

## Charles Steele jr speaking in Germany on Martin Luther King Day and meeting Civil Rights Leader Roland Jahn

Mr. Charles Steele jr, President Emeritus and CEO of the Southern Christian leadership Conference from Atlanta is on a visit to Berlin and Hamburg in Germany for discussions on civil rights projects with young people and to organise a memorial site for Martin Luther King jr., who visited the formerly divided German capital Berlin exactly 50 years ago.

On Martin Luther King Day Charles Steele jr. held a speech in the Protestant Berlin Sophien Church in former East-Berlin, where Martin Luther King himself preached 30 years ago in front of 3,000 people. In his prayer 1964 Martin Luther King encouraged the increasingly isolated people in the divided city of Berlin in public speeches with the words: „Where people break down the walls of hostility that separate them from their brethren, there it is that Christ completes his ministry of reconciliation.“ No man-made barrier "could erase the fact that God's children live on both sides of the Wall", he made clear. This will be mentioned in the Martin-Luther-King-Memorial, which is on the way to be built in Berlin.

### Visiting the Stasi Archives

Just before Charles Steele jr. was invited by the former East German civil rights leader Roland Jahn, who is now the Federal Commissioner for the "Stasi Records Agency", which is safekeeping and securing the archival holdings of the former East German secret police and intelligence organization of the Communist German Democratic Republic, called "Stasi".

One of the Stasi Records Agency's most important tasks is to provide people access to files that concern them. The former East German "Ministry of State Security" was the secret police force, secret intelligence service and organ for criminal investigations, primarily in political criminal cases. It was set up under the direct guidance of the Soviet secret police. The MfS had its own detention centres and own armed forces.

Charles Steele jr. was overwhelmed to get to know the history of this "Ministry of Repression", as Roland Jahn explained it to him. The former German civil rights activist gave an impression, how important Martin Luther King's efforts, declaring that civil rights are essential to democracy and that segregation must stop, have been for the East German civil rights movement too. This East German civil rights movement put an end to the Berlin Wall and the East German dictatorship 30 years ago. "People learnt by Martin Luther King, how to fight peacefully for their rights", Roland Jahn said. "All this shows, that people can change history - if they want," Charles Steele jr. answered.



Charles Steele jr. together with the Federal Commissioner for the "Stasi Records Agency" Roland Jahn in the main building of the former East German secret police, which is now a museum. Foto: Holger Kulick

More about this historical site:

[http://www.bstu.bund.de/EN/Home/home\\_node.html](http://www.bstu.bund.de/EN/Home/home_node.html)



Charles Steele jr. visiting the Sophien church on sundy mornig together with preacher  
Foto: Holger Kulick Franziskus Jaumann



outside Berlin Sophien Church / Charles Steele jr and Charles Isaac Brooks  
Foto: Holger Kulick

More about Martin Luther King visiting berlin in 1964 you can find here:  
<http://einestages.spiegel.de/external/ShowTopicAlbumBackground/a4946/113/10/F.html>

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