INTERNATIONAL YOUNG PEOPLE’S CENTRE

THE BUCHENWALD AND MITTELBAU-DORA MEMORIALS FOUNDATION
THERE ARE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CULTURES,
BUT NOT BETWEEN CIVILIZATIONS.
WHEN WE LIVE IN SOCIETIES, …
IT MEANS THAT EVERY INDIVIDUAL
HAS THE SAME FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS.
AT THE SAME TIME,
THOSE RIGHTS MEAN
THAT PEOPLE CAN LIVE TOGETHER,
THAT THEY RESPECT ONE ANOTHER,
THAT THEY BEAR RESPONSIBILITY
FOR ONE ANOTHER –

THAT IS CIVILIZATION.

Stéphane Hessel, survivor of Buchenwald Concentration Camp and French diplomat, participant in the drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948.
SEEING, UNDERSTANDING, REFLECTING
THE HISTORICAL-POLITICAL EDUCATION WORK AT THE BUCHENWALD INTERNATIONAL YOUNG PEOPLE’S CENTRE

4 Buchenwald, The Historical Site
6 The Buchenwald Memorial
8 The Buchenwald International Young People’s Centre
8 Core Principles of Education Work
10 Facilities
12 Formats
14 Contents
16 Methods
20 Service
23 Further Educational Offers at the Memorial
In July 1937 the SS had the forest cleared on the Ettersberg near Weimar to make way for the construction of a new concentration camp. The facility was to aid in the suppression of political opponents, the persecution of Jews and Sinti and Roma gypsies, and the permanent exclusion of Gemeinschaftsfremde ("strangers to the community") – among them homosexuals, homeless, Jehovah’s Witnesses and persons with criminal records – from the deutscher Volkskörper ("body of German people"). Buchenwald soon became a synonym for the National Socialist concentration camp system. Once the war had started, people were deported to Buchenwald from all over Europe. Altogether more than 250,000 persons were imprisoned in the concentration camp on the Ettersberg and its 136 subcamps. The SS forced them to perform labour for the German armament industry.

At the end of the war, Buchenwald was the largest concentration camp in the German Reich. More than 56,000 persons died here as a consequence of torture, medical experiments, undernourishment and heavy labour. Over 8,000 Soviet prisoners of war were shot to death in a specially installed killing facility. Members of the resistance formed an underground organization in the camp in an effort to check the SS’s ravages to the extent possible. The “Little Camp” nevertheless became the hell of Buchenwald. Enfeebled inmates were still dying by the thousands shortly before liberation.

When the Americans reached Buchenwald and its subcamps in April 1945, Dwight D. Eisenhower, supreme commander of the Allied forces, wrote: “Nothing has ever shocked me as much as this sight.”
1945 – 1950

In August 1945, the Soviet occupying power converted the main section of the former concentration camp into one of its so-called special camps. Primarily local Nazi party functionaries were interned here, as well as adolescents and persons who had been denounced. All contact to the outside world was prohibited, the right to a fair trial utterly neglected. Of the 28,000 inmates, more than 7,000 died – above all in the winter of 1946/47 – of diseases caused by undernourishment. The camp was dissolved in February 1950, shortly after the founding of the German Democratic Republic (GDR).

1950 – 1990

In 1958, at the site of the mass graves established by the concentration camp on the southern slope of the Ettersberg, the GDR erected a concentration camp memorial which was visible for miles around. Its sheer size was intended to reflect the magnitude of the crimes committed at Buchenwald, but it served the GDR primarily as a national monument. It focuses primarily on the members of the German Communist resistance. Their history was exploited as a means of legitimizing the Socialist Unity Party (SED)’s claim to power in the GDR. Entitled the “Nationale Mahn- und Gedenkstätte Buchenwald”, this facility was developed into the largest German concentration camp memorial, comprising exhibitions, an archive and a library.

Since 1990

Following the end of the GDR, the memorial was reorganized according to a new concept now also providing for commemoration of the fates of other victim groups: monuments, commemorative stones and newly cleared areas of the camp grounds now call attention to the fates of Jews, Sinti and Roma and other inmates. At the same time, new permanent exhibitions on the history of the concentration camp, the Soviet special camp and the memorial itself were developed. Most recently, special exhibitions such as “Topf & Sons” – about the cremation oven manufacturers – and the Commemorative Buchenwald Railway Path raise a greater awareness of Buchenwald Concentration Camp’s embedment in National Socialist society. In the memorial’s education work, the chief focus is on the visitors and their questions.
**Time Lane**

At Ettersburg Castle, a former summer residence of the dukes of Weimar, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe staged *Iphigenie auf Tauris* and Friedrich Schiller completed his drama *Maria Stuart*. In 1937, an old ducal hunting lane once belonging to the castle was used by the concentration camp architects to lay out the course of the camp fence. The “Time Lane” addresses this physical adjacency and links Ettersburg Castle, as a symbol of Weimar Classicism, with Buchenwald, thus provoking thought on the proximity of culture and barbarianism.

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**Commemorative Buchenwald Railway Path**

Beginning in 1943, the Weimar-Buchenwald railway line served the purpose of deporting prisoners to the concentration camp and from there to the subcamps for forced labour. The transports to and from Auschwitz also travelled this route. The commemorative path invites visitors to retrace the fates of the deportees and the link between the camp and the outside world.

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**Camp Gate**

The gate building marks the boundary between the SS area and the inmates’ camp – between the “people’s community” and the “strangers to the community”. Its cynical inscription *Jedem das Seine* ("To Each His Own") can be read only from the inside. The building also houses the concentration camp *Bunker*, or detention cells, where inmates were subjected to torture. Commemorative rooms today pay homage to their fates.

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**Crematorium**

The cremation ovens are now a grave marker for the dead of Buchenwald. At the same time, they symbolize the industrial and inhuman treatment of the dead. The history of the Topf & Sons Company of Erfurt, which developed these ovens, sheds light on the embedment of the NS crimes in German society.
Concentration Camp Exhibition
The exhibition on the history of the concentration camp is housed in the former camp storage building. On more than 1,600 square metres of floor space, hundreds of objects, documents and first-hand reports grant insight into the history of Buchenwald. Each of the 160 glass cases corresponds to one of the worksheets provided by the Young People’s Centre.

Art Exhibition
The artworks of former inmates not only convey the horror of the concentration camp, but also bear witness to self-assertiveness and are valuable testimony to human dignity. Also comprising works by contemporary artists, this art exhibition – the only one of its kind in Germany – allows access to the camp history in a way that written documents cannot.

Exhibition
Soviet Special Camp
Located at the site of the Soviet Special Camp graveyard, this exhibition allows an in-depth examination of the camp’s history, its inmates and their fates. Comparisons with other camp systems aid visitors in identifying the special camp’s specific place in history.

Exhibition
History of the Memorial
An exhibition located near the GDR memorial retraces the history of Buchenwald during the GDR. The biographies of former inmates who were excluded from official commemoration document the consequences of this development. The five mainstays of Buchenwald commemoration in the GDR conclude the presentation: Naked Among Wolves – Oath of Buchenwald – Ernst Thälmann – Self-Liberation – Goethe Oak.
Seeing

The point of departure for learning about history is the authentic location – the remains of the camp. They are the material evidence linking present and past. They are enhanced by first-hand reports, original documents, objects from the collection and other illustrative material. As direct testimonies, they trigger our power to imagine the past, and they trigger questions: **LEARNING BY RESEARCHING RATHER THAN SERMONIZING.**

The power to imagine historical events is the basis for empathy and the true comprehension of history.

Understanding

Young people who visit the memorial can no longer remember the past directly. Therefore: **REMEMBRANCE AND COMMEMORATION NEED INFORMATION.** This information is not an end in itself. It serves the purpose of learning what we must not do – on the basis of the specific historical example, and in keeping with the spirit of indivisible *humanitas* and indivisible human rights. It sheds light on the political, legal, social and cultural conditions under which human beings become perpetrators. It preserves the experience of the victims of persecution and the members of the resistance. **THIS INFORMATION IS ACTION-ORIENTED.**
Communication

The MEMORIAL EDUCATION WORK PROMOTES DIALOGUE and is itself dialogically structured. The rupture in civilization brought about by National Socialism is countered by basic solidarity with the human being as a human being. Intercultural and transnational encounters and discussions are therefore core elements of the memorial education work.

Reflexion

The past is critically examined with the aim of raising an awareness of the dangers threatening democratic, human-rights-based culture in the present and future. The young people’s own past experiences and observations of the present are therefore a further starting point for the learning process. MEMORIAL EDUCATION WORK DOES NOT DICTATE HOW HISTORY IS TO BE SEEN, BUT SENSITIZES PARTICIPANTS AND ENCOURAGES A REFLECTIVE HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS and independent ethical judgement.

Memorial Education Programme

MEMORIAL EDUCATION WORK does not dictate how history is to be seen, but sensitizes participants and encourages a reflective historical consciousness and independent ethical judgement.
The Buchenwald Young People’s Centre carries out its education work in two former SS caserns. Used during the GDR era as an administration building and a youth hostel, these buildings underwent thorough renovation in 1999 and 2007, and were converted to meet the needs of a modern seminar facility. With numerous special-use rooms and overnight accommodations for more than 70, they can now host several groups at once.

Seminar rooms
Four rooms for groups of 25 to 70 persons; multi-functionally equipped, e.g. with aerial view of Buchenwald Concentration Camp, beamer, flipchart.

Multi-media room
Access to the digital collections and the card catalogue of the memorial library; equipment and material for producing newspapers, posters, exhibitions, films and audio presentations (6 computer workplaces).

Paul Goyard Room
Seminar room for 36 persons; exhibition of approximately 60 facsimiles of drawings and photographs from the memorial art collection; can be used for an examination of the importance of art and culture in the concentration camp.

Workshop
Facility for producing drawings, collages or documentations on display boards as well as working with plaster and clay (15 workbenches)

Kitchen and dining room
For summer work camps (seats 37), can also be used as a seminar room.
Reading rooms
Two study rooms, each with a small reference library of approximately 100 volumes. Numerous thematically and topographically classified files holding first-hand reports on the past events and historical documents.

Facilities outside the Young People’s Centre which can also be used for the education work:

Restoration workshop
Restoration of found objects from Buchenwald Concentration Camp (accommodates 6 persons).

Library
Specialized library with more than 36,000 volumes, among them numerous reference works and over 50 periodicals (library and archive together accommodate 14).

Archive
A collection of material and reports by inmates of the concentration camp and the special camp; historical documents (archive and library together accommodate 14).

Model rooms
Six rooms with models of the camp grounds (accommodate up to 30).
FORMATS

All seminars and workshops are accompanied or led by a member of our education staff. This person is also available beforehand for detailed advice on the duration, contents and methods of the individual programme modules.

Our work is geared toward young people and adults age fifteen and older. Programmes for persons with special requirements, for example the blind / partially blind or youth social work groups, can also be carried out.

The Young People's Centre staff is capable of accompanying programmes in German, English, French, Spanish, Italian, Russian, Polish, Romanian, and Hungarian.

To register for one of the educational offers, please contact the Young People’s Centre directly:

jbs@buchenwald.de (Ms. Sylke Schmidt)
For teenagers

MEMORIAL EXCURSION
This two-to-three-day offer is geared specifically for school classes in the ninth year and higher with an interest in delving deeper into the historical events by means of an excursion to a memorial. In addition to guided tours of the grounds for the purpose of conveying basic information, the primary focus is on thematic work in small groups and discussion with members of the education staff.

YOUTH PROJECT WORK
Within the framework of scholastic and extracurricular project weeks, the Young People’s Centre offers groups the opportunity to devote themselves in depth to topics of their choice over a period of three to five days. In the context of guided research work, for example, material is collected which then serves as a basis for collages, staged readings or other presentations. The latter can be realized at the memorial or back in the group’s home setting.

INTERNATIONAL WORK CAMPS
Every summer, international two-week work camps for young people are offered in cooperation with the Action Reconciliation Service for Peace (ARSP), the Service Civil International (SCI) and the Vereinigung Junger Freiwilliger (VJF). Apart from theoretical studies, groups can also be involved in practical clearance and excavations within the framework of the memorial’s archaeological activities. To register please contact our partners.

For adults and disseminators

SEMINARS
In the context of educational offers for adults, various political-education organizations – e.g. churches, associations, labour unions, the army and universities – can use the Young People’s Centre for three-to-five-day seminars during which they concentrate on themes related to the history of Buchenwald.

CONFERENCES
For lectures and conferences on current topics – pertaining, for example, to the culture of remembrance or right-wing extremism – the Buchenwald Memorial offers important and highly relevant points of departure for discussion. For this reason, various partners use the resources provided by the Young People’s Centre for their further-education programmes or interdepartmental conferences.

DISSEMINATOR SEMINARS
The education work carried out at Buchenwald not only presents a challenge to the memorial education staff, but also to the disseminators who decide to bring their groups to Buchenwald. In two-to-three-day seminars, the various means of working at the memorial are introduced and methods of teaching history discussed.

THE STAFF
With their various professional qualifications as historians and cultural studies specialists, archaeologists and teachers, social and political scientists, the members of the Young People’s Centre staff represent the broad foundation of memorial education work at Buchenwald. In keeping with the character of the memorial as a site of European history, the staff is international, multilingual and interculturally competent.
The history of Weimar and Buchenwald provides a unique historical resonator for historical-political education work. This uniqueness lies in the proximity between the camp and Weimar as a cultural centre, and in the access thus offered to the past: a form of access which makes the potentials and limitations of human action—in the positive as well as the negative sense—directly experienceable. The members of our staff will be glad to help you arrive at a suitable selection of themes for your group.

**Buchenwald Concentration Camp (1937–1945)**

**INMATE GROUPS**
In Buchenwald, one of the largest concentration camps in the German Reich, people from more than fifty nations were held captive. Biographies and worksheets convey the fates of individual victim groups, among them Jewish inmates, Sinti and Roma gypsies, members of the resistance, homosexuals, Christians, women in the Buchenwald subcamps, children and adolescents.  
**Sites**: monuments and commemorative stones / Little Camp / exhibition on Buchenwald Concentration Camp

**LABOUR**
Initially, apart from the actual camp construction, labour in the concentration camp served the purpose of breaking the inmates’ wills. As time went on, hundreds of thousands of persons were made to perform forced labour for the German armament industry in Buchenwald’s 136 subcamps.  
**Sites**: quarry / exhibition on Buchenwald Concentration Camp / Sonderbau (“special building”) / excursion to Mittelbau-Dora Concentration Camp Memorial  
**Link**: www.dora.de

**EVERYDAY LIFE**
The everyday lives of the inmates were dominated by roll calls that went on for hours, despotism and torture, hunger and death, inadequate hygienic conditions and the medical experiments carried out by the SS doctors.  
**Sites**: detention cell building / muster ground / disinfection building / wooden barricade of the inmates’ infirmary / restoration workshop (work with found objects) / exhibition on Buchenwald Concentration Camp

**SELF-ASSERTION AND RESISTANCE**
Even under SS terror, inmates endeavoured to maintain their dignity. They documented the horrors of the camp in drawings. Members of the resistance in Buchenwald succeeded in establishing one of the most important underground organizations within the concentration camp system.  
**Sites**: art exhibition / exhibition on Buchenwald Concentration Camp

**Weimar – Buchenwald**
As both the centre of German Classicism and cradle of the first German republic, Weimar was a site of particular interest to the National Socialists. The entire city and its cultural activities were to be reorganized to conform to the NS ideal of “German culture” for the “people’s community”. In the capital of the Schutz- und Trutzgau (“protection and defence district”) Thuringia, buildings such as the Gauforum or the Hotel Elephant were erected. To this day, the city of Weimar provides evidence of what was meant by the National Socialist aim to establish a new, racially defined society.  
**Sites**: Weimar (guided tour) / Commemorative Buchenwald Railway Path / Time Lane  
**Link**: www.weimar-im-ns.de
Perpetrators and Co-Perpetrators

THE SCHUTZSTAFFEL (SS)
Since 1990, numerous remains of SS structures have been re-exposed to view. They facilitate thoughts about the people who organized and committed the crimes at Buchenwald.

Sites: zoological garden / caserns / villas / guard path used by the Buchenwald concentration camp guard units

THE TOPF & SONS COMPANY
The cremation ovens in the Buchenwald crematorium were manufactured by a company in Erfurt. The history of its engineers and mechanics, who also developed the crematoria in Auschwitz, takes visitors back to everyday life in German society during National Socialism.

Sites: Crematorium / former facilities of the Topf & Sons Company (Erfurt)
Link: www.topfundsoehne.de

Soviet Special Camp (1945 – 1950)

The existence and realities of the special camp were taboos during the GDR era. The critical examination of the various biographies of the internees – from their arrest to their lives after the camp’s dissolution – is a particularly effective means of learning about the establishment and function of the special camp system.

Sites: exhibition on the Soviet special camp / graveyard

History of Buchenwald Memorial

Based on the memory of Ernst Thälmann, chairman of the Communist party, and the monumental memorial on the southern slope of the Ettersberg, Buchenwald became an integral element of the GDR perception of history. In conjunction with the new conception of the memorial after 1990, the latest research results were placed at the disposal of the public, and new means of access were granted to the history of Buchenwald.

Sites: GDR memorial / memorials and commemorative stones / exhibition on the history of the memorial
A POSSIBLE DAY AT THE MEMORIAL

Depending on the interests and abilities of your group, the Buchenwald Memorial education work offers you a wide range of methods, all based on the concept of “learning by researching”. In this way, every group can find its own approach to the history of the place. In this context, emotions are regarded not as potential impediments but as means of identifying one’s own interests. On the following pages you will find only a selection from the broad spectrum of possible methods. Before your visit, we will be happy to advise you on the most suitable options for your group.
1. METHODS FOR GETTING STARTED AND IDENTIFYING TOPICS OF INTEREST

ASSOCIATIVE PICTORIAL METHOD:
Which photo caught my attention?
Why do I find it interesting?

EXPLORING THE MEMORIAL:
Where was this picture taken?

FORMING SMALL GROUPS:
What do I want to concentrate on?
Placing a significant found object at the disposal of a small group.

MODEL ROOM:
How to the individual images combine to form an overall picture?

Thematic worksheets give participants orientation on the memorial grounds, pose thought-provoking questions and provide basic information.

2. ACTIVITY- AND PROCESS-ORIENTED METHODS

DIGITAL COLLECTION:
Who took the picture?
What did survivors say about my found object?
Link: www.buchenwald.de/fotoarchiv

HISTORICAL GROUNDS:
Where was the object excavated?
How does that site look today?

EXHIBITIONS:
How (in what context) is my found object presented in the exhibition?

RESTORATION WORKSHOP:
Work with original found objects.

SEMINAR ROOM:
Work with first-hand reports and historical documents.

3. RESULT-ORIENTED METHODS

WORKSHOP:
Organizing exhibitions, making collages.

SEMINAR ROOM:
Presentation of research results.

ATELIER:
Premiering a staged reading.

ASH GRAVE:
Planning and organizing a commemoration service.
The seven stages of archaeological monument preservation at Buchenwald

Archaeological excavations have been in progress at Buchenwald Memorial for more than fifteen years. The objects found – meanwhile numbering more than 10,000 – touch our emotions and provoke thought. Events otherwise almost impossible to grasp are reflected in them. They are material evidence of past camp realities, sources which allow themselves to be deciphered and decoded.

Individual groups staying at the Young People’s Centre for several days can be involved in one or more of the stages of archaeological monument preservation at Buchenwald – based on the respective focus of the current research work. Here the “learning by researching” concept takes on a special contour.

1. Research
   – in exhibitions and the digital collections

2. Site clearance / excavation

3. Preparing the site for presentation

4. Recovering, sorting, storing
   – in a former concentration camp barrack

5. Restoration
   – in the restoration workshop

6. Cataloguing
   – in written records and the database

7. Presentation
   – in exhibitions and the digital collections
The seven stages of archaeological monument preservation at Buchenwald

18/19

Further educational offers
The two buildings housing the Young People's Centre provide accommodations for two groups of up to 37 persons each. A choice can be made between dormitory rooms for several persons, or single and double rooms.
Buchenwald Memorial is situated approximately 8 kilometres north of Weimar and can be reached easily by public transportation. Bus line 6 in the direction of Buchenwald (not Ettersburg) runs hourly between the city and the memorial. It can be boarded in the city centre (e.g. Goetheplatz) or at the main station. Link: www.sw-weimar.de

We greatly appreciate any interest you might have in visiting the Young People’s Centre. We will be happy to carry out an in-depth advisory session with you in preparation for your visit. For information on the costs of room and board, please consult our website. Link: www.buchenwald.de
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER READING:

Buchenwald Concentration Camp 1937-1945.
A Guide to the Permanent Historical Exhibition.
ISBN: 3-89244-695-5

Konzentrationslager Mittelbau-Dora 1943-1945.
Begleitband zur ständigen Ausstellung in der KZ-Gedenkstätte Mittelbau-Dora (guide to the permanent exhibition at Mittelbau-Dora Concentration Camp Memorial). By Jens-Christian Wagner on behalf of Stiftung Gedenkstätten Buchenwald and Mittelbau-Dora, Göttingen, 2007. ISBN: 978-3-8353-0118-4


KZ Buchenwald / Post Weimar.
Documentary (in German with English sub-titles) by Margit Eschenbach. A Chronos Film production on behalf of Stiftung Gedenkstätten Buchenwald and Mittelbau-Dora, 1999. (In addition to the main film [approx. 32 min., colour/b+w], the DVD features historical U.S. Army footage [approx. 25 min., b+w], biographies of witnesses to the historical events, a chronicle and a ground plan of Buchenwald Concentration Camp and its subcamps.)

“Sehen, Verstehen und Verarbeiten”.


Imre Kertész: Fateless.
Evanston/USA, 1996. ISBN: 978-0810110490


Jorge Semprun: What a Beautiful Sunday!


The Memorial

The young people’s centre

The historical site

The young people’s centre

YOUNG PEOPLE’S CENTRE

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- become members free of charge
- receive support from us on school projects
- integrate their own school projects into our programme
- reserve guided tours with us at short notice or join our individual guided tours
EXPLORING BUCHENWALD WITH A GUIDE / ACCOMPANIMENT

General and thematic guided tours for groups
By previous arrangement, the memorial offers general guided tours (90 minutes) and in-depth, thematically oriented guided tours (2 hours). Since these tours are in high demand, we request registration at the Visitor Information Centre well in advance. The tours cost 26 Euros per group (reduced fee: 13 Euros).

General guided tour for individuals
Several times daily from 10:30 am onward: 90 minutes (offered by the Förderverein Buchenwald e.V.; donation requested).
Link: www.foerderverein-buchenwald.de

One-day programme for school classes
Following respective preparations within the framework of class instruction, school classes can carry out a one-day programme (6–8 hours) at the memorial, either independently or with the accompaniment of a member of the education staff. The programme can be flexibly planned with a combination of modules such as tours of the grounds, films, work with documents and found objects, etc. Please register with the Young People’s Centre secretarial office. The programme costs 30 Euros per group.

EXPLORING BUCHENWALD ON YOUR OWN

Visitor Information Centre
Orientation and recommendations regarding current offers and special exhibitions at the memorial; wide range of thematic flyers/brochures available.

Cinema
Documentary on the history of Buchenwald Concentration Camp, in German with English or French subtitles. Hourly showings, duration: 30 minutes (documentary on Soviet Special Camp No. 2 also available on request). For groups, previous registration at the Visitor Information Centre is requested (+49 [0] 3643-430 200).

Multimedia guide
in eight languages and optional visual component. Available at the Visitor Information Centre for a rental fee of 3 / 5 Euros. Duration: 2–3 hours. For groups, previous registration at the Visitor Information Centre is requested (+49 [0] 3643-430 200).

Bookshop
Teaching material and wide selection of specialized literature on: inmates’ biographies, National Socialism and concentration camps, special camps, the culture of commemoration.

Website
Current information and free downloads of flyers and printed material for project work at Buchenwald:
www.buchenwald.de
An information brochure of the
Buchenwald and Mittelbau-Dora Memorials Foundation
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