

On the relationship of the migration of peoples,
democratic right of asylum and proletarian internationalism

The imperialist world system is the cause of the “modern migration of peoples”

German reality: deportation of politically persecuted refugees at the borders, refugees being crowded in camps, arson attacks on asylum seekers' housing facilities, exploitation and enslavement of workers from other countries, “citizens' action groups” and “citizens' forces” against so-called “foreign infiltration” pogrom-like assaults on asylum seekers, on colleagues from other countries. German chauvinism and racism, the unbroken tradition of nazi-fascism bear their poisonous fruit!

There can be no doubt that the West/German imperialists have succeeded in instilling the poison of German chauvinism, racism and arrogance into the minds of broad parts of the working population, of workers in West Germany. This poison serves them to disguise the system of rule and to divert from those, who are really guilty for economic crises, unemployment, housing-shortage, pauperisation, hunger, misery and wars. In this way they want to present a “scapegoat”. It is West/German imperialism itself who is mainly responsible for the fact that so many people are forced to leave their home countries, to look for shelter because of political persecution or to offer for sale the only “property” they have – labour power – in order to save themselves and their families from starvation!

Indeed, in view of the increasing unemployment in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, but in other European countries, too, a migration of peoples comprising hundreds of thousands of people who are looking for work has begun. A mass migration of people who, according to capitalist laws of “market economy”, that is to say following the laws of profit, of offer and demand, must leave their homes and – sometimes even not equipped with basic things – set out with their whole families to look for a job here in West Germany.

The reasons for this process of migration on a new level are certainly not only the dramatical sharpening of the situation in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. They are not alone the break down of those regimes which pretended to be “socialist”, but, for many decades, in reality have practised a policy against their own peoples, against the working class under the cover of “socialism”. This policy was used to secure the domination of a “new bourgeoisie”. However, the reasons lie deeper, they are based in the imperialist system itself.

Capitalism is international. The workers must sell their labour power as a commodity, they must offer themselves on the “labour market” as a commodity. They look for a job in those areas where they allegedly or really get the best pay. Hunger and extremely miserable living conditions are the essential reasons for them to offer and sell their only property, their labour power, outside the home country on the markets of other countries.

In the epoch of imperialism, the highest stage of capitalism, where a few big imperialist powers have divided the world among them, such miserable living conditions are typical in countries which are exploited and oppressed by those powers. This is the inevitable consequence of imperialist plundering of the colonies and dependent countries, of squeezing out huge extra-profits out of the working population of these countries by the imperialists.

Whereas in the 60s and 70s labour was “recruited” by West German capitalists mainly from Southern Europe, South-Eastern Europe and Turkey, now there can be noticed an increasing immigration from Eastern Europe as well as from Asia and Africa.

These phenomena of migration of the peoples are deliberately made use of by the West/German imperialists:

- They have built up an industrial reserve army, an army of workers “willing to work”, who are forced to sell their labour power under most miserable conditions for hunger wages. Pointing at this “potential”, the capitalists try to bring down the wages and

to deteriorate the working conditions.

- Moreover, the West/German imperialists are fomenting nationalism and chauvinism, they are inciting the workers from different countries against one another in order to secure their domination following the old slogan of all oppressors and exploiters “divide and rule!”



“But only reactionaries can shut their eyes to the progressive significance of this modern migration of nations” (Lenin)

However the phenomena of “modern migration of nations” is nothing new. We only have to look at the experience of the labour movement, to learn how it approached this question in its fight against the imperialists and opportunists.

In his writings “Capitalism and Workers' Immigration” Lenin wrote already 1913 there is no doubt about it, that

“dire poverty alone compels people to abandon their native land, and that the capitalists exploit the immigrant workers in the most shameless manner.”

(Lenin, “Capitalism and Workers' Immigration”, 1913, Collected Works, Vol. 19, page 454)

And:

“Capitalism has given rise to a special form of migration of nations. The rapidly developing industrial countries, introducing machinery on a large scale and ousting the backward countries from the world market, raise wages at home above the average rate and thus attract workers from the backward countries.

Hundreds of thousands of workers thus wander hundreds and thousands of versts.”
(Ibidem)

In his fundamental work about imperialism, Lenin wrote capitalism had reached a new stage

imperialism, in which the problem of the migration of nations would intensify:

“One of the special features of imperialism connected with the facts I am describing, is the decline in emigration from imperialist countries and the increase in immigration into these countries from the more backward countries where lower wages are paid.

(Lenin “Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism”, 1916, Collected Works, Vol. 22, page 282)

Lenin made it clear, the modern migration of nations is an inevitable factor with the growth of imperialism and offers new chances as well as puts forward new tasks to organise and fight for the unity of the working class all over the world. He explained:

“But only reactionaries can shut their eyes to the progressive significance of this modern migration of nations. Emancipation from the yoke of capital is impossible without the further development of capitalism, and without the class struggle that is based on it. And it is into this struggle that capitalism is drawing the masses of the working people of the whole world, breaking down the musty, fusty habits of local life, breaking down national barriers and prejudices, uniting workers from all countries in huge

factories and mines in America, Germany and so forth. (...)

The bourgeoisie incites the workers of one nation against those of another in the endeavour to keep them disunited. Class-conscious workers, realising that the break-down of all the national barriers by capitalism is inevitable and progressive, are trying to help to enlighten and organise their fellow-workers from the backward countries.

(Lenin, "Capitalism and Workers' Immigration", 1913, Collected Works, Vol. 19, pages 454/457)

Of great importance was the stance taken by Lenin, Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht at the Socialist Congress held in Stuttgart 1907 (Lenin volume 13) against narrow minded nationalists who even demanded the prohibition of immigration from backward countries in this case China. This philistine reactionary nationalist view point received a rebuff. Lenin remarked rightly:

"This is the same spirit of aristocratism that one finds among workers in some of the 'civilised' countries, who derive certain advantages from their privileged position, and are, therefore, inclined to forget the need for international class solidarity."

(Lenin "International Socialist Congress in Stuttgart", 1913, Collected Works, Vol. 13, page 79)

The International Socialist Congress from 1907 in one of its resolutions rejected demands from opportunist elements that restrictions should be placed on the immigration of workers into the industrial countries as an "in view of the proletarian solidarity reprehensible exclusion":

"The immigration and emigration of workers is a phenomenon inseparably connected with the nature of capitalism as it is unemployment, overproduction and underconsumption of the workers. These means are often used to lower the workers' share in the labour product and caused by political, religious and

national persecution they temporarily reach abnormal dimensions.

The congress can not see any means to remedy the possibly threatening consequences of immigration and migration for the workers, especially not in some economical and political special regulations to restrict freedom of movement and to exclude other nations, because these are to be regarded as useless as well as reactionary in their nature."

("International Socialist Congress at Stuttgart 1907", protocol, Berlin 1907, reprint, Stuttgart 1977, page 58)

Lenin, Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht fought against the opportunist reactionaries who tried to restrict the working possibilities for Japanese and Chinese because they "argued" that these workers were backward and undeveloped. Lenin characterised these people and the essential tasks as follows:

"The narrow spirit of secluidity in the tradition of medieval guilds, the spirit of trade-unionist exclusivity was stronger with these people than the consciousness about the socialist tasks: instruction and organisation of those strata of the proletariat which have not still been reached by the labour movement."

(Ibidem, page 81)

On the SPD party congress 1907 Karl Liebknecht struggled for the application of the proletarian-internationalist policy also in the German Social Democracy:

"I take the opportunity to make a few remarks as regards the question of immigration and emigration which has arisen in the discussion. I would like to draw your attention to the eminent importance of this question. I have on many occasions observed the misery of immigrants in Germany and their subjection to the police and I know that these people have to face many difficulties. Their precarious situation is something for us German Social Democrats to take note of. Right away we should

devote our attention energetically to the regulations as such as they apply to immigrants, especially to the elimination of the disgraceful expulsions. It is well known that foreigners who are organised in the union are deported with predilection ...

The resolution from the congress in Stuttgart decided the line we should accomplish as regards the question of expulsion; clause 3 of the minimum programme comprises the abolition of all restrictions which exclude certain nationalities or races from the permit of residence in this country and from the social, political and economical rights of the locals. Concerning this matter an amendment had been made by Hungary according to which an expulsion is to be subjected to the guarantee of a legal decision. This amendment was withdrawn after all agreed that clause 3 states the total abolition of deportation laws. The congress resolution demands equal rights for foreigners and domestic people in general also concerning the right to stay in Germany."

(Karl Liebknecht, "Away with the expulsion sword of Damocles", from the debate which took place at the international socialist congress in Stuttgart 1907, taken from "Collected Speeches and Writings", volume II, Berlin/DDR 1985, page 72 - 73)

A few years later Lenin had to go on the offensive against the opportunist leaders from the American socialist party because they demanded restrictions on the immigration of workers from other countries, an attitude that was contradictory to the decisions taken at the Stuttgart congress:

"We think that one can not be internationalist and be at the same time in favour of such restrictions".

(Lenin "Letter to the Secretary of the Socialist Propaganda League", 1915, Collected Works, Vol. 21, S. 428)

Lenin showed us how we should fight and attack the racist and chauvinist propaganda of the ruling class, how we should fight and organise

against the incitement of the working people, the workers in West-Germany, that is intended by this kind of propaganda

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Fight the pseudo-leftist version of chauvinism!

In view of the massive emigration from the countries of Eastern Europe, groups which suppose to be "left-wing" often use the trick to compare the work-seeking people of those countries with their own, allegedly progressive political positions in order to reject these people and wish them "to hell".

It is a fact that in the countries of Eastern Europe many decades of pseudo-socialist mismanagement and the sell off of essential sectors of the economy to "classical" Western capitalist countries have taken place. Those parties which proclaimed to be "communist" were characterised by moral decay. The officials who were at the helm of the state apparatus were exploiting the working population like the old exploiters. In view of all these facts it is not astonishing that the people who emigrate now are not revolutionary or communist minded. Very often these people are completely disorientated, anti-Communist minded, only interested in getting enough to live on and often have been out of work for a long time.

It is also evident that the West/German bourgeoisie tries to mobilise these broad masses with their anticommunist general tendency as a reserve for fascist activities and to use them as scabs and for keeping down wages. (In this context the revanchist ideology of the so-called "ethnic Germans" plays an important part. It's an absurd story: anyone can prove his "being German" with the help of his grandfather's passport of the Wehrmacht or the SS, even if, for generations, he has been living as a Pole or a Soviet citizen, far away from every "German tradition".)

In comparison to West Germany, countries like

Poland, Hungary, Rumania are often very backward countries on the industrial level, they are really being bled white in the actual situation and a mood is spreading which can be described as "it is every man for himself". Today the most reactionary nationalist agitators are active there, in Yugoslavia, in the Soviet Union, in Rumania and in Hungary.

In this atmosphere, West German union bigwigs, the labour aristocrats, that is to say the better paid and corrupted upper class of the working class, play their trump card. It has always been their credo to preach arrogance against the workers from economically backward countries. Now they present themselves to be the big spokesmen of the "Germans", using a jargon which is directed against other peoples and everything allegedly "un-German" – similar to the jargon used about 50 years ago. We do not want to mention here the fascistic vocabulary of these ladies and gentlemen.

It is important to unite with the colleagues from other countries, who have been living and working in West Germany for a long time and who are a firm basis in the struggle against chauvinism. We have to expose and fight the labour-aristocratic, petit bourgeoisie spokesmen of West/German imperialism and to forge a joint internationalist front with the new arrivals looking for a job.

In view of the fact that colleagues from other countries like Turkey are often in the front line in company clashes, in strike battles and at demonstrations, nationalist arrogance towards them is all the more absurd. (If this is not the case, it nevertheless should be made clear that every form of national arrogance of the German workers must also be rejected.)

When in the last few months an increasing number of workers from those countries – mainly from Eastern Europe, where the struggles of the working class are not as developed as for instance in Turkey and where more as an exception rather than the rule workers have gained their own experience in the struggles even for unionist-economical demands –, have come to West Germany, this is no reason for arrogance at all.

Totally arrogant, however, is the idea that the immigration of workers mainly from Eastern

European countries would destroy a strong "class struggling workers' movement in West Germany". Reality proves, however, and nobody knows it better than the few but all the more important really progressive and revolutionary forces in the companies, that a battle-hardened "workers' movement for class struggle" is sadly lacking in West-Germany today.

It is merely true that at the moment – in comparison with the immigration of workers from Turkey who have been very ready to fight – through the immigration of workers from Poland, Hungary or Rumania for instance, no direct fresh militant or even revolutionary forces develop on the factory floor.

What is to be done? Go on uniting the revolutionary forces in the companies, fighting also the little and allegedly unimportant issues against the capital, developing and strengthening the idea of solidarity, enlightening, discussing and organising – in the struggle against all reactionary ideas and against every German-nationalist arrogance. The basic idea of proletarian-internationalist solidarity, the idea of unity beyond the borders of nationalities, must be brought to the forefront of these struggles.

The initiative in the struggle against nationalist and racist instigation must come out of the factories

Every day, in every company the workers discuss about all the questions broached:

We must fight against German-chauvinist prejudice not only because of the smear campaign of BILD and other newspapers, the virulence of broadcasting and television, but also in connection with the actually – sometimes more sometimes less – simmering conflicts between West German colleagues and those from other countries.

The attitude to all these issues is so to speak a *touchstone* how far the German colleagues are still in the ideological clutches of the West/German bourgeoisie, or how far they have already – emotionally as well as by their behaviour in daily

life – spread the idea of solidarity and joining together beyond the borders of nationality and helped to get this idea accepted.

In this context, the experience of *joint struggles* on a small as well as on a large scale is of special importance. The idea of overcoming nationalism and racism, the idea of joint struggles and proletarian internationalism is often present as seeds in those companies, where already *strikes* have been carried through. There sometimes people start to realise – getting beyond the aims of the daily struggles – that it is necessary to shake the basic pillars of the whole capitalist system, to overthrow the system of imperialism *in joint action*.

It is not astonishing that colleagues – for instance from Turkey who know and often have learned from their own experience what political oppression in their home country means – take the initiative more clearly and rapidly, when, by way of example, extremely right-wing influenced "citizens' groups" and "citizens' forces" or open neo-Nazi forces terrorise asylum seekers in their neighbourhood, ambush them or even burn their prison-like camps and housing facilities.

Here we should start to forge a united front against every form of national narrow-mindedness, against the poison of chauvinism and racism, the joint front against the common exploiters and oppressors!

A united struggle for the right to immigrate without restrictions

The right attitude to the question of the modern migration of nations is closely connected with the right attitude to the question of right of asylum. Both questions by no means contain the same, but both questions lap each other. There are some areas in which it is not very clear, whether certain problems have to do with the question of migration of nations, the question of people seeking for work or whether they have also to do with questions of politically determined persecution of whole groups of a people.

This is evident by the Kurds who came to West-

Germany from the territory of Turkey. On the one hand, indeed, they came to West-Germany to look for work, on the other hand due to the intolerable situation for the Kurdish minority in their homeland political persecution is also a factor.

To understand the problem and what it entails, let us look a bit closer at this example:

When someone from Turkey looks for work in West-Germany, but looks for work, because of political persecution in his homeland he can not find any work there and he can not live there, then the question is rather a "tactical" one. Then it is a question of estimation of the respective situation, whether he or she should register as an "applicant for political asylum", (until 1990 that meant not to be allowed to work for several years, and is today long meaning overdue residence in so-called "collection points" or "camps", prohibited from leaving the place, real danger of being deported and a heap of other oppressive measures to boot), or whether he or she should think about so-called "illegal" possibilities. The result of that actions can lead to expulsion, to the jeers of the criminal bureaucrats of West-German imperialism: "Why then at the eleventh hour in remand pending deportation does the refugee apply for asylum? It can not be that in the past he or she has been persecuted – make-belief asylum-seeker!"

In reality however the conditions for the refugees are so miserable in West-Germany and characterised by various restrictions, that for many of them, this is the last possibility in fact to avoid being deported at the last moment.

When it is clear, that we in the spirit of the international labour movement fight against every restriction of permission to work for people from other countries seeking for work and every restriction of immigration, and at the same time defend the democratic right of asylum, then we will be ideologically and politically enabled to track down the various traps set by the ideologists of the West-German imperialists and to expose them. Then we can take the *offensive*, not only to defend the "damned of this world" in her or his right to look for work but also to defend the right of asylum as democratically defined fundamental right.

Joint struggle for all democratic rights for the workers from other countries

The struggle for the right to unhindered immigration for the workers – no matter which nationality they are, no matter where they come from – must in any case be connected with the struggle against their status where is a lack of rights or a far-reaching limitation of their rights. For instance they do not have the right to vote, the right to residence and the right to work is restricted by a whole series of limitations and conditions. Actually, they must permanently reckon on being deported or expelled, all the more in all those cases, where revolutionary, class-struggling colleagues are concerned.

The West German working class must fight for the democratic rights of workers coming from other countries to West Germany (no matter whether they have come because of economical and social reasons or whether they had to flee from reactionary political conditions in their home countries). This is the prerequisite for developing confidence between the immigrating workers and the West German working class.

Widespread chauvinist rejection and racist prejudices which are in the minds of a considerable portion of the West German workers towards their colleagues from other countries can only lead to mistrust and national separation.

The almost total lack of rights of the workers from other countries is all the more a quite central means employed by the West/German bourgeoisie to put pressure on them in times of increasing unemployment and crises or in labour disputes and to split the united internationalist struggling front of the workers or to undermine its

development from the beginning.

Precisely in the clashes with capital that take place in the factories we must unmask all manoeuvres and all ideological arguments of the bourgeoisie who aim at splitting the workers because of their different nationalities. It is important to make the workers realise that these are attempts made by the bourgeoisie (which until now unfortunately often are successful) to weaken and gag the workers' movement against West/German imperialism in order to stabilise the economical and political power of West/German imperialists.

Being active in this sense – propagating the revolutionary internationalist attitude – falls on fertile ground in the factories, although the West/German bourgeoisie has success with its chauvinist inciting within the German working class and especially within the workers aristocracy.

In the factories, in the struggles against capital the "progressive meaning of modern migration of peoples" becomes visibly, because the daily experience of the mass of the working class teaches them that the bourgeoisie takes advantage of the divisions of the nationalities and only beyond these divisions a joint struggle in the spirit of solidarity and based on the internationalist consciousness against the bourgeoisie can be developed.

Only if we fight against chauvinism and racism will we be able to use the progressive meaning of the modern migration of peoples that Lenin referred to for the joint struggle. Like every struggle against the bourgeoisie, this does not happen spontaneously. Therefore we need an aim-orientated Communist Party, which is steered in the struggle against imperialism and opportunism and which carries the proletarian class consciousness into the masses!

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Prevent deportation and mass expulsion of those who are politically persecuted and demand their democratic right of asylum!

In the last few years there has been a long debate going on about the question of asylum, instigated by the bourgeois media, especially about the question who is entitled to this right.

Naturally, the bourgeoisie tries to prove that "there is no such thing" as political persecution, when demonstrators in Turkey are arrested and tortured. To back up this claim, the department for foreign affairs issues information to the effect, that in Turkey that is normal and "torture is no reason for asylum".

What is taking place before courts here in the Federal Republic of Germany, defies all description. They try with all their might to restrict the concept of the right of asylum as far as possible.

Above all the reactionary jurists try to depict the circumstances so, that the politically persecuted broad masses, whether they belong to an organisation or not, are not entitled to the right of political asylum, but only active "card-carrying" members – that possibly have to present a confirmation in writing from the reactionary counter-revolutionary regimes that they have been politically persecuted.

At the same time the imperialist bourgeoisie have started a provocation in the *ideological sphere*, whereby many honest forces who are active in fighting the restrictions of the right asylum have reacted in a wrong way.

The imperialist demagogues provocatively refer to the formula, which is right in an abstract sense, "that not everyone automatically" is entitled to the right of asylum.

These reactionary forces of course do not have the likes of them, the counter-revolutionary torturers from Chile or other countries in their mind.

But they try to use the fact that the right of asylum really is "defined" and therefore is

subjected to certain restrictions and limits and come out against a *democratic and wide use of the right of asylum* for the broad masses of suppressed and persecuted working people from other countries.

Currently the manoeuvre is pushed in the foreground to mix together the question of right of asylum and the problem of modern migration of nations and in this way to reduce the right of asylum to absurdity.

Indeed when one thinks of the workers from eastern Europe coming to the Federal Republic of Germany and other western European countries, it would be nonsensical to conceive the notion "political asylum" in that way, that this whole process of migration of people from east to west Europe could be classified in this category.

Also when the greater number of these cases does not fall within the category "political persecution", it is *inadmissible* to simplify things especially with two groups from eastern Europe. One of these the Roma, who have been persecuted and suffered pogroms, the other parts of the Jewish population, who have had to flee their homeland and depart for western Europe because the anti-Semitism is growing at tremendous pace. Under these circumstances the right of asylum – in the classical sense – should and must be granted.

As an example of the malicious agitation against refugees and people seeking for work from Rumania the following problem can be elucidated:

The malicious agitation against Rumanians is especially based on the fact that more than half of those who are fleeing from Rumania are Roma. While the reactionary-anticommunist forces in Rumania have no reason to flee but stay there to be up to mischief, the Roma on the other hand, who have been oppressed already before, are now the victims of regular pogroms.

We must keep that in mind, more than half of the refugees and those seeking for work from Rumania

Who is politically persecuted?

A campaign of smear propoganda and brain-washing launched by west/German imperialism tries to convince people that it has to be distinguished between alleged "make-belief asylum-seekers" and "politically persecuted persons".

Constitutional law and international agreements are used in a mendacious manner to bolster up their arguments, that only those who are members of political organisations and who are politically active are persecuted. This restricted and false construction is made up for the purpose to keep down the number of politically persecuted persons as low as possible.

In reality the concept of political persecution has the meaning that people are persecuted for political reasons in a calculating manner. These reasons do not only comprise explicit political activity but also racist, national or other viewpoints.

In Nazi Germany political persecution meant every Jew whether politically active or not.

The same applies today as regards the Tamils, who are persecuted and butchered in their homeland. Or the Kurdish people from Turkey, who are not even allowed to describe themselves as Kurds and, not so long ago, to speak their own language in public. They must also live with the threat of being killed by the Turkish military at any time. Or the young persons from Iran, that fled during the reactionary war between Iran and Iraq on account for not be used as cannon fodder in an unjust war. Or the Roma from eastern Europe, who have to suffer pogrom type persecution there. All these people are chased, persecuted, tortured and murdered by the politicians from the ruling classes in their countries in a politically calculating manner not depending on whether they belong to a political organisation or not.

are Roma, they deserve our special protection and support.

We want to make it very clear that refugees from Rumania often for very good reason will not tell the authorities here that they have been persecuted as Roma, because that would only mean for them more persecution and special discrimination here in Germany.

At the same time the authorities, that have been ordered to distribute the refugees to small villages, try to use only the term "Rumanians" and to get into as less "trouble" as possible – which is their bureaucratic calculation.

The announcement alone leads to fierce opposition from local people when they hear the word "Rumanian". When they realise that persecuted Roma should be given accommodation in their locality they found so-called "actions groups" and their opposition takes on a clearly reactionary racist form.

Furthermore the reactionary regimes in eastern Europe will in the future be confronted by a growing "left-wing" opposition in these countries; a progressive, really socialist orientated labour movement will arise and be certainly exposed to political oppression immediately. One should keep that in mind.

That is true also for other countries for example Pakistan. There it is very clear that massive oppression is combined with enormous misery and a shortage of working possibilities.

Moreover in many cases there are good reasons that those who have been politically persecuted want to get their families out of their homeland and bring them to the country where they are exiled.

A proper understanding of the problem of the

right of asylum with the question of migration of nations and how they *overlap* requires in any case *offensive* arguments against any variation of the racist and nationalist smear campaign.

To the question of democratic right of asylum:

No refuge for tyrants and torturers!

When the right of asylum was established as a basic democratic right as a consequence of the French revolution 200 years ago it was certainly not intended to be a right of asylum for fleeing monarchs, who had been overthrown, and their entourage, but for democratic revolutionary forces.

The corresponding resolution from 1791 reads:

"The people of France guarantees the right of asylum to all those who have been driven into exile because of their struggle for freedom in their own countries. For tyrants it will be refused."

In the socialist Soviet Union at the time of Lenin and Stalin the right of asylum was as a matter of course embodied and defined in the constitution. This right of asylum was not for the despots, who were overthrown, but for the persecuted, the "damned of this world".

The final draft of the 1936 constitution of the socialist Soviet Union reads:

"The USSR guarantees citizens of foreign states, who are persecuted for defending the rights of the working people or for their scientific activity or for the struggle for national freedom, the right of asylum."

And during the period after 1945, still under the impression of the Anti-Hitler-Coalition, the "General Declaration of Human Rights" published in 1948 commented on the democratic right of asylum:

"Article 14 (right of asylum)"

1. Every human being has the right to seek and enjoy the right of asylum in other countries because of persecution.

2. However those who are persecuted because of not-political crimes, or actions which contravene the objectives and principles of the United Nations are not allowed to claim this right."

Here it is still obvious that asylum for torturers, overthrown despots, executioners, fascists and so on does not correspond with the substance of the right of asylum in a democratic sense.

The reactionary tradition and use of the right of asylum in West-Germany

If one compares this original idea with the German Constitution called "Basic Law" it is entirely clear that the real intention of the wording in the Constitution was in the first place to protect the German Nazi criminals and their followers.

Article 16 clause 2 states:

"No German citizen shall be extradited to a foreign jurisdiction. Political persecutes are entitled to the right of asylum."

This clause was embodied in the German Constitution not because of any great human and noble reasons and especially not in support of freedom fighters all over the world. Even when the right of asylum for political persecutes was formulated in a "neutral" way, West-German imperialism has *never acted neutral in reality*.

On the contrary, the reason why this article was so eagerly embodied in the "Constitution" was the anti-communism of the time and the general situation at that time. With help so to say this general formulated article, the fascist and reactionary criminals for example from eastern European countries, who wanted to escape the

justified revenge of the population, took their heels and made their way to West-Germany. Indeed *fascists, counter-revolutionaries and wanted collaborators* with Nazi-fascism from Rumania, Soviet Union, Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia poured into West-Germany. To include the right of asylum *explicitly for this kind of people* in the German Constitution was impossible at that time, so they changed it around, that a *general right of asylum without the restrictions that had been laid down by the UN* was brought into operation.

In the same article 16 clause 2 it is laid down that no German citizen shall be extradited to a foreign jurisdiction. What that really means, that Germans who have committed crimes in other countries shall not be extradited. In view of the vast amount of crimes committed by Germans in other countries during the Nazi-fascist period with that article these people have been protected from being brought to justice by the peoples, who had suffered from them. *That* is the gist of article 16 clause 2 and *that* must be made clear to all and sundry, who defend this article as "liberal-

Fight against chauvinism and racism – Long live proletarian internationalism!

Questions in the struggle against reactionary mass mobilisation

Lebach/Saarland is a very good example where West-German imperialists last year managed to mobilise a relative broad mass movement of German locals against the housing of Roma refugees in their area. Here it is plain to see how it functions:

The news from the major's office, not to speak of the whispering campaign, in a rural area, in a small village or town, that 500 or more asylum-seekers are to be housed in their area regularly sets in motion a whole chain of events.

In a sneaky way, on the one hand "anger" is stirred up and at the same time a shrug of the shoulder policy is practised that "it is out of our hands" and the ones at the top were responsible.

democratic" on the whole.

Today when the economical crises has also seized Germany and when the concrete possibilities have grown huge, that politically persecuted from other countries far and wide claim the right of asylum in West-Germany, the West-German imperialist are interested in repealing that part of article 16 which provides *certain possibilities of protection* for politically persecuted anti-imperialists, anti-fascists and communists.

Fully aware about the fact, that the German Constitution on the whole is a weapon of West-German imperialism to fool the broad masses, that it protects the capitalist ownership of the means of production explicitly and so on, and also fully aware about the fact, that also article 16 is contradictory, even wrong, nonetheless *all* attempts of West-German imperialism to *abolish the right of asylum* must be resisted. The priority here is definitely not questions of law or special wordings, but the *corresponding struggle* and how it will be led.

With what in mind a definite mood is generated and encouraged.

Additional measures and announcements ("Football training is no longer possible, the gym is occupied"; "there are no woman amongst them, they are all young and single, they will be after our women") only make the mood more tense, and very soon a situation is reached, where the "respectable citizens" according to his or her mentality form either a "militia" or a "citizens committee" and inebriated, incited forces throw stones and incendiary compounds.

Where injuries or even deaths have been the result of such activities, and after the refugees have left this "hospitable" scene in a hurried manner, then is the "peoples rage" exalted. An example is made, a "victory" is achieved, the genuine democratic forces have kept their mouth or have been quickly shoved to the side.

The consequences of such a "victory":

The idea of proletarian internationalism recedes more and more into distance, reactionary ideas are strengthened by such actions. The West-German bourgeoisie has chalked up another victory, the can go on – referring to this kind of "peoples anger" – rail-roading through restrictive laws and measures under the pretext "safeguards for the population".

Especially repugnant are such developments as "citizens initiatives" where Roma from eastern Europe are affected. Overt racist hate campaigns, direct continuation of Nazi-propaganda against "gypsies", which led to the extermination of 500.000 Cinti and Roma, manifest themselves in the open; the few demonstrations that take place to show *solidarity* lack real power. Nevertheless their value should not be underestimated, they should be supported and encouraged.

In places where reactionary "citizens initiatives" are organised against asylum-seekers following practical principles could be adhered to:

- * Even in those places where it looks as if the protest from the "local people" is a seemingly legitimate matter (for example no possibilities to train in the gym) one thing is inadmissible under all circumstances: Simply to *swim with the current*, to do as if the "protest" against such measures were as such quite legitimate and to ignore the tangible connection with the reactionary cheap propaganda.
- * On the other hand it also false, clumsy and detrimental to close one's eyes to any worries and any fears categorically. Naturally one has to try to isolate the reactionary agitators from their fellow-travellers when the possibility arises.

To counteract false opinions, a detailed campaign – as concrete as possible and as fundamental as the situation allows – with certain actions, leaflets, posters and other methods must point out the following decisive arguments:

Only by working together with the refugees can the concrete problems on the scene be grasped,

only under the sign of *solidarity*, when real contacts between the refugees and the young persons in the village, in the town or in the city district are established, when the biography of individual refugees is known, one will be able to organise the *concerted* protest against untenable conditions, which in the first place concern the refugees and in the second place – if that is true – the so-called "locals".

Only in this way and only together with the refugees can the reactionary provocation's from government agencies and offices be thwarted, can the plug be pulled on the reactionary agitators and at the same time be made most of the situation for political instructional work and discussions about the causes of misery in the world and the reasons for racism and nationalism.

A nation that oppresses other nations can not be free!

The ideological and political *struggle against the flood and currents of German chauvinism* is not only in the interest of the freedom fighters, of the politically persecuted refugees, the jobseeking people from all over the world, but *especially in the interest of the enlightenment and education of the German workers and the working population at large.*

The more and more massive efforts towards racist blinding of the working population, towards indoctrinating them with a feeling of superiority against people from other continents, from Turkey, Sri Lanka, Eastern Europe etc., the attempts of instigating them against political refugees from other countries *in order to divert from their own exploitation and oppression, to present them a scapegoat for that and to get them ideologically into the right mood for wars to come against other peoples*, all that actually makes any real progress in class struggle here in West Germany *impossible*. The armed struggle of the proletariat to overthrow West/German imperialism in the socialist revolution, to smash its state apparatus, the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the participation in the proletarian

world revolution are *completely out of the question*, as long as such a chauvinism predominates.

indignant parts of the population *fight this chauvinist stream* side by side with the asylum seekers.

It is the hard truth that under the pressure of the fascist and racist agitation the majority of the population joins in the choir of the alleged "foreign infiltration", the alleged "stream of asylum seekers" and similar things. Today it is all the more urgent to oppose a real but completely different stream, that is the *stream of German chauvinism*. In this context those positive examples are all the more valuable, where genuine

This is the only way to advance on the road of the destruction of world imperialism together with the workers, the peoples of the world. On this long, winding and difficult, but only possible way to reach this aim it is the task of the working class to maximally support one another, in the sense of proletarian internationalism, in the struggle against world imperialism, for the proletarian world revolution.

No slaves below us, no masters above!

When the peoples speak for themselves, they will soon agree!

Long live proletarian internationalism!

Death to German imperialism, revanchism and militarism!



Extracts taken from: "Gegen die Strömung", # 57, which was published in October 1991 and translated into English in November 1998

GEGEN DIE STRÖMUNG

Pogroms!

These are today the days when the **EGGERPÖGROSEN** are being produced in a **pothole**!

... [The rest of the leaflet text is too small to transcribe accurately but follows a similar structure to the other leaflets.]

A selection of other leaflets published by "Gegen die Strömung"

GEGEN DIE STRÖMUNG

The Genocide Committed Against the Herero by the German Imperialists Won't Be Forgotten Nor Forgotten!

... [The rest of the leaflet text is too small to transcribe accurately.]

GEGEN DIE STRÖMUNG

The Potsdam Agreement: a sharp weapon for unmasking German imperialism, revanchism and militarism

... [The rest of the leaflet text is too small to transcribe accurately.]

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