

Saturday 15.08.20

4.30 pm

Schinkelplatz

**Tear it down and turn it upside down!
First Rehearsal
(feat. The Tear-Down-Ensemble)**

While monuments of racist colonial history and violence are being taken down in many places around the world, Berlin disgraces itself by doing the exact opposite. The already-problematic reconstruction of the Berlin Palace has now been crowned with the globus cruciger (a golden cross-bearing orb), a symbol of imperial power and Christian global domination. It is accompanied by its historical inscription, demanding of the living and the dead to kneel unconditionally and humbly before Jesus. This pompous assertion will roof over the Ethnological Museum's collection mainly acquired during German colonialism; a blatant perpetuation of colonial violence. The revival and reconstruction of these adornments, with their call for submission and sense of superiority, further exposes the Humboldt Forum as an antidemocratic and regressive project. We are most alarmed that an architectural reimagination of Prussian monarchy, Christian dominance and colonial entitlement, makes legitimate space for revisionist and right-wing nationalist ideologies in the city of Berlin.

The neo-Prussian fantasy of omnipotence is shared by actors in the private sector who, through donations, enabled the covert self-coronation on May 30th. For the sum of 1 million euro, Maren Otto was allowed to inscribe a dedication for her husband, the late entrepreneur Werner Otto, directly onto the orb. In this way, the Otto Group and its subsidiary company, ECE Project Management, who have already devastated many inner cities with their dismal shopping malls, are permitting themselves the rhetoric of imperial divine right.

This dubious public-private pact becomes even clearer when we discover that Hohenzollern's (former Prussian aristocratic family) domed cross was not a part of the Bundestag resolution to reconstruct this Prussian palace on the site of the Palast der Republik and therefore, was not decided on in a democratic forum.

An online dossier from the Humboldt Forum describes the golden ensemble of cherubs, 'exotic' palm leaves, and globus cruciger as a "symbol of charity, freedom, cosmopolitanism and tolerance." But sorry, dear Monika Grütters, this is an insult to all of the above.

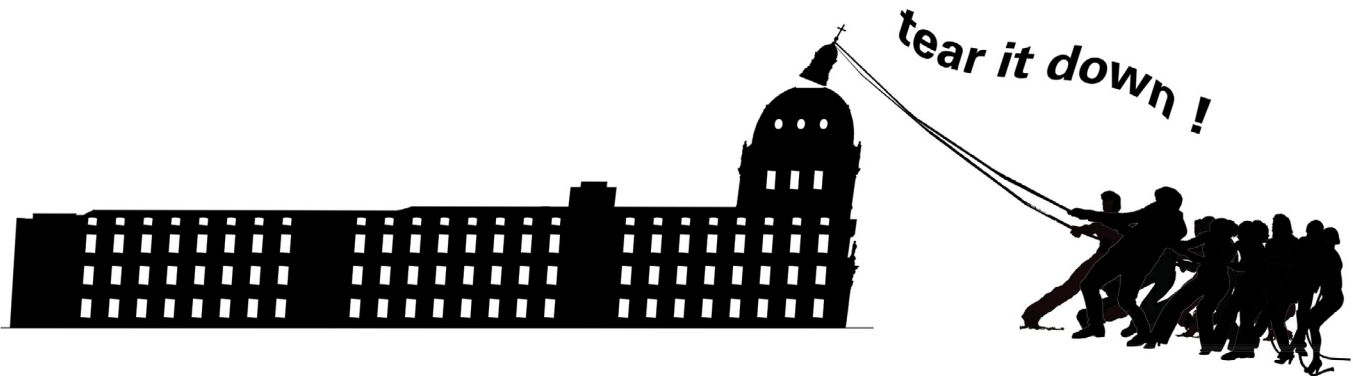
As for the Hohenzollerns: they are not benevolent, culturally-inclined patrons, rather a Prussian “family clan” that waged wars and spread catastrophe for over a thousand years. Even now, they are making headlines with absurd claims for financial compensation.

While elsewhere space is being created for a decolonized world that fights racism and Eurocentric ignorance, in Berlin the imperial undead are being exhumed from the crypts of history. These revenants are being enthroned above the city. Meanwhile, below, basements are filled with stolen artifacts and human remains from those very societies the Hohenzollern family forced to their knees under the sign of the cross. In the exhibition rooms of the Humboldt Forum, the “Kulturnation” Germany fulfills its longstanding dream “to be able to be someone again” on the world stage, aspiring to “critical” and “cosmopolitan” gestures. We are stunned and outraged at such insidious historical revisionism. In line with the current UN Decade for People of African Descent, it is immediately clear that the cross must come down! Afterwards, and only afterwards, can a sensible repurposing of these Baroque ruins be considered. Today we begin with the rehearsal to topple this undead and blood-soaked structure and sink it in the River Spree.

Black Lives Matter must also apply to museums. So that there may be a change of perspective in the white culture of remembrance.

Tear it down and turn it upside down!

The Coalition of Cultural Workers Against the Humboldt Forum



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