

PIZZA



БЛЮБТ!

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How it started...

The Pizzeria Anarchia is a house project located at the Mühlfedgasse 12 in the second district in Vienna. It exists since November 2011 and is now in danger of eviction. At that time, the two owners of the house, Avner Motaev and Nery Alaev, owners of Castella GmbH, offered a temporary use free of charge, first until March, later until June 2012. Even though they claimed to be motivated by social responsibility, it became quickly obvious that their real motivation (which they admitted in front of the judge by now) was to scare away the remaining tenants. Due to their permanent rent contracts, it was nearly impossible to displace them by juridical means, and they also couldn't be persuaded to move out by the sabotage and intimidations made by the owners.

In spite of these quite contradictory conditions, we decided to take the chance. Our goal was to protect the remaining tenants and to collectively resist against the brutal business practices of the owners. At the same time, it was clear that most of us didn't have the intention to leave the house after the end of the legal time given in the contract. This way, we placed ourselves amidst one of the many fronts of gentrification, being completely aware of the owner's intention to use us for their own profit interests. From the beginning it was our plan to turn the tables. In the middle of the Viennese second district, which is under strong gentrification pressure, we put an anchor to intervene in the ongoing process of displacement.

Many of us were homeless at this time and, therefore, this step was also a possibility to emancipate oneself from the constraint to pay rents, without being dependent on the meagre charity institutions of state and church, which are open only for people with the "right" passport anyway. The start of the project was not easy, many people didn't know each other beforehand and it took some months until a functioning collective emerged.

As an open collective, we try to create a free, social and cultural space in which different forms of events and open discussions can take place.

What we do:

Since the end of February 2012 a "People's Kitchen" with pizza, created by everyone who likes to take part in the making or bringing of ingredients, from our woodfire stone-oven takes place every Sunday. Food and drinks are always given for a free donation, while it is important for us that also people without money are not being excluded. Some time later, the "Filme unter der Hand" (underhand movies) was established, where political movies, documentaries and rare movies are being shown every Tuesday. There is a free shop with clothes and other useful things and there is an info-shop with a small library. To open them for the public also on other days of the week, the Pizzeria is also open on Friday afternoons since some months. Since September 2012, discussions and information meetings take place more or less regularly on the Pizza Sundays. With longer and warmer days we take more

space outside the house, for example for breakfast on the pavement, and our daily life integrates more with the surroundings. On May 1st 2012 and 2013 inhabitants, other users and friends of the Pizzeria organised a big street party with the name “What you want...”. It is planned to be repeated in 2014. Since summer there are monthly demonstrations with the slogan “The damn rent is too high!” where topics such as the critique of racism or the prison society are equally given attention to.

With the expiration of the contract we started a campaign where the methods of the owners were revealed. We published an article in the Augustin, a street newspaper sold by mainly homeless people, and invited selected journalists to explain them the situation. Even though the collaboration with mainstream media is a delicate issue, we thought it to be appropriate in that situation in order to create a certain public attention for protection against assaults. Also, the topic of displacement by “upgrading” was so far rarely discussed in Vienna.

The business practices of the Castella GmbH

If we collected everything we have by now found out about the methods of Motaev and Alaev in our and other houses, we could easily write an extensive manual for real estate speculation: Removing, without replacing, the hallway windows in winter, turning off the gas or water supply, regular visits late in the evening, sometimes by the owners themselves, sometimes by their henchmen with a fighting dog at the leash, intruding apartments and requesting to hand over the keys, oil and butanoic acid spilled in the staircases, sometimes simply garbage piles in hallway and staircase, over and over again the threat that the house will collapse soon, blocking of the canalisation, so that the waste water is flooding the courtyard, scribbles exactly at the apartment doors of the tenants who do not want to negotiate their removal with the owner, snooping of tenants by private detectives, lawsuits to force a cancellation of contracts with absurd reasons, where the mostly less legally trained and less financially strong tenants have to prove their innocence, threats to press charges of creating a criminal organisation and so on.

The owners of the Pizzeria only buy houses where a few remaining people with mainly permanent and low priced rent contracts live in. These houses are relatively cheap, because other owners already tried to crack these hard nuts. Motaev and Alaev, using at least eight different companies, have specialised in this so called “freeing of inventory”, they deal with the last steps of “de-renting” and sell the apartments individually, mostly as owner-occupied flats. If it works out, this business model promises high profits. As a result of our campaign, a whole series of articles was published discussing the house in the Mühlfeldgasse as well as the Castella GmbH and other companies of Motaev and Alaev.

They want us to leave...

On August 2nd 2012 the two owners, supported by a dozen of construction workers, two private detectives and a locksmith, eventually tried to evict on their own

account the parts of the house used by the Pizzeria-collective and to close the entrance of the Pizzeria by putting up a stone wall. Supporters were mobilised, there was a long lasting back-and-forth, where several times the owners and their henchmen used brutal violence. However, after more than twelve hours, they capitulated. Subsequently, several sabotages of the power supply and attempts to exchange the door-locks followed, but after a while it got quiet.

After this eviction-attempt the owners had to face bad news in the press again, and after some time, all eviction lawsuits against remaining tenants in their houses were withdrawn from court. A partial success, but time will show, for how long. But then, the conflict with the Pizzeria-Collective went to court. Apparently, they first tried to get rid of the most annoying troublemakers, before going on with the displacement of the regular tenants as unwatched as possible. Repeatedly, the trial was postponed. At the end of January 2013 though, we had the last hearing. The judge offered to give us one month time to negotiate a mutual agreement with the owners.

By now, we have received a written verdict in favour of the owners. We are making an appeal, but are aware that it's very likely to be refused quite soon. After that the owners will be allowed to evict the house legally with support of the authorities. Concretely, this means that the Pizzeria is in danger of eviction beginning in the middle of June 2013.

...but we will stay!

We have decided to not try to reach a mutual agreement with the owners, because we do not want to make any deals with them anymore. Instead, we will stay in the house, until state authority will come to enforce private property rights and to violently evict us. We are very happy about every form of visits and support, and we will certainly try to make the eviction fail. For this, we will urgently need any form of support from outside.

Keep yourself and others up-to-date about our situation, contact us, organize solidarity actions, come by for a visit, and most of all:

Come to the eviction on day X!

We will not retreat!

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