

Train of Commemoration

Example of a 'Good Practice' campaign event in Germany.

in the frame of 9 November Campaign 2007 'Act Against Intolerance'
– International Day Against Fascism and Antisemitism –

They travelled thousands of kilometres by the German “Reichs Railway”, death-bound...

They were more than 12.000 children and young people from Germany alone and over 1.000.000 others from all over Europe, Jewish, Roma and Sinti or simply children of nazi-opponents.

In memory of those who were deported by the German “Reichsbahn”, now again another train rolls through Germany – a Train of Commemoration – with the high mission of paying a journey of memory and dignity to the murdered ones.

For many years now groups of active citizens in Germany have been trying to use the former places of deportation – in this case train stations – as locations for commemoration actions, but they have often faced resistance and ignorance from the involved institutions, like the Deutsche Bahn AG, Europe’s largest railway company, and the Ministry of Transport in Berlin. Nevertheless, the grass-root organisation “Train of Commemoration” together with groups all over Germany and with support of some trade union districts was able to struggle successfully for a nationwide commemoration train tour following the former deportation routes.

The historic train features an exhibition showing the biographies of the deported ones, photo documentations and documents like letters and official orders. The names, background info and history of the responsible perpetrators are also displayed along the wagons of the train. The initiators of this campaign call civil society to take part in the campaign actively by researching the fatal truth of the deported children and young persons. As a matter of fact, among the wagons carrying the exhibition, there are also empty ones which are designated to display the research results of individuals, schools organisations or citizens’ committees. As the exhibition train stops in every station, it becomes a work in progress: people are not only “visitors”, but they can make the exhibition grow and contribute to the Holocaust education in a personal and very positive way.

The impact of this campaign was so amazing as to involve more than 20.000 visitors already now. In every train station along the route, people of all age

queue to get educated and inspire others to take a stand against right-wing extremism, xenophobia, antisemitism and nationalism. More and more cities and communities call for the train of commemoration to stop in their town.

The train of commemoration started its travel in Frankfurt on the 08.11.2007, it will travel over 3000 km and stops at more than 40 train stations before leaving Germany at the end of April 2008 to head forward to its final destination: Auschwitz (Oswiecim, Poland).

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