



# Gröpelinger News

## Voices from the district #6

### Housing

#### Is it a right or a source of profit and speculation?



September 26 2021, 59.1% of Berlins eligible voters voted in favor of a referendum that would expropriate over 243,000 apartments

from speculation companies like Deutsche Wohnen and others. These apartments are then to be rented out at a lower rent and managed in the interest of the tenants\*. This is undoubtedly a victory for all wage-earning people who defend the right to adequate housing and low rent against those who see housing as a form of profit and, speculation.

The Deutsche Wohnen company has increasingly drawn the ire of its Berlin tenants\* in recent years. They gained a monopoly in rental housing owning 110,000 apartments in Berlin alone and, have harassed their tenants with drastic rent increases. They have turned the right to adequate housing into a real business, making it difficult for many working families and young people to pay their rent. This was one of the reasons why the referendum was successful.

#### How can the right to adequate housing be protected and guaranteed in the future?

The will of the people of Berlin points to a rejection of corporate models like those of Deutsche Wohnen and Vonovia, which put profit maximization before the needs of their tenants\*. Despite the outcome of the vote, there is a majority of deputies in the government who refuse to accept the will of the majority. They claim that implementation and, communitarization will mean higher costs for the public expenditures, since they will have to compensate these companies. This is undoubtedly a poor payer's excuse, because we all know that most of Deutsche Wohnen's apartments belonged to the state of Berlin until a few years ago, when it sold them to Deutsche Wohnen at a bargain price. What the deputies do not want to recognize is that the model of speculative business in the housing market has failed. The right to decent housing, like all other fundamental rights, such as the right to education or education or health care, must not be in the hands of a handful of companies whose main



#### Table of Contents 02/2022

Sequel to "Housing  
- Is it a right or a  
source of profit  
and speculation?

-2-

Voices from  
the district:  
How would  
you like to  
live?

-3-

Everyone has right  
to housing! The  
Bremen Alliance  
against evictions  
introduces itself

-4-

What I should  
know about  
job centers  
and, rent  
increases

-5-

Reports on  
Community  
Gathering and,  
Solidarisch in  
Gröpelingen

-6-

# Solidarisch in Gröpelingen

## theme

interest is profit. Therefore, pressure from the people must be maintained until the basic needs of all are met and the government fulfills its legal mandate.



### Is the situation in Bremen different from that in Berlin?

It is true that most apartments in Bremen are offered by private landlords\*. Nevertheless, there are also some large companies that are already giving clear signs that developments are also moving in the direction of the Berlin model. One of the largest players in the housing market of the Hanseatic city is Vonovia, which owns 11,000 apartments.

What stands out about Vonovia is that after the outcome of the referendum, which was in favor of expropriating Vonovia, then went public and, bought

more than 50% of Deutsche Wohnen's shares. This trend is also reflected in vonovia's ongoing abuses against their tenants\* which are becoming more drastic and frequent, such as rent increases or evictions for non-payment.

### Why is it important to stand up against these conditions?

It is now up to us to open a public debate and, decide whether we look the other way and wait until the water is up to our necks before reacting, or whether we want to support the people in Berlin in their fight for expropriation and at the same time organize resistance in Bremen.

We from Solidarisch in Gröpelingen want to start this resistance by

showing solidarity with the struggles of the 243.000 families against Deutsche Wohnen, because a victory of the people can have a very important meaning for the rest of the country. On the other hand, we must oppose the abuses, evictions for non-payment and rent increases and not stand idly by.



# Solidarisch in Gröpelingen

## Voices from the district

Either in a house or an apartment, preferably 70m<sup>2</sup> on the ground floor with a garden. A garage would be nice too.



I would like to live in a large apartment with a garden, together with roommates and, we share the food and divide up the chores.



In a big house with a garden where we could grow vegetables. And with many people.

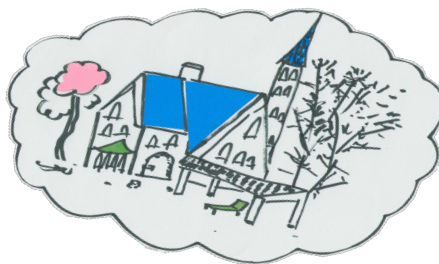
I would like to live in a 4 room apartment, with a garden. Together with my nephew. The ground floor would be best.

The way I live now. A 2-room apartment in Gröpelingen.

WE WERE IN GRÖPELINGEN ON THE STREETS AND ASKED YOU: IF YOU COULD CHOOSE, HOW WOULD YOU LIVE?



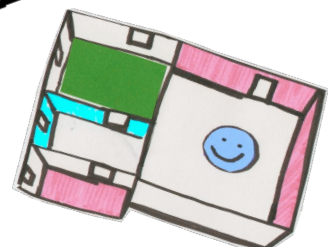
Preferably with renewable energies and, in a multi-generational house. A quiet location would be great too.



In a mansion.

Preferably with a lot of people, around 10 people and, in the evening one person takes turns cooking for everyone. That would be great.

I would like to live in an apartment with a garden. 2-3 rooms and, preferably near the train station would be ideal.



# Solidarisch in Gröpelingen

## *friends introducing themselves*

### The Bremen Alliance to Prevent Forced Evictions

**Since when does the Alliance Against Forced Evictions exist in Bremen and what do you do?**

We have been active throughout the city against evictions and, terminations since the beginning of 2019. The alliance is an association of tenants, people affected by evictions, politically active people. Anyone who wants to join us may come to the open meeting.

**How can you be reached and what exactly do you do?**

You can reach us by phone. We listen to the story and help the affected person with legal advice, if this is desired or, if the legal assistance is simply not enough, we do political actions; this ranges from accompanying the person to the court hearing where we help try to prevent evictions.

**So if your landlord tries to kick you out of your apartment, contact us, come to the meeting. Together we are stronger! Contact us here if you have questions or want to participate:  
017686546283**



**Can you give a few more examples?**

ESPABAU tried to terminate a tenant. The motive was racial proven in 2019. ADLER Wohnen tried in 2020 to evict a tenant who refused to pay false service charges and, in November 2021 GEWOBA tried to put a tenant out on the street. They failed in this.

**Is it mainly housing companies that are problematic?**

No, private landlords have the largest share of the housing market in Bremen. They often behave like feudal lords. For this reason, we sometimes hold a demonstration in front of the apartment of a landlord who wants to evict his tenant. Like in **October 2021** in the neighborhood. We show that the tenant is not alone.

**What are your goals?**

Our goal is a world where everyone can live well and, have a say in the way for example tenant

contracts are written. That's what we're trying to make happen here and, now. By fighting for a safe and clean home for everyone to live in but also to grow our numbers and, participation at meetings

or events we hold supporting one another. We don't try to help others by taking decisions



# Solidarisch in Gröpelingen

## *What I should know*

### **Stress with the **job center**?**



You have made an application to the job center, but still get no or too little money? Then come to the counseling!



After the application, the job center gives you a so-called "integration agreement". In it, you can see what the job center thinks you have to do. You do not have to sign it on the spot. It is better to take the "integration agreement" home and discuss it with the counselor.



Your salary changes every month, but the job center charges you more than you get? Then come to the counseling!



You don't have to give your phone number to the job center. Better not, then they can't call you anytime.



### **Jobcenter - Enough is enough !!**

Sat | 26.02. | 2 pm | Ohlenhof  
*Come by and, tell about your experiences*  
**Protest in Gröpelingen**



## **Rent increase received - what to do?**

According to the law, landlords are allowed to adjust the rent to the "local rent".

**BUT:** the rent may be increased by a maximum of 15% of the basic rent within 3 years.

**AND:** your landlord has to prove the local rent. He can do this, for example, by quoting the average rent of 3 apartments in the immediate vicinity.

But: the comparison apartments must be the same size, equipment etc.. Here, too, there is often trickery.

If you get a rent increase, have it read by experts before you sign anything !!

# Solidarisch in Gröpelingen

## Community gathering

Every 6 weeks the members of Solidarisch in Gröpelingen takes place. In the meeting all members of the district meet and, discuss together what current issues or problems there are and what can be done about it. At the last plenary meeting, the focus was on problems and experiences with the Jobcenter. Many of those present reported that the bureaucracy of the job



center drives them crazy: thousands of forms, constantly new letters and often no money for months. That's why we decided to organize a first rally in Gröpelingen on the topic "Jobcenter - es reicht!". Our goal is to go to the Jobcenter later this year with concrete demands and, to force the acknowledgment of these problems and try to gain improvements. A lot of people have problems with the Jobcenter, but everyone fights alone. That way nothing will ever change. That's why we want to start organizing.

**Solidarisch in Gröpelingen** is an agreement to work together in the community and decide what action we can take. The place is open to everyone and, anyone is welcome to speak or ask questions. People come together in order to be able to better face problems in everyday life, such as rent problems, trouble with the job center, stress at work, experiences with racism or sexism. In order to know one's own legal situation, we offer counseling in tenancy law, residence law, labor law and social law. But advice can not solve every problem. As a district union, we can also build pressure on bad employers, landlords or the job center, in

But **Solidarisch in Gröpelingen** also has a political vision. We are convinced that a fundamental change of this society is necessary, because capitalism leads to more poverty, produce exploitation and, destroy the sustainability of our climate as well. Therefore, it is important to find ways to build a socially just and, ecologically sustainable society without racism and sexism. We think that such a change will not come from parties or politicians. Rather, it will take many people organizing together and fighting for a different society. If you are interested in joining, get in touch: We do regular activist meetings and, a general meeting every 6 weeks.

**Solidarisch in Gröpelingen** is independent of political parties, state institutions, trade unions and, religious institutions. We are financed by donations from everyone who likes the project or actively participates in it. The idea lives from the fact that more and, more people are joining in Solidarisch in Gröpelingen and, actively participate.

### Solidarisch in Gröpelingen

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