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

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

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Successful International Anti-Fascist Conference of FIR

Under the title “Anti-fascism today and the dangers of right-wing politics” member federations of FIR and guests discussed on 24/25 October 2022 in Belgrade the right-wing development in Europe, the history revisionist efforts and the tasks of the preservation of the anti-fascist legacy for the coming generations in Europe. Due to the Corona pandemic, it was the first international conference of FIR after a long break. Thanks to the great support of the Serbian Veterans Association SUBNOR, which had organized everything excellently in Belgrade from the conference place, over the accommodation up to the political perception of the conference, delegates from more than 20 European countries came together. Represented were Portugal and Greece, Netherlands and Italy, almost all states of the former Yugoslavia and many other countries. Even the member federations, which for various reasons were prevented from participating, sent greeting addresses or a video message, like the Russian Union of Veterans. The high-level presence of representatives of the Serbian government was conspicuous. The head of the Presidential Office and the newly elected Minister of Foreign Affairs, as well as the representative of the Ministry of Veterans spoke at the opening of the event. It was a special pleasure that the Chairman of the All-Serbian Federation of Jewish Communities delivered a greeting during the conference. In his opening speech, FIR President Vilmos Hanti emphasized: “Our conference provides a good opportunity to present and share our views on the situation of the historical heritage of the anti-fascist resistance not only in Europe, but also elsewhere in the world. At our Budapest preparatory conference in August - which was a kind of prelude to the present one - we emphasized that the reevaluation of the former anti-fascist victory has increased significantly today.” In contrast, he lamented, “The past is coming back to life, neo-Nazism and neo-fascism are facing a renaissance.”



The chairman of the Serbian Veterans Association SUBNOR, Major General Vidosav Kovacevic, emphasized, “The descendants of those who committed terrible crimes during the Second World War are striving for historical revision. In addition, we, the anti-fascists, are unfortunately too little active and too little united in confronting them. It is important that we join forces.”

An important signal in the international cooperation of veterans’ associations was the participation of the president of the World Federation of Veterans (FMAC), Dan-Viggo Bergtun. He not only formulated a clear rejection of all extreme right aspirations, but also saw weaknesses of democracies at the European level as one of the reasons for the strengthening of extreme right forces.

The newly elected Serbian Foreign Minister Avika Dacic pointed out the danger of historical revisionism. “In every European parliament, there are probably deputies who are convinced that Auschwitz and Jasinovac did not exist or that it was some kind of labor camp, almost like a spa! The question is whether we can stand up and tell them clearly to their faces that they are liars! We are few, but our voices should be louder so that the tragedies of Hitler, Mussolini and others are not repeated,” he was quoted as saying on Serbian television.

In the introductory speech, the Secretary General of FIR emphasized that the extreme right forces inside and outside the parliament stand for racism and xenophobia, hate speech, anti-democratic tendencies and social division. They deny the right to diversity, practice real fascist violence against refugees and foreigners and attack meeting places of democratic organizations. In addition, anti-fascist memorials as well as synagogues and mosques are desecrated.

He called for rejecting the right-wing populist, right-wing promises against real social problems as demagoguery and for naming the real threats to our lives. “Veterans’ organizations and anti-fascists can address these problems only in close alliance with civil society organizations, trade unions and other influential groups. For this, we need networks and joint activities. Such networks must be open to all people who are willing to stand up for democracy, freedom and/or the political and social rights of all people in the respective country. In doing so, it is essential that we link our work with the anti-fascist and anti-racist movements of the current generations. Only in this way can we effectively and successfully counter the danger from the right.”



In more than thirty speeches, representatives of different generations spoke about the upcoming problems and anti-fascist alternatives for action. Of course, the danger of the development of the right in today’s Europe, as it has become evident in recent weeks through the results of the election campaigns in Sweden and Italy, was debated. For the first time in decades, there is a prime minister in Europe, who has never denied her fascist origins. This strengthens right-wing tendencies, which must also be fought in other states such as Hungary, Poland and several Baltic republics. Not only in governments, but also

at the regional level, right wing tendencies influence politics in Europe, as can be seen in Belgium, Spain and in Germany. In this way, they influence political debates and decisions in the European Parliament.

Several times the war in Ukraine and the consequences for anti-fascist work were discussed. There was no open controversy in the plenary debate about the assessment of the war in Ukraine, although the anti-fascist associations in the respective countries have quite different analyses and positions on the war. At the same time, it was recognized that the strengthening of right-wing forces is also related to the war in Ukraine. Although right-wing groups sometimes call for “peace,” they see themselves as profiteers from this war. They expect a collapse of the democratic system in European countries because of the social problems for the people and the protests against it.

Connected to the debate about the Ukraine war are problematic tendencies of historical revisionism, the destruction of memorials and monuments themselves, as experienced in several European countries. Neo-fascists are destroying memorial trees for prisoners of Buchenwald concentration camp; in other countries, state authorities are demolishing central memorials to Soviet liberators. This goes hand in hand with a rewriting of history in schools and public institutions. More than ever, it is necessary to stand up against such developments in a committed way to strengthen anti-fascism in civil society in order to preserve the legacy of the women and men from the resistance, the survivors and the liberators. This must be a task of the education of the younger generations, was demanded in several speeches. How such a thing is possible was shown by a Belgian remembrance project, in which the anti-fascist legacy was passed on not only in terms of knowledge, but also emotionally to later generations.

On the second day, all participants commemorated the anniversary of liberation in a dignified ceremony at the

Memorial to the Soviet Liberators of Belgrade. The final message summarized the main themes of the conference as follows:

“The International Anti-Fascist Conference calls on all democrats to be aware of right-wing populism, far-right “promises” and real threats to our lives. We point out this danger and invite civil society, veterans’ organizations, today’s anti-fascists, trade unions, human rights organizations, youth movements and initiatives, and also conservatives to come together. Form networks and movements that are open to all people who are ready to defend democracy, freedom, political and social rights of all people in the country. We must resolutely oppose the extreme right-wing danger.”



In Serbia, the conference received a lot of attention on television and in the print media. Later, reports could also be found in newspapers and online portals in various other European countries. In a few weeks, a documentation of the contributions of this important conference will be available in English and Serbian.

Ulrich Schneider

Common appeal of FIR and World Veterans Federation on peace

WVF and FIR, both honored as “Ambassadors of Peace” of the United Nations, in the tradition of the fighters in World War II and the resistance fighters against Nazism, connected with relevant forces of the civil society in many countries of Europe, raise their voice in the current situation to stop the war in Ukraine.

We call both sides and all allied forces for an immediate ceasefire and a start of international negotiations. Weapons will never bring peace, diplomacy and negotiations are the only way. This is necessary especially to save the life of the civilian peoples on both sides.

In this, we also see ourselves united with Pope Francis, who has urgently warned of the danger of nuclear war, which will have catastrophic consequences not only on the battlefield, but also for all European countries and definitely for all humankind.

Mr. Dan Viggo Bergtun
President WVF

Mr. Vilmos Hanti
President FIR

Italy: Rome - Peace rally

Several tens of thousands of people demonstrated - called by the anti-fascist associations, trade unions and Christian peace groups - for peace in Europe on November 5, 2022. Gianfranco Pagliarulo (ANPI) said:

“Why are we here? We are here to shout. And our cry will be louder than the roar of the bombs. It will be louder, if we unite more and more, if more places like this are created in Europe. Our cry can prevail, when it becomes the cry of a people, the cry of the peoples. Our cry breaks the silence of diplomacy, condemns the absence of negotiations, rejects war and recognizes all as brothers. (...) There is another way, the ceasefire, the negotiation, the international conference, the ban on nuclear weapons. It is the way of the peoples, of life, of the dream of another, less unhappy world. It is the way of today’s partisans. Partisans of peace, partisans of humanity.”



Germany: “Diplomacy is necessary now”

Address of the Secretary General at the Anti-War Day September 1, 2022.

I come from an international FIR meeting of anti-fascist associations in Budapest, also there the war and the consequences for social action in the interest of the people and the anti-fascist legacy were a big topic.

It was lamented by the participating associations that there is no recognizable progress to bring about a ceasefire in the first step and to come to diplomatic negotiations between the war parties in the next step.

Although we have within the FIR quite different political conceptions over the world situation, we could agree nevertheless on some core theses, which I would like to present.

Thus, we stressed in memory of their honor by the United Nations as “ambassadors of the peace” that for us anti-fascism can never be used for the legitimization of a military aggression, let alone a war of aggression against a neighboring country. We stressed that in war we are always on the side of the victims in the civilian population, victims of hostilities or of the consequences of economic sanctions, which affect not so much the economically powerful, but first of all the ordinary people - even in our own countries.

For this reason, we advocate international dialogues that prevent conflicts between neighboring states from being fought with weapons, which is not only a reality in Ukraine, but also a latent danger in the Balkans.

Since the FIR and its member federations want peace, we reject in all clarity further supplies of weapons into the war areas. Weapons have never created peace. Instead, we demand the immediate beginning of diplomatic initiatives, which influence the war parties to agree to a ceasefire.

Moreover, it is perfectly clear to us that the war in Ukraine is not a war between two neighboring states, but has a pan-European, in fact a global dimension. Therefore, a lasting solution to this problem is only possible if not only the two countries directly involved in the fighting, but all European states set out for a new international conference for collective security in Europe. A conference in the CSCE - format, which in 1975 helped to minimize recognizably the political and military confrontation in Central Europe.

Italy Declaration of Forum of Anti-fascists and Resistance Associations

The Forum of Anti-Fascist and Resistance Associations dutifully examined the new political situation created following the recent elections, expressing concern and together assuming responsibility before the country, which is going through a very serious crisis, the first to pay the consequences of which are young people and very large sections of the population. The Forum appreciates the remarks made by Senator for Life Liliana Segre, who presided over the inaugural session at Palazzo Madama.

The Forum, with full respect for the response of the ballot box and the first choices of the Chambers and while waiting for the new government, expects from the Presidents of the House and Senate scrupulous compliance with the constitutional dictate and as the first act of the new government, however it will be formed, an unequivocal anti-fascist pronouncement precisely on the occasion of the upcoming anniversary of the centenary of the March on Rome. The Forum recalls the capital importance of the application of this dictate, which draws its sap from the Resistance and the War of Liberation, from Western democratic cultures and constitutional tradition, from solid Europeanist positions drawn over time from the Ventotene Manifesto to the Lisbon Treaty, as relevant as ever in the new multipolar world.

The electoral outcome handed the country to a right-wing parliamentary majority, despite the fact that the sum of the votes of the opposition forces is significantly higher; the percentage of abstainers, together with the percentage of blank and null votes, is close to 40 percent of the electoral body.

The Forum expresses extreme concern over:

1. the election result, which determined the most right-wing parliamentary majority in Republican history with a dominant component of nationalist inspiration and post-fascist tradition, and the political and cultural proximity of some of these forces with governments that practice regimes of illiberal democracy and deny rights acquired in the constitutional culture of the European Union;
2. the very high percentage of abstentions and blank and null votes, which manifests an alarming sign of distrust in politics and distance from institutions, as well as the waning of civic sense and awareness of participating in and contributing to the common good;
3. the current electoral law that has resulted in a parliamentary composition that does not correspond to the real power relations manifested by the will of the voters;
4. the situation of the country in which the totality of crises - the difficulties of democracy, the still unfinished pandemic, high inflation, the socio-economic crisis, the effects of war, global warming - reveals a very serious general emergency.

Therefore, the Forum, mindful of the unity achieved by the forces of the Resistance, hopes that the broadest civil, social, political, and cultural unity of the country's democratic and anti-fascist forces will be brought to life on these issues on the road to full constitutional implementation.

Finally, the Forum, placing the defense of democracy and the fundamental principles of the Constitution at the center, pledges to reject any possible attempt at democratic regression and the disruption of the rights of citizens.

Italy: Opening speech of Auschwitz survivor Liliana Segre in the Senate.

On October 28, 100 years ago, the Italian fascist regime - the first in the world - began the March on Rome, as it is known worldwide.

One can read many excellent history books on the subject and hear many interesting speeches. However, for ANPI, the Italian Partisan Association, the words of an extraordinary contemporary witness are of particular importance, shedding new light on the darkness of the past to illuminate both the present and the future.

Liliana Segre was just a child when she was thrown out of school by the racist laws of fascism. She was a teenager when she was loaded onto a train to Auschwitz. For 30 years, as a wife, mother, and grandmother, she toured schools as a witness to the times, increasingly combining memories of yesterday's tragedies with a testimony to today's civilization.

For these reasons, she was appointed Senator for Life, the highest civil and moral recognition of the Italian Republic. Liliana Segre is no longer just the woman who tells of the horrors of the Shoah: She has become a figure who reminds us every time she speaks that Italy has chosen humanity, solidarity and mutual respect.

It was the same at the opening session of the Senate. Instead of giving a speech, Liliana Segre chose to give a demonstration of political determination, intellectual and moral rigor. Once again, she gave everyone an example of what anti-fascist commitment should look like today.

Below are excerpts from her opening address:

"In this month of October, which marks the centennial of the March on Rome that began the fascist dictatorship, it is up to someone like me to temporarily assume the presidency of this temple of democracy, the Senate of the Republic. ... Belonging to such an important assembly can only make us all aware that the country is looking to us, that our responsibility is great, but at the same time the opportunity to lead by example. To lead by example means not only to fulfill our mere duty, that is, to perform our office with "discipline and honor," but to strive to serve the institutions and not to exploit them.

... The majority that emerges from the elections has the right and the duty to govern; minorities have the equally fundamental task of opposition. Common to all must be the imperative to preserve the institutions of the republic, which belong to everyone, which belong to no one, which must function in the interest of the country, which all parties must guarantee.

Great, mature democracies prove to be such when, beyond party divisions and the exercise of different roles, they are able to rally around an essential core of shared values, respected institutions, and recognized emblems. In Italy, the most important anchor around which the unity of our people must manifest itself is the Republican Constitution, which, as Piero Calamandrei said, is not a piece of paper but the testament of 100,000 dead who have fallen in the long struggle for freedom; a struggle that did not begin in September 1943, but which ideally sees Giacomo Matteotti as its pioneer.

... Of course, the Constitution itself can be improved and can be amended (as it itself provides in article 138), but allow me to say that our country would be a fairer and even happier one if the energies spent for decades on amending the Constitution - with modest and sometimes derogatory results, by the way - had been spent instead on its implementation.

The thought leads inevitably to Article 3, in which the constitutional fathers and mothers were not content to prohibit the discriminations based on "sex, race, language, religion, and political opinion, personal and social circumstances" that had been the essence of the ancient régime.

They also wanted to leave to the "Republic" a perennial task: "to remove the obstacles of an economic and social nature which, by effectively limiting the freedom and equality of citizens, prevent the full development of the human person and the effective participation of all workers in the political, economic and social organization of the country."

This is not poetry or utopia: It is the orientation that should guide us all, even if we have different programs to follow. Remove these obstacles!

... Another terrain where it is desirable to overcome the fences and to assume a common responsibility is the fight against the spread of hate speech, against the barbarization of public debate, against the violence of prejudice and discrimination. ...

Finally, I hope that the entire Parliament will be able to make an extraordinary and very urgent commitment, in collaboration with the Government, to respond to the cry of pain of so many families and businesses suffering the effects of inflation and the extraordinary increase in energy costs. They see a bleak future; they fear that inequalities and injustices will increase rather than decrease. ... We have no time to lose: A clear signal must go out from democratic institutions that no one will be left alone before fear and anger can reach alarm levels and take over."

China condemns Japanese Government Officials' Visits to Yasukuni Shrine

In August 2022, China felt compelled to formally protest a visit by a member of the Japanese Cabinet to the Yasukuni Shrine, where World War II war criminals are honored. This visit shows the Japanese government's wrong attitude toward historical issues, according to a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman. China called on the Japanese side to own up to and thoroughly reconsider its history of aggression, responsibly address relevant issues, and win the trust of its Asian neighbors and the international community by taking concrete measures. Media had reported that Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida had sent offerings to the Yasukuni Shrine and some members of the Japanese Cabinet had visited the shrine, which honors 14 convicted major Japanese war criminals from World War II.

All those who love peace and advocate justice would disagree, and those who reverse the course of history will surely go astray again. Only if it sticks to the path of peaceful development can Japan find its correct position, the Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman said.

Russia: Anti-fascist congress in Moscow

An anti-fascist congress was held in Moscow in September 2022, hosted by Russian government agencies. Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu gave the opening speech. He emphasized:

“Today we are witnessing another living manifestation of Nazi policy, when the Russophobe idea of banning all Russian citizens from entering European Union countries is actively promoted from high European tribunals.” At the same time, Shoigu noted that the basic principles of the world order - the legal and political assessments of the Nuremberg Tribunal - are increasingly being ignored and revised by individual countries, especially the Baltic States. He stated:

“In Estonia and Latvia, SS legionary marches have become a tradition, monuments and obelisks to war criminals are erected. Nazi slogans and calls can be heard openly in the streets of Lithuanian cities.”

In his lecture, Shoigu quoted Bulgarian Communist Georgi Dimitrov, who had called fascism “bestial chauvinism, medieval barbarism and unbridled aggression against other peoples and countries.” Shoigu added: “In the 1930s, fascist dictatorial regimes were established in Spain, Portugal, Romania, Croatia and some other states. Its most radical and aggressive form was German National Socialism.”

He recalled that the aggression against the Soviet Union was the most brutal. “Twenty-seven million dead. No other nation in the world paid such a price. Of the total number of victims, almost 14 million were civilians. This is a direct consequence of the policy of extermination pursued by the invaders.”

In his address, he did not only deal with the past. The aggressive political forces had “learned the lessons of history ... badly”, he said.

“The bombing of Yugoslavia, the wars in Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya, the sponsorship of terrorist structures in Syria. These and similar crimes always have certain initiators and executors. The responsibility for such actions and their consequences lies exclusively with the U.S. and NATO leadership.”



USA: Commemorating the Victims and Defenders of Leningrad

It is good to know that also in the United States of America social groups and institutions are active in preserving the memory of the fighters and survivors of the anti-fascist fight. June 2022, at New York's Holocaust Memorial Park in Brooklyn, NY a ceremony was held at the New Monument for the Victims and Defenders of the Siege of Leningrad. Barry Lituchy, Co-President of the Holocaust Memorial Committee, gave the following ideas:

“Today we are unveiling and welcoming a new monument to our Park. It is a monument honoring the victims and heroic defenders of the Siege of Leningrad, whose heroic resistance for 900 days from September 8, 1941 until January 27, 1944 saved the city and what remained of its 200,000 strong Jewish population from the Holocaust.

The Siege of Leningrad has not always been fully appreciated in this country. In Russia almost everybody knows about it. But here, few people understand what an important chapter in the story of the Holocaust this event really was. And that's why it took us a long time to get this monument established. Although the inscription reads that the heroic resistance of the people and soldiers of Leningrad saved the city from the Holocaust, and this is true, nevertheless, the Siege of Leningrad did result in the deaths of a million people. In fact, we must recognize that the Siege of Leningrad was a deliberate crime of genocide organized by Hitler to exterminate Jews and Russians alike, and in that sense alone, it deserves to be considered a chapter of the Holocaust as well.

Hitler declared this deliberate intention to murder the entire population of the city in a radio speech on November 8th, 1941 when he announced, “Leningrad must die of starvation.” No surrender will be accepted. But the inhabitants of Leningrad, despite running out of food already by October 1941, despite being forced to live, on what amounted to only a starvation ration of 3 slices of bread per day, despite the constant bombardment from the air and from artillery, and despite the coldest winter in 100 years, they fought to defend the city from the Nazi invaders until the Soviet army finally broke the siege in January 1944. ... It is not surprising then that the city was declared “a hero city.”



... Today we must fight a war against forgetfulness, against apathy, and against the growing and very real danger of a revival of anti-Semitism, racism, and fascism by those who want to erase the past.

That's why it's important for us to also remember on this day the 600,000 Jews who fought in the Red Army, and the 160,000 Jews who died in combat. And the tens of thousands of Jews who fought and died to defend Leningrad. We must honor their memory, for without those defenders, some, indeed many, of us, would not be here today. They died so we could live. And we must never forget that!

So, when you have a chance to view the new monument, think about these things. Remember, that it is now up to us, to our generation, to remember our martyrs, our victims, our relatives, and our families, now that the Survivor generation is disappearing. We have the burden of carrying on these traditions and these lessons of the Holocaust, so that they are not forgotten or distorted. The Survivors taught us that even if only just one of them had survived, it was their goal that we, as their descendants, should remember them and tell their story, to remind the world of what was done to our people and to teach the lessons of the Holocaust, among which, is the story of the Siege of Leningrad.”

United Nations General Assembly condemns glorification of Nazism

Since 2005, the Russian Federation together with further states of the former USSR presented a declaration to the GA on “**Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance**” (Item 66(a) draft resolution A/C.3/77/L.5). End of September, the Russian delegation brought this topic again on the floor. Annually, each year the U.S. Government has been one of only small number of Governments to vote in the U.N. General Assembly against this statement by the General Assembly against racism and historical revisionism and expressing a commitment to doing everything possible to reduce such bigoted acts. For the first time ever, on November 4, 2022, America was joined not only by one or two voting against it, but 55 nations, and almost all gave as reasons that Russia was for it and has invaded Ukraine.

Ukraine is the only country that has usually been joining America in opposing such resolutions; and many countries this year vote against the resolution because Ukraine always does, and thus vote in solidarity with Ukraine against Russia—condemn the resolution because Russia supports it.

Even though these resolutions never named a specific nation, the USA and its allies opposed the resolution because it allegedly legitimized the war in Ukraine. But why have they also rejected the resolution in previous years?

Of course, the resolution as adopted by 105 in favor, 52 against and 15 abstain.

The following countries **voted against the condemnation of Nazism**:

Albania, Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kiribati, Latvia, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, N. Macedonia, Norway, Papua, Poland, Portugal, Rep. Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Ukraine, UK, U.S.

General Assembly of the International Auschwitz Committee.

This year the member of the Executive Committee Jean Cardoen (Belgium) participated as a representative of the Belgium Auschwitz Foundation, and the FIR in this important meeting. He brought to the General Assembly the following greeting of the FIR:

Your meeting takes place in complicated times and is overlaid by the Ukraine war in every form.

On our last meeting of the executive committee of FIR we underlined again in all clarity: For the FIR, awarded by the UN with the honorary title “Ambassador of Peace”, anti-fascism can never be used to legitimize a military aggression, neither a war of aggression against a neighboring country. In a war, we are always on the side of the victims, especially the civilian population of the warring states. We want peace and reject in all clarity further arms deliveries to the war zones. Weapons have never created peace. Instead, we expect diplomatic initiatives that influence the warring parties to agree to an immediate ceasefire.

However, not only is peace under attack, so is our necessary shared historical memory. In the past weeks, we had to experience the destruction of memorial trees in the memorial sites Buchenwald, Dora and in Bavaria recognizably by neo-fascist perpetrators of violence. In Riga, the central memorial to the Red Army, which liberated the country from fascist barbarism, was violently destroyed by state authorities. In addition, at the Auschwitz memorial we note with concern the efforts to shift the memory of Auschwitz-Birkenau and thus the internationality of the camp society in favor of a focus on Auschwitz I and thus a nationalization of remembrance. This would redefine the character of the Auschwitz extermination camp and marginalize large groups of victims, such as the Jewish people deported to Auschwitz for mass extermination from all parts of occupied Europe or the large group of Sinti and Roma. We must not allow this to happen.

If we stand up for an appropriate commemoration and the preservation of the legacy of the survivors for today and tomorrow, then it means for us that we work together in the whole width of the memory for the work in the memorial places. In this work, the FIR and its member federations are allies of the International Auschwitz Committee. In this sense, we wish your meeting a successful course.



Spain: Homage to Salvador Allende in Barcelona



Once again, the member association of FIR Associació Catalana Ex-presos Polítics del Franquisme participated in the tribute to Salvador Allende. In front of a large number of people present, they recalled Allende's message of September 11, 1973: "Let us be aware that sooner or later the great roads will open again (...) to build a better society".

Spain - Remembering Franco victims

Nearly five decades after the death of Spanish dictator Francisco Franco, the Senate in Madrid has passed a law to exhume tens of thousands of victims of the war and Franco's dictatorship from mass graves and provide them with a dignified memorial. For the bill of the Social Democratic government, which provides for state funding of the exhumations, there were 128 votes in favor, 113 against and 18 abstentions on Wednesday. The House of Representatives has already voted on it in mid-July. "Today we take another step toward justice, reparation and dignity for all victims," wrote head of government Pedro Sánchez of the Socialist PSOE on the short message service Twitter after the vote.

According to estimates by historians and victims' associations, more than 100,000 missing persons still lie in collective graves. According to the law on "democratic remembrance," the search for the missing will be the responsibility of the state in the future. Among other things, a map of all mass graves is to be drawn up and a DNA database of the victims created to enable their identification.

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
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Albania:

LANC remembering the protection, rescuing and sheltering of the Jewish citizens

In an interesting presentation, LANC reminds the fact that all the Jews who lived in Albania during the WWII, were sheltered in the Albanian families and saved from the Nazi persecution. This is undoubtedly a story that makes Albania and Albanians proud. The Jews in our country as well, participated for the liberation of Albania side by side the Albanian anti-fascist fighters. Not only did they fight, but the blood of the seventeen of them – Jewish martyrs has been shed in the foundation - for the liberation of Albania.

Albania and Albanians have saved not 200 local Jews, but around 15 times more of them coming from Central Europe and the Balkans. There is a list of 2265 Jews' names who came to Albania before and during the WWII. This list has been available at the Holocaust Memorial Museum since August 2005.

In the Nazi period, the government and the Regency addressed the issue of the protection of the Jews as “internal affairs” and part of the “relative independence”, and they did not hand over their lists to the occupants. The Reich withdrew in front of Tirana's rejection. There was a complete convergence of all wings and orientations: anti-fascist and pro-anti-fascist, secular and clergy, Muslims and Christians, communists and nationalists - in the north and in the south, in order to protect and not allow to be touched the Jews sheltered in Albania.

Despite the fact that the country was occupied, most of the Jews have been treated well by the Albanians. Characteristic values such as hospitality, trust and generosity stood out in the conduct of the Albanians. These values were also manifested in the sheltering of the Jewish refugees mainly in the mountain villages, as well as in helping and accompanying them according to their wishes to safely leave Albania.

The Albanian government, although under the Nazi-fascist occupation (The fascist Italy had occupied our country in April 7th, 1939), provided the Jews with Albanian passports making them Albanian citizens, as such saving them from the terrible Nazi holocaust.

For the purpose of sheltering and taking the Jews under protection, on May 14th, 1939, the Ministry of Interior of the Albanian government issued a direction, which intended the registration of all the Israeli citizens living in Albania. A few years later, in 1943, when the German forces were arriving to Albania, a significant number of Jews were in the Albanian territory and endangered by the German Nazis. But even under the Nazi German occupation, the Jews were not betrayed by the Albanians. Under the order of the Minister of the time, in August 31st, 1943, Albanian passports would be issued to all the Jews in the Albanian territory and not been provided with passports till that time.

There are memorials today in Albania, in the memory of the Jews who gave up their lives for the liberation of our country. Today, there are 75 trees growing in Israel, each of them is a memorial for one Albanian hero who received the title “The Righteous Among Nations”. There is a ward on Holocaust in the Albanian Historic National Museum with photos, texts, maps and other documents of the war time.

Big Anti-Fascist Demonstration in Piraeus

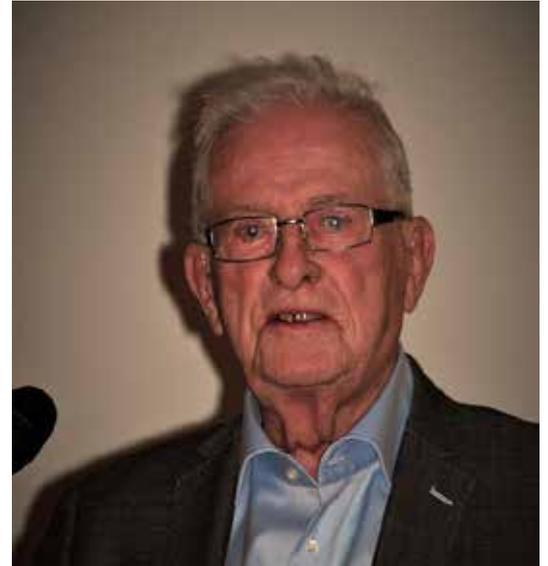
A massive anti-fascist march was held in Keratsini of Piraeus to honour Pavlos Fyssa, on the occasion of the nine-year anniversary of his murder by the nazi-murderers of Golden Dawn. Thousands of workers and young people rallied in Keratsini, at the monument erected for the anti-fascist musician. On the front of the Keratsini rally, there was a banner of the Piraeus Regional Trade Union Centre, with the phrase “Struggle against the system of poverty, inflation, wars that hatches the snake's egg”, which set the tone of the mobilization. Particularly massive were the blocks of trade unions. The youth who gathered behind the banners and flags of the Students' Militant Front, the Coordinating Committee of Piraeus Students, the Student Association of the University of Piraeus, etc.

The president of the Piraeus Regional Trade Union Centre and the ENEDEP union, Markos Bekris, among others, noted: “We are here today because the struggle to definitively and irrevocably defeat Nazism and its roots does not end as long as this system, capitalism, exists, because it is its genuine child. Today, when the exploiters, their governments and their state are preparing the people and youth to adapt to the millstones of their barbaric system or die, we call on the people and youth to stand up, to fight. To fight in an organized and collective way to raise a nationwide river of struggle and to fight in a united and coordinated way for our rights.”



We remember Max van den Berg (1927-2022) (Netherlands)

At the end of May 2022, the Dutch resistance fighter and committed contemporary witness Max van den Berg died at the age of 95. He was just 14 years old when he participated in the February 1941 strike with friends from his school. He saw how the German occupiers ruthlessly crushed the strike. That was a formative experience for him. As the son of a Jewish father, he witnessed much of his family perish in concentration camps; his father himself died in the bombing of Nijmegen in 1944. During the occupation, Van den Berg distributed the underground resistance newspaper *De Waarheid*, and his mother helped people in hiding. During the war, he experienced what discrimination and exclusion could lead to. However, he also saw that resistance to injustice was possible. Therefore, it was no coincidence that in 1946, five years after the February strike, Van den Berg took part in a large demonstration in Amsterdam against the stationing of Dutch troops in Indonesia, where 20,000 people gathered on the Waterlooplein. During the protest, military police shot dead one demonstrator.



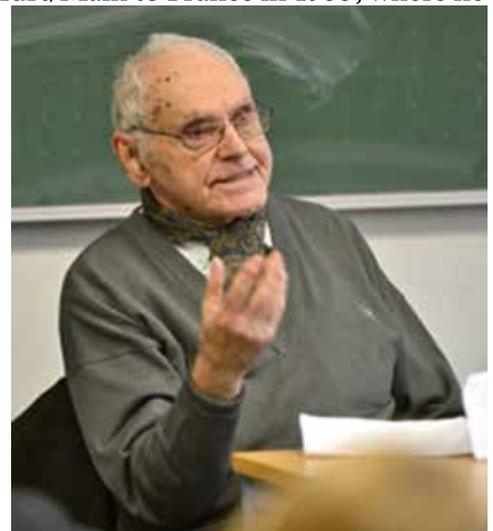
Van den Berg was by then a member of the Communist Party of the Netherlands (CPN) and spent the rest of his life fighting against social injustice, discrimination, racism and fascism. He was a co-organizer of the first Auschwitz commemoration in 1952 (now the National Holocaust Commemoration), involved in the founding of the Resistance Museum and the March 21 Committee. He wrote for the communist newspaper *De Waarheid* and organized the *Waarheid* Festival in Rai, and after the merger of the CPN with Groen Links sat for that party on the Osdorp Municipal Council. He later joined the SP. Max van den Berg, who was married twice and had four children, remained active until the end of his life. He was a regular speaker at demonstrations against racism and discrimination and at commemorations of resistance and war. For his commitment to the city and his tireless fight against racism, Van den Berg received the Andreas Medal last year.

Although Max van den Berg was always combative, he was never dogged, says his daughter Maaïke. “He was an incredibly cheerful, positive person. He was incredibly curious, loved to travel and had a fabulous memory.” We will preserve his memory.

Obituary for Siegmund Gingold (1922- 2022)

On October 10, at the age of 100, Siegmund Gingold, a German-French anti-fascist, died in Paris.

Already at the age of 11, he had to flee with his Jewish family from Frankfurt/Main to France in 1933, where he lived until the end of his life. When German troops occupied France in 1940, Siegmund became a member of the *jeunesse communiste*, which earned him several months in the “Santé” prison. Free again, he joined the *Résistance*, as had his siblings Leo, David, Peter and Fanny. “Most members of my family were involved in the *Résistance*. This and the support of our non-Jewish friends enabled us to survive during this tragic period and to escape deportation and extermination by the Hitler regime. This is the only reason why I can bear witness today,” he wrote in his memoirs. As German emigrants and Jews, the Gingold family was exposed to Nazi terror on a daily basis. One brother spectacularly managed to escape from the clutches of the Gestapo, while his brother Leo and sister Dora were deported to Auschwitz and murdered there.



This drastic tragedy did not let him rest even after the war. He became a member of the FNDIRP and became involved in the protests against “IG Farben in Abwicklung”. IG Farben supplied the Nazis with Zyklon B. In Paris, Siegmund organized protests in front of the German embassy and denounced in public actions the corporation that, as accomplices to mass extermination, also had his siblings Dora and Leo on its conscience. Several times Siegmund, his wife Hélène and his brother David demonstrated in Frankfurt/Main in front of the former IG Farben headquarters.

Siegmund spent his entire life campaigning for a humane and just world, for a life in dignity without racism and anti-Semitism, against fascism and war. He and his family owed their survival to solidarity. He himself lived this precious solidarity.

We will preserve his memory.

Netherlands: The National Holocaust Memorial of Names

Last September, the unveiling of the National Holocaust Memorial of Names took place in Amsterdam. Visiting the memorial today, one sees young and old from the Netherlands and abroad, individually or in groups. Surprised, dazed, frightened, sad, shaking their heads, pointing to a name. At the bottom of the walls of names, there are white stones or stones with a message, flowers, candles, notes. Many people visit the monument every day. Especially noteworthy is the fact that thousands of pupils and students from all over the country have visited the monument, with or without accompaniment from the Jewish Cultural Quarter.



Earlier this year, the outstanding design by architect Daniel Libeskind won the Amsterdam Architecture Prize 2022 and received an honorable mention from the Professional Association of Dutch Architects. There has also been considerable journalistic interest from abroad. The impact of the monument is enormous. The Monument of Names as Petrified Memory has found its place in the city - and beyond.

The Dutch Auschwitz Committee is currently working on the establishment of a support group “Friends of the National Holocaust Memorial of Names”.

Germany:

FIR presents places of remembrance documentation to Thuringia's Prime Minister

At the end of August the Secretary General of the FIR, Dr. Ulrich Schneider, had an official appointment in the Thuringian State Chancellery for the presentation of the Places of Remembrance documentation and an exchange of ideas on the politics of remembrance with Bodo Ramelow, the Prime Minister of Thuringia and current President of the German Bundesrat.

Together with two representatives of the Thuringian VVN-BdA, who have been pursuing an active remembrance policy at the various memorial sites for many years, joint proposals for the integration of the memorial sites into civil society remembrance were discussed.

It was from the viewpoint of all participants a constructive dialogue, which showed that the FIR and its member federations are perceived as relevant interlocutors in the memory politics and for today's questions of the anti-fascist perspective.



Imprint :

Responsible: Dr. Ulrich Schneider, (General Secretary)

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

E-Mail: office@fir.at , Internet www.fir.at

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

Bank account: Postbank Berlin (BLZ 10010010), Account: **543 054 107**, Owner **FIR**,
IBAN DE 04 1001 0010 0543 0541 07 SWIFT-BIC: **PBNKDEFF**

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