

LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

If any historical event, once narrated and contextualized, is never isolated in the past but reverberates with that which came before and after, then the seismic ripples of the interwar years are felt particularly strongly today. Most striking is our current battle with a virus that brought the world to a standstill almost a century after the outbreak of a flu pandemic that claimed around fifty million lives. While the 1920s roared with an economic boom fueled by petroleum, that resource is now in its twilight years—an inevitable decline accelerated, in part, by COVID-19 and the efforts to mitigate its spread. And while that decade ended in a spectacular bust, the shock waves of capitalism and its state-controlled variations have become, in the decades since, a numbing norm.

We have yet to comprehend the impact of COVID-19—and the hunger and inequality it has exacerbated—on popular movements

worldwide, but as Bob Marley sang: “a hungry mob is an angry mob.” Large swathes of the global population are reaching the threshold of what can be borne under the current system; alternatives are a matter of urgency.

The interwar period was alive with experimentation—in thought and in practice—in alternative modes of organizing that resisted the momentum of capitalism and a slide towards fascism: communism, socialism, anarchism, and nihilism, as represented in our fourth volume of *Barricade*.

In an editorial, the Indian anticolonial revolutionary, M. P. T. Acharya, invokes Marx’s call of 1848: “Workers of the world, unite!” Only, by 1930, clear asymmetries between the laboring classes in colonial spaces and in the metropole had emerged. Acharya admonishes the European proletariat for complicity in the production of an imperialist war machine that was ravaging the lives not only of colonial laborers;

the European proletariat, he argues, was blind to its complicity—and suffering materially from it. Anti-militarism, for Acharya, was a concept that was capable of uniting the interests of all the laboring classes, because the war machine is a globalizing force.

The exigencies that make international solidarity urgent will change over generations; but Acharya’s call is clarion, especially as wars, and now climate change, continue to dump ever more people into the ever broadening class of the global precariat, where it’s not always easy to identify the axes along which solidarity might be cultivated.

In Acharya, we have an anti-colonial voice from the colonized world, an antifascist perspective of the period less often represented. Similarly, the other texts collected here broaden the scope of the oft-told Eurocentric story of fascism’s rise, as well as the social and political resistance during this time. In

a manifesto published in 1926, the 22-year-old Korean anarchist and anticolonialist, Woo-Yeol Yoon, rails against Japan's large-scale proliferation of prisons as part of its imperialist strategy in Korea. He would later come to experience the brutality of that strategy first-hand, when he, despite his youth, survived a mere four months beyond his fourteen-month incarceration for his role in the document. The author Taiko Hirabayashi's 1927 short story "At the Charity Clinic" also explores the brutality of the Japanese carceral systems in its colonies, drawing attention to the role that "unwanted" Japanese citizens played in settler colonialism. (Hirabayashi was an active leftist, a member of the proletarian writers' movement.) A fictionalized account of her imprisonment, her time in exile in Manchuria, and the loss of her child from malnutrition, the story makes clear the connection of capitalism and imperialism with misogyny.

Children emerge as a particularly disposable population not only in Hirabayashi's story, but also in a radio address given by the writer and school teacher Carmen Lyra in 1935. In it, she narrates the political and economic circumstances that led her to become an organizer and one of the founding members of the Costa Rican Communist Party. The address is both intimate and macroscopic, her critique of capitalism emerging directly from her everyday experiences. By demonstrating that the activity of care-giving is endemic to thinking and conceptualizing political organization, Lyra directly connects the material inequalities programmed by capitalism with the bodies of her students and their families. "When I saw little barefoot children entering the school," she recounts, "pale and timidly hugging the walls, not daring to step into the open as if they might lose their balance, I felt that something had to be done beyond bathing these creatures or giving

them a cup of oats or milk.”

Though there is a clear focus, throughout this volume, on World War I and the rise of fascism as a continuation of the effects of capitalism, the more recent poems of the Indian writer Amrita Pritam, and the contemporary poetry of Faouzia Aloui and Patrick Sylvain, complicate any attempt historically to locate fascism and authoritarianism. Both Pritam and Aloui repurpose time-honored poetic traditions: Sufi and Bhakti (Pritam) and Arabic (Aloui). Though they comment on modern political circumstances in India and Tunisia respectively, the suggested affinities with earlier periods and struggles expand the historical consciousness of their poems. A similar temporal remove can be observed in Sylvain’s poetic project to reimagine the Haitian revolution.

Questions of authorship, co-translation, mediated translation, and self-translation—and their implications for political

solidarity—surface and resurface throughout. Acharya’s thoughts were published in a range of languages—from Dutch and German, to Tamil—and sometimes appeared simultaneously, in more than one language, in different leftist publications across the world. While his proficiency in each language (and as such the extent of his authorial control) remains unclear, one might say that he was writing not only *for* a global community of anticolonialists, anarchists, and communists, but also, through these acts of translation, *with* them. Pritam wrote her poems in Punjabi, but a limited readership in that language meant that they were, as a matter of course, translated to Hindi prior to publication. This raises the question of mediated translation: as the translator Paramita Purakayastha notes, though it increases the risk of misinterpreting the author, “building solidarity is essentially an act of translation.”

Meanwhile, Sylvain's poems are, in a sense, born mediated, in that they are written with an eye towards (self-)translation. His decision to write in Haitian Creole (and in Japanese forms) is significant: a "political act" that pushes back against notions of a vernacular language as less of a literary medium than others.

Deviating from the norm, our interview, this time, is also a translated archival document. In 2015, amidst a rising sea of far-right activity in France, the activist Julien Terzics recalled his experiences as a "skinhead hunter" in 1970s Paris. As a founding member of the "Red Warriors," Terzics and his comrades would fight skinhead gangs, driving them out of the Parisian neighborhoods they had come to dominate. By their regalia they knew them: the burly embodiments of fascist and white supremacist sympathies. What began as a matter of survival, a relatively simple act of self-liberation, was really the start of Terzics's

political education and a lifetime of militant activism. As in Lyra's case, radicalization, for Terzics, was born of his everyday experiences. His story serves as a helpful reminder that forms of solidarity that build resilience more often begin with the actions we take, for ourselves and those around us, than with their theoretical models—that education follows experimentation, and that, simply put, "we all get out of this together, or we won't get out at all."

