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The Fédération Internationale des Résistants (FIR)

Its activities during the Breakdown of the Soviet Bloc¹

Abstract

This paper offers an analysis of the activities of the communist-dominated Fédération Internationale des Résistants (International Federation of Resistance Movements, FIR), the international umbrella organisation of associations of victims of Nazi persecution from both Eastern and Western Europe between the late 1980s and early 1990s. During this time, the collapse of the Soviet Bloc led to a deep crisis for the Eastern European organisations like the Polish Związek Bojowników o Wolność i Demokrację (Union of Fighters for Freedom and Democracy) representing the former anti-fascist resistance fighters and political prisoners of Nazi concentration camps, which had been part of the communist power apparatus, and therefore of FIR. The organisation, which had been mired in growing financial difficulties for at least two decades, then lost much of its influence and of its potential to spread its message among the public. Nevertheless, FIR tried to maintain its activities with a special focus on dealing with right-wing extremism, the preservation of the rights and pensions of former resistance fighters, a commitment to peace and disarmament, as well as to the politics of memory.

In June 1991, the Fédération Internationale des Résistants (International Federation of Resistance Movements, hereafter FIR) held its Eleventh Ordinary Congress Moscow. Founded in Vienna in 1951 as the successor organisation to the Fédération internationale des anciens prisonniers politiques (International Federation of Former Political Prisoners, hereafter FIAPP), the first international umbrella organisation of associations of victims of Nazi persecution, FIR consolidated associations of former anti-fascist resistance fighters and partisans, organisations of former concentration camp inmates and all “other persons persecuted under Nazism and fascism”, as well as their dependents.² FIAPP, FIR and their national member organisations were dominated by communists. Therefore, the collapse of the communist system within the Soviet sphere of control directly affected FIR and the associations of victims of political persecution and anti-fascist resistance fighters. The congress of 1991 was strongly influenced by this crisis.³ During this meeting, at which 69 delegates from both Eastern and Western Europe as well as from Israel took part, the participants commemorated the fiftieth anniversary of the Nazi attack on the Soviet Union. At the same event, they celebrated the fortieth anniversary of the founding of FIR.

1 I would like to thank the Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies (VWI) for giving me a generous grant and supporting me in various ways.

2 Art. II Statuten der Internationalen Föderation der Widerstandskämpfer (FIR). Beschlüsse des II. Kongresses der FIR, 28 November 1954, Vienna 1954.

3 Der XI. Ordentliche Kongress der FIR tagte vom 24. bis 26. Juni 1991 in Moskau, in: Mitteilungen. Fédération Internationale des Résistants, July 1991, 3.

In general, researchers have engaged very little with the international associations of the victims of political persecution. An exception is the recently published PhD thesis of Philipp Neumann-Thein, which dealt with the International Committee of Buchenwald-Dora and Commandos.⁴ Some other international associations have been mentioned mainly in studies about concentration camp memorials such as Auschwitz, Dachau or Mauthausen.⁵ The history of the International Auschwitz Committee (hereafter IAC) from the 1950s until 1965 was also investigated in the biography of the Austrian leader of the IAC of the time, Hermann Langbein.⁶ Meanwhile, the impact of the Eastern and Central-European revolutions of 1989/1990 on the associations of victims of political persecution have attracted very little interest from historians.

The history of FIR has, however, been the subject of various studies. Jérémie Libot recently wrote his Master's thesis about the organisation's history but, despite his focus on the years between 1971 and 1991, he barely analysed the impact of the collapse of communism on FIR.⁷ Wilfried Ruppert, an East-German PhD student whose research on this topic was carried out during the communist period, focussed on the organisation's commitment to the "struggle for peace".⁸ Furthermore, Alexander Heldring's study, which was written at the end of the 1960s and was clearly anti-communist in motivation, and two other recent essays by Ulrich Schneider, FIR's current secretary-general, are extant.⁹ The *Festschrift* which the organisation published to celebrate its fiftieth anniversary is also of interest to this study.¹⁰ All of these papers, however, share the same problematic foundation: namely their sources. Heldring relied on oral information from Hubert Halin, a Belgian anti-communist and declared enemy of FIR, for a significant portion of his book, while Schneider did not utilise any archival sources and did not acknowledge the rich publications of the association. Libot and Ruppert confined themselves to French or East German sources, while the scattered archive of FIR has not been used so far. This author's major research project aims to shed light on FIR's role in transnational politics of memory.

This article presents the preliminary results of this major project. It is based on a reading of the internal protocols of FIR meetings and on an analysis of the organisa-

4 Philipp Neumann-Thein, *Parteidisziplin und Eigenwilligkeit. Das Internationale Komitee Buchenwald-Dora und Kommandos*, Göttingen 2014; for the Comité International de Neuengamme, see the publication of the German Lagergemeinschaft Michael Grill/Sabine Homann-Engel, "... das war ja kein Spaziergang im Sommer!" Die Geschichte eines Überlebendenverbandes, Hamburg 2008. The International Committee of Ravensbrück is mentioned in Helga Amesberger/Kerstin Lercher, *Lebendiges Gedächtnis. Die Geschichte der österreichischen Lagergemeinschaft Ravensbrück*, Vienna 2008.

5 Bertrand Perz, *Die KZ-Gedenkstätte Mauthausen 1945 bis zur Gegenwart*, Innsbruck 2006; Jonathan Huenner, *Auschwitz, Poland, and the Politics of Commemoration, 1945–1979*, Athens (Ohio) 2003; Harold Marcuse, *Legacies of Dachau. The Uses and Abuses of a Concentration Camp, 1933–2001*, Cambridge 2001.

6 Katharina Stengel/Hermann Langbein, *Ein Auschwitz-Überlebender in den erinnerungspolitischen Konflikten der Nachkriegszeit*, Frankfurt am Main/New York 2012.

7 Jérémie Libot, *La Fédération Internationale des Résistants, 1971–1991: Un Itinéraire de la Résistance Européenne* [The International Federation of Resistance Fighters, 1971–1991: A Guide to the European Resistance], s. l. 2013.

8 Wilfried Ruppert, *Zur Geschichte der Internationalen Föderation der Widerstandskämpfer (FIR) im Kampf für Frieden, Entspannung und Abrüstung, gegen Faschismus und Neofaschismus (1951–1970). Zum Anteil der antifaschistischen Widerstandskämpfer der DDR an der Tätigkeit der FIR*, Berlin (GDR) 1989.

9 Alexander Heldring, *The International Federation of Resistance Movements. History and Background*, The Hague 1969; Ulrich Schneider, *Die Internationale Föderation der Widerstandskämpfer (FIR) und der 8. Mai 1945*, in: *Marxistische Blätter* 43 (2005) 2, 72-76; Ulrich Schneider, *Zur Geschichte der Internationalen Föderation der Widerstandskämpfer (FIR)*, in: *Informationen. Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift des Studienkreises Deutscher Widerstand 1933–1945* 31 (2006) 63, 26-29.

10 *Fédération Internationale des Résistants (FIR) – Association Antifasciste 1951–2011* [International Federation of Resistance Fighters (FIR) – Anti-Fascist Association 1951–2011], Berlin 2011.

tion's journals *Der Widerstandskämpfer*, as well as *Informationsdienst*, which appeared regularly every three months until the beginning of 1990, and its successor *Mitteilungen*. Another important source is the newspaper *Der neue Mahnruf*, which is the organ of the Austrian Communist Party-affiliated KZ-Verband. This study investigates FIR's reactions to the political upheavals in 1989/1990 and focuses on the changes within the associations of formerly persecuted persons, on the impact of the collapse of the communist regimes on the aims and activities of FIR, and on the consequent changes in its understanding of history.

Associations of Victims of Political Persecution

Associations representing the interests of formerly persecuted persons and their dependants were founded immediately after the liberation on local, regional and soon also on national levels. Divisions between Jewish and non-Jewish victims existed in many countries: for instance, in Austria in 1946 the Aktionskomitee jüdischer KZler (Action Committee of Jewish Concentration Camp Prisoners) were founded,¹¹ while the victims of political persecution organised themselves in the non-partisan Bundesverband der ehemals politisch verfolgten Antifaschisten (Federal Association of Former Politically Persecuted Anti-Fascists). Various other groups of persecuted persons could not organise themselves and were soon marginalised: this included 'anti-social persons', criminals, homosexuals, or Roma.¹² As early as the end of 1945, but especially beginning in 1947/1948, the established national associations split along party political and ideological lines.¹³ This also befell the Warsaw-based FIAPP, which was locked in a crisis because of the expulsion of the Yugoslav organisation after the split between Stalin and Tito and the resignation of many Western associations.

In 1951, the FIAPP held its Second World Congress in Vienna in order to found a new umbrella organisation. The International Federation of Resistance Movements, Political Prisoners and Victims of Nazi Persecution (FIR), which was brought into being at this meeting, relieved the FIAPP.¹⁴ Its seat was in Vienna, which then was divided into four occupational zones and therefore was situated at the interface between East and West. The Austrian capital was also regarded as a suitable location, because according to the Moscow Declaration of 1943 Austria was regarded as 'Hitler's first victim', a point of view shared by FIR.¹⁵

FIR claimed to be a non-partisan organisation, but it was in fact dominated by communist interests. According to its statutes, it aimed at unifying all anti-fascist resistance fighters and victims of Nazism and to stand up actively "for the defence of

11 Later it changed its name to Verband der wegen ihrer Abstammung Verfolgten (Association of People Persecuted on the Basis of their Origin).

12 Stengel/Langbein, 109; Zofia Wóycicka, Przerwana żaloba. Polskie spory wokół pamięci nazistowskich obozów koncentracyjnych i zagłady 1944–1950 [Interrupted Mourning. Polish Disputes around the Memory of the Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camps 1944–1950], Warsaw 2009, 58–59; Harold Marcuse, Die Organisationen der Überlebenden von Dachau. Ein Abriss der Entwicklung von der Befreiung des Konzentrationslagers bis Anfang der 1970er Jahre, in: Janine Doerry/Thomas Kubetzky/Katja Seybold (ed.), Das soziale Gedächtnis und die Gemeinschaften der Überlebenden. Bergen-Belsen in vergleichender Perspektive, Göttingen 2012, 159–174. Concerning criminals as a victim group of National Socialism, see Nikolaus Wachsmann, Hitler's Prisons. Legal Terror in Nazi Germany, New Haven 2004.

13 Neumann-Thein, Parteidisziplin, 92.

14 Der Wiener Kongreß, in: Der neue Mahnruf 4 (1951) 7/8, 1–2; Wir werden unsere Mission erfüllen. Bericht über den Internationalen Kongreß der Widerstandskämpfer und Naziopfer in Wien vom 30. Juni bis 3. Juli, in: Der neue Mahnruf 4 (1951) 7/8, 3–4.

15 Die FIR an den Präsidenten der Bundesrepublik Österreich, in: Der Widerstandskämpfer 6 (1958) 3, 9.

freedom and human dignity against every [...] discrimination and against the re-birth of fascism and Nazism in all of its forms". Furthermore, it aimed at the "punishment of all crimes against humanity" and material compensation.¹⁶ FIR wanted to defend the "spirit and the ideals of the resistance movement" and to show "her historical role", to preserve the memories of the "martyrs of the war of resistance" and to keep alive the memory of the "horrors of the dungeons and concentration camps". FIR swore "to help achieve the aims of restoring peaceful relations between the nations, as defined in the UN charter" and "the strengthening of the fraternal solidarity of the resistance fighters of all countries".

On 28 November 1954, FIR shortened its name to the International Federation of Resistance Movements, although this did not affect the composition of its membership.¹⁷ Among them were associations of victims of Nazi persecution on both sides of the "Iron Curtain": beside the French *Fédération Nationale des Déportés et Internés Résistants et Patriotes* (National Federation of Deported and Imprisoned Resistance Fighters and Patriots, hereafter FNDIRP), these included among others the West-German *Vereinigung der Verfolgten des Naziregimes* (Association of Persons Persecuted by the Nazi Regime, hereafter VVN), the Austrian *KZ-Verband*, the Polish *Związek Bojowników o Wolność i Demokrację* (Union of Fighters for Freedom and Democracy, hereafter ZBoWiD) and the Czechoslovak *Svaz protifašistických bojovníků* (Association of Anti-Fascist Fighters, hereafter SPB). Dutch, Belgian, Luxembourgish, Soviet, Hungarian, Italian, Romanian, and Bulgarian associations and an organisation from the Free Territory of Trieste were also represented, as were, from the mid-1950s Israeli organisations of former resistance fighters. Yugoslavia was a special case: it was represented by the exiled Stalinist, Joseph Milunić, in FIR's Executive Committee. In addition, there was also a Republican Spanish association.¹⁸ The Western member associations were dominated by former communist resistance fighters or political concentration camp inmates, the Eastern European members were part of the communist apparatus, either as mass organisations like the ZBoWiD or the SPB with hundreds of thousands of members or as cadre association like the East-German *Komitee der Antifaschistischen Widerstandskämpfer* (Committee of Anti-Fascist Resistance Fighters, hereafter KdAW), which only had 2,500 members in 1983.¹⁹

In the 1950s, FIR moulded the development of associations of former political prisoners. The organisation initiated or contributed to the founding of the international *Lagergemeinschaften* (Concentration Camp Communities) of Auschwitz and Buchenwald (both founded in 1952), Mauthausen (1953), Dachau (1955), Sachsenhausen (1955 and 1965) and Ravensbrück (1955/56, refounded in 1964).²⁰ At the end of November 1951, the *Fédération Internationale Libre des Déportés et Internés de la Résistance* (Free International Federation of Deportees and Internees of the Resistance, hereafter FILDIR), which unified anti-communist and social-democratic as-

16 Art. IV Statuten der Internationalen Föderation der Widerstandskämpfer (FIR). Beschlüsse des II. Kongresses der FIR, 28 November 1954, Vienna 1954; herein also the following quotation.

17 Art. I Statuten der Internationalen Föderation der Widerstandskämpfer (FIR). Beschlüsse des II. Kongresses der FIR, 28 November 1954, Vienna 1954.

18 Die Tagung des Generalrats in Paris, in: *Der Widerstandskämpfer* 4 (1956) 4/5, 5-10; Das neue Exekutivkomitee der FIR, in: *Der neue Mahnruf* 4 (1951) 7/8, 1.

19 K. Erik Franzen, *Verordnete Opfererinnerung. Das "Komitee der Antifaschistischen Widerstandskämpfer in der DDR"*, in: K. Erik Franzen/Martin Schulze Wessel (ed.), *Opfernarrative. Konkurrenzen und Deutungskämpfe in Deutschland und im östlichen Europa nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg*, Munich 2012, 28-44, 41; the KdAW replaced the VVN in 1953, when it was dissolved in the GDR. Thomas Hofmann, *Der spezifische Antifaschismus der DDR. Die Auflösung der "Vereinigung der Verfolgten des Naziregimes" (VVN)*, in: *Zeitschrift des Forschungsverbundes SED-Staat* 7 (1999), 68-82.

20 There were several attempts to found International Sachsenhausen and Ravensbrück Committees.

sociations, was founded in reaction to the establishment of FIR.²¹ The founding of further, anti-FIR associations on an international level soon followed, with the Belgian anti-communist Hubert Halin playing a leading role. Halin's numerous associations, however, mostly remained short-lived and, by the beginning of the 1960s, FILDIR was also close to failure.²²

Until the mid-1970s, FIR was an important protagonist among the associations of victims of political persecution. Its activities ranged from the social-medical field, the peace movement and the debates over the statute of limitations concerning Nazi crimes during the 1960s through to education about and remembrance of National Socialism and the anti-fascist resistance. However, in the mid-1970s, the organisation got into financial difficulties. Employees had to be dismissed and the two journals had to be merged.²³ This resulted in a loss of visibility.

Changes within the Associations of Victims of Political Persecution and the Debate over FIR's Future

The crisis of 1989/1990 was palpable for the Eastern European associations. They were regarded as a pillar of the old regime and, in many cases, they were infiltrated by the secret police.²⁴ Some associations were involved in domestic and internal party power struggles. In Poland, Mieczysław Moczar, who was then the Minister of the Interior and Chairman of ZBoWiD's Main Committee, attempted to be nominated as chair of the Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza (Polish United Workers Party, the Polish communist party) with the help of the Union in 1970.²⁵ The legitimacy of the communist states had its source in the victory over the Third Reich and the resistance against the fascist occupiers. These were of course only two elements with which the Eastern European rulers legitimised themselves, and their significance varied from country to country. They were, however, important parts. Therefore the anti-fascist resistance was regarded as a part of the communist dictatorship. Moreover, the resistance, because of its self-professed contribution to the liberation from German occupation, was held as a precursor of communism.²⁶

The result of the breakdown of the Soviet bloc was a deep change within the culture of memory – and the erasure of the memory of communist resistance against Nazi occupation. For instance, in Poland, the commemoration of the communist crimes and of the resistance of the Armia Krajowa (Home Army, hereafter AK) dominated. Linked to the memory of the AK was the attitude of the Soviets to non-communist resistance, for example when the Red Army idly watched while the Wehrmacht and SS crushed the Warsaw uprising of 1944.²⁷

21 Ruppert, *Geschichte*, Volume 1, 36; Pieter Lagrou, *The Legacy of Nazi Occupation. Patriotic Memory and National Recovery in Western Europe, 1945–1965*, Cambridge 2000, 278–279.

22 *Ibid.*, 282–283.

23 Dokumentationsarchiv des österreichischen Widerstands (hereafter DÖW), 22718/5, Tagung der "Delegation des Büros" der FIR: Tätigkeitsbericht des Sekretariats, 18–19 March 1975.

24 For example, the Polish FIR delegate Gustav Alef-Bolkowiak, who held a high position within the ZBoWiD, was simultaneously an official collaborator of the Polish Secret Police. *Archiwum Akt Nowych (AAN)*, 1354/7657.

25 Krzysztof Lesiakowski, Mieczysław Moczar "Mietek". *Biografia polityczna [Mieczysław Moczar "Mietek". A Political Biography]*, Warsaw 1998.

26 Tony Judt, *Die Geschichte Europas seit dem Zweiten Weltkrieg*, Bonn 2006, 958.

27 Beate Kosmala, Polen. *Lange Schatten der Erinnerung: Der Zweite Weltkrieg im kollektiven Gedächtnis*, in: Monika Flacke (ed.), *Mythen der Nationen: 1945 – Arena der Erinnerungen*, Volume 2, Mainz 2004, 509–540, 525.

Even in Yugoslavia, where the narrative of the partisans was a unifying factor in the country, this master narrative lost its power after the death of Tito in 1980 and amidst growing nationalism.²⁸ The end of the resistance narrative meant an accelerated development of change of the dominant remembrance regime, which in the West had already begun during the 1960s and which by 1990 was not by any means complete in every country.²⁹

The turn of the communist resistance narrative discredited the associations of victims of political persecution and former resistance fighters, which were part of the old system.³⁰ Therefore the organisations were restructured and renamed in all of the former ‘people’s democracies’. There was also a change of leadership.³¹ At the beginning of December 1991, the Federation of Hungarian Resistance Fighters and Anti-Fascists informed FIR that it had opened up for groups of Nazi victims who had hitherto been excluded, not been accepted officially, or whose persecution had continued after 1945, including Jews and forced labourers.³²

The likewise mostly communist-oriented Western-European associations such as FNDIRP largely escaped the repercussions of political change in Eastern Europe.³³ However, the breakdown of communism brought with it serious consequences for the West-German Vereinigung der Verfolgten des Naziregimes/Bund der Antifaschisten (Union of Persecuted Persons of the Nazi-Regime/Federation of Anti-Fascists, hereafter VVN-BdA), which had been financially dependent on the Deutsche Kommunistische Partei (German Communist Party, hereafter DKP) and therefore directly from funds of the GDR, as the DKP was on a drip-feed from East Germany. The VVN-BdA not only had to reduce its activities considerably, but also had to dismiss all of its full-time employees.³⁴

For FIR, the economic consequences were also serious. Its funding came mainly from membership fees, and after 1989 several of the Eastern-European associations had to lower their payments or to cease them completely as public financial contributions were cut back or stopped entirely. As a result, FIR was forced to apply drastic economic measures. From 1989 to 1991, the annual total expenses were reduced from 4,646,165 Schillings to 1,583,000 Schillings (from roughly 340,000 Euros to roughly 115,000 Euros). This cut applied to FIR’s activities as well as its staff and

28 Holm Sundhaussen, Jugoslawien und seine Nachfolgestaaten. Konstruktion, Dekonstruktion und Neukonstruktion von “Erinnerungen” und Mythen, in: *ibid.*, Volume 1, 373-426, 386-388.

29 Etienne François, Meistererzählungen und Dammbürche: Die Erinnerung an den Zweiten Weltkrieg zwischen Nationalisierung und Universalisierung, in: *ibid.*, 13-28; Stefan Berger, Remembering the Second World War in Western Europe, 1945–2005, in: Małgorzata Pakier/Bo Stråth (ed.), *A European Memory? Contested Histories and Politics of Remembrance*, Oxford 2010, 119-136.

30 In Bulgaria, the Комитет на борците против фашизма и капитализма в България [Committee of the Fighters against Fascism and Capitalism] was regarded as a party-affiliated organisation of the communists. It was said that its members were never active resistance fighters against the pro-Nazi Bulgarian government during the Second World War: Bulgariens Antifaschisten keine Widerstandskämpfer? In: *Der neue Mahnruf* 45 (1992) 2, 5.

31 Der Wandel hat alle erfaßt, in: *Der neue Mahnruf* 43 (1990) 6/7, 2.

32 Die FIR zu aktuellen Problemen. Das Sekretariat der FIR tagte in Wien, in: *Mitteilungen. Fédération Internationale des Résistants*, December 1991, 5; Hans Coppi: Abschied und Neubeginn. Schwierigkeiten mit dem Antifaschismus in der DDR, in: *Der neue Mahnruf* 43 (1990) 6/7, 8.

33 Serge Wolikow, *Les Combats de la Mémoire. La FNDIRP de 1945 à Nos Jours* [Battles of Memory. The FNDIRP from 1945 to the Present Day], Paris 2006.

34 Karl Kropotnik, ‘Deutsche Kommunisten stoßen VVN in die Pleite. DKP entzieht der “Vereinigung der Verfolgten des Naziregimes – Bund der Antifaschisten” die Gelder / VVN-Präsidium leugnete bislang eine Fremdfinanzierung / Ende der Vereinigung als Bundesorganisation steht bevor / Finanzhof Stuttgart erkennt Gemeinnützigkeit an’, in: *die tageszeitung*, 7 December 1989, 5; Der Wandel hat alle erfaßt, in: *Der neue Mahnruf* 43 (1990) 6/7, 2; Organisationen der Widerstandskämpfer in Umgestaltung, in: *Der neue Mahnruf* 43 (1990) 4, 5.

journals.³⁵ *Der Widerstandskämpfer* was discontinued because of “organisational restructuring”.³⁶ Its final issue was published in March 1990. It was replaced by the *Mitteilungen*, which were published only on an irregular basis. At the beginning of 1991, it was proposed that FIR be dissolved, but this was rejected unanimously by the Delegation of the Bureau.³⁷

Like its Eastern European member organisations, FIR enforced a leadership change, but this did not mean a new beginning. President Arialdo Banfi, who had held his office since 1965, announced his resignation because “the political motives which determined my election have expired”.³⁸ Obviously Banfi, who as a Senator of the Partito Socialista Italiano (Italian Socialist Party) had a seat in the second chamber of parliament, was elected president in order to serve as a front to hide the communist-dominated nature of the organisation.³⁹ The Eleventh Congress declared Alix Lhote, a French communist who was the previous secretary-general, as its new president.⁴⁰ The position of secretary-general was given to Ilja Kremer, a professor from Moscow. Banfi was elected honorary president.⁴¹

Since 1990, the future orientation of FIR was disputed internally, though at the time no major changes were made.⁴² The aims of FIR, which concurred in part with those formulated in Soviet foreign propaganda, remained by and large unchanged after the Eleventh Congress and stayed closely attached to the characteristic style of the Cold War, even though the broad compatibility beyond the communist movement must not be underestimated: the “fight for a stable peace”, the “defence and protection of freedom and human dignity”, the “complete eradication of the Nazi doctrine” as well as the “fight” against neo-fascism and neo-Nazism.⁴³ However, in the demand for the “punishment of all war criminals who are still free”, the connection to the Second World War was missing. In a letter to the participants of the conference of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (hereafter CSCE) in Paris in November 1990, FIR cited environmental protection and development aid as “the most important matter of concern of the former resistance fighters, combatants and war victims”, which in fact bore only little importance for FIR.⁴⁴

At the meeting of the Delegation of the Bureau in April 1991, it had been settled that FIR's character as an organisation of former resistance fighters and Nazi victims should be preserved, but it was proposed that differently composed left-wing or anti-

35 DÖW, 22713/3, Tagung der “Delegation des Büros” der FIR, 13-14 April 1991: Finanzbericht von Oskar Wiesflecker.

36 An unsere Leser und Abonnenten, in: *Der Widerstandskämpfer*. Informationsdienst, January-March 1990.

37 The “Delegation of the Bureau” is not mentioned in FIR's statute. Nonetheless, it led the organisation between the other organs' conferences: of the Congress, the General Council and the Bureau. Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR (hereafter SAPMO), DY 57/332, Tagung der “Delegation des Büros” der FIR. Bericht über die Arbeiten, 13 April 1991.

38 Der XI. Ordentliche Kongress der FIR tagte vom 24. bis 26. Juni 1991 in Moskau, in: *Mitteilungen*. Fédération Internationale des Résistants, July 1991, 3.

39 Arialdo Banfi, *Una vita attraverso la storia*. A cura di Andrea Ragusa, premissa di Giorgio Rochat [A life through History. Edited by Andrea Ragusa, foreword by Giorgio Rochat], Manduria/Bari/Roma 2000.

40 Alix Lhote, born 22 June 1921 and died June 2007, was a French resistance fighter and a former inmate of Struthof concentration camp. After 1945, he held various leading positions in FNDIRP; from 1973 he was secretary-general of FIR; from 1991 president. In 2001, he resigned for health reasons. Fédération Internationale des Résistants (FIR), 36.

41 Der XI. Ordentliche Kongress der FIR tagte vom 24. bis 26. Juni 1991 in Moskau, in: *Mitteilungen*. Fédération Internationale des Résistants, July 1991, 3.

42 Tagung der Delegation des Büros, in: *Der Widerstandskämpfer*. Informationsdienst, January-March 1990, 1-11.

43 Orientierungs- und Aktionsprogramm der FIR, 26 June 1991, in: *Mitteilungen*. Fédération Internationale des Résistants, July 1991, 3; herein also the following quotation.

44 Tagung des Büros der FIR: Kommunique, 7-8 September 1990, in: *Mitteilungen*. Fédération Internationale des Résistants, September 1990, 2.

racist federations be included as well. President Banfi even proposed to include victims of Stalinism, but this suggestion was not put into effect.⁴⁵ Moreover, the Delegation strove to intensify the co-operation with the three international veterans' associations – the Fédération Mondiale des Anciens Combattants (World Veterans Federation, hereafter FMAC), the Confédération Internationale des Anciens Prisonniers de Guerre (International Confederation of Prisoners of War, hereafter CIAPG) and the Confédération Européenne des Anciens Combattants (European Confederation of Former Combatants, hereafter CEAC).⁴⁶ Therefore, the International Committee on Disarmament and Safety, which coordinated the co-operation of these four international organisations since 1971, was to be reactivated.⁴⁷ Representatives of these associations participated in the Eleventh Congress and delivered greetings to the delegates,⁴⁸ but the International Committee was disbanded at the end of 1991 and replaced by informal contacts between the presidents or secretary generals.⁴⁹ However, the co-operation within the peace movement, which had existed since the World Meeting of Former Combatants in Rome in 1971, was continued.⁵⁰

In spring 1991, it was further proposed that FIR be opened to the next generations.⁵¹ This was demanded especially by VVN-BdA, in which since June 1990 younger members, who came from Christian organisations or were associated with the German Green Party or the Social Democratic Party, held leading positions.⁵² Other associations of formerly persecuted persons already had youth sections or – like VVN in 1971 – had opened their ranks to persons born after 1945 in order to preserve the organisation, its aims and the memory of the anti-fascist resistance for the future, when the generation who had lived during the Second World War would be dead. Therefore, people who had no relationship to former concentration camp inmates, but who identified with the goals of the 'old' VVN and who stood in solidarity with the Nazi victims, could become members.⁵³ Within FIR, there was no majority in favour of this at the time, but because of the lack of sources we can only speculate about the reasons for this.

In spite of this floundering of FIR and of many associations of victims of political persecution, few members left FIR. The only exception was the Związek Kombatantów Rzeczpospolita Polska i Byłych Więźniów Politycznych (Union of Fighters of the Polish Republic and Former Political Prisoners, ZKRP i BWP), which dissociated itself from the communist past of its predecessor.⁵⁴ However, ZKRP i BWP main-

45 Das Büro der FIR tagte in Berlin, in: Mitteilungen. Fédération Internationale des Résistants, September 1990, 2.

46 Next to no research exists about these organisations. There is only one blog entry to be found, and that is for FMAC: juliakling, Dreaming an Unlimited Dream in a World of Division: A Veterans' Utopia? <https://erinerung.hypotheses.org/276#more-276> (18/10/2016).

47 SAPMO DY 57/332, Tagung der "Delegation des Büros" der FIR. Bericht über die Arbeiten, 13 April 1991.

48 Der XI. Ordentliche Kongress der FIR tagte vom 24. bis 26. Juni 1991 in Moskau, in: Mitteilungen. Fédération Internationale des Résistants, July 1991, 3.

49 Die FIR zu aktuellen Problemen. Das Sekretariat der FIR tagte in Wien, in: Mitteilungen. Fédération Internationale des Résistants, December 1991, 5.

50 Friede – Sicherheit – Freundschaft. Das erste gemeinsame Treffen der Widerstandskämpfer, Kriegsteilnehmer und Kriegsopfer für Frieden, Sicherheit und Freundschaft in Rom war ein voller Erfolg, in: Der Widerstandskämpfer 19 (1971) 16, 12-17.

51 DÖW, 22718/3, Thesen für die Tagung der "Delegation des Büros der FIR" und zum XI. Ordentlichen Kongreß der FIR. Entwurf, undated; SAPMO DY 57/332, Tagung der "Delegation des Büros" der FIR. Bericht über die Arbeiten, 13 April 1991.

52 Der Wandel hat alle erfaßt, in: Der neue Mahnruf 43 (1990) 6/7, 2.

53 Schneider, Geschichte, 29. This opening up was also expressed in the change of name to VVN-BdA.

54 The ZKRP i BWP was the successor organisation to ZBoWiD, which itself was the association within FIR with the most members. In March 1990, when it changed its name, it had 860,000 members. Der Wandel hat alle erfaßt, in: Der neue Mahnruf 43 (1990) 6/7, 2.

tained friendly relations with FIR.⁵⁵ Among other things, the founding of new associations in the former Soviet republics and the opening up to further anti-fascist and left-wing groups from the West even led to an increasing number of organisations within FIR after 1990. In April 1992, a Greek association, which represented the communist fighters of the Greek civil war from 1944 to 1949 and the victims of the post-war persecution of communists, became a member. At the same time, a Canadian association of resistance fighters of Greek origin was admitted, thereby becoming the first non-European organisation to belong to FIR.⁵⁶ In September 1992, 79 unions were associated with FIR, more than ever before.⁵⁷

Commitment to Peace and Disarmament

The commitment to peace and disarmament constituted the main emphasis in FIR's activities during the Cold War as well as after 1989.⁵⁸ Their involvement in the CSCE process as a pressure group in the background was a particular source of elation for FIR officials, but in fact the former resistance played only a minor part. It could even be claimed that FIR saw itself as the decisive protagonist in preparing the *détente* process, setting it in motion and bringing it to its positive conclusion. For example, Oskar Wiesflecker said at a meeting of the Delegation of the Bureau in April 1991: "we, the former resistance fighters and combatants, have been the vanguard of that process. [...] We have so to speak started the experiment before the diplomats and statesmen."⁵⁹ Alix Lhote furthermore said at the Eleventh Congress that the existence of FIR had led to the CSCE process, "of which we together with the world community of the former combatants were the precursors, as has been shown by the signing of the Appeal of Rome [which was adopted at the World Meeting of Former Combatants, M.B.] in 1971 and today's situation with the signing of the Charter of a Common Europe".⁶⁰

FIR justified its commitment to disarmament, peace and friendship among nations with the lessons learned from history by the former anti-fascist resistance fighters in order "to avoid for all times the return of the sorrows and horrors suffered by their nations".⁶¹ According to Oskar Wiesflecker, "the work for disarmament, the

55 SAPMO DY 57/332, Letter of the Związek Kombatantów Rzeczpospolita Polska i Byłych Więźniów Politycznych (Association of Combatants and Former Political Prisoners of the Polish Republic, ZKRP i BWP) to FIR, 4 April 1991; SAPMO DY 57/332, Letter of FIR to the president of ZKRP i BWP, 15 April 1991.

56 Das Büro der FIR tagte in Wien, in: Mitteilungen. Fédération Internationale des Résistants, April 1992, 1. Today, the members are once more exclusively European and Israeli. <http://www.fir.at/liste-der-verbände/> (2 June 2016).

57 Ukrainische Union der ehemaligen Kriegsteilnehmer in die FIR aufgenommen, in: Mitteilungen. Fédération Internationale des Résistants, September 1992, 3.

58 For the engagement of FIR in this field see Ruppert, *Geschichte*.

59 Von der Notwendigkeit der FIR. Die "Delegation des Büros" der FIR tagte in Wien, in: Mitteilungen. Fédération Internationale des Résistants, April 1991, 2. Oskar Wiesflecker was born on 18 May 1919 in Vienna, and died there on 3 December 2009. He was active within the resistance from 1934 onwards. He was imprisoned for a short time after the 'Anschluß'. After the Second World War, he became an editor for newspapers of several left-wing groups and parties, among them the organ of the Kommunistische Partei Österreichs (Communist Party of Austria), *Volksstimme*. From 1960 he was the chief editor of *Der Widerstandskämpfer* and in charge of many other FIR publications. Wiesflecker was a member of the leadership of the KZ-Verband and from 1981 chief editor of *Der neue Mahnruf*. In the 1990s, he became secretary-general of FIR, which he remained until 2004. Der KZ-Verband trauert um Oskar Wiesflecker. KZ-Verbandsobmann, DÖW-Vizepräsident und Ehrenmitglied der FIR, in: Der Neue Mahnruf 64 (2010) 1/2, 1-2.

60 Der XI. Ordentliche Kongress der FIR tagte vom 24. bis 26. Juni 1991 in Moskau, in: Mitteilungen. Fédération Internationale des Résistants, July 1991, 3. Lhote meant the Charter of Paris for a New Europe.

61 Adresse der Internationalen Föderation der Widerstandskämpfer (FIR) an die Staats- und Regierungschefs, die an der Gipfelkonferenz der KSZE teilnehmen. Für ein Stabiles Europa in Frieden und Demokratie, 8 September 1990, in: Mitteilungen. Fédération Internationale des Résistants, September 1990, 2.

fight for peace and for the friendship among nations [was] a core matter of concern of all anti-fascists and democrats”, because anti-fascism demands of us “to speak up consistently for democracy, social justice, for the respect of human rights”, “but democracy and its comprising civil freedoms” could “develop only in peace, in an atmosphere of understanding, of friendly co-operation among the nations and the preservation of their security”.⁶²

The ideological restrictions on FIR and on its commitment to *détente* in the East-West conflict were reflected in its long silence about the events in the Eastern Bloc at the end of the 1980s. *Der Widerstandskämpfer* let the calls for independence in the Baltic Soviet republics – growing ever louder since 1988 – pass without comment, while the fall of the Berlin Wall was equally received with silence. FIR was not alone in this: the East-German KdAW needed several weeks in order to adjust itself to the changed situation.⁶³ The FIR publications of the time gave no hint about the partly violent protests and, with the exception of Romania, the largely peaceful regime changes within the former Eastern Bloc.⁶⁴ FIR also refrained from comment on the massacre in Tiananmen Square on 3-4 June 1989, though the organisation had turned towards non-European issues a long time ago – as shown by its commitment to the Middle East conflict or its statement on the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.⁶⁵

Not until the meeting of the Delegation of the Bureau on 24 February 1990 did secretary-general Alix Lhote give his opinion on the revolutions within the Soviet sphere of control, in which his skepticism about the recent political developments was diplomatically phrased, but unmistakable.⁶⁶ At that time, the disintegration of the old power structures was clear. In Poland and Czechoslovakia, the communist party had lost its power, the Magyar Szocialista Munkáspárt (Hungarian Socialist Workers’ Party, the communist party) had disbanded, and in Romania the dictator Nicolae Ceaușescu had been executed. FIR’s skepticism did not change much in the aftermath, even though FIR specifically welcomed the Charter of Paris for a New Europe passed by the CSCE meeting on 19-21 November 1990, which endorsed the results of Eastern- and Central-European revolutions and in which the CSCE states (including the former communist states) declared their belief in the market economy and pluralism.⁶⁷ FIR followed the belief in pluralism and gave up the communist understanding of democracy, which its Eastern-European members had held until a short time previously.⁶⁸

FIR did not express a disapproving attitude towards German unification and it demanded a European security system which would include a unified Germany.⁶⁹

62 Kongreß der ANED [Associazione nazionale ex deportati nei campi nazisti, National Association of Deportees to the Nazi Camps] in Prato, in: *Der neue Mahnruf* 43 (1990) 11, 2.

63 Antifaschistische Widerstandskämpfer: Mit unseren Erfahrungen für den Prozess der Erneuerung, in: *Der Widerstandskämpfer*. Informationsdienst, January-March 1990, 21-23.

64 On these events and a discussion on whether the term ‘revolutions’ can be used in this context, see Philipp Ther, *Die neue Ordnung auf dem alten Kontinent. Eine Geschichte des neoliberalen Europa*, Berlin 2014, 58-80.

65 Delegation der FIR in Israel. *Der Widerstandskämpfer*. Informationsdienst. Sondernummer, Vienna 1989; Resolution zur Lage im Persisch-Arabischen Golf, 7-8 September 1990, in: *Mitteilungen*. Fédération Internationale des Résistants, September 1990, 2.

66 Tagung der Delegation des Büros. Vienna, 24 February 1990, in: *Der Widerstandskämpfer*. Informationsdienst, January-March 1990, 1-11, 2.

67 Charta von Paris für ein neues Europa, Paris 1990.

68 Die Zukunft der FIR: Für eine gerechtere, freiere, solidarische und brüderliche Welt, in: *Mitteilungen*. Fédération Internationale des Résistants, July 1991, 3.

69 Das Büro der FIR tagte in Berlin, in: *Mitteilungen*. Fédération Internationale des Résistants, September 1990, 2.

FIR responded positively to German representatives who declared that the German external borders would be recognised. In his speech at the Berlin meeting of the Bureau of FIR, Peter Florin, the chair of the Provisional Board of the KdAW, discussed “the fears of some countries in view of a German nationalism and said that we want a Germany from which peace started. Germany must never again be a threat to other countries.”⁷⁰

Nevertheless, the president of the Comité International de Mauthausen (International Mauthausen Committee, hereafter CIM), Josef Hammelmann from Luxembourg, declared that the former concentration camp prisoners were afraid of a unified Germany whose strength had been regained. The CIM claimed that a distancing from National Socialism must be included in the German Basic Law.⁷¹ FIR was even more definite on this point, demanding even before the merger of the GDR to the Federal Republic of Germany (hereafter FRG) that an obligation to commemorate the Nazi crimes and the duty “to make future generations aware of these crimes in order to preserve them from totalitarian, racist and antisemitic temptations” had to be fixed in the German constitution.⁷²

Another important issue for FIR was the war in the Balkans, which had begun in June 1991 with the separation of Slovenia from Yugoslavia. The war in Bosnia which broke out two months later and escalated in April 1992 was the main focus of a conference of the four international associations of former resistance fighters, combatants and prisoners of war. Many national organisations took part in this conference, which was held in Warsaw in September 1992, among them representatives of the Serbian, Croatian and Slovenian veterans’ associations. Ilja Kremer represented FIR at this conference and suggested somewhat helplessly that the participants from the former Yugoslav republics should sit together and discuss their problems in order to find a solution. Furthermore, the conference decided to send a common delegation of FIR, FMAC, CIAPG and CEAC to the Balkans. This “mission of information” was required to meet with representatives of partisans’ and veterans’ associations and gain a better overview of the situation.⁷³ Even before the delegation left, FIR called upon the former partisans within the veterans’ associations in disintegrating Yugoslavia to fight for an end to all “excesses and all violations of human rights”.⁷⁴ Shortly prior to this, reports on mass murders had spread about.⁷⁵

From 26-31 October 1992 the delegation – in which Oskar Wiesflecker represented FIR – first travelled to Slovenia and Croatia, and then from 24-28 November to Serbia and Montenegro, in order to inform employees of relief organisations about

70 Ibid., 2. Peter Florin was born on 2 October 1921, and died on 17 February 2014. During the Second World War, he was in exile in the Soviet Union, where he fought as a partisan in Belarus in 1943/1944. In 1945, he became a member of the Gruppe Ackermann, which was sent to Saxony to secure the influence of the Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands on the future political development in central Germany. Between 1958 and 1989, he was a member of the Zentralkomitee der Sozialistischen Einheitspartei Deutschlands [Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany] and, from 1973 until 1989, deputy foreign minister of the GDR and ambassador to the UN.

71 Angst vor Deutschland, in: Der neue Mahnruf 43 (1990) H. 11, S. 4.

72 Tagung des Büros der FIR: Kommuniqué, 7-8 September 1990, in: Mitteilungen. Fédération Internationale des Résistants, September 1990, 2.

73 Warschauer Konferenz beschließt Entsendung einer Informationsmission der vier internationalen Organisationen ehemaliger Widerstandskämpfer und Kriegsteilnehmer in Länder des ehemaligen Jugoslawien, in: Mitteilungen. Fédération Internationale des Résistants, October 1992, 5.

74 Abscheu und Empörung. Die FIR zur Situation im ehemaligen Jugoslawien, in: Der neue Mahnruf 45 (1992) 10, 3.

75 Drei Stunden lebend im Massengrab. Muslimischer Augenzeuge berichtet von serbischem Massaker, in: Süddeutsche Zeitung, 4 September 1992.

the situation, but the priority was the representatives of veterans' and partisans' associations. Furthermore, the delegation visited refugee camps and POW camps in Croatia. It was planned to publish a common communiqué, but this was never completed.⁷⁶

Dealing with Right-Wing Extremism and Nationalism

Just as in previous years, dealing with neo-Nazism and neo-fascism occupied a central position in the activities of FIR and its member associations.⁷⁷ FIR took on this 'special task' on the basis of former resistance fighters' experiences, from which a moral obligation arose "to fight against every appearance of fascism, Nazism, racism and antisemitism".⁷⁸ The memory of "their comrades fallen in the battle against the forces of inhumanity" also laid an obligation at the feet of former resistance fighters. The oaths taken by the former communist camp inmates of Buchenwald and Mauthausen also played a part. According to tradition, the prisoners of Buchenwald had sworn in April 1945, shortly after their liberation, that the "destruction of Nazism and its roots is our watchword".⁷⁹ For FIR, the exact wording was of only minor importance. What matters, was the message of the oath, which in the 1990ies meant to fight against neo-nazism. The oath of Mauthausen, which its former inmates had sworn in May 1945, made no reference to National Socialism, but FIR nevertheless also used this text to justify their approach to right-wing extremism.

In the 1980s, both of these oaths played a major part within FIR's discourse of the past.⁸⁰ They were reinterpreted as the one "oath of the resistance movement", but without mentioning their reading, because FIR not only had to integrate into its ranks former prisoners of Buchenwald and Mauthausen, but also other groups: former inmates of other camps and prisons, resistance fighters who had never been caught, former members of the International Brigades in the Spanish Civil War and veterans of the republican Spanish army, and bereaved families. Through Eastern-European mass organisations such as ZBoWiD, groups which had nothing to do with the resistance or Nazi victims were represented in FIR: veterans of the regular armies, for example in ZBoWiD or the Soviet Committee of War Veterans, or those who took part "in the armed struggle for the strengthening of the people's power".⁸¹ Furthermore, several associations had opened their ranks to young people. More importantly, the fact that FIR positioned itself as the executor of these oaths underlined the special moral standing of the former prisoners.

76 Informationsreise in Länder des ehemaligen Jugoslawien, in: *Der neue Mahnruf* 45 (1992) 12, 8.

77 Sekretariat der Internationalen Föderation der Widerstandskämpfer (F.I.R.): *Die FIR zu Ausländerfeindlichkeit, Rassenhass und Neonazi-Terror*, in: *Mitteilungen. Fédération Internationale des Résistants*, Dezember 1991, 5.

78 Das Büro der FIR tagte in Wien, in: *Mitteilungen. Fédération Internationale des Résistants*, April 1991, 1; herein also the following quotation.

79 Buchenwaldarchiv, NZ 488, Ansprache in französischer, russischer, polnischer, englischer und deutscher Sprache auf der Trauerkundgebung des Lagers Buchenwald, 19 April 1945; another version read slightly differently: "Crushing Nazism is our watchword". *Buchenwalder Nachrichten* Nr. 5, 20 April 1945, in: Bodo Ritscher (ed.), *Buchenwalder Nachrichten*: Nr. 1 (14 April 1945) – Nr. 28 (16 May 1945), Weimar/Buchenwald 1983, cited in: Neumann-Thein, *Parteidisziplin*, 74.

80 Alix Lhote, *Für eine Welt des Friedens. Basierend auf mehr Gerechtigkeit, Freiheit und Zusammenarbeit*, in: *Der Widerstandskämpfer. Informationsdienst*, 1979, special issue, 1-3, 1; *Botschaft der FIR zum 8. Mai*, in: *Der Widerstandskämpfer. Informationsdienst*, 1980, 5; *An die Teilnehmer der Madrider Konferenz über Sicherheit und Zusammenarbeit in Europa*, in: *Der Widerstandskämpfer. Informationsdienst*, 1980, 8, 3-5, here 5.

81 ZBoWiD hat 800.000 Mitglieder, in: *Der neue Mahnruf* 41 (1988) 5, 7.

During the Cold War, Western Europe and especially the FRG were FIR's sole focal point, yet after 1989/1990 FIR began anxiously recognising the growing nationalistic, neo-Nazi and neo-fascist movements in Eastern and Central Europe.⁸² The most senior FIR committees repeatedly expressed their will to fight these fascist, racist, xenophobic, violent, and antisemitic groups. For example, FIR protested against the desecration of the graves of Soviet soldiers in Kiev in September 1991 and against the desecration of graves and memorials in Hungary in 1992, as well as against the radical right-wing remarks of a leading Hungarian politician.⁸³

However, the financial and personnel cutbacks within FIR became increasingly noticeable. In December 1991, FIR sent a letter to the Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the Republic of Lithuania, in which it demanded the revocation of the rehabilitation of condemned Nazi collaborators as alleged victims of Stalinism. Before FIR had sent this protest, however, the Jewish World Congress intervened in Vilnius and pushed through a commission to review the rehabilitations.⁸⁴ FIR obviously not only lacked sufficient information about such occurrences for a timely reaction, but also the means to push through its demands. These weaknesses were also evident in the problems regarding compensation for Nazi victims and of the preservation of the former resistance fighters' privileges granted before 1989, especially in the Eastern Bloc.

However, the main focus of dealing with right-wing extremism remained on a now unified Germany. There, neo-Nazis committed numerous xenophobic crimes and arson attacks at the beginning of the 1990s.⁸⁵ FIR protested several times. In November 1991, FIR condemned "the growing acts of violence and terror of right-wing and neo-Nazi groups" in identical letters addressed to Federal President Richard von Weizsäcker, President of the German Bundestag Rita Süßmuth, and Chancellor Helmut Kohl.⁸⁶ Simultaneously, FIR demanded a "resolute conduct" of the authorities and that the "necessary legal measures" be taken. At this time, the German authorities had registered more than 200 corresponding incidents since January, for instance in Hoyerswerda, Honnef, Hünxe and Eisenhüttenstadt.⁸⁷ In December 1991, FIR appealed to the "former resistance fighters and victims of Nazi-fascist barbarity" once again, not only condemning the radical right-wing attacks but also pointing out the successes of right-wing political parties in elections in Germany, Austria and Switzerland.⁸⁸ At the beginning of September 1992, FIR once again commented on "right-wing extremist terror acts" in several German towns.⁸⁹ Numerous national member organisations, among them FNDIRP, the Association

82 Tagung der "Delegation des Büros" der FIR, in: Der neue Mahnruf 43 (1989) 5, 7; Das Büro der FIR tagte in Berlin, in: Mitteilungen. Fédération Internationale des Résistants, September 1990, 2.

83 Die FIR zu aktuellen Problemen. Das Sekretariat der FIR tagte in Wien, in: Mitteilungen. Fédération Internationale des Résistants, December 1991, 5; Die FIR zu den rechtsextremistischen Terrorakten, in: Mitteilungen. Fédération Internationale des Résistants, July 1992, 4. There is no information given in the document as to which graves and memorials were affected.

84 Die FIR zu aktuellen Problemen. Das Sekretariat der FIR tagte in Wien, in: Mitteilungen. Fédération Internationale des Résistants, December 1991, 5; Schreiben der Fédération Internationale des Résistants an den Vorsitzenden des Obersten Sowjets der Republik Litauen, 9 December 1991, in: *ibid.*

85 Judt, *Geschichte Europas*, 860-861.

86 Neonazi-Terror unterbinden! In: Mitteilungen. Fédération Internationale des Résistants, November 1991, 4, 4.

87 Theo Sommer, Das Schandmal des Fremdenhasses, in: *Die Zeit*, 11 October 1991.

88 Sekretariat der Internationalen Föderation der Widerstandskämpfer (F.I.R.): Die FIR zu Ausländerfeindlichkeit, Rassenhass und Neonazi-Terror, in: Mitteilungen. Fédération Internationale des Résistants, December 1991, 5.

89 Sekretariat der Internationalen Föderation der Widerstandskämpfer (F.I.R.): Die FIR zu den rechtsextremistischen Terrorakten, 7 September 1992, in: Mitteilungen. Fédération Internationale des Résistants, September 1992, 4.

of Anti-Fascists and Victims of Nazism in Israel and the Austrian KZ-Verband condemned the arson attack of 26 September 1992 which partly destroyed the 'Jewish Hut' memorialising the concentration camp at Sachsenhausen.⁹⁰ FIR itself continued its activities, considering it one of its most important duties "to inform the young generation about the inhumane character of these manifestations".⁹¹ How this was possible in practise in the face of more or less complete absent media and public visibility as well as reduced financial means remains unclear.

Dealing with Historical Research, Memorials and Holocaust Denial in the Transition to Democracy

Part of the policy towards right-wing extremist, nationalist and right-wing political trends was to combat "all attempts to falsify, deny or trivialise the history of Nazi crimes and of the genocide".⁹² Not only FIR, but also the international committees of former concentration camp inmates targeted several groups in their wording:⁹³ right-wing radicals who refused to acknowledge Nazi crimes and portrayed them as a post-war fabrication, but also conservative historians in the FRG in particular, such as Michael Stürmer or Andreas Hillgruber. FIR and several of the international committees saw the new concepts for the exhibitions in concentration camp memorials in the former GDR and the inclusion of the camp histories after 1945 also in the context of the trivialisaton of the Third Reich.⁹⁴

In April 1989, Oskar Wiesflecker as representative of FIR addressed the extraordinary general meeting of the *Lagergemeinschaft* of the former internment camp in Gurs, claiming that by opposing the "forgers of history" the resistance fighters preserved "the remembrance of our brothers and sisters who have been killed in action".⁹⁵ At the FNDIRP congress in May 1992, the Belgian vice-president of FIR, Jean Brack, commented on "the forgers of history who are trying to deny or trivialise the Nazi crimes. This is therefore the time to spare no effort to keep this memory alive."⁹⁶ Like Wiesflecker, Brack avoided any explicit reference to the Holocaust or to the Jewish victims of National Socialism. In dealing with the assertion that there had been no gas chambers in the concentration camps and that therefore no prisoners could have been killed with poison gas, FIR also avoided mentioning Jewish victims.⁹⁷ This must be considered in the context of the rivalry between victims of the Holocaust and the communist victims of Nazi persecution, according to which var-

90 Scharfe Proteste gegen Brandanschlag in Sachsenhausen, in: Mitteilungen. Fédération Internationale des Résistants, October 1992, 5.

91 Von der Notwendigkeit der FIR. Die "Delegation des Büros" der FIR tagte in Wien, in: Mitteilungen. Fédération Internationale des Résistants, April 1991, 2.

92 Orientierungs- und Aktionsprogramm der FIR, 26 June 1991, in: Mitteilungen. Fédération Internationale des Résistants, July 1991, 3.

93 40. Jahrestag des Sieges und der Befreiung. Veranstaltungen – Erklärungen – Aufrufe (2), in: Der Widerstandskämpfer. Informationsdienst, 1985, 5, 1-15, here 7.

94 Von der Notwendigkeit der FIR. Die "Delegation des Büros" der FIR tagte in Wien, in: Mitteilungen. Fédération Internationale des Résistants, April 1991, 2; Das Büro der Internationalen Föderation der Widerstandskämpfer (FIR): 50. Jahrestag: Befreiung und Sieg über den Nazismus. Für den Aufbau einer Welt des Friedens und der Freiheit, in: Mitteilungen. Fédération Internationale des Résistants, 1995, 1.

95 50. Jahrestag der Errichtung des Lagers Gurs, in: Der Widerstandskämpfer. Informationsdienst, 1989, 3/4/5, 31-32.

96 Kongreß der FNDIRP in Vichy, in: Der neue Mahnruf 45 (1992) 8/9.

97 On the attempts to play down National Socialism and to deny its crimes, see Brigitte Bailer-Galanda/Wolfgang Benz/Wolfgang Neugebauer (ed.), Die Auschwitzleugner. "Revisionistische" Geschichtslüge und historische Wahrheit, Berlin 1996.

ious interpretations of FIR's argumentation are possible: either it made demands on the Jewish victims and subsumed them under the term "political prisoner", a tradition which goes back at least as far as the founding of FIAPP,⁹⁸ or FIR wanted to consciously remind of the fact that non-Jewish prisoners had also been murdered in the gas chambers, for example in Mauthausen.⁹⁹ Nevertheless, for FIR and the international committees of former concentration camp prisoners, Holocaust denial in its myriad forms was another issue for concern, but at the same time FIR levelled the differences between the political victims and the Jewish victims.¹⁰⁰

In October 1989, FIR organised the "European Symposium of Historians on the Problems in the Historiography of Fascism, the Second World War and the Resistance" as an "academic and political answer to the ideological approach of a group of conservative historians from the FRG".¹⁰¹ This conference was thus FIR's contribution to the West-German *Historikerstreit* of 1986/1987, taking a firm stand against the positions of, among others, Ernst Nolte, Michael Stürmer and Andreas Hillgruber. Several representatives of national associations and of international camp committees presented papers, as well as Ilja Kremer, who also welcomed the participants and the deputy secretary-general Zygmunt Bieszczyński as functionaries of FIR. Some prominent Austrian historians were also among the speakers, to whom no one-sided political interpretation of the resistance could be attributed, such as Wolfgang Neugebauer, the academic head of the Dokumentationsarchiv des österreichischen Widerstandes (Documentation Archive of the Austrian Resistance, hereafter DÖW), the founding director of DÖW Herbert Steiner, and Siegfried Mattl from the Department of Contemporary History at the University of Vienna.¹⁰² The conference transcript, however, makes no mention of the speakers' institutions – with the exception of Kremer's and Bieszczyński's – so that the impression arises that most of the participants were specialists.¹⁰³ However, not only historians and political scientists appeared at the conference as main speakers. For instance, the Soviet diplomat Valentin Bereshkov spoke about the "historical significance of the anti-Hitler coalition", and the former chairman of the DKP Kurt Bachmann appeared on a panel entitled "Forgery and Revisionism in Current Historiography and the Questions of the New Generation in this Context". Among the specialists were also sympathisers of the political left, including the Marxist political scientist Reinhard Kühnl from

98 See the discussion on whether a special Jewish delegation should be permitted to attend the founding congress of the Fédération Internationale des Anciens Prisonniers Politiques (International Federation of Former Political Prisoners), hereafter FIAPP in Paris. At the first international conference of political prisoners in February 1946, a Jewish delegation took part. FIAPP was the predecessor organisation of FIR.

99 Florian Freund/Bertrand Perz, Mauthausen – Stammlager, in: Wolfgang Benz/Barbara Distel (ed.), *Der Ort des Terrors. Geschichte der nationalsozialistischen Konzentrationslager*, Volume 4: Flossenbürg, Mauthausen. Ravensbrück, Munich 2006, 293-346, 321.

100 40. Jahrestag des Sieges und der Befreiung. Veranstaltungen – Erklärungen – Aufrufe, in: *Der Widerstandskämpfer. Informationsdienst*, 1985, 4, 11-18; Das Büro der Internationalen Föderation der Widerstandskämpfer (FIR): 50. Jahrestag: Befreiung und Sieg über den Nazismus. Für den Aufbau einer Welt des Friedens und der Freiheit, in: *Mitteilungen. Fédération Internationale des Résistants* (1995), 1.

101 Kommunique der Tagung der "Delegation des Büros" der FIR für weitere Abrüstungsmaßnahmen – gegen neofaschistische Umtriebe, in: *Der Widerstandskämpfer. Informationsdienst* 1989, 3/4/5, 7.

102 Peter Steinbach, Ein Glücksfall. Zum 70. Geburtstag von Wolfgang Neugebauer, in: Christine Schindler (ed.), *Feindbilder*, Vienna 2015, 317-322; Brigitte Halbmayr/Herbert Steiner, Auf vielen Wegen, über Grenzen hinweg. Eine politische Biographie, *Weitra* 2015, 242-243; Johanna Gehmacher/Albert Müller/Bertrand Perz, In memoriam Siegfried Mattl (1954–2015). Nachruf des Instituts für Zeitgeschichte, <https://mediensportal.univie.ac.at/uniview/uni-intern/detailansicht/artikel/in-memoriam-siegfried-mattl-1954-2015/> (28 April 2015).

103 Internationale Föderation der Widerstandskämpfer, *Faschismus, Krieg, Widerstand. Historikersymposium der FIR: "Die Aggressionen Nazideutschlands in Europa – Geschichte und Geschichtsschreibung"*, Vienna 1989.

Marburg and Kurt Pätzold, who was a professor at the East Berlin Humboldt University. Outside FIR and its member associations, the symposium was widely ignored. No report was published in any academic journal, the miscellany was not reviewed and it is hardly available in German or Austrian public libraries.¹⁰⁴

At the beginning of the 1990s, attempts by Brandenburg and Thuringia to redesign the memorials in Sachsenhausen, Ravensbrück and Buchenwald met with the determined resistance of the communist associations of former prisoners and of FIR. During the course of this process, it was suggested that the manner in which communist resistance within the concentration camps was presented be revised, and that the use of Buchenwald and Sachsenhausen as Soviet special camps after 1945 be addressed in the exhibitions.¹⁰⁵ FIR supported the attempts by the international committees of former Nazi concentration camp prisoners to confer upon the memorials UNESCO protected status in order to preserve “their original condition”.¹⁰⁶ For FIR, this meant preventing all changes which contradicted the communist interpretation of the resistance in the camps, and the commemoration of the NKVD special camps.¹⁰⁷ This was not only about maintaining the influence on the memorials in competition with the victims of Stalinist repression. In GDR times, the right to have an input was not highly protected. It was simply unbearable for the former concentration camp inmates that Nazi perpetrators should be put on the same level as them – the reasoning being that these had been under the thumb of special camp prisoners.¹⁰⁸

The core element of the communist remembrance of the resistance in the camps was a heroic picture of selfless men and women who saved the lives of as many of their fellow prisoners as it was possible to save. This interpretation, however, completely ignored the dark sides of the attempts to resist the murderous intentions of the SS and over-emphasised the alleged “solidarity” of all the prisoners, which never existed in such a universal form. Saving one life in the concentration camps usually meant sacrificing another prisoner, who had to be added to execution or transportation lists or simply had to take the place of the other condemned person. Furthermore, the communist remembrance ignored the complicated reality of the camps, which could be described only insufficiently, if not falsely, by categories such as “resistance” and “collaboration”. Instead, the reality of life in the camps was pushed into the background.¹⁰⁹

The revised exhibitions attempted to offer a more realistic view of the concentration camps and the role of the prisoner functionaries.¹¹⁰ However, the former resist-

104 This finding is the result of a search in the Karlsruhe Virtual Catalogue and in the library database of the Arbeitsgemeinschaft Gedenkstättenbibliotheken. Altogether, only seven copies are available in German libraries. In Austria, only the libraries of the University of Vienna and of the DÖW hold copies.

105 Neumann-Thein, *Parteidisziplin*, 448-496.

106 Orientierungs- und Aktionsprogramm der FIR, 26 June 1991, in: *Mitteilungen. Fédération Internationale des Résistants*, July 1991, 3.

107 Internationale Lagerkomitees fordern: Gedenkstätten müssen erhalten bleiben, in: *Der neue Mahnruf* 44 (1991) 1, 3; Neumann-Thein, *Parteidisziplin*, 460.

108 Stefanie Endlich, *Die Diskussion des Colloquiums. Versuch einer Zusammenfassung*, in: *Brandenburgische Gedenkstätten für die Verfolgten des NS-Regimes. Perspektiven, Kontroversen und internationale Vergleiche*, Berlin 1992, 184-199, 186, 191-193.

109 Wolfgang Sofsky, *Die Ordnung des Terrors. Das Konzentrationslager*, Frankfurt am Main 1993; Detlef Garbe, *Selbstbehauptung und Widerstand*, in: Wolfgang Benz/Barbara Distel (ed.), *Der Ort des Terrors. Geschichte der nationalsozialistischen Konzentrationslager*, Volume 1, *Die Organisation des Terrors*, Munich 2005, 242-257.

110 Volkhard Knigge, *Die Umgestaltung der DDR-Gedenkstätten nach 1990. Ein Erfahrungsbericht am Beispiel Buchenwalds*, in: Hans-Joachim Veen/Peter März (ed.), *Woran erinnern? Der Kommunismus in der deutschen Erinnerungskultur*, Cologne/Weimar/Vienna 2006, 91-108; Petra Hausteil, *Geschichte im Dis-sens. Die Auseinandersetzungen um die Gedenkstätte Sachsenhausen nach dem Ende der DDR*, Leipzig 2006.

ance fighters saw in the revised interpretation of the communist resistance a further attack on their self-image, which was repeatedly shaken by unveilings of the crimes committed by Stalin and the GULAG after 1956, particularly as the uncovering of Stalinist crimes in Khrushchev's 'secret speech' and in the publications of Solzhenitsyn led to the conviction that it was better to have stood on the "right" and "better" side in the struggle between fascism/National Socialism and communism.¹¹¹

In April 1991, FIR joined an initiative of the international concentration camp committees directed at the upcoming CSCE Colloquium at the European Cultural Heritage meeting in Cracow from 28 May to 7 June. FIR sent a letter of its own to the ambassadors member states of the CSCE in Vienna,¹¹² in which the organisation expressed its "anxieties about the threat to memorials especially of the former Nazi concentration camps in the territory of the former GDR",¹¹³ namely their redesigning, which was pushed ahead by the persons responsible in the former East-German states with little sensitivity towards the former prisoners and without consulting the victim associations.¹¹⁴ FIR asked its members to protest to their national governments. While the CSCE Colloquium took place, the international concentration camp committees held a conference in Cracow to lend weight to their demands and to lobby alongside.¹¹⁵ The result was a statement of the CSCE Colloquium in which the signatory states, to which Germany belonged, obliged themselves to support the preservation of the memorials.¹¹⁶ FIR saw the acceptance of this document as an affirmation of the success of this endeavour and of the international concentration camp committees, but it neither brought an end to the debate nor prevented the memorial sites in the former GDR from receiving new exhibitions and the memory of the Soviet special camps being included in the memorials.¹¹⁷

However – and this was the most important point – the victims' associations and the international committees, which had withdrawn from the communist narrative of the resistance, though not including FIR, were now involved in the discussions about the redesigning of memorials.¹¹⁸ FIR thus became an outsider. Nevertheless, and despite its lack of personnel, the organisation continued to protect its position and maintained the positive picture of the Soviet Union's role as exclusively a liberator. In 1995, it warned against mixing up "the history of these camps [i.e. the concentration camps] with the use by the allies after the war", but – not surprisingly – this went unheeded.¹¹⁹ Ultimately, FIR participated in this debate only sporadically and without decisive success.

111 Jorge Semprun, *Was für ein schöner Sonntag!* Munich 2004.

112 DÖW, 22718/3, Schreiben der FIR an die Botschafter der 34 KSZE-Staaten, 15 April 1991.

113 DÖW, 22718/3, Tagung der "Delegation des Büros" der FIR: Bericht von Oskar Wiesflecker: Von der Notwendigkeit der FIR, 13-14 April 1991.

114 Endlich, Diskussion, 192.

115 Die Bewahrung der ehemaligen Konzentrationslager und die Frage des Archivs von Arolsen, 26 June 1991, in: Mitteilungen. Fédération Internationale des Résistants, July 1991, 3.

116 Symposium über das kulturelle Erbe der KSZE-Teilnehmerstaaten. Cracow, 6 June 1991, in: Ulrich Fastenrath (ed.): *KSZE/OSZE. Dokumente der Konferenz und der Organisation für Sicherheit und Zusammenarbeit in Europa*, Neuwied 1992, Volume 1.

117 Die Bewahrung der ehemaligen Konzentrationslager und die Frage des Archivs von Arolsen, 26 June 1991, in: Mitteilungen. Fédération Internationale des Résistants, July 1991, 3.

118 Bernd Faulenbach, Zu den Schwierigkeiten eines Diskurses über die Neukonzeption von Gedenkstätten. Nachwort, in: *Brandenburgische Gedenkstätten für die Verfolgten des NS-Regimes. Perspektiven, Kontroversen und internationale Vergleiche*, Berlin 1992, 200-204.

119 Das Büro der Internationalen Föderation der Widerstandskämpfer (FIR): 50. Jahrestag: Befreiung und Sieg über den Nazismus. Für den Aufbau einer Welt des Friedens und der Freiheit, in: *Mitteilungen. Fédération Internationale des Résistants* (1995), 1.

Reparations, Pensions and the “Rights of the Resistance Fighters”

Defending the social privileges granted to the former resistance fighters during the Cold War was another main focus of FIR's activities. These privileges were cut back or completely eliminated in almost all European states after 1990. According to information from FIR, corresponding legal drafts or laws were already in place in Austria, France, Germany, Greece, Portugal, Spain, Poland, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia and Hungary.¹²⁰ Research about the provision for Nazi victims is due for many states with the exception of Austria and Germany, and the FIR documents do not tell us which benefits the formerly persecuted persons received before 1989 and which were supposed to be or were in fact cut back after 1990.¹²¹ In any case, in September 1991, *Der neue Mahnruf* reported that the pensions of former resistance fighters in Greece had been cut.¹²²

FIR's protest was very general: no reference to any concrete state or to particular benefits were made. Instead, the organisation maintained that “the legitimacy of many governments of European countries emerged from the victory over Nazism”.¹²³ This argument, which seemed to be taken directly from the strategies of legitimation of the overthrown communist regimes, did not have any traction after 1989. At best, the ethical right to special social welfare benefits for former resistance fighters could be derived from the struggle against National Socialist occupation. However, this was also denied to the mostly communist former resistance fighters, particularly as they often reached high party and state positions in the post-war period. In addition, one must bear in mind the tight budgetary situation in the Eastern- and Central-European states, which had to fight against economic crises and high unemployment rates in the transition from planned to market economy.¹²⁴

In this context, unified Germany was the focus of attention once again. Since 1949, the GDR had granted privileges to formerly persecuted persons, who had been distinguished between “victims of fascism” and the “fighters against fascism”. Since 1965, upon reaching retirement age, members of these groups received “honorary pensions”: since the income was last increased on 1 January 1989, “fighters” received 1,700 East-German Marks, while victims received only 1,400 Marks.¹²⁵ This was a significant sum, considering that old-age pensions averaged only 434,12 Marks for invalids.¹²⁶ However, a person's status as a “fighter” or “victim” could be taken from them at any time as a result of unfavourable political conduct.

Although the Unification Treaty was intended to continue paying the pensions according to the GDR law, after 3 October 1990 it was envisaged that this difference be evened out, to the disadvantage of the former resistance fighters, whose pensions were decreased.¹²⁷ The Interessenverband der Verfolgten des Naziregimes (Association of Persons Persecuted by the Nazi Regime, hereafter IVVdN), the successor to

120 FIR agiert für die Respektierung der legitimen Rechte der Widerstandskämpfer, in: Mitteilungen. Fédération Internationale des Résistants, November 1991, 4, 2-4.

121 There is current research available in France, Italy and Poland.

122 Athen streicht Pensionen, in: *Der neue Mahnruf* 44 (1991) 8/9, 7.

123 Für die Respektierung der legitimen Rechte der ehemaligen Widerstandskämpfer und Opfer des Nazismus 26 June 1991, in: Mitteilungen. Fédération Internationale des Résistants, July 1991, 3.

124 Judt, *Geschichte*, 791-800.

125 Constantin Goshler, *Schuld und Schulden. Die Politik der Wiedergutmachung für NS-Verfolgte seit 1945*, Göttingen 2005, 373-384.

126 *Ibid.*, 392; *Statistisches Jahrbuch der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik*, Berlin 1990, 384.

127 Nr. 5, Anlage II, Sachgebiet H, Abschnitt III zum Vertrag zwischen der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik zur Herstellung der Einheit Deutschlands – Einigungsvertrag, in: *Bundesgesetzblatt II*, 889-1236, here 1214.

KdAW, repeatedly turned to FIR to ask for intervention in Bonn, where severe cuts – or in some cases a complete abolishment – were planned to these “honorary pensions”.¹²⁸ FIR protested and seemed to be successful,¹²⁹ until in October 1992 the IVVdN notified FIR that the German Bundestag had passed a law which made it possible to cut back or cut off the pension for profiteers of the East-German regime and for persons who “had offended against the principles of humanity or of the rule of law”.¹³⁰ Those affected included Peter Florin and the widow of Horst Sindermann, who was chairman of the GDR’s council of ministers and member of the Politburo, but during National Socialism had been a prisoner in the concentration camps at Sachsenhausen and Mauthausen.¹³¹ FIR lacked any means of pressure for disposal and could not act effectively in this context.

Summary and prospects

The democratic revolutions in Central and Eastern Europe decisively changed the circumstances in which FIR acted. Many of its member organisations from Eastern Europe experienced a deep crisis, which also affected FIR. In Poland and Czechoslovakia, the old mass organisations dissolved during the democratic revolutions, while many new, much smaller organisations were founded, of which by today only a small minority have become members of FIR.¹³² The financial problems of FIR dramatically increased. The organisation had to dismiss employees and to restrict its activities. Victim groups which had been discriminated against during communist rule now established their own associations. Furthermore, conflicts arose between the former anti-fascist resistance fighters and the victims of Stalinist and communist persecution, as the latter called for recognition, compensation, and justice. In some cases, former resistance fighters against German occupation had been the perpetrators of the communist regimes, while their associations had supported the rulers. The result was a delegitimisation of the communist resistance as a whole, and of FIR as its international representative. To complicate the situation, some of those who had been persecuted during Stalinism had taken an active part in the mass murder of the Jewish population during the Second World War, or had been local fascists.

Although the communist anti-fascist resistance had lost much of its reputation, FIR hardly reacted to the challenge of post-1989 Europe and its changing memory culture. The aims and statutes of the organisation remained the same and the personnel of the leading bodies was not fundamentally renewed. Furthermore, its political orientation did not change much, despite the declaration of belief in pluralistic democracy. Only in November 2004 did the thirteenth Ordinary Congress adopt a new statute, in which the aims of FIR were amended, as is still in force today. It especially included goals criticising globalisation, and opened FIR to “members of today’s generations, who support the safeguarding of the memory and the political legacy of the resistance and of persecution”.¹³³ The latter had gained increasing importance

128 NS-Verfolgte in der ehemaligen DDR, in: *Der neue Mahnruf* (1991) 3, 6.

129 Die FIR zu aktuellen Problemen. Das Sekretariat der FIR tagte in Wien, in: *Mitteilungen. Fédération Internationale des Résistants*, December 1991, 5.

130 § 5 Entschädigungsrentengesetz, 22 April 1992, in: *Bundesgesetzblatt I*, 906.

131 *Ibid.*; Legitime Rechte von deutschen Widerstandskämpfern werden durchlöchert, in: *Mitteilungen. Fédération Internationale des Résistants*, October 1992, 6.

132 In Poland, for instance, there are today 79 associations of different victim groups, of which only one is a member of FIR. www.kombatanci.gov.pl (31 August 2016); www.fir.at/liste-der-verbände/, (31 August 2016).

133 <http://www.fir.at/statut/> (2 June 2016).

because of the advancing age and the death of many functionaries and since the reduction of FIR's activities could also be traced back to the weakened health of many of its representatives.¹³⁴ In 2004, a generational shift took place with the election of Ulrich Schneider, born in 1954, as new secretary-general. The new president, however, was a representative of the old generation: Michel Vanderbrought, who was elected to this office, was already 79.¹³⁵

134 Arialdo Banfi died in 1997, Alix Lhote in 2007 and Oskar Wiesflecker, who had managed FIR's publications for decades, died in 2009.

135 Fédération Internationale des Résistants (FIR), 34-38.

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