Youth for Dora

Our association feels very linked to the outlined topic. "Jugend für Dora e.V." was established in 1995 on the initiative of former prisoners of the Concentration Camp Mittelbau-Dora.

While the association firstly consisted of students from the region of Nordhausen who wanted to deal more intensively with the history of the former Concentration Camp and the former prisoners, many new members and members who grew with the association have already passed a professional education or started an academic study or are employed. But "Jugend für Dora e.V." still is a sphere of activity for students and adolescents. The voluntary work is increasingly networking, a fact which is also owed to an international association network – our members are not only German but also from other European and non-European countries.

We are especially confronted with that outlined breach. It is not only the fact that the association was established on a Concentration Camp survivors' wish, it is also the special importance of the contact to the history witnesses; on the anniversaries of the liberation of Mittelbau-Dora we take care of the survivors and interviewed them. We also meet survivors on our travels. That's how intensive contacts and friendships originated.

We see ourselves as an actor on the cut surface between the civil society, the memorial and survivors and want to take responsibility with trend-setting projects at this specific point.

If you have any questions or would like to promote us, please contact:

Jugend für Dora e.V.
c/o KZ-Gedenkstätte Mittelbau-Dora
Kohnsteinweg 20
D-99734 Nordhausen

Phone: +49 (0)3631 495817
E-mail: kontakt@jfd-ev.org
zukunftderzeitzeugen.blogspot.de
www.jfd-ev.org
www.dora.de
Idea

Since a fairy long time it is pointed out that the memory culture in its praxis is confronted with a breach, as the contemporary witnesses of the National Socialist’s crimes and of the Holocaust steplessly decrease. The point of time approaches when nobody is able to have a share in the debate about this part of the past with his or her own memories.

Above all, this fact brings institutions and educational multipliers working on the history of NS-crimes to new questions: How memory of National Socialist crimes will look like in general? How will anniversaries of the liberation and commemoration ceremonies be arranged, in which no survivors can participate anymore? How will interviews with contemporary witnesses be “replaced” in working with visitors?

Already since years, in organisations and camp-associations only few are active who became victims of the National Socialist regime themselves. Often children of former concentration camp prisoners or committed third persons took over the room they left behind.

Questions and developments of this type are mainly discussed in an academic context. As often as the tragedy is pointed out that soon there will be no survivors anymore, as rarely those who are mainly concerned are involved in searching for answers: the former victims themselves.

Ambition

With our project, we want to make a contribution to include the survivors in that discussion. They shall not be considered to just be bearers or intermediators of memories, as often that happens. In fact they create and co-create a presence and a future, in which the discussion about their past still has an utmost importance.

We want to appreciate and conserve the former prisoners’ personal experiences for future generations in form of a video documentation. Furthermore, the interviews shall document which specific and personal expectations, visions and wishes our conversational partners have regarding to a future remembrance and memory culture.

Interview method and procedure

With different interview teams we want to visit survivors in their nowadays home countries to start up a conversation about our topics. Thereby we are going to visit witnesses in Western and Eastern Europe and Israel.

We want to enable a first harmonization and an interdependence sensitization for the particular wishes and expectations of the involved through mail correspondence in the run-up to the visits.

We want to have two interviews with the survivors (one biographical interview and one interview on the future of remembrance) and furthermore we want to spend some days with our conversational partners to broach the issue of their personal history, current life situation and their wishes to the future without any pressure of time and with space for reflection.

We are going to deal with the different layers of remembrance in our preparation: thereby it is about the individual life situations of our conversational partners as well as about the social context and the different memory cultures in each country we are going to travel.

The filmed interviews shall form the basis of a video documentation and of a brochure.

Cooperation partner

Our cooperation partners are Yad Vashem / The International School for Holocaust Studies in Jerusalem, the International Tracing Service (ITS) in Bad Arolsen and the foundation “Stiftung West-Östliche Begegnungen”. In addition, we are promoted by the Memorial of the former Concentration Camp Mittelbau-Dora.

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