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

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The world commemorates the 75th anniversary of liberation - despite Corona

The 75th anniversary of the liberation, the day of victory remain immovable in the social consciousness of the people of Europe. Although the official commemoration ceremonies were held in camera, the anti-fascist public could not be deterred from celebrating 8 and 9 May 2020 in an appropriate public form. In many European countries there were social initiatives for public commemoration actions. They show that the memory of the world historical victory of the anti-Hitler coalition and the women and men who gave their lives, health and freedom for it remains alive. In a video message on Facebook the General Secretary of FIR explained:

“This year we must celebrate the days of liberation, the day of victory virtually, in our minds, our hearts. Nevertheless it is certain that our common conviction makes it possible to lead the world into a peaceful and solidary future - anti-fascism remains our task today and tomorrow”.

We received reports about worthy commemoration ceremonies, but most of them had to take place in small scale, from Austria, Belgium, France, Greece, Israel and Spain. We are sure that in many other European countries and beyond, this date was commemorated in an appropriate form.

Thus in Hungary in Budapest on 8 May at the anti-fascist memorial - initiated by the federation of the resistance fighters and anti-fascists MEASZ - was remembered. Although the police had forbidden all public gatherings, numerous social organizations and prominent personalities of the country laid down flowers or flower arrangements at this monument together. The comrades of the Russian Veterans Union had sent a greeting message, which was presented there.





In Russia itself public commemoration was not possible due to the corona situation. In Moscow and other cities, the walls of houses were decorated with symbols of the anti-fascist fight on the occasion of the day of victory.

The popular fighter pilot and long-time FIR representative Alexej P. Maressjew, honoured with the “Michel Vanderborgh Award” was honoured in one of these pictures.



In Portugal one reminded already on 25 April of the anniversary of the “carnation revolution”, while in Germany in far over 50 places of anti-fascist alliances commemorative meetings

with flower laying down and public demonstrations, as on the Frankfurt Römerberg were accomplished. At the Paulskirche even the mayor of the city Peter Feldmann spoke at the beginning of the commemoration. The VVN-BdA had started a petition in April 2020 with the demand: “8 May must become a public holiday”. On May 7, 95,000 signatures were handed over to the representatives of the German Bundestag.



Message of ANPI: The balance of April 25, 2020

The 75th anniversary of the Liberation of Italy from the Nazi-fascism was celebrated in the midst of a pandemic. The impossibility of being physically present at the parades and squares has triggered in the ANPI, and not only there, a sensitization battle against the responsible institutional authorities so that the restriction on popular participation imposed by the pandemic would not be used to weaken, or even worse, to disclaim the value

of April 25. Thus, we have obtained the possibility to participate at the commemorations, respecting the acknowledged limitations, strongly reinforcing the values connected to this date.



A vortex of initiatives has created a gigantic and wonderful kaleidoscope that has exceeded all expectations. We have hung the Italian and ANPI flags out of the windows not out of patriotism but to express the love for a united Italy with equal rights from north to south. We have met to sing “Bella ciao” all together at 3 pm; from the windows, from the courtyards, from every corners of Italy the voices rose, and they made reverberate across the whole country an infinity and multiplicity of needs and sensibility united in one single song.

This 75th anniversary of liberation was a particular moment of reflection in Italy, despite the physical distancing due to the virus. Great vicinity and community were achieved; the will and hope were expressed to have a future that knows how to overcome that normality of which we all have seen all the limits, a future that can finally realize the fruit of the Resistance which is our Constitution.



David Sassoli – President of European Parliament: Message for ANPI

April 25th is the festivity that reminds us of the values on which our Republic is founded: anti-fascism, freedom and democracy. It is the day when every year, in addition to celebrating the Liberation of Italy from the fascist regime and the German military occupation, we remember the sacrifice and resistance of a people who, exhausted by years of war and injustice, managed to rediscover their freedom and regain its independence.

Today, on the occasion of the 75th anniversary, to the dutiful recognition of the courage of those who fought heroically against Nazi fascism and fell in the name of freedom and justice, it is necessary to reaffirm with clarity and determination the founding values of the Resistance that are the basis of our Republic and our Constitution, as well as an indispensable prerequisite of our democratic life.

Without memory, there can be no future. Knowing where we come from is key to understanding where we can and where we want to go. Because democracy, like freedom, is never conquered once and for all. It is an immense heritage that has been given to us and which we have a duty to protect and pass on to future generations. Remembering also means rediscovering we are part of the same community. Between 1943 and 1945, anti-fascist partisan forces showed indeed the strength to rebel themselves, presenting themselves to the whole world with a newfound dignity.

Our Constitution is the daughter of the Resistance and of the 25th of April and is the cornerstone on which our civilization and our social model rests. The democratic values of freedom, equality, justice and solidarity carved into it are our identity and the centre of our action.

Here's what we celebrate on April 25th. Not only the defeat of Nazi fascism, but a renewed national unity and a democracy finally open, with popular foundation, that materializes in the Republic and the Constitution. Above all, we celebrate an ethical victory and a moral redemption: the choice of those who have been able to escape the yoke of authoritarianism, the cult of power and the power of intolerance.

After the years of the dictatorship, Italy has managed to redeem itself and promote the start of the Community project together with other countries.

Because Europe was also born like this: from the common desire for peace, from the strength of greater ideals that "brought together like brothers" distant people, united in countering the seeds of violence, oppression and the denial of fundamental freedoms.

Today more than ever, in these difficult times, we must rediscover that spirit. Europe faces very thought-provoking challenges. Our history, of yesterday and today, teaches us that it will not be national selfishness that will protect us. Europe has been formed and we want to continue to grow as a community of citizens, with its diversity, with political, religious and cultural pluralism.

As Umberto Eco wrote, "freedom and liberation are a task that never ends." On behalf of the European Parliament, I would like to thank you for your great efforts in keeping the memory of liberation alive, in Italy and in Europe. Together with you, our effort, our struggle and our responsibility must continue.

Message for 9 May 2020 from Israel

The former front soldiers, members of the Union of disabled fighters, their families, relatives and friends, prisoners in ghettos and concentration camps, resistance fighters of all countries, participants of antifascist rallies and demonstrations of all ages, nations, denominations, participants of the modern action "Immortal Regiment" will greet the 75th anniversary of the "Victory Day" with enthusiasm. This day will be remembered for a long time, also because it must take place in a closed circle on the anniversary of victory because of the insidious virus.

For the well-known historical reasons, the celebrations should take place on 8 and/or 9 May in different countries. The editors of the magazine "Voice of the Disabled Fighters" suggested to the leadership of the Union of Soldiers and Partisans - disabled war veterans of the struggle against Nazism, our comrades-in-arms - to celebrate both days. May 8 should be considered as a day of memory and glory of the heroes of the Second World War who died in battles with the Nazi invaders, and May 9 as the day of victory over the Nazis.

We are pleased about the support of our fellow combatants in the FIR and your personal initiative, dear Mr. Ulrich Schneider, in international circles, in the media of the FIR, in publications in the Internet and others. Congratulations to the Day of Victory.

On behalf of Ephraim Paperny, President of the Union of Disabled Fighters and the Central Committee of the Union, and with deep respect Moshe Spitzburg, Press Secretary of the Union and publisher of the magazine "Voice of the Disabled Fighters".



PEAEA-DSE

The modern meanings of the Great Antifascist Victory of the peoples on May 9, 1945

Developments around the coronavirus pandemic, unfortunately, limit the possibilities of organizing mass events in honor of the 75th anniversary of the Great Antifascist Victory of the peoples, for 2020. This victory was brought by the people and their movements with the Communist Parties as vanguard, the USSR and the Red Army as the main protagonist and with the anti-Hitler alliance.

However, we can still spread the meanings and messages of the anti-fascist victory in other ways and forms. ... A new capitalist economic crises is on progress and the bourgeois governments give billions and trillions to business groups to save them, while workers receive crumbs-benefits, redundancies, unemployment and extreme labor conditions.

There are issues of vital importance to workers and the workers' people's movement that cannot expect solutions for its own benefit, for the benefit of life, the work, the peoples well-being, if it does not organize its struggle against these policies, if it does not claim to fulfill its modern needs. With all this, the only possible prospect is the enormous importance of socialism-communism that can ensure a happy future for the people. On the eve of the anniversary of the Antifascist Victory, anti-communist staffs are falsifying the history of World War II and they do not hesitate to fabricate unprecedented lies in order to slander and tarnish the USSR. Imperialist and opportunist propaganda goes so far as to claim that the people of the USSR fought and resisted because of the terrorism inflicted on them by the Soviet leadership and the state. It is anti-communism on the verge of irrationality. If they lived in conditions of terror, they would not fight with such heroism, so much self-denial against the Nazis. The Soviet people, the Soviet army, fought with faith in defending socialism, so they won.

The European Union (EU) has established May 9 as "Europe Day", eliminating "People's Victory Day"! The EU and the United States support the operation to restore and justify the fascists in the Baltic States and Ukraine, who joined the Nazis during World War II. They are called "fighters of democracy" because they fought against the Red Army and Soviet power. Their pursuits must fail by the fighters actions, the friends of the Resistance and the liberation struggle, by all the people who do not accept the distortion of history and anti-communism. The history of the Second World War clearly reveals that fascism has been and is an alternative to the rescue of capitalism. Fascism is born in its bowels; it is not the result of a form of management e.g. neoliberal politics. It is an exercise form of the monopolies' power with special characteristics such as the open organization of violence, the suspension of the operation of civil institutions. Fascism also defends capitalist property in the means of production, the exploitation of man-by-man. Particularly in the conditions of capitalist crisis, poverty, unemployment and the deterioration of parliamentary parties, the bourgeoisie uses Nazi parties as advanced outposts serving its interests, to integrate popular forces into capitalism, imperialist action and war. In order to wage effective anti-fascist and peaceful anti-war fighting, our fight must aim the causes and culprits who make imperialist wars, to capitalism - imperialism, to its power. Anti-fascist and anti-war struggle must set demands and objectives that contribute to the people's awareness of the causes of wars. For example, wars were taking place and are taking place with the existence of the INF (Balkans, Middle East, North Africa, etc.). Today, intra-imperialist competition between the USA, the EU, Russia, China, for energy and market sharing, etc. is at a great sharpening. Competitions bring wars. There is also a need for a fight to release our countries from NATO and the EU.

The fighters and friends of the Resistance, the anti-fascist are fighting for such an anti-imperialist anti-war movement with the working class and the communists ahead, a working-class grassroots movement that will change the world by ridding it of exploitation, to permanently stop economic crises, imperialist wars, refugees and immigration. Such a strong movement is needed in each country and we, the PEAEA-DSE, make sure that we contribute to this and with the historical experience of our popular movement in the Second World War that contributed greatly to the anti-fascist victory of the peoples. To bring real peace and cooperation between peoples by building relations of brotherly friendship and class solidarity. It is the best way to celebrate this peoples' anniversary.

A Prague Tragedy

While all over the world - despite the Corona pandemic - the memory of the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Europe from fascism and war is kept alive, commemorating the victims and honoring the liberators of the anti-Hitler coalition, a Prague district government is indulging in a political scandal that cannot be surpassed in its provincialism and small-mindedness.

Despite international protests and interventions, including to the Czech state government, on Friday 3 April the monument of Marshal Konev, who as supreme commander had achieved the military liberation of the Auschwitz extermination camp and Czechoslovakia, was dismantled and transported away. Only a few weeks ago, on 27 January 2020, Czech anti-fascists have honored Marshal Konev at this memorial in memory of the victims of the fascist extermination policy.

Obviously, the district government tried to use the exceptional situation because of the health-related initial restrictions to carry out this desecration of the monument without public protests. Apparently, they wanted to prevent that on the liberation day of the Czech capital or on Victory Day thousands of Prague citizens would again make a pilgrimage to this monument and commemorate the liberators with flowers and other honors. Following on from the scandalous declaration of the European Parliament on 19 September 2019, which was

used as a legitimization, particularly in the Baltic States and in Poland, to remove monuments of remembrance of the liberators, we are now witnessing another appalling example in Prague of the consequences of this historical revisionism.

The FIR and its member federations are however sure that the Czech anti-fascists and many citizens will retain the memory of the liberators despite this outrage and will remember in worthy public forms Marshal Konev and the thousands of fighters in the ranks of the Red Army, who accomplished the liberation achievement.

Theses on the political situation in Europe today:

FIR President Vilmos Hanti has called in a message at the end of March the member federations to take all necessary measures to preserve their vitality and to contribute to fight against Fake-news, which try to undermine the resistance of our societies. He would like all member federations to live through these difficult times with greater determination and the firm will to defend themselves against attacks aimed at undermining the values of our human civilization. They should be ready to continue the common fight against this unprecedented invisible pandemic as fighters of our time, the 21st century, to defend the goals of FIR.

This appeal requires from all associations to deal with the present political situation. In the following some ideas about it:

1. The Corona pandemic hits a Europe, which was in no way prepared for these health problems and whose politicians with their actions endanger the project of a united Europe. Although health policy is in the responsibility of nation states, a worldwide pandemic cannot be fought within the borders of individual nation states. Instead of agreeing on a pan-European strategy, however, nationalist separatism developed, with sometimes devastatingly non-solidary behavior (uncoordinated closing of borders, prohibition of the supply of medical supplies to affected states, etc.).

2. In the wake of the rigid austerity measures triggered by the financial crisis, especially in the southern countries of Europe, and the subjection of the costs of the health care system to the profit principle, it became apparent that numerous health care facilities were broken down. The affected countries - especially Italy - were not able to rebuild the necessary infrastructure within a short period of time.

The lack of solidarity between the European states proved to be a problem, which is also expressed in the decision to introduce so-called "corona bonds", which give all states the opportunity to obtain favorable financial resources to rebuild their own economic structure.

3. We are concerned that some governments are using the opportunity of the pandemic to establish anti-democratic power structures, which threaten the very existence of democratic rights and freedoms even after the end of the emergency medical measures. While restrictions on anti-fascist commemorative events were enforced everywhere, justified by health risks, at the same time the city administration in Prague removed the Konev monument and in Germany approved administrations marches of supporters of the extreme right on April 20 - despite Corona restrictions.

4. In all European countries, we are seeing that workers and employees having to accept a drop in wages because of the restrictive measures taken to combat the pandemic. Small businesses, especially in tourism, are suffering enormous losses, while cultural workers in all sectors are facing personal ruin. Aid has already been announced for multinational companies. If, though, Europe is not to suffer irreparable damage from this pandemic, we need a policy that recognizably serves the interests of the people of this continent and is not merely a redistribution to save the large companies.

5. The greatest victims of the Corona pandemic in Europe are the refugees who are crammed together, for example, on the Greek islands or in overcrowded transitional camps. While all citizens are required to maintain a "distance", they have to live under conditions where infection is almost inevitable. At the same time, racist propaganda blames them for the spread of the corona virus. Anti-fascism today proves itself in advocating for the rights and help for the weakest of the victims of this corona crisis.

The "creation of a new world of peace and freedom" ("Oath of Buchenwald") also means standing up for a new form of international cooperation which together will enable progress to be made in the fight against the corona virus, e.g. by developing vaccines or medical aid in particularly affected countries.

Dr. Ulrich Schneider, Secretary General Secretary of FIR

The political situation in Chile

Information from Nelly Cárcamo, president of the Unión de ex Presos Políticos de Chile (Union of former political prisoners of Chile, Unexpp de Chile) - member of the FIR.

Since October 2019, Chile experiences the beginning of an unprecedented popular revolt. This was the result of an accumulating anger in large parts of the society, which were victims of abuse, injustice, mistreatment and injustice for many decades. Until then, popular protest was brutally suppressed or at best trapped in ineffective and useless official discussions, and its demands were neutralized. Nothing changed. The uprising, however, forced the government and the “opposition parties” to urgently offer, among other crumbs, a plebiscite to change the constitution as a way out of social pressure. However, they imposed rules that allowed them to maintain their privileges and absolute control over all processes. The mobilization continued and led to the most massive demonstrations in Chile’s history.

In the spring of 2020, an “Agreement for Peace and a New Constitution” was presented, but not to deepen democracy or strengthen the fundamental rights of the people. Nor was it intended to create effective legal guarantees to protect, for example, economic, social and cultural rights. Therefore, this agreement from above was simply a desperate way to gain time. This is the reason why the social movement continues to demand that the constitutional amendment be made by a sovereign constituent assembly. Then came the pandemic, and what is becoming a nightmare for humanity is the lifesaver for the most reactionary parts of our society, their government and for their complacent and neutralized “opposition”. The postponement of the date of the referendum was not for health reasons, as is widely claimed; the pandemic is a pretext, as people were already trying to order the resumption of schools and the opening of shopping centres.

Had it not been the pandemic, it would have been “the lack of guarantees and security caused by the social movement” to maintain the state of emergency. Can anyone believe that the state of emergency and the curfew were imposed only because of the pandemic? Why so much concern for the few nocturnal passers-by, while during the day the workers crowd like cattle for collective mobilization and expose themselves to infection without anyone caring?

In fact, you do not have to be a fortune teller to suspect that the government will keep the military on the streets until it no longer needs them as a shield. That it will allow it to rule with the complacent voices of the opposition and enforce all its nefarious laws that protect big business, while charging the workers and the cost of the pandemic and the cost of their demands for more democracy, more equality, more sovereignty and more justice. The protests and social mobilization have led to serious and systematic violations of human rights, in which many people have been murdered, mutilated, tortured, raped and thousands of political prisoners raped, which can only be compared to the crimes against humanity committed during the military-civilian dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet (1973-1989).

Ceremony for the Radnoti Miklos anti-racism award had to be postponed.



Due to corona restrictions, the annual Radnoti Miklos Anti-racism Prize award ceremony in Budapest in March 2020 also had to be postponed. This year again, outstanding personalities of Hungarian political and cultural life were on the list of those to be honoured. Mayors, philosophers, writers and other committed anti-fascists.

Also the Vice-President of FIR and responsible for ANPI Europe Filippo Giuffrida should receive this important honour. With it his extensive internationalist commitment should be appreciated.

For health reasons and for the protection of the honoured the celebration was shifted into the second half of 2020. It is to be hoped that the pandemic restrictions will allow a worthy commemoration until then.

Obituary Cécile Rol-Tanguy (1919-2020)

Again we must say farewell to a great representative of the anti-fascist struggle, Cécile ROL-TANGUY. She died on 8 May 2020, the 75th anniversary of the liberation at the age of 101 years in Monteaux.



A family declaration stated: “This is the disappearance of one of the last figures of the French Resistance and the liberation of Paris in August 1944, who carried the highest honours of the Republic (Grand Officer of the Legion of Honour, Grand Cross of the National Order of Merit, Medal of Resistance, Cross of the Voluntary Fighter of the Resistance) and was a symbol of the place of women in the fight against Vichy and the Nazi occupier. Cécile ROL-TANGUY always stressed that she accepted these awards only as a tribute to all the women in the shadows, who were indispensable links in the secret struggle. To the deportees, to the internees, to all those who were murdered by the enemy and yet so often forgotten at the hour of victory. To all the women who, like her, simply regained their place in the daily life of their families and the country after the end of the war.”

Their political commitment began as early as 1936 in her work for the Popular Front and the Spanish Republic. It was there that she met Henri TANGUY, representative of the Parisian steelworkers, fighters in the International Brigades in defence of the Spanish Republic. They got married in 1939, just before the war. At the end of June 1940, when the Wehrmacht marched into Paris, she joined the Resistance. She wrote leaflets, trade union newspapers and other illegal documents from the banned CGT and worked for communist lawyers defending the first prisoners of the Vichy regime.

From October 1940, the couple went underground. She was Henri’s connection with the other fighters in the underground. During this period, in May 1941 and November 1943, she also gave birth to two children, Hélène and Jean. Together with her husband, she took part in the Paris Uprising in August 1944 on the secret command staff. She was the only woman at the reception that General De Gaulle gave at the Hôtel de Ville to the FFI General Staff in Ile-de-France on 26 August 1944. Cécile and Henri Rol-Tanguy with Lucie and Raymond Aubrac remain the two pairs of symbols of the French Resistance. After the war, she gave birth to two other children, Claire (1946) and Francis (1953), and remained her husband’s indispensable collaborator.

Until her last breath, Cécile ROL-TANGUY continued to demonstrate her loyalty to the generous utopia of communism, to her youthful commitment to social justice and the emancipation of women. After her husband, who died in 2002, Cécile was president of ANACR and honorary president of ACER / AVER (Spanish fighters). Until 2014, she was still active as a contemporary witness in schools. At the age of 100, in August 2019, she took part in the ceremony commemorating the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Paris.

The FIR expresses its deepest sympathy to her family and her political companions and comrades-in-arms. For all antifascists Cécile ROL-TANGUY will remain unforgotten.

Obituary Ilya Semyonovich Kremer (1922-2020)

We must bid farewell to Prof. Dr. Ilya Kremer. He was connected several decades with the political work of the FIR.



Born in January 1922 in Gomel, he could study 1939 at the faculty for history of the Leningrad University, from 1940 at the Moscow University. The fascist attack of June 1941 changed also his life. Instead of studying, he took part in the protection of the homeland, in fortification work and until 1943 in an aircraft factory as a lathe operator. In the summer of 1943, he became a soldier in the Red Army and took part in the fight for Berlin. In an interview, he reported:

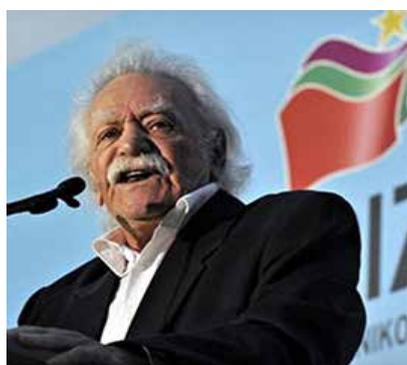
“It wasn’t until 1943, when the Red Army had already suffered terrible losses, that I was sent to the front. So I was put into a training unit, and in 1944, I joined the anti-aircraft artillery of the 5th Corps of the 1st Belarussian Front. Our route then led from Lublin to Berlin via Warsaw, Poznan and Landsberg on the Warta River.” It was not until November 1945 that he was demobilized and returned to Moscow.

Two years later, he was able to complete his studies in 1948. As a historian and professor of international relations, he was subsequently editor and lecturer in history at the Moscow Automotive Technical School. In the mid-1950s, he came to the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR. In 1974, he was appointed professor at the Department of International Relations of the Institute of Social Sciences of the Central Committee of the CPSU. As a member of the Soviet Committee for European Security, he accompanied the process of détente policy scientifically and practically.

Of central importance was his work in FIR. Several decades he was political secretary of the FIR and representative of the Soviet (Russian) committee of war veterans in the FIR office in Vienna, temporarily as secretary general and member of the presidency of the FIR. In this context, he developed various international contacts. During the reactivation of the FIR since 2004, he was of enormous value as advisor and mediator. The FIR appointed him since 2004 as a member of the honorary presidency and distinguished him 2019 with the “Michel Vanderborght Award”.

He died on 23 March 2020 at the age of 98 years in Moscow. We will remember him as a comrade and good friend.

Obituary Resistance fighter Manolis Glezos (1923-2020)



With deep sorrow, we have to inform, the Greek resistance fighter Manolis Glezos died end of March at the age of 97 years. He had previously been hospitalized because he had difficulty breathing and chest pain. Glezos was politically active until his old age.

He had become known to a broad public when, together with Apostolos Sandas, he took down the swastika flag from the Athens Acropolis during a life-threatening action on 30 May 1941. It was a symbolic act of resistance against the German occupying forces. Many Greeks followed this example at the time. Up to the present day, Glezos and Sandas have been considered a symbol of the resistance of the peoples against fascist foreign rule and oppression. During the war, he was arrested and tortured several times. His

younger brother was executed by the occupying forces.

After the liberation of the country from the fascist occupation, Glezos first headed the Communist Party newspaper “Rizospastis” as editor-in-chief. The newspaper was banned in December 1947; in 1948, he was sentenced to death for this activity. Due to strong protests, especially from abroad, this sentence was not carried out. Glezos was not released until July 1954. In the following years he received further long prison sentences for his political activities. Immediately after the military coup on April 21, 1967, he was sent to prison again. It was not until 1971 that he was released through a general amnesty. He was sentenced 28 times for his political activities, including three times to death.

After the fall of the military junta he was, among other things, chairman of the United Democratic Left (DFA) and mayor of the municipality of Apiranthos on Naxos, where he was born. He was first elected to the European Parliament in 1984 for PASOK. In 2002 he founded the group “Active Citizens”, which cooperated with the then Synaspismos (now SYRIZA). In 2012, he was elected to the Greek Parliament for SYRIZA. He was the oldest member of the European Parliament from 2014 to 7 July 2015.

Despite his old age, in recent years he has always vehemently defended the legitimate demands of the Greek people regarding compensation for the damage caused by the German fascist occupation.

The FIR and its member federations mourn with the family, his fellow combatants and the Greek anti-fascist movement. We will keep an honorable memory of him.

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

FIR President Vilmos Hanti honoured with the WVF medal of honour



In the spring of this year during the meeting in Zagreb, the president of the FIR and the Hungarian MEASZ Vilmos Hanti was honoured by the world veterans' federation with its highest honor for the merits for the common task. Vilmos Hanti has been a participant at the congresses of the WVF for many years and is beyond that in close connection with this association. With this medal of honour the WVF underlined the readiness to deepen the connections between the FIR and its organization in the future.

75 years ago - we do not forget!

German-Italian commemoration in times of Corona

Because public remembrance is not possible in today's times, virtual or symbolic forms of remembrance must be used. To this end, members of the Federation of Persecuted Persons of the Nazi Regime - Association of Anti-Fascists (VVN-BdA) in Kassel organized a commemoration action End of March at the blackboard for the Italian forced laborers murdered at the Wilhelmshöhe railway station.



On 31 March 1945, the Gestapo had murdered 78 forced laborers there for alleged looting. A damaged Wehrmacht train carrying food and other items was parked at the station. The individual carriages of this train had already been vomited and looted by German civilians. Italian military internees, who were accommodated on a siding in a construction train, had also helped themselves. When this food was found in their accommodation, the Italians and a Soviet forced laborer were led to the edge of a bomb crater by order of the head of the Kassel Ge-

stapo, Franz Marmon, and shot from behind. A few days later American troops liberated Kassel. Equipped with the flag of the VVN, the FIR and a pennant of the Italian partisan organization ANPI, the VVN members laid down flowers and documented this symbolic act. Photos of this action were sent together with a short message also to the Italian veteran organizations and published there on websites and in the press. Thus, a common commemoration was possible - despite the Corona crisis.

AfvN successful against Nazi propaganda in online commerce

For many weeks Dutch anti-fascists of the action "Stop Nazibooks on Bol" fight against the trade with fascist propaganda reading on online trading platforms in the Netherlands. In an extensive dossier, they were able to prove that the Bertelsmann group advertises and sells anti-Semitic and Nazi propaganda works in its online distribution. The worst example was certainly the children's book "Der Giftpilz", published by the convicted Nazi propagandist Julius Streicher, which was used for anti-Semitic hate in the 1930s. In addition, the "Protocols of the Elders of Zion", one of the hate writings that founded anti-Semitic propaganda, could be ordered through this site. The books of Holocaust deniers and historical revisionists can also be purchased through this site.

The state Auschwitz Museum, the Central Council of Jews in Germany and Dutch anti-fascists and the Dutch Auschwitz Committee and others had insisted in public statements and to Bol that such anti-Semitic works of art should no longer be offered. In February, a Dutch member of parliament, Attje Kuiken of the PvdA (Socialists) sent an official request to the Dutch Minister of Justice, Ferdinand Grapperhaus, who is known as an opponent of Nazi propaganda. The MP demands to know what the minister intends to do about such sales campaigns, which she believes promote Nazi ideals.

In fact, it was possible to remove the openly anti-Semitic propaganda books from the official mailing list. However, this does not eliminate the problem. Arthur Graaff, representative for the AfvN, explained that the largest Dutch Nazi fair such as Militariabeurshouten.com, which offers about 4,000 Nazi items every two months, and the Dutch e-bay subsidiary Marktplaats, which offers about 3,600 Nazi items for sale, must also be forced to stop the free sale of Nazi memorabilia.

Amicale de Mauthausen y otros campos honored Barcelona supports the “Never again” network

At the end of April, the Barcelona City Council joined the “Red Nunca Más” (Never Again Network) network, whose main objective is the recovery of republican values in order to defend the memory of the Spanish and Catalan deportees and to raise awareness that similar situations will never be repeated. At the same time, the City Council signed a cooperation agreement for the participation of the City Council in tasks of awareness-raising, dissemination and prevention of fascism, and in historical research on the deported men and women of Barcelona. It also seeks to define and implement, together with other cultural and civil society institutions and especially with the city’s secondary schools, a program of activities that will make our society more just, more supportive, more tolerant and free of fascism.

In a plenary session, the City Council unanimously awarded the Gold Medals of Merit for Civil Merit to the Amical de Ravensbrück and the Amical de Mauthausen and other camps and all victims of Nazism in Spain, to coincide with the 75th anniversary of the liberation of the Nazi concentration and extermination camps at the end of the Second World War and the advance of the Allied troops. These medals are intended to honor their work and to pay tribute to all those, who were deported to Nazi camps, including almost 700 people from Barcelona.

All these initiatives are part of the commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the liberation of the Nazi camps, which the Department of Democratic Memory has prepared this year, with a series of activities developed since January and continued as far as possible in the city.

Digital archive of the deportation

One of the largest collections of documents on the victims of the Nazi regime is now available on the Internet. The historical holdings of the Arolsen Archives are almost completely online, the International Centre for Nazi Persecution announced in April 2020. According to the announcement, interested persons worldwide can now access 26 million documents with information on 21 million names of persecuted persons via the online archive.

“This brings us a big step closer to our goal of creating a digital memorial to the victims of the Nazi regime,” the statement said. This is also thanks to partners such as the International Holocaust Memorial Yad Vashem in Israel. In the last few weeks, it has “brought huge collections such as the forced laborers’ index to the online archive”.

The European Commission and Europa Nostra awarded the European Heritage Prize / Europa Nostra Awards 2020 to the online archive of the Arolsen Archives in the category Education, Training and Awareness Raising.

“The internationally recognised Arolsen Archives are of immense importance. The wealth of documentation adds to the global knowledge of the victims and survivors of Nazi persecution and makes the crimes transparent. The success of this awareness-raising project is in digitising around 30 million documents and providing open access. Collaborative work with other institutions around the world has further enriched their database. The metadata vocabulary allows users to easily search through this immense amount of information and the dialogue interface enables interaction between users”, the Jury stated. “The archive has recorded an impressive number of users of the portal and has included parallel activities in education and awareness-raising”, the Jury noted.

The collection of the former victim tracing service ITS is part of the UNESCO world document heritage. According to their own information, the Arolsen Archives have put one of the largest collections on the victims of Hitler’s fascism online. They document the crimes of the Nazis with unique pieces of evidence. It includes original documents and copies of millions of forced laborers as well as transport and deportation lists of millions of people who were deported to concentration camps and ghettos. The documents are freely accessible and can be searched by name, for example.

Women in European resistance fight

In the first decades, the history of the antifascist fight was mentioned as men's history. Today it is completely undisputed, which important contribution women made in all ranges of the antifascist fight, the military groups, the antifascist networking, the political clearing-up and the individual solidarity with the pursued and their relatives. With the establishment of the Ravensbrück women's concentration camp, the Nazi regime also made it clear that persecution and terror did not stop at the female sex.

Just in time for the 75th anniversary of the liberation from fascism and war, the journalist and anti-fascist Florence Hervé presented a biographical documentation of the female perspective of the resistance struggle in Europe. This book reports on 75 resistance fighters from twenty countries, from occupied countries, from unoccupied or neutral states as well as from Germany and Italy. Twenty-four different female authors have contributed biographies. Some of the contributions were rewritten for this book; others were taken from the annual calendar "Wir Frauen". Without claiming to be representative or complete, the diversity of the resistance was to be portrayed and both known and unknown women were to be introduced. They are also representative of the many nameless women, explains the editor.

Despite all the differences in the initial situation in the different countries and the individual motives, the women were united by the desire for freedom. In addition, Hervé emphasizes: Many of the portrayed people broke traditional gender roles in the resistance, fought for and lived out approaches to women's emancipation. The biographies show a continuity of the resistance. After liberation, former deportees and resistance fighters developed activities against racism, colonialism and war, as well as against discrimination against women - on national, European and international level.

The biographies of the respective countries are introduced by short texts that deal with the national characteristics of the resistance struggle. Of course, national icons of the resistance struggle could not be missing from this collection: Lilo Herrmann and Johanna Kirchner in Germany, Lucie Aubrac, Danielle Casanova and Geneviève de Gaulle Anthonioz in France, Hannie Schaft in the Netherlands, Lisa Fittko and Rosa Jochmann in Austria, Soya Kosmodemyanskaya in the Soviet Union, Dolores Ibárruri in Spain and Milena Jesenská in Czechoslovakia. Their names and biographies are known far beyond the national framework, sometimes idealized.

However, the biographical sketches of the popular and lesser-known resistance fighters are pleasingly empathetic and not very heroic. Rather, the personalities become recognizable in their different facets and the constraints of their actions. The respective authors make clear the often difficult personal decisions that the individual women had to make on their way into the resistance.

If one wants to name a desideratum in this exciting compilation at all, it is the absence of three countries in which there was also resistance from women worth mentioning. In Albania, women's battalions existed in the armed struggle, in Hungary, deported Jewish women in the sub-camps of the concentration camps proved their courage to survive, and in Portugal, women in particular supported networking in the fight against the fascist Salazar regime. This book completes the view on the antifascist resistance around the women's perspective and gives courage for the commitment against neo-fascism, right-wing populism, racism, sexism and war.

Ulrich Schneider

Bibliography:

Florence Hervé (Hrsg.), Mit Lust und List, Europäische Frauen im Widerstand gegen Faschismus und Krieg, 294 S., PapyRossa Verlag Köln 2020, ISBN 978-3-89438-724-2

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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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