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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.

**Student Contribution to the exhibition "Berlin Initiative for 'Eastern Workers'"  
Soviet forced laborers in Germany: an exhibition at the 'Red Rathaus' from July 7<sup>th</sup>  
through the 20<sup>th</sup>, 2000.**

10th grade students at Sophie Scholl High School in Berlin-Schöneberg formulated the exhibition's closing statement:

"We are convinced that our generation as well must take responsibility for what happened over 50 years ago in Germany. The history of forced laborers has received much too little notice in the past. And they are often not properly recognized as victims.

It seems only few are aware that these people were interned in work camps where they were forced to live under inhuman conditions, where they were starved, tortured and worked to death.

We must consider the fact that many contemporary witnesses are already quite old and soon may no longer be with us. Then there will be no one left to tell of these terrible deeds. Thus we feel it is our duty to preserve their history for future generations.

Getting to know Katherina Derwjanko, who was interned in Liebenau, and her brother Wassily, who was forced to work on a bunker in Berlin-Schöneberg, has made us aware that the numbers in the history books on National Socialism also represent individual lives. Meeting the victims personally gives you some idea of their pain and suffering. And that can be quite an experience.

Our contact with the Derwjankos made us realize for the first time how ashamed we felt when talking with them, and others like them, about what happened in this country where we live. We greatly admire their courage in returning to the place where they suffered something which dominates their lives to the present day.

And incredibly, our own government also makes us feel ashamed by continually delaying reparation payments. You could almost get the impression that those responsible are counting on the victims' advanced age and waiting for their death. Not even 50 years have passed, and already

former forced laborers are again being mocked by those companies that shamelessly used them and profited from their work.

We should not forget that money could never make up for what people like Katherina and Wassily had to suffer. It was much too horrible for that. Even today, former forced laborers are discriminated against and called traitors in their own countries. It is absurd that they are made to feel ashamed for having been forced into labor.

Rather we should show them that people in Germany are interested in their history. But financial support is also important, for the countries, which supplied most of the forced laborers, are quite poor. The relatively small sum the companies would have to pay would in many cases be a great financial support for the people. The stories the Derewjanko family has told us have given us some idea of how little money and means they possess. Even the country in which they live places unbelievable hurdles in their path when it comes to certifying their status as former forced laborers in Germany, and their indemnification. We simply cannot understand why these people are still made to suffer and feel ashamed after six decades, and why they, for the most part, must still help themselves."

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