

Speech Gabi Fechtner

8 May 2020 – 75 years of liberation from Hitlerite fascism

Dear guests,

Dear citizens of Gelsenkirchen,

Dear comrades,

I am pleased to be celebrating this important **day of liberation** here in public with all of you, even under the currently difficult conditions. Just like a week ago, on May Day, in more than 100 cities, the MLPD is proving today in numerous cities in Germany that the important days of struggle and commemoration of the international workers' movement can neither be banned, nor banished to the Internet or reduced to bourgeois interpretations.

The anniversary of the liberation from Hitlerite fascism is a day of the historical victory of the socialist social system over fascism as the most brutal form of the capitalist social system.

This anniversary is also a day of the defeat of anticommunism in its fascist version. Therefore, this celebration is also part of our movement under the motto "**Don't give anticommunism a chance!**". Because today, too, we must celebrate this day in opposition to anticommunism, which denies the historical facts.

We commemorate this day also in the awareness of how important it is today to remind of the crimes of fascism and the immortal successes of socialism. Today, when in the last four years in at least 22 countries of the world fascist, proto-fascist or openly reactionary governments have come to power and fascist forces are strengthening.

After twelve years of Hitlerite fascism and after six years of devastating world war, it was on 8 May exactly 75 years ago that the time had come. After a self-sacrificing and bitter struggle, the bloody genocide was brought to an end, the military campaign of German imperialism, of Hitlerite fascism was defeated. One can only have a rough idea of what it must have been like when the two Soviet Red Army soldiers raised the red flag on the Reichstag in Berlin. After all, not long before, Hitler had announced what he called the "annihilation of Bolshevism" to be his main goal and proceeded to implement it with extreme brutality.

Dear guests,

Believe it or not, it took 40 years until the first official representative of the Federal Republic of Germany, at that time President von Weizsäcker, admitted it. You have to imagine that until then they had not spoken of a day of liberation. And even this is being called into question again today by numerous reactionary to fascist politicians. Because **anticommunism** was planted **firmly in the DNA of the German constitution**, from their point of view a **victory of socialism over fascism could not and cannot be seen as a liberation**. That is their entire fundamental view of history. And even where this liberation is recognized today, many bourgeois media and politicians conduct really daring maneuvers as to **who the liberators of this liberation actually were. If I speak of**

liberation, I also have to say who actually achieved and fought through this liberation.

In order to avoid this question, Deutschlandfunk radio announces this morning in all seriousness, that liberation had been achieved through the capitulation of Hitlerite fascism. Are we now supposed be grateful to Hitlerite fascism for surrendering? Until the very last day they still tried to destroy the cities, to murder the communist prisoners and only capitulated because they were defeated.

This liberation was achieved through struggle! It is anticommunism which leads to delusions, distortions, lies and falsifications. Many media have emphasized the importance of the Allies here and in particular the so-called Western powers, i.e. the USA, Great Britain and France. Of course, these are also rightly mentioned, because they were close allies in the anti-Hitler coalition. However, the decisive forces for both the formation of this anti-Hitler coalition and for the self-sacrificing struggle for liberation from Hitlerite fascism were the Soviet people and the Red Army. In other words, a socialist people and a socialist army. And, of course, these were then undisputedly under the leadership of Josef Stalin.

Nevertheless - or perhaps for this very reason - we were actually forbidden to hold a commemoration event for this 8 May as a day of liberation at the Buchenwald concentration camp memorial site two days ago, on grounds of the assumption that we as organizers "*could glorify Stalinism at this event.*"

By the way: Two days earlier, we had received the explanation that the event could not take place because there was not enough disinfectant in the toilets. We said, you can't be serious, we'd be glad to bring two packages of disinfectant for each toilet. And then two days later we got this reason. So you can see how here something is being used as a pretext. We think the Corona health protection measures are justified, you can see that here. We take distancing seriously and wear face masks. But there are also examples where this is being misused to prohibit the struggles, the protests, the justified days of struggle and commemoration of the working-class movement, and this was the clear example for that. This argumentation that you are not allowed to talk about Stalin on 8 May shows the whole **absurdity of the taboos of anticommunism!**

Of course, we will also pay tribute to the achievements of Stalin and the Red Army on such a day! We do so because where would our country be without the hard battles fought by the Soviet Union? And where would all those be today, who are so upset about the hard fight that was fought at that time, if this hard fight had not been fought exactly against Hitler fascism? We would have completely different conditions here, and so these people should ask themselves whose side they are actually on.

How can you celebrate a day of liberation without naming the liberators and their merits, which even last until today? What should we do on a day like today with regard to Stalin? Should we condemn Stalin for defeating Hitler? Should we to condemn the fact that he did everything possible to form the anti-Hitler coalition? Of course we are not going to do that, and we are not going to let anticommunism dictate to us how this day is to be celebrated.

But secondly, it must be said that we do not glorify "Stalinism", but reject this anticommunist slanderous term. We represent Marxism-Leninism, which Stalin applied in his time to build socialism in the Soviet Union. The term "Stalinism" is only suitable for implying that what happened there was something completely different. By the way, the wire-pullers behind this ban of the rally in Buchenwald are the same people who wanted to ban the commemoration for the communist Thälmann last year: The foundation board of the memorial, composed of high-ranking politicians from the Left Party government of Thuringia, of all parties, but also CDU top officials like the CDU Minister of State for Culture, Monika Grütters.

We therefore welcome the fact that in this discussion also more and more critical voices are becoming louder, whether it is Esther Bejarano, one of the last concentration camp survivors, critical Russian historians or even journalists who criticize the fact that on this day the merits of the Soviet Red Army are not being adequately acknowledged. There is an increasingly broad movement calling for 8 May to become a holiday. Today, however, under the sword of Damocles of anticommunism, hardly anyone dares to resolutely defend what the socialist Soviet Union under Stalin's leadership achieved and what at that time also received highest respect and recognition worldwide.

Historically, nobody can seriously deny this role! For example, the bourgeois British historian Geoffrey Roberts wrote in 2006: "*In the context of the horrific war on the Eastern Front, Stalin was indispensable to the Soviet victory over Nazi Germany.*" "*Stalin worked hard to make the Grand Alliance a success and wanted to see it continued after the war.*"¹

Even the British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, declared at the time: "*I have a strong admiration and regard for the valiant Russian people and for my wartime comrade, Marshal Stalin.*"²

Completely unthinkable that such things are said today. You meet with disdain if you dare to discuss these questions - in a contentious discussion, of course. So there is no need for a journalist or observer to shudder when we speak objectively and from the standpoint of the working class today about the merits of the socialist Soviet Union and Stalin. We are doing this because it is about time that this taboo is finally broken in Germany and that this discussion takes place as a broad, open, equal social discussion.

Of course, questions that arise in this discussion about the betrayal of socialism, about problems or even crimes committed in the name of socialism are justified and also necessary. But it is something completely different whether this discussion is being held because we want to do it better, because we want to win people for a new upswing in the struggle for socialism, or whether it is being used to defame socialism and play down the crimes of fascism. And that is what is being done here by bourgeois parties and the government.

It was the German Wehrmacht that invaded the Soviet Union in 1941. You would think there would be no need to mention that. But the discussion is currently being conducted in the bourgeois media as if it were necessary to point out that afterwards ... crimes were committed under socialism. Certain of victory, the fascists first made huge territorial gains. **They** committed unbelievable crimes. They destroyed 70,000 towns and villages on Soviet soil, they started pogroms against Jews, they hanged political commissars of the Red Army, they raped women. More than 27 million Soviet citizens lost their lives - by far the highest number of victims of all countries involved in the war against the fascist states. Over 50 million people lost their lives in this war.

And who made this possible? Hitler was not an "accident of history" or just an individual monster. He was authorized, financed and consciously brought to power by German finance capital. By the very corporations such as Thyssen, Krupp, IG Farben, the arms industry etc., which to this day, often under a different name, continue to stand for the dictatorship of the monopolies in the German Federal Republic.

1. *Stalin's Wars: From World War to Cold War, 1939–1953*. Yale University Press 2006, p. xi (Preface)

2.

<http://www.churchillarchiveforschools.com/themes/the-themes/key-events-and-developments-in-world-history/churchill-and-the-cold-war-why-did-churchill-make-his-famous-iron-curtain-speech-in-1946-/the-sources/source-6>

<https://winstonchurchill.org/resources/speeches/1946-1963-elder-statesman/the-sinews-of-peace/>

They have established a different form of rule today. But still with the willingness to preserve a ground for fascist forces and their ideology so that it can be used against the revolutionary working-class movement in case of emergency. The Soviet people were united in the absolute will to defend the socialist fatherland and to defeat fascism. The essential basis of unity was the common socialist construction and the deep conviction to lead this struggle. Never could a reign of terror, eroded from within (as today's anticommunists describe the Soviet Union) have developed such an extraordinary power as was necessary to defeat this Hitlerite fascism. Such a struggle can only take place if you rely on the masses, if you rely on the working class and if they are deeply convinced that they are fighting for a just cause. That was ultimately also the reason why this struggle was superior to this highly armed Hitlerite fascism, which lost more and more support among the population.

May 8 is also a day that reminds us of the **criminal history of anticommunism**. Often the main credit for the liberation is attributed to the Western Allies. They played a major role for the fact that World War II could rage for so many years. In order to defeat fascism, Stalin had been trying to forge an alliance with the USA and Great Britain since Hitler's seizure of power. But for anticommunist reasons, these countries at times even deliberately allowed Hitler's fascism to operate against the Soviet Union and rejected all offers of cooperation from the Soviet Union. At that time, there was a solidarity movement for "Uncle Joe", as Stalin was then called, in the USA and Great Britain, involving tens of thousands of people. There were mass demonstrations of the working-class and trade union movement, which demanded that the USA and Great Britain should support the Soviet Union in the fight against Hitlerite fascism with a 2nd front!

So today we proudly remember the victors of 8 May 1945! And we combine this commemoration with the slogan, yes, a call for a movement: "*Don't give anticommunism a chance!*" And we also have an extended slogan: "*Don't give anticommunism, fascism, racism and anti-Semitism a chance!*" For us, all these crimes that imperialism produces are one. Anticommunism plays a particularly important role in this, because it is the ideological justification for legitimizing fascism, racism and anti-Semitism. If in German so-called "documentary channels", in schoolbooks and on the Internet socialism and communism are reviled as an entire system of atrocities, then according to this logic the fascists also have a justification, because their main enemy are the communists. And that is how it actually works. Currently the AfD, together with its proto-fascist wing, can spread its smears more or less unhindered, including the current parliamentary group leader Gauland, who in all seriousness calls 8 May a "total defeat". This is a fascist position that he has taken on this issue. The MLPD, in turn, has been even increasingly fought and defamed in recent years, starting with Seehofer's Ministry of the Interior.

But: This has no future! These taboos are breaking up more and more, and without doubt the MLPD has gained a role in society as a whole in the last years! While the revisionists, i.e. those who betrayed socialism in the Soviet Union, the GDR etc., only emphasize the victims and suffering of the communists under fascism, the communists of that time proved that Hitler's anticommunist war could be defeated and how. The struggle was not only of a defensive nature. From the defense of the homeland they finally went over to the attack, liberated half of Europe from fascism and as a result - after the victory of the Chinese revolution - one third of humanity lived in socialist or people's democratic countries.

Dear friends,

In this context, I would not like to miss also commemorating Willi Dickhut today. He was co-founder and guiding force of the MLPD, who died exactly today on 8 May, 28 years ago. Willi Dickhut represented the unshakable conviction in the victory of socialism: He

shaped the determined struggle of the KPD against Hitlerite fascism under illegal conditions, and his indispensable part in the liberation of Solingen at that time, where workers and communists prevented the city from being destroyed just before the liberation from the fascists, remains unforgettable. The destruction of Hitlerite fascism was a victory over anticommunism, fascism and anti-Semitism. We stand here today as the heirs of a courageous policy, oriented to the future- with the perspective of the united socialist states of the world.

Our President Steinmeier stated in his speech today that you could only love Germany with a broken heart. I ask myself: when does a heart have to break? A heart only has to break if I have identified or still identify myself with the other, with the wrong side at some point. My heart does not have to break when I think of this history, because we are on the side of the upright communists, the resistance fighters, the brave fighters of the Red Army and all those who fought together in alliance with them. And it is in this tradition that we are holding this commemoration day! With 58 revolutionary parties and organizations, we in the ICOR struggle together on five continents to build a worldwide anti-imperialist united front against fascism and war.

Today we lay this wreath down on the place where the statue of Lenin, the Russian revolutionary and leader of the October Revolution, will be erected. We have heard that there is a rumor in Horst that perhaps today we will erect the statue of Lenin. I am sorry to disappoint you - we will not be doing that today. But we will erect this statue of Lenin in the not too distant future and we are very happy to continue the great discussion that it has triggered here in Horst, but also halfway around the world. With this we will also continue our movement "*Don't give anticommunism a chance*". Without Lenin and the October Revolution, the first socialist state in the world would not have existed. Without the selfless efforts of the socialist Soviet Union under the leadership of Stalin, fascism would not have been defeated. We bow down before the Soviet people today. We bow down before the partisans, the communists, the social democrats, before all those who fought for liberation from Hitlerite fascism and paid with their lives.

Thank you very much.