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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](mailto:office@fir.at) Internet: [www.fir.at](http://www.fir.at)

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### Editorial

13 years ago the International Federation of Resistance Fighters (FIR) – Association of Anti-fascists sent for the first time a Bulletin with the title “FIR News” to the member federations as well as friends and partners of the international anti-fascist federation. Since then we reported quarterly in 49 issues about the activities, decisions and positions of the FIR as well as about various activities of member federations, about the political developments in Europe and beyond and about literature for anti-fascists.

With this Bulletin we tried to organize and contribute the exchange of experience between the member federations to spread good examples of the historical-political work and the acting against the increasing racism and neo-fascism in Europe within the anti-fascist structures.

Since our member organizations work in completely different structures, their acting is depending on specific factors of the national history and the co-operation with other social forces, we offered member federations and connected organizations in this special edition to report on their own work and anti-fascist acting in the respective countries. In addition on the following sides texts can be found to the role of the FIR in international networks, in the historical-political argument as well as over the antifascist self-conception.

Thus this Bulletin offers also beyond the day an overview of anti-fascism in Europe today.

### **Antifascism today / today's antifascism.**

Seventy-four years after the antifascist victory of World War II the colligated positions aimed to defeat Hitler's fascism have weakened and realigned. This has several reasons, as we know.

The most important is that with the collapse of the Soviet Union, the world became unipolar and in front of our eyes unveiled a new sort of hegemon world-dominion that is without any control. Which's sole purpose is the accession of capital, often without the consideration of the person, and the interests of the people.

Today the goods of the world are concentrated in a close circle. This alignment does not secure broader access to the most basic human requirements. The number of people excluded from the access of goods is significantly rising.

The modern technology, the world of the internet gives even more potential for those in power to monitor and manipulate the masses of people. And to set up so-called virtual ghettos.

Whilst the aim of the institution of democracy is to help people's rights to be represented and implemented; in many societies we see there is no democracy at all, or the current state of democracy does not provide substantial protection for the validation of right of equality and tolerance for minorities.



Clothed in the robes of democracy, within the immune-deficient confines of democracy dictatorships have formed. These dictatorships are the petri dish for the growth of new fascisms. These tyrannies more and more often falsify historical facts and deheroize the anti-fascist heroes of World War II, with the aims of giving grounds to fascist thoughts in people's minds. Since Goebbels, we know how influential the press could be in determining people's thinking. As he said, „Think of the press as a great keyboard on which the government can play.” In many autocratic systems press is concentrated in the hands of the government, thus the incitement of fascist thoughts can be done as easily like knife goes through butter.

We are also aware that the most important tool of rising fascisms is finding a scapegoat. These scapegoats than will be held accountable for the intolerable social and economic circumstances in front of millions. Today's role of the scapegoats has fallen to the flock of „immigrants” arriving to the European Union. There are barely any anti-fascist resistance fighters and family members left living among us, whom all fought so bravely against fascism during World War the II. And such their role of keeping and maintaining the anti-fascist thought in society has diminished proportionately. New generations have no first-hand experience about the terrors of WWII. They are more easily suggestable to support the solidification of new fascisms, autocracies.

Having to experience these above, we must ask ourselves the question: What can anti-fascist people, communities and organizations do to strengthen anti-fascist values under such dire circumstances?

We must proclaim that today everybody is an anti-fascist whom with either word or action represents humanity, tolerance and equality. We must support those economic systems that provide broad access to material goods and we must deny all autocracies that strip people of their rightful share of goods. We can be anti-fascists everywhere: at the workplace, within the circle of our friends and family. We can make our common endeavor more fruitful if we rally around anti-fascist organizations, thus using the power of community to achieve or goals. It is also important to support and fund all organizations, politicians, artists, any other personalities whom proudly represent anti-fascist virtues. Only strong democracies can provide protection against new fascisms. Therefore, anti-fascist have a stake in making and protecting strong democracies. Support all true democracies where our anti-fascist values are present!

The next Elections to the European Parliament are going to be in May 2019. It is necessary to support anti-fascist! The stakes are high! We must not let neo-fascists gain any ground. If they were to gain access to the economical and administrative tools of the European Union, they would only use them to destroy our civilization. The FIR offers a strong and traditional framework for European and international anti-fascist unison. This would worth every anti-fascist's while to support personally and or financially. Let us use or historic motto: No pasaran!

Vilmos Hanti, President of FIR and of MEASZ

### **FIR and its fight for an antifascist Europe and commemoration work**

For over 65 years, the FIR is active as an international umbrella organization for the creation of an anti-fascist Europe. In political actions with the peace movements, the trade unions and other social movements the FIR and their member federations use themselves in the respective countries and on international level for the realization of the ideals of the anti-fascism. Thereby the FIR uses parliamentary and extra-parliamentary movements for the implementation of its goals. In the call to the elections to the European Parliament 2019 the FIR formulated its conceptions.

Thus, the FIR and its member federations stand up for a Europe,

- which opposes all forms of racial discrimination or xenophobia,
- which works for refugees and minorities and guarantees humane treatment for all,
- which protects and helps to preserve the identity-giving cultural characteristics of minorities and regions,
- which opposes all forms of Holocaust denial, destruction of memorials, falsification of history and rehabilitation of SS criminals,
- which ensures a social policy that guarantees all people work, education, food and adequate housing,
- which represents a community in the interests of the people and does not serve the rule of banks and business associations,
- which advocates comparable living conditions in all countries and takes action against forced labour migra-

tion and human trafficking,

- which advocates a peace policy based not on hegemonic but on non-military conflict resolution,
  - which guarantees equal rights between peoples and nations and prevents any hegemonic policy,
- Such a Europe is possible if citizens actively and audibly defend their interests.

The FIR made in the past years its contribution for the conversion of these ideals by setting - together with its member federations - on conferences and conferences, with consultation and public actions a clear signal against the advance of neo-fascist and extremely right groups, against racism and xenophobia, for social justice and peace. The impressive conference in cooperation with the Serbian member association SUBNOR against the warmongers in the Balkans in May 2018 was a good example of such activities. The numerous invitations to the FIR and its leading representatives to national and international consultations underline the high esteem, which is shown for this common work. Thus, the FIR supports the international exchange of experience and the cross-linking of active anti-fascist structures.

An important part of the common work is the fight for the preservation of the memory of the anti-fascist resistance in all European countries. Today anti-fascists must defend themselves in different countries of Europe against massive forms of historical revisionism and the removal of the memory and its memorial places. The support of this fight became an important field of action of the FIR in the past years. Thus it concerns the receipt of the memorials and memorials for the liberators of the fascist barbarism, which are to be torn down for example in Poland, the Ukraine or Croatia or even rededicated. It is about the rehabilitation of fascist collaborators and criminals by honoring the SS volunteers in different Baltic States to “heroes of national independence” by annual marches, as in Riga. Against this scandal, the FIR successfully protested together with the German VVN-BdA and anti-fascists in Latvia in a coordinated international action, so that the Latvian government saw itself induced to let spread a justifying explanation about all embassies.

The FIR uses itself besides actively for a memory of the antifascist resistance. The representatives of the FIR were represented on numerous commemoration meetings and other public appreciations. With large success since several years the exhibition “European resistance against the Nazism” developed with the “Institut of the veteran” is presented in different European cities. Several thousand visitors have seen this exhibition and numerous events dealt with the memory of the women and men from resistance and persecution. Also with it the FIR and its member federations make an important contribution against forgetting.

### **The international activities of “RUSSIAN UNION OF VETERANS” (RSV)**

The All-Russian Public Organization of Veterans “Russian Union of Veterans” (RSV), as the successor to the Soviet Committee of War Veterans (SCWS), continues to participate in the activities of the international veteran movement to strengthen peace and security of peoples, comprehensive cooperation and international relations based on the norms of international law and Russian legislation. The main task of the RSV international cooperation is to maintain permanent relations and cooperation with international and national organizations of veterans of foreign countries and, above all, with the World Federation of Veterans (FMAC), the



International Federation of Resistance Fighters (FIR) – Association of Anti-Fascists and the Association of Anti-Fascists of the world. “

In 2013, the VIII Conference approved the new name of the Organization - the All-Russian Public Organization of Veterans “Russian Union of Veterans” and its governing body - the Russian Committee of Veterans (RVC). After the Conference, the newly elected RVC reestablished fruitful cooperation, primarily with the FIR and its Executive Committee, veterans and anti-fascist organizations of Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Hungary, Germany, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, etc. It is symbolic that the Russian Union of Veterans focuses its main efforts on the struggle to consolidate peace and strengthen ties with foreign veteran organizations opposing the revival of neo-fascism, neo-Nazism, and the threat of a new war and for the security of peoples on all continents of the planet Earth.

RKV pays great attention to the preservation of memorable memorials at the burial sites of Soviet soldiers in almost all countries of the world where, for one reason or another, Russian and Soviet soldiers died. In order to deepen this work, in April 2015 we established the Autonomous Non-Commercial Organization “International Returns Names” military memorial center. This organization is entrusted with the task of restoring the personal data of compatriots who died during the Great Patriotic War of 1941–45 and are buried in nameless graves on the territory of the CIS states and the European Union as “unknown soldiers”, or listed as “missing persons”. Deployed under the leadership of the Chairman of the RSV, Army General MA. Moiseev in January 2016, the work of the Russian-Bulgarian and Russian-Serbian groups, which included representatives of the Russian Union of Veterans, the Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Rossotrudnichestvo for the care of graves and memorable places for the dead Soviet soldiers in Bulgaria and Serbia. Due to the increase in the number of cases of desecration of graves and monuments by the population of Bulgaria, practicing neo-Nazi tendencies, the Russian-Bulgarian group under the leadership of S.V. Vinogradov cares for graves, restores destroyed and desecrated monuments.

RSV held a number of international meetings of veterans and anti-fascists in Moscow in the framework of joint activities with the FIR, in which representatives of more than thirty countries of Europe and Asia participated. Particularly memorable was the meeting in March 2015, dedicated to the 70th anniversary of the Great Victory. Veterans also participated in celebrations in China, dedicated to the 70th anniversary of the end of the Second World War. On the initiative of the RSV, in Novo Mesto, Slovenia, on October 28-29, 2015, the Founding Conference of the International Association “The World Anti-Fascist Association” was held. Anti-fascist and veteran organizations from Russia, the former republics of Yugoslavia (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia), Austria, Hungary and Italy took part in the conference. Almost all representatives emphasized the strengthening of the reappearance of fascist and neo-Nazi tendencies in Europe and in their countries. They noted that the main reason for this is the impoverishment of the people. The falsification of history in many European countries has also become a common feature of the current situation. On the initiative of the FIR Executive Committee, in the framework of the Commonwealth in January 2017 in the city of Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina), the RSV and the Council of the Commonwealth (President Tit Turnnshek) held a meeting of anti-fascists. The meeting was also attended by delegations of veteran organizations in Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Serbia, Slovenia, Croatia, and Montenegro.

We are a united front with FIR members in the fight against the revival of neo-fascism, the rampant terrorism and neo-Nazism. On the eve of the 75th anniversary of the Great Victory, we need to expand our work among the participants of the Great Patriotic War of 1941-45. and veterans of the Second World War to eradicate attempts to revise the historical truth about the role of the Red Army in the victory over fascism and the liberation of the enslaved peoples of Europe. In a number of European countries - Bulgaria, Latvia, Poland, Ukraine - the Soviet soldier is forgotten, the graves of fallen soldiers are being desecrated, and monuments and a monument are being demolished. But they should not forget the lessons of history. Army general Moiseev reminded on the monument on Liberation Square in honor of the defenders of Stalingrad and the liberation of Bratislava on April 5, 1945 by the troops of the 2nd Ukrainian Front **“Glory to the Soviet Liberator Army. If there were no Stalingrad, there would be no Liberation!”**



Veterans of Russia began active preparations for the solemn date - the 75th anniversary of the Victory of the Soviet people in the Great Patriotic War of 1941–45. RSV plans on the eve of this date to hold an international meeting of veterans and anti-fascists in Moscow. We must always remember those who saved Europe and the world from fascism and nationalism. Historical experience teaches us this; it confirms the reality of our days.

M.A. Moiseev/ N.N. Royanov, RSV



## ANPI: Antifascism in Italy today

The emerging bunch of extreme right/neofascist groups, parties, movements that has characterized Europe in these last years has not, unfortunately, spared Italy. Carla Nespolo, President of ANPI, has recently recalled that Antifascism is simply the root of our civil and democratic society. Opposing this model, awakening the black impulses that led Italy to one of the darkest moments in its history, means willing to undermine our common coexistence, attacking democracy, disrupting every rule of peaceful and common living.

Rules which have been codified in the Italian Constitution, the lighthouse guiding all antifascists in these obscure times. Words that are a wall against any attempt to bring back the clock of a century, and a bridge between peoples.

Today more than ever, Italians are called to protect what we thought was totally acquired: the value of peace among peoples and of antifascism, equality, democracy. In an increasingly unequal society, the inability - or sometimes worse, unwillingness - of the national and local governments to enforce those principles has become the problem.

If these neo-fascist handfults managed to infiltrate the local administrations and the parliament, it is because they surf on the effects of the economic and social crises. Not to say about the unbelievable choice of relegating the study of history to a subject of little importance.

The school is still a place of democratic resistance. ANPI has recently renewed its Special Protocol with the Ministry of education, to bring into the classrooms its experience and memory. Because the heroism of many teachers and the goodwill of so many students are not enough, and notwithstanding the weird decision of a right-wing government, history should continue to be taught. To remember what it meant living under the fascist yoke and regain freedom. To remember that hundreds of thousands of women and men have fought, risked and lost their lives to build the Italian Republic as a first step towards a Europe of the people, a Europe of peace.



Indeed, Italy sees racism and xenophobia coming back to life. With a government which is strong with the Weak (such as the migrants) but unable to face such an epochal phenomenon as migrations.

We live in hard times, where far-right organizations can find allies in the public administrations. The fascists who are illegally occupying a big building in the heart of Rome are untouchable, but the Mayor of Riace - who did his best to offer to Migrants new opportunities - has been forced to quit his city. The Government is proposing a Rom and Sinti special register and to impose shorter opening times to the "non-Italian shop-keepers". Local administrations do not sanction - or even worse, they support and protect - "True Italians' patrols" and paramilitary formations that are said to help - aka replace - the police.

We are intensely worried about what comes out of racism, selfishness, individualism, out the myth of "Champion". When the Partisans are less and less, the strength of direct testimony is fading. We must then concentrate on the power of knowledge. Does a boy know that women under fascism could not vote? That even men could not freely vote? That there was no freedom of expression, of teaching, no artistic neither musical freedom?

ANPI has thus asked the Italian municipalities to refuse to concede the use of public spaces to anyone who doesn't recognize the values of antifascism. To block the neo-fascist activities and proselytism showing the value of anti-fascism as the basis of our legal systems and to remember that there are rules that must always be respected.

Filippo Giuffrida, Vice-President of FIR, ANPI

## Anti-fascism today in Greece

Neo-fascists today in Greece express themselves politically only through the Golden Dawn party (GD). Some years ago the GD was not represented in the Parliament where it found its expression through G. Karatzaferis' party "People's Orthodox Awakening". Gradually GD obtained a stronger presence in political life. From 2010 on Greece's bourgeois class began to decrease the "People's Orthodox Awakening" and to help the more thoroughbred fascists-nazis of GD to develop by putting them forward in several ways (mass media etc.). From 2012 on GD is a parliamentary party, the third largest in the Greek Parliament.

GD's development was based on demagoguery. They used the bad economic situation of the people and the corruption of government parties, which were responsible for that situation.

They started to spread several myths about protection of the elderly against "migrant thieves".

They allegedly helped old men and women to cross the street. They organized food distributions "only for Greeks" and told everywhere that within the Parliament they would be pitiless towards corrupt politicians and would even use violence within the Parliament itself in order to defend the People's rights. In spite of all this, they are not accepted by the entire public opinion.



However, the first thing they did immediately after their entrance into the Parliament was to misuse their parliamentary immunity and start the hunt against migrants and refugees from Asiatic and African countries, while at the same time developing a primitive kind of anti-communism.

Their criminal face became immediately evident with their murderous attacks on foreign workers and communists using Hitler's method of "strong-arm squads". They murdered not only foreigners just like that, without any reason, but the Greek anti-fascist rapper Pavlos Fisas as well. For these crimes they have not been punished yet, because the law-suit has been going on for three years now. The delay is due to the fact that no fit room has been afforded to carry out the trial without any trouble... In the meantime, the GD murderers are free. Their anticommunist rage is such that the GD member of Parliament Ilias Kasidiaris slapped during a TV transmission the KKE (communist) deputy Liana Kanelli, because she defended Rena Dourou, deputy at that time of Syriza, into whose face Kasidiaris had thrown a glass of water.

In spite of the big words of governments against GD, even now the Syriza government invites them at official events increasing their prestige. Communists, the class-orientated trade-union movement and the peace movement are the only forces being consistent in the struggle against the GD nazi criminals. They clearly denunciate the criminal GD organization and capitalism-imperialism, too, as responsible, because it uses GD for the defense of their interests. Wherever the three above-mentioned anti-fascist forces organize events, they denunciate the fascists, they scan slogans against fascism and address calls to everybody to isolate the GD's by chasing them away from wherever they appear. So, as soon as they appear at any popular or trade-unionist event, they are immediately thrown out by the rallied people.



As time goes by and the role of GD is revealed more and more, which is clearly to defend the interests of the rich accompanied by anti-communism and hatred against refugees and migrants, their forces shrink. Until recently, according to gallups, they were at the third place, but now this position has been put into doubt.

Christos Tsintzilonis/ Grigorios Touglidis, PEAEA-DSE

### **Situation of the Hungarian Antifascists MEASZ:**

The Hungarian Federation of Resistance Fighters and Antifascists (MEASZ) works with around 800 members amongst challenging circumstances. While the Hungarian state gives subsidies to NGOs, it gives only to those that belong to Prime Minister Viktor Orban's family or friends, or who are admitting help the government. Therefore MEASZ is not subsidized by the state, moreover, others sponsors don't dare to subsidize MEASZ either, fearing the government cripples them economically. Consequently, our activities shrunk significantly. Our survival is at stake. Amongst our activities, you can find the traditional antifascist commemorations, the yearly handover of the Miklos Radnoti Antiracist Award, publishing our yearbook, maintaining our domestic and international relations, internal organizational matters. We grab every opportunity to oppose the government that has shifted to its current far-right totalitarian operation.



### **Antifascist Movement in Germany**

The FIR has in Germany several member federations, whose largest is the "Union of the pursued ones of the Nazi regime - federation of anti-fascists" (VVN-BdA). The VVN is a non-party union of women and men of the generation of the pursued ones of the Nazi regime, resistance fighters and anti-fascists of today's generations. The political basis of the work is the legacy of the liberated prisoners of the Buchenwald concentration camp of April 1945, the "Oath of Buchenwald" whose core message means "The destruction of Nazism with its roots is our slogan; the construction of a new world of peace and freedom is our goal".

Women and men from the anti-fascist resistance, survivors of the Nazi concentration camps founded the VVN shortly after the end of the war. After the liberation in 1945 prisoner committees and committees "victims of



fascism” arose, later the “associations of the persecuted of the Nazi regime” formed on regional level at first, 1947 the all-German council of the VVN. Already at the beginning of the 70’s the organization opened itself as “federation of the anti-fascists” to the subsequent generations. By this extension beyond the framework of the members the VVN-BdA became actually a generation-spreading and non-partisan union, which stands for the continuity of anti-fascist work, for learning from history, for the vision of an anti-fascist future; for a world without racism, anti-Semitism, Nazism and militarism, without exclusion, without fascism and war.

In October 2002, the anti-fascist federations from the former GDR and the FRG as well as camp communities united under the common roof, so that the VVN-BdA is now the strongest force of the organized anti-fascism in the Federal Republic of Germany.



The political emphasis of the work of the VVN-BdA on all levels (circles, regional federations and federal organization) are to today the history and memory work, the active acting against Neo-Nazis, racism and anti-Semitism, the advocacy for democratic rights and liberties and the peace work.

In contrast to some state-organized commemoration events, which leave it at the mourning over the victims, the VVN reminds on the occasion of January 30 or other data connected with the crimes of the German fascism also of the social causes and the promoters of fascism. At the same time we stand up for the fact that not only the victims are remembered, but also the women and men from the respective regions, who stood at the risk of their life, their freedom or their health in the resistance against the Nazi regime - most of them came from the labor movement - are not forgotten.

The VVN organizes cultural events on the day of liberation in many places on 8/9 May. For several years now, a cultural festival has been taking place in Berlin on 9 May in Treptower Park at the Soviet memorial under the motto “Whoever does not celebrate, has lost”, at which several thousand people remember the fighters of the anti-Hitler coalition and in particular the Red Army who liberated Germany from fascism.

“Never again fascism” also means offensive to oppose all forms and groups of neo-Nazis, racists and anti-Semites that are clearly visible in Germany. Together with other anti-fascist groups, alliances and forces we oppose Nazi marches. To our alliance partners here belong in particular the trade unions, local and supra-regional antifascist groups, in addition, parties, if they are ready to oppose Nazi provocations also on the roads.

If courts and police protect Nazi marches, then civil society is called upon to oppose them peacefully, such as against the Europe-wide marches in Dresden on 13 February or recently against a Nazi march in Berlin.



“Blocking is our right” is the slogan under which anti-fascists oppose the deployment routes of Nazis and racists.

In order to point out to the politicians their responsibility for stopping Nazi propaganda, the VVN-BdA started a “noNPD campaign” some years ago with the statements “Fascism is not an opinion, but a crime”, in which 185,000 people with their signatures called on the representatives of the German Bundestag to initiate a prohibition procedure.

With the emergence of the right wing populist “Alternative for Germany” (AfD), the VVN-BdA has become involved with the initiative “Aufstehen gegen Rassismus” in the great mass actions of the past months. At the large-scale demonstration in Berlin in October 2018, almost 250,000 people demonstrated their resistance to racism and the development of the law and advocated active solidarity with refugees and migrants.

The statement “Never again war!” is also a guideline of VVN’s work. In the Easter marches, on the Anti-War Day on September 1st or in the campaign “Disarmament instead of rearming”, members of the organization are involved everywhere. The VVN does not leave it to appeals, but demands a stop of arms exports especially to war zones, which is a cause for the refugee development.

With all these activities, the VVN-BdA still translates the antifascist legacy into practical politics today.

Ulrich Schneider/ Heinz Siefert, VVN-BdA

### **Anti-racism in Poland - Current Challenges**

The “NEVER AGAIN” Association was established in 1996 by Marcin Kornak. Since that time it has been educating the society, as well as actively fighting against right-wing extremism, xenophobia, racism and violence. A very important part of our mission is the “Brown Book” - a periodical in which one can find the effects of monitoring xenophobic incidents.

Nowadays in Poland we are observing similar processes and diagnosing problems similar to those in other countries, like e.g. USA, Great Britain, Hungary, Italy or France. This includes the rise of far-right political parties and organizations that use xenophobia, racial prejudice and economic frustration to appeal to voters and supporters. The situation worsened in as of mid- 2015. It was the time of immigration crisis in Europe, but – different to what happened in many other countries – here in Poland the problem was mainly theoretical, since Poland was never an important destination to which the refugees would travel, and a common Polish citizen probably never met a true refugee. This allowed right-wing politicians to create an image of a dangerous, violent immigrant who is not running away from a war in his country but comes here to destroy our society and use the money from social assistance. This clearly false image came to be deeply rooted in the minds of many Polish citizens. It will also be a fuel for the politics of hatred, allowing organizations and parties previously unknown or marginal to become serious political players or even make their way into the Parliament.



What happens frequently is violence – either verbal and/or physical or both – towards people who are considered “different” - judging by skin color, language they speak or the way they dress. In the “Brown Book” we record such incidents and simultaneously observe that the number of such events is growing. A very important cause is the passivity of authorities which allows the attackers to feel free. Also in media we observe radical politicians discussing the situation in Poland. Words that some time ago would be spoken only quietly and in private now make their way to the bigger audience. It is a big challenge to educate society, show that violence and hate speech is not to be tolerated. This requires a responsible approach by the journalists and also rapid reactions when the said hate speech is heard.

A quick glimpse at the incidents noted in “Brown Book” can help us understand, what is really happening and what we can do to stop the growth of hate-related events. In the edition covering years 2009-2010 we can find about 30 mentions about devastating memorial places – mostly Jewish cemeteries, but also ones of Russian soldiers. In the years 2011-2012 – over 20 mentions. Only in 2018 the media informed about many devastations of Soviet military cemeteries, during which many tombstones were destroyed – e.g. 57 in Milejczyce in eastern Poland and 20 in the city of Gdansk. In the case of Jewish cemeteries the attackers usually destroy the tombstones and paint anti-Semitic signs and writings. Also, synagogues are frequently defaced with swastikas and other anti-Semitic symbols. Most of the perpetrators remain unknown.

A very loud happening, covered also in foreign media, is the “March of Independence” in Warsaw, which takes place every year on November 11. It has little to do with commemorating the Polish fight for independence of our country, instead it is a time for radicals to show up and present their views to the public. We can see different banners with slogans about “white Europe”, attacking Muslims and refugees, clearly anti-Semitic, homophobic and xenophobic. This happens every year, and despite that a large group of conservative journalists and important political figures try to defend the march as patriotic, calling what is seen: “marginal incidents and provocations”. Anti-immigrant marches also take place in other cities of Poland, on different dates. What connects them is that they are all defended as patriotic and harmless, despite the rising violence towards people considered to be “outsiders”.

To sum up – the situation in Poland resembles the way in which politics go in many countries. The growing importance of extreme right-wing political parties is alarming and calls for our reaction which must come in many ways – from reacting to every violent incident, to educating society and raising awareness about such universal values as tolerance, peace and the now maybe forgotten truth that we are all equal and everyone has the right to feel safe and remain unharmed.

Jacek Dzięgielewski

**Contact data:**

“NEVER AGAIN” Association, P.O. Box 6, 03-700 Warszawa 4, Poland

## **The threat of the Far Right and the response by Antifascists in the UK**

In the UK the leading proponent of far right politics is Tommy Robinson aka Stephen Yaxley. He receives a lot of support from the Alt Right in the US, Steve Bannon, Marine Le Pen, Gert Wilders and has gathered at times up to 15.000 people on the streets of Britain. This is the largest number of far right sympathisers and fascists who came out on the streets on two occasions: 9<sup>th</sup> of June and 14<sup>th</sup> of July.

It isn't all despair though, there is also hope: Stand up to Racism was central to organising a counter demonstration of 250.000 against the visit of Trump on 13 July and mustered numerous counterdemonstrations to the far right.

We have had four serious attempts of the far right to grow in Britain :

The National Front in the 1970 beat the liberals into third place in the Greater London Assembly. They were stopped by the **Anti Nazi League** and their companion **Rock Against Racism** which built a mass antifascist movement with 100.000 people joining the march and carnival in 1978. Large numbers of Holocaust survivors helped to expose the Nazi core ideas of the National Front. A multicultural, multiracial movement of black and white broke and demoralised the National Front and their organisation disintegrated.

The BNP from 1990-2010 attempted to build a new organisation combining anti-immigrant propaganda with Nazi ideology. Their aim was to gain respectability and win votes in elections. In 2006 the BNP had two MEP's, two London Assembly members and a host of council seats dotted around the country. To counter the growth of the BNP and their growing support **Unite Against Fascism** was formed. UAF exposed the links between racist violence and the BNP. When they decided to target East London and Stoke on Trent UAF formed groups together with Trade Unions and community organisations and started a campaign of mass canvassing of voters coupled with a cultural campaign by “Love Music Hate Racism” aimed at young people which led to the electoral defeat and disintegration of the BNP.

Former BNP member Steven Yaxley and others formed a street movement capitalising on the islamophobic language of the UK elites and the War on Terror. They were able to mobilise up to 5.000 people targeting the Muslim community but also any ethnic minority, LGBT communities and Trade Unions. **Unite Against Fascism** was central to the destruction of the English Defense League (EDL) by leafletting Football clubs and successfully defending multiracial communities in Sheffield, Tower Hamlets and Walthamstow. The EDL fell apart after their defeat in Walthamstow but they made Tommy Robinson, a petty fraudster criminal with convictions for assault and domestic violence a household name. He received a popular profile from right wing media and through skilful use of social media. In the aftermaths of two terrorist events : the bombing of the Manchester Arena after a pop concert and the attack at London Bridge, the far right saw this as an opportunity to relaunch. In the meantime a eurosceptic party : the United Kingdom Independence Party had grown under the charismatic leadership of Nigel Farage, receiving at one point 26% of the vote. In response we formed **Stand up to Racism and Stand up to UKIP**. We targeted the constituencies of Nigel Farage and Douglas Carswell and motivated enough of the electorate to vote against them to prevent them gaining a seat in Parliament. This was a successful campaign and coupled with the Brexit vote meant that UKIP's purpose was spent and their vote collapsed. UKIP changed direction to become a more openly racist party.

Under Theresa May's leadership the UK Government built a hostile environment towards migrants. The Windrush Scandal, where migrants from the West Indies, some born in the UK others residents for 60 years, were unlawfully deported caused an outcry. Stand up to Racism was central to organising demonstrations and demanding the return and compensation for those whose rights were violated. Our experience shows that racism from senior politicians seeking nativist votes also unleashed the far right.

We work with Trade Unions, Faith groups, LGBTI organisations, disabled activists, political parties and grassroots organisations. Stand up to Racism helped organise mass demonstrations in support of refugees. We established support for refugees in Calais to which 1 in 10 people in the UK contributed and we worked with Lord Alf Dubs to call for unaccompanied minors to be given a new life in the UK.



We challenge and fight all forms of racism, xenophobia and religious hatred. Key part of our work is exposing islamophobia. We found that islamophobia unleashed older forms of racism; antisemitism and racist abuse grew with the legitimisation of islamophobia.

Through our sister organisation “**Love Music Hate Racism**” and cooperation with the music industry we are engaging the youth and we are celebrating diversity and multiculturalism.

We hold yearly conferences of on average 1400 attendees, with local and international speakers engaging many people in the fight against racism and fascism. Our aim is to build a local anti-racist mass movement which is part of a global fight against the far right and racist movements worldwide.

Weyman Bennett

co-convener of Stand up to Racism and Unite Against Fascism

Contact data: <http://www.standuptoracism.org.uk/>[www.standuptoracism.org.uk](http://www.standuptoracism.org.uk/)



## **The Identitaire – New Fascist current in Denmark**

### **FIR – DK about the today's situation in Denmark**

Antifascists have a major task today to oppose the obscured revival of Fascism in Europe. The new extreme right groups and movements are spreading over the western world. These groups define themselves as alternative movements. But they are only old wine in new bottles. They get together in broad networks and contain established and well-known xenophobic political parties.

The use of the term alternative is no coincidence. It is as a smoke screen to cover up the ideas and thinking behind the movements. Their ideas and political goals are a world where white culture prevails and white power rules and where multicultural is the main enemy. They wish to cultivate an original nationality and to find a common European ethnicity in Europe. We saw them emerge in connection with the latest election to the European Parliament in France, in Italy, in the Northern countries, in Germany, and in Denmark together with Dansk Folkeparti (Danish Peoples Party).

To describe this movement is no easy task. They have no appointed leader, and they have no dominant organization. Instead they constitute a many-headed monster composed of persons and groups among whom – until now – nobody has claimed full control of the political direction of the movement. We are however able to state, that the various groups agree on - the left wing antifascists as their main enemy - who has deprived them of many of their rights (i.e. “The dangerous myth of equality”).

In Denmark, we find these movements in Dansk Folkeparti, in the identitaires, in the many anti-Muslim groups, and in extreme in Nordiska Motstandsrørelsen (Nordic Resistance Movement), and lately in “De Nye Borgerlige” (The New Middle-class). De Nye Borgerlige looks as if they will be represented in the Danish Parliament after the election in 2019. They use an extreme rhetoric against asylum-seekers, refugees, and foreigners integration, and dispute the “Human Rights. Their policy is evident ethnocentric “Our white culture is the best” – a clear Master Race understanding.

The above mentioned groups and parties constitute approximately 20% of the eligible voters. In common is the slogan “Denmark for the Danes” – the Neo Fascist parole in the 1990's. Their number is not noticeably rising, but their policies are becoming “good political form” far over the middle of Danish politics, where the parties compete for the most inhuman cut backs in refugee politics. The Danish parliament has the last few years passed more than 100 cut backs among which is the “jewelers-law”, and restrictions on the right to unite families. In common for all these groups is the parole “Denmark for the Danes” – the slogan of the Danish Neo-Nazis in the 1990's. This slogan has become good form far over the middle in Danish politics. The freedom of speech has become the instrument of those in power to earmark certain (pt. the Muslims) sections of the population as scapegoats – not the citizens' right to speak out against those in power. They tell us to forget the universal responsibility for freedom, solidarity, and equality.

What we need is an understanding of history, the antifascist resistance, and a strong common ground in Europe against racism, nationalism, and abuse of power.

Tove Jensen, FIR-DK

### **SUBNOR Serbia: Balkans want peace only**

We, the Europeans, know well what the wars unfortunately are. Inhabitants of the Balkans, are always for the rich men with imperial intents a ‘powder keg’ to be ignited at their will and to extend the fire for sake of their own strategic and financial interests.

In such a horrendous volcano, always on the defense, Serbia lost in Great War over 28 percent of its inhabitants, and in the World War II, fighting shoulder to shoulder in the columns of the victorious anti-Hitlerite Coalition, one out of seven Serbs lost his life. That is why our Veterans say: “Peace, no matter how loose, is better than tragic armed confrontation.”

There is, thus, big reason for our Organization, among leading in Europe; it has more than 130,000 members, ever more middle-aged and even younger generation, who cherish the tradition of freedom and antifascism as basic tenets of civilization. Guardians of that aim are the descendants of the old combatants, supporters, and people of good will aware of danger arising from the evils of the past, through brute nationalism, with populists who care more for their seat of power than for humanity, instructed terrorists who somewhere grabbed their positions and dressed in branded suits to imitate the justice and fairness they ignored until almost yesterday, during their armed attacks.



SUBNOR Serbia with its seven decades of work, aware of the lurking dangers, gathered last spring in Belgrade Antifascists of the Balkans. Presidents of Veterans' Organizations came from Greece, Bulgaria, Albania, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Slovenia, Republic of Srpska, along with Delegation of the FIR on highest level. Unique Statement, addressed to the Heads of States and Governments, is a substantiated appeal that the European land should never be a sort of antechamber for major conflicts.

In addition to making atmosphere for the political means, dialogue and reasonable compromises, preventing new misunderstandings and heal the old wounds, our Organization actively participate on all social levels in Serbia and in the World. Due to such activity we were decorated by the President of the Republic of Serbia for our contribution to the freedom and Antifascism.

It is a substantial encouragement for our work, which was pushed to the margins in Serbia after the year 2000 and until few years ago. Now we can proudly say that we have entered public sector through a big gate due to our tenacious work and results and the authorities who accept, understand and support antifascism and tradition based on freedom, peace and common consent.

SUBNOR Serbia deals responsibly with its membership in the FIR, which is considered as a pivot of all Antifascist organizations, and in that sense will keep on helping joint activities on the basis of constituted and accepted principles in the interest of Peace.

Dušan Čukić, President of SUBNOR Serbia



## URAP - Antifascism in Portugal

URAP – Portuguese Antifascist Resistents Union – was founded in 30th of April of 1976, gathering in its ranks a large mass of antifascists with constant intervention during the fascista dictatorship. But its antifascist activities star earlier.

URAP was created by the antifascists that during fascism created the Commission for Help to the Political Prisoners (Comissão de Socorro aos Presos Políticos) – organization that, with great courage, opposed the regime in the hearth of its repressive politics. Gave material and juridical support to political prisoners and their families, spread news about the prisoners and denounced the repression both nationally and internationally and fought risking the freedom of its own members against the repressive policy of the regime.

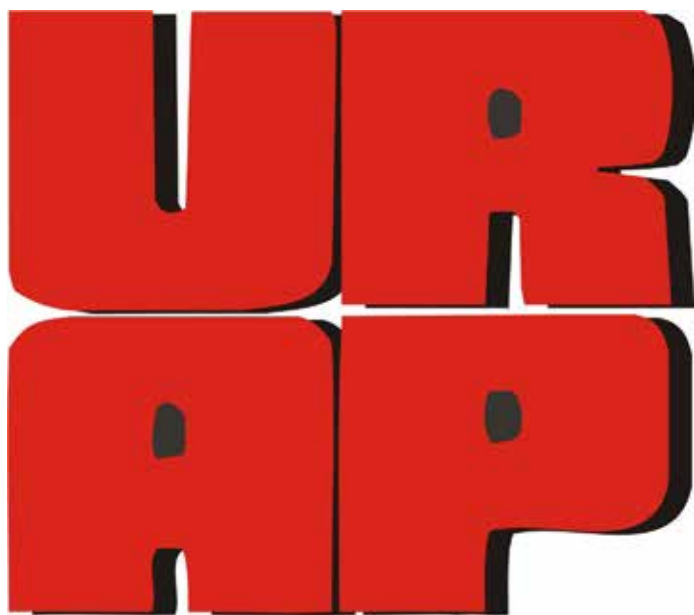
URAP, heir of this Commission, has for these past years fought the falsification of the history of fascism and alerting to the dangers of demagogu and populism.

In a society, like the one we are living, in which the major social media is in the hands of big business that hardly open space for voices that present themselves out of the dominant opinion, URAP is going to continue fighting against the oblivion of the men and women that for their love to Freedom and to their people lost years of their lives in prison, many even giving their lives.

Besides this important work of fighting historical revisionism, has had active participation in the struggle for democracy, solidarity with the peoples and for peace. It's an example of this action the participation on the "World Festival of Youth and Students" and the joining of "Platform for Peace and Disarmament" and for the end of nuclear weapons.

We highlight in 2015 the commemorations of the end of World War II in which, with FIR's torch of Peace and Freedom, we visited many places nationally.

In the 80 years of the Spanish Civil War, we recalled Guernica, and its martyrs, in several sessions that we continue to perform. And intervened in Brussels, invited by the Basque Country comrades, in a ceremony in the European Parliament.



We were able, with our struggle in unity with all the democrats that accompanied us, that Peniche's Fort, symbol of the repression, where so many fought and suffered, would not become a luxury hotel but, instead, a true Museum of Liberty and Resistance.

Our book about Peniche's Fort, about it's history and with the name of all the political prisoners, in an investigation conducted by URAP and by Peniche's Town Council, is in its 4<sup>th</sup> edition and has been present in innumerable session throughout the country.

Around the 25<sup>th</sup> of April, anniversary of the Carnation Revolution, we have participated, and will keep on participating, on session in schools, with the collaboration of teachers and Town Councils, reaching thousands of students that otherwise wouldn't know what fascism truly was, throughout the country.

Popular demonstrations are import moments in which we call on the participation of all democrats, to reinforce and show clearly that the Portuguese People doesn't wish to return to the dark times of fascism. It's because we consider it our duty to remember the ones who fought for a better country, an URAP's delegation visited Tarrafal's concentration camp in Cape Verde, in April of 2009, and intervened in an International Symposium.

We visited in Azores, in the Isle Terceira, the S. João Baptista and S. Sebastião, known as "Castelinho", Fort's, places that are not well known but were places in which fascism imprisoned and tortured many democrats and resistants that whole heartily fought it.

We were capable of finding out all the names of all the prisoners that were in those terrible places, and like we did for Peniche's Fort, we have planned, in collaboration with Angra do Heroísmo's Town Council, with which



we have a protocol, to present a book that denounces everything that happened there so that the memory never fades.

Like those men and women who fought during fascism, with courage and determination, so do we, today, in unity, keep on fighting and defending democracy and freedom which were the result of our Revolution and people's struggle.

Francisco Canelas, URAP

## **AfvN: The last five years in the Netherlands: some highs and lows**

Of course, to foreigners Holland is regrettably well known for Geert Wilders, the blond haired rightist and populist leader of the Party for Freedom (PVV). But after an advisory role in government, especially the Christian Democrats had enough and vowed to not tie themselves up to him again. Since then, he and his 27 other parliamentarians of the 150 are just hanging on. No real advance has been made by them either in local or provincial politics.

But problems of shortage of housing, an unforgiving tone in the discussion about fugitives, differences between poor and rich, and differences between black and white have grown. And so have those between left and extreme right. We have seen Pegida coming from Germany, even headed by a Dutchman living (and trading arms) in Germany.

Still, there are some successes. Just to list the most important: four times, Pegida demos were thwarted. Two Nazi-fairs were stopped. For the fourth time, a remembrance of the unique February-strike (the only one in occupied Europe protesting prosecution of Jews) was organised. The sale of original copies of Mein Kampf was severely frustrated, and led to two prolonged court cases that gave us a lot of publicity and that we won both times.

**Nazi-fairs:** In 2015 we managed to get the first Nazi-sales fair closed. It was our first visit ever to such an occasion, and one stand number 1 we already ran into a copy of Mein Kampf... This year, we managed to get another one closed, also with a lot of publicity. In total, Holland has over 30 of the sales events of Nazi-stuff per year.

A separate mention is for E-bay subsidiary Marktplaats (Market place) that offers about 3,000 Nazi-items daily. We are trying to persuade the mayor of Amsterdam to institute a by-law forbidding trade in Nazi-items



**AFVN**  
Antifascistische  
oud-verzetstrijders  
Nederland

Bond van  
antifascisten

in het city. As she is from the Green-Left party, chances are this approach will work. We intend to repeat this throughout Holland, and hope that after winning over some 5 or ten local governments, we can get all towns to implement this as a standard.

**Pegida, Identitaires and other dangers:** We were the first to point at Pegida in Holland. As stated, we contributed to upsetting or thwarting four Pegida-demonstrations. The Identitaires sometimes manifest themselves, but not more often than three times a year. We did have more concerns with several local debates on refugee centre's. In three communities the debate was invaded by hooligans.

Also a worry is the rise of the Nazi-admirers such as the Militracks-fair in the National Resistance Museum in Overloon, where they have a terrain of some 10 hectares and once a year invite owners of Nazi-vehicles and their machines to come and drive around. Although we tried, we did not get into a good discussion with the board yet.

**Ysselsteyn...the Nazi-cemetery with 31,000 Nazi-dead:** Here, apart from Nazi-soldiers and SS-men also lay Dutch torturers, executioners and Jew-hunters. The German ambassador organises a remembrance here every year on Volkstrauertag. Some progress in awareness, f.i. Google-rating tripled since our summer campaign. That involved protesting the Bundeswehr delegation to the Nijmegen four day endurance marches. The soldiers take the chance to go and honour the Nazi-dead in Ysselsteyn, regardless of the German minister Van der Leyen proclaiming that the Bundeswehr should keep maximum distance from anything Nazi. Yet the German soldiers lay reefs and salute the SS and the Dutch torturers and traitors.

In 2017 we took away Bundeswehr reefs and placed them in the grave of a single mother and her five dead children, 13 tot 1 years old. On the grave there was not even place for the names of all the children, while in Ysselsteyn Nazi-cemetery every Nazi has a separate cross with a name (at least 99% of them).

**The two trials:** In 2015 we protested the sale of an exceptionally costly luxurious copy of Mein Kampf, with a dedication and signature by Hitler himself. We put up placards on his shop widow, stating 'Forbidden for Jews, Muslims, Negro's'. A criminal court case in Amsterdam led to a conviction, which was squashed a year later, pronouncing our spokesman innocent. A second, partly similar case revolved around a Nazi-stuff seller who we called a 'Nazi-seller' in our publications. He objected, but also lost in second instance. As these judgments came within ten days of each other, a lot of positive publicity came out of this.

**Colonialism:** This centres on Indonesia and the remains of Dutch colonialism – and the role of Dutch SS-men and the severe punishment of draft resisters. The Netherlands fought a war against the freedom fighters in Indonesia from 1945 to 1950. The Dutch army comprised 200.000 men, and they killed at least 150.000 Indonesians, while burning village after village, executing men at will, in short committing countless war crimes. The victims are only now fighting court cases for compensation against the Dutch government, and winning slowly. We are supporting the protesters and working closely with the committees concerned, and take the chance of pointing to class-war elements in the colonial struggle. Since fall 2017, a four year study into the war crimes has started, paid for by the government and costing € 4 million. But, the professor leading the study is not undisputed and maybe racist, and does not want to distance himself openly from colonialism. We support the critics of this research, which seems a total waste of money.

**Exhibition glorifying Nazi design coming:** The AFVN-BvA is also preparing action against an intended exhibition, honoring Nazi-design, notably by Leni Riefenstahl, Albert Speer and even Hugo Boss. The exhibition will be organized by the Design Museum in Den Bosch, and a professor of design from Delft Technical University is the curator. He has also said that he might get the cooperation of German collectors, who currently see no possibility to exhibit their prized possessions in Germany itself.

We have informed the man that we will oppose his plan totally, because it is clear to us that here and now there is not one good reason to glorify Nazi-design. There is a simple parallel with the trade in Nazi paraphernalia: it eventually boils down to admiring the Nazis.

Of course, as anti-fascists in a time of rising extreme-right activity, including the killing of peaceful activists such as Heather Heyer in Charlottesville on Aug. 12th 2017, and many, many attacks on synagogues such as the shooting in Pittsburgh on October 17th, with 11 dead; and the attacks on mosques and on refugees in Germany as well as in Holland and elsewhere in Europe, we cannot allow such an exhibition to go forward. Here also a possible line of defense is not only direct confrontation, which we will always be prepared for, but also to try through the town council to get a ban on any event glorifying Nazism, and also trade in Nazi paraphernalia.

Our position and situation

We are small and flexible, and are completely independent. That will remain our situation for the time being. But we have received maximum attention in the press.

Arthur Graaf, f Spokesman of AfvN

### **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 and Cooperation with international networks

The FIR as an international umbrella organization is already a network from its origin. The member organizations in the different countries are on the one hand the basis of the co-operation, on the other hand the multipliers of the spreading of the ideas of the anti-fascism in the respective countries. That the member federations convert this work in full independence and with their own agenda, are the strength of the FIR and a sign of their political width.

From this situation, repeatedly differences in the political assessments result. That is not only logical, but for the co-operation of the member federations of large importance. The quality of the common work shows up in the fact that - starting from different points of view - the greatest possible community of the political work, the explanations and the public appearance is realized. It is not surprising that such a political breadth is subject to great stress in acute international situations and that debates and controversies arise in the process. Nevertheless, it is clear to all concerned that we can only realize our ideals if we act together. It speaks for the sense of responsibility of the member federations and the FIR management committees in the past decades that from such content wise controversies no durable, serious distortions for the existence of the organization resulted.

Just like with the member federations the FIR co-operates for decades with other international networks. The oldest co-operation partner is surely the World Veterans Association (WVF/FMAC). Different member federations of the FIR are themselves members in the WVF. In particular the federations, whose tradition is closely connected with the military acting of the anti-Hitler



coalition, have a higher affinity to this federation. The complexity of the co-operation with the WVF results from the different socio-political conceptions and the activities following from it. Possible starting points are common initiatives in the question war and peace, as they were successfully possible in the 80's and which become today again more urgent. The FIR will actively approach the WVF with this topic.

On the field of the anti-racist work the FIR is connected for several years with two international networks. The first is the network "UNITED against racism", a network of anti-fascist and anti-racist organizations from many European countries based in the Netherlands. For many years UNITED has initiated campaigns for common remembrance and political action on the ground and organizes international conferences in cooperation with partners in the various countries - especially for young people. The central concern of UNITED is to provide materials for public relations work and to support international campaigns on 18 March, the "Antiracism Day" or to commemorate 9 November 1938, the day of the Jewish pogroms in Germany. UNITED and its co-operation partners in different European countries are for the FIR an important network in the common occurrence for anti-fascism.

For some years, the "European Network against Racism" (ENAR) works with seat in Brussels. The ENAR Network against Racism is the result of an intergroup collaboration between members of the European Parliament. With its regular electronic newsletter, ENAR is developing into an information network on issues of migration and anti-racism. Currently ENAR is supported by individuals and democratic organizations, who consider such cooperation important. FIR is also a member of this network. In the past years ENAR organized public conferences with political and economic sponsors. The potential of this cooperation is still open for development.



In the past years, the FIR was connected with further international networks, which did not prove however as durably. To it belongs the initiative “World without Nazism”, a network, which was based in particular on the Russian speaking Jewish community in different European countries. Some impressive conferences have taken place in recent years. At present, however, there are no recognizable activities. In addition, the “International anti-fascist front”, in whose network member federations of the FIR are active and which successfully organized two conferences in Russia and Slovenia, is currently inactive.

The FIR and its member federations are - as formulated at the beginning - for a co-operation with all anti-fascist and anti-racist initiatives and networks based on equal co-operation. It is important that in practical action progress has been made in the sense of the historical legacy of the practice of the anti-fascist and anti-racist initiatives and networks.

### **Network of International Camp Committees**

For many years - mostly in Paris or Berlin - there were meetings of the presidents of the international camp committees at the major concentration camp memorial sites. This joint exchange has diminished somewhat in recent years. On initiative of the Italian FIR organization ANED these contacts were reactivated since 2018. After the summer break a first international meeting of the representatives of the camp communities took place in Milan. The reason for this was various discussions with memorial site directors about the design of the memorial sites, the course of the memorial celebrations and further questions about the participation of the survivors and their political heirs in consultation with the memorial sites themselves.

It was also considered necessary to make the voice of the survivors heard in the current political development and the rise of right-wing populist and extreme right-wing forces in various European countries. This is what the unanimously adopted “Appeal of Milan” says:

“For over seventy years, the survivors and their descendants have remained faithful to the promises of liberation of their camps. They have worked tirelessly for peace and fraternal solidarity among peoples.

Through their testimony they fought against racism, anti-Semitism and xenophobia and the theses of right-wing extremists in Europe. The response of various European countries to the arrival of refugees driven by war and hunger is not a humanitarian reception but the closure of their borders. The Mediterranean has become a huge cemetery where the hopes of thousands of men, women and children come to an end. Europe seems to have lost its memory: many Europeans were themselves refugees before and after the war. They have sometimes experienced solidarity, but also discrimination and rejection. Europe must learn the terrible lessons of its recent history and not close its eyes to its responsibility.”

It was agreed that this cooperation would continue. At the beginning of November 2018 the second network meeting of the International Camp Committees took place in the rooms of the memorial “German Resistance”. Participants from Germany, France, Italy, Luxembourg and Norway were present, representing the international camp communities Auschwitz, Buchenwald-Dora, Dachau, Mauthausen, Natzweiler-Struthof, Neuengamme, Ravensbrück and Sachsenhausen as well as the organisations ANED, Zentralrat Deutscher Sinti und Roma and the International Federation of Resistance Fighters (FIR).

Christoph Heubner welcomed the conference as host and presented important aspects of the work of the International Auschwitz Committee.

In a specialist lecture, a representative of “Team Europe” explained the content and organisational aspects of project and structural funding in European Union programmes, in particular in the “Europe for citizens” programme. In doing so, he dealt in detail with the areas of “democracy promotion” and “European historical awareness”.

In the second part, Andre Raatzsch of the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma presented the work of the Documentation and Cultural Centre in Heidelberg and described vividly the rise of antiziganism in various

European states. He used current examples to illustrate how historical remembrance work is directly linked to the fight against all forms of racism and antiziganist stereotypes today, for example when the Italian President of the European Parliament Antonio Tajani (Forza Italia) denounces the planned Italian “citizen’s money” as a “transfer payment” for Roma families in Romania.

The second part of the consultation was the discussion of proposals for further networking. Dominique Durand, President of the IKBD, recalled the various approaches of previous networks and presented ideas for joint political action and coordination. He recalled the decision of the European Parliament in 1993, which dealt with three areas: securing the stones, i.e. preserving and securing the memorial sites themselves, supporting the people, i.e. helping the survivors and deportees, and securing the legacy, i.e. rejecting any mixing of the memory of concentration camps and their subsequent use as internment camps, as well as preserving the memory of the survivors’ statements for a future Europe. In the discussion it became clear that the model of a network was favoured by all participants. A common formalised structure was neither necessary nor helpful.

The proposal of the FIR to have the legacy of the survivors like the “oath of Buchenwald” and the “legacy of Mauthausen” as well as the “legacy of the survivors” of 2009 jointly registered as immaterial world document heritage of the UNESCO, to implement as common project of the camp communities was welcomed by all sides.

In continuation of the work, a further meeting was arranged for spring 2019 - probably in Mauthausen.

### **The future of antifascism**

Approximately 20 years ago, the German member organization VVN-BdA put its foundation anniversary under the slogan “future draft anti-fascism”. It stressed at that time that the political request of the persecuted generation and their subsequent fellow combatants did not settle also after decades, but as political orientation has expressiveness for future generations. That applies equally to the FIR, since it extended itself 2004 on the XIV regular congress to the “federation of the anti-fascists” and opened for today’s anti-fascists.

The political meaning of this future draft lies in the fact that it contains a vision of a peaceful, socially just and democratic society starting from the historical experiences of the generation of the resistance fighters, the partisans, the internees and deportees and those who fought in the ranks of the anti-Hitler coalition for the freedom of their country and the liberation from the fascist barbarism. The legacy of the survivors, formulated in the declarations of the prisoners of Mauthausen and in the oath of Buchenwald, describes a society that is not derived from a certain model, but a future worth living, in which all can participate, who honestly turn against fascist, militaristic and nationalistic tendencies.

This corresponded to the political composition of the anti-fascist fighters of the time, which included trade unionists, communists, socialists, liberal democrats, even bourgeois forces, people with a religious background and those excluded on racial grounds. Of course, different party political orientations were present, but they were not decisive for joint action against the common enemy and for a better future.

Antifascists strive for such a width in the social co-operation also for a future development. Therefore, anti-fascism orients itself as future draft also not at any party programs, but names the conditions, under which humans can have a peaceful and worth living perspective. For the realization of this objective it needs broad social alliances beyond party and organization borders away. Antifascist politics stands for it also in the future. In many respects, the demands are congruent with the statements of the universal declaration of the human rights of the United Nations of December 1948 in its entire breadth. There one can find for example the right to work and appropriate remuneration, to education and sufficient dwelling space, the right to asylum and freedom of movement are formulated as social human rights, which is not reality up to today even in Europe in all countries.

One of the basic demands is the question of peace. Anti-fascism is indivisibly connected with the slogan “Never again war!” and with it also with all forms of non-military conflict solutions of interstate conflicts. The women and men in the resistance and in the anti-Hitler coalition did not risk their life against the fascist expansion efforts, in order to accept today hegemonic politics and military dominance in different parts of the world.

An important part of anti-fascism as future draft is the memory work. The FIR and their member federations are the predestined carriers of a commemoration work, which moves in particular the memory of the women and men from the resistance and the pursuit into the center. It does not apply to mourn alone the victims, but it must be remembered also to those, which admitted with their life, their health and their liberty for a better world, for the liberty of the own country and against the fascist barbarism. Such role models are important for future generations in order to recognize that it is possible to change social conditions. It is a challenge to constantly development of new forms of remembrance work with which future generations can actually be reached and their questions about history can be answered.



A central thought - also in memory work - is the question of internationality. The smashing of fascist barbarism was only possible through the joint action of different states and peoples. In the resistance itself - not only in the defense of the Spanish Republic, but in all national resistance groups - a high internationality showed up by the participation of anti-fascists from different countries. These examples are also important for today's generations when nationalism and chauvinism reappear. In addition, here anti-fascism proves to be a future draft for a worth living society.

Ulrich Schneider, Secretary General

## 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](mailto:office@fir.at) , Internet [www.fir.at](http://www.fir.at)

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