

# **Demonstration by the Association of Victims of the Nazi Regime (VVN) at Berlin's Lustgarten on the Day for the Commemoration of the Victims of Fascism (September 12, 1948)**

## **Abstract**

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In June 1945, only a month after the end of the war, concentration camp survivors founded the first prisoner committees as well as the committees for the victims of fascism [Opfer des Faschismus or ODF]. From these emerged the regionally-based Association of Victims of the Nazi Regime [Vereinigung der Verfolgten des Naziregimes or VVN], which united at a meeting in Frankfurt in March 1947 to become the national VVN Council [Rat der VVN]. Reflecting the general anti-fascist consensus that prevailed in the Soviet occupation zone, the VVN was an ideologically mixed organization: its deputy chair, Heinrich Grüber, was a Protestant pastor and former concentration camp inmate. Nevertheless, the association's Communist members increasingly relegated non-Communists to the sidelines. Additionally, antisemitic agitation during the Slansky affair in 1952 – which was dressed up as “anti-Zionism” – prompted many Jewish members of the VVN to leave the GDR for the West. The VNN was finally dissolved in February 1953; in the GDR, it was replaced by the Committee of Anti-Fascist Resistance Fighters [*Komitee der Antifaschistischen Widerstandskämpfer*].

In addition to establishing the committee for the “Victims of Fascism,” the Berlin Magistrate also declared September 9, 1945, a memorial day for the victims of National Socialism. The first commemorative celebration was held at Werner Seelenbinder Arena. (The arena had originally been called Neukölln Stadium, but was renamed after the well-known Communist resistance fighter.) In the following years, the commemorative events were held in Berlin's Lustgarten. The VVN participated in the events for the first time in 1947.

## **Source**

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Source: Rally of the Association of the Persecuted of the Nazi Regime (VVN) in the Berlin Lustgarten in Mitte on the occasion of the Memorial Day of the Victims of Fascism. View of the Lustgarten and Altes Museum with the banner “Fighters against fascism”. Photo: Jochen Moll. bpk-Bildagentur, image number 30017958. For rights inquiries, please contact Art Resource at [requests@artres.com](mailto:requests@artres.com) (North America) or bpk-Bildagentur at [kontakt@bpk-bildagentur.de](mailto:kontakt@bpk-bildagentur.de) (for all other countries).

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