

## Feministischer Streik (feminist strike)

Hey everyone, it's nice to see you all here. I'm here for the Feminist Strike Jena, a group that focuses on labour struggles in social and educational services and fights for better working conditions in care work. Today is not only international women's day, it's also a feminist day of struggle! But what does 'feminist struggle' mean? It also means feminist striking!

The creation of an international women's day goes back to 1910, to the initiative of the second international socialist women's conference. Later on the 8<sup>th</sup> March was selected as a date because on the 8<sup>th</sup> March 1917 in St. Petersburg female garment workers, soldier's wives and female farmers went to the streets together and started the February Revolution. But in 2018 the day took on new meaning, as in Argentina alone 800.000 FLINTA, this means women, lesbians, inter, nonbinary, trans and agender persons, took to the streets together. In this mass movement, starting in Latin America, FLINTA assemble on the streets to strike together against patriarchal violence, restrictions to abortion rights, poverty, and bad working conditions. And for this reason we are also all coming together here and now!

To fight for a better society we are connected with many other feminist strike groups in Germany. Today, in Kassel, Freiburg, Berlin and many other cities the Feminist Strike is taking to the streets with the slogan: "We will not be budgeted to breaking point – feminist struggle now!". We and our allies are questioning the neoliberal austerity policies which have dismantled the welfare state for decades. When the welfare state is being dismantled, that also means that more and more care work, like cooking, cleaning, childcare and much more is being performed by FLINTAs at home, or by underpaid migrant workers. Neoliberal capitalism, this is the way our society and economy are working at the moment, shifts responsibility for financial security, life chances and caring for relatives onto individuals. Housing construction, healthcare, energy and water supply have been placed in private hands. But companies prioritise profits over human beings. The institutions that remain in public hands often function in the same way, they too are struggling with the logic of austerity.

In Jena there is a very current example: In December the FDP mayor Nitzsche decided to close a kindergarten in a rushed process - although the current forecast of the decrease of the number of child in Jena would be an opportunity to finally invest in early childhood education and to be able to provide a good education with enough staff! The explanation was: economically it is not feasible, there has to be budget cuts. Why is this city being run like a company? Humans are not for profit! In May there will be local elections. So let's reject the current city government's austerity policy!

The conditions we describe here provide fertile ground for hateful ideologies, for example when welfare recipients or people affected by racism are used as scapegoats for insecure living conditions. Going on strike means disrupting and irritating these conditions and creating moments in which we can express our dreams of a different society.

We dream of a society in which people's needs take centre stage. That is why we stand in solidarity with labour struggles. We are fighting to bring privatised services back into the public ownership of local municipalities. But we don't want to blindly rely on the state for

this - we are fighting for more! We are fighting for paid and unpaid care work to be socialized, this is recognized, and shared fairly and democratically!

But as you all know: This year the regional elections for Thuringia are taking place, and the situation is bleak. A right-conservative government is a real option. This is the time for us to become active as antifascists together! In the long term we need the life and working conditions that prioritize people's needs, people who live here regardless of where they come from or how long they've been here. With this in mind we wish you all a lot of resilience and strength, today and in the days ahead. We want to fight together as feminists and antifascists – 8<sup>th</sup> March is every day, that is a call for struggle!

### Gemeinsam Kämpfen (fighting together)

**We as the feminist organisation "Gemeinsam Kämpfen" are demonstrating here today and in many other places in Germany. Together with our friends and comrades in Rojava, in Abya Yala, in Palestine, in India, in Israel, Nepal, Kenya and many, many other places, we are confronting the patriarchy and together we are transforming our anger into resistance.**

Patriarchy murders in many places around the world and shows its different faces. The patriarchy murders in wars, such as the one in Kurdistan - through racist murders, such as the one in Hanau - through targeted assassinations of politically active people in Rojava - North and East Syria and worldwide. And it murders through numerous feminicides in Germany and all over the world.

In Vienna, 5 women were murdered in one day on 26 February. A mother and a daughter were murdered by their husband and father. Three migrant sex workers by a client and perpetrator.

An attack on one is an attack on all!

Where is our anger when we hear about all these attacks? Do we still feel it or have we already felt it? Is there something stirring inside us, or are we already so hardened that we no longer have access to it? Do we feel the attacks on us, our friends, mothers, siblings? Too often we are still angry with ourselves, directing our anger against ourselves.

No! Let us feel it and direct it against the patriarchal structures that separate us from each other, keep us small, block our access to our own will, rob us of the strength to say "no" or "yes" loudly and clearly!

Let them not make us feel alone, but connected! Let us transform them into collective pain and organised resistance!

Racism, fascism and all other forms of oppression can only be fought together with patriarchy - because fighting patriarchy means fighting domination, war and violence and building a good life. The achievements of the women's revolution in North and East Syria are a role model for us.

Women there have joined forces; in all areas of their lives, out of necessity. They have created women's councils, their own education, their own forms of economy in which businesses are run by women, a women's village (in which only mothers and children live), military self-defence and their own philosophy and science of struggle, the core of which is the liberation of women. The Turkish state and the patriarchal structures anchored in society are constantly attacking this life of freedom that has been fought for. But the resistance continues!

In the same way, the stories of all the resistant, non-binary, lesbian and queer movements here are a role model for us. In East Germany, we are building on a history of organised women who resisted the male dominance of the SED system!

Who organised themselves! Who organised themselves and created magazines - like the lesbian magazine "frau anders", which was written and published in Jena to give visibility, expression and strength to being a lesbian.

Mothers who in the 80s/90s took a stand against high armament and a possible nuclear war, came together as a large peace movement and founded the organisation "Women for Peace".

Women who autonomously distributed flyers under the name "lila offensive" on Alexanderplatz on 4 November 1989, with the following lines: "Women, do you know why we have come together here today? It's about the upheaval of society as a whole. Women on the offensive!"

Let's connect with the resistant history of all the women, lesbians, non-binary, trans and a-gender people of this city, this country, this world and let's learn from them!

### **Fighting patriarchy also means fighting its manifestation in us!**

The term "patriarchy" can be used to describe many things that we experience every day. Competition, selfishness, envy, hopelessness, mistrust, withdrawal, fear, insecurity, isolation and much more. These are the weapons of patriarchy in our everyday lives. We must also fight against them in order to find our own will among all this, to organise ourselves within it and build a free and good life, to free ourselves from the male gaze on ourselves, our friends and the world!

Let's disarm the patriarchy!

We recognise that our lives are political and the very core of our actions! We are convinced that there is a revolutionary force in every single person, a force that strives for community, peace and hope and wants to change the world into a good one. We are therefore also convinced that revolutionary power always exists in our society, that places and moments of collectivity have always been lived and will continue to be lived.

### **So what does it mean to fight against patriarchy and in favour of peace and a free society?**

The way in which our coexistence is currently organised and is being organised wants to make us forget our collective values. We can call it the "system", patriarchy, capitalism, but it is clear that all these structures make us forget what is really important to us in everyday life. They make us forget how we really want to live. They make us forget how our lives are connected to the lives of people in other places. They make us forget to recognise the weapons of patriarchy. They make us forget what we are actually angry about - that we are angry at all!

Let's not forget that we need community!

Let us not forget that we are not independent of our comrades who are also fighting for our freedom in other parts of the world!

Let's live together and not against each other!

Fighting means transforming anger into courage.

Let's disarm the patriarchy! Let's disarm it within ourselves and disarm it by feeling, showing and living our anger; by collectivising it and transforming it into organised resistance. Let's disarm it by recognising ourselves as fighting women, lesbians, non-binary and trans people and thereby change our society. By organising ourselves and becoming a force that can build a society of liberation for all.

Let's discuss how we actually want to live.

So much is already being created here in Jena, such as a solidarity health centre, trade union organisation, lived solidarity in everyday life, self-help and self-defence groups, meeting cafés, self-organised children's and youth groups, solidarity farms, neighbourhood initiatives and advisory structures.

Let's combine all of this!

Let's turn it into a common vision for Jena, Thuringia and the whole world!

Do we need feminist councils, for example, to develop this? To organise ourselves and find solutions to our problems?

How do we manage to overcome patriarchy as the source of oppression in all our struggles?

To do this, we need to come together as feminists and feminist structures and talk about our perspectives and visions!

On this path, we move forward courageously, with all our comrades worldwide at our side, with all those who have fought before us behind us and looking ahead to a life worth living!

We have the power to change the world! We will not let anger and courage be taken away from us!

Together we defend life!

Jin Jiyān Azadî!

## URL

Dear friends, dear comrades,

I'm here for the undogmatisch radikalen linken (URL) (undogmatic radical left), it feels good to be here with you today on the street. It feels good that we are standing here together today. It is important that we are coming together and support each other in our feminist struggle. Our feminist struggle is a struggle against the right. We see and hear it all. The right-wing propaganda, the normalisation of misogyny and queerphobia. The fascists draw their strength from crude notions of masculinity. They draw their strength from antifeminism. They support each other in their hate against femininities and fight a bitter battle against the diversity of gender norms. We answer this struggle from the right with determination and solidarity!

Our struggle for feminism is an antifascist struggle.

We are not leaving each other alone in our rage and desperation, but we join forces. We reflect together and channel our rage in solidarity. Isolation and bitterness: we leave that to the fascists. By collectivizing our rage, we don't despair, even if the AfD seems to win and the CDU in Thuringia is a seat warmer for the fascists. We stand against it and we have something we can hold against it! Because we take care of each other, we build caring relationships with each other and we are organising together.

The fascists and reactionaries fight for a regressive image of masculinity. To them, being a man means: repressing their own feelings, pretending to be strong, proving themselves to each other, and being in permanent competition with each other. To them, being a man means being an asshole.

And when fascists fight a battle for masculinity, we respond by denouncing masculinity! Insulting male honor was and is our motto against the fascists of the AfD and against the

reactionary fraternities in Jena. Gatherings of right-wing, reactionary men's fraternities have a long tradition in Jena. In 1815 in Jena under the motto "Honor, Freedom, Fatherland" the 'Urburschenschaft' was founded in Jena. Since then, right-wing men have been gathering in the Jena student community to prove their masculinity in drinking bouts. Insulting male honor means standing against reactionary masculinity with determination. And not only in the fraternities in Jena do reactionary antifeminists find a safe haven. Fundamentalist Christians have found their calling in taking action against the rights to self-determination of FLINTA (women, lesbians, inter, non-binary, trans, agender) persons. They do that for example in Paradiespark, where their propaganda against queer people and against the right to an abortion is delivered in a family friendly package.

But before we become too comfortable: we all know that patriarchal structures don't only exist in fraternities. They exist in all of society, and they also exist in the societal left. And everywhere, where they exist, we must fight them in our feminist struggle and overcome them.

Our struggle for antifascism is a feminist struggle

This is why it's of the greatest importance here and now to show solidarity with the people who are being persecuted and incarcerated for their antifascism. People from Jena have been affected by this persecution. Since November, Maja has been in pre-trial custody in Dresden and is awaiting the verdict on being extradited to Hungary. But not only Maja suffers from state repression. No, we are all affected by it. The conduction of house searches in the Budapest process, the house searches after Gera, the countless penal charges. Against this wave of state repression, that is affecting FLINTAs differently, we are standing in solidarity here and now.

Dear comrades, dear friends,

We are here together today, to support each other in our struggle. Our struggle is the struggle for the self-determination of all people. It is the struggle for solidarity. And we can see, there's a lot to do.

So, let's get to it: Alerta!

### MSFC (Medical students for Choice)

Abortions - hardly any other topic is discussed so emotionally in public. Hardly any other topic polarizes so strongly. And yet much remains unsaid, there is always talk about people who want to have an abortion and a large cloud of taboos, myths and silence hangs over the reality that obscures the view of abortions. There were over 100,000 abortions in Germany in 2022. Of these, around 3000 pregnant persons came from Thuringia. There are 2 abortions for every 10 births in Thuringia. Not a marginal topic at all! We probably all know people who have already had an abortion.

But how differently is a person who does not want to carry a pregnancy to term treated by the system? And how marginalized are abortions treated in medical training compared to

births? Although it is one of the most common gynaecological procedures, there are only 7 practices in the whole of Thuringia on the list of the Federal Medical Association, plus 8 clinics that perform abortions. And there are fewer and fewer across Germany. Many doctors who are currently contributing to care will retire in the next few years. This means that new doctors will have to step up to guarantee security of supply.

We are boiling with rage. Since abortions are an essential health service and therefore should be treated as such - in public discourse and by the state!

We are boiling with rage. Because the regulation in the penal code is outdated, discriminatory and patronizing!

We are boiling with rage. Because doctors who perform abortions are criminalized and receive hardly any support!

Out of this anger, we at medical students for choice have been campaigning for better teaching on abortion and reproductive justice at the UKJ (university clinic) for around 1.5 years. It is important for us to emphasize that the fight for reproductive justice goes far beyond the simple "ProChoice". We fight against the shackles of racist violence, material poverty and sexism that influence the right to motherhood and self-determined decisions against having a child. It is often forgotten and concealed that reproductive injustices are deeply rooted in the history of enslavement and colonization. Black people's bodies and their reproduction were massively determined by others, depending on how this served the profit interests and the retention of power of white supremacy.

After all, who is encouraged by the state and society to have children and who is not had and still has a lot to do with the political and economic interests of those in power - the political implementation is called "population policy". The history of the so-called eugenics movement of the 20th century seems largely suppressed, but its thought patterns and practices live on. Sterilizations, forced abortions and child abduction of Black women in the USA were a bitter reality until the 1990s. And in Germany too: even until 2011, forced sterilizations of trans\* people were carried out if they wanted to have their gender registration changed.

The global distribution of power and resources also has an impact on who can and should reproduce and how. Although the African continent is much less populated than the European continent, African countries in particular are the target of European contraceptive campaigns.

Reproductive justice means thinking about the personal level of the question "Do I want children?" together with the structural level of reproduction: "Which parenthood is promoted? Who can afford to have children? Who is actually free to decide what happens to their own body?"

It's not just a question of "What does the law say?" but also what resources and access are needed to actually be able to decide freely about my own life, i.e. whether there are practices in my area that perform abortions, whether there are language barriers that prevent me from knowing about the various options, whether I have enough financial means to pay for the abortion or whether I have the time and capacity to apply to the authorities to

have the costs covered and, finally, whether my environment will support the decision to have an abortion. Far too often, these questions restrict the self-determined decision of pregnant people.

That's why we say, seething with anger: Stop it!

In addition to the laws, the care situation must also improve, especially in rural regions. The stigmatization of abortions must end - no more sidewalk harassment and criminalization in the law!

All pregnant people must be able to afford an abortion! Put an end to the incapacitating compulsion to undergo counselling before an abortion! Let's have low-threshold, widely available information about abortion methods!

And especially as medical students, we are boiling with rage as we demand:

Adequate and value-free teaching to enable future doctors to offer abortions with sufficient knowledge! Doctors must be supported in implementing abortions into their treatment spectrum!

Boiling with rage we demand the abolition of §218 and the legalization of abortions!

### TRASOVE (trans solidarity network)

#### Anger

At the beginning of my transition, nothing was as bad as the looks on people's faces, not the violence, not the slogans, but the looks. The constant focus of attention, never being invisible and the way you are looked at, the intrusiveness in the looks, the mixture of amusement and disgust. These looks have taught me to be ashamed. I am constantly busy perceiving myself in the eyes of others, subjecting my appearance, how I am perceived, to constant judgment. The looks of others have become my own, my judgment of myself. I look at myself with disgust, I see myself as a ridicule. There are days when I hate who I am so much that I want to disappear, to no longer be there. I can't go out; I can't bear the stares. I also direct these looks at others, other women, other trans people. I judge them. I measure them against the standards by which I measure myself - cruel standards. There is then a moment when the shame, which burns so much that it is unbearable, turns into rage. An undirected, aimless rage. The desperate defence of the self against a merciless judge. Being looked at, being exposed to looks, is probably one of the most well-known female experiences. The looks we experience are very different, depending on how beautiful, how German, how rich, how gender-normative, how hetero - how conforming to the norm - we are perceived to be. Yet these patterns of perception are not as individual as we like to claim - they are in all of us, and they are very similar. The views have changed the closer I have come to the cis norm - but they have never stopped. The shame never stopped either. Something that many of my friends - queer and straight, cis and trans - know. When I think about anger and feminism, it's mainly this no-longer-bearing of shame. My anger is above all an anger out of shame. Anger keeps you alive, against the judgments of others, of yourself, of society. The shaming of angry women is the expression of society's hatred of femininity. It would be easy to say that this anger is also the power of change, that 'we women and queers' can unite in this. But I don't

believe that. Anger is not enough. This anger is undirected - who or what should it be directed at? Who is to blame for the shaming? And more importantly, should our political connection really be built on the similarity of experience? Or isn't exclusion, homogenization or even fragmentation already inherent in it? Shouldn't a movement like feminism be defined above all by a common understanding and common goals? The abolition of this gaze regime, the abolition of this shame, for example. That doesn't require anger. But it does require an understanding of this anger as an expression of real suffering, as a demand that things should not be the way they are. For a world without shame!

### FAIRY (feminist antifascist intersectional radical youth)

Hello everyone! Our rage is our strength, with this motto we are standing on the street today.

We are angry, angry about the circumstances in which we grew up as young FLINTAs, about what we and other FLINTAs had to experience and must experience every day. I am part of the youth group Fairy, we are feminist and anti-fascist organized here in Jena. Our group consists of many very young people, most of whom come from Jena and the surrounding area. I grew up here and March 8th means a lot to me. It was an important moment in my life growing up and still is. I want to tell you a bit about my personal story and that of young FLINTA people. The events I want to share with you now may seem small and less important at first glance, but they are precisely the situations that shape and shape young FLINTAs, showing them what life in the patriarchy should look like. When I was in third grade, I realized for the first time how firmly gender norms were anchored in my mind even as a child. It was a hot day in summer and a friend of mine took off his T-shirt and ran around shirtless. Quite normal. My one friend then also took off her T-shirt because she was so warm. I thought it was amazing that she dared to do that. I had this thought when I was 8 years old, at an age when my upper body and hers looked exactly like our school friend's upper body. In the summer, a few years later, when I was 12 or 13, my father wanted to tell me to wear long leggings under dresses/skirts/shorts in midsummer, because he thought I would have been too revealing without them. Reactions like this are often seen as caring and parental love at first glance, but unfortunately, this kind of behaviour by parents does not protect young FLINTAs, but rather makes them responsible for sexual assault later in life. Instead of blaming young FLINTAs for the misbehaviour they are confronted with, they should be encouraged, encouraged that their feelings and sensations are important and right, that if they find something unpleasant and assaultive, their feelings are valid. That they don't have to push their boundaries just to avoid hurting guys. For example, when I was thirteen years old, a guy followed me from the bus stop all the way home, and at some point, I plucked up the courage to confront him and ask him what he wanted from me. When he told me he'd like my phone number, I didn't have the heart to refuse and gave it to him. And despite these experiences that FLINTAs have in the patriarchy from an early age, I know what it's like to be ridiculed when you talk about the inequality between FLINTAs and cis men and your own experiences. Which, in my eyes, only emphasizes the existence of this inequality. It's a shame that in our society it's only possible for FLINTAs to talk about issues that move us without social pressure in segregated spaces. But even if this is a pity, these spaces offer an



enormously important space to strengthen each other's backs and to feel that we are there for each other. For example, I took part in an educational weekend with my mother. On this weekend, I received an education about the menstrual cycle with other FLINTAs my age. It was neither embarrassing nor uncomfortable, but much more empowering to learn together and get to know yourself. Also, it's FLINTA sports groups that regularly offer us a safe space to train free from prejudice, where you're not sexualized or underestimated just because of your gender.

These experiences have connected me strongly with other FLINTAs and I have realized how much strength can come from such joint actions. This gives me the strength to keep fighting, because it's not just my body that has grown in recent years, nor just my mind and my knowledge. An incredible anger has also grown inside me. It has grown for so long until I have become this anger. Anger that I also feel when I think about the perpetrators of sexualized violence being protected. There is a trainee teacher at our school who everyone knows was abusive towards several female pupils. Nothing is done about it. Partly out of fear of his A-level grades. He seems unassailable. This shows the extent to which power imbalances are exploited, even against minors. And all this even though the state of Thuringia is supposed to develop protection concepts to prevent sexualized assaults by teachers against female students. Not only are the tasks involved in developing these concepts largely offloaded onto FLINTA students, they also simply don't work, so they only address part of the problem. Because in the reality of our lives, most of the violence takes place among pupils. And there are huge gaps in the way we deal with sexualized violence. Although a large part of the student body probably describes itself as feminist, perpetrator protection is actively pursued, for example, and those affected are questioned. While those affected are confronted with perpetrators every day, for example sitting with them in the classroom and being exposed to rumours about the crime itself, perpetrators experience virtually no consequences. Their social life remains virtually unaffected. In my circle of friends, one guy took advantage of drunk FLINTAs several times and harassed them. This was known, but he remained part of the circle of friends. The people involved were also questioned and slutshamed. Another friend knowingly chilled with a rapist. Protection of perpetrators is part of everyday life and is not prevented by school, close friends, or relationship partners. This practice shows young cis guys that there are no consequences for them if they act out and thus reproduce patriarchal violence. Many of those affected do not have the opportunity to take legal action to defend themselves, so support from their environment should be more important. They must learn that neither school nor their own group of friends is a safe space. It is therefore more important that we strengthen each other and show perpetrators of violence a clear edge. Patriarchal violence should not remain without consequences. But in this society, in patriarchy, there is no room for Flintas' rage. Sometimes I have the feeling that there is no place for FLINTAs in this society at all. All things that are characteristic of young FLINTAs are put down and invalidated. We FLINTAs also want to be able to develop! We want space for our anger, our problems, and concerns in society and in public discussions. We want space for ourselves! And we take it, here and now and every day. I was recently thinking about where in history we lost our voice, but I realized that it is much more important that we find it again right now. Each and every one of us needs to find our voices again so that we can all fight loudly and powerfully together against

patriarchy. We must help each other to find our voices again, because we can only defeat patriarchy together. In centuries and millennia of tradition, FLINTAs have been underestimated, but we will always do the opposite, we will always show how strong we are, exactly when they least expect it. We will not allow ourselves to be forced into the role of victim! No, we don't need a prince to save us from the dangers of this world, we can damn well save ourselves. We will be the heroes of our own stories!