

Dear (Zen) Peacemakers, dear all who may be interested,

We invite you to join **PeaceDays** at the Buchenwald Memorial, a former concentration camp (near Weimar, Germany), scheduled to take place August 28 – September 02, 2021.

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.

- 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.
- We recognize our fears, defense strategies and indifference and let arise from this the strength for acting courageously.
- We commit ourselves to embody the insight that the recognition of differences and diversity makes interconnectedness possible.
- We want to understand what causes war and what causes peace, so that we can act peacefully.
- 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 with 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 become a place of learning, love, and connectedness. That is what motivates us to create and offer the upcoming PeaceDays in Buchenwald as a space for "wonderous transformation."

Our diverse spiritual traditions and backgrounds; ZenPeacemakers, Ridhwan School and Jewish-Christian, create a unique harmony. And our diversity motivates us to explore how we can encourage each

other on our personal pathway, that we may *wake up* together. We are further inspired by the European transboundary dimension of our collaboration (Danish-Dutch-German).

Our Personal Backgrounds:

Dorle, Reiner and Kathleen first encountered each other on the grounds of Auschwitz-Birkenau in 2011 as participants of the *Zen Peacemakers' Bearing Witness Retreat* with Bernie Glassman Roshi. We have been friends ever since. Reiner has participated in two Retreats at the Buchenwald Memorial; in 2009 and 2010. Dorle and Judith organized a Retreat in Auschwitz in 2014 for Ridhwan School students. Kathleen joined the Auschwitz retreat two more times, in 2014 and 2015, and co-created a book about this practice. In 2018 the four of us conducted the first *PeaceDays at the Buchenwald Memorial*.

Our Tentative Schedule:

Arrival at the Buchenwald Memorial; Saturday, August 28 at International Young People's Centre (IYPC). There will be an informal welcome and get-together in the afternoon for those who arrive early. The "Official" opening session is after dinner.

The daily schedule will be the same from Sunday, August 29, to Wednesday, September 1:

- Morning meditation outside (if raining, inside).
- After breakfast, there is the opportunity to work on projects at the Memorial. There are projects that are more physically demanding like helping to restore the Memorial Path of the former Buchenwald-Bahn (Railway from Weimar up to the Camp) or less physically demanding, indoor work such as assisting in restoring items at the Restoration Workshop.
- After lunch from Sunday to Wednesday, we will have guided tours of the area with a chance to co-create spiritual rituals such as doing meditative practices and chanting the names of victims.
- After dinner, we will practice (walking) meditation, Inquiry, Council in small groups held in different places on the Campgrounds. Each will be guided by a member of our circle. At various times, Kathleen will

offer opportunities to do creative writing and journaling about our experience. On Wednesday, after dinner we will have a special ending program outdoors. On Thursday, September 2 after breakfast, there will be a short closing celebration. Then, departure.

General Considerations:

We all find it highly challenging to give our full commitment to “abiding where we are” in 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 believe 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.

- You can bring candles with you to burn at sites on the grounds.

- For any logistical questions, Reiner is the best person to ask.

Registration:

If you decide to participate, please fill in the [Registration Form](#).

Peacemaker-Gemeinschaft Deutschland e.V. is a nonprofit association entitled to raise donations and support projects in accordance with the ZenPeacemakers' statutes and intentions to foster peace around the world. As a participant we ask that you donate a minimum of 375€. If you are able, please donate more, so that we can offer people with less money the chance to participate. We will pass your donation on to the Buchenwald Memorial to cover the costs of our stay. After you have transferred your contribution to

the Peacemaker-Gemeinschaft Deutschland e.V. bank account (we will provide these details in the registration form), your registration is valid. Reiner will send you a donation certificate upon request.

With warm regards; Dorle, Reiner, Judith and Kathleen

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International: zenpeacemakers.org