While we may have begun this project with a sense of urgency motivated by certain discrete political events unfolding in a narrow geographical band, we are discovering that our continuation of this work involves more than an inquiry into other histories and other sites of experience in the effort to contextualize our own. The present issue, Barricade’s second, presses us with questions concerning the future of radical political action and the potentialities of aesthetic representation to explore, critique, and resignify the past for the sake of the future.

In this issue, we see an incredibly diverse range of anti-fascist and anti-authoritarian practices represented—from personal reflections on the place of the individual within a larger political community, to more collectively experienced forms of cultural production like song, to sweeping world-systems analysis and intensively “theoretical” modes of understanding the
machinations of global capital and the production and exploitation of human desire.

Évelyne Trouillot’s short story, “The Funeral,” reminds us that human action is never singularly motivated but contingent and overdetermined by complex matrices of material need and ideological objectives. Focalizing a scene from contemporary Haiti, we read in her character a feeling of being trapped and what perhaps may happen when a person lacks access to explicitly “politically” oriented practices of expression and resistance amidst the backdrop of natural disaster, disenfranchisement, and the political machinations of foreign aid.

The anonymous author of “Only One Solution: To Remain Together!” locates in the radical space of the zone à défendre a countermeasure to the isolation and dependency that Trouillot’s story describes. Here the power of difference and dissensus is affirmed and the challenge articulated: how to disagree without becoming divided? In this testimonial, the ZAD emerges as a place of imagination, one that demands a high degree of self-reflexivity if leftist politics are to evolve and transform to meet present exigencies.

Likewise Samir Amin’s “An Alternative to Liberal Globalization” looks back to the 1955 Bandung Conference in order to look forward, refracting a possible future through historical and historically hegemonic concepts like “development” in order to propose non-deterministic models for new economic arrangements that resist imperial capitalism. His analysis dares to recognize the potentially volatile yet operative role of nationalist and populist movements as strategic elements in the larger project of disengagement from the traditional forms of imperial domination that have shaped the Global South.

In the lyrics to Ralph Rabie’s “Donker, Donker Land,” we
find Apartheid South Africa cast in
biblical terms, which is to say epic,
intergenerational, and familial. This
kind of gesture—whether amplify-
ing and universalizing what is fun-
damentally intimate or framing in
the terms of intimacy what proper-
ly belongs to the public sphere—is
one we find reiterated throughout
the texts in this issue, the alertness
and immediacy of which consist-
tently remind us that fascism itself
is intimate: it concerns the family
and it is of the body. The lyrics too
highlight the way that Apartheid
maintained itself by exploiting bib-
lical narratives for the purposes of
racialized terror and domination.

José Carlos Mariátegui’s es-
say “Scenes from a Civil War” of-
fers a glimpse into the social and
political conditions that laid the
groundwork for Mussolini’s fascist
party to take power during the vol-
tile years following World War I. In
“Castor Oil and the Intelligentsia,”
Mariátegui depicts what could be
described as the erotics by which
Italy’s intelligentsia—writers, art-
ists, philosophers, Idealists, Futur-
ists—became active agents of the
fascist cause, taking pleasure in al-
lowing themselves to be “taken by
force.” In these crónicas, the sense
of flux is palpable: tradition is posed
as the Janus face of revolution and
the reader feels the maneuverings
in which both sides anticipate one
another, each operating under the
assumption that the acting liberal
state power is ineffective. Mariáte-
gui’s pieces pose important ques-
tions for the contemporary mo-
ment—concerning the political role
of intellectuals and artists, the ease
with which various art and literary
movements are enlisted for polit-
ical means, and the political and
economic systems that fund and
privilege certain forms of intellectu-
al work.

The introduction to Michel
Clouscard’s Neofascism and the
Ideology of Desire returns us to the
problem of the erotic, a conceptual
space that has been utterly exploit-
ed, depicting a political economy in which, as he has written elsewhere, "all is permitted but nothing is possible." Clouscard’s insistence on the continuity of capitalism in its transition from classical to neo-liberalism, his description of the “emancipation” of desire and productivity and how these collude to reproduce new markets and technostructures of exploitation: these theoretical gestures lay bare the dialectic between liberalism and neo-fascist populism by assuming the tactical form of a polemic—which may be the form that theory needs to remain efficacious.

As Orsolya Lehotai makes clear in the interview that closes this issue, in the case of contemporary Hungary, isolation and dependency are not only strategies but the products of its repressive authoritarian regime—against which familiar modes of protest appear to be proving increasingly less viable. Lehotai therefore advocates for the interrogation of the deep psychic and affective structures that enable Viktor Orbán’s illiberal policies to take hold so strongly. On the occasion of her own self-reflection, we are all inculcated in an open-ended conversation about what other practices of resistance there may be and which are most effective and in what circumstances.

We find company and solidarity in these texts, both those emerging from our contemporary moment and those from past historical contexts that at times feel uncannily prescient, at others quite remote—but all offering sustenance in our shared struggle towards a more just and equitable world. We hope you find something here too.