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

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The values of antifascist resistance – a basis for future political work Report of the XVIII regular congress of FIR in Reggio Emilia

“Together with today’s generations, we preserve the legacy of the fighters and persecuted, we fight against neo-fascism, racism and the roots of fascism, and for democracy, humanism, social justice and “a new world of peace and freedom.” This was the message of the XVIII regular congress of the International federation of Resistance Fighters (FIR), held in Reggio Emilia (Italy) on 29-30 November 2019.

Delegates and guests from more than 15 European countries met in this famous region, well known for the “Resistenza” and the place of birth of the Italian Tricolore. Member federations from Austria to Spain, from Denmark to Greece and from Russia to Portugal attended this important meeting of the veterans and antifascist movement. It was a great honour that the major of the city welcomed all delegates and guests in the “Sale di Tricolore”.

In its political and organizational report, the Secretary General presented a successful balance of the work of FIR and its member federations of the last three years. He mentioned important conferences in Belgrade and Rome, impressive commemoration ceremonies of liberation dates in former concentration camps, but also in Sevastopol, and political activities of member federations in all countries against neo-fascist violence, racism, antisemitism, and right-wing political attempts in electoral campaigns. He presented good experiences for the work with the exposition of “European Resistance fight against Nazism” and other ways to give the legacy of the veterans to new generations. He underlined that it was successful to strengthen the relations between FIR and its member federations, to intensify the communication, and to bring former member federations back into the active work of FIR. This work will be continued.

A main point in the political debate was the critics on the declaration of the European parliament of 19 September 2019. All delegates rejected this scandalous statement of historical revisionism. Several member federations made concrete proposals for common projects of historical work, being active against NS-glorification in Budapest, Sofia, Riga and Bleiburg, to support the International Day against Racism, declared by the United Nations. The Russian comrades invited the member federations to participate on May 9, 2020 in the ceremony for the “Day of Victory” at the Red Square and an international antifascist conference at the following day in Moscow.

A highlight was the common wreath laying for the Martyrs of the resistance in the city centre. Many banners of ANPI, the Italian tricolore as well as traditional flags of FIR could be seen. This ceremony was also well attended by the public and media.

The congress closed with the visit of the museum Cervi nearby Reggio Emilia. It is a memorial place for the family of the seven brother Cervi, who have been killed as partisans, and an institute for sustainable agriculture work because of the innovations, which the family Cervi brought to the region. Also in that way antifascism and today's tasks are directly connected.

Ulrich Schneider

Opening speech of President Vilmos Hanti (Excerpt)

I welcome you with great respect at this opening of the 18th Congress of the FIR. You are those who care, deep in your heart, for the fate of ordinary people. You are those who are ready to take on the responsibility for your fellow humans! You are those who are working relentlessly day by day for a more peaceful humanist world. In your persons, I salute the representatives of antifascist organisations, who are the carriers of the values of the victors of World War II, ready to preserve and to pass on the lessons of this war to the younger generations. I wish to thank you for your dedication shown in your respective organisations during the last three years since our Congress in Prague, and for the consistent continuation of your antifascist activities.

...

We are gathered at this Congress on the eve of the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II. In this period, all across Europe the military operations of liberation against Nazi Germany were coming to an end. It is on this day, 75 years ago, that in my country, a big city, Miskolc was liberated.

Fortunately, we still have some amongst us who took part in the antifascist resistance, in the partisan movements or in the ranks of regular armies, who were actively present in the political activities of this period and who lived through the horrors of the war. Now, we sense that we are getting more and more further away from the impact that this 75 year old antifascist victory had on ordinary people. So, it is no wonder that falsification of history, a host of distortions, lies appearing in the textbooks of young students, questioning the victory of antifascism are getting more frequent. All this leads to poisoning the real world image of young people, in particular, and discrediting the deeds of the antifascist heroes. We are witnessing more and more the dismantling of public monuments, erasing street names, which all represent symbols of World War II. In the public discourse and the media we hear less and less about the great historic victory. All this offers wide-open doors for the resurfacing of fascist mentalities, which had been swept away earlier. In our world of today, we have to face up to this dramatic challenge.

Let me quote Pope Francis. He said: „I am concerned because we hear speeches that resemble that of Hitler in 1934. 'Us first, we..., we...' These are frightening thoughts. Sovereignism means being closed. A country should be sovereign but not closed. Sovereignty must be defended, but relations with other countries, with the European community, must also be protected and promoted. Sovereignism is an exaggeration that always ends badly. It leads to war.”

Nowadays, more and more populist leaders with extremist, discriminatory and also fascist inclinations are being elected through democratic processes. They make use of the human credulousness, ignorance and vulnerability to stir hate, to find scapegoats responsible for the everyday person's problems and to dangerously divide our societies. All this is implemented through lies, demagoguery, intimidation, corruption, Goebbels' style propaganda and a considerable decrease of the activity field of the free press and the arts. And this represent tragic dangers for mankind. It seems that liberal democracies have not been able to prevent automatically the coming to power of fascist populists. We have to admit that our previous democracy projects, the informative historical face up to the past have not proved to be sufficiently effective. We need new methods and tools!

I also have to raise the issue of the refugee crisis which, as we speak, is shaping our today. There is no doubt that our place, that of the antifascists, is to be found on the side of the rescuers. Our stand is that we ought to show solidarity towards those who find themselves in perilous situations. And refugees must not be mistaken for terrorists who want to destroy the civilised world. In this struggle, we need the widest possible international cooperation. In one his speeches delivered most recently in Paris, the Secretary General of the United Nations said: „Fear of foreigners is being used for political ends. Intolerance and hatred are becoming commonplace. People who have lost everything are being blamed for all the world's ills... Let us return to reason. Let us not yield to populist rhetoric. Let us never accept racism, xenophobia or discrimination. Let us reach out... Diversity is not a threat but an asset.”

FIR, our organisation carries a great responsibility. It is perhaps the only international civil organisation which draws its force and inspiration from the ideals of the antifascist victory in World War Two and the heroism of the antifascist resistance. The symbol of FIR is the torch, and we, too, just as handing over a torch, we have to pass on and share with others our tremendous knowledge and experience. We have to be much more determined and effective when communicating with the younger generations, and we also have to demand more forcefully a stronger coordinated action by the democratic decision-makers and the democratic civil organisations. In order to make our struggle more purpose-oriented, the scope of our actions should be widened and more substantive with all those ready to fight for a future based on solidarity, liberty, equality and fraternity. This objective can be achieved only together and on the basis of a global reflection.

Let us say together: No pasarán!

Political Declaration of the XVIII regular FIR Congress

1. Anti-fascism is more relevant than ever!

75 years after the historic victory in May 1945 over fascist regimes in Europe, anti-fascism is a more recent political idea than ever. The current problems of political, economic and social causes, require from all people political networking and joint actions – overtaking any political party boundaries – for a socially just, sustainable, peaceful and democratic development in all parts of the world.

2. Stop the resurgence of right-wing populism and neo-fascism

It is with great concern, that we see the increasing political influence of extreme right forces, from violent neo-fascists to right-wing populist groups, in different European countries. Right wing policy has been in governmental power in several European countries. The problematic consequences for the living conditions of refugees and migrants, for minorities and political activists are visible.

On the one hand, some of these groups engage ostensibly to the serious concerns of the people, but give nationalist and racist responses to the existing problems. Moreover, they propagate and practice increasingly violent forms of conflict, such as arson attacks on “foreigners”, hunting refugees and other excesses. The refugee’s movement caused by war and social need – which only can be answered by practical solidarity of all European countries – is answered by them with a demand for authoritarianism, intolerance and nationalist chauvinism.

On the other hand, we can see a wide political movement – including all generations and different political groups and powers – which is active against such tendencies. Mass-meetings in Austria, Germany, Italy, social protests in France and Hungary made visible that there exists a democratic counter movement. FIR and its member federations are part of this social movement – bringing their historical experiences in these activities. In several European countries we have to face open propaganda for former fascist movements (f. e. Bandera in Ukraine, Horthy and the German SS in Hungary, Lukow in Bulgaria, Mussolini in Italy, Ustasha in Croatia, Baltic-SS as “freedom fighters” in Latvia). This is in contradiction to numerous international declarations, such as the Resolution of the United Nations General Assembly on preserving memories (17 Nov 2014) and the European Parliament Resolution on the rise of neo-fascist violence in Europe adopted on 25 Oct 2018.

FIR and its member federations as internationalist movement, stand together against racism, anti-Semitism, anti-ziganism, xenophobia, neo-fascism, nationalism and extreme right-wing populism. We support all groups and networks, which stand against such developments.

3. Eliminate the threat of war – for the protection of peace

Fascism and war are two sides of the same coin. That is why the oath of Buchenwald of 1945 reads “Destroying the Nazism with its roots and creating a new world of peace and freedom”.

FIR as “Ambassador of peace” of the United Nations, has a moral order to work for non-military solutions for the conflicts in the world. We fight - in particular - both the causes of war and the warmongers who want to impose their imperialistic goals, their needs of raw material and their geopolitical interests, and this on the backs of peoples. FIR cannot accept any attempt of military alliances to be seen as “world-policy”. FIR will always work for non-military solutions. We can see in different parts of the world the military escalation to the open aggression in a form of “proxy wars”.

Not a single state or a military alliance have the right to decide about war and peace. We call all political powers to strengthen the United Nations as institution for solving any conflict among states without military aggression, in Middle East, in Afghanistan, in Iraq, in Syria or in Ukraine.

That is how FIR acts as part of the international peace movement.

4. Preserving memories – against historical revisionism

The memory of the common anti-fascist struggle of the peoples and military parts of the anti-Hitler coalition is a permanent task of FIR and its member federations. In several European countries, notably the Baltic States, Poland, Ukraine and in some countries of the former Yugoslavia, we see various political and social attempts to falsify the antifascist memories. Monuments of the anti-fascist struggle are destroyed or even rededicated; former collaborators of the SS are recognized as “freedom fighters” and even the European Parliament walked into the trap of trying to establish a “solemn ceremony against totalitarianism” on 23 August. We oppose the attempts to build a museum for the Portuguese dictator Salazar.

We oppose those attempts of historical revisionism and we are proud that in all those countries veterans and antifascist groups keep on fighting for the historical truth, defending such memorial places dedicated to the liberation from Nazi-fascism and to the liberators.

The tasks of the FIR and its member federations remain to preserve the historical memory of the resistance of the peoples, of the women and men who sacrificed their lives, who fought in the ranks of the anti-Hitler coalition, for their convictions or who were victims from any other reasons in the concentration and extermination

camps. Passing their experiences on to present and future generations is one of the most important tasks of our organizations and we are constantly looking for best practices and new ideas to reach today's generations with our historical experiences.

We cooperate particularly with camps' memorials, with archives and historical institutions and antifascist initiatives that convey history. Outstanding examples of this work are the exhibition "European resistance against Nazism" and the international youth meetings, such the one that will be held again 2020 in Memorial Auschwitz, documenting the impressive forms of transferring history to the young generations.

5. The unity of the anti-fascist forces consolidate - win new generations!

Since nearly 70 years, the FIR is working as an international umbrella organization including all the different fighters and forces of the Anti-Hitler-Coalition, former persecuted and today's anti-fascists. Their strength is the commonality that results despite different political party orientations, social visions or religious values. The path of the "torch of FIR" impressively emphasized that community.

In our ranks are comrades and friends

- they defend and fight to affirm civil and human rights,
- they fight against politics and cultures that generates poverty, fascism and war,
- they defend democratic and social rights,
- they are based on religious or humanistic ideals connected with the antifascist goals,
- they want to preserve the memories of their families.

Each way to antifascism is welcomed in FIR.

This unit must be developed renew, because the witness's generation is leaving us. We call all member federations to open their structure for the today's generations. In that way we are challenged to share the ideals of the anti-fascist legacy with the post-war generations, who bring their own issues and perspectives in political disputes.

FIR is committed to ensure that politics and government in every European country are

- opposed to any form of discrimination based on origin, race, sexual orientation, language, religion, political views, personal and social conditions,
- providing a safe haven to refugees and respect the rights of all, particularly women;
- not at the service of big financial entities and lobbyists, but are granting social policies to provide everybody with jobs, education, welfare and adequate housing, as the basis for a true democracy;
- promoting comparable living conditions in all countries, in order to avoid the obligation to migrate in search of work;
- opposed to all forms of Shoah denial and revisionism, falsification of the Resistance fight, the destruction of memorial sites, the rehabilitation of Nazi-fascists and collaborators in any form they show up;
- fighting all nationalism and separatism and protecting the rights and cultures of minorities;
- advocating a peace policy based not on domination in matter of foreign policy, but on non-military conflict solutions and restoring international law.

FIR task is therefore:

Together with today's generations we preserve the legacy of the fighters and persecuted and fight for democracy, humanism, social justice and "a new world of peace and freedom."

Adopted political declarations

Several proposals for political statements and tasks for the coming time were on the floor of the congress. Statements to the following topics were adopted by the congress. One can find the full text on the website of FIR:

1. Stop NS-glorification! Activities against SS and NS-Collaborators in several countries.
2. FIR and member federations will be active in the "week against racism" in March 2020
3. No more German pensions for former SS-activists - compensate victims
4. Condemnation of attacks of the German tax office against VVN – anti-fascism must be recognized as a non-profit activity"
5. Condemnation of historical revisionism in the decision of the European parliament of September 19, 2019
6. Letter to the Bulgarian authorities to accept Bulgarian antifascists as fighters in the ranks of Anti-Hitler-Coalition
7. Political and organizational tasks of the coming work in 2020/21 (orientation for the new Executive committee).

Impressions of the congress

Opening of the congress in Sale di Tricolore - the mayor of Reggio Emilia handed over to President Vilmos Hanti the traditional flag.



Public wreath laying at the memorial for the resistance fighters in City centre of Reggio Emilia.

Secretary General presented in the conference hall his illustrated political and organizational report of the last three years.



The audience is listening very attentively the reports and interventions of the delegates.

The new elected Executive Committee of FIR

President

Vilmos Hanti (Hungary)

Vice-Presidents

Filippo Giuffrida (Italy)

Vladimir I. Romanenkov (Russia)

Gregorios Toulidis (Greece)

Secretary General

Dr. Ulrich Schneider (Germany)

Financial secretary

Heinz Siefert (Germany)

Members of executive committee

Jean Cardoen (Belgium)

Mari Franceschini (Italy)

Dr. Regina Girod (Germany)

Guido Lorenzetti (Italy)

Mitsea Panagiota (Greece)

Nikolay I. Royanov, Nikolay I.
(Russia)

Alessandro Pollio Salimbeni (Italy)

Simeon Ignatov (Bulgaria)

Jacques Varin (France)



A bad message from the European Parliament

On 19 September 2019, the EU Parliament in Strasbourg passed a resolution that allegedly dealt with the “significance of the European past (or European historical consciousness) for the future of Europe”. 535 MEPs voted for this resolution, 66 against and 52 abstained.

The FIR and its member federations can in no way agree with this resolution. The text of the declaration does not show the future of Europe, but is an ideological relapse into the worst times of the cold war, which are expressed in this resolution, which came about on initiative of the Baltic States and Poland. Contrary to all scientific findings, it is claimed here that it was only with the German-Soviet Non-Aggression Treaty that “the course was set for the Second World War”. The reconstruction of the events that led to the Second World War is narrow-minded, emissive, instrumental, and has no scientific basis: in a single reproach. It links the oppressors and oppressed, victims and slaughterers, invaders and liberators. The resolution is a text of gross ideological propaganda, worthy of the worst moments of the Cold War. Only perverse is the statement in the resolution that “it is of decisive importance for the unity of Europe and its people and for the strengthening of Europe’s resistance to the current threats from outside that the victims of totalitarian and authoritarian regimes are thought of”. What is the current external threat that parliamentarians are talking about?

The declaration criticized in fact a new historical revisionism. Although the EP-members condemn in some EU-states the glorification of people who collaborated with the National Socialists, at the same time they adopted the historical narrative of the same EU states that Russia allegedly falsifies historical facts and glosses over the “crimes committed by the totalitarian regime of the Soviet Union”.

The FIR and with it all federations of the survivors of the fascist persecution, the fighters against the Nazi barbarism and all anti-fascists say no to such historical falsifications.

While there is a growing danger of fascism, racism and nationalism, the Resolution chooses a path of lacerating division rather than a responsible and rigorous unity. FIR calls the European Parliament to convey, to protect and confirm its own authority and credibility, a clear sign of a radical rethinking, in the wake of the principles that inspired the creation of a United Europe, daughter of Anti-Fascism and the Women and Men who opposed the Nazi-Fascist Regimes. We recall for that the opening speech of the new president of the parliament.

FIR rejects the recent resolution of the European Parliament where it equates and condemns Nazi fascism and Communism, in clear contrast to its Anti-fascist, anti-Nazi and anti-racist Resolution of 25 October 2018.

In addition, we remember the Literature Nobel-Prize winner Thomas Mann, who warned in 1945:

“To place Russian Communism on the same moral level with Nazi fascism, because both are totalitarian, is, at best, superficial, in the worse case it is fascism.

He who insists on this equality may be a democrat; in truth and in his heart, he is already a fascist, and will surely fight fascism with insincerity and appearance, but with complete hatred only communism”.

The Train of 1000 – May 2020

Under the High Patronage of his Majesty the King

On two occasions, in May 2012 and May 2015, the 'IV-INIG', the Auschwitz Foundation and the International Resistance Federation jointly organized a new Train of Thousand towards Auschwitz, in partnership with other foreign associations / institutions, bringing together over 1,000 young people coming from Belgium and Europe. Given the success of previous editions, the Auschwitz Foundation, the War Heritage Institute (formerly the Belgian Veterans Institute) and the International Federation of Resistance Fighters (FIR) intend to organize a new Train of 1000 from Brussels to Auschwitz. The train will go with 1000 young people from May 05 to May 10, 2020 (including a commemorative ceremony on May 8 on the spot, the date of the German surrender and the victory over Nazism.)

In addition to the Commemoration, the trip has several other objectives:

educational: allow these 1000 young people to visit the Auschwitz Museum and the extermination camp of Birkenau, and to see first-hand the Nazi concentration camp and genocide system

remembrance: visit the camp with survivors and witnesses

citizen: to be clearly aware of the concentration issue and thereby of the absolute denial of human rights.

media: The gathering should attract, as for previous editions, huge media attention in order to highlight this massive and symbolic mobilization of European youth, gathering for Democracy and against political extremism.

In the train will be 17/18 year old students from Belgium and Europe. Participating nationalities will be Belgian, French, Dutch, Luxembourgish, German, Italian, Russian, Portuguese, Spanish, Polish, Hungarian, Greek, etc. Former deportees from Auschwitz and other camps will participate in the trip. In the past we had some parliamentarians from different parties.

We actually already have people from Belgium, from Italy, from France, from the Netherlands, From Luxembourg and from Germany. We would be pleased if some young people (even a few) from other European countries could participate. It is also possible, for some youngsters to participate, without coming by train but coming directly to Cracow from 6 or 7 until 8th of May.

Please contact the office of FIR, if you are interested to participate with a group of young people in this project. Technical details and information of the cost will be given to all interested ones.

Jean Cardoen

Decision of ARAC congress

The future of the planet, It is peace!

The planet is sitting on a powder keg. We are in a world where the common goods, the sovereignty of states and respect for others are called into question by the representatives of a financial oligarchy who believe that everything belongs to them and that everything is allowed. Inequality, the monopolization of wealth, the desire to enforce one's law at the expense of the sovereignty of peoples have always been the causes of war. "From the hell of the poor is made the paradise of the rich," wrote Victor Hugo. This historical observation is more actual than ever.

The race for armament has resumed. The United States leaves international treaties; the armed forces of some nations are deployed on all continents. The military expenditures of the countries explode in the USA, Germany et al. France is one of the world's leading countries in the arms trade. In one century, we have experienced two world wars. We must come together and make the voice of all those who love justice, respect for peoples, equality and peace heard. This is crucial for the future of humanity. Working for peace and respect for international law means restoring the full role of the United Nations Charter signed in 1945.

Mr President Marcon, we demand:

- Respect for international law and the United Nations Charter,
- The inclusion of the "Charter of the United Nations" in the curricula of schools.
- The signing and ratification of the Treaty of 7 July 2017 banning the use and proliferation of nuclear weapons,
- France's withdrawal from NATO and the measures taken to disband NATO,
- That France, in accordance with its republican values, plays an independent and effective role in respecting the sovereignty of the peoples and creating peace.

Antifascist meeting in Copenhagen

For anti-fascists there was a particularly varied offer on 5 October 2019 in Copenhagen. At least four different events required their attention. These included a “Arbejderhistoriefestival 2019” (Workers’ History Festival 2019), at which the latest research and publications on the Danish political and social movement were presented in the Workers’ Museum - Library and Archive of the Workers’ Movement. On this weekend members of the FIR-DK organized an antifascist excursion to the memorial Stutthof in Poland. In the house of the trade union BJMF activists of the “Fællesinitiativet Mod Racisme og Discrimination” met in the basement with guests from Great Britain and Sweden and in the upper floor met on invitation of DEMOS and FIR-DK representatives of different anti-fascist and anti-racist organizations in the context of the anti-fascist action week to an international consultation.

Invited as advisers were the representative of the trade union BJMF Carsten Bansholm, who reported on the political and trade union fight against “social dumping”, thus the wage discrimination of foreign workers, and the Secretary-General of the FIR Dr. Ulrich Schneider, who discussed the current tendencies of the right development in Europe and in Germany with the participants.

In view of this broad offer it could not surprise that the number of the guests remained somewhat behind the expectations, but the discussion and the following discussions were all the more intensive.

Regarding the trade union action against wage discrimination of foreign employees, the ideological and practical effect was rightly referred to, if such wage dumping is directed against the incomes and the social security of the native workers. This does not only mean social cuts, but also a division of the workers, which is used by the extreme right for their racism.

Ulrich Schneider continued this form of social inequality as a starting point for right-wing populism and racism in other European countries, giving a brief overview of current developments in Italy, Austria, Poland, Hungary and Germany. For the Danish antifascists the results of the AfD were not new, but they were interested in explanations for the growth of this party and its increasingly open fascist orientation. Also the scandalous resolution of the European Parliament of 19 September 2019 was cause for intensive debates.

DEMOS and FIR-DK showed with this conference that they see themselves as an active part of the international anti-fascist community.

A worthy commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the Slovak National Uprising

The President of the FIR, Vilmos Hanti took part in the commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the Slovak National Uprising on 29 August in Banska Bistrica (Slovakia). Together with the presidents of the Slovak and the Czech Veterans Association, he laid a wreath for the Hungarian anti-fascists and the FIR. The delegation of the veterans was among the first, which could lay down its wreath.



Tribute to the Romanian and Soviet armies on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of 23 August 1944 in Craiova

On the occasion of the “23 August Day of Liberation”, the Committee of the Romanian Socialist Party (P.S.R.) of Dolj County and the Committee of the Socialist Youth Association organized a series of activities on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the “National Anti-Fascist and Anti-Imperialist Uprising” of 1944. This includes a photo and book exhibition on the Anti-Hitler War, a conference debate and sports competitions. A special moment was the laying of wreaths at the monument of the Romanian soldiers, but also at the Soviet soldiers who were killed in the fight against fascism in the city of Craiova. The events on August 22 and 23 were held under the motto “Yesterday, today, tomorrow: no fascism, no war”.

In the debate organised in the Socialist Club it was pointed out that during the military uprising of 23 August 1944 in Romania the military-fascist dictatorship of Ion Antonescu was overthrown and the alliance with Hitler’s Germany was lifted. In that moment Romania joined the United Nations the night of 23 to 24 August 1944. In his speech Dr. Ing. Gheorghe Ghiță - President of the Communal Committee Craiova of the P.S.R. stressed that a broad national consensus of political forces, including the Communist Party of Romania, became possible with the support of the army and even the monarchical institution. This subsequently enabled the liberation of the state territory from occupation by German and Hungarian troops through the deployment of Romanian and Soviet soldiers. The leaders of the three major Allied powers, as well as the Romanian military leaders and the Soviet Marshal Rodion Malinovski, who led the military operations on this front, were mentioned with emotion. On August 23 the process of abolishing the anti-democratic fascist measures introducing the dictatorial regime began and laws for the victims of this regime were introduced, and those responsible for war crimes were condemned.

In the debates the forces of anti-fascist resistance of the war and the interwar period were honoured, in which the workers’ movement and communists as well as other democratically oriented political forces played an essential role.

The historian Simion Șomîcu emphasized the importance of the European anti-fascist resistance and referred to the personalities and actions of the French, Italian, Russian, Czechoslovak and Balkan partisan movements, emphasizing the special role of the People’s Liberation Army in Yugoslavia and the EAM-ELAS in Greece organized by the communist parties of these countries.

Various speakers condemned the current trends of revision of history and distortion of the truth about the Second World War and the post-war period. The atrocities of fascism are minimized or even denied, or attempts are made to equate Nazism and Communism by claiming an absurd resemblance between the executioners and the victims. In many Eastern European countries, but also in the structures of the European Union, authorities tolerate or approve the rebirth of fascist movements, while the most constant enemy of these currents, the communist movement, is denounced.

At the end of the meeting, it was concluded that it was necessary to take action against the tendencies towards the rebirth of fascist ideas, but also against the neo-colonialist acts of war of the Western powers in the world or against the new arms race initiated by the United States, into which Romania was also drawn.

Simion Șomîcu



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

Dutch anti-fascists protest against exhibition on Nazi design

The Dutch anti-fascist association AFVN-BvA has symbolically blocked the opening of an exhibition on the “Design of the Third Reich”, which took place from 8 September in Bois-le-Duc, the capital of the Dutch province of Brabant. The case attracted international attention. Even the Arab news channel Al Jazeera reported on this exhibition. Previously, the national secretary of the largest Jewish religious community in the Netherlands, Ruben Vis of the Netherlands Israelite Church (NIK), had expressed his support for the protests against the demonstration of swastikas, Nazi posters and films as well as objects such as a replica of an SS dagger, SS uniforms designed by Hugo Boss and the VW beetle. The critics of the exhibition also reject this car as an NS object and refer to the Jewish designer Jozef Ganz, who first coined the name “Volkswagen”.

The demonstrators rejected the claim of the exposition, whose preparation began at the beginning of 2018, that design had played a decisive role in the rise of National Socialist power - they refer to the conviction of the majority of historians, who see violence and intimidation as decisive factors. The French-Jewish Nazi hunters Serge and Beate Klarsfeld from Paris joined the support as did several other well-known Dutch Jews, such as writer and painter Chaja Polak and journalist and Nazi hunter Hans Knoop, known for his relentless and successful persecution of one of the most notorious Dutch war criminals, former SS man and millionaire Pieter Menten, who was convicted by a Dutch court of complicity in the murder of Jews in Poland during the First World War.

Jewish and other personalities asked the director of the museum, former university professor Dr. Timo de Rijk von Leyden and Delft, to stop this exhibition and in particular, the “senseless and completely unnecessary” spread of Nazi symbols. He did not address the critics, nor the argument that his museum was directly opposite the Jewish monument to the 293 Holocaust victims of Bois-le-Duc. He had the approval of the local Jewish community, but did not want to name any names.

FIR monument in Radeburg (Saxony) desecrated.

Once again, neo-Nazis desecrated a memorial to the memory of all victims of fascism in Saxony (Germany). It concerns the Wettin column in the Heinrich-Zille-Hain, which is provided with the inscription “to the memory of all victims of fascism 1933-1945” and on two sides with the logo of the FIR.

At the beginning of October the memorial column, which is since 1956 monument for the persecuted of the Nazi regime and victim of fascism, was defaced with swastika smears and the slogan “Heil Hitler”.

Such an attack does not come as a surprise. In this area the neo-fascist AfD tripled its share of the vote in the last state elections. It reached with over 33% the most votes in the municipality. In such a political climate, the memory of the victims of fascism is already a political provocation.



We condemn the Turkish invasion of Syria

The Panhellenic Union of Fighters, friends and descendants of the National Resistance and Democratic Army of Greece, denounce, the third criminal intervention - invasion of the Turkish army in the desperate Syria. The Turkish army’s attack with the US imperialist blessings on the basis of intra-imperialist rivalries and the bargain over the geostrategic control of energy sources and transport routes in the region are even more damaging the Syrian people suffering from the 8-year imperialist war in Syria.

The criminal attack of the Turkish army on Syria is in the interests of the Turkish bourgeoisie. While the attitude of the US-NATO-EU imperialists reveals how false are the recent Greek government cheers for Pompeo’s visit and the alleged US peacekeeping and stabilization role. The peoples cannot rely on the imperialists and their alliances for their own security. The US along with NATO and the EU are factors that threaten the peace, security and prosperity of the people.

It also reveals how dangerous for our people is the country’s involvement in imperialist plans that is upgraded by the latest agreement signed and turning the entire country into an American-NATO base for US-EU interests.

The resistance fighters, their friends and descendants of the EAM and the DSE are demanding, now, immediately, that the Turkish criminal assault in northern Syria be stopped and that all the foreign troops leave Syrian territory.

We are fighting for:

- The closure of the bases of US-imperialist intervention in the region.
- The return of the Greek soldiers involved in imperialist missions.
- No participation of Greece in imperialist designs.
- Release from NATO and the EU.

Finally, as PEAEA-DSE, we call on the Greek people to be vigilant in deflecting any dangerous plans that are at the expense of the country and other peoples from imperialist interventions.

Stay away from the Syrian and the Kurds.

Historical revisionism in Czech Republic On the dispute over the monument to Marshal Konev

For several weeks now, the political dispute over a monument to the Soviet marshal Ivan Stepanovich Konev in the sixth district of Prague has been intensifying.

The statue, which was inaugurated in 1980 in memory of the liberation of Prague on May 9, 1945 by the 1st Ukrainian Front of the Red Army under Konev's command, has in recent years repeatedly become the target of anti-Communist and anti-Russian destructiveness, including on August 21, 2019. Unknown persons smeared the statue with red paint with the words "No to the blood-stained Marshal!". Konev is accused of having commanded the Soviet Armed Forces in Hungary in 1956 and the Soviet Armed Forces group in Germany in 1961.

However, instead of cleaning the statue of the consequences of the vandalism, the district administration decided to cover the monument with a scaffold and a building plan. At the same time, the district mayor provocatively suggested that if Russia wanted this statue, it should be placed in the embassy's garden. Of course, the Embassy rejected this request. The monument is a reminder of thousands of soldiers of the Red Army who died during the liberation of Czechoslovakia. This vandalism and the political reaction of the district administration are a frightening sign that historical revisionism against the liberators of fascist barbarism is also increasing in the Czech Republic.

According to Radio Prague, around 200 people demonstrated in front of the monument at the beginning of September. Among the protesters were representatives of the Communist and Social Democratic Parties, but also Jiri Ovcacek, speaker of the Czech President Milos Zeman. He described the barrier as "absurd" and recalled that Konev, as commander of the 1st Ukrainian Front, was also responsible for the liberation of the prisoners of the Auschwitz extermination camp.

There were also clear words from the official Russian side. The Russian Minister of Culture Vladimir Medinski criticized the behavior of the district administration. He described the mayor of Prague's sixth district, Ondrej Kolar, as a "local Gauleiter" who had repeatedly drawn attention to himself with anti-Russian remarks. The Russian Foreign Ministry stated that in 1993 the authorities of the Czech Republic had guaranteed the protection of Soviet military monuments in a treaty on friendly relations and cooperation between the two countries. The Russian Foreign Ministry further stated: "We once again call on those who provoke a war against the symbols of victory over Nazism to end the desecration of the monument to Marshal Konev".

In this atmosphere, the Council of the Municipality decided by a majority that the Konev monument should be handed over to a museum. It will be replaced by a memorial "for all liberators of Prague", although it is not clear who the mayor means. Czech President Milos Zeman has described the Council's decision as a "disgrace".

Forgotten places of terror: Jasenovac

Sometimes it takes years, in individual cases even decades, until scientific research results on the fascist terror system can be published in German. And then it is often "niche publishers" who get such publications off the ground with great commitment and financial risk.

This fate is shared by a congress documentation rich in material on the subject of "Jasenovac and the Holocaust in Yugoslavia". On 400 pages you will find analyses by historians, eyewitness accounts by survivors, countless documents and historical pictorial material as well as further contributions to a conference that took place in October 1997 at the Kingsborough Communication College of the City University of New York.

The editor Barry Lituchy began systematically collecting and evaluating testimonies of survivors of the Jasenovac concentration camp at the beginning of the 1990s. In his introduction, he criticizes, among other things, the US Holocaust Memorial Museum because it refused to present the subject of Jasenovac in clear self-censor-

ship at the beginning of the 1990s, because due to the internal conflicts in Yugoslavia in the 1990s an exhibition “on the suffering of the Serbs in the Second World War would inevitably have caused undesirable political connotations”. One can see that the historical preoccupation with the concentration camp and the role of the Croatian Ustasha fascists themselves seems to be internationally burdened. All the more meritorious is the fact that Lituchy did not allow himself to be misled in his urge for enlightenment.

Further consideration must be given. Jasenovac is not only a place, but the term for a complex of camps. Therefore, the different functions of this camp can be found again and again in the testimonies of contemporary witnesses. However, all these camp parts were under the direct control of the fascist Ustasha units.

“Even before the first invitations to the Wannsee Conference were sent out on November 29, 1941, Jasenovac was already in full swing as a camp for the mass murder of Jews, Serbs and Roma ... the Croatian fascist regime had already issued orders for the genocide of Jews, Serbs and Roma and initiated corresponding political measures.” (S.33)

However, this was only possible through the previous military occupation of the country by the German fascist troops, which - as the German Wehrmacht General Franz Böhme put it - were to appear as “avengers of the dead” of the First World War. It should not be forgotten that the Catholic Church had supported this regime from beginning to end against the “Orthodox Serbs”.

Already in the introduction Lituchy deals with various controversies between the historians and explains their background. For example, to this day the numbers of victims of the various persecuted groups are quite uncertain because the Ustasha did not practice a “Prussian” bureaucracy. Even killing actions are only approximately documented. In two essays and three detailed replies the different perspectives became visible. In the past, the number of victims was often calculated for all places of extermination, so that the specific share of the concentration camp is not clear. In addition, the recording of victims by population group was sometimes arbitrary, as Jews or Roma were also recorded as Serbs or Croats. The total number of murdered persons is therefore usually given as about 120,000 victims. So far, a list of 36,000 named victims of the Jasenovac main camp is available. Of great interest are also the different contributions to the prosecution of the perpetrators of this terrorist camp. The best known person in this context is the former Austrian Federal President Kurt Waldheim, whose active role in the occupation policy in Yugoslavia was traced in detail. But also the lesser known Croatian perpetrators were taken into consideration. Some of them were able to evade responsibility via the “rat line” with the help of the Catholic Church, as Christopher Simpson proves.

For those who deal with the complex Jasenovac for the first time the fourteen testimonies of contemporary witnesses are of great urgency. Of course they differ only marginally from reports from other concentration and extermination camps, but in them the atmosphere and the specifics of this Croatian concentration camp become comprehensible. It was a camp in which a racist extermination policy was practised, in which forced labour was the order of the day, in which even women and children were imprisoned. Even in the last days of the camp, the guards committed mass crimes against the prisoners. Survivor Cedomil Huber reports succinctly: “On the morning of April 22, 1945, a total of about 1200 prisoners had been in both camps, and by the evening of the same day there were only 80 survivors left,” who had managed to escape. At the end, there are more than twenty pages of historical photographs, some of which had been presented in an exhibition at the conference, which impressively underline what was said in the testimonies of contemporary witnesses.

The book is not an overall presentation of the camp’s history, but rather a collection of material for further work. But it offers an excellent material basis. In his summary Lituchy emphasizes that the Holocaust and Jasenovac’s experiences have shaped the people of Yugoslavia. But since Tito failed to denazify the country, every successor state had to “still deal with collective responsibility”.

Ulrich Schneider

Bibliographie:

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