



Red Winter. Artistic intervention at main square of Levanger, Norway, 2014. Photo: Rena Rädle

Red Winter

Commissioned by LevArt (<http://levart.no>) in the frame of Deep Sites, 5-20 September 2014.
Curated by Anne-Gro Erikstad.

The artistic intervention with sound, banners and the distribution of our newspaper on Levanger's main square creates references between contemporary and historical social movements from Levanger and Norway that are part of worldwide struggles for emancipation. The point of departure is the three-day-long workers' uprising that took place in 1851 on Levanger Square, which was internationally noticed and covered in the news in Paris and London at that time. It was triggered by the arrest of Carl Johan Michelsen, who agitated for the first Norwegian labour movement in Levanger, led by Marcus Thrane.

In the center of Levanger, at the historical location of the uprising, we installed banners all around the square. From the square's speakers pavilion, we emitted

The work consists of:

Recordings of four speeches, banners, newspaper Red Winter (Norwegian/English):
https://raedle-jeremic.net/pdfs/red_winter_newspaper_web.pdf

Video documentation Red Winter, 16 min, Norway 2014.

Editing: Rena Rädle, camera: echomedia

Excerpts: <https://e.pcloud.link/publink/show?code=XZna27ZG7PCvgtY34bc29XRW8IXUFbUoEYX>



Videostills from **Red Winter**, 16 min, Levanger 2014

recorded speeches of political agitators from past and present-day movements. Passer-byes were addressed by us and we distributed a newspaper with the four speeches, drawings and slogans to them. The speakers represent the first Norwegian labour movement, the antifascist struggle during WW2, emancipatory movements of the Roma and Sami during the last decades and current environmental movements. From their historical positions but still aware of the present day situation, they share the experience of their struggles and analyze mechanisms of exploitation now and then. They defend their demands, claim political, social and economical equality and call for radical change and revolution.

The work Red Winter* draws on a local tradition of historical folk theater. However, the aim of the intervention reaches beyond a re-enactment of historical events. The imaginary interaction between the speeches and slogans that are each derived from specific situations and political conjunctions, draws



Red Winter, banners at the pavillion and around Levanger's main square. Photos: Rena Rädle

a connection ranging all the way from the past to the social struggles of today. The particularity of their struggles is traced by the speakers' biographical testimony and accounts, but their incendiary speeches are also directed to a common struggle that needs to be fought at the present. Through the artistic compression of time, space and language, the work creates a new perspective on current positions and makes space for the projection of a future political program beyond particular interests, identity politics and anthropocentrism.

*The title Red Winter was inspired by the dramatic play Raud Vinter by Thorvald Sund, based on the Levanger riots in 1851, and performed in Levanger for the first time in 2006.

THE REVOLUTIONARY SEED OF THE PAST SHALL GERMINATE NOW!



Speech by the member of the Thrane movement

Citizens of Levanger!

Some one hundred and fifty years ago, they sent Carl Johan Michelsen and our comrades to jail. Why were they thrown into the dungeon? Because they were hungry! Because they had no work! Because they wanted to send their children to school, but didn't have the money for it! Because they no longer wanted to send their children to war as cannon fodder for the gentlemen in power! Because they wanted to have a say in matters concerning them. Ha! They had to use soldiers to defeat our rebellion; we have given these mighty gentlemen quite a fright! There would be plenty for everyone, if only things were distributed fairly:

Down with the landowners!

Now, one hundred and fifty years later, I stand on Levanger Torg once again. I hear that you have fought for the right to vote and the right to education, and even military service for women. I hear that Norway is a rich country now. I also hear that begging is nowadays banned in Levanger? Is it really necessary for anyone to beg? The more I enquire, the more I realize that you have not achieved the kind of social justice for which we fought in 1851. You have fought for political equality and equality before the law; Do not stop there! Fight for economic equality as well! Only by fighting against the propertied class can we pave the way for a just society.

I call on you to sow the seed of revolution - transfer our power into the 21st century!

Let the revolution start from this place in Levanger. Let it spread to the south from the periphery of northern Europe and ignite the heart of Europe, which is weakened by the poison of neo-liberalism and neo-colonialism! Europe with all its riches will have to change its relationship to the world. The wars for resources, the exploitation and plundering of the periphery, the expropriation of land, the internment of the displaced and dispossessed, all this needs to be brought to a halt. That is what we are fighting for, at this moment, in this place!

But before I return to the past, I want to tell you one more thing: As modern socialists, you must not look backward. Do not leave the development of technological progress to the capitalists! Your so-called Facebook and Twitter revolutions will not endure as long as modern technology remains a resource in the hands of the capitalists.

You yourselves must take control of technological progress! Increase the speed of social transformation! For economic democracy!



Speech by the activist for a radical ecological turnaround

I greet you, my dear friends, in the language of the people of this northern landscape.

Inaudibly for you, I greet the stones under our feet and the distant mountains from which they were hewn. My inner self receives the screeching answers of birds that mingle with the roar of the wind.

Fossil capitalism has forged an alliance with death!

Using ever more destructive methods, it forces all natural wealth from our planet. We human inhabitants of Norway are among the infinitely small percentage of living things that immediately and directly profit from the destruction of the earth. With oil drilling planned in the Arctic, the Barents Sea and off the coast of Lofoten, we endanger our last untouched marine regions. Do we really believe that quick profits such as these will enable our descendants to survive the collapse of the ecosystem? Last year we achieved an important victory in the fight for the Lofoten Islands. But we demand more:

Stop all oil production in the Arctic!

I agree with the comrade from the Thrane movement of the 19th century: we need a revolution, and we are the ones who must spark it off! I agree with the Romanian activist that we must not simply retreat into our own biotope, but need to enter into coalitions that rise above homo sapiens as a species!

The resistance fighter from World War II is right when he says that fascism is on its way back. We can see it right in the midst of society: in the racist campaign slogans of so-called patriotic parties, in the pamphlets of young people filled with hate, in the neo-Nazi attacks on migrants and Roma throughout Europe. If the struggles of the past are not to be in vain, we need to adopt a new and far more radical position! The old logic that places the individual at the centre of the world is too limited.

We need a radical, a truly revolutionary change in perspective!

Away with anthropocentrism!

The inhabitants of the seas, the skies and the earth are our allies.

The plants and the minerals are our comrades!

Let us regard the revolution from the perspective of the sand!

Let us write our slogans in the language of the ocean's depth!

Let us proclaim the revolution with the sounds of all animate and inanimate matter!



Red Winter, banners and public discussion about the artistic action at the Levanger townhall.
Photos: LevArt



Installation view of Red Winter banners at Gallery SIZ, Rijeka, 2015. Photo Rena Rädle.



Installation views of Red Winter banners and Red Winter newspaper at Gallery SIZ, Rijeka, 2015. Photo Rena Rädle.