

"The acute crisis of international crisis management"

Interview with Stefan Engel, 21th May 2010

Red Flag: At the beginning of the year (see 'Red Flag' interview of 20 December 2009) you described the politics of the government and the monopolies with their crisis dampening measures as a "dance on a volcano". How have things developed since then?

Stefan Engel: In the meantime, the volcano has started to emit lava. The international crisis management has cost a lot of money since November 2008 and has been immensely burdening the national budgets. An estimated worldwide total of 27 trillion US-dollars has been spent for this up till now. This inconceivable amount is about half of the yearly world gross national product. In our brochure "Bourgeois Political Economy in Shambles", published in May 2009, we already criticized that bourgeois crisis management does not tackle the root of the evil. It can only dampen or overcome the current crisis at the cost of future, even deeper and more sweeping crises. At that time we had already predicted that this gigantic crisis management will bring about a tendency toward state bankruptcies and bring the destabilization of social relations to a head. In the meantime, in some countries of the European Union an **acute danger of state bankruptcy** has arisen. In this context the "*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*" of May 11th, 2010 talked of an "*historically unique emergency, which could have drastic effects on the stability of the Euro-zone.*" According to this mouthpiece of the monopolies, the "*euro crisis and the dangers arising from it ... are putting the international financial crisis into the shade: It is no longer merely a matter of preventing a breakdown of banks, but one of states .*"

It is evident that the so-called "euro crisis" is actually a new quality of the international world economic and financial crisis. It has to be described as a crisis of international crisis management. This naturally changes the general starting situation for which we have to prepare ourselves tactically.

Red Flag: But hasn't the danger of state bankruptcies been averted by the new 750 billion "protective umbrella"?

Stefan Engel: By no means! It's like a story from "A Thousand and One Nights" when they claim that the problem of imminent state bankruptcy only exists in Greece. In fact, the debts of Greece amount to only 0.273 trillion euros. This is 3.14 per cent of the debts of 8.69 trillion euros in the EU¹. The legend that the Greek people have lived beyond their means is not becoming more true by repeating it over and over again and by constantly adding new horror stories in a foul smear campaign by the "*Bild*" newspaper. It is a fact that in the past years the Greek economy has been bought up systematically by the international monopolies and has been degraded to an object of speculation. The Greek government has been compelled to make excessive arms purchases in order to meet its obligations within the NATO. In Greece we are not simply dealing with a case of the unsuccessful financial policy of a high-spirited government. The neocolonial plundering of this small dependent capitalist country by the international monopolies has experienced its bankruptcy. The new 'protective umbrella' which has been erected by the EU and the IMF against the danger of state insolvencies in Europe has only superficially something to do with Greece.

You have to be aware in general that the international crisis management has fueled speculation worldwide and has thus given rise to a series of new speculative bubbles which could burst with the slightest interruption of payment transactions. This imminent chain re-

action, which has made the imperialist world system extremely sensitive because of the worldwide interconnection and interdependence of the financial flow, necessitated the extraordinary new crisis management. One crisis summit is rapidly following another, and the euro is still falling rapidly. The international financial floor equals a mine field, in which the governments and monopolies have to move.

Red Flag: What will be the consequences of the new crisis management to avoid state bankruptcies in the EU and the fall of the euro?

Stefan Engel: The most important consequence is that the international crisis management in Europe which until now is more or less being ended, and a politics of the so-called stabilization of the state finances is taking its place. But this is, in fact, extremely dangerous, because the world economic and financial crisis is not yet over and now even aggravating factors for an economic recovery are being added. The rigorous shifting of the burdens of the crisis onto the backs of the working class and the broad masses is becoming the focal point of the governmental policies in the EU countries. This means a change in tactics which will contribute to a sharpening of class contradictions.

Red Flag: Doesn't this change in tactics, which has been agreed on at the EU level, pose a great danger for the preservation of the so-called "class peace"?

Stefan Engel: In the meantime it became known that in Romania public employees are supposed to accept a 25 per cent cut in wages and the pensioners and unemployed a cut of 15 per cent. Similar programs have been adopted in Portugal and Spain and have been announced by the new government in London. In Spain the unions have explicitly canceled their moratorium with the government and have announced a first general strike in public services on June 2nd. In Greece active people's resistance is continuing and maintaining its level. In Romania the pensioners have entered the scene to take action against the outrageous cuts. Remarkable are, in addition to the people's rebellion in Greece, the situation in Thailand, which is similar to an uprising, and the recent armed uprising in Kyrgyzstan. This shows that on the basis of dramatic economic developments an eruptive destabilization of the political situation is also possible and can be expected to occur more often.

Immediately after the Land elections in North-Rhine Westphalia, the discussion began under the banner of criticizing "*the hesitant politics of Chancellor Merkel*": The CDU-politician Koch was brilliant in his favorite role as a rabble-rouser. He demanded tax increases and a drastic deterioration of living conditions, especially for children, families and the youth – for instance the cancellation of the "guarantee for day care for children under three years of age", as well as the 10 per cent share of the budget for education and research.² His coalition friends from the CDU and FDP in Berlin are hurrying to prepare the population for drastic cutbacks and tax increases in 2011 by about another 20 billion euros. Especially the social insurances and, outside of North-Rhine Westphalia, the subsidies for mining are called into question.

With the introduction of the change of tactics, the ruling politicians are complying with the demands of the leading monopoly capitalists. On 18 January 2010, the head of the BDI (Federal Association of German Industry) Keitel already demanded: "*The era of 'bailouts are fun' is at an end! ... Whoever gives state subsidies for the crisis only prolongs it. ... Therefore I plead for a fast, but soft transition. ... Let's not fool ourselves: This will mean painful cuts.*"³

But this is not that easy. The development of the consciousness of the masses, which

could be observed in the election results in NRW, could lead to the accelerated erosion of the mass basis of the bourgeois parties through the change of tactics. That is why after the elections the subsidies for the monopolies, disguised as plans to 'lower taxes', or the flat rate in the health care were put into cold storage. The latent political crisis has intensified considerably.

Red Flag: The federal government and the different bourgeois institutes for economics have unanimously predicted a significant recovery of the economy in 2011. What do you think about that?

Stefan Engel: The deepest slumps in the world economic and financial crisis have in fact given way to a stagnation, and the economy has generally turned into a depression. However, that does not mean that the crisis has been overcome! In Germany, the increase of the gross national product by a tiny 0,2 per cent in the first quarter of 2010 has been hyped up to become the harbinger of an economic revival in spring. 4) At the same time industrial production in the year 2009 has slumped by 17.9 per cent as compared to the level of 2008. 5) At the rate of the small growth in the economy up till now, it will take years until the level before the crisis will be reached. The ongoing economic weakness in the country is only poorly concealed by the high increase in exports due to the cheap euro on the world market.

Red Flag: Up to now the monopolies and the government have succeeded in avoiding a major increase in mass unemployment, in spite of a big slump in production. Nevertheless you get the impression that discontent in the factories is growing.

Stefan Engel: Through short-time work, reduction of overtime and cancellation of many company agreements for the increase of the weekly working hours beyond the 35-hour workweek, they actually succeeded in avoiding 1.2 million dismissals. In 2009 the paid weekly working hours in industry declined to 36.7 hours. This has led to a much smaller increase of the official unemployment rate compared to all economic crises since 1981 and was doubtlessly the decisive factor for the restraint of the masses towards the crisis management of the government. However, we should not forget that the above mentioned measures can at best be accepted by the workers only temporarily. If a workforce today has already been on short-time work for one and a half years, this is making a big hole in the family budget, and this can hardly be shouldered for a long time by any working-class family. In addition, especially in the big industrial enterprises, short-time work has been misused to intensify speedup and to lower real wages. In 2009 the workers in the industrial enterprises already lost 4 per cent of their real wages on the average. This has not happened for decades! Taking all this, no worker can be sure of keeping his job. All this is increasing discontent in the enterprises.

Red Flag: How are the results of the Land elections in North-Rhine Westphalia to be assessed against this background?

Stefan Engel: For the black-yellow (CDU/FDP) coalitions in Düsseldorf and Berlin, this election result is a disaster. The CDU lost 1,014,770 votes compared to the state elections in 2005. It was – like the SPD – elected only by 20 per cent of those eligible to vote. The FDP lost 872,117 votes in comparison to the federal elections about 8 months ago and was elected by only 3.9 per cent of those eligible to vote. The "ideal coalition" of the employers' associations has been punished resoundingly.

What the SPD was cheering on the evening of the election was in reality a new negative record in state elections in NRW. It lost another 383,452 votes compared to the catastrophic results of 2005, which caused ex-SPD-Chancellor Schröder to resign. Only scarcely half of the number of people eligible to vote voted for CDU, SPD, FDP and the Greens altogether 6). Voter turnout sank from 63 to 59 per cent. The process of the masses detaching themselves from the bourgeois parties, bourgeois parliamentarism and its institutions is continuing unhindered.

The toleration of the masses of the government is obviously coming to an end. This is the essential result of this Land election. The trend to the left has continued. The anti-communist propaganda that was orchestrated by means of a forced debate about "left extremism" hardly bore any fruit. On the contrary, it seems that it brought votes for the regional party organization of the Left party instead, which is regarded as being especially "left"! It entered the state parliament for the first time with 5.6 per cent. 8) The critical electoral recommendation and support by the MLPD doubtlessly contributed to this. The Greens as well have benefited from the trend to the left by a seemingly left appearance as a party opposed to nuclear and coal-fired power stations with a "green plan for the future". The tug of war over possible coalitions shows the big problems the bourgeois parties have in the face of their continuously dwindling mass basis. No matter how you look at it - there will be no stable government! Even a grand coalition with a great majority in the Land parliament would only deepen the crisis-prone development in the bourgeois party scene and most of all put a suicidal strain on the SPD.

Red Flag: The MLPD in NRW called for the critical electoral support of the Left party. Is it now conforming to the Left party ?

Stefan Engel: Of course not. The MLPD did not take part in this state election for reasons of concentrating its forces. However, it is not in favor of an unpolitical ignorance of such elections. In the election program of the Left Party for the state elections we saw a whole number of demands which used to be put forward by the MLPD alone and which the MLPD spread more and more among the masses in its persevering rank and file work. This includes the demands "Down with Hartz IV", for a 30-hour week with full wage compensation, the struggle against the retirement age of 67, for a political right to strike, against the deployment of the federal army abroad, for the ban of all fascist organizations, and so forth.

Of course we regret that no official election agreement was reached between the MLPD and the Left Party. Previous to the elections, the Land executive board of the Left Party rejected talks with the Land leadership of the MLPD. You can assume that the reason for this is that the Left Party wanted to have an open option for entering a government with the SPD and the Greens. An all too close proximity to the MLPD could be an obstacle for such an intention.

Of course, it is perfectly clear to the Left Party that the demands in their election program which we support would not play any role in such a governmental coalition. In spite of this, last weekend the federal party congress of the Left Party approved a participation in a government in North-Rhine Westphalia. This way the MLPD gets the dubious role of having to defend large parts of the election program of the Left Party against their own party leadership. Even so, a critical election support in North-Rhine Westphalia by the MLPD was correct, because this way we have underlined that we are still prepared to cooperate with the Left Party on the basis of the common struggle for central demands.

At the same time, we want to warn the members and functionaries of the Left Party most urgently about entering this government. With that they would be responsible for taking

part in enforcing the crisis program of the monopolies against the broad masses in the most populated federal state. The left trend will further develop most of all in the active resistance against laying the burdens of the crisis on the backs of the broad masses. The Left Party must decide, which side it will take.

Red Flag: On May 1st, you did not get the impression that the smear campaign against the "left extremists" of the MLPD has an effect in the working-class movement in Germany.

Stefan Engel: The relation of the masses of participants to the MLPD on this May 1st was actually remarkable. While in the run-up a rigid anti-communist exclusion campaign against the MLPD was launched by parts of the DGB leadership , we were greeted and protected everywhere by the participants as a natural part of the May 1st activities. Boastfully announced bans against stands of the MLPD – which by the way have no legal basis – could not be enforced anywhere. The colleagues shielded and protected the MLPD, in some places united action had even been organized to protect the MLPD stands. In Berlin, where they attempted to remove the stand of the MLPD, a mass discussion and rallye of 200 colleagues took place and prevented it. Naturally we did not aim our main attack against the DGB leadership, but against the anti-worker policies of the government and monopolies. But it is quite clear that we will not allow such attempts of exclusion – which, by the way, have something to do with the fact that DGB- and IGM-leadership at the moment are more and more taking sides with the government and trying to prevent struggles at any cost.

The strengthening of the revolutionary direction in the left trend among the workers could already be observed in the works councils elections as well, where class-conscious workers could improve their positions. Very good results were reached especially by those colleagues who had run during the federal elections in 2009 on the open lists of the MLPD and where in the run-up anti-communist attacks had been responded to offensively.

In this situation the leading board of the metal workers union is arrogantly ignoring a clear decision by the union congress of 2007: Instead of lifting the divisive incompatibility rulings against the MLPD, they were not only underlined in a session of the leading board on 9th February 2010, but even further sharpened. Many union members find it scandalous that this is being justified not only with the unspeakable lies of the secret service about the MLPD, but also with ultra-right "scientists" - belonging to the fascistoid camp – who have been used as crown witnesses.

The right-wing IGM leadership under the direction of Berthold Huber is especially annoyed by the MLPD's rejection of the politics of class collaboration, the propaganda for company-wide cross-border struggles in entire branches and the commitment to genuine socialism. They are especially attacking the scientific concept of the necessity of the dictatorship of the proletariat in socialism, as elaborated by Karl Marx as an alternative to the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. It shows its own political inadequacy when the leading body of the IGM classifies self-organized strikes as being in competition with the IG Metall, knowing quite well that the possibilities of union strikes are extremely limited, because there is no full legal right to strike in all matters in Germany. The leading board of the IGM could learn a lot from the example of the federal conference of the Industrial Union for Construction, Agrarian and Environmental Workers, where the demand for a political right to strike has even been written into the statutes.

What many people might not know is that until 1980, Berthold Huber had been a leading functionary for more than 12 years in the forerunner organization of the MLPD, and here he had a special responsibility for the guidance and control of the factory and trade-union

work. It is pure hypocrisy when he maintains that the democratic centralism within the MLPD would make it impossible for MLPD members to support decisions of the metal workers union. If that were right, Berthold Huber himself, as an active party member in the early seventies, would never have been able to become a union functionary at the same time. For us the unions are and will remain to be '*überparteilich*' self-run organizations, in which blue and white-collar workers with different party affiliations and different world outlooks are active together for the defense and improvement of their wages and their working conditions. Berthold Huber should stop currying favor with whomever by taking an anti-communist stand in promoting such decisions. The unity of the unions is too precious for such obvious ambitions.

The incompatibility rulings against the MLPD split the unions and weaken their combative strength, because militant and active union members are placed under a steady threat of expulsion from the union and are defamed as being union enemies.

Red Flag: With 150,000 participants in the anti-nuclear-power demonstrations in April, the environmental movement has come back powerfully. What was the starting point for this?

Stefan Engel: The clearest turning point in the struggle against the global environmental catastrophe was the failure of the world climate summit in Copenhagen. This is in line with the federal government's massive attempts to extend the running time of nuclear power plants to 60 years, as well as the construction of more coal-fired power plants, in spite of the immense and generally recognized risks for humans and nature. The Schröder/Fischer government, with its decisions for a step by step moratorium on the use of atomic energy, had more or less suggested to the old environmental movement that it could dissolve itself. Now people are seeing that without active resistance against the profit-greed of the monopolies, the environment will not be saved. As far as I know, this was the biggest anti-nuclear demonstration ever in Germany. This is a sign of hope! Because with the dramatic development to the global climate catastrophe, a much more comprehensive and harder struggle is necessary to save the earth for human life.

Red Flag: You get the impression that with every dead soldier, the deployment of the federal army in Afghanistan is meeting with more rejection in the German population. How will this continue?

Stefan Engel: In the meantime far more than 100,000 NATO soldiers are in Afghanistan to pacify the so-called "nest of terrorism". It is implausible that this military deployment is necessary to overwhelm some 100 Al Kaida and about 5000 Taliban fighters. In the meantime the NATO is apparently confronted with a broad rejection in the Afghan population, which in our media is consciously and indiscriminately being defamed as belonging to the Taliban. The NATO aggression cannot overcome this broad resistance of the Afghan people! With each dead soldier, the rejection of the people in the NATO countries is growing. The government of the Netherlands broke apart a short time ago for this reason. And in Germany people can only be pacified by announcing the withdrawal of the German troops in 2011 over and over again. But nobody should believe that the NATO will withdraw from Afghanistan voluntarily without succeeding. Therefore the anti-militarist struggle and the struggle for the withdrawal of German troops from Afghanistan have to be strengthened.

Red Flag: The intensification of the latent political crisis is, of course, not only a

material basis for the left trend. On the basis of a low level of class consciousness among the masses, it can also provoke rightist or neofascist tendencies in connection with aggressive anticomunism. Has the neofascist danger in Germany increased?

Stefan Engel: We should not underestimate that the same material basis for the left trend can promote right and neofascist ideas as well, especially among backward people. We shouldn't underestimate the election gains of fascist and right-wing populist parties in France, Hungary, the Netherlands, Italy and partly at the Land elections in North-Rhine Westphalia, too. Objectively they constitute a mass basis for the fascistization and the state terror against the revolutionary working-class movement.

The more meaningful is the upswing of the anti-fascist struggle, which reached a peak in the prevention of a European-wide Nazi march in Dresden by massive active mass resistance.

Red Flag: With the internationally organized crisis management, the mass movement among the workers, the broad masses and the youth as well declined for a while. Has this not changed in the meantime?

Stefan Engel: In my last interview I already pointed out a distinct revival of the **rebellion of the youth**. Since 2009, a total of almost one million young people took part in protests in the entire spectrum of their existential and future interests. 50 per cent of them protested in the "education strike"-actions, followed by antifascist, anti-imperialist and anti-militarist protests, as well as in the environmental sphere and in workers' protests. This tendency has continued in 2010, especially in the actions of a new generation of the anti-nuclear plant protests and in the antifascist protests. Nationwide protests in the educational system are planned for June 9th.

This is not only the highest level in terms of numbers since the protests against the Iraq war in 2003. Most of all, the criticism of capitalism has witnessed a clear revival. The youth rebellion of today clearly has a **qualitatively higher level**. The youth league of the MLPD, the *Rebell*, is actively involved and has planned to become the first address in organizing and leading the rebellion of the youth.

With the development of the rebellion of the youth, a turn has taken place in the working-class and militant people's movement. The self-organized militant actions in the factories have increased, just like the activities for the protection of the natural environment, for the defense and extension of democratic rights and liberties, in the anti-fascist struggle, as well as against the NATO war in Afghanistan. This tendency will get stronger on the basis of the change in tactics by the monopolies and vitalize the spontaneous movement. The Marxist-Leninists will support these movements and develop them to a higher level. At the same time, it is necessary to draw the connection to the international working-class and people's movement in all activities and to organize these struggles as a school for the preparation of the international revolution.

Red Flag: What political tasks has the MLPD planned for the coming time?

Stefan Engel: In the coming months, the entire party is concentrating on the solidification and higher development of Marxist-Leninist factory and trade union work. We promote the initiation, leadership and higher development of the struggles with the strategy and tactics of the working-class offensive as a transition to class struggle in its true sense. We also have to critically and self-critically reveal and overcome a right-wing opportunist tendency

in practical work, which is oriented alone towards the ups and downs of the spontaneous movement, restricted to unionism and which dissolves the unity of economic and political struggle, as well as that of the factory and trade union work with the neighborhood work. This critical-self-critical debate has to take place in the neighborhood groups as well, which in many cases have given up their close ties to the factory and trade union work, so contributing to weakening our work on the main front line. We stick to the guideline we have set that in spite of all extension of the party work to new sectors, we concentrate 50 per cent of our forces on the main front line of factory and union work to win over the decisive majority of the working class.

In the criticism-self-criticism campaign on Marxist-Leninist youth work we have succeeded in making important steps ahead. This especially meant understanding Marxist-Leninist youth work as the mass tactics of party building and developing it as a school of life of the proletarian mode of thinking. The whole organization has struggled successfully for a new understanding of the political line on youth work and has drawn important lessons in 15 critical-self-critical conferences with more than 300 participants for changes in our work.

In the center was the question of the dialectic handling of the three fundamental interrelations between the party and the *Rebell*: The ideological-political leadership of the party as the leading factor, the practical cooperation of party and youth league as the practical foundation of the school of life of the proletarian mode of thinking and the promotion of the organizational independence as the decisive method for the education for the self-liberation for the masses of the youth and for winning them over for socialism. The next thing is to develop and implement certain pilot projects in youth work and in all aspects of rank and file work to make youth work as the mass tactics of party building become the basic standard of our work. That makes it necessary to study the results of the criticism-self-criticism meetings and to change work accordingly. This can only be done if the political-organizational emphasis on youth work is realized comprehensively. Until then the criticism-self-criticism campaign will continue.

The member and delegate meetings taking place in the MLPD at the moment will watch out carefully that the progress doubtlessly made after the special campaign does not fizzle out, but will further bloom in a systematic youth work on a new level.

Red Flag: How are the plans for founding an international organization for the co-ordination of the practical activity of revolutionary parties progressing?

Stefan Engel: In the meantime, the initiative for creating the ICOR has shifted from the phase of preparation to the phase of the founding. The founding resolution, preamble and motions on the future work are being discussed intensively in the almost 70 organizations taking part. The ICOR signifies a new quality of proletarian internationalism.

This has ideological, political and organizational effects on our party work, which we will have to systematically elaborate, study and put into practice in the coming future. To give assistance, the central committee is doing concentrated work on an issue of the theoretical organ "Revolutionärer Weg" on this topic.

With that the contradiction must be solved, that the preparation of the international revolution is already being put into practice, but the necessary solid theoretical foundation in the ideological-political line of the MLPD is not yet worked out. This theoretical work is extremely complicated, something historically new and is being done more than ever in a very close exchange of opinions and experiences with the revolutionaries of the world.

Red Flag: The idea of a World Women's Conference of rank and file women in Venezuela in 2011 seems to be gaining more and more attraction. What is the state

of the preparations?

Stefan Engel: It is very good to hear that the idea for a World Women's Conference of rank and file women is being taken on by ever broader parts of the militant women's movement in ever more countries of the world. In Germany there are more than 20 women's political city conferences in the meantime that are active supporters of the preparation. If this World Women's Conference in Venezuela in 2011 with the self-organized initiative of the militant women from all over the world is a success, this will signify a defeat for the ruling powers in this world, who wanted to take the problem of the liberation of the woman off the agenda by discontinuing the regular world women's conferences of the UN. But the problem of the double exploitation and special oppression of the masses of women will exist as long as capitalism exists. The MLPD supports this project wholeheartedly and by all means at our disposal, because it has the firm conviction that the liberation of humanity from exploitation and oppression is not possible without the liberation of the woman!

Red Flag: The left trend in Germany seems to be unbroken, but what about the revolutionary perspective in the framework of the left trend? Can we assume a new upswing in the struggle for socialism or has anticomunism become more firmly established?

Stefan Engel: It is quite remarkable that in an Emnid inquiry of February, 82 per cent of the persons asked said that they could imagine living in a socialist society. This certifies a miserable defeat for the anti-communist campaign conducted by the European Council in all European countries since 2006. And that in face of the daily reports in radio and television about the supposed atrocities of communism, especially those of "Stalinism" and of "Maoism". Even during the "Cold War" we had not witnessed such a massive campaign in questions of world outlook . The declared goal to brand communist ideology as the "root of international terrorism" among the masses has failed thoroughly. However, we should not underestimate that many people only have a very vague concept of a socialist society.

This weekend Lafontaine also spoke again about "democratic socialism", where the exploitation and oppression of mankind by mankind would be abolished. But he wants to realize this without abolishing capitalism and without a revolutionary societal transformation. Capitalism and socialism are irreconcilable societal formations. Whoever tells people that socialism could be introduced via parliamentary elections is either naive or demagogic. In the coming years the MLPD will have to assert itself as a revolutionary alternative in opposition to parliamentary illusions of the realization of socialist relations by means of elections, in order that an upswing of socialism can come about.

The left trend in Germany is doubtlessly an important stage in the development of class consciousness, but is not yet sufficient for a struggle aimed at transforming the society into a new one. Therefore it is especially important not to set stakes spontaneously in the left trend, but to lead an intensive struggle over the mode of thinking of the masses. The masses can only learn to take the right path on the basis of their own experiences. Therefore it is so important to discuss their future interests in a comradely way on the basis of the common struggle and to overcome petty-bourgeois illusions in the capitalist society.

For more and more people it is becoming evident that the small stratum of international finance capital dictates the lives of entire national economies and that the imperialist world system is in the grips of a crisis-prone form of existence. This will become a pacemaker to encourage the masses to lead the struggle to overcome capitalism.

It is one of the main shortcomings of party work of the past years that we have only been insufficiently able to develop an agitation and propaganda for genuine socialism which is

effective and to spread it among the masses . But we are very determined to overcome this central shortcoming and to arm ourselves for a new offensive for genuine socialism. Therefore the MLPD is actively taking part in the activities for the commemoration of the lessons of the armed uprising against the Kapp/Lüttwitz putsch 90 years ago. We are also preparing to take part in the Land elections in Saxony Anhalt in early 2011 and in the senate elections in Hamburg in 2012. We are doing this with the aim of taking further steps for breaking through the relative isolation of the MLPD lastingly, broadly anchoring the alternative of genuine socialism among the masses and building up the MLPD and its youth league *Rebell* more quickly.

Red Flag: Thank you very much for the interview!

1 eurostat press release, 22 April 2010

2 Hamburger Abendblatt, 11 May 2010

3 Hans Peter Keitel, speech at the political forum Ruhr on 18 January (quoted from the BDI homepage)

4 Rheinische Post, 13 May 2010

5 OECD statistics

6 Land campaign manager NRW, 10 May 2010

7 ibid.

8 ibid.