

Press release

NSU-COMPLEX

Tribunal denounces racism from a migrant perspective

Cologne, May 17th 2017 - This Wednesday marks the starts of the Tribunal 'Resolving the NSU-Complex' at the Schauspiel in Cologne. Those affected and hurt, anti-racist initiatives and activists will be denouncing the deeply rooted structural racism in Germany. They will also be naming perpetrators of the NSU-complex. A multitude of voices are featured in the opening speech that casts a look back on the history of racist attacks in Germany from the crimes of the NSU-network to the present, aiming to strengthen the perspectives of those affected and hurt by racist violence.

Mitat Özdemir, co-founder of the initiative 'Keupstraße ist überall' (Keupstraße is everywhere) will give an account of his personal story of migration, of arriving in Germany and the struggle of migrants for rights. The attacks of the neo-Nazi NSU particularly targeted small entrepreneurs who have built up an existence in Germany and are effectively shaping the cityscape of many large cities.

The Keupstraße in Cologne is an example of a diverse society and the NSU chose it as a place for right-wing terror that is highly endowed with symbolism. The neo-Nazis placed a nail bomb in front of the barber shop of **Hasan and Özcan Yildirim** on June 9th 2004. During the opening of the Tribunal the two barbers will report how they experienced the attack that wounded 22 individuals, some heavily, and how police and authorities treated them and other residents as suspects in the following years. Despite strong evidence provided by those affected and hurt indicating neo-Nazi perpetrators, police did not investigate in this direction. The methods by which police investigated are an example of structural racism which many individuals in Germany are exposed to every day.

Since her liberation, the Auschwitz survivor **Esther Bejarano** has been campaigning against the strengthening of fascist movements in Germany. She is following her motto „I will play until there are no more Nazis“ at the Tribunal: After her speech Esther and Joram Bejarano will perform some music together with the Rapper **Kutlu Yurtseven** from the Cologne-based band Microphone Mafia.

Gülistan Avcı is the widow of Ramazan Avcı, who was killed during a racist murder committed by skinheads in Hamburg in 1985. He was one of the first known victims of extreme right-wing violence in Germany. Gülistan Avcı gives an account of how the initiative in commemoration of her then-engaged was founded, which has had a part in naming the *Ramazan-Avcı-Square* in the vicinity of the crime scene.

Mai-Phuong Kollath is a long-term resident of the 'Sunflowerhouse' and recounts how she became a witness of the attack in Rostock-Lichtenhagen in 1992. The pogrom is one of the most severe racist-motivated attacks in Germany after the end of World War Two. Today she is active as inter-cultural advisor and constant participant of the Summit of Integration of the Federal Government and deputy chairperson of the Federal Summit on Immigration and Integration.

Chowra Makaremi is a scientist at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales in Paris and contextualises the NSU-tribunal within a number of historical tribunals in civil-society.

Activists of the planning circle for the tribunal 'Resolving the NSU-complex' commemorate the victims and lament the ignorance of those who are not affected by racism: „Ignorance is stronger than lack of knowledge. It is knowledge based on not wanting nor having to know.“ The tribunal will peak in the reading of the bill of accusations on Saturday, and is symbolically opened by the activists.

To conclude the day **Bülent Kullukçu** will exhibit some musical and visual impressions from a project he is perusing together with the Berlin-based publisher Imran Ayata. The „Songs of Gastarbeiter“ bring together the music of the first generation of immigrants.

Press contact

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