



Christian Semler speaks at a demonstration protesting Brezhnev's visit to West Germany. (Rote Fahne photo)

Germany and the Three Worlds

An Interview with Christian Semler, Chairman of the KPD

Class Struggle is pleased to publish the following interview with Christian Semler, Chairman of the Communist Party of Germany, the KPD. Semler has a long history of struggle against imperialism. Late last year, in fact, the West German bourgeoisie placed him and other activists on trial for their activities in organizing mass opposition to U.S. aggression in Vietnam among the German people in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Due to mass protests, however, the court was unable to impose any heavy jail terms or fines. Semler got a suspended sentence and three-years probation, which the KPD considered a political, if not legal, victory in the case.

The KPD is a Party adhering to the "theory of the three worlds," that is, the political differentiation of world forces between the two superpowers of the first world, the lesser imperialist powers of the second world in Europe and elsewhere, and the vast majority of countries of the third world. How do you apply this theory to Germany, especially given its divided status?

According to our analysis, both German states belong to the second world. They are developed capitalist countries. In West Germany the monopoly-capitalist bourgeoisie, the core of the bourgeoisie in general, rules as an independent imperialist bourgeoisie. In East Germany, however, the Soviet Union is in top command and exercises a foreign rule. The new bourgeoisie in East Germany is the servant of Soviet social-imperialism, but also pursues its own interests in opposition to the Soviets.

Against which superpower must we direct our main blow? Given the fact that both German states are developed capitalist countries, it is important to answer this question. Its answer lies in the fact that Soviet social-imperialism is a power which already has occupied one part of Germany and whose influence over the other part is continuously increasing. Consequently it is the more dangerous of the two superpowers and the one against which we have to direct our main blow. U.S. imperialism, on the other hand, is allied with the West German bourgeoisie. It has political, economic and military positions of major importance to defend in West Germany. U.S. imperialism will not voluntarily withdraw from Germany, just as it will not voluntarily withdraw from Europe.

Our political line, then, puts before us the task to unite the masses of people in both German states against both superpowers. In our view, the socialist revolution in Germany can only be victorious when the two superpowers have been routed from German soil. Concretely this means that we aim to create a people's movement against the hegemonism of the two superpowers, for democratic rights and unity of the German nation. Consequently the stand we take towards the various bourgeoisies is the essence of our application of the theory of the three worlds.

What is your Party's analysis of the relationship between U.S. imperialism and West Germany? Should the West German ruling class be seen as an independent force?

As you probably know, it was the U.S. imperialists who, in

cooperation with the West German imperialist bourgeoisie, split Germany into two parts after World War II. West German imperialism then continued to develop under the hegemony of U.S. imperialism. Today, on the one hand, the West German bourgeoisie is allied with U.S. imperialism. On the other hand, competition is developing between the two imperialisms in a number of areas. Despite this competition, however, the West German government and almost all forces within the West German bourgeoisie believe that the alliance with the U.S. is of vital importance for the maintenance of West Germany's security vis-a-vis the Soviet Union. That is, there does not exist a significant faction within the West Germany bourgeoisie which would advocate a policy of opposition to the two superpowers and a policy of a united Europe which is sufficiently strong to oppose the Soviet Union and develop independently from the U.S.

Such an alternative is objectively necessary, however. And there are aspects of the West German foreign policy, for example, which amount to a greater appreciation of the needs of the third world and an alliance of the EEC (European Economic Community) with the third world.

The general line of the West German bourgeoisie and its government, however, advocates that one must necessarily rely on the U.S. militarily while continuing to pursue the detente policy towards the Soviet Union. We characterize this policy as "expanding on the lee side of the U.S. while simultaneously conducting an open door policy towards Soviet social-imperialism." Using these maneuvers, West German imperialism attempts to secure hegemony or predominance in Western Europe through its special relations with the U.S. and the Soviet Union. This policy is bound to fail. This means that the West German bourgeoisie and its political representatives, currently the SPD and FDP [social-democratic and liberal parties—ed.], are a very powerful force of appeasement towards Soviet social-imperialism.

What is your Party's stand on the German national question? Would the unification of Germany play a progressive role in the world today?

It is, of course, not so that the solution of the national question always and everywhere in history plays a positive role. In Europe in particular, there are many who think that it isn't bad that Germany is divided, since she has already been involved in two bloody world wars. However, we believe that raising the national question today

means, in terms of world politics, countering Soviet social-imperialism. You see, the social content of the national question in Germany is the struggle against Soviet hegemonism in Europe. Our political line consists in doing everything to support the struggle of the working class and the masses of people in both German states for national unity, for democratic rights and social demands. Our policy is geared towards forging strong links between the struggles of the masses of people in both German states. It is directed towards mobilizing the West German working class to declare itself in solidarity with the masses of people in the other part of the country who are subjected to an exceptionally brutal social-fascist oppression by the Soviet Union and the new bourgeoisie.

Today we can say that our policy of an anti-hegemonistic and democratic movement in both German states has scored some victories in the last two years. This is true especially in that a very strong movement is developing today in support of the struggle for democratic rights in East Germany. People today are standing up for the democratic rights and basic interests of the people in the GDR to an extent unthinkable two years ago. That is, we can say that we anticipated a historical trend with our political line and that we are part of this historical trend.

What is the situation of the revisionist party in West Germany and the revisionist government in East Germany, the GDR? What is the relationship between the two?

The modern revisionists in West Germany numerically are an insignificant force. They are strictly dependent on Soviet social-imperialism and the new bourgeoisie in the GDR. This is particularly a financial dependence. The DKP [West German revisionist party—ed.] receives yearly from at least 30 million marks to 100 million marks [approximately \$50 million—ed.]. The masses of people who have seen the so-called “real existing socialism” in the GDR strongly reject the modern revisionists.

The revisionists pursue the line of infiltrating the trade union apparatuses and procuring positions in the universities. They have made a few gains, which they attempt to use to throttle the practical struggles by playing a demobilizing role. This policy aims to gain them a strong enough position in order to whore their way into an alliance with the reactionary, pro-detente social-democrats and to wait for the hour when they can fulfill their role as a fifth column. Significant tendencies toward Eurorevisionism do not exist within this party, although the Eurorevisionist trends are potentially very

powerful in Germany.

The SED [Socialist Unity Party, the ruling revisionist party in East Germany—ed.] in the GDR has 1.8 million members. The proportion of workers is relatively small and the party is very isolated from the masses. In practice, the SED is a gigantic instrument of the new bourgeoisie for the expansion of its social basis. The party is a gigantic club for the promotion and the securing of positions. It basically sides with the Soviet social-imperialists and in some respects is their junior partner, as can be seen in its relatively independent role in Africa.

The SED cannot count on the approval of wide sectors of the working class in the GDR. On the contrary, it is despised because of its policy of support for social-imperialism. In order to fulfill the demands of the Soviet social-imperialists, which have been determined by the unequal and unjust treaties between the GDR and the Soviet Union, the working class of the GDR is subjected to ever-sharpening exploitation. In other words, the Soviet Union subjects East Germany to plunder and exploitation to the greatest extent.

How is the economic crisis affecting the German working class? How is it manifested in the GDR?

In East Germany there are very serious signs of economic crisis. Of course, this is mainly due to the restoration of capitalism and the problem which all revisionist countries face, namely, the continual backsliding of the workers' productivity. This is particularly aggravated by the Soviet exploitation which forces the GDR economy to adapt itself to the CMEA [Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, the Soviet-dominated economic bloc—ed.]. As a consequence, the GDR loses its connection to Western technological and economic levels. Naturally, this is a point which will result in increased contradictions between the new bourgeoisie in the GDR and Soviet social-imperialism.

Concerning the question of economic development in the Federal Republic, it is, as I have already said, a developed imperialist country. The organic composition of capital [the proportion of machinery to the number of workers or, to be more exact, the relation of value of the labor-power engaged—ed.] is relatively high. The rate of profit is falling. Only the intensified exploitation of the workers and the export of capital can compensate for the falling rate of profit. The West German government attempts to implement both to a great extent. There are waves of rationalizations and speed-ups in the plants combined with a big mass of lay-offs.

The technological revolution has been in high gear for several years and has resulted in "economizing" hundreds of thousands of jobs. Thus now we can observe a relatively new phenomenon—namely, permanent unemployment of nearly one million workers with an age composition which is continuously becoming more disadvantageous. This means there is especially great unemployment among the youth, which is something new in West Germany in recent times. We currently have a joblessness among the youth which goes into the hundreds of thousands.

For this reason there has been a revival within the trade union movement of a left social-democratic and reformist consciousness. The questioning of the capitalist system, however, still occurs on a wholly reformist basis. There is also a broad discussion in progress of how the massive joblessness and the intensified speed-ups can be countered.

Our Party strongly supports the demand for the 35-hour week at full wages. I am happy to say that this demand is slowly gaining a mass character within the working class.

We also support the demands which are directed against the worsening of the position of the unemployed within the framework of unemployment insurance. As they already did at the end of the 1920s and the beginning of the 1930s, the capitalists are attempting to institute extended cuts in the state social insurance program.

As a whole, one can say that we are in a situation where it is necessary to gather our forces and to rebuild and consolidate the workers' movement. Although the workers' movement in West Germany today is still under reformist or even reactionary leadership, it has made great progress during the last ten years. Today it is again possible to put before the working class the questions of exploitation and the limits of the capitalist system. Marxism is on the forward march within the working class. Of course, there is not yet wide acceptance of the idea of the necessity for socialist revolution.

We understand that your Party and its leaders, including yourself, have recently been the targets of political repression. What is the state of the struggle for democratic rights in the two Germanys?

Similarly to the U.S., we also have a whole undergrowth of laws and legal measures directed against the work of the communists. Our Party continues to be semi-legal. There currently are a number of criminal cases in progress against our Party and other progressive organizations. We are working hard to mobilize larger parts of the

masses of people with the slogan, "Against political repression in both German states."

One can say that in certain respects this policy has borne fruit. This was manifested in the unsuccessful effort of the CDU [Christian Democratic Union, opposition party to the Social Democratic Party in parliament—ed.] to prohibit the organizations which claim to be communist. [The revisionist German Communist Party was openly exempted by the CDU in its attempt to prohibit the Marxist-Leninist organizations—ed.] This was also manifested in an increasing interest among the masses for the struggle against reactionary legal measures, paragraphs, surveillance practices and the so-called "computer surveillance state," which has been worked out to an hitherto unknown perfection in West Germany. For example, all of the leading functionaries of our Party are subject to the "preventative search" measures of the Federal Border Security [a West German para-military policeforce—ed.] and are constantly followed during their travels. This is particularly the case in travels to foreign countries. In sum, they are subjected to constant surveillance.

There is also a stronger growing movement against the *Berufsverbote* [laws which prohibit communists from occupying civil service jobs such as teachers—ed.]. The government is now maneuvering to exempt the revisionists from the *Berufsverbote* but to continue to make us subject to them. Naturally many progressive forces oppose this.

Both the KPD and the political forces preceding it played a big role in the Indochina solidarity movement during the 1960s. What lessons have you drawn from this. How is the anti-imperialist struggle developing today?

This movement played a very important role in the anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist awakening in West Germany during the 1960s. Our Party has been able to rely on this movement as well as give it leadership. We had, however, already in the beginning of the 1970s, oriented this movement against *both* superpowers. In 1971 and 1972, we had fought a two-line struggle within the solidarity movement for Vietnam. Naturally this advance was quite incomprehensible for a number of people. That is, we were successful in creating a numerically very large solidarity movement which also opposed the other superpower. We also developed democratic structures and were successful in transforming the moral indignation of many thousands of people into a political opposition.

It isn't our view that the anti-imperialist struggle has died out

following the victories in Indochina. We do think, however, that the anti-imperialist struggle today has to strongly support the peoples and states of the third world. It has to develop a method of concrete demands and of concrete pressure on the bourgeoisie. That is, we are working to develop this movement in accordance with the theory of the three worlds.

As before, the support for the third world continues to be a great productive force in the class struggle in our own country. Consequently this is not a closed chapter of history for us. However, today the anti-imperialist struggle must be seen as a struggle against both superpowers, as a struggle of solidarity with the peoples of the third world and with the people of Eastern Europe who are subjected to imperialist exploitation by the USSR. In this sense we aim to develop our anti-imperialist work and to connect it to the anti-imperialist movement of the 1960s.

