

NEWS



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Bulletin of the International Federation of Resistance Fighters (FIR) – Association of Antifascists

Magdalenenstr. 19, D - 10365 Berlin,
Phone +49 30 – 55 57 90 83 - 2, Fax +49 30 – 55 57 90 83 - 9
E-Mail: office@fir.at Internet: www.fir.at

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No pasaran! - We will not let the extreme-right through!

On the one hand, the result of the elections to the European Parliament confirmed the concerns of the anti-fascists and democrats, but on the other hand it also underlined the different political balances of power in the respective countries. Some characteristic features can be seen in all the results:

1. Voter turnout rose in almost all European countries. This is not the result of a “European euphoria”, but shows the concern of many people in the different countries that a low turnout could lead to an increased number of deputies from the extreme right, nationalist and right-wing populist parties. In addition, indeed, in some countries where voter turnout was high, extreme right-wing parties have significantly underperformed their expectations.

2. The previous majority parties of the European People’s Party (EPP) or the Group of European Socialist and Democrat Parties (PSE) have lost about 25% of their seats. This makes it clear once again that many people in the countries of the European Union are dissatisfied with the policy and development of this European policy. In the appeal of the FIR and other European anti-fascists, we formulated our criteria for a different Europe. We do not want a Europe of the companies and banks, but of the citizens and the socially weak ones. From the past majority parties humans expect obviously no solution of the pressing political problems. The political left has also suffered losses, particularly the defeat of the SYRIZA party and losses in France and Germany.

3. Environmental policy issues have taken on great importance in various EU countries. Young people are committed to “Friday for Future” and other issues. The parties of the ecology movement were therefore able to increase their share of the vote in many countries. It remains to be seen whether these voices can also be effective for a consistently anti-racist and peace policy.

4. It is noticeable that regional parties or niche parties, which stand up for individual interests of groups of people, are represented in larger numbers in the European Parliament. It is not yet clear which positions they



will adopt on more far-reaching issues such as the militarization of Europe, the tightening of the border regime (FRONTEX) or the neoliberal economic course. They should, however, be the contact points for political initiatives at European level.

5 In the run-up to the elections, there were many speculations that extreme right-wing and right-wing populist parties could rise to become the largest political group in the European Parliament. Fortunately, these right-wing “flights of fancy” suffered a political belly landing. Although the proportion of votes cast by the Italian Lega grew to over 30%, which meant doubling its votes, the European Parliament was unable to keep up with the rise in the number of votes. The French RN (formerly FN) of Marine LePen became the strongest party in France, even though it lagged significantly behind the results of the parliamentary elections. The German AfD also increased its vote to 11%. But it also fell well short of its result in the German Bundestag elections. The FPÖ, which took office as the ruling party, lost much of its influence in the scandal surrounding its frontman HC Strache. In other countries (Netherlands - Wilders, Denmark - Danske Volkeparti, Finland - the true Finns) they also lagged behind their earlier results. Together with other right-wing parties, they gained roughly the same number of mandates that the EPP had lost.

Overall, it can be said that this election campaign saw the first broad international social mobilization - not for a party, but against the advance of the European right. The claim to power of LePen (RN), Salvini (Lega), Strache (FPÖ), Wilders (PVV), Meuthen (AfD) and other leaders of European right-wing parties, which they have raised several times in recent months, has mobilized many people against these dangers and led to a much worse result for the right-wing parties than they had hoped for.

When the black-blue government came to power in Vienna, there were the largest demonstrations and rallies in recent years with 60,000 and 80,000 participants respectively.

In France, the political left and the trade union movement not only mobilized against the advance of Le Pen, but also combined their protests with active resistance against the Macron government's planned cuts in the socio-political system. In addition, the “Yellow West Movement” created a social resistance that shook the political system in France.

While the right in Milan mobilized about 15,000 participants at their “big rally”, several 10,000 people demonstrated “for the anti-fascist values of the constitution and freedom against all forms of fascism” in this city on the Constitution Day on April 25, 2019.

In Germany, the mass demonstration “# indivisible” with almost a quarter of a million participants in Berlin in autumn 2018 and 150,000 demonstrators on the weekend before the European elections at six rallies against nationalism and for a social Europe showed that especially young people were ready to stand up for another, an anti-fascist Europe.

In the middle of March, anti-racist initiatives with demonstrations, rallies and other creative forms of action had made it clear that they were defending themselves against the refugee policy of the rulers in Europe and that they were advocating humane and solidarity-based help.



ELEZIONI EUROPEE - 26 MAGGIO 2019

VOTA ANTIFASCISTA

Un voto antifascista alle elezioni europee: lanciamo un forte appello ai cittadini di tutti i Paesi europei perché vengano sconfitti nazionalismi, razzismi, fascismi, nazismi, mai così forti dal dopoguerra ad oggi.

Vogliamo un'Europa contraria a qualsiasi forma di discriminazione, che garantisca asilo ai rifugiati ed il rispetto dei diritti di tutti, in particolare delle donne e dei fanciulli; un'Europa del lavoro, dell'istruzione, del sostentamento a chi ha bisogno; un'Europa che si opponga a ogni negazionismo e revisionismo, alla riabilitazione dei nazisti; che tuteli i diritti e le culture delle minoranze; che sia portatrice di pace e di non ingerenza negli affari degli altri Stati.

Difendiamo la democrazia e le libertà conquistate col sangue, con la Resistenza e la Liberazione nel 1945! Contribuiamo a dar vita a un largo fronte antifascista e democratico a difesa dei popoli dell'Unione Europea!

PRIMI FIRMATARI

ASSOCIAZIONI ANTIFASCISTE E PARTIGIANE EUROPEE

FEDERAZIONE INTERNAZIONALE RESISTENTI* - ANPI (Italia) - VVN-BdA (Germania) - ZZB NOB (Slovenia) - SABA HR (Croazia) - STUDENTI MEDI (Slovenia) - ANED (Italia) - ZKP (Unione Partigiani) (Carinzia) - AMICALE BELGE DES EX-PRISONNIERS POLITIQUES D'AUSCHWITZ-BIRKENAU (Belgio) - ASSOCIAZIONE ITACA (Belgio)

*Alla Fir (Federazione Internazionale Resistenti) aderiscono 58 associazioni degli ex combattenti nelle forze partigiane, dei perseguitati dai regimi nazista e fascista durante la seconda guerra mondiale e dei giovani antifascisti.

One should also not forget that the FIR and the anti-fascist federations in the respective member countries brought themselves with public declarations and other actions clearly in this election campaign to hearing. The common declarations were presented in different countries and communicated by the media. The declarations were often used to spread also own appeals and calls in the different countries.

Here it showed up once more that the member federations of the FIR and the forces connected with them are actually able to intervene effectively in the political and social debates and fights.

That there was no march through of the extreme right, the fascists, nationalists and right-wing populists in Europe it is also a merit of the international anti-fascist movement. However, we must not rest on our laurels. We must continue to work on the networking of anti-fascist associations and anti-racist initiatives. Globalization-critical organizations and the peace movements in the different countries must also be included in it. And as an important social partner, the connection to the trade unions must also be strengthened. The positive experiences of the political initiatives of the past weeks show that such social alliances are possible. It should be a common goal of all anti-fascists to develop further for the “construction of a broad democratic and front of the people” (anti-fascist appeal to the European elections).

We will not let the right in Europe get through!
Ulrich Schneider



Important meeting of the FIR Board in Budapest

At the beginning of May, the executive committee of the FIR met on invitation of the Hungarian federation MEASZ in Budapest. On the agenda were different important points, among other things the danger of extremely right parties and groups and the state of the political resistance in the different European countries. We read in the Bulletin that there are demonstrations and other mass actions, political declarations and other impressive counter-signals in the different countries. Secondly, the committee dealt with the preparation of the upcoming regular FIR Congress, which - at the invitation of the Italian association ANPI - will take place in Italy. Jean Cardoen reported on the planning of the international youth meeting in May 2020 in Auschwitz “Train of Thousand”.

Before the opening of the conference, the members of the Board of Directors and other international guests of the Michel Vanderborcht Award ceremony gathered at the Freedom Square at the Memorial to the Soviet Liberators of the City of Budapest to lay a wreath there. Already several times the danger existed that this monument should be removed, since it corresponds no longer to the new historical view. To this day, however, the anti-fascists have succeeded in defending the monument.



Michel Vanderborght Award in Budapest Impressive tribute to European anti-fascists

Connected with a meeting of anti-fascist federations at the first weekend in May in Budapest, the ceremony of the “Michel Vanderborght Award” took place, an honor of the FIR for personalities and organizations, which are connected in the special measure with the objectives of the anti-fascist work in Europe.

The honor, named for the former Belgian FIR president, was handed over in this year to two veterans of the anti-fascist movement, the Greek communists Lazaros Kiritsis, who reported still in his high age of 98 years as a contemporary witness on the anti-fascist fight of the democratic army, and Professor Ilja Kremer, who was involved as a member of the red army in the liberation of Berlin and worked decades in the leading body of FIR. From Hungary a popular antifascist musician, Janos Brody, was honored with the award, who presented some of his most famous songs on this event. From Italy, Paolo Berizzi, journalist of the daily newspaper La Repubblica, was honored for his anti-fascist research and educational work.

The Belgian Auschwitz Foundation - and in the person of its President Henri Goldberg - was honored for its great work with young people. An example: “Train des Mille (Train of the 1000)”, a European youth meeting together with the FIR and the “War Heritage Institute” in Brussels at the Auschwitz Memorial. From Germany the initiative “rising up against racism” was honored, which organizes political actions against right development and in particular the advance of the AfD since two years with large success. Their high level of mobilization and diverse activities were a major reason for awarding this prize to the German network.

More than 500 guests in the Miklos Radnoti Cultural Centre - named for a Hungarian anti-fascist - made this award ceremony itself an impressive signal of the anti-fascist movement in Hungary. Political personalities of the city and the country, the mayor of the 13th district, a former vice-president of the European Parliament, delegates of the Hungarian Parliament, representatives of parties and trade unions were present, which proved thereby their reference to the anti-fascist idea. Finally, an appeal was presented for the European elections: “Let us defend the democracy and freedom, conquered with the blood, the resistance and liberation in 1945. Let us contribute to a broad antifascist, democratic front in defense of a European Union of peoples”.



Esterwegen: Remembrance at the site of the first concentration camps

Almost two hundred guests from Germany and the Netherlands came together in Esterwegen invited by the “German-Dutch Initiative 8 May” to commemorate the liberation from German fascism 74 years ago. “And we would like to remind you that what happened can happen again,” explained Jörg Meinke, member of the initiative.

“If a Europe, as it is currently constituted, is to have a democratic perspective, then only, if it resists itself credibly against right-wing populist and extremely right tendencies and efforts”, underlined Ulrich Schneider as representative of the FIR. “We do not want a fortress in Europe, which accepts the countless dead in the Mediterranean approvingly. We want a Europe, which is conscious of its anti-fascist roots and therefore uses itself against any form of Holocaust denial, falsification of the resistance fight, destruction of memorial places, historical revisionism and rehabilitation of SS criminals”, underlined the Secretary-General of the FIR.

As further speakers spoke a son of the moor soldier Hans Möller and the Dutch historian Ruud Weijdeveld, who published about the anti-fascist fight in Groningen. He reported about Dutch anti-fascists who made the way across the border possible for escaped concentration camp prisoners. “None of this was without danger, not for the refugees, not for the Germans who helped them, but certainly not for the Dutch either. All risked their lives”.

At the end of the ceremony, Weijdeveld and Schneider laid flowers on the memorial stone for the Nobel Peace Prize winner Carl von Ossietzky, who was killed by the prison term in concentration camp Esterwegen.



Mauthausen Appeal of the International Committees of the Nazi Extermination and Concentration Camps

On May 5th, 2019, on the occasion of the international ceremonies commemorating the liberation of the Mauthausen Nazi Camp in Austria, the Representatives of the International Committees of the Nazi Extermination and Concentration Camps climbed the 186 stairs of the stairway of death, emblem of the Mauthausen Camp, in order to reaffirm their attachment to the protection of Memorial sites and the public's free access to them.

Today, they would like to launch the following appeal:

“As guardians of the memory of the prisoners of the nazi extermination and concentration camps and the values they defended – often to their deaths –,

We, the representatives of the International Committees of the Nazi Extermination and Concentration Camps, Profoundly worried by the nationalist, populist, and xenophobic policies enacted by a number of governments of the states of our continent,

Considering that these policies are in fundamental contradiction with the spirit of the different oaths made by the detainees upon their liberation, in particular by those of Mauthausen and Buchenwald,

Evaluating the grave threat that these policies represent for our collective destiny because of their appeals to violence, to hate, and to antidemocratic practices,

We consider it to be our duty to draw the European Parliament's undivided attention:

- to the danger of the political and human deviations that we are witnessing today,
- to the calling into question of the fundamental values which, in the aftermath of the Second World War, had served as the bedrock upon which a peaceful, tolerant Europe was founded, which cared about social progress and was resolutely vigilant to commit itself so that the roots of the national socialist evil would never regrow,
- to the historical fact that today's Europe was born well before the signature of the Treaty of Rome: it was born in the midst of the suffering of the nazi camps, in the hearts and minds of these tens of thousands of men and women, from all over a Europe occupied and ravaged by national socialism.

As the guardians of the memory of the victims of the nazi camps, we urge all Europeans to resist hate speech, nationalist, racist, xenophobic, antisemitic ideologies, as well as the illusion maintained by demagogical politicians according to which their prosperity and their happiness would be founded upon the rejection of the Other because of her/his ethnic origin, beliefs or political convictions.

We appeal to them to bear in mind the hard-won lessons of the history of the last century and to keep alive the values of peace, dialogue, solidarity, respect for the rights and the dignity of the human person, which have been willed to us by the men and women who have survived the national socialist hell.

“Time for Outrage!” urged nazi concentration camp survivor, diplomat, and great humanist Stéphane Hessel, who with René Cassin was among the authors of the text of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. Let us be outraged, and let us remember, so that we may better act and react together.”

Commemoration of the Day of Liberation / Day of Victory

In many places of the world, the “Day of Liberation” and the “Day of Victory” were celebrated on May 8 and 9. Memorial ceremonies, political celebrations on the streets and at memorial sites as well as commemoration actions of the “immortal regiment” took place on all continents. The FIR had written also in this year a greeting message in German, English and Russian language to the participants of the commemoration meetings. It was presented at different places. In the message, it said among other things:

“The 8th/9th May 1945 is and remains for anti-fascists in all parts of the world the “morning red of human history”. The memory of the victims of fascist barbarism and the fighters against fascism is a lasting concern for all of us.

We remember together family members, friends and relatives, political companions and personalities of our countries, who as partisans, resistance fighters and in the ranks of the anti-Hitler coalition gave their lives for the freedom of their homeland and the military smashing of the fascist military machinery.

We are all sending out a public counter-signal against frightening efforts to falsify history, rehabilitate SS criminals, and destroy memorial sites to the liberators in public space, as we must register in particular in the Baltic States, Poland, Ukraine and some Balkan states.

We associate this with the obligation to carry on the political legacy of the former fighters and survivors, as it says in the “Oath of Buchenwald” of the former prisoners of the CC Buchenwald of 19 April 1945: “the destruction of Nazism with its roots and the creation of a new world of peace and freedom”.



FIR congratulates the Portuguese antifascists (URAP) for the 45th anniversary of Carnation Revolution

April 25, 1974 the clerical fascist regime of Salazar failed because of the common activities of resistance fighters and left soldiers and officers. “Grandola, Villa Morena” is since that time the anthem of the Portuguese antifascists. In a greeting letter to our Portuguese member federation URAP FIR underlined the important event of celebration the 45th anniversary of the “carnation-revolution” of April 25, 1974 in Lisbon and at the memori-

al-place of Fortress of Peniche.

FIR wrote:

“The International Federation of Resistance fighters (FIR) – Association of Anti-fascists knows well the importance of the resistance fight in the dark period of Salazar-regime. And we know also the symbolic significance of Fortress of Peniche as high security prison. Here most popular leaders of the resistance, members of the communist party et.al. have been imprisoned under unhuman circumstances.

Nevertheless, we know that two times it was possible for famous prisoners to escape. First António Dias Lourenço was able to escape in December 1954. On January 3, 1960, communist leaders Álvaro Cunhal, Francisco Martins Rodrigues and eight others connived with a member of the National Republican Guard. They also descended the walls with a rope made of sheets. It is ridiculous that the fascist administration claimed later that a Soviet submarine had been near the Peniche coast waiting to pick up the escapees. Álvaro Cunhal continued his resistance fight and he was a highly recommended leader of the antifascist fight in Portugal, which has been successful in April 1974.

FIR and its member federations will never forget these facts. We are satisfied to hear that because of the activities of URAP the memorial place will be revalued with a new museum and a Memorial with the names of the antifascists who were imprisoned there. In this way, not only the resistance fighters will be honored but also the historical work of URAP. Congratulation for that result of your work.

Please let your comrades and the public know that FIR is on your side in preserving the memories of the Portuguese resistance fighters and supporting the activities of URAP in its today's fight.”

Protest against Nazi glorification in Carinthia

The protest rally on 11 May 2019 in Bleiburg/ Pliberk against the Ustaša meeting at the Loibacher Feld was co-organized by the International Federation of Resistance Fighters (FIR). Andrej Mohar, representative of the initiative:

“We are relieved that the Gurk diocese has come to a ban of the bishop's mass on the Loibacher field Libuško polje. We regret that the politics still does not follow the example of the church and obviously also further is not willing to forbid the constitution-hostile annual Ustaša meeting”.

The initiative now includes 25 organizations of former resistance fighters and anti-fascists, victim associations and memorial associations from Austria, the Alps-Adriatic region and beyond. Mohar is particularly satisfied that he has succeeded in “further internationalizing the protest against the Ustaša and neo-Nazi meetings in Bleiburg/Pliberk”.

Kundgebung

Initiative gegen Ustaša- und Nazitreffen in Kärnten

Komm am 11. Mai nach Bleiburg/Pliberk!

Die Gurker Diözese hat die Bischofsmesse im Rahmen der Veranstaltung des „Bleiburger Ehrenzugs“ untersagt, um Distanz zu faschistischem Gedankengut zu signalisieren. Die Politik folgt diesem Beispiel leider nicht. Das österreichische Innenministerium hat das verfassungsfeindliche alljährliche Ustaša-Treffen bis heute nicht untersagt. Deshalb werden wir am 11. Mai die Forderung nach einem Verbot der Ustaša- und Nazitreffen in Kärnten erneuern. Wir werden uns darüber hinaus für ein entsprechendes Gesetz gegen neofaschistische Tätigkeiten auf EU-Ebene einsetzen. Darum freut es uns besonders, dass die Kundgebung am 11. Mai auch von den Widerstandsverbänden aus dem Alpen-Adria-Raum aktiv unterstützt wird, und die FIR (Internationale Föderation der Widerstandsorganisationen) als Mitveranstalterin dabei ist.

Es wird uns freuen, wenn Du am 11. Mai in Bleiburg/Pliberk auch dabei bist!
Die Kundgebung findet bei jedem Wetter statt. Parkplätze auf der Festwiese.

www.spomin-dejanja.at & www.erinnern-handeln.at
Posojnica Bank, IBAN: AT03 3910 0003 0311 6338, BIC: VSBKAT2K, Initiative proti ustasem.

Samstag
11. Mai 2019, 10 Uhr, Bleiburg/Pliberk
Hauptplatz

Veranstalter: erinnern & handeln – Initiative gegen Ustaša- und Nazitreffen in Kärnten.
Mitveranstalter: Föderation Internationale des Résistants

Support the political work of the International Federation of Resistance (FIR) - Association of Antifascist!

The political work of international anti-fascist organization requires large resources. Since civil society organizations do not have national or institutional grants, the organization depends on contributions and donations.

Bank-account: Postbank Berlin IBAN DE 04 1001 0010 0543 0541 07, Owner: FIR
Donations from foreign countries only with IBAN DE 04 1001 0010 0543 0541 07 and
SWIFT-BIC: PBNKDEF

Regular FIR Congress 2019 in Italy

The last executive committee meeting (EC) decided to hold the next regular congress of FIR end of 2019 in Italy. We thank our Italian federation ANPI to support FIR with this offer.

Because of our statute, the FIR congress should happen every three years. Our last congress has been in Prague in November 2016 in a good prepared venue and active supported by our Czech member federation. In the surrounding of the congress, we organized the ceremony of Michel Vanderborght Award too. This time we will have time enough to discuss only our organization topics. In the debate of EC, several aspects, we should discuss about, were appointed:

- What are the political consequences of the up growing of extreme right wing political groups and parties not only in Europe?
- How we can stop all attempts of historical revisionism, destroying of memorials and monuments, as well as the falsification of the history of the resistance fight?
- Are we able to combine our powers with antifascist social groups, antiracist movements, the peace-movement, trade unions and social networks?
- What are the experiences of our member federations to hand over the legacy of the former veterans to the today's generations?

These and further topics are on the political agenda in FIR, as well as in the member federations. Our regular congress end of 2019 could be a good place and possibility to discuss about and find solutions for these problems.

In the coming weeks we wait for some confirmations for venue and accommodation, so we can fix the timetable. All member federations will receive details as soon as possible.

Because of the coming congress, for all member federations some tasks are on the agenda:

- Make sure your participation. Based on our financial order, those federations are able to vote which has paid their membership fees for the last three years. If you have any requests, do not hesitate to contact the financial secretary.
- If you have proposals for topics to discuss or if you propose a common declaration for the congress, please let us know it in advance. This is helpful for translation work and for preparing the agenda.
- At the congress, we have to elect our leading body and to name the honorary presidency. If your organization would have any proposal for these tasks, please inform us also in advance.

FIR invited for celebration of Sevastopol liberation

Invited by the Russian Veterans Organization, the president of FIR and president of MEASZ Vilmos Hanti participated end of April at an impressive ceremony in Sevastopol/ Crimea. This event was dedicated to the day of liberation of the Hero-city Sevastopol 75 years ago and was attended by international veteran organizations and highly respected political and public persons. During a conference Vilmos Hanti took the floor.

“On behalf of the International Federation of Resistance Fighters - Association of Anti-Fascists (FIR), I congratulate the participants of the conference. I am pleased to be here on the invitation of the Russian Union of Veterans at the international conference dedicated to the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Crimea and the hero-city of Sevastopol from fascism.

During World War II, the people of the former Soviet Union made tremendous sacrifices for peace, and by beating back the fascist attack on their sovereign country, as a member of the anti-fascist coalition defeated fascism militarily. I came from Hungary. Allow me to express my gratitude to all those who liberated my country also in 1945 from fascism.

Seventy-four years after the end of the war, we find that the fascist spirit of the vanquished, often in a new form seems to be getting stronger. Many want to rewrite history, to falsify the past. We cannot allow this, the millions of former anti-fascist resistance fighters have not sacrificed their lives for the brutality and inhumanity of fascism to return to our world again! The city of Sevastopol suffered a lot but fought heroically during the Great Patriotic War, whose noble anti-fascist resistance significantly contributed to the success of the humanist outcome of the Second World War.

On behalf of FIR, I welcome the heroic resistance fighters of the city, their family members. I salute all those who vigilantly preserve the memory of the hero-city, recalling the anti-fascist resistance. I wish a peaceful life to the residents of the city!”

MEASZ opens museum of the Hungarian resistance fight

During the meeting of the executive committee in May 2019 in Budapest, the members of the executive committee of the FIR got an impression of the newly arranged museum to the history of the Hungarian resistance fight. While the Hungarian government ignores this topic, the Hungarian anti-fascist federation took over the initiative for a memorial place itself. Numerous pictures, original artifacts and a large number of documents give a good impression of the width and the intensity of the action of Hungarian anti-fascists.

Nikolaj Rojanov of the Russian Veterans' Association presented as a gift a copy of the flag, which was hoisted at the Reichstag in Berlin in May 1945 as a sign of the victory over German fascism.



Action in front of the Italian Cultural Institute in Budapest

Representatives of the Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP) and the Alliance of Hungarian Resistance Fighters and Antifascists (MEASZ) sent a political signal in mid-May in Budapest against the cooperation of Hungary's Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and Italy's Minister of the Interior Matteo Salvini. In a public wreath-laying ceremony, they paid tribute to the Italian antifascist hero Giorgio Perlasca, whose bust stands in front of the Italian Cultural Institute in Budapest.

In a letter to the institute, the Hungarian anti-fascists emphasized: "We know that the great Italian people courageously fought against fascism and that the Italian Republic is built on the spirit of anti-fascist resistance. For this reason, we protest against the fact that Viktor Orbán, in the person and ideas of Matteo Salvini, imports Italian fascism into our country. We do not need Hungarian fascism or Italian fascism. We can never forget the horrors of the Second World War!

Therefore, the Hungarian Socialist Party and the Alliance of Hungarian Resistance Fighters and Antifascists ask the Italian Cultural Institute in Budapest to organize a conference on the traditions of Italian antifascism and to represent the true antifascist values of Italy as a whole".



“Train of 1000” May 2020

In 2012 and 2015, the Belgium Auschwitz Foundation, the Belgium “Institut des Vétérans” and the International Federation of Resistance Fighters (FIR) organized the “Train of 1000” for Auschwitz, in partnership with other foreign associations / institutions, bringing together nearly 1,000 young people from secondary schools in Belgium and Europe.

From May 5 to May 10, 2020, the Auschwitz Foundation, the War Heritage Institute and the FIR will co-organize a similar event, the dislocation of a thousand young people from Brussels to Auschwitz with a special train: the “Train of 1000” 2020.

It will take and bring together a thousand young Belgians and other Europeans who will commemorate, in the presence of the last survivors of the camp, the victory of the democratic forces over Nazi Germany.

In addition to Commemoration, the trip has several objectives:

- Educational: to allow these 1000 young people to visit the Auschwitz Museum and the Birkenau extermination camp, and to be acquainted with the Nazi concentration and genocide system
- Memorial: visit the camp with survivors and witnesses
- Citizen: to be clearly aware of the concentrationary theme and thereby even of the absolute negation of human rights.
- Media: The meeting should be, as for previous editions, highly mediatized in order to highlight this massive and symbolic mobilization of a European youth gathering for Democracy and against political extremism.

Who will be on the train? Students and young people from 17 to 25 years from Belgium and Europe.

It is expected that students will come by class with their teaching supervision. It should be noted that the Train itself will physically bring some 750 people, but this number will be increased by certain groups from other European countries who go directly to Poland (for the countries nearest from Auschwitz like the Czech Republic, Poland, Russia, Hungary etc.)

The students will come from the different social networks and types of schools.

Actually, there are commitments from the following countries (reservations): Belgium, France, Netherland, Luxembourg, Germany, Italy, Portuguese, Spain, Russia, Poland, Hungary, Greece, etc.). Further countries are expected.

As addition to the students, time witnesses will attend the train. Ex-deportees of Auschwitz and other camps will participate in the trip. Experts and other specialists in memory will join the trip. In Poland, representatives of Institutions (in the past we had some parliamentarians (from different parties) will participate in the ceremony.

All interested schools, veteran organizations and social networks should contact the organizational board in advance. In Belgium, France and Netherland, please contact the Auschwitz Foundation. All other countries, please contact the office of FIR or the national veterans organization. All participating groups should organize a preparation project in their own responsibility.

Further technical details and information of the cost for all participants are available on request.



Distomo and Lidice remain unforgotten!

Every year on 10 June, people gather in two different places in Europe to commemorate the fascist mass murders, in the Czech Republic in the small town of Lidice near Prague and in central Greece in the town of Distomo.

77 years ago, on 10 June 1942, German troops murdered the entire male population in Czechoslovakia in the village of Lidice with 500 inhabitants about 20 km north-west of Prague, deported the women to concentration camps and killed most of the children in Chelmno concentration camp. Two weeks later, German troops murdered more than 30 men in Lezaky, about a hundred kilometers east of Prague. As justification for these massacres, the fascist occupiers cited the successful bomb attack on Reinhard Heydrich, the planning officer for the "final solution" of the Jewish question and the highest Nazi official in Bohemia and Moravia at the time. Indeed, at the end of May 1942, a small group of Czechoslovak resistance fighters trained in Great Britain succeeded in killing those responsible for countless crimes against the Czechoslovak population directly in Prague. In revenge and intimidation the village of Lidice was destroyed and the men of Lezaky were shot.

Two years later, also on 10 June, members of the 2nd Company of the 7th SS-Panzer Grenadier Regiment of the 4th SS-Panzer-Grenadier-Division under the command of the SS-Hauptsturmführer Fritz Lautenbach attacked the small village Distomo in Central Greece, which had only a few hundred inhabitants. They murdered - from infants to the elderly - without distinction all the inhabitants they encountered and devastated the village. About 218 people were killed in the massacre. Only a few of the inhabitants found by the SS soldiers in Distomo have survived in hiding places or, like Argyris Sfountouris, who was barely 4 years old at the time, by chance. Reports of surviving victims, Greek authorities, even the SS people involved and other documents document the horrific events and the barbaric destructiveness of the SS troops.

The German troops used the activities of the ELAS partisans on German facilities and troops as a pretext for this crime. The reaction of the occupying forces consisted of increasingly brutal retaliatory measures, arbitrary hostage taking and executions, the destruction of entire villages, and massacres of civilians. When an SS unit used to fight partisans was involved in a battle near the village in which 6 SS men were killed, the SS Company carried out the cruel massacre of the population of Distomo. It should not be forgotten that - not only in Greece - there were hundreds of places where the fascist occupation troops had committed similar crimes against the civilian population.

Despite the occupation terror, the resistance struggle did not come to a standstill. Czechoslovak anti-fascists continued to contribute to the liberation of their country from fascism. In the summer of 1944, this culminated in the Slovak National Uprising. Also in Greece, the fighters of the ELAS intensified their actions and made an important contribution to the liberation of the country from the German occupation.

Lidice and Distomo were never forgotten by the worldwide solidarity of the anti-fascists. In Lidice the Czech government organized this day of remembrance in a dignified way. As a special appreciation, we see the decision of the Slovak government to award one of the assassins posthumously with high honours. These are important signals against all attempts to falsify history: it was not the anti-fascist resistance that was responsible for this massacre, but the fascist occupation policy. Do not allow any relativization of fascist crimes and rehabilitation of fascist collaborators!

In Greece, where there are also official commemoration ceremonies in Distomo, the memory has been connected for many decades with the just and justified demands of the Greek people for reparation on the part of the Federal Republic of Germany due to the forced occupation loan and the damage caused in Greece by Nazi occupying powers during the Second World War.

The FIR supports for many years the political efforts of the anti-fascist and social organizations for the penetration of these requirements and calls on the German government not to block any more serious negotiations. German reparations for Greek victims are still missing! This statement remains valid.

PS: A few weeks ago, the Greek parliament called on the government by a large majority to represent the justified demands against the German government. However important this decision may be, it remains inconsistent, since it neither listed the total amount of damage adequately nor committed the Greek government to binding action. The Greek anti-fascists of the PEAFA will therefore continue their political fight for the memory and appropriate reparation.

Ulrich Schneider

MEGHÍVÓ

Antifasiszta Európát!
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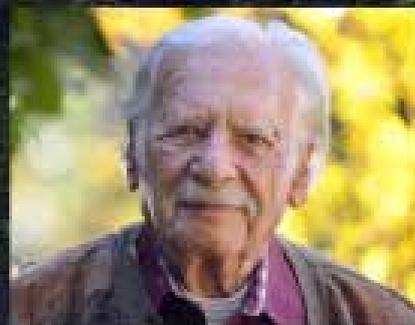
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Responsible: Dr. Ulrich Schneider, (General Secretary)

Secretariat: Internationale Föderation der Widerstandskämpfer - Bund der Antifaschisten (FIR),
Magdalenenstr. 19, D- 10365 Berlin, Fon +49 (0) 30 – 55 57 90 83 - 4, Fax +49 (0) 30 – 55 57 90 83 - 9,
E-Mail: office@fir.at , Internet www.fir.at

The International Federation of Resistant fighters (FIR) has been designated by the Secretary-General of the United Nations as a «Peace Messenger». The Federation is accepted as NGO at the UNESCO, Paris, at the UN standing committee of disarmament, Geneva and the European council, Strasbourg.

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