

# Zur Frage des Imperialismus / On the question of Imperialism

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*Wir veröffentlichen an dieser Stelle einen Diskussionsbeitrag des Genossen **Andreas Sörensen**, Vorsitzender der [Kommunistischen Partei Schwedens \(SKP\)](#). Wir bedanken uns bei der SKP für diesen Beitrag und die freundliche Erlaubnis zur Veröffentlichung*

*Here we publish a contribution by comrade **Andreas Sörensen**, chairman of the [Communist Party of Sweden \(SKP\)](#) on the analysis of imperialism. We want to thank the SKP for this contribution and the friendly permission to publish it.*

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Eine der wichtigsten Fragen, vor denen wir stehen, ist die Frage des Imperialismus und die richtige Charakterisierung des Kapitalismus in seiner imperialistischen Phase. In der Kommunistischen Partei Schwedens (SKP) diskutieren wir dieses Thema seit einiger Zeit, und wir kommen zu immer deutlicheren Schlussfolgerungen. In diesem Artikel werde ich versuchen, meine Sichtweise darzulegen, in der Hoffnung, nicht nur die Debatte in Schweden, sondern auch die internationale Debatte innerhalb der kommunistischen Bewegung zu fördern.

Ich möchte mit einem sehr konkreten Beispiel beginnen und aus diesem Versuch einige grundlegende Schlussfolgerungen ziehen, von denen einige im Widerspruch zu der Art und Weise stehen, wie die kommunistische Bewegung den Imperialismus und die imperialistische Politik traditionell betrachtet. Natürlich riskiere ich, im Unrecht zu sein, aber wenn doch, dann hoffe ich, dass ich geholfen habe, Fragen zu stellen, die beantwortet werden müssen, und indem ich eine Beantwortung dieser erzwingen werde, werde ich die Debatte gefördert haben!

## **Litauischer Imperialismus**

Litauen ist ein armes Land. Das Durchschnittsgehalt liegt bei rund 800 Euro pro Monat (es ist wichtig, sich daran zu erinnern, dass dies bedeutet, dass die Hälfte der Arbeitnehmer im Land ein niedrigeres Gehalt haben!). Das bedeutet, dass Sie, wenn Sie relativ zentral in einer litauischen Stadt wohnen, fast Ihr ganzes Gehalt für Ihre Miete ausgeben müssen, wenn Sie in einer Dreizimmerwohnung wohnen. Außerhalb der zentralen Stadtteile müssen Sie nur die Hälfte Ihres Gehalts für eine gleichwertige Wohnung ausgeben. Nachdem Sie Ihre Miete bezahlt haben, muss Ihr Gehalt auch für Ihre anderen Ausgaben wie Essen, öffentliche Verkehrsmittel, Kleidung und so weiter aufkommen.

Die Tatsache, dass die Löhne in Litauen niedrig sind, zieht ausländische Investitionen an. Viele dieser Investitionen kommen aus Schweden. Schwedische Kapitalisten machten 2016 fast ein Fünftel aller ausländischen Investitionen aus. Die beiden Sonderwirtschaftszonen Litauens in Klaipeda und Kaunas ziehen wahrscheinlich viele dieser Investitionen an. Schwedische Unternehmen wie Tele2, Telia Sonera, ABB, IKEA, Swedbank und SEB haben alle große Investitionen in dem Land. Litauen ist trotz seiner Größe der viertgrößte Lieferant von Möbeln für IKEA, was bedeutet, dass mehr Möbel von IKEA in Litauen als in Schweden produziert werden. Es ist offensichtlich, dass niedrige (wir sollten nicht wirklich von niedrigen Löhnen sprechen, sondern von niedrigeren Löhnen) Löhne und schlechte Arbeitsbedingungen Investitionen anziehen.

Es entsteht das Bild einer Nation, die von den großen Imperialisten ausgebeutet wird. Die Menschen und die Arbeiter werden unter Druck gesetzt, weil sie kapitalistischen Profit brauchen. Dieses Bild ist jedoch fehlerhaft. In jeder kapitalistischen Nation gibt es eine Dualität, die ich hoffentlich mit meinem litauischen Beispiel zeigen kann.

### **Die ausländischen**

## **Direktinvestitionen Litauens**

Trotz der Tatsache, dass die Investitionen aus reicheren Ländern zunehmen, scheint dies die litauischen Kapitalisten nicht davon abzuhalten, ihre eigenen Investitionen zu tätigen. Werfen wir einen Blick auf die Nachbarn Litauens.

In Weißrussland sind die litauischen Kapitalisten nach Russland und Zypern die drittgrößten Investoren (die zyprischen Investitionen sind wahrscheinlich indirekt russisch, da eine Reihe von Oligarchen das Land nutzen, um Steuern in Russland zu vermeiden). Litauisches Kapital ist in mehr als 500 weißrussischen Unternehmen angelegt und "jeder zweite reiche Litauer hat Geschäfte in Weißrussland", um einen litauischen Parlamentarier zu zitieren. Die Investitionen, die von Litauen bis Belarus jährlich getätigt werden, belaufen sich auf rund 80 Millionen Dollar [1]. Die Investitionen aus Litauen konzentrierten sich vor allem auf das Einzelhandelsgeschäft, wo vor allem die Firma Sosedo groß geworden ist. Auch im Energiesektor wurden einige Investitionen getätigt, wo die litauische Modus-Gruppe im Bereich Solarstrom tätig ist [2].

Investitionen in Solarstrom sind nicht nur auf Weißrussland beschränkt, sondern werden auch in Polen getätigt, wo die Sun Investment Group 200 Millionen Dollar in den Bau von Solarstromanlagen investiert [3]. Neben dem Solarstrom investieren litauische Unternehmen in den Einzelhandel, und 2017 kaufte das litauische Unternehmen Maxima eine der größten polnischen Einzelhandelsketten Stokrotka. In der Ukraine sind die größten litauischen Investitionen auch im Einzelhandel zu finden [4].

In Lettland konzentrierten sich die Investitionen vor allem auf den Bausektor. Große Unternehmen wie LB Lords Asset Management und Capitalica Asset Management haben 250 Millionen Euro in Bauprojekte in Lettland investiert [5].

### **Also, was ist Litauen?**

Ist Litauen ein ausgebeutetes Land oder ein ausbeuterisches Land? Die Frage ist unmöglich zu beantworten, weil sie falsch formuliert ist. Litauen ist beides, und wenn es beides ist, wird die Charakterisierung als

ausgebeutete oder ausbeuterische Nation überflüssig und dient stattdessen dazu, die Klassenwidersprüche innerhalb Litauens zu trüben. So wie in jedem anderen Land, wo die Kapitalistenklasse an der Macht ist.

In jeder kapitalistischen Nation gibt es zwei Hauptklassen: die Kapitalistenklasse und die Arbeiterklasse. Ihre Interessen sind diametral entgegengesetzt. In jedem Land wird die Arbeiterklasse ausgebeutet und in jedem Land beuten die Kapitalisten aus.

Wenn man eine Nation als ausgebeutet und eine andere als Ausbeuter kategorisiert, setzt man den Ausbeuter mit den Ausgebeuteten gleich. Das innere Verhältnis und der Widerspruch zwischen ihnen werden zugunsten eines Widerspruchs zwischen der ausgebeuteten Nation und der ausbeuterischen Nation beiseite geschoben. Das Endergebnis ist, dass der Kapitalist innerhalb der ausgebeuteten Nation genauso ausgebeutet wird wie die Arbeiterklasse.

Die litauischen Arbeiter werden von ausländischen und einheimischen Kapitalisten ausgebeutet und unterdrückt, während die litauischen Kapitalisten die arbeitende Bevölkerung anderer Länder ausbeuten und unterdrücken.

Der Klassenkampf bleibt der größte Widerspruch – in jeder Situation. Aber was hat das mit dem Imperialismus zu tun?

## **Imperialismus als System**

In früheren Diskussionen innerhalb unserer Partei haben wir den systemischen

Charakter des Imperialismus festgehalten. Damit meinen wir – vereinfacht gesagt – die Beteiligung jeder kapitalistischen Nation an einem System, das durch eine Reihe von Prozessen und Merkmalen gekennzeichnet ist.

In seinem Buch „Der Imperialismus als höchstes Stadium des Kapitalismus“ beschrieb Lenin, wie das kapitalistische System in ein neues Stadium eingetreten war: das imperialistische Stadium. Das bedeutete natürlich, dass alle kapitalistischen Nationen (d.h. die Nationen, wo die Kapitalisten an der Macht waren) jetzt im Rahmen des imperialistischen Systems existierten. Die neue Phase war durch eine Reihe von Prozessen und Merkmalen gekennzeichnet:

- **Die Konzentration von Produktion und Kapital hatte ein hohes Niveau erreicht und die Konzentration setzte sich fort.** Zu einem bestimmten Zeitpunkt hatte der Zusammenschluss ein solches Niveau erreicht, dass er den freien Wettbewerb als bestimmendes Merkmal des Kapitalismus ersetzt hatte. Der freie Wettbewerb hörte nicht auf zu existieren, aber außerhalb des freien Wettbewerbs hatten sich Monopole gebildet und waren nun definierend für den Kapitalismus geworden.
- **Eine Fusion von Bank- und Industriekapital zu Finanzkapital.** Durch die Fusion der Großbanken mit den Großindustrien entstanden riesige Konglomerate, in denen die Banken als zentrale Vermittler fungierten. In einem schwedischen Kontext hat C-H Hermansson die Personalunion der schwedischen Banken mit der Industrie analysiert.
- **Der Kapitalexport wird zu Lasten des Warenexports erhöht.** Die Kapitalisten jedes Landes suchen immer nach den profitabelsten Investitionen. Wenn diese nicht mehr im eigenen Land gesucht werden können, suchen die Kapitalisten diese Investitionen im Ausland, wo die Löhne niedriger sind, die Bedingungen für die Arbeiter schlechter sind und wo folglich die Gewinne höher sind. Lenin nannte diese Heimatmärkte *übersättigt* – sie waren nicht mehr die profitabelsten Märkte und mit Investitionen gesättigt.

- **Die Welt**

**war unter dem Großkapital aufgeteilt worden und wurde immer wieder neu aufgeteilt.** Durch die Bildung von Trusts, Syndikaten und Kartellen schließen sich große Monopole zusammen, um dem Wettbewerb mit anderen Monopolen besser zu begegnen. In Schweden gab es eine Reihe bekannter Kartelle, wie z.B. das Straßenkartell, bei dem sich die Baumonopole dem Straßenministerium anschlossen (diese Abteilung existiert nicht mehr), um die Preise für die Asphaltierung künstlich zu erhöhen.

- **Die Welt**

**wurde unter den Großmächten aufgeteilt.** Die Großmächte haben die Welt in Interessengebiete aufgeteilt, in denen sie die Märkte kontrollieren. Früher fand das durch Kolonien statt, heute werden andere Methoden angewandt. Da alle Monopole und Unternehmen jederzeit wachsen müssen, zwingt die Teilung der Welt zu einer Neuaufteilung, die wiederum ein erneutes Wachstum der Monopole ermöglicht.

Alle diese Merkmale und Prozesse wurden 1916 von Lenin identifiziert und erscheinen uns heute noch deutlicher. Es ist wichtig festzustellen, dass das, was als Merkmale des kapitalistischen Systems in seiner imperialistischen Phase diskutiert wurde, genau das ist – *Merkmale des Systems*. Diese Merkmale charakterisieren *nicht* die einzelnen Länder. Es ist unmöglich, *jedes einzelne Land* neben diese Merkmale zu stellen, um zu entscheiden, *inwieweit* sie imperialistisch sind. Dass ein Land eine Produktion hat, die konzentrierter ist als ein anderes, oder dass ein Land einen entwickelteren Kapitalexport hat als ein anderes, macht nicht das eine imperialistischer als das andere.

Lenin hat diese Merkmale und Prozesse, die das gesamte System charakterisieren, identifiziert. Alle kapitalistischen Nationen, die sich früher im Rahmen des freien Wettbewerbs befanden, befanden sich nun im Stadium des imperialistischen Kapitalismus. Natürlich hatte sich von einem Tag auf den anderen nicht viel für die einzelnen Unternehmen oder Monopole geändert, aber der freie Wettbewerb hatte aufgehört, das kapitalistische System zu definieren. Stattdessen war es durch Monopole definiert. Wichtig ist zu beachten, dass jedes dieser Merkmale und Prozesse (d.h. die anhaltende Konzentration des

Kapitals, das anhaltende Wachstum des Kapitalexports auf Kosten der Warenexporte und so weiter) *in jedem einzelnen kapitalistischen Land* aktiv ist.

Heute ist dies genauso wahr wie damals, wie das litauische Beispiel zeigt. Auch dort sind diese Prozesse aktiv. Auch der Markt in Litauen ist überreif und zwingt die litauischen Kapitalisten ins Ausland. Dies ist ein Prozess ohne Ende.

Das bedeutet - um es deutlich zu sagen -, dass *jede Kapitalistenklasse in jeder kapitalistischen Nation am imperialistischen System teilnimmt und sich an die Gesetze des Systems hält*. Das schließt nicht aus, dass die Kapitalisten einer Nation schwächer sind als die einer anderen. Sie schließt auch nicht aus, dass die Erwerbsbevölkerung einer Nation ärmer ist als die einer anderen. Darüber hinaus schließt sie nicht aus, dass die Konzentration von Kapital und Produktion in einigen Ländern weiter fortgeschritten ist als in anderen, oder dass der Kapitalexport in einigen Teilen der Welt stärker gewachsen ist als in anderen. Der Kapitalismus - also der Imperialismus - entwickelt sich nicht gleichmäßig, sondern ungleichmäßig und zeigt daher zu jeder Zeit Unterschiede.

Das bedeutet auch, dass wir die Welt nicht in *imperialistische Nationen* und *kapitalistische Nationen* aufteilen können, sondern dass jede *kapitalistische Nation* im Rahmen des *imperialistischen Systems* handelt. Die relative Stärke in der Kapitalistenklasse eines bestimmten Landes ist in diesem Zusammenhang irrelevant - sie entscheidet nicht über den Charakter des Wirtschaftssystems, das innerhalb des Landes existiert, auch wenn sie für die Beurteilung der Stärke verschiedener Staaten relevant ist. Das bedeutet eine Ablehnung der These, dass es *kapitalistische Kategorien* im Vergleich und im Gegensatz zu *imperialistischen Kategorien* gibt.

## **Schlussfolgerungen**

Dies ist nur eine kurze Darstellung eines sehr komplexen Problems, das in diesem Artikel bei weitem nicht in seiner Gesamtheit analysiert wird, aber ich denke, dass es dennoch möglich ist, eine Reihe von relevanten Schlussfolgerungen zu ziehen, die uns beim Verständnis des Imperialismus und bei unserer Organisationstätigkeit helfen können.

- **Eine Unterscheidung zwischen kapitalistischen Nationen, die darauf abzielt, sie entweder als ausgebeutet oder ausgebeutet einzuordnen, verdeckt den grundlegenden Widerspruch zwischen Arbeit und Kapital.**

Eine Analyse, die sich auf Nationen statt auf die Komponenten konzentriert, aus denen sich die Nation zusammensetzt (d.h. die Klassenzusammensetzung einer bestimmten Nation), wird unweigerlich dazu führen, dass die grundlegende Klassenunterscheidung in jeder Nation verdeckt wird.

- **Es gibt keinen *Antiimperialismus*, der vom *Antikapitalismus* getrennt ist.** Die Vorstellung, dass man ein Antiimperialist sein kann, während man gleichzeitig eine Unterstützung für den Kapitalismus als Wirtschaftssystem beibehält, ist falsch, da er den Imperialismus vom Kapitalismus trennt und ihn auf einen politischen Ausdruck reduziert. Gegen imperialistische Kriege oder andere Ausdrucksformen des Imperialismus zu sein, ist kein *Antiimperialismus*.



- **Jede**

**Trennung zwischen *imperialistischen* Akteuren oder Nationen und *kapitalistischen* Akteuren oder Nationen bedeutet notwendigerweise die Anwendung der Analyse des Imperialismus auf jede einzelne Nation oder jeden einzelnen**

**Akteur, was der Analyse des Systems entgegensteht.** In dem Artikel behaupte ich, dass es keine Trennung zwischen *Imperialisten* und *Kapitalisten* geben darf. Eine solche Unterscheidung würde notwendigerweise dazu führen, dass willkürlich eine Art qualitative Grenze gezogen wird, wo ein bestimmter kapitalistischer Übergang zum Imperialismus erfolgt oder wo eine kapitalistische Nation imperialistisch wird. Dies wiederum zwingt uns, eine Reihe von Fragen zu stellen, wie z.B. "Bei welchem Niveau der Konzentration verwandelt sich ein bestimmtes kapitalistisches Land in ein imperialistisches Land" oder "Zu welchem Zeitpunkt bedeutet die Ausweitung des Kapitalexports auf Kosten des Rohstoffexports eine Transformation von einem kapitalistischen zu einem imperialistischen Land"? Der Punkt ist hier, dass diese Argumentation in eine Sackgasse führt, in der man gezwungen ist, die *Eigenschaften des Systems in Kriterien umzuwandeln*, die auf jede einzelne kapitalistische Nation angewandt werden. Das ist jedoch nicht möglich und führt zu einer Überlegung auf Grundlage der Logik des *geringeren Übels*, wo kapitalistische Nationen im Gegensatz zu imperialistischen einen positiveren Anschein haben.

- **„Die**

- Demokratie entspricht dem freien Wettbewerb. Die politische**

- Reaktion entspricht dem Monopol.“** Dieses Zitat stammt aus

- Lenins „Über eine Karikatur auf den Marxismus und über den imperialistischen Ökonomismus“, die 1916 geschrieben wurde.

- Der Grund, warum ich es hier benutze, ist, dass es einen Punkt veranschaulicht, der oft vergessen wird, der aber unvermeidlich wird, wenn wir den Imperialismus als ein System betrachten. Das System des Imperialismus, d.h. der Kapitalismus in seiner Monopolstellung, erzwingt eine bestimmte Richtung in der Politik, weil es am besten zum Ziel der Monopole passt. *Dies ist in jedem Land des imperialistischen Systems der Fall, denn in jedem Land regieren die Monopole.* In jedem Land stehen die Monopole und die kapitalistische Klasse im Gegensatz zur arbeitenden Bevölkerung und müssen Schritt für Schritt in eine reaktionäre Richtung gehen, um sie zu unterdrücken. Da die Situation in jedem kapitalistischen Land ähnlich ist, ist die Politik jedes Landes in ihren Grundzügen ähnlich. Die Unterdrückung der Grundrechte der arbeitenden Bevölkerung findet überall auf der Welt statt: von Indien bis Bolivien, von Schweden bis Südafrika.

Das imperialistische System produziert eine bestimmte Art von Politik, die natürlich andere nationale Merkmale annimmt, sich aber qualitativ nicht von den in anderen Ländern präsentierten Politiken unterscheiden kann.

- **Der**

**Imperialismus ist dynamisch.** Das ist sehr einfach zu sagen und scheint selbstverständlich zu sein, aber ich möchte es trotzdem berühren und erweitern. Der Imperialismus entwickelt sich ungleichmäßig, was bedeutet, dass einige Teile des Systems stärker entwickelt sein werden als andere, während bestimmte Regionen aufgrund günstiger Umstände einen Wachstumsboom erleben können. Es können Allianzen gebildet werden, die bestimmten Akteuren helfen, und technische Erfindungen können Monopole an die Front bringen. Das macht die Hierarchie im Imperialismus dynamisch – sie verändert sich ständig. Wir dürfen die Opposition der schwächeren Kapitalisten gegen die stärkeren nicht mit Antiimperialismus verwechseln.

Ein weiterer Aspekt der Dynamik des Imperialismus betrifft die *Überreife* eines Landes, die den Bedarf an Kapitalexport schafft. Dies ist keine *absolute* Kategorie, da einige Länder mehr überreif sind als andere. Der wichtigste Punkt dabei ist, dass jedes Land *in Bezug auf seine eigene Bourgeoisie überreif ist*. Für den schwedischen Kapitalismus ist der schwedische Markt überreif, und im Gegensatz zum schwedischen Markt stellt der litauische eine Alternative dar. Für den litauischen Kapitalismus ist der litauische Markt überreif, während der weißrussische oder lettische Markt Alternativen bleiben. Das bedeutet, dass sich in jedem Land die Kapitale vermischen und nebeneinander existieren: Ein Land kann ein Ziel für den Kapitalexport sein und gleichzeitig ein Ausgangspunkt für den Kapitalexport sein.

Ich hoffe, dass ich hiermit einen konstruktiven Beitrag zur Diskussion über den Imperialismus leisten konnte, der dazu beiträgt, die Diskussion in die richtige Richtung zu lenken. Die Analyse des Imperialismus steht im Mittelpunkt sowohl der Analyse als auch der Praxis des Kommunismus, und die Analyse, die wir durchführen, wird schwerwiegende Folgen für unsere Praxis haben. Daher ist es wichtig, dass eine kritische Diskussion mit dem Ziel stattfinden kann, eine tiefere Analyse des Imperialismus zu formulieren.

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One of the most important question that we stand before is the question of imperialism and the correct characterization of capitalism in its imperialist stage. In the Communist Party of Sweden (SKP), we have for some time discussed this issue, and we reach ever more solid conclusions. In this article, I will try to present my view of it, in the hope of furthering not only the debate in Sweden, but the international debate within the communist movement.

I will start by one very concrete example, and from this try to draw some basic conclusions, some of which run contrary to the way the communist movement has traditionally viewed imperialism and imperialist policies. Of course, I run the risk of being in the wrong, but if I am, my hope is that I have helped pose questions that need answering, and in forcing these questions to be answered, have furthered the debate!

## **Lithuanian imperialism**

Lithuania is a poor country. The average salary is around €800 a month (it is important to remember that this means that half of the workers in the country have a salary that is lower than this!). This means that if you live relatively central in a Lithuanian city, you have to spend almost all of your salary on your rent, if you are living in a three-room apartment. Outside the central parts of the cities, you only have to spend half your salary on an equalent apartment. After paying your rent, your salary must also pay for your other expidentures, such as food, public transportation, clothes and so on.

The fact that wages are low in Lithuania attracts foreign investments. A lot of these investments come from Sweden. Swedish capitalists accounted for almost one fifth of all foreign investments in 2016. The two economic free zones of Lithuania, located in Klaipeda and Kaunas probably attract a lot of these investments. Swedish companies, such as Tele2, Telia Sonera, ABB, IKEA, Swedbank and SEB all have large investments

in the country. Lithuania is, despite its size, the fourth biggest supplier of furniture to IKEA, which means that more of IKEA's furniture is produced in Lithuania than in Sweden. It is apparent that low (we shouldn't really be talking about low wages, but rather *lower* wages) wages and bad working conditions attract investments.

The picture that emerges is of a nation exploited by the big imperialists. The people and the workers are pressured because of the need for capitalist profit. However, this picture is flawed. There is a duality in every capitalist nation, which I hope to be able to show with my Lithuanian example.

### ***The foreign direct investments of Lithuania***

Despite the fact that the investments from richer countries increase, this does not seem to stop the Lithuanian capitalists from making their own investments. Let's take a look at Lithuania's neighbors.

In Belarus, the Lithuanian capitalists are the third biggest investors, behind Russia and Cyprus (the Cypriot investments are probably indirectly Russian, since a number of oligarchs use the country to avoid taxes in Russia). Lithuanian capital can be found in more than 500 Belarusian companies and "[e]very second rich Lithuanian has business in Belarus" to quote a Lithuanian parliamentarian. The investments made from Lithuania to Belarus every year amount to around 80 million dollars. [1] The investments made from Lithuania have primarily been directed to the retail business, where above all the company Sosedis has grown large. The energy sector has also seen some investments, where the Lithuanian Modus Group is active in solar power. [2]

Investments in solar power are not limited to Belarus but are also made in Poland, where the Sun Investment Group are investing 200 million dollars to construct solar power parks [3]. Apart from solar power, Lithuanian companies are investing in retailing, and in 2017, the Lithuanian company Maxima bought one of the biggest Polish retail chains Stokrotka. In Ukraine, the biggest Lithuanian investments are also found in retailing.[4]

In Latvia, the investments have primarily been directed towards the construction sector. Big companies, such as LB Lords Asset Management and Capitalica Asset Management have invested 250 million Euro in construction projects in Latvia.[5]

## **So, what is Lithuania?**

Is Lithuania an exploited country or an exploiting country? The question is impossible to answer, because it is falsely formulated. Lithuania is both, and if it is both, the characterization as an *exploited* or *exploiting* nation becomes superfluous and instead, serves to cloud the class contradictions within Lithuania. Just as every other country with a capitalist class in power.

In every capitalist nation two main classes exist: the capitalist class and the working class. Their interests are diametrically opposed. In every country the working class is exploited and in every land the capitalists exploit.

When one categorizes a nation as exploited and another as an exploiter, one equates the exploiter with the exploited. The internal relationship and contradiction between them are set aside in favor of a contradiction between the exploited nation and the exploiting nation. The end result is that the capitalist within the exploited nation become just as exploited as the working class.

The Lithuanian workers are exploited and repressed by both foreign and native capitalists, while the Lithuanian capitalists exploit and repress the working population of other countries.

Class struggle

remains the main contradiction – in every situation. But what does this have to do with imperialism?

## **Imperialism as a system**

In earlier discussions within our party, we have maintained the *systemic* character of imperialism. With this we mean – simply put – the participation of every capitalist nation in a system characterized by a number of processes and features.

In his book *Imperialism as the highest stage of capitalism* Lenin described how the capitalist system had entered a new stage: the imperialist stage. Of course, this meant that all capitalist nations (that is, the nations with capitalists in power) now existed within the framework of the imperialist system. The new stage was characterized by a number of processes and characteristics:

- **The concentration of production and capital had reached a high level and concentration continued.** At a certain point, the concentration had reached such a level that it had replaced free competition as a defining feature of capitalism. Free competition did not cease to exist, but outside of the free competition, monopolies had formed and had now become defining of capitalism.
- **A merger of banking and industrial capital into finance capital.** Through a merger of the big banks with the big industries, enormous conglomerates were created where the banks acted as central facilitators. In a Swedish context, C-H Hermansson has analyzed the personal union of the Swedish banks with industry.
- **Capital export increases at the expense of commodity export.** The capitalists of every country always seek the most profitable investments. When these no longer are to seek within the own country, capitalists seek these investments abroad, where wages are lower, conditions for the workers are worse and where, consequently, profits are bigger. Lenin called these domestic markets *oversaturated* – they were no longer the most profitable markets and had been saturated with investments.
- **The world had been divided and kept being divided between big capital.** Through the forming of trusts, syndicates and cartels big monopolies join together so as to more effectively meet competition from other monopolies. In Sweden there have been a number of famous cartels, such as the Road Cartel, where the construction monopolies joined the Department for Roads (this department no longer exists) to artificially raise prices for asfaltering work.
- **The world has been divided by the big powers.** The big powers have divided the world into spheres of interest where they control markets. Previously done through colonies, other methods are now used. Because all monopolies and companies must grow at all times, the division of the world forces a *redivision*, which in turn allows monopolies to grow once again.

All of these features and processes were identified by Lenin in 1916 and they



emerge even more clear to us today. It is important to note that what has been discussed as features of the capitalist system in its imperialist stage is just that - *features of the system*.

These features *do not* characterize individual countries. It is impossible to place *every single country* next to these features to decide *to what extent* they are imperialist. That one country might have a production that is more concentrated than another, or that one country has a more developed capital export than another, does not make the more imperialist than the other.

What Lenin did was to identify these features and processes that characterized the entire *system*. All the capitalist nations that previously found themselves within the framework of free competition now found themselves in imperialist capitalism. Of course, from one day to the next, not much had changed for the individual companies or monopolies, but free competition had ceased to be defining for the capitalist system. Instead, it had come to be defined by monopolies. What is important to note is that each of these features and processes (ie the continuing concentration of capital, the continuing growth of capital export at the expense of commodity exports and so on) are active *in every single capitalist country*.

Today, this is as true as it was then, which the Lithuanian example shows. Also there, these processes are active. The market in Lithuania is *also* overripe, forcing Lithuanian capitalists abroad. This is a process without end.

This means - to speak clearly - that *every capitalist class in every capitalist nation participates in the imperialist system, abiding to the laws of the system*. This does not exclude the fact that the capitalists of one nation are weaker than those of another. It also does not exclude the fact that the working population of one nation is poorer than those of another. Additionally, it does not exclude the fact that the concentration of capital and production is more advanced in some countries than in others, or that capital export has grown more in some parts of the world than others. Capitalism - that is, imperialism - does not develop evenly, but *unevenly* and therefore, displays differences at all times.

This also means that we cannot divide the world into *imperialist* nations and *capitalist* nations, but that each *capitalist nation* acts within the framework of the *imperialist system*. The relative strength in the capitalist class of a given country is in this context irrelevant – it does not decide the character of the economic system that exists within the country, even if it is relevant in judging the strength of different states. This means a rejection of the thesis that there are *capitalist categories* in relation and in opposition to *imperialist categories*.

## **Conclusions**

This is only a short presentation of a very complex problem, which is far from analyzed in its entirety in this article, but I think that it is nonetheless possible to draw a number of relevant conclusions that can help us in understanding imperialism and in our organizing work.

- **A distinction between capitalist nations that aims at categorizing them as either *exploited* or *exploiting* cover the basic contradiction between labor and capital.** An analysis that focuses on nations instead of the components that make up the nation (ie, the class composition of a given nation) will inevitably lead to the basic class distinction in every nation being covered up.
- **There is no *anti-imperialism* that is separate from *anti-capitalism*.** The idea that one can be an anti-imperialist, while at the same time retaining a support for capitalism as an economic system is false, as it separates imperialism from capitalism, reducing it to a political expression. To be opposed to imperialist wars or other expressions of imperialism is not *anti-imperialism*.
- **Any separation between *imperialist* actors or nations and *capitalist* actors or nations necessarily means the application of the analysis of imperialism on every given nation or actor, negating the analysis of the system.** In the article, I maintain that there is no separation to be made between *imperialists* and *capitalists*. Such a distinction would necessarily lead to some sort of qualitative boundary being arbitrarily set up, where a given capitalist transitions into being an imperialist, or where a capitalist nation transitions into being imperialist. In turn, this forces us to ask a number of questions, such as "At what level of concentration does a given capitalist country transform into an imperialist country?" or "At what point does the expansion of capital export at the expense of commodity export entail a transformation from a capitalist country to an imperialist one?"

The point being made here is that this reasoning leads into a dead-end, where one is forced into converting the *characteristics of the system* into *criteria applied to each capitalist nation*. This application is not possible and leads into a reasoning based on the logic of the *lesser evil* where capitalist nations, as opposed to imperialist ones, retain a more positive aura.

- **"Democracy**

**corresponds to free competition. Political reaction corresponds to monopoly."**

This quote is from Lenin's *A Caricature of Marxism and Imperialist Economism*, which was written in 1916.

The reason I use it here is because it illustrates a point often forgotten, but which becomes inevitable when we view imperialism as a system. The system of imperialism, that is, capitalism in its monopoly-stage, forces a certain direction in politics, because it best suits the aim of the monopolies. *This is the case in every country within the imperialist system, because in every country the monopolies reign.* In every country, the monopolies and the capitalist class stand in opposition to the working population and must take step after step in a reactionary direction to suppress them. Because the situation is similar in every capitalist country, the policies of each country are similar in its basic features. The repression of the basic rights of the working population is occurring all over the world: from India to Bolivia; from Sweden to South Africa.

The imperialist system produces a certain kind of policy, which of course assume different national characteristics but cannot be qualitatively different from the policies presented in other countries.

- **Imperialism**

**is dynamic.** This is very easy to say and seems self-evident, but I still want to touch upon it and expand upon it. Imperialism develops unevenly, meaning that some parts of the system will be more developed than others, while certain regions can experience a boom in growth due to favorable circumstances. Alliances can be formed that help certain actors and technical inventions can propel monopolies to the front. This makes the hierarchy within imperialism dynamic – it is ever-changing. We must not confuse the opposition of weaker capitalists to stronger ones for anti-imperialism.

Another aspect of the dynamism of imperialism concerns the *overripeness* of a country, which creates the need for capital export. This is not an *absolute* category, insofar as some countries are more overripe than others. The main point here is that every country is *overripe in relation to its own bourgeoisie*. For Swedish capitalism, the Swedish market is overripe, and in contrast to the Swedish market,

the Lithuanian one represents an alternative. For Lithuanian capitalism, the Lithuanian market is overripe, whereas the Belarusian or Latvian markets remain alternatives. This means that in every country, capitals *intersperse* and exist alongside each other: a country can be a destination for capital export, while at the same time being a point of departure for capital export.

With this, I hope that I have been able to form a constructive contribution to the discussion of imperialism that helps to propel the discussion in the right direction. The analysis of imperialism stands at the center of both the analysis and the practice of communism, and the analysis that we make will have serious consequences for our practice. Therefore, it is vital that a critical discussion with the purpose of formulating a deeper analysis of imperialism can take place.

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[1] <https://belarusdigest.com/story/investing-in-belarus-a-story-of-lithuanian-businessmen>

[2] <https://belarusfeed.com/belarus-retail-top-foreign-investors/>

[3] <https://www.thefirstnews.com/article/here-comes-the-sun-lithuania-pours-millions-into-polish-solar-energy-991>

[4] <https://lithuania.mfa.gov.ua/en/ukraine-it/trade/trade-and-investment>

[5] <http://newsecbaltics.com/lithuanian-real-estate-investors-making-dent-real-estate-market/>

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# Greeting from the Jeunes Communistes de Lyon

The Text as [pdf](#)

*The political secretary of the Jeunes Communistes de Lyon held this speech at a conference of the "Kommunistische Organisation" within the "Luxemburg-Liebkecht-Lenin Wochenende" 2020 in Berlin. You can find a German translation [here](#).*

Dear comrades,

It's an honour to be invited here today. We think that both our people have had a great common history of struggle, which we need to remember and to celebrate. The perfect example of this, for us, is the great fight against the Ruhr invasion that the french imperialists organised during the 20's. The cooperation between our Parties at that time is to be remembered and is largely due to the assistance of the Communist International.

But I was not invited here to speak about this matter. I was asked to speak about the development of the communist movement in France, more specifically about my organisation. I was asked about this before the start of the strike against the pensions' reform in France, so i was requested to talk about it as well because it would be a good example of what we were able to do as a little, local communist organisation regarding this strike.

So firstly, in order for everyone to understand where we are at right now, i'll talk about what we are. The Communist Youth of Lyon was a part of the MJCF, which stands for National Movement of the Communist Youth. It is the youth organisation of the French Communist Party, the one born in 1920 after the founding of the Third Internationale. During the late 2000's, the MJCF was being dismantled by the Leadership of the PCF at the time, and few of the local organisations survived, like the one in Lyon, which survived with a few members, but was not very active.



*The political secretary of the Jeunes Communistes de Lyon*

At the beginning of the 2010's, the MJCF grew back in some areas, and started to gain back some traction. Of course, it did not have a Marxist-Leninist basis, but some of the local organisations, even if not mature, started to enquire about theory, and started to grow a strategical approach of revolutionary work.

By then, some local organisations started to think about socialism, revolution and the means to achieve it : Marseille, Lyon, Dijon, Saint-Etienne and others. They started to question the national leadership. During congresses and other such national events, they started to bring up matters like socialism, class struggle, Democratic Centralism and so on. They soon became an opposition to the national leadership, which was controlled by the reformist PCF.

Lyon became the centre of this opposition, and by then, all the national democratic events were prepared in Lyon, in order to reflect on what was needed to be brought up to the discussion, and what we proposed to the members of the MJCF. We tried to take back the leadership and to rebuild the organisation, against the reformism of the national leadership of the PCF, and of a large part of the membership base.

By then Lyon was home of a major federation, gathering about 100 members, having it's own place to organise the struggle. It was then not much but a student organisation. We had no concrete links with the workers union, other than with their representatives. We pushed issues against the Leadership, in order to force them to create debates on socialism, and we had some victories in the congresses and national debates.

That's why the leadership needed us gone. We were gaining momentum and we were closing in on victory. Many local organisations started to take interest in us. Thus the leadership decided to take action in a conflict we were in. On of our local section, Villeurbanne, a city in the suburbs of Lyon, was on the side of the National Leadership. The latter took advantage of it and made a politician move to get rid of our then Local Leadership, with the help of the local Communist Party, and their then allies, the Socialist Party, and the Left Party of Melenchon. They paid fake memberships to many unknown people, and managed to gather enough votes to eliminate our Leadership during a General Assembly of the members.

With that move, everything that our comrades spent years to build was destroyed in a few hours, and only a few of our comrades kept faith in the cause. They were the few ones, about five, that decided to rebuild an organisation. At that point, the local organisations that were our allies in the opposition either went to waste or strongly localised themselves. They focused on their local growth, in the hope that someday they could rebuild an opposition.

That's what our comrades, which rebuilt our local organisation in Lyon did as well. They tried to build actual links with the Unions, they studied works of KKE about the social alliance. They rebuilt the organisation as it is now, with more experience of what reformism and opportunism actually are. With time, they also started to understand that PCF and MJCF were now bourgeois organisations, and that it could no longer bring us anything.

It is also at that point that we started to gather new members and our started to grow again. More students joined, but also more workers. We are now starting to build strong links within the Union ranks, like the railway workers, the chemical industries workers and others. As an example, two years ago, we organized a march to commemorate the sacrifice of workers against Nazism during World War 2, to which Five Hundred railway workers attended.

At the same time, we have tried to regrow links with local structures of MJCF, with whom we used to work. As such, we are now working with comrades from Strasbourg and Marseille, in order to rebuild a national communist organisation that could bring us an actual national perspective of our own. It's still a project, and we face many issues in building it, but we are advancing, and if you want any further information, I will gladly answer to them later.



As an example of our experiments regarding the work towards the masses, our best examples are the Struggle Committees in Universities and High schools. We have been for building these mass organisations for three years now, with the goal to organise struggle on places of studies. We called them Struggle Committees, and we intend to use these tools to lead the mobilisation concerning national issues but mostly local ones, for instance, against school administration, for the improvement of learning conditions, to defend cases of scholarship grants for students.

We tried to build these tools to counter the methods of leftists in universities and high schools. The leftists in these places are undermining the struggle. They want to keep students from organising on a local basis, they want to keep them from considering local demands. So, we decided to build these committees on local basis in order to organise students, first for their own demands concerning learning conditions, then to try and make them join the broader struggle for national demands.

Doing so, we managed to gather more and more students. They are not necessarily communists, but they recognise our place in the struggle and are fine with it. We also managed to mobilise them on the Strike against Pensions' Reform. In the places where our comrades were present, we told them to push forward our demands, and to propose actions to join the workers on strike during demonstrations. This was one of the first times that we were able to lead the mobilisation of the youth.

Later, leftists succeeded to undermine our mobilisation, by pushing young and inexperienced students to make use of violence during strike pickets or demonstrations, bringing upon them repression from the police. We lost some support at that moment, but even so, we reached milestones that will be useful for years to come.

The work we have achieved in those Struggle Committees has been very different from the work we had to achieve in the Workers' Union. In universities and high schools, there were no pre-existing Students' Union in which we could intervene. We therefore had to build them by ourselves. We had to create those organisations, to build their credibility, and at the same time, keep working as the Communist Youth directly on other matters, such as French Imperialism, European Union and others.

This is very different from the work we must achieve in the Workers' Union, the CGT. The CGT is already well established, it's the first union confederation in France, and it exists since 1895. In those unions, reformism has deep roots, and we had to think about strategies to make our influence grow in it without compromising our positions. We took our first foothold in the Union by participating into the Unemployed Committee, a branch of the CGT that's built on local basis, either to help Unemployed to defend their rights, or to struggle against unemployment.

I need now to make a quick explanation about how CGT works. When you join the Union, you join two different components: Your Union, in your workplace, which is linked to a national branch (Steel Workers, Railway Workers, Chemical Industry Workers, etc.). On the other hand, you join a Local Union, on a geographical basis. This one depends on where your workplace is located. This second component is supposed to be the basis of the inter-branch struggle. It's also this component that is supposed to help grow the membership basis, by working towards new workplaces, or in workplaces where there is no union yet.

Both components have separate leaderships, and the Confederation, which is the national leadership, is supposed to be the link between the different branches of the industry, and the Local Unions.

As we had no foothold in any particular branch, we needed to use Local Unions. That's where we could meet with workers from different branches. The Unemployed Committee served this purpose: we could then reach out to different branches to suggest actions against unemployment. For example, we did some actions, where we invited Unemployed workers to bring their resumés that we then gave to our comrades from the Railway. They then had to push those resumé towards their employers, in order to force them to hire those Unemployed workers. This had a double political message: we need more Railway Workers to ensure a safe Public Service, and we need jobs por Unemployed workers.

All those actions secured us a strong foothold in the CGT, from which we could launch further developments, toward other branches, in the hopes of being able to push forward demands we reflected upon between communists.

I think i've covered a vast majority of our current work towards the masses. Of course, we have other campaigns: Against French Imperialism in Africa, Against European Union. But those are really different because we do not expect masses to join the events we organise about these campaigns (demonstrations, meetings, etc.). It's more about trying to inform workers about these subjects that we thing very important.

We think that our work toward the masses, in the CGT, in universities and high-schools really are important, in order to push our demands, our analysis forward. The working class, even if organised in unions, needs a leadership, and the ongoing strikes really shows it. It also need allies, and it is a communist task to found those alliances, with the anti-monopolistic strata. We intend to lead this struggle, while, at the same time, attack imperialism at it's heart.

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# Down with the coup in Bolivia – Solidarity with the Bolivian people!

The campaign against the democratically elected Bolivian president Evo Morales and his party Movimiento al Socialismo (Movement for Socialism – MAS) has intensified last year and reached a bitter climax last weekend with the forced resignation of Morales. Parts of the military and police have taken the side of the ultra-right opposition and put pressure on MAS politicians to resign through acts of violence, kidnappings and the pillaging and destruction of homes.

The opposition movement presents itself as democratic, as it opposes the alleged dictator Morales, it presents itself colorful and youthful. But the excesses by police and military during the last days, racist above all in nature, show clearly the actual thrust. The recognition and empowerment of the indigenous population, the expansion of the education and health system to the detriment of private corporations and, above all, the nationalization of central industries were a thorn in the side of US imperialism and the dependent Bolivian bourgeoisie.

In contrast to Venezuela, the developments that have meant an improvement in the living conditions of the people are based not only on the sale of oil, but on an expansion of the productive forces in state hands. However, even in Bolivia, state power is not in the hands of the proletariat and the strata allied with it. In Venezuela, this could be balanced by the ideological solidarity of the military with the Bolivarian process, which was not possible in Bolivia.

The coup is followed by terror against activists of the popular movements and supporters of the government. The police brutally attack the demonstrations of the popular masses and raid the poor neighborhoods, those raids being directed against the people's movement. Indigenous activists, trade unionists and MAS supporters are insulted, beaten and tortured.

The mass and militant demonstrations against the putschists in the last days give hope and show a courageous and well-fortified people who are ready to defend the achievements of the last 13 years. The mass and militant demonstrators shout the slogan “ahora si, guerra civil” (translated: “civil war now!”). In the next few days it will become clear how the movement will develop and whether armed people's units will emerge from it and how the reactionary forces will react to it.

It is indicative that the German government welcomed the coup after less than 24 hours. This shows how much they care about democracy and human rights, as soon as a democratically elected government decides to expel the imperialists from the country. This reminds of the cries of joy of German politicians about the outbreak of democracy in Chile, when on 9/11 1973 one of the bloodiest military dictatorships of the continent began. It is also worth mentioning in this context that the German-Bolivian lithium project, which was stopped a few days before the coup, is now considered possible again. After Argentina, Bolivia has the largest lithium deposit in the world. A raw material that is used, among other things, for batteries for electric cars and smartphones.

Also the “Neues Deutschland”, the newspaper of the Left Party (Partei Die Linke), as well as the “taz”, which is regarded as “left-wing alternative”, justify the coup. Thus it says in the “Neues Deutschland”: It is not nice, the way that Evo Morales had to abandon the presidency. For Bolivia’s democracy, however, it is important and correct that Morales is finally followed by someone else. (“Learn to let go”, Neues Deutschland 11.11.2019). These forces, too, prove once more that at the end of the day they are on the side of imperialism and reaction.

We condemn the criminal coup carried out with the support of foreign imperialist states, including the USA and Germany. We express our solidarity with the Bolivian people and their resistance. We emphasize that the Bolivian people have every right to defend their achievements with all means at their disposal, including force, and to strike back the reaction.

La lucha sigue! - The struggle continues!

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## Working in the masses – Abbreviated version of the resolution of the 2nd Plenary Assembly of the Communist organization

The text in [pdf](#)

**Theses on the struggle of the working class in abridged form, based on the “Decision on Work in the Masses” of the 2nd Plenary Assembly of the Communist Organization, July 2019**

At the 2nd Plenary Assembly of the Communist Organization (KO) in July 2019, after months of fruitful discussion, a resolution was passed on work in the masses. In order to make this very long document more easily accessible, we present here a strongly abbreviated version limited to the essential statements.

## **Political justification**

### **Building the Communist Party**

The communist, revolutionary workers movement in Germany has been heavily weakened. Characterized by ideological disagreement and ambiguity, it has frayed itself into various organizations and is therefore hardly able to unfold its political effect. The KO was founded with the aim of overcoming this state through a process of organization and clarification and creating the conditions for the creation of a Communist Party in Germany – a revolutionary working class party capable of steadily expanding its influence on the working class and ultimately leading it in the decisive struggle for power.

One of the essential challenges in building this party is that we must work out common orientations for the class struggle. We hereby present and discuss our preliminary conclusions on the struggle of the working class. For the unity of the communists, which we ultimately strive for, is only possible on the basis of a unity of content, political-ideological unity. The question of organizing the working class is of central importance in this struggle for the correct political line of the communists.

### **Our Goal: Organizing and Winning the Class Struggle**

The revolution won't come by itself. This requires the revolutionary act, the revolutionary uprising of the entire working class. For this the workers must gain the consciousness that they are being exploited as a class and can overthrow the exploiting system as a class. So the revolution cannot be the work of a small conspired community, but only the work of the workers themselves. In a revolutionary situation in which capitalist rule is fundamentally shaken and the masses rebel against the system, the workers must take power in their own hands and build the new society of socialism. For the workers in the revolutionary situation to be able to do this, they must already have gained experience in mass organizations: The experience of democratic self-organization, decision-making and pulling on one strand, the experience of defeat and rising up again, the experience of solidarity and mutual help. Revolutionary times are times of crisis in which many experiences can be gathered, but only a working class that is as experienced as

possible in questions of organization, trained in struggle, focused on the goal and acting uniformly will then be able to deal the fatal blow to the rule of capital. Our work is dedicated to the preparation for this goal.

The goal of the communists in mass work must be the politicization of the masses, the raising of their consciousness – it must be understood that the goal of the struggle can only be the overthrow of the capitalist class and that the working class must unite and organize itself under the leadership of the Communist Party. The struggle must therefore have the goal of state power, otherwise the capitalist class remains in power and the struggles will ultimately subordinate themselves to the rule and political goals of the capitalist class.

Class-oriented mass work and mass organizations are not to be understood separately from the Communist Party / Organization. Without them they will not exist, nor will the Communist Party be a revolutionary vanguard, the highest form of organization of the proletariat without mass work and mass organizations. Thus, although these are two different and in practice separate forms of organization, their structure and development inevitably go hand in hand.

The struggle of the classes takes place objectively, even without our intervention. In every previous society, the interests of oppressors and the oppressed were irreconcilable and manifested themselves in a constant clash. The recognition of this permanent struggle, however, does not necessarily lead to a revolutionary course. On the contrary, the real questions begin here, namely the questions of the specific problems, the nature and the goal of the proletarian class struggle.

## **Limitation of struggles, generality of class struggle:**

The ongoing confrontation between the working class and the bourgeoisie is always the seed of the class struggle as we conceive it, the organized struggle of the working class for power. Strikes and other forms of economic struggle are seed forms of class struggle. So they contain the potential to unfold the entire political struggle of the class for state power. But only the potential, only the germ. The interest of the capitalist class is that this seed does not unfold, but remains a seed. From the point of view of capital, the struggle should on the one hand be restricted and limited to individual companies and sectors, but on the other hand also remain confined to wage demands, working time issues, etc., without posing the question of power. By contrast, from the point of view of the communists and those who represent the interests of the working class, the struggle must not remain limited, but must be extended to the struggle of the entire class and must relate to all questions, above all to the question of state power, which the working class must conquer.

This does not mean that the demand for a soviet republic should be imposed on every strike. That would be ridiculous and sectarian. Rather, it means that the workers must recognize in the struggles that there must be more at stake – regardless of whether they win or lose that struggle. They must recognize that they are irreconcilable with an organized opposing class and must therefore organize themselves in a long-term and disciplined way. In independent mass organizations closely linked to the organization of revolutionaries, this experience can lead to the realization that the power of the working class is the only solution to their problems. In these organizations an understanding can mature about how they can get there and what role the individual strike, the individual action of struggle can play in this long-term struggle.

According to this comprehensive understanding of class struggle, every small joint action of workers against their living conditions gains potentially far-reaching significance. For it is the starting point where we can practically demonstrate that organization is necessary; and where we can at the same time politically demonstrate that it is part of the whole class struggle in which the question of power must be posed.

This is not just about expanding struggles such as strikes and pushing the demands forward, even though these are important tasks. But our task goes beyond that and consists mainly of something else: In building an organization that is able to connect the struggles with each other, to show everywhere why it is a struggle of the whole class and against the other class, why the question of power is decisive for it.

For this we have to focus our whole organization on class struggle and mass work. We must understand the activities and demands that result from them in their unity and context. For example, the question of education is not separate from our work in the masses, because there we must constantly develop even better means of communicating our program and our positions. In order to be able to combine our activities in the masses well with scientific socialism, we need good knowledge of the history of the workers' movement, of social conditions and their development, and of the experiences workers gain in their struggle, as well as of the class enemy and his strategies.

The question of cadre development is also closely connected with and determined by the demands of class struggle. In order to create the preconditions for the construction of the Communist Party, what we currently lack, apart from ideological clarity and unity, are cadres. The cadres are the people who lead the struggle most actively and consciously, who know it from all sides and who can connect all aspects with each other. They are communists who are up to the demands of the class struggle. We must win them mainly from the masses and be able to train them, train them, develop all the skills they need to lead the struggle.

## **Our Orientation: Internalizing Principles**

Our orientation does not include a detailed, technical proposal, such as that everyone should go to a certain committee of the trade union. Nor do we propose a uniform recipe, which should always be applied in the same way in every city, such as the establishment of a neighborhood association. Rather, it is first a question of understanding the goal, the principles and the fundamentals and then applying them after evaluating the concrete conditions and possibilities according to local conditions. It is a matter of evaluating the work on the basis of these principles again and again collectively and regularly and drawing practical conclusions from them.

This means that in all places where it is possible, we try to organize workers or other working people – in the company, in the residential area, at schools and universities. This means that we also have to extend our influence in other, existing mass organizations and promote the independent organization of the workers in them: in trade unions, in sports and cultural associations. We and the people we reach must apply and spread the principles of autonomy and activity everywhere.

We do not decide on a general rigid orientation towards company and trade union policy in the sense that everyone should go into the company at all times and everywhere. This may well be right and necessary, but it must be decided in one place according to conditions and capacities. Depending on the situation, the best starting points must be found. For example, if we start a sports club in a town and organize people there, there will be young workers who will later work as trainees in a company.

We also find sons and daughters of the working class at the university or technical college. There we also find sons and daughters of the middle-class who we can inspire for our mass work in the neighborhood or in the company and who side with the working class practically and ideologically together with us. They also have to organize themselves in order to do justice to their own specific interests and to gain organizational experience which they can bring to the companies. Moreover, a part of the working class works at the universities themselves, the struggles of all these parts must be united.

## **On the organization of the masses**



# Social situation and necessity of organization

Since the defeat of 1989, the smashing of socialism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, the workers movement has been in a serious crisis. Social democracy and opportunism have decimated the labor movement, organizations (trade unions, associations, etc.) have been subordinated to bourgeois ideology or have been decimated. Many formerly revolutionary workers parties have dissolved. Independent, class-conscious and revolutionary organizations of the working class hardly exist any more in the FRG. Most workers and their families in Germany today are not politically organized or tied to the interests of the ruling class through social-democratic organizations.

Nevertheless, the widespread assumption that most workers are fundamentally not interested in political issues is false and an expression of a lack of contact with the working class. Rather, workers have no larger context in which to discuss and think through political and social issues. All the more so, they have no context in which they can become active on their own. They are exposed to the influence of the bourgeoisie, its state, its media and offers of the culture industry without any real counterweight.

As a result, many workers, especially young people, experience psychological, social and cultural brutalization in various forms. These include selfishness, superficiality, inability to build personal relationships, hedonism and drug use and other expressions of disruption of social relations. These phenomena pose problems for our mass work, as they complicate the organization and development of class consciousness.

Atomization and isolation are also experiences that many workers and their families have. So it is not only and not necessarily loneliness, but a limited experience of sociality. Fewer and fewer people collect the experience of joint activity and thus the capacity to act. With it they can hardly recognize possibilities to fight with the others.

In order to counteract these negative phenomena, we must bring people together in all areas, in the residential district as well as in the workplaces. We have to be patient. Our work is long-term and designed for continuity. The need for patience and continuity arises from the matter itself: We are not doing a campaign or a temporary project, but have a lifelong task ahead of us - organizing the working class. Thus our own process of organization will not stop, we will have to further develop it all the time. This will also be an important task in socialism.

Therefore, we do not have to have a political motto for everything at once; a political topic that is

discussed quickly comes up anyway. Mutual help can play an important role in this task, because it is linked to the needs of the people we can and want to reach, who reject egoism and ruthlessness. Mutual help can take many different forms, from an open ear for the problems of the colleague to shopping for the elderly neighbor to coaching for the young people in the settlement. Patience is also important because not every worker will immediately realise that collectivity and organisation will pay off for him personally in the short term. And we must also be patient with those who want to organise themselves but have little time and energy objectively and do not make unrealistic demands on them.

## **What are mass organizations?**

By mass organizations we mean organizations in which the workers organize themselves along their economic, social and cultural needs and interests. They can take different forms depending on the field and historical situation. They are places where one's own social power as a collective subject, one's own abilities can be experienced. They are places where one learns to decide for oneself and to implement these decisions. They are also spaces for social, political and ideological debate. In them, there is no separation between the different areas of life, since they serve to organize people according to the different sides of their life.

Their character as mass organizations also results in a great fundamental openness and low threshold of participation, which is in contrast to the high demands on membership in the Communist Party. Every worker must have the opportunity to participate in a mass organization, even if he has little time and strength at his disposal. The principles described below should therefore form the basis of cooperation: Willingness to act for one's own class interests, preservation of the independence/self-sufficiency of the mass organization and solidarity towards the other participants. Examples of mass organizations are the trade unions, but they can also be workers' sports clubs or an association in a residential area in which workers organize mutual help.

## **Who do we want to organize with our revolutionary mass work?**

When we speak of the masses, we mean all those whom we can organize in the class struggle on the side of the working class. So, the masses comprise larger parts of the population than just the working class - for example, parts of the petty bourgeoisie (e.g. small self-employed) and the intelligentsia (e.g. scientists, engineers). But necessarily a large part of the masses consists of workers - and that is why our mass work is directed primarily at the working class itself.

We assume that in Germany the vast majority of wage earners belong to the working class or have very similar living conditions to the working class. Industrial workers, cashiers in supermarkets, caretakers in hospitals, tram drivers or train drivers, part-time workers, the unemployed or temporary workers may have different living, working and fighting conditions, but they share both their relationship to the means of production - they have none - and the (differently pronounced) threat to their social status.

The organisation of brain workers, whose share in industry is increasing, is also an important task. If this task is neglected, the division of the workers in the company increases. This organization of brain workers into offices, etc., does not result automatically from the organization of workers in production, but must be understood as a task with its own problems and contradictions, which requires its own answers and forms of organization.

The working class is the revolutionary subject - so before there is a stabilized class-oriented workers' movement, the organization of other parts of society (small self-employed, intelligentsia, etc.) cannot be successful either. For the organization of these layers can only take place in connection and alliance with the interests of the working class. It follows that our mass work is aimed at the working class. We basically orient ourselves towards the working class - not exclusively, but fundamentally. This means, for example, that we build up mass work in a district where the majority of workers live. When petty-bourgeois people join in, we do not deny them participation, but the focus is on the interests, circumstances and concerns of the workers and their families. In companies and trade unions we do not focus on engineers or executives, but on workers and ordinary employees, whose situation is almost identical to that of workers.

## **The organization of youth**

We should pay particular attention to young people and address them in the various areas of life - school, culture, sport, but also through other interests. Young people are more open to the ideas of communism and more agile, usually not yet so resigned or ideologically stuck - in other words less fixed overall. The youth will also be particularly involved in the struggles of the near future. We can positively influence the formation and development of the personality. All in all, our wealth of experience is still very small, so we will have to try to organize young people in different ways. However, young people have specific needs: For example, some forms of mutual help may not yet play the same role for young people as for older workers, because they are not confronted to the same extent with the state bureaucracy or are less concerned about it. Young people, on the other hand, can be much more easily organized through culture, sport or mutual tutoring. In our mass work we must therefore always reflect the specific situation of young people. We must also give more concrete thought to mass organizations for pupils and students.

Furthermore, we will deal with the question to what extent the foundation of a Communist Youth

Association is necessary in order to prepare the young workers for work in the Communist Party at an early stage.

## **Comprehensive mass work gets us into the workplaces**

From a strategic point of view, our goal is to achieve a presence in the workplaces through all-round organization. We must not look at workplaces and workers in isolation from other areas of life. For the class struggle and especially in its intensified phase, the workplaces play a special role because there the masses of the workers are concentrated and their collective actions can both effectively harm the class enemy and be big steps in the common experience. On the other hand, this special importance of the workplaces must not lead to an economicist view that underestimates the political character of the class struggle and that focuses on workplace struggles without regard to the situation and the political goal. In many cases, this can hardly lead to much more than trade unionist work.

## **Companies and trade unions**

The DGB unions are today the largest mass organizations of the working class in Germany. They are organizationally independent and democratically structured in principle, even though democracy is often undermined by the social democratic and other bourgeois forces.

However, many ways and methods are used to enforce “social partnership”, cooperation with capital, and thus the interest of capital. They describe themselves as unified trade unions, in which workers of all political directions are to be united, but they are in fact social democratic directional trade unions, in their history communists were regularly excluded. The DGB trade unions are also closely linked to the state and to corporations through alliances and personnel overlaps. Nevertheless, it is essential that we develop options for action within trade unions by using, strengthening and insist on respecting formal democratic structures. This will enable us to attract and activate more members to trade unions and to thwart the implementation of social partnership. Our goal must be to make the unions into truly unified unions based on class struggle and thus an important driving force for the revolution.

As communists, we are simultaneously striving for the politicization of the trade union movement and the workers organized there. The trade unions must not confine themselves to the narrow framework of workplace issues, but must see themselves as a comprehensive organization of the working class for its interests, which must in principle take a class-oriented position on all issues affecting the class. In

principle, this politicization takes place no differently than in other forms of mass work. Moreover, it must neither be put off for a long time, e.g. with reference to the lack of consciousness, nor limited to economic questions, nor must it overshoot the mark and lose the workers in the process.

The concept of unified trade unions, however, not only refers to the unity of different ideological and political currents, but also to the dimension of bringing together all workers from the most diverse sectors and branches in a single overall organization. The centralization of the trade unions is thus an important principle of the trade union movement, because it counteracts the division of the working class into occupations, branches, etc. Syndicalist ideas, which assume that independent trade unions are the right form of organization, must be fought against, because they stand in the way of the unification of the class struggle. We must examine more closely what form of centralization currently prevails in the DGB unions and how and whether centralization can be achieved on the basis of the unified revolutionary class struggle. In addition, we must analyze to what extent the trade unions are organizationally and politically connected with social democratic organizations (especially with the SPD, but also with the Left Party). Undoubtedly, the majority of secretaries and members are under the ideological influence of social democracy.

The same principles of mass work as listed below – activity, independence, solidarity – apply to the struggle in the trade unions. Partly these principles are also part of the statutes of the trade unions, which results from their history. It is important to us that they are also implemented and that we find forms with which our colleagues can implement them.

## **Mass work and the question of the social alliance**

What is the relationship between mass work and the revolutionary strategy of the Communist Party?

The councils represent the historically grown form of the organs of the workers' power and therefore also of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Councils are organizations in which people meet and organize counter-power by collectively deciding, administering and organizing social affairs. In socialism they are decisive structures of the socialist state. The basis of the councils is the social alliance of the various social classes under the leadership of the working class. This alliance, however, must be established beforehand, under capitalist conditions in struggle, by bringing together the various struggles, including different strata. This leads to many open questions: What kind of councils make sense? Which people organize themselves through the councils? How do we get from mass organizations to council structures? What historical experiences have we had with councils?

One task of our class analysis must be to clarify which parts of the working class and the other parts of the people we reach with our mass work and which not yet. How do we bring these different social strata together under the banner of the working class? To what extent can councils be formed before a revolutionary situation? At the present time we can state that we must always consider and develop mass work from the point of view and with the claim of uniting the struggles.

## **Principles of mass work**

We can name three basic principles of mass work, which generally apply to all areas of mass work and serve as the basic orientation of our practice:

a) Activity

b) Independence

c) class solidarity

## **Activity**

The activity and self-activity of the people in the mass organizations is the most important principle and condition for the realization of the other two principles.

Activity must relate to all aspects of organization: On practical-structural questions, on social communication between people, on all political questions and on organizational management. The activity ranges from the cleaning service to the maintenance of the premises, from mutual care and openness, to the ability to talk about all problems, to the discussion of political issues and the management and expansion of structures.

The forms of organization must be developed in such a way that this principle is not only a formal principle, but is real and can be experienced in practice. This can be achieved, for example, through a joint plenary session designed in such a way that workers, in particular, who are often not used to being asked, can express themselves and realize that it matters whether or not they do so.

The basis of mass organizations can only be democracy. Everything must be discussed, thought through and decided from below. At the same time, collectively adopted decisions apply to everyone. The mass organizations should also organize themselves according to the principle of democratic centralism: Free discussion, democratic decision-making and election of possible leaders from the bottom up, but at the same time binding decisions. Of course, this principle does not apply with the same severity and discipline as in a Communist Party.

Democratic structures also mean that we must consciously break with every form of representation that encourages passivity among the working class. This is true in the structures we have developed, where we must above all ensure that as many people as possible take on a task and that we do not do everything ourselves. But it also applies to existing mass organizations in which we are active. In the trade unions, such forms of representation that encourage passivity are particularly widespread and institutionally entrenched. We must recognize this with particular attention and, wherever possible, push it back by activating and involving our colleagues.

The principle of activity also applies particularly to ourselves: we must be the most industrious in mass work. We must be the first to take on tasks without taking everything from us and doing it ourselves. The motto is to take responsibility without incapacitating ourselves. We make sure that we do not live out our lead without reflection, for example in education. For example, we take a back seat when writing the newspaper, but not when sweeping the common premises. It is not always central that everything should be done quickly and as perfectly as possible, so it is a false temptation to let students professionalize work and thus leave the workers out in the cold.

To be exemplary in questions of activity also means to always be reliable and to complete tasks as well as possible.

## **Independence**

A central characteristic of mass organizations is their autonomy and independence. Independent has two meanings: independent in order to be able to do something – self-activity – and independent in the sense

of independence from something else.

Independence in the sense of self-activity means: we do it ourselves, not everything is already there. We gain our own experience in planning, organizing and implementing. As described above, the revolution can only be the work of the working class, self-activity and activity is therefore an important element of mass work, which we have to consider and implement very concretely. As a member of a workers' council, we must avoid colleagues thinking "he'll do it for me". When helping each other, if we have more knowledge than others, we must make sure that we do not fill out all the applications ourselves or sort the papers, because it is quicker, or if we are dealing with a wall newspaper in the company, not to write the articles in the newspaper ourselves, because we are used to it and can write better anyway.

Independent in the sense of independence from the state and all kinds of civic institutions means above all financial and material independence. This is a point that is not easy to communicate in practice, since not all forms in which the class enemy appears (whether as neighborhood management, cultural office, foundation, etc.) are directly recognized as such by the workers and there is not sufficient awareness of why it should be a problem to get money from the city if one can finance the premises with it.

The core issue of independence is financial and in the broad sense material independence. Money, but also premises, technical means and favorable business relations are, however, means to secure the influence of the state on associations, trade unions or other forms of organization. Permanent larger donations from companies or individuals are also a gateway to adaptation to foreign interests. Donations without any conditions can be useful. But three active and conscious workers are worth much more than three generous donors. The orientation must be: We can do it ourselves! Through the participation of many people in the organization, one can achieve great potential in voluntary work and also financial participation.

The principle of independence and autonomy also applies to the Communist Organisation/Party. This is the condition for the openness of the mass organization and at the same time for the vanguard role of the party. In principle, the functions of the organizations are different and therefore they cannot be identical, even if they must have an organic connection and in some respects represent a unity in the struggle. This unity, however, cannot be decreed from above, but must develop organically through the insight of the struggling workers. Decisions must be made collectively and democratically in the mass organizations, with the votes of the participating communists being no more and no less valid than those of all others. We conduct the struggle on the ground as full members of the mass organization by trying to convince other members of our positions. The ideological struggle, which must be conducted everywhere, must take the form of open discussion, address all issues, identify all contradictions. Communists cannot sit back and refer to party congress decisions and thus supposedly have answered questions. Our goal is that the Communist Organization/Party and its program is as widespread as possible, that its goals are hegemonic in the workers movement, that opportunist and reformist forces are pushed back. In mass organizations



we lead the ideological struggle as members of the KO/KP, as communists, but not as delegated deputies, but as active and vanguard parts of the mass organization. In concrete terms this also means that we may lose this struggle, that we may lose structures of mass organization built by us when other political forces gain the upper hand in it. It is therefore all the more important that we position ourselves as well as possible and as communists deal systematically with the questions of mass work.

This does not mean, however, that we in the Communist Organization do not reflect on what is done in the mass organizations and what is the role of comrades in the mass organizations. But the decision is made in the mass organization. There we want autonomy and openness of the debate – on the one hand so that as many workers as possible take part in the debate and present their point of view, but also so that we can lead these discussions and are not excluded. We reject the idea of fiddling around – everything must be named openly and transparently. Nevertheless, the highest discipline for our comrades is that of the Communist Organisation/Party. Only the Communist Party has the ability to see through the circumstances and to have a better overview of the overall situation.

So on the one hand there is a necessary clear organizational separation between the party and mass organizations. On the other hand, they are not hermetically sealed off from each other. We must not think them apart from each other and separate them from each other. It is a mistake to separate the Communist Organization/Communist Party from the workers out of fear or insecurity, to talk to them much later about communist standpoints and thereby prevent the raising of their consciousness.

The principle of financial independence of the mass organizations also applies completely to the Communist Organization or Party. It is fatal when a relationship of dependence develops between the mass organizations and the Communist Party. For this leads to the mass organization being perceived as an appendage of the communists and thus uniting fewer workers in itself. We must therefore take care not to use the financial means of the KO or the party at any time out of pragmatism, e.g. to enable the mass organization to make a purchase that would otherwise not be possible.

The working class must be able to recognize and classify the various political forces and their proposals for solutions. It must become clear who is proposing which path, who is developing which organization and what this means for the goal of the working class. This must be evident in concrete disputes. Because for the working class the difference between the forces that rely on sham solutions and illusions and the Communist Party/Organization must be visible, alliances with other organizations are problematic and a participation must therefore be decided with special responsibility towards the concrete demands of the class struggle and on the basis of a careful analysis of these forces. This means that at the level of mass organizations we must also work towards rejecting alliances with organizations that spread bourgeois and counterrevolutionary influences among the masses.

## **Solidarity**

Solidarity is the (conscious or unconscious) expression that man is a social being and cannot exist without other people. However, we are not interested in just any kind of solidarity, but, since we live in a capitalist class society, in class solidarity. Class solidarity is always based on the understanding that one belongs to a class and has common interests with it. So we strive for the solidarity of all workers, the workers of every nationality, religion, gender and social situation, in order to overcome the division of the class. The existing division of the class along all imaginable lines of division is one of the most important means of the ruling class to secure its rule. Only by creating opportunities to get to know and trust one another can such prejudices be overcome and an attitude of solidarity be built.

We should avoid two mistakes when dealing with unsolidaristic behavior: Overemphasized political correctness and exaggerated indignation in the wrong place prevent getting to know each other and build trust, they distract and are thus an expression of false intolerance. On the other hand, too much tolerance, e.g. towards targeted racist agitation, can also become a problem and an expression of opportunistic conflict avoidance. In summary one can say that it is also our task to find such a way of dealing with racism and misogyny within the labor movement, which is enlightening and does not lead directly into sectarianism through simple exclusions. Of course there is also misogyny in the working class, but we do not change this by pushing our class brothers out, but only by struggling against it together.

## **The Role of the Communists in Mass Work**

### **The Relationship of the Communist Organization/Party to the Mass Organizations**

We assume that at the moment there is no organized force in Germany that is pushing the organization of the working class to overthrow the bourgeoisie. So there is no Communist Party that can prove itself in practice as the vanguard of the working class. In order to lead and win the struggle against capitalism, the working class does not only need mass organizations. It also needs the Communist Party, which can lead the class struggle as the bearer of the scientific worldview and organized core of the most advanced people of the working class.

The most important difference between mass organizations and the Communist Organization is that the

Communist Organization is the basis for the construction of the Communist party, but the Communist party is the most highly developed form of the working class organization. It has the overall view for the class struggle of the working class, it unites the different demands of the class struggle – economic, political and ideological. It includes the cadres that are most disciplined and trained and can lead the struggle. The revolutionaries who pursue the common political goal are organized in it. It is therefore not a mass organization, even if it may include mass membership, in the sense of many people. Mass organizations in the sense meant here, on the other hand, are organizations that unite workers and want to reach all workers – regardless of their political convictions, as long as they are willing to stand up for their interests with their class brothers.

The Communist Party we want to build is the revolutionary party of the working class. This means that it can best organize and lead the class and, of course, should consist to a large extent of workers, especially in the leadership. This does not mean, however, that members of other strata cannot be members and cannot play an important role. Our mission is the political struggle of the class and to gather all forces that lead or support it.

The Communist Organization/Party is generally the prerequisite for the existence of independent mass organizations. Without the conscious, political power there are no organizations with which the workers can develop their struggle. Also historically we can see that the essential impulses for the creation of trade unions and other forms of organizing the workers usually came from revolutionary forces. So it is wrong to assume that the right forms will automatically emerge from the development of struggles or that an upswing of struggles must first take place for the communists to be able to take them up and become effective. We can and must already now develop forms of organizing the working class in order to be prepared for all possible social developments, for ups and downs of the struggles. Our goal is the conscious, structured and planned leadership of the struggle of the working class.

So we are not only a silent observing part of the mass work, but we actively and creatively participate in these projects. We observe the workers and discuss with them. We develop assessments of the people around us and promote our organization. The capable and interested will then become supporters, candidates and later members. Many of our future cadres should be recruited and developed from the mass work.

The ways in which we bind people from mass work closer to the KO will be further developed with the development of our mass work. We want the approach of people to our organization to be an organized process rather than a random one. The mass organizations, for example, will stand in social confrontations, in concrete struggles – and in these struggles we as the KO must make proposals for further action. We can also raise the awareness of the workers through training courses for the mass organizations (worker training courses, lectures, discussion evenings etc.) and introduce the most conscious among them to our goals through extra training courses. An important point is the mediation of historical experiences.

We are not perfect cadres and do not appear as such. We are normal people who also talk about their problems, we are people with rough edges who reflect about it and strive to become better. This does not mean that we can let ourselves go and lose sight of the fact that as communists we have to meet certain requirements of the organization. We also criticize and self-criticize within the mass organizations – not as a formal item on the agenda, where everyone says when they came too late. Criticism and self-criticism means dealing openly and honestly with shortcomings both of the organization and of one's own activity and personality and should be part of all our activities. Honesty, sincerity and authenticity are the keys to success when it comes to getting in touch with the working class. If we pretend, it will be realized by others and hinder the building of trust.

## **Bringing mass organizations together**

We strive for the direct interlocking of the various forms of mass work, but we do not force them artificially. They should grow together organically. It must currently be a growing together over individuals, not over organizations. In a later, developed stage, it will be necessary to develop nationwide associations of our mass work in order to bring the class together as a whole. Each of us and also the people we organize in mass work should represent the principles of activity, independence and solidarity and spread them wherever they have access. We do not create a new scene of like-minded people, we want to grow into all spheres of society. This means that it is quite possible and right for the masses to be active in several mass organizations – e.g. in workers' sports and in the neighborhood meeting, in the trade union and in mutual help. Thus, there will be a lively exchange between the mass organizations by the organized individuals. This exchange can lead to the connection and mutual support of struggles.

Organizing along economic, social and cultural lines is itself a political question. This does not exclude offers like open meetings against war, for solidarity with Palestine or a union for anti-fascist self-protection. This, too, can be mass work, where the principles of democracy and independence should not be suspended. Whether and when such direct offers make sense to political questions is a concrete practical question, which must be answered concretely. On the whole, we must gather further experience in order to be able to better assess the usefulness of such forms of mass work.

## **Agitation and Propaganda**

Agitation and propaganda are closely related and must not be artificially separated. Neither the one nor the other is allowed to get a one-sided overweight. With propaganda we spread the knowledge of scientific socialism, apply it to concrete circumstances and their development and justify the necessity of socialism.

Propaganda shows the overall context, it is clear and to the point. Propaganda is relentless, scientific enlightenment about the circumstances. Agitation, on the other hand, tries to mobilize the masses by means of generally known social developments and to show the necessity of socialism only in general, without giving a comprehensive reason for it. Agitation thus relies more on scandalization, on fomenting anger and hatred for the circumstances. Agitation is aimed at broader sections of the working class because certain insights into social conditions are already required in order to understand communist propaganda. Propaganda is therefore not only directed at intellectuals. Both our agitation and our propaganda are directed at the working class.

Agitation leads to action by organizing and mobilizing the masses with the urgent goal of recognizing and leading the class struggle. The power of agitation lies in the fact that it openly and directly denounces the circumstances and calls a spade a spade. It is based on a systematic study of the experiences of the masses and the background of social conditions.

We also develop agitation as the Communist Organization/Party (not only through the mass organizations, that is) and use for it the collected experiences and our structures of the mass organizations. But we also operate them at any time in everyday life, as individual communists. Agitation also serves us as a school and a touchstone for our ability to get in touch with the class. We sharpen our arguments, learn about the consciousness of the working class and how and at which points it can be won for us. Agitation is never preaching. Agitation is scandalization and activation, daily and in all areas of social life. A successful agitation therefore requires a great closeness to the working class: Only when I know what is happening to the workers in my neighborhood will I be able to successfully discuss the fundamental contradiction of capitalism and the need to overturn these conditions without falling into revolutionary phrases with which one is more likely to lose one's interlocutors.

**Organizing the working class for class struggle and socialist revolution is a huge task for all of us. We are only at the very beginning and it may be difficult to imagine where this path will lead us in the years and decades to come. At the same time we know that there is simply no alternative - because capitalism has nothing to offer us and nobody else will get rid of this barbaric system for us. We need everyone for this challenge. Let us rebuild the workers' movement and the Communist Party!**

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## We condemn the Turkish invasion of Syria!

The Turkish government invades Northern Syria. We strongly condemn this aggression against the territorial sovereignty of Syria! This attack is a threat to the people of the region and can cost many human lives. Turkey is the second largest military force in NATO in terms of ground forces, directly after the USA, and has a vast arsenal of military equipment.

Since the beginning of the imperialist war against Syria, Turkey has been in a front position against the government of Bashar Al-Assad, side by side with the USA, Israel, Saudi Arabia, as well as France, Britain and Germany. Turkey supported the militias that were supposed to plunge the country into chaos and destabilize it. All of them together had resolved to overthrow Assad and bring about a regime change. By the time Russia entered the conflict at the latest, it was clear that direct military intervention entailed a high military risk. This insight quickly led to a change in tactics: the fight against the so-called Islamic State (IS) was used as a ticket for longer intervention by the anti-Assad coalition.

However, the regional interests of the Turkish government were increasingly at odds with the interests of the anti-Assad coalition. On the one hand, the cooperation of the USA with the Kurdish armed groups YPG/YPJ and later the SDF (Syrian Democratic Forces), which are close to the PKK and could bring a large area under its control on its southern border, was a thorn in the side of the Turkish government. On the other hand, Turkey is striving for more autonomy than regional power and does not want the USA to dictate so much to it.

The invasion of northern Syria is thus in continuity with the foreign policy of the Turkish AKP government, which in recent years has been characterized by increasing aggressiveness and belligerence towards neighbouring countries and openly sought to expand Turkey's influence by abolishing existing borders and occupying foreign territories. Already at the beginning of last year the Turkish army marched into Afrin ("Operation Olive Branch") and occupied the city. Turkish politicians also repeatedly demanded an occupation of Greek islands in the Aegean Sea by the Turkish army. In all this, Turkey is not simply a puppet of more powerful imperialist countries, but also pursues its own interests and goals.

The

Kurdish armed organisations, for their part, have exploited the aggressive war against Syria and brought the north and east of Syria under their military control. In the course of the war they strengthened their cooperation with US imperialism and gave the interventionist powers in the north-east of the country a safe place to build military bases. For years the SDF militias led by the YPG have been regarded as the closest allies of the USA in Syria. This opportunist and pro-imperialist policy of the Kurdish organizations cannot be justified by anything. In view of the USA's withdrawal of support and Turkey's military offensive, the Kurds are now asking Assad for help.

Even

the YPG/YPJ and SDF, which are regarded as progressive forces by many leftists, also by some communists, do not represent the interests of the working class and the peoples of the region. On the contrary, they participated in the fragmentation of the country by creating a de facto separate state in Northern and Eastern Syria. While we do not support these organisations, our solidarity in the current difficult situation is, of course, still with the Kurdish population of Northern Syria and the other peoples of the region who have become victims of Turkish aggression. Resistance to this aggression is fundamentally legitimate.

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USA, which apparently can no longer win the war in Syria against the coalition Russia-Iran-Syria, is looking for a new tactic for asserting its own interests in the region. Due to their military and financial support of the Kurdish armed organizations, their relationship with NATO partner Turkey is at the worst level. The withdrawal of their soldiers from the north and their transfer to the Iraqi-Syrian border now seems to be a concession to Turkey.

On

the other hand, US President Donald Trump has clearly criticised the Turkish invasion. It is therefore not yet clear whether it was also a consideration behind the US troop withdrawal to give Turkey a free hand, or whether Turkey is merely exploiting the vacuum created by the withdrawal without having agreed its own actions with the USA.

Meanwhile, the Russian government is more or less neutral and is merely calling on Turkey to be prudent. Obviously the weakening of the US-SDF coalition is in the interests of the supporters of the Syrian government, including Russia, and one way of persuading Turkey to withdraw after such a military intervention. Iran insists on the territorial sovereignty of Syria and is meanwhile demonstrating its potential with its own military manoeuvres on the Iranian-Turkish border.

It is obvious: the whole region of West Asia is threatened by a source of fire in the tug-of-war of imperialist interests. And it is also clear that the population in the various countries will once again bleed through this dirty capitalist war over the division of the region.

The working class of Turkey, Syria, Iraq and Iran and all other countries in West Asia have nothing to gain in this war but will pay for it with their blood. The working class should not accept to be instrumentalised by the aggressive policies of the Turkish government. And even if it is right to defend the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Syria, but also of the other countries of the region, against any aggression, it does not mean to identify with the ruling class of one's own country. The struggle of the working class for the defence of its own country, against foreign aggressors, must in the end also be led for the power in its own country, against the exploiters and the ruling class, for the power of the working class and for socialism.

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## Solidarität mit der Kommunistischen Partei Polens (KPP)! | Solidarity with the Communist



# Party of Poland (KPP)!

Der Text als [pdf](#)

Die

Regierung Polens bereitet bereits seit längerer Zeit ein Verbot der Kommunistischen Partei Polens (KPP) und allgemein kommunistischer Aktivitäten in Polen vor. Seit Jahren werden immer wieder Gerichtsverfahren gegen Mitglieder der KPP und ihre Zeitung Brzask geführt, obwohl es sich bisher um eine legale Partei und Zeitung handelt. In einem neuen geplanten Gesetz des polnischen Parlaments wird nun ein weiteres Mal der Kommunismus mit dem Faschismus gleichgesetzt und kommunistische Aktivitäten sollen allgemein kriminalisiert werden.

All

das passiert vor dem Hintergrund einer immer weiter verschärften antikommunistischen Rhetorik der Regierung und bürgerlichen Parteien in Polen und immer dreisterer Geschichtsfälschung. Die Erinnerung an die sozialen, ökonomischen und politischen Errungenschaften des Sozialismus in der Volksrepublik Polen, die vor allem ältere Polen weiterhin pflegen, soll ausgelöscht werden. Die jüngeren Generationen sollen mit der Lüge aufwachsen, das sozialistische Polen sei ein Terrorregime gewesen, das die Arbeiterklasse unterdrückte. Die Geschichtsfälschung polnischer und anderer Nationalisten und Faschisten, liberaler Antikommunisten sowie der Katholischen Kirche ist offizielle Staatsdoktrin. Wer die Mitverantwortung polnischer Kollaborateure für den Holocaust erwähnt, also eine erwiesene und gut dokumentierte historische Tatsache, wird inzwischen mit mehreren Jahren Gefängnis bestraft. Obwohl während des Zweiten Weltkriegs Millionen polnische Juden und nicht-jüdische Polen von den deutschen Faschisten ermordet wurden, obwohl es die Rote Armee war, deren Soldaten Seite an Seite mit polnischen Kommunisten und Antifaschisten unter unbeschreiblichen Opfern Polen vom Faschismus befreite, werden Faschisten im heutigen Polen hofiert, während die Kommunisten verfolgt werden.

Die

Europäische Union unterstützt nach Kräften die Bemühungen

reaktionärer Regierungen in Osteuropa und anderswo, kommunistische Organisationen, Aktivitäten und Symbole zu kriminalisieren. Damit zeigt sie, dass sie alles andere als ein „demokratisches Friedensprojekt ist“, sondern ein Instrument der Konzerne gegen die Völker Europas. Dass der Faschismus nichts anderes ist als die hässlichste Fratze des Kapitalismus, soll verschleiert werden, indem die antiwissenschaftliche und antidemokratische Theorie des „Totalitarismus“ oder der „zwei Extreme“ den Kommunismus mit dem Faschismus, oder Stalin mit Hitler auf eine Stufe stellt.

Der

Antikommunismus ist eine verbrecherische Idee, in deren Namen im 20. Jahrhundert Millionen Menschen ermordet wurden und bis heute erkämpfte demokratische Rechte abgebaut werden. Die Verfolgung unserer polnischen Genossen zeigt ein weiteres Mal, dass die bürgerliche „Demokratie“ nur eine Fassade für die Herrschaft des Kapitals ist und die Rechte von Gegnern des Kapitalismus sofort eingeschränkt werden können, wenn es der herrschenden Klasse beliebt.

Wir

fordern ein sofortiges Ende der antikommunistischen Verfolgungen in Polen und eine Abschaffung aller antikommunistischen Gesetze!

Solidarität mit den Genossinnen und Genossen der Kommunistischen Partei Polens!

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The

Polish government has been long preparing a ban on the Communist Party of Poland (KPP) and of communist activity in general. Time and time again both members of the KPP and their newspaper Brzask have been brought to court under frivolous pretenses, regardless of the legal status of their party and publications. A new law from the Polish parliament seeks to further equate communism with fascism, and to further criminalize communist activity.

This

all against the backdrop of ever-increasing anti-communist rhetoric from the government and bourgeois parties of Poland, and ever more audacious falsifications of Polish history. Memories of the social, economic and political achievements of socialism in the Polish People's Republic, still maintained in the memories of older Polish generations, are being actively erased. Younger generations are being raised with the lie that socialist Poland was a terror regime, one that oppressed the working class. The historical revisionism of Polish (and other) nationalists and fascists, liberal anti-communists and the catholic church is state doctrine. Those who mention the responsibility of Polish collaborators in the Holocaust - a proven and well documented historical fact - are met with years of jail time. Although millions of Polish Jews and other Poles were murdered by German fascists during the second world war, and although it was the Red Army, whose soldiers stood side by side with Polish communists and anti-fascists, making great sacrifices to free Poland from fascism, today it is the fascists that are courted by the Polish government, while communists are persecuted.

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European Union strongly supports the reactionary governments in Eastern Europe and elsewhere in their attempts to criminalize communist organizations, activities, and symbols. This shows that the EU is not close to being the "democratic peace project" that it claims to be, but rather that it is an instrument of corporations against the peoples of Europe. That fascism is nothing other than the ugliest face of capitalism is to be concealed with unscientific, undemocratic theories of "totalitarianism" or of the "two extremes" of communism and fascism, or through putting Stalin and Hitler on par with one another.

Anti-communism

is a criminal concept, in whose name millions of people were murdered in the 20<sup>th</sup>

century, and today more and more hard-fought democratic rights are destroyed. The persecution of our Polish comrades once again shows that the bourgeois "democracy" is only a façade for the rule of capital, and that the rights of those struggling against capitalism can always be stripped away at the discretion of the ruling class. We demand an immediate end to anti-communist persecution in Poland, and the abolishment of all anti-communist legislation!

Solidarity

with the comrades of the Communist Party of Poland!

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## Interview with the Communist Organization (KO), Germany

*Auf dem Blog "Pelo Anti-Imperialismo" (Für den Antiimperialismus) wurde ein Interview mit der Kommunistischen Organisation auf Englisch veröffentlicht. Wir dokumentieren das Interview an dieser Stelle:*

The Blog "Pelo Anti-Imperialismo" (For Anti-Imperialism) published an [interview with the Communist Organization \(KO\)](#) from Germany. We document the whole interview:

Questions of Pelo Anti-Imperialismo Blog (PAI) and answers of Kommunistische Organisation (KO).

**1 - The formation of the Communist Organization (Kommunistische Organisation, KO) took place quite recently, in June 2018. Why did you deem it necessary to form a new communist organization? And why did you choose not to form a communist party?**

Many of our members have been members of the German Communist Party (DKP) and its youth organization SDAJ until a minority fraction of both organizations decided to split in 2017. Together with other communists they decided to form the Communist Organization in June 2018. Prior to this, we have tried to develop a discussion within the DKP and SDAJ about several crucial issues concerning the rebuilding of the communist movement and the labor movement in Germany. We have advanced our critique of the strategy of "anti-monopoly democracy", which has been the strategy of the DKP since its foundation in 1968 and poses the necessity of an intermediate stage in the struggle for socialism. We have stressed the importance of this debate, because we think that it is hugely relevant for our everyday struggle. We think that socialism has to be posed as the immediate goal of the communist party and we think

that historical experience has amply demonstrated that all the concepts about participation of communist parties in governments, while the bourgeoisie is still in power, are based on illusions and lead the working class to defeat. Experience also shows that slogans such as the “unity of the left” and particularly the collaboration of communists with social democracy in all its forms do not lead to a strengthening of the movement, but quite to the contrary they contribute to the disorientation of the struggle and to workers being entrapped in illusions.

But there were other issues as well: We believe that the communist party has to be organized according to the high requirements of class struggle. The complexity of the tasks that we face in our struggle for the reorganization of the working class movement in the workplaces and neighborhoods can be confronted successfully only by a disciplined and efficiently working organization of revolutionary cadres, with a high level of political consciousness, in direct contact with the working class and popular masses. Therefore, the communist party has to be directed towards the goal of winning, organizing and educating the most advanced sections of the working class and other popular strata. This is incompatible with the idea that due to the weakness of the movement, we have to accept everyone into the lines of the party and with the generally little attention that is given to the ideological-political formation of communist cadres by most Marxist groups in Germany.

So, we tried to advance these and other issues within the DKP and SDAJ for years. We assessed, however, that most members and the leadership of both organizations were not truly interested in this debate. Therefore, the chances to achieve a correlation of forces that would allow the communist movement to recover from its political, ideological and organizational crisis within the existing organizations were practically zero. This is why forming a new organization was without alternatives.

Our new organization, KO, is working both to start a clarification process for the scientific discussion about all the controversial issues that the communist movement faces, and to start the reorganization of communist work in the working class on a systematic, scientific base. To put it in other words: We strive to reunite scientific socialism with the labor movement.

At this moment we believe that the conditions for the formation of a communist party in Germany are still not there. Of course, we could have decided to call ourselves a communist party from the beginning, but then we would have used the label "communist party" without the meaning that we attach to it. In order to write the program of a communist party, a substantial degree of ideological unity, based on the application of Marxism-Leninism to the current situation is needed. Many questions have to be addressed and carefully studied first. And you cannot call yourself a communist party if you do not at least have established the foundation of your mass work, of your political intervention within the working class. At the same time, of course, we state very clearly that the foundation of KO serves the preparation of the conditions for the future foundation of a party. This is not the task of today, but we hope and we think that it will be possible in a few years from now.

**2 - You talk about the need for a clarification process. Could you explain what you mean by that?**

According to our analysis, the crisis of the international communist movement (ICM) persists for some decades now and it does so, because some fundamental political and ideological questions are not properly addressed. Illusionary slogans and strategic orientations, such as the participation of communists in bourgeois governments, the idea of "broad alliances" with bourgeois and opportunist political forces, the notion that Russia is an anti-imperialist state or that China is developing socialism. Those ideas undermine the credibility of communist parties, their ability to intervene in the working class and to propose solutions for workers' problems. This is why for us, the question of ideological clarification is of the utmost importance. Even though our organization is partly the outcome of a split, we do seek unity among communists. But unity has to be based on common views about crucial issues, otherwise it stays a purely formal unity, the addition of separate forces in a common organizational framework, but not the formation of a truly coherent political force capable of focusing its resources on the reorganization of the labor movement.

Our clarification process is an open discussion process, where everyone is invited. We are not afraid to openly discuss our proposals and theses. We do not think that open discussion with other political forces will lead to the adoption of mistaken positions, but it will

rather force us to sharpen our own arguments and promote unity with those who are truly looking for answers.

So, when we say that it is an open discussion process, this is not to say that we don't have our own positions. Of course, it is not possible to build a strong organization without a common programmatic foundation. In our foundational congress, we have decided upon our Programmatic Theses

(<https://kommunistische.org/programmatische-thesen/programmatic-theses-of-the-communist-organization/>),

where both our positions and some important open questions for the clarification process are presented. So, for us, the clarification process is taking place under these premises and if someone wants to join the KO, obviously they have to agree to our Programmatic Theses first. But this does not mean that if you don't agree, you cannot participate in the clarification process.

The organizational underpinning of this process are seven working groups on big overarching themes: Scientific foundations; Political Economy of imperialism; revolutionary labor movement and the communist party; the state, fascism and social democracy; socialist society; class analysis; German imperialism. During the last months, those working groups have collected the many dozens of discussions and issues of dissent that exist within the communist, revolutionary and labor movement. We present those debates in a general form, we have collected literature and formulated questions that we will have to answer. The result is a huge collection of knowledge, which is both the foundation of the clarification process and the scientific apparatus that we have to develop. We have published this result on an online platform (<https://wiki.kommunistische.org>), where all the content is easily accessible and systematic discussion about it will be greatly facilitated. So, since our foundation in June 2018, we have already made big steps. We will continue to work in that direction.

### **3- Can you describe the situation of the working class in Germany?**

First of all, the living standard of the working class and the popular masses is still higher than in many other countries of the EU and most countries in the whole world. This is due to several factors:

On the one hand, the German bourgeoisie and its state were forced to raise living standard, salaries and workers' rights in the period of the existence of the German Democratic Republic (GDR), since the existence of a proletarian state posed an alternative to the capitalist barbarity that workers in the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) were living in.

On the other hand, the German capitalist state has a huge experience with the policy of "divide and rule": The use of extra-profits made it possible to pacify huge parts of the core industrial working class and to thereby weaken the labor movement. So there still exists a considerable working class aristocracy. Additionally, there is a part of the working class, mainly consisting of migrant workers and since the annexation of the GDR also of eastern German working class, who have had considerably worse living standards ever since.

After the annexation of the GDR and the predatory appropriation of its socialized property, the German bourgeoisie gained exclusive access to a whole new market and workforce. Also, there was no more need for to raise living standards of the working class, since the threat of the GDR was gone. The bourgeoisie started therefore a huge attack on working class rights and living standards. The reformation of the social security system in the beginning of the 21st century, known as the "Agenda 2010" and especially the "Hartz reforms", was a huge step forward in the pauperization of the working class and since then, every year there are more and more brutal attacks on the working class.

It would be too much to try to describe every single one of these attacks and it will be an important part of our clarification process to analyze and understand the exact situation of the working class in Germany today. To get a notion, let us exemplify the main splits within the working class in Germany:

The split between men and women: Germany has one of the highest gender inequalities compared with the other EU member states: The payment gap between men and women is around 21%.

The split between workers from the FRG and those from the former territories of the GDR: Wages are still considerably lower in the former territories of the GDR, so are living standards.

The split between migrant workers and German workers: The amount of



children of migrant workers, who are unable to reach the highest graduation in school or even university is considerably higher than children from German working class families.

The split between fulltime workers with stable work contracts and all kinds of flexible work, especially temporary work. With the undeniable support of the social democratic forces within the unions, the amount of so-called "atypical" workplaces increased tremendously. Right now, around 40% of the active workers are either in temporary work, part-time jobs or so-called "small-scale employment". This counts for all parts of the economy and even a huge amount of employees by the state.

Education, health care, wages, housing, food prices - everything is sometimes gradually, sometimes rapidly deteriorating. And the labor movement is way too weak, too fragmented and politically disoriented to defend the working class against the steady attacks of the bourgeoisie.

#### **4 - Given this situation of the working class, how strong is the labor movement in Germany? What is the correlation of forces inside the labor movement and what is the role of the DGB (German Trade Union Confederation)?**

As we describe in our programmatic theses, the labor movement in Germany has been on the defensive for several decades. The counter-revolution in the GDR destroyed not only the lives and hopes of millions, it also shattered the labor movement in the FRG. Hundreds of thousands left the unions, thousands left the DKP. But it would be wrong to simply attribute the weakness of the labor movement to the occurrence of the counter-revolution. We would rather say that the counter-revolution was a qualitative leap, but it was a result of a gradual weakening of the labor movement in the previous decades. The German Confederation of Trade Unions (DGB) considers its member unions to be so-called "unitary unions". They do not mean simply the fact that communists, social democrats and others are part of these unions and act within them. They are also convinced that the DGB was formed on a common agreement between communists and social-democracy based on the lesson the communists learned from their defeat by fascism. This is certainly not true. The DGB was right from its beginning a project of social democracy to counter the unification attempts of the labor movement made by the Communist Party of Germany (KPD) - the foundation of the FDGB in the Soviet occupation zone. Thus, the first executive board of the DGB was comprised solely of social democrats and even one fascist cadre.

Communists were never able to substantially challenge the correlation of forces within the unions after WWII. It will be a core task in the clarification process and a precondition for the successful reorganization of the labor movement in Germany to analyze and understand the reasons for this negative correlation of forces. As the labor movement in Germany is not separated from the rest of the world and we could observe similar developments in other countries, we suggest that the wrong directions in terms of strategy of the international communist movement is one main factor. Another crucial factor is the history of German unions and their long relationship with the capitalist state. Without understanding the exact structure and function of the unions in Germany, we won't be able to expose the role of social democracy and change the correlation of forces within the labor movement. And then, of course, the communist movement in Germany suffered a heavy blow by the brutal persecutions under fascism. After World War II, it was severely weakened and could not restore its previous influence in the unions.

On the other hand, the dominance of social democracy within the labor movement and its corrupt behavior of class collaboration led to the alienation of many workers from trade unionism as such. Nowadays only around 1/6 of the workers in Germany are organized in unions. It is obvious, that especially migrant workers, "flexible" workers and unemployed workers are not part of the unions and do not feel themselves represented by them.

Altogether we can state that the working class in Germany, especially in Western Germany has lost the memory of its heroic tradition. No independent working class organizations currently exist, be it in culture, sports or the neighborhood. That means, a lot of workers are either part of petit-bourgeois or state run sports clubs, cultural organizations and so on or they have no social surroundings at all except for their families.

## **5 - What is your practical approach to organizing the working class?**

We are trying to develop a mass work through our local base organizations, the focus of which is the working class. We think that the task of communists is to organize the working class in the

workplaces, but not only there. Workers do not have only economic needs, but also social and cultural ones, for instance. They do not just work somewhere, but they also live somewhere. Their problems are concentrated not only in workplaces, but also in working class neighborhoods.

Departing from the experience that it is very hard to build cells in the factories "from the outside", without already having one or several comrades that work there, we do not focus all our time and energy on work in workplaces and trade unions. Those comrades that have the possibility to do political work in their workplaces should do this, of course. We are collectively gathering and evaluating their experience and will in the future develop a coherent approach towards the problem of workplace organization, as well as trade unions and the German system of workers' representation. Undoubtedly the organization of the working class at the workplaces is strategically the most important task in the class struggle.

At the same time, we are developing mass work in working class neighborhoods, where access for us is often easier than in workplaces. This mass work can take many forms, according to the needs of the people that we are trying to organize: It can take the form of workers' sports clubs, cultural activities, mutual help and counseling on the problems of the working class, protests against high rents, initiatives in solidarity with Palestine or against racism and so on.

The most important principles for this kind of work are that it has to follow a consistent line of defending working class interests against capital and it has to be completely independent and democratic. This point is very crucial: We want the working class to organize itself and to become active on its own behalf. The organizations that are formed in this struggle should be independent from the state, both politically and financially, and from the bourgeois parties and institutions. But they should also be independent from us! We do not want pseudo-mass organizations that are only camouflaged transmission belts of the communist party or in our case the KO. Of course, since there are not many such independent mass organizations, it is often our task to initiate them. But since the goal is to organize and activate as many working class people as possible, they have to be truly democratic. We are taking part there as communists and we generally do not hide our political views and goals, although of course there can be cases where we have to proceed with caution, such as in the trade unions. But we do not try to impose our goals with administrative means. We accept the possibility that a democratic decision can be taken in those mass organizations that we think is wrong. This also reflects our view that

in the proletarian revolution, it will be the working class that's taking power, not the communist party. Of course, without the leading role of the party in all class struggles, revolution will not be possible. But this is a different matter.

According to the Leninist understanding of the vanguard role of communists, we try to achieve an anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist line of struggle in all mass organizations and fronts of struggle, but we want to achieve this through our collective experience, our scientific approach to all problems of the working class and the leading role of our cadres in practice.

This also means that our approach to political alliances is quite different to the approach of virtually all other political groups in Germany. We are normally not trying to build alliances with other organizations. In fact, we view this understanding of political alliance as problematic. The notion that the communist movement will gain strength by simply numerically adding the forces of different groups is quite wrong. As noted above, we are not opposed to unity, quite the contrary. But strength is built from ideological clarity and a correct approach to mass work. We also oppose the notion that alliances between different political forces should be built based on the least common denominator. We cannot, for example, form an alliance with the "Left party" in Germany, simply based on the fact that they claim to be against war. Because, if we look at their role just a little more closely, we will see that their rejection of war is shallow and unprincipled, while they support the imperialist European Union and even refuse to take a clear position on NATO. Doing so would prevent us from exposing their role, because it would endanger our alliance with them. This is why this policy of alliances is in practice opposed to the communists' essential task of telling the truth to the people

So, to sum up, we do have a policy of alliances, but they are alliances that are built by the working people from below, not by the leaderships of political parties and groups from above. We could only briefly outline our approach here, but these issues will be the main focus of our next nationwide congress in July.

## **6 - How important is proletarian internationalism for KO?**

The communist movement has always been an international movement. It cannot exist in any other way. We reject the idea that due to national peculiarities the communists of every country have to find their own way. Of course, it is wrong to just copy the positions of other parties, without taking into account the situation in your own country. But we think that imperialism is a global system and the working class has the same enemy everywhere. This makes the situations in different countries comparable. Therefore, the communist parties should not only strive to coordinate their actions, but also discuss their respective views and analyses with the goal of achieving greater political-ideological unity. We think that the foundation of the Communist International in 1919 was a great achievement, whereas its dissolution in 1943, as well as the dissolution of the Cominform in 1956 were grave setbacks for the international communist movement, depriving it of the structure that was needed to develop a common strategical approach in the struggle with imperialism, thereby leaving the movement more vulnerable to the influence of opportunism. The reconstruction of a new communist international should be the long-term objective of the communists, no matter how far away this possibility seems now. In order to approach this goal, we believe that an open and honest debate between communist parties, based, of course, in international solidarity, is necessary today.

So, of course we stand in firm solidarity with working people and communists all around the globe. We try to analyze important developments in other countries and take position on them. In the last months, we have published our positions on issues like the war in Yemen, the Sino-American trade conflict, or current political development in Brazil, Israel/Palestine, France, Nicaragua and Venezuela. Our political line in all those issues is that we take into account the general interests of the working class and the necessities of the international confrontation with imperialism. We are using our texts to get in contact with people and provide a base for political discussion in different ways. We are not able yet to comment on all relevant developments on the national and international level, but this is our goal.

And obviously, when we will have formed a party, we will seek to build relations with the international communist movement.

But even now, we welcome the efforts that are taking place to reconstitute the international communist movement, for example through

the International Meetings of Communist and Workers' Parties (IMCWP) or the Meetings of European Communist Youth Organizations (MECYO).

**7 - The German SPD party is the heart of the world social-democracy, the Friedrich Ebert foundation carries the name of the butcher of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht and the destroyer of the German soviets, it was in the headquarters of that Ebert foundation that the Portuguese Socialist Party was founded and "funded" to destroy the revolutionary upsurge in Portugal in the 1970s. Yet the Trotskyists slander the Communist Party of Germany (KPD) by saying that the communists would have prevented the rise of the Nazis if they had allied with the SPD. What are your views on this question, both in historical terms as well as for the current situation?**

The anti-fascist struggle of the KPD is an important point of reference for us. Since the 7th International Congress of the Comintern in 1935 and especially since the end of the war in 1945, the communist movement in Germany (KPD and from 1968 on DKP as well) has adopted the narrative that the communists' "failure" to ally with social democracy during the Weimar Republic was a serious sectarian mistake that made it possible for fascism to take power. So, it is not only the Trotskyists who share this point of view. Social democracy itself, of course, is promoting a similar, but much more extreme narrative, claiming that the communists are the main culprits for the victory of Nazism, since they preferred to attack bourgeois democracy instead of fascism. Of course, this is a brazen lie, since the communists were the only political force of the Weimar Republic to fight fascism in a consistent way, whereas the SPD contributed in many ways to its rise.

We think that this issue is a complex one that deserves a lot more study - something we intend to do in the years to come. But it is quite clear even now that this historical account is flawed. The Weimar Republic was formed through the collaboration of the counter-revolutionary and pro-Monarchist SPD leadership with the most aggressive forces of reaction, the so-called Freikorps. Throughout the existence of the Weimar Republic, the SPD has done everything in its power, to prevent the working class from gaining consciousness and to create the illusion that socialism would eventually be introduced through parliamentary decisions. Social democracy supported savage repression against the labor movement, for example in May 1929, when the social democratic president of the police Karl Zörgiebel ordered the massacre of 33 workers in Berlin. The Red Front-Fighters Alliance (Roter Frontkämpferbund), an organization of revolutionary mass self-defense,

was banned by the social democratic minister of interior Carl Severing, whereas the fascist paramilitary Sturmabteilung (SA) was left untouched. And on the 1st of May 1933, already under the fascist dictatorship, when communists were already being sent to concentration camps, the social democratic trade union leadership participated in a common march with the Nazis. Even though the contribution of the SPD to the rise of fascism was more than obvious, the KPD advanced several proposals to create a common front of struggle against the Nazis. They were completely ignored by the SPD leadership. So, the rise of fascism was not caused by communist "sectarianism", but by the collusion of bourgeois and social democratic parties with fascism, by their consistent defense of capitalist exploitation. This is not to say that the communists have not committed tactical mistakes. If and to what extent they did, for example in their approach towards social democratic workers, has to be studied. But we cannot agree with the anti-communist propaganda version of history.

The relationship between fascism and social democracy has to be studied with respect to the current situation as well. We think that the rise of racist, nationalist and even openly fascist forces all over Europe, of which the rise of the Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) in Germany forms part, has to be understood against the background of the development of capitalism and bourgeois politics. Social democrats have been in the forefront of the strategies of imperialism. It was the SPD together with the Green Party that introduced the Agenda 2010 reforms, which pushed large parts of the working class deep into permanent poverty. It is the social democratic union leaderships that allowed capital to spread precarious working conditions and create a huge low-wage sector with millions of workers. It is Die Linke (Left Party), Germany's second social democratic party, which has participated in those attacks against the working class in several regional governments. All those actions have contributed to sections of the people turning towards the far-right, if only to protest against the established parties. Social democracy spreading illusions and then betraying them, and fascism exploiting the disillusionment and fears of the politically more backward sections of the petty bourgeoisie and working class are two sides of the same coin.

**8 - What are your views concerning the German Democratic Republic (GDR)? Does the DDR have any relevance for your political work?**

We say that the GDR was the greatest achievement of the German labor movement. It was a state, where the exploitation of man by man was abolished. The landlords, big industrialists and banks, the social pillars of the Nazi regime, had been expropriated and the main means of production were property of the people. The Nazi criminals were removed from all responsible positions, whereas in Western Germany most of them stayed in their positions and helped to rebuild the army, police force, courts and secret services of Western German imperialism. Unemployment, homelessness and misery were unknown to the people of the GDR. And the government pursued an internationalist foreign policy, supporting the liberation struggles in Vietnam, Nicaragua, Angola and many other countries, while never sending its troops to fight a war in another country. Of course there were mistakes and shortcomings, the reasons of which have to be analyzed. Especially the role of revisionist influences in the Socialist Unity Party has to be studied. But this does not change the fact that the GDR was our state, a state of workers and peasants, of the German communists and antifascist resistance fighters that suffered in fascist concentration camps, fought in Spain 1936-1939 or joined the Red Army in the war to liberate their homeland from fascism.

And it does have direct relevance for our political work. When you do political work with people and talk to them about our goal of socialism, the GDR or the Soviet Union always come up as a topic. People want to know what communists have to say about this. The bourgeois media and education system are making enormous efforts to create a negative picture of the GDR, which is portrayed as a brutal dictatorship that made the whole country a giant prison, relentlessly spying on its own citizens. The GDR is typically called the "second German dictatorship", equating it with the horrors of Nazi fascism that caused dozens of millions of deaths. This shows that the ruling class in Germany is still afraid of socialism, which is why they resort to poisoning the people's minds with their despicable anticommunist lies. But this distorted anticommunist propaganda picture of the GDR affects people in Western Germany more strongly than in the East, since the latter have their own or their parents' memories of socialism, which they can compare to the propaganda that is taught in school or transmitted in the mass media. In the Eastern German working class, reference to the GDR is generally positive and this fact is helping our local branches there to talk to the people about capitalism and socialism.

2019 will also be the anniversary of both the foundation of the GDR



in 1949, as well as the counterrevolution in 1989. In October 5 and 6, we will participate with several contributions in a congress by the Communist Party of Germany (KPD) which is dedicated to this topic. We have a lot to say about this, so in the course of this year there will be a series of activities and publications concerning our view on socialism in the GDR.

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## Programmatic Theses in English / Programmatische Thesen auf Englisch

[Here](#) you can find the English translation of the Programmatic Theses of the Communist Organization (CO).

[Hier](#) kannst du die englische Übersetzung der Programmatischen Thesen der Kommunistischen Organisation (KO) finden.

Workers of the world, unite!