

X. International Conference

Universal and Regional Systems of Protection of Human Rights 70 Years after Proclamation of Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Achievements – Barriers – New challenges and Solutions

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Ways To Freedom

Ladies and Gentleman,

it is a honor for me to speak to you in the polish Sejm because of an invitation of a friend. I bring you greetings from Germany – not from the government, but from my friends. Thank you for your interest in my speech.

The Declaration of Human Rights was the attempt to call people back to reason after the suffering and mass murders of the Second World War - what ranges from concentration camps to dying on the fronts, bombed cities and the hell of Hiroshima. The Declaration defines standards for a dignified, peaceful life in freedom on the earth. It comprises 30 articles with special statements. The statements of the Declaration are based on something we call our voice of conscience, what we feel inside, what we consider fair and good, what we represent with our morality, and what is immutable and universal.

The subject, I want to speak, is how the situation of Human Rights is today and what we can do as single persons for our freedom.

We have no influence on the place and the date of our birth. We must take the world, how we find it. For example, my father was born in 1937, under the rule

of Hitler in a city named Breslau, today called Wroclaw. I myself was born in 1961 in the Communist part of Germany. My son was born in 1990 in the reunited Germany. As you can see, within just one generation in a time of only 20 to 30 years, the political and general living conditions have completely changed. Now almost 30 years later again we are facing serious changes.

I remember very well that the East German government violated many articles of the Declaration of Human Rights, particularly the right of free travel (article 13) and freedom of expression (article 19). Furthermore the articles 3, 5, 9, 10, 12, 14, 15, 19, 20, 21, 28.

Today in Germany the very important article 13 is fulfilled. Everyone can travel wherever they want. I myself was one of hundreds of thousands who were involved of this change and I am a witness of this time.

That's why it's very disappointing for me, that article 19 - freedom of expression - becomes more and more restricted in Germany again. People who express a critical opinion get much trouble. They lose their jobs, they become attacked, hotels do not give them rooms, banks give them no account, football clubs give them no membership and so on – and even the church excludes them. Although Jesus says: Everyone come to me, especially the sinners!

For me as a journalist, the increasing restrictions are very serious, a very serious problem.

In addition is to say, that Germany today furthermore violates the articles 3, 12, 28 and – different to East-Germany – also the articles 23 and 27.

I will not describe this in detail. It only shows, that the situation of human rights was not optimal in earlier times and is not optimal today.

So which possibilities do we have in every time at every place on earth as single persons to get the maximum of individual freedom in which system ever?

I thought about it.

Yes, it is right, today I can take part in free elections every four years. But not time a political party that I voted for, has won the elections. I can wait to the next elections and never give up my hope - but my lifetime is too short to wait and hope. So what can I do?

I have understood, it starts with myself. Freedom begins by myself.

The first and much important way to everybodys personal freedom is:

Health

Do not underestimate it! An interesting question: Is it better to live healthy in a dictatorship or sick in a democracy? Anyone who was seriously ill, knows it: Health is the most important way to freedom. Think of people, who walk with crutch or rollator! If you need medication, you are dependent of it. If you need help from others, you are dependent. If you are not healthy, you have no quality of life, no power for resistance.

You can do a lot for your health. Move! Moving is the best medicine. Everyone can move. Decide what you eat. Everyone can decide what they eat. Your way of live has a big influence to your health. Everything else is destiny.

The next important way to freedom means

Skills

Learn a profession that you can use everywhere, a profession that others need. For example, a doctor of medicine or a nurse. But not everyone can study medicine. Take a profession with a broad base and which doesn't need perfect language skills. Learn Languages! The more skills you have and the more languages you speak, the more independent are you. In this sence I recommended my sons to become craftsmen. A practical occupation is the ticket to every country in the world.

The next way is

Knowledge

Education widens your horizon. The more you know, the freer you are. You have your knowledge in your had and can take it with you to everywhere in the world. Francis Bacon (1561–1626) said: Knowledge is power! You have to search for education. I did this. But I did not learn most things in schools. To get knowledge does not mean to study years at universitys. You can study everywhere, you can learn by experience, at work, you can read books, the big philosophers and mystics, the big novelists, you can use *youtube* and the *internet*. Just do it!

This leads to the next way to freedom:

Information

Use all possibilities to inform yourself. The offer today is very great. Think for yourself! Recognize the manipulation! My first step was to turn off my TV.

Another important way to freedom is

Talent

Everyone has some talent. Use and develop your talent! Be creative. Open yourself to the treasures of art. I am not a musician, not a good craftsman. I found out, my talent is reading and writing. I wrote some books. Textbooks and novels and stories. I had to realize, that nobody wants to publish it. So I have published the books myself. Everybody today can become a selfpublisher. It is easy and not expensive. Nobody forbids it. Just do it! If your talent is to teach – teach! If your talent is to make sports – make sports! If your talent is to travel around the world – do it! Do not wait, what someone says – do it!

And think of this: you have all time

Scopes

for actions and decisions. No one was forced in Hitler-Germany to be a guard of a concentration camp. You could have become a baker or a gardener or a carpenter. No one was forced to shoot people at the inner German border. There was a shooting order, but you did not have to hit the target. Everybody always has scopes for decision. Use it!

Independence

Try to be as independent as possible. If you don't identify with your state, do not wear a uniform! Be your own master. Try to develop your property! Property makes you independent.

Gratitude

Be thankful! Do not be greedy and do not envy. Greed and envy makes you unfree.

Respect

Show respect to others, what others think, what others do. Do not think, that you are right alone. Many have done more than you. This polish priest for example – Jerzy Popiełuszko – he died for freedom. This german priest – Oskar Brüsewitz – he also died for freedom. Respect, what they have done. Be thankful! Pray for them!

Connections

Network and exchange with others! It makes you stronger to be not alone and it is the way to get positiv changes together and in future. That`s why I came here to discuss with you.

It will be interesting for me, which ways to freedom you know and which more we can find out together.

Thank you for your attention!