



45 - **Access without fear" - access to all the city's resources for everyone and without fear**

50 - **"Don't ask, don't tell" - no questions about residence status, not even at authorities, and no reports to migration-authorities or the police**

- **No racist controls - no police or other controls based on ethnic or racial criteria**

- **Stop all deportations. No deportations.**

60 The Solidarity City principle separates the right to social participation from nationality and legally defined residence status and anchors it instead on belonging to urban society and a process of political negotiation from below. This opens up a field of action in which the national border regime can be questioned at the local level: Then this regime will be **abolished** wherever people live together and stand up for each other, where they organise themselves, demand rights and thereby initiate social change. Migrants\* and non-migrants\* are equally subjects of a political practice of "doing equality", the daily production of social equality in the city.

75 Solidarity with refugees will be the starting point for new visions of a "city for all". In such a city of solidarity, "all people should be able to participate and shape city life - regardless of residence status, financial possibilities, skin colour, gender, sexuality, religion". (Self-conception Solidarity City). This makes the Solidarity City idea compatible with other movements and conflicts over social rights and against inequality. The neo-liberalisation-process is pushing more and more people in urban societies to the margins and effectively excluding them from participation.

### **Not utopian, but realizable: Solidarity City in practice**

80 The models for the Solidarity City principle are the Sanctuary Cities in the USA and Canada. The so-called refuge cities date back to the 1980s, when numerous churches in the USA opened their doors to people fleeing wars and armed conflicts in Central America. The pressure from this

#### **People without papers**

How it happens that people do not have residence papers is very different. Some students from other countries stay after their studies although their residence permit has expired. So do seasonal workers. Some come from other European countries in search of work, but only occasionally find bad odd jobs. Still others were recruited to work under false conditions and the employer keeps the papers. Often it is also about women who are sexually exploited and who sometimes manage to run away. Or people who live and work here catch up with family members who are in the country without permission after a short period of a permitted visit. A growing group are, after all, refugees. Most have gone underground after their asylum application has been rejected. Some have also entered the country and have not even applied for asylum because, for example, their country of origin is generally declared safe. It should also be kept in mind that destruction through war or climate change, expulsion through land theft or economic destruction through unfair trade agreements are not recognised as grounds for asylum.

85 movement was so strong that many cities and municipalities refused to cooperate with the federal authorities in deportations and opened municipal services to all their citizens/inhabitants regardless of their legal status. To the present day, some 300 communities in the United States are sanctuary cities, offering undocumented immigrants a safe haven and consistently refusing to deport their citizens. Currently, they are a thorn in the side of the Trump Administration, and they are under increasing pressure.

90 When it comes to role models for Europe, New York in the USA and Toronto in Canada are often mentioned. There, as in many other Sanctuary communities, it is about much more than protection from deportation and a more or less precarious right to remain. With the City ID, New York has introduced its own city identity card, for which the status as a foreigner does not play a role. All citizens who can prove their identity and residence in the city can have the City ID issued to them. It is recognized not only by administrations and public institutions, but also by many private  
95 companies and even by the police. For undocumented migrants, the city ID card removes many hurdles and unpredictable risks in daily life. Wherever necessary, they can use it to identify themselves like any other New Yorker.

100 In Toronto, migrants from different communities, various grassroots initiatives and activists\* of “No One Is Illegal” have joined forces to form the network "Solidarity City Movement". As a movement from below, the alliance has made the social division of the city, the social exclusion of the paperless and the scandal of deportations in every part of the city, in every school, in every hospital its theme and field of political action. In close cooperation with lawyers' associations, parishes, human right groups, cultural workers and even parts of political parties and the city  
105 administration, large campaigns were initiated, for example for an education right in schools with and without papers, for health care for all or for the support of informal workers. In a broad alliance and with staying power, Toronto City Council finally succeeded in officially declaring Toronto Sanctuary City in 2013. It took nine years to fight for it. Since then, the city has guaranteed to protect undocumented migrants from deportation and to give them access to community services  
110 and facilities. Today, the Solidarity City Movement is persistently ensuring that the city council's decision is upheld and that the associated guarantees are actually adhered to.

A network of Solidarity City initiatives has also emerged in Germany in recent years, with more than 15 cities now belonging to it. In view of an active welcome culture in the summer of 2015 and the solidarity that has persisted since then, an increasingly restrictive asylum policy and a  
115 significant tightening of the federal deportation policy, voices in Germany are also increasing for more protection. The experience of deportations directly from school, the workplace or the delivery room has left traces in the collective memory and engendered resistance.

## **From nationality to urban citizenship**

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In Germany, too, municipalities have legal possibilities to protect their citizens/inhabitants from deportation and illegalisation. According to the "Grundgesetz" (German Constitution Law), they result from the right to municipal self-determination and the responsibility of the municipalities for

125 public welfare. The Bundesländer, in turn, have certain competences of their own under the  
"Aufenthaltsgesetz" (Residence Act), over which they may exercise discretion. The Länder are also  
responsible for carrying out deportations.

130 This gives the city states of Berlin, Hamburg and Bremen special room for manoeuvre, as they are  
both municipalities and federal states. As municipalities, they are responsible for the foreigners  
authority and the social welfare office, for socio-medical health care, the KiTas (kindergarten) and  
the schools. As federal states, they can issue benevolent administrative regulations for the  
135 application of the Residence Act and even impose a three-month deportation ban. On this basis,  
Hamburg and Bremen have protected refugees from deportation from Afghanistan against the will  
of the federal government.

140 Beyond the legal scope, solidarity cities can only grow in an atmosphere of tolerance and solidarity.  
It is particularly common in port cities. Here, global accessibility for goods and people from all over  
the world is the basis of existence. Welcome and Farewell belong to the cultural flair, the "buten  
(outside)" and the "binnen (inside)", the "we" and "the others" are symbiotically intertwined.  
Bremen stands in such a harbour city tradition. At the same time, it is a city with a citizens'  
constitution. Bremen is committed to independence and an open, liberal spirit. Port city culture and  
145 city citizenship self-confidence are good starting points for the basic idea of a Solidarity City: all  
people who live here are part of the city society and have a right to their protection and  
participation.

## **"Together we are Bremen"**

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We know that Bremen is home to people who do not have legal residence status, even if we do not  
know their number. We also know that many live in this city who are formally only tolerated and  
permanently threatened with deportation. The "Gottlieb Daimler People" have made this publicly  
visible. Since March 2018, a large group of young fugitives from the camp in Gottlieb-Daimler-  
150 Strasse have been defending themselves against the arbitrary age determination by the  
Sozialbehörde (Welfare Administration), against transfer to other federal states, against deportation  
to Italy or their country of origin and against their illegalisation. They simply refused to accept the  
punishment of exclusion that the city subjected them to because, they are here and want to be able  
to participate in the socio-cultural and political activities in Bremen. Now known as "Together we  
155 are Bremen" they fight for a future perspective in Bremen because their centre of life is here: They  
have established close contacts, made friends and have become a part of the city. Now they finally  
want to be allowed to go to school, learn a profession and contribute to the city society that  
welcomed them - but whose administration wants to transfer them out of the city boundaries and  
send them into an uncertain future. A solidarity network of Bremen citizens around this self-  
160 organised group of young people provides living space, helps with language learning and provides  
support in everyday life, such as registering for school but encounters bureaucratic hurdles. The  
names of the young people are not stored in the central administration software for compulsory  
school leavers. "We, as well as all those people who find themselves in similar situations, need the  
practical and solidarity support of the Bremen \*wo\*men - more than ever," says a "Gottlieb Daimler  
165 youth".

They have made visible and audible what is needed for people without a secure residence status: Protection and security, housing, medical care, education, language, training, work etc. Every day, the solidarity network makes sure that everything possible is made available anew - with a great deal of personal effort and often against official resistance, sometimes even with their support???. Together with the young people, they are at the centre of the social field of conflict for which the Solidarity City concept seeks solutions: How does an urban society find solidarity with people with precarious or no residence status who are denied basic rights today? How do many people jointly build a solidarity city in which not only civil society, but also the city parliament and the administration live up to their responsibility to create good living conditions for all?

## **The simple that is hard to make**

The central themes of Solidarity City are the ability to access all the possibilities and resources of the city without fear, no questions about the residence status, no racial profiling/police checks to check the papers and the stopping of all deportations. In view of the criminalisation of sea rescue on the Mediterranean, some initiatives have supplemented this canon with the demand for "relocation from below", i.e. the active reception of rescued persons, who nobody in Europe wants to receive.

This results in concrete fields of action for a Solidarity City movement in Bremen: The coming and staying, living and health, education and training, work, social security and finally a perspective and security for the future. It takes a lot of patience to build a city based on solidarity. But it is feasible if many people take part.

### **To Come:**

Bremen should become a safe harbour. This has already been decided by the Bürgerschaft ( City Parliament) as a strong signal. This includes the fact that the city, with its weight as the control centre for sea rescue in Germany, is demanding that the Federal Government and the EU immediately resume sea rescue operations in the Mediterranean. Citizens and mayors should also continue to actively support the reception of shipwrecked persons rescued from drowning in Bremen. A safe harbour also means that the young people of "Together we are Bremen" must quickly be granted residence status by the Senator of the Interior so that they can finally find a home. In addition, Bremen should make it uncomplicated for relatives scattered throughout Europe or from the countries of origins to follow in their footsteps. But relatives are much more than the family in the narrow sense.

### **To Stay:**

Nobody from Bremen is to be deported anymore. The more people make it clear that they do not support this inhuman policy, the more protection there will be in every neighbourhood, every school, every business. Why shouldn't in the end a federal state in Germany refuse to carry out deportations that violate human rights and are intolerable in humanitarian terms? This also includes the fact that the Senator for the Interior and the Foreigners Authority take every legal opportunity to

consolidate the stay and "upgrade" the residence status until naturalisation. Finally, the aim is to ensure that the residence status is no longer checked during identity checks or visits to the authorities.

#### 210 **Housing:**

Every inhabitant of the city of Bremen should be able to redeem their claim to an adequate apartment. From now on, no one may be accommodated in camps. In order to put an end to predatory competition on the housing market and ensure that there is enough affordable housing for everyone, there must be a new start in non-profit social housing construction.

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#### **Health:**

220 Good medical care must be available to all residents\* of this city. For this reason, there must be sufficient resident doctors\* and therapists\* in all parts of the city. Like hospitals, they must have access to a pool of language and cultural mediators provided by the city at all times. To ensure that medical care can also be provided irrespective of residence status, the anonymous health insurance voucher should be introduced in Bremen, as it already exists in other cities. The humanitarian consultation hour at the health office is a good starting point for this.

#### **Education:**

225 Education is a human right. This is why all children in Bremen already have the formal right to go to school - even if their parents do not have residence papers. This right is already being implemented at some schools in Bremen, but not all. That is why there should be further training on the legal situation and sensitisation for school staff. In future, school attendance by children whose parents do not have residence papers should always result in humanitarian tolerance. At the same time, the right to education must be extended to KiTa's as well.

#### **Vocational Training:**

235 For many young people in Bremen it is difficult to find a vocational training place. This makes it all the more important to support those who have made it. Young refugees need support to accompany their training right from the start. They also need security so that they can concentrate on learning. For this reason, trainees must make full use of all discretionary leeway when deciding on the safest possible residence status: In Bremen, a training toleration should be converted into a residence permit with immediate effect and a **missing legal** status into a humanitarian toleration.

#### 240 **To Work:**

The labour law is most frequently circumvented by employers among those employees who are least able to defend themselves because of their particularly vulnerable position. Undocumented migrants are particularly affected. They often have to earn their living in extremely exploitative

245 working conditions and under the most difficult conditions. Competent advice on labour law for employees without residence papers is therefore particularly important. Good starting points are the two trade union counselling centres that already exist in Bremen. But there is also a need for open-minded labour courts that actually enforce the statutory labour rights of undocumented workers. It must be assured that an action will not ultimately lead to expulsion.

## 250 **Perspective and security for the future:**

255 Access to many public services and institutions in the city depends on valid identification and residence documents. A legal job can only be found by those to whom the salary can be transferred, and an apartment can only be rented by those who have an account. A bank account can only be opened by those who present their papers. A registration address is a prerequisite for KiTa-Platz or school registration. However, if you register at the Einwohnermeldeamt without residence documents, your data must be forwarded to the Ausländerbehörde immediately. A New York City identity card can make a lot of things easier. Therefore, a Bremen Citycard is to be introduced, which will be recognized by all authorities, public authorities, banks, other service providers in the city and also by the police as a fully valid ID document.

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At the same time, Bremen, as a federal state, is to advocate the abolition of the obligation to inform (§ 87 AufenthG) enshrined in the Residence Act. This is because it requires public authorities, with the exception of schools, to inform the Migration Office (Migrationsamt) or the police immediately if they lack residence documents. This obligation to register, which is unique in Europe, is to be replaced by a ban on the transmission of residence data.

270 Security for the future means for people with a precarious state of residence especially that their stay can be consolidated step by step up to the naturalisation offer. For this reason, the authorities must make use of all legal leeway and provide information. For undocumented migrants, perspectives and a secure future can be achieved through recurring opportunities to legalise their stay. For this reason, the state of Bremen is to issue amnesties for violations of the right of residence on regularly recurring, publicly announced dates and issue residence permits for the people who are citizens of this city.