

Coalition government fails due to capitalist laws - Strengthen the socialist alternative!

Interview with Gabi Fechtner, Party Chairwoman of the MLPD, ...

... on the climax of the open political crisis in Germany with the break-up of the coalition government of SPD/FDP/The Greens, on the election of the fascist Donald Trump as the new US President, on the material basis of the world economic and financial crisis, and on the candidacy of the Internationalist List/MLPD for the new elections on February 23, 2025.

Rote Fahne: How do you assess the current development?

Gabi Fechtner: These turbulent weeks will not be forgotten so soon. On November 6, 2024, in the morning we learned of the election of the fascist Trump as US President, and in the evening the German government coalition collapsed. All this has far-reaching significance. Never before have **new elections** been held in Germany because a coalition government openly fell apart. The **overt political crisis has thus reached its climax**. Elections are now to be held on February 23.

We find ourselves in an **extraordinary situation**. In **global politics** the **open world crisis** also **is intensifying**. After all, Donald Trump is taking office as US President with an elaborated **fascist program**. We should be prepared for further surprises.

A huge debate is raging in the media as to why the coalition government broke up and who is to blame. What are the real reasons?

In the public debate, alternatively the maliciousness of the FDP or a stage-managed dismissal by Scholz is cited. There is, of course, something to both versions, and the parties involved are not exactly popular. However, this discussion is very superficial and distracts from the real problem. The open political crisis is the result of the fact that **capitalism simply no longer works**. That is why any bourgeois crisis management is bound to fail sooner or later.

We had already qualified it as an open political crisis after the state elections in Thuringia and Saxony-Anhalt. The prediction that the **government no longer can gain control of the situation** was accurate. This was because the masses no longer wanted or want to be governed as before. And those in power could and can no longer govern as before. The capitalist associations demanded an "economic turnabout" with increasing urgency and made tough demands. In the end, only 15 percent of those surveyed were satisfied with the coalition government. 73 percent were in favor of its end.

The material basis for this is the deep and, since 2018, extraordinarily long-lasting **global economic and financial crisis**. Capitalist economic crises lead in a law-governed way to **political crises**, no matter how "good" or how "bad" a bourgeois government works.

What happened to the promises of the supposed "coalition for progress"?

The "social and ecological transformation" promised by the government failed. Foreign policy was supposed to have a beneficial "humanitarian" effect. Women's rights were to be given top priority. These promises have all failed miserably.

The coalition government had promised to build 400,000 **homes** every year. In 2023, just 270,000 were built, while 910,000 public housing units are lacking. How are such ambitious plans supposed to work without a planned economy? The capitalist housing construction companies only build homes if they expect maximum profit from them. They even artificially reduce the supply of housing in order to drive up prices. The housing question can be solved – in genuine socialism. Because then the focus is on people's needs in harmony with nature.

We have great laws that every child must have a **daycare place** from their first birthday. Nevertheless, there is a shortage of 430,000 daycare places. The bourgeois state and family system continues to place the burden on women to manage the compatibility of family and career. This is constantly made more difficult under capitalism. Under socialism, social tasks are also solved socially instead of being passed on to families, and to women in particular.

The "citizen's benefit" (basic income support for jobseekers) was supposed to be the big step towards improving the lot of former recipients of *Unemployment benefit II* (Hartz IV, welfare). In fact, due to speculation-driven **inflation**, all in all they now have between 15 and 20 percent less purchasing power than in 2021. In genuine socialism, there is no more inflation.

Environmentalists won several court rulings that obliged the government to do more to protect the climate. But the monopolies couldn't care less. In 2023 more fossil energy was produced worldwide than ever before. Under the **Green energy and environment ministries**, of all things, Germany is buying extremely environmentally harmful LNG gas from the USA and feudal dictatorships in the Middle East and cementing this until at least 2043. Under socialism, the focus would not be on the maximum profits of oil and gas companies, but on people and nature.

The oh-so "**humanitarian, peaceful and values-based foreign policy**" justifies and supports Israel's genocide in Gaza and is becoming increasingly entangled in the devastating war in Ukraine. The German government stands for the most reactionary refugee policy since the Second World War. With the development of the global environmental catastrophe and the continued support for the war in Ukraine, Gaza and Lebanon, simultaneously **new refugee movements** are created.

All promises were bound to fail against the backdrop of today's **general crisis-proneness of imperialism**.

Will another government succeed in solving society's problems?

Capitalism notoriously fails to solve social problems. Therefore, any other bourgeois government must also fail at this. Rightly, only 23 percent think a "*CDU-led government will be able to solve the problems better*".¹

To really solve these problems, capitalism must be overcome in a revolutionary way. That is the only real way. Our vision of a **socialist society** provides that the fruits of social labor also benefit those who create the values. That is why strengthening the socialist alternative has become the **decisive social issue**.

The crisis could even escalate into a **systemic crisis** if the masses realize this. Of course, the system of the petty-bourgeois mode of thinking with its ever-new deceptive maneuvers is not completely finished. But its effectiveness has declined miserably.

¹ Opinion poll ARD-Deutschlandtrend extra, 6 Nov. 2024

What can the masses expect from the monopolies' course with a new government?

First of all, it must be said that the early elections are a one-to-one response to the **monopolies' demand** for them. They called for a "**radical turnabout**" or a **new government**. When Lindner's 18-page paper reflecting these demands failed to go through, he provoked the collapse of the government. **Stefan Wolf, head of Gesamtmetall**, the Federation of German Employers' Associations in the Metal and Electrical Engineering Industries, praised Lindner's catalog, saying it contained "*very good proposals*". No wonder, because Lindner copied the monopoly associations' list of demands like a bad plagiarist. The Secretary General of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), Carsten Linnemann, predicts that a CDU-led **ultra-right government** will pursue an "**Agenda 2030**". This all amounts to a veritable **general attack** on the workers and the broad masses. It includes longer working hours, pension cuts, lower social security contributions for capitalists, drastic cuts in "citizen's benefits". But also an even tougher asylum policy, a general attack on urgently needed environmental protection measures, arms build-up, and the dismantling of bourgeois-democratic rights and freedoms.

For the masses this is no alternative to the SPD/FDP/ Green coalition government and would **push** the problems **to the extreme**. There are deeper reasons why the decisive monopolies are demanding an ultra-reactionary turnabout today. The **basic tendency of imperialism to internal reaction and external aggression** is driven to extremes by the general crisis-proneness of imperialism. The working-class and people's movement must resolutely **fight the shifting of the burdens of war and crisis**. We will work in it in such a way that it becomes a school of society-changing struggle.

The monopolies are pushing especially for a "reduction in bureaucracy". That doesn't sound bad at first...

Everyone would applaud if it were really about reducing bureaucracy! But under the heading of "**reducing bureaucracy**", the *Tariftreuegesetz*² is to be repealed and the German Supply Chain Act canceled. By "cutting red tape" the monopoly capitalists mean: Do away with workers' rights, environmental protection requirements or the fight against the global exploitation of child labor. For them, this is unnecessary fuss.

The German monopolies look enviously to China or the USA. They too want to rule without having to take democratic or ecological procedures into consideration. Taken to their logical conclusion, these ambitions lead to a **fascist dictatorship**! This is no coincidence either, but stems from the requirements of **capitalist competition with its relentless pursuit of maximum profit and domination of the world market**.

How could someone like Donald Trump win the US presidential election?

For many people in Germany, it is hard to understand how a reactionary, racist, fascist and misogynistic creep like Trump could be re-elected president. He has gathered a horror cabinet of arch-militarists, multi-billionaires, racists, anti-vaccinationists and open fascists around him. It does not exactly speak for the moral superiority of US imperialism that this personified late-imperialist decadence is its top personnel. Trump only achieved his high approval ratings with nasty **demagoguery**. He and his deputy J. D. Vance and co. have succeeded in portraying themselves in the eyes of the masses as fighters for their social needs. Vance even presented himself as a "*fighter for the workers*".

Trump cleverly placed **social and economic issues** at the center of the election campaign. He combined this with a wave of chauvinism and anticommunism. One of his slogans was: "*I'll protect you!*" A significant proportion of workers voted for him. 69 percent of all white men without a university degree voted for Trump.

² Under this act, public contracts are awarded only to companies that comply with the working conditions laid down in the relevant collective agreements.

The significantly worsened social situation of the masses hardly played a role in Kamala Harris' election campaign. Yet 38 million people in the USA can no longer meet their basic needs. Food prices have skyrocketed by 50 percent in recent years.

Fascism has become the guiding principle of the decisive section of solely ruling international finance capital based in the USA. Trump is proceeding to systematically organize the **transition to a fascist dictatorship**. Fascist ideologues like **Curtis Yarvin**, according to whom the USA should be governed as if by the CEO of a corporation, are having a field day.

This presents an enormous challenge to the revolutionary and working-class movement in the USA. It is about building an **antifascist popular front** with the solid core of a **proletarian united front**. This popular front must organize resistance against the establishment of a fascist dictatorship and needs international solidarity to do so.

What impact will Trump's presidency have on the global situation? Is he the peacemaker he sells himself as?

The fascist Trump as US President is changing the global political situation and fueling the **fascist threat** around the world. His presidency is a **declaration of war for the supremacy** of US imperialism. The new US Administration has little inclination to be considerate to allies, world peace, the natural environment or class collaboration.

With Trump's election, the **structural crisis of the reorganization of international production** is openly culminating. A significant section of the monopolies in the USA, and increasingly elsewhere, are banking on isolationism, open economic warfare and international battles of annihilation. This **carries the inter-imperialist rivalry to extremes**. At the same time, no one can reverse the internationalization of capitalist production. Thus the **capitalist crises will come to a head**.

China will not accept the challenge by the USA without a fight. The **danger of world war** will increase dramatically. In the meantime, imperialist camps are clashing in more and more armed conflicts. **In a law-governed way imperialism leads to war**. And today imperialism has reached a point where the shifted balance of power ultimately only can be changed by war.

The other day the German daily Die Welt ran the headline: "Decline of the economy". What do you think of these ominous scenarios?

We must not be fooled by the monopolies' **propaganda of decline**. Making a big noise is all part of their business, especially in times of collective bargaining rounds. It is a fact that German industrial production has fallen by 15 percent since 2018. However, the media is full of propaganda about *"deindustrialization"*. In Germany, industry's share of gross value added – more than 20 percent – is still far higher than in all other major EU economies. Competition for industrial production is particularly fierce worldwide, as the working class in that sector is highly productive and creates the most surplus value and therefore profit. The German economy is still the third strongest in the world at any rate. **In military and political terms** it has even expanded its leading role in the EU.

The propaganda battle of the German monopolies is the accompaniment to the efforts to gain advantages. VW boss Blume also tugs at the heartstrings: *"VW clearly has to make big savings!"* One could almost feel sorry for Germany's largest corporation. In fact, VW is still making billions in profits. After all, it was 1.58 billion euros in the third quarter of 2024 alone. But that's not enough for them. They can only survive in today's capitalism if they defend and expand their dominant position on the global market or recapture it.

The "Alternative for Germany", AfD, says that the crisis exists because the coalition government pursues "bad policies". Their nationalism makes them blind to any economic expertise! Firstly, there is a **global economic and financial crisis**. And secondly, it stems

from the **chronic over-accumulation of capital** and is a **crisis of overproduction that is inherent in capitalism**. It is now in its sixth year and will continue to deepen. This has never happened before in the history of capitalism! It is linked to the **structural crises** associated with the electrification of drive technologies, digitalization and the energy transition. The introduction of e-mobility alone is expected to destroy up to 40 percent of the jobs in Germany in the automobile and supplier industries. In this environment, the monopolies are less and less willing to exercise restraint towards the workers for purposes of the class collaboration policy. This shows the insanity of capitalism: humanity is becoming more and more productive, but the crises are getting worse and worse. We need a global, highly dynamic and flexible **planned economy** for the benefit of humanity and nature in united socialist states of the world.

Why is the MLPD running as a revolutionary party nationwide in the new elections?

In such a deep and open political crisis, we as Marxist-Leninists owe it to the masses to present a **revolutionary and socialist alternative**. Election campaigns in such turbulent times are an extraordinarily good opportunity for us to gather forces for the revolutionary class struggle and to make the Marxist-Leninist positions known.

There is a great deal of discontent with the crisis manifestations and the disaster of the present government. Our task is to penetrate from the **appearance to the essence of the problem**. Behind all social problems, we need to work out the **laws of capitalism** and develop an aggressive **critique of capitalism**. Only then can people understand why voting for any bourgeois party does not solve the problem. Only then can people understand that a fundamentally different social order is needed: **genuine socialism based on the proletarian mode of thinking**. And only then will socialism become clear, not as a utopian dream but as a necessary and also scientifically possible next step for humanity. Because the solution can also be found in the problem. In this election campaign we must succeed in making a very fundamental, profound and at the same time popular argument for genuine socialism.

We have a **program** on how to solve all seemingly unsolvable crises. There are indeed alternatives to the supposed lack of alternatives! However, these must be fought for and require a different social system in its entirety.

Elections today are **manipulated** via the bourgeois media as rarely before in history: the MLPD does not appear in the bourgeois media at all, while the Alliance Sahra Wagenknecht (BSW) exists only in the media. In the social media, a party's reach has long been determined by its financial strength. But it would be sectarian stupidity not to make use of the extended democratic rights and freedoms in the run-up to elections.

Have the SPD and even the CDU and AfD discovered their heart for the working class? They are all increasingly referring to the "working population" and praising hard work, diligence and motivation.

Not a bit. They are monopoly parties that only need the workers as part of their mass base. Of course, the ruling class knows that it is dependent on the workers for its imperialist plans. In addition, they are scared by the workers' above-average aversion to capitalism. When these ladies and gentlemen praise the hardworking class, then only to ensure that it allows itself to be exploited for all eternity. Of course, all of them think very little of a fighting working class.

The fascist **AFD** has been able to gain influence among workers and is corroding their class consciousness. It is worth listening more closely to these demagogues: When the fascists want to bring the "German economy" to a new upswing, they are talking about the capitalist economy. They propagate a **völkisch class collaboration**. The failed class collaboration is to be rehashed in the German-national variant. Most workers are dissatisfied with today's ruling class. And now the AfD wants to make them believe they should ally themselves with

Germany's corporate bosses? Even the AfD cannot arbitrarily reverse the trend towards the erosion of class collaboration politics.

The MLPD pursues a different course with its factory groups. This is because the **class contradictions are intensifying considerably** in the factories. More and more companies are announcing mass layoffs and plant closures. The **pilot agreement in the metalworkers' collective bargaining round** is a shabby compromise. A wage increase of 2.3 percent per year – that means a loss of real wages. No less than 700,000 industrial workers have taken to the streets in protest since September. They were mostly very militant. Trade-union actions often combined with independent elements, including self-organized warning strikes.

The international industrial proletariat is intervening more strongly in the **process of political ferment**. The monopolies, the reformists and the government will certainly try to impede workers' struggles during the election campaign or, if possible, avoid them altogether.

Our **workplace party groups** are at the forefront of the struggles so far. They are being **put to the test**. In times of crisis, **struggles must be prepared, initiated, led and developed higher**. Given the open crisis of class collaboration, **independent strikes and mass struggles** are in the air. It is important to carry out **constructive trade-union work** without limiting ourselves to trade-union struggles.

We will therefore focus the election campaign particularly on the industrial workers without neglecting the social issues and the struggles of the broad masses.

What role will antifascist work play in the MLPD's election campaign?

In the antifascist struggle, forging a broad united front with the workers in the lead is the order of the day. This is of **strategic** importance – and so is the **Internationalist Alliance**. It is also important that we significantly broaden our **alliance work**. The MLPD has a special profile here. We are the only party in Germany that **pursues a clear course against the global fascist danger**. The antifascist struggle must permeate all fields of rank-and-file work. For example, it is not possible to pursue environmental policy today without attacking the fascist climate deniers.

We will also argue against the chauvinistic slogan "Germany first". The internationalization of production is progress. The problem lies in the imperialist principle of competition. "Germany first" means only that German capital wants to benefit most. We are fighting for **proletarian internationalism**. Under socialism, the peoples of the world work together, internationally, for mutual benefit and in unity with nature. Unjust wars will then no longer exist. To achieve this, however, each working class must first overcome the solely ruling finance capital that confronts it as exploiter and oppressor. We will therefore continue to push for the close union of the workers and revolutionaries of the world. We have made significant progress in this respect with the **Fifth World Conference of ICOR and the Lenin Seminar**.

When there are elections in Germany, the story that all power comes from the people is always rehashed. What do you have to counter this?

No matter who you vote for: the dictatorship of the monopolies remains. Who are the people anyway? The population is divided into two classes. And the working class has no political power whatsoever. A majority is in favor of the nine-euro public transport ticket – yet it was abolished. A majority criticizes Israel's policy in Gaza – and yet the government supports the genocide. A majority is against the gap between rich and poor – but it is widening. In the capitalist system of the German Federal Republic the government will always be a **service provider for the monopolies** and the **state** will always be an instrument for oppressing the working class. If the working class wants to change this, going to the ballot box will not help, only a revolutionary upheaval will. We have the important task of helping people to overcome **petty-bourgeois parliamentary illusions**. We will **fight hard for every vote** because: A vote for the MLPD is a decision for a revolutionary workers' party. It

strengthens the socialist alternative in public. It is a step towards the decision to take an active part in the **socialist movement**. The best way to do this is as a member of the youth league *Rebell* or the MLPD.

What role will the new book on the crisis of the bourgeois social sciences, religion and culture play in the election campaign?

Work with the theoretical organ *Revolutionärer Weg* has become much more important in the party. We have been able to better and better overcome the pushing aside of the ideological aspect. However, we still have to learn how to transform this into **popular agitation and propaganda**. Covering everything from religion to education and culture, the book is a guide to dealing with the everyday issues of the masses in depth. The book series on the crisis of bourgeois ideology will be a **reliable ideological compass** to help us negotiate our way through these challenging times. That is why we are using the elections to **widely advertise and sell** these books.

What can we expect from the MLPD's winter election campaign?

We will **concentrate fully** on this important election campaign. First of all, the present fight to get the party **admitted to the election** in all **16 German states**, along with numerous direct candidates, in the shortest of time, is a great challenge. Proving that today's crisis is a law-based consequence of the capitalist system will lead right into the **movement for gaining new esteem for genuine socialism** based on the proletarian mode of thinking. This will also find expression in the promotion of the socialist youth movement. We will also conduct a special youth election campaign, and *Rebell* will raise its profile. We will advocate revolutionary working-class politics as the antithesis of the present coalition government, rightward development and fascism. We will call the existing problems of humanity by their names, be it the danger of world war, the global environmental catastrophe or the fascist danger.

We will target the monopolies. We will not limit ourselves to public relations work, but promote independent and trade-union struggles. In neighborhoods, at universities and in factories we will stand up for our **list of demands for the fight against poverty** and for the **social issues of the masses**. Last but not least, we will establish ourselves as the party of women's liberation.

The social tasks facing us we can never tackle alone. We must therefore invest much more in the **promotion of non-party self-run organizations of the masses**. **They are gaining in importance!** They are an independent force for their self-set goals in the struggle for women's liberation, for international solidarity, for the interests of the masses in the municipalities, or for saving the environment, and against the fascist climate deniers.

The most important thing is how the work is done. The training of more and more people must **be of better quality!** We must do everything we can to recruit **new forces** and to keep attracting new people to organized political work. In February we will go into full swing with an intensive street election campaign.

I would like to thank everyone for their extraordinary efforts over these past few weeks, and I am sure that we will draw strength from them!

Thank you very much for the interview and good luck!