



Bulletin 2/13

Information for revolutionary and Marxist-Leninist forces of all countries

Excerpts and synopsis from the publications by "Gegen die Strömung" - Organ for the Building of the Revolutionary Communist Party of Germany: **March - June 2013**



Appears quarterly in ENGLISH, French, Italian, Spanish and Turkish



The leaflet from March/April 2013 dealt with:

The Experience at Opel Confirms the Slogan:

**If you fight you can lose,
but if you don't fight, you've already lost!**

Over 76 % of the Opel workers in Bochum have rejected the so-called 'restructuring wage agreement' that the leadership of the metal workers' union IG-Metall had agreed with Opel management. This rejection is completely justified. ... There are many voices claiming that it doesn't make any sense to fight in a situation like this. That it would only make things worse. Those who fight will only lose, that's the logic that the union- and works council chiefs are trying to make us believe.

But the experience at Opel in Bochum confirms both directly and indirectly exactly the opposite. Those who fight can lose ... but without a fight, without a determined defence, without exerting any significant pressure, the capitalists and their State will be able to continue to impose ever-worsening conditions. And most of all: without a fight, without coming together in a long-term, irreconcilable struggle against capital and the capitalist system, with victories, setbacks and defeats along the way, the workers will never be able to put themselves in a position to get rid of capitalist exploitation and oppression once and for all.

The Opel „Restructuring Wage Agreement“ – A Document of Intensified Exploitation

This section made clear the meaning of the agreement that the trade union bosses and the united works council of Opel had agreed with the capitalists from the Opel board: compulsory redundancies, the ending of car production in Bochum, wage cuts, lies about „safeguarding the future“ and the fomenting of a German-chauvinist atmosphere, division

and blackmailing of the Opel workers. The section concluded:

For the union and works council chiefs and their apparatus it is important to prevent any effective struggle. Above all, they want to prevent by any means a repetition of the powerful and independent strike of 2004, and to prevent a spark of resistance that might ignite at other Opel sites. They haven't been able to achieve this yet.

Step It Up, Don't Ease Off!

The next section emphasised:

The decisive factor is the combativity of the workers, their readiness and ability to land effective blows against capital and its State, to go on strike, to occupy factories, to really turn up the pressure.

The more they lead a determined fight against exploitation and oppression, the more they can begin to reject the politics of class collaboration, of reformism and belief in the State, to reject the division of the workers through German nationalism and chauvinism – and vice versa. And the more they can approach a struggle directed against the totality of capital, its parties and its State. Such a struggle can make it easier to make connections with resistance against Nazis and tendencies towards State fascism, against policies of militarism and war, and against imperialist exploitation and oppression due to German imperialism across the globe.

Take the Struggle into our Own Hands - Without and Against the Trade Union Bosses!

This section addressed the question of whether it really makes any sense to fight within the trade unions:

... We want to summarise our position in three brief points:

- The trade union apparatus is firmly controlled by a small layer of well-paid and fully bought-off union bosses (Lenin called them the „labour bureaucracy“). This layer of bureaucrats can count on the support of a not insignificant layer of the working class, the so-called „labour aristocracy“. The leadership of the German Trade Union Federation and its apparatus are thus in many ways closely linked – and coalesce with – the State and capital. ...
- But we are not saying that this completely negative appraisal of the trade union leadership means that we shouldn't work within the trade unions. Sometimes it's necessary to fight your enemies from within. Together with our activist colleagues we need to fight against the leadership of the trade unions, their bureaucratic and undemocratic apparatus with the aim of mobilising the maximum number of union members. But we must be careful, we're operating in „enemy territory“. ... Slander, denunciations, sackings, expulsions from the union – these are all part of the harsh reality for those who dare to challenge the union bosses, who expose their intrigues and who get a bit too close for their comfort...
- The decisive thing is to rely on our own strength, not to allow ourselves to be intimidated and stopped by the union bosses and their apparatus, and where possible, to use some of the structures of the union, without making ourselves dependent on them. ...“

For the Revolutionary Overthrow of Capitalism

... The task of the communist forces is to support all of these daily struggles with all their strength, to bring their militancy, activity and arguments into these just struggles. The communists will, however, make clear that every such struggle within the capitalist system has its limits. In the long term, this struggle can slow down – but not stop – the general deterioration of conditions. Unemployment, work closures, pay cuts, exploitation and oppression will always occur as long as capitalism still exists....

In the long term these daily struggles can only lead to success when the workers actively attack capital and its State, the system of capitalism. That means too that the most important thing is not the immediate outcome of a struggle. In the long term the decisive factor in all of the struggles is the advancement of the revolutionary unity of the workers for the overthrow of capitalism. ...

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels developed the program for the road and the goal of the struggle of the revolutionary workers. „Down with the wage system!“ - that means that private ownership of the means of production and the exploitation of one person by another need to be abolished. But the precondition of this is that the old bourgeois State, an instrument of capitalism, needs to be smashed from top to bottom and a completely new revolutionary workers power, the dictatorship of the proletariat needs to be constructed. That's a clear program which lays out in plain language and without fear of the ruling class, on the one side the necessity of dictatorial measures against capital and against the capitalists, and on the other side the socialist democracy for the working class on the way to a classless, communist society. other ss the proletariat needs to be constructed. The appeal of the communists remains: Workers of all lands should unite. That's the meaning of International Workers' Day, the red First of May.

The leaflet consisted of four sides of A4 and also contained the following articles:

- *Highlights of workers' struggles across the world (February-March 2013)*
- *The Fight of the Ford Workers from Genk (Belgium) – an Example to Follow!*
- *Opel Union Boss Einkenkel & Co. – Stopping a Real Fight by „Talking Left“*
- *Supplement: Appeal of the Opel workplace reps on May 1, 2013*



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The leaflet for May/June 2013 had the subject:

Solidarity with the Struggling Workers in Bangladesh!

Over 1,100 textile workers died in Bangladesh after being forced to work, despite warnings, in a factory in imminent danger of collapse. The cause was immediately clear: in an atmosphere of bottomless poverty, extreme oppression, terrible exploitation and inhuman working conditions, it was the combined profit greed of the capital of imperialist countries and the local ruling class, the factory owners and managers which led to the deaths of over 1,100 textile workers.

The deadly working conditions in the textile industry in Bangladesh were also a subject in the German media in Germany for a short time. The deadly – in the literal sense of the word – working conditions in the textile industry in Bangladesh were also a topic in the media in Germany for a short period of time. But the subject quickly disappeared again, and was anyway treated as if it was a particular problem among a low-cost firms in the textile industry. European subjects quickly dominated international news reporting once again. But in reality the events in Bangladesh place questions of proletarian internationalism on the agenda, of perspectives for revolution in very different oppressor and oppressed countries across the globe.

*In the next section **the deadly working conditions of the textile industry in Bangladesh** were described.*

*A further section told of the **struggles of the textile workers in Bangladesh** which are directed against these deadly working conditions.*

*The section headed „**Reject the German-European Perspective**“ discussed how the promotion of a German-chauvinistic and European-chauvinistic attitudes aims to create and strengthen an atmosphere of class peace in Germany.*

The following section identified and examined factors which explain the difference in living standards of the working, exploited classes in different countries and regions: The history and development of living standards in each country, the particular traditions in a country and most of all how

the fierce worldwide struggles of the working masses achieved social improvements. Another factor is the colonial and neo-colonial exploitation of countries dependent on imperialism by the imperial metropolises.

*The section ‘**Solidarity in the Struggles**’ started by establishing that capitalism across the world means that the working class in every country sinks ever deeper into poverty. It continued:*

Struggles of the working class continually develop up to the present day in all capitalist countries against this ‘absolute pauperisation of the working class’ (Marx).

Today in the so-called ‘low-wage countries’ there are increasing struggles to raise the living- and working conditions to the well-known working and living conditions in the imperialist centres.

In the imperialist centres there are struggles of varying size and intensity in different countries against increasing unemployment, cuts in welfare services and low pay. The ever-increasing sharp rivalry between the imperialist great powers over the next decades will lead to increasing international crises and wars. Out of all of these aspects arises the prospect – also in the imperialist centres - of the lowest layers of the labouring masses, above all the workers, becoming revolutionary and then breaking with the labour aristocracy and opportunist leaders.

On top of that is the fact that workers from countries with poor economic conditions are being forced to sell their labour power in ever greater numbers in countries where the economic situation is better, merely in order to survive. This modern migration, triggered by capitalism and imperialism, provides great opportunities and possibilities for a united struggle of the workers of different countries against the common enemy of the capitalists, who are trying with all means at their disposal to set one group of workers against another.

In Germany it is necessary to lead a **systematic and determined fight against German chauvin-**

ism and European arrogance in the struggle for the unity of workers in all countries. This is especially clear in the class struggles of countries such as Bangladesh.

If we can succeed in making contacts, in organising a left-wing union- and democratic movement in Germany which acts in solidarity with those fighting, if we can organise a common struggle across borders in the current union battles, if we succeed in fighting against German and European chauvinism in these struggles, then it will be an important step in the right direction.

In all of these struggles it will become clear how effective it is when the working class of several countries, often quite different countries, enters into a common struggle against the capitalist class of their 'own' countries, in a fight against capitalists who are no longer simply capitalists in one country but who are organised as imperialist monopolies and companies operating worldwide. It becomes possible to recognise common enemy.

But it would be naïve to think that the centuries-old division of the world into colonial countries and imperial metropolises, and the centuries-old chauvinistic jingoism can be overcome in a few decades.

It will be a long road, a road on which there will not simply be isolated struggles, trade union questions and democratic conditions, but rather the building of a common fighting revolutionary front on all of the important issues. The possibilities of a common struggle across all borders have grown enormously over the last decades. Travel and information routes have been shortened dramatically. It's not just the case that the ruling class in all countries can more easily organise common exploitation and oppression despite increased competition. The working people of the world can also more easily make contact with each other and organise common, revolutionary struggles to bring down imperialism.

In recent years there has been increasing discussion that the capitalist system doesn't just have problems, but that it is itself the problem. Capitalism

needs to be 'overcome' or 'abolished', as it's often vaguely put. But sooner or later it becomes clear that these fine words often disguise or ignore the real problem and thus fail when confronted with the harsh reality. For it won't be possible to just somehow 'overcome' or 'abolish' capitalism, that's the typical language of reformism! The capitalist system and its machinery of power need to be smashed in a real revolution.

So as it has become increasingly clear in the last few years that capitalism means war, death, exploitation and oppression, that capitalism now represents a worldwide system, then it has also become clear that precisely the powerful class struggles in the so-called low-wage countries can have an immense importance in the weakening of imperialism and can deal it heavy blows in individual countries. It can become clear that the class struggles in each country can help the class struggles in other countries."

In conclusion it was emphasised that there can be no solution without the unity of the working class of all countries, without the line of unity of all exploited and oppressed masses inside and outside of the main imperialist centres. That's why Karl Marx proclaimed the slogan:

„Workers of all countries, Unite!“



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(*... but don't underestimate the secret services anywhere in the world)