

Speech Stefan Engel

8 May 2020 – 75 years of liberation from Hitlerite fascism

Dear friends and colleagues,

Dear comrades,

It is important that we include such days of commemoration in our work. Such days of commemoration are first and foremost days of ideological debate. Gabi Fechtner has already explained that the fight against anticommunism is one of the most important tasks for Marxist-Leninists in our time.

Anticommunism practices historical misrepresentation. It eliminates democracy. It turns the concept of freedom upside down. It contributes to and justifies the continued exploitation and oppression of humanity. No alternatives to the ruling system should appear possible.

When we say today that the 8th of May is a day of liberation from fascism and war, we are saying at the same time that the main ideological reason for, and main cause of, fascism was anticommunism – and not anti-Semitism, as bourgeois historiography presents it today. It was not Hitler who invented anti-Semitism. It was invented by the Catholic Church over 1,800 years ago. Martin Luther was a fervent anti-Semite. The first Reich Congress of the Protestant "German Christians" in 1933 declared: *"The State of Adolf Hitler appeals to the Church, and the Church has to hear his call."*

No, anti-Semitism was not the core of fascism. Anti-Semitism was an important part of fascism, its hateful racism, with which it built up a mass base. The hatred of Jews was already deeply rooted in the population before that and was very widespread due to the centuries of slander and discrimination against the Jewish people.

The anticommunism was directed against the socialist Soviet Union, but also against the people who fought against fascism in our country. It was not only Willi Dickhut; there were also many miners who at that time – at the end of the war – hid their work colleagues in potato crates in the cellar at home so that they could not be found by the fascists. They saved them. Numerous Red Army soldiers and other Russian forced laborers were protected here in Gelsenkirchen by the miners, by the employees of the then Gelsenberg company, so that they would not be liquidated by the fascists at the end of the war, as was usual. We know from old miners that they took a few extra sandwiches to work for the forced laborers in order to give them something to eat. This was strictly forbidden; anyone caught was threatened with the death penalty. They did it anyway and they were proud of it. None of these people are honored today if the day of struggle for liberation and the liberators are not properly defined. We stand in the tradition of the working-class movement, and we also honor these miners, the workers and the many families, who in those years under fascism – at the risk of their own lives – ensured that this liberation struggle of the Red Army and the antifascist struggle was a success.

It is also a lie that the fascists first of all brought Jews to the concentration camps. In the beginning it was the communists – among them many communist Jews –, social democrats, and criminals. Only later, with the Reich Pogrom Night, did the situation change. Then it was primarily Jews who were arrested. At first they were called on to buy

their freedom. Hitler was mainly interested in money. In 1938 fascism was in a deep financial crisis. It was bankrupt because the international banks stopped giving it money. Hitlerite fascism was completely in debt and remedied its financial situation through the brutal expropriation of wealthy Jews and by letting Jews partly buy themselves free to emigrate with their families to the USA.

Many of those persecuted by the Nazi regime continued to be persecuted after 1945. After the KPD ban, over 100,000 Communists were deprived of their pensions as victims of persecution by the Nazi regime. These people then had no pension at all. With this I want to emphasize that anticommunism did not stop after 1945. But the victory over Hitlerite fascism was a great victory over anticommunism.

Anticommunism is inherent in the system of capitalism and imperialism. It is one of the ideological foundations of the capitalist system. Therefore, anticommunism will only disappear when capitalism disappears. The dispute with anticommunism will still play an important role even under socialism! We must be clear about this. That is why the fight against anticommunism is also an essential part of our work from the very beginning.

We must be aware that anticommunism has also penetrated deep into the population. We know the reservations: the feeling that "*with communists and 'Stalinists'*", as they always call us – which is, of course, nonsense – "*you have to be a bit careful*". "*You don't know anything for sure, but you have to be careful.*" "*You'd better keep a little distance from them.*"

Do not believe that the MLPD could have been brought into relative isolation for decades without anticommunism. None of us have ever been arrested for their political work. They don't do that yet today. They try to isolate us politically by not allowing us to appear in the media, by excluding us from the trade unions, from women's associations, from youth organizations etc. They try to isolate us and also try to prevent rallies like the one we are holding today. This with such outrageous reasons as those given by the "left" Minister President Bodo Ramelow and his friends in Thuringia on the occasion of the ban on commemorations on the grounds of the former Buchenwald concentration camp. They simply cannot stand it that we are helping socialism and the Soviet Union in Stalin's time to gain new esteem.

The struggle against anticommunism remains a major task. If it is not waged, then we will not achieve victory. If the people do not overcome anticommunism in their thoughts, feelings and actions, we will not be able to prepare and carry out a new socialist revolution.

That is why it is so important to hold such days of struggle, days like today, and to fight to contribute in this way also to the clarification of history. We do not follow this general mainstream that communism is no longer discussed at all, that one is no longer allowed to appear in public discussion at all. Every day you can watch three or four talk shows on television. Don't think that at some point there will be a Marxist-Leninist in the show who will be allowed to say something like here at the rally. No way. Anticommunism has become a state religion in Germany. This fact is not up for discussion. That's simply the case. We work from a minority position here. In order to get further out of this minority position, we must give the struggle against anticommunism a higher priority.

"*Don't give anticommunism a chance!*" is our current slogan. Some people shy away from this discussion a little bit and advise: "*Don't make this a topic on your own initiative*". When we attack anticommunism, some people flinch a bit. No, if we do not make it an issue, nobody at all will make it an issue. And then anticommunism continues to work. Unless people consciously overcome this anticommunism, these reservations that are being stirred up against the communists, we will not be able to win them over for a new go at the

struggle for socialism and for a liberated society.

It is important to understand anticommunism properly. It claims that communism is a power system based on violence. But this is a complete distraction from the system of the dictatorship of the monopolies that we have here – monopolies that have at their command the entire state apparatus of violence, the entire media, public opinion.

With this world economic and financial crisis in conjunction with the corona crisis, we are in a situation where we are heading towards an **overall societal crisis of the imperialist world system**. Never since World War II has the imperialist world system been in such a deep crisis. We are heading towards it – despite or perhaps because of all the "easing measures" and all the debates that are being held. It is not for nothing that a NATO strategy is being prepared to crush revolutionary uprisings and struggles in all countries of the world. Anticommunism plays an important role in this coming conflict. If we fight against it, in this crisis of society as a whole we can win the masses for a new society without exploitation and oppression. This can only be done if they cope with anticommunism. Socialism is not a society of violence; socialism is a liberated society, free from exploitation and oppression of humans by humans, on the way to the classless society of communism. A liberated society in which the environment is protected and the main focus is not profit, but humankind in interrelationship with the preservation of nature. It is the perspective for the youth for which we are fighting here. The struggle for socialism is the most democratic liberation struggle that can be waged today.

In this sense the 75th anniversary of the liberation from fascism and World War II should be an occasion to carry this fight against anticommunism in our hearts under the slogan "Don't give anticommunism a chance!" and also to give it a higher priority in our activities.

In this sense, *Glückauf*, good luck!

Long live the struggle against fascism!

Long live the struggle for socialism/communism – for a liberated society!