

Issue 4

Red Thread emerged at a point in time when hopes were high of converging and thinking about geographies that had not - could not - been related to each other for a long time due to the borders drawn by nationalism and the cold war paradigm. An optimism and zest that the web of interactions established in the 90s could be taken further, be deepened and somehow made permanent, gave rise to the project in 2009; the journal launched as a discussion platform coordinated from Istanbul, but always conceived to be able to move to nearby geographies.

Following our third issue, we took some time to select the topics we thought we should concentrate on. In the previous issues, there was always the feeling that something important remained unaddressed: we wanted to contribute to the analysis of the current educational system, to examine the models of alternative, experimental education, to trace the development of feminism outside of the West, to shed some light on today and yesterday of the Non-Aligned Movement... However, at one point, the whirlpool of history started to churn faster than the spool of our red thread and we stopped for a bit to contemplate on whether the issues we were preparing had any resonance. We filed away the folders we were working on and started assembling an issue that would be able to respond to the excitement and the energy of the resistance movements that since 2011 begun to appear from Egypt to Brazil to Turkey to Armenia; we wanted to investigate and understand the shared denominators of these movements. But we were pushed back by the incessant political ruptures, traumas, by the speed and scope of events that kept taking away freedoms, lives, and all future; we kept on trying and failing, as the reality was always being faster than whatever response we could deliver.

We realized quite quickly that the rhythm of publishing we aimed for at the beginning is not possible in the times of the acceleration of the global production of art and culture and massive precarization of cultural labor. The limited time afforded by our various professional and life engagements, our particular geopolitical conditions and the efforts to produce the financial circumstances that would make the publishing even possible have resulted with the closed loop of postponing that challenged our desires, our readiness, our endurance and our commonality. The fact that this issue is in front of you shows that we have accepted slowness, irregularities, contingencies, breaks, and also persistence and new beginnings, as the conceptual response to the situation that otherwise may be seen as unattainable. Against the biennialization of theory - slow model of production!

For the occasion of this issue we focused on the notion of dispossession, suggested by a member of our editorial board, Meltem Ahıska. It was right around the time when Judith Butler and Athena Athanassiou had jointly published *Dispossession: The Performative in the Political* (2013), and we were excited by the possibility of expanding the notion to include the examination of body, identity, rights, and freedom within the framework of *dispossession*; this issue is made up of responses to this expanded framework.

What we couldn't foresee or even imagine at the time was that the very cultural and intellectual field in which different social expressions of dispossession were discussed would itself be under the blockade. In truth, we never anticipated that the humorous word play in the title of our publication would be taken seriously and that the red thread would be encoded as a "red threat". Today, the freedom of one of the founders of our publication, Osman Kavala, is held hostage. The "local and national" nature of this crass action makes possible the discussion of a "war of culture", expressed by the highest authority of that mindset, discussing the use of war methods to establish a cultural hegemony. (It is with bitter irony to note that the concept is not so local and national: Bismarck is the founder of the notion of *Kulturkampf*.) This unilaterally launched war is the phenomena we are starting to encounter across the world, making more acute the need to share the experiences of those in the fields of culture, art, and activism and to develop the networks of solidarity. This is a topic to study for the future issues.

One of the most important arguments in this debate is that the moment of the realization of the experience of dispossession is also the moment of the initiation of political subjectivity. The consequence of the emergence of political subjectivity is the contact with those at a disadvantage, the dislocated: possible moments of activating networks of solidarity are pointed at, we believe, with a several texts that complement the Dispossession chapter.

In the previous issues of Red Thread we tried to stay within the circle drawn with the center point in the Eastern Mediterranean basin: the focus was conceived to be more on the non-Western geographies of Southeast Europe, Southern Caucasasia, the Middle-East, Northern Africa. The traumatic developments of the last few years and the consequent demographic movements kept us from clearly distinguishing between the geographies we focused on and Europe understood as European Union. In this issue, we trace the official responses of EU countries on the migration wave, as well as the rise of the populist right. Through our collaboration with Maxim Gorki Theater and 3rd Berliner Herbstsalon, we feature texts on the historical infrastructure which provocatively foreground "de-integration" in the face of the "integration" narrative that has taken over the entire political scale. We hope that you can find striking examples that minor against the majoritarian positions can relate to.

While preparing the issue on dispossession, one from among us is being taken into arrest. This has left behind powerful emotional traces. Is there a new doubt? Could we continue this magazine into the future?

Until soon and here is to hoping it will not be too long of a break.