

DEMOLISHING OR SQUATTING?

Direct Action as a Means in Urban Politics



WHAT IS DIRECT ACTION?

With direct action we describe a collective action through which a common need can be satisfied as immediately as possible.

The political means to preserve the FH have been exhausted:

1991: Guidelines for
monument preservation

1990: City Council
passes bill for „gentle
reconstruction“

1997: Presentation of
Concept paper for
Potsdam to the
UNESCO

The classic case of direct action is the strike for shorter workdays or more work-free days. Here, workers got together to satisfy a shared need for less working hours through collective absenteeism.

Quickly, however, direct action took other forms: blocking construction sites to prevent a pipeline from being built; rent strikes at which the tenants coordinate and stop paying rent to fulfil the need for affordable housing; sabotage of weapons to hinder mobilisation for a war that would cost one's friend's lives. Direct action is not about doing what is legal but about doing what is legitimate. The people of a city do not need state or party to get active. They can join forces, communicate their interests and wishes and act together.

WHY IS DIRECT ACTION LEGITIMATE IN THIS CASE?

The means we had within the rules of official politics are depleted. This way, the demolition of the Fachhochschule will not be prevented. Clearly, the people of Potsdam expressed their will

1999: City Council passes „Renovation Area Potsdam City Centre“

2001: City Council restructures the „Renovation Area“

2000: Decision to reconstruct the City Palace (Landtag)

2006: Final decision on reconstruction of the City Palace

to preserve the building with 15.000 signatures, but were ignored. Through demolition, privatisation and for-profit use the multi-faceted resource that is the FH-building – an ample, publicly accessible space in the city centre – will be destroyed.

Apparently, there is a shared need for a collectively usable space and in the Fachhochschule there is a building very well suited to satisfy this need. Therefore, direct action is the appropriate means. Faced with the plan to demolish the building this year, we see two alternatives: give up or squat! People in Potsdam can join forces to prevent the destruction of a resource and organise its use themselves. Thus, a use according to the needs of the people of Potsdam can be put directly into practice – apart from historic romanticisation and profit interest. The space opened by a squat can provide the freedom to develop further aspirations for the city.

2011: Decision on selling the FH

April 2016: Start public petition „Potsdamer Mitte neu denken“

2010-2016: Ascertainment of the development plan

August 2016: Jakobs makes legal claim to invalidate the petition

Direct action like such a squat are social and communicative processes like they rarely occur in the everyday of wage labour, school, university or Jobcenter. In these institutions we internalise isolation and competition instead of collective organisation. The practice of direct action can bear fruit far beyond the Fachhochschule and Potsdam's city centre.

WHAT TO DO?

SAVE WHAT CAN BE SAVED!

Demolishing or squatting?

For an appropriation of the Fachhochschule by the people in Potsdam

Continued use not demolition!

bittestehenlassen.noblogs.org

September 2016: City Council decides that the petition is invalid

März 2017: Court procedures confirm the decision that the petition is invalid

Besetzung der FH?