



Fighting together for housing as commons Housing Activist Conference

February 26th – 27th 2016, Technische Universität Berlin

In 2015, Bankers and real estate industry were happy to announce „rents will increase further in 2016“.

Because Investors see flats only as attractive investement.
Because housing is still being turned into a commodity.
Because politicians keep hiding from their social responsibilities.

This is why we, the tenants of Berlin, have to create a social city for ourselves:

The „Mietenvolksentscheid“ (tenant referendum) in 2015, a public referendum on a new housing policy, brought city-wide attention to the housing crisis and the responsibility of official politics. Since then, Berlin’s parliament has responded to this pressure and passed a law that integrates some of the referendum’s proposals but far from all. In Autumn 2016 there will be elections and the parties in power want to pacify the problem and protests surrounding it.

But the housing crisis is still not solved in any way. 3000 new social housing units will be subsidized by the Berlin Senate in the next few years. Far too little given the fact that Berlin’s population grew by 48.000 residents in 2014 alone. To respond to this, politicians and housing-companies estimate a need of 300.000 new flats up until 2030. There is still no official concept of how to meet these challenges and we have reason to doubt that affordable housing will be a top priority.

Meanwhile, politicians keep enchanting investors, trying to induce new construction. But for many tenants, private investment won't solve the problems. Quite the contrary is the case: real estate companies like „Vonovia“ are driven by investors that seek profit in the „boomtown“ Berlin. Whole blocks, privately and publicly owned, are kept empty in Berlin and Brandenburg, while the private housing sector sees conversions into condominiums, demolitions and expensive renovations.

Against all this, we imagine the city of tomorrow as a city, where housing is not a commodity but a social right. We want to end the power of private investment - we want housing to be a common good under democratic controll. Creating affordable housing is also key to confront the new racist divisions in our city, where so many new residents, migrants and refugees are arriving.

At the conference, we will discuss how to put our ideas on the policial agenda in the election year of 2016. We invite everyone who is politically active or engaged in the field of housing and urban struggles or who would like to get involed to join us in this discussion.

More information at: www.mietenvolksentscheidberlin.de

Register at : konferenz@mietenvolksentscheidberlin.de

The opening plenary discussion as well as the closing discussion will be translated into French and English. Please let us know if you need translation for any other workshop with your registration for the conference, so we can plan ahead more easily.

Organized by : Initiative Mietenvolksentscheid www.mietenvolksentscheidberlin.de
Supported by : Stadtteilbüro Friedrichshain, Stadt von Unten www.stadtvonunten.de

Program

Friday February 26th:

7 – 9 pm // Opening plenary discussion : Housing as commons – Fighting together towards a housing activist movement – followed by FAQ //

Podium: PAH (Barcelona) // Right to the City Activist Hamburg // two Activists from Zwangsräumung verhindern ! // Mietenvolksentscheid Berlin // Activists from Berliner Tenant/Neighborhood Initiatives

Starting 9pm: Informal socializing

Saturday February 27th

Workshops on general housing problems, questions, demands and new starting points

1. Housing as commons

10 – 11 :30 am // State-owned housing instead of mass- refugee camps

With : Architekten für Architekten // Tempelhof 100 (inquired)

11 :45 am-1 :15 pm // Publicly owned real estate – Source of finance or possibility to create the city? //

With: Stadt von Unten // Mietshäusersyndikat

2 :14 – 3 :45 pm // The housing question – Financing affordable housing

With: Stadtteilbüro Friedrichshain // tba

2. The enterprise housing

10-11 :30 am // Vonovia – The formation of a Big Player on the real estate market

With: tba // Lisa Morgenschweis // Alternative tenant organisation Witten (inquired)

11 :45 am – 1 :15 pm // How to proceed against evictions and luxury rehabilitation?

With: Republikanischer Anwalt*innenverein e.V. (Alternative lawyer organization) // Tenant of Gleimstraße 52 // Bizim Kiez (inquired)

2 :15- 3 :45 pm // To start acting – Strategies to put landlords under pressure

With: Kotti & Co. // Alliance against rising rents Neukölln (inquired) // Zwangsräumung verhindern !

3. ‘We like to stay put !’ – Strategies for Social and public housing

10 – 11 :30 am // The new ‘Wohnraumversorgungsgesetz’ (new housing policy) – what does it hold true ?

With: Mietenvolksentscheid (tenant referendum) // Pankower Mieterprotest (tenant group Pankow)

11 :45 am – 1 :15 pm // Social benefits – The right to appropriate housing

With: Sozialberatung Friedrichshain // AK Wohnungsnot (working group on housing shortage) // TOPOS (social research institute)

2 :15- 3 :45 pm // Scandalous costs in social housing stock – How to continue after ‘Schwabgutachten’ ?

With: Mieterstadt.de // Prof. Martin Schwab

4. From the idea to the campaign

4 :15 – 8 pm // Housing as commons needs to get practical ! // In between there will be food and drinks provided

0. Generally

10- 11 :30 am // New development – where, how, who and who’s involved ?

With: tba // Mauerpark Allianz (inquired)

11 :30 – 11 :45 am // coffee break

1 :15 – 2 :15 pm // lunch break // *community meals organized by Friedel 54*