



AGAINST THE SELLOUT OF THE CITY!

For the preservation of Hermannstraße 48!

Press release, May 2023

First contract cancellations, rent increases, firings, 'modernisation', flats standing empty and refusal to communicate - The displacement machine in H48 has been fired up.

Not even a year after our houses passed into the ownership of a real estate company, the ugly effects of weakened neighbourhood protection ('Milieuschutz') are becoming apparent:

- The 'Heilpädagogische Praxis' in our factory building, a day care centre which is part of the so-called disability support, has received a notice of termination in January 2024.
- Meanwhile, the hairdresser MS Coffeur in the front building had the misfortune of their contract expiring. The subsequent contract includes a hefty rent increase of around 50%. Here, too, it is clear that the path is leading towards displacement.
- The employment of our long-time caretaker, valued by the house community, has been terminated.
- Surveys of the attics of the front building, side wing and transverse building have recently taken place. Roof extensions including lifts are to be expected. Such modernisation works are also permitted in areas protected by the Neighbourhood Protection Act and the costs can be passed on to renters above and beyond the 'Mietpreisbremse' (rent brake). Our neighbours, some of whom have very low incomes, will have to reckon with rent increases that are difficult to bear. Here, too, we don't need an oracle to tell us that displacement is intended.
- In the factory building, living space for about 12 people with an area of 363 square metres has been standing empty for more than 2.5 years. The change of ownership has not altered this situation. People could move in here immediately. Given the housing situation in Berlin, that would be the only right thing to do. Commercial spaces on the ground floor have also been standing empty since the death of the former tenant in 2021. We wonder why the Heilpädagogische Praxis could not set up their new location there, where they would no longer have had to rely on the often inoperable lift. Why was it important for the owners to get rid of them as tenants? We do not know. All we know is that vacancies increase market value.



In autumn, the owners had their lawyer signal their willingness to sell. The state-owned housing company Stadt und Land then tried several times to enter into negotiations. To no avail. The owners did not react. Have they changed their minds? We do not know. Because despite repeated attempts, the owners seem to refuse any communication with us tenants.

In November 2021, the Federal Administrative Court overturned the practice of the right of first refusal (,Vorkaufsrecht') in neighbourhood protection areas. The district of Neukölln had to revoke the pre-purchase decision, which would have allowed us to live in a self-managed and self-determined manner with dignity and security. According to the court, the right of first refusal should not be applied on the assumption that displacement will take place in the future. However, it does not require a crystal ball or a great deal of economic understanding to know what a house being sold into private hands will generally mean. The reality has been documented many times. After less than a year, we can draw an interim conclusion and reaffirm the obvious. Dysfunctional legislation and the political unwillingness to put the right of first refusal on a legally secure footing is a slap in the face for us tenants! Even after 1.5 years, there is no sufficient political will on the part of the federal government to reformulate the right of first refusal. The H48 continues to organise. We will not wait for our eviction!

No displacement at this address!

Come to the rally on May 25, 2023 at 6pm!

We address the following demands to the owner Hermannshof 48 Grundbesitzgesellschaft mbH and its management Tina Sahr:

1) Please talk to us! The tenants organised in the Hausverein Hermannshöfe e.V. want to be involved in decisions regarding the future of our living and working spaces. We consider a willingness to provide information as the minimum!

2) Acknowledge the de facto residential tenancy in the factory building! Our tenancy agreements were concluded with the will and knowledge of all parties that the premises are exclusively or predominantly residential. We fully insist on our rights as tenants!

3) No rent increases beyond the Mietpreisbremse! This applies both to the current residential tenancies in the factory building and to the tenants of the front, side and transverse buildings, who could be affected by the costs of modernisation works.

Contact

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