

## Lernen aus der Geschichte e.V.

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Das mehrsprachige Webportal publiziert fortlaufend Informationen zur historisch-politischen Bildung in Schulen, Gedenkstätten und anderen Einrichtungen zur Geschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts. Schwerpunkte bilden der Nationalsozialismus, der Zweite Weltkrieg sowie die Folgegeschichte in den Ländern Europas bis zu den politischen Umbrüchen 1989.

Dabei nimmt es Bildungsangebote in den Fokus, die einen Gegenwartsbezug der Geschichte herausstellen und bietet einen Erfahrungsaustausch über historisch-politische Bildung in Europa an.

Excerpts from reports written by students of the Friedrich von Bodelschwingh Schools in Bethel about their history internships at the Majdanek Memorial Site\*

[...] The subject of our work experience is very interesting and varied, as we saw during our group work. I feel we have learned a lot, both historically and emotionally. [...]

[...] This work was a great experience for me. The work in the memorial was interesting, but was too closely related to the group work in school. In spite of this, the intensive involvement in the subject matter was very important to me. I have gained many new insights, and now the success of our work is dependant on how it affects others. The work as such was good, I have come to understand how difficult it is to read source literature and have learned how to read into the subject.

[...] The work in the memorial was very important, as the camp reminded us how important it is to inform people about the past and this proved to me in a very forceful way what my own role in the process is. I was surprised how well I was able to deal with the visit to the concentration camp, though I may have been suppressing my feelings. The walk through the camp, especially the end with the flower ritual, was very important for the process of understanding and remembrance, but I am not sure if I would have succeeded had I been by myself. The ritual of placing a flower was very important to me. It was also important to be able to see something different and to gain a wider view.

[...] From the very beginning I was very interested in and excited about taking part in the work experience in Poland. The task was a challenge for me, to do this kind of work was an important step in my life. I really enjoyed my time in Lublin and return home with new views on certain questions and issues. I feel that this is the crucial lesson I learned from the work experience! [...] Working in a memorial was exciting. Naturally there were also moments in which I could no longer stand the sight of the premises, maybe even because I knew too much about what had happened there! But aside from these moments, I feel good when I think about Majdanek and our work there. I have realised how important it is to preserve such memorials and that donations and words are not enough.

[...] After our two-week stay in Lublin and our class work in the memorial I can say it was

worth coming here. It is important for me to say that the work in the memorial was an experience I will never forget, and that it is much easier to concentrate on and deal with the subject while at the location. This internship suited our series of lessons well, as we had previously learned about most of the necessary background information. When it comes to the actual work, I can say this was the first internship in which I actually did useful work. The texts we compiled in group work are not the most important thing to me. The crucial part of the internship are the knowledge and impressions I gained through the work. The texts and the video will help others benefit from our work and may inspire other people's initiative. [...] While conversations with contemporary witnesses, Mr. Wysok or Björn were important to me, just being there was what impressed me most. [...]

[...] During the internship my task was to compile information leaflets for the visitors of the Majdanek museum. In my opinion this was a very useful task, as the leaflets provided visitors to the museum with an introduction to the memorial. The work on the information leaflets was largely successful. While completing my task I was able to learn new things about the memorial. The group work was very interesting for me, because it also taught me to get along with a particular group over a longer period of time. Before the project began I was worried I would not get along with the group, but luckily this was not the case.

I was most anxious before we left and while we spent time in the memorial. It was hard to deal with the inhuman deeds of the Nazis. Some days were very difficult, as we learned a lot about the holocaust. May humanity learn from the past. [...]

\* The reports are compiled from the internship projects of 1996 and 1999. At the end of their stay in Poland, all students wrote a report on their experiences. They all had the possibility to change their reports after some time at home.

From: Stollberg-Wolschendorf, Beate: *"NS-Geschichte vor Ort erfahren. Praktikumsberichte der Friedrich-von-Bodelschwingh-Schulen Bethel (Bielefeld/BRD) in der Gedenkstätte Majdanek.* In: Tomasz Kranz (Ed.): *Bildungsarbeit und historisches Lernen in der Gedenkstätte Majdanek.* Lublin, 2000: pg. 197-199.