

I never fit into boxes

I have given up trying to fit in somewhere, to assimilate to stay under the radar in this so-called majority society. I haven't always made as little effort as I did last time, or others did who obviously had a big problem with the fact that my gender didn't fit into the binary pigeonhole. Very early on, in fact, I knew I was out of order, perhaps even before I could think in any language. That was the effect of violence. Or how else should I put it, being subjected to experimental treatments in a hospital, instead of parental care receiving isolation, plus mainly strangers who inflicted pain on me and who had no respect for my privacy. Of course, they were the good guys and I was the bad, sick and failed one. So I always submitted, deeply trusting that they could make me good and I eagerly did my bit to live up to the role expectations ascribed to me. I may have to apology to one or two people today if I went overboard back then. Or maybe not, because I only reflected what was thrown at me.

Then in puberty, surprise!, came the big breach of trust. Suddenly the trusted men in white didn't know what to do either when my body resisted their treatment regime. I became increasingly a hopeless case and the experimenters turned away from me in disappointment. Again I believed that I was the cause of the disappointment. Now I was finally caught between the sexes, and now alone with it. Ironically, with their help, I became even queerer than I could have been anyway. It's just that I didn't know this term at the time, and unfortunately I had no idea that there was also a strength in it and to a certain extent, I may be so arrogant as a marginalized person, a superiority, at least in the way I see some things. Even if it hurts to be excluded from so many areas of society, I don't envy you for being straight men and women. Your unwritten rules are too complicated for me, I would collapse claustrophobic, like in an overheated bus. I would be far too clumsy socially anyway and would constantly put my foot in your mouths. Please, don't take it amiss if I don't look you in the eye when passing by. It has nothing to do with disrespect, I just don't need your looks. And if the sight of me bothers you, I really don't care. I'm allowed a little satisfaction after what has been done to me. I don't have any great expectations or even demands for myself, maybe just that you shouldn't keep doing this crap to others. I also don't need any compensation, which I should perhaps exchange for cooperation and your good conscience. My being inter* belongs to me and not to you.

Queerness, war and refuge, mental health

(If you're nervous, you can express it to the public.. it will help you relax)
I am Rash. My pronouns are he him.

I left my my home country, Syria, about 5 and a half years ago to flee a raging war and a queerphobic surrounding that made my life almost impossible to maintain. Let me tell you about a few of my struggles : Before i knew that I was queer, I knew that I was different and I knew that this kind of difference wasn't acceptable by my family, my schoolmates or teachers.

and even when I was a kid I knew that certain behaviours were being reacted upon with anger, violence and exclusion.

With the time and through pain and trauma, i learned how to make people less aggressive when interacting with me.

this process took a lot of time and effort especially that I had to go through every detail of my personality and the things that made me : me and change them in a way that pleases what others think of me.

what type of behaviours should I keep and what type of behaviours should I get rid off ? how do I walk ?

how do I speak? what words do I choose? how do I move my hands ? how do I eat ? how do I use my eyes to look at people? how do I use my facial expressions?

This was exhausting! this was torture!

I had to change the way I am in order to be safe and not be humiliated and dehumanised by people I considered to be my friends and my family.

The fact that i still stand here today after going through this and the fact that I'm confident and proud of the person i am today is an achievement. i deserve this moment of joy. Just Like all the queers today.. so Congratulations.. we made it

But the bigger issue is yet to be resolved.

Fleeing my country was a highly emotionally charged process. But it wasn't new to me.

Although i did it for the first time in my life, i wasn't the first family member who had to leave their home country.

My grand parents immigrated for a better life.

My uncles fled the oppression and imprisonment they suffered under the Assad's dictatorship for being politically active.

In 2015 and after 4 years of bloody protests, war and destruction, it was my turn to leave...

Although the land and people of my region date back to thousands of years ago, the land of the middle east is still looked at as a piece of cake for the most powerful rulers of the world to share.

Since the ottomans occupied greater Syria in the 16th century, followed by European colonization in the 20th century, my people has been suffering. Wars, displacement, death, migration, stealth of land, borders and separation, religious fanaticism and ethnic cleansing.. all of which still happening till this day.

Every desperate try for independence, ended in dictatorships.

Every cry for freedom, ends in a new unending war.

We all heard a comment one day about how middle-easterners are considered to be uncivilized, brutal and queerphobic by nature. How can we deny this knowing that queer people are suffering atrocities in MENA ?

Trying to understand this contradiction puts us on a historical journey :

as Joseph A. Boone outlines in "The Homoerotics of Orientalism", the notion of the queerphobic middle eastern is ignoring several hundred years of history where "it was the uptight Christian West that accused the debauched (degenerate) Muslim East of harboring what it "...." called the 'male vice' (sodomy)".

The Middle East was associated with 'sexual deviancy' '...' whose mores and values good Christians must remain on guard against. The movements for modern nation-state building in what is now Turkey and Iran actually saw the adoption of heterosexual norms "at least in part as a response to the European representations of its civilizational 'backwardness' and sexual 'irregularities'". In Turkey, "unabashedly frank (unashamed) references to same-sex acts and desire were written out of the historical record and repressed from collective memory in the name of western style modernization", while "the price of Persia's emergence as the new Iranian nation-state was the official eclipse of its long-standing history of male homoerotic bonds as 'pre-modern' and the cultivation of heteroeroticism as the new norm."

This longing to copy the West and to become civilized is still deeply present in the minds and hearts of the people in the middle east. We call it "تقليد الأجنبي" in Arabic.

The sexual violence and oppression of "the barbaric uncivilized middle easterns" started to become more and more brutal as European colonizers occupied the region.

The first laws that punished "unnatural sexual relations" in Syria were presented by colonizers in the middle of the 19th century.

Today, many Islamic conservative ideologies frame queerness to be a foreign contamination and calls to fight any liberal ideologies including queer feminism as a form of resisting the western influence.

In the process, the history of homoerotic relations among males once considered a part of the fabric of Muslim culture is being erased and the association between Islam and queerness is being denied.

This historical context wasn't aimed at blaming the West or trying to oversimplify queerphobia in the MENA. It is an approach to try to understand that queerphobia in the MENA is as modern as the nation-state building, colonialism and marriage between resistance and the construction of the "other" as inferior, deserving of discrimination, stigmatization and elimination.

We need to reclaim our identity and decolonize it. And the way to doing this is through queer liberation.. liberation of our minds as well as our lands.

What about our situation today?

Queer people of MENA are frustrated. Left alone and forgotten.

Between strict patriarchal societies that kills us, poverty and unending wars we are left with no choices.

Rather we're forced to flee our homes and countries or face death, imprisonment, torture or suicide.

Let us again remember a hero that left us about a year ago :

Sarah Higazi was an Egyptian queer activist who got arrested for waving a rainbow flag in a concert

As symbolic as it seems.. the Egyptian authorities saw a huge threat in her action.

In Egypt, the authorities ruled gang-rapers and molesters not guilty despite video evidence. Sarah got arrested, tortured and forced to leave her country. Later on, she decides and i quote : "the sky is a safer place than the earth".

"The world was cruel, but I forgive" were her last words before she committed suicide in her exile in Canada

I could have been Sarah. But i would never forgive!

Many queer people in Syria and other middle eastern and African countries are still threatened by jail, torture and losing their lives.

Alireza was a 20 year old gay lover and dreamer from Iran. After his family found out about his exemption from the Iranian military that deemed him mentally ill for being gay, and after discovering his plans to leave Iran and start a new life with his lover in Turkey. He was kidnapped by his siblings and cousins and brutally murdered. His mutilated body was left in the hot desert.

This brutality is widely accepted against queer people in the region. ISIS threw men off high buildings as a punishment for being gay.

Soldiers raping political prisoners in Assad's prisons is a way to humiliate them and keep them quiet.

Sexuality is used as a weapon of physical and mental degradation by the oppressor!

Many queer women get slaughtered ,sometimes in public, by their family members. In a cruel practice called "honor killing" in an attempt to wash the families reputation off of shame for having a queer child.

All this brutality Queer people face leave them feeling empty and emotionally exhausted. And once we manage to run away, we spend a part of our lives, sometimes long years, fighting our mental battles. Some of us survive, some of us don't.

Our biggest challenge might be figuring ways to come out of the labyrinth of generational trauma, decolonizing our bodies and minds and discovering our sexual identities.

What is portrayed to appear as a dramatic moment of honesty with a person's parents by the western Media is a never ending battle for many of us.

Prison concerns us all!

Dear queers!

We need to talk about the discrimination and criminalisation of queer, trans, inter and non-binary people. Queer, trans, inter and non-binary people have problems at school, in the family and at work due to structural oppression and are therefore more likely to be affected by poverty.

Those who are not hired anywhere because of their gender performance or gender deviating from the norm gender, tend to be more dependent on the authorities or engage in criminalised activities to earn the money they need to live.

For example, some engage in sex work. Sex workers often face discrimination by the state, criminalisation, police violence and social stigmatisation.

In general, queer, trans, inter and non-binary people are also more likely to experience street harassment, sexualised violence and police violence. For many it is everyday life to have to defend themselves and to experience repression themselves. And often end up in jail for trivialities.

Furthermore, violence against queer people is normalised by the justice system and the cops and trivialised by the media. At the same time, every act of self-defence is criminalised, especially when it concerns people of colour, i.e. when people do not fall into the common image of the white victim.

Trans, inter and non-binary people are fundamentally discriminated against by the justice system.

This ranges from experiences of violence with cops during checks, humiliation, insults or harassment, to the legal concept of changing one's status, where those affected first have to justify their gender before the judiciary in order to have it officially recognised.

And we also need to talk about the situations of trans, inter and non-binary people in prison! Prisons are based on a binary understanding of gender. All those affected are forced into men's or women's prisons regarding the gender entry in their passports. In practice, however, this is often done arbitrarily and on the basis of a binary gender logic. For example, trans women sometimes end up in men's jail.

As in the case of Diana, who was arrested in Munich in 2019 after a police check and a raid of her house without a warrant, she was put in custody for six months. In the men's prison, in isolation detention.

Trans people in prison are particularly often affected by violence and harassment from staff and/or inmates and are then usually, or actually always, locked up in isolation detention, ostensibly for their protection. Trans people are also often denied important medication and hormones, even if they are already undergoing hormone treatment and urgently need it. This has catastrophic psychological and physical consequences, leading to self-injurious behaviour or even suicide attempts. The resulting hormone imbalance also poses a great risk.

So we see, for queer, trans and inter people violence is cruel everyday life. We have to defend against oppression and in doing so we experience even more violence from the judiciary and the state. Our self-determination and self-defence becomes a risk. So we have to deal with prison as a possible instance of this system of oppression.

From all this, we draw consequences for our queer-feminist practice: We must always direct our struggle against the state, against repression and the police. Because these are part of the patriarchal, capitalist and racist system of oppression.

We do not appeal to the state to give us more rights and we take what is ours.

We are not asking the cops to protect our demonstrations, we are confronting them with appropriate hostility, because they deserve nothing but our hatred.

We are not asking for inclusion in marriage, the military or the police service. We do not want queer integration into state institutions!

We want to destroy them all!

Nor do we need more queer-friendly prisons.

We want to abolish prisons!

Let's remember: the 1969 Stonewall Riot was born out of anger against the daily harassment and violence against racialised trans women, drag queens, sex workers and precarious queers who angrily took the streets and attacked the cops.

In this spirit: Criminal Queers Unite!

To each cripple their cudgel (Jedem Krüppel seinen Knüppel) - a speech on radical inclusion

Hello.

Thank you all for coming, thank you for together making Pride more radical. Thank you also to all those who made sure I could be here today. The people who make my activism possible because they are caretaking friends and realtive, because they form my network which I could neither live without - nor be an activist. The people who do paid and unpaid care work, the people who, even though invisible, stand behind me.

There is this awful saying, "Behind every successful man is a strong woman." Well, in the case of dis_abled activists this is actually true: behind each of us is a network that enables our activism. Disability activism has a bias, the survivor bias: Only those of us who can survive in this society are even able to do activism. We can only be radical because we are privileged enough to be able to raise our voices at all.

On the subject of radicalism:

In Germany's first cripple movement there was the slogan "Jedem Krüppel seinen Knüppel" (To every cripple his cudgel), under which disruptive actions were organised, wherever the concerns of disabled people were not sufficiently taken into account – these days we have arrived at "Aktion Sorgenkind" ('worry child') (renamed "Aktion Mensch").

Now begging for human rights, for human dignity. We are supposed to make ourselves compliant to a society that, at best, does not want to see us, that segregates us in special schools and homes, and at worst murders us in good conscience.

On 28 April this year, four people were brutally killed in an institution called Oberlinhaus in Potsdam. The media spoke of "salvation" or "being overwhelmed" as the motives for the crime. I object. I call it murder.

Murder of disabled people, of "life unworthy of life" [lebensunwertes Leben], has a tradition in Germany. A tradition that goes back a long way, but reached its peak during the National Socialist era, when disabled people were systematically murdered.

Murder out of "noble" motives, because no one wants to live like us - say the healthy, those who defined normality as the norm based on themselves.

Murder is labeled as "euthanasia", as "assisted suicide", as a "mild gift". My life in the hands of people whose pity could mean my death.

Yes, even mine. Not all disabilities are visible. Not all of us use wheelchairs, walkers, long canes or similar visible aids.

I am autistic [Autist_in]. The glottal stop is important as it shows my nonbinarity. I am living intersectionality, I am trans and autistic. Definitely a life less boring, although I would prefer it to be less discriminatory.

My brain works differently from those who set the norm. About one percent of the world's population is autistic.

Autism is a neurodiversity, just like ADHD, but also, for example, dyslexia, dyscalculia and dyspraxia.

I like to use to describe autism that my brain works on Linux - in a world made for Windows PCs.

Invisible disabilities can protect - but that's not always the case. Hans Asperger, namesake of the now obsolete Asperger syndrome (currently this, among others, is considered part of the "autism spectrum disorder") had the children he didn't "like", those who didn't fit his definition of an "interesting disorder", transferred to hospitals, where *Aktion T4* - the systematic murder of disabled people during Nazism - was carried out. He also thought autistic people (he only boys/men as possibly autistic) had no sense of humour. Propably it was him who had no sense of humour.

Being invisible doesn't always save you.

It can also hinder - I don't have a cudgel I could use to hit someone's shins, like Franz Christoph, who, once used his crutch to hit German President Karl Carsten's shins. The cripple movement at the time was radical and in the worst possible position. "Nicht über uns ohne uns!" - Don't talk about us without talking to us - is one of the slogans we still use today - instead of talking about those affected, we should speak with them, the experts of their own cause.

That happened in the 80s. Today, white-sprayed wheelchairs represent murdered disabled people, even though we do not know, whether they even used a wheelchair or not. Now, those wheelchairs are aesthetically rotting in the garden of the Oberlinhaus. Actual, dignified commemoration looks different than letting the commemorative objects, the aids, become overgrown by nature.

The aids. Will all that remain of me be a pair of glasses and my stimming jewellery? Will diabetics be represented by their insulin pumps? Are we really nothing but our tools? The dead are laid out, the murdered are commemorated with a photo... I have never seen a murdered walker commemorated through white spray-painted shoes.

Today, employees are still exploited in special workshops for people with disabilities – working forty-hours a week for a little money, somewhere between eighty and two hundred euros. So that so-called "normals" can feel good about buying knick-knacks and Christmas presents made by "those one's". Exploitation, but with a good conscience.

That's what it's really about: that the "normal", the "healthy" are comfortable - the disabled should disappear, become invisible, not disturb. If they disturb, if their voices become too loud, if they hit out with their crutches - then the outcry, the indignant gasp of the majority society is palpable.

Who do "those one's" think they are? Shouldn't they be grateful that we let them...

Yes, what?, I like ask there, Grateful for what? That you let us live? That you still make disabled people infertile by administering the pill and three-month injections (or even sterilisation), because the idea of us having a fulfilling sex life fills you with horror. but at least the error of our existence is not eradicated, at least after our birth? Unless people are overwhelmed, of course....

Right now the 90s are making a comeback in terms of fashion - but also in terms of discourse. We are seeing the same questions being asked as if it were the first time: Should we push for the possibility of prenatally determining whether a child might be

In the 80s it was not about autism, at that time there prenatal examinations were mainly performed because of trisomy 21 - also known as "Down's syndrome". Nowadays, this examination is a standard procedur, just like the urging voice of the doctor, whenever there is a high probability for trisomy 21, that is asking: "Do you really want to keep it?"

So, do we? Do we as a society want to afford disabled children? Can we grant persons giving birth self-determination over their bodies, while denying it to them in the case of a disabled child? Can we force parents to have disabled children? Right now it is the other way round: Currently, the bodies of pregnant people are policed by laws, sections 218 and 219a are in still force, currently pregnant people are denied self-determination over their own bodies. An abortion is a criminal offence, it only then remains unpunished, when deadlines and regulations are observed.

Deadlines and regulations offer no exemptions - except in the case of a disabled child. They can be, in some cases even are supposed to be, aborted, for much longer than their normal, considered normal, suspected as normal, siblings.

The crippled women's movement already had to struggle with this dilemma and today we must agree with the solution they proposed in the mid-80s: An abolition of sections 218 and 219a of the penal code, but at the same time no support for eugenic research, an abolition of special regulations for disabled children and more support for pregnant persons who have been diagnosed as likely to have a disabled child. If between 70 and 90% of cis women expecting a child with trisomy 21 terminate the pregnancy, then this is a symptom of a society that portrays disabled life as inadequate and not an individual responsibility/choice of childbearing persons!

Radicality means radically standing up for the right of self-determination of all persons. It means being radically inclusive. To examine one's own spaces. Why are there hardly any visible disabled people in leftist, autonomous, emancipatory spaces? Why is there no support for the invisibly disabled, why can't this be made possible? Are we ourselves as inclusive as we demand society to become? These are questions we all should ask ourselves - and not only ourselves, but also the people in charge of all the spaces in which we move - or want to move in.

Finally you can get a sticker from me, so that every cripple may raise their cudgel, against Ableism and for practical inclusion.

To my Jewish brothers and sisters who sometimes do not feel as at home in the queer community as much as they should: I See You!

I know the fetishisation, the feeling of being the Jewish accessory - I stand right beside you in solidarity.

I know the distress of people demanding me to comment on certain things I don't want to or cannot speak about - I stand right beside you in Solidarity

I know the feeling of not feeling at home, the diaspora between different communities - I feel you - I stand right beside you in Solidarity

I know the expectations of who or what I have to be as a Jewish person, and the fear of not being able to fulfil them - I stand right beside you in Solidarity

I know the being judged as not being Jewish enough. The constantly being defined from the outside, existing under the burden of having to proof oneself. - I stand right beside you in Solidarity

I know the search for one's own roots, and the sharp judgements of the environment that always seems to cut them off - I stand right beside you in Solidarity

I know the jokes that are meant to be clever or funny but get deep under the skin - I stand right beside you in Solidarity

I know the opinions that anti-Semitism is not a real problem. So strong that sometimes we believe it ourselves. - I stand right beside you in Solidarity

I know the loss of words in trying to express what we have just experienced, those everyday things that are not burning synagogues - I stand right beside you in Solidarity

I know the lack of places, where one can address one's own needs and wishes and fears in safety. With the certainty of being understood - I stand right beside you in Solidarity

I know the daily encounters with the cluelessness of what being Jewish means. From the unpleasant stereotypes that have nothing to do with our realities, to the idea that being Jewish has no impact on our daily lives. Nothing to do with us. - I stand right beside you in solidarity

I know the unwillingness to engage with our realities, of not recognising that being Jewish means marginalisation. Denied opportunities. Denied access. Denied resources and means. Denial that the circumstances of our lives are everybody's business - I stand right beside you in solidarity.

I know all the shitty anti-Semitic prejudice that so often denies us allyship: that we are above average, have no problems, power relations are not to our disadvantage, based on a feeling rather than a factual reality. The consequence is that we are left alone with the shit that happens to us, that we are not considered in activist events - I stand right beside you in solidarity!

I know the isolation and loneliness, that is no coincidence but part of the structural Jewish reality and therefore: - I stand right beside you in Solidarity!

I know the feeling of forgetting too often what beauty, treasure and gift, a resource my Jewishness is - I stand right beside you offering you my hands to hold, my shoulder to rest as a sibling in Solidarity!

No Pride in the Police!

Just a few weeks ago, the organisers of New York City Pride announced that they would no longer tolerate groups of uniformed police officers in the parade for the next five years. In addition, the number of police officers "protecting" the parade will be drastically reduced. This decision is the result of years of discussion about the role of police in the parade, despite the history of the Stonewall Riots and the large number of BIPOCs murdered by police. Immediately, the decision was criticised by the public, including parts of the LGBTQIA+ community, because queer police officers would now be the marginalised. What a bullshit.

In Saxony, there has been a contact person for LGBTQIA+ in the police since last year. In addition, this year the public prosecutor's office in Leipzig also appointed a contact person for queer people. Officially, these persons are supposed to help increase the trust of LGBTQIA+ in the police, which shall increase the willingness to report queer hate crimes. However, what the police actually want to achieve with this is to present themselves as progressive. Some queer advocacy groups celebrate the establishment of these posts as a success. I, on the other hand, believe that neither queers nor anyone else should trust the police and the state and that police officers cannot be allies.

Whether in New York or Leipzig, both cases are about supposed security, which is supposed to be created or increased for queers through the visibility and responsiveness of the police. But how is an institution like the police supposed to create security? Their task in the white supremacist capitalist patriarchy, as the Black feminist bell hooks describes the state of society, is to maintain, defend and enforce precisely these racist, capitalist and patriarchal conditions against all resistance. Police officers as henchmen of the state repressive apparatus serve nationalist or economic interests. They actively oppose any emancipation efforts or attempts to change property relations. We see the results every day.

Every deportation, racist control, police violence, eviction, humiliation, criminalisation, persecution, imprisonment, spying and threat that takes place through this institution affects people who suffer from racist, anti-Semitic, misogynist, queer-hostile, anti-gypsy, social-chauvinist and classist power structures against which they have difficulty defending themselves and which are carried out by police officers.

In the uniforms, on the other hand, there are people who carry out this violence of their own free will, misuse their position of power and are themselves clearly political actors. Nobody has to be a cop. Nothing and no one forces them to execute this violence and yet they do.

We may now be happy about a bit of rainbow in the police and prosecution, but it is the same police and justice system that harasses queer BIPOCs on a daily basis, that deports queer refugees to regions that are hostile to them, or that itself repeatedly commits racist murders like that of Oury Jalloh or Amad Ahmad.

It is the same police that took away queer feminist spaces like the Liebig34 in Berlin. And they will continue to evict our safer spaces when, thanks to gentrification, we can no longer afford the rent. It doesn't matter whether it's an autonomous house project or the RosaLinde.

It's the same police who beat us up at demonstrations, because of which we have to go to hospital and suffer permanent damage and trauma.

It is the same police that put our queer brothers and sisters into prisons and concentration camps. Even after 1945, hundreds of thousands of actual or supposed gay men in the FRG were persecuted by the state, driven to their deaths and locked away by the police, and they would continue to do so unquestioningly today if § 175 were still valid.

It is the same police and judiciary, on the other hand, which to this day does not classify violence against our community as queer-hostile, for example the homophobic and right-wing extremist murder of Bernd Grigol in Leipzig in May 1996.

It is the same police who put our comrades, who supposedly or actually actively and militantly oppose Nazis and thus do much more for our security than the state will ever do, in pre-trial detention for months. Free Lina!

It is the same police that uses wrong pronouns for us despite corrections, humiliate us or don't even take us serious as queers when arresting us.

And it's the same police who are always involved in right-wing terror networks, who prepare for a day X and write death lists. A threat to all queers, migrants, BIPOCs, Jews, Sinti and Roman, leftists and so many more.

This institution, the police and its police officers, cannot offer us any protection. They are themselves a threat, their mere presence makes many of us feel uncomfortable.

Finally, it is also about privilege. Who can make use of such a contact person for LGBTQIA+ at the police or public prosecutor's office? Queer refugees, undocumented queers, homeless queers, drug-using queers and others for whom the police is not only a hostile place because of their queerness, but also because of other affiliations, identities and marginalities? It's about intersectionality and what Marsha P. Johnson said: There is no pride for some of us without liberation for all of us. Even though it has certainly become more comfortable for *white*, cis-male wealthy gays in recent decades, which I don't want to denigrate at all, the struggle is far from over. And that's why we won't assimilate into your violent system, we won't settle for marriage for all and adoption rights, and we won't start recognising the police as allies.

You can have our anger, but you won't have our trust.

And when we walk past the Dimitroff guard and the Leipzig public prosecutor's office, let them hear what we think of them.

No pride in repression, no pride in the police!

sexualized violence and assault in queer spaces

Hello, we are part of Queering Defaults. We are a queer intersectional activist group that was founded in June 2020. The following speech will be about sexualized violence and assault in queer spaces. We hereby issue a trigger warning. However, it will be more of a reflection on the topic. We will not describe any actions in a graphic way.

For the sake of transparency, we as Queering Defaults did not come up with the idea of addressing the issue of sexual violence in queer spaces on our own. In June 2020, when we formed, we wanted to criticise the CSD as it is currently happening in Leipzig and making our own intersectional events for the community.

As well as you might, in our group there were and are also people affected by the Monis Rache incidents. In our group there were and are also people living in the East of Leipzig, where recently several perpetrators were named and assaults were made public.

Sexualized violence in the radical left is not un-heard of by us. And we ourselves have also experienced sexualized violence in various forms, both in sexual contexts and in everyday life. So the topic is in fact present. Nevertheless, we did not think to put it on our agenda for a long time.

Last fall, we received a request from people in the community asking if we could concern ourselves with it, if we might even want to organize an event focussing on it. Especially in the queer party and event scene in Leipzig – and certainly elsewhere – sexualized violence could be found. However, the focus on it was missing, there was a kind of consensual silence in relation to queer spaces.

We began to exchange ideas in the group, to clarify terms and to share experiences. At the beginning, many of us thought that they actually had quite little contact with sexualized violence. Some were able to name that they had experienced assaults. But they often lacked the strength to talk more about it. That is more than understandable, and not wanting to open up wounds is completely okay.

Over the weeks, we came up with different terms. Consent, principle of consent, authority to define, awareness... and others. Meanwhile, more and more experiences and situations came to mind where we were in fact affected ourselves after all. Supposedly small assaults came back to mind, also sexual acts to which we would have preferred to say “no” in retrospect.

Our most important realization so far, however, was that we ourselves were perpetrators or could still become perpetrators. The idea that only cis men can be perpetrators is simply nonsense.

Sexualized violence can occur in lesbian romances, it exists in bisexual one-night stands, between trans* people in long-term relationships, at sex parties, and also between gay cis men.

A consideration of sexualized violence must not only be concerned with heterosexual relationships between cis people, and it must not only be about identifying and calling out cis men as perpetrators. Otherwise, that reproduces norms, in terms of sex, gender, relationship models, and role expectations. With respect, we appreciate your work on the topic, but please, please don't forget queer people in your analysis. Patriarchy hides everywhere and with it sexualized violence. It would be short-sighted to say that a victim could never become a perpetrator. It may hurt to hear this, but *of course* I, as a victim of sexualized violence, can commit an assault on another – or even on the same – person. Even when I don't intend to, and even when we've talked at length about consent.

We have to get rid of the idea that it is enough to identify and call out perpetrators. After all, the process continues beyond that. We need functioning concepts for dealing with perpetrators, for implementing the wishes of those affected over time, and we need structures that can prevent this

kind of violence in the long term, which also work in acute situations or even years after assaults. To a greater extent than what happened in Leipzig last year, we need a public discourse on the topic that concerns everyone. We need to rethink the status quo.

Now what does all this have to do with queer spaces?, you may be asking. Well, let us give you a few examples and lines of thought we've come across. We are only a small group and don't have the resources to do empirical studies. That's why this is more of an attempt to name problem areas. We ourselves don't have answers to everything yet either.

A lesbian cis woman is in a long-term relationship with another cis lesbian. It's going great, they finally have peace from the patriarchy. For many months the sex is cool, they don't have to worry about assault, after all they have an understanding of the consent. After half a year, however, one person opens up to her partner that there were definitely situations in which she felt pressured to have sex, where in retrospect she would have preferred to say "no". Now what?

A trans* person has come out. People are finally starting to call her by her real name. She downloads tinder, is up for meeting a few people in the new city, maybe there's a cute flirt in it? It quickly becomes clear that some people only get in contact because they want to date a trans* person, preferably pre-surgery or pre-hormones. These people are "chasers". The person is not interested in Tinder anymore, but also in real life they can't get rid of the idea of being desired only for their gender identity and their body. Now what?

Two people, who are not cis men, have had a crush on each other for a long time. They make out a lot and that's cool. One person would like to have sex, the other person says no, even if it is hard. The topic of sleeping with each other accompanies them for many months. The second person becomes sad, because they have never had sex. But at the same time the desire is there and with every touch, every attempt to "start something" the fear of committing an assault also bothers the person. Intimacy becomes torture because of this mixture of expectations and needs and the attempt not to cross boundaries. Only later does a person open up that they assume to be asexual themselves. Not having slept with each other makes a lot of sense, was good for both parties involved. Still, the acquired fear of crossing boundaries with every move remains. It won't make future romances any easier neither. Now what?

A gay person is on Grindr and Tinder a lot. Physical interaction is important to them, getting to know people – even if only for short sex dates – is fun. Over time, however, the person encounters more often the feeling of just being a body that provides closeness and also the feeling that sex is occasionally expected. After all, they had met on Grindr. On the one hand, one night stands are quite right for the person, on the other hand, it sometimes feels like crap. Navigating your own needs and the expectations created by the app and also specifically by gay contexts is not so easy. Now what?

A sex party is to be hosted. All are looking forward to the fact that in their small backwater town finally a queer event is going on. There are even people who are willing to clean up afterwards. But now the question arises, how to enforce radical consent. How to make it clear to all people that in order to have sex a verbal "yes" is mandatory? How reliable is consent actually at a party where drugs and substance use will also play an important role? The awareness crew is torn between the desire to create a community meeting space and the challenge of avoiding sexualized violence. Now what?

Hello everyone !

We are the Disabled and Mad Celebrate Pride Parade from Berlin ! we are happy to participate in your Pride ! Even just by audio recording.

We are happy to contribute to this intersectional Pride. Unfortunately, it still happens far too rarely that different dimensions of exclusion are thought together. Yet we all know from ourselves that no one is one-dimensional. Some are disabled AND mad, some are disabled and queer, others are queer and chronically ill and Black... Class also plays a role: those who are queer and/or disabled and/or person of color have a higher risk of living in precarious conditions. Those who live in precarious conditions also have a higher risk of becoming ill.

Yet, most groups limit their political work to only one, or at most two, dimensions of exclusion. Unfortunately, this also happens to us very often. We organize Pride parades and do other actions, mainly to draw attention to the situation of disabled and mad people. We fight for all of us to have equal rights and self-determination. Queer people have been pathologized for centuries and still are. This makes their self-determination more difficult. Today, this especially affects trans* and inter* people. Therefore it is obvious to think this together. In our alliance and at the parade, queer people are represented in a very diverse way!

Nevertheless, for a long time our alliance consisted mainly of students and working academics, between their mid-twenties and mid-forties. This has not only determined our issues, but also the way we work together and communicate. And unfortunately, it has always led to people "giving up" after a while and no longer participating. We put them off with academic German language, lots of mails and long meetings on Tuesday evenings. However, internal barrier removal and reflection on privilege are central concerns for us. It's been a long process of reflection since 2017, and in 2018, some new people have joined and confidently raised the issue of academization. They have led to a change that has been worthwhile. Our alliance has since been joined by members from abroad so far, but it remains exclusively White. This is a building site that we must continue to address. We know that.

We think it's always important to consider who is missing and why. Most demos and Prides are missing a lot of disabled, mad and sick people. The routes are often difficult to roll and walk on. They are too long for chronically exhausted people, without seating. Some people can only participate at a certain time, either because of an impairment or because of structural disadvantages - e.g. driving service or too little assistance. Often contributions are not translated into German sign language and are formulated in a very complicated way. By the way, this is unfortunately also true for this contribution. People who are stimulus sensitive to sounds, body movements, smells, feelings or what they see are not considered in any demo so far, and cannot participate because of stimulus overload.

The Covid 19 pandemic presents us with a whole new set of challenges.

The first question is whether and how disabled and mad people in particular can demonstrate when a disease is rampant that puts a large portion of us at particular risk. The pandemic causes those we want to make visible to disappear from the public eye again. In some cases, they withdraw voluntarily to avoid an infection, because many who are not among those at risk do not show solidarity. Worse: Residents of residential and nursing homes as well as social-psychiatric institutions are forcibly isolated through curfew restrictions and visiting restrictions up to bans. A return of the now again (more) isolated to the public is necessary. On the other hand, many people who have participated in our previous parades are currently not participating in demos precisely because of the exclusion mechanisms just described. Therefore, we very much welcome the fact

that risk reduction measures are carefully planned and energetically implemented at your demonstration. Thus you show that it is possible to be active and at the same time protect each other from the pandemic. Thank you for that ! For our part, last year and this year we decided to have an online Disabled and Mad Celebrate Pride Parade. It is easier for us.

A second question posed by the Covid-19 pandemic is that of living together afterwards. Since March 2020, all of a sudden many people have been able to have a glimpse of what everyday life is like for many disabled and mad people. Isolation, lessening of social contacts, loneliness, restrictions, fears... At the same time, the rapid turn to the digital has enabled many of us to be able to be part of it again - while others of us have been completely isolated. We would like to call loud and clear on everyone to create a life after Covid-19, where barriers of all kinds are abolished and isolation is fought against.

Well, we also know that Covid-19 makes a lot of people chronically ill. They get too little recognition for their new unfamiliar situation, that they suddenly can't do anything like before. To those we want to say: join the disability movement! We know this struggle for recognition, adjustments and for rights. Let's fight together! You are not alone!

We are disabled, we are mad, we are here and we are proud!

I would like to start with a big applause for the trans and gender-nonconforming community all over the world. Trans and gender-nonconforming comrades were always the first ones in our anti-capitalist struggle. When Marsha P. Johnson and other revolutionaries were defending Stonewall bar in 1969 it was a strike back against gentrification, against capital, against police and capitalist state. It cannot be forgotten.

Capitalism is not a system of regular growth and progress. It's a system of crisis. Crisis after crisis after crisis. Queers and trans people, and nowadays, especially queer and trans migrants, are always the first victims of those crises. Migrant men, women and migrant LGBTQ people are very often the first ones to lose already precarious jobs and flats. To lose safety.

More than ten years ago I was kicked out of my flat because I was gay. Parents of my well off friend were afraid I will gay him over. I was considered a threat. A danger. So don't tell me capitalism has nothing to do with queer liberation. Paying rent was for me, and is for many of my friends and comrades, the biggest financial burden. One third of our salary, half of your salary or even more - that money doesn't even go to people who built those houses with their own hands!

In the times when we have hundreds of thousands of empty and private flats and so many queers are living on the streets, anti-capitalist struggle should be at the center of our activism!

I remember when I was 20 years old and I told myself I will not out myself in front of my parents before I will be financially independent. My relation to capital and capitalism was directly connected to my freedom and my independence. How long queers will have to live like that?

I remember those two gay guys in gay bar in Poland talking about being disinherited. Their families said they don't need flats because they are gay and they will not have families.

I know so many stories about queers becoming homeless, because their parents kicked them out after coming out. Too many of such stories. Polish government, the current one - neoliberal and nationalistic - and the one before - neoliberal and conservative - spends millions of euros on glorification of nation, of antisemitism and antisemites, on national stations, on anticommunist propaganda, on state-funded Holocaust denialism. List is long. So much money on this fascist bullshit and the only one (!) shelter for queer homeless youth in Poland, run by a NGO, had to be closed because of financial reasons?! Shame!

The state did not turn its back on us. The state has never been on our side. We're doomed to live with our families. And when those families turn away from us, we - working class and migrant queers - we are not becoming freelancers, we do not receive scholarships, we don't get rich on cryptocurrencies, and we do not inherit the comfortable life of our parents. We go to wage labour, we do sex work, we land on the street. We get abused. Institution of family is about abuse. About domination of women, about inheritance, capital accumulation and reproduction. Family, straight or rainbow, is the core of capitalism. I am so fed up hearing who is the son of who. I am sick of thinking about hundreds of thousands, millions of queers trapped in their families and doomed to live in small flats or houses with their abusive parents. It is in a family where people learn that you are someone else's property. Kids as property. Private property. A human being as private property. Property. Property. Property. Private. Private. Private. What is this fucking world we're living in?

Poor queers are very often doomed to live outside of the family. They learn too soon what wage labor (Lohnarbeit) means. And no one should ever have to learn what it is!

Individualistic, cosy, safe life and a good job is not our goal. We need to fight against alienation, against wage labor and poverty. Our goal is to liberate ALL queer, trans and non-binary people from capitalist exploitation!

As queers, non-binary and trans people we should not ask, but DEMAND, global free universal health care. We have seen very clearly during the AIDS crisis in the 80s and 90s, that capitalist states don't care about our well-being and health. I urge you to join anti-capitalist organizations, unions and engage in solidarity with queer working class and migrants. We need to occupy churches, city halls and streets to stop exploitation of queers in the global south, in the Middle East, Asia and Eastern Europe. We need immediate GLOBAL covid relief funds for queers, sex workers, queer working-class artists, trans and non-binary activists and organizers! We will not pay for this pandemic! We need more migrants and refugee queer shelters and spaces in Leipzig and in Saxony!

Every time I think about getting a job, finding a job, surviving in a job I think about homophobia. When can I come out? Can I come out at all? Once, working as an educator I heard from one teenager in my group that he would never tell his father that his supervisor (Betreuer) is gay. He said his dad would come and pick him up immediately and he would never finish his internship. I am a danger to family. But you know what? I'm proud of it! Are you proud to be enemies of the state and family?

Nationalists and right-wing politicians like to scape-goat minorities, queers, migrants, Jews, leftists. They blame them for everything. We are guilty of all mischief.

Last year, during the presidential campaign in Poland, Andrzej Duda, current president of Poland and a member of nationalist, antisemitic and fundamentalist party PiS, decided to scape-goat LGBTQ people to reach his political goal. And he won.

On the other side we're being instrumentalized by liberals. We are being instrumentalized by centrists. And what is worse, our politics are being used to discipline the working class. Being an ally has become a trend, a fashion, an accessory.

And I tell you one thing: if you think that everyone is a blacksmith of their own fate, they you are not a queer ally. If you think people need to work just to be able to survive and to pay the rent, you are not a queer ally. If you think we do not need to abolish money, you are not my ally. If you don't think we need to abolish capitalism you are not my ally at all.