



# Women in Exile & Friends

**Support work in “collective accommodations”**

- 1. The history and the approach of Women in Exile**
- 2. Traps and errors we observed**



**Women in Exile**  
Flüchtlingsfrauen werden laut



**From the year 2000 on...**

**The roads of 'Women in Exile':  
Refugee Initiative Brandenburg**



**"FREEDOM IS NOT GIVEN ON A PLATER OF GOLD"**

**No to Lagers for Women! Close all Lagers! Keine Lager für Frauen! Alle Lager abschaffen!**



## 2002: Women in Exile is founded

***It became obvious that apart from the discriminative laws faced by all asylum seekers, women and children were facing problems of a different kind. These problems are due to the compulsory collective accommodation system such as lack of privacy, sexual harassment and violence in the “Heims”.***

***Among the women activists this brought up the idea of organizing an initiative to give women a forum to meet together. Here they could express their fears and needs, and try to seek for solutions politically and socially.***

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## Asylum Seeking Women organizing and empowering themselves

*Women activists from different “Heims” in the state of Brandenburg got together and decided to organize themselves as a group “Women in Exile”.*



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**Women in Exile organized meetings, seminars, demonstrations and produced info materials.**



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***We organize “Empowerment” seminars to inform the women about their human and political rights and encourage them to be active in fighting against laws which hinder their emancipation.***



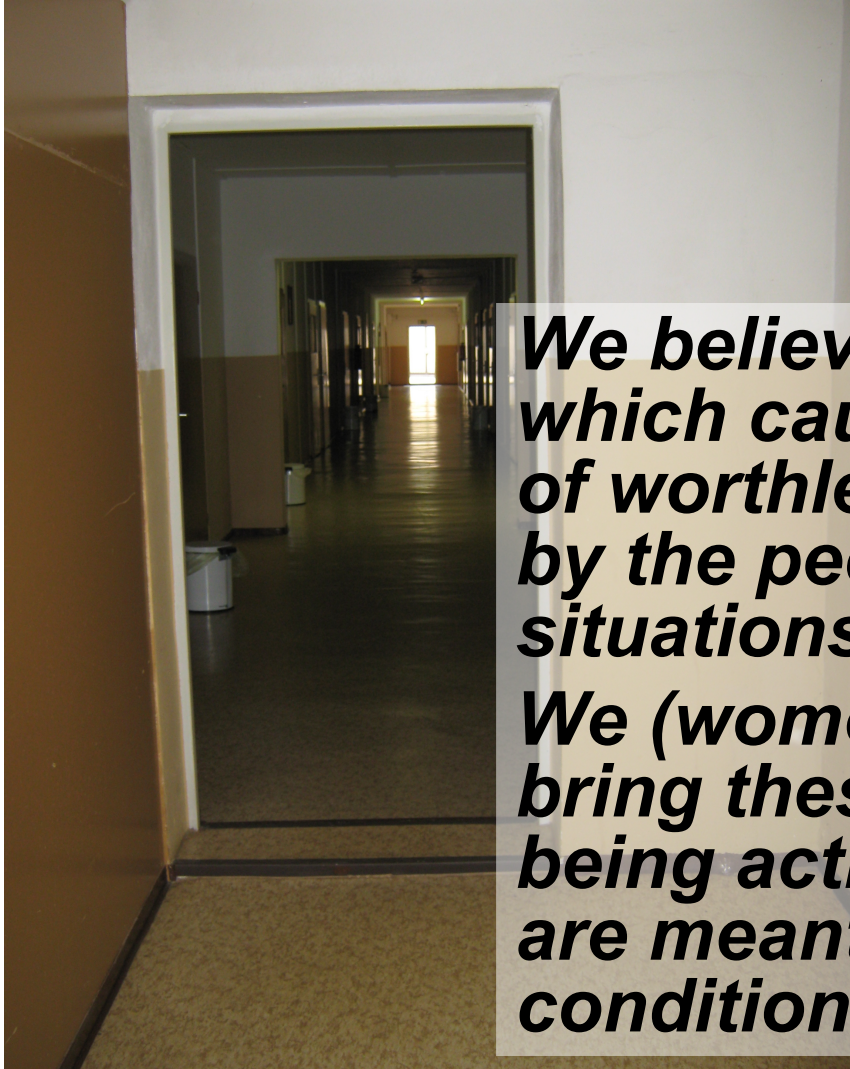
***Together we try to find solutions on how to go about these issues and when there is a needy case the person is directed to a proper institution where they can get help.***

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***We believe the living conditions in Heims which cause stress, trauma and feeling of worthlessness can be described best by the people who are living in these situations.***

***We (women) are the only ones who can bring these issues out to the society by being active, by joining activities which are meant to improve our living conditions.***

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***Women in Exile produced a brochure after visiting different Heims, highlighting the problems faced by the women in the Heims. There we gave details of some of their day to day problems.***



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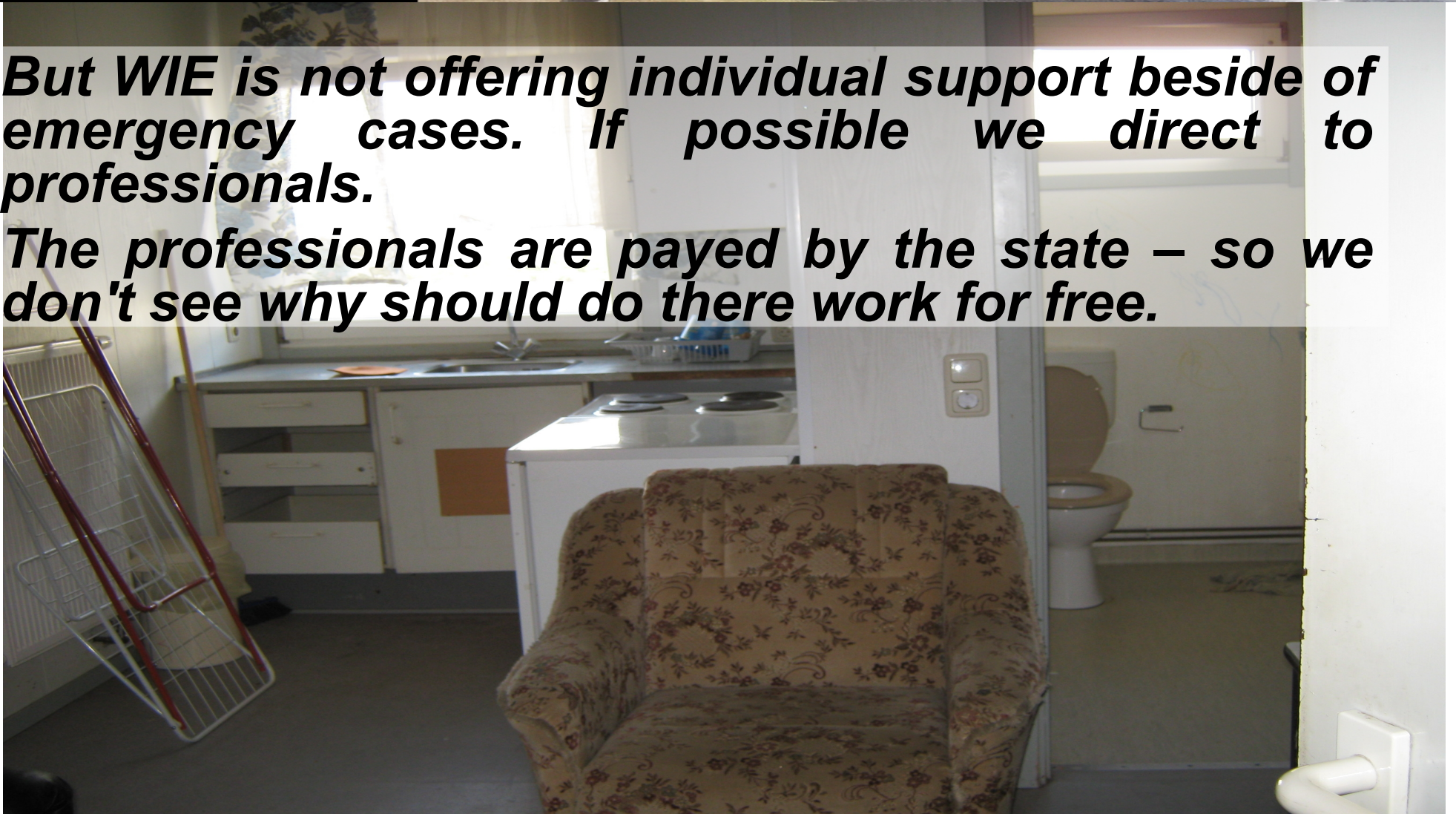
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***But WIE is not offering individual support beside of emergency cases. If possible we direct to professionals.***

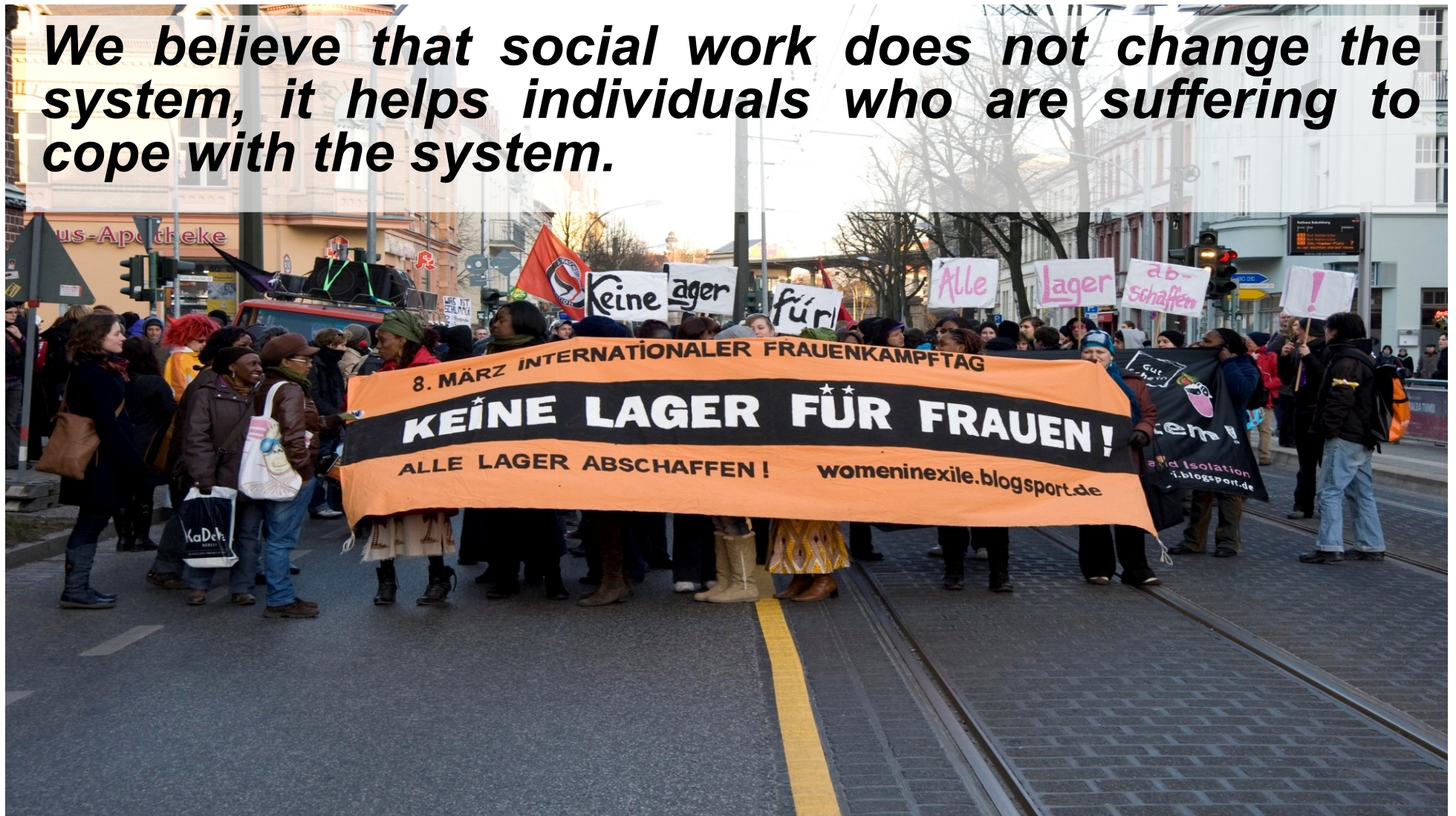
***The professionals are payed by the state – so we don't see why should do there work for free.***



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*We believe that social work does not change the system, it helps individuals who are suffering to cope with the system.*



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***Nevertheless there might be circumstances where there is a lack of professional supporters, so it is understandable that activists start to do support work to help out.***

***But we have observed especially in Brandenburg in Areas around Berlin some “Traps and errors” of support work:***

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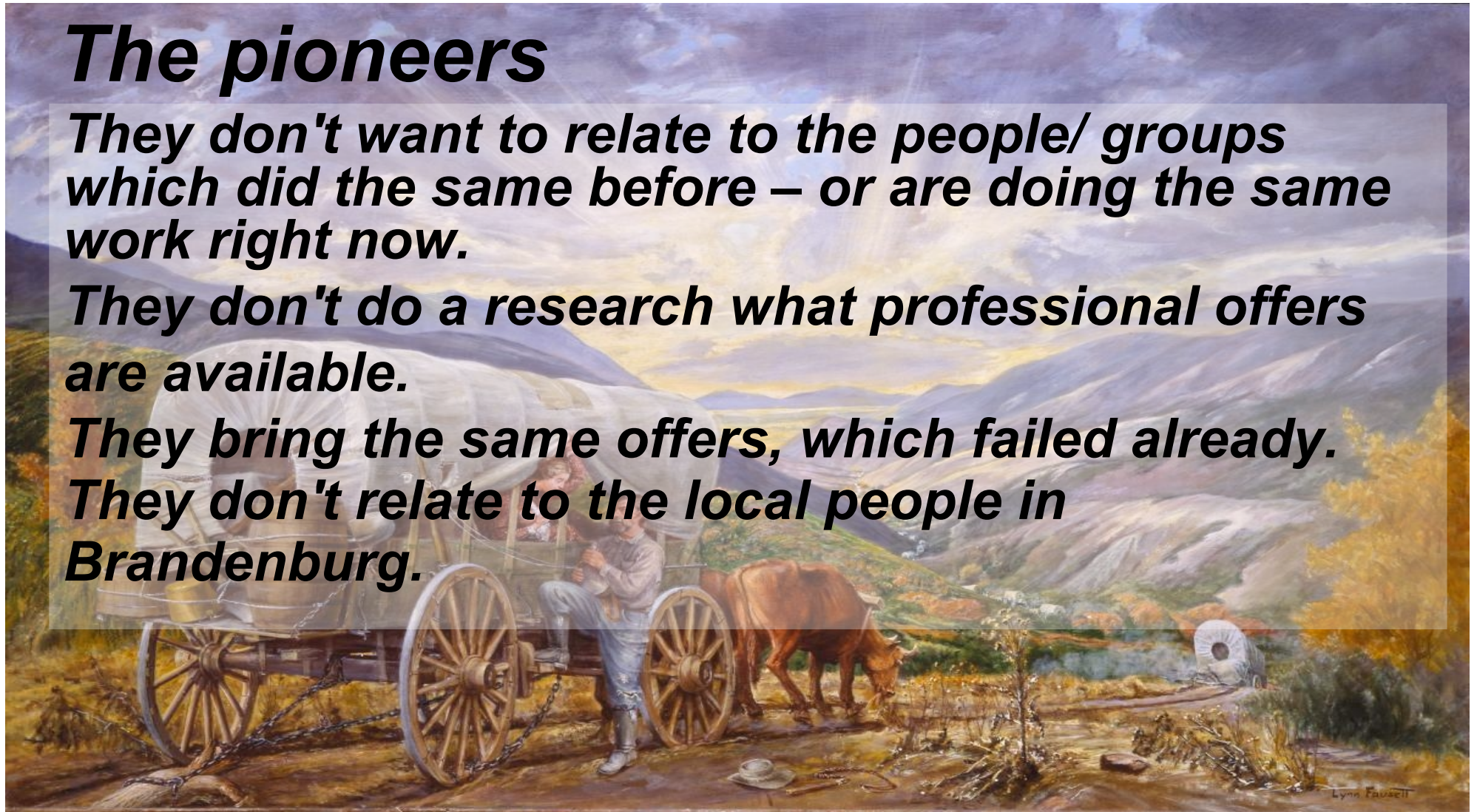
## *The pioneers*

*They don't want to relate to the people/ groups which did the same before – or are doing the same work right now.*

*They don't do a research what professional offers are available.*

*They bring the same offers, which failed already.*

*They don't relate to the local people in Brandenburg.*



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## *The helpers*

*If they are not clear in what they offer – and what they can not offer, they create disappointments and sometimes even danger for there “clients”*

*They let refugees believe that all Germans know everything about Germany, the laws, the administration and so on.*

*They are one day here – the next day there..*

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## The teachers

Kulturelle Orientierung —

Regeln und Verhaltensweisen

Zeit ist Geld

wie Arbeit, "Vergnügen"

**They offer "German language classes" as a hobby, sometimes without following any curriculum.**

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***We believe that behaviours like this are not helping refugees to empower themselves.***

***That is, why we see it very critical what some groups coming from an anti racist background are doing in this field.***

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*Thank you for your interest!*



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