

# WEIMAR: RALLY

➔ DDR *GDR*

STATIONEN *STOPS*  
/ SOWJETISCHER EHRENFRIEDHOF  
/ DEUTSCHES NATIONALTHEATER  
/ THÄLMANN-DENKMAL / JAKOBSKIRCHE

## ANDERE TOUREN *OTHER TOURS*

-  JOHANN WOLFGANG  
VON GOETHE
-  MARIA PAWLOWNA
-  BAUHAUS
-  NS IN WEIMAR
-  NS ARCHITEKTUR  
*NS ARCHITECTURE*
-  DENKMAL *MONUMENT*

herausgegeben von der  
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WEIMAR  
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Verein für Bildung e.V.  
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99423 Weimar

[www.weimar-jena-akademie.de](http://www.weimar-jena-akademie.de)

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UND JUGEND-  
BEGEGNUNGSSTÄTTE  
WEIMAR

! Find out something about the history of Weimar between 1945 and the German Reunification!

AIM

? What was the significance of the Soviets in Weimar during the period after World War II and what did Goethe and Schiller have to do with the German Democratic Republic (GDR)?



Take a look at the city map and start your tour! Your first stop is the Soviet Memorial Cemetery in the Park on the Ilm River.

? When the so-called peaceful revolution began in the GDR in 1989: What did the people demand and why?

! Later on, tell the others what you have discovered and where visible traces of the GDR can be found in Weimar!

?



>> Find out which tour stop  
this image belongs to!

## SOVIET MEMORIAL CEMETERY *PARK ON THE ILM RIVER*

# 1

### INFO

After Germany had lost World War II, the allied powers took over the government. On 1 July 1945 the USA passed the state of Thuringia over to the Soviet military administration. The latter installed its so-called "Stabsitz" or staff headquarters in Weimar: Its commanding officers moved into offices at the former National Socialist Gauforum, and they stationed a large number of military units in town.

1945  
1949

SOVIET MEMORIAL CEMETERY  
PARK ON THE ILM RIVER

1



The commanding officers of the Soviet military administration for the state of Thuringia in front of the staff headquarters in Weimar.

Thüringisches Hauptstaatsarchiv Weimar  
(Photo Ernst Schäfer)

1949

1949

## SOVIET MEMORIAL CEMETERY *PARK ON THE ILM RIVER*

1

### INFO

 Find out how old the soldiers and officers were and when they died.

650 soldiers and officers of the Red Army were buried at this “Memorial Cemetery”. Their final resting place is located in the Park on the Ilm River. There is another Soviet Memorial Cemetery in Weimar: It is located in the park of the Belvedere Palace and was created as the central cemetery for the state of Thuringia in 1946. More than 2,000 additional graves for Soviet military employees and civilians are located there.

SOVIET MEMORIAL CEMETERY  
*PARK ON THE ILM RIVER*

1



In the middle of the memorial cemetery there is a monument with an inscription in Russian. The translation is: "Eternal fame for the heroes 1941–1945"



Describe the monument's design!  
Compare the years inscribed on the monument and on the grave-stones. What do you notice?

1941  
1946

SOVIET MEMORIAL CEMETERY  
PARK ON THE ILM RIVER

1



QUOTE

*The last Soviet troops left Thuringia at the end of 1992. In their "FAREWELL SONG" they sing:*

*"We now leave German soil forever, because the war is long since over.*

*In the hope that now eternal peace will last, tanks and weapons now roll past. [...]*

*Germany, we give you our hand, and go home to our fatherland.*

*Our homeland welcomes our return, our friendship will last for all time."*

1992



QUOTE

*"Weimar will [...] become a creative centre with a programme, a direction, a cultural plan that will be representative – not only for Weimar, Thuringia or the East Zone, but for Germany. [...] The splendid new building [...] is the very first representative theatre to be built in all of Germany after 1945. It rings in the fourth creative period [...] in Weimar that began with Goethe's directorship in the year 1791."*

INGE VON  
WANGENHEIM  
(actress and writer)  
on the occasion  
of the re-opening  
of the National  
Theatre in 1948

## GERMAN NATIONAL THEATRE *THEATERPLATZ*

# 2

### → INFO

>>  
Search the outside of the building for traces of the history of the German National Theatre!

On 7 October 1949, the German Democratic Republic (GDR) was founded as a sovereign state along with the Federal Republic of Germany. A sort of competition between the two German countries emerged. The government of the GDR utilised the significance of the classical city of Weimar. It envisioned Weimar as the centre of German culture per se: This is where Goethe, Schiller, Herder and Wieland lived and worked. Consequently, cultural activity in Weimar and with that, the German National Theatre, was given national priority.

→ QUOTE



Who is supposed to go to the theatre in Honecker's opinion? Think about the importance of going to the theatre from his standpoint.

*"The German National Theatre has become the theatre of the people in our socialist country, in which the workers and farmers, the youth and all classes of the people experience rich encounters with the great humanistic, proletarian-revolutionary and socialist works [...]."*

ERICH HONECKER, 1975  
(1971–1989 GDR Head of State)

GERMAN NATIONAL THEATRE  
*THEATERPLATZ*

2



INFO

In the autumn of 1989 the first demonstrations against the regime took place in the GDR. In Weimar, people met at the Theatre Square and the Democracy Square. Week after week, up to 20,000 people gathered here. They demanded democracy, free elections and freedom to travel; at the same time they protested against the government's misuse of power. In addition, they demanded the legitimisation of the "New Forum". This opposition alliance strived for a restructuring of society. All the demonstrations were non-violent.

GERMAN NATIONAL THEATRE  
THEATERPLATZ

2



On 19 November 1989, the employees of the German National Theatre announced a demonstration. The motto was: "Freedom, Equality, Citizenship".

Claus Bach, Weimar

>> Think about what this motto is demanding.

1989  
until  
1990

## THÄLMANN MONUMENT BUCHENWALDPLATZ

# 3

➔ INFO



*"From your sacrifice, our socialist deeds will grow."*

What does the inscription on the wall behind the monument mean? Describe how the inscription and the monument make you feel.

This is the first monument that the German Democratic Republic (GDR) erected for Ernst Thälmann (1886–1944). Thälmann was the chairman of the German Communist Party (Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands, KPD) and was a member of the Reichstag from 1924 until 1932.

The National Socialists murdered him at the Buchenwald Concentration Camp on 18 August 1944. On 17 August 1958 the statue was festively unveiled. From then on, Thälmann was to serve as a role model for the new socialist country.

THÄLMANN MONUMENT  
BUCHENWALDPLATZ

3

KPD campaign poster for the Reichstag election in 1932. After the Social Democrats and the National Socialists, the KPD was the third-strongest party at this election.



Deutsches Historisches Museum, Berlin

1932

THÄLMANN MONUMENT  
BUCHENWALDPLATZ

3

→ QUOTE

PLEDGE OF THE THÄLMANN PIONEERS

*“Ernst Thälmann is my example.  
I pledge to learn,  
to work and to fight,  
as Ernst Thälmann taught us.*

*I will act according to the rules  
of the Thälmann Pioneers.*

*True to our salutation I will  
always favour peace and  
socialism.”*



Think about how Thälmann was supposed to serve as a role model for children and youths in the GDR!

Children in grades 1 to 7 were usually “pioneers” in the GDR and consequently members of the political mass organisation “Ernst Thälmann”. At age 14 they were entitled to join the Freie Deutsche Jugend (Free German Youths).

1985

PARISH HALL, ST. JACOB'S CHURCH  
AM JAKOBSKIRCHHOF 9

4



INFO

At the beginning of the 1980's the so-called Monday Circle met in this Parish Hall every week. Between 30 and 70 young people gathered here. They discussed environmental protection and peace issues in the GDR. They used rooms that belonged to the church, which was not under state control. They organised concerts here, for example. The employees of the *Geheimdienst Staatssicherheit* (*Stasi*, State Secret Security Service) classified these meetings as politically dangerous and subversive. That is why they put the Monday Circle under constant observation.

PARISH HALL, ST. JACOB'S CHURCH  
AM JAKOBSKIRCHHOF 9

4

→ INFO

Early on, young people in the GDR were strictly instructed and controlled. Although there were many cultural events, they were rarely to the taste of young people. They were seen as being dull, compulsory exercises. Almost all young people were members of the state organisations: "Young Pioneers", "Thälmann Pioneers" and later "Free German Youth". Dissident youths such as Punks were often excluded from these organisations' events and were politically unaccepted.

PARISH HALL, ST. JACOB'S CHURCH  
AM JAKOBSKIRCHHOF 9

4



Claus Bach, Weimar

“Der Rest” (“The Others”) – a performance in the Parish Hall of the St. Jacob’s Church in 1984. “Der Rest” was the first GDR band to release a record in West Berlin (500 copies pressed). They did not have permission to play in the GDR.

1984  
until  
1987

→ QUOTE

SONGTEXT  
"Leben" ("Life")  
by the "Mehrzweck-  
orchester fröhliche  
Note" (MOfN,  
"Multi-Purpose-  
Orchestra Happy  
Note"), Weimar

*"We live in a  
country, where  
every person is  
the same.*

*It isn't easy  
to say that,  
yeah it isn't easy.*

*But every minority  
that the government  
doesn't like is  
suppressed and  
just slapped away.*

*We hate  
this country,  
we are a burden  
for it.*

*They want to  
get rid of us,  
but that makes  
us hate them.*

*You put us in jail  
and hit us in the face  
you won't get us  
down, no you  
can't do that.*

*We don't fit  
into this country,  
don't belong  
to the system  
we live in  
a better world  
with better ideas."*

→ QUOTE



Write down what means the State Security used to work against its "enemies". What were their aims?

*"Forms of degradation towards those seeking emigration permits, Punks, people with pacifist and anarchist orientations and Christian motivated youths of the Weimar Monday Circle:*

- goal-oriented disqualification of commitments in regard to particular ideals, role models, etc. and the initiation of doubts about their personal chances*
- initiation of mistrust and mutual suspicion within groups of an enemy nature or groupings of an enemy-negative nature."*

RAINER WAGNER  
Stasi degree dissertation  
15 August 1986

# CITY MAP

## YOUR STOPS:

- ① Soviet Memorial Cemetery  
Park on the Ilm River
- ② German National Theatre  
Theaterplatz
- ③ Thälmann Monument  
Buchenwaldplatz
- ④ St. Jacob's Church  
(Parish Hall)  
Am Jakobskirchhof 9

