

The Fifth International Conference on Jasenovac
May 24-25, 2011
Banja Luka

DECLARATION

OF THE FIFTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON JASENOVAC, DEDICATED TO THE GENOCIDE COMMITTED AGAINST SERBS, JEWS AND ROMA IN THE INDEPENDENT STATE OF CROATIA DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR

1. The Fifth International Conference on Jasenovac,

- Starting from the fact that in the present-day Republic of Croatia the memory of the genocide committed during World War II against Serbs, Jews, and Roma by the quisling government of the Independent State of Croatia, which at that time also included the area of today's Bosnia and Herzegovina, especially the Muslim people, whom they called "the flowers of the Croatian nation", has been deliberately and systematically blotted out;
- Bearing in mind that the casualty rate of this genocide, especially the number of victims in Jasenovac, has not only been suppressed in the Croatian public media and quasi-historiographic works, but also radically diminished to a mere 40,000 killed Serbs, Jews and Roma, just as Franjo Tudjman, the first president of the Republic of Croatia, did in his capacity as a historian;
- Having in mind that nowadays some very influential and very partial parties in Croatia present the Ustasha, as perpetrators of genocide in the Independent State of Croatia, along with Ante Pavelic, as fighters for Croatia's national liberation and independence, based on alleged historical and national rights of the Croatian people;
- Given the fact that the historically proven genocide against Serbian, Jewish and Roma people has never been properly condemned by politicians, either in Tito's communist Yugoslavia or the present-day Croatia; that unlike the German people, who have accepted responsibility for the Holocaust committed in their name by the Nazis, the Croatian people have never taken responsibility for the genocide committed in their name; and that the Roman Catholic Church has failed to condemn the crimes of genocide in the NDH, the way it has condemned crimes committed at other World War II execution sites across Europe and apologized for the involvement of some of its members in them;

Given that the authorities of the People's i.e. Socialist Republic of Croatia, as a federal unit within the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia (FPRY), and later the SFRY, as well as the authorities of the present-day Republic of Croatia, as an independent state, have never offered to pay any reparations to the victims of genocide and their descendants;

- Given the fact that the execution sites at which the victims of this genocide were tortured, massacred and killed, and the mass graves into which they were thrown and buried without due respect or a respectable funeral, have never been marked and protected in a proper way;
- Since Ante Pavelic and many of his associates fled the Independent State of Croatia after the war using the so-called rat lines, along with the support of some Vatican prelates and clerics, and that many of them have not been tried in the country, which would have led the Croatian people to acknowledge the unfathomable crimes committed on their behalf, and to their moral enlightenment and purification;

1. Keeping all this in mind, the Fifth International Conference on Jasenovac hereby concludes that:

- The Ustasha crimes against Serbs, Jews and Roma during the Second World War in the Independent State of Croatia were a premeditated and planned genocide, as defined by the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on the 9th of December, 1948;
- In the perpetration of this genocide, 700,000 Serbs, 23,000 Jews and 80,000 Roma were tortured, robbed, raped and eventually killed by the Croat Ustasha in the Croatian system of concentration camps Jasenovac alone, used for the extermination of Serbs, Jews and Roma and the regime's ideological opponents, only because they belonged to another nation, religion or race;
- The Independent State of Croatia was the only country during World War II which had concentration camps for the extermination of children, located in Stara Gradiska, Jasenovac, Ustica, Jablanac, Jastrebarsko, Rijeka near Jastrebarsko, Gornja Rijeka near Krizevci, and Lobograd, in which 42,791 Serbian, 5,737 Roma and 3,710 Jewish children were killed, according to still incomplete investigation;
- The crime of genocide in the Independent State of Croatia is, by its proportions, closest to the Holocaust committed in Nazi Germany against the Jews;
- During the perpetration of this genocide, many Serbs were forced to change their national and spiritual-historical identity, for the sake of salvation of bare life, and give up their Orthodox Christian faith and accept Catholicism under duress and threat of death;

2. Based on these conclusions, the Conference requests that:

- The Republic of Croatia, as a state of the Croatian people, accept, following a decree by its highest authorities, the historical and every other responsibility for the genocide committed against Serbs, Jews and Roma during the Second World War in the Independent State of Croatia, including the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- All of the Crime of Genocide sites be marked and protected in an appropriate manner, and that the memory of its many victims be kept;
- the entire complex of the Jasenovac concentration camps used for the extermination of Serbs, Jews and Roma be preserved and maintained as a the victims' memorial;
- A programme of construction and preservation of the Memorial Area Donja Gradina, which would be a continuation of the project of construction of Donja Gradina set up in the 1980's, be drawn up and implemented;
- A single date be set in the Republic of Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republic of Srpska and Republic of Serbia to commemorate the victims of the genocide committed in the Independent State of Croatia – Serbs, Jews and Roma;
- The Republic of Croatia determine within a reasonable period of time and pay fair reparation to the genocide victims and their descendants.

The Conference expects the international public, especially the states of the Second World War anti-fascist coalition, to support this Declaration on the genocide in the Independent State of Croatia, so as to help it come to light after seventy years of waiting.

Banja Luka, 25.05.2011.