

Interview with the Roten Bund^{*†}

Conducted by Roten Post

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Roter Bund: On the occasion of our foundation, the editorial office of the Roten Post asked a comrade and a comrade of ours some questions about who we are and what we plan to do.

Rote Post: Hello Comrades. It's nice that you give us the opportunity to talk to you. Just recently, the foundation of a new revolutionary organization in Germany was announced. The Rote Bund moves, so to speak, within the same political environment in which many of our cooperating comrades move, and to which a large number of our readers certainly also feel they belong. That is why we are very interested in this development. Can you tell us a little bit about this new organization, what you think, what its meaning is?

Maria: *The Rote Bund is an organization founded by comrades who worked in different red and internationalist collectives in Berlin, Bremen, Hamburg, NRW and Baden-Württemberg, and by individuals and smaller groups from other federal states. Some of us have pursued revolutionary politics together over many years, but above all locally and without a uniform nationwide form of organization. We have now changed that. We are convinced that in the political battle of class against class, the organization is the most important weapon. Because in order to achieve political goals, appropriate forms of organization and struggle are needed. In our opinion, the form of organization that we have used over the years was mainly good and fulfilled its political purpose. But today this form of organization is outdated and does not correspond to the current moment of the class struggle in Germany. We discussed our political tasks together for a while and agreed on a political program. In this we have defined our goals. In order to fight for these goals, we need a form of organization that enables us to act uniformly nationwide. It*

^{*}<https://roterbund.de/index.php/interview/>

[†]Translation and Footnotes by a. Ishmael.

is also important for us to give the comrades in parts of the country, where there have been no collectives so far, and who now have a growing interest in our work, an opportunity to organize themselves together with us. That is why we founded the Roten Bund, as a broader activist organization, of which we are convinced that it will allow us a completely different reach and political effectiveness in the future.

RoPo: Why the name “Roter Bund”?^{1 2}

Lucas: *Germany is an imperialist country. Accordingly, the task of the proletariat, the working class, in this country is to carry out the socialist revolution. This differs from the situation of our class in the oppressed countries – there it is the task of carrying out a democratic revolution in order to eliminate the imperialist yoke and the exploitation by bureaucratic capitalism and semi-feudalism. In this country, we repeat, the task is the socialist revolution – and thus the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. An organization of activists is usually referred to as “Roten” in the Communist Movement when it has set itself this task. In the oppressed countries, where a new democratic revolution must be carried out, a form of organization of comparable character is usually called “movement of the people” or similar.*

So, the “red” comes from the character of the revolution that must be made in Germany. We chose “Bund” as the name because, as I said, we are emerging as an association of different collectives, groups and individuals. That in the first place. But secondly, also because we strive to be able to act as a kind of umbrella organization in the future, under which organizational forms with a special orientation, such as youth organizations, cultural organizations, etc. can also participate. The comrades of the Red Women’s Committees have decided to see themselves as part of the Roten Bundes. We are very happy about that. This has made an important, if not decisive, contribution to our emergence.

RoPo: That means that the Red Women’s Committees have dissolved into the Roten Bund?

Maria: *No, no way. The comrades continue to work, but now as part of the Roten Bundes as a whole, i.e. they retain their own organizational structure, but as part of a larger whole.*

RoPo: As Marxists, we know that without the Communist Party, the

¹Roter Bund roughly translates to “Red League” in English.

²The word “Rote” is conjugated in German so in this text you will see Rote, Roten, and Roter. An example would be: der rote Apfel = the red apple, die roten Äpfel = the red apples, ein roter Apfel = a red apple, viele rote Äpfel = many red apples.

proletarian revolution cannot win. What do you think about this question? Are you an organization that works for the reconstitution of the Communist Party of Germany?

Lucas: *According to our understanding, the Communist Party is the highest organizational form of the working class, it is its organized front force – the general staff of the class. And because it is, it must consist of the most devoted, determined and most sacrificing of all fighters of the working class. So the Communist Party is a selected force. Not everyone who wants to work for the proletarian revolution can meet these very high requirements. There are comrades who work like this, and of course they have to play a leading role within the entire revolutionary movement, but our role is different. We organize ourselves as activists, i.e. that we actively, systematically and in an organized manner, enter the class struggle of the working class. Of course, we share the same worldview as the front force of the working class, but our respective practice does not correspond to the same level as that of the comrades who take this matter directly into their own hands. Of course, we see the need for the reconstitution of the Communist Party in this country and of course hope to be able to contribute our modest contribution to this process. But the task of leading this process and carrying it out in the end is not ours.*

RoPo: If you now talk about worldview – in your founding declaration you do not write directly about ideological questions. Does this mean that you are a “cross-stream” organization?

Maria: *We are definitely not a “cross-stream” organization, then we would not see ourselves as an activist organization, but as an association of different interest groups, parties and organizations. We are convinced that in class society every idea and every point of view inevitably bears a class stamp, as Chairman Mao put it so aptly. This means that every thought, every point of view is ultimately an expression of the ideology of a class. And our ideology must be the proletarian one. Our political line or our points of view, which we have summarized in our founding declaration, are nothing more than an attempt to apply this ideology within the class struggle of the proletariat and in its service. In summary: We understand politics as an application of ideology in class struggle. We do not put this in the foreground in the founding document. For our activist organization, the core question is not to formulate a general political line. This is the task of the Communist Party. What we want is to clarify what we are fighting for to give people the opportunity to create their own clear picture, without more general formulations.*

RoPo: But there are many organizations or political associations that, like you, say that they fight for the class interests of the proletariat and that also call themselves Marxists or even Marxist-Leninists.

Lucas: *The ideology of the proletariat – worldview, point of view and method of the class – is the only scientific ideology and develops accordingly over time. More precisely, by jumps and in spiral form, as Lenin would express himself. Accordingly, our basis is the ideology founded by Marx, developed by Lenin and Chairman Mao Zedong to a higher level, and whose most important representative in recent decades has been the Chairman Gonzalo. This is the only correct ideological guideline for us. In this respect, to express this very clearly, we are of the opinion that parties and organizations that put themselves on a different ideological basis cannot be called consistent Marxists and that in most cases these groups are forces that have betrayed Marxism and with flags that are not theirs, chess.*

RoPo: Okay, that means you get along alone and don't have to work with anyone else?

Maria: *No. We are convinced that there is a great variety of forces in the revolutionary movement in Germany with which we can, should and must work. We believe that there are a lot of representatives of other class interests with whom the proletariat has to cooperate – as Marx has already described. But the proletariat has the clear intention to lead these other classes, and not to be merged into them. These points, we think, are necessary to handle in the current moment of the class struggle in this country in order to unfold the corresponding effect in the revolutionary united front, which is necessary. We will always judge each person, group, organization or party primarily on the basis of their practice, and we hope that others will apply the same criterion with respect to us. But a prerequisite for cooperative cooperation is an active ideological struggle, and not unprincipled reconciliation.*

RoPo: Then, to move on to another topic, how do you organize yourself?

Lucas: *The organizational principle of the working class has been democratic centralism since Marx and Engels. Lenin later also devoted himself to this question and further developed and founded the principle of democratic centralism. And of course we also work according to this principle. We want to be an efficient organization that serves the interests of the working class, not a discussion group. Therefore, uniform action is necessary in order to be able to strike, as they say, “as a fist,” and for this we need centralism, but on the basis of democracy, with conscious and voluntary discipline. By the way, we believe that is necessary to note: the law of contradiction, the*

core of materialist dialectics, teaches us that there are no two things in this world that are the same. There is always a difference in abilities, charisma, talents, etc. within a human group. In the groups in which one opposes the organizational principle of democratic centralism in the name of “freedom” and “anti-authority,” there is a myriad of “unofficial” hierarchies without exception. It is claimed that everyone is the same, but in the end it is always the same petty popes who run the shop. There is no more democratic form of organization than the one in which the decisions are made by achieving ideological and political unity through active ideological struggle, criticism and self-criticism. And because every idea has a class stamp, human ideas reflect class interests, accordingly, objectively speaking, in every revolutionary organization there is always the struggle between two lines: the line that serves the interests of the proletariat, i.e. the revolution, and the line that serves the interests of the bourgeoisie, the ruling imperialist order. If we acknowledge this, we can also understand why the only democratic organizational principle for our class is democratic centralism.

RoPo: Does that mean that you also have a statute? And why didn't you make this known at the same time as the founding declaration?

Maria: *We have a common understanding of our organizational principles, and of course we have a regulated internal life. However, we think that this is one thing that concerns those who want to participate in this internal work, and not something that necessarily concerns everyone. So, the comrades who work with us, get in touch with us and fight together with us will of course be informed in detail and comprehensively about these things.*

RoPo: Your founding declaration is above all a revolutionary program. If you read this, you get the impression that much of it is from the resolution of the international meeting of the anti-imperialist organizations of the 20th. August 2022 is written off. Why is that? Can't you think for yourself?

Lucas: *Yes, we can think for ourselves. We also discussed this question. If there is already a fundamentally correct and correct program, as in this case e.g. on anti-imperialism, why should we not accept it? The Red Women's Committees had already signed this resolution. Of course, we also have to apply this program.*

RoPo: Which people do you want to reach or organize?

Maria: *Simply put, of course, because we have committed to the fight for the socialist revolution, we want to achieve and organize all those who want to put an end to the exploitation and oppression that maintains the ruling order today. Of course, above all, the leading class of our revolution, our*

class, which is the largest class in German society, the working class. But also the huge class of the semi-proletariat and parts of the petty bourgeoisie, such as intellectuals who want to side with the working class. Above all, we find it important to go to the most exploited and oppressed, to those whom Engels called “the deepest and broadest masses.” Then within these different parts of the people, of course, the youth has a special role, as the bearer of the future and as the most active part of the revolutionary movement. Women have double reasons to rebel, as they suffer not only from the exploitation and oppression of the ruling class, but also from that of patriarchy. And we are of the opinion that a decisive thing is to overcome the division of the working class in Germany into local and foreign workers. Because this is the most important pillar for the maintenance of the imperialist system. Accordingly, the ones mentioned are the ones we want to reach. Anyone who shares our political points of view and is willing to develop as an activist is welcome to work and fight with us.

RoPo: Can you list a few fights that you put on the agenda?

Lucas: *If you take a look at our program or our founding declaration, you will already get an impression of how broadly our topics are. Of course, in accordance with the objective of the Roten Bundes, we focus on different economic and political struggles of the working class. In our eyes, this is necessary in order to develop the class struggle of the working class in this country and to continue to take root among the workers. For example, different of our members have already participated in the various waves of strikes that have occurred in recent years, highlighting the need for a combative union. But we also develop the labor struggles in our respective workplaces.*

For us, proletarian internationalism is also of particular importance. It is not an empty phrase for us that the working class is an international class. That is why we attach great importance to supporting the struggles of our class and the organizations that lead the class in the respective countries. Of course, there are the four people’s wars that are currently being waged – in Peru, India, Turkey and the Philippines. These are great beacons for us, and they give us revolutionary perspective and hope. A fight that is now directly on the agenda for us, for example, is the struggle of the Mexican people in southern Mexico against the Interoccitan Corridor. But the struggle of the poor farmers in Brazil has also been present in our work for a long time.

Maria: *In addition, we will also, and above all of course we comrades, but not only, put the struggles of women against the double oppression and exploitation from which they suffer, on the agenda. We also see a great need*

to fight against any kind of identity politics and postmodernism that have caused great damage to the women's movement in this country, especially in recent years. But in our opinion, the struggle for the emancipation of women is not just a struggle for ideas, so wherever possible we will put emphasis on the special economic conditions in which the woman fights.

RoPo: The Rote Bund also has a logo, can you tell me why you just chose this symbol?

Maria: *We are guided above all by the saying of Marx and Engels: "The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win!" As the Roter Bund, it is our job to break these chains and unfold the full power of our class. All under the motto: "Proletarians of all countries, unite!" That's why we chose our symbol as it is.*

RoPo: Do you also operate websites with revolutionary news, or do you have a newspaper or something similar?

Lucas: *No, we do not operate a news website ourselves, nor do we distribute a newspaper. But of course we try to be in exchange with other revolutionary news websites, or with revolutionary print media, such as the RoPo, for example.*

RoPo: What is the possibility of contacting you if I am interested in you?

Maria: *For everyone who is interested, we have a website called roterbund.de, which we update occasionally. There you will also find different e-mail contacts from the respective federal states.*

RoPo: Thank you very much for this extensive interview and good luck with your work!