

GLASGOW Speech Reinhard Silbermann 9/8/18

Dear anti-fascists,

at first I would like to thank HOPE NOT HATE GREATER
GLASGOW for the invitation to speak at this important event.

I send you solidary greetings from the German International
Brigader organization KFSR, from the two Ernst Thälmann
organizations in Hamburg and Berlin, the Willi Bredel Society and
especially from young anti-fascists from the north of Hamburg,
where I live, from the group "Antifa 309". Every day these young
fighters make sure that the fascist scum does not feel comfortable
in the north of my city. They are wonderful young antifascists and
maybe they are here once guests, in this, your battle hardened
city of Glasgow!

Thank you, dear friends, for giving me the opportunity to speak to
you today.

I grew up in the working-class background of Hamburg, among

the illegal fighters of the KPD operating harbour cell.

They were illegal, because the KPD Thälmanns was forbidden since 1956 in West Germany, at that time 10 thousand communists were accused and 200Tsd pursued .

That's why I feel emotionally deeply connected to the Glasgow working class.

Let's go back in history, to Spain from 1936-1939.

Today, 80 years ago, the great battle raged at the Ebro, the Republican People's Army fought sacrificially against the Francofascists and against Italian and German intervention troops. Despite the tremendous material superiority of the fascists (for example, fifteen fascist bombers came on a bomber of the Spanish Republic), the Brigaders fought side by side with their Spanish brothers and sisters - an example of proletarian internationalism. The Spanish War 1936-1939 is closely linked to the names of our Hamburg transport and dock workers Ernst Thälmann and Edgar André. Battalions in Spain bore their name.

The weeks before the Battle of the Ebro, on the Aragon front, were bitter moments for the Republican People's Army. The lack of weapons forced them to retreat behind the Ebro. The high losses of the fighters of the International Brigades could only be compensated by Spanish comrades.

The integration of the Spanish fighters involved difficulties such as language problems, illiteracy, the safe handling of weapons, and so on. These were largely eliminated by experienced members of the International Brigades, an activists' movement, founded before the Battle of the Ebro starts,.

John Peet, Interbrigadist and activist of the XV. Brigade wrote:

"Important military and political factors made this movement useful and necessary - the moral of an army that knows what it fights for seldom sinks"

During the Battle of the Ebro, Prime Minister Negrin in the League of Nations had agreed that the international volunteers of the People's Army on their side and on Franco's side, the German

and Italian intervention troops will be deducted.

If only Negrin had known what Lord Halifax said in a conversation with Hitler.

This Lord thanked Hitler for the destruction of Communism in Germany and that Germany could be rightly regarded as a bulwark against Bolshevism!

So, of course, Hitler and Mussolini did not think about carrying out the agreed demobilization of their troops. This did however the International Brigades.

After their demobilization and dismissal in October 1938 in Barcelona, France refused to accept the Brigaders. This monstrous fraud caused the Brigaders to continue fighting.

Thus , on January 23, 1939, more than 1,000 Brigaders of the XI. Brigade came together and were asked by the brigade staff, "Will you volunteer to go back to the front?"

The cries of readiness for further struggle subsided in the thunderous noise of those present, everyone wanted to fight. Lists

were laid out.

In the middle of the noise, a voice began to sing the International.

Many had tears in their eyes, and these were men who had fought for years and gone through heavy labor, prisons, and concentration camps.

One after another stepped up, enrolled, mostly in block letters, so you could read absolutely the name ... (quoted from the book Pasaremos)

The closure of the French border almost throughout the war and the naval blockade decisively prevented the victory of the Popular Front. In this context, I recall the Soviet Union's last major supply of arms, 250 tanks, 200 fighter planes, 90 bombers, etc. which at the special request of the republican leadership at the end of 1938 / beginning of 1939 at the expense of the USSR were sent to Spain. Almost nothing crossed the French border.

The so-called "non-intervention" of civil democracies and fascist states was a farce. It was only publicly denounced by the Soviet

ambassador Maiski in London.

US corporations, the USA were not part of the "Non-Intervention Committee", supplied large quantities of fuel, vehicles, and war material to the fascists, often delivered over the gateway Portugal.

Dear friends, hard was the path of the German anti-fascists to Spain, they came in part from the concentration camps and torture hells of the Nazis. The hard class struggles in the period 1919-1933, with thousands killed, slained class fighters and the personal experience of fascism from 1933 in the dungeons of the Nazis, have made our German anti-fascists in Spain strong. Despite constant danger, the working class of my city Hamburg stood on the side of the Spanish Republic and boycotted and sabotaged in the harbour weapons for the fascists in Spain.

For example, workers could read at factories and planks slogans like "No weapons for Franco" "Long live the Spanish Republic".

Many resistance actions are proved.

Dear friends, today we honour all our international volunteers and we should not highlight one. They use all the most valuable things they have, their lives.

Nevertheless, I would like to make an exception and tell you a short story of our Hamburg Brigader Erich Hoffmann, called "Vatti" (Daddy).

Vatti Hoffmann was only 53 years old. He died in 1959 as a result of his injuries from the Spanish Civil War and the injuries caused by the torturing of the fascist beasts in Nazi prisons.

After the defeat of the Spanish Republic he was, like so many of his comrades in France interned and came in 1942 in the concentration camp Auschwitz.

There, in the concentration camp he organized resistance with other comrades in the coal mines. So they for example let derailed mine cars, made parts for support stamps disappear, spilled cans of drive oil for mine locomotives.

In the face of their own death by discovery, they succeeded in hiding 158 Jewish children from Hungary and saving them from

murder.

What have we learned from history and what are the tasks ahead of us today, in the face of the wars rekindled (riekindelt) by imperialism and the resulting influxes of refugees?

Unfortunately, anti-imperialism disappeared from the radar of the left in Germany in the late 80s, and without the anti-imperialist movement there will be no rebirth of the left.

The far-right and fascist-infiltrated new German party AFD wins more and more supporters. Their anti-social demands only serve the capitalists, camouflaged by a disgusting incitement against asylum seekers and refugees.

Capitalism is not yet open to these new Nazis. The coalition of Social Democrats and Christian Democrats is still doing their order to discipline the Exploited by laws and repression. But if that does not work, there is the brown "reserve" in the background.

It is only a matter of time before this new Nazi party becomes "acceptable", like the Nazi party 1932/1933.

Remember,

the police leaders of many states, today called the „Western Community of Values“ worked actively with the Gestapo before World War II. Today they are united in the NATO.

Yes, you western democracies, your hands are smeared with blood.

And that's why we should not just talk about fascism! The German philosopher Max Horkheimer said clear words: "But whoever does not want to talk about capitalism should also be silent about fascism!"

The fight of the anti-fascists today, our fight, should be on the one hand the fight against the armaments industry and the politicians who persistently insist that the state expenditures for armaments and wars rise

We must resolutely oppose imperialism with its eternal greed for markets, profit maximization and exploitation.

The resources of the countries and their strategic location from which the refugees seek asylum are objects of the desire of global

economic and financial interests. The greed of capitalism is the cause of the suffering of these peoples and their fleeing to the responsible countries.

The migrants who are looking for shelter have mostly saved nothing but their bare lives.

On the other hand, this requires our solidarity with the migrants.

We should offer them to fight together with us against the destruction and destroyers of their home countries.

Long live the international solidarity!

Together, it's still fighting best!

The proletarian internationalism of the Brigaders is our example!

Long live the Internationalists of the International Brigades!

No Pasaran!

Reinhardt Silbermann, KFSR - Germany