

DRUŠTVO IZGNANCEV SLOVENIJE



DRUŠTVO IZGNANCEV SLOVENIJE



DRUŠTVO IZGNANCEV SLOVENIJE



DRUŠTVO IZGNANCEV SLOVENIJE



DRUŠTVO IZGNANCEV SLOVENIJE



DRUŠTVO IZGNANCEV SLOVENIJE



DRUŠTVO IZGNANCEV SLOVENIJE



DRUŠTVO IZGNANCEV SLOVENIJE



DRUŠTVO IZGNANCEV SLOVENIJE



DRUŠTVO IZGNANCEV SLOVENIJE



DRUŠTVO IZGNANCEV SLOVENIJE



Speeches of the Delegations

Ljubljana, 2009

Druga svetovna vojna se je začela
1. septembra 1939. leta ob 5.45.
Končala se je v Evropi
8. maja 1945
ob 23.01 uri,
v Aziji 2. septembra 1945
ob 9.25 uri.
Trajala je šest let in en dan,
ali 2194 dni, ali 52641 ur.

Med šestletno drugo svetovno vojno
je vsako uro izgubilo
življenje 1045 ljudi,
vsako minuto 17 ljudi.
Skupaj 55 milijonov:
kot vojaki, žrtve zračnih napadov,
kot begunci, pregnanci, izgnanci,
prisilni delavci ali žrtve nasilnežev.

Iz knjige Brazgotine ostanejo, Bad Arolsen 2005

1st European Congress of Exiles and Refugees, Victims of Nazism and Fascism, 1920–1945



Speeches of the Delegations

Referati kongresnih delegacij

Prvi evropski kongres izgnancev in beguncev
žrtev fašizma in nacizma 1920–1945

REFERATI KONGRESNIH DELEGACIJ

Zbrala: Ivica Žnidaršič, prof.

Angleški prevodi: MultiLingual - prevajalska agencija

Uredniški odbor: Ivica Žnidaršič
Robert Škrjanc
Miloš Ekar
Milan Jazbec
Gregor Kaplan

AD&D: INadvertising, d. o. o.

Izdalo: Društvo izgnancev Slovenije 1941–1945

Natisnila in vezala: Demat d.o.o., Ljubljana

Ljubljana, 2009 / (*ponatis 2012*)

CIP - Kataložni zapis o publikaciji
Narodna in univerzitetna knjižnica, Ljubljana

314.151.3-054.73/.74(4)''1920/1945''(082)

EVROPSKI kongres izgnancev in beguncev žrtev fašizma in nacizma
1920-1945 (1 ; 2009 ; Ljubljana)

Referati kongresnih delegacij / Prvi evropski kongres izgnancev
in beguncev žrtev fašizma in nacizma 1920-1945, [Ljubljana, 6.
junij] ; [zbrala Ivica Žnidaršič]. - Ljubljana : Društvo izgnancev
Slovenije 1941-1945, 2009

ISBN 978-961-91582-8-9

1. Žnidaršič, Ivica
245831424

CONGRESS PROGRAMME

Slovenian and European National Anthems – performed by
the Orchestra of the Slovenian Armed Forces

Welcome speech by the President of the Republic of Slovenia,
dr. Danilo Türk

Opening of the Congress and speech by the President
of the Society of Slovene Exiles 1941–1945,
Prof. Ivica Žnidaršič

Papers of the Heads of Congress Delegations,
Associations and Organisations from Europe

Guest speakers

Musical intermission

Approval of Congress communications and
decisions of the Congress

After the Congress there will be a Round Table meeting with the Heads
of Congress Delegations.

The Program will be enriched by performances of musical artists.

Welcome speech by the President of the Republic of Slovenia dr. Danilo Türk on the occasion of the 1st European Congress of Exiles and Refugees, Victims of Nazism and Fascism, 1920–1945

Ladies and Gentlemen, distinguished guests,

It gives me great pleasure to have the opportunity to welcome you to the 1st European Congress of Exiles and Refugees, Victims of Nazism and Fascism in the period 1920–1945. This event was organised by the Slovenian association under the leadership of its president, Ms. Ivica Žnidaršič. My heartfelt welcome goes to all participants everyone, and in particular to those delegations which have arrived from eleven friendly European countries.

Slovenia is a young country, one which achieved its independence on the basis of a plebiscite – the most democratic and direct form of expressing political will of the people. The proclamation of independence of Slovenia on 25 June 1991 was followed by a war, which, however, was of short duration and could neither prevent the birth of Slovenia nor the finishing phases of disintegration of the former socialist Yugoslavia.

This new fact came to the attention of a number of countries, which in the period of a single year recognised independent Slovenia and enabled it to become a member of the United Nations in May 1992. Less than six years later, Slovenia became a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council. This further contributed to the consolidation of its international position and visibility on the global political map.

Speeches of the Delegations

The next steps included memberships of the Council of Europe, OSCE, NATO and, in 2004, the European Union. Although a small and young country, Slovenia has been highly active in all these organisations, which resulted in its presidency of the OSCE in 2005, the Council of the European Union in 2008 and the Council of Europe in 2009.

In 2007, Slovenia became part of the Schengen area and adopted the European currency, the euro.

Today we may say that Slovenia has become a successful, vigorous and respected member of the growing European family of nations which, hand in hand, shape the political, financial, economic, social, cultural and moral image of the Old Continent.

This kind of development, however, did not simply come about by itself. Our history is full of reefs which had to be carefully navigated for centuries in order to survive as a nation. No matter under which crown we were, the care and struggle for the preservation of our cultural values and, in particular, the Slovenian language were always at the heart of our action.

This spirit of resistance of a small nation was also able to withstand Fascism and Nazism. As for many other nations, the Second World War was the most severe ordeal for Slovenia in its entire history. Occupied by Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy and Hungary during the Second World War, the Slovenian territory was soaked with blood of those who were organised in the Liberation Front and withstood the occupying forces. Many Slovenians were exiled from their homes and sentenced to forced labour or sent to concentration camps, where many of them lost their young lives. Those of you who have returned will never forget this.

Threatened by such intentional and systematic attempt to obliterate the nation, the Slovenians, against all odds, lived to see May 1945 as part of the victorious nations of the Second World War. Our contribution to the Allied Forces was greater than one would have expected from such

a small nation. Being the foundation of our statehood, this bravery and courageous defiance must never be forgotten.

We share a similar fate with many other European nations, especially those that are represented at this congress today. We share with you our belief that this part of history cannot and must not be forgotten. While historical information can sometimes be rather abstract, the experiences, memories and personal testimonies altogether contribute to turning numbers and historical information into faces, the fates of people and nations.

This is why today's event is of paramount importance. The way you have organised in individual countries testifies to the fact that the experiences and memories that you – exiles, refugees and victims of war – all share cannot disappear, but are, in fact, still being sought out, recognised and linked in a circle of cooperation and strengthening of friendship between individuals and nations.

Your existence and the active operation of your societies, as well as meetings such as today's guarantee that this most tragic period in European history will remain as a living warning in our memory forever.

By this you are sending a clear message to all those who wish to rewrite history, distorting historical facts and the truth for political purposes. The message you convey today is also intended for countries which have to date not fully paid war reparations.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to close by saying a few words about the main proponent and organiser of today's congress, the Society of Slovene Exiles. Their highly successful operation, which goes back to 1991, is regarded in Slovenia as an important expression of Slovenian civil society, which is making every effort to preserve the historical memory of this period and to help victims of war exercise their rights.

Their ties with all of you who have come from Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Austria, Germany, France, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, Russia and Ukraine demonstrate that our small country has an understanding of great issues. I am pleased to see that you have invited mayors of German towns, who take care of the graves of Slovenian exiles, scattered throughout the territory of the former Third Reich, to today's meeting and that you cooperate with them.

I am also pleased that the representatives of the International Red Cross have been invited to attend this kongres, which helped you when you were returning to your homes, exhausted and deprived of everything, and which put great efforts into tracing the missing persons after the Second World War.

I would like to commend you for all your work to date, and I wish you every success in continuing your work, everyone in their own environment and together in our common European home.

And for now, your home is here, in Slovenia.

Slovenia is a friendly country with hospitable people. I hope that you will experience our hospitality first hand and come again to our country with your family and friends.

I wish you every success in your work on this day of memories, solidarity and friendship between nations.



SLOVENIA

**Prof. Ivica Žnidaršič,
President of the Society of Slovene Exiles 1941–1945**

**At the occasion of the first Congress of
Exiles and Refugees –
bound by the same fate of suffering**

We have gathered at the first European Congress of Exiles and Refugees of victims of Fascism and Nazism in the years from 1920 until 1945. The sponsor of the congress is the President of the Republic of Slovenia, Dr. Danilo Türk, to whom I also extend my gratitude for his welcome address.

I greet the representatives of state authorities from the Republic of Slovenia, ambassadors of European states that sent their delegations of exiles and refugees, and all other distinguished guests and persons cooperating with us.

In the name of the Slovenian Society of Exiles 1941-1945 and in my own name I especially welcome the delegations of organizations and associations that include exiles and refugees from European states, and extend my gratitude to them for sending their introductory essays that were translated in Slovenian and English language and published in the Congress brochure, so that all of you participating at this Congress could speak in your own language.

Our brochure concerning the exile of Slovenes, organization of Slovene exiles, forced labourers and refugees, and our endeavours to enforce the status and rights is, however, available in Slovenian and German language.

I would like to express my content and joy in the fact that all of us have the chance of getting acquainted a little better today, to find out

more about our common fate, and agree on what we as witnesses of World War II atrocities can do to prevent the formation of new Fascist and Nazi organizations.

We have reached back as far as the period between both world wars because much of the Slovenian territory remained under Italy and Austria, where the aggression and oppression against Slovenians started even before the beginning of the World War II. Slovenians in neighbouring countries still struggle for their national rights.

A vast number of lives were lost in the World War II which included 55 millions of dead with over 30 millions of civilians, 35 millions of wounded, 3 millions of missing, and a large portion of property devastated. Suffering, degradation and sorrow left a great number of severe consequences that are still felt by us, i.e. the exiles and refugees, even to this day. Time healed our wounds but left us with bitter memories which compel us to call upon all leaders of Europe and the World on this day and to tell them to intensify their efforts in preventing the recurrence of those things that were experienced by us. We should all strive towards preventing the spending of richness of this world on armament as much as it currently does. It should rather be used to prevent wars and hunger and improve the lives of all nations and all people. In the 20th Century, 251 millions of people were either exiled or had to flee from their own homes. This far, the politicians governing the world failed to react efficiently enough to prevent the slaughter that can be witnessed all around the world even today.

It is important to socialize, to cooperate in a friendly fashion and to trust each other. We are bound by a common fate, and represent societies and organizations operating in a special and noble manner, we are the people of a certain age that scarred us, and strengthened in us our awareness of importance of life, solidarity and peaceful co-existence among the people and nations.

There are as much as 11 delegations of societies and organizations from European states attending this Congress of people that shared the same fate of Fascist and Nazi violence with Slovenians.

After more than 64 years passed, it was expected that we would have no further need to explain again about the forms of violence and of the genocide politics that were exercised by the Fascist and Nazi regimes over European nations in the time after the end of World War I and during World War II.

We hoped that the civilian victims of war aggression would be able to enforce their status, rights, personal and material reparations soon after the end of the World War II. We hoped that the resolutions regarding war damage reparations in the form approved by the Allies of World War II at peace and reparation conferences would come to fruition.

But the cruel reality of the world keeps reminding us every day that Fascism and Nazism still live, and we are also aware of the fact that the resolutions of the peace conferences are not realized, because some rights still remain unrecognized.

There is an absolute lack of contents concerned with the occupation and division of Slovenia during World War II, and we find nothing on the denationalization and genocide politics lead against Slovenian population in the time of occupation and even before that.

In 2007, the Italian president said that Italian concentration camps were nothing more than just summer camps. The Union of Istrians – comprised of those Italians that deserted Slovenia in 1945 – sent a message to European Union in March of the same year that also included demand to enable them their return to locations from whence they left after the end of World War II, and a demand that the states of Slovenia, Lituania, Latvia, Estonia, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary should face their demands. They also wrote on behalf of Sudeten and other Germans that had to return to their homeland from the aforementioned states after the World War II was over.

But Kočevje Germans themselves were the ones to ask Hitler for relocation from Slovenia back to Reich. They sold their property when populating the occupied part of Slovenia and homes of exiled Slovenians, which makes it understandable why their return to our homes is out of question.

We must prevent the European Union from adopting any discriminatory document that would be based on falsification of history.

We are not repeating this because of our hatred towards those that caused us woe, but to make known the deeds of the Nazi and Fascist systems and to give our tragedy a suitable and honest historic record. It has become modern to only talk about the violence of Communism these days, but this is not fair as long as our young generation and young generations of the world do not realize what the Fascist and Nazi regimes did in those times, so they could understand that period for what it was and so that they could avoid repeating the same mistakes.

The new generations of the successors of aggressor countries from World War II are not personally guilty for the evil their forefathers committed, but they also can not be indifferent to the lives of those that were victims of these aggressive wars and actions.

We, as the victims of violence and as the first victims of Fascism and Nazism, have an obligation to keep repeating this until the historians and scientists in institutes also learn more about our endeavours. A joint textbook of European history is currently in preparation. Will we be able to influence it so that it also includes something about exile of numerous European nations during World War II?

The prosecution that was conditioned by ethnical, racial and ideological intolerance did not begin on 10th May 1945 when World War II in Europe ended, but during First and Second World War and continues basically until the present day, disseminating in various ways and through various parts of the world.

The events that followed the end of World War II can only be understood in the context of what transpired in the period of Fascism and Nazism, whose messengers in Europe were primarily the Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany. Killings that were committed after the end of war all over Europe were in fact acts of unjust violence, but nonetheless definitely a consequence of Fascism and Nazism and betrayals of their co-operators, the collaboration.

For if we do not take this fact into consideration, we are unable to avoid the dangers of equating the victims with those that caused their misfortune.

Initiatives for mutual connection of European societies

The Slovenian Society of Exiles 1941–1945 gave its initiative for mutual connection of related societies as far as ten years ago, but the initiative was only strengthened after 2002 when we contacted the embassies of several European states in Ljubljana and asked them to help us gain the addresses of those that would be willing to hear our wishes concerning the cooperation. Even as early as then, we proposed that an international committee of exiles and refugees that were victims of Nazism and Fascism during the World War II be established, and that the Museum of Exiles at the Rajhenburg castle be expanded with an exhibition about the deportation and internment of other European nations. However the establishment of contacts proceeded slowly because we did not know whether there is anyone in Europe that actually takes care of linking societies and organizations that include deportees, refugees and forced labourers.

The closest ties were woven with the Czech society Circle of Citizens that were exiled from the frontier zone in 1938.

We attended their conference on 17th November 2007 in Prague and signed an agreement on cooperation. At this conference, we gave

the suggestion to summon the first European Congress of deportees and victims of Nazism and Fascism. The participants of the conference agreed that the congress should be held in Ljubljana. The declaration that was adopted at the conference in Prague was also signed by the Polish society. The Association of Slovene deportees from Carinthia also extended its support to the idea of summoning this Congress.

We also established contacts with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Curator of the German foundation of Memory, Responsibility and Future and mayors of certain German cities where the graves of Slovenian exiles are located. Our cooperation with the German city of Rudolstadt, which went as far as founding the Society for Studies Concerning Forced Labour, is especially good, with the society's President and mayors today joining us here at this Conference.

Students of German city Rudolstadt even had to write their secondary school graduation paper on forced labour during World War II and also included testimonies of Slovenian deportees and forced labourers that were located in the city during World War II. The announcement of graduation papers was public and was held in the presence of journalists, the assembly of Professors, a delegation from DIS and the Mayor of Rudolstadt. All of this represents success in acquainting the youth with the events of World War II and a great example for other German cities and schools as well as for schools in Italy.

We chose 6th June as the date to hold the Congress, because it is the day immediately prior to the day dedicated to Slovenian deportees, the 7th of June, commemorating the largest transport of Slovenians that was deported in 1941. Several thousands of our members gather on this day, so we combined this year's event that was held on the Day of Slovenian Deportees with our Congress.

The purpose of this Congress is to stimulate greater interconnection of societies and organizations in Europe which include deportees and refugees

that were victims of Fascism and Nazism, to create suitable conditions for the exchange of experience, especially as far as the group efforts for maintenance of historic memory and enforcement of status and rights of civilian war victims resulting therefrom are concerned. All of this was done with the purpose to get ourselves better acquainted on the basis of sharing a similar fate, to strengthen the bonds of friendship and tolerance among nations, and to pursue the strengthening of human rights in struggle against all forms of racism. We notice a rise in Fascist tendencies within Europe where Neo-fascism and Neo-nazism often work under the cover of patriotism. There is a constantly growing presence of exclusion and intolerance against different people and those that think differently.

It is most probably our destiny that we will have to keep on explaining not only about our suffering during exile and while we were refugees, but also about the hard life and absence of any help in the time of our childhood, after our return from the exile. It is therefore paramount not to delete the boundary between violent acts of occupiers and their henchmen and the victims of Fascism and Nazism.

What really matters is our concern for preservation of historical facts, memories and testimonies which we are realizing through mass gatherings on the Day of Deportees on 7th of June, with exhibitions, book, brochures and pamphlets publication, and with museum activities, because we can not allow that our suffering, our loss of lives, loss of childhood and youth, loss of property, loss of our intellectual development, loss of health, severe physical and psychological injuries due to heavy labour and war tragedies in camps and in exile, would simply be forgotten.

We proposed as early as in 1998 that the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington would also display the genocide against Slovenians and other European nations during the World War II in addition to the genocide against Jews. We expect the Memorial Centre in Berlin to hold an exhibition regarding the violence of Hitler's Germany and Fascist Italy.

I would like to share a couple of historical facts and explain about the martyrdom of Slovenian nation during World War II.

World War II almost sealed the fate of Slovenian nation. Slovenia was divided and occupied by four states in the spring of 1941: Germany, Italy, Hungary and the Independent State of Croatia. The largest parts of Slovenian territory were usurped by Germany and Italy. The civil servants of the occupiers were composed of 90 percents of Austrians.

The Slovenian nation was not spared even one type of violence that were introduced to the world during World War II.

The goal of the occupiers was to destroy the Slovenian nation. With this purpose in mind they engaged in various forms of denationalization policies. All signs and marks that would attest to the presence of Slovenian nation were immediately removed. They removed all Slovenian inscriptions from streets, markets, offices, stores and changed the names of locations to foreign, German names.

All Slovenian societies and organizations were disbanded, all Slovenian newspapers were cancelled, Slovenian artistic word and words of poems had to be stifled. They destroyed both Slovenian books and libraries. Slovenian schools were closed, and it became forbidden to use Slovenian language. They changed Slovenian birth names and surnames, and implemented humiliating racial profiling.

Children were violently taken away from their parents, many Slovenians were deported, incarcerated, interned, confined and dispatched to concentration camps, forced labour, they shot hostages and forcibly mobilized Slovenians in the army of the occupier.

The occupiers torched villages, demolished buildings, exploited our natural resources, pillaged the property of Slovenians and sent it to their mother countries. One of the cruellest measures exercised by the German occupiers within the framework of Nazi denationalization politics was mass deportation of Slovenians and settlement of Germans. Homes of deported

Slovenians were populated by Germans from Kočevje, Bessarabia, Bukovina, Dobrudže, South Tyrol, Dalmatia, Bosnia and Austria.

The first ones to be deported were Slovenian teachers, clerks, leaders of political parties, priests, writers and other intellectuals. They were forcibly taken to Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia. The German occupier deported as many as 63,000 Slovenian during 1941–1945 from the Spodnja Štajerska region, Gorenje and Mežica Valley alone, of which the majority, including 45,000 people, were deported to 428 German deportation camps that were created by Nazis for deported Slovenians, with 10,000 deported to Croatia and approximately 7,000 to Serbia. Approximately 17,000 Slovenians fled before they were deported. In 1942 they deported Slovenians from Carinthia and from those Slovenian territories that were occupied by Hungarians. After Italy capitulated in September of 1943, the Germans also deported a large number of the people from Primorje.

Slovenian deportees were forcefully emigrated to locations scattered from Poland to France, North Germany and all over former Yugoslavia with the intention of wiping us off the map of Europe as a nation. We were supposed to work until death as slaves for the benefit of the superior German nation, as Göring ordered: “Not to kill them, but toil them to death”, or as the Italian General Robotti uttered: “There is not enough killing here”. Fascist used to say, that “all the men of this god forsaken tribe should be shot”.

Or in the words of Benito Mussolini at the mass gathering in Pulj in distant 1920: “In our dealing with a race, such as the Slavic, which is inferior and barbaric, we must choose the politics of stick” and “the Adriatic sea, which is our bay, must deliver the Slavic race into our hands if we are to realize our Mediterranean dream”.

From 1920 onwards, the Slovenian language was forbidden. Teachers used to spit in mouths of students that dared to speak Slovenian. As early as 1929, there were no Slovenian schools left in Primorje.

The criminal activity of Italian authorities spread to the newly conquered territory of the area surrounding Ljubljana. Even our capital city, Ljubljana, was fenced with barbed wire that spread over the length of 30 kilometres, including additional guards, towers and bunkers. Nobody could leave or enter the city.

The War Crimes Commission that was established in 1943, established that there were 4017 German and 2518 Italian war criminals that were to be held responsible for causing violence against Slovenians. Italy failed to put its war criminals on trial up to this day.

Return to homeland

The terror, hunger and degradations ended in the summer time of 1945. Thousands of survivors longed to return to their homes. After the fall of Fascism and Nazism, Slovenians, just as many others, wished to return to Slovenia and to their ravaged homes. We were left without moveable property, many of us without places of residence and agricultural buildings.

Germans from Kočevje and others that lived in our homes, also ruined our forests, vineyards, our agricultural buildings, domestic and working equipment, slaughtered our animals, and damaged numerous houses. A great deal of property owned by deported Slovenians was seized by the society Deutsche Ansiedlungsgesellschaft (DAG) in the interest of inhabiting the Germans and strengthening the German nationality.

These territories did not receive adequate help to assure their normal course of life once the ordeal was over. After the end of World War II, Slovenian deportees did not receive the status of victims of war aggression, no health, social or pension security nor any war reparations.

All the adopted legislation was intended solely for enforcement of the rights of combatants that used weapons to fight the occupier.

None of the governments of former Yugoslavia did anything for the victims of war aggression.

Only the independent state Slovenia listened to the demands of Slovenian deportees and other victims of war aggression. The Act about victims of war aggression and a special Act that acknowledged the reparation for psychological and physical suffering and deportation was adopted. The question of material compensations however remains opened to this day.

About founding and operation of the Slovenian Society of Exiles 1941-1945

8.000 Slovenian exiles, forced labourers and refugees gathered at the Rajhenburg castle in Brestanica near Krško as early as on the 9th June 1991, in the first year following the declaration of independent Republic of Slovenia, and formed the Society of Slovenian Exiles 1941-1945 (DIS).

Stalls and stables of Rajhenburg castle were one of the largest gathering camps for deportation of Slovenians in 1941; approximately 63,000 Slovenians passed through this camp on their path that was laid with thorns. An assembly of the Society of Slovenian Exiles was therefore founded at this exact place as a symbolic reminder and a warning regarding the tragedy of deportation.

Initiatives, demands and already enforced rights

After the unification of Germany and the declaration of independence of Slovenian state, we, the exiles and refugees of Slovenia, began to demand the reparation of injustices committed against us.

We wrote tens of letters, petitions and materials with demands addressed to the authorities of Slovenian state, German Chancellor and various authorities of the German state.

All the gathered material, arguments and initiatives helped the competent ministries to shape their policies and the legislation related to unsolved questions of status and war reparations. The materials that DIS gathered influenced a gradual legal management of rights held by Slovenian deportees and refugees as well as other victims of war aggression.

The government of the Republic of Slovenia (RS) considered the report related to opened questions of war reparations in June of 1993 and sent it to the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia for further consideration. In 1994, the Slovenian parliament adopted 20 resolutions concerning the management of status and rights of Slovenian exiles and other civil victims of war aggression.

The National Assembly of RS adopted the Act about victims of war aggression on 17th October of 1995, which recognizes the following rights to those that are entitled: health care, health resort and climate treatment, recognition of pension qualifying period, the right to pension under favourable conditions, the right to war reparation in accordance with the special Act, a symbolic monthly rent until the end of ones life, which amounts to 1.25 Euros for each month in concentration camp for those that were incarcerated in camp, for stolen children and for prisoners, 0.84 Euros for deportees and internees, and 0.50 Euros for those that were deported with the purpose of being used for labour and those that fled from being exiled.

The National Assembly of RS also adopted the Act Amending the Payment of Compensation to the Victims of War and Post-war Aggression, which provides reparations for physical and psychological suffering and for the deceased relatives. According to this Act, Slovenian exiles are entitled to 104.32 Euros, and the refugees are entitled to 50.08 Euros for

each month of physical and psychological suffering. An amount of 834.50 Euros was agreed on for the deceased parents.

The German Act about the Foundation Memory, Responsibility and Future was adopted in August of 2000, in which the International Organization for Migration (IOM), with its seat in Geneva, was designated as the parent organization for all non-Jewish victims. 10,910 Slovenians received their reparations for forced labour in accordance with this Act. Austria also joined and settled its obligations in relation to Slovenian forced labourers in accordance with the Reconciliation Act and paid the reparations for 2395 Slovenians.

On the basis of agreements at the Thematic Conference of DIS, an agreement was signed between the International Organization of Migration and the Slovenian Society of Exiles 1941-1945 on 28th February 2001 which concerned the cooperation for enforcement of reparations related to forced labour in accordance with the German legislation.

Although our Society was compelled to deal with the issue of status and rights enforcement since our foundation on 9th June 1991, we also managed to dedicate ourselves during this whole time to preservation of historic facts and collection of memories and testimonies, museum and archive activities along with publishing of books, brochures and pamphlets.

In addition to publishing our own newspaper, Vestnik DIS, and our quite extensive publishing activity, we are also renovating the stalls and stables of the castle that held one of the largest deportation camps for Slovenians in 1941. The Museum of Contemporary History is cooperating by supplying the Museum of Slovenian Exiles at the Rajhenburg castle in Brestanica which we would very much like to expand with an exhibition related to the exile of other European nations.

Some of the suggestions by the Society of Slovene Exiles 1941–1945 for consideration and adoption of the resolutions at the Congress

1. The difficult fate of exiles and deportees was also shared by numerous European nations that were occupied by German, Italian and other Nazi and Fascist regimes during the World War II, so the Slovenian Society of Exiles 1941–1945 gave the initiative to found the International Committee of Deportees and Refugees that were victims of Fascism and Nazism in 1920-1945. The questions concerning reparation of war damages are still opened.

Europe already has committees that link organizations and societies related to concentration camps, but we have no international committee of deportees and refugees of victims of Nazism and Fascism.

If the suggestion is adopted, we will agree on the domicile at the round table after the Congress.

2. We wish to expand the Museum of Slovenian Exiles at the Rajhenburg castle in Brestanica near Krško with additional data and photographic material related to exile of other European nations. The museum will feature an exhibition of photographs that were received during preparations for this Congress. We also wish to collect publications that speak of aggression during World War II. This museum could gradually become the European Museum of Exiles and Refugees that were victims of Fascism and Nazism.
3. We will send a letter to all the Presidents of European states asking them to persist in prevention of founding of Fascist and Nazi organizations, because we have the duty of keeping to remind them of the consequence of such actions for peaceful coexistence in Europe as well

as the world. The First and the Second World War and their consequences demand the initiatives for prevention of recurrence of such atrocities, aggression, suffering, torture, killing and all other forms of rejecting and disrespecting of human rights that were most pronounced particularly during Second World War.

4. We expect that the common European textbook of history also appropriately captures the exile of numerous European nations from their homes due to Fascist and Nazi aggression. We hope that the textbook will also describe other forms of denationalizing and genocide policies against nations that were labelled as inferior by Hitler and Mussolini and which they plotted to destroy.
5. In accordance with the resolution of the United Nations Organization, the aggressor states were obliged to pay for war damages and war reparations for victims of war aggression. This principle was also confirmed at the reparation conferences held in years 1945 and 1946 in Paris and lastly in London.

In 1945, all the states of the Allied Coalition were invited to submit their data concerning damages that were caused by the aggression and racial discrimination during World War II. Our former state responded too by sending its data on war damages. This was also followed by other states that suffered damages.

The whole world, particularly America, England and France are well aware of the fact that the payment of reparations for the countries of the Central Europe and the Eastern Block was withheld. It was lastly the period of Cold War and the eastern states weren't supposed to get hold of foreign currencies.

The division of states engulfed in war aggression into western and eastern states was a mistake which Germany tried to repair through

their law concerning the Foundation Memory, Responsibility and Future. It would however be proper to also settle other caused damages and the damages caused by loosing the property.

We, the exiles and refugees, lost all our property and received no war reparations. We therefore call upon the victorious Allies of the World War II to realize the resolutions adopted at peace and reparation conferences.

6. We ascertain that not all civilian victims of war were taken care of. This is especially true for the Central and Easter Europe where there is still a great number of unsolved problems with an occasional rejection of recognition of legitimacy of claims by these victims that demand their reparations. Therefore all the civilian victims of war need to receive a reimbursement for the damages caused and have their rights, to which they are entitled due to resulting medical problems, disability and lost property, recognized. All of this shows the need for further fortification of the solidarity on national as well as international level.
7. It would be important to study how the individual social and political systems and various countries responded to our suffering, what was the public opinion and what were the responses of the population in relation to developing forms of support for children, that were placed in camps, exiled or were refugees. It would be important to share experience about how the individual European countries took care of direct help in the homes of lonely, ill and handicapped victims of Fascism and Nazism and what more could be done by the Curators of the German Foundation Memory, Responsibility and Future, the European Union and the Council of Europe for this purpose.

8. The message of the Congress should be our wish for friendly cooperation between nations and implementation of tolerance regardless of the difficult and cruel past. We strive for the abolishment of racism in all its forms of discrimination.

We are fed up with war events and memories of our suffering and take joy in the present moment and in all the days that we still have left on this earth.

We extend our gratitude to each and every one that helped organize this first European Congress of exiles and refugees. It will surely exert an effect on strengthening of the mutually connected societies and organizations that include exiles and refugees from Europe.

Samo Pahor

Deportees from Primorska

At the beginning of 19th Century, an administration territory, the Austrian-Illyrian Littoral Region (Primorska), was set up by the Austrian Empire, consisting of the principality (former county) of Goriško Gradiščansko (Gorizia Gradisco), the independent city of Trieste and the bordering county of Istria. After World War I the name Primorska (Littoral Region) came into common use for the Slovenian ethnic territory annexed to the Kingdom of Italy by the Rappal Agreement. Following the Italian term Venezia Giulia the term Julijska krajina was in use.

In Istria, due to the electoral system, which favoured wealthier classes, Italians prevailed, although outnumbered by Slovenes and Croats together. In Trieste, Italians prevailed in number and properties. In Goriško Gradiščansko (Gorizia Gradisco), despite the greater number of Slovenes, Italians were very strong due to the economic power with which they dominated Gorica (Gorizia).

Owing to political dominance in the local administration (local councils and regional assemblies), Italians were successfully infringing Article 19 of the basic law, promulgated on 21 December 1867, which guaranteed the equality of ethnic groups and their languages. It had become obvious in the field of education in particular, which had become a tool for the mass Italianization of the Slovene population, when compulsory elementary schooling came into force.

The action of the community administration of Trieste against libraries, set up in 1868-1869 in the Trieste neighbourhood was very typical. In that period of time the first two deported people were noted.

World War I

Massive population migrations started in 1915, when the Kingdom of Italy attacked the Austrian-Hungarian Empire. The authorities on both sides evacuated the civilian population from the Soča (Isonzio) front line. On the Italian side, a smaller number of the population was evacuated and sent down to Sicily and Sardinia. On the Austrian-Hungarian side this number was substantial. The number of people leaving their homes is estimated to be as high as 80,000. Most likely, the Slovenes who left Trieste due to the war are not included in this number.

Such people are commonly called refugees, but due to fact that they had been deported by force, using all means, most likely they could be called deported persons. Those in Italy, most likely, had the status of internees while they were citizens of the country at war with Italy.

After World War I a part of these deportees had no possibility to return to their homes.

The Period of Italian Military Occupation 1918–1921

Italian military authorities immediately started to persecute Slovenes and Croatians. It started with the forcible removal of national servicemen who had already returned home; either returned from the front lines or demobilized before the end of the war. The Italian authorities released Slovenes and Croatians who were in military prisons much later than members of other nationalities of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire. On the other hand, many Slovenes who were soldiers in the inner parts of the country could not return to Primorska (Littoral Region).

The second in line were intellectuals including priests and monks. Intellectuals were sent to Sicily, while priests and monks were banished to the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes.

At the same time the systematic firing of administrative officials, policemen, gendarmes, postal employees and railway employees began.

Railway employees were accused of organizing a political strike and therefore they were fired en masse in 1919. Of course, most of them emigrated to the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes.

Many Slovene professors lost their jobs with the termination of those secondary schools with German, Slovene and Croatian language learning programmes. Just a few years later the professors of the realka secondary school (general programme) in Idria and those at the secondary school for teachers in Tolmin lost their jobs.

In this period a private terror started: from breaking into the bishop's palace and the editorial office of the daily *Edinost* (Unity) toward end of December 1918, to pogroms by members of the fascist party, established on the 23 March 1919. Among the most known pogroms are the arson of the *Narodni dom* (National Home) in Trieste on the 13 July 1920, and the demolition of almost 30 Slovene organizations and companies more or less at the same time. The violent removal of signs in the Slovene language started immediately after the arrival of Italian army.

The Period of the Kingdom of Italy 1921–1943

1 During Peace-Time 1921–1940

With the arrival of the Italian army, the intolerance of the local Italian population against the equality of the Slovene and Croatian population received state support. The annexation of Primorska to the Kingdom of Italy increased this support and the culmination of this support was reached when the fascist party gained power on 31 October 1922.

Already during the period of the liberals' rule, the expulsion of the Slovene and Croatian languages from public offices started and a state commission was established with the mission to change all names of settlements into the Italian language in order to Italianize the external image of

the country (King's decree No. 800 of 29 March 1923). With this decree the Italian state accomplished the efforts of the Italians of Primorska (Littoral Region) to Italianize local names, which appeared only from 19th century onwards.

In 1923 the abolition of schools in the Slovene and Croatian languages (King's decree No. 2165 of 1 October 1923) was ordered. These schools' teachers were partially ordered into early retirement, some were sent to the interior of Italy and some were fired. All together, more than 700 teachers were affected (in the school year 1918–1919 there were 48,160 Slovene pupils and 16,881 Croatian pupils, and 745 Slovene and Croatian teachers. During 1923–1943 more than a quarter of a million pupils were without elementary school education in their mother tongue).

The transfer of judges and court employees into the interior of the country followed, as well as road workers and railway workers.

All Slovene associations were forbidden in 1927 and all Slovene newspapers in 1928.

With the King's decree No. 494 of 7 April 1927, the King's legal decree No.17 of 10 January 1926 on the change of family names into an Italian form, applicable for Southern Tyrol, was extended to the Julijska krajina (Giulia Region). One part of family name was changed on a 'voluntary' basis. No public job was available for those with non-Italianized family names and a larger part was changed in an official manner with the excuse that family names were changed into their original Italian form. Slovene and Croatian names had been Italianized much earlier; registrars did not accept any such names on the basis of the law No. 383 of 8 March 1928, which forbade funny and immoral personal names, and on basis of the King's decree No. 1238 of 9 July 1939, which forbade foreign names.

Due to general pressures of denationalization and organized economic pressure, the emigration of Slovene farmers, craftsmen and workers soon started. Authorities sent commissioners to many small saving and loan

banks in order to shut them down, because they extended their help to farmers and craftsmen in meeting their financial problems. In this way, obviously, the authorities speeded up emigration even before the world economic crisis. Many people of Primorska emigrated to Argentina and many decided to emigrate to the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. It would be necessary to make a detailed investigation, since when the agency 'Ente per la rinascita Agricola per le Tre Venezie', established in 1919, and which became a corporate body with the King's decree No. 1343 of 8 September 1921, which granted special authorisation to purchase and own Slovene and Croatian tracts of land. After 1931, this agency was entrusted with special authority to carry out the purchase and expropriation of Slovene and Croatian farms (after carrying out operations in Tyrol this agency was changed by the law No.1780 of 27 November 1939 into 'Ente nazionale per le Tre Venezie').

Emigration from Julijska krajina (Guiulia Region) continued during the economic crisis and after it, it became far more accelerated during the war in Ethiopia (1935-1936), when many national servicemen, in order to avoid military service in Africa, left for the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

The people of Primorska, who, due to different pressures emigrated to Yugoslavia, used the term emigrants for themselves, although due to different forms of constraint they could be called deported persons.

Slovenes and Croatians who didn't emigrated from the Kingdom of Italy, despite the economic and nationalist pressure, were subjected to many forms of persecution.

On the basis of the King's order No.1848 of 6 November 1926, a special prefecture's commission could issue an admonition (ammonizione) for persons whom it assessed as a danger to public order and national security, followed by a warning (diffida) and finally it could order up to five years of confinement (confino) in a place far from the permanent residence. In most cases, such confinement was predetermined on a smaller island (Lipari, Ponza, Tremiti,

Ustica, and Ventotene) or in a small remote place. Many Slovenes were condemned to forced residence. It is known that a large number of Julijska krajina's (Giulia Region) population were among those admonished, warned and sent to confinement. Among them there was a very large number of Slovenes and Croatians. All these people were registered in a central political register (casellario politico centrale). In this register all those were registered who were on the questuras' three lists of dangerous people who might be preventively arrested in special situations. At the end of the period of confinement, some faced repeated confinement. In many cases confinement was ordered after the termination of their imprisonment for people condemned by the Special Court for the Defence of the State (Tribunale speciale per la difesa dello Stato). All those in confinement could be considered deportees.

The Law No. 2008 of 25 November 1926 established the Special Court for Defence of State, which delivered many sentences to Slovenes and some Croatians. Most likely, there were 544 Slovenes and Croatians among the defendants (9.68 % out of 5,617 defendants), and 476 among those sentenced (10.35 % out of 4,596). Death sentences were delivered in 36 cases for Slovenes and Croatians (76.6 % out of 47 sentences). The data which shows that Slovenes and Croatians represented around 1 % of population of the Kingdom of Italy offers a clear picture of the level of persecution against these two national minorities.

2. During the War 1940–1943

With the entrance of the Kingdom of Italy into World War II, Slovenes and Croatians faced new persecution. Namely, besides the internment of populations of those countries at war with Italy, the war law foresaw internment also for Italian citizens who might be dangerous in war conditions.

After the occupation of Ljubljanska pokrajina (Ljubljana Province) the Italian authorities arrested many people from Primorska, who, after 1918,

left Primorska for Yugoslavia and partly imprisoned or interned them. Later such internment was ordered for hundreds of the arrested residents of Ljubljanska pokrajina.

Through the development of the national liberation struggle in Primorska, the authorities started interning people suspected of supporting the national liberation movement or being under investigation of the Special Court for Defence of the State. At the beginning they were sent to smaller camps and some on islands. When the prisons in Rijeka, Trieste and Gorica (Gorizia) were overcrowded, the Special Inspection Office for Public Security of Julijska Benečija (Giulia Veneto) prepared two larger camps: the former camp for prisoners of war in Cairo Montenotte in the Province of Savona for men, and the incomplete camp in Fraschette di Alantri in the Province of Frosinone for women. The camp Fraschette fell to pieces after Italy's capitulation and the female internees had to find their own way home. The Italian authorities passed male internees in Cairo Montenotte to the German authorities, which transferred them to the Mauthausen concentration camp.

The people of Primorska who found their shelter in Štajerska in Slovenia also met fresh persecution. The Germans prescribed banishment of all inhabitants who had settled in Štajerska after 1 January 1914. Some escaped to Ljubljanska pokrajina or to relatives in Primorska. The Germans quickly arrested and deported the more active ones to Serbia and the rest were sent to Croatia.

3. Ljubljanska Pokrajina

With the Italian occupation of a part of Dravska Banovina (Drava Region), which was annexed to the Kingdom of Italy on 3 May 1941, and was called Ljubljanska pokrajina, more active cooperation started between the Slovenes from Primorska and Slovenes from the newly annexed territory. On one hand this was because in Ljubljanska pokrajina the Slovene

language remained in use in official matters and in schools and they did not impose national service, on the other hand, it was because of the increasingly stronger activities of the national liberation movement.

At the very beginning of the war, the Ljubljanska pokrajina provided jobs for many Italian soldiers: the 11th army corps had approximately 45,000 men, which for 339,751 inhabitants means 7.5 inhabitants per soldier. Until the middle of 1942, the Italian army in Ljubljanska pokrajina increased the number of its soldiers up to 70,000 men, which meant 4.5 inhabitants per soldier. The Italians established the 23rd army corps with two new divisions with more than 20,000 men. So until the end of 1942, more than 90,000 Italian soldiers were on Slovenian territory, which were desperately needed on the battlefields of Africa and the Soviet Union. The contribution of the Slovene nation to the victory over fascism has not yet been fully recognized.

Measures for putting down the war for liberation were very severe. On 30 May 1942, the army also took over matters of public security.

Ljubljana was encircled by a 41 km long fence of barbed wire and became a very special concentration camp. Ljubljana's inhabitants were systematically and massively checked. Suspicious people were sent for internment in great numbers; people whose guilt could not be proved were sent for confinement on the basis of the decree of 11 September 1941. With the proclamation of 7 November 1941, the Ljubljana Military War Court was established which in 8,737 trials heard 13,186 cases delivered 83 death sentences, 412 life sentences and sentenced 3,082 people to up to 30 years of imprisonment. The bodies of the executed were buried in secret in Tržič (Monfalcone) until 10 March 1942.

In the countryside the Italian authorities transported inhabitants in internment en masse in many camps, among them to those specially known like Rab, Gonars, Visco, Chiesanuova, Minigo, Renicci, Colfiorito, Pietrafitta and Tavernelle. From Primorska, people were sent to smaller

camps: Scipione, Sassoferrato, Fabriano, Pollenza, Urbisaglia, Corropoli, Nereto, Tortoretto, Istonio, Lama dei Pelogni, Manfredonia, Castel di Guido, Isernia, Ariano Irpino, Alberobello, and Pisticci. Besides this, they were also transported to previously mentioned places of Lipari, Ponza, Tremitti, Ustica, and Ventotene and to the two larger Cairo Montenotte and Frascette di Altari camps.

The number of Slovenes confined or interned by the Italian authorities has not yet been precisely determined, for the Slovenes of Primorska in particular, while data on these people are in Italian archives. Altogether it is assessed that 30,000 Slovenes were interned and confined in the period of 1941–1943.

Beside the 83 condemned to death, 146 people were shot in Ljubljanska pokrajina. During operations in the countryside, the Italian army killed 1,569 captured men - of these 40 were shot in only one day on 30 July 1942 at Vražji vrtec on Babno polje.





AUSTRIA

Jože Partl, President of the Association of Slovene Deportees

The April Persecution of 1942, a Pinnacle in the History of Repression against Slovenes in Koroška (Carinthia)

When discussing the persecution of Slovenes in Austrian Koroška we have in our minds the 14th and 15th of April 1942. On these two days, Nazi authorities carried out the long planned K-action of forced expulsion or deportation of around 220 nationally and politically conscious Slovene families in order to create space for those people from Kanalska dolina who had opted for the Reich. With the expulsion of the Slovenes, the Nazis wanted to begin the final solution of 'Koroška problem' by using violent liquidation of that part of the Slovene speaking population who persisted in their national consciousness. For these two days, historians Hans Haas and Karl Stuhlpfarrer state that at that moment 'Austria had established a system which clearly and publicly accomplished the anti-Slovene policy, which, until these two days in Koroška, had existed out of the public eye, half hidden, or existed just as a programme.' The two historians have in their minds the prehistory of this expulsion. For ten years this had been forming against Slovenes in Koroška, in first place were German-liberals, followed by the German-national/German-nationalistic elites of the majority population, and finally, they were supplemented by an illegal Nazi elite, which had become the exclusive elite in power after 'anschluss' in 1938. For decades, an anti-Slovene ideology, or anti-slavism, had encumbered the relationship between both nationalities in Koroška; this manner of thinking had been reflected and realized through anti-Slovene measures using any ways and means up to the most extreme.

Therefore, the events of 14 and 15 April 1942 represent the pinnacle of repression against Slovenes in Koroška. For a long time before these days, the Nazi's repressive apparatus operated against the Slovenes of Koroška. After the spread of the resistance of the Koroška Slovenes, who had joined the general Slovene resistance, the Nazi system acted at full strength throughout the duration of the war. The German Reich's military defeat did not result in the disappearance of anti-Slovenism, but it remained in many constituents for years after, and some factors of this mode of thinking can be traced even today.

In rather rare cases, on the side of the majority Austrian population, resistance in different forms to such policy could have been seen. In the eyes of the majority, such 'Slovene allies' were rather quickly considered traitors and during the Nazi period they shared the fate of the Koroška Slovenes.

The main factors of anti-Slovenism can even be traced back to the period of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Media and politicians of pan-German and German-national orientation, in deep belief, wrote about the superiority of German culture and necessary economic predomination of Germans over others. The Koroška Slovenes' efforts to reach social and national emancipation and participate in political life in Koroška were thwarted by the elites of the majority population through the means of carefully planned interventions in social life in Austria. The education of Koroška Slovenes in their mother language was forbidden, Slovenes were not allowed to play any role in the land's administration and, by means of an electoral geometry, the Slovene movement could not attain any substantial political success in Koroška. These elites developed a verbal radicalism, using it for 'sending' Koroška Slovenes across the Austrian-Yugoslav border to Yugoslavia. Let us just think of the slogan used during the plebiscite period, 'yo-ho – across Ljubelj' and similar, which in consecutive years have never been ever omitted. For them, Slovene intellectuals represented

a hindrance, while they had always been the first in articulating and carrying out Slovene national demands.

Two reports from a political and military commission, investigated by historian Janko Prunk, witnessed the first politically motivated persecution of Koroška Slovenes during World War I. The first blow was struck against several Slovene priests, followed by cultural activists and members of cooperatives and political functionaries. During fighting for the border in 1918-1919, reprisals were again carried out against visible Koroška Slovenes, part of whom were interned in Upper Koroška. It is necessary to take into account actions carried out by the Yugoslav side as well in Yugoslav zone A of the plebiscite territory. Years after the 10 October 1920 ballot, Hans Steinacher spoke about 'victory in the German night' as almost all Slovene intellectuals left or were forced to leave the country.

During the period 1920-1938, despite ceaseless talks of some Koroška mediums about Slovene irredentism, the authorities intervened only in one single case against the Slovene functionary Anton Gastl from Šteben, near Beljak (Villach), a self-educated man in legal matters who helped many farmers with legal advice. But he never appeared in court. His life's journey was ended in a Dachau concentration camp 'thanks' to Koroška Nazis. The social-democrat Mayor of Marija na Zilji, Anton Tudor, who was a friend of the writer Ksaver Meško, and who did not agree with the anti-Slovene policy of the land's authorities, shared his destiny. It is no coincidence that Franc Wedenig was teaching in his community. It was he who in the 1920s prepared a new curriculum for utraquistic (bi-lingual) schools, which were the most appropriate for the lingual and pedagogic principles and demands of the Slovene minority in Koroška.

Carinthian Slovenes knew very well what would happen after 'Anschluss' of Austria to the German Reich. After 'Anschluss', the authorities arrested some Slovenes; eight priests immediately experienced the repression of the new regime. The first victim of Nazism among Slovenes in

Carinthia was Vinko Poljanec. In August 1938, he died as a result of imprisonment – or at least this contributed towards his death. Until the attack of the German Reich on the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, the Nazi regime began to particularly persecute Slovene Priests. Nazi authorities abolished the last remnants of the utraquistic educational system, Maklin's bi-lingual ABC disappeared from schools and was replaced exclusively by the German one, Latin letters disappeared as well. All teachers in utraquistic schools who spoke Slovene were transferred.

A larger group of Carinthian Slovenes found themselves in prison for listening to a foreign radio station, e.g. from Ljubljana.. Farmers faced severe problems with compulsory food product deliveries, they partially tried to avoid these regulations, and as a result, many of them found themselves in conflict with the authorities. Border passages were tightly controlled by the authorities and this by no means ceased after the attack on the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. The organization TIGR appeared in Carinthia, and once discovered by the authorities, it resulted in an even greater number of arrests. Arrested persons were both, Slovenes and Germans; death sentences as well as lengthy imprisonments were delivered.

During the attack on the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, the security services carried out many arrests. Arrested Slovenes, among which were a well known group of Slovene priests, spent weeks and months in prison. The authorities dissolved the Slovene Cultural and Educational Union and all 42 cultural associations. The Union of Carinthian cooperatives and all loan and economic member cooperatives shared the same destiny. Each of them received a commissioner whose task was to liquidate and/or merge them with German cooperatives; management was given into hands of trustworthy party comrades who would make any effort to Germanize them. All properties fell into the hands of the State and Slovene books were burned. The Slovene language had to disappear completely from public life and churches.

The action in two days in April 1942 led to the capture of 221 families with 1,075 people. Families had half an hour to gather needed things and members of 171st supporting police battalion from Lesce (Slovenia) transported them into the Reichsarbeitsdienst collection camp in Žrelec. Only 158 people were released from there. In Žrelec, Slovene deportees were registered, photographed and given numbers, depriving them of their identity. 917 persons were taken by trains to VOMO camps in the Reich. At the same time, those from Kanalska dolina (Kanal Valley) who opted for the Reich arrived at Celovec (Klagenfurt), where the authorities pompously welcomed them at Celovec's railway station and partly allocated them to the emptied farms of Slovene families. Further deportations of Slovenes from Koroška were the results of punitive actions. The victims were inhabitants who were supporting partisans in any way or means.

The deported Carinthian Slovenes lived under a special regime. In most cases, those fit enough for work were sent to factories. Any deviation from discipline was punished. Children were left to themselves if older internees didn't take care of them. Carinthian Slovenes were placed in many camps, including Altötting, Eichstätt, Ettlingen, Frauenaaurach, Gerlachsheim, Hagenbüchach, Hesselberg, Rastatt, Rehnitz, Rettenbach, Schwarzenberg, Wiessenburg and Wernfels and others - all cannot be mentioned here, where internees experienced something so inhuman that today it is difficult to comprehend, it was an industry for the destruction of human beings.

In these camps, Slovene deportees from Koroška lived in conditions unsuitable for human beings. Some were forced to pull ploughs like draft animals, others served the Nazi upper classes like slaves. Many of them had to work in arms factories rendering it possible for the German army to destroy other nations. We were enslaved at all levels. On Sundays, all of us had to listen to the trumpeting of the 'lagerführers' singing the same old tunes, the more fanatical were crueller, those that were more careful were less so. But the tune was the same: 'Wir warten nur auf den Befehl, und wenn er

kommt euch zu erledigen, wird er glatt durchgeführt werden.’ (We only wait for the order, and when it arrives for you to be eliminated, we will execute it without a second thought).

For us, the most difficult part was that Carinthia did not want to accept us after the war. When we, the deportees, started returning to our home land in the summer days of 1945, we realized that our homeland, although liberated, actually didn’t want to accept us back. Already upon arrival at Beljak (Villach), we had to obtain our existence by force in Carinthia, as Carinthia wanted to send us back to Germany. After tiresome negotiations led for Slovenes by dr. Joško Tischler, we were allowed to remain in Carinthia. But we had still to go to a camp, namely to Jesuitenkasarna in Celovec. We could only leave the camp from time to time. Some got a small space in their own houses, while others were provided space by their relatives.

After this unpleasant experience upon returning back to our homeland, we realized that an organization would be needed for taking care of returning our properties and obtaining compensation for damages done to our national body. The same people – Nazis – could be found in the commission for compensation of damage as could be found at our deportation. This fact made us even more determined in our decision to establish our own organization.

Our organization was established February the 1st 1946. Celebrating the forth anniversary of deportation on 15 April 1946, the Association of Slovene Deportees (*Zveza slovenskih izseljencev*) organized a large meeting in Celovec, claiming compensation for damages. Initially the authorities forbade the meeting, but later they had to allow it. During the meeting the police broke up the participants with fire hoses and physical attacks. Quite a number of participants were injured and some arrested. A service was foreseen in the cathedral of Celovec, but the Ordinary’s office forbade it.

In the beginning, the new authorities in Carinthia thought that the same results of the situation of the national minority question as was reached

during the Nazi period had to be maintained in Carinthia. Even the British occupation authorities took it as granted. Only thanks to the determined efforts of dr. Joško Tischler and others could we slowly get out of the camp in the time of 'liberty' and start returning to our homes. However, a bitter feeling remained as we were no longer recognized in the places from which we had been deported after the war, it was not recognized that we had lived there and we still do to this day.

On the contrary, in our land of Carinthia, we endeavour the most to write the history in a different way, or, at least to adapt it to Carinthia. It is true that many things were done to suit the wishes of conquerors. Some victims – including those from German nation, which died owing to the fighting for life and death which was imposed on neighbouring nations by German National Socialism, have been forgotten. It must not be so. As long as towns like Stalingrad (St. Petersburg), Lidice, and many others were burning, it was said that it was the logic of the world war. When the bombs were levelling German towns like Dresden and many others, it was called a war crime.

What has happened to deportees/emigrants? Long before, the Heimatbund were preparing plans for deportation. When Nazism was at the pinnacle of its glory, when their armies were destroying Europe, we were deported. The evidence that such plans had been made much earlier can be seen in the case of Spodnja Štajerska, namely, many individuals were registered on lists for deportation that had already been dead for quite some years. And now the same organizations which had been preparing our deportation would have a key word in recognizing our rights?!

The tragedy of Germans in Slovenia, and that of some individuals in Carinthia, is closely connected with the Nazi's boot which wanted to destroy the entire Slovene nation. During the period of National Socialism, too many followed German dreams toward Adriatic Sea. A single minded legal system followed liberation, which also swept away innocent people

who might have done nothing. The German army itself contributed to the confusion, it had to capitulate on 8 May 1945 and lay down arms, but it did not. Thus many of our fighters for liberty were still dying, including civilians, when liberation was already in full spring. We want to have confidence in the work of historians. They must process the history of the last hundred years.

I am firmly convinced that with good will, friendship is possible between nations, even in this part of Europe. If it was possible to work out for France and Germany, why it could not work for us? But the path of friendship leads over the territory of Carinthia. There is no friendship without the Slovene nation, and, at the same time, the recognition of the Carinthian Slovenes' human rights.

It is necessary to recognize that during the last period of history, our state of Austria has shown more willingness to financially compensate the damage caused by our deportation. However, a vast majority of deportees would not be able to see it. The majority of them were put into too early graves owing to these traumas. The representative of Austrian Jews, Mr. Muzicant, said that money is not everything. I would like to underline that too. Damage caused to our national body hurts even more. Material damage could be compensated in many ways; it could be done by the state and by our own calluses.

To exchange the rights deriving from Article 7 of the state's treaty for financial support is not acceptable – it is degrading. This much glorified European legal system is necessary to respect, but end attacks on the rule of law. If this is not done, it could lead toward anarchy, and, at the end, to the final destruction of democracy. When this happens, not only would Slovenes from Carinthia find themselves behind the bars, but also many democrats would be there as well.

Undetermined politicians like very much to talk, as if to say that we condemn extremism on both sides. This is a very charming excuse for not

giving a clear statement. Does this mean that the extremism is supporting the rule of law, as well as the demand for the execution of Article 7 of the state treaty and others? I have never heard that any of our people has demanded any right which would make any harm to the German speaking population. We Slovenes, who have lived for centuries in Carinthia, which had been annexed to Austria, expect that the new democratic Europe will protect our national minority rights contained in the state's treaties.

During the Nazi period, the Slovenes of Carinthia shared the fate of the entire Slovene nation. Slovenes in Carinthia experienced the Nazi regime much earlier than Slovenes in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Nazism meant for all special ethnic groups in particular to disappear from the face of the earth.

The only right way for all of us living in this space is the way of a true friendship and the recognition to live and exist in this part of the world. Let Prešeren's Toast, which is the national anthem of the state of Slovenia, be the light for us all.



BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Vera Adamič Papež

Fascist violence against Slovenians during both World Wars

I am a descendant of the Adamič family from Ivanji Grad on Komenški Kras that had to relocate after World War I from their hometown to Bosnia due to Fascist violence. I was born in 1936 in Banjaluka.

With the Italian army occupying Julijska krajina and the Treaty of Rapallo that was signed by the Kingdom of Italy and Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes in 1920 a hard life begun for the Slovenes of Primorje region. Italy accepted the program of total identity destruction for the national minorities living in this state. The action of Fascists begun on the 4th August 1919 when Italians burned down the Slovenian House of Workers in Trieste and the Slovenian National Home in this city even before that, on 13th July. They destroyed everything that was Slovenian. There were posters “Eviva Italia - Qui si parla soltanto italiano” (Long live Italy – only Italian language is spoken here) on every step. Italianization has begun. All Slovenian cultural societies in Istria, on Kras, and on Goriško were dissolved. They pillaged books from the society Mohorjeva družba, banished Slovenian school teachers out of schools and replaced them with Italian that did not speak Slovenian. Priests were prosecuted also and religious education in schools was forbidden. Fascist societies began to operate in schools. Children and youth had to wear special fascistic uniforms with black pants and black shirts.

Political and national pressure with Italian Fascist legislation conditioned the exile of Slovenian people. Fascism's interest laid in as many Slovenian as possible deserting their homes while Fascism stimulated the emigration. The violent deportation of Slovenians also occurred in

Kras, in the vicinity of Komen, in Vipava and Gorica, where our ancestors lived for several centuries. This time saw exile and deportation of over 100,000 people, approximately 70,000 people migrated to the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and 30,000 were forced to seek their new home around the world.

My grandfather, Alojz Adamič, was forced to leave his birth hometown due to Fascist violence and denationalization which he opposed. He namely burned the Italian flag in 1924 as a protest against denationalization. He found a sanctuary in Slatina near Banjaluka in the same year with his family, wife Alojzija and daughters Danica, Dragotina and Slavica. The departure from home on karst land was painful for my grand-grandfather Jože and his daughter Veronika. The family Adamič was followed by other families from Kras that were helped by my grandfather at buying property in the territory of Slatina, where the price of land used to be cheap in comparison to Italy. In this manner 57 families found their new homeland in the aforementioned part of Bosnia. After four years of residence they acquired Yugoslavian citizenship in 1929.

New immigrants found their first years very tough as they had to adapt to the new environment, new way of life and new neighbours, although the Orthodox population received them favourably. The big colony of diligent and patient Slovenians in Slatina had bricklayers, carpenters, joiners, blacksmiths, shoemakers, carriage builders, barrel makers and also goldsmiths and clockmakers, that exercised mutual help. They became masters of house building and made their own clay bricks on the property of the Adamič family.

Slovenians introduced a number of novelties in fruit growing and gardening tradition of that region. They introduced many plants of new sorts of apple trees, pear trees, peach trees and cherry trees as well as new sorts of vines. I remember that our grandfather Alojz Adamič even cultivated figs and Japanese apples. These places were namely dominated

by plum trees in that time. New harvests also consisted of cauliflower, asparagus, kale, cucumbers, fennel, different types of lettuce, chicory and beans. As a pioneer of Slovenian settlers, my grandfather also helped all immigrants as well as local population with his knowledge in agronomy. A lot of efforts, sweat and expertise were needed for Slatina to become a “Slovenian viticultural village”. Grandfather was also the initiator for formation of Slovenian cultural and artistic society in Istria in whose framework the choir Soča, drama section and tamburica section were operating. The property of Adamič family also organized liturgy until a humble church was built on the initiative of the aforementioned society in 1928 with the volunteer work and financial contributions of compatriots from Slovenia.

Grandfather Alojz Adamič and professor Antin Štrekelj who was the soul of Slovenian ethnical minority in Banjaluka, formed the Agricultural cooperative in Banjaluka that established business contacts with agricultural institutes of Netherland and Germany. In short, they saw to it that the Slovenian ethnical minority as well as the local population could sell their agricultural products not only in Banjaluka but also in the territory of Slatinske Toplice operation where tourism was flourishing. Society “Triglav” operated in Banjaluka. A special Slovenian kitchen where immigrants gathered by domestic culinaries was also organized. Both ethnical groups were closely connected with the purpose of keeping the Slovenian national identity, language and cultural heritage.

Alas the peaceful life did not last for too long as the Second World War interfered with the life of Slovenian in the aforementioned part of Bosnia with its cruelty. German Nazism with the strong support of the Independent state of Croatia carried out violence even against Slovenian nation. They saw their way out of this in the partisan movement that was joined by a number of Slovenians among which there was a large number

of casualties. Pinko Tomažič, the organizer of Antifascist movement in Trieste and Primorje, also visited the region of Banjaluka and propagated the antifascist network in this territory. He was later convicted and shot in Trieste. He is a national hero.

After the World War II was over, certain Slovenian families left this region for Vojvodina, certain families returned to Slovenia while other families remained in Bosnia. My grandfather, Alojz Adamič, returned to Slatina where he rebuilt the home and property. He organized an Agricultural cooperative in 1946 and cooperated with Slovenia in beekeeping, purchase of dairy cows, plants and seeds. Slovenians that remained in the region did everything for the development of agriculture and Slatina experienced a rebirth that was also contributed to by the energy of young Slovenians.

The last war that raged in the territory of Bosnia from 1991 also caused new national discords among the residents. Non-Serbian population, including Slovenians, had to leave their homes again, sell their houses and “with trousseaus over their shoulders” head either towards Slovenia or elsewhere seeking their daily bread. The Adamič family found their refuge in Slovenia in 1993, but we also had to leave our ancestors in Bosnia, leaving them on the cemetery.

I am aware of my roots and am especially proud of them, because I can say that I am a Slovenian in two homelands. The Museum of Recent History in Ljubljana featured the exhibition “Izgnani po tuji volji” (Exiled by foreign will) which also showed the historic path of the Adamič family under the title “Kraška murva Adamičevih” (Carst mulberry tree of the Adamič family), i.e. a symbol which remained near our former home in Slatina.





CZECH REPUBLIC

Jiří Prokop

Czech Society: “The circle of Citizens of the Czech Republic that were exiled from the frontier zone in 1938”

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with great delight, that I am able to share this information regarding our organization that resembles your society in many respects. The circle of Czech Republic citizens that were exiled from the frontier zone in 1938 was formed in 1993 as an answer to political pressure that was exerted on Czech Republic by the Sudeten German organizations. In addition to that, we also wished and still wish to cooperate in the current Czech-German dialogue.

It would be an arduous task to try and find a more catastrophic politics than the policy of “Appeasement”. This policy did not only lead Czech people to their misfortune, but also caused damages to the whole Europe. Our weapons, frontier forts, developed and advanced industry, everything that could help wage war on Hitler, was turned into his easily won advantage. Regardless of all this, Czechoslovakia would be completely satisfied with the moral support and the assurance that the democratic states of Europe would not consider it as the side that provoked the war.

After the Munich betrayal, at least 230.000 people abandoned the frontier zone that also included German anti-fascists and Jews beside Czechs. There was of course also the possibility of staying on the Sudeten territory and herewith to join Germany. On the other side, leaving the

territory would also mean loss of real estate, so a half a million of people decided not to abandon their homes. In addition to that, they also lost their citizen's rights, children in primary schools using Czech language were exposed to Germanization, and there was also the abolition of Czech secondary schools. On 15th March 1939 the German Army occupied the rest of Czech country and established the so called Protectorate in this land. The fate of Czech population was – especially in comparison to Slovenia – far better than that of the rest of the states under German occupation, because Hitler wanted to use the benefits of Czech industry. Nonetheless, the final balance sheet of the Nazi regime was abominable: 340.000 Czech citizens died, 220.000 of them due to their racial affiliation. There were 5.000 victims during the so called Heydrichiada alone. The preparations for the time that would follow the eventual victory of Nazis were under way even before the end of the war: The population in the territories where the majority of population was Czech was forcibly exiled under the pretension of building firing ranges (Benešovsko, Sedlčansko). The Nazis did not hide their plans. After taking up the office of the Head of the Protectorate, R. Heydrich stated: “This space must become German. After all, there is nothing for a Czech here.”

For us, Czechs, the Second World War didn't begin with the attack on Poland as it did for others. For us, the war begun with Munich Treaty. The refugees from frontier zones were the first casualties of the war. And precisely herein lies the problem of our organization. In the time of foundation, our organization had 1500 members, but there are only approximately one thousand of us left today and the average age is approximately eighty years.

Those that had to desert the frontier zone in 1938 never received any reparations, although some of them lost much more than just their property because Henlein's terror also cost a great number of lives and wounded. Other Czech victims of Nazism received their reparations in steps:

Victims of concentration camps, including widows and orphans left by those that were condemned and killed in concentration camps, received their reparations in 1994. In 1997, the reparations were paid from Czech-German Fund for the Future that was funded by both the Czech Republic and Germany (Germany contributed for reparations only in this case). In 2004 the rest of the survivors, including those that were imprisoned, received an increase in pension.

Reparations for Czech Victims of Nazi Regime

1. The so called humanitarian gesture by the Czech government, the Act no. /217/1994/Sb/. The political intention was to remind the German government of its moral duties. The reparations were related to political prisoners and their surviving successors / widows and orphans / if they were murdered or died in concentration camps. Orphans received / provided that they were less than 18 years old in the time of losing their parents / a lump sum of 100.000 CZK for each parents which means that brothers and sisters had to share this sum. The widows received similar reparations but the prisoners themselves received their reparations with regard to the number of months spent in concentration camps. The payment amounted to one and a half of billions of CZK in total.
2. A “Czech-German Fund for the Future” was formed on the basis of Czech-German declaration, dated 21st January 1997. This institution was funded by both states. The German side pledged to invest 140 millions of DEM into the fund, while the Czech side invested 140 millions of CZK. The financial means of the Fund are intended for various actions and only partially for reparations. International activities on slave and labour works were organized from 1998 to

2001 and American lawyers played an important role. The result were reparations in categories A – slave labour, B – forced labour and C – other lawless cases / mostly including pseudo-medical experiments/. The Czech-German Foundation for the Future assured payment for 75769 applicants in categories A, B, C from the funds of the Foundation “Memory, responsibility and future” /German Act BGBI I 3347 and 10964 applicants from the “Reconciliation Fund” /Austria/. The Fund paid a total of approximately 8 billions of CZK for slave and forced labour.

3. Act no. 357/2005 determined the conditions for payment of a lump sum to participants in NOB (National Liberation Movement of Resistance) in the amount of 30.000 CZK for the participants of NOB, 15.000 for the widows and widowers of participants in NOB, 15.000 for orphans if both of their parents fell in action or one of the parents fell in action while the other one was already deceased. Besides that, the same Act determined a pension supplement for elderly and disabled in the amount of 50 CZK per participant in NOB, 25 CZK for widows or widowers and 20 CZK for an orphan for each month since entry into NOB, but never in the amount less than 200 CZK. These limited supplements to a pension do not only concern the participants of the 1st and 2nd resistance but also those that were prosecuted by the Communist regime.

Reparations, however, are not the priority of our organization. What we wish is primarily to resist the German pressure being exerted on Czech Republic by organization of Sudeten Germans, often with the support of the provincial Bavarian government and at times even of the Federal Government.

In spite of this, we wish to dedicate our strengths to preservation of correct and not deformed view of the recent history. We sincerely salute the endeavours of the Society of Slovene Exiles for the international cooperation and we stand decisively by it. We wish much success to your organization as well as to the entire Congress.

Dr. Václav Kural

Unfounded demands by Sudeten Germans

I would like to give a non-exhaustive introduction into Czech-Sudeten problematics of influence the Association of Sudeten Germans has (Landmannschaft, SL) in the Federal Republic of Germany. To be short and to the point, just as desired, I will only dedicate myself to the period after the year 1989. Even in 1989 at the May Congress of Sudeten Germans the former press officer SL, Franz Neubauer determined the character of coming age: “The time is on our side as the Soviet system is collapsing... and it is precisely in this moment that the Sudeten-German question is placing itself on the agenda and starting to play its role. We therefore can’t sit cross-armed but must spread our wings and take flight with the oncoming favourable winds. This is the time for action!”

In the first phase, they managed to achieve the adoption of thesis by Austrian professor Felix Ermacor who claimed that the expulsion of Sudeten Germans represents a “murder of a nation” (Völkermord, a genocide). After a series of various complications (especially as far as the Czech-German declaration is concerned) the new leadership suite, headed by the couple Böhm-Posselt, began a strong defensive. This was contributed particularly by the fact that the Czech Republic entered the European Union on the basis of opinion by the German expert on law, J. A. Frowein.

A new and decisive attack happened quickly – in Austrian as well as in German parliament internal session, which was held at Augsburg from 14th to 15th May 2005, where the Bavarian Prime Minister Stoiber was the main orator. The failure in elections however prevented him from implementing his project of attack on Czech Republic. The new Bavarian government nonetheless basically accepted it. This act enabled a

substantial reinforcement of Posseltian leadership of SL that renewed their commitment to Ermacor's theory of "expulsion" = genocide of Sudeten Germans. Dem Recht auf die Heimat gehört der Zukunft.« This happened at the Nürnberg meeting of SL between 2nd and 4th June 2006. But the mentioned theory was not accepted at the meeting which was the credit of the head of the Collegium Carolina, Prof. Schulze-Wessel. The theory also wasn't accepted on the level of common German politics, so the leadership of SL only committed itself to Czech-German coordination as far as the formation of "righteous view with respect to the expulsion of Sudeten Germans" is concerned. We are not familiar with further development in German endeavours as far as this subject is concerned. We can otherwise presume that the endeavours shall continue to orient themselves in the direction that is indicated by the radical results of research group that controls the vast German grant (after the esteemed expert, D. Brandes, was removed). At the front of the group stands a Swiss German von Arburg that exaggerates when presenting the factual as well as presumed excesses of Czech side without (judging from the statement taken from the Czech newspaper "Soudobých dějinách") taking into consideration the role of the German factor in the time of World War II and the German occupation of Europe, in particular of the German territory.

It will definitely be interesting and important to precisely follow the results of this years annual meeting of Sudeten Germans and to take a harmonized standpoint in relation to that.



FRENCH

Hubert Siebenschuh**Gilbert Tscheiller**

Patriots, who resisted occupation

Who are those, who today are called patriots resistant fighters against occupation? Simply Sais, these are French Mosellans and Alsations, who rejected annexation and germanization of their departments. They helped un-obedients, refugees, prisoners of war, deserters and supported them, under this name called also those who by different way and means showed their anti-German feelings in a variety all to forms of an active resistance. These are 27.000 Alsatians and Mosellans covered by documents No.1039 -1107 and 1108, issued by the General Secretariat of the Government.

To understand better those persons to whom by the decree, issued 17 December 1954, the State granted the title of patriot resistant against occupation, it is necessary, in a concise summary of history, to present the annexation of departments Alsace and Mosel during the period 1939-1945.

On 14 July 1940, German troops occupied Paris. At the time of the signature of truce between Germany and France on 22 June 1940 not a single article had been specifying a secession of any territory. Despite this fact in the middle of 22 July 1940 so called 'Frankfurt border' was reestablished in a state as defined in 1871. Meeting in Montoire between Petain and Hitler definitely confirmed that mother homeland coolly left its children of Alsace and Mosel.

Since June 1940, Alsace and Mosel found themselves incorporated or annexed to two German regions. Alsace to Baden gau (county), ruled by Wagner, and to Mosel in Sarre Palatinat county, called Westmark, ruled by Burckel.

The first measures of denaturalization were applied without any delay through appropriate measures for breaking all possibilities of resistance. After the expulsion of functionaries of French authorities, it was necessary to terminate all elected functions (mayors, municipal councilors, deputies, senators, vice-prefects, prefects, etc.). Establishment of a replaced structure started acting in September 1940. It was entrusted to the members of the Nazi party National Socialitische Deutsche Arbeiter Partei (NSDAP) Thus the population got imprisoned in a net of control which did not leave to persons any kind of autonomy. German money was given in circulation (1 reichsmark for 20 francs presented a devaluation of 50%). All legal and business documents had to be reissued in German. The use of French language was eliminated in public and administrative life. German language had become the only language used in teaching, names of towns, villages, streets and places were replaced by German, in September 1940 an order on germanization of names and family names were published, French sounding names were mandatory Germanized with civil status. Alsace-Mosel province was combed, separated from its mother homeland, was subject to the most odious violation of law.

Taking into account that departments Alsace and Mosel had different administrators, so the regime of germanization advocated by Wagner and Burckel was different, but the final result was the same.

Nazis did understand that population would not fall on their knees. Hitler had declared that Alsace and Mosel should be Germanized in a delay of ten years. He also envisaged that around 250.000 persons, mainly implacable French persons would have to be moved, dispersed in Reich and replaced by reliable people.

In Alsace (Bas-Rhin, Haut-Rhin), Wagner, a faithful national-socialist, being profoundly convinced of the rightness of the cause he was defending, for the triumph of these ideas he did not step back before any obstacle. As

Führer entrusted him with this mission to Germanize Alsace, he was prepared to go against all and everything to carry it out. Supporter of a quick action he was afraid to lose the advantage of the effect of intimidation. He established a public administration for setting up a quick and total germanization of the public life. Administration started working on 16 July 1940. Wagner considered Alsatians as German citizens.

But the resistance, being individual or collective, started appearing everywhere, although sometimes it was only symbolic.

In June 1940, in less than ten days, 2.978 arrestations were carried out in the region of Strasbourg and 2.077 in the region of Mulhouse.

Population started resisting and revolting to despicable system of constraint, spying, organized informing, collective or individual threatening, which was the foundation also of the national-socialist regime. They resisted and revolted to attempts, as grotesque as odious, to make disappear of all traces and even memory of three centuries of French Alsace.

Rather quickly a necessity for a place for incarceration appeared and in early July 1940 the security camp Shirmeck-Vorbruck was created. (Do not mix it with the concentration camp Struthof) This camp was opened 2 August 1940. In the beginning it was mostly used as a transit camp, but rather soon the incarceration lasted years, some prisoners were liberated only at the end of hostilities. Prisoners were forced to forced labor and at the beginning 1942 the first executions were carried. 15.000 Alsatians and thousands nationals from most parts of Europe followed one another in this camp before its evacuation on 22 November 1944 in Gagennau, Welheim and Haslach at Rastatt. The camp was given at disposal to Daimler-Benz factory. Today, no remains can be found, not a single barrack, barbed wire, watchtowers, cells in which so many Alsatians suffered.

Right in this camp in the mid August 1941 the first convoys of Alsatians were formed to transport, transfer, banish, and expatriate them, as it sounds nicer instead of using **deportation**. These Alsatians were then

transferred to Polish. Czech camps or to territories in the East, annexed or controlled by Germans.

After the encirclement of houses or villages, arrestations were carried out during the night between 1 and 5 o'clock in the morning. Persons of all ages, fathers, mothers, grand parents, children, pregnant women, were brutally dragged from their homes and taken by trains to special well known camps in Eastern Europe just because they wanted to stay French.

It is reckoned that 290 deportations in 1942 and 2.364 deportations in 1943 were carried out. Arrestations and deportations continued till the end of 1944. An exact number of deportees are not known. Quite a number of them were sent to special camps in Würtemberg (Schelklingen, Siessen, Riedlingen) where they were appointed to different jobs in factories or on farms where they could witness scenes reminding the marches of slaves in the old times.

A great number of families were caught to be used in forcing the young men capable of joining to accept the recruitment, which had come in power in August 1942. Those who had subtracted from this dictate were punished with deportation of entire family.

Hardly arrived to camp, one of the most painful episode and supreme disgrace in annihilation of human dignity started – deportees were exposed on a dais to 'buyers', who came to choose hands needed or quite simply to serve them.

Families were dislocated, men separated from their wives and sent on command to far places, wives were sent to factories in the vicinity and children to a camp for reeducation meant for serving the propaganda of national socialists.

Certain families hadn't found each other only till after the repatriation, some of them were not complete any more.

Different but not less severe was the situation of families sent to arms factories. They lived in outbuildings of the factory, in a space very limited

and all the time under control of SS and in scarcity of the essential goods for a dignified life. Parents worked at list 12 hours daily, 6 days in a week, during that time children were confided to propaganda of the party.

In **Mosel**, the situation was a little different. It is necessary to look at the events happening in Alsace to judge those in Mosel. If the goals were the same, means were considerably divers.

Mosellans had opportunities to defend them against German pretensions, such opportunities were not granted to Alsatians.

Mosellans had a cause to defend: it was the moral prestige of France in Mosel.

The only trump left to them in their hands was in possessing the French citizenship. To reach total germanization and complete annexation it was necessary to deprive Mosellans of the French citizenship. So, Burckel intended to eliminate those who seemed to be the most dangerous for a successful execution of his policy of germanization. This caused an expulsion of 24210 persons to France across the western border. The expelled persons had the right to take with them 2.000 francs and 50 kg of luggage. Among them was an important part of clergy, namely 423 priests. However, in April 1941, Mosellans manifested their opposition against measures for annexation carried out by German authorities. Arrestations on 29 May 1942 touched 745 persons who were sent to special camps.

Without wanting to enter in details about the organisms established by Nazi regime, such as Hitler's youth, paramilitary formations, services of obligatory work, etc, meant for the Community of German People (Deutsche Volksgemeinschaft), which was opposed by a great part of population. The Community of German People had to be a model for Mosellans how to be a good German and national socialist. In February 1942, they were invited to sign the following declaration: " I confirm my faith into Führer and people and demand my admission to the Community of German people ".

In his speech in February 1942 Burckel affirmed that the citizenship will be attributes with an immediate effect to all members of the Community of German People who represented all Mosellans of German origin and became citizens of Great Reich. They were granted by same rights and duties. In cases when there were any reserves about confidence, a very subtle policy was set up and if somebody was due to such reason excluded from the Community, it was possible to seek a solution before *Kreishrengericht* (Court of honor) of the *arrondissement* established for that reason.

This speech provoked a unanimous resistant movement and in a demonstrative manner a great part of population declared their preparedness to emigrate to France under the slogan “better to lose farms and homes than accept German uniform”. Services of German propaganda make public that all those who insisted on demand to be repatriated to France were traitors of the people and that reprisals would be undertaken because of them against their families. End of December 42, the fate was determined of all those who had refused the German nationality or who were excluded from the Community of German People, known as patriots resistant fighters against the occupation. They were deported to the internment camps in Silesia, Sudetes and Upper Silesia.

The management of an *arrondissement* of the Community of German became responsible for the families who were marked out for deportation to prepare identification documents which beside personal data consisted also an evaluation of properties left behind, and the reason of deportation.

Also in Mosel the operations of arrestation of 8.756 persons in January 1943, Gestapo and accompanied by police forces carried out between 3 and 6 o'clock in the morning.

The place of destination was in the camps in Sudetes, de Lower Silesia, Upper Silesia.

Life in camps

Many Alsatians and Mosellans were sent to Saxony and Silesia into detention camps in Breslau, Trébnitz, Grussau, Riesa, Schmiedeberg, Petersdorf Striegau, Annaberg, (there were around 80 detention places in these territories)

In camps patriots resistant fighters to occupation (PRO) worked outside, surrounded by SS troops or closely watched by the factories to which they were allotted.

Deportation camps scattered in Upper and Lower Silesia as well as in Sudetes, in 1941 and 1942 served as transitional camps for population coming from the East (Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Banat around Temesvar, Rumania etc.) and who shared the destiny together with patriots resistant to occupation. This population was also suspected of anti-Nazi patriotism

Services “Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle für die Festigung der deutschen Volkstum” known as «Center for consolidation of Germanity» dealt with racial questions and germanization. They were capable to quickly organize the incarceration to these camps of large numbers of families of patriots resistant to occupation from Mosel, Alsace and Luxembourg.

For these services, specialized in this type of action, a nomination of a “LAGERFUHRER SS” with his staff was no big problem. They didn’t care at all about the unconfortness, mixed genders, lack of hygiene conditions. Their unique car was to accommodate elements who had manifested hostility against Great Reich and therefore there was no place to treat nicely those who were there incarcerated.

A certain number of these camps were placed in monasteries, convents, des abbeys, disused factories, old cinema halls or ruined hotels, and in many cases also in barracks. Some camps served as transit places for Roma people and Jews. “Lagerfuhrer” hold personal documents and

filed them by individuals or families. They contained data on civil status, identification number, and also observations concerning the behavior in the past and the reasons for arrestation of deportees.

Majority of patriots resistant fighters to occupation with their families stayed in many camps in row. Some camps had up to 1.000 persons and 1.600 in some barracks.

Despite the diversity of camps conditions of life and lodging were very similar. Families with children and aged persons were piled up and lived together in a reduced space, spelt in the stacked beds, on mattresses full of vermin and other parasites. Nutrition prepared in common kitchens (chores on women) was in general bad and in particular insufficient.

These conditions of life could vary from camp to camp, which had been becoming more and more difficult through time passing by and Germany itself started feeling the effects of restrictions more and more severely.

The first weeks of staying in camps almost all PRO's with their families were one by one sent before a special 'racial' commission responsible for examining persons and detecting races namely "non Arian" or to define the quality of Arians and use it for making pressure on them to join national-socialism. Many didn't understand the goal of such commission, before which they had to stand in face, in profile and be turned toward it by back, and meanwhile members took notes and in some cases measured their skull and took several pictures.

Through interrogation the commission noted working abilities. During the first years professional qualification of each detainee was exploited, but majority of them changed camps many times and they were sent to factories producing military goods. After changing one or two camps miners stayed in copper mines till their liberation. In 1944, conditions of work became more and more difficult when a 72 hours working week was introduced, Children started working at the age of 13.

It is difficult to describe in general all different situations in which lived PRO's, their life in camps, forced labor they were subjected to during two and a half years.

More than 60 years after this raid, many PRO's deceased. Others too old or ill doesn't like to revive to these bad memories. A big part of testimonies were give by young people, who were 13 to 25 years old during that period of war. Their memories deeply rooted in them represent testimonies which urgently have to be recorded for to be able to understand what had been happening to PRO's in special camps and what moral and physical pressures they experienced.

Despite the Nazi oppression their attitude in camps was dignified and courageous till the end of the long months of their deportation.

Hubert SIEBENSCHUH

Fédération Nationale des Déportés Internés Résistants et Patriotes (F.N.D.I.R.P.)
Association Départementale des Déportés Internés Résistants et Patriotes
de la Moselle (A.D.I.R.P.)

Les droits des Déportés, Internés et Patriotes Résistants à l'Occupation

Une loi de solidarité publique assurant le soutien de la nation aux invalides, veuves et orphelins fut promulguée dès 1919 (après la première guerre mondiale de 1914 - 1918). De nombreux textes subséquents furent décrétés après la guerre de 1939 – 1945 qui avait créé des catégories nouvelles de victimes de guerre.

Les différents textes de loi et décrets d'application régissant les invalidités, les pensions des victimes civiles, sont réunis dans un ouvrage appelé « le Code des Pensions militaires d'Invalidité des Victimes de Guerre ».

La pension d'invalidité, dans la conception actuelle, représente le paiement d'une dette de reconnaissance de la nation envers ceux et celles qui ont lutté pour la défense de la patrie ou ont été victimes de cette lutte.

Cette réparation présente un caractère forfaitaire, les modalités de calcul de l'indemnisation étant uniquement basées sur le taux d'invalidité sans tenir compte de la situation personnelle du pensionné dans la vie civile et sociale, ni de l'atteinte à son activité personnelle.

Ouvrent droit à pension :

- Les infirmités résultant de blessures reçues par suite d'évènements de guerre
- Les infirmités résultant des maladies contractées
- L'aggravation de ces infirmités.

L'objet de la loi et de ses décrets d'application, est de régler les conditions dans lesquelles la reconnaissance de la Nation doit se manifester.

Plusieurs articles du code édictent une présomption d'imputabilité des maladies contractées aux profits des catégories de déportés plus particulièrement méritantes.

Statut des déportés et internés de la Résistance.

Le titre de déporté résistant est attribué à toute personne qui, pour acte qualifié de résistance à l'ennemi a été :

1. Soit transférée par l'ennemi hors du territoire national, puis incarcérée ou internée dans une prison ou camp de concentration.
2. Soit incarcérée ou internée par l'ennemi dans les camps ou prisons existant dans la zone annexée par le Reich (Bas-Rhin, Haut-Rhin, Moselle)
3. Soit emmenée par l'ennemi dans un convoi de déportés, vers une prison ou un camp de concentration puis, au cours du trajet, est décédée ou s'est évadée.

Statut des déportés et internés politiques

Le titre de déporté politique est attribué aux français ou ressortissants français qui, pour tout autre motif qu'une infraction de droit commun ont été :

1. Soit transférés par l'ennemi hors du territoire national puis incarcérés ou internés dans une prison ou camp de concentration.
2. Soit incarcérés ou internés par l'ennemi dans les camps ou prisons existant dans la zone annexée par le Reich (Bas-Rhin, Haut-Rhin, Moselle)
3. Soit emmenés par l'ennemi dans un convoi de déportés, vers une prison ou un camp de concentration puis au cours du trajet, sont décédés ou se sont évadés.

Le titre d'interné politique est attribué à :

Tout français ou ressortissant français qui a été interné, à partir de juin 1940 par l'ennemi ou par l'autorité de fait se disant Gouvernement de l'Etat français pour tout autre motif qu'une infraction de droit commun, une mesure administrative ou judiciaire privative de liberté et qui a été maintenu interné au-delà de la durée par l'ennemi ou l'autorité de fait se disant Gouvernement français, en raison du danger qu'aurait présenté pour l'ennemi, la libération de ladite personne, du fait de son activité antérieure

Statut du Patriote Résistant à l'Occupation (PRO) des départements du Rhin et de la Moselle. (Départements annexés au Reich allemand)

Le titre de patriote résistant à l'occupation incarcéré en camps spéciaux est attribué aux français originaires des départements du Haut-Rhin, du Bas-Rhin, et de la Moselle qui, en raison de leur attachement notoire à la France ont été arrêtés et contraints par l'ennemi de quitter le territoire national pour être incarcérés en camps spéciaux, en pays ennemi ou en territoire étranger occupé par l'ennemi.

Les maladies contractées ou aggravées et les blessures de toutes sorte reçues pendant cette période de contrainte, sont réputées effets directs ou indirects de guerre ; les ayants droit et les ayants cause bénéficient, en conséquence, des dispositions incluses dans les lois régissant les pensions des victimes civiles de guerre.

Conclusion

Selon le statut de déporté ou interné d'une part, résistant ou politique d'autre part ou encore patriote résistant à l'occupation, l'étendue des droits à pension peut varier.

Tous voient leurs blessures ou maladies évaluées par rapport à un barème particulier dont l'application est vérifiée par une commission spéciale.





CROATIA

Mladen Veličković

Life in the camp El Shatt (the Sinai Peninsula)

Ladies and Gentlemen

Let me first introduce myself. I am the grandson of Ivan Toman that died during NOB in the Battle of the Sutjeska, and of Marija Martinović that was deported while pregnant to the concentration camp Molat by Italian Fascists after they passed the sentence, where she later gave birth to my mother Logorka Toman. The name Logorka stems from being born in a camp, which is called “logor” in Serbo-Croatian language.

Grandmothers, grandfathers, uncles, aunts and their friends frequently used to tell me about their life in the refugee camp El Shatt. I would like to use this opportunity to extend my gratitude to barba Teofil Marelić, because I have today the possibility of telling you something about a segment of life and events in the camp El Shatt, which would give me great pleasure.

I extend my thanks to the organizer of the Congress for making it possible to present at least a segment of the truth concerning the existence and life in the refugee camp El Shatt, which is located in the desert of the Sinai Peninsula, at this eminent meeting.

Before the invasion of German military forces and after the capitulation of the Fascist Italy, Partisan units and headquarters of the National Liberation Movement of Resistance (NOB) were moving towards Dalmatian islands of Brač, Hvar, Korčula and Vis. They came along with many

civilians: wives, children, elderly, sick and wounded persons. Their existence at the islands was very questionable as the German army also landed on Dalmatian islands with the exception of Vis, which was the reason for organized retreat of population to refuge.

The first transport of refugees began in December of 1943 in the direction of South Italy, because Sinai, their final destination, was a peninsula in the Egyptian desert of El Shatt. Everything there was prepared for settlement in linen tents. After a long and strenuous month that was spent on the road, life in the refuge finally began on 3rd of April 1944 and lasted for two years far from home, far from our calm life on the island Iž and in the raw, barren desert of the Sinai Peninsula, ten kilometres away from the Suez Canal. This was the site where a city made out of linen and with some 30.000 refugees, mostly from Dalmacija, Primorje and Zagore, has risen.

First days and months, before we were accustomed to the rough climate, were very difficult. Daily temperature in the shade reached 50 °C and dropped under 30 °C at night, meaning that the nights were pretty much cold. There were also those times, when “gibli” i.e. the warm wind mixed with sand would block the sun and daylight and thus turn it into darkness.

Each refugee received military blankets, some straw to make a pillow, with the place to sleep right there on the dry desert sand. The food was terrible and insufficient as far as the quantities were concerned. The most frequent on the menu were macaroni with marmalade, rice cooked on milk, cooked zucchini seasoned with margarine or butter. Each person received 120 grams of bread per ration. There was a shortage of water a couple of times per day, however the drinking water was kept within amphorae that were located in tents. Hygienic conditions were bad with lice and numerous skin diseases present. Sleeping on the sand was very unpleasant due to various lizards and spiders. The canteen was pretty far away from tents and we had to visit it in accordance with the predetermined schedule.

The poor clothes that were brought along as the majority of us ran with only the essentials, most often only a beggar's sack, also represented a big problem. The strenuous journey took more than a month and we arrived almost barefoot and naked. The allies gave us clothes and footwear but this process took too long and operated on the principle of previously distributed coupons. Women and children up to the age of 14 received their clothes from the Red Cross while men received old military uniforms.

At the head of Dalmatian refugees was the Central Committee under whose wing operated camp and district committees. Schools, various courses, theatre groups and choirs were organized and we also had a soccer team, while El Shatt even hosted the football club Hajduk from Split. The camp operated until the end of January 1946.

El Shatt and its hard living conditions also demanded a large number of human lives, because the desert sand buried over 800 of our people, mostly children. Because of this, a new city, even sadder, and adorned with funeral mounds and crosses, was slowly erected in the desert near the linen city and the life in tents. There is much pain and sorrow invoked in those that had to bury their closest ones on foreign territory, far away from their own homes and cemeteries where their relatives are buried.

The burial ground in El Shatt today has a form of five pointed star at the centre of which there is a monument to mother Dalmatia which testifies of the symbol of those times. The statue of a woman symbolizes Dalmatia at the far off Sinai and the woman is facing north, i.e. the home hills and rocks, olive trees and beloved Dalmatian stones.

This is a monument that is dedicated not only to the dead that remained in the desert of the far away Sinai Peninsula in Asia forever, but is at the same time a symbol of life far away from domestic fireplace and our blue Adriatic sea.



GERMANY

Speech by the mayor of Rudolstadt, Jörg Reichl, on the 6 June 2009 at the 1st European Congress of Exiles and Refugees, Victims of Fascism and Nazism of 1920–1945 in the Sport Hall Tivoli, Ljubljana, Slovenia

Respected Mrs. President Ivica Žnidaršič,
Dear Guests of the congress,
Respected ladies and gentlemen,

When you, Mrs. President of the Society of Slovene Exiles 1941–1945, sent to Rudolstadt the invitation for today's event, it was clear to me, as mayor of the Thüringen city of Rudolstadt, to accept this invitation and come see you here in Ljubljana with a delegation from our city.

Allow me, respected Mrs. President and especially you, participants of the congress, all united by the fate of former exiles, to explain the motives behind the participation of our delegation from Rudolstadt.

We all, and particularly we Germans, know that one cannot avoid one's own history. The generations that come are always affected by the actions and doings of those before. So it is important to face our past over and over, especially if that past contains very dark periods.

Rudolstadt – a quiet, small city in the state Thüringen – has claimed itself to be very eager to know its more than 1200-year long history.

Important events that have occurred in all these centuries, be it in good times or in bad, are being researched in a variety of ways, are re-appraised, publicly displayed, and in this way kept alive.

A special role in this is played by the so-called »dark chapters« in the recent history of Germany – particularly the time of Nazi dictatorship from 1933 to the end of the Second World War in 1945, but also the events

in the years of Soviet occupation that followed, and the events of »real socialism« in the German Democratic Republic.

The possibility that this recent history, with all its contradictions, forceful deeds, and, among others, its horrible crimes, could be honestly and fairly explored is a possibility that exists for only two decades.

Before that, historical viewpoints were for 40 years ideologically marked, and many things twisted from one side. Only with the peaceful revolution and the fall of the Berlin Wall, which led in the autumn of 1989 to victory over the communist dictatorship in Germany, as well as in Central and Eastern Europe, were the foundations laid for an objective look at history.

When, in May 1998, a Slovenian group of visitors arrived in Rudolstadt and participated in a tour of the city, it turned out that the visitors were former Slovenian forced labourers in Germany. They wished to visit the Nordfriedhof cemetery in Rudolstadt, as their relatives were buried there. None of those leading the city knew of the fate of the forced labourers, because that part of German history, and along with it the history of Rudolstadt, was never explored, and the graves had been covered with already in the 50's of the previous century.

When my predecessor in the position of mayor, dr. Hartmut Franz, who is also a member of our delegation to this congress, found out about this, it was self-evident to him that he personally see to it that this intolerable state be cleared and that the entire graveyard in Rudolstadt be re-ordered.

With the help of the The Society of Slovene Exiles 1941–1945, we found the names of those forced labourers who had lost their lives in Rudolstadt, and immortalized them in a new memorial obelisk.

For that initiative, I would like to personally thank dr. Franz once again today. With it, he began a period of memory, research, and above all constant remembering of events past.

At the same time, personal contacts with the Slovenian Society were the initiative for us to intensively take up interest in the history of forced and foreign labourers during the Second World War, who were also sent to work to Rudolstadt.

In the same war grave, research has shown, there lie buried foreign workers from at least ten other nations. They came to Germany either voluntarily, ensnared by false promises and driven all over Europe, or they were, as it happened in Slovenia, simply forced to work here during difficult, partly incredibly difficult, circumstances.

In Rudolstadt and its surroundings, around 2,000 foreign labourers worked at the time. They worked mostly in factories hazardous for your health, factories of Thüringer Zellwolle AG in Schwarza, in »Torpedoarsenal Mitte«, they were put to work at additions to the German national railway, to build roads, and often on farms in the area for work in the fields and barns, and even at local families for help in household work. With mostly sparse food, sleep with bad hygiene conditions in camps, under strict control and with a working day of more than 12 hours, foreign labourers were, especially towards the end of the war, strongly exposed to conditions that led to weakness, disease, and often death.

This dark chapter of regional history becomes incredibly obvious only once we begin to deal with the fates of individual forced labourers. The number of those that could authentically report becomes smaller from year to year. There are fewer and fewer people who are witnesses of the time and can, with help of their personal experiences, inform us about the war period and its harsh consequences.

So it was to the majority of citizens of Rudolstadt engaged in this very important time that we, through contacts with the Society of Slovene Exiles, not only shed light on the tangible details regarding the Nordfriedhof graveyard, but that we develop close relations with the President of the Association, Mrs. Ivica Žnidaršič and her sister, Mrs. Zdenka Kaplan,

which began in 1999. Both were, as children, with their families and other expelled from their homeland in Rudolstadt as forced labourers, and lost their father and brother here.

The personal meeting with her and other visitors from Slovenia, whose relatives lost their lives in Rudolstadt, did not leave only emotional connections, but, among other things, contributed to a probably unique ceremony in all of Germany in the year 2000. The motive was the ceremony of the opening of the newly ordered graveyard and a memorial on the 25th May, to which the city of Rudolstadt invited a delegation from the Society of Slovene Exiles.

As the successor of our former mayor, Dr. Franz, I already had numerous opportunities to meet with Mrs. Žnidaršič and Mrs. Kaplan and many other former expelled and already had the opportunity, two years ago, to visit the Society of Slovene Exiles here in Ljubljana.

Believe me: I am hurt and shocked by what happened to you, and many others, in our town as well, over 60 years ago. No words can apologize. But I promise that we in Rudolstadt will always remember the terrible events and remember the dead, the victims of terror. We cannot allow forgetting.

I am convinced that the young generation can and will contribute to make sure we do not forget. The young people of Rudolstadt have, as their graduation project for secondary school, dealt with the theme of forced labourers. Christian Weidmann, who is also a member of our delegation from Rudolstadt, will today tell us about the reasons for the initiative of the young generation.

Respected Mrs. President,
Dear ladies and gentlemen,

I personally hope that the history of the expelled and forced labour be researched anew. I wish that we who are alive today, and the generations to come, always have your fate before our eyes.

Everyone today and in the future know: we, the citizens of Rudolstadt, wish reconciliation with everyone who suffered injustice at the hands of our predecessors in the time of Nazism in Germany. We, the citizens of Rudolstadt, wish heartfelt contacts between us and the members of the Society of Slovene Exiles 1941–1945 and all other European expelled of the time.

I think that our nations in the strong and large European Union will live in peace. This co-existence will in the future, more than at any other time, be based before all on mutual respect and mutual recognition.

I further wish you a good congress.

Christian Weidmann

Respected Mrs. President Ivica Žnidaršič,
Dear Guests of the congress,
Respected ladies and gentlemen,

Our respected mayor, Mr. Jörg Reichl, presented to you the background and content of our visit, and the various connections of my town of birth with the Association of Expelled Slovenes from 1941–1945.

Today, here, I wish to tell you about these topics as seen from the younger generation.

We – three secondary school students from Rudolstadt, Matthias Hoffmann, Florian Ruhs and I – were born in 1988 and grew up in a time without dictatorial regimes and the desire for power. For that, we are very grateful.

It was very, very difficult for us to try and imagine how much suffering was caused to people a few decades earlier.

Of course, it is known from books and history what degree of death and destruction the dictatorship of the Nazis brought upon a great part of our world and particularly upon European nations.

Yet, ladies and gentlemen, historical facts and numbers are abstract, and it is a different dimension if you experience them.

If we look at it personally, if we look at the background, if we research and document the fates of individuals, completely new ways of looking at events open.

With emotion and personal feelings, we find ourselves in the middle of things and immerse ourselves with those hurt and their fate.

That is how it was with us students.

The fate of Slovenian forced labourers has been a public topic in the city Rudolstadt for more than 10 years.

Mr. Dr. Hartmut Franz and our teachers gave us the initiative, and sparked our curiosity.

And so, in the frame of a publicly resonating project, an image of the events and conditions of back then was formed.

The presentation of the work took place in the presence of a Slovenian delegation.

Dear Mrs. Kaplan, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you once again from the bottom of my heart.

During the project work, we found the answers to many questions of the past, but one question was very current: How to go on with extensive research of the history of forced labourers and foreign workers in our region?

How should our partnership with our Slovenian friends continue?

To save everything, and to continue, we established a society.

Our goal was, from one side, to complement existing personal ties and the engagement of the Rudolstadt city administration, to keep alive the spiritual inheritance of your patriots.

The other, and in my opinion more long-term, goal matches perfectly with the content and aim of this congress.

With our actions and commitments, we must contribute to understanding among the nations of Europe!

Who could do this better than the young!

Research, memories of the events from one side, partnerships and the strengthening of friendship, including friendship on a completely personal level, are all contributions to a lasting understanding among nations and a grateful task for the younger generation.

This became particularly clear to me whilst filming the documentary that we will see.

Dear ladies and gentlemen, respected guests, let us work together in this endeavor; this congress is the milestone.

I pay my respect to the memory of your patriots.

Dear Mrs. Žnidaršič, dear Mrs. Kaplan, I pay my respects to your life work.

City of Rudolstadt**Representative for Press and Public Relations****Frank Michael Wagner****Remembrance and rectification of injustice
in a friendly manner – exhilarating contacts
between Rudolstadt and the Society of
Slovene Exiles 1941–1945**

We cannot avoid our own history. It works on and on, and marks the present. It is urgently necessary to face our own history, even the dark parts.

Rudolstadt – a quiet, small town in the state of Thüringen, with a rich cultural history and present – has claimed to be very dedicated to its more than 1200-year history. Important events that have occurred in all these centuries, be it in good times or in bad, are being researched in a variety of ways, are re-appraised, publicly displayed, and in this way kept alive.

A special role in this is played by the so-called »dark chapters« in the recent history of Germany – particularly the time of Nazi dictatorship from 1933 to the end of the Second World War in 1945, but also the events in the years of Soviet occupation that followed, and the events of »real socialism« in the German Democratic Republic.

The possibility that this recent history, with all its contradictions, forceful deeds, and, among others, its horrible crimes, could be honestly and fairly explored, is a possibility that exists for only two decades.

Before that, historical viewpoints were for 40 years ideologically marked, and many things twisted from one side. Only with the peaceful revolution and the fall of the Berlin Wall, which led in the autumn of

1989 to victory over the communist dictatorship in Germany, as well as in Central and Eastern Europe, were the foundations laid for an objective look at history.

Also in Rudolstadt, the revolution in the »hot autumn '89«, carried out by engaged citizens at demonstrations and numerous public ceremonies with much courage and without any violence whatsoever, contributed to radical social change. Even before the reunification of Germany on the 3rd October 1990, the first free local elections were held in spring. Consequently, a democratically elected city parliament was formed, which set the direction for establishing independent local administration and the establishment of entire new structures in economic, cultural, and social fields. With these changes, which are hard to control in social life, we gave ourselves from the beginning the important task that historical events in Rudolstadt be enlightened anew, researched and brought close to the public through exhibitions, lectures, and publications.

Of course, in the first years after 1990, not everything was achieved. There was little time to thoroughly come to grips with the recent past, and many things remained on the sidelines. Only gradually, we succeeded in dedicating our attention to special topics, dealing with, for example, the history of the Jewish community in Rudolstadt, or the chapter of forced labour in the Third Reich. Here we must draw particular attention to the various projects carried out by the students of Rudolstadt's secondary school Fridericianum and state schools, which have in recent years made immense contribution to completing the history of the city.

So much as an introduction, to understand the next lines. They speak of our current, exhilarating friendly relations, which began, actually, by pure coincidence. Sometimes, we need an encouragement from the outside to enable us to take a historical event out of the grip of oblivion.

It happened in May 1998 that a group of visitors from Slovenia, shortly beforehand announced by a travel agency from Berlin, arrived in

Rudolstadt and participated in a tour of the city. To everyone's surprise, it turned out that the visitors were former forced labourers, who had lived here in 1944/45 in camp. They wished to visit the war cemetery at the Nordfriedhof graveyard, where their relatives had been buried, and remember the dead. Unfortunately, the graves were no longer there, which caused many and much understandable reluctance.

When the then mayor dr. Hartmut Franz, the head of the city's tourist information service Sabine Christophersen, and the author of these lines found out about this inconvenience, it was obvious that such a uncomfortable situation for Rudolstadt be illuminated and rectified.

Thus, the graveyard administration carried out extensive research in city hall and the city archives, during which it turned out that the graves of Slovenian forced labourers had been, already in the 50s of the previous century, removed to make space for a Soviet war cemetery with a suitable memorial for official events. Equally harsh was the revelation that the Slovenian visitors, on previous visits in the times of the GDR, were shown ordered areas at the Nordfriedhof graveyard as the graves of their relatives, when in fact, the graves had never been there.

All that was unknown to those in city hall. The duty to do everything to keep alive the memory of the foreign labourers buried here was thus even greater.

That same year, it was decided that the entire complex of the war cemetery in the Nordfriedhof graveyard would be re-arranged. Included in this endeavour were the state administration of Thüringen and the German commission for war cemeteries. With help of the Association of Expelled Slovenes, with whom we established direct contacts immediately after the visit, we found the names of the forced labourers that lost their lives in Rudolstadt, and immortalized them in new memorial marks.

At the same time, personal contacts with the Slovenian Association were the initiative for us to intensively take up interest in the history of

forced and foreign labourers during the Second World War, who were also sent to work to Rudolstadt.

In the same war grave, research has shown, there lie buried foreign workers from at least ten other nations. They came to Germany either voluntarily, ensnared by false promises and driven all over Europe, or they were, as it happened in Slovenia, simply forced to work here during difficult, partly incredibly difficult, circumstances. An additionally terrifying circumstance was the categorization of foreign labourers derived from Nazi ideology, whereby workers from the east represented the lowest category in the hierarchy of foreign civilian forced labourers.

With the expansion of the war, the losses connected with it and the growing lack of a workforce in the war economy of Germany, the methods with which the workforce was recruited on all occupied lands, entire families with children, and forcefully removed into the Reich, became increasingly brutal. We estimate that at the end of 1944, aside from 2 million prisoners of war and around 400.000 inmates of concentration camps, around six million foreign civilian labourers worked in German factories, workshops and fields to ensure a by then barely satisfactory supply for the country and the front.

In Rudolstadt and its surroundings, around 2,000 foreign labourers worked at the time. They worked mostly in factories hazardous for your health, factories of Thüringer Zellwolle AG in Schwarza, in »Torpedoarsenal Mitte«, they were put to work at additions to the German national railway, to build roads, and often on farms in the area for work in the fields and barns, and even at local families for help in household work. With mostly sparse food, sleep with bad hygiene conditions in camps, under strict control and with a working day of more than 12 hours, foreign labourers were, especially towards the end of the war, strongly exposed to conditions that led to weakness, disease, and often death.

This dark chapter of regional history becomes incredibly obvious only once we begin to deal with the fates of individual forced labourers. The number of those that could authentically report becomes smaller from year to year. There are fewer and fewer people who are witnesses of the time and can, with help of their personal experiences, inform us about the war period and its harsh consequences.

So it was to the majority of citizens of Rudolstadt engaged in this very important that we, through contacts with the Association of the Expelled Slovenes, not only shed light on the tangible details regarding the Nordfriedhof graveyard, but that we develop close relations with the President of the Society, Mrs. Ivica Žnidaršič and her sister, Mrs. Zdenka Kaplan, which began in 1999. Both were, as children, with their families and other expelled from their homeland in Rudolstadt as forced labourers, and lost their father and brother here.

The personal meeting with her and other visitors from Slovenia, whose relatives lost their lives in Rudolstadt, did not leave only emotional connections, but, among other things, contributed to a probably unique ceremony in all of Germany in the year 2000. The motive was the ceremony of the opening of the newly ordered graveyard and a memorial on the 25th May, to which the city of Rudolstadt invited a delegation from the Association of the Expelled Slovenes.

At the same time, at the level of »high politics« in the European Union and particularly in the federal government of Germany, debates and discussions took place that dealt with solving the question of reparation to former forced labourers. Research by the Department of Information of the city of Rudolstadt undertaken back then showed that in the decision accepted by the Federal Cabinet in March 2000 was actually draft legislation for establishing the federal foundation Memory, Responsibility and Future, which was altered later. The draft included so-called »introductory clauses« and a whole complex of regulations as to who is actually

»entitled to reparation«. Half of the total reparation of 10 billion DEM, would be raised by the federal government, and the other half by businesses, which gave for that purpose the initiative to establish the foundation.

As it was in the meantime known to the city of Rudolstadt that some former forced labourers from Slovenia were worried that they would remain without reparation, we wanted to help in any and every way, and so turned directly to the acting federal chancellor for the initiative for the foundation's establishment, dr. Otto Graf Lambsdorf. Our aim was to give the participants of the ceremony on occasion of opening the cemetery some happy news as a farewell gift to take home to Slovenia.

Unfortunately, we could not interpret from our multiple correspondence with the foundation any concrete promise.

That is why, on initiative from the mayor dr. Hartmut Franz, we organized a collection of voluntary contributions, with which we, through a fixed sum per citizen, sponsorships from Rudolstadt businesses, and personal contribution, managed to collect a sum so that each of the 38 still living Slovenians, who were forced labourers in Rudolstadt factories, received 1000 DEM.

This contribution was then given on the 25th May 2000, upon a reception of the Slovenian delegation at city hall and at the opening of the new memorial complex at the Nordfriedhof graveyard. Aside all the sadness of being at the graves of their relatives, one could notice among the guests immense joy at this non-bureaucratic attention that came from the heart.

This was a gesture to try and mend damage, a gesture of understanding between nations on a personal level, and from that day on, certainly the beginning of a good friendship.

Since then, we not only had much correspondence between Rudolstadt and Ljubljana, but again mutual visits.

And so, on the 60th anniversary of the return of Slovenian exiles to their home, Sabine Christophersen, who in the meantime took care of the

Slovenian graves in Rudolstadt, and the mayor, dr. Franz, were invited at the memorial ceremony at the caste Rajhenburg.

At another visit before that, they brought from Rudolstadt a tree, which they planted in Ljubljana as a symbol of friendship. If a group of visitors came to Rudolstadt from Slovenia, it was no longer only for commemoration at the cemetery, but soon developed into visits to museums and businesses, trips to the surrounding areas, personal visits to friends, and shopping in the shops of Rudolstadt.

All of these mutual activities were accompanied by exhaustive reports in the city paper, in local and supraregional media. This is important to mention, as it is because of this that the memory stayed alive in Rudolstadt, memory of a concrete event during the time of Hitler's dictatorship, and that interest continued.

It all bore fruit particularly at the moment when the youth of the city announced that, in the framework of their graduation work at the Fridericianum, they would tackle this historical topic. The students Matthias Hofmann, Florian Ruhs and Christian Weidmann have, with extensive research, gathered facts, interviewed witnesses of the time, studied sources in archives and their thoughts and reflections on the political, economic, and social background regarding the local example of foreign labourers in Rudolstadt during Nazism was an immense achievement.

These three youths were also among the delegation that, together with the newly elected mayor of Rudolstadt, Jörg Reichl, stayed in Slovenia in the summer of 2007, where above all the students were given much credit.

Particularly thrilling and still not enough appreciated is the continuing initiative shown by the secondary school students. As they themselves have told you, they were completely surprised at the emotional component of their research. From that, they came to the idea to establish a society, with the goal of keeping alive the honour and spiritual inheritance of foreign and forced labourers. This Society of Force Workers Destiny in

Rudolstadt was established on the 11th January 2007 and has since then, aside from continuous presentation of the topic in public, actively taken care to gain members from all areas of social life in Rudolstadt.

If we try to summarize, we can say that the heartfelt relations between the citizens of the Thüringen city of Rudolstadt and the members of the Society of Slovene Exiles 1941–1945 are a shining example of a definite reconciliation between nations after the Second World War, began by Germany. With a myriad of personal meetings and activities, which from time to time commemorated exceptional circumstances, there developed in the last ten years something truly special which represents an example of normality in Europe, a Europe that in the meantime has become bigger and still more peaceful.





POLAND

Józef Sowa

President of the Central Comitee of SPP

Association of Poles deprived by the Third Reich (Description of activities)

During the World War II (1939-1945), the Nazi regime of the Third Reich introduced a total system of terror and slave labour for Poles that was more cruel than in other occupied states.

During the war, Poland lost 6 millions and 28 thousands citizens, of which 600 thousand Poles lost their life on all fronts due to the war. The majority of the 6 millions were killed due to the extermination occupation politics in relation to the Polish nation.

The occupier established 3.690 camps and other extermination centres on the territory of Poland. Polish citizens were also deported into 7.862 Hitler's camps that were located in other states of Europe.

Among the deported, there were around 600 thousand children up to 15 years old. Besides that there were around 200 thousand children that were taken for the purpose of Germanization.

Before the beginning of German aggression on the USSR the Poles were on the first place and after the attack, they were on the second place with respect to the number of persons that were deported by the Third Reich.

One of forms of enslaving the Polish nation by Hitler's authority was to force Polish deportees to wear a rhombus shaped mark with the letter "P" on their clothes, which should even further degrade them.

The German occupier deported approximately 3.200 thousands of people into the Third Reich or other occupied states. These data are based on an approximate estimation because the precise documentation alas was not preserved.

Terror, executions, but above all shootings were taking place all over Poland. Because we wish to teach young generation of this subject, we would like to speak about how Germans used the following methods to send people to slave labour in the Third Reich in the framework of their terrorist campaign:

The first one: They were summoned to the Ministry of Labour and then sent to transitory camps on a predetermined day with special transport.

The second one: Street raids. The German police closed roads and sent Poles, men as well as women and also children over 13 years of age, that were found on these streets by coincidence, to labour in Germany with prepared vehicles.

The third one: Children being taught at primary schools were transported to Germany. In 1940 the German police chose children from upper classes and following a selection, loaded them onto prepared trucks that drove them to forced labour on various German locations. Parents usually only learned of their child's new location of residence after about a week, when they received the petition to send their child his personal belongings.

The fourth one: On the basis of the pre-prepared lists the German police suddenly appeared at a given location of residence at 4 o'clock in the morning and forcibly drove away certain persons with prepared trucks.

"Recruitment" for labour was closely connected to the deportation as the method of the authorities of the Third Reich.

Term deportation can be understood as taking away people under the direct duress in street raids, whether a suitable office of Hitler's regime (Arbeitsamt) issued orders to Polish citizens for departure from area II of the Republic of Poland (in her borders before 1st September 1939) to slave labour in the Third Reich.

The fate of people wearing the "P" mark that was shared by hundreds of thousands of particularly young people remains in the memory as an incomprehensible discrimination in the civilized world. Nobody can forget

death of their colleagues and closest ones, raids, humiliation, living in constant fear and slave labour in inhuman conditions that was demanded by Hitler's regime without any mercy.

The people of Polish society that suffered that were injured the most were the youth of Poland, including adolescents – war casualties, hundreds of thousands of oppressed Polish children that are burdened by the consequences of repressions, including but not limited to lack of education and slave labour that exceeded capabilities of their age. The intelligence and intellectual powers of Poland were also exterminated. Their destiny were camps and prisons. This period shall remain written down in history as the time of concentration camps, of building of totalitarian systems (“civilization of death”) and of the modern age slavery. People that were labelled with the “P” mark and enslaved by this system comprised for a while a half, and towards the end of the war over 25 % of all labourers (Fremdvolkischarbeitselnatz) working in the German war industry.

The problem of reparations following World War II

After the war the reparations for repressions of the Third Reich in relation to the Western European countries were solved on the basis of the London treaty dated 27th February 1953. This answer also allowed the Germans to fashion similar claims in relation to the countries of the Central and Eastern Europe in unspecified future.

After war endeavours of Polish authorities for reparations regarding repressed Poles was introduced by the Minister of External Affairs of the Polish People's Republic, Marian Orzechowski, in his answer to the interpellation of the parliament member Helena Galus. Minister Orzechowski then also noticed: “The standpoint regarding the civil law reparation claims

from the title of deportations and slave labour of Polish people was set by the Polish government in year 1947 in a memorandum that was submitted at the London Conference.

The International Military Tribunal and its judgements accepted the system of deportations and slave labour as a war crime in the sense of the Article 6 of the statute of the Tribunal as well as on the basis of the Article 82 of Hague Convention IV. from the year 1907. Despite this international legal viewpoint, BRD reacted negatively on the demand for settlement of reparations claims by Poles. Reparation regulations in BRD were prepared in such a way that Polish citizens could be excluded when making the necessary reparations. The court of BRD decided without legal basis that the prosecution of Polish people was dictated by the demands for security of Hitler's Germany, so it assumed a paradoxical thesis that the crimes committed to Polish nation – the victim of Hitler's aggression – were caused by the need to protect the German state from dangerous and hostile activities of Poles.

In its notice from 27th September 1960, intended for UNO the government of the Polish People's Republic (PPR) again affirmed the validity of reparation claims by Polish citizens and submitted their legal addresses and the demand for their realization. After concluding the agreement in 1970 and establishing of diplomatic relationship the conditions allowing Poles to submit a demand for reparation claims directly at the government of FRG were fulfilled (September 1972, the visit of the Minister for External Affairs in Bonn). But the government of FRG refused to change its negative standpoint.

In the following years, in December 1983 and April 1984, Polish government opened the question of reparations several times, especially in connection with the false information spread by the German bureaus, that the German government paid Polish claims in the height of 100 millions of DEM to the victims of medical experiments and 1.3 billions of DEM from

the title of agreement on rents. Polish government clearly showed in the mentioned documents, that neither the amount of 100 billions of DEM for the victims of experiments, nor the amount of 1.3 billions of DEM paid in accordance with the agreement dated 9th October 1975 in relation to of war rent claims, do not appertain to reparation claims of Polish citizens. Although certain circles of the German society were inclined toward Polish standpoint, the government of the FRG failed to argumentatively answer and stubbornly stuck by its viewpoint. FRG confirmed this viewpoint on 20th May 1986 in its answer to interpellations in Bundestag and in its report on reparations, submitted in November 1986.

In this situation the Polish government submitted to German government an Official Note in which the problem of civil law reparations for Polish citizens was comprehensively included. This was the picture of the endeavours of government of PPR until the end of 1986.

It needs to be stressed out that the Soviet Union interrupted the collection of war reparations from GDR in the form of goods as well as in other forms already in 1953, after an agreement with the government of PPR. The government of PPR went even further. Not only did it agree on the minutes of USSR-GDR, but on 23rd of August 1953 also declared that it recouces the reparations on the account of Poland in relationship to the Germany as a whole.

Therefore all – even later agreements with FRG and the documents in connection with it – stay silent as far as reparation claims for Poles are considered. This blatant example of legal qualifications lack in the defence of Polish state and nation allowed German lawyers an excuse (a pretence) for argumentation of the declination to pay reparations to Poles. It has to be admitted that the manipulations and deceptions regarding reparations for results that were caused by the Third Reich with war, were noticed by Germans themselves who affirmed their benevolent support with various statements and charity help. We should quote the words of the member

of Bundestag, Markus Mecker (SPD), that described the situation related to reimbursement for the atrocities of national socialism as “the history of stone cold hearts, concealed guilt, and flight into legal tricks”.

Formation of the Association

In the conditions of frequent and deep political tensions in Europe as well as around the world during the post war era or the so called “Cold War” people that were victims of the Third Reich violence often did not have the possibility of organizing their movements or establish their own associations that could serve as means to reach a civil law reparation.

On the other hand, there were no political conditions for formation of such an organization, as it could lodge reparation claims in relation to both German states, which means also GDR that lead its politics on the basis of “brotherly relations” with USSR as well as PPR. Governments of PPL therefore did not pay any attention to the formation of such an association until the end of 1980ies. Polish system was not inclined to centres and organizations that would express social thoughts if they were not allowed so by the party until 1980ies. The question or reparations for the consequences of the World War II was wrapped in silence. Due to the fear from subjects that were taboo for GDR and USSR, nothing was allowed to be done. The fact that there were no diplomatic relations with FRG, recognized as the heir of the Third Reich, prevented enforcement of rights that were allowed by the German Restitution law – BEG (Bundesentschädigungsgesetz).

In the time of “relaxation” that slowly begun in Poland after the year 1956 the persons with the mark “P” slowly begun to merge and appear courageously in the international arena. The first such initiative was the Club of People With Mark “P” that was created by dr. Czesław Ziemia

at the Association of Friends of Vroclav. The Club, for example, published photographic material on slave labour of Poles for the Third Reich for the first time on the territory of Poland.

The Club suggested that there should be a commemoration exhibition from the times of deportation of Poles to slave labour in Germany in the armoury of the Museum of History. They started to build in commemoration plaques – bricks on the places of martyrdom. In April 1985 the Club organized the symposium “Polish people on forced labour in Vroclav during the war”.

On twenty third of April 1987, the Warsaw court registered “the Association of Poles that were exploited by the Third Reich”. The leaders of the association were dr. Jacek Wilczur and St. Dojlida. The association begun to actively recruit on the territory of the whole country and became competitive to other initiatives for the question of reparations.

The press, radio and television started to broadly inform on all initiatives for moral and physical damages that were caused by the Third Reich. Initiatives of rent recipients, groups of disabled people and wronged parties that were also supported by PSL (Polish People’s party) began to form. This caused the rise of personal and leadership ambitions and rivalry. The authorities decided to tie all organizations into one state All-Polish organization because it reasoned that the support of the society would play an important argument in endeavours towards reparations, for which there was no official agreement in 1984, of the previously unsuccessful operation of the PPL’s diplomacy.

The aforementioned joining into one common Polish organization, the Association of Poles Injured by the Third Reich, was performed on 7th April 1988 following the suggestion of the Minister of Justice, Czesław Domaradzki. The initiative group that was lead by the elected Mag. colonel Tadeusz Szadkowski, a former forced labourer and deportee in the Third Reich, was also formed.

The statute, necessary regulations and the main committee were formed at the congress that was legalized by the authorities of those days.

On the 10th of May 1989 the Voivode Court in Warsaw (VII. Civilian Department) affirmed the statute of SPP wherein the goals of the Association of Poles Injured by the Third Reich were laid. These are:

- Documentation of historical truth regarding the destiny of Polish women and men prosecuted by the Third Reich.
- Endeavours to secure their appurtenant rights and social help.
- Activity at home and abroad which should earn moral and material satisfaction for Polish women and men that were injured by the Third Reich due to prosecution, especially their stay in concentration camps, work camps, jails, due to slave labour and other forms of prosecution.

The Association began its activities immediately after registration. A very broad action of registering and verifying people that have the right to compensation was set.

The Congress addressed an appeal for public opinion that the following should be solidarized with the goals of the Association:

SPP intends to decisively express its role of a subject, not only as the advocate but also as the commissioner of verified roles. With respect to the fact that the question of reparations wasn't solved in 50 years following the aggression and Hitler's occupation, we must act accordingly and call on the world public for support by publicly opening the question of civil legislation claims by our citizens. We have formed a link with social and political forces at home and abroad, even in FRG, which seek a just solution of the question of reparations. We wish to implement a system of social self-help for the members of Association. State authorities, political and social forces are hereby called upon to support our endeavours and present our question to domestic and international public.

“... Our goal among others is to establish a Centre for documentation of reparations which could cooperate with the Institute of National Memory. The Congress shall authorize the bodies of the Association in their endeavour not to leave the question of reparations only as a white stain in the post-war history.”

The formation of the Association was also published by the foreign press. Polonia in USA, Canada and Germany responded kindly. To remain unified in our ranks and to gain moral authority it was important to demand that the Association remain independent from changing political systems in Poland; the Association could not interfere with interparty and philosophical disputes. The Association wanted to activate forces of society for support of righteous goals, but without the incorporation of official factors that interfere with intricate processes of reshaping the world politics.

With this principle we succeeded to strengthen the loosened groups and voivod committees, to control the vigorous growth of organizations and manage the system of paying the membership contributions and to prepare the suitable regulations.

The activity of SPP soon made possible the creation of own funds, deposits to bank accounts that paid off with interests, and strengthening of the material basis, which could be contributed to the authorities on terrain (offering of premises, discounts with payments etc.). SPP quickly became the largest social organization in Poland with more than one hundred thousand members gathering the documentation of historic truth regarding the destiny of Polish women and men in the time of Hitler's occupation.

In the new phase, Germany expressed its standpoint on reparations on 8th March 1990 with the resolution of the Bundestag. They also write: “...Regardless of the fact that Poland renounced their reparation claims in relation to Germany in 1953, the reparation claims dated 14th November

1989 on the basis of the joint statement by the Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki and Chancellor Helmut Kohl, also remain valid as far as the united Germany is concerned.”

In June 1991 Chancellor Helmut Kohl and Prime Minister Jan Krzysztof Bielecki signed an agreement in Bonn, concerning good neighbourhood relationships and amicable cooperation between states. Simultaneously, there were speeches on the form of settlement that German government should implement for the victims of Hitler's regime in Poland. The discussions lasted for six months and finished with formation of the institution named Polish-German Reconciliation. The agreement was not included into the arrangement, it existed in the form of letters between the Deputy of German Minister For External Affairs, Dieterj Kastrup, and the minister of the Office RM, Krzysztof Żabiński.

The letter from Dieter Kastrup mentions under item 1: “The government of Federal Republic of Germany is prepared to deposit a lump sum of 500 million DEM on the account of the organization Polish-German Reconciliation for humanitarian reasons.

Minister Żabiński replied in his letter: ... “The Government of the Republic of Poland confirms that this settles questions that are the object of this agreement once for all. The government of the Republic of Poland shall not demand the realization of further claims by Polish citizens as far as the Third Reich prosecutions are concerned.”

In this time, the supervisory board of the organization Polish-German Reconciliation was composed of respected characters from political life, such as Władysław Bartoszewski, Jan Krzysztof Bielecki, Tadeusz Mazowiecki, Władysław Skubiszewski, Stanisław Stomma, Andrzej Szczypiorski and others. German side was represented by Friedrich Vogel.

Further efforts of the Association for reparations

In the name of realization of goals set in the statute, the Association of Polaks Injured by the Third Reich invested efforts in achieving moral and material satisfaction. It therefore addressed open letters for recognition of fair reparations to the Chancellor of FRG and proposed to the highest Polish authorities to settle these affairs at meetings with the highest German leaders.

In the 3rd quarter of 1994 the presidio of SPP addressed an appeal to the president of FRG, Roman Herzog, to support the demands of injured parties. In his response dated 8th November 1994 the Head of the President's Office of FRG extended his sympathies over suffering of former forced labourers. This was a partial satisfaction of those that suffered damages under Third Reich and victims of Hitler's Nazism, but the letter also stated that the President of FRG holds no influence over the standpoint of German companies that used slave labour during the war and which should today feel the responsibility to pay the damages.

In 1997 the Central Committee of the SPP again turned to Chancellor Helmut Kohl in writing regarding slave labour in the time of Third Reich. The association received an answer of the representative of the office of H. Kohl dated 26th July 1997 that the question of reparations is definitely settled.

In the time of Polish-German relations normalization the conclusion of an agreement in the form of letter exchange between Deputy Minister of External Affairs, Dieter Kastrup, and the Head of the Office of the Council of Ministers, Krzysztof Żabiński, on 16th October 1991 was the result of efforts on the part of the Association.

The agreement stipulated that the Polish government would call the suitable organization (the Polish-German Reconciliation Organization), and that the government of FRG would remit a lump sum (500 millions

of DEM) as humanitarian help to people that were oppressed during the time of Third Reich.

This sum was distributed by verification commissions of the Polish-German Reconciliation Organization with cooperation of the representative of the FRG government.

Applications, which means the so called qualification-verification cards (the KKW card) were prepared by the interested parties, but were most often helped by activists of all departments within the Association.

The hardest phase of preparing the application included difficulties of completing the documentation that was proposed by interested parties, as they were incomplete and only confirmed the repressions that happened in fragments. After 47 years they were often very difficult to supplement.

The last phase was the opinion of the representative of Association.

Payments begun in 1992 and ended in 2001.

Approximately 616,000 persons applied for the help of the Association.

Payments of Polish authorities

Simultaneously with the described duty, the Association of Poles Injured by the Third Reich endeavoured towards the highest organs of the Republic of Poland paying the payments to the injured parties similarly to the way in which the combatants and former deportees to Sybira are receiving their payments on the basis of the Act dated 21st January of 1991 (with subsequent changes).

Thanks to the organizations that unified plaintiffs, in first line the Association of Poles Injured by the Third Reich, as well as understanding relation of some members of parliament, an option to prepare the Act that would bring satisfaction to this category of people has shown itself.

On 31st May 1996 the Assembly of the Republic of Poland adopted the Act on payment of reparations for deportees to forced labour or persons

that worked in work camps of the Third Reich and Soviet Union (Of. J. 1996, No. 87, poz. 395). This Act acknowledged the injured parties a regular payment, however each submitter (a deportee or slave labourer) had to provide his own documentation.

The Act dated 31st May 1996 stipulated, that the application for the Office of War Veterans' and Repressed Persons' Affairs has to be supplemented by the opinion of the Association for Repressed Persons chosen by own judgement. In the most difficult phase, especially when documenting the applications, as well as with lump sum help for injured parties, this was on the agenda of all departments of the Association of Poles Injured by the Third Reich.

The Act was implemented from September 1996 until the end of 1999 and included over 270 thousands of people.

Other activities of SPP

1. Representatives of SPP established numerous contacts with members of the government of the Republic of Poland, and attended the international and domestic meeting always when the reparations for the slave labour were a part of the discussions. These contacts raised the prestige of the Association and accentuated the question of claims by Poles that were exploited by the Third Reich.
2. We should mention fertile contacts with Swiss civil organization that helped victims of the holocaust. It extended help to the members of SPP that were struck by the flood. Some members of the SPP also received help by the statement and bank fund Schweizer Fonds zugunsten bedeutftiger Opfer von Holocaust (Shao).

3. Numerous meetings and conferences in Poland and Germany that were organized by SPP and German circles favourable to Poles offered a chance of establishing amicable contacts with famous German persons including lawyers and scientists. A special satisfaction to the people wearing mark “P” was the unveiling of the commemoration plaque dedicated to Polish deportees to forced labour on the wall of the Siemens factory in Berlin (former AEG) on 1st September 1995, the anniversary of the beginning of the Second World War.

Unveiling of the monument to persons deprived by the Third Reich in Warsaw

A specially important event transpired on the 7th May 1996 on the cemetery Powązki in Warsaw when the monument dedicated to Polish slave labourers in the Third Reich was solemnly unveiled. This represents a great moral satisfaction for the people that were caused damages by the Third Reich. The ceremony was also attended by the president of Republic of Poland, Mr. Aleksander Kwaśniewski (he held a speech). Together with the Prime Minister Włodzimierz Cimoszewski they immured the constitutional charter. Ceremonial manifestations alongside the honour guard platoon was attended by the representatives of the assembly and government of Republic of Poland and the Mayor of the city Warsaw as well as scouts and numerous delegation of SPP with flags.

The question of satisfaction – the new phase

The reverberant actions in the international arena, especially the public appearances of the organization Jewish Claims Conference whose

members were repressed by the Third Reich, the public appearances of SPP and individual lawsuits on German courts and the authorities of FRG, the commission for petition of Bundestag found out on 4th November 1994 that there is a possibility of solving the reparation questions by companies, that exploited the work of Poles during the war, paying the reparation of their own free will. This is one of the most crucial decisions of the Germany in regard of the satisfaction. Some German trusts (Siemens, Daimler-Benz and others) started to remit the first payments to the aforementioned workers.

Modern German legislation and diplomacy successfully protect themselves from the words “reparation” so that there wouldn’t be an avalanche of claims that would be caused by the true settlement of the moral damages and crimes in the territory of Eastern and Central Europe. Therefore the comments in the press (in Germany as well as in Poland), using the term “reparation”, aren’t completely accurate when discussing various payments that Germans paid to the organization this far. We must not forget individual, otherwise countless, humanitarian gestures of various German circles that helped the injured parties. But these gestures are not in any proportion to the damages that were caused by the war and the Third Reich.

In the 1990ies there were questions of satisfaction for the injured parties in the international arena. This caused a pressure on public opinion of Germany, especially after exchange of the ruling team, when the authority was taken over by SPD.

The public media retained social democratic rhetoric. Under the pressure of public opinion and especially powerful Jewish circles in the USA, Chancellor G. Schroeder decided to settle the question of satisfaction for nations in regard of injustices and to solve the question with humanitarian help. He proposed that a general purpose fund be formed with a share of public means and a share from trusts, companies and other institutions that used the work of occupied nations during the war. Financial help should finally wash the odium that Germany has and that persisted due to

Hitler's crimes to Germany, and end the demands for material satisfaction. The fund should serve for reconciliation and cooperation between nations. Referring to the voice of the former President, Richard von Weizsacker, who said: "Errinerung ist Kempunkt der Verrohnung", the fund acquired its name "Memory, responsibility and future".

In these circumstances the talks with Austrian authorities regarding the satisfaction for forced labourers, that used to work in Austria during the war, begun. Joint delegation of SPP and the organization Polish-German Reconciliation with the cooperation of Polish embassy in Vienna had fertile talks with representatives of Austrian government and centre Szymon Wiesental regarding the recognition of financial aid to arrested and forcibly employed Poles in the territory of Austria. The Austrian fund of "Reconciliation, peace and cooperation" was formed relatively quickly.

The determination of the amount of funds in the formed German organization took some time in the USA as well as in Germany, before the Bundestag formed this organization. The cooperating parties in the talks were the representatives of interested nations – Russians, Ukrainians, Belarussians and Czechs with Poland represented by the ministers J. Widzyk and J. Kranz and the president of the Polish-German Reconciliation fund, B. Jałowiecki and Dr. Karol Gawłowski from SPP.

The Act on the "Memory, responsibility and future" fund came into force on 2nd August 2000 and only applies to those persons that were still alive on 16th February 1999. The fund should realize the agreed upon payments in two instalments through suitable state partnership institutions with which it concluded an agreement. The limit for Poles was set at 1,812 millions. The payments were supposed to be performed by the Polish-German Reconciliation fund on the behalf of the "Memory, responsibility and future" fund in accordance with provisions that were stipulated by the curators of the Federal Fund. To realize the payment, one had to fill out the form and lodge it in certain time together with the required

documents. A signed document had to be enclosed, stating that the person would not demand anything more from Germany or German companies. The amount of payment depended on the category into which the submitter was categorized.

German payments

Poles that suffered damages should receive a total of 1,812 millions of DEM where the first instalment should represent 75% and the second 25% of the sum. The legal basis for payments was the Act of Bundestag dated 2nd August 2001, which determined the principles for acknowledgment of payments and their amount for individual living groups of those that suffered damages:

prisoners in concentration camps and ghettos	15 thousand DEM
prisoners in heavy prisons	12 thousand DEM
prisoners in camps for educational work (AEL)	12 thousand DEM
prisoners in penal camps (Straflager)	10 thousand DEM
prisoners in camps Polenlager in Silesia	10 thousand DEM
prisoners in camp Potulice that were imprisoned from 2nd October 1941 until 20th January 1942	7,5 thousand DEM
prisoners in camp Potulice that were imprisoned from May 1941 until 1st December 1941 or until 21st January 1942	5 thousand DEM
prisoners and arrestees	5 thousand DEM
children to the age of 16 that resided in transitional camps for over 180 days	5 thousand DEM
workers, deportees into the Third Reich and on the occupied territories for work in industry and public sector	4 thousand DEM

The Society of Slovene Exiles 1941–1945

workers, deportees into the Third Reich and on the occupied territories for work in agriculture, services and crafts	2 thousand DEM
children up to 12 years old, deported together with parents or those that were born in the time of forced labour	2 thousand DEM
children to the age of 16 that resided in transitional camps up to 180 days	1 thousand DEM

Additional payments in the maximal amount of 15.000 DEM will be provided for mothers whose children died in children's homes and victims of pseudomedical experiments.

The help of intensive cooperation of Polish-German Reconciliation fund with the organizations of those that were caused damages, among them also the Association of Poles that were caused damages by the Third Reich achieved 490 thousand of people having been paid 2,5 billions of PLN in total (condition on 28th April 2003).

Austrian payments

Due to the endeavours of the PNP fund and the Association of those that were caused damages as well as of the Austrian politicians and lawyers adopted the Act on Reconciliation that acknowledges payments for persons that were exploited during the war in the following manner:

1. Victims of slave labour in the territory of Austria and on locations that can be compared with concentration camps – payments of 7.630,65 EUR per person.
2. To the victims of forced labour in industry, craft, construction, energy in communal institutions, on railroads and postal offices – payments of 2.543,55 EUR per person.

3. To the forced labourers in agriculture, forestry and households – payments of 1.453,46 EUR per person.
4. To women that bore a child when in forced labour or that were forced to abort – payments of 363.36 EUR per person.

Austrian payments were performed in whole and in the same manner as German. The role of Association in preparation of applications and with payments was identical as in the case of Germany.

Directions of further SPP activity

Congresses of SPP delegates always represent a chance of assessing the accomplishments this far and for analysis of further program and on how to best protect the interests of those that were injured by the Third Reich. This again represents a starting point for determining the direction of further operation of the Association and for the estimation of the tasks that will be the most important.

In regard of the multiple directions within the framework of Association operations the future work must concentrate on the following tasks:

1. To continue in efforts together with the Polish-German Reconciliation fund to successfully finish payments to persons prosecuted by the Third Reich.
2. The other important task is the project of the Act on monetary payments to under-aged victims of the war from 1939 to 1945. Our Assembly rejected three initiatives this far, the last one due to being tendentious and exceedingly motivated, as the adoption of such Act would burden the state budget too much. The government of RP and

forces that support this project differ in their estimation of the number of beneficiaries that would use legal benefits. In September 2002 the senate of the Republic of Poland received a subsequent project of the Act on monetary payments for underage victims of war that took into consideration critical comments of the Assembly's opposition.

The question of broadening the social help on the basis of the Association's own financial funds also have to be thought over in detail. We are also thinking of the possibility of increasing the support for our members. The success of this task depends on the possibility of gaining grants from the fund that would remain after finished statute activity of the Polish-German Reconciliation fund, and of the financial help from the Polish-German Cooperation fund as well as state institutions, for example the Ministry of Work and Social Politics.





RUSSIA

Professor N.A. Mahutov
Chairman of MSBMU
Member of the Russian Academy of Sciences

Preserving the memory of victims of Fascism and Nazism on international level

The first European Congress of Victims of Fascism and Nazism will be held on the 6th June 2009 in Ljubljana (Slovenia) and will host representatives from several European states that suffered damages during the war. The organizer of the event is the Slovenian Society of Exiles 1941-1945.

The international congress will coincide with the 70th anniversary of the beginning of World War II, the bloodiest war in history that claimed over 50 millions of lives.

We extend our greetings to the President of the Republic of Slovenia, the Organization Committee, the Chairman and to all the participants of the Congress on behalf of the International Association of Former Under-age Prisoners of Fascism, and wish everybody a lot of success in preserving the memory of war victims and in your endeavours for a better future of Europe and of the whole world.

One of the greatest tragedies of World War II (1939-1945) is the fact that the war operations in the occupied territories claimed three times as many lives of civilians in comparison to soldiers. Until that time, there were no historic records of similar mass murders of civilian population. The crimes committed by the Fascists and their collaborationists were disclosed and judged by the Nürnberg International Tribunal in 1946.

Most horrific of the whole World War II history and of the Nürnberg judicial process were, however, the facts that revealed crimes committed

against children and youth; the most innocent and at the same time the least protected group of war victims.

The International Association of Former Underage Prisoners of Fascism was founded under Soviet Union, on the Day of Remembrance and Admonition, on 22nd June 1988 in Kiev. Today, the association represents the largest structured association of its kind and involves hundreds of thousands of citizens from Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldavia, Russia, Uzbekistan, Ukraine and Estonia, who lived through the horrors of Fascist torture in concentration camps, ghettos, prisons and other forms of forced detainment, which were implemented by Nazi Germany on the occupied territories of the Soviet Union, European states, and of the Third Reich with their allies.

The foundation of the International Association of Former Underage Prisoners of Fascism is the first mass reaction of people that were held captives under Fascism in their childhood and had to face tragic loss of their childhood. The formation of Association simultaneously also represents the first official recognition of the international problems concerning protection of children and youth against war crimes and conflicts.

The International Association of Former Underage Prisoners made preservatopm of memory on underage victims of World War II its main and most important task. By founding their Association and with the publication of the newspaper called “Destiny”, the followers of the Association wish to warn of intolerable crimes against children and to transmit this important message to younger generations.

Numerous cities of various countries nowadays feature museums, monuments and memorial plaques, books, paintings and musical works that bear witness to the suffering of children which had to suffer crimes of the Nazi regime.

The legislative and executive authorities of the aforementioned states already adopted a series of resolutions whose intention was to preserve the

memory of war victims that make possible numerous benefits for former underage prisoners of Fascism.

The European and American public was successful in achieving the foundation of three special funds by the Federal Republic of Germany and Austria in the years from 1993 to 2006, whose intention was payment of financial means to victims of Nazi regime. Thus thousands of people that were forced to labour or suffered as prisoners in ghettos and officially acknowledged concentration camps, scattered all over the territory of the Third Reich, received material help or medical assistance.

Financial means that will be paid out by the Austrian and German Fund “Remembrance, Responsibility and Future” until the year 2009, and the subsequent operation of the Federal Fund “Remembrance and Future” will definitely contribute to solving the abovementioned problem.

The International Association of Former Underage Prisoners of Fascism also approached the UNO with questions concerning protection of children as the victims of war in 20th and 21st Century and the question regarding international recognition of the Association as a non-governmental organization. The realization of set tasks will also continue in the future through cooperation with Russian, Ukraine and Belarus Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

We used the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Osvecim to appeal to the leaders of the states that participated in World War II to solve the question of child protection and preserve the memory of children that died during the war.

The International Association of Former Underage Prisoners of Fascism, alongside with National Association, proceed to actively invigorate bonds between public societies of Nazi regime victims in Poland, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Norway, Finland as well as in Germany, Bulgaria, Israel, USA and Austria. The National Association of Ukraine (Chairman M.D. Demidov), Belarus (Chairman N.A. Lič) and Russia (Chairman N.N. Dorožinski) were the most consistent in their endeavours.

Dear participants of the first European Congress of victims of Fascism and Nazism!

We hope your effort also instils a new momentum in the international association of victims of Fascism and Nazism. The International Association of Former Underage Prisoners of Fascism is prepared to establish contacts of closest nature with all public societies of victims of Fascism and Nazism and simultaneously also wishes similar meetings in 2010, when we will be celebrating the 65th anniversary of the end of World War II.

We wish health, happiness and preservation of belief in the importance of our work to all the participants of the Congress.





SLOVAKIA

Dr. Juraj Drotàr

Nazi violence in Slovakia during II World War

In Slovakia, the destiny of persecuted persons during the World War II is with reason determined as a tragedy. The totalitarian regime of the wartime Slovak Republic bears its own part responsibility for liquidation of Slovak Jews in concentration camps and for the persecution of Roma people. It is not so simple to understand this problem. The only matter to be respected is historical facts. No making of legends or myths by which a blessing of political system and its representatives of that time is tried to be made can be taken as a basic background.

Propaganda of wartime Slovak State maintained that Jews had been facing only already known happenings in medieval centuries: Jews had been considered second class people and rulers frequently drove them out from their countries. It is necessary to stress that also the Vatican's position on Nazi genocide policy was very negative, which was known to the Slovak Government of People's Party.

Co-responsibility for the holocaust could not be a rescue for a future not for an existence of an independent state. Moreover, after the Nazi victory a shameful destiny of the entire Slovak nation would be in question. Nazi plan was to seal the fate of Slavic nations. Slovaks would have been able to be only Germanized, but only a certain part of people, those who had meet the criteria for being members of Arian race. The rest would live the life of slave workers or face a physical liquidation.

System of labor camps

From the very beginning the legislature of the Slovak State had been 'taking care' of hostile, asocial and unadoptable persons. Already in March 1939 the legislature presented this matter, which resulted in opening of the first concentration camp in Ilava in April 1939. It was not a labor camp but a concentration camp. In 1941, labor camps started being built by order on working duties with the power of a law. Labor camps were meant for asocial peoples, however this meaning could have been interpreted in many ways, which frequently resulted in many misuses. Beside people who tried to protect their natural and civil rights many Roma peoples were sent to these camps. The special department of the Ministry of Interior - Central Office of Labor started building the camps in cooperation with certain (mainly building) companies, which were taking advantage of cheap labor force. In these camps the Ukrainian refugees and Soviet prisoners of war, who escaped from German camps for prisoners, were interned. At least 6000 prisoners went through such camps.

With an aim to humiliate Slovak Jews, even before 1941, so called Hlinka's guards organized labor groups of Jews, who by their opinion, had been showing a hostile behavior against the State. Later, by a decree of the Government, military labor groups were set up, consisted of classified 'non-Arian' citizens.

After the Arian process, which resulted in deprivation of all properties of Jews, in April 1941, on the basis of a decree of the Ministry of Interior and later on so called Code on Jews, the Jewish labor camps started being set up.

Deportations

Anti-Jewish propaganda was acting very strongly, Hlinka's guards were inciting to hatred against Jews. Christian sentiments of population of the Slovak Republic were misused as an excuse for deportations. On 24 March 1942 the Slovak Government in the point 19 of its minutes laconically stated:

‘The Government adopted the bill of the Constitutional Law on the elimination of Jews from the territory on the Slovak Republic’.

Immediately the next day, the very first train departed, loaded with 1000 Jewish girls. They left the territory of the Republic at dawn 24 March and entered into hell through the door of the concentration camp of Oswiecim (Auschwitz). From 5 April 1942 on 8 transports left with 8000 exclusively young Jews. In some cases the officials of the Ministry demanded deportation of entire families.



SERBIA

Dragoje LUKIĆ*

CRIME AGAINST CHILDREN IN THE INDEPENDENT STATE OF CROATIA 1941-1945 - AN INDISPUTABLE CASE OF GENOCIDE

The slaughter of “innocent children” in Betlehem before more than two thousand years was only a pale picture of the genocide committed against children in Ustasha Independent State of Croatia where the depth of consequences exceeds all trials in the history of human kind.

The diary of Anne Frank, a shocking testimony of a young Jew girl murdered in German camp, is known by the whole world. But only a few people know for ten thousands of brutally extinguished children’s lives at the stake of Ustasha state during the World War II. A whole generation was mowed down but our history only briefly brushes against this crime. No one on our territory paid for this suffering with so much blood as these children. This is our deepest wound. It is precisely this wound that shows the horribly disfigured face of Fascism. Ustasha crime against children was drowned in the general syntagm of “victims of the Fascist violence” and has therefore remained on the edge of history instead in its centre.

Lack of investigation of the crime against children opened a space for manipulation and abuse of this theme which is traumatic in itself as it is. The polemic on the number of victims that was not established and that often degenerated into vulgar trading still provokes nausea to this day. Overestimation or underestimation of the number of murdered is equal to

profanation of victims. We were witnesses to such acts in the last decade of previous century.

I tried to find support in authentic documents and precise data and tried to argument the answer to the question regarding how many children lost their lives in the framework of Ustasha project of creating an ethnically clean Croatian state, not only as a researcher but also as a witness to the agony of children in camps of Ustasha state.

The reconstruction of the chronology of crime, the collection and identification of lost children, the recording of their names and surnames, names of their parents, year and place of birth, nationality, year and place of their bane took me almost half of century. Where possible, I also entered the name of the person that committed the crime under “Serial number of death”.

From 5th May 1941 when the Ustasha killed a five member family of Josip Mraunc, a Croat from Blagaj at Slunj on Kordun and his sons, twenty years old Ivan and five years old Nikola, but ascribed the crime to “Serbian bandits”, until 9th of May 1945 there were 74.762 children murdered from their infancy to 14 years of age. Lives of 40.354 boys and 34.199 girls were extinguished. The gender of 208 remains unidentified. Children victims come from 5.532 places of birth in modern state Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Srem, a region that used to be a part of Independent State Croatia from 10th April 1941 until 9th May 1945.

The largest number of children that died were of Serbian nationality with 54.085 children, followed by 6.239 Muslim children, 5.781 Roma children, 4.421 Croatian and 3.820 Jewish children. Among the killed children there were 2.645 babies, 5.122 one year olds, 5.869 two year old children and so forth up to the age of fourteen. The average age of murdered youngsters was five and a half years.

13.914 youngsters were killed in the first year of war. Year 1942 was the most murderous. 34.741 children lost their lives, 15.452 were murdered

in 1943 and 8.296 in year 1944. Youngsters died even in the last year of war. At that time, 2.359 children's lives were extinguished.

If we exclude 14.528 children from the total number of deceased in NDH that are entered in the register as victims of war mowed down by typhus, winter, hunger, who died as the youngest fighters of the national liberation war, died during battles, due to remaining bombs and other explosive devices or who lost their lives in some other manner, then the most severe form of genocide was committed against 60.234 children's lives.

There were 32.054 boys and 28.012 girls killed. The gender of 208 remains unidentified. This group too included the greatest portion of Serbian children, 42.791, followed by 5.737 Roma children, 5.434 Muslim children, 3.710 Jewish children and 2.289 Croatian children; 273 children casualties belong to other nations or their nationality could not be determined.

The forms of Ustasha terror against children were numerous and various. The lives of 36.730 boys and girls were extinguished on terrain, in villages and settlements and at the firesides of their own homes at 1.398 places of execution, most frequently arranged on territories and locations where the majority of population was Serbian. Some of the places of executions saw more than 500 children killed in no more than one day (Drakulić, Šargovac and Motike, villages in the area of Banja Luka). 266 children from the village Prebilovac at Čapljina were thrown into šurmanaš caves of Hercegovina. Further similar cases appear in Lika, on Kordun, on some sites in Slavonija, but particularly in Bosanska krajina and parts of Eastern and Central Bosnia.

23.504 boys and girls were killed and otherwise murdered in Ustasha, German and Italian camps, with as much 19.432 of little internees killed only in camp Jasenovac. Their average age was approximately seven years. The majority of children murdered in Jasenovac were also Serbian, representing thus a total of 11.888 children, followed by 5.469 Roma people children and 1.911 Jewish children. Among the victims in Jasenovac, 132

Croatian and 17 Muslim children were identified, however the nationality of 15 youngsters could not be established. Children were brought from 1.107 places of birth to their place of execution in Jasenovac.

Children's lives in camp Jasenovac were extinguished in a manner that was never yet recorded in the history of nations populating this area. This is the theme of my book "Bili so samo otroci - Jasenovac grobnica 19.432 deklic in dečkov" (We were only children – Jasenovac, the tomb of 19.432 girls and boys), which was published in the year 2000, where I extensively described the manner of data collection and on crimes against children.

According to the ascertained data, 41.474 youngsters from Bosnia, 30.305 from Croatia and 1.150 from Srem lost their lives. There were also 1.473 boys and girls that were born in other parts of the occupied Yugoslavia and were also murdered in NDH. 24.392 children victims were identified in Bosanska krajina, 23.227 of youngsters among them were of Serbian nationality. Kozara is a drastic example of child slaughter – 13.184 murdered. There were 5.033 children murdered in the area of Gradiška municipality and 4.419 in the area of Dubice. Over 2.000 of children lost their lives in the village of Gradiška municipality (Podgradci, Turjak, Jablanica, Gašnica).

11.643 youngsters died in Eastern Bosnia. There were 4.680 boys and girls of Serbian nationality that were slaughtered by Ustasha units and their infamous "Črna legija" (The Black Legion). This area was also the place where Chetnik units of Draže Mihajlović committed their crimes against children. In 1942 they killed 4.224 Muslim children in Čajnica, Foča, Gorazde, Rud, Rogatica, Sokoc, Višegrad and Vlasencia.

In Croatia, the genocide against children was committed at Kordun where 7.666 youngsters among which the majority of children were from Slunj, Vrginmost, Vojnić and Karlovac and included a total of 6.919 boys and girls. 4.612 children lost their lives in Lika, of which 4.426 of youngsters belonged to Serbian families.

There were 8.465 boys and girls killed in Slavonija of which 4.229 were Serbian, 3.068 belonged to Roma people, 796 were Jewish, 201 Croatian while the nationality of 71 from these children remains unidentified.

When the word is about Roma children, we must take into consideration almost insurmountable difficulties regarding their identification, especially in Bosnia and Herzegovina. 5.469 of the total number of killed Roma peoples' children (5.781) were killed in Jasenovac alone. The words of certain Ustasha officials that: "all of the gypsies in NDH would get their "permanent residence" in Gradina, the biggest scaffold of the camp Jasenovac", were thus realized.

From the total of 3.820 of killed Jewish children from the territory of NDH, there were 3.700 children killed in camp of Ustasha and Nazis, with 1,911 boys and girls killed in the camp Jasenovac alone. Besides this, many of the Jewish children and their parents got transported to Nazi concentration camps in Germany, mostly from Sarajevo (1.345) and then from various cities in Croatia (1.601) and Srem (829).

According to the material I investigated, the Ustasha and their formations killed approximately 48.000 boys and girls, mostly of Serbian nationality, followed by Roma and Jewish children. German divisions and their penal expeditions put to death approximately 3.700 children in the territory of NDH. Muslim 13th SS division "Handžar" massacred approximately 3.600 children of Serbian nationality in Eastern and Central Bosnia in 1944. Chetnik units put to death over 4.800 Muslim children. The Italian army is also responsible for the deaths of over 500 boys and girls of various nationalities in their occupation zone.

The nature of this crime is also described in these following data: 1.813 youngsters were set on fire in houses and yards, 1.088 were thrown in pits and chasms, 953 were butchered, 349 were killed in Orthodox churches, 218 were shot, 51 were drowned in ditches and wells, 21 were hanged (12 girls and 9 boys) from poles, fences, trees, apple trees and

from prison gallows (Gospić). Sara Vujnović and Branko Kravić from Divosel in Lika were both six years old, when they had to face Ustasha gallows, while Milan and Mileva Stanić only had each two years.

** Dragoje Lukić, publicist, literate and researcher, a camp child himself, journeyed from sepulchral mound to sepulchral mound, from photograph to photograph of killed boys and girls, from one to other number of their camp files and after many years managed to create a balance sheet of this bloody Ustasha feast. He raised a monument to killed children, more durable than those made from bronze. He is the second father to a whole generation of mowed down progeny (from the book “Dragoje Lukić, oče pokošenega naraščaja” (Dragoje Lukić, father of a mowed down nation)).*

THE SOCIETY OF INTERNEES AND DESCENDANTS OF INTERNEES IN CAMPS OF NDH 1941-1945

The first European Congress of Exiles and Refugees – victims of Fascism and Nazism 1920–1945 in organization of the Society of Slovene Exiles 1941-1945 can find its justification in the fact that Slovenian nation used to be one of many nations from the territory of former Yugoslavia that was exiled from its homes and experienced the exodus of refugees.

This is first of all a subject best explained by citizens of Slovenia themselves. It is enough to say that we know of their pains and suffering because a large part of Slovenian citizens in exile lived through the war years in Serbia and shared good and evil with our citizens. Many friendships between Slovenian and Serbian families stem from this period and remain preserved to this day regardless of the events that brought to the disintegration of Yugoslavia. This speaks of the inseparable connection of historical destiny shared by both nations.

We are glad that the Slovenian nation found its path and wish it would never again experience the faith of refugees and exiles from their homes as they did by the hand of Fascist and Nazi invaders in the World War II.

Serbia again failed to avoid the destiny of being the country where hundreds of thousands of citizens from Republic of Croatia and a smaller number of people from other republics sought their shelter. Serbia is still no. 13 with respect to other countries according to the number of refugees living on its territory. Their destiny is no better than the destiny of those that were exiled in World War II: their properties were destroyed, those that survived were driven away from their firesides to exile. The fact that these people still can not return to their homes 15 years after the military actions are complete is further aggravating their destiny. Let's hope that the organizers of the second

Congress are also able to include the problem of these refugees in their programme. The distance in time will then be large enough to allow the discussions regarding this theme to proceed without tensions that still burden this period.

The Society of Internees and Descendants of Internees in Camps of Genocide in NDH 1941-1945 with the seat in Belgrade – Serbia, in whose name we address you, unites surviving camp prisoners from camps Jasenovac, Gradiška, Sisak, Jasterbarsko and others. The Society unites approximately 700 members, but according to our estimates, there are twice as many camp survivors from the area of former NDH still living in Serbia. The majority of us were in the time of internment just children – camp prisoners. NDH was the only Nazi establishment in Europe that had camps for children. It was researched and there exists a list of 74,762 children from their infancy to the age of 14 that were killed or otherwise murdered in the territory of NDH.

The basic activities of the society were gathering of surviving camp prisoners and collection of written documentation, oral testimonies and other proofs regarding crimes committed against innocent civilians. We organize scientific meetings on crimes against Serbian and other nations during World War II. With this purpose in mind we collaborate with scientific institutes, museums of genocide victims and other associations that are based on similar activity. We publish books, journals, audio and video materials which are used to reveal and announce the truth and to preserve the memory of genocide victims.

Almost all our members come from Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and from Republic of Croatia with only a smaller number from Republic of Serbia (there are also Slovenians). The maelstrom of war in 1941 forced us to desert our homes and take refuge in sanctuaries where the unarmed and poorly armed fathers, mothers, older brothers and sisters tried to protect us. The largest number of them died defending their

families. We were caught by German-Ustasha military units and taken to camps of death – Jasenovac, Gradiško, Sisak, Jastrebarsko and others. Our homes were burned down, our properties looted, and the families paid with their heads in fight or in camps.

We, the survivors of camp horrors who lived to see the liberation had no one left and nowhere to return to.

We were refugees in our own countries. We grew up in War Orphans Houses, foreign houses and families and started our own families where we were accepted. We have persisted here until the present day, living with longing for our birth places and native homes, the places we did not return to, for there was mostly nothing but ruins left. Not even the graves of our dearest ones exist as they were scattered in unknown locations all over scaffolds and camps.

Although the main theme of the Congress concentrates on refugees and exiles, we would like to warn this assembly of an important question which is the just material reparation for the victims of Fascist violence. This question has been present since 1945 but was not completely solved until today. There were attempts at solving the question from time to time, depending on political pressures of individual states or communities (the Jewish community) on Federal German Republic. Many victims of the Second World War genocide received their reparations, however a large number of them did not, not only for destroyed and looted property, but also as far as for their own suffering and pains are concerned. They include all members of our society.

As you already know, the Republic of Germany formed a fund for restitution of damages “Memory, responsibility and future” with an appropriate Act in August of the year 2000. The fund is financed by the German government and the German Chamber of Commerce. The enforcement of this Act and technical operations concerning the reparations are entrusted to the International Organization of Internees in

Geneve (IOM). Over 530 internees of the camp system Jasenovac, our members, submitted a claim for recognition of their rights to reparations. All of them were rejected with explanation that the claims were submitted after the appropriate deadline. Our persuasions that IOM failed to give us a timely notification and that the list of BEG got supplemented with camps in the territory of NDH only after 19th November 2001, the subject we were also not informed about, and other explanations, were not taken into consideration.

The fact that the camp prisoners with their residence in Croatia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina could enforce their right to reparations in accordance with this program makes us believe in the special treatment of internees that live in the territory of the Republic of Serbia. Our appeals to the government and the Chancellor of the Republic of Germany, to the Director of IOM and others were of no avail.

German objections regarding the maturity of submission, new conditions in Europe and similar as reasons for refusing to solve the remainder of questions regarding damages caused to war casualties have no foundation in International Law and are also not acceptable with respect to legal basis as a reason to cease solving the submitted claims. The International Law allows no questions regarding the fulfilment of this obligation, regardless of the fact whether it was ascertained or stipulated by the Peace Treaty and other international legal instruments or not. To raise disputes regarding this matter would be expensive for all wronged parties, and we believe that the question of reparations and the reparations for the victims of World War II should be solved with an agreement between both states while taking into consideration the complete sensitivity of this problem.

With regard to everything mentioned this far, the text of IOM organization sounds extremely ironic, when it writes in material – as quoted: “the German law admits that the injustices committed and human suffering

caused can not be substituted with monetary payment” and “the law became valid too late for those that lost their lives as victims of Nazi regime or died in the time since then”. We ask ourselves whether the Republic of Germany is waiting for our numbers to drop even further until the following year, so it can again apologize to the dead because their reparations again came too late?

We are supporting the idea of sending a letter to Presidents of European countries regarding the problem of Neofashist and Neonazi organizations formation as well as formation of International Council on Exiles and Refugees.

The Congress would completely justify our expectations if it could use a resolution to warn of the pledge for restitution to all victims of Fascism and Nazism in the period from 1941-1945 by the member states of the Axis powers.

Best wishes towards successful work of the Congress,

Internees of the Genocide Camps in NDH 1941–1945, Belgrade



UKRAINE

G. J. Synjuk

The Kiev Association of Former Underage Internees

Memories of childhood...

According to official data, there were, from 1941 to 1945, more than 8 million Ukrainians tortured and killed in fascist camps. It is known that the victims were military internees and civilians, old people, women and men. The harshest fact is that among victims of Nazi violence there were numerous children, their childhood forever scarred with war.

The characteristic German efficiency created an industry of death and destruction on the highest level of perfection, both in terms of organization and technical output. In occupied lands, there existed 14,033 official concentration camps and working camps for forced labour. Behind barbed wire, 18 million people were imprisoned - men, women and children of various nationalities. They were imprisoned without judicial investigation and without a court order.

We, the former underage internees in concentration camps, were first awarded the status of former underage internees in fascist concentration camps at a federal congress. This federal congress took place in Kiev, on the 22nd June 1988, that is 43 years after the end of the war with Nazi Germany. The announcing of this status came to be after many years of effort on behalf of the former civil initiative, the Soviet Children's Fund of V. I. Lenin. At the congress, there was also established and announced a civil association, the Kiev Association of former underage internees in fascist concentration camps.

That same year in Kiev, at the location of former orphanage n. 13, there was a gathering of former orphans that were brought to the orphanage from fascist camps, their parents having been murdered by the Nazis.

That is how in Kiev, a new, in its own way unique, association in the world formed - the Kiev Association of former underage internees.

The Kiev Association of former underage internees was formed in 1988 after the federal congress of former underage internees.

At the beginning, the members of the Association were former child internees in fascist concentration camps. From an organizational standpoint, the Association was formed in 1989, in the framework of the then Soviet fund of V.I. Lenin. The president of the fund was chosen to be Mrs. Vera Lebedeva Stepanivna, a former internee in the concentration camp Oswienim.

An incredible amount of effort was put into the establishment of the Association by the former director of orphanage n. 13, Vira Semenova Arsentivna, who was not only an educator to the children, but a substitute mother, offering much love and warmth to them.

The Kiev Association was also formed by numerous civil associations, which former underage internees had joined.

Since its inception, the Association represented the interests of former child internees and offered material, moral, legal, medical, and all other forms of social support.

In this period, the members of the Association participated in all public ceremonies and celebrations, such as the 11th April International Day of liberation of internees, the 9th May Victory Day, the 6th November liberation of Kiev from German Fascist Occupation Day.

In the Association, we prepared celebrations of the New Year, the 23rd February Homeland Protector Day, the 8th March International Women's Day, and the celebration of the 15th and 20th anniversary of the Kiev Association of former underage internees.

Following a mutual agreement, we members of the Association visited the Kiev theatres once a month, these being the Russian dramatic theatre L. Ukraine and the National Academic theatre I. Franko.

We also prepared professional excursions to the national palace Ukraine.

From its sponsors and donations, the Association offered its members material help and distributed packages with groceries, and humanitarian aid, as well as distributing clothes and footwear.

For the New Year holidays, we gave gifts to the grandchildren of members of the Association.

In November 2007, there opened the Home of Veterans, where members of the Association are offered free health advice and treatment.

Today, we have good relations with all associations in the city.

The Association co-operates with all associations with members who suffered in fascist intemment. Together with the museum »Childhood, Marked by War« the Kiev association of former underage intemees works as a peace organization and leads active propaganda. Photographs, historical documents, and other exhibits tell of the conditions in which children lived and worked in Nazi concentration camps during the Second World War, and in what difficult state they were brought to Kiev in 1945.

At first, the Kiev Association of former underage intemees had 44 members who had been intemees and had official papers to prove it, and 139 members who did not have official documents, but instead other, clear proof of intemment.

To confirm the fact that we had been in fascist intemment, survived hell, and stayed alive, we had to turn to all official institutions and archives.

In occupied lands, the Nazis built concentration camps in almost all towns and places, and though they had not been equipped that sophisticated as the camps in Buchenwald, Oswiencim, and Majdanek, the people in these smaller camps were nonetheless kept there by force, imprisoned in incredibly cmel conditions. Any offence was punished by death, to create fear in others. The victims of these camps were in the hundred thousands, and no one knows where they were buried.

The regime in these concentration camps went beyond human understanding in its cruelty, people were murdered without any noting of personal information, and overall, it is not possible to comprehend the extent of these acts by the Nazis on occupied lands.

This year, we will celebrate the 64th anniversary of victory in the harsh war against German Fascism. For reasons, which are incomprehensible, there is much talk of how historians and society are not interested in such facts and that apparently, there is no need to publish material on these concentration camps, built on occupied Ukrainian territory.

Sixty years after the liberation of the Ukraine from fascist occupation, many facts and truths are explained and accepted in different ways, though sometimes you try to explain and accept, and even forgive, that which cannot be fully comprehended. Yet the pain caused by torture and humiliation with unforgivable deeds will not disappear, not even after decades. You never forget how, as a young boy, a thing of no worth, a slave who is not to utter a single word, as a work horse, you were brought in by a freight train! You could not even hope that they would treat you like a human, as you had no right to words, empathy, help, or even life. It is true, these are bitter memories. We owe it to always remember these horrible events in the history of all humanity. They are impossible to erase from memory. We always owe it to remember, so that it may never happen again.

Twenty-seven, or according to some calculations more than 30, million human lives were lost in the war by the nations of the USSR. These losses were infinitely tragic and bitter. In the time of Nazi occupation of the republics and regions of the USSR, 1,170 cities and more than 70,000 villages were robbed, ruined, and burned. Once flourishing areas became deserts of no people. Hundreds of trains took with them to Germany 7 million heads of heavy farm animals, 20 million pigs, 27 million sheep and goats, 9.2 thousand tons of wheat and flour, coal, metals and materials for construction. Special economic units of the Wehrmacht gathered the fertile

soil of Ukrainian and Russian lands, and took them to Germany. The citizens and the economy of the former USSR were damaged for 679 billion roubles. Ukraine suffered damages for 285 billion roubles, Russia 249 billion, Belarus 75 billion, Latvia 20, Lithuania 17, Estonia 11 billion, and Moldova for 11 billion roubles (in terms of state prices from 1941).

Descriptions of the black night of occupation that extended over our lands will never be perfect, never accurate, but incredibly unjust and humiliating for the tortured and by miracle alive victims of Nazism, if we do not speak of the execution and working of the massive Nazi machine that wrought havoc and violence on a peaceful population. Some facts follow.

More than 14 thousand concentration camps, Gestapo prisons, ghettos and other shameful creations of the twisted fantasy of Hitler's occupation existed, creations that covered the map of the continent with thick brown fog in which by day, by night, by summer, and by winter they transported, tortured, and stole the freedom of the peaceful people of Europe. All this happened on lands from the English island of Order in the West to the Russian city Belaja Kalitva in the East, from the Norwegian village Grini in the North to the lowlands of the Greek river Aheloos in the South, where our people starved and died. Out of 18 million of all internees, almost 6 million - which means every third person - was a citizen of the USSR. Two million did not await liberation. In most cases, we know not the places where our people were, nor do we know the places where they are buried.

The global press published a list of the beneficiaries of »silent« account, a list prepared by initiative of the US Commerce Department, which also prepared a report on finding and returning the stolen and secretly invested money taken from internees in Germany. The statements of state functionaries and the employees of banks where the money is kept have both, once more, revived those memories that one cannot erase.

Some of us were lucky and survived this terrible hell, and lived to see today. And so our hearts dictate to us that we cannot allow it to happen,

that our fate would repeat and that coming generations of children would face the threat of violent death.

We children, who in times of war experienced the violence of Nazi executioners and met inhuman suffering, have forever remained weak and with damaged mental health. Even today, we dream of the horrors that were and wake up in fear, covered in cold sweat.

At the Institute for gerontology of the Academy for Medical Science, in the laboratory of professor Vojtenk V.P., it was proven that the life expectancy of those who had survived concentration camps was significantly shorter than the statistical average of human life expectancy, especially for men.

Childhood... in this word, the entire world is captured: mother, the sun, friends, celebrations, joy...

For children, it is characteristic that everything is seen black-and-white: good or bad. Even if you tell a child a hundred times that this particular person is an ugly enemy, that same person will remain a good person if he offers food to a starving child. or the opposite - if something is done with good intentions, but is received by the child as violence on them, then everyone connected with this event will become a criminal.

The children of the camps are now grown people, they are elderly, who have kept memories of humiliation and insults down to their last details.

The goal of our Association is the safeguarding of rights and the representation of those that experienced the horror behind barbed wire in concentration camps, ghettos, and other camps for forced labour. The Association demands that former underage intemees in concentration camps, who are a special category of participants in the armed struggle against fascism, deserve moral and material support, particularly concerning the purchase of medication and rehabilitation.

It is hard to calculate the number of people that were forcefully removed and transported to the concentration camps of Nazi Germany. In

any case, there were more than 18 million. of those, 12 million were brutally murdered.

The Association offers its members, by the best of its abilities, legal, material, medical and other forms of social support, and to those who, for one reason or other, do not have the documents to confirm and prove their internment, the Association helps with the search and striving for these documents.

Today, former underage internees in fascist camps hold, in accordance with existing legislation, the status of participants in the war and war invalids, and from this status receive certain relief.

A feeling of guilt for the deeds of their fathers and grandfathers was the key reason for the leadership of the Association Wilhelm Stark and the doctor of medicine Bernard Schmidt to decide to organize a search for the people whose most horrific memories are connected with the city Mors, so that they could offer them moral support and help.

The 8th May is marked in Germany as the day of signing an unconditional surrender. on this occasion, a mass was held in the local church in honour of those who died in the war. In history, there are no - and there can be no-trivial eras, events, facts, or people. The big and the small, events continuous and events past, they all deserve attention, because everything in history is connected to the fate of people, also those whose childhood was forever marked by war.

We cannot forget the past. It must be spoken about, and it must be written about, so long as there are live witnesses of the war. Contemporary Germany cannot, in any way, be compared to what it was in the time of Nazism. It is now a completely new Germany, a democratic country that has given up any demand or wish for world domination, a country that wishes us all well.

Peace and (spokoj) will rule the world when the youth, together with older generations, will actively form friendly relations with all nations of

the world. We will do everything to prevent the tragedy of the Second World War from ever occurring again.

We will live modestly, we will ponder the future, but we will never forget the past.

Markiyan Demidov Head of the Ukrainian Union of Prisoners and Victims of Nazism

Information about activities of the Ukrainian Union of Prisoners and Victims of Nazism

Every year, on the 22nd of June, Ukrainians celebrate the beginning of the Great War for the Fatherland 1941-1945 as one of the hardest page in the history of the country.

For the Ukrainian people that day was the beginning of suffering and humiliation, brought by the Nazi Regime and the Third Reich.

Between 1933 and 1945, Nazi Germany established about 20,000 camps to imprison many millions of its victims. Unfortunately, only after 43 years from the victory over Nazi Germany, those people gain the legal recognition as victims of the war conflicts.

Thanks to Soviet Fund “Children’s Fund named by Lenin” and Head of the Fund Mr. Albert Likhanov, first meeting of ex-infant prisoners of fascism took place in Kyiv on the 22nd of June 1988. This historical fact was the beginning of rehabilitation of that category of people in moral and juridical sense.

Ukrainian Union of Ex-infant Prisoners of Fascism was found on 8 February 1991 at the conference of 13 regional and city organizations of the ex-infant prisoners of fascism.

On the 9th October 1998 at the conference of the Ukrainian Union of Ex-infant Prisoners of Fascism it was decided to rename the union to Ukrainian Union of Prisoners and Victims of Nazism and to pass the new regulation. In that way all victims of Nazis got into the Union independently of their age.

Today the Union counts nearly 200 000 members from all over Ukraine. All together the number of victims of Nazism in Ukraine is around 3 million.

During the time of Ukrainian economic crises 1991-2000 a huge number of victims of Nazism found themselves under the poverty line. According to this fact the death-rate among them sharply increased. Because of that the Union became co-sponsor of the Law of Ukraine “On Status of War Veterans, Guarantees of their Social protection”, passed on 1993.

In 1995 state deputies changed to Law of Ukraine “On Status of War Veterans, Guarantees of their Social Protection” in the sense that the war veterans may be granted different loans according the procedure, established by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine. Disabled veterans are supposed to be given a possibility to receive different kind of compensation services according to the procedure established by the government.

At the end of the 90th Ukrainian Union of Prisoners and Victims of Nazism, together with International Union of the Ex-infant Prisoners of Fascism raised the question of compensation payments to the victims of Nazism. Later, together with Fund of “Mutual Understanding and Reconciliation” they began a fight for the compensation payments to the former Nazi victims.

The compensation were paid on March 2000, due to all possible efforts of interested parties

The Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) undertook its first compensation initiative followed by the “Federal Law for the Compensation of the Victims”. But unfortunately the mentioned law was ignoring some categories of Nazi victims. That’s why we are still conducting the negotiations, in order to obtain justice.

Activists of the Union are working extensively in order to obtain additional payments from insurance assets of the Third Reich and to obtain

humanitarian assistance from donor organizations, juridical and physical persons of FRG.

Parallel with International negotiation process and on the initiative of the members of the Union, the extensive work on creating juridical base, which would guarantee right of the victims of Nazism in Ukraine, was taking place.

As the result, on the 20 march 2000, the Parliament of Ukraine adopted and the President of Ukraine signed the Law “On Victims of Nazi Persecution”. It categorizes victims of Nazism, regulates such issues as state compensation and guarantees of social protection as well as rights of victims of Nazism and implementation of these rights in Ukraine. Today every victim of Nazism in Ukraine can feel as full fledged citizen.

Since 2004 members of the Ukrainian Union of Prisoners and Victims of Nazism joined started the work on the proposals of the programs from the Memorial and Future Fund, which allowed us to strength our international contacts significantly.

We built up friendly relations and business connections with Polish public organizations and educational institutions. Together with the “Union of Polish Victims of the Third Reich” we have signed the association agreement. Also we have built up business connections with the museum of death camp “Maidanek”, where we are organizing international meetings of Ukrainian, Polish and German students.

Roundtable discussion with members of Mutual Understanding and Reconciliation Funds, which protects all categories of Nazi victims, from Ukraine, Poland and Czech Republic, was conducted in Kyiv in 2004. We are also establishing contacts with French public organizations and the Embassy of the French Republic in Ukraine.

For several years we are cooperating with German public organizations like “Demarche of atonement”, “Russian-German exchange”, with

museums of death camps, church communities and Berlin's public organizations "КОНТАКТЫ-Kontakte", "Bunker", etc.

We are attaching great importance to the work of Ukrainian and German Union to attract attention to the problem of forced labor through culture and art. Today we are working on organizing exhibitions and theater performances. On June 2000 members of our Union together with members of public organization "КОНТАКТЫ-Kontakte" opened the exhibition "Ost-arbeiter in Berlin". Because of that a lot of Ukrainians received financial and humanitarian help.

Because of excellent volunteer work in 2006 two delegations of Ukrainian students have visited Berlin, where they participated in the festival "Ost-arbeiter". During their stay in Berlin students had an opportunity to visit museum of the military concentration camp "Ravensbrück".

To preserve the remembrance of the history events members of our union are agitating to raise the monuments and memorial plaques in all regions of Ukraine.

Due to financial support of the City Administration and voluntary donations the monument "Memorial for the Future" was uncovered in Kyiv on the 22 June 2005.

We are working on gathering and establishing the memories of living victims of the Ukrainian people's tragedy. All manuscripts are given to the National Museum of the World War II.

Many biographic stories were found our members together with Ukrainian National Fund Mutual understanding and Reconciliation.

Second book "Memorial for the Future" was published on the 60th Anniversary of Victory and the end of World War II.

On twentieth anniversary of the International Union of the ex-infanter prisoners of fascism, with the support of the President of Ukraine Mr. Yushenko V.A., an international forum of consisted from all former Soviet Union countries, took place in Kyiv, from 22 to 24 June 2008. Two

new books were presented: third volume of “Memorial and Future”, and collection of poems “Echo of the suffering in the memory of the slaves of the Third Reich”.

All our divisions cooperate with radio and television companies in Ukraine. Due to this fact, people have an opportunity to be informed about our activities.

We are working on education of young people in the spirit of anti totalitarianism, anti militarism, anti racism and xenophobia. On this project we are working together with German organization “Demarche of atonement”. Young volunteers from Germany are constantly working with our organizations. We consider this cooperation as a very important step in the way of mutual understanding.

Ukrainian Union of Prisoners and Victims of Nazism is recognized by all government structures in Ukraine as well as by Ukrainian Organization of Veterans.

Government appreciates the public activities of the Union at its true value.

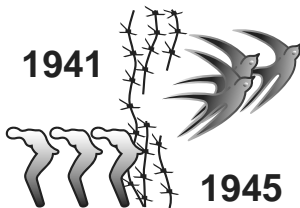
More than 100 members of the Union received medals of “For Service” of all ranges, medals “Princess Olga” of all ranges, honorary diplomas of the President of Ukraine, the Parliament and Cabinet of the Ministers of Ukraine.

Index

Welcome speech by the President of the RS dr. Danilo TÜRK	5
SLOVENIA	
President of the Society of Slovene Exiles Ivica ŽNIDARŠIČ	10
Samo PAHOR	27
AUSTRIA	
Jože PARTL	38
BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA	
Vera ADAMIČ PAPEŽ	48
CZECH REPUBLIC	
Jiri PROKOP	54
Dr. Václav KURAL	59
FRENCH	
Hubert SIEBENSCHUH, Gilbert TSCHEILLER	62
Hubert SIEBENSCHUH	71
CROATIA	
Mladen VELIČKOVIĆ	76
GERMANY	
Jörg REICHL, župan mesta Rudolstadt	80
Christian WEIDMANN	85
Frank Michael WAGNER	88
POLAND	
Józef SOWA	98
RUSSIA	
N. A. MAHUTOV	120
SLOVAKIA	
Dr. Juraj DROTÀR	126
SERBIA	
Dragoje LUKIĆ	130
UKRAINA	
G. J. SYNJUK	142
Markiiian DEMIDOV	150

DRUŠTVO IZGNANCEV SLOVENIJE

1941



1945

World War II began on the 1st September
of 1939 at exactly 5:45.

It ended in Europe
on 8th May 1945
at 23:01,
and in Asia on 2nd September 1945
at 9:25.

It lasted for six years and one day,
or 2194 days,
or 52641 hours.

The war that lasted for six years claimed
1045 lives each hour,
or 17 lives each minute.

This makes 55 millions all together:
as soldiers, victims of air raids,
as refugees, deportees, exiles,
forced labourers and victims of bullies.

From the book: The scars that remain, Bad Arolsen 2005

DRUŠTVO IZGNANCEV SLOVENIJE

1941



1945