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If you want Samba

Rubia Salgado

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After thousands demonstrated against the ÖVP-FPÖ government, we are back on the street: Every Thursday since October 4 we have met in a different place in Vienna to protest this neoliberal right-wing extremist government, but above all we assemble to exchange and to show: yes, there are alternatives, and yes, there are ways of doing things better for everyone.

Rubia Salgado was one of many who spoke at Ballhausplatz on the October 4 in front of thousands of people. Here is her speech.

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If you want me, I am we!

It is frightening to have to be here again, here at Ballhausplatz, here in Austria, here in the world.

And it is wonderful and encouraging to be here, with you, here in Austria, here in the world amongst you in Kabul.

Here in Kobani.
Here in Buenos Aires.
Here in Manila.
Here in Luanda.

Here in Chemnitz.
Here in Vienna.
Here in Brazil with daily violence, with daily murder of Homo Trans Black Indigenous Women Poor.

Ele não, ele não!

Here we are, once again, and again and again we are here and there and everywhere and loud and full of joy and in solidarity and in rage, singing out, crying, laughing, again and again we say it clear, we don't want this government!

And me and we there, where we move every day, we Queers Feminists Migrants and Refugees, who managed to arrive here, we are here despite of the daily pain that marks our everyday life, despite being spat at in the bus, despite the insults, despite harassment, despite deportation, despite reduced guaranteed minimum income, despite fear, despite mouldy apartments, despite racism in the street, by the authorities, in hospitals and schools, despite racist, murderous migration policies, despite the pessimism of the intellect we move with optimism of the will, we move in confrontation, in struggle for a better life for all, here, everywhere and now.

Yes, optimism!

They won't silence us, they wont destroy us. They are desperate, because we are powerful, because non-conformity is much more common than they wish or could imagine, because our worlds are much more joyful and powerful than their narrow world of conservative and reactionary values, because the politics of marginalisation, of humiliation, of exploitation had to stumble upon us. We won't let them destroy our achievements.

When Judith Butler was in Brazil last year, numerous reactionary groups organised a series of protest actions against her and against what they call gender ideology. They made a Butler puppet and burned her on the street...

And Butler, talking in an interview about these experiences in Brazil, said things very similar to what we are doing here in the context of optimism: the worlds that the conservatives want to destroy, the gay and lesbian worlds, the trans worlds, the queer feminist worlds are already powerful. They know that they are not only powerful, but that they are becoming even more powerful and self-evident; and the more they become more powerful and more self-evident, the "Others," the Nonconforming, the LGBTIQ, the Migrants, Refugees and Fugitives, the Deviant, those with Disabilities, the Blacks, the Indigenous and the many, many others, the more powerful and self-evident all these groups become, the more identities are not understood in essentialist terms but rather as positionings, the more we join forces in the struggle for equality, the more furious and dangerous the reactionary right will become.

But we too!

But still we have to be careful, to take care of each other, to protect and support each other in the struggle, not giving them a chance and practicing disobedience ourselves, together, day-to-day.

As a Black queer person, who I saw recently in a video and who, at the parade that celebrates the so-called independence of Brazil, was dancing Samba to the military music, Samba!

And this is how we go through the world, dancing Samba, dancing differently, not following the music of violence. Let us try ourselves out in resistance, in dissent, in disobedience.

And be like this in the world...
If you want Samba, I am Haikai
if you want reason, I am wine
if you want flesh, I am poison
If you want pleasure, I am pain
if you want laughing, I am biting
if you want performance, I am hammock
if you want order, I am chaos,
if you want family, I am desire
if you want property, I am exchange market
if you want names, I am woman
if you want woman, I am eunuch
if you want eunuch, I am lesbian
if you want borders, I am bolt cutter
if you want murder, I am see rescue
if you want police, I am clown
if you want horses, I am dragon
if you want desert, I am mountain
if you want mountain, I am world
if you want world, I am Linz,
if you want Linz, I am Rio
if you want Rio, I am Mediterranean,
if you want death, I shout life
if you want silence, I am voice
if you want me, I am we
if you want Donnerstag, we are Demo!

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transversal texts has also published a book by Rubia Salgado: Aus der Praxis im Dissens

For more information on the Thursday protests: https://wiederdonnerstag.at/