develop our work on the main fighting line. In particular at **Opel and in the mining industry it was outstanding** how we succeeded several times in achieving opinion leadership among the workforce through a creative strategy and tactics in the struggle over the mode of thinking, and thereby preparing and setting off concrete struggles and achieving tactical successes. The entire organization must learn from these examples.

In the **youth work** we succeeded in launching new initiatives: for example in the collaboration with other forces in organizing the first rebellious music festival. In the rebellion of the youth the youth league could gain new influence and strengthen the *Rebell* significantly.

In and with the **militant women's movement** as well, we succeeded in initiating further events which again brought the women's issue more into the focus of attention in the social discussion.

In **international solidarity work** the MLPD achieved an important advance during the last year especially in connection with the liberation struggle of the Kurdish people for autonomy, freedom and democracy, and has proven its ability as reliable ally of the international solidarity.

All these examples have **significantly increased our mass influence.** However, this is still hardly reflected in a growing membership of the MLPD. Moreover, the progressive elements of our work are still in sharp conflict with tendencies of the worshipping of spontaneity, of right-opportunism and sectarianism. This is connected with displacing the doctrine of the mode of thinking and dissolving the system of systematic work among the rank and file in favor of individual activities, campaigns and struggles.

For all that one has to take into consideration that the party has **taken on and splendidly mastered a great many new tasks** with almost the same forces. Nevertheless, the party is **only at the beginning of a medium-term process of self-transformation**, in which it has to do justice to the tasks posed by the new stage of proletarian internationalism and the extension of the strategy of the international revolution by the environmental question.

The militant women's movement stabilized and broadened considerably.

You can say that again! Some of the biggest changes and advances were made in the militant women's movement. This surely takes place against the backdrop that an ever larger number of women increasingly take a critical view of the role assigned to them in the bourgeois family system, rise above it and want to assume social responsibility for the future. Girls and young women increasingly criticize sexism as a social problem, instead of only rebelling individually or even adapting themselves. Important signals were set with the International Women's Day on 8th March, May Day, the Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women on 25th November, and the Women's Political Counsel. This is also a success story of Marxist-Leninist work among the rank and file in close interaction with the *ueberparteilich* (non-party-affiliated) militant women's movement. This became evident at the **11th Women's Political Counsel in October 2014 in Chemnitz**: With the great sympathy and support of the women's political organizations and institutions of the host city Chemnitz there was real "sisternization" between the women of the city and the women of the counsel. Outstanding this year was that the broadness of the forces allied in the counsel was again extended. Modern anticommunism, as usual stirred up prior to each counsel in the past years, could in the end gain no ground. The counsel increasingly arouses interest in the trade unions, even though the executive board of the Metal Workers' Union wanted to keep the union women away from it by administrative measures. Today the counsel is **the** most important women's political event in Germany with international appeal. The central role which the non-party-affiliated women's association *Courage* plays in it meanwhile is conspicuous.

In the **international women's movement and the "process of the women of the world"** there are **significant advances** as well. The 2nd World Women's Conference of rank and file women in 2016 in Nepal meets with great approval in the militant international women's movement and is being led this time by the world coordinators in a very purposeful and determined way. The framework of the conference in 2016 has already been established, and in the continents the mobilization can be started with determination. The participating forces represent a broad spectrum: from bourgeois women, trade unions, progressive "NGOs" to the women of revolutionary parties. In the preparatory discussions, the principles, above all that of the unity of the preparation of the World Women's Conference with the **sustained strengthening of the militant women's movement** in the respective countries, play a fundamental role. Only on this basis can cooperation on an equal footing be developed.

Of great importance is the constituting of the **regional conference of the "world women" in the Middle East**, which was held successfully there in September in the midst of the intensified struggle for Rojava, with eminent representatives from the whole spectrum of the women's movement from ten countries. The solidarity especially with the Kurdish liberation struggle also marked the activities of the "women of the world" in Europe around the 25th of November, the international Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. This solidarity will continue to play a big role in the process of the women of the world as well.

As early as one-and-a-half years ago the MLPD took part intensely in the solidarity with Rojava. Why is that so important at the moment?

The revolutionary world organization ICOR organized an international Rojava campaign in 2013. Rojava is a focal point of the struggle for national and social liberation. The **presently most advanced struggle for freedom and democracy** is taking place there. Due to the weakness of the Syrian Assad regime an independent, democratic self-administration could be established – protected and achieved by armed units – which one can **actually describe as revolution**. Remarkable advances in the struggle for the liberation of women also have been pushed through there. Meanwhile, the different reactionaries and fascists have launched various attacks against Rojava. This underlines that one must not **generalize in an inadmissible way** the strategy and tactics for the autonomy of Rojava and assume that a revolution could be successful without the fiercest class disputes, including even armed struggles.

In the **battle for Kobanê**, counterrevolutionary, fascist forces in Islamist trappings on the one hand, and progressive, revolutionary forces of the Kurdish PYD on the other, are pitted against each other directly. A series of changes in the objective and subjective factors of the last 25 years underlies this **most important point of culmination in the Middle East**: This includes the failure of the US/NATO aggression against Iraq and Afghanistan. Furthermore, neoimperialist forces, for example from Turkey or from Saudi Arabia or Qatar, have joined the struggle for the redivision of the world. These new forces often make use of terror organizations dressed up as Islamists, and do not show themselves directly. Last but not least, the liberation organization PKK and the YPG/YPJ allied with it have been fighting in the Kurdish regions for decades and are firmly established among the masses.

The imperialists apparently fight the Islamist-fascist terror of the so-called "Islamic State" (IS) with bomb raids. At the same time they support the buffer zone proposed by Turkey between Syria and Turkey, which is situated exactly in the area of Kobanê. This means that the autonomous self-administration of the Kurds is in great danger.

It is of particular importance that the Kurdish liberation movement becomes a part of the international, revolutionary and working-class movement. At the same time **its heroic struggle deserves the full solidarity of all revolutionaries** and the international working-class movement. In order to combine these two aspects, the MLPD has proposed a **solidarity pact between the ICOR and the Kurdish liberation movement** which does not simply follow a line of unilateral international solidarity. In the meantime the MLPD has adopted a comprehensive concept for its solidarity work: for instance the organized collection of donations of money and materials for medical equipment and medicines. In addition it will participate in an international brigade for the reconstruction of infrastructure destroyed by the belligerent conflict. For the MLPD, the solidarity with the Kurdish liberation struggle is closely connected with the effort to make its revolutionary work among migrants an integral part of the work in factories and trade unions, among the youth, the women, in the environmental sector and in the neighborhoods.

For this reason the next **Whitsun Youth Meeting** will also be marked in a special way by the solidarity with the Kurdish liberation struggle.

Especially at the mass demonstration on the 10th of October in Düsseldorf, and also with its participation in many other activities, the MLPD could establish itself as a reliable ally of the Kurdish liberation struggle. On the other hand, a number of migrants of Kurdish origin have now joined our party. This is a positive development which has to be further encouraged. This applies in particular to the **increasingly closer connection of the Kurdish liberation struggle with the international revolutionary and working-class movement**.

At the demonstration on 6 December in Cologne against the ban on the PKK there were massive attempts of the organizers to exclude the MLPD. What happened there?

It was a bit astonishing that the demonstration did not get the intended importance as had been agreed still in November with the Kurdish organizations. Instead, Trotskyists and autonomous groups appropriated the leadership of this demonstration, and the Kurds themselves hardly played a role in it. There were relatively few Kurdish participants at the demonstration. We cannot judge here whether this had something to do with the attempt at intimidation by the state organs and the temporary ban on the demonstration. It is a fact that the leadership by the petty-bourgeois forces immediately resulted in a strange policy of exclusion of the MLPD. Starting from Trotskyists, anarchists, so-called anti-Germans and further "autonomists", or forces influenced by them, the attempt was made, out of anticommunist motives, to push the MLPD and *Rebell* out of the demonstration or to forbid their independent agitation and propaganda. To achieve this even the police were called.

It is a very negative phenomenon that in the **solidarity with the Kurds also liquidationist elements have penetrated** and try to engage in irrelevant disputes on the back of the Kurdish

liberation struggle. This is totally unacceptable. To exclude the MLPD for anticommunist reasons – mark you, at a demonstration against the criminalization of revolutionaries – is a complete farce.

The **crisis of the autonomists** in Germany has on the other hand now led to a search among many young people for a social alternative. The MLPD is aware of this positive aspect, and we enter into a discussion with these young people. However, on our part there will be no adaptation to or subordination to anarchist and Trotskyite behavior obviously influenced by modern anticommunism.

Does the question of refugees polarize the social dispute?

Surely. The so-called "Pegida movement" is a **rallying point for openly neofascist forces like the NPD, of dubious terror movements like the "HogeSa" and protofascist and ultrareactionary organizations** like the AfD. In Dresden they momentarily succeed in getting thousands of people onto the streets every week with a **disgusting demagogy**. For example, they warn there against "Islamization" – with a proportion of Muslims of 0.1 percent of the population in Dresden! They connect arbitrarily and unobjectively the question of refugees with the phenomenon of fascism based on Islamic ideology, even though 99 percent of the refugees have nothing to do with that. They set themselves up as so-called "non-violent" decent citizens although many of their leaders are known criminals and the fascists in Germany have killed more than 120 people since 1990. They pretend to be critical of the "establishment", but make foreigners the scapegoat for a bourgeois policy that is purely oriented to the interests of the monopolies. It is scandalous when bourgeois politicians like the Minister of the Interior, de Maizière, justify this incitement of hatred as totally normal "worries from the middle of society". The appearance of this new reactionary and protofascist movement under the guise of "normal citizens" has to be taken seriously and the dispute conducted with its vicious demagogy.

What is new, however, is that among the masses there is an **unprecedented wave of support and solidarity** with refugees. Many facilities are swamped with offers of relief. There is no march of fascists that is not combated by committed counter-demonstrators. Since the beginning of December surely 50,000 people have demonstrated out of solidarity with the refugees, against Pegida and co., for the ban on all fascist organizations and their propaganda and against the government's reactionary refugee policy – considerably more than on the side of the Nazis and ultrarightists.

This **social polarization** is not likely to remain a temporary phenomenon. A contributory factor is imperialism's proneness to crisis, which will cause the worldwide refugee flows to grow. We defend and demand the right of asylum for all oppressed people and the protection of refugees. However, we also say clearly that the worldwide problem of migration can only be solved in a positive way in the united socialist states of the world.

The CC of the MLPD issued a call for criticism and self-criticism to the organization at the end of September, as guideline for the preparation of the 10th Party Congress of the MLPD, so to speak. What is it about?

Since the founding of the party, the MLPD has been conducting a **criticism and self-criticism movement towards the party of the masses**. Criticism and self-criticism is the law of development of the MLPD, which has to be applied systematically to become party of the masses. **Criticism and self-criticism campaigns** signify in the history of the MLPD always a special **point of concentration for the entire organization in order to resolve certain demands on the party**. What is it about this time?

With the publication of the books *Dawn of the International Socialist Revolution* and *Catastrophe Alert! What Is to Be Done Against the Willful Destruction of the Unity of Humanity*

and Nature? the **strategic goals of the MLPD have been extended**. Such an extension of the strategy of a proletarian party doesn't take place every day, but is a very far-reaching change. Of course, the general strategic goal remains the preparation and implementation of the international proletarian revolution for the overthrow of imperialism and the construction of socialism. However, today this task has to be extended in a double respect: First, we have to assume responsibility for the international socialist revolution, which requires a **new quality of proletarian internationalism**. Today this is manifested in the collaboration in ICOR, in the 250 bilateral relations of the MLPD, its intense cooperation in *ueberparteilich* internationalist projects like the International Miners' Conference or the World Women's Conference. On the other hand, the proletarian revolution and the construction of socialism have to refer today to the **solution of the social and the ecological question!** Therefore, the criticism and self-criticism campaign for the 10th Party Congress takes place under the heading: "*Let us fight for the self-transformation of the MLPD and Rebel with the new tasks relating to environmental policy*". This self-transformation does not concern an individual area of responsibility, but refers to the **whole system of work among the rank and file and to leadership work in all its aspects**.

Whenever new tasks are on the agenda there is much to learn. At the same time we have to raise revolutionary vigilance, because new tasks always involve sources of mistakes which from the start should be minimized and avoided, if possible, and misdirected developments corrected. The criticism and self-criticism campaign is a suitable method for systematic learning in a creative atmosphere.

Every organizational unit, every leadership discusses the call and realizes a program of self-transformation. Its most important content is a long-range view as to how work will change, what one has to learn for this, how the members and friends will be developed and trained, and how this entire process combines with the permanent breaking of the relative isolation of the MLPD.

For the long-term work schedule of 2015 the strengthening of the MLPD was formulated as guideline. What does that mean?

The MLPD is growing into a new social role, and high expectations are placed on our members from many sides. However, its forces did not keep pace with that in an adequate way. The resolution of this contradiction tolerates no delay. The working-class movement has made the bitter experience not only once in its history, and also on the international level, that entire parties get overwhelmed or weakened by social developments when they do not sufficiently strengthen their forces quantitatively and qualitatively and prepare the generation change in time.

Therefore, we will **concentrate on the all-sided strengthening of MLPD and Rebel during the whole next year**. This is naturally closely connected with our tasks in class struggle. All-sided strengthening not only means that we realize a systematic recruitment of new members in every activity. It encompasses among other things also the ideological-political strengthening and financial strengthening, the intensifying of the generation change, and the consolidation of the system of work among the rank and file. This includes raising to a higher level the **dialectics of systematic party construction and promotion of the self-run organizations of the masses**.

For instance, we currently observe distinct deficits in the constructive work in the trade unions. The strengthening of the non-party-affiliated organizations like *Courage* or the new environmental union also has to be supported systematically by the party. For they are the expression of an important leap in consciousness among the masses.

Last but not least, our work in and related to the *ueberparteilich* relief organization **Solidarity International** is not yet developed in a sufficiently all-sided way. It is generally underestimated that international solidarity work also needs a form of organization in which the inter-

nationalist consciousness can develop systematically.

Up to now, initiatives for the strengthening of the party are still undertaken more as a side-line or – influenced by the petty-bourgeois anticommunist mode of thinking – are sometimes conducted in a somewhat defensive way or sacrificed to the concrete ups and downs of the day-to-day struggles.

Precisely in times of many activities, demonstrations, etc., the danger always arises of dissolving the system of work among the rank and file because there is so much to do. However, only an activity which is integrated into the system of the work among the rank and file and is done on this basis can lead to the strengthening of the party and the revolutionary forces as well as of the interaction with the self-run organizations of the masses. For this reason, the **system of rank-and-file work as point of reference is of particular importance.**

The most important driving force in the strengthening of the MLPD is the Marxist-Leninist mass tactics in party building: our **youth work.** Here important advances have been made in the last years. The *Rebell* has broadened its appeal, and in the party a lot of activists have emerged who really care about the youth work. Nevertheless, we also observe that in a number of locations and leading bodies the importance attached to work among the youth is insufficient. This is without perspective and overlooks the fact that the **permanent strengthening of the party** still has to take place **mainly by way of work among the youth.**

The youth is open-minded, has only few established patterns of behavior, and is least marked by this bourgeois society and bad habits. At the same time, the youth is complex and filled with contradictions, in the face of which many bourgeois educators capitulate. With our party culture, our comrades' diverse experiences of struggle, our literature, our practice and our youth league, we have all the possibilities to develop new revolutionary potential among the youth from this contradictoriness. However, to tackle this task we have to be fully committed and, with revolutionary self-confidence and full trust in the youth, enter into a well-founded dialogue, train and educate the youth and also take up and promote their initiatives.

Especially at group level, many new, young *Rebell* members have assumed responsibility. They must learn the "tools of the trade" from the bottom up – this complex work can't be handled with clever comments. Also, a number of neighborhood party groups have put support for the work with the *Red Foxes* children's organization on the back burner. This will have to change.

The MLPD as the party of the future has responsibility for the youth! **If we don't really focus on youth work in strengthening the organization,** our task to strengthen the MLPD cannot be successful. Every task which we undertake this year has to be combined in a special way with the question how we can further develop the youth work of our party and help the *Rebell* to advance its development to become the mass organization of the rebellious youth.

We also have to direct special attention to the process of transition of rebellious young people to become Marxist-Leninists. Successful youth work is the starting point and the **mass basis for the generation change** in the party in the next few years.

The widespread youthful arrogance idolizes typical strong and weak points of the youth – leading thus to the conservative conclusion that the youth does not need to change itself. This is a reflection of the petty-bourgeois educationalist tendency in party work. The success of the generation change stands or falls on coping successfully with the youthful arrogance, and on the readiness to change oneself and learn everything that is necessary.

In November the last session of the Central Committee in the year 2014 took place. What were the results?

With the stock-taking at half-time by the 9th CC the **immediate preparation of the 10th Party Congress has been initiated.** After the 9th Party Congress many, mostly young, comrades took on new tasks and had to settle into their new areas of work. This proved to be more complicated sometimes than was imagined, because a member of the Central Committee not only

has a special task, but always the responsibility for the overall leadership of party building and the class struggle! Today this is a very complex process. Most of our comrades are workers, are in employment, and are at the forefront of the systematic work among the rank and file in their locations. The plenary session of the CC was combined with a very productive integrated CC seminar dealing with the present-day demands on scientific work. The focus of criticism there was the **influence of the petty-bourgeois positivist method on analysis, the determination of tasks or the culture of debate**. This method limits itself to individual facts, to describing problems without realizing the deeper or all-sided connections. This makes it impossible to recognize profoundly the objective **development, the class consciousness and the relations in the extended system of our work among the rank and file**, and to draw conclusions in perspective. The positivism of bourgeois science maintains that one can only describe phenomena, but not recognize deeper causes and laws. To consider only individual facts and the results of work is superficial. Much more important is **why** and **how** and in what **connection** they have been achieved.

The bourgeois ideology of positivism today has a very formative effect on the masses through the means and methods of the modern mass media and communication. A typical example is the *Tagesschau* (daily news program on German TV), in which viewers are confronted with an average of up to 120 pieces of information in hardly a quarter of an hour. One gets the feeling of being informed and nevertheless does not know what is happening in the world, and above all **why**.

The **petty-bourgeois positivist and petty-bourgeois negativist modes of thinking**, however, not only have an effect on the masses, but also on the party. In the party they foster the **worshipping of spontaneity**, the counterprogram to the **doctrine of the mode of thinking** with the conscious application of the dialectical method in all tasks. We have to deal with this problem in an all-round way in the next issue of the theoretical organ *Revolutionärer Weg* (Revolutionary Way). It will have the title "*The crisis of bourgeois ideology and the doctrine of the mode of thinking*".

On the basis of this important philosophical discussion the plenary session of the CC worked very creatively: For the first time we could analyze the entire crisis cycle since 2008. From a dialectical analysis of the organization we have drawn creative conclusions for improving guidance and control as well as consolidating and extending our system of work among the rank and file. For the CC we have decided to initiate an important phase of consolidation and stabilization. It is related to the elaboration of the report to the party as well as the planning of the work in 2015.

What is the outlook for 2015 and what are the tasks in your opinion?

The year 2015 as well will entail many imponderables in the economic and political development. We will deal with them in a flexible way, but will not allow them to set the pace. Our clear course for the future is oriented to the new tasks in the field of environmental policy, the development of the working-class offensive, our Marxist-Leninist youth work as mass tactics of party building, and the resolute promotion of the generation change. Already today there are so many people from the militant opposition and the international movement who turn to us with their expectations, need for advice, wish for joint actions, that we cannot do justice to this with the present forces.

Thank you very much for the interview!

¹ IPCC Synthesis Report 2014

² Tagesschau Online, 5th December

³ Coalition treaty, p. 106