

**Aspects of contempt for  
Humanity in Europe**

**deportation  
centre  
motard  
straße**

**Systematic exclusion  
and deprivation of Rights**



# Contents

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## 3 Foreword

---

## 5 The internal and external situation of Fortress Europe

---

### 12 Fortress Europe in Bulletpoints

---

14 Migration policy in Germany // History of a discriminatory system

---

19 Living in Uncertainty // The situation of refugees in Brandenburg

---

22 Departure Centre // Detainment while awaiting deportation

---

26 The Camp Motardstraße 101a // Multifunctional crystallization point of Berlin's refugee policy

---

32 Interview // Frank Iwapelu, 38, Motardstraße resident

---

34 Profiteers of the Camp System // Two examples from Berlin

---

39 Antiracist Engagement // Possibilities for action

---

44 Organisations and Groups

---

47 Glossary

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**Bündnis gegen Lager – Berlin/Brandenburg (Alliance Against Camps)**

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# Foreword

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For a long time, the European Union (EU) has been waging a latent war against immigrants. Since the year 2005, a new phase has begun. More than 1,900 people from African countries (documented and undocumented<sup>1</sup>) were killed while attempting to cross the border between Morocco and the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Mellila. Many other were deported and abandoned in the Sahara Desert. These barbaric actions, killings and massive deportations to the desert are proof of the intensifying conflict and the inhumanity of the European immigration policy. Outside of Europe in Africa and Eastern Europe, camps are being set up and new ways designed to keep immigration in check. Other measures are also being used to take control of immigration, such as the use of FRONTEX or EUROPOL, the European Police Agency. These organizations coordinate the protection of the external borders of all EU member states by supporting these countries with training of national border patrol and establishing unifying training methods, creating risk analysis, keeping

themselves informed of the latest technologies available for control and surveillance of all external borders, supporting the member states in situations that require strong technical and operational assistance at the external borders and providing the necessary support to organise common repatriation actions of the member states. Using these methods, people are being held within the borders of destroyed countries. Nevertheless these policies are being opposed by people on all sides of the borders. Throughout Europe, day in and day out, there are social and political struggles, demonstrations and campaigns.

On October 07 2006 the third International Action Day for migrant rights took place. This day was chosen in honor of the aforementioned events and followed the mobilisation of January 31 2004 and April 02 2005, the first and second days of action for migrants in more than 50 European cities. The third Action Day was based on an Appeal from Bamako (the capital of Mali) where part of

the World Social Forum was being held in January 2006, during which it was stated “From Bamako to Nairobi, we propose a year of international mobilisation for the right of every human to move freely throughout the world and to take control of his/her own destiny.” There they proposed an international action day that would take place at locations symbolic of borders (airports, internment camps, embassies etc.).

In Berlin there have been numerous protests concerning the internment camp Motardstraße in which human beings are forced to live within an industrial area surrounded by barbed wire. While it has functioned in the past as a processing point for asylum seeking refugees, it is today being used additionally as a deportation centre whose existence is officially denied by the Berlin senate.

On the Day of Action a rally took place in Berlin city centre as well as at the entrance to the camp itself.

In this brochure, we concern ourselves with the function and circumstances surrounding Motardstraße. We will begin with two texts regarding “Fortress Europe” and the policies of migration within Germany.

We conclude the brochure with a description of past, present, and future possibilities of political intervention. Freedom of movement and universal human rights are for us, steps toward globalization rising from the bottom upwards. We want a world without exploitation and oppression!

We wish for a public examination and debate and a successful struggle for the closure of the camp on Motorstraße and all other deportation facilities!

**Bündnis gegen Lager - Berlin/Brandenburg  
February 2007**



# The internal and external situation of Fortress Europe

The migration policy of the European Union (EU) may first appear to be paradoxical. Despite all the efforts put into building the “Fortress Europe”, immigration into the EU remains the same. The struggle against illegal immigration appears to remain unsuccessful, however, the number of people in deportation camps and centres and illegal occupations is steadily increasing.

On the other side, it is clear that Europe needs immigration in order to avoid becoming an older- and under-populated subcontinent and to be able to keep up its economical status.<sup>1</sup> If immigration is such a necessity, why does the EU and its member states treat the people who come here to look for protection, work, and livelihood so negligently? Why

are so many of these people locked up, put into camps and denied legal work and travel without having committed a single offence?

Anyone following up these questions will likely begin to doubt the true function of the “Fortress Europe”. They raise awareness of the consequences of militarisation of borders and deterioration of human rights, not only for the migrants in transit but also within the “Fortress Europe”, in their so called “Space of Security, Freedom and Rights”. Militarisation and disfranchisement of people prove to be an end in itself. It is not about protecting an interior against an exterior, but creating an interior in which the population can be kept under control as much as possible.

## Europe wants illegality

The differentiation between legal and illegal immigration is constructed as an instrument of sovereignty.<sup>2</sup> There is no distinguishing between wanted and unwanted migrants, but on the contrary, both legal and illegal migration is welcomed by the economy and to a large extent by the political regime. This can be illustrated with the following examples:

By law or by ministerial decrees, in many situations the legal status of people - often hundreds of thousands of people at the same time, can be changed. The most common examples are programs for legalisation. The government gives away residence permits to everyone, even to some without any work contracts, the only requirement being a certain reference date from which they all must have lived in the country. Essentially however the current legislative immigration policy results in the opposite outcomes:

A setting up of time periods after which people can be deported by force, and in addition people are re-

stricted to living in one place only, prohibited from working, and are subjected to camp residencies or deportation confinement.

Up until 20 years ago, Italy was a good example, having had barely any laws on immigration. Everyone who entered the country was not considered illegal and was provided with various rights.<sup>3</sup> To this date, children up to the age of 16 years do not need permission to stay in the country, meaning that they also cannot become illegal. If that age limit would be to cut by even two years, it would mean the instant “illegalisation” of thousands of children.

It is often said that within the policies of the EU, it would be necessary to create legal options for immigration to fight the illegal migration. By that, in most cases they mean a work visa that comes with a short term working contract but without any concern for integration and no political or social rights.<sup>4</sup> Now in fact most of the migrants who are

detained for being illegal came into the country using exactly such a visa, but have stayed after the



visa has expired.

Even in the member states of the EU which are located in the south with several relatively open outer borders, only about 30% come into the country illegally by crossing land or sea borders while 70% are the so called “visa overstayers”.<sup>5</sup> In politics as in science there is a wide consensus about the fact that the aforementioned form of work immigration is essential for the functioning of the European economy. The consensus wavers, however, in the fact that the illegal migrants are “representing enrichment” particularly within agriculture, and the service sector (e.g. housing services).<sup>6</sup>

For example, a short time ago in Austria several high profile politicians made their way into the press because it was discovered that they employed illegal migrants for the care of their parents. The Minister for Economy, Mr. Bartenstein has stated that in Austria the system wouldn't work without illegal caretakers, at least in the short term. How does Austria react to this? With a moratorium, meaning a ruling that for a certain period of time the employment of illegal migrants within the caretaking industry cannot be prosecuted. The people though by whom the Austrian upper class are dependent, stay illegal without social or political rights and are therefore bound to the workplace.

The message from the EU states seems to be, support illegal migration to create a segment of the work market in which conditions are reminiscent of slavery.

## **Fatal results of militarized border management**

The sealing off of borders and deportation measures are ineffective. This situation doesn't help thousands of people getting stuck on their way towards the EU and living on the street for years, just to possibly drown finally in the Mediterranean sea.

The sensationally staged migration by sea normally proceeds as follows: people in Sub-Saharan Africa start by buying tickets in travel offices in the North African states. These states have closed their official borders by pressure from the EU, thus transportation companies travel on more dangerous informal routes for extra money and finally often abandon the people in border towns.

These people find themselves in states such as Morocco, a monarchy which has two border conflicts; Algeria, which is still in a state of emergency; Libya which belongs to the “axis of evil”, or Egypt, itself being in a State of Emergency since 1981. In these countries, both police and military are corrupt and there exists a strong racism

against blacks. Meanwhile the only way for them to get money from the EU is by detaining and deportation of migrants. These migrants in transit can then spend years in daily fear of assault, arrest and deportation. They typically assemble themselves together in informal camps, but even these camps are subject to police evictions. In these camps, service providers working secretly make offers of organized travel to Europe. This means, the migrants are then put into packed, small buses at night and brought to dwellings near the sea to wait until a boat is available and the circumstances are favorable for departure. At this point in time they must destroy their documents, putting them at the mercy of their caretakers.

The crossing must be life threatening. When a boat is packed with sufficient food, fuel, and proper navigation instruments it is going to be sent back. The reason being is that the Mediterranean Sea is militarily protected. In Spain, they even use satellites to detect migrants at sea, and aside from that there are SIVE-installations with radar and heat detecting cameras on the coasts. In addition, within the past 5 years there were 5 maneuvers carried out with war battleships under the supervision of NATO program "Active Endeavor". The naval fleet of the Spanish Guardia Civil and the Italian Guardia di Finanza have been massively upgraded and equipped with helicopters and airplanes. They detect boats often already near to the African

Coast. If the migrants notice a European police or military boat, they pour out their fuel and destroy their engine. Sometimes though the potential rescuers drive on.

Most of the time, however, the migrants are being brought to the European Coast into closed camps. Their lives are put into the hands of federal agencies, and only those who are lucky will eventually become free. Afterwards they most often continue to live in camps, either open State or Church run camps located in cities, or self-organized camps located near to vegetable plantations. Without any rights, their income is insufficient and with so little security, decent living conditions are impossible.





## An area in a permanent State of Emergency

There is a contradiction between the need for immigrant workforce and the efforts to seal off the borders, which simply put, costs the EU and its member states a lot of money. Surely this originates from differences of opinion and miscommunications between those who have created the EU. On the one side there is the European Commission who thinks in economical terms and supports more immigration while the “struggle against illegal immigration” is under the verdict of the European Council, made up of politicians from the interior and justice ministers of its member states, who are more concerned with “security” and therefore control of the population. In addition, although there is in every member state a politically proven need for immigrant workforce, and while every member state wants to live in an “EU without inner borders”, there is also a desire to have control over immigration at the outer borders. This is why politicians fluctuate between two opposite statements: “we need more immigration” and “the ship is full”.

This State of Emergency which will in the following be used as a pattern to describe the results of immigration politics, however should not be seen as a grand strategy or even conspiracy. More so, it is an accident which is unfortunately repeating itself everywhere within this neo-liberal world order.

The EU is a new developing entity, and shouldn't be underestimated in its significance. Just think about the number of states and their impact on the world of today. A little harder to imagine is that where people move, a new space is created with its own rules and awareness. If you travel by train through Europe, you have to follow different rules and will have different experiences than if you would drive by car, fly, or even hitchhike. The tourist that flies to Kenya is moving within another space than the migrant who is risking his life on the same route. He arrives as somebody different, perhaps as a hotel guest, while the migrant is hidden in a tool shed and cleans the plates of the hotel restaurant.

The goal of the domestic policies of the EU is to create what they call a “space of security, freedom, and rights” which is reminiscent of Orwell's newspeak terminology. In reality, however, it is a space in a permanent State of Emergency. This State of Emergency is generally declared in cases of a crisis situation or when the sovereignty of a state is in danger. Its major characteristics are the suspension of judicial and parliamentary control, the issuing of laws by decree, the deployment of the military in the interior and the restriction of human rights.

The main tasks of the EU domestic policies (the third pillar of the EU) are the struggle against

illegal migration, international organized crime, and international terrorism. We explained earlier that illegal migration exists only because there is a struggle against it and ensuing laws thereof. All three of these struggles are part of a threat to national sovereignty constructed from a context of migration. An intervention of the European Court of Law can be interfered with in reference to a threat of national security, while on the other hand the EU states, parliaments and courts have merely an influence on the EU's domestic affairs because it is subject to an international framework. This means that "space of security, freedom, and rights" is subject to a very limited control by parliament and courts. The institutions which work on this level, such as the border protection agencies FRONTEX or EUROPOL, therefore naturally combine the functions of police and intelligence agencies. At the same time within the EU the lines which distinguish between domestic and foreign affairs become unclear, and the foreign affairs of the single states and the domestic policies of the EU have to be brought to concurrence.

This happens on the one hand because of the creation and dismantling of paramilitary units such as Guardia Civil, the Guardia di Finanza and the Bundespolizei, and on the other hand through the use of the military to gain control of social problems and to maintain global injustice. This means the use of the military at both inner

and outer borders, airports, and soon, the French Banlieus.

The objective of this State of Emergency policy was recognized last year in the spectacularly staged pictures from the Canaries of the half dead migrants and the deportation camps. The "illegals" can be picked up off the street, arrested and imprisoned anytime in Germany for up to 18 months, while in other countries for only 1 or 2 months. The protection from random imprisonment, the Habeas Corpus principle, is considered to be a fundamental accomplishment of a constitutional state and has now been revoked for a significant and economically necessary part of the population. The denial of rights of these migrants is paving the way for forced labor on the unemployed, and further restricting of basic right of EU members themselves. Within these deportation camps, departure centers, and the legal precariousness of migrants stigmatised as illegals, we discover a situation of a global underclass and what the future holds for us all, if we don't band together to fight for equal and reciprocal rights for everyone.

**Institut für progressive Wissenschaft**  
**ipw-home.de.vu**



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# Fortress Europe in Bulletpoints

A list of methods and strategies used by member states of the EU to manage and prevent immigration, asylum seekers and foreigners. Included is the fact that migrants are being prevented from establishing themselves in the EU, thus forcing them to return to their home countries.

## 1. Implemented Domestic Strategies and Methods

### Territorial Surveillance

In European countries, police are instructed to systematically survey, control and intimidate migrants.

### Living Conditions of Asylum Seekers

- » Limitation of stay for 0-6 months
- » Forced residence in isolated and hard to reach

- areas (woods...)
- » Obligation to share a room with others
- » Obligation to reside assigned area
- » Prohibition of work
- » Deprivation of cash money by the use of coupons, organised meals in canteens and food parcels
- » Psychological terror
- » Denial of the right to an education or training etc.
- » Criminalisation of asylum seekers through special laws

### Racism in the institutions, within the legal system and on the streets

The member states of the EU have developed a system in which it is impossible for migrants to thrive.

- » Migrants are often harassed when requesting services from government offices. Often hospitals send away sick immigrants because of a missing health insurance certificate.
- » Racist slurs are used (e.g. foreigners, colored).
- » Lack of anti-discrimination laws (the rights of foreigners and asylum seekers rights have been deliberately disregarded).
- » Criminalisation of immigrants. They are more often affected by police checks without cause for suspicion.

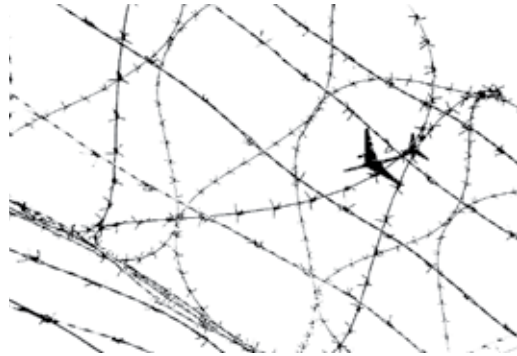
## 2. Sealing-off from the outside world: strategies and methods

Measures that should prevent immigrants from wanting to come to Europe:

- » The conditions for obtaining a European visa.
- » The waiting time for a visa continues to grow.
- » The naval blockade/closure of sea lanes.
- » Taking of finger prints during the request for visas in the embassies of EU member states.
- » The European countries support the building of camps in neighbouring countries of Europe (e.g. Libya)

### The Establishment of Treaties

The European countries have signed a certain number of treaties which aim at promoting free



movement within the member states. Some examples are the Schengen Agreement that came into being in 1995 (is only valid for the so-called Schengen countries) and for the whole of the EU the Tampere Agreement that took effect in 1999. The consequences which resulted were the following:

- » Combined border surveillance with a corresponding border protection agency.
- » Consistent asylum procedures and a collective EU department for asylum.
- » Inquiry into asylum procedures outside of the EU with the collaboration of the UNHCR.
- » Documents with biometric data
- » Improved information exchange between the national police authorities and the intelligence agencies



# Migration Policy in Germany

## History of a discriminatory system

The support of the deportation centres within immigration law represents the last culminating point in the process of establishing a discriminatory system against migrants in Germany. Deportation centres had indeed been built before then, but their legal basis was extremely disputable. The establishment of the system of exclusion can be described in four major stages which are partly connected by intermediate stages.

The first major building block in the creation the discriminatory system was the recruitment ban in 1973, which put an end to immigration in the GDR for economic reasons. This was only made possible again with the creation of the Green Card in the year 2000, although it concerned a very limited circle of people. Up until the recruitment ban,

there had been recruitment agreements with Italy (1955), Greece and Spain (1960), Turkey (1961), Portugal (1964) Tunisia and Morocco (1965) as well as Yugoslavia (1968). However the stay could easily be terminated by the German authorities if they believed that the migrants had not deserved their hospitality. That at least is how it was worded in the ordinance for the police in charge of foreigners in the year 1938. That ordinance was in force up to 1965 and was then replaced by an *Ausländergesetz* (aliens act) with extended discretionary powers on the part of the authorities.

The next step to push on with the exclusion of migrants took place with the passing of various decrees and bills at the beginning of the 1980's. They were accompanied by a racist debate on the

“abuse of asylum” and “economic refugees” when the number of asylum seekers reached more than 100,000 a year. It began with the introduction in 1980 of an obligatory visa for many countries from where the largest groups of asylum seekers came, a one year working prohibition imposed on asylum seekers as well as the cancellation of child-care allowances for asylum seekers, with the exception of refugees from the Eastern Bloc.

Then followed in 1981 the new version of §120 paragraph 2 of the Bundessozialhilfegesetz (federal social security law) according to which there was the possibility in justified individual cases to reduce asylum seeker's benefits to what is necessary for survival and to provide them primarily with allowances in kind. Since the social security offices were in practice unable to provide grounds for these reductions on the individual cases, they subsequently conceded mostly uncut allowances. Even the principle of allowances in kind, although a “required” principle, was only enforced in areas with particularly restrictive providers of social benefits. “Required” principle here means that allowances in kind should be fully cancelled only in exceptional cases.

In 1991 allowances were regularly provided in the form of allowances in kind and reduced across the board only in Bavaria. All the other federal states provided uncut allowances, partly varying

from one area to another in the form of allowances in kind or in cash (North Rhine-Westphalia), sometimes in form of allowances in kind in camps, and otherwise in cash allowances (Baden-Württemberg, Lower Saxony, Rheinland-Palatinate, Saarland). Other federal states generally provided allowances in cash (Hesse, Schleswig-Holstein, Bremen, Hamburg, Berlin).<sup>1</sup>

A further step was taken in 1982 with the passing of the Asylverfahrensgesetz (law on the asylum procedure). The obligation of residence, the first camps in the form of collective accommodation<sup>2</sup> for asylum seekers and the identification of asylum seekers were introduced therein. Obligation of residence means that the person concerned is not authorised to leave the assigned district of the foreigner's registration office. The ban on employment on the asylum seekers was also extended to 2 years. The extension of the allowance limitation for ‘tolerated’ and other migrants obliged to leave the country finally took place in 1983.

The central building block in the system of exclusion and discrimination then took place at the beginning of the 1990's. It started in 1990 with the extension of the visa obligation to all countries except the countries of the European Community, the European Free Trade Association and the so-called positive list. The visa obligation was also extended to children. ‘Positive list’ means here that only na-

tionals of countries on that list do not need a visa, and not that there is a general visa exemption that has only been abolished for certain countries.

A new *Ausländergesetz* (alien's act) then came into effect in 1991. It contained improvements as well as tightening of legislation. The late realisation that the migrant labourers are not easily reintegrated in their countries of origin, but through family reunion fetch their families later, led to improved possibilities of migrants bringing their families to Germany. Separate rights of residence were created for family members and naturalization made easier for second generation immigrants. The legal access to the job market was however limited. A general ban on employment without authorisation was imposed on non-Germans.

At the same time the power of deportation (e.g. in case of punishable act) was also accentuated and the administrative discretion of the foreigner's registration offices (e.g. concerning possible consolidation of their stay) extended.

The few improvements brought forth by the new aliens act were however completely eclipsed by the de facto abolition of the right of asylum in 1993. It had already been subject to significant limitations a year before. The right to appeal was only accepted in a very limited number of cases and

under dramatic reduction of the appeal deadlines. The grounds for asylum which were submitted late, could then be disregarded during the verification process and also disregarded as an obstacle to deportation. A 'forfeiture' has been introduced in case of failure to follow the asylum procedure: the application for asylum is then considered withdrawn. The regulations on the imposition of preventive arrest and custody pending deportation were also tightened, as well as the penalty regulations in case of violation of the law on the asylum procedure (e.g. against the obligation of residence). The camp system was further extended with the construction of additional decentralised common shelters and central admission stations were introduced.

The de facto abolition of the right to asylum contains the creation of a third states rule which excludes the possibility of obtaining the asylum status in case of an unofficial immigration into a country by overland routes.

A list of so-called reliable countries of origin was also drawn up. Asylum seekers from the countries listed there have the obligation to prove that they were actually persecuted, otherwise the application for asylum is rejected as obviously unfounded. This serious turning point was accompanied by the introduction of the so-called airport procedure, the creation of a special status



for refugees from civil wars who can no longer be awarded asylum status and the passing of the Asylbewerberleistungsgesetz (law on asylum seeker benefits - AsylbLG). With that law, the social security benefits of these people were reduced for at least one year by 35% of the normal income support package, payment in kind (accommodation in camps, food packages, coupons) established as the only form of benefit and the provision of medical care cut back. All these changes were accompanied at the beginning of the 1990's by a campaign of hate against migrants, which had to date never reached that level. They equated migrants with natural catastrophes and implied an even stronger violation.

This situation created a social climate in which the existing racism publicly made headway, in which arson attacks against refugee camps (e.g. Rostock) or residential houses of migrants (e.g. Mölln) as well as pogroms - very often with the approval of the local population.

After this extensive disintegration of the living conditions of migrants in which refugees are particularly concerned, some additional tightening appeared in the mid-1990's, especially in the field of the social law. In 1997, the application of the AsylbLG was stretched out from 1 to 3 years. Fur-

thermore, migrants with a toleration status were also included in the law. In 1998 the possibility was also created in the AsylbLG to further cut the already reduced income support package when the authorities in charge of foreigners believe that the migrant entered the country only in order to obtain social security benefits or cannot be deported due to reasons that s/he can defend.

The most recent step in that development is the Zuwanderungsgesetz (immigration law) of 2005



which at a symbolic level may give the impression that Germany has agreed to become a country of immigration but does not result in an improvement of the actual living situation of migrants. After all, most of them were not at all 'useful foreigners' for Germany. On the contrary, the tightening up of laws had also been created in the immigration law. Apart from the legal guarantee of the deportation centres that was already mentioned earlier, accepted asylum seekers were now also denied permanent residence just after their recognition.

Now a three year restriction period follows the recognition process. The obligation to collaborate in the asylum seeking process was expanded. Violation of this obligation would lead to the asylum seeker being locked out of a regular process. The

obligation of residence was so expanded that it now automatically remains in force after an unsuccessful asylum procedure until it is suspended by the authorities in charge of foreigners. Before that, the authorities in charge of foreigners had to explicitly order it. Finally, the opportunity to obtain a regular right of residence for migrants benefiting from the toleration status because of their uncertain origin has been made more difficult.

Despite a slightly changed rhetoric in recent years, the migration policy in Germany is characterised by separation and discrimination, as far as immigration is concerned. The living conditions of many migrants, particularly refugees are and remain precarious.

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1. <http://www.proasyl.de/lit/classen2/classen2-1.htm>

2. Means the accommodation in a form of barracks in remote areas. The normal course of life is affected by a lack of space, nonexistent privacy, insufficient sanitary facilities and surveillance.



# Living in Uncertainty

## The situation of refugees in Brandenburg

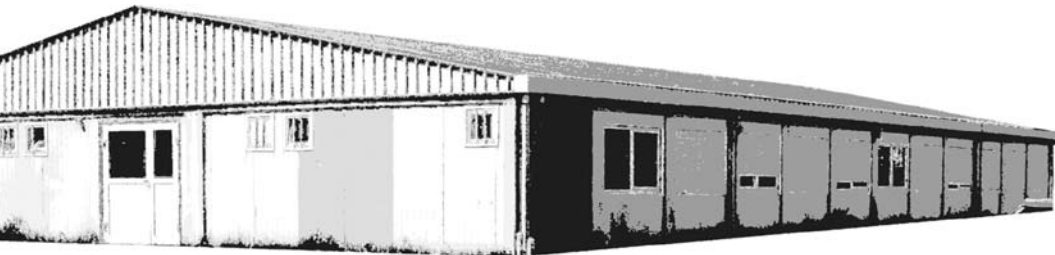
According to information from the Brandenburg council for refugees<sup>1</sup>, about 6,000 refugees live in Brandenburg. The majority of them are housed in communal accommodations (Sammelunterkünfte) of the Federal State, of which there are around 30. Only a few of them live in rented apartments, although the accommodation in refugee shelters costs considerably more. The communal shelters are often located outside small towns and sometimes in areas as remote as in the middle of a wood, where accommodation is in buildings such as run-down former barracks. The living conditions are very poor. A camp called Waldsieversdorf in the district Märkisch Oderland in Brandenburg<sup>2</sup> is an example: the nearest bus stop is 4 km away, the

nearest shopping facility 23km away.

The inadequate condition of the buildings contributes to health and hygiene difficulties, which are also produced by the fact that people who are not used to each other are forced to live close together and share kitchen and sanitary facilities. The potential conflict generated by such living conditions is another problem.

Very often, accommodation in the collective institutions is accompanied by the distribution of coupons which should be used to purchase everyday necessities. Apart from the fact that transport connections to the shelters are often extremely bad,

these coupons are valid only in certain shops and for a certain period of time (usually for one month). This makes supplying one's needs more difficult. Cultural needs are not taken into consideration. Certain items like transport tickets, pharmacy items or phone cards cannot be obtained through coupons. These items must be acquired with the 40 euros pocket money made available monthly.



However it should be noted that refugees who are following an asylum procedure need a lawyer and assuming that the legal representative accepts the payment of their fees in installments, these are likely to cost around 25 euros of the 40 euros supplied monthly.

As well as the difficult material situation of the refugees who are kept away from the job market through a series of regulations and therefore have no possibility of independently earning a living, there is also a heavy psychological pressure on them. They have to deal with the uncertainty of

their status as refugees, they often have had traumatic experiences and added to this they find themselves in Germany deprived of human rights. They encounter an atmosphere of exclusion and control through rules such as the so-called obligation of residence. This means that they are not allowed to leave their assigned district of residence without permission. So in order to visit friends or

family who live in another district for example, authorisation would have to be obtained from their local authorities in charge of foreigners' issues.

A lot of people who come hoping to find protection and to be able to lead a normal life spend years living in a state of hopelessness or insecurity about the future, with uncertain residence status and with the fear of deportation. This situation has an impact on their physical and mental health. There are regular reports of stomach and intestine diseases, nervousness and depression as well as unspecific symptoms like headaches, insomnia and

dizziness. When they are feeling unwell however, refugees cannot just visit a physician. They must first go to a social security office to obtain a certificate for the coverage of the costs of the treatment. Only the treatment of acute illnesses and pains is paid for. Generally the costs for treating chronic diseases are not met.

The living situation is a particularly enormous burden for young refugees or children who were born here whose parents are asylum seekers. They have to come to terms with differences between their parents knowledge and the new culture and they often have barely any connection or none at all to their “countries of origin”. Basically they are fully integrated here; they have experienced a large part of their socialisation here. Their circle of friends is here.

At the same time, no prospect is offered to them especially at a stage of their life which is decisive for the development of their personality and the

preparation of opportunities for their future. They are entitled to education only so far as is provided by compulsory schooling. They can sometimes pass Abitur (final high school leavers exam, usually taken at age 18) if they have an advocate but their prospects for studies and professional training are generally extremely gloomy.

The measures and regulations resulting from the law on foreigners and special regulations which apply only to refugees constitute a net that seriously restricts the refugees in planning their lives. The spatial and social disassociation produced by experiences limited to authorities and offices, shelters and shops as well as verbal and physical assaults are testimony of structural and daily racism. Because of the absence of possibilities to integrate, neither the refugees nor the residents have the opportunity to approach each another as equals.

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1. <http://www.fluechtlingsrat-brandenburg.de>

2. This camp was closed in the beginning of 2007. The new camp lies near Strausberg and is also remote.



# Departure Centre

## Detainment while awaiting deportation

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The first departure centres were put into operation in 1998 in Braunschweig and Oldenburg in the federal state of Lower Saxony, with 50 places each. The set-up was termed “Modell X” by the regional government, which at the time was the SPD. Under the red-green federal administration, this newly developed model of a deportation camp (Abschiebelager) was legally consolidated and termed “departure facility” (Ausreiseeinrichtung) from the 01.05.2005 according to § 61 of the Aufenthaltsgesetz (residence law). At present, there are official departure institutions according to § 61 in Bavaria/Fürth (50 places), Rhineland Palatinate/Trier (40 places), Saxony-Anhalt/Haberstadt (400 places), Lower Saxony/Braunschweig and Osnabrück (50 places each), and since 01.04.2006 in Schleswig-

Holstein/Neumünster and Lübeck with unclear capacity. In addition to these, the largest federal departure institution is in Bramsche-Hesepe and has 550 places. It is officially called a “communal shelter” of the Landesgemeinschaftsunterkunft (Federal State) and it is meant to focus on giving advice about voluntary departure. There are further departure institutions hidden within the central initial reception institution in Mecklenburg-Westpomerania/Horst (shared since 01.10.2006 with Hamburg) and Berlin. They are hidden because they are not called “departure institutions” by the federal state governments but they have the same function. Officially there are around 600 places in departure centres in total in Germany.

The legal basis for setting up departure centres is § 61 paragraph 2 of the Aufenthaltsgesetz (residence law), where the basic concept on which the departure centres are based is also described. The law allows the federal states the possibility of setting up departure centres for foreigners who are to be deported. The departure centres should promote the voluntary departure of migrants by giving advice and enabling access to the relevant services, authorities and courts. The departure centres are intended to ensure that migrants due to be deported actually leave the country.

As well as the theoretical target group of migrants due to be deported, the camps are also used to hold asylum seekers whose applications have been refused, but who cannot be deported because they do not hold a passport or other identification document. Not possessing identification documents is considered evidence of the migrant failing in their obligation to cooperate about leaving the country.

Voluntary departure or deportation can only take place when the identity of the migrant is



explained and replacement documents can be provided. Special research and services exist for this purpose in Bavaria and Rhineland-Palatinate, aimed at obtaining either a truthful collaboration with the migrant or enough evidence to make the acquisition of a substitute passport possible even without the cooperation of the person concerned. The person concerned would also be provided with psychological consultations and advice about foreigners' rights. The foreigners' rights advice includes information about the migrant's obligation to cooperate and otherwise consists principally of information about the services and opportunities to enable voluntary departure. The hopelessness of the migrant's legal situation, the difficulties

relating to integration and living a self-determined lifestyle are also discussed.

Admission into a departure centre is made by issuing a notice to the person concerned that they must take up residence at the departure centre. Departure centres are open institutions. “Open” means that the inhabitants can leave the institution. However they are then subject to permanent control. The previously mentioned psychological consultations occur only when the migrant regularly has their registration checked. In the departure centre in Fürth, Bavaria, searches can be carried out of inhabitants personal possessions (such as driving licence, letters, hidden identity cards, phone cards) in order to try and establish their identity. Searching is meant to be employed only after other methods have been exhausted. However in Lower Saxony people are subjected to such treatment after minor occurrences such as not turning up to a meal time are interpreted as insolence.

People who have to live in departure centres are obligated to stay within the urban area where the departure centre is located. This is a tightening of the law according to § 56 of the AsylVfG (laws in the constitution relating to asylum), where movement was limited to the district where the authorities were located. In departure centres pocket money is partially cut in accordance with

§ 1a AsylbLG (law relating to financial support for asylum seekers) and to the allowance of payment in kind. In a nutshell, on being forced into departure centres people:

- » Lose their job
- » Lose their home
- » Lose their social environment and their friends
- » Lose any source of income
- » Probably lose their lawyer (because they can no longer afford to pay the costs)

In Departure centres, they receive a bed in a dormitory, three meals a day and a few euros pocket money when they cooperate with the authorities. The stay in a departure centre is indefinite and is intended to lead to either a voluntary departure or deportation.

Despite these measures, the objective of departure camps is only met to a limited extent. The experiences from other departure camps show that a third to a half of all inmates “go underground” (see next page). In this way the departure centres cause many people to take on illegal status.





- » 140 people were admitted to the camp in Fürth, Bavaria until 30.6.2004. 43 of them went underground, 34 left the country, seven were deported, and four received a residence permit. The rest are still there.
- » In the camp in Haberstadt in Saxony-Anhalt 62 people were admitted to departure centres during the year 2004. Six of whom were women. Some of them had already lived in Germany for 10 years. 15 people have gone underground; one has left the country - the rest are still there.
- » In Lower Saxony 309 migrants left the camp in Bramsche in 2002: 146 were relocated to other municipalities, 47 were deported, 50 left the country “voluntarily” and 66 went underground.



# Motardstraße 101a

## The Camp

### Multifunctional crystallization point of Berlin's refugee policy

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Camp Motardstraße 101a is hidden, located inside an industrial area. It is made out of prefab blocks of flats in questionable condition. In the surrounding area there is no infrastructure for adults or children (apart from the U-Bahn station Paulsterstraße).

#### **The history of the camp**

Prior to the year 1989, the area was used by the nearby lamp company OSRAM. In 1989 it was leased by the AWO, which simultaneously signed an agreement with Berlin's senate about the accommodation of so-called ethnic German immigrants (Spätaussiedler). In 1995 the last "ethnic German immigrants" were moved out, because the

block where they had been staying had become decrepit. The camp was then used to accommodate asylum seekers and refugees from civil wars as well as migrants, who were only legally entitled to the "toleration status" (Duldung). Due to the construction of Fortress Europe only a few asylum applications have been filed since, so the home which has 625 places is no longer full (about 400 places are used).<sup>1</sup>

#### **Berlin's senate secretly operates a "departure centre"**

At the same time, lots of people and families live in the city, who in the opinion of the authorities should have left the country. They refuse to do so

because they have decided to live here. Many of those people cannot leave the country because their “home” countries refuse to issue them passports or do not let them enter or they are threatened with repression and persecution there. In Article § 1a of the Asylbewerberleistungsgesetz (AsylbLG), the legal basis has been created in order to drastically worsen the living conditions of those people who have no residence right here. They are denied a decent life on the ground that they refuse to cooperate in their departure or that they are only here to receive social benefits. The administration of people who live here for example as refugees from war zones, or those whose application for asylum has been refused and they are now living here under the so-called “toleration status” is mainly the responsibility of individual districts. The decision on the design and implementation of § 1a of the Asylbewerberleistungsgesetz is also made by the districts. In the past, this situation has led to some districts denying any form of social support to people who, according to the clerks in charge, fall under the law mentioned above. These people then received no shelter, food, money or medical care.

Since January 2006 a new administrative regulation from the social senate about how to deal



with these people is in force.<sup>2</sup> Now everyone who in the eyes of the authorities can be treated according to § 1a of the Asylbewerberleistungsgesetz should at least receive allowances in kind. This means that they must be given a bed somewhere and receive something to eat, but that’s as far as it goes. The camp Motardstraße is the only institution in Berlin where allowances in kind take the form of full board. For this reason more and more people from other districts have been sent there since January. Even districts where migrants were previously not subject to starvation or homelessness are now using the “solution” of sending migrants to Motardstraße.



With their admittance into the camp, immigrants are urged to leave the country or are pushed into illegality. The senate's little humanitarian demonstration of providing full board is easy to criticise given the reality of the living conditions which are aimed at breaking self-esteem and human dignity. Basically the camp operates as a departure centre because the aim is to deprive people there of any other perspective.

## Life in an “open prison” - the daily routine in Motardstraße

What does this mean for the people concerned? Admission into Motardstraße means that they are denied the chance to have a life where human rights are respected. They receive insufficient food and it is pre-packed and wrapped food. They have a bed to sleep on in a small shared room. There is no lockable cupboard or space for personal things. The toilets cannot be locked and do not always work. The kitchen is teeming with small animals. Cockroach hunters come regularly but it does not help. Although they are authorised to leave the camp, it is located in an industrial park where no one lives apart from them. Without money, they are unable to buy transport tickets so they cannot go somewhere else, or even easily visit the authorities or a lawyer. Whoever wants to live like a human being must break the law: they must travel without a ticket, work without a permit, go illegal and underground. Whoever is then caught loses any chance of obtaining a legal right of residence.

## The verdicts of Berlin's administrative courts - sweeping and firm

The social courts of the federal state Berlin-Brandenburg had previously declared the “zero support” policy and §1a as being admissible,

as had the upper chamber of the administrative court of Berlin. This is in contrast to the predominant opinion from courts in other federal states.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, in Berlin if migrant parents intended to misuse social support this is counted against their children. The zero support policy means that human beings will be left hungry and homeless because as well as the harassment described above their accommodation and catering are withdrawn from them. This misanthropic practice has been used by some districts in Berlin. The districts Mitte and Reinickendorf have made a particular name for themselves in connection with this. With the coming into effect of certain regulations, this practice is no longer permitted in Berlin.<sup>4</sup> This small improvement came into being as a weak compromise between the harsh judgements of Berlin's administrative courts and the arbitrariness of the social security services. All the migrants who are categorised according to §1a of the Asylbewerberleistungsgesetz should now receive payment in kind and be transferred to a camp. This measure is a consequence of the fact that several social security offices in Berlin impose the "shelterless starving" punishment and Berlin's courts act particularly harsh on that point. Berlin's senate has obviously not been able to oblige those social security offices to behave humanely.

We demand the courts in Berlin and Brandenburg to stop using the elasticity of paragraph §1a

of the Asylbewerberleistungsgesetz because all the grounds for its use are based on the arbitrariness of individual employees of the authority in charge of foreigners as well as on sweeping reports on the federal states by the foreign office. Reports by the people concerned about their individual situation are to a large extent completely ignored.

### **Profiteers from the operation of camps: Dussmann and AWO**

The company Dussmann and the Arbeiterwohlfahrt (AWO) make a great profit from the departure centre Motardstraße 101a. Dussmann is responsible for the disgusting food packages, and AWO operates the camp (see *Profiteers of the Camp System*, p34). Rallies took place on 07/10/2006 near the head office of the company Dussmann as well as in front of the camp. The demonstration called for the closure of camp Motardstraße and that those responsible be publicly called to account.<sup>5</sup> The reaction of the manager of the camp to our campaign is symptomatic. She maintains that the inhabitants of the camp should partially take responsibility for the bad structural and social conditions there. A German language course project operated on a voluntary basis was temporarily stopped. The teachers had designed our multilingual invitations for the migration Action Day.



## The role of the senate of Berlin

The senate administration in charge of health, social affairs and consumer protection is directly responsible of this torment which is affecting more and more people. It maintains the contract with the AWO to operate the camp and through bureaucracy that it has designed it allows the federal office and

the individual districts to decide to send people to Motardstraße.<sup>6</sup> We demand that the senate of Berlin immediately abolishes the discriminatory practice of payment in kind and compulsory accommodation in camps at the federal state as well as at the district level. The solution is simple: **close down Motardstraße!**

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1. <http://www.parlament-berlin.de:8080/starweb/adis/citat/VT/15/KIAnfr/ka15-13603.pdf>

2. [http://www.fluechtlingsinfo-berlin.de/fr/gesetzgebung/AV\\_Bln\\_1aAsylbLG\\_2006.pdf](http://www.fluechtlingsinfo-berlin.de/fr/gesetzgebung/AV_Bln_1aAsylbLG_2006.pdf)

3. Sentences partially documented in the web under:  
<http://www.fluechtlingsinfo-berlin.de/download.php?op=getit&lid=49>

4. “Leaving to starve and homelessness” is nevertheless still exercised.

5. [http://www.chipkartenini.squat.net/Archiv/aktionen/berichte/aktionstag\\_7\\_10\\_06/aktionstag\\_7\\_10\\_06.html](http://www.chipkartenini.squat.net/Archiv/aktionen/berichte/aktionstag_7_10_06/aktionstag_7_10_06.html)

6. The social assistance office of Spandau wants to cut down the benefits for refugees to zero that do not assist in the clarifying of their legal status and send them to the camp Motardstraße, Berliner Morgenpost, January 4th 2007, <http://www.morgenpost.de/content/2007/01/04/bezirke/874862.html>



Motardstraße

**We demand of those responsible in Berlin that:**

- » No one is sentenced to stay in the camp at Motardstraße!
- » Motardstraße is closed down and all related contracts cancelled!
- » Article § 1a of the Asylbewerberleistungsgesetz is no longer used!
- » The Asylbewerberleistungsgesetz is thrown out!

**Close down  
Motardstraße!  
Open the Borders!**



# Interview

## Frank Iwapelu, 38, Motardstraße resident

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**Q: How long have you lived here in the camp at Motardstraße in Spandau?**

Iwapelu: I have lived here since the end of July, exactly 2 months.

**Q: Where did you live before moving here?**

Iwapelu: Before that, I spent nine months in the deportation prison at Köpenick.

**Q: How long have you been living in Berlin?**

Iwapelu: I came to Berlin more than a year ago. I had spent three months here before I got arrested by the police and sent to Köpenick.

**Q: What is your current residence status?**

Iwapelu: I live under the toleration status.

**Q: And how is life here in the home at Motardstraße? Do you have a personal bedroom?**

Iwapelu: It is not a good place to live. When you do not live here, the living conditions are probably not imaginable. At the moment, I share a bedroom with another man. We are actually supposed to be three in the room but the third person is never here. He knows somebody in the town and can live with him. But it would be narrower here if the three of us were living here. There is already barely enough space here. We have dismantled the third bed and put the mattresses on top of each other in order to have a little bit more space. Other than this there are cockroaches in the bedroom. It is difficult to sleep during the night because there are insects everywhere. Neither the cupboards nor the toilets



are lockable. It is terrible.

**Q: Do you cook your food by yourself or is there a canteen where you can eat something?**

Iwapelu: They have given us a couple of pots but we do not receive any food to cook. A friend of mine has given me some money so that I could buy some potatoes and something to cook. Otherwise we receive food packages, the same thing everyday. It is too little. Two rolls in the morning and evening or a slice of bread and a roll, a slice of sausage and cheese, some butter and jam, at noon a bowl with packaged food. There is no microwave here, so the food at noon is cold and way too little. Additionally there is a little of milk or juice and sometimes a fruit. That must change! They should give us money so that we can buy food for ourselves to cook. Anything is better than to receive the same packaged food everyday. The food in prison and partly the living conditions in Köpenick were really better, even if we were locked up. However there were also physicians who took care of us when we were sick. We also had a telephone and a television set. When you want to make a phone call here, you must first walk ten minutes to the next subway station.

**Q: What do you do now when you are sick?**

Iwapelu: I must first go to the social security office and get a certificate that I need in order to visit a physician. We then receive a transportation ticket

for the trip to the physician or to the hospital. There is however no ticket for the return trip or another trip in case one has to return to the physician. In other homes, people receive social tickets for the month. But without tickets here at the edge of Berlin, one is completely lost. It is almost like in prison.


**Q: Do you receive any money from the social security office?**

Iwapelu: No. At the moment, I receive no money at all. Every month, I go to the social security office and say that I need money and a transportation ticket. But currently I receive only the packaged food and a coupon for cleaning items and cosmetics like shaving foam or things like that.

**Q: Is there a social worker here in the home that looks after such problems?**

Iwapelu: No, there is no one here to whom one can speak when one has problems. There is certainly a secretary's office here, but it does not take care of personal issues. From time to time, they can perhaps make a call for someone at the social security office but that is all.

September 2006



# Profiteers of the Camp System

## Two examples from Berlin

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Migrants are accommodated and catered for in homes where no conditions can be created which support their stay. That means in plain text that the city of Berlin spends money in order to force human beings into such unbearable living conditions that they leave Germany, or at least go underground illegally and so cost nothing more to the state.

It would of course be cheaper to offer normal apartments and money to these people so that they can take care of themselves. But Berlin pays companies and so-called welfare associations in order to help them torment the migrants in a professional way. It is a lucrative business for the

companies. In the following we would like to discuss two profiteers of Berlin's policy of exclusion: the Dussmann group and the Arbeiterwohlfahrt ("Workers Welfare" or AWO).

### Dussmann

Dussmann is an international group with more than 55 000 employees in 28 countries. Subsidiary firms like Kursana or Pedus Office belong to Dussmann. The main business of Dussmann is the leasing of security staff and cleaning crews as well as catering services. Further branches are nursing services, commercial management and energy management. The catering service exists

mainly in hospitals and nursing homes for senior citizens. Dussmann advertises itself on its website as a company that satisfies high quality demands at low costs and has a heart for the recipients of its services.

Peter Dussmann is the owner of the Dussmann group. He presents himself as a self-made millionaire who went from rags to riches. “I became entrepreneur because I did not want to work for another idiot. Freedom is the decisive word for me.”<sup>1</sup> Dussmann is a liberal and as such a forerunner in issues like extensive video surveillance and the abolition of the Ladenschlussgesetz (Hours of trading act). He agitated as member of the jury of the middle-class PR initiative “Energizer of the Nation” and is also a member of the board of trustees of the notorious “liberal network”. He considers himself as a culture patron with his store at the Friedrichstraße.

The Dussmann group is very successful: According to its own statement, it achieved a volume

of 1.238 billion euros in the business year 2005, a growth of 71 million euros in comparison to the previous year. One of the reasons of this achievement is that the company Dussmann saves money wherever it can: employees of the Dussmann group receive extremely low salaries: A cleaner earns 4.20 euros per hour, a historian, who can speak two

foreign languages works in the museum for a gross salary of 7 euros per hour. In the Charité in Berlin, a company that belongs partially to Dussmann offers wages between 3.99 and 4.99 to specialists. Only people who do not have another choice generally accept such low wages. Therefore, there are also people without residence permits among Dussmann’s employees.



Dussmann operates as caterer and supplies Motardstraße on behalf of the city of Berlin. Dussmann receives 7 euros from the city of Berlin for

every meal. The value of a catering package that should nourish a person for a whole day should clearly be less than that. Because they want to keep the price low and therefore keep the profit high, the quality of the food is almost non-ex-

istant. It is apparently unimportant for the senior cultural patron Dussmann if the de facto daily forced feeding of people with such food packages is an ordeal for the consumer or not. While the people at Motardstraße are forcing that food down their throats, Peter Dussmann is listening to readings of Brecht in his culture store.

## Arbeiterwohlfahrt

The Arbeiterwohlfahrt (“Workers Welfare” or AWO) is known by many as “the welfare organisation with a little heart on its logo”. It has the structure of a decentralised non-denominational welfare organisation and maintains strong links with the SPD. 29 organisations at federal states and district level are affiliated to the Federal AWO organisation and organisations at ward levels are under the control of those at the district level. These in turn are made up of local organisations from the district (overall ca. 4,000). The decentralised organisation also means of course that the operating principles and the political alignment of the regional sub-organisations can differ from one another.

The AWO claims that it is bound to its fundamental values liberty, equity, tolerance and solidarity, which are also anchored in the workers movement. They pretend that the economic action of the workers’ welfare is on the same line with the

basic principles of the association. Contrary to the principle of profit maximization, the AWO measures its performance on the benefit to the user.<sup>2</sup>

The federal organisation of the AWO has signed amongst other things a memorandum with Amnesty International, Pro Asyl and the Republican lawyer association. The actual situation of the German asylum procedure is presented there critically and a general change of policy required. In various other official statements, the AWO presents itself as immigration friendly, intercultural, antifascist, social and philanthropical. The AWO even offers counselling centres to migrants.

Seen from a distance, the AWO seems to be a militant organisation fighting for equity, workers’ and human rights. When one looks closer, it suddenly appears to be completely different.

Uncompromising cost pressure and a constant deterioration of the working conditions characterise the daily reality of the employees as well as that of the people “supervised” by the AWO. The employees of the welfare organisation are often forced to do many extra hours of work and must then wait for a long time to be paid for them. Sometimes they wait in vain. The AWO is further known as a profiteer of the Hartz laws. It does not only get richer from the massive employment of people doing 1-euro jobs, but it also uses its political might to accentuate

the Hartz laws and hence have more 1-euro slaves placed at its service.<sup>3</sup>

The AWO is responsible for the operation of camps nationwide. In spite of its official statements on openness to migration, it does not actually excel in organising those camps humanely - on the contrary.

At the beginning of the 1990's miserable living conditions prevailed in the homes for asylum seekers in Bremen, which were operated by the AWO. They were infamous because of the lack of space, the catering, the ban on visitors and the hostility of the managing staff working there. The AWO, together with Bremen's senate exacerbated the situation, as they did not think it to be beneath themselves to run even windowless war bunkers as accommodation for refugees.

Under "social joint responsibility for the local community" the AWO obviously also means deportation services. The AWO in Bremerhaven, under the melodious name "garden in the native country", organises the return of old and severely ill people to the former Yugoslavia. All that is embellished and called "voluntary return". They know very well that the majority of the returnees have only been pressured into the programs with deportation threats. Where up to now deportation could not be carried out by force because of humanitarian reasons, the

"voluntary" return programs nowadays offer the authorities new possibilities to get rid of ill people easily and cheaply. The AWO is only concerned to secure its own position and therefore reverts readily to the currently popular discussion about the money saving potential and extols its personal capabilities. Volker Tegeler who is AWO manager in Bremerhaven first declares "the coffers are empty" and then concludes: It is cheaper to accompany the refugees to their native country than to monitor them in Germany.<sup>4</sup>


Even in Berlin, the camps which are operated by the AWO are not something that can advertise the humanity of that so-called welfare organisation. Three of their four homes count among those most contributing to exclusion if they are seen from the accommodation perspective of the city.<sup>5</sup> They had been built far away from the rest of the world and the living conditions of the inhabitants there are the worse of all the camps in Berlin. The inhabitants of Motardstraße are really afraid of the AWO staff members. The staff members try to drive away the visitors who want to have social contact with the inhabitants and improve their situation together with them. Since July 2005, there is no more "asylum procedure and social supervision" at Motardstraße. The organisation of the AWO for the federal state Berlin has deliberately ended these positions. In October 2006 they removed the rooms from a group of people who have been giving



German language courses on a voluntary basis for years - they had distributed invitations for the action day "for global migration". The language course has been replaced in the meantime and is now done by 1-euro workers without qualifications, interest and understanding of the situation of the inhabitants.

That is in short the hypocritical countenance of the companies, which profit from the misery of the migrants. When the people governing the city of Berlin whine again about the fact that they do not have enough money, they must think about whom they give the money to and above all for what. Apparently, the task of driving people out of Germany is an important state goal.

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1. Interview in "Stern" (28. 6. 2005): <http://www.stern.de/wirtschaft/unternehmen/:Peter-Dussmann-Erfolgreich-Kultur/542347.html>
  2. <http://www.awo.org>
  3. <http://www.berlinonline.de/berliner-zeitung/archiv/.bin/dump.fcgi/2004/0907/politik/0068/index.html>
  4. <http://de.indymedia.org/2004/11/97217.shtml>, October 29th 2004, (Nordsee-Zeitung may 19th 2004)
  5. Tobias Höpner: Schwerpunktarbeit im Diplomstudiengang Stadt- und Regionalplanung "Die Standortwahl für Flüchtlingsheime in Berlin und die sich daraus ergebendestadräumliche Situation der Unterkünfte im Kontext der Flüchtlingspolitik", Sept. 2004; [http://nolager.de/blog/files/nolager/Fl%C3%BCchtlingsheime\\_in\\_Berlin.pdf](http://nolager.de/blog/files/nolager/Fl%C3%BCchtlingsheime_in_Berlin.pdf)



# Antiracist Engagement

## Possibilities for intervention

The history of antiracist movements is as old as racial discrimination. In the following article we will show through examples, but without pretending to achieve full coverage, which face these struggles can have here and now. The acting figures of these struggles are (and were) the people concerned; that means the migrants as well as leftist groups working in solidarity. The legal situation has worsened continuously in the past 30 years (see *Migration policy in Germany*, p14). Antiracist actions in Germany are therefore unfortunately for the most part defensive struggles against the authorities, governments of federal states as well as the federal government and against the people responsible in the judiciary and the economy.

### Racism in paragraphs

Following a great number of racist attacks at the beginning of the 1990's, which in part reached the extent of pogroms and resulted in casualties, many antiracist actions took place. The riots of Rostock-Lichtenhagen<sup>1</sup> where luckily no casualties occurred are internationally known examples of this. Later the biggest democratic parties organised large demonstrations and called for the end of these attacks in order to preserve the international reputation of Germany. At the same time, far-reaching changes of the constitution of the Federal Republic of Germany were made and further discriminations in daily life introduced (see *Migration Policy in Germany*, p14). After all, the

successful throwing of eggs at the then Federal President von Weizsäcker and the attempt to hinder the vote by blocking the federal parliament testify to the existence of an antiracist resistance.

Resistance is stirring everywhere in Germany, with very different facets against the effects of the Asylbewerberleistungsgesetz (law on the support of asylum seekers) that was also passed in 1993, particularly against the principle of payment in kind. Many companies, which had been profiting from the system, had a worse image and sometimes serious material damages. Examples of this include the companies operating camps and those which produce and sell the food packages.

In Berlin, companies like the hotel chain SORAT (company owned by two rotten contingent stores for the whole of Berlin) or institutions like the German Red Cross (it abandoned the camp business after protests and because of a financial plight in Berlin) have actually bailed out of the business with that discrimination.

Exchange initiatives have existed in many cities for years, whereby people exchange the vouchers of the refugees or readable chip cards for money. It is a simple and legal possibility of directly supporting the refugees.<sup>2</sup>

Antiracist campaigns can be directed against

imminent deportations by regularly protesting in front of deportation prisons, airports, embassies and against the companies which participate in it. Many airlines were led to abandon their deportation service. Pilots increasingly refused to carry out deportations. The concrete legal and personal support regularly led to a little slowing down of the deportation machinery that contributed in saving some lives.

In many cities there are groups who commit themselves against the system of 'custody pend-





ing deportation' and at the same time engage themselves as much as they can to defend the daily issues of individual detainees. Their work particularly includes visits and the organisation of legal support.<sup>3</sup>

The accommodation of undocumented people is mostly clandestine, that is the reason why we cannot and do not want to provide you with contact information. Church groups are an exception. In some cases they openly announce the accommodation of undocumented people in a spectacular way under the so-called church asylum.<sup>4</sup>

When looming deportations are publicly announced, the whole milieu of the threatened people regularly gets involved: school classes, colleagues, migrant organisations protest, airline passengers refuse to fasten their safety belt. It helps individuals and leads to a sensitizing of great parts of the population.

The status of illegality only became a topic of public concern with the creation of the nationwide network "No one is illegal" during the art event "documenta X" in the year 1997. The living and working conditions of the approximately 1.2 millions "sans-papiers" are more and more highlighted.<sup>5</sup> Contrary to other European countries, there is unfortunately no big resonance on this issue in Germany, neither from the trade unions,

the media, the economy nor from big parts of the population. Finally, the German economy is based in a great part on the exploitation of these people who are practically completely deprived of their rights. They serve in the construction, agriculture, sex work, domestic work, cleaning and restaurant sectors of the economy. While in Italy, Spain, the Netherlands and Sweden a (differently encompassing) legalisation took place, almost nothing is being done in Germany. Undocumented migrants have never obtained a residence permit here, neither for humanitarian reasons, or because of economic considerations. The so-called illegality has until today never gotten old. In 2006, a campaign for the right to stay has created a new attempt for a legalisation in unfortunately a very small scale. It is directed to the ministers of the interior in the governments of the federal states and requests that at least people living here since 5-10 years under the 'toleration status' can have a lasting prospect in Germany. The practice shows that even such minor claims can only be made possible under the acceptance of further considerable restrictions.<sup>6</sup>

Other aspects like the worldwide unique 'obligation of residence' or the growing existence of (deportation) camps are discussed by different groups and at times have good publicity. The obligation of residence is violated in the form of individual as well as collective protest. Tough discussions

between concerned migrants and (federal) police officers sometimes led to those higher up gaining some kind of understanding. The federal state Berlin displays a formal timid concession in that unusual racist practice.<sup>7</sup> Nonetheless little has happened. More political pressure nationwide is needed. The existence of deportation camps, called in the official language “departure institutions” was made known in recent years through protest actions. The living conditions of the refugees could partly be clearly improved in the interplay of radical action, daily civil disobedience and conviction campaign towards the different people responsible.

### **Struggles to improve the living conditions of the refugees.**

In recent years, the Anti-Camp-Action-Tour took place every year. People protested for many days at chosen exemplary main places with nationwide and also some Europe wide participation. The places chosen were the particularly gruesome camps called “jungle homes” because of their isolated location; deportation prisons; offices of the federal police and airports as formal extraterritorial camps. The boycotts of the compulsory canteen food in Bramsche-Hesepe at the end of 2006<sup>8</sup> and against the food packages containing stale meat in Munich at the end of the year 2005<sup>9</sup> are prominent examples of protests by refugees.

Besides the constantly necessary discussion of the racism of the authorities, there could be successes in some cases: In Berlin, refugees are in the meantime nearly all paid in cash. The same happens in a part of Brandenburg and in the whole of the federal state of Mecklenburg-Westpomerania. Accommodation is now done predominantly (Berlin) or basically (Brandenburg and MW) in apartments. A welcome development that would not have taken place without the commitment of the anti-racist opposition outside the parliament.

In the framework of the 3rd cross-national action day of migration on October 7th 2006, campaigns took place in Berlin which have the local objective to discuss the use of the camp at Motardstraße 101a as a departure centre and in prospect to put an end to the camp system.<sup>10</sup>

We intend to work trans-nationally against the internationalisation of refugee prohibition. The topic of migration plays an important role for social forums worldwide. There are the Migreuport and Noborder Network that exist as European networks.<sup>11</sup> In 2007 an action day about and for migration will take place on June 4th in the framework of the protests against the G8 in Heiligendamm. In the run-up to that event, a conference is planned in Berlin on colonialism with focus on Africa.<sup>12</sup>

The action day in October 2006 was a beginning that will continue with this brochure. Through various campaigns, we should be able to succeed in convincing politicians and the public that there is a problem, that we have the perseverance necessary to accomplish that task of sensitization and that the politicians in Berlin have room for manoeuvre to limit individual evils: **Close down the camp Motardstraße.**

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1. [http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ausschreitungen\\_von\\_Rostock-Lichtenhagen](http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ausschreitungen_von_Rostock-Lichtenhagen)
  2. <http://www.chipkartenini.squat.net>
  3. Some groups can be found in the internet: <http://www.abschiebehaf.de/gruppen.htm>
  4. See for example: <http://www.kirchenasyl-berlin.de>
  5. Estimates from the economist Friedrich Schneider. Quoted after: Corinna Milborn, *Gestürmte Festung Europa*, Styria Verlag, P. 73.
  6. More information under: <http://www.bleiberechtsbuero.de>
  7. Abstract from the coalition's contract 2001. The federal state of Berlin will apply the exceptions to the rulings on the leaving of an assigned residence location according to §58 AsylVfG in a flexible manner in order to avoid unnecessary severity towards asylum seekers. To this it has to strive for an agreement with Brandenburg.

Abstract from the coalition contract 2006: The coalition parties examine an initiative of the federal council with the goal to concede to the federal states an authorisation for a modification of the obligation of residence to refugees. The coalition parties will speak out in favour of applying the ruling of §58 of the law on the asylum procedure leniently together with the federal state Brandenburg. The state Berlin will oppose any attempt to tighten up the law on the support of asylum seekers.

8. More information under: <http://www.nolager.de>
9. More information on refugees' protests in Bavaria under: <http://www.deutschland-lagerland.de/index.php?kampagne>
10. <http://www.noborder.org>, [http://www.fluechtlingsrat-hamburg.de/content/eua\\_071006\\_MigrationsAktionstag.html](http://www.fluechtlingsrat-hamburg.de/content/eua_071006_MigrationsAktionstag.html)
11. Information under: <http://www.migreurop.org>, <http://www.noborder.org>
12. Information and schedules for example under: <http://www.gipfelsoli.org>



# Organisations and Groups

## Internet addresses

### Berlin and Brandenburg

#### **adb-berlin.org**

Anti-discrimination office. Counselling and support for victims of discrimination

#### **akasylberlin.de**

Accompaniment service to Government offices in Berlin

#### **Alliance against camps - Berlin/Brandenburg**

c/o FFM, Mehring-Hof, Gneisenaustr. 2a, 10961 Berlin, e-mail: buendnis\_gegen\_lager@riseup.net

#### **chipkartenini.squat.net**

Initiative against the chip cards system. For social help in cash money instead of chip cards, for the right to labour.

#### **fels.nadir.org**

FelS – For a leftist movement

#### **fi-b.net**

Refugee's initiative Brandenburg

#### **fluechtlingsrat-berlin.de**

Extensive website of Berlin's council for refugees. You can also find here: directory of the counselling offices for refugees in Berlin as well as much more information on dispensation of justice and help for refugees and migrants.

#### **initiative-gegen-abschiebehaf.de**

Initiative against custody pending deportation. Berlin's group standing up against the system of custody pending deportation. We visit and accompany detainees. We go to the public and offer education sessions on the topic.

**plataforma-berlin.de**

Platform for migrants and refugees Berlin. Alliance against deportations state racism and discrimination

**Initiative gegen Abschiebeanhörung**

lni\_gaa@gmx.net

**Nationwide****ausreisezentren.de**

Website documenting the departure centres

**deutschland-lagerland.de**

With focus on camps in Bavaria

**noborder.org**

Information about the activities and campaigns of the (european) noborder network, founded 2000

**nolager.org**

Information about anti-lager campaigns & the european lager regime for refugees and migrants

**nolager.de**

Website of the anti-camp-action-tour-campaigns

**proasyl.de**

Federal working group PRO ASYL

**carava.net**

Website of the Caravan Munich, a refugees' organisation in Munich

**thecaravan.org**

A nationwide network made up of refugees, migrants and antiracist groups.

## Counselling centres in Berlin

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You can request opening times and languages by telephone or find them inside a leaflet of the council of refugees: <http://www.fluechtlingsinfo-berlin.de/fr/arbeitshilfen/asylberatunginfoblatt.pdf>

**Counselling for Asylum and refugees**, Heilig-Kreuz-Gemeinde, Zossener Str. 65, 10961 Berlin - Kreuzberg, Tel.: 030 - 691 41 83

**OASE Pankow**, Schönfließer Str. 7, 10439 Berlin - Prenzlauer Berg, Tel.: 030 - 471 40 71, [www.oase-pankow.de](http://www.oase-pankow.de)

**KUB**, Office for contact and counselling for refugees and migrants e.V, Oranienstr. 159, 10969 Berlin - Kreuzberg, Tel.: 030 - 614 94 00, 030 - 614 94 04, [www.kub-berlin.org](http://www.kub-berlin.org)

**Centre for Help to refugees and migration services (zfm)** at the treatment centre for victims of torture Berlin (BZFO), Turmstr. 21, Haus K, Eingang C, 3. floor (former hospital Moabit), 10559 Berlin-Tiergarten, Tel.: 030 - 303906-54, -44, -57, [www.bzfo.de](http://www.bzfo.de) -> "zfm"

**Counselling office AL MUNTADA for migrants from the Arabic world**, Morusstr. 18 a, 12053 Berlin – Neukölln, Tel.: 030 - 682 47 718, Tel.: 030 - 682 47 719, [www.diakonisches-werk-berlin.de/01/ueber\\_uns.html](http://www.diakonisches-werk-berlin.de/01/ueber_uns.html)

**Amnesty International** - in the house for democracy and human rights, Greifswalder Str. 4 - 2. Hof, 3rd floor, 10405 Berlin - Prenzlauer Berg, Tel.: 030 - 841 09 052, [www.amnesty-bb.de](http://www.amnesty-bb.de)

**Counselling centre for fellow citizens from foreign countries**, Beratungszentrum für ausländische Mitbürger, Reistrommel e.V., Zum Hechtgraben 1, 13051 Berlin – Hohenschönhausen, Tel.: 030 - 547 82 456, [www.reistrommel-ev.de](http://www.reistrommel-ev.de)

**Citizens's initiative for fellow citizens from foreign countries e.V.**, Bürgerinitiative Ausländische MitbürgerInnen e.V. – Beratungsstelle, Neustrelitzer Str. 63 Haus E, 13055 Berlin – Hohenschönhausen, Tel.: 030 - 981 45 35 , 030 - 981 45 46, [www.bi-berlin-hohenschoenhausen.de](http://www.bi-berlin-hohenschoenhausen.de)

**Treatment centre for victims of torture Berlin e.V.**, Health centre Moabit, house K, entry C, 3rd floor, Behandlungszentrum für Folteropfer Berlin e.V., Gesundheitszentrum Moabit, Haus K, Eingang C, 3. Etage, Turmstraße 21, 10559 Berlin-Tiergarten, Tel.: 030 - 303906 -0, -24, -49, [www.bzfo.de](http://www.bzfo.de)

**Counselling on cases of hardship, by the members of the commission of the cases of hardship Berlin.** For asylum seekers, people living under "tolerance status" and people without residence permits who are threatened by deportation, when urgent humanitarian and personal reasons for a continuous stay in Germany are available. Look in the leaflet for location and office hours. [www.fluechtlingsinfo-berlin.de/fr/gesetzgebung/Info\\_HFK\\_Berlin.pdf](http://www.fluechtlingsinfo-berlin.de/fr/gesetzgebung/Info_HFK_Berlin.pdf) or: [www.fluechtlingsratberlin.de](http://www.fluechtlingsratberlin.de) -> "Links" -> "Initiativen und Beratungsstellen". Please, first read the leaflet and bring all the documents mentioned there to the counselling session.

**Directory of counselling services for refugees Berlin**, with further counselling offices and addresses of lawyers competent on the rights of foreigners: [www.fluechtlingsinfo-berlin.de/fr/arbeitshilfen/adrfueberatung.pdf](http://www.fluechtlingsinfo-berlin.de/fr/arbeitshilfen/adrfueberatung.pdf) or [www.fluechtlingsrat-berlin.de](http://www.fluechtlingsrat-berlin.de) -> "links" -> "initiativen und beratungsstellen" -> "links" -> "rechtsanwalte"

## Medical Services

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**medibuero.de** - Office for medical help for refugees Berlin. Arranges anonymous and free of charge treatment by qualified medical personnel for people without residence status and health insurance. Büro für medizinische Flüchtlingshilfe Berlin, Mehringhof, Gneisenaustr. 2a, Hinterhof, Aufgang 3, 2nd floor, Berlin-Kreuzberg, Tel.: 030 - 69 46 746

**xenion.org - XENION** - psychotherapeutic counselling office for people persecuted for political reasons.

- Network single guardianship AKINDA - support of unaccompanied children

- Network of mentors for refugees –orientation and integration support for refugees

Paulsenstraße 55-56, 12163 Berlin, Tel.: 0 30 - 323 29 33

**Asylum seekers** are people who have made an application for Asylum and are still in the Asylum approval process. This term is used in contrast to 'Asylum applicant', because with 'applicant' the impression is given that the German State can compare the Asylum process with an application for a job. In doing this, it confirms an obligation to give protection to such people.

**Refugees** are for us people who are forced to leave the place they called home, in order to protect their lives, their health or because of their economic situation.

**Migrants** are all the people that live somewhere that is not the place they originally called home. The change of location can be permanent or temporary. We don't regard as migrants people who are identified by the general public as 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> generation migrants. They are also a part of the community where they were born and have grown up in, independent of the question of how they are seen by the majority society.

## Glossary

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**close  
motard  
strasse!**

