

LOOKA HERE!

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Poetry • Reviews • Interviews

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You Mad Dog You.

Black America seeing White America drowning jumped
into the freezing , fast flowing river of no remorse, in other words,
if it was a horse and you roped it,

it would drag your ass all up and down the river bed.

Not taking care of where he grabbed, only being concerned with saving her,
he grabbed her about the breast.

White America being so, so conscience of what is all american proper,
bitch bit Black America's hand,

he let go,

and the bitch drowned,

and

Black America died of rabies.

— Anthony Earl Baggette (February 15,1971)

BOYCOTT!

Feminism is the belief and goal that women should have the same rights and opportunities as men. It is a belief system.

— Darlington

For me, feminism is the struggle of people to make the world more equal.

— Stephan

There's the one fundamental stance: women and men in the world must be equally valued, privileged, and honored, in every facet of their lives.

And then there's the fight: women and men must live by that stance and vanquish any barriers or actions that prevent it.

— Marianne

To me, feminism is very simple. It means equality in terms of resources and from an economic standpoint. Also, to me, it means a woman can decide over her body. I think it's a very simplified answer, though.

— Enrico

Recently I heard tale of an incident at an institute in the Berlin area. There was a job posting, a position in the sciences. There was a board appointed from the team to review the candidates' CVs; each candidate was awarded points according to skills, qualifications and experience; the results were tallied to create a score that then was used to rank the candidates according to best and worst qualified. The equal-opportunity officer (female) at the institute, in reviewing the application process (required by German law), noticed that one male member of the review team had rated a female candidate substantially lower than any of the other teammates. Whereas all of the other teammates had rated this candidate with medium to high marks, this particular male teammate had rated the female candidate as poor across all categories. The equal opportunity officer brought this to the attention of the project director as well as the representative of the work council (both male), neither one of which had noticed this discrepancy. It was agreed that this male team member would be removed from the hiring board. The net effect of this rating by this team member would have caused the female candidate to be ranked as number 5 among the final candidates; without his input, she was ranked number 2. When informed about his removal from the hiring board, the male team member was upset and denied any bias or prejudice, taking issue with the assessment of the equal opportunity officer but could not explain his disproportionate rating of the female candidate.

What is Feminism? It is having sight among the blind.

— GLN

COMMUNITY FORUM: What is feminism?

Feminism means two things for me, and since I can't decide which is more important to me I decided to draw straws and write them down in two separate columns. Which column is on the right or the left side of the page is completely arbitrary and doesn't mean one has more or less political impact for me than the other.

1 Feminism means full equality between men and women. It is the struggle for women's rights and the same opportunities for women, sexual self-determination and the protection against physical and sexual violence. It means the same money for the same work. and that sometimes women have to stand up against men even if, in other political struggles, they are on the same side. For example, in Nicaragua during the agrarian reform when men didn't want to follow the socialist principle "The land to those who work on it", because in Nicaragua women traditionally work the fields and men didn't want them to own it.

For me, feminism is a struggle, where real progress has been made and I am grateful to all women who lived and fought before me, so I can benefit from their struggle. That does not mean that I think everything is now easy, but I remember, when I was a girl, my mother told me that a friend of her was attacked by a real psycho, who pushed a knife in her stomach. She survived and the attacker was found and had to stand trial. My mother's friend was a student with a low income and had no good clothes. To feel comfortable as a court witness, she bought a new nice coat; the judge asked her if she didn't think it quite natural that she had been attacked since she had been wearing such attractive clothing. Probably there are still judges who think that way even today; but in the richer countries of the North there is no judge who would dare to say so.

2 For me feminism means racism. Or more precisely: the feminist discourse of the new women's movement of the 1970's in the western world was, for a very long time, ruled by the point of view of white middle-class women and still is today in its mainstream form. It asks and answers questions that are mainly relevant for white middle-class women. But its big sin goes deeper. One huge benefit of the new women's movement is indeed the correct analysis of rape as a form of violence. This seems to be self-evident today, but I still remember a female (!) teacher in my school making jokes about "*Vergewohltätigung*" (This is a play with the German word "*Vergewaltigung*" (rape), which implies that rape is something that is good for a woman). The first and most accurate analysis of rape as a form of violence and power was made by Susan Brownmiller in her book "Against our wills", which is a feminist classic even today. In this book, Susan Brownmiller proclaims that black men would commit rape more often than white men. Susan Brownmiller later withdraw her racist argumentation. Nevertheless, the theoretical basis of her thesis is stamped into the thinking of a lot of people who were socialized in feminist thinking in the 70s, 80s and in the beginning of the 90s.

— Rima

To me, in this world of pandemic violence against women (female infanticide, female genital mutilation, systematic war rapes, other rapes, sexual slavery, trafficking in women and forced prostitution, child brides, forced marriages, honor killings, stonings and floggings, acid throwing, breast binding, sexual harassment, body shaming, rape culture ...) and inequality of rights (lower salaries for equal work, more unpaid work and low paid work, glass ceilings in upper management, old boys clubs, power inequality, wealth inequality, legal inequality, education gap) feminism means the awareness, the effort, the struggle, the fight to improve every one of these aspects and more in the lives of women and girls everywhere.

The backlash against women's progress in the western world since the 1970's includes badmouthing the word feminism, so that it is a charged word with which many are reluctant to associate themselves, and this, too, is a form of violence against women.

Feminism also means the freedom from traditional women's roles in their respective societies. In my immediate society, that means, that I don't automatically wash the dishes, cook, clean or do laundry. That I don't automatically take on the care-taking role to keep my society functioning. It means I don't have to want or aspire to that which men are or have. It also means I can cook, clean, caretake, or join the boys if I want to.

— Susanne

If you google Gloria Steinem and CIA ,you get the whole story! Twas created in the 60's by the CIA to get woman working so that they pay taxes! End of story!

— Nic

Well it's certainly not taking your clothes off and strutting your stuff. Feminism is a woman staying in a woman's place; if she wants to be treated like a lady, stop acting like a man; I believe in equal pay, but I also believe a woman is built by God to protect herself from physical harm — heavy lifting and heavy work is not a woman's duty; a woman is to preserve herself for a 'good husband'; a husband does not want to wake up to a woman with hard hand & knees; if that were the case, he would choose another man; a man does not want a woman that is hard-core and ruthless; he is searching for someone that is humble, not searching for extra attention from others, busy tending to herself and her business at home, at work, or in public places that respect herself and supports her man.

— Judy

COMMUNITY FORUM: What is feminism?

Feminism aims to seek justice for people and communities that are systematically and systemically marginalized based on gender, race, sexuality, class, and other social, cultural, and political markers. The many existing feminist theories—such as Black feminism, Transnational feminism, Xicanisma, Marxist feminism, Ecofeminism, and so on—attempt to understand, explain, and interrogate the impetuses for and implications of power and dominance particular to specific communities across time periods and geographical locations. As feminist theory is interdisciplinary, we are comprised of theorists from a variety of disciplines including, but not limited to, sociology, psychology, history, literature, political science, anthropology, and economics. Similarly, we are also committed to advancing intellectual collaboration both within and outside of the academy.

- Heidi

Feminism – the universal demand for women’s rights – is and remains, as long as necessary, as long as women cannot participate in social, societal or political processes in the same way and with the same possibilities as men. And while there is within society always a power opposing this evolution, this demand remains an everlasting process.

- Helmut Leurs

To me feminism’s the action and struggle to put the world in the place where no sex is over the other, it’s everything we can do for equality, it’s not a female action, it’s more of a human action all of us should be part of .

- Ahmad



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Thoughts on Mentorship

Enrico Kufuor

When I first got into coaching my objective was to help kids achieve what I was never able to; I wanted to help kids fulfill their dreams and even if they didn't succeed, they would become a better person in the process and pursuit of their goal. In my mind coaching was the ideal position in which I could achieve that feat - it's easier to reach kids through sports than through almost any other realm. Or in any realm I'm versed in for that matter.

But I quickly realized that there is more to it than simply coaching. A mentorship is a relationship in which knowledge is passed on to a novice by a person who has more experience and expertise in a certain realm or field. Though coaching has the same objective, mentorships focus on building the relationship and goes much further than simply the content taught on the court. A mentor fosters self-confidence, self-perception, and, most importantly, helps kids create a vision for themselves.

When dissecting the lives of successful people there are always a few similarities, especially the fact that they usually had the help of one person you would consider a mentor – a person that believed in them and not only made sure their gift was nurtured, but also gave them a safe environment and taught them how to balance their work and life.

Throughout the last few years one young kid in particular was in need of just that: a relationship with his basketball coaches. He is extremely talented with a very bright future ahead of him, yet he needed advice, vision, and most importantly assurance. He didn't initially find it in his immediate surroundings, which prompted him to look elsewhere in terms of his development as a basketball player.

Another crucial component to mentoring is time. One thing often forgotten in coaching is to look past merely the task at hand, and instead create an environment and relationship built on trust. Not only does this allow for a sharing of information and issues that impact success, it also fosters a meaningful relationship that extends far past the time the task is performed. When looking at the impact the late John Wooden and Dean Smith had on their players far beyond their playing days, it's clear that they were far more than just basketball coaches – they were mentors.

Similarly, it seems these two famous basketball coaches were far more development driven. It was far more important to them to make sure their players developed their craft, as well as evolving as human beings.

Essentially, to get the most out of any young person, it is immensely important to put in the time to create a climate of trust and even more so to lead with love. If you don't care about the person you work with, most likely he or she will only do the tasks half-heartedly. Ironically, the most successful people usually understand that relationships are truly the indicator of how far one can go.

On that note, if you truly want to create results and impact a young person's life, don't just coach, be a mentor.

Kreuzberg Beats 2016



The Kreuzberg Beats was formed to give children a chance to play basketball and not be subjected to racist coaches. Far too often children with darker skin, hard to pronounce names have been abused by referees, parents and coaches here in Berlin.

Our coaches and parents work hand-in-hand and try to work with BBV which is not going well. In my opinion, there are a few biased people working with BBV who will not face reality. I think they are in denial that we are in Germany.

Over the years, we have established a good relationship with the Turkish community, which is important since we are based in Kreuzberg.

We have a strong understanding that working together against the many hurdles that will be placed in front of our children is the only way the prepare them for the future in Germany.

Those of us that have our eyes open see that racism is alive and well in all aspects of life in Germany including basketball and that the only way to deal with this is to first face it and then eradicate the biased people from the league.

There is no place for racism anywhere.

Every child has the right to be given a fair chance.

— Anthony Baggette





Görlitzer Park

Jose Guevara

To the summers, the crows, and the free-spirited
crowds of the Görlitzer Park:
When using Görlitzer-like parks, do not display
aggressive behavior,
Do not bring aggressive dogs,
Do practice your juggling act,
Do watch the sunset,
Do drink your beerverage, here it's beerlin after all
Do bring your small personal DJ set and play your
homemade music,
Or bring and play your drums, you'll have a small
captive audience,
Do not be obnoxiously flirty,
Do mind your own business,
Do not bring your laptop,
Do bring your notebook and pen, your sketchbooks and
pencils
Sit on the grass, or on your towel, and just relax.

THE LONE DJEMBE AT
THE GÖRLITZER PARK



The path of existing for existence's sake has many
byways that cross at different angles, and one of them
leads to and through Görlitzer Park.
I will miss its crowd.
I'll miss the foxes, so rarely seen, the smart crows, so
undomesticated.
What do you look for Mr. Bumblebee so close to the
ground?
Am I sitting on your home, a hole in the ground?
Tempelhof is vast, exposed, and constantly under the
attack of the wind.
The Görlitzer Park bowl is small, cozy, in comparison,
and dented into the protection of the earth for comfort.

Cities: a collection of illusions

Humans: illusion seekers, illusion pushers, illusion gobblers.

Everybody lives a dream, even if that dream is a nightmare, and even if that dream is not one's own. Within the dream I live, I send my beats out to infinity, and on their way there, they greet the moon, bump against the rings of Saturn, and sail past the sun.

In the dark, I, the drum apprentice, sit on a bench at the Görlitzer Park, and drink German beer as I play my beats.

I drum to say good bye to young age and to conjure up ghosts out of swamps.

The boom of my Djembe celebrates the dreams of my living and dying cells, it celebrates the impending doom, and, like the heart, each beat gets me closer to the end.

The refugees who made it out of whatever hell, become the new consumers to feed the machine that made them refugees in the first place. The madness goes on and on: A wave of refugees is always in the making. I drum to that.

Shame on the exploiter, shame on the exploited, I'll drum to that too.

In the playground of life, land on solid ground to stay safe and sound.

Pick up your keys and don't sneeze or you'll fall on your knees. Peace.

Like poetry, the drum is raw, and free, and it aims at the marrow.

They are both ignored or even despised.

Nobody can teach the real thing.

When not done right they are annoying and cringe-inducing, but even when done and played well, their deep touch can still be incomprehensible or uncomfortable.

Falling into a trap and beginning to struggle

Napuli Paul Langa

This is Napuli Paul Langa. I am from Sudan and I would not like to mention which part of Sudan I came from, South or North, all of this is just politics. I would like to share with you my entry into and my experience of the refugee movement at Oranienplatz, Berlin. When I came from Sudan, traumatized from being tortured for 4 days because of my activism there, I had escaped from the intelligence services and I left everything behind: My work as a human rights activist in the Sudanese organization for Nonviolence and Development (SONAD) and my studies at Ahfad University for Women in Khartoum. I left to save my life from the government and it took long to come to Germany. So when I arrived in Germany and applied for asylum in Braunschweig – that is exactly when I fell into a trap. I realized that I lost my rights and dignity when I sought asylum – it is better not to seek asylum in Germany, though you have serious problems.

I saw that people were going crazy in the lager, which is located in the middle of nowhere, so I decided that I will not end this way. I was asking several questions that no one among us in the lager could answer.

Asylum seekers from different lagers in Germany came together to discuss how to end the isolation system that is a product of capitalism. We declared that we intend to fight the laws and policies that violate our freedom and dignity. Responding to the suicide of the Iranian asylum seeker Mohammed, refugees had built the first protest camp in Würzburg in early 2012 where he had died. Then other camps followed in other cities and after that the movement started to travel from Würzburg to Berlin,



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by foot and through a bus tour. We were able to expose the isolation of refugees, and we invited them to leave their lagers, to join our bus tour and the march to Kreuzberg in Berlin.

Oranienplatz Resistance

From there we continued our resistance at Oranienplatz in Kreuzberg. It is well known that Oranienplatz is regarded as the political symbol of the struggle. After thirteen days, the group started to have different opinions on political strategies. The group who organized a hunger strike went back to Munich, South Germany, where they called themselves *Non-Citizens*. The other part remained in Oranienplatz.

Oranienplatz brought visibility to our struggle, especially in the public eye, and gave us the power to negotiate with the government officially.

We organised many actions: we occupied a vacant school, we occupied Brandenburg Gate, we went on demonstrations and hunger strikes, we occupied the tree at Oranienplatz, the roof of the school at Ohlauer Straße, we occupied the parliament in the district of Kreuzberg, the federal office of the Green Party, we occupied a church, a UN office, embassies and our story occupied the media. We became subject to police brutality and many people were arrested. We responded by organizing spontaneous demonstrations at the prisons in which our comrades had been arrested. Underlying all these actions were three demands: Abolition of the lagers, abolition of the obligation of residence (*Residenzpflicht*),* which forbids us to leave the city where we are accommodated and the cessation of deportations. We had great impact on the German Parliament and the Committee on Internal Affairs were forced to meet with us because of our hunger strike. During the meeting, the two major right wing parties spoke out against our demands.

The Occupied School

We used the occupied school at Ohlauer Straße and Oranienplatz for the recognition of the refugee movement as a political institution. We worked to bring more refugees to join our struggle and to expand it. There are things that are important, but not urgent and then there are important things that are urgent: our struggle is both, important and urgent. We received a lot of support from the German society in terms of food, clothes, financial and legal support, free German classes, as well as doctors and lawyers offering their services.

***Residenzpflicht:** A 3-month *Residenzpflicht* ("mandatory residence") affects all people with a status as an asylum seeker or someone who is tolerated ("*Duldung*"). People are allowed to cross the border into another state except in Bavaria and Saxony. In November 2015, an even more restrictive form of mandatory residence has been put into effect, according to which any violation of the rule leads automatically to cessation of the small financial support the asylum seeker receives and the application for asylum is interrupted. A second "violation" can cause immediate deportation. "*Residenzpflicht*" for asylum seekers in this form is a Germany-only phenomenon. — Eds.

When we occupied the empty school, it was six o'clock in the morning. The former mayor of Kreuzberg came and stopped the interference of the police and gave us 3 days. After 3 days our stay was extended to 2 months. Then he came up with a plan which would allow us to cooperate with several organizations for this project. We refused and said, 'if they are in solidarity with us they should not even consider coming to the school.'

One urgent reason for the occupation was the very cold weather—we had families and sick people who needed to be in a warm place. Everything concerning our political activities took place at Oranienplatz. A few weeks later we had problems with the police mainly due to 'violations' of the residence obligation which we broke by ignoring it. Some of us were threatened with deportation. Although there was this threat, the movement had no fear of it, some had already been deported to where they had first landed because of the Dublin III regulation.



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Lampedusa in Berlin and the Eviction of Oranienplatz

Lampedusa is a synonym for Europe's borders, for the immigration rules and regulations of the European Union, for the European policy on asylum, for the colonial heritage which established a global, geopolitical and social divide that becomes obvious there. The immediate consequences of this historical development are the boats from the African continent that arrive almost every day.

Around March 2013 a group from Lampedusa arrived in Berlin. Lampedusa is an island in Italy where the people who are escaping from Libya are put before being given the permission to stay.

The refugee camp was evicted from Oranienplatz, according to an agreement between Senator Dilek Kolat and mainly a group from Lampedusa who had already moved from Oranienplatz to a Caritas house in Wedding. They were deceived into believing and signing an agreement. She said 'if you remove the tents in Oranienplatz then I will apply what is written in the agreement.' So there were clashes with us: the refugees who were staying in Oranienplatz and wanted to stay.

The clearing of Oranienplatz tents that took place in April 2014 was not done voluntarily as claimed by politicians. The Kreuzberg district mayor Monika Herrmann and the Senator of Integration of the State of Berlin Dilek Kolat claimed that the Oranienplatz refugees had agreed to the voluntary evacuation – but this does not correspond to the facts.

On that day, at around 2 pm, I resisted the clearance by occupying a tree for five days. The police and security services prevented me from all attempts at contact or to be supplied with food. I demanded a conversation with Dilek Kolat concerning the promises she had made — the toleration of the Lampedusa group, the transitional housing to Berlin, and the stopping of deportations — which were the reasons the refugees had accepted the Senate's offer. We also demanded that our meeting place and the info point be brought back to Oranienplatz, which they told me was impossible. Eventually, our united resistance succeeded in reinstating our meeting place.

Dilek Kolat did not respond to our claim for an unlimited right to stay. The Senate declared that the promised review of individual cases would begin only after the clearance of Oranienplatz. At that moment we mainly demanded to rebuild the political space for refugees that we had had at Oranienplatz. At the same time, we prepared ourselves for the trans-national march to Brussels.

The Freedom March to Brussels

The idea for the march to Brussels started to take shape in spring and summer of 2013. Two of us went on a transnational tour to six European countries. We started from Oranienplatz on June 26, 2013. During the whole tour we experienced no real obstacles. We passed through Germany, Austria, Italy, France, crossed Switzerland, again France, and then Belgium. We wanted to collect common demands from refugees in EU countries.

In May 2014 a larger group went on a six-week march over more than 500 km. Our March for Freedom started in Strasbourg and while we were crossing the borders of Germany, France, Luxembourg and Belgium we experienced the key EU asylum policies first-hand.

The march quickly formed a band, every day marching through at least two villages, and for a while we were accompanied by two ponies. Even if people did not always know at the beginning what we wanted, they soon understood it without words that our goals were their goals. We had come from war zones bringing no problems. In the villages of Alsace-Lorraine, Saarland, Luxembourg, and Wallonia we met friendly people who made

their public spaces, community centers and halls available to us. About thirty times we transformed cities with tents, kitchens and luggage. We left every place cleaner than we had found it.

The march was a traveling conference. We moved from town to town on a daily basis and sometimes we marched together with the local people from the villages. In our camps we held information events, we showed documentaries and we danced or practiced how to survive police raids unharmed.

We attempted to attend a conference of EU Interior Ministers in Luxembourg, but after some fruitless dialogues with Members of the European Parliament, it came to police attacks, arrests, and detention. We spent an entire day caring for victims of pepper spray and dog bites. In Brussels we held a sit-in outside the police station, after several protesters were arrested.

We want freedom, to go everywhere without permission.*

Colonialism and Imperialism

All of the problems described above have to do with colonialism, capitalism, racism, and imperialism, as well as the Berlin Conference of 1884–1885 which formalized Europe's claim on Africa. European powers arbitrarily divided up Africa between themselves and started administrating their new colonies. Seventy years later they bequeathed to native Africans countries that looked remarkably different from how they looked in 1880. These countries are the poorest in the world today.

To judge the impact of colonialism on development in Africa simply by looking at outcomes during the colonial period is a conceptual mistake. Post-independence Africa looked nothing like it would have in the absence of colonialism. Indeed, in most cases post-independence economic decline in Africa can be explicitly attributed to colonialism

** For example in Brussels there was this family from Romania that paid a truck driver 1000 euros in order to be smuggled into Belgium - even though they may actually travel freely as EU members. But because they are homeless, their government gave them no IDs.. Belgium may at any time arrest them indefinitely.*

Note from the editors: This procedure especially applies to members of Roma families from Eastern Europe (e.g. Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia, and Hungary, but also in minor numbers in other countries such as Slovakia, Poland, and the Czech Republic) who are structurally as well as institutionally discriminated against in society, the labor market, the educational system and housing. Often they live in segregated, remote areas under horrible conditions with barely any financial aid provided by the state. After the asylum laws were tightened in November 2015, people without IDs or passports, and especially people from non-EU-states – the so-called "safe countries of origin" of the Balkans (i.e. Macedonia, Serbia, Albania, Kosovo, Montenegro, and Bosnia and Herzegovina) – undergo a fast-track asylum procedure in special asylum centers close to the border with no real chance of proper legal counseling. Thus asylum seekers from these countries are rarely granted asylum.

because the types of mechanisms that led to this decline were creations of colonial society. In Africa we had three types of colonies:

Those with a centralised state at the time of the scramble for Africa, such as Benin, Botswana, Burundi, Ethiopia, Ghana, Lesotho, Rwanda, and Swaziland. Those of white settlements, such as Kenya, Namibia, South Africa, Zimbabwe, and probably Angola and Mozambique as well as colonies which did not experience significant white settlement and where there was either no significant pre-colonial state formation (like Somalia or South Sudan) or where there was a mixture of centralised and un-centralised societies (such as Congo-Brazzaville, Nigeria, Uganda and Sierra Leone).

In the former, given the assumption that the patterns of pre-colonial development could have continued if there had not been colonialism, these countries would be more developed today. Colonialism not only blocked further political development, but indirect rule made local elites less accountable to their citizens. After independence, even if these states had a coherence others lacked, they had far more predatory rulers. These polities also suffered from the uniform colonial legacies of racism, stereotypes and misconceptions.

Self-Organised Protest

Up to now we have achieved a lot with regards to our three demands, but our struggle will not stop until we are satisfied. Oranienplatz and the school are one thing. The occupation of Oranienplatz was forced to end; most of those occupying the school have been evicted and the promise made by the Berlin Senate turned out to be a lie. They lied to silence us, but on the other hand they pushed our movement to become more well-known.

In the refugee movement we do not have power over one another or so-called leaders. The idea of voluntary participation makes it easy for everyone to choose in which group she/he fits, for example, financial groups; media groups; legal groups, etc.

We had difficulties as well in our movement due to clashes between different interests, either strategically or tactically, as well as different demands, from several sides: between refugees and refugees, between refugees and supporters, and between supporters and supporters. These clashes gave the government the chance to try to divide us. For example, with the Lampedusa group at Oranienplatz it became clear that the asylum seekers in Germany face different situations. The politicians used this for their divide-and-rule strategy at Oranienplatz, just like politicians did it in the colonies in Africa, as mentioned above.

Of course, problems among us in the movement have been solved through meetings, discussions, resolution groups. Even though we did not solve all the problems above, the mentioned methods have been very helpful. In general, the refugees and the supporters are like sisters and brothers in my point of view. In understanding that together we have to fight against the system, we take each other's hands and walk hand in hand.

For example, refugees are aware of what the EU does, including Germany. Ask for the reasons why people flee! Clearly it has a connection to imperialism and capitalism. The asylum laws are racist and colonial. Fight these laws. And not only in Germany, fight all over Europe; fight together also with the working classes and social movements.

Right now we try to communicate strongly to unite all refugees: Collect phone-numbers, emails, use internet pages together, exchange and empower one another and build up infrastructure, focus on the political fight, organize conferences, workshops and so on. The struggle for human rights has to be based on the development of social relations. From my experience there is always a possibility, nothing is impossible. Gandhi said: "be the change you want to see in the world". So for you right now and right here do not be part of the problem. Rather, oppose!

I call upon us, my sisters and brothers: Let us fight together for every one of us to have the right to live, not just to survive.



Letter to the community: Why I no longer want to be active in the O'Platz movement

by Jana G.

Dear all,

This is to those who are and have been active at O'Platz for the past few months. I would like to inform you that I am stopping being active at the weekly plenums and all the working groups (campaign group). My decision was not taken hastily; I have considered it over a long period of time. In this letter, I would like to explain the reasons for my decision so as to make it transparent for those who put in a lot of energy into O'Platz activism. At this point I would like to thank all of those who fight continuously; thank you for your effort and your energy!

I started coming to the O'Platz plenums and working group meetings in August 2015 with the intention to support a self-organized refugee struggle. I didn't live in Berlin at the time of the refugee marches, the hunger strikes and the occupation of O'Platz and the school, but I watched all the news about it with great interest and in solidarity. During this time, whenever I found myself in Berlin, I took part in demonstrations and did some shifts at the O'Platz Info Point. So, when I started becoming active at the O'Platz plenums, I had a certain understanding of a self-empowered protest in mind. My goal was clearly to work for something that refugees themselves had considered worth fighting for. As far as I understood the goals were to reactivate O'Platz as a space of resistance by building some

kind of construction (boat, then house) and to reestablish the O'Platz Info Point.

In summer we held some plenums in order to re-emphasize the importance of self-organization and empowerment of refugee activists/people without papers (or however each person wishes to call him/herself). It was said that refugees would take decisions by themselves. Supporters would just give advice. However, in the following months I started to realise that, firstly, there weren't always enough refugee activists coming to the meetings to take decisions, secondly, there were barriers that prevented real participation of refugee activists (for example, the language barrier, as meetings were commonly held in English), and thirdly, that many different people and scattered groups claimed to represent 'The O'Platz Movement', which was very confusing for newcomers.

These are three of the reasons, why I didn't know what my role in this could be and which political goals I could pursue through being active in O'Platz plenums and the working groups. I would argue that this is a question each of us should consider though: Why are we here and for what are we putting in so much energy? In the end, I realised that, for myself, I don't know what to support and what to fight for at O'Platz plenums anymore (at least at the moment). To detail this further, I would like to give some examples:



What is the way out of the labyrinth? - the Eds.

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In August 2015 a “boat working group” was formed. Since I thought that it was a clear demand from refugees to put a boat on O’Platz (which maybe it wasn’t after all, I still don’t know), I took part in this working group. At the end of the first meeting of the boat working group ,(September 2nd 2015) two white men fought about whose idea was to be realised on O’Platz (a boat or a concrete cube), each one claiming that he had planned this or that first, claiming that these or those refugees had supported his idea first, and so on, and so on. I saw this as a re-staging of a colonial setting and was taken aback.

In the following meetings it became increasingly clear to me that we didn’t

actively talk about or tackle the hierarchical structures that were preventing real participation of refugee activists. We didn’t overcome the barriers that language difference, access to knowledge, access to the protocols, access to the Internet and lack of representation caused. We didn’t fulfill the basic requirement to always include refugees in every task, and we didn’t make any effort to include new refugees. I participated in working group meetings where we were mostly white people with papers and only one or two refugee activists, who couldn’t even participate without an interpreter.

I still thought that I was supporting O’Platz as a self-organized refugee

struggle, although we didn't even adjust the structure and procedures of the meetings to fit with the refugees' needs and demands. The problem is, that we didn't discuss these things in depth. Critique at the plenum was judged as an assault on 'The movement' or met with self-defense. I think, if we had discussed the structure more seriously, the relationship between the plenum and working groups, work processes, decision-making and power structures, and our self-image, we could have clarified this issue and we could have changed the name "O'Platz Refugee Struggle" accordingly. But there wasn't room for this in the plenaries. I believe this is because of many reasons: Firstly, it was always very exhausting to talk about this issue and people were already frustrated, because they talked about it so many times during the past few years (although, perhaps, without coming to any conclusions). Secondly, people thought they could move forward with their projects more quickly if they were not being hindered by questions such as working structures and self-image. Thirdly, the way we held plenaries was ineffective and deconstructive: It is hard to talk about such important questions without preparation, without appropriate moderation techniques and without being able to rely on a continuity of people and consistency of commitment.

I am also criticising myself here. I took up the position and responsibilities of an 'organiser' of the campaign group, maybe preventing refugee-self-

organisation by this. My role, as is the case for most of the other roles in O'Platz plenums and working groups, was not made transparent. Not talking about these important issues, although they did come up now and again, contributed to the invisible power structures inside our group.

There is another point I want to stress, which came from an email I received from Stefan, the artist from the house construction group. I found out that he considers the group the only people who really work for their project, supposedly without help from anyone else from the plenum (which is not true). In this email he revealed, that he/they will make decisions for themselves without consultation with the plenum. This is not the structure we agreed on. And for me, personally, this is not how I want to work. It is okay that this group (the house group) have made their decision to go through with their plans to build a house/monument on O'Platz, without being hindered by endless plenums. But they should make this decision transparent. And I don't think that the house group represents 'The movement' or the O'Platz refugee struggle as a whole.

I hope, the reasons for my quitting have been made clear in this email. I will of course stay in touch. And I am still willing to help out with things, just not in the position I am in now.

With the best wishes for the new year,
Jana

The Music That Couldn't Sing

You look bored,
as if life was an empty page,
or life had put you on hold.

That blank look of yours is as empty as last night's wine bottle
and the coldness of your room surrounds you like
the morning fog.

The music that sang the passions of life and would have taken you for a ride
in the country where the flowers grow,
stopping the people from growing old,
the touch that would make you smile,
the warmth that would let you sleep in peace,
you pushed away a long time ago.

All you had to do was open your heart and smile,
but you remained cold and grew old alone,
now the music can't sing.

— Anthony Earl Baggette (March 21, 1969)



Minorities must break the bond with the Captors that continue to hold them as hostages. Minorities suffer from the "Stockholm Syndrome" no different from the bond formed between a battered victim and their abuser. It's called cognitive dissonance — minorities know what was done to their ancestors, but they still love the captor.

The 2016 Primaries has to be one of the best Civics 101 Classes ever written in United States history. For those paying the Primaries any attention you have surely witnessed voter disenfranchisement across the board, every State has its own set of "rules" that make it almost impossible for the "ordinary" persons to have a "voice" in the political process. It's very clear it's a couple of political factions that "rule," nothing new. The Preamble in the United States Constitution is very clear: "We the People" is the so-called "sovereign States" as Gouverneur Morris composed and ordained it to be in the Preamble of the United States Constitution.

One of the very reasons I can't stand "Hillary Clinton" is that she speaks with a forked tongue; she and her husband are United States Constitution scholars' adverse to the indigenous, indigent, to women, and person's of a distant people, and "all others" when boasting "Delegates and Super Delegates" who are selected by political parties for exclusionary purposes that makes it almost impossible for independents to interfere or disrupt a two hundred and twenty seven [227] corrupt experiment. That "Glass Ceiling" Hillary Clinton intends to break has more to do with vanity and entitlement rather than democracy. Democracy was never intended by the esteemed "Founding Fathers" in the United States and being the "legal" scholars the Clintons are, they prey on willful ignorance and or denial minorities endow.

I personally take offense to the Clintons' arrogance and political propaganda directed towards descendants of persons of a distant people/minorities. Even though Hillary says she does not take anyone for granted, it has been proven not once but twice that she preys on the naïvete, gullibility, and vulnerability of minorities and those that lust after power and authority susceptible to Clintonite back-door deals. They rally behind the Clintons to influence their constituents and other minorities to support the Clinton "Aristocracy Stratagem."

Minorities could become a force to be reckoned with in the United States. Voter disenfranchisement is by design established by the architects that separated themselves with the entitlement to "self-govern" the United States governing documents articulating "formal speech." Anyone that accepts [\$200,000] for [20] minute speaking engagements for Corporate America while opposing a [\$15.00] minimum wage for ordinary workers is condescending and disregarding the ordinary tax-payer who bailed Wall Street out. It was the ordinary worker that lost his/her jobs, homes to foreclosure, automobiles to repossession, life savings, retirement funds, 401-K investments, pride and dignity, and



for this reason the White middle class workers are “anti-establishment” while minorities just can’t get enough of the Democratic Party whom have done nothing for the Black race in more than [50] years. They could not even keep the [1965] Voters Rights Act from being repealed.

It has been said victims gravitate to their abusers. The time has come for minorities to break the bond from the oppressor. What people around the Globe are witnessing is self-enslavement: individuals who lack reading comprehension skills, who can’t distinguish truth from artful rhetoric or sincerity from political dogmatism.

Time has come to cut the serpent’s heads off and gut them.

Stop being so helpless; stop depending on someone else to do for you that you can do for yourself; there is no such thing as genetic inferiority, but there is literacy inferiority. Stop taking what other people say for granted and start self-educating self, stop allowing media personalities and politicians to speak over one’s head or use code words and language with their two Party Politics full of guile, it’s time for minorities to organize their own independent Political Party to form the majority, it is incomprehensible to me that minorities of all ethnicities can’t form their own coalition to become King. It is my hope if the Republican Party find a way to not nominate Donald Trump, and if Bernie Sanders does not accumulate enough Delegates to become the nominee for the Democrat Party, all hell break loose in the United States of America.

—Judy Lynn Clark Ferguson (April 21, 2016)



Peter Rose is a Berlin resident who was born and raised in New York City. He is a Performer and teacher of "Awakening Practice" workshops, Performer Training and "Song of Myself". His performances include "over the wall stories" (1981), "Berlin Zoo" (1983) and "Cleansing the Senses" (2005). He is co-creator of Performance Space 122 (1979) and "Open Movement" www.peterrose.org

What does community mean to you and specifically an artistic community? How do you as an artist work to realize this community?

Community is something that is born into being through confrontation and recognition.

A human-being / artist / individual explores their needs in the presence of others who do the same.

The alchemy of creating a community is when we discover one another in this dynamic process. This resolution of individual conflicts through an ongoing process of confrontation and recognition is community. The intent is not to conform to or for the community but to confront oneself in the presence of and with the support of the community. The origins of a community do not require so many. It is the catalytic process of a few that creates a magnetic field for those who follow.

Can you describe your ongoing Body/Voice work as a teacher at Tatwerk Studio?

Work Streams for Body Resonance and Voice "Song of Myself" is an ongoing work stream/session devoted to body resonance and voice.

The action/practice includes essential breathing and relaxation exercises for the body-vocal instrument. Students will attempt to find the songs they choose

within their resonating organism: this is body resonance. The practice is at once an act of performance and an act of meditation and sharing, through their own lives and their voices.

One of the themes of this work is "external order/internal intimacy." Can you describe this?

"External Order, Internal Intimacy" is the title of an interview/article by Jerzy Grotowski with Marc Fumaroli. For the purposes of working as a professional in the studio I would describe external order/internal intimacy as the act of ordering my life before me as a means to move toward the experience of my own life, toward my own flesh and blood, to make my own life entirely visible. To move from the external order, perceptual skill and precision to the internal intimacy, an act of revelation which springs forth from within, simple and true. This is a simplistic and poetic description which requires the work experience itself to verify and the entire article to read!

You are now working with NIF (New Israeli Fund Deutschland) which wants to promote democracy in Israel. Can you tell us about this organization and your role/work in it?

Personally, I have been unable to identify with or support The State of Israel for

many years because of its military occupation of Palestinian territories. More recently, the right-wing policies of the Netanyahu government have proven a threat to Israel's democracy. NIF is committed to supporting initiatives that emphasize democratic values and their practice in a civil society for all citizens of Israel. NIF has been able to identify the following reasons for Israel's fragile democracy which is an essential step toward efforts to strengthen it:

- Israel is a young and inexperienced country that functions without a constitution to safeguard democracy. It has basic laws which can also be changed with a majority of 61 votes in the Knesset which a governing coalition can usually attain.
- Israel is a country of immigrants many of whom come from countries without a democratic history.
- Since its inception, Israel has been in a constant state of war with multiple opponents which allows the government in power to create laws in the interest of national security without concern for democratic principles.
- The occupation perpetuates that ongoing state of war which demands support from the Israeli public. Those who disagree are often considered traitors rather than legitimate voices of opposition.

My role is to facilitate and direct events as part of an effort to bring our concerns about Israel to the attention of a broader public and propose means to initiate activities within Israel and beyond—those which advocate social justice, religious

and societal pluralism and fight against the occupation of Palestinian territories.

What do you think needs to happen in order to move the peace process between Israel and Palestine forward? What kind of future can you imagine in the region?

The position of The New Israeli Fund is that the two state solution is not dead. As expressed by its president, Talia Sasson, "it is the only option that could realistically receive consent from both sides. When the cessation of hostilities leads to genuine peace talks, that is the policy that should be pursued.

As there are 400,000 Israeli citizens living in the West Bank and another 200,000 in the Greater Jerusalem area beyond the green line, the problem can be solved with territorial swaps, Land for Peace."



©CVM 2015

Then there is the question of "The Jewish State"; the Israeli government has tried to make the recognition of The Jewish State a part of peace negotiations. Ms. Sasson's personal opinion, which I share, is that Israel should define itself as the "homeland of the Jewish people," instead of the Jewish State. This indicates a clearer inclusion of every other kind of potential citizen. "The Jewish State" is one of national exclusivity which was not the intention of its democratic founders.

As Ms. Sasson has said, "The issue of recognition of the 'homeland of the Jewish people' should be left to the end of negotiations."

How should we respond to support for expanded Israeli settlements?

Any continuation of illegal settlements supported by the right-wing Israeli government completely destroy the possibility for dialogue about a shared future for Israelis and Palestinians.

There is a new influx of Israeli Jews coming to Berlin - they are sharply criticized by those in Israel. What does their arrival mean to you? And how do you feel as a Jew living in Berlin?

The arrival of Israelis says as much about Berlin's open society and civil discourse as it defines the lack of these realities in Israeli democracy. There is a severe leadership crisis in Israel. Netanyahu's right-wing government has been a disaster for Israel and its international standing.

The arrival of Israelis in Berlin presents a golden opportunity for them to have direct contact with Palestinians and the Arab world as they have practically no chance for such contact at 'home.' The meeting and interaction of Palestinians, Jews and Israelis in Berlin can foresee a more realistic understanding of each other than 'just the enemy.' The young will forge these new relationships and plant the seeds for contact, understanding and concessions, not only conflict.

The challenge of contemporary Jewish life in Berlin has been there since my arrival in 1978.

The Jewish life of pre-war 'old Europe', with its emphasis on religious tradition have long dominated. As have unconditional support of Israel policies in the Jewish community and German government. This culture of Jewish life in Berlin has grown considerably. I am an unlikely but proud, longtime Jewish citizen of Berlin. The stereotypes and taboos supplied by history and the media apply less and less. A Jew can live in this city and retain links to tradition and live in a contemporary metropolis. This is my view and I strongly support Jews living in Europe. Anywhere.

Why do you live in Berlin?

I returned to Germany in 1992 to start a family with Christina von Mickwitz and her son, Eckhard, both of whom were born in East Germany. I first met Christina in 1978 on a trip to East Berlin. I then lived in West Berlin from 1979-1981, performing throughout West Germany from 1984-

1986. Returning to a united Germany and Berlin after the Wall fell in 1989, was tantamount to fulfilling a dream. Christina and I could pursue our relationship and raise her son in a unified Germany. We were both free from two extremes: the state socialism and repression in East Germany and the United States, where economic and social inequality was a plague on the nation. I wanted to be in Central and Eastern Europe where the earth was peacefully turning over. I could participate in an unforeseen triumph for humanity. As an artist, Jew

and bi-polar person, I felt better about the prospects for growth, change and support in Germany than in the United States. Germany's social system, in the form of health insurance and general support for its residents was far more humane than the American system. Berlin was on the verge of rediscovering and defining its identity and I wanted only to be an active citizen in that historical transformation. The transformation in which I participated has taken place. The dust has settled before my eyes and there is a new era beginning with other challenges.



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Political Groups

Women in Exile

An initiative of refugee women to fight for their rights. We know from our experience that refugee women are doubly discriminated, not only by racist laws and discriminative refugee laws in general, but also as women. The struggle against these laws are often dominated by men who look at other issues as more important.

Network meeting: every first Saturday of the month, 13:00, Heilpraktikerschule, Bethanien, Mariannenplatz 2a, Berlin-Kreuzberg;

Postal address: Rudolf-Breitscheid-Straße 164 – 14482 Potsdam info@women-in-exile.net
033 1243 48233

International Women Space

International Women Space is a feminist group of migrant and refugee women coming to Germany from former colonized countries as well as women without that experience working together to develop a common political struggle against the effects of patriarchy in Fortress Europe. Please contact us via email:

internationalwomenspace@riseup.net; iwspace.wordpress.com; 0151 1485 5720

African Refugees Union (ARU)

We remind the German society and government that their economical wealth and stability bases on the longterm exploitation of our countries. Therefore they have no legitimation to illegalize Africans that are forced to come here for this reason. On the contrary we expect them to accept their responsibility for the colonial crimes. Our mission is to unite and change these racist power structures.

Facebook: *African Refugees Union*; Meeting: Every Friday, 2pm, Project room, Waldemarstr. 46, 10999 Berlin; aru1884info@gmail.com ; 0152 1341 1249

AfricAvenir

AfricAvenir International e.V. creates opportunities for the production and dissemination of knowledge from the perspective of Africans and migrants from the African Diaspora. Raising awareness and changing perspectives as suggested by the "critical whiteness approach" form the basis of our work. We offer interdisciplinary activities in the field of cultural and political education.

Address: Kameruner Str. 1 – 13351 Berlin www.africavenir.org; 030 26934764

Glادت

GLADT is an independent, self-organized group of lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and trans people (LGBT). They offer counseling and support services in English. All services are available to the general public, regardless of ethnic background, religion, nationality, sexual orientation or gender identity.

Address: Kluckstraße 11 – 10785 Berlin; info@gladt.de ; 030 26 55 66 33

LesMigraS

(Lesbian/bisexual Migrants, Black Lesbians and Trans*People)

"LesMigraS" is engaged in anti-discrimination and anti-violence work, offers counselling and a space for self-empowerment. They advocate for a society in which all aspects of the lives and identity of lesbian, bisexual women and trans*people are accepted and appreciated.

Address: Kulmer Strasse 20a – Berlin; info@lesmigras.de ; 030 21 91 50 90

corasol

Corasol is a group of people with and without a right to stay, with and without the experience of flight or migration, who try to fight against racism and white dominance within the society by structural political work and mutual support. More concretely: we've organized the Antiracist Shopping in Hennigsdorf, do the monthly Friedel Vokü with information on antiracist topics and smaller public actions.

www.corasol.blogspot.de corasol@web.de

CISPM Berlin (Network in Germany for the International Coalition of Sans-Papiers, Migrants and Refugees)

cispmberlin@riseup.net; 0152 – 17253443 (DE/ IT/ ES), 0152 – 13033001 (EN/ FR), 0152 – 10257497 (FR/ EN)

The Caravan and The Voice

The Caravan-for the Rights of refugees and Migrants is a network of individuals, groups and organizations of refugees, migrants and Germans based on the common struggle against imperialism and racism - for socio-political justice, equality and respect for the fundamental human rights of everyone.

www.karawane-berlin.org; the_voice_berlin@emdash.org; 0170 – 8788124

Die Plataforma der MigrantInnen und Flüchtlinge Berlin

The "Plataforma" is a open space for groups and individuals, who come from different parts of the world and who have diverse experiences and visions. Due to that, there is the possibility to exchange and to develop strategies against the dominating Injustice, to act as a political subject and to become visible.

plataforma.berlin@gmail.com; 0176 – 26565198

Pro Asyl

PRO ASYL struggles for a democratic and open society in which refugees have the chance to live in dignity. PRO ASYL assists refugees in their asylum procedure and offers various other kinds of help.

proasyl@proasyl.de; 069 – 24 23 14 20; (Mo–Fr: 10AM–12AM & 2PM–4PM)

KUB

If you have questions regarding your asylum process or if you need legal advice for other purposes (translating letters, trouble with the police etc.) we recommend you go to KUB (Kontakt- und Beratungsstelle für Flüchtlinge und Migrant_innen). KUB is a registered non-profit association, whose purpose it is to provide support and consultation services for refugees and migrants from all over the world in matters concerning not only social and residence law, but also psychosocial and other existential questions.

Address: Oranienstraße 159 U Moritzplatz (U8)

Office hours: Mo: 10 AM – 1 PM consultations in EN, FR, DE

Tu: 10 AM–1 PM consultations in EN, ES, DE Th: 10 AM–1 PM consultations in EN DE;

Fr: 10 AM–1 PM consultations in Arabic, Dari, Farsi, EN, FR, ES, Turkish, DE

Phone: 030 – 6149400 kontakt@kub-berlin.org; **all services are free of charge!**

Lawyers for asylum law

Benjamin Düsberg

*Address: Hasenheide 12 10967 Berlin Phone 030-6912092; Fax 030 – 6911126
mail@rechtsanwalt-duesberg.de*

Sunna Keles

*Address: Anklamer Str. 38 10115 Berlin-Mitte Phone 030-52281877;
Fax: 030 – 52281879; ra_in.sunnakeles@posteo.de*

Practical support

Medibüro

Monday and Thursday 4.30pm – 6.30pm;
Mehringhof, Gneisenaustr.2a, Hinterhof, Aufgang 3, 2. Stock, Berlin-Kreuzberg, ;
Phone: (030) 694 67 46 info@medibuero.de

Malteser Migranten Medizin

A medical practice for people without a health insurance
Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday, 9am–3pm;
Aachener Str. 12, 10713 Berlin-Wilmersdorf;
Phone: (030) 82 72 26 00 MMedizin@malteser-berlin.de

Berliner Behandlungszentrum für Folteropfer (BZFO)

The term "Folteropfer/ victim of torture" needs to be understood in a broader sense.
People do not necessarily have had to be physically tortured by a political system; e.g.
psychological abuse in a social setting is also considered torture.
Phone: (030) 30 39 06 -0; mail@bzfo.de

Free German Language Courses:

KuB

For Women, with childcare – bring your kids!
Familienzentrum Friedrichshain (Fürstenwalder Str. 25)
Monday 10:00 – 13:00, Friday 10:30 – 12.30

NewYorck im Bethanien

Südflügel - Mariannenplatz 2 A 10997 Berlin-Kreuzberg,
Tuesday -Thursday 10.30 – 12.30. number

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Heisse Scheiben CDs and Records

Ohlauer Str. 44, 10999 Berlin-Kreuzberg www.heisse-scheiben.de

Möbel Olfe

Reichenberger Str. 177, 10999 Berlin www.moebel-olfe.de

Südblock

Admiralstraße 1-2, 10999 Berlin www.suedblock.org

Tante Horst

Oranienstraße 45, 10969 Berlin www.tantehorst.de

Kreuzberg Pavillon

Naunynstraße 53, 10999 Berlin
www.kreuzbergpavillon.tumblr.com

for their continued support

Calendar of upcoming events:

Meal Share @ Kreuzberg Pavillon Naunynstraße 53

Every second Wednesday, 19:00; next dates: 18 May, 01 June

One World Poetry Night @ Familiengarten-Stadtteilzentrum des Kotti e.V. Ora-

nienstr. 34, Hinterhof Every second Saturday, 19:00; next dates: 14 May, 28 May

INTERVENTIONEN 2016: REFUGEES IN ARTS & EDUCATION

03 -04 June: Festival & Conference @ Podewil - Klosterstraße 68, Berlin
www.interventionen-berlin.de

One World Basketball @ Böttgerstraße 8, U Gesundbrunnen

Every Saturday, 18:45-21:00

for more Information about events and meetings, please go to: oplatz.net/calendar