

## The call from Hesse:

### **Hands Off the Civil Clause! For civil sciences and education! Against the militarization of the universities!**

Almost two years after Russian troops invaded Ukraine in violation of international law and the German federal government's subsequent proclamation of a "Zeitenwende" [turning point] the drastic narrowing down to military logic is a seemingly unshakable maxim that is now openly intended to lead to "war-readiness" for society as a whole, both materially and mentally. As scientists and students, we know that today, as then, no war can be waged without the involvement of science. A historical perspective makes it obvious that global military armament always means a technological arms race in competition for the most sophisticated means of violence.

After the media's frequent attacks on the **civil clauses** at over 70 universities and research institutions in the Federal Republic [1] during the last political summer slump, Hesse's Prime Minister Boris Rhein (CDU) now appears to be taking action with his upcoming re-election. The current negotiations between the CDU and SPD in Hesse regarding a coalition agreement apparently include the deletion of the civil clauses anchored at three Hessian universities and colleges. Not surprisingly, actually, if you consider the promises made by the Prime Minister to the local arms giants during the state election campaign. Rhein already postulated promising conditions there, possibly including unrestricted access to public facilities, in keeping with the armament zeitgeist.[2] Whatever this intervention in the democratic self-administration of universities should look like, it would be a militaristic intervention in the civilian university and research landscape that would be unprecedented in the history of the Federal Republic. **Civil clauses** are the results of democratic disputes in universities. They were fought for by students, researchers and teachers and decided by the self-governing bodies!

However, the militaristic "Zeitenwende" is hitting a public university landscape in a desolate state: there is a renovation backlog for the repair of German universities, which is estimated at over 70 billion euros [3]. In Marburg, the roof of a lecture hall recently collapsed [4], entire departments have been declaring bankruptcy for years [5], precarious employment conditions at public universities continue to be a bitter everyday life for mid-level academics and student assistants [6] and the psychosocial situation of students has been increasing for years. [7] The economization of universities and research over the past decades is by no means a success story - further tightening is not a solution, but rather cements its causes!

This real and obvious problem faced by universities and their members will not be granted a special fund of 100 billion. On the contrary, a militaristic tightening of dependence on third-party funding prevents the future development of the entire university landscape that is oriented towards the common good.[8] Because under the current budget situation with debt brakes at the federal and state levels, billions spent on armaments and militarization mean further destruction of the welfare state and thus also the basis for research and teaching oriented towards the common good.

## **Stop it!**

We want a civil university landscape that makes it its mission to respond to global crises internationally and cooperatively and thus follows the forward-looking mandate of the UN global community with the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Such an orientation forms the basis of science that aims to research the causes and develop humanistic solutions to the climate crisis, wars, flight and expulsion and global social misery! **Civil clauses** create the academic freedom to be able to do justice to precisely this task. [9] Because the involvement of science in war, especially in Germany, has a dark history: in the two world wars, German scientists played a key role in the barbaric quality of the means of violence for German colonialism, total war and the Holocaust. After the liberation by the Allies, this entanglement was given significant consideration in the Constitution [Grundgesetz].

## **We demand: HANDS OFF THE CIVIL CLAUSE!**

- No militarization of public schools, universities and research institutions in Hesse and everywhere!
- For the civil orientation of science and teaching and the necessary needs-based public funding!
- Strengthen the nature of the **civil clause** among students, researchers and teachers for the training and ability to think critically of a responsible, social and democratic person!
- Dare to be more democratic! Promoting and expanding the democratic self-administration of universities through comprehensive equal involvement and participation committees of all university members.

**Kassel & Frankfurt, December 15th, 2023** Contact to the initiative: [info@zivilklausel.de](mailto:info@zivilklausel.de)