

Statement reclaim society!

Activists have critically marked different aspects of the work of reclaim society! and demanded transparency in our work. With the following position paper we hope to fulfill this wish and want to work more self-critically and transparent in the future.

Us

"We do not want to be part of the spectacle, but part of the downfall of the spectacle."

reclaim society! is a group that formed in Potsdam / Berlin 2010 in order to work around the topics of "migration", "asylum" and "racism.". In our collective development a domination-critical approach with the focus on *white* supremacy has prevailed more and more. By *white* supremacy we understand a global system that is the basis of racism and therefore racist state of things. *white* supremacy goes hand in hand with *whiteness* as the norm, *white* solidarity and *white* privilege. *white* supremacy in the context of germany is maintained by governmental and non-governmental institutions of society (for instance: education, autonomous and self-organized structures and groups) and functions both subtle, eg. by being silent, and directly and offensively. reclaim society! wants to attack oppressive norms and systems and has found a way to do so in the context of political education, through inputs, workshops and organizing events, where racism as a part of *white* supremacy can be marked and fought against.

The rs! circle of activists has changed continuously in the nearly three years of our collective political work. Some activists have positioned themselves as People of Color, as Refugees, as People with refugee experience, as migrants or Roma. Others as *white*. Currently there are activists of Color with and without refugee experience and people that are read as *white* in a racist system and thus have privileges. At this point, it is important for us to make our concept of People of Color transparent: In our understanding, People of Color is an emancipatory self-identification of people who experience racism in a particular context, here: germany / western europe. In our concept of PoC we include the experience of People marked as "Slavic" and Jewish people. For us it is self-evident that not all People negatively affected by racism have/ represent the same position; that means that also not all people that position themselves e.g. as PoC have the same positions.

Before the PoC concept became an act of resistance it was part of *white* racial segregation, which was then appropriated by PoC and turned against *white* violence. Due to this, the PoC concept inherently challenges *white* supremacy and is consequently questioned by *whites/ white* structures. We are all instrumentalized by *white* structures, including rs!, but only by acknowledging this can we be able to challenge these structures. This means that only by naming the *white* violence and *whites* acknowledging their part in the upholding of *white* supremacist structures, it is possible to challenge and eventually bring down *white* supremacy/ racism. We distance ourselves from identity politics and see self-designations, such as PoC, as necessary tools to challenge *white* supremacy.

Reclaim your voice

Within the rs! project "reclaim your voice" some *whites* (amongst others) of rs! went into refugee camps between November 2010 and July 2012 and designed and teamed theatre classes with children and youth. By freely moving in and out of the camps the *whites* demonstrated their privilege of freedom of movement. Moreover, by teaming the courses images of *white* authority and thus supremacy were re-produced. The *whites* thus created violent experiences of *white* power.

Starting in early 2011, this was marked by PoC and Roma members of rs!, while *whites* remained silent. Only through the marking by PoC and Roma the *whites* realised that – consciously or unconsciously - they were continuously exercising violence. The *whites* could only be brought to a stop-point through the resistance of PoC and Roma. It has been challenging for the *whites* to accept the protest, which lead to lengthy but enriching and still ongoing political processes, from which the *whites* benefit until today.

Since July 2012 the project is in a summer break. In autumn 2012 two of Color positioned activists from rs! will take up the project.

Goals and Strategies

We too live and move within the system, which means that we are also not free from the various power relations. This is why racism/ *white* supremacy also happens in rs!, and we assume responsibility for it. In collective processes we try to mark and reflect on it and try to create safer spaces together.

Our goal is a society without domination in which people can organize themselves autonomously and due to their necessities. We stand in solidarity with deprived groups and individuals. We try to think the various relations of domination and mechanisms of oppression as intertwined and try to mark and challenge them continuously in ourselves and our surroundings. We understand this as an ongoing individual and collective process.

We work together with democracy-critical groups and individuals who share our approaches, and with whom we can politically grow together. That means we refrain from essentialist solidarity concepts or groups and individuals that actively uphold structures of domination.

rs! has been part of several networks and alliances and is right now part of the No Border Berlin Network (<http://noborderberlin.wordpress.com/>).

rs! believes that *whites* have to deal with themselves, with other *whites* and with problems created by *whites*, such as racism. If this is the case, rs! regards *whites* as potential allies of PoC, Refugees {...} in the struggle against *white* supremacy. PoC of the group want to mainly support people negatively affected by racism. Therefore, inputs and workshop are teamed in different constellations (including with *white* positioned facilitators), while always at least one PoC teams and *white* co-teams are explicitly asked to team by the PoC.

No Border Networkings

As an antiracist/ racism-critical group we are committed to the vision of a world without *white* nations (we write *white* to highlight that 'nation' is a *white* concept) and borders. We perceive the No Border Movement as a potentially strong network to struggle against *white* supremacy/ racism. We see *white* awareness as a fundamental tool in order to engage in this struggle. The Cologne preparation itself pointed out its missing *white* awareness structures on the very first preparation meeting as well as the racist violence *whiteness* produced within the preparation process. Thus *white* awareness was established as one of the foundations of the camp and all its structures. Plenty of information about *whiteness*/ racism was made available before and during the camp (over workinglists, the infobrochure and readers at the camp), making transparent on how to deal with *whiteness* on the camp. There has been the space during the preparation process to voice concerns about the way the subject of *white* awareness was going to be addressed. Even though *white* awareness was openly announced as a basis for the camp, individuals and groups resisted the highlighting and critique of *white* supremacist structures and racist individual/ collective behavior, thus actively breaking the consensus in order to hold up *white* power structures. We are convinced that the No Border Movement can only fight borders by radically challenging power structures as

white supremacy/racism, which includes that *whites* have to step down from their power positions. Through meeting many people and groups (at the camps) who share these views we are enthusiastic about taking part in the mobilization towards the No Border Berlin Camp networking 2013 and to keep on engaging in collective processes with others to radically question all forms of domination.

Financing

The funds of rs! consist only of fees and expense allowances for workshops and inputs organized and teamed by rs!. Members of rs! do not personally claim fees/ expense allowances. 2011 rs! was approached with a large donation, which we collectively rejected in summer 2012 and returned to the donator because of conditions that appeared attached to it and the control and power exercised by it. Additionally rs! as a group wants to stay independent and realizes projects/programmes self-sustainably. Thus rs! cannot afford to finance external projects. The participation of rs! members at the No Border Camps 2012 in Stockholm and Cologne was not financed by rs!.

Growing together

We are always open towards solidaric critique because we are convinced that we can only grow together. We strive for a collective lifelong, self-organized learning together with you. If you find yourselves in our political approaches and our visions – as individuals or as a group – we are happy to organize a coming-together. rs! is always open for new ideas to radical change.

We look forward to seeing you!

reclaim society!,
Berlin, August 2012