

## **Action days against the deportation camp Bramsche Hesepe (5th until the 7th of june)**

“We don’t want to live in the camp” – it is with this motto that refugees of the deportation camp Bramsche-Hesepe want to set up a 3-days protest camp outside the fence of the deportation camp together with activists of the NoLager-network. The events, hearings and actions will inform the public not only about the situation of the refugees in this deportation camp itself – including the latest repressions and conflicts. It is also the European politics of camps and migration which will be once more exposed to public criticism.

The central demand of the action- respective lager-boycott-days is the immediate closing down of the deportation camp Bramsche-Hesepe! Big demo: Tuesday, 6th of june, 4 p.m. Osnabrück

No camps – not here and nowhere else!  
For global freedom of movement!  
Equal rights for everybody!

### **Bramsche-Hesepe**

The deportation camp has been existing since the year 2000. Officially it is a ‘Landesaufnahmestelle’ (state admission place), but the name is deceiving and shall cover that with 550 places Bramsche-Hesepe simply the biggest deportation camp in Germany. It is the declared aim to press people to the so-called voluntary return. This affects mainly refugees, whose application for asylum has been already rejected and whose deportation is only suspended for the reason that the substitute papers for their passports are not available. There are also refugees in Bramsche-Hesepe, whose asylum procedures are still going on, but who –according to the so-called prognoses-statement of the Bundesamt for migration - will almost for sure be rejected (in Germany only 1.7 % of all asylum procedures have a positive outcome). To speak of voluntary return is certainly cynical and puts the reality upside down, because the inhabitants of the camp are exposed to a system of harrassment on an every day level (more information about this you can find in the paragraph ‘every day life in the deportation camp Bramsche-Hesepe.’) By this they shall not only be isolated but also become worn down and completely without hope and any perspective, as the ‘manager’ of the “Ausreisezentrum” Ingelheim frankly put it. One method is that the inhabitants are on a regular basis giving a paper from the camp-intern foreign-authorities, in which they are asked to sign that they are willing to leave Germany voluntarily. This means that they shall actively look for their travel documents, because only then their deportation can take place quickly, latest when their asylum procedures have come to an end. If they refuse this (and many of them do, because they do not want to become helpers in their own deportation), they are threatened or faced with penalties: These include the cutting or deletion of the “pocket money”; to not allow people to do “charitable work” (for 1-2 Euro per hour); the limitation of the anyway very much restricted freedom of movement (Residenzpflicht). It was only recently that some refugees got punishment orders of 200 Euro or alternatively imprisonment of 40 days. According to the law it is their offense that over a period of many years, they have actively refused to fill out and sign “an application for the issuing of passport-replacement-papers respectively documents for the journey home.” Although the law offers the possibility to punish refugees for not collaborating in their own deportation, so far Bramsche-Hesepe seems to be almost the only place where this extra-cynical paragraph is put into practice.

There is no limit to the stay in Bramsche-Hesepe – “voluntary return” or deportation are the only possibilities which the inhabitants are offered by the authorities. It is for this reason that several refugees, among them many families, have been staying in the camp for years. And still – not many people return ‘voluntarily’. The much bigger number of refugees leaving the camp does so either because they are deported or because they prefer a life in illegality. The regional authorities in Hannover, who are responsible for the deportation camp, frankly admit that Bramsche-Hesepe is an experiment: “The experiences and competences gained in Bramsche shall also be used for the reinforcement of approaches of return especially the advice to return voluntarily also in the other communal accomodation of the Central Admission and Foreigners Institution’. Matching this is the fact that trainings for employees of other deportation camps take place on a regular basis in Bramsche, for example in january 2006 for the staff of a deportation camp (“communal accomodation for people having to leave the country”) in Neumünster (Schleswig-Holstein), which has just opened on April 1 2006. It is important to mention in this context that the number of newly arriving refugees in Europe has rapidly gone down, while on the other hand the number of (working)migrants without papers is massively increasing. As a result many of the refugee camps in Germany are empty. It is therefore planned to accommodate the remaining refugees in some few big camps and to work from the beginning in the direction of ‘voluntary return.’

## Protest

Since the deportation camp Bramsche started existing there have been protests – especially by the people who have to live in the camp themselves. Be it silent protest, for example the silent undermining of everyday regulations and obligations as well as actions aiming at the public. In the beginning of march refugees from Bramsche-Hesepe have published an protest letter which was signed by 183(!) inhabitants of the camp. This letter describes the intolerable conditions in the camp in detail and demands the dissolving of this place. It was planned to hand the letter over at the ministry of interior in Hannover, but they refused to receive it. So instead it was given to two members of the state parliament from FDP and Bündnis90/Die Grünen and afterwards deposited in the mail box of the state ministry of interior as part of a demonstration. So far the only answer to this were warnings respective legal proceedings because of the violation of the 'Residenzpflicht', for example against two refugees who had the courage to report about the situation in the camp at a well-visited press conference, which took place before the demo started. The FDP, which is part of the state government in Hannover, has chosen to react in their own special way. Two members of the state parliament visited the camp one week after the demonstration, one of them being Gabriela König from Osnabrück. The outcome of this visit was a press release which gave the impression to be written by Bramm, the manager of the camp (also member of the FDP) himself and which comprised the height of racist resentment.

Talking about protests it should also be mentioned that in the early hours of the 27th of march the entrance of the camp was blocked once again, (with the result that the more than hundred employees could not take up their work.) The immediate cause for this was the serving of expired food in the canteen. Another reason was that the inhabitants of the camp were outraged at the boldness and contempt with which politicians and bureaucrats deal with them again and again – the latest example being the (non-)reaction to the open letter.

The nation-wide NoLager network supports the demands of the refugees in Bramsche-Hesepe (some of them have been active in the network for quite a while). The NoLager network has demonstrated already twice on the grounds of the deportation camp Bramsche-Hesepe: In 2004 as part of a 17-day-long Anti-Lager-Action-Tour and on the 24th of september 2005 together with the 'committee for basic human rights and democracy'. The demonstration on the second of march in Hannover – where the open letter was handed over – was carried out by activists of the NoLager-network and by inhabitants of the camp. The NoLager-network consists of self organized refugee organizations as well as antiracist, autonomous and feminist groups.

The everyday life in the deportation camp Bramsche

The everyday-life inside the deportation camp Bramsche-Hesepe is characterized by purposeful repression and harassment:

Having to live in cramped conditions without privacy with up to six people in one room, families even have to share a room with up to 9 people.

Every self-determined everyday activity is limited to a very large extent: Food is only served at the camp-intern canteen, clothes and hygienic products are only handed out in the 'Kleiderkammer'. Refugees whose asylum procedures are still going on are not allowed to work except for the rare possibility to do a badly payed charitable job. Having a pocket money of only 38 euro per month implies that for instance parents cannot fulfill even the simplest wishes of their kids.

All authorities (for example 'Ausländer- und Sozialbehörde) are on the grounds of the camp.

When having health problems the refugees have to go to the medical station. Usually there is only one nurse on duty, only twice a week a general doctor is available. Very seldom it's approved to see a specialist, allegedly because of lacking finances.

About 150 children have to live in the camp. There is an internal kindergarten (with only one educator) and a lager-internal school for them. Most of the children who are required to attend school are taught there because school attendance is compulsory in Niedersachsen, but not for seriously learning something. For this reason classes are only two hours per day and most of the children feel neither challenged nor taken serious.

The residential law (Residenzpflicht), which exists in Germany, means that refugees have to apply for permission as soon as they want to leave the administrative district, in which they are registered. It

depends on the goodwill of the authorities whether they are given this permission or not. It happens regularly that permissions are denied, simply because visits at relatives or friends who are living further away are only possible with staying overnight. People who want to visit their relatives in the camp are also not allowed to stay overnight.

Above all the daily life is subject to permanent control. Cameras are installed everywhere, lots of activities are observed by the janitors.

### **European Camp System**

Although our protest focusses on single camps like Bramsche-Hesepe, we always have the development of the European camp-system as a whole in our view. When we speak of the European camp system we are referring to the fact that at the moment a system of different camps, which are complementing one another, is set up inside and outside the European Union with a very high speed. To these belong first refugee camps in front of the EU borders, like in the Ukraine, Libya or Mauretania; second huge camp complexes directly at the EU-borders, at the polish border to the Ukraine as well as at the italian island Lampedusa or the Canary Islands (Spain); and third different camps inside the different countries of the EU. The basic principle of these camps is isolation – be they situated in the Libyan desert, in the forests of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern or in an industrial area of big cities in western Germany. The more refugees and migrants are isolated or socially closed out, that is the more sparsely their contact to the neighbours, to migrant-communities, to lawyers or political activists is, the deeper the control is getting a grip of them and the stronger they are exposed to harassment, humiliations and punishment by the management of the camp and the authorities.

With this politics of isolation the camp-bureaucrats are pursuing several, sometimes contrasting aims at once: In the first place as many refugees and migrants as possible shall be caught in camps in order to prevent them from entering the EU. This goes hand in hand with other measures for example the increasement of the number of border police, the technical perfection of the monitoring at the borders or the spying out of secret migration routes and meeting points. Putting people in camps is secondly a central requirement for deporting refugees and migrants as easy as possible, either directly to their countries of origin or into the just recently set up refugee camps in Northern Africa, where it is then up to the governments of Libya, Tunisia or Morocco to decide what is going to happen to them. Thirdly the camp politics aim at deterrence respective illegalization – be it, that refugees and migrants prefer it to enter the EU irregularly (instead of going through an anyway almost hopeless asylum procedure) or be it, that they are worn down through their experiences inside the refugee camp and 'voluntarily' decide to live illegally. Both is calculated, at least to a certain level: people without any legal status do not cost the state money, and in addition they are available to the european labour market as cheap, flexible workers who are not organized in trade unions – be it in the agriculture, at construction sites, in the cleaning business, the catering trade, the sex-industry or in the private households of the middle class.

It is also important for us to point out that unfortunately it is only a minority who migrates out of curiosity and for the reason of discovering new places. The majority of people is looking for a better life – a life in dignity and self-determination, in safety and where they can exist above the subsistence level. In other words: They leave because the basis of their livelihood has been destroyed, because they have to get to safety from war and dictatorship or sexist persecution. Many of these reasons are directly or indirectly linked to the ruling (economic) world order. Therefore the politics of camps and migration have to be understood also as an attempt of the rich countries to keep up the world-wide extremely unfair conditions of allocation.

We decline the isolation of refugees and migrants without papers, no matter if they are put from the cities into the forests or to the Northern African desert camps. We stand up for the right of global freedom of movement. Everybody has the right to stay wherever and as long as they want to! We demand the stopp of all deportations and the immediate closing of the refugee camps – here and everywhere!

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## **Days of Action**

The days of action and camp boycott will take place directly in front of the deportation camp from the 5th until the 7th of June (unless the authorities force us to switch to the inner city of Bramsche). During the action days there will be public workshops, events and film shows concerning the topic of 'refugee camps and the politics concerning them'. Further on hearings are planned concerning the deportation camp Bramsche and the German and European politics of refugee camps in general. And of course there will be action: a demonstration in Osnabrück, speaker's corner's in Osnabrück and Bramsche are planned as well as several surprise activities. There is a direct link between the action days in Bramsche and the action days against the deportation camp in Halberstadt (Sachsen-Anhalt), which will take place on the 29./30. May. In Halberstadt as well it is tried to force refugees to return 'voluntarily', for example by giving them 'Duldungen' only for one or two days (for some people this has been going on for years).