

## Dear all who are interested,

We herewith invite you to join the **Days of Peace and Reconciliation** in the Memorial of former Concentration Camp Buchenwald (near Weimar, Germany), to take place on April 25-30, 2020.

## Our Vision

We feel the need to turn to our personal and collective wounds. We see this turning as loving action on the way to inner and outer peace.

- o We feel called to acknowledge the wounds of our time, to learn from them and to heal them where possible. This strengthens our determination not to cause new wounds.

- o We recognize our fears, defense strategies and indifference and let arise from this the strength for acting courageously.

- o We commit ourselves to embody the insight that the recognition of differences and diversity makes interconnectedness possible.

- o We want to understand what causes war and what causes peace, so that we can act peacefully.

- o We see ourselves as part of a learning community and are ready to contribute to peaceful vividness.

If this vision inspires you, you are welcome to share the PeaceDays\* in Buchenwald with us.

\* Even though these days we respectfully continue the tradition of the ZenPeacemaker Bearing Witness Retreats in memorials and other wounded places, we have decided not to call them "retreats". Rather, we want to emphasize that we are not retreating, but exposing ourselves to exposed places to make collective peace and serve our amazing, challenging, beautiful world.

## Our motivation

We - Reiner, Dorle, Judith and Kathleen, the initiators and spiritholders of this event - experienced in Retreats in Auschwitz (and other places of suffering) that a place of atrocity can turn into a place of learning, love, and connectedness. That motivates us to create situations like the upcoming **PeaceDays** in Buchenwald as spaces for people to experience this "wonderous transformation".

We estimate the harmonic as well as the diverse aspects of our spiritual traditions - ZenPeacemakers, Ridhwan School and our jewish-christian backgrounds. They motivate us to explore how we can encourage each other on our personal pathway, and how we may wake up together.

We are also inspired by the European transboundary dimension of our collaboration (Danish-Dutch-German).

## Personal backgrounds

Dorle, Reiner and Kathleen had their first encounter on the grounds of Auschwitz-Birkenau in 2011 as participants of the ZenPeacemakers' Bearing Witness Retreat with Bernie Glassman Roshi. Since then we are connected as friends. Reiner has participated in two Retreats at Buchenwald Memorial in 2009 and 2010. Dorle and Judith organized a Retreat in Auschwitz in 2014 for Ridhwan School students.

In 2018 the four of us organized the PeaceDays at Buchenwald Memorial for the first time.

## A first schedule draft

**Arrival: Saturday, April 25** at [International Young People's Centre \(IYPC\)](#). There will be an informal welcome and get-together in the afternoon for those who arrive early. "Official" opening session after dinner.

**From Sunday, April 26, to Wednesday, May 29**, there will be a similar frame for each day:

- Morning meditation outside (if raining, inside).
  - After breakfast, there is the opportunity to be part of working programs at the Memorial. This may be helping in projects at the Memorial Path of the former Buchenwald-Bahn (Railway from Weimar up to the Camp - kind of bodily demanding work, outside), or assisting in restoring items found on the grounds (at the restoration workshop - more easy work, inside).
  - After lunch on Sunday to Wednesday, we co-create special spiritual services in or outside the Camp (like chanting names of victims, guided tours...).
  - After dinner, we practice (walking) meditation, Inquiry, Council in small groups in different places on the Campgrounds, each guided by a member of our circle.
- Whenever it fits and is wanted during the days of our stay, Kathleen will offer creative writing opportunities to do journaling on our experience.
- On Wednesday after dinner** we will have a special ending program outside.
- On Thursday, April 30** after breakfast, there will be a short closing celebration. Then, departure.

### General considerations

- For all of us it is highly challenging to give our full commitment to 'abiding where we are' in the sense of quiet attention and mindfulness, to let the place be our teacher. It is the responsibility of each of us - and all of us together - to keep that in mind and body. We hope that the program we designed will serve this aim. If you feel you need time on your own, feel free to skip parts of the program after letting us know.
- If you want to contribute to the name-reciting Ceremonies, please bring a list with names of people who suffered during the Holocaust (or later). If you do not have names from your own family or friends, you can download files with names of victims here: <http://www.yadvashem.org>
- We will create a kind of altar in the middle of our meditation space. You are invited to contribute to its unique shape with symbols, pictures, and items that are meaningful to you.
- Also, if you want, you can take some candles with you and burn a candle somewhere on the site.
- For any logistical questions, Reiner is the best person to ask.

### Registration

If you decide to participate, please fill in the registration form attached to this invitation and send it back to Reiner (Email addresses below).

### About ZenPeacemakers Deutschland e.V. and your donation

[ZenPeacemakers Deutschland e.V.](http://www.zenpeacemakers.de) is a nonprofit association with the legal right to raise donations and support projects in accordance with the ZenPeacemakers' statutes and intentions to foster peace around the world. As we organize these **PeaceDays**, we ask you to donate 375€ (minimum - if you can, please donate more, so that we can offer people with less money to also participate). We will pass your donation on to the Buchenwald Memorial to cover the costs of our stay and any other upcoming needs. After you have transferred your contribution to the ZenPeacemakers Deutschland e.V. bank account (we will provide these details in the registration form), Reiner is ready send you a donation certificate on demand.

With warm regards,  
Dorle, Reiner, Judith and Kathleen

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