

Manifesto

**FEMINIST STRIKE
/ WOMEN'S STRIKE**

14.06.2019

**Manifesto of the
women*'s strike
collective Zurich**

About this Manifesto

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The manifesto of the women*'s strike collective has been written by different working groups. In it, diverse positions and perspectives stand side by side. Neither linguistic, nor contentwise it has been homogenized or standardized. The entire text collection mirrors the spirit of the collective, where solidarity is central as opposed to a lowest common denominator. To take space means to become visible. We take as many spaces as we are women* and furnish it with our concerns and demands. The manifesto contains no claim to completeness. Zurich, April 2019

Is it normal for a boss to comment on the figure and clothes of his employees?

Is it normal to see half-naked women*'s bodies in public places all the time?

Is it normal for Black women* and their families to be exposed to racial profiling on a daily basis?

Is it normal that every other week in Switzerland a woman* is killed within her own four walls?

Is it normal for a woman* to endure domestic violence in order to secure her right of residence?

Is it normal that less than 20% of victims of sexual violence in Switzerland file a complaint?

Is it normal for women* to receive less pay for the same job than their male counterparts?

Is it normal that work is split into paid and unpaid (home- and caring-) work, the latter being done primarily by women*?

Is it normal for women* with disabilities to hardly find any accessible doctor's offices?

Is it normal that Black Women* are not being thought of as a part of the Citoyennes?

Is it normal that migrant's diplomas are not recognized and appreciated?

**WE DON'T THINK
SO! THAT'S WHY
WE'RE STRIKING
ON JUNE 14TH.**

BREAKING THE SHACKLES TOGETHER

From an early age, we learn to assume gender-specific roles through education and socialization. Violence and discrimination are part of everyday life for women*. Both violence and discrimination appear to be normal. Women* are supposed to put aside their needs and take over most of the education and care work - be it in the flatshare, in the family, in an association, at work or in the political collective. If a woman* dares to behave contrary to this norm, to even rebel, she is immediately rebuked and devalued: She is referred to as „uncaring mother“, „slut“, „know-it-all“, „unfeminine“ or „bitchy“ and insulted with racist and sexist remarks. In other cases, she loses her job, her family, she is abused or even killed. For it is vital to the functioning of a patriarchal and capitalist society that women* provide care-work for free or at miserable wages. Next to racist and colonial exploitation, it is this gender-specific division of labour that keeps the dominating economic system alive.

FIGHT FOR FREEDOM

In short, the conditions in which we live in are an impertinence. For years, we have been pointing out these countless grievances and fighting against them. We are women* with and without residence permit, with and without responsibility for children, we are Black and white women* and women* of colour, in queer and heterosexual relationships, younger and older, with and without disabilities. As such, we talk to journalists, make political initiatives, interpellations, collect signatures for ballots, hope, wait ..., go out on the street, convince acquaintances, talk with friends and family. But what has changed? Sure, there has been progress, small and big. That is, for example, the right to equal education for girls and boys, women's suffrage or unpunished abortion. Also, public racial discrimination can be prosecuted (albeit it rarely is), rape in marriage (since 1992) is punishable and, since 2004, will be pursued ex-officio without a report. One thing in common with these achievements is that they are all the result of a women*'s movement that has been going on for over a hundred and fifty years. And all of these achievements were hard-earned with passion and tireless dedication.

But still - and more and more often - we are confronted with anti-feminists, sexists and racists, on the street, at work, on the Internet or in the government palaces of the world. They want to destroy the liberties we have won and degrade us to cheap labour, sex objects and obedient housewives. Because they think they can oppress the feminist movement, which is growing all over the world, by living their sexism even more shamelessly. But these gentlemen are wrong.

WE MOVE, WE STRIKE!

We do not tolerate the reactionary backlash and the inhuman „normality“. We recognize the different and multiple oppressions that this system produces. That's why our feminism is diverse and that diversity is our strength. The time is ripe for a profound change.

In order to accelerate this change, we refuse to work for one day, we refuse our „normal“ functioning. We are on strike! As we did in 1991. And as our sisters do worldwide. We stand in solidarity with the feminist struggles, and on June 14 2019, we will also join this international movement!



OUR WORK IS WORTH A DAMNED LOT – EVERYTHING STANDS STILL WITHOUT US

Whether we work at the construction site, in the nursery, in the office, in the (external) private household, in the sex salon, at school, in the airplane or even in the own household - our work is worth more than what we get for it. We do not tolerate sexist or racist pay gaps. Our work deserves the same respect and recognition as any other work.

This applies in particular to home and caring work: just 10% of care work done in Switzerland is remunerated while the remaining 90% of this work is not paid - and over two thirds of this unpaid work is carried out by women*. In short, home and care work sustains the capitalist economic system. Care work subsidizes the entire economy - not the other way around. And we do not receive any pension for all the unpaid work with which we subsidize the economy. Therefore, women*'s pensions are correspondingly low in old age and many women* are affected by old-age poverty. Instead of correcting this inequality in old-age provision, AHV reforms are aimed

at further disadvantaging women*, for instance the raise of the retirement age for women.

For this reason, we demand the socialization of care work, which also includes housework. We want a reasonable wage! We want secure employment contracts, whether in the private household or on the construction site. We want subsidized day care and retirement homes. Genuine equality can only be achieved by overcoming the hierarchization of people. Members of the majority society have to question their privileges. Men have to be equally involved in care and reproductive activities. We won't further tolerate that mothers - especially single parents - end up in a poverty trap. We demand a parental leave, a paternity leave that meets the real needs of childcare and the mother's employment. We demand an immediate and comprehensive decriminalization of sex work in order to guarantee the rights of sex workers. We do not want case rates in hospitals, but well-paid staff who can take time for their work. Because care is precious! And any other work done by a woman* as well. Our work is worth a damn lot. Without us everything stands still.



WE FIGHT AGAINST INSTITUTIONAL AND EVERYDAY RACISM AND SEXISM

Sexual violence can be a reason to leave your country of origin. While fleeing, most women* experience more violence. And also in the country of arrival, refugee women* experience violence, for example when having to recount their experiences in interviews with migration authorities. These interviews feel like a police interrogation in a criminal case.

We demand that issues specific to women* are fully recognized as reasons for taking refuge in Switzerland, not only on paper but also in practice.

We demand that sexual identities are recognized without having to show evidence (for example in an asylum procedure). The binary mindset and categorization of people must stop because the reality is much more complex and diverse.

In addition to everyday sexism, Black women* and women* of colour are exposed to everyday racism, be it while walking through the neighbourhood, on the dance floor or while looking for a job. As non-white women*, we have to fight for "being part" on a daily basis - and

if we question the racist interpretive authority of the mainstream society, we are denigrated as „hypersensitive“.

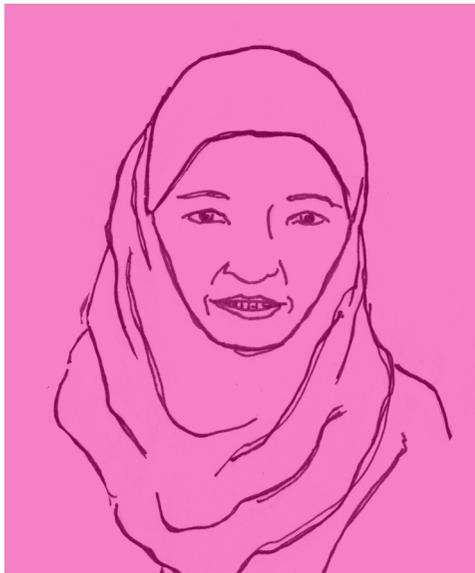
In this country, diplomas and qualifications of other countries are rarely recognized. As a consequence, the work areas of migrants are often limited to the household and nursing professions. We take care of children, old people, other people's households - our work is made „invisible“, is not recognized and not appreciated. In some cases, we are available 24 hours a day. Sometimes without a legal residence status. Through our work, we enable other women to work and make a career.

We want real access to the education and legal system - without fear of being deported.

We demand that the status of the sans-papiers be regularized, that diplomas be recognized, and we call for a legislation that protects us against the multiple forms of discrimination we experience as women*, as migrants, as workers.

We demand that the various levels of violence against migrant women* become visible and recognized as a problem. We demand a right to stay if our lives are in danger. Only then can we successfully fight this violence.

And let us listen to each other: That means recognizing various forms of discrimination and questioning privileges.



WE WANT AN EMANCIPATORY EDUCATION

We want a school system that is a place of emancipation and promotes equality. We want to have more of a say in the design of the lesson and the school as a whole. Educational institutions must be safe places and allow room for resistance. Subjects can no longer be understood as gender specific. Access to education should not only be granted for all, but must effectively be made possible for all. Male*-dominated training courses, such as technical courses and many others, must be opened for women* so that they also have the opportunity to help shape them.

The school is an expression of the patriarchal society: It consolidates the hierarchies on the basis of practiced gender roles. School and professional careers of children and adolescents are shaped by the values, norms and models of educational institutions, practices, forms of support, educational aids, content, textbooks, interactions and, ultimately, the institution itself.

The promotion of equality must be independent of the school subject. We want teachers and educators to be trained accordingly. This requires

constant awareness-raising through further education and a reformulation of the professional mandate in the name of cooperation and solidarity.

An emancipatory education requires using an inclusive language, addressing gender pluralism, that is, to point out that there is more than just „man“ and „woman“, discussing different family models, discussing role models and scrutinizing multiple discriminations. We demand the recognition of students' diversity by teachers, teaching materials and educational institutions in general.

We demand more (global) political education and discussion in the classroom - also in primary school.

WE FIGHT AGAINST SEXIST, HOMOPHOBIC AND TRANSPHOBIC VI- OLENCE

Also in Switzerland, women* suffer violence: either because they are women* and / or because they identify themselves as lesbians, bisexuals, trans people, intersexuals or queer people (LGBTIQ) and therefore do not conform to this hetero-normative society. Every other week in Switzerland a woman* dies of sexist violence. Two out of five women* experience physical and / or sexual violence in a partnership during their lifetime. When a woman* is murdered by her (ex-)partner, it is often referred to as a „family drama“: The person concerned is complicit because she left him or was wearing a skirt that was too short. We want violence to be named for what it is: sexist violence! We want to decide for ourselves which life plan is right for us and what we wear. Our lives and bodies are ours!

Many women* are affected by overlapping discriminatory experiences in a society dominated by men, often white men (such as women* of colour, migrant women*, women* with disabilities,

women* who do not match the beauty ideal of glossy magazines, older women*, precarious women* and LGTBQI* persons). In the masculine structures and institutions of the migration regime, such as shelters for refugees, these multiple threats are particularly noticeable.

We demand the (legally) binding implementation of the Istanbul Convention. This includes protecting individuals from mental, physical and sexual violence and bringing the perpetrators to justice. Sexist violence should no longer be accepted in society, funding for campaigns is needed in order to instigate a rethinking in society. Sexist violence is always linked to a claim to power and it is violence - whether in partnership, at work, on the street or in social networks.

No means no! We demand legal protection of persons affected by violence and the recognition of their power of definition. Stop protecting perpetrators! We demand that sexual violence be recognized as part of the anti-discrimination law. There must be a right to integrity.

WE WANT CLIMATE JUSTICE - AND A REAL FIGHT AGAINST GLO- BAL WARMING

Grounded on the patriarchal structures of binary divisions, hierarchization and devaluation, the capitalist economy also shapes people's relationship to the environment. Similar to the unpaid reproductive work of women*, in capitalism the reproduction of nature is also made invisible and devalued, disregarding the fact that the natural environment - apart from human labour - is crucial to economic activity. By further capitalizing on water, land, oil, etc., private companies are opening up new areas for profit, leading to an increasing degree of material exploitation and destruction particularly in countries outside of Europe. We oppose any privatization of land and water and demand the democratization of all decisions on how to deal with our environment. Like gender relations, we also want to revolutionize the relationship to nature. We demand climate justice - now! If we want to stop global warming, we must also consistently stop the profit-driven exploitation of people and environment.



OUR BODIES ARE OURS

The profiteers of the capitalist system enrich themselves by capitalizing on different levels of our bodies: On the basis of ubiquitous regulations, slimming and health craze, youth cult and stereotyped images of women* we are told how to dress, show, nourish and behave, and what we ought to consume. Through films, books, advertising and education binary sexuality is propagated to us since childhood. This leads to discrimination and devaluation of people who do not conform to this binary logic. The general spread of stereotypes leads to a culture in which women*'s bodies are turned into objects. This legitimizes and trivializes gender-based violence. Therefore, we demand that this type of violence be portrayed and fought against for what it is: A sexist matter of fact that injures and kills women*. Furthermore, so-called „women's products“ are commercialized, extra VAT is raised on hygiene products such as pads or tampons, and the responsibility of contraception is (amongst others) financially passed on to the female gender.

Today's medicine is adjusted to masculinity. For women*, research focuses mainly on issues of repro-

duction and not enough on issues affecting women*'s health in general. For example, a heart attack is often not recognized in time when women* are concerned, because non-male bodies are simply under-researched.

We call for more research into male contraception, a medicine that recognizes all genders and provides free access to health care for all. We want free choice in reproduction, the right to free abortion, free contraceptives, free choice of contraception, free hygiene products for menstruation and free access to treatments related to self-determined sex adjustment.

Women* and girls* with impairments are affected by multiple discriminations. We are more often subjected to violence, injury or abuse, inobservance or neglect, as well as ill-treatment or exploitation, both within and outside our domestic environment. We want better protection and better care for disabled women* and girls*, more opportunities for self-determination and more visibility and audibility in the public space.

HETERONORMATIVITY OUT OF THE HEADS

Non-male sexuality is largely connoted negatively. Female lust is passed over, menstruation is tabooed. The body and lust of people who are not cis-male have long been completely unexplored and even today there is much less knowledge about them. The hegemonic view of sex is cis-male and heteronormative: Heterosexuality is considered the only valid norm. Thus, law and institutions also discriminate against other forms of relationship and / or sexual desire. We demand to be able to define our own sexuality and relationships so that we can live our desire the way we want it. We demand education campaigns on self-determination, sexuality and identity.



**BECAUSE OF ALL THIS
AND MUCH ELSE, FOR
ALL THIS AND MUCH
MORE, WE STRIKE ON
JUNE 14, 2019
- LOUD AND CASUAL,
FULL OF ANGER AND
CONFIDENCE. WHY?
BECAUSE WE ARE
MANY! AND BECAU-
SE NOBODY ELSE IS
DOING IT FOR US.**

A NOTE ON LANGUAGE AND SPELLING:

In a binary world where everything is considered either „male“ or „fe-
male,“ we want to use the gender
star * to indicate that not everyone
identifies with the gender assigned
to them at birth. Sexual identity
and sexual desire are subject to
social and personal change and
are not „natural“ or fixed. Cis wo-
men or cis men are people who
can identify with the gender assi-
gned to them at birth. We believe
that women*, whether Trans, Inter,
Cis or Queer, are repressed by pa-
triarchy and definitely do not bene-
fit from it. That’s why we use the
gender star; also to show that we
are many.

We write „Black women“ with a ca-
pital „B“ to point out, on the one
hand, that „Black“ is not an adjec-
tive, but a constructed racialization
with specific attributions that are
not based on real dispositions. On
the other hand, the use of the large
„B“ refers to anti-racist resistance
struggles in which the term „Black“
is used as a political self-designa-
tion; We write „white“ small, al-
though we also understand this
adjective as an attribution but it as-
sumes a clearly different meaning
in history and present as „Black“.