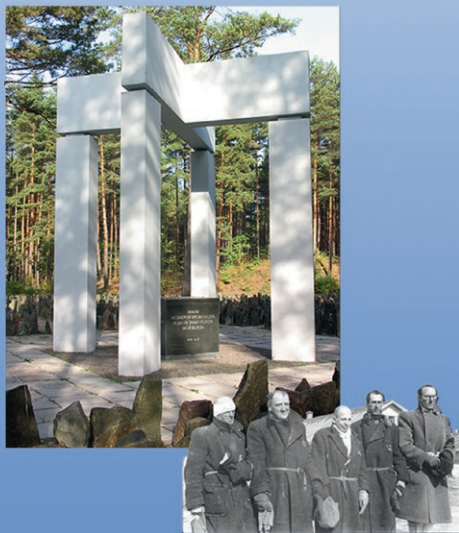


THE EXHIBITION
BIKERNIEKI – FOREST OF THE DEAD

Bikernieki - Wald der Toten

Die Deportation deutscher Juden nach
Riga, ihre Ermordung und das
Gedenken daran



You can download a pdf of the
touring exhibition [16 pieces]
here: www.riga-komitee.de.
The exhibition can be ordered via
email to info@riga-komitee.de.

LIST OF MEMBER CITIES

founding members (23rd May 2000):

Berlin, Bielefeld, Dortmund, Düsseldorf, Hamburg, Hannover,
Kassel, Köln, Leipzig, Münster, Nürnberg (incl. Bamberg,
Bayreuth, Coburg, Fürth, Würzburg), Osnabrück, Stuttgart

further member cities:

Bocholt, Kiel, Lübeck, Wien, Bremen, Steinfurt, Warendorf,
Paderborn, Dresden, Billerbeck, Vreden, Coesfeld, Bochum,
Gelsenkirchen, Magdeburg, Recklinghausen, Gütersloh,
Haltern am See, Marl, Viersen, Herford, Moers, Marburg,
Bünde, Stadtlohn, Dülmen, Drensteinfurt, Ahlen, Werne,
Gescher, Mainbernheim, Krefeld, Rheine, Telgte, Herten,
Ahaus, Südlohn

symbolical members:

Brno, Prague / Praha, Riga, Terezín

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GERMAN RIGA COMMITTEE



IN MEMORY OF THE VICTIMS



1

On 23rd of May 2000 the Federal President Johannes Rau – ex officio patron of the Volksbund Deutsche Kriegsgräberfürsorge [German War Graves Commission] – welcomed representatives of 13 German major cities. Together with the president of the Volksbund they founded the “German Riga Committee” in the presence of representatives of the cities Riga and Vienna. Ing. Erich Herzl’s “Initiative Riga” from Vienna has given a strong impulse for that.

The German Riga Committee is an association of towns and municipalities. Its purpose is to keep alive the memory of more

than 25 000 Jewish citizens deported to Riga in 1941/1942 from their home cities; most of them murdered in the woods of Bikernieki. The German Riga Committee also feels connected to the more than 26 000 Latvian Jewish victims of the Riga ghetto, murdered on the “Riga Blood Sunday” and the days after in Rumbula in order to coop up the people deported from the German Reich. Today the German Riga Committee has 55 members and applications pending.

// 1
“These stones are like an outcry of the innocent people killed here and let you see that the whole place was a scene of executions.”
[Sergejs Rizs]
photo: Volksbund

// title
side view of the shrine of names
photo: Volksbund

WAR CEMETERY AND MEMORIAL SITE RIGA-BIKERNIEKI

The committee's first mission was to build a worthy war cemetery and memorial site for the victims. This was achieved in cooperation with the Latvian partner organization of the Volksbund, the Brethren Cemetery Committee and the municipality of Riga. The Central Council of Jews in Germany and the “Initiative Riga” – founded last century – supported the project. The cenotaph on the central memorial site is surrounded by fields of granite stones. They symbolize the victims crouching before their imminent execution.

The memorial in the Bikernieki wood was inaugurated November 30th in 2001, 60 years after the “Riga Blood Sunday” and 60 years after the depor-

tations from Germany started. At the inauguration 21 bronze shells with lists of names were immured into the shrine of names. The member cities' names are written on stones of polished granite, placed on the memorial site.

The maintenance of the memorial by Latvian and German young people allows close relations as well as a lively exchange of memories between Riga and those German cities where the deportations started.

Memorial main entrance:
Bikernieku iela, 1001 Riga, Latvia. GPS data: 56°57'52.12"N, 24°12'42.28"E.



2

// 2
A forest trail, the “trail of death”, leads the visitors from the central memorial place to the particular mass graves.
photo: Sergejs Rizs



3



4

// 3
Young German and Latvian participants during the commemorative event on July 9th, 2010 at the central memorial place in Riga-Bikernieki.
photo: Uwe Zuchti

// 4
traces of the former ghetto in Riga: faded inscription “KÖLNER STR.” [Cologne Street] on a rusted metal sheet, July 2010
photo: Axel Vogel

REMEMBRANCE AND ENCOUNTER

How can we keep alive the memory of the Jewish victims of National Socialism for the generations to come? The activities of commemoration and education of the German Riga Committee continuously offer occasions and impulses in German municipalities and in Riga.

Coordination of the German Riga Committee

The Volksbund coordinates the activities, initiating regular meetings, symposia and exchanges via international workcamps and joint commemorative journeys. The focus of the Riga committees' work is to trace the multiple narratives as well as historical complexity in order to contribute to international understanding in today's Europe.

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