

A respectable success in a head wind

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The Bundestag election campaign (federal election campaign) is over, how are the election results to be assessed?

The Grand Coalition of CDU, CSU and SPD got a resounding slap in the face. It lost approximately 24.8 percent of the votes in comparison to the *Bundestag* elections in 2005. This is equivalent to more than 8 million voters. With 23 percent the SPD reached a historical low. With 33.8 percent also the CDU/CSU achieved its second-worst result in postwar period. In spite of that the CDU/CSU will succeed in forming a new government together with the FDP. The Grand Coalition that was still elected in 2005 with 32.8 million votes only received the approval of 24.6 million voters in the present elections. The parties of the new government – CDU, CSU and FDP – can together only bank on just 21 million votes. In this way this new government has the most questionable legitimization a federal government ever had.

This **desired government of the ruling monopolies** will in future initiate an intensified course against the masses after a certain period of transition that will doubtlessly influence the development of class struggle sustainably and represents a break in the political development of the past years in Germany. The result of these *Bundestag* elections means a **new tactical starting position** for the MLPD and the forces of the militant opposition.

How did the trend towards the left develop during the Bundestag elections?

The **trend towards the left** did not only last, but **has even intensified again** immediately before the *Bundestag* elections. The Left party could gain 3.2 percent more votes and got almost 12 percent. At the same time the **process of detachment** from the bourgeois parties, parliamentarism and its institutions has **clearly expanded**. In spite of most different election mobilization campaigns, the voter participation dropped to almost 7 percent compared to 2005. That means, that 4 million less people went to the polls compared to the last time! Not because the people would have become more apolitical or there was bad weather on the polling day, but because the masses have a critical view towards the bourgeois policy. Hardly a word was lost by these parties about the great problems of the world economic and financial crisis.

It was pretended that everything is in order. However, the broad masses felt that something is going wrong here. With our slogan “Watch out! After the elections you will pay the bill!” we sharpened the vigilance of the masses, not to believe the bourgeois hypocrisy. The **slap on the wrist** of the SPD for the Agenda 2010 is undoubtedly also the **result of the work of the MLPD of convincing people** and the untiring work of the **nationwide Monday demonstration movement**. It is remarkable how a growing mass of people

resisted the bourgeois opinion manipulation. Since the so called „Duel“ between Merkel and Steinmeier a synchronized propaganda was launched in the media, that the SPD was again on the upswing. Many workers did not allow to be condemned by the rightist trade union leadership to vote for the SPD only in order to prevent a CDU/FDP-government.

The **search for a way out**, a societal alternative to the ruling political conditions, has undoubtedly intensified.

Is there a growing interest in the MLPD?

The **Left party** mainly benefits still from the trend to the left and it was **very successful** in this *Bundestag* elections as well as in the *Landtag* elections (*land* parliamentary elections) that were held simultaneously in the *lands* of Schleswig-Holstein and Brandenburg.

In voting the attraction of the MLPD is undoubtedly eclipsed by the link-reformist policy of the *Left party*. With about 39.000 minimum voters the **election results of the MLPD worsened by around a third** compared to 2005 in favor of the *Left party*.

With the first vote we managed to achieve 113.6 percent more votes on average of the constituencies with direct candidates than by means of the second vote. Here it is proved last but not least that the election obstructions – like the 5-percent-hurdle – directly fosters petty-bourgeois reformist illusions. The main reason for that is the **changed starting situation compared to the year 2005**. The open political crisis, combined with a whole series of mass struggles and strikes at that time brought the MLPD to the headlines and provided us with thousands of spontaneous protest votes also in those fields in which we hardly worked up to then. That was not the case this time!

Today the behaviour at the polls only conditionally shows how the transition to the positions of the MLPD takes place in the consciousness of the masses. **The vote for the MLPD only reflects a relatively advanced process**. We are, however, in contact with tens of thousands of people, we have thousands of sympathizers and enjoy respect far into the camp of the *Left party*, into the Green Party, the SPD and even the CDU. Only by means of a systematic work among the rank and file this transition will keep on developing in the consciousness of the masses. The election campaign provided us with more detailed information about how different **transitions** are evolving **in the development of the class-consciousness**: Initially there is the process of people detaching themselves from the bourgeois parties, the bourgeois parliamentarism and its institutions. The orientation and turning to the trend to the left is a further transition within this process; not all people orientate themselves to the left! In the trend to the left the struggle develops between the (left-)reformist and the revolutionary direction. Depending on how this debate develops, the attraction for the MLPD is developing and results in the conscious vote for the alternative of genuine socialism.

Isn't the voting result of the direct candidacy of the party chairman also a specific success of the party work in Gelsenkirchen?

1.5 percent for the first votes in Gelsenkirchen are still not the whole truth, but they are a sign for the **increased attraction of the MLPD among the masses**.

That shows that also many sympathies for the policy and objectives of the MLPD are concealed behind the wake of election successes of the *Left party*. In Gelsenkirchen we have rather good forces in party construction at our disposal and here we also conducted a very intensive street election campaign that was expressed in the election results relatively better than elsewhere under the given conditions.

Due to the omission of a direct candidate of the *Left party* developments in class-consciousness, in the attraction for the MLPD appear, that are eclipsed elsewhere by the results of the *Left party*. Nevertheless the **development of the class-consciousness** that is expressed here is not **restricted to Gelsenkirchen or Herne!** Particularly, however, we succeeded in winning more than 400 members for the voter action groups in Gelsenkirchen, tying many new prospective interested people, sympathizers and employees to the MLPD and to considerably strengthen the organizational basis of the MLPD. That was also successful at a national level, where we were able to win about **30 to 40 percent more members for the voter action groups** than four years ago. That confirms our assessment made in August that the general conditions for an electoral success worsened for the MLPD, at the same time a growing minority steps up its search for a socialist alternative; that widens the scope for the MLPD, particularly organizationally and in order to win new forces.

If our party groups have understood this specific starting position – and to me that seems to have been increasingly successful in the last weeks – the strengthening of the MLPD could in fact advance.

The self-transformation of the party itself, however, played the most important role in this case. This was the **first election campaign after the re-organisation of the party into seven *land* organizations**. The new *land* organizations sometimes had to fight hard for the great challenge of *land* election campaigns under the leadership of the new *land* leadership. But the organization mastered that task better week by week. The individual ***land* organizations** developed an **own profile**, the whole **organization** created **close strong bonds**. In the former election campaigns the *land* organizations in the “new lands” were now and then supported by the entire party. Now they entirely mastered an excellent election campaign by their own force. **The whole organization has a legitimate claim to being proud of its achieved work.**

How can the party be proud of having lost a third of its former votes particularly to the Left party?

The pride refers particularly to the successful offensive, a regular breakthrough in the systematic work among the rank and file and the innumerable new contacts and meetings with the most different people, organizations, discussion issues and requests. **No bourgeois election procedure in the world can be the yardstick to assess this work!** For a longer time we had to deal with a tendency of the worshipping of spontaneity in the party that had been critically discussed at the last party congress. With this worshipping of spontaneity the work among the rank and file of the party among the masses lessened under the impression of the decline of the people’ movement and the working-class movement during the grand crisis coalition. The membership development of

the MLPD also stagnated in the last four years. In some particular regions it even slightly declined. An **essential material basis for this development was the crisis dampening policy** of the Berlin government in the world economic and financial crisis.

However, with the offensive for genuine socialism the party congress set the task to again develop all-sidedly the system of the work among the rank and file and to use the election campaign to strengthen the party independent of the ups and downs of class struggle.

There was an intensive struggle about this task that finally could be decided in the course of the election campaign in a successful offensive for genuine socialism. **The forward-looking process of self-transformation of the party and the increasingly better development of the all-round system of the work among the rank and file was the specific strength** that we were able to show increasingly better in the course of the election campaign and that also enhanced the attraction of the MLPD for the masses. This fact is of greatest importance in the medium-term period.

Many readers of the Red Flag are not involved in this work and are not so familiar with these developments. Can you explain this in more detail?

We have to be clear about the fact that we will be facing hard class struggles. In our economic analysis we have found out that the world economic and financial crisis is linked up with the potential of a revolutionary world crisis. Against this backdrop the biggest capitalist countries under the leadership of US imperialism founded the G20 and launched an unprecedented international crisis management in order to alleviate the situation at all costs, undermine the class struggle and dampen the class contradictions. Undoubtedly they have succeeded up to now. **However, the world economic and financial crisis has not yet been overcome.** The small upward movements, the temporary rise in the stock market prices, the recovery of world trade are not at all signs for the end of the crisis. The steep decline of world production has not yet been overcome and it is not yet clear whether these isolated and temporary tendencies towards recovery are not mainly due to the gigantic state crisis management programs. It is very possible that the economy will decline again and trigger a new financial political disaster when the effects of the crisis management programs lessen. Even now there is no longer such a close unity of the G20 nations as there was during the acute phase of the outbreak of the world economic and financial crisis at the end of October 2008. Meanwhile **the rival interests are coming to the fore**, and it will be difficult to actually implement the commonly agreed upon conclusions from the world economic and financial crisis. In the end, they will not succeed in overcoming world economic and financial crises like that sustainably, much less in eliminating them in the future.

We should not overlook the fact that the international crisis management programs were launched at a high price.

The state debt has risen enormously in more or less all imperialist and capitalist countries and the **crisis management programs** have to be financed **on the backs of the broad masses**. Most of the labor market policy consequences of the crisis are basically still to come in many countries as in Germany, too, and will lead to an intensification of the class struggle; especially the reorganization of the international automobile production, the chip production, the struggle for the markets for alternative energies will enormously intensify the exploitation in industry.

For this reason it is especially important that in the election campaign the MLPD succeeded in significantly strengthening its ranks and its allies. **It is of special importance to unify the revolutionary potential of the working class in Germany** by means of a very intensive fraternal cooperation with a number of migrant organizations in Germany. The revolutionary potential of the working class in Germany can only develop if the German workers unite with the workers having a migrant background.

How did the party succeed in advancing youth work within the framework of the offensive for genuine socialism?

Just in the last weeks we have increasingly succeeded in exerting a greater influence upon young people. We could unlock an important potential for the youth league *Rebell* and the children's organization *Red Foxes*. However, we in the Central Committee have to realize that there was a multitude of initiatives in the youth work of the rank and file this year, but that the **Central Committee did not understand how to bring these together systematically for a lasting change** of the political work among the youth of the party and the youth league. This is undoubtedly the greatest weakness of our offensive for genuine socialism and will be an important topic for the next plenary session of the CC.

The most important self-transformation of young people in *Rebell* is **to stand up for their conviction**: being proud of being a *Rebell*; being proud of contributing to the liberation of humankind from exploitation and oppression; being proud of fighting for genuine socialism!

Let us also speak about the development in the automobile industry. The „New Deal“ with Opel was presented before the elections as if it would save the jobs of the Opel workers and be welcomed by the workers. What do you think about that?

Undoubtedly the reorganization of the international automobile industry is **presently focussing on Opel**. However, the problem is deeper and affects more or less all automobile monopolies. According to statements of the EU commission, there are production capacities in the worldwide automobile industry of 94 million cars per year. In comparison, the worldwide sale of cars is estimated by the EU at 55 million in 2009. The worldwide monopolies want to solve this contradiction by **closing down dozens of plants worldwide and cutting hundreds of thousands of jobs**.

In this context the **Automotive Workers' Counsel**, which has been being prepared for October 2009 for some time, takes on **special importance**. Delegations from 19 important automobile countries apart from Germany have

already registered for it. There are deliberations to improve the cooperation and solidarity among the auto workers of various countries, which is urgently necessary for the coordination and mutual support in the struggles.

What conclusions does the MLPD have to draw from the changed tactical starting position and the restructuring of the government ?

The transition to a CDU/FDP (Christian Democratic Party /Liberal Democratic Party) government is definitely a signal of the ruling monopolies for the intensification of the class struggle and the ruthless attacks on the living conditions of the workers. We have to assume that the time of restraint will be followed step by step by a time of open attacks. However, I do not think that this will happen immediately after the elections, because the monopolies are still pursuing a policy of cautious crisis management in order not to provoke the broad masses of people. At the same time, the trade-union agreement with the government, that has mainly been organized by way of the SPD (Social Democratic Party) participation in government, is in danger.

One of the greatest problems of capitalist society is undoubtedly the **deep crisis of social democracy**. It has to try to win back its influence on the working class. This will only be possible if it goes into confrontation with the Christian-Democratic/Liberal government. It is very possible that the leeway for the development of mass demonstrations and strikes will increase. At the same time, there will be attempts to compel the Left party to tie the working class more to the capitalist system. It is possible that attempts will be made to take the Left party into the state parliaments in order to undermine its opposition and the partly radical claims and to establish the Left party as a new social democratic factor upholding order against the struggles of the masses and the influence of the Marxist-Leninists. The counterpart of that is the declared intention of Oskar Lafontaine to regard the re-social-democratization of the SPD as the strategic goal of the Left party. This in turn can widen the scope for the revolutionary working class movement to the left of the Left party, because many expectations regarding the Left party will be disappointed in this process.

Have the chances for active environmental protection been improved with the strengthening of the Left party and the Greens and the fact that all parties in the federal parliament payed lip-service to environmental protection?

You should not let yourself be deceived too much by the election campaign slogans of the parties in Berlin. The treacherous slogan of the compatibility of economy with environment means nothing else than the **subordination of environmental protection to the profit interests of the monopolies**. The rigorous pursuit of the construction of 21 coal-fired power stations, the serious intention of the CDU, but also of the FDP, to increase the operating lifetimes of nuclear power stations and even to plan the construction of new ones, are signs for a dangerous regression regarding the environmental protection, which will challenge the active resistance of the masses. The MLPD is well-advised to intensify its initiatives in the formation of an active resistance in environmental protection and cooperate in this with all relevant forces.

The MLPD has conducted an offensive for genuine socialism for more than one year. Will this offensive be continued now?

No. The offensive for genuine socialism has been successfully concluded with the end of the federal election campaign. Now we have to „**secure the victory**“ as it is called in military strategy and tactics and consolidate the success. That means we have to deal with the lasting positive assimilation of our election campaign success; that means to win the many new members of voters action groups **for the membership in the party and youth league**, to train new comrades for the growing tasks of the party and also to **orientate** the party to the future work among the rank and file. Part of this is also especially the **intensification of the interaction with the various self-organizations of the masses** and also their strengthening by winning new forces, which the MLPD has got to know in the election campaign. All in all, the motto is: the most progressive experiences of the organization in this election campaign have to become the **standard in the daily work among the rank and file**. Part of this is, for example, the ability acquired to combine every activity with the organization of new supporters. Part of this is especially also the **culture of this election campaign** – its culture of debate, its polemics, its spirit of solidarity and of the practiced socialist visions. We cannot fall behind the level of the systematic work among the rank and file that we have reached in the offensive for genuine socialism.

More importance has to be attached again to the **study and the ideological-political training**. Last but not least, the international duties of the MLPD towards the worldwide revolutionary and working class movement are growing.

How has the process of the international coordination of revolutionary parties and organisations progressed?

The first phase of discussion for opinion-building could be concluded for now at seven regional conferences, together with 70 organisations and parties. The participating organisations agree that the time has come for an organized step in the future improved collaboration on a revolutionary foundation.

There was a lively exchange of views regarding the content, the principles and the organisational structures for this process. This has to be written down in resolutions, motions and proposals for decisions as a foundation for the second step, which is the direct decision on the future structure of the international coordination, the revolutionary work in party-building and class struggle. The MLPD was able to play an active and creative role in this process and to make many of its experiences that it gained on the international level in 25 years available. In the upcoming months it is necessary to continue this process with clear aims and to include further relevant revolutionary parties and organisations in the world in the process. No doubt, important conditions for this process are the experiences made in the world economic and financial crisis.

They showed many participants quite clearly how quickly the capitalist economy and its social fabric can plunge into an open crisis and how important international cooperation is in such a situation. **We need a new quality of proletarian internationalism** that will affect, in turn, the class struggle in the

individual countries, as well.

I regard the **great success in the collaboration with different migrant organisations** in Germany within the framework of the German parliamentary elections 2009 to have a close connection with the very positive and creative process, which also built up trust, of closing ranks among revolutionary parties and organisations in the entire world. I assume that this process will set free many new forces and will make an important contribution to unfolding a new upswing in the struggle for genuine socialism, anchor the revolutionary ideas of the working class among the masses to a new extent and strengthen the parties and organisations.

We have not talked about the tasks in revolutionary theory for some time.

It is urgently necessary that after intensive tasks in the international field, as well as in leading the offensive for genuine socialism, the central committee **continues and intensifies its work on the theoretical organ “Revolutionärer Weg” on the preparation of the international revolution.** Over the recent months, a considerable amount of work was left undone.

Especially the process of closing ranks in the practical coordination of the tasks in party-building and class struggle of the international revolutionary working-class movement make it necessary that we study and further develop the arising theoretical questions thoroughly. Despite the fact that practical work is predominant in this coordinating task, the answer to the arising theoretical questions is fundamental for the whole thing to function and foremostly so that it obtains a perspective. The preparation of the international revolution under the condition of the reorganization of international production and the beginning historical phase of transformation is historically new and also affords **historically new theoretical answers which cannot all be answered already in Marxism-Leninism**, and they cannot alone be derived from the experiences from the past and the previous practice of the collaboration among international parties and organisations. The MLPD has to attach greatest significance to these theoretical conclusions. The party has to support the central committee in this task in every respect. This particularly implies that every leadership level has to fulfill their tasks with full responsibility. The election campaign built a good foundation for this, as well.

At this point, I would like to thank all comrades, all volunteers in the election campaign, all new friends and critical companions **for their great efforts, their engagement, their creative – sometimes also critical suggestions and impulses.** I am very much looking forward to the future collaboration and about welcoming many new members in MLPD and REBELL. I would like to encourage every volunteer in the election campaign to take that step.

Thank you for the interview!