

After the Wall Teaching Materials

The built environment

The *Gedenkstättenkonzeption* and *Buchenwald's* dual history

The *Gedenkstättenkonzeption*

Resources

The following exercise draws on information provided in the document 'Fortschreibung der Gedenkstättenkonzeption des Bundes', available at: http://www.bundesregierung.de/nsc_true/Content/DE/___Anlagen/BKM/2008-06-18-fortschreibung-gedenkstaettenkonzeption-barrierefrei,property=publicationFile.pdf/2008-06-18-fortschreibung-gedenkstaettenkonzeption-barrierefrei

Comprehension Questions

Vorwort, Einleitung and Grundsätze der Förderung von Gedenkstätten und Erinnerungsorten (pp. 1-4)

1. When was the *Gedenkstättenkonzeption* drawn up?
2. What were its three aims? Which one of these do you think is the most important? Why?
3. How is the *Gedenkstättenkonzeption* said to contribute to German democracy? Do you agree with this argument?
4. In what ways are National Socialism and the GDR compared in the report? Do you think the comparison is appropriate? Why (not)?
5. The third full paragraph of p. 2 states that historical facts and research are the foundations of memory. What do you understand by this claim? What are the tensions between historical facts and memories?
6. Read the principles for the memorial sites on p. 2. What do you understand by the term heterogeneity in this context? How will the aims relating to heterogeneity be achieved? Do you think this principle is important? Why (not)?

7. What role does education play in the principles for the memorial sites, and why?
8. Who does the Federal Government plan to bring together once a year (top of p. 3)? Why do you think these groups have been selected? Do you think other groups should also be invited to the events? If so, who?
9. How is a Gedenkstätte defined in this document?
10. Which five criteria will be taken into account for the provision of support for a memorial site? Which of these do you think is the most important? Why?

Buchenwald's Dual History

Resources

The following exercises draw on the information provided on the *Buchenwald* website (available at: http://www.buchenwald.de/index_en.html).

Recommended further reading on this subject: Bill Niven, *Facing the Nazi Past* (Routledge: 2002), pp. 10-61.

Comprehension Questions

(The information required to answer these questions should be accessed through the above website. Click 'The Buchenwald Memorial', then 'History', and finally 'National Buchenwald Memorial'.) Familiarise yourself first with the historical information on both the Concentration Camp and the Soviet Special Camp No. 2.

1. What was planned for the Buchenwald site in 1949?
2. What decision did the SED make in 1950? Why did it come to this decision? Do you agree with it?
3. How was the site developed in the 1950s? What impact was the site intended to have on its visitors? How did this fit into the context of socialism?

4. How was Soviet Special Camp No. 2 represented during this period?
5. How was Buchenwald reconceptualised following the fall of the Wall? What were the new aims of the memorial site? Do you think these aims are appropriate? Why (not)?

Class Activity: The Success of the Memorial

Divide into pairs/small groups and choose one of the following sites within the memorial to research and present to the rest of the class:

Outdoor facilities:

Inmates' camp, SS area

Cemeteries

Commemorative Buchenwald Railway Path

Commemorative sites

"Time Lane"

Exhibitions:

Buchenwald Concentration Camp

Soviet Special Camp No. 2

Art Exhibition

History of Buchenwald Memorial

Each group should consider the following questions:

- What is the purpose of the site?
- What can you learn from the site?
- Would you like to visit the site? Why (not)?

After each group has presented their site, discuss the following questions as a class:

- As a whole, does the memorial site fit in with the aims outlined in the *Gedenkstättenkonzeption* and the information provided about Buchenwald's history on the website?
- Do you think the site works as a dual memorial? Why (not)?
- How would you respond to the site if you or your family had been persecuted during National Socialism?
- How would you respond to the site if you or your family had been persecuted during the GDR?
- What changes would you make to the site?