

Winning the Future

For more than a generation, the house was a church dormitory for students. This was the time of reconstruction in Germany, and the social and political suppression of the past under the sign of the East-West confrontation. There were only a few who resisted the silence. When the crimes of National Socialism and the resistance finally became the focus of social discussion in the 1980s, an alternative to establishing a museum in this historically significant house was sought together with contemporary witnesses Eberhard Bethge (Dietrich's friend and biographer), his wife Renate (Dietrich's niece) and Bishop Albrecht Schönherr (who was trained as a pastor of the "Confessing Church" in Finkenwalde). Dietrich's life and work were placed in their historical context on nine panels and his study was restored.

The Memorial and Place of Encounter, a "Topography of Resistance", was opened in the same year as the provisional "Topography of Terror" at the center of tyranny.

The concept of the house has proven itself in principle but has reached its limits with the exclusively voluntary guiding the visitors and caring for the house. Not only research on Bonhoeffer, but also the development of the culture of remembrance in the church and in society demand new concepts and media networks. In the dispute over identity, diversity, participation and medial mediation, historical memory is becoming a point of socio-political controversy.

The future of the house therefore requires a professionalization of the work through the establishment of a management position for the coordination and qualification of the important and diverse voluntary work.

The Bonhoeffer House

Karl Bonhoeffer (1868–1948), head of the clinic for psychiatry and neurology at the Charité, and Paula (1874-1951), a trained teacher, moved into the house, built for their retirement, in 1935. Dietrich's study room in the attic became the center of his life during the unsteady times of training pastors in Finkenwalde and his conspiracy.

The house was acquired by the Evangelical Church Berlin-Brandenburg after the death of Karl and Paula Bonhoeffer. After this sale, it became the center of the student congregation of the universities in the West of Berlin. Later on, the house became a church dormitory for students. Since 1987, it has been a church memorial and meeting place run by volunteers.

It is both an ecclesiastical and a social mission to keep alive the memory of this extraordinary family with the families of their eight children and the message that emanates from this house.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote his "Ethics" in his parental home, met with opponents of National Socialism, and it was here that he was arrested by the Gestapo on 5 April 1943. Dietrich Bonhoeffer is known worldwide as a pastor and theological teacher of the "Confessing Church", prosecutor against the exclusion of Jews, ecumenical admonisher for peace and author of moving letters and poems from prison. In personal responsibility for his faith, he consistently took the path of political resistance to the point of death. His life and his thoughts also challenge us today in concrete ecclesiastical, ethical and political conflicts to the responsibility for others in the "mature world" that is founded in Christ.

Responsibility for the Future



Seminar group from the USA, August 2021

Memorial and Place of Encounter

Bonhoeffer-Haus e.V.

**Marienburger Allee 43
14055 Berlin**



75th birthday of Karl Bonhoeffer on 03/31/1943
with the extended family relatives and friends

„The ultimately responsible question is not how I extricate myself heroically from a situation but [how] a coming generation is to go on living.“
(Dietrich Bonhoeffer, An Account at the Turn of the Year 1942-1943, DBW 8,42)

Curriculum Vitae Dietrich Bonhoeffer

1906, 4 Febr. Dietrich & Sabine born in Breslau
1912 Karl, Dietrich's father called to
Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Berlin (FWU)
1923 Dietrich starts with Theology in Tübingen
1924-1927 Theological Studies at FWU Berlin
1927/1930 Sanctorum Communio, Doctoral Diss.
1928-1929 German congregation in Barcelona
1930/1931 Act and Being, Habilitation
1930-1931 Postgraduate year, Union Theological
Seminary (UTS), New York/USA
1931, Nov. Ordination at St. Matthaeus, Berlin
1931, Nov.-1932, March, Confirmation Class, Zion
1932 Lectures at FWU
1933, 30 Jan. Adolf Hitler made chancellor
1933, 1 Febr., The younger Generation's Altered
View to the Concept of Führer, Radio
1933, 16 Apr., The Church and the Jewish Question
1933, 20 July, 'German Christians' win election
1933, 11 Sept, Pastor's Emergency League
1933, 17 Oct.-1935, March, Pastorate in London
1934, 29-31 May, Confessing Church in Barmen
1934, 28 Aug., The Church and the People of the
World, Ecumenical Conference, Fanø
1935-1937/1940, Director Preacher's Seminary
closing by Gestapo, Collective Pastorates
1937 Discipleship, 1939 Life Together
1939, 2 June-27 July, exile at UTS, New York/USA.
1940, Oct., Assignment to the headquarters
of the Military Intelligence Office, Munich.
Beginning with the Ethics Manuscripts
1942, 31 May-1 June, secretly meeting with Bishop
Bell, Sigtuna and Stockholm
1943, 17 Jan., engagement to Maria v. Wedemeyer
1943, 5 April, arrested at Marienburger Allee 43
Tegel Prison, Gestapo (since 8 Oct. 1944)
1944, 20 July, failed coup of Stauffenberg et al.
1945, 9 April, murdered at Flossenbürg,
Concentration Camp

Historical Place of Learning



Dietrich Bonhoeffer's restored studyroom

Opening hours

Saturday 10 am (in German language)

11 am (in English language)

Possible on weekdays by appointment only.

What can be learned from this historical place?

- Perceiving exclusion and developing empathy
- Standing up for the rights of the weaker person
- Distinguishing between the state of injustice and the state under the rule of law
- Learning to resist
- Finding support through commitment
- Engaging in faith: "there will be people who pray and do justice and wait for God's own time" (DBWE 8, 390, Thoughts on the Day of Baptism)
- Being prepared to rethink, for repentance and conversion
- Respecting the other / stranger
- Taking responsibility for the next generation

By powers of Good

1

By faithful, quiet powers of good surrounded
so wondrously consoled and sheltered here -
I wish to live these days with you in spirit
and with you enter into a new year.

2

The old year still would try our hearts to
torment,
of evil times we still do bear the weight;
O Lord, do grant our souls, now terror-stricken,
salvation for which you did us create.

3

And should you offer us the cup of suffering,
though heavy, brimming full and bitter brand,
we'll thankfully accept it, never flinching,
from your good heart and your beloved hand.

4

But should you wish now once again to give us
the joys of this world and its glorious sun
then we'll recall anew what past times brought
us and then our life belongs to you alone.

5

The candle you have brought into our darkness,
let them today be burning warm and bright,
and if it's possible do reunite us!
We know your light is shining through the night.

6

When now the quiet deepens all around us,
O, let our ears that fullest sound amaze
of this, your world, invisibly expanding
as all your children sing high hymns of praise.

7

By powers of good so wondrously protected,
we wait with confidence, befall what may.
God is with us at night and in the morning
and oh, most certainly on each new day.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, DBWE 8, 548 ff.