

RESOLUTION

Adopted on October 3, 2010 in Berlin during the Germany-wide networking meeting of initiatives and NGOs for postcolonial cultures of remembrance
freedom roads! - Dealing with colonial street names: practice and visions

Addressing:

Municipal districts

Cities

German State governments

German Conference of Cities (Deutscher Städtetag)

In the European and German metropolises vestiges of the colonial past and remnants of colonial-racist ideology are engraved in our urban landscapes. Street names call to mind the "colonial possessions" and remind us of formerly occupied spaces, regions, and resources, or have references that discriminate against People of Colour. Even to this day, colonial protagonists are honoured with street names and memorials "that still glorify the colonizers and humiliate the colonized" (May Ayim). Such tributes insult the dignity of man and are inconsistent with the democratic principles of our society.

A public and intercultural debate on European colonialism and its discriminatory material, cultural and spiritual consequences, is long overdue. Without a fundamental change in cultures of remembrance, neither the South-North Divide with its economic and political imbalance nor the racism still present in our society can be understood and overcome.

Africans and African-Germans in our country were the first to criticize the street names still honouring colonial protagonists. Since late 1990, more and more initiatives have become engaged in the renaming of these streets. Today numerous NGOs and university projects do research in (post)colonial urban spaces.

We, the undersigned, demand that municipal districts, cities, German state governments and the German Conference of Cities (Deutscher Städtetag) understand that coming to terms with our colonial past is a part and parcel of public responsibility in our migration constitutive society– an urgent task for postcolonial cultures of remembrance which must be actively supported.

We urge immediate action in the following areas:

- No commemorating of "world conquerors", slave traders or other colonial protagonists with new street names, statues or memorials.
- Renaming of streets still honouring colonial protagonists.
- Developing options for new streets paying homage to People of Colour – especially women - who became victims due to colonization or who were prominently engaged in anticolonial resistance movements.
- Visualizing the historical context and the reasons for the renaming of streets by providing local information with signs, information plaques, etc.
- Providing critical commentary on street names bearing colonial references.
- Dissecting the ideological message transported by colonial monuments through public commentary and/or transformation through interventions with visual arts.

- Opening and supporting a public discussion on colonialism and racism with means and methods of participative art as well as cultural and educational community work.
- Promoting processes of decolonizing public space through active dialogues with neighbourhoods, local residents and citizens.
- Developing extensive postcolonial concepts of remembrance, especially for cities where "colonial quarters" exist.
- Implementing such concepts by establishing round table discussions and by participating historians, artists, NGOs and other experts - in particular People of Colour.
- Developing postcolonial concepts of remembrance in the framework of sister city partnerships between Germany and the former German colonies (e.g., Berlin/Windhoek, Duisburg/Lomé, Hamburg/Dar es Salaam).
- Promoting postcolonial cultures of remembrance and their acceptance as a city-wide field of responsibility through the German States (Bundesländer). The development and maintenance of these cultures of remembrance may not be solely entrusted to the municipal districts.

Berlin, October 3, 2010

Thanking for translation: P. Lange

Initial Signers

Afrika-Rat e.V. Dachverband afrikanischer Vereine und Initiative Berlin Brandenburg

AG postkolonial bei Engagierte Wissenschaft e.V., Leipzig

Manuela Bauche, Historikerin, Leipzig/Berlin

Prof. Dr. Marianne Bechhaus-Gerst, Vorsitzende KopfWelten - gegen Rassismus und Intoleranz e.V., Köln Postkolonial

Johannes Berger , Projektgruppe "Afrikanisches Viertel", SPD Berlin-Mitte

Berlin Postkolonial e.V.

Prof. Dr. Beate Binder, Institut für Europäische Ethnologie und Geschlechterstudien, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

Anne-Kathrin Horstmann, Kopfwelten e.V., Köln Postkolonial

HMJokinen, Bildende Künstlerin, freedom roads!, Projekt afrika-hamburg.de, Hamburg

Moctar Kamara, Vorsitzender Afrika-Rat Berlin-Brandenburg e.V.

Initiative "Kolonialismus im Kasten?", Berlin

Christian Kopp, freedom roads!, Vorstand Berlin Postkolonial e.V.

Marius Krohn, freedom roads!, Berlin

Anja Kuhr, culturcooperation e.V., Hamburg

Dirk Ludwig, Diversity Committee, Nelson Mandela Schule, Berlin

M.S. Mboro, Vorstand Berlin Postkolonial e.V.

München Postkolonial

Karl-Heinz Niedermeyer, Fachausschuss für Internationale Politik, Frieden und Entwicklung, SPD Berlin

Dr. Marie Biloa Onana, Bildungsreferentin, Vorstand Berlin Postkolonial e.V.

Beatrace Oola, Initiative Schwarze Menschen in Deutschland ISD, Hamburg; ISD Sisters

Sharon Otoo, Vorstand Initiative Schwarze Menschen in Deutschland ISD, Bund e.V., Diversity Committee, Nelson Mandela Schule, Berlin

Elvira Pichler, Kulturpolitische Sprecherin der Fraktion von Bündnis 90/Die Grünen der BVV Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg, Berlin

Mina Ringel, Eine Welt Netzwerk Hamburg e.V.

Udo Sack, Projektgruppe "Afrikanisches Viertel", SPD Berlin-Mitte

Ingo Siebert, Geschäftsführer und Studienleiter August Bebel Institut Berlin

Cornelia Stoye, Bezirkspolitikerin der GAL Hamburg-Wandsbek

Monika Tiemann, GAL Hamburg-Wandsbek

Jonna Tikkanen, Eine Welt Netzwerk Hamburg e.V.

Joachim Wagner, Projektgruppe "Afrikanisches Viertel", SPD Berlin-Mitte

Dr. Joachim Zeller, Historiker, Berlin