

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Barricade was born of a moment that felt like hopelessness, a sort of helpless rage and isolation when confronting a world and a country that suddenly, as though a text in an unfamiliar language, seemed illegible. Day by day, we've watched as around the world the once-unthinkable has become the inevitable, the aberrant has become the quotidian. This worldwide shift towards authoritarianism and nationalism dressed in the guise of populism, whose possibility was always lingering just beneath the surface even if apparent only in retrospect, has crystallized into a trend that shows little sign of relenting. And history suggests it won't do so willingly.

For some of us, in this moment of reckoning, our first instinct was toward literature, not as an escape but as a mooring in this global groundswell. In the written world we may have hoped for an understanding that we lacked, and for the trajectories and histories that might

be revealed. Instead, for some of us, as we tried to share those texts that might have helped to give shape to the amorphous, to discern meaning from static, to structure resistance through solidarity, we were stymied by languages we did not share, with no recourse to the one in which we do.

Language itself was initially the barricade.

But a barricade is a makeshift structure; it can be disassembled and reconstituted in other forms. Disassembled hopelessness and reconstituted rage have been channeled into the production of this first issue, which you are now just beginning to read. Together I hope we might find insight in past voices, to let them commingle with those of the present overlaying experience upon experience, moment upon moment so that we might draw up blueprints and battle plans. A barricade is a point where the defensive can become the offensive.

Barricade seeks to exceed the barriers of time, language, and genre. *We believe that power functions in part by controlling the movement of information.* We must not let that control be too easy. Authoritarianism builds popular support through an implicit argument for the particularity of its given moment, the uniqueness of the situation facing its populace. It says, *This is not that.* Or, *You cannot compare us with them.* The particulars may change, but the pronouns remain the same.

It is this constitutive exceptionalism that is resisted precisely by way of comparison and comparability. It's untenability reveals itself in the moment of translation. This journal aims to dismantle its claims, strip them down into their component parts before repurposing them in new forms that can be used against themselves. Their very words give structure to our resistance.

From the earliest pages of this first issue, questions become apparent. Is any one fascism commensurate with any other? Does the word "fascism" itself refer to a temporally- and geographically-bounded political moment, or an amorphous form of authoritarianism, one whose beginnings can be located, and whose future may be again on the ascendance? How can art be resistance? How is it complicit? In lieu of answers, *Barricade* provides more questions, but also, it is hoped, space to explore those questions and context to ground our readers in their own contemplation. Towards this end, each issue incorporates an interview feature which will include conversations with scholars, artists, and public intellectuals, and will explore various themes and questions that irrupt in our pages.

Being open-access means that we don't have pay walls or blocked content. Texts that appear in *Barricade* are published under the

Creative Commons license Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives, which means the texts may be shared, but only for non-commercial purposes and only with proper attribution to the author and translator. This was a matter of serious discussion among our editorial collective, and we believe the resulting decision best balances our desire to facilitate the movement of information while at the same time insisting on the value of artistic and intellectual labor. We are deeply grateful to the translators, authors, and all others who hold rights to texts appearing within for their willingness to be published under such a license. Fundamentally, this license is deeply consonant with *Barricade's* mission and is indicative of the translators' and, in many cases, authors', commitment to our shared principles. *We seek to keep information moving by re-presenting it in translation.*

Rage alone cannot turn a project like *Barricade* from an

impulse into a reality. For that, I must thank New York University's Department of Comparative Literature for its generous support in this endeavor. Without it, *Barri-
cade* would have been destined to remain a fleeting notion, an idea whose time had not yet come.

And lastly, I must also say thank you to the other members of the editorial collective. Untold hours of labor have gone into the production of this journal, hours whose only remuneration is the pleasure of expanding the range of the works we publish by bringing them to an English-reading audience. While I cannot say precisely that it was a labor of love, it was nonetheless a labor of passion. What love there is is reserved for the pieces that we have been so honored to publish.

—Amy Obermeyer