

Jugend für Dora e.V.
Workcamp 2005

*10th anniversary of
Youth for Dora*



10

The Present

KZ-Gedenkstätte Mittelbau-Dora
einmalige Aufführung

27 August 2005 h. 17:00 im Neubau



Workcamp 2002 - Installation and Pouchoir in Ellrich

„Young memory – 10 years Youth for Dora“

- a way with increasing perspective -

Every story has a beginning, but sometimes it's difficult to distinguish in the real life. This moment was for Youth for Dora in 1995, the significant year of the 50th anniversary of the liberation of the concentration camps. Our nowadays youngest members just started to read and write the alphabet. People of different age came together to dedicate their interest to the history of the Mittelbau-Dora Concentration -camp. For the old people, survivors, was it more than facts the wish to transmit their experiences and ideas to the next generation. The motivations to approach the history and the site were various, but first of all to get to know the place and its background, to understand and to move on something for the future, also to talk and to listen to people who were deported and with young people of ~~beginning~~ ~~interest~~ those first wishes and ideas various projects, contacts and linkages grew and brought up new issues. At the early beginning there was only the wish and the message that the statue as a registered society might be useful to raise financial means. The following weeks and months and almost

years for the elaboration of a legal statue confronted us totally un-experienced people with real problems of society life such as e.g. lawyer appointments and the establishment of a bank account, until we finally got registered at the Local Court Nordhausen with the number 541 in May 1997.

Thus "E.v.chen" was born! So we called our young organisation following the German shortcut for registered society "e.V.". At that time we had already managed our first summer workcamp in 1996. All doubts of the first year were disappeared and a remarkable "target group" found. Burocratic procedures, such as accounting and "tax return" remained very problematic for us from the first steps; instead we always spilt over of great project ideas. Son one event led to the next, from week-ends with extensive cooking experience to challenging workcamps, exciting study tours, special events organised on our own and of course personal interviews with former inmates from all over Europe. Summa summarum we spent at least 230 full days of Youth for Dora life

within the last 10 years, means almost two third of one calendar year.

We build up contacts into more than 10 countries. In Belgium and France it's mainly based on personal contacts with survivors or their representing associations, in Poland it's a town twinning between Nordhausen and Ostrow/ WLKP, and to Italy, Romania and others it founds the way by workcamp contacts and many, many individual stories.

Finally our study tours led us already into six countries, by the way we travelled about 20.000km by car and by train and succeeded more or less to practice numerous languages.

Following the statistics we gained partly more than 40 members, elected a chairperson and a vice-chair. Besides the members, five brochures – partly in different languages – leaflets and numerous information materials are the most visible results of our work.

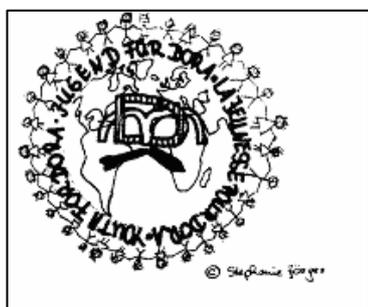
We succeeded to place our priorities in a right order and hope to continue doing so in the future.

All the comprehensive work was only possible thanks to Brita Scheuer, only one name, but many phone calls, letters, e-mails, proposals and documents, which enabled us to manage our organisations work. Sometimes this needed to be discussed enjoying a good bottle of wine. But we also had the pleasure to profit from the kind guys, who are doing their "civil service" at Brita's side. Over the years nine highly motivated guys carried our food and work tools, accompanied us and took us anywhere our plan just intended to bring us and sometimes very individual wishes.

The memorial became not only our office place, but also Youth for Dora home. We settled in, use it extensive, stock our staff and enjoy the hostability. With the time both the building and the staff changed. Mrs. Klose accompanied our first steps as director of the memorial, while Mrs. Jani motherly looked after us and many overwhelmed us with well meant advice and some technical workers confronted us with their rules. For special operations we totally trusted Günter Bollmann, such as for a ride to Ellrich to make an information panel fundament, in case of broken spade or also bike. We examined everybody hard and didn't disappoint them hopefully. When Jens-Christian Wagner became director of the memorial in 2001, he was already for years a good observer of our activities and we are glad to get his support for our projects and to profit from his work and ideas.

When we were looking for groups similar to ours at the early beginning ten years ago, there was nothing to find in our age. We were unique when we started our very open structured way, making contacts and collecting ideas and issues. Out of this matrix we "weaved" again and again new projects together and created finally the nice network of today. It made our association rich and open, attractive for young and almost young people to come together. Hopefully this will stay, continue and increase so for long, long time.

Congratulation Youth for Dora! All the best for the next years! It's not easy to get adolescent/ adult – you will need a lot of support!



The small story of the Youth for Dora logo

Right after our first workcamp we started to think about a kind of emblem and to collect first suggestions.

Stephanie Jörger offert us one of the few visual designs – and wie accepted it prompt. Thus the small chain of people with our organisations name in German, English and French, around the world with the former logo of the memorial builds already since nine years the symbol for our activities.

JUGEND FÜR DORA E.V. – YOUTH FOR DORA

activities - goals – intentions – a summary

Jugend für Dora e.V. – youth for Dora is an international youth organisation, which is prior dealing with the history of the former Concentration Camp Mittelbau-Dora and its system of subcamps.

In 1995 former inmates expressed the wish to create an association of interested and committed young people, who are continuing the memory work of the survivors, thus the „hell of Dora“ will never be forgotten. From a small group of young people from the region, who were following this intention, were over the time a registered society established, connected in a nice network with other organisation, individuals on national and international level.

Main objective of the organisation is to contribute a small part for a better understanding of the history of the Nazism. In detail it means a lot of awareness work for historical places and happenings as well as its effects in the past and impacts on the present, to provide information, to preserve the commemoration and the memory, to raise awareness and create a generation overlapping cooperation as well as an intercultural communication and cooperation in different projects.



*Wir stehen bereits mit den Schuhsohlen auf der Erde,
Der "Besten der Welt"
und zweifellos wäre es besser, sie auszuziehen und
mit nackten Füßen zu laufen"*

Max Dutilleux (former inmate)

Paris, 20.10.1998

Liebe Dorothea,

die Mitglieder des Comité européen Dora-Mittelbau & Kommandos wissen sehr die wichtige Arbeit zu schätzen, die die „Jugend für Dora“ bei der kürzlich in Nordhausen veranstalteten Tagung geleistet hat.

Ihr habt Euch dieser Aufgabe sehr professionell gewidmet. Wir gratulieren Euch hierzu und danken Euch von Herzen.

Ich habe nicht versäumt, Jacques Brun von Eurer Geschicklichkeit zu berichten und davon, dass ihr großzügig Eure Zeit geopfert habt. Ihr wisst, wie ungeheuer wichtig es ist, der Jugend die Notwendigkeit des Sich-Erinnerns bewusst zu machen. Daß Ihr der Tagung eng verbunden wart, beweist, dass Ihr von dieser Notwendigkeit überzeugt seid.

Herzlichen Dank nochmals an alle, und freundliche Grüße!

Jean Mialet

President

Comité européen Dora-Mittelbau & Kommandos

Youth for Dora - destinations and provenance

European Connections



Hiking tour with the workcamp 2000



Mecklenbourg study tour, May 2004



Workcamp – a kind of family life

From the Dora memorial – into the region and world

The term “workcamp” has been given to a new form of meeting and exchange in recent years. Local characteristics and conditions, organisations, associations and trade unions formed the development and face of historical places in a different way.

Youth for Dora has enjoyed some of its best experiences with this form of meeting, and now workcamps have become a yearly event when potential projects are discussed and planned, thanks to the participants who have decided to continue working with our organisation. Usually we have seen ourselves much more as part of the group than as responsible managers,



HARZRIGI - home of our workcamps since 1997 !

even were this de facto and sometime we had to face it in critical situations. The personal feeling for this position and the outside perception are of course different visions. Only sometime we analyse the personal benefit of the one or other happening for our individual development. The further development of single aspects, issues or contacts is rather in the foreground than ourselves, but that means again a kind of results of reflection, which happens more in the sub conscience and we are less aware of it. With the growing distance of time we are realising the importance of some experiences for our development. But already one single workcamp ex-

perience may have a great impact on the way of thinking and going on like the short letter from Saskia participant of the workcamp 1997 and her words from 2004, and some other statements show.

Je retourne parfois à Dora, non pas pour retrouver un lieu maudit, mais pour rendre un hommage à mes camarades qui ont souffert et qui sont morts <là-bas>. Ce camp avait été oblitéré pendant des dizaines d'années car les grandes puissances ne voulaient pas que soit connue l'origine de la conquête spatiale. Maintenant Dora est connue dans le monde entier. Il n'est pas question de reconstruire le camp ni le Tunnel, mais de bâtir un mémorial à la mémoire des milliers de morts. Et c'est ce qui se fait.

J'ai eu à plusieurs reprises l'immense plaisir de rencontrer les équipes de Jugend für Dora, ces garçons et ces filles qui viennent de l'Europe entière pour, par leur travail, chercher des traces de ce qu'était le camp. Ils ont des outils très délicats, ils creusent dans la zone des blocks. Lorsqu'ils sentent quelque chose ils utilisent des pinceaux pour dégager lentement ce qui se trouve là, un reste de notre <civilisation> disparue. Et puis la chose est portée au <laboratoire> avec beaucoup de soin. On se croirait en Egypte, à Karnak ou à Abu Simbel.

On se rend compte que ces jeunes ne font pas ce travail par curiosité. Ils pensent à ceux qui étaient là il y a maintenant soixante ans.

Merci à toi, Dorothea, merci à tous tes amis qui font ce si beau travail. Et merci à tous les gens du Gedenkstätte.

Yves Béon, (France, ancien déporté, 2004)

Milestones

July 1996	1. International Workcamp in the memorial Mittelbau-Dora Excavation works at the fondamentation of the former camp prison, called bunker. with participants from Germany, Belgium and France	-
August 1997	2. International Workcamp in the memorial Mittelbau-Dora Cleaning along the borderline of the former inmate's camp and essay to make a visitors path following the former electric fence of the camp. Thus the extent of the area should be made more visible and accessible. with participants from Poland, Netherlands, Ukraine and Germany	Dora -
August 1998	3. international Workcamp of the Youth for Dora association in Ellrich-Juliushütte The first time of our YfD activities a sub-camp got focused for a workcamp project, with excavation and maintenance work as well as interviews with survivors. Participants from Czech Republic, Belgium, Netherlands, France, Poland and Germany	Ellrich -
August 1999	The 4. international Workcamp guided us to places of forced labour in Northern France, the Museums of La Coupole/ St. Omer, Eperlec and Mimoyeque, the Alliees landing beaches in the Normandy and finally to Paris. We met KZ survivors and representatives from the French Association and European Committee as well as old resistant.	France -
August 2000	5. international Workcamp Cleaning up of the 56 accommodation barracks and construction of a small wall of 15/ 20 brick stones, each painted with its original block number. In same time we made a brochure with a map of the camp providing information about personal biographies for many barracks.	- -
August 2001	6. International Workcamp Following the project from the previous year, inventory of found objects from the area of the 56 accommodation barracks of the prisoners camp: registration, cleaning and exposition of the found objects	Dora -
August 2002	7. international Workcamp Following the railway line Nordhausen – Ellrich we did five installations, at or close to sites of former KZ camps or construction sites. By this way we wanted to show the spatial density of sites of suffering and death, but also the close neighbourhood of “civil” and “KZ”.	Region Nordhausen
August 2003	8. international Workcamp in Nordhausen A signing project to memorialize at the KZ sub-camp Boelke-Kaserne and the cemetery of honour. A pink line was painted on the pavement guiding from three different places in the centre of the town to the cemetery. The line was illustrated with names and words of KZ prisoners and liberators. Thus we confronted and informed people in same time about the close relation between the Memorial and civil life in Nordhausen at the time.	-
August 2004	The Workcamp turned out, because of lacking financial support.	none
August 2005	9. international Workcamp Theatre project (with Marco Pejerolo, un Italian theatre regisseur) about human behaviour and compoment in dealing with the history of the concentration camps. How we are behaving from the state of “innocence” until we get to know from the “horror” of the concentration camps? What kind of expressions and results we can show?	- Dora -



Excavation work in Ellrich 1998



2005 – workcamp atmosphere



workcamp 2003 - introduction in Ellrich

Un ami me proposa de l'accompagner à un camp d'été en Allemagne; il s'agissait d'une rencontre internationale sur la problématique concentrationnaire. Interlogué et curieux, je décidai de le suivre avec une demi douzaine de jeunes Belges.

Nous débutâmes avec la visite du camp de Dora et son tunnel. Je réalisai alors que mes connaissances sur les camps de concentration étaient plus que fragmentaires. En effet, notre enseignement ou formation était livresque et finalement peu axé sur cette période douloureuse.

Nous étions alors animés d'un sentiment enthousiaste qui nous rassemblait autour d'un projet, en l'occurrence le dégagement du bunker – prison cellulaire. Mais la réalité prit encore une autre dimension lorsque nous rencontrâmes des survivants de cet enfer car ils nous confrontèrent à l'univers concentrationnaire au travers de leur expérience personnelle. Mieux qu'une leçon d'histoire ou qu'une mise en garde face au totalitarisme, cette discussion autour d'un témoignage respirait la vérité et le danger de certains régimes.

Des jeunes de différents pays d'Europe allaient connaître quelque chose de riche. Pendant deux semaines, nous allions vivre au rythme des découvertes des cultures, d'une région et bien sûr de jeunes gens de notre âge. L'enente fut excellente et cordiale: dans le fond, n'est pas cela l'Europe? Celle des relations humaines. Des amitiés internationales ne tardèrent d'ailleurs pas à se créer.

Vivre directement un tel séjour est sans doute un enrichissement humain de la plus grande importance.

Philippe (Belgique, Workcamp 1996)

"The first thought that pops into my head is the overall feeling I had that whole three weeks; a feeling of understanding, being part of a group, I think I could call it a safe feeling. I think by saying that for me I immediately pin down everything that was important for me. Those many years ago when fear was the base for making choices.....those three weeks choice were made from a base of faith. The warm feeling we all rolled into at the house on the hill made me realise what extreme differences we lived in... and it made me even more aware of the fact how important the work in Dora is. For me it's all about never forgetting what happened in those awful years, because if we are able to never forget the risk of it happening again will be smaller.

One other very important thing is, that I experienced as a young girl (I think, I was around 14 when I was at Dora) that it is possible to feel a bond with people who speak a different language, now this maybe sounds logical and it feels like that for me. But for many people it's not. For many people it's scary to find them in different cultures and habits.....and again I find myself making a point that can be related to the Second World War...I think that almost every choice made in those years was based on fear.

Okay, I could go on and on with writing about the deeper thought behind the things I experienced but there is so much more!

Looking at the stars at night in the rocking chair in the garden, riding the old bikes in the morning to work, the fresh bread we ate every morning, the walk we had in the woods, the stories of the people who were in Dora and lived to tell the story to us youngsters, Agatha my lovely friend from Poland (with whom I would love to see again), the barbecue in the evening and so many, many more moments that will always be a part of me growing up. It feels like I got something extra in those 3 weeks... And I'm happy to get the chance to thank you for it. Thanks I had the best time!!!!!! "

Saskia Schretler (Netherlands, Workcamp 1997)

My school send me here with other people: Erika, Virginia and Francesca because we had won a scholarship.

I love this place and I also love all the people that I Know here.

I love the work in the forest.

I think that here I can do something good for me and for the memory.

I think that all people must Know what has happened and they must remember this.

I'm very happy to stay here because I'm feeling better.

Here I'm in peace with myself and with the others.

The work isn't hard because I do it with love and thinking that what I do is important.

I don't work for myself but for the others and that is so good.

Here I do things that I never thought I would do.

Here I learned something new about the concentration-camps.

I would like to stay here with all these special and fantastic people.

I love it when we go for a walk together.

I love when people from different countries cook their special food.

I love this workcamp because I have the possibility to get to Know so many people from all over the World.

I can learn new words from their languages and things about their culture and have new friends.

I think that it is very important to meet survivor prisoners, because with their testimony, we can try to understand better what has happened. Only to read what has happened in the books, it's incredible, but with a testimony, we have something sure and we are more near to this fact and this person.

I would like to come here the next year if it is possible, because this place has something special!

I would like to tell my friends about my experiences and I hope that they would like to do the same experience.

Gama Ursula Kipulu (Italy, 2001)

Hi! I am Kasia and I am from Poland. Why? Because I am interested in history and I think that Workcamp is a very good idea. I am very, very glad that I am here with my friends. Here the atmosphere is unbelievable. People are always happy, smiling and friendly. We worked, cooked, painted... People were speaking in foreign language for me here, and therefore sometimes it was very funny. We painted signs on streets this year. We wanted to show people a road to the cemetery in Nordhausen, where prisoners of concentration camp in Mittelbau-Dora are buried. I think it is a wonderful idea. I want to thank to everybody. I hope that I will always have got this place in my mind... In my opinion it was a very good time.

See you next year!
Kasia Witon (Poland, 2003)

Statements and messages - living workcamp ideas



Hi! I am again here, because I like the project and I think we must remember the past to learn and don't make again mistakes. Until people will not have the knowledge of the history, the world can't be better. We are doing our task to make more aware people in Nordhausen, but it's no easy. Intolerance still exists. What I can tell about the project? It's cool! The street is very nice with a pig-pig line and the idea of sentences and names of prisoners it's good. I would like to make a twinning between Jugend für Dora and other associations in Italy. Why not in the future?!?

Francesca (Italy 2003)



I came here because I won a scholarship in school. If I think about the last month when I was in Turin I would never have imagined what a beautiful feeling I would have here - I think this Workcamp is a place where people become better inside. This is what happened to me. Staying here with people of different nationalities and doing something „for the whole World“. It's what we call in Italy „lezione di vie“ (lesson of life). I talked about doing something for the whole World because I think that what we do here is really special.

About the work in the forest I can say that it's really interesting to find the rest of the past to try to better understand the survivor prisoner's histories. I think it's really important to meet prisoners and listen to their stories and this is a part of the Workcamp that I like. I worked especially in the barack where we clean the objects that we find in the forest. When I do this I feel like an archeologist and I like it very much.

About the spare time: during the day we went to visit cities like Erfurt or some other cities, I like it because I learn something everyday about everything...people or history and culture of this place. What is also beautiful are the evenings when we cook, eat and talk to the others. After that we go in the garden, play the guitar and sing together...I think it's great!

It's all interesting and cool here. I hope that I will come the next year.

Virginia Callari (Italy, 2001)

Here, we found people who are concerned by the truth of our history. We've been learning every day something new about Dora about all the nations which are here and about us of course. We didn't know nearly anything about Dora now we know it does exist. We wish to everyone to get an experience like that in his short life.

We really hope deeply that it can light up people's mind; anyway it gave us hopes to carry on. Finally, we could feel that everyone knows why they are here and what for.

We think we need more energy to work everyday. Hope life will keep us together, so see you next year.

Nicolas et Jeremy (Paris/ France 2002)



Dear Workcamp (2002),

Now it was the second time with you and all the great people. I have to say... “ever again”. We need more of these experiences!!! (hbush-hurlehar for more work-camps!)

I don't know why, but this year the time runs away. Fuck the fucking fuck!!!

We (me) grateful to the founders of “Jugend für Dora” ! For other wise we wouldn't be here. Thanks thanks thanks. But my special thanks go out to Dr. Scopa and his supporter Birdboy also to the enemy Mr. Language and Guru, unbelievable Pompieri, Ursu, Erika, Daniela, Kathy, Carmen, Anja, Doro, Brita, Asia, Marlena, Lukas, Nicolas, Jeremy, Adam, Tomek!

Sorry, if somebody lost. So now I will stop. I will not press out more of these stupid ideas!

I hope next year again, with all this great people! STOP p.s. thanks to the zivis !!! *Sebastian*



participants of the workcamp 2003!

Jugend für Dora e.V. - Youth for Dora

International summer - workcamp 11.08



Nordhausen - Orbassano - Ostrow - Tulcea - summer 2003

Landschaften - Menschen - Europa - zwischen Kulturlän

My first workcamp! What an experience. At the beginning it was difficult for me to find the right level of conservation. But when the time went by, during the work on the installations, which was sometimes really stressful, and with the evening cooking associations we all talked a lot and the knowledge of each other became better and better. Also the development of Dr. Scopa, his genius little helper Birdboy and the never-ending battle between them and Mr. Language helped us to overcome our shyness. So three very special weeks passed by with good working results, interesting and funny short trips and at last great little evening parties.

Thanks a lot to all workcamp members! I had a really good time!

p.s.: hbush-hurlehar for automatic stairs everywhere!!

Dr. Scopa (2002)

Summer - Workcamp 2005

From 15th to 28th of August

... curious and innocent participants for the theatre workshop arrived from Italy, France, Romania and Germany in Nordhausen – but after two unforgettable weeks under the guidance and all the depending exercises of Marco Pejrolo, Davide and great Erika – everything changed

STEPS OF THE PROJECT





Concetti	Concepts	Begriffe
consapevolezza	awareness	bewußtsein
fiducia	trust	vertrauen
rispetto	respect	respekt
sicurezza	safety	sicherheit
immaginazione	imagination	vorstellung
significato	meaning	bedeutung
discorso	conversation	gespräch
spazio protetto	safe place	sicherer raum/ort
possibile	possible	möglich
luogo del possibile	place of possible	ort des möglichen
dare senso	to give sense	sinn geben
costruire senso	to build sense	sinn bauen
conoscenza di sé	awareness of ourself	selbstbewußtsein





The details make the history and the history memory make the conscience of the humanity for that the mistakes don't come back, it's for this, that we are here in the workcamp. The theatre project is to make aware the people about the important memory of the history through their feelings in the theatre show. Don't forget the history mistakes. Thus the experiences of only two weeks can enable people to feel responsible for a better future.

Jérémy Nedjar (Paris/ France, 2005)



What shall we call it – the rare conversations

Encounters with witnesses of the time

The conversation with survivors, with witnesses of the concentration- and extermination camps became for us and all who spent time with us, something almost natural, still bearing in mind that these encounters are very special and unusual.

We met people from all over the world, got to know their stories and learned of their experiences. Some of them we met again and again and developed quite close relationships. This was not always possible, because of their home countries and their socio-economic backgrounds. We met survivors not only at the camps of Dora, Ellrich or Harzungen, but also on our study tours in their home countries and with their families. They gave us very different point of views and offered us unique insights into their thoughts.

Through various encounters and letters, a deep confidence has developed between both groups of people. Now, we have to learn that these relationships have a limited life. Out of this something new is growing for us, and it's our responsibility to record and pass on their experiences in another way than personal conversations with survivors.

The conversations with survivors have extended our horizon greatly as we have learned from their reports - not only from their own experiences and humiliation in concentration camps, but also from their families' experiences during the war, especially from the rather less known war in Eastern Europe.

Above all was it very encouraging and enriching to hear how survivors were dealing with these experiences after the war.

Encounters and contacts moved forward our way of thinking and promoted questions which formed the development of our association. Conversations and later discussions about the relationships to such places as Wannsee, Auschwitz, Breendonk or south-western France were behind the idea to organise study tours. In same time they gave the impulse for dealing with the history of the concentration-camps and their structure, e.g. in the public performance of the reading from the Yves Béon book "Planète Dora" or during the seminar "Being a Stranger" in Ellrich.

It is very difficult to mention only a few names, but we don't want to hide the great efforts in anonymity. We have to express our great gratitude to at least some people personally: Danke Willi Frohwein and Ewald Hanstein. Merci beaucoup Jean Mialet, Jacques Brun, Etienne Eckert, Yves Béon, Max Dutilleux, Jacques Grandcoin, Guido Schreve et Louis Garnier, Francois Heumann et Henry Bousson. Danku Albert Van Hoey and Albert Van Dijk, Leopold Classens and Josef Huybrechts. Dencuje barco Zbigniew Mikolajczak, Dencuje Otokar Litomisky and Vilem Murice. Bolschoje spasibo Pawel Petschenko and Nikolai Petrowitsch.



French Survivors: Nordhausen's honorary citizen Jean Mialet (with yellow sash) with Louis Garnier and Jacques Grandcoin on the right.

„All my memories from this time of the war 1939 to 45 are connected with the KZ period. I lost half of my family. My father was brutally murdered by the Gestapo at the Fort VII in Posen in January 1942. My 16-year old brother was shot by the SS in June 1944, when my mother and I were in the same so-called "SS education camp ZABIKOWO b/Posen". My Mother was deported to Ravensbrück. I passed through the concentration-camps gross-Rosen, Buchenwald-Langensalza – already with a red point symbolic signed, because I had tried to escape from the sub-camp, and Mittelbau-Dora in Nordhausen.

What matters the youth of Dora, I am your enthusiast, especially for the maintenance of the graves, the search for the death marches, the collection of the interviews. The so-called real historians keep a certain distance from the witnesses of the time; because they are not able provide a documentation. But the individual experiences are just as important as the documents. The Nazis knew this well. That's why the documents of many camps were destroyed and potential witnesses were murdered.

From time to time the evil spirit of that time can be released from the bottle, to have a look on and to close the bottle again, that we are not forgetting, and that people can not blindly lie."

Zbigniew Mikolajczak (Polish survivor, 2005)



middle south France trip: in Grenoble and in the Vercors mountains - autumn 2003

Le 11 avril 1995, notre petit groupe d'anciens du kommando AEG était rassemblé à Dora pour le cinquantenaire de la Libération du camp. J'ai appris plus tard que quelques uns des jeunes étudiantes et étudiants avaient décidé en 1995 de créer "Jugend für Dora" (Une Jeunesse pour Dora).

En août 2000, je reviens une nouvelle fois à Dora à la demande de Dorothea qui organise avec l'association chaque année son "Camp d'été International".

J'arrive donc à Dora le 14 août au début de la matinée où je suis accueilli très chaleureusement. Je suis accompagné dans un endroit de la forêt où une équipe de jeunes travaillent déjà sur l'emplacement d'une ancienne baraque. Ils sont entrain de nettoyer le terrain des bois morts, buissons, et jeunes arbres qui l'avaient envahi. Une fois les fondations mises à jour, les fouilles pourront commencer pour tâcher de repérer et d'identifier la baraque, et éventuellement découvrir des objets pouvant être intéressants pour l'Histoire du camp.

A midi, nous faisons dehors un sympathique repas en commun. En fin d'après-midi, je retrouve tous ces jeunes groupés autour d'une grande table de la salle de réunions. Ils sont venus écouter mon exposé qui sera traduit presque instantanément en Allemand et en Anglais.

C'est donc très ému et assez impressionné, que je me lance à faire un exposé sur ce que j'ai vécu ici il y a plus de cinquante ans. L'exercice est difficile car il est pratiquement impossible de décrire, et surtout de faire comprendre à quelqu'un qui ne l'a pas vécu, ce qui est absolument inimaginable, comme par exemple l'atmosphère de peur, de haine, de brutalité, de folie... qui régnait dans cet "enfer" qu'était Dora durant les premiers mois.

Par contre j'ai été heureux de pouvoir répondre aux questions qui m'étaient posées.

Le soir, les jeunes toujours très chaleureux nous reçoivent à dîner dans leur camp situé à quelques kilomètres de Dora.

J'aurais souhaité pouvoir discuter avec chacun d'eux mais le barrage des langues m'en a empêché; aussi je veux les remercier pour la contribution très importante qu'ils apportent à l'entretien et l'amélioration des deux camps, mais je veux aussi leur dire que je suis très impressionné par l'exemple qu'ils donnent en montrant que des jeunes de pays différents, de langues différentes, de cultures ou de religions différentes peuvent travailler ensemble dans un même but : vouloir apprendre à bien connaître le passé et s'engager à tout faire pour qu'il ne revienne pas demain.

Henry Bousson (ancien déporté, 2004)

Notre papa a été arrêté par la Gestapo à Paris le 11 Août 1944. "Soixante dix sept mille", il est arrivé à Ellrich le 3 Septembre. Il en est reparti le 3 Mars 1945 avec ce Transport de 1602 malades pour la Boelcke-Kaserne.

Là on perd sa trace.

Comment concilier traversée du deuil et mémoire ?

Le travail et la joyeuse amitié de Jugend für Dora sont les meilleures réponses que je connaisse.

Et nous partageons nos mémoires. Elles sont différentes. Nous les portons ensemble.

Témoignage de Philippe Reyx, 65 ans.
Echirolles, Isère, France.

On the road to places – coming back with questions

Travels which we love – need – search for

From the encounters with the survivors and with young people from other countries, we started to develop different study tours. These were planned with clear expectations and were full of the high intensity of a short visit with the burning discussions and the energy that comes from searching and finding out.

The organisation of such trips is based on various fundamentals. Sometimes our wishes and expectations are reflected in the programme on site, already discussed with museums or memorials. Sometimes we also offered a performance, such as the public reading in Peenemünde 1999 that became a far-reaching experience. Afterwards we had our first public discussion with technically rather than socially interested people. Another time it was our spontaneity and curiosity for such places, to Museums like Wannsee or the Museum for resistance in Berlin. However, in almost all cases, personal contacts gave the crucial stimulation to go on a trip. At the very beginning the first trip led us in 1998 to the Anne-Frank-Foundation in Amsterdam, followed by trips to Terezim and Prague, to Northern France and Paris as well as to Auschwitz and Krakow. All of them were very clearly organised from a scientific and social background and instead mainly formed of personal conversations. We had some almost family outings, especially the one to Belgium which benefited from the marvellous hospitality of the Belgium survivors A. V. Hoey and L. Claessens, who guided us to the places of their personal imprisonment in Breendonk, but also to other authentic places of the German occupation and deportation in Antwerpen and Mecheln.

Curiosity brought us more than once to Peenemünde, a place to “rub” and which questions and presentation namely contributed to the youth for Dora development. The preparation for the first trip happened through the reading in 1998 followed by a second in 2001 in the new Museum - which isn't a memorial – and which showed us new face. Personal contacts took us also to southern Germany, to places of KZ Natzweiler subcamps in the area of Stuttgart/ region Württemberg and some

years later beyond the borders to the KZ Natzweiler memorial in Alsace/ France.

An early trip to the Culture and Documentations Centre of Roma and Sinti in Heidelberg in 1999 was much more than a Museum visit. It was rather an introduction to the cultural situation and work of the minority in Germany over the last decades and in the present, about cultural connections, e.g. on the traces of European music.

A similar mixture of memorial places, visits to commemoration initiatives and to the political prison of the GDR in Schwerin offered a study tour northwards to Mecklenburg in May 2003.

Following repeated discussions about resistance in occupied countries we returned to France in autumn 2003 to Grenoble, up to the Vercors Mountains and into the Midi. The first part of the programme was the French resistance. Looking south we focused on the situation of people who had tried to leave the occupied European countries and ended up in in-



Perfect accommodation in a private atmosphere is always highly appreciated

ternment camps in the South, at the Spanish border or in Spanish camps. At each stage of the trip we were accompanied by witnesses of the different periods or events, so it became really three dimensional, well argued, exciting and filled with increasing questions. Thanks to the great friendship and organisation of Philippe Reyx it was also possible to get to know new ways of dealing with history and the conflicts of nowadays, e.g. in the “peace school” in Grenoble.

Small groups, high intensity and extensive complexity, which is “breaking out of all pores”, always forms our travel atmosphere. It’s not possible to separate between witnesses, historical places and the present, that also shows the difficulty of dealing with it and it brings up new issues for the future – which we have to take up and carry on

Traveling means curiosity, research and documentation, but also singing – watching – attention and amazing « group dynamic! »



Late discussion in Aix-en-Provence (study tour 2003)



“Professional Documentation”

Your green might be my blue?!

or: **please take a praline.** or:

after Dora to Belgium – a trip to memorialize –from 24.-27. May 2001

..yes, vielleicht ist es das... auch für mich haben sich nach unserem Kurztrip nach Belgien einige grundlegende Fragen ergeben.

Allein die Anreise war ein Erlebnis. Geschafft aber glücklich liessen wir uns im sonnigen Garten von Frau Claessens (in Antwerpen) verwöhnen. Frisch motiviert fuhren wir nach Mechelen, um uns dort das Jüdische Museum anzuschauen. Zusammen mit Familie Claessens fuhren wir dann nach Stekene, wo uns Herr Albert Van Hoey in seinem Gartenparadies willkommen hiess. Zwei liebevoll eingerichtete Gartenhäusschen mit hauseigenem See, waren für die nächsten Tage unser zu Hause. Was für ein Empfang - Herr Van Hoey hatte an wahrlich alles gedacht! Während ich über die Verlagerung meines Studiums nach Stekene sinnierte, erkundete der Rest die faszinierenden Umgebung. Um unsere Lebensqualität weiter zu steigern, zauberten vereinseigene Köche aus 4 Zutaten eine leckere Pasta. Zur Soiree eingeladen

wurden natürlich auch Herr und Frau Claessens und Herr Van Hoey, mit ihnen gemeinsam parlierend ließen wir den ersten Abend ausklingen.

Am Freitag starteten wir frisch und munter in ein volles Programm, welches uns in den frühen Morgenstunden mit der liebevollen Aufforderung Frau Claessens: “Bitte nehmen sie eine Praline!” versüßt wurde. Nach einem gelungenen Empfang im Rathaus in Antwerpen, wo wir von Herrn Heylen zu einem interessanten Rundgang eingeladen wurden, bekamen wir die Möglichkeit uns als Verein vorzustellen, was abwechselnd durch Herrn Claessens und Dorothea geschah. (...)

Das Fort Breendonk war unser nächstes Ziel. Dort wurden wir von Herrn Francois De Coster, ebenfalls einem ehemaligen Häftling, empfangen und begleiteten ihn mit Erwartungshaltung durch die kühlen Mauern. Durch unseren Lunch in Verzug geraten, arbeitete die Zeit gegen uns, auch eine rasante Führung durch das Fort Breendonk konnte



The right mixture of exhibition – conversation with witnesses of the time and discussion is important

daran nichts ändern. Gern hätten wir noch länger unseren Wissensdurst gestillt, aber in Brüssel wartete der Botschafter auf uns - ein Termin, den wir nicht verschieben konnten.

Während wir den Empfangsworten des Botschafters folgten, genossen wir das Angebot an Getränken und Keksen, Herr Van Hoey und Dorothea bemühten sich sowohl die Arbeit der belgischen Amicale, als auch unseres Vereins vorzustellen und in einem adäquaten Licht erscheinen zu lassen.

Der folgende Tag war der Tag des "Philippus Maximus", denn es war daran seine Heimatstadt Huy zu besuchen und zu erkunden. In dem von Philippe geführten Stadtrundgang war auch das Schloss von Huy mit seinen diversen Ausstellungen enthalten. Begeisterung erzeugte vor allem der unvergleichliche Panoramablick über die Stadt mit seinen drei Atomkraftwerkstürmen.

Etwas melancholisch koordinierten wir unseren Rückzug ins Gartenparadies. Ein letztes Mal ließen wir uns von diesem außergewöhnlichem Flair einfangen und die Melancholie begleitete uns in die Nacht. Was der folgende Tag zu werden versprach,

hat er gehalten – Sonntag: Abreisetag. Wehmütig verabschiedeten wir uns von Herrn Van Hoey und seiner liebevollen Fürsorge, und als ob eine emotionsgeladene Abschiedszeremonie nicht Herausforderung genug für uns weiche Gemüter ist, stellten wir uns bei Familie Claessens gleich der nächsten. Hunger ist schlimmer als Heimweh und zarten Versuchungen in Stresssituation zu widerstehen ein Balanceakt – gemeinsam verloren wir das Gleichgewicht und vernaschten die gesamten Gebäck- und Zuckerreserven der Claessens. Wir verabschiedeten uns mit einer Träne im Knopfloch und traten endgültig die Heimreise an. Gegen Abend erreichten wir unseren Stützpunkt die Gedenkstätte und wie bei unseren vereinsinternen Verabschiedungen arttypisch, verflüchtigten wir uns ebenso unkonventionell, wie wir unser gemeinsames Abenteuer begonnen hatten – gegenseitiger Zuneigung gewiss, aber, für unseren Verein bezeichnend, ohne große Worte ...

*Franziska Schumann
(2001, gekürzt)*



Spending time together means more

Brilliant Ideas and their implementation

About long lasting and idealistic projects

What starts with wide-ranging discussions retains only a small selection of feasible ideas in our “basket of projects” by the end of the night. Some of them we have tried to realise, some we are still working on and others we hoping to achieve at some point. For that, we are always open to choosing brilliant methodologies and extraordinary subjects.

In this context we might mention performances of public readings in Nordhausen, Ellrich, Harzungen, Osterode, in Dora and Peenemünde. We could talk about the public movie and lecture/ talks series in the association’s house of Nordhausen on the first evening of our regular youth for Dora week-end meetings. Maintenance work and association meetings are also such strange, wonderful happenings, which are often quite banal, but without which nothing would be possible.

Maybe this is the moment to talk briefly about some funny problems that crop up. Who wants to organise mobile toilets for the Workcamp? Who might be able to convince a car rental company to lend us

a minibus for free? Who wants to write the invitation letters/ e-mails for the next meeting or finally again an article for such a desirable project as our exhibition?

Little appreciated, but very much needed are repeated visits to local politicians and companies to gain their interest concerning donations and other in-kind support. So far we haven’t talked about almost too big challenges such as a tax return or even worse to find out what does it mean to add an “accounting certificate” to a project proposal. In such moments the internet and huge encyclopaedias are highly appreciated.

It is great to have real highlights – Workcamps and study tours – they charge the batteries and encourage. They are the people who are accompanying us, whom we meet, who are helping and transmitting. Thank you to all of you and all, who are doing it for us again and again.



Challenges between office and physical demanding work

„Being a stranger in Ellrich“ an example from history and present

Seminary from 3th to 5th of May 2002 in Ellrich

Limits and chances? Refusal or denial? Charity or xenophobia? Differentiation or further development? Self reflection or tolerance and identity? All these subsequently upcoming questions and experiences from projects led us to the idea of a seminary and finally in cooperation with the NGO “Schrankenlos” to a wonderful project.

The seminary offered the chance to get an insight in the public awareness of stranger in a small German town. In the centre were the people who became or still are “strangers” in the Ellrich municipality at different time and because of different reasons. Following this method we focused on the history of Jews in Ellrich, we were talking with the KZ survivors Josef Huybreghts and a displaced person from Silesia, we were thinking about the situation of the Roma and Sinti in the public life, we were listening to reports from Asylum seekers from Pakistan and Kongo and we discussed the matter of „being German“ in general. Beginning with these individual experiences and perception of the population we continued with further conversations about the importance or rather description or definition of: What does it mean being stranger? When and why people feel like? How can we promote a better integration?

Thus we were discussing changes and continuities of the perception of the “unknown” through different periods. Diverse contributions made it possible to bring together people who were coming from different geographical and temporal contexts to join our common dialogues and discussions. By following this approach the seminary marks a crucial step in the young history of our associations work. First we started to learn about the history of the concentration camp in Ellrich, we continued with maintaining work and the installation of information panels, several workcamp projects. Beyond the historical happenings and heritage we finally came up with the discussion of issues and problems from the daily political life. What does it mean to be a stranger? How integration can be achieved? These are two of the often discussed main questions.

The insufficient answers and the missing awareness for this situation requires diverse action urgently. Both on governmental and society level it needs new creative solutions and development ideas as well as beyond all openness and commitment. During these days we discussed many questions and problems of high political or rather social importance and actuality only in a small circle, which need more attention on a larger scale. We were lucky to experience the benefits of a really mixed and diverse event with a lot of growing ideas and new relations, which always start with listening and talking, but also cooking and singing.



Participants of the seminary (May 2002)

The increasing perspective of our tasks and interests led us by that time to the seminary and was finally an impulse and break-up into a new Youth for Dora time. A further step towards the same directions was the seminary about tolerance and pseudo-tolerance with Brita and Clemens in August 2004. Other projects we couldn't fix and realize by now, because of its complexity. Our perspective became wide, very wide – beyond the region and state, beyond ethnics and religions – to structural issues. The future challenge is now to narrow down the broad issues and the variety of topics in appropriate events and projects. It will be great to find all the complex ideas in the details of each project by following up our always flexible way.

Some more Highlights out of the Youth for Dora Chronic

11th April 1995	Foundation of the organisation at the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the liberation of the KZ Mittelbau-Dora
Oktober 1996	First week-end meeting of Youth for Dora in Nordhausen/ Salza
1996/ 1997	Elaboration of a brochure, which represents the association and its work
May 1997	Youth for Dora registration as a „registered society“ at the Local Court of Nordhausen with the number 541
27th January 1998	Contribution about the planned Youth for Dora activities at the site of the former subcamp Ellrich and the history of the place in the TV News „heute Journal“ of the Second Public German Programm „ZDF“
February 1998	First study tour to Amsterdam to visit the Anne-Frank-Foundation
September 1998	Study tour to the Historic-Technical Information Centre in Peenemünde/ Usedom and public performance of a reading about Wernher von Braun
June 1999	Installation of the first information panel about the history of the subcamp Ellrich in the entrance area of the former camp site
August 1999	The 4th international Workcamp guides us to places of former forced labour in Northern France and to commemoration memorials in Paris
August 1999	Study tour to Heidelberg to visit the Centre of Documentation and Culture of Sinti und Roma; followed by a visit of the memorial for the KZ Natzweiler sub-camp Neckarelz and the memorial Osthofen
June 2000	The second big JFD brochure get published, which is documenting three years of association activities in german, english and french language.
September 2000	Youth for Dora get the 1st price for social commitment in the GEK competition in the Harz mountains region
January 2001	Invitation from the German Parliament for the International youth meeting at the occasion of the 27th January in Berlin.
11th April 2001	Public performance of a reading with reports from survivors of the subcamp Ellrich in five languages (dutch, german, french, polish, russian) at the occasion of the anniversary of the liberation of the concentration camp
May 2001	Antirassism day in Herzberg, organised of the country council Osterode/ Harz
March 2002	Study tour to Auschwitz and Krakau accompanied of encounters with young polish people both in the International Meeting Centre and over the days
11th April 2002	At the occasion of the 57th anniversary of the liberation of the camp symbolic installation at the former subcamp Harzungen and public reading of extracts from survivors experiences in different languages
May 2002	Seminary „Being a stranger in Ellrich“ in cooperation with the association „Schrankenlos e.V.“ and supported by the regional Centre for political education in Thuringa
September/ Oktober 2003	Study tour to the South of France to places of national socialist crime and of the french resistance; organised in cooperation with the french association; as well as visit of the memorial for the former international camp Le Milles close to Aix-en-Provence
August 2005	„10 Year Youth for Dora“ e.V.

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