



STUDIO TOLERANCE

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Admission free



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Voices for Tolerance

Texts: Désirée Galert, managing director, and Orkide Ezgimen, education advisor (KIGa e. V., Kreuzberg Initiative Against Antisemitism)

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Declaration of Human Rights

„Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world, [...] The General Assembly, Proclaims this Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, [...]“

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Resolution 217 A (III), 10 December 1948, excerpt

Context

On December 10, 1948, the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This comprises 30 articles that have been translated into hundreds of languages. The Declaration sets certain standards internationally, but these are not binding under international law. A European Convention on Human Rights has been adopted by the member states of the Council of Europe; the Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany contains fundamental rights taken from it.

The genesis of the Declaration of Human Rights goes back to the intellectual currents of humanism, enlightenment and secularization. Philosophers of the 17th and 18th centuries had dealt with the relationship between rights and duties in a state system from which the first general basic rights to which every human being is entitled were formulated. The Virginia Declaration of Rights of 1776 laid a foundation with its Article 1, which states that “All men are by nature equally free and independent and have certain inherent rights, [...]” Similar sentiments can be found in the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen (Déclaration des Droits de l’Homme et du Citoyen), which is considered a significant step towards universal protection of human rights. Fundamental rights in themselves were already formulated in the Middle Ages, such as the English Magna Charta of 1215 („Great Charter of Liberties“).

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 contains all of today’s international standards and came into being shortly after the Second World War and the crimes of National Socialism. Articles 1 and 2 state that „All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights,“ „regardless of ‘race’,“ „sex or religion for every human being.“ A human right, by definition, is a right to which a person is entitled vis-à-vis the state and which is innate. By human dignity is meant the inner and social claim to value. However, there is no exact definition of human dignity.

Globally, violations of human rights and attempts to undermine fundamental rights are occurring again and again in the present. There are a number of international agreements against torture, human trafficking, racial discrimination, women’s and children’s rights. Since 2002, the International Criminal Court in The Hague has punished war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. The 1990 Cairo Declaration on Human Rights unites an alliance of Islamic states.

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Hugo Hamid Marcus

National Socialism, Weimar Republic

„The general equality of men which democracy demands already exists by nature, and precisely in the fact that men as individuals are all in the same way unique, distinct, inimitable and incomparable.“

Hugo Hamid Marcus (1880–1966)

Hugo Hamid Marcus was a German writer and intellectual who campaigned throughout his life for the decriminalization of homosexuals and for the assertion of their rights. He converted from Judaism to Islam in Weimar-era Berlin and was for many years the managing director of the Wilmersdorf Mosque in Berlin-Wilmersdorf, the oldest mosque still in existence in Germany. During the November pogroms of 1938 under Nazi rule, he was arrested and deported to Sachsenhausen concentration camp. After his release, he went into exile in Switzerland.

Context

Weimar society in the 1920s and early 1930s was a pluralistic, diverse society in whose history Jewish-Muslim experiences and interactions were equally influential. Berlin, in particular, was a place of encounter between diverse individuals and social groups. The construction of the Wilmersdorf Mosque in 1925 created a new center for Muslim life in Germany.

However, under the §175 legislation of the time, the freedoms and rights of homosexuals were significantly curtailed, and there was massive interference in people's everyday lives. Homosexuality was punishable, and at the same time there was by no means unanimity in science and politics about the legality of the paragraph. The subsequent period of National Socialism 1933-1945 was characterized by an intolerant, anti-democratic and völkisch-racist ideology. Those who were marked as the „others“ were marginalized, disenfranchised, and targeted for murder, such as Jews* Jewish, Sinti*zze and Rom*nja or people with physical or mental impairments. The genocide of at least 6.3 million Jews* Jewesses is called Holocaust in European terminology, and Shoah, or „catastrophe,“ in Jewish terminology. After 1933, the mosque community was appropriated by the National Socialists and instrumentalized for their own propaganda. The application of §175 was also tightened, and suspects were actively persecuted, deported to concentration camps and murdered. §175 was not abolished until 1994.

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Denis Theodore Goldberg

Apartheid

„I can only speak from my own experience of being totally convinced that what we were doing was right and served the right purpose: equal rights for everyone in our country, for other countries, for all people. That's the only way to be human, to stay human, to not become insignificant. It's not about me or you. It's about all of us.“

Denis Theodore Goldberg (1933–2020)

South African civil rights activist Denis Goldberg was born in Cape Town in 1933 to Jewish immigrants. His grandparents came from Lithuania, where they had to flee from the pogroms in the Russian Tsarist Empire. He was one of the few whites to fight against apartheid and was the only white man to be sentenced to life imprisonment in the Rivonia Trial of 1963/64, along with Nelson Mandela. After his release in 1985, he emigrated, first to Israel, then to London, where, as a representative of the ANC, he continued to fight first for an end to apartheid and later for an egalitarian social structure and a lifting of the socioeconomic disadvantages of the black population. Nelson Mandela was freed in 1990 and four years later was elected South Africa's first black president.

Context

South Africa had an apartheid regime from the 1940s until 1994, in which the political-social doctrine of racial segregation was dominant. Apartheid was characterized by the authoritarian and self-declared supremacy of the European-descended white population over all others.

„Apartheid“ is an Afrikaans word that literally means „separateness“ or „separation.“ South Africa's history is marked by colonialism. Black people were not given the same rights and freedoms as whites and were excluded from political as well as social life. The resistance of the black majority population was initially non-violent. The majority of the black population organized itself in the youth movement of the African National Congress ANC. In its early years, the ANC primarily united layers of the educated elite. The best-known fighter among them was the civil rights activist and lawyer Nelson Mandela (1918–2013). As a political activist and president of the Youth League, he campaigned for social equality for black Africans. In the course of developments, measures against the black population were legally tightened, and the movement became radicalized until the organization was banned by the state, and its members were convicted.

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Malala Yousafzai

Children's rights, Right to education, Fight against extremism

„Education is education. We should learn everything and then choose which path to follow. Education is neither Eastern nor Western, it is human.“

Malala Yousafzai (* 1997)

Malala Yousafzai is a child rights activist and UN Messenger of Peace. Born in Pakistan's Swat Valley, she dreamed of going to school as a young girl, but was barred from doing so by the extremist Taliban in Pakistan, who had conquered her home territory. She fought against this ban time and time again, also publicly. In 2012, Malala Yousafzai was the victim of an assassination attempt: A Taliban supporter fired a rifle at her on a bus. She survived with serious injuries and was brought to the UK for medical treatment, where she still lives with her family. Since then, she has become an even more energetic advocate for girls' education around the world, in 2017 becoming the youngest recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize for her courageous commitment. She has established a foundation to support education for young women around the world.

Context

Although children's rights were adopted and written down by the UN in 1989, even today they are not recognized by all states worldwide. Girls' education in particular is often ignored. Article 28 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child states, „(1) States Parties recognize the right of the child to education [...].“

Extremism and terrorism pose an ongoing threat to states and societies worldwide, including Pakistan's pluralistic society. As a result of ongoing disputes, such as in the context of the Indo-Pakistani territorial conflict over Kashmir, and as a result of internal religious as well as domestic political power struggles, the country repeatedly experiences severe setbacks, with which hopes for peace and freedom often fade. Developments in neighboring Afghanistan, where the Afghan Taliban seized power again in the summer of 2021, are significant in this regard, as radical groups in Pakistan may also be strengthened as a result.

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Eko Fresh

„Guest worker history“, Migration

„60 years after the recruitment agreement, we see that we can no longer live without each other. We have grown together. In music, in food, in the neighborhood, in relationships... With this in mind, we can look optimistically to the next 60 years.“

Eko Fresh (* 1983)

Eko Fresh is a German rapper, songwriter, owner of his own music label, and actor. His real name is Ekrem Bora, and he comes from Cologne, where he grew up with his mother as the son of a Turkish-Kurdish immigrant family. His maternal grandfather had come to Germany from Sivas in central Anatolia as a guest worker. His father, Nedim Hazar, also a musician and filmmaker, came to Germany as a political refugee in 1980, though he has since returned to Turkey. Eko Fresh's music career began in his teens, when he chose rap and hip-hop as forms of expression for his art, and also came to terms with his experiences as a German-Turk. In his music, he likes to actively and critically participate in social debates about migration and integration. In doing so, he also has a political claim and speaks out clearly against racism, bullying, hatred and intolerance. Recently, one of his texts was included in a school textbook. He joyfully posted on Facebook: „I just found out that my song text from „Der Gastarbeiter“ was featured in a school textbook. Grandpa, that one was for you!“

Context

Beginning in the 1950s, West Germany experienced a tremendous economic boom. There was an urgent need for workers in mining, road construction, and industry, who were recruited primarily from southern European countries as so-called „guest workers.“ Agreements were signed with Italy, Spain, Greece, Morocco, Portugal, Tunisia, Yugoslavia, and Turkey.

On October 30, 1961, the Federal Republic of Germany and Turkey signed the German-Turkish Recruitment Agreement. It regulated the temporary posting of workers from Turkey to Germany. Until the recruitment stop in 1973, about 870,000 workers came from Turkey to Germany. During this time, people left their homeland for economic reasons, but also to study in Germany or because they were politically persecuted. Labor migration not only boosted the economy in the „host country“ but also in the country of origin, for example by compensating for high unemployment. The Federal Republic was basically open to labor migrants, but people were not always welcomed openly. In the new environment, they encountered a new language, culture and people. The work was usually physically hard and the salary comparatively low. „Integration“ was not provided, as they were expected to go back to their countries of origin. The feeling of being caught between two worlds and also the longing for their home countries became part of their identity. Many found a second home in Germany. Guest workers became immigrants and Germany became a country of immigration.

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Nadia Murad

Escape, Genocide, Sexual violence

„We must not only imagine a better future for women, children and persecuted minorities, we must work consistently to make it happen – prioritizing humanity, not war.“

Nadia Murad (* 1993)

Nadia Murad is a human rights activist and survivor of the IS-perpetrated genocide against the Yezid*in minority in Iraq and Syria. She was born in 1993 in Kocho, a village in northern Iraq's Sinjar region, and is a member of Iraq's ethnic religious group of Yezid*is.

During the Iraq crisis in 2014 and the advance of the militant terrorist organization with the self-designation „Islamic State“ (IS), a period of martyrdom began for her and many others of her ethnic group, during which the IS murdered her mother, six of her brothers, and many other people in a raid on her home village. The genocide of the Yezidis* is called Farmān in Yezidi and is seen as a continuation of their long history of oppression and persecution. Nadia Murad, like many other girls, was captured by IS, abducted, psychologically and physically abused, sexually assaulted, tortured and sold as a „sex slave.“ With the help of a Muslim family, she managed to escape to the Kurdish border region. Today she lives in Germany, where she fights for the recognition of the genocide against the Yezid*is and for justice. In 2018, she became the first Iraqi to receive the Nobel Peace Prize and is a UN Special Envoy „for the Dignity of Survivors of Human Trafficking.“

Context

Since 2014, the terrorist radical Islamist group known as the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria has been the focus of world attention. Young women*men from Germany and other countries in Europe and the world also joined this violent jihad in the name of Islam. There are still terrorist attacks in Berlin and other European cities carried out by IS sympathizers and members. The IS's claim to leadership aims to establish an Islamic state of God. Its underlying ideology is directed against all those who do not think and believe like them and do not fight for their goals and interests.

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Albert Memmi

National Socialism, Colonial history

„Tolerance means being able to think: Although I believe that I am right and that truth exists, I will not force it on you.“

Albert Memmi (1920–2020)

Albert Memmi was a French-Tunisian sociologist, writer and essayist. In his writings, he addressed issues such as colonialism and decolonization, racism, and migration processes, among others. In doing so, he tackled emotional and sociological issues, dealing with feelings of alienation and uprootedness. He himself was born in Tunis in Tunisia under the French protectorate and was the son of a Tunisian-Jewish family, on his mother's side from of a Jewish Berber family, on his father's side with Tunisian-Italian roots. Albert Memmi grew up in this multi-cultural environment and described himself as an atheist. In 1942, as a young student in the capital Algiers, he experienced the repressions of the French Vichy regime. He was expelled from the university. In Tunis, which was occupied by the Nazis, he was imprisoned.

After his escape and the end of the war, he found a new refuge in Paris in 1956. As a critic of the colonial system, he questioned discourses that were shaped by unequal power relations and shaped historical perspectives and cultures of memory - as can be read in his „Portrait of a Colonized Man“ („Portrait du colonisé suivi du portrait du colonisateur“) from 1957.

Context

The post-World War II period in many European colonized territories was marked by processes of disintegration and struggles for the states' own independence. The term decolonization or decolonization is sometimes defined as a continuation of colonial history, but with the goal of ending colonial rule and achieving sovereignty, or self-determination. In addition to France, colonial powers in Europe included Great Britain, the Netherlands, the German Empire, Italy, Spain, Portugal, and Belgium. Outside Europe, Russia, the United States and Japan also owned colonies.

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Mark Ashton

LGBTQ, Gay rights, Workers struggle

„When you think about it, it is quite illogical to actually say, ‚well, I’m gay and I’m into defending the gay community but I don’t care about anything else’. It’s ludicrous.“

Mark Ashton (1969–1987)

Mark Ashton was a political activist and socialist from Oldham, UK. In the early 80s, he was a member of the Communist Party of Great Britain. He was open about his homosexuality and supported the causes of the LGBT community at the time. During the 1984/85 miners’ strike, he and a friend founded the London association Lesbians and Gays support the Miners to provide moral, financial, and activist support for the miners’ labor struggle and their families. The strikers were resisting the threat of closures and privatization under Margaret Thatcher’s government. Particularly in the beginning, LGSM and its growing membership were met with strong rejection due to prejudice.

Mark Ashton’s initiative led to the formation of further LGSM groups throughout the country, which a year later led to the influential National Union Mineworkers (NUM) now supporting LGSM. Together they led the Lesbian and Gay Pride Parade in London in 1985. The Labour Party, which was elected by a majority of miners, pledged to support lesbian and gay rights. In the years that followed, the miners were one of the most important allies of the lesbian and gay movement. Mark Ashton died at the age of 26 from AIDS-related pneumonia. His story was made into a film in 2014, „Pride“, which won an award in Cannes.

Context

The impending impoverishment of miners in Great Britain was a social reality, especially since even before the miners’ strike, a postwar legal decree provided for cutting state benefits for strikers’ families.

Solidarity with the striking miners encouraged meeting and mutual tolerance and led to solidarity with each other. The exclusion of homosexuals and the stigmatization of people with HIV-positive and AIDS-related illnesses represent an ongoing social challenge. In the 1980s, this was only discovered in the early years, viewed as something brought to Europe from „outside“ and associated primarily with homosexual men. Since there were few treatment options at the time, new fears were associated with it, often accompanied by hostility, for example, also because educational campaigns at the time fueled these fears.

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Rosa Parks

U.S. Civil rights movement

„I just wanted to be free like everybody else. I did not want to be continually humiliated over something I had no control over: the color of my skin.“

Rosa Parks (1913–2005)

Rosa Louise Parks was born Rosa Louise McCauley in Tuskegee in the southern U.S. state of Alabama and was a U.S. civil rights activist. In addition to her profession as a seamstress, she worked throughout her life for the enforcement of human rights for blacks, their equality and equal rights. She became known in connection with the Montgomery bus boycott. The protest was sparked when Rosa Parks refused to stand up during a bus ride to vacate her seat for a white passenger and was arrested and charged as a result. The resistance lasted a year, after which „racial segregation“ on public buses was declared unconstitutional. However, fair treatment of blacks by granting them the same rights and freedoms as whites continued to be denied.

Context

In the United States of America in the 1950s and 1960s, the Civil Rights Movement, a protest and resistance movement, fought against the racially motivated social and spatial segregation of black and white people and for their equal rights. It had its most popular leader in the person of Martin Luther King (1929-1968), a minister who was committed to ensuring that all people, regardless of their skin color, origin or religion, had equal rights. The policy of the so-called „racial segregation“ intervened very strongly in the everyday life of the people and also led to violent attacks up to so-called „lynchings.“ There were segregated schools, segregated waiting rooms, segregated theaters up to segregated toilets, restricted voting rights, unequal professional opportunities and unfair treatment e.g. in court hearings. Attempts to resist, show solidarity, or demand justice took courage. Martin Luther King, who called for nonviolent „civil disobedience,“ was assassinated in 1968. His famous speech „I Have a Dream“ is unforgotten. Civil rights activists such as Martin Luther King, Rosa Parks, and many others were able to initiate processes through civic engagement. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 signed by U.S. President Johnson is considered a milestone in the struggle for the recognition of black people as equal and equal citizens of America. Contemporary events, such as cases of police violence against black people, continue to raise questions about institutionalized racism. One of the most recent examples of this is the transnational Black Lives Matter movement.

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Ibn 'Arabi

Islamic Spain - Philosophy, Judaism, Christianity, Islam

„My heart has learned to assume every shape: / It is a pasture for gazelles, / A monastery for Christian monks, / and also a temple to idols / And the Ka'aba of pilgrims / And the tablets of the Torah / And the Holy Book of the Quran. / I follow the religion of love: / Whoever way the camel of love / takes, / It is my religion and my faith.“

Ibn 'Arabi (1165–1240)

Ibn 'Arabi was born in Murcia, Spain, and is among the best-known Islamic scholars, Sufi mystics, and philosophers. His teachings on the cosmos and the prophets were closely linked to a belief in mystical love and the equivalence of religions. His works not only reflect his affection for mysticism. They also shaped the development of Islamic spirituality by viewing Islamic traditions from a new perspective, harmoniously uniting apparent opposites, and incorporating Jewish as well as Christian philosophy. In addition, his teachings also contain influences from the ancient Greek scholar Plato and parallels to Hindu teachings. An essential aspect of his doctrine is the „perfect man,“ who was created „in the image of God“ and thus forms a manifestation of the characteristics of the Creator.

Context

Between the 8th and 15th centuries, the area of the Iberian Peninsula called al-Andalus in Arabic was ruled by various Islamic dynasties, and the Caliphate of Córdoba (929-1031) in particular was a center of attraction for Islamic scholars. Córdoba became a leading cultural and economic center in the Mediterranean region and in the all Islamic regions.

Under Islamic rule, Jews and Christians were recognized according to their status as „People of the Book“ and subjects of protection (dhimmi status). By today's standards, however, this does not imply social equality or equal participation of „minorities.“

Although the position of Jews* and Christians* was marked by restrictions and discrimination, Islamic Spain is often perceived as a symbol of peaceful coexistence of different „cultures“ and referred to as the „Golden Age of Tolerance.“ It was based on the Andalusian model of so-called „convivencia,“ which emerged in the age of the Taifa kingdoms and was intended to regulate peaceful coexistence and constructive interaction.

The end of Islamic rule in Spain was fueled by ongoing power struggles and wars, but was initiated primarily in the course of the so-called Reconquista, or Christian reconquest. This resulted in the expulsion of Muslims, as well as Jews, from Spain.

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Moses Mendelssohn

Enlightenment - Judaism, Philosophy, Literature

„Those who have experienced for themselves how difficult it is to find the truth and to convince themselves that they have found it are always more inclined to be tolerant of those who think differently.“

Moses Mendelssohn (1729–1789)

Moses Mendelssohn was a German philosopher of the Enlightenment, in which the self-determination of the individual and ideals of freedom, equality, and tolerance of other religions were declared to be significant standards of human action. He himself came from a Jewish family and advocated the emancipation of Judaism and the „civic improvement of the Jews“ in the Christian „majority society“ as well as mutual tolerance. As a Jewish reformer, he was a co-founder of modern Judaism. For Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729-1781), an important poet and thinker, son of an Evangelical Lutheran pastor as well as a friend of Mendelssohn, the philosopher served as a model in the Ring Parable „Nathan the Wise“ (1779), which is considered a plea for tolerance and humanity.

Context

With the Age of Enlightenment, a new social and intellectual development began in Europe around 1700. It aimed to break away from old social structures and ways of thinking. The focus was on demands for equal rights and freedom for all people as well as civil rights, education and the separation of state and religion.

A leitmotif was the idea of emancipation, liberation from religious or state tutelage and social equality. In the French Revolution, the ideas of the Enlightenment were partially realized. Although this represented a turning point in history and debates, Jews* Jewesses continued to be excluded from civil and human equality in the sense of the Declaration of Human Rights of 1789. Throughout his work, Lessing championed the Enlightenment ideals of reason, tolerance, freedom, and humanity.

The play „Nathan the Wise,“ published in 1779, was a taboo-breaker at the time: Lessing had made a Jew a positive hero, a member of a „minority“ that was mostly despised in Europe at the time. In Europe at the time, for example, the anti-Semitic stereotype of the money-grubbing Jewish Christ-killer was widespread. Lessing’s Nathan character argues against religious narrow-mindedness and in favor of an enlightened understanding of God. The drama is set in the time of the Crusades, addresses the relationship between the three great monotheistic religions, and includes the Muslim Sultan Saladin as a historical figure.

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Ceija Stojka

National Socialism, Sinti and Roma

„And many years after that, when we were released, it was very difficult to find our way back into the world. Into the beautiful world. Where the green grows. Where nobody threatens us.“

Ceija Stojka (1933–2013)

Ceija Stojka was an Austrian writer and artist who, as a member of a Rom–Lowara family, was persecuted by the Nazis in her childhood and deported to Auschwitz and other concentration and extermination camps. Most of her family was murdered there, she herself survived. She was one of the first Rom*nja in Austria to publicly address the genocide of the Sinti and Roma minority.

Context

After the end of the Second World War, it took well over thirty years until the crimes committed against the Sinti and Roma of Europe under National Socialism were officially recognized as „genocide“ in Germany in 1982. Social actors and organizations, especially relatives and survivors of the genocide of the Sinti and Roma, which is called „Porajmos“ („devouring“, „destruction“) in Romany, stand up for the reappraisal of the centuries-long history of persecution, for equal participation and against the discrimination that continues to this day.

Sinti*zze and Roma*nja in the German-speaking countries is a centuries-old history, in which they experienced constant exclusion and persecution as a „minority.“ The genocide under National Socialism began in 1933 with forced sterilization, which was initially based on the „Law for the Prevention of Hereditary Diseased Offspring“. Although this law had already existed during the Weimar period (1918–1933), the requirement for forced sterilization was new. Among the „hereditary diseases“ defined by the National Socialists was „hereditary imbecility,“ which opened the way for applications for sterilization. Finally, „imbecility“ was assumed in various forms of socially non-conforming behavior and was mostly diagnosed with the help of a kind of test („intelligence test sheet“). Among those who were forcibly sterilized was the successful German boxer Johann „Rukeli“ Trollmann, from „Ruk“ in romani čhip, in German „Baum“. With the so-called „Auschwitz Decree“ of December 16, 1942, the situation for Sinti*zze and Roma*nja worsened. Those who were not deported to the Auschwitz concentration camp due to an „exception“ were nevertheless to be sterilized. Beginning in February 1943, more than 23,000 Sinti*zze and Roma*nja from the German Reich and the occupied territories were deported to the Auschwitz–Birkenau death camp. Johann „Rukeli“ Trollmann was beaten to death in the Wittenberge concentration camp near Hamburg in 1944, presumably by a supervisor whom he had previously defeated in a boxing match. The Nazis knew who Trollmann was and had him fight SS men regularly after his forced labor. He survived this for two years despite malnutrition.

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Politische Bildung für die Migrationsgesellschaft

Boppstraße 3
D-10967 Berlin

Tel.: +49(0)30 - 91468490

Web: www.kiga-berlin.org

www.stopantisemitismus.de

www.lchaim.berlin

www.anders-denken.info

facebook: facebook.com/kiga.berlin

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Kunstbibliothek
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin