

# Women's & Queer Strike Kassel 2022

## **Hauptbahnhof // Central Station**

### **Entry Speech by Women and Queer Strike Kassel**

Dear friends, dear comrades, dear feminists,

I am glad to be on the streets with you here in Kassel today! I am glad that we are taking the space we deserve today and that we are striking together!

For the fourth time, the demonstration on 8 March is now being organised by the Women's and Queer Strike Alliance, on whose behalf I would like to welcome you all very warmly!

This year, we women and queers have again called for a walkout – whether your work is paid or unpaid! It is still us who do most of the unpaid care work. And even if we are paid for it, the recognition for our work is so low that we can often barely live off it.

On a day like 8 March, when we all lay down our work together, we show that we no longer accept these injustices! We are consciously following the tradition of feminist achievements that other feminists have fought for before us. We must not forget that 8 March is celebrated as international day of feminist struggle because of feminist socialists like Clara Zetkin. The memory shows us that a feminist struggle must always be an anti-capitalist struggle.

We also see ourselves as part of the international feminist strike movement: We learn from the determination and anger of our comrades from Poland, from Argentina, from Spain! Their protests for bodily integrity, self-determination and reproductive justice are ours too! And we have already achieved a lot! One example is the legalisation and coverage of abortions up to the 14th week in Argentina. But we know that we have to defend everything we have fought for. And as long as paragraph 218 still exists, as long as a free choice of personal designation is still not possible, as long as a woman continues to be murdered every third day in Germany, we have to continue to take to the streets together!

We will not be satisfied with system-conforming petty changes like quotas in supervisory boards because these will never lead to the liberation of all women and queers. That is why we choose the feminist strike as our means of choice to disrupt the capitalist process of exploitation!

And for the first time, the trade union ver.di is also calling for a strike today: Today was the first warning strike in the collective bargaining in the social and educational services, where mainly FLINTA work. They are striking for better working conditions and also for the upgrading of care work. And that is why we explicitly show our solidarity with the strikers today: Because their demands are also our demands - and in the end we care, strike and fight together!

Let's strike loudly on the streets of Kassel today: Against patriarchal and racist violence and oppression! For the overcoming of capitalism and for a society in which the focus is not on securing profits but on caring for each other!

### **ISD Kassel (Initiative of Black People in Germany)**

Speech Entitled "Ain't I a Woman?" by Sojourner Truth  
Delivered at the 1851 Women's Convention in Akron, Ohio

Well, children, where there is so much racket there must be something out of kilter. I think that 'twixt the Negroes of the South and the women at the North, all talking about rights, the white men will be in a fix pretty soon. But what's all this here talking about?

That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages, or over mud-puddles, or gives

me any best place! And ain't I a woman? Look at me! Look at my arm! I have ploughed and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man could head me! And ain't I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much as a man – when I could get it – and bear the lash as well! And ain't I a woman? I have borne thirteen children, and seen most all sold off to slavery, and when I cried out with my mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me! And ain't I a woman?

Then they talk about this thing in the head; what's this they call it? [member of audience whispers, "intellect"] That's it, honey. What's that got to do with women's rights or Negroes' rights? If my cup won't hold but a pint, and yours holds a quart, wouldn't you be mean not to let me have my little half measure full?

Then that little man in black there, he says women can't have as much rights as men, 'cause Christ wasn't a woman! Where did your Christ come from? Where did your Christ come from? From God and a woman! Man had nothing to do with Him.

If the first woman God ever made was strong enough to turn the world upside down all alone, these women together ought to be able to turn it back, and get it right side up again! And now they is asking to do it. The men better let them. Obligated to you for hearing me, and now old Sojourner ain't got nothing more to say.

### **Migrant\*innenbündnis (Alliance of Migrant Women)**

The Federal Statistical Office reports: German exports have increased enormously in the pandemic year 2021 and have even risen above the level before the pandemic. At first glance, that sounds very positive. But what does this news concern us today on International Women's Day?

The decisive criterion for the German upswing: Germany is competing with other nations with its ever-increasing low-wage sector. For the success of Germany as an economic nation, more and more people have to go to work under increasingly poor conditions. And this affects us women above all.

A recent study by the German Institute for Economic Research shows that - intensified by the Corona crisis - more and more people - and especially women - have to work in so-called mini-jobs. Since the 2003 labour market reform until 2019, the number of people in mini-jobs had already increased by 43% to 7.6 million, which was almost 20% of all employees. For 61% of these people, the mini-job was their main job. In the first months of the pandemic, the Institute estimates that 850,000 of these mini-jobbers (i.e. 12%) had lost their jobs altogether. All others were not entitled to short-time allowance during lockdown phases.

On 1 February 2022, the weekly newspaper "Die Zeit" wrote: "In the meantime, the number of mini-jobs has returned to pre-crisis levels. At the same time, there are fewer and fewer people doing a mini-job exclusively and more people doing a 450-euro job on the side."

All this clearly shows that mini-jobs are by no means a stepping stone into the primary labour market, as is repeatedly claimed in political propaganda. Mini-jobs do not secure livelihoods, they secure the precariousness of those affected! Mini-jobs, like temporary work, only serve capital profit - as a low-wage sector in international competition - and in times of economic crisis they are quickly dismantled. In the current coalition agreement, the FDP has prevailed with regard to the mini-job regulation. Earnings are to increase to 520 euros; however, there is still no obligation to pay social security. It is only promised in full: It is to be prevented"... that mini-jobs are abused as a substitute for regular employment or become a part-time trap, especially for women. We will monitor the compliance of mini-jobs with current labour law more closely." The reality already looks different.

In the economic crisis and pandemic, inequalities in income between the sexes continue to increase. Care and reproductive work have been shifted to women a lot more. Less gainful employment - more childcare. The risk of old-age poverty among women also continues to increase. In this country, they already receive on average 46 percent less pension than men.

We demand now more than ever: care work belongs to social responsibility. We women want to work and live independently! The prerequisite for this is a significant society-wide reduction in working hours and the distribution of the necessary work among all those capable of working! Not only through collective agreements in some favoured sectors where mainly men work - but legally for all!

As first steps in this direction we demand:

1. The upgrading of system-relevant professions!

In nursing, health care, cleaning, retail, education and social work, mostly women are employed - often precariously. For example, according to a recent report by the Federal Statistical Office, 85% of the workers in the elderly care sector are women, 68% of them part-time. They are all still under particularly great pressure in the face of the Corona crisis. Lack of resources pushes women to their physical and psychological limits. In all these areas, the risk of infection is particularly high. We stand in solidarity with workers in the social and educational professions and support their demands in the current round of collective bargaining.

2. We demand higher wages and safe and good working conditions!

Women earn on average 18% less than men in the same jobs. The majority of them work in the service professions. Especially women with a migration background work in these precarious jobs or mini-jobs. The increase of the minimum wage to 12 euros will melt away in the face of inflation. Prices for electricity, gas and food are rising sharply and drastically. In addition, the income limit for mini-jobs will rise from 450 to 520 euros. This means a deterioration of social security.

That is why we demand: social security from the 1st euro!

We have to join forces and fight together!

## **Rathaus**

### **Employee in the Social and Educational Service**

I am Noemi, I am active in different feminist contexts in Kassel, but today I am standing here in a different role. I am standing here today as a person who works in the field of social and educational services. I work as a personal assistant for people who are in wheelchairs and need support in everyday life. That means I clean, I cook, I go shopping, I accompany people to appointments and meetings, but I am also available for advice, I am part of these people's lives, I see their personal problems and conflicts and I also support them. So, my job is very diverse and requires a lot of physical ability. But above all, it also requires a lot of social and emotional energy.

And that's how it is for all people who work in professions in the social and educational services. We care for others, and make sure that the people we work with have the opportunity to participate in social life. We keep the system running, maintain social relationships and help to keep the basis of social coexistence.

BUT despite all this important work, the great importance that care work has for our society, despite the great challenges that this work brings, care work is still devalued. The activities are considered "feminine", in a patriarchal society like ours this means that they do not deserve recognition and appreciation.

In times of neo-liberalisation of the social system, attempts are made to make care work more efficient and cheaper. The result is overworked and underpaid workers who have to do too much in too short a time and are paid poorly for it.

For example, I can tell you that I feel guilty every time I am sick and can't go to work because I know that it causes a lot of stress for my colleagues as well as for the people I work with. It is not easy to turn down a shift when I have a day off because I know that another overworked person will have to fill in. But it is clear that someone MUST work, because our work cannot just rest for a day. We can't just strike and refuse to care without ending up with people suffering who can't help the conditions we work in.

And yet it is important that we fight for better working conditions, for better pay and for more recognition! Today is the central strike day of the collective bargaining of the social and educational services who are employed in the public sector. These are, for example, educators or social workers who are employed by the city of Kassel. The trade union ver.di is fighting to improve working conditions at least for these employees, to do something about the shortage of skilled workers and to achieve

better financial recognition. Collective bargaining is ongoing. We want to call on you to support the industrial action and show solidarity with the workers!

But not only these workers are fighting for better working conditions. A large number of social and educational workers are not employed in the public sector, but by church or non-profit organisations. They are not part of the collective agreement of the public service and therefore have to fight for their rights independently.

For example, I am employed by Ambulante Dienste Nordhessen. We are part of the Orthopaedic Clinic in Hessisch Lichtenau, but we are, so to speak, a temporary employment agency of the clinic. That is why we are covered by the collective agreement for temporary workers. This leads to particularly poor working conditions and low pay for us. We are also currently in collective bargaining with our employer to improve this situation. I would like to call on you to support the labour struggle here as well and to show solidarity with the workers.

But of course, it cannot remain only collective bargaining, working to improve the status quo. We demand greater recognition and appreciation of care work in general, be it paid or unpaid. We envision a society in which care work is organised communally and grassroots democratically. We want a society in which mutual care and no longer profits are at the centre. We fight against capitalism and patriarchy!

## **ROSA Kassel**

Against Sexism, War and Capital!

Today, on this 8th of March, we are protesting for more appreciation of the labor in the social and educational sector, we show our solidarity with the striking employees and we are happy to make our demands collectively heard.

We are calling for more recognition for employees in nurseries, in all-day care, in social work and in care for the disabled! In the last two pandemic years, the workers in the social and educational sectors have put their own health at risk in order to make possible emergency care, regular testing, hygiene discipline and care for the fears and worries of children and parents. All this happened against the backdrop of staff shortages due to colleagues suffering from covid-19 and overwork. The demand and requirements for this occupational group have increased further, but recognition and appreciation, which must also be expressed in higher wages, have not. This should have changed years ago! But now more than ever!

On this 8th of March, however, we are also confronted with the violent culmination of imperialist tensions, which have been unleashed in a war in Ukraine for several days. Therefore, we also clearly say today: No to war! Russian troops out of Ukraine, solidarity with the anti-war movement in Russia! The current political developments around the world make us often feel powerless. However, a look at the history of the International Women's Day is encouraging. Since 1917, the 8th of March has not only been a feminist day of resistance, but also a day of protest against war. That is because 105 years ago, female workers at the Putilov armaments factory in Petrograd laid down their work under the slogan "For Bread and Peace". They kicked off a strike that became the beginning of the Russian Revolution, which, together with the German November Revolution of 1918, ended the First World War. Both events are an important example that we need to organize from below to end war, exploitation and sexist violence. Our motto is 'Strike - We don't pay for war and crisis!'

For the 'frontline workers' in care, retail, education and social and educational services, there has not been much more than warm words so far. This shows once again that we have to fight for every change, no matter how small, on our own behalf. Strike as a tool is only as radical as the ignorance of the ruling politics! The inaction of the old and new government can obviously not be justified by missing financial means. 100 billion Euros can be made available for armament and only one billion was invested in care and education during the whole pandemic. This indicates the political preference for a war for profits and the redistribution of the world, rather than for a life worth living for all. The money is available, so finally hire enough staff and do pay our overtime, vacation days and wages reasonably!

Many social workers are already working at their limits due to the corona crisis. In the coming weeks and months, they will also be confronted with the task of supporting the many innocent war refugees in building up a new existence in a foreign country. In 2015, there was the last round of collective bargaining in the social and educational sectors. It also coincided with a massive wave of migration. Instead of demanding, as the SPD leader at the time, Gabriel, did, that employees should reduce their wage claims in favor of the refugees, we say: No to division! Refugees from Syria, Ukraine or Afghanistan: All have a right to well-paid staff in social and educational services! We have a right to good wages and health protection through relief! We did not start the wars and economic battles; we are the ones who help people to find their way back into life after traumatic experiences.

The importance and responsibility, but also the challenges in this profession, in which 83% female employees and many queers work, are high. However, the jobs are mostly precarious due to forced part-time work, overtime and poor pay. Even though many of us know about these circumstances and know that our working conditions are threatened to become even more stressful and precarious in the near future, we retreat into those social professions for fear of queer-hostile discrimination in other professions or the sexist prejudices that try to legitimize these working conditions. Indeed, the idea still prevails that the qualifications to raise children, care for the elderly, or other care work are innate in women, mothers, and queers, justifying poor or no pay for this work. We say: That's nonsense - care work is just dumped on us. Empathy and a sense of responsibility are not dependent on gender or identity! Social work and educational occupations are professions for which we have been qualified and trained!

Therefore, ROSA stands for the united fight of all genders for a society that organizes child raising, education, care, domestic and paid work jointly and in solidarity; a society in which not profit, but the societal majority decides democratically on the use of resources. Only such a - from our point of view - socialist society can offer a future without discrimination and violence. For this aim, we have to make every day an International Women's Day: Against sexism, war and capital!

### **S.E.K. (Solidarische Erwerbsloseninitiative Kassel // Solidary Unemployed Initiative Kassel)**

Hello everyone,

My name is Jenny Schirmer and I would like to thank you on behalf of the Solidary Unemployed Initiative Kassel for the invitation. We are an initiative by those affected for those affected by unemployment. As we know the problems in the social benefits system, we have joined forces to help each other over the hurdles and to defend ourselves against injustice.

On the occasion of the International Day of Feminist Struggle, we would like to dedicate ourselves today to the topic of single parents. Most of them did not deliberately choose this form of family, but rather it is born out of the emergency situation that the other parent is not available or does not harmonise for the joint upbringing of children. Particularly in order to prevent domestic violence, it must be self-evident that the parents do not become financially dependent on their partner and can organise life with their children according to their own individual needs. On behalf of these families, I would like to give you an insight into the social benefit system from my own history.

At the beginning of 2019, after many years of illness, I fell into HARTZ-4 and had to look for a flat for my son and me directly under these conditions. The case worker informed me that we were only entitled to the adequacy limit for two people. The two of us need a 3-room flat so that we each have our own bedroom and a common room for our family life. However, at the maximum I have found almost only 2-room flats at the highest price, which makes it impossible for us to live family life. The first and actually only flat that is in line with the costs was rejected immediately because it didn't include the heating costs. I fought like a lion for this for this flat. I went to the municipal works. Their forecast was not enough. In the meantime, a revised version of the rent offer has disappeared in the office. It was only when I kindly received the heating bill of the previous tenants the offer was approved. The landlord could not hold the flat for that long and let it to someone else. Another time I was misinformed about the possibility of a double tenancy, that it was not possible. The list goes

further. Other authorities have also acted improperly. For example, single parents are usually entitled to one more room on the housing entitlement certificate, but even this my son and I did not get it directly. Only through research we were able to get the extra room.

However, in order to seriously help us with the costs of accommodation, it took months of our own research to find a backdoor solution. There is a court ruling that some children on social benefits do not belong to the community of need. So the family is entitled to a little more money for housing. To cut a long story short, families are still falling through the system and the Job Centre seems to have no interest in ensuring that children in poverty grow up in family-friendly housing. It is absolutely unreasonable that people have to find all this out on their own and enforce it against the unwillingness of the authorities. There is a simple solution to the housing costs for single parents, an additional housing requirement. But the job centre here in the city refuses to grant it. At the time, I had a potential flat approved in the district. There it was a matter of course. That one brief moment of not having to fight for an existential thing made me burst into tears.

In the city of Kassel alone, there are about 2000 single parents on social benefits. Very few of them are aware of their right to higher housing costs. Therefore, we of the Solidary Unemployed Initiative Kassel demand the recognition of this additional need as a minimum solution. We ask all to support this demand, take one of our flyers with you and talk to those around you about single parents. And, we call on all single parents, let us stand up together for your and our rights, because family life needs space.

We are a poor initiative and depend on donations to cover our expenses. Therefore we would be very happy if you put something into our collection box!

## **Königsplatz**

### **Statement on Ukraine and Russia**

Like most people, we were and are shocked by the Russian war against Ukraine. We would like to call for solidarity with Ukrainians and all people living in Ukraine. Like any war, this one exacerbates existing injustice. Speaking out clearly against wars of aggression of any kind must also mean speaking out against sexism, queerphobia, racism and all discrimination!

The war in Ukraine shows it again clearly: where there is war, already existing injustices intensify. As always, it is women, non-binary and trans\* people who are particularly threatened. Every war of aggression brings with it imprisonment, torture, death and sexualised violence, of which women and queer people are particularly at risk. The general mobilisation in Ukraine prohibits all men under 60 from leaving the country. As trans women are not recognised as women in Ukraine, they are not allowed to leave the country. But queer and trans people in particular are afraid that they will face death and persecution even if they survive Russian missile attacks and invasion. There are already reports that the Russian side is keeping a list of not only opposition members, but also queer and trans activists. Fleeing to neighbouring countries is hardly safe for queer and trans people. There, too, they are particularly threatened by violence, especially sexualised violence, in mass accommodation. Therefore, we also demand that refugees in need of protection, such as trans and queer people, are not sent back to Poland, Slovakia, Moldova, the Czech Republic, Hungary or Romania at the German borders, where they are not safe, but are allowed to enter Germany.

Furthermore, we would like to draw attention to the situation of Black people and people without Ukrainian passports. Black people and people without Ukrainian passports are prevented from leaving the country. Black women are told that "our women first" are allowed to leave, while neighbouring countries turn away Black people who have made it to the border with the words "only Ukrainians". Europe, as is clearly shown again these days, wants to be a Europe for whites. We can all witness the final consequence of racism in Europe live here: Black future, Black security, Black freedom, Black people - Black lives are worth less. This deadly racism must finally come to an end. Deutsche Bahn has offered all people with Ukrainian passports onward travel to Germany without a ticket...and what

about people without Ukrainian passports like the numerous students from African countries? We join the demands of the Initiative of Black People in Germany and demand an immediate admission of all African and Black refugees from Ukraine, a safe and fast onward journey to Germany and a granting of a simplified access for student visas for all students so that they can continue their studies!

### **Autonomes Frauenhaus (Autonomous Women's Shelter Kassel)**

War and violence against women are closely linked. For soldiers, war always means emotional brutalisation and mutilation. It means grief and loss. And it always means an increase in violence against women and children. The war in Ukraine is no exception. All over the world, women, queers and people who are exposed to (multiple) discrimination experience patriarchal violence in order to re-establish the heterosexist normalcy again and again.

As a staff member of the Autonomous Women's Shelter Kassel, I would like to use the short time I have here to draw attention to the political scandal of women's shelter funding and thus also to the reception and working conditions in the women's shelters. Since the opening of the first autonomous women's shelter in Berlin in 1976, this struggle has continued unabated. Since then, countless debates in the Bundestag, in the state parliaments, at the Association of Cities and Towns, and in the parties with repeated changes of government have not led to autonomous and association women's shelters being able to fall back on uniform and sufficient funding with a binding legal basis throughout Germany.

The demands in all areas of the care work sector, which is dominated by women, have increased with the privatisation of public services, everywhere wages are stagnating at a low level and everywhere work processes are being condensed. As in care for the elderly and the sick, as in kindergartens and after-school care centres, this is also happening in women's shelters.

Today, women's shelters in most of the federal states are supported by state grants as well as by grants from the municipalities, in varying amounts. The number of subsidies has always been uncertain and unstable and always dependent on the political majority. Other sources of funding such as donations are indispensable, especially for autonomous women's shelters, because as independent associations they cannot fall back on their own funds from institutions such as churches and associations. In addition, women affected by violence are expected to pay for their stay at the shelter. All autonomous women's shelters firmly reject this, but are forced to do so because of the financing conditions.

By ratifying the Istanbul Convention - the "Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence" - Germany has committed itself to providing a sufficient number of easily accessible shelters for women and children affected by violence and all those affected by domestic violence.

Using the example of Hesse, I would like to show you the drastic supply and funding gaps that women's shelters throughout Germany have had to work with for years.

Many women's shelter workers in Hesse's 17 autonomous shelters and 14 women's shelters run by associations and churches are working at full capacity. Without unpaid, so-called voluntary work, the operation of many women's shelters cannot be maintained. According to a survey, about 70 % of the women's shelters do not even have half of the required staffing that has been set according to the standards of the Paritätische Wohlfahrtsverband.

That is one point. The other point is the serious lack of places.

The women's shelters in Hessen currently have only 314 rooms for women and children. According to the Istanbul Convention, however, twice as many so-called rooms are required. In figures: In Hesse alone there is a shortage of 300 family rooms with almost 800 beds. In total, Germany lacks 15,000 places. With serious consequences: Everywhere in Germany it is difficult to find a free place in a

women's shelter. Many women seeking help have to be turned away and are then left to fend for themselves again.

For years, women's shelters in Hesse and throughout Germany have unsuccessfully demanded sufficient places in shelters as well as nationwide coverage combined with low barrier financing of material and personnel costs. The way women's shelters are financed has a massive influence on whether women can find quick and unbureaucratic access to protection and support.

Low-barrier funding means: unrestricted access to women's shelters and other protection facilities for persons acutely threatened by domestic violence; regardless of origin, residence status, disability and financial security. I am coming to the end: In order to ensure that all women affected by violence and their children can receive protection and qualified help in a women's shelter of their choice, women's shelters finally need funding that is independent of the individual case, in line with needs and covers costs on the basis of a nationwide binding legal basis. In order to ensure that all those affected by patriarchal violence are offered a place of protection, the infrastructure must be massively expanded. Old demands that have lost none of their relevance.

## **Wesertorplatz**

### **Feminism Unlimited Kassel & MeeTIN\*up**

The struggle for bodily autonomy and self-determination is a fundamental issue in feminism. Because it affects all of us, whether as women, lesbians, inter, non-binary or trans people. In patriarchal societies, we are all denied the right to determine our own body.

The struggle for bodily autonomy and self-determination starts with the fact that our opinions and choices aren't heard. They are not taken seriously when it comes to our own bodies. Although trans\*, inter\* and genderqueer people are those who know best about their own gender, they are being told what to do by others, such as their parents and doctors. Lesbian sexuality is not seen as a serious sexuality in many parts of society. And when pregnant persons want to terminate their pregnancy, they have to explain themselves, defend their decision and are called murderers. Sadly, these are not individual cases, most of us know these and similar experiences. And every day, it happens again and again.

All of this affects our relationship with our body. We are not taught to listen to our own feelings, but rather to the opinions from the outside. For many of us, it's natural to ask "am I doing this right?" instead of "does this feel right for me?". Our relationship with our own body is still combating sexist and racist stereotypes, we are still fighting for a relationship with our own body that is not shaped by a sexist and racist lense.

But this fight is more than about our relationship with ourselves. It is about our relationship to others and to the state, because in our current society control is exerted on our bodies. Violence is being done to our bodies: Forced surgeries on inter\* children. The criminalization of sex workers. Deportations. Forced contraception for disabled people. The endless availability of unpaid care work. Sexualized violence. Daily assaults on women and queers of color. Femicides, murders of women that are still played down as "marital drama, family tragedy" or "relationship crime". We women and queers are systematically deprived of our bodily autonomy and self-determination in private as well as in public spaces—by societies structures but also by the constitution.

The new federal government of SPD, the Greens and FDP has announced in its coalition agreement to liberalize two of these laws: In future, the ban on advertising abortions is to be lifted. In addition, the so-called "transsexual law" is to be adjusted into a "self-determination law". It should then be possible



for trans\* persons to officially change their names and gender registration without an “expert” opinion. These announcements show that our political work is bearing fruit. If the announcements are really followed up, this will lead to very concrete improvements for many of us. But this does not change the fact that we are fundamentally denied the right to decide for ourselves about our body. Abortions remain illegal and can only be done under certain conditions to avoid facing punishment which means that pregnant persons and doctors continue to be criminalized. Additionally, trans\* persons must continue to have their gender recognized by court opinions in order to receive hormone therapies, voice training and surgeries.

Which is why we say: The progress on the legal level are only liberalizations on the legal level. While they give us more freedom of choice, the power over our bodies ultimately remains with the state. We want more!

We want real self-determination for trans\* people free of charge and without patronizing expert opinions! We want the decriminalization and safe access to abortion! We want the abolition of the binary gender system! Not only because it compulsively divides our bodies into men and women and was shaped by colonial domination but also because we want an end to the alienation of bodies and sexuality for the purpose of production and reproduction!

We are not fighting for more rights in an exploitative and sexist system. Overcoming capitalism, white supremacy and patriarchy is the basis for real bodily autonomy and self-determination.

For this, we need to unite and organize as women and queers. We need to build and expand our own structures. We need to believe each other and take our experiences and feelings seriously. We need to find new words that can describe what we feel.

Let us fight together for our bodily autonomy and self-determination!

[End of speech here and transition to announcement in a more informal style.]

In addition, one more announcement: On Saturday, March 12, the meeting of the Christian Right to Life groups will take place again in Kassel. These groups belong to the hard core of the religious fundamentalist, racist and anti-feminist movement against the bodily self-determination of women and queers. Join us against them this Saturday!

My body - my choice

## **Women Defend Rojava Kassel**

Dear friends,

on every 8th of March, it becomes clear that the struggle for liberation is international. On this day, women, lesbians, inter, non-binary and trans persons - summarized as "FLINT" - unite worldwide. On this day, we show impressively that resistance against capitalist patriarchy knows no borders.

Due to today's International Day of Feminist Struggle we would like to remember the FLINT people who were or still are captives of the Islamic State in Şingal. They were kidnapped, raped, sold in slave markets and murdered. But we also want to commemorate the FLINT people who have fought in Rojava and Başûr against the terror groups of the Islamic State and who now fight against the attacks of the Turkish army.

As Kurdish women living in the diaspora, we are not only confronted with patriarchal and capitalist structures. Rather, our identities become criminalized and appropriated, or it is demanded that we

adapt our multi-layered identities. We follow the motto of the Kurdish women's movement: "The free woman is the basis for a free society!" Society cannot be free if there is patriarchal violence and exploitation. This means for us that we must fight patriarchy on all levels on which it operates! The violent binary gender system that surrounds us and that we are taught oppresses and murders so many of us. The revolution in Rojava serves as an example that there is a need for a resolute feminist struggle by everyone against patriarchal oppression.

The goal of the Kurdish women's movement is a grassroots-based democratic, ecological, economically just and non-gendered society, but not only in Kurdistan! As Kurdish FLINT-persons and internationalists in Europe we understand the struggle of the Kurdish women's movement (and the revolution of the FLINT-persons) in Kurdistan not only as an example; but we also try to support it every day and see ourselves as a part of this struggle.

Even though important achievements have been made in the 111 years since the first announcement of the International Day of Feminist Struggle, the fight for the liberation of FLINT persons is still vital and pressing. Currently, we are facing a new wave of systematic femicides. For example, in Kurdistan where the AKP government and its military are practicing fascist, anti-minority and especially anti-women and anti-queer politics. Mass arrests, executions and a brutal war is conducted against the civil society, and FLINT people who resist this are targeted in particular.

Often, European feminists have been blinded by their liberal-capitalist perspective to see the historical, social, and political conditions under which non-European FLINT persons live and fight. This leads to pitying non-Christian and non-European FLINT persons as "oppressed" who need to be saved. Self-conscious and politically organized non-European FLINT persons seem "suspect" to them. But if we don't think of feminism as international and anti-capitalist, we are vulnerable. Feminist movements in Europe are highly fragmented and competitive with one another. In capitalism, exaggerated competitiveness becomes the norm, and we as FLINT people are not immune from this either. But there must be a way out of this: competitiveness causes isolation among us and must therefore be refused and actively dismantled through solidary practice.

We want to advance this awareness and solidarity among FLINT persons to stand together against the attacks on our lives and on our right to self-determination. We want to stand together with FLINT persons in all parts of the world for justice, peace and freedom. But as we stand here together, let us also remember all those who cannot be here with us today: The prisoners in the prisons and those who have fallen in the fight for a liberated society! We are also loud for them today!

Without a radical, systemic critique, patriarchy cannot be overcome. As FLINT people who liberate ourselves, let's strengthen our solidarity and take responsibility for building a free society!

Down with femicide! Long live the International Day of Feminist Struggle and internationalist resistance!

Jin – Jîyan – Azadî!