

Press release of
Working Group Hamburg Postkolonial (Arbeitskreis Hamburg Postkolonial)
Initiative of Black People in Germany
(ISD Initiative Schwarze Menschen in Deutschland)
Central Council of the African Community in Germany
(Zentralrat der Afrikanischen Gemeinde in Deutschland)

Decolonize Hamburg

NOT ABOUT US WITHOUT US!

With a very first municipal concept in Germany, the City of Hamburg undertakes efforts to come to terms with its own colonial history. Countrywide active self-organisations of people of African descent as well as the Working Group Hamburg Postkolonial signal their willingness to cooperate in the concept development and have proposed a board of experts. However, the Committee for Cultural Affairs of the Hamburg Parliament has rejected their suggestion.

Hamburg. On 12/10/2014 the Working Group Hamburg Postkolonial initiated a Round Table in Hamburgs Town Hall. Around 40 representatives of local and Germany-wide Black and African associations and organisations, postcolonial initiatives, educational institutions as well as responsible administration delegates and Members of the Hamburg Parliament were invited, and the meeting was organised by Eine Welt Netzwerk Hamburg. The topic of the Round Table was the disputed draft in which Hamburg's Senate is predefining the way how to deal with the city's colonial past (Senate paper no. 20/12383 of 7/8/2014, here in German: hhpostkolonial.files.wordpress.com/2014/07/senatsbericht-koloniales-erbe2014.pdf)

The organisations of the Black Community in Germany and the Working Group Hamburg Postkolonial have criticized the Senate's paper for covering only limited perspectives on the city's colonial history, on historical periods, geographical space, urban dimensions and vestiges as well as on scholarly debate. They place emphasis on the fact that they themselves were the ones to give the very impulses for the programmatic concept. As persons affected by colonialism and racism they make very clear that they will in no way accept to be excluded from the concept development. To the responsible Hamburg Ministry of Culture the experts in the migrant and diaspora organisations offer a model for cooperation: they propose an equally represented and multiperspective commission for the development of a truly corporate memory culture concept.

One day later and on the basis of this cooperation offer, a petition for a co-determinative expert advisory board was started by the Left Party at the meeting of the Committee for Cultural Affairs. The ruling Social Democratic Party (SPD) as well as the Christian Democrats (CDU) voted against the proposal. Once again only a more or less diffuse „participation“ of non-governmental actors was specified by the Committee for Cultural Affairs and recommended to the Senate.

The Working Group Hamburg Postkolonial and the countrywide active self-organisations of people of African descent declare: „We decidedly disagree with any one-sided commemorative concept. It is in no way acceptable that even today only *white* perspectives on our shared colonial history are privileged. We request Hamburg's Senate and the City Parliament to invite to an unfeigned cooperation and a corporate development of a comprehensive concept for Hamburg's colonial legacy.“

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