

**A MESSAGE FROM PETER GINGOLD,
PRESIDENT OF THE ASSOCIATION OF THE SURVIVED
FROM AUSCHWITZ, FRANKFURT AM MAIN**

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With "Nevermore Auschwitz!" the war against Yugoslavia!

If I could participate in and provide an opportunity to address your meeting¹ with a couple of words on behalf of those who have survived the holocaust, I would say the following:

The war against Yugoslavia was waged with a new kind of lie about Auschwitz, which particularly contributed to the German population to approve the NATO aggression. What is a new lie about Auschwitz? In contrast to the old one that denies Auschwitz, makes it banal, the latest kind of lie about Auschwitz makes the most horrifying crime in the world's history innocent, monstrously claiming that, when it comes to Kosovo, the idea was to prevent something alike. Not casually that Scharping, the minister of war, a couple weeks prior to the beginning of the war had paid a visit with a group of soldiers of Bundeswehr to the memorial Auschwitz to declare there that it was necessary, in order to prevent repeating of Auschwitz, that German soldiers should go to Kosovo. Thus, using Kosovo, the war against Serbia had already been prepared.

The new kind of lie about Auschwitz was essentially a basis to psychologically wage a war shamelessly instrumentalizing Auschwitz for the war propaganda. Night after night, the TV pictures of mutilated corpses, endless processions of people, who mainly ran away from bombing, surely also expelled, but suggesting as if the destinations were extermination camps, industrial factories of death like those of Auschwitz. Extermination, genocide concentration camps, Serbian soldiers equal to those of SS, Milošević equal to Hitler, expelling equal to holocaust, the mass media were stuffing the heads night after night. From March 24, Germany was waging war with "Nevermore Auschwitz". What a monstrous embellishing of the most horrifying crime against humanity in its history, when all the high values of German poets and philosophers "truth, beautiful and good" were dispelled in Auschwitz! And equalize that with the civil war in Kosovo, no matter how terrible it is! That was a new kind of lie about Auschwitz! That what was happening in Kosovo was so much exaggerated as if preventing of a new holocaust was in question. Destruction of

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¹ A scientific meeting "Yugoslav Crisis: Lessons for International Law", held on 19 and 20 May, 2000, at the Faculty of Law in Niš. A selection of papers read at the meeting makes the contents of this volume.

"worthless lives", millions of people exterminated like vermin, millionfold industrially killed, only because they were born. Six million of Jewish lives, half million of German gypsies and Romanies as well as millions of Slavs. Almost all of my relatives were exterminated in gas chambers. I had to hide my two-year old child into a hiding place to save it from the gas chamber. Oh, if millions of the destined to die then were only thus endangered, no matter how bad it was, only to be expelled, but that they could survive! What a monstrosity to equalize that with events in Kosovo! What a shamelessness to use a new kind of lie about Auschwitz to justify the war against Yugoslavia contrary to international law! That was why our open letter to the ministers of foreign affairs and defence, written by those who had survived the holocaust, was faxed to both minister already during the first days of the war. It was sent to media as well. But, it would have not been made public at all if an amount required for a whole page in "Frankfurter Rundschau" had not been collected by our friends, without that we would have never been able to pay DEM 40,000 needed for such an advertisement. It was how our letter reached the public, but the desks of the federal chancellor, both ministers, Scharping and Fischer, as well, who immediately reacted denying that they had compared Kosovo with Auschwitz.

I was inundated with reactions. Endless number of approvals by telephone calls, fax, piles of letters. I was told by many people that they had copied and delivered the letter, for tens of thousands times taken to people, at demonstrations and warning guards. It was a sign how people can be mobilized against a war. Yet, most deeply we were moved when we were advised by the Faculty of Law in Niš what that letter meant to them.

What an unbelievable shamelessness to justify the aggressive war against Yugoslavia by Auschwitz. We must not allow that all future wars should be justified in that way. We must not allow Germany to be again humiliated in that way, to deprive herself of the care for the Nazi past, to unburden herself from the historical ballast. Let us save ourselves from such kind of overcoming the past! As for the German history of recent times, it was just the Germans in the frontline who were obliged to do their utmost to prevent that war, in any case to stay away from Yugoslavia, there being thousands reasons for that. Auschwitz has been so far considered as a warning against war and barbarism, nowadays, however, Auschwitz is considered as a moral excuse for aggressive wars! That must not be allowed!

Who could ever in this country (Germany), after May 8 and the sea of blood and tears behind us, imagine again a war in Europe, particularly from the German territory. First of all not forgetting how many countless victims were a price paid to come to May 8, 1945, to save the mankind from the Nazi savagery. 25 million of the Soviets only. Compared with the number of inhabitants, it was the Serbs who had the greatest number of victims fighting the German fascism. A mention of this has been done in our letter. There was hardly a person in Europe, hardly anyone in this country, who did not speak: Nevermore! Nevermore a war! Finally, it was the Organization of the United Nations that resulted from there, the Charter of which we have cited in our letter: "to save the succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind, ... to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security" ... And not the last is the existence of UN, an achievement of the antifascist resistance.

"Nevermore a war!" turned over into "Nevermore Auschwitz!" The war that there should be nomore Auschwitz! Let us save ourselves from that monstrously shameless forgery! Anybody here knows: it was fascism and war that made Auschwitz possible. Therefore: Neverome fascism, nevermore war and therefrom nevermore Auschwitz.