

Speech rally H48 remains!, 16.01.2021

Nina:

I myself was in a similar situation as you here in the H48 a few weeks ago. Our house was part of the huge real estate sale to Heimstaden, which affected numerous houses here in Neukölln and thousands of tenants throughout Berlin.

We then did what many other houses did: we got together as tenants, founded the house community Wilde3 and fought together with other affected people for our house to be pre-purchased.

We didn't succeed, but at least our fight led to the signing of a declaration of avoidance, which is at least a small protection.

For me, this shows that tenants everywhere keep making it clear that it is possible to fight back, whether it is here at Wildenbruchplatz and in the Heimstaden network, in the Otto-Suhr-Siedlung in Kreuzberg, or here today in the H48.

For me, this also shows that we need more than preemption, rent caps and the like, namely the expropriation of real estate corporations such as Heimstaden, my new landlord.

Only because of the pressure of us tenants there is the rent cap, only because of us a house is pre-purchased from time to time. And the rent movement is getting bigger and bigger. That's why I believe: if we have created the rent cap, then we can create much more!

That's why we want to talk with you today about expropriation. Because we all know: Heimstaden is not an isolated case.

On the contrary: Many people here are afraid of displacement or of not being able to afford an apartment anymore. And with good reason: private housing companies, not only Heimstaden, but also Deutsche Wohnen, Vonovia, Covivio and others are playing Monopoly in Berlin. In the last 10 years alone, rents here in Neukölln have risen by over 100%.

For such companies, housing is a business. For this they pursue a strategy of profit increase at any price.

At Deutsche Wohnen, rising rents are already factored in, because this is the only way to pay out dividends as promised to shareholders.

That's why they cut back on repairs, have broken heating systems in the middle of winter and no hot water.

In return, modernizations are carried out because costs can be passed on to the rent. The irony is that most of the apartments with which Deutsche Wohnen is making a profit today once belonged to the state of Berlin.

Former stocks of Gehag and GSW were privatized at ridiculous prices, after they were originally paid for and paid off by tenants of the city. This begs the question: Who is actually expropriating whom? A new study by the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation has just shown that half of Berlin's rental apartments belong to a thin layer of millionaire and billionaire families.

When rents rise much faster than the incomes of broad sections of the population - as they have in recent years - this leads to a redistribution from the bottom to the top. This means: We, the tenants, are expropriated every month anew by the rent madness and not the corporations.

Judith:

That is why we demand expropriation

Politicians have not found a remedy against this rent madness in the last 10 years. The magic formula "new construction" does not solve the speculation problem and also serves a high-priced segment of condominiums, which is not affordable for 70% of the people anyway.

The rent control is a joke. We all know that it has had de facto no effect in the past, is rarely pulled, and allows far too many loopholes. The rent cap is a first step. But it is only valid for 5 years and even by then it is questionable whether it will hold up in the courts.

That's why we have to take the houses away from the speculators.

That is why we demand:

- Profit-oriented housing companies with more than 3,000 apartments in Berlin should be expropriated in accordance with Article 15 of the Basic Law, in return for compensation well below market value.

- The housing stock should be transferred to public ownership and administered by a public institution under democratic control of tenants and the city society.

Various expert opinions have shown that expropriation is constitutionally possible. They also say that compensation below market value is feasible.

We have calculated: Expropriation can be designed in such a way that it is budget-neutral in the medium term.

Soon our petition for a referendum will finally go into the next round. Starting on February 26, 2021, we need to collect 170,000 valid signatures in four months to put our referendum petition to a vote. If we manage to do that, then the people of Berlin will be able to decide on the socialization of large housing corporations in September 2021, when the federal elections and the elections to the House of Representatives also take place.

170,000 signatures, that's quite a lot. We want to collect 25,000 of them here in Neukölln alone - and we'll only manage that with your help. To collect that many signatures, we need a lot of collectors, a lot of support and working structures in the neighborhoods.

We are already busy building up these structures. We have founded the Kiezteam Neukölln, which will take care of coordinating the collection of signatures here on site. We are a growing group, we are quite motivated and we are still looking for new comrades-in-arms. You want to support us in collecting signatures from February on? Would you like to help us distribute flyers for the petition, put up posters or do other activities? You want to join the neighborhood team and take over organizational tasks during the collection and the election campaign?

Then talk to the people here at the rally (they are over there) or write an email to the address that is also on the flyer that we distribute here.

Together, let's make Neukölln and all of Berlin a social and affordable city for people, not speculators.

Berlin has its own demand -

Against the sellout of H48, against the sellout of the city, expropriate Deutsche Wohnen and Co!

Thank you!