

On the Eviction of Volksbühne

We are astonished at the fact that the Senator of Culture, Klaus Lederer (Die Linke), and the new Artistic Director, Chris Dercon, actually evicted the Volksbühne, as it demonstrates the profoundly authoritarian character of both persons and their notion of culture. Their actions are in essence neoliberal: political in its discourses, but repressive and hierarchical in the real structures behind the scenes. The artists whose rehearsal conditions were protected by the police should urgently let us know whether or not this action was in their name.

More importantly – and therefore all the more appalling – is that fact that a process that we see as a rare opportunity needed to be destroyed and criminalized. The “collective” organizing of a space like the Volksbühne for a week, and the opening of it for events, discussions and parties, was an amazing process that gave everyone who was there and able to take some time an idea of the possibility of cultural empowerment. The “arrogance” that the occupiers (or performers) were accused of by the press is not accurate in this case, considering that they consistently stepped back and included everyone who was present in every decision. That these discussions didn't simply fail because of arbitrariness or dogmatism is due to the fact that many have already internalized anarchist (in the best sense) and direct democratic tools for discussion.

To dispose of this process by means of the police discredits both the new “management” of the Volksbühne as well as their “superiors” in the Senate. Dialogue must be reactivated, there needs to be a solution in which the Volksbühne opens up to this process and its non-normative logic of time.

As opposed to the Senate's public statement, the negotiations on Wednesday were by no means broken off by the occupier-performers, and the offer to take over the Grüner Salon and the Pavillon were not rejected. Quite the opposite: The negotiation process was postponed until the following evening in the presence of colleagues from the Senator of Culture and the Volksbühne.

The eviction has further encouraged exactly this atmosphere in which the disruption of order, of works and of names is already not tolerated, and in which that which cannot be located within the conventional registers of security, visibility and efficiency is responded to with punishment and resentment. This occupation drew the imperceptibility of being, collectivity, transindividuality and the thinking of the many into the public sphere. It would have been exciting to see the next ignition phase of this performativity. The eruption of a coming aesthetics from below, which insists upon the potentiality of those who have no share, which has been so often invoked in theater and performance, and which enables the multitude or the many to act, was never opposed to the ongoing rehearsals at the Volksbühne. Therefore, the variations on Rosa-Luxemburg quotes about the freedom of those who perform differently are irrelevant, particularly when coming on behalf of those who did not want to position themselves in the tradition of Rosa Luxemburg. We support the performance and call upon everyone to make its continuation possible.

b_books, Berlin, 29 September 2017

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