

HITLER'S DEATH DAY



Special Authorisation.
Special time, virus time. Everyone feels special about their breath,
their exhalation has become dangerous, inhaling other people's
dangerous air is an act of pure risk.

But not for those who believe in the Superior Race.
They defy potential death of a trans-national disease, they defend the borders of their healthy land, they are the ones who can show that even molecules are just immigrants and therefore not to be considered.

When they want to celebrate a person's birthday, himself responsible for evaporating 6.3 million people's lives through smoke stacks, they will do so.

Their desires are heard.
Shared by those who can issue a special authorisation at a time when no group is allowed to gather in public, for fear of spreading a virus.

Some viruses, the mental ones, never seem to die.

And so there they are, marching in Dresden, in reverence to the inventor of the gas chamber. It is the 20th of April 2020, Adolf Hitler's birthday.

I want a special authorisation, too.
I want one, so I can show how much I believe in something even more superior than the Superior Race. It is old fashioned, I know, its name is "Humanity".

I request one from the Local Authorities. They send me to the Police.
I request one from the Police. They send me to the Ministry of the Interior. I request one from the Ministry of the Interior. I receive a phone call from the Police.

"So what exactly are you planning in front of the Former Reichstag?"

"Are you supporting Adolf Hitler's ideology? You know that we cannot accept defamatory speeches, according to the Constitution."

I obtain the special authorisation.

It is the 30th of April 2020, Adolf Hitler's day of death.

The high visibility jackets are ornate with slogans:

"Endlich issen tot." (Finally, he's dead.)

"Solidarität"

"Long live self-reflection."

"Juchuhhh."

Over thirty metres of red sailing rope binds a group into one human web, each person tied to another, a horizontal climbing expedition in front of the German parliament.

Some are nodes, with rays shooting off them like a star in a solar system, some are trailing behind another person, idle end points, or potential connectors for future participants.

We push, we pull, we drag, the rope digs into our skin, we play horses on a leash, we run around, we stretch from one end of the parliament's front square to the other. We change the noose we are in with someone else.

We have a laugh.

A boombox speaker plays a mash-up version of Mozart's Requiem and a Dixieland tune. Are we sad? Death is serious, after all. But whose death is more serious than others'? Can we celebrate a death as well?

Some hesitant bystanders, watching at a distance.

I shout in their direction: "Today is the day when Adolf Hitler died. We are very happy! Are you happy, too?"

I am pulled away. I am hanging in my ropes, carried by the "human" on my left and another "human" on my right, supported. The rope a boa constrictor, my rib cage tight, I am hardly breathing. I am in a rhizome, I don't have to worry about my own body weight.

Some young women are close, with an expression of curiosity on their faces.

I shout my sentences again. They do not seem to understand. I try English, I try German, I try French.
But the mask that I am wearing acts as a nemesis to any form of intelligible communication.
The women smile at me awkwardly.
They say something, too.
They wear masks, too. I only hear friendly muffle.
No-one understands anything.

But they are here, with us, they are not afraid to assist in the spectacle of the red web in front of the former Reichstag. They are audience.

Another person arrives on the scene, with her bicycle.
She goes one step further.
She parks her bike and joins our performance.
Bouncing about joyfully, a joker in our grid, using us as her personal trampoline of happiness.

On the grass near the square I can spot what is - even at this distance - clearly a person belonging to the journalistic profession. Rarely have I seen such huge photography lenses, bulky grey tubes hanging off a man's neck, covering the near entirety of his chest.

I sense my chance. I leave my web and run towards him. In four sentences I brief him on the event and invite him to take some pictures for whichever press he might be on duty here.
He approaches the scene and starts taking photos of us, when, fatally, he spots the cellist, who is playing in front of the former Reichstag, sharing the space with us.

The cellist comes here every day, to perform the German national anthem in minor, thereby commemorating all the refugees who are not allowed into the country (a couple of paper copies with photos lying next to his foldable stool), a musical disagreement to the government's stance towards refugees.

We had asked him to play something joyful for the occasion, which he did. We hover around him, making him the centre of our entanglement, carefully avoiding his moving bow.

The journalist has fallen in love with the cellist. At a metre's distance, he lies down onto his belly, photographic lense perched up and starts shooting away. The cellist is his target, his favourite subject. He clearly is going for "a picture is worth a thousand words", with the dramatic clouds in the sky, the Reichstag building as a backdrop and this stropky-haired youngster on his cello, complete with self-sewn mask, whose moderate clothing holds a keen resemblance to that of a Czech musician freshly graduated from the conservatoire...in 1925. Corona-kitsch.

I am disappointed.
But that's journalistic freedom. I am too poor to bribe, too politically correct to coerce.

Another gentleman enters the scene. Also equipped with a tool for documentation. He requests an interview. Pointing a medium-sized film camera at me, he asks me questions about the event. Further into the interview, he mentions: "Well, those people who vote for the AfD (Alternative für Deutschland, a right-wing party in Germany) just don't know any better. They really believe all the lies. They are mis-informed."

I become angry. I am not willing to let those mis-informed off the hook. I argue that they do not wish to be informed in the first place. If they did, they would have to change their world view, and that is clearly something they do not wish to do.

I am having difficulties remaining polite. My speech becomes faster, more demagogic. I just about manage a "thank you for this interview". The change from movement to talking was very uneasy.

The police walks onto the square: "Time is up. Please vacate the square. We already gave you an extra half hour. We hope everything went well for you. Have a good afternoon."

I have a quick chat with them. They are friendly, but disinterested. They look professionally bored, yet sympathetic to the cause.

Whilst packing up the rope and dismantling the camera contraption, the Russian dancer darts towards us, pushing a pram with her child at top speed.

"Shit, did I miss it?"