



The International Committee of Deportees and Refugees,
Victims of Fascism and Nazism in 1920–1945

Founded at the First European Congress of Deportees and Refugees,
Victims of Fascism and Nazism, in Ljubljana - Slovenia on 6th June 2009.

For the Belgrade meeting

Ivica Žnidaršič, Prof.

President of the International Committee of Deportees and Refugees,
Victims of Fascism and Nazism in 1920–1945

Dear members of the International Committee and dear guests,

I would like to extend a special welcome to representatives of the Serbian association and Serbian members of the International Committee **Milenko Čekić** and **Slavko Milanović** who had arranged for our accommodation in Belgrade, reserved a venue for our session and proposed an exciting programme as well as a draft of the declaration that we will consider and then publish.

Member of the International Committee from Bosnia and Herzegovina Mrs. Vera Papež Adamič, Belarusian member Lych Nina Antonovna and Vice-President of the International Committee Mr. Jiří Prokop from the Czech Republic have all excused themselves from today's session.

Today's meeting is the first to be attended by two representatives from Austria, **Gregor Krištof** and **Josef Pototschnig**.

You have already received the invitation and a draft agenda for this session, as well as some of the papers and studies that had been translated into English, Russian, Serbian and Slovene, so that it would not be necessary to interpret everything.

I apologize for the date of the meeting having been made known so late.

I ask all future hosts of our meetings to please comply with Article 8 of our rules that states that the date of a meeting of the International Committee must be communicated to the members at least three months before the session.

For our new guests, I shall state some details of the creation and past work of the International Committee.

At the initiative of the Association of Slovenian Deportees from 1941 to 1945, the International Committee was established at the first European congress of deportees and



refugees, victims of Fascism and Nazism, which was held in Ljubljana, Slovenia, on June 6, 2009. The congress was attended by over 4,000 people.

Less than a year after the congress, on June 4, 2010, the International Conference on the Welfare of Deportees and Victims of Forced Labour in Some European Countries was organized in Ljubljana.

At the conference, we elected the members of the International Committee and adopted rules for its operation in Slovene, English, Czech, Slovak, Polish and Russian.

At the same time, it was decided that the meetings of the International Committee would occur annually, in a different member country each year.

We have so far organized two meetings in Slovenia, the one in Ljubljana and another meeting in Brestanica in 2011, as well as meetings in Ukraine (2012), Russia (2013), Slovakia (2014) and the Czech Republic (2015).

From 2010, the International Committee includes committees of victims of Fascism and Nazism from Slovenia, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, Ukraine, Russia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Austria.

In 2013, the Committee was joined by organizations of victims of Fascism and Nazism from Belarus and Estonia.

On the agenda today is to agree on the order of International Committee meetings in 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020.

All past meetings of the International Committee have been well-organized, and we have managed to collect a great amount of materials and publications regarding the Fascist and Nazi oppression of the Slavic peoples.

What is important is that these meetings are recounted in various publications:

- Booklet with the contents of all papers presented at the Ist European Congress of Deportees and Refugees, Victims of Fascism and Nazism in 1920–1945
- Booklet on the meeting in Kiev, Ukraine, in 2012
- Proceedings containing part of the materials presented at the meeting in Moscow, Russia, in 2013



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- Booklet on the meeting in Bratislava in 2014

Meetings were also used to send letters to presidents of European countries, to the UN and the EU.

We also wrote to the Berlin-based International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) proposing that the term Holocaust be expanded to include the oppression of Slavic peoples, not only the Jews, Roma and Sinti.

As our proposal was declined, we had agreed at our previous meetings that you would find out who represented your countries at this Berlin-based Alliance.

Some of the replies from presidents of European countries were published in our booklet from the meeting in Bratislava in 2014. The replies were more numerous than we had expected. We also received a response from President of the European Parliament Mr. Martin Schulz.

We have also received a reply from the European Shoah Legacy Institute (ESLI) indicating that we could join the Institute, on which we will decide today. We will also make a decision regarding the resolution for the presidents of European countries and others.

At the Moscow meeting, we had, as you know, signed the anti-Fascist manifesto drafted by Jorgos Mitralias from Greece and received his response and thanks. However, Mr. Mitralias was unfortunately unsuccessful with his bid to organize an anti-Fascist and anti-Nazi congress.

Such a congress would have been welcome, as Fascist and Nazi organizations are again springing up across Europe.

The associations and organizations of the victims of Fascism and Nazism that make up our International Committee should themselves be publishing letters of protest against the creation of neo-Fascist and neo-Nazi organizations and against the rewriting of history.

We must preserve the awareness that the German and Italian Fascist and Nazi regimes were the greatest threat our world has ever faced.

Belgrade, October 21–22, 2016