

# Observing *Memories*

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of the Roma genocide  
under Nazism*

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*On the Margins of  
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Against Revisionism,  
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# Observing *Memories*

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EUROPEAN  
OBSERVATORY  
ON MEMORIES

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The European Observatory on Memories, based at the University of Barcelona's Solidarity Foundation, is an international network established in 2012, dedicated to fostering dialogue on historical memory. By building synergies between academia, institutions, cultural centers, and civil society, we aim to promote fundamental rights and values through respect for diversity, ensuring that memory remains an integral part of Europe's cultural and social fabric.

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# Observing Memories

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# 8

**COVER PICTURE**

**Memorial to the Sinti and Roma  
of Europe Murdered under  
National Socialism (Berlin) ©  
Foundation Memorial to the  
Muredered Jews of Europe. Photo:  
Marko Priske**

# EDITORIAL

Once again, I have the pleasure of addressing you from our humble yet solid public platform represented by this new issue of *Observing Memories*. In a turbulent world, according to the latest statistics from our colleagues at the Barcelona Centre for International Affairs (CIDOB), we are living through a period with more open conflicts - ranging from explicit wars to political, social, and humanitarian disputes - than at any time since the Second World War. These conflicts are marked by constant violations of human rights, not only in our old Europe, particularly in the East, but also in the entrenched violence in Africa and Asia, the “dark silence” imposed on many women in autocratic nations, and the persistent lethal attacks on civilians in the Middle East. Faced with this reality and the worrying trend of democracy veering towards an extreme, unjust, and unthinking right-wing stance, feelings of perplexity and frustration have re-emerged in a glaring manner.

In this context, politics of memory - reflections on the past that serve as transformative values in the present - are more necessary than ever. Such politics of memory are interpreted as a social and political process that gives the past a future. This future is activated in the present, not as an abstract concept but as an ethical, social, cultural, and civic action that intersects with many others. It becomes, in the 21st century, a citizen’s right, embodying the values of social justice, equality, reparations, and public responsibility. At the European Observatory on Memories (always in the plural), we critically approach the recent past. We recognise that memory is not a solution to current problems or conflicts; it is not a magical formula. This critical perspective aligns with Gensburger and Lefranc in the monograph we translated into Spanish, which calls for opening politics of memory to the multifaceted sphere of society through cultural memory, as Marianne Hirsch suggested long ago, or by embracing a new “memorial turn”, advocated by Professor Vinyes. This “turn,” which places memory at the centre as a right rather than a duty, also propels us towards a multidisciplinary approach, integrating memory into broader societal and political spheres while internationalising processes into increasingly universal concepts. These efforts do not aim to simulate protective policies but rather to establish substantive frameworks.

As we have consistently argued during our annual meetings, “Taking Stock on European Politics of Memory”, diversity, subaltern memories, and the concepts included in the new CERV programme outline various pathways that are correct in theory and also in the practice of promoting and implementing projects, research, and creative initiatives related to the uses of the past. We work in partnership with civil society, young people, and national and transnational historical memory associations to disseminate this right. We approach it as the right to truth, justice, and reparation, grounded in universal principles. To this, I add a new concept: “Public Responsibility”. Memory, as a space of power, also exerts influence on those who administer it, demanding responsibility - a responsibility that must also be executive. We know, particularly in Spain, that there are excellent legislative texts on the right to memory and its development. However, without implementation and the public responsibility to provide resources (budgets) and access to these laws, i.e., public policy, they generate much frustration and a certain escapism. Administrations (local, regional, national, international) are obliged to invest in this universal right, especially in its collective dimension. Perhaps then, and only then, can we call on societies to decide the countries and the future they want, not those imposed on them. We advocate two paths towards the social construction that memory represents. The first is a certain ethical disobedience, which is more necessary today than ever before, though always essential, and we pursue this through multiple channels. This magazine seeks to be a modest expression of that effort. The second path is the permanent integration of politics of memory into education. It cannot be repeated often enough: this must be implemented not as theory or public discourse but as concrete action. Pedagogically and inherently, education should be present in every

memorial activity, project, or action. At the same time, I return to the public responsibility to clearly and definitively apply knowledge of the past in official educational programmes, in a multidisciplinary but permanent manner. We must avoid the classic approach of doctrinaire pedagogy and instead equip young people with tools that allow them - rather than us - to develop their own means of transmitting and understanding knowledge. It is a challenge, but the most important one.

In this spirit, we directed EUROM's activities throughout 2024, applying comparative, transnational, and horizontal actions that also engage with our present. These have encompassed subaltern memories, analyses of political processes, lobbying and institutionalisation, network-building, gender and feminism, decolonialism, memorial planning and management, patrimonialisation, tourism, culture, monumentalisation, or the dissonant or uncomfortable resignification of spaces, critical academic, literary, historical, or artistic reflection, invisible memories, legislation, international projection, participation, pedagogy, creation—a wide array of actions and initiatives that we aim to promote and publicise through our information portal ([www.europeanmemories.net](http://www.europeanmemories.net)).

There are many challenges, and critical analysis must remain a constant, alongside the social and cultural promotion of each programme and project we collaborate on or participate in. As I mentioned, this publication is one example of the constant renewal of memory as a process. I would like to thank the EUROM team and, especially, the authors for finding the time to contribute their expertise to our most “reflective and observant” publication.

In this edition, we focus on the Samudaripen/Porraimos and its memorialisation process, which is tied to the challenges faced by the Roma community in obtaining recognition and reparations. For example, María Sierra provides an overview of these challenges within the context of post-war Germany and Europe, where the Romani people were not recognised as victims of genocide until several decades after the atrocities were committed. This argument is echoed in Anja Kožul's article, which outlines a similar context for the specific case of Croatia. The author highlights the rise of the far right across Europe and the persistence of various discriminatory practices as obstacles to addressing the marginalisation of the Roma people within the processes of reparation as victims of genocide.

In the section dedicated to politics of memory in Europe, we present two cases linked to the patrimonialisation of traumatic memories that transcend national boundaries and challenge the nations and societies of the continent. In the first case, Stéphane Michonneau and Babeth Robert reflect on the projection and uses of the so-called “martyred villages”, through a transnational comparative study of some of the most representative examples of this patrimonial category. In the second, Christian Dürr examines the complex and ambitious memorialisation project of the Gusen Concentration Camp. Its medium- and long-term implementation plan, involving both international experts and local residents - historically resistant to living alongside the memorial- makes it a reference case.

The political changes that occurred this past year in Argentina have alerted the international community to the need to preserve policies aimed at defending and promoting human rights. The ESMA Memory Site Museum, which was added to the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2023, thus receives international recognition as a heritage element whose mission diverges significantly from the vision of the current Argentine government. We discuss this with Mayki Gorosito, Executive Director of the ESMA Memory Site Museum, who also shares insights into the complexities of memorialising the space.

In the section of short articles, we have several contributions of great interest due to the relevance of the processes they represent. One such case is presented by Diana Castelblanco, in which the materiality of objects evokes a memory powerful enough to counteract the deterritorialisation and loss of identity experienced by communities in post-conflict Colombia. Similarly, Javier Tébar and Andrea Tappi emphasise the importance of critical reflection when analysing Spain and Portugal's transitions to democracy, particularly in the current context of commemorating these milestones. For their part, Mario Proli and Patrick Leech discuss the mosaics of the former fascist-era pilot training school in Forlì, Italy. Featuring motifs glorifying fascist ideology and its connection to aviation, the mosaics remain intact in what is now a secondary school. This makes them a heritage asset with significant educational potential for future generations. In the same vein, Luiza Iordache and Rocío Negrete stress the importance of deepening research into overlooked subjects in historiographical narratives, such as the women who participated in the anti-fascist resistance in France.

In the reviews section, Ricard Conesa introduces us to the recently inaugurated Museu Nacional Resistência e Liberdade. Located in the Fortress of Peniche, near Lisbon, the museum honours the political prisoners of the Estado Novo regime and their struggle for freedom. Yayo Aznar offers reflections on the role of memory and its various material representations in a review of Daniel Palacios' book, *Making Monuments from Mass Graves in Contemporary Spain*. Palacios, in turn, reviews the work of Sanja Horvatinčić and Beti Žerovc, *Shaping Revolutionary Memory. The Production of Monuments in Socialist Yugoslavia*, which explores the unique characteristics of memory and monumental representation in the former Yugoslavia. Finally, David González introduces us to the story of the Spanish Republican teacher Antoni Benaiges, whose life inspired the film *El maestro que prometió el mar* (The Teacher Who Promised the Sea).

In the section dedicated to members of the EUROM network, Csaba Szilágyi reminds us of the fundamental role archives play as custodians of memory. Using the example of the Blinken OSA Archivum and its organic connection to the Central European University, we see how an archival institution's work in preservation, research, and dissemination can support democratic values and promote human rights. At Blinken OSA Archivum, this is achieved through initiatives such as those presented here, related to the Srebrenica massacre, current refugee crises, and the Holocaust itself.

As always, we have maintained a multidisciplinary approach and presented a plurality of actors and authors from diverse professional, geographical, and geopolitical perspectives. We hope you enjoy reading *Observing Memories 8*.



**Jordi Guixé**

Director of the European  
Observatory on Memories

# History and memory of the Roma genocide under Nazism

Maria Sierra

Professor of Contemporary History, University of Seville

“We do not need a memory that shies away from the confrontation between victims and executioners, that eases consciences. We need a memory that walks through the carriages, that stands on the ramp, that sees the faces, that hears the screams”, Ewald Hanstein, Auschwitz survivor (*Meine hunder Leben* (‘My Hundred Lives’), 2005, p. 156)

**M**ore than half a million people were murdered by the Nazi regime and its collaborators simply for being considered “Gypsies”<sup>1</sup>. This number continues to rise as researchers uncover new mass graves on the Eastern Front of World War II. This means that more than two thirds of the Roma people who lived in Europe before 1933 were victims of a genocide that, in proportional terms, may have been even more devastating than that of the Jewish people during the Holocaust. The comparison is not just supported by numbers, but also by the intentions and methods used: treated under the Nuremberg Laws as an “inferior race”, the so-called “Zigeuner” were expelled from their jobs or recruited for forced labour, subjected to sterilisation and plunder, registered as criminals, and violently mistreated, if not outright tortured, under various so-called scientific study techniques. They were imprisoned in local jails or camps and deported to extermination camps and ghettos spread across the vast Nazi concentration camp network. Many fell into mass graves, shot by firing squads or subjected to other brutal methods, and

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<sup>1</sup> In this text, I use the word “Gypsy” (“Zigeuner” in German) as a historical term, always in quotation marks. Its deeply pejorative nature in several languages is integral to its meaning. For this reason, although I employ it when referring to historical texts or concepts, in my own discourse as the author of these lines, I have opted for the term Roma (Romani), an endonym that emerged from the First International Romani Congress (1971). *Sinti* refers to the Romani minority historically established in German-speaking regions; much like *Gitano* in Spain, these are self-referential terms used by these communities.



1. Eva Justin interviewing Romani women and children in Racial Hygiene Unit photograph taken between 1936 and 1940 | German Federal Archive – Digital image archive: R 165 Bild-244-72. Bundesarchiv, R 165 Bild-244-72 / Unknown author / CC-BY-SA 3.0

eventually endured the “death marches” with the collapse of the Third Reich. Even Auschwitz, the symbol of the Holocaust as an industrial and bureaucratized system of human liquidation, holds a prominent place in the history of the Romani genocide: in 1942, a “*Zigeuner-lager*” (Gypsy camp) was established there, envisioned by the Nazis as the “final solution” for this European minority.

The similarities with the much more well-known Jewish case are so numerous that it is not surprising that Jewish researchers were the first to detect the documentary traces of the mass murder of Romanies carried out by the Nazi regime. Written memoirs by Jewish survivors recall them as part of the racial “scum” of the camps (a term used by Simon Lacks). Raphael Lemkin himself, the man who coined the legal concept of ‘genocide’ after the war, included this group in his early reflections on the crimes of Nazism. It is true that there are also some differences between the two genocides: dates, legislative patterns, racial-scientific arguments and so on, but none as significant as the difference in their recognition and memory.

## “Persecuting the Survivors”

This was the title of an article published in 1998 by Holocaust historian Sybil Milton, describing the fate of the Romani people after the war. The title is both expressive and accurate, given the extent to which the

suffering of this persecution, whose racial motives were not recognised until much later, was ignored. It is true that, within the framework of the flawed post-war denazification, it was not until the mid-1960s that a series of high-profile trials (Eichmann, Auschwitz) confronted German and global public opinion with the genocidal nature of the destruction of the Jewish people. However, the legal journey for the Romani case was far more tortuous: according to the majority of German courts, what had happened to the “Gypsies” was not a consequence of Nazi racial (nor national or religious) persecution, but rather the consequence of police action to prevent crime. Although nuances were discussed (for example, around the 1943 decree that massively deported Romanies from a large part of Europe to the Auschwitz-Birkenau extermination camp), the legal discourse was based on the affirmation of the “known” asociality and criminal tendencies of “Gypsies”, thus perpetuating the Nazi legal-police logic.

Such a doctrine meant that for a long time, the persecution that sent thousands of Romanies to the ghettos and camps in Polish territories from 1940 onwards was not considered racially motivated. Nor was the persecution that, from the 1938 decree (the so-called “Combating the Gypsy Plague”), sent many others to detention camps after confiscating their property and subjected them to racial tests. Neither was the forced sterilisation of men, women, and children from even earlier dates considered persecution. The case of Dr. Ritter, head of the unit for the study and identification of “Gypsies”, is paradigmatic: despite his involvement with the Nazi criminal police, after the war, he became a professor at the University of Tübingen and later joined Frankfurt’s health service, where he worked as a child psychologist. He was exonerated after an investigation initiated by complaints from his victims, in which his claims were accepted (he argued that he did not know about the extermination and had only recommended sterilisation). Experts consulted during the trial relied on Ritter’s own work as the scientific basis for their arguments about the nature of “Gypsies”, while the victims’

testimonies were disregarded for their supposed lack of evidential strength. Eva Justin, his closest collaborator, who had written a doctoral thesis on the asociality of children with a “live test subject” who was later liquidated in the extermination camps, was also acquitted. Her youth and supposed inexperience were taken as mitigating factors in the trial.

Thus, administration experts and police officers who had participated in the persecution of the Romanies remained in the public service, while the criminal records and files constructed by the Nazis continued to be used for decades. The failure to acknowledge that the racial characterisation of the “Gypsies” by the Nazi regime was based on attributing a genetic criminality to all of them was closely related to the persistence of specifically anti-Gypsy racism, which was as ancient as it was socially widespread. In addition to the judicial and administrative disregard of the Romanies as victims, they continued to experience widespread prejudice and were treated as presumed criminals in everyday life. The fact that their suffering under Nazism had not sparked a societal shift in this regard was noted by historian Wolfgang Benz, who pointed out that the prejudices that had fuelled the Nazi anti-Gypsy racial machine were still alive in Germany. He wrote this in 1985, at a time when there remained a tacit agreement that this persecution had been somehow justified.

This is not just a German problem. In France, for example, the work of Lise Foisneau shows that not only were the internment camps for the Romanies prolonged after the war, but post-war violence also manifested itself in accusations of collaboration, arrests, and murders, all tinged with an anti-Gypsy bias. Furthermore, legal discrimination persisted for decades, as it was not until 1969 that a law was revised which required “nomads” to carry an anthropometric identity card, placing them in a legal limbo subject to special police surveillance, despite the motto “liberté-égalité-fraternité” emblazoned on the front of the document. Nor is this just a capitalist issue. On the other side of the wall, in the communist bloc,

Romani communities suffered two paradoxically parallel processes. On the one hand, their suffering as a racialised group targeted for destruction during the war was rendered invisible; on the other hand, they were forced to assimilate into the dominant culture. In this first respect, what happened with a children's story, *Ede and Unku*, written in 1931, is telling. It narrates the friendship between a working-class boy and a Romani girl. The book became compulsory school reading in East Germany from 1972 for its antifascist symbolism, bolstered by the author's profile, John Heartfield's photographs, and its inclusion in the infamous Nazi book burnings of 1933. However, its use in schools overlooked the suffering of a group persecuted on racial grounds, even though the protagonist was a real Romani girl. Erna (Unku in Romani) Lauenburger, who was deported with her family to Auschwitz-Birkenau in 1943 and murdered a few months later. A 1981 film revisiting the story also failed to address the fate of the Romanies.

In general, post-war communist countries' dominant narratives of national unity, which erased the racial identity of victims to highlight the role of the heroic, suffering "people", were accompanied in the case of the Romanies by policies aimed at their assimilation into mainstream society. The forms of these policies varied widely, from forced sedentarisation but with some provision of resources (Bulgaria, the Soviet Union) to more repressive measures such as property confiscation (Poland) or forced sterilisation (Czechoslovakia). Although in some cases there were opportunities for education and social mobility, the cost of forced cultural assimilation was high. Additionally, where local populations had collaborated with Nazi authorities during the war, the official discourse afterwards placed all responsibility for the Romani genocide on the German occupiers, as happened in Romania with the deportation of thousands of Romanies to Transnistria.



2. Dr Robert Ritter in 1938 at Stein in der Pfalz, Germany | German Federal Archive – Digital image archive: R 165 Bild-059-026. Bundesarchiv, Bild 146-1991-014-09 / CC-BY-SA 3.0



3. Craniometric studies and racial science: Eva Justin [?] and Dr. Adolf Würth measuring the head of a young Sinto, 1938 | German Federal Archive – Digital image archive. Bundesarchiv, Bild 146-1989-110-32 / CC-BY-SA 3.0



## From justice to the fight for memory

4. Polish Romani women in the Lublin ghetto, 1940 | Picture by Max Kirnberger (1902-1983), public domain.

Post-war justice ignored the racial persecution of Europe's Romanies, dismissing their claims, prolonging (and even reinstating) pre-existing anti-Gypsy laws, and ultimately perpetuating a racist discourse deeply rooted in society. At times, there appeared to be opportunities for legal and administrative recognition of the victims, such as when the Cologne court ruled in favour of claimants in 1963 who had fled Germany after being subjected to racial tests by Ritter's team, establishing that they had been persecuted on ideological grounds. However, legal change was slow and fragmented. Meanwhile, the victims struggled to survive without assistance, their properties confiscated, and their families destroyed; they even sought to erase their Romani identity in the face of continued social stigma and police harassment, while the traumatic effects of the Holocaust were exacerbated by the prevailing silence.

The paralysis of the official channels could only be overcome through activism and the struggle for rights led by civil associations, shifting the battleground to the streets and public opinion. This was a multifaceted process, with initiatives that sometimes received support from non-Romani allies and the solidarity of some Jewish representatives. As early as the 1960s, some national organisations began to form, connecting the cause of defending the civil rights of those treated as second-class citizens with the demand for recognition of Nazi victims. The convergence of these local initiatives, not always



5. From left to right they are: Richard Baer (Commandant of Auschwitz), Dr. Josef Mengele (head physician at the Auschwitz Zigeunerlager) and Rudolf Hoess (the former Auschwitz Commandant). The grounds of the SS retreat outside of Auschwitz, at "Solahütte", 1944. | US Holocaust Museum

easy, led to the First International Romani Congress (London, 1971), which explicitly took up the cause of Holocaust recognition, and was later formalised as the International Romani Union (1977). This is where the first comprehensive study on the Romani genocide originated, by Grattan Puxon and Donald Kenrick, published by the University of Sussex ("The Destiny of Europe's Gypsies", 1972).

It is logical, however, that it was in Germany, where the largest number of survivors lived, that the cause gained particular political momentum. The social climate began to change from the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s, with a strong public debate about the significance of Nazism in the country's history (the so-called Historians' Dispute or *Historikerstreit*), which provided a favourable framework for a broad critical reassessment of the past. In this context, German Romani activists took a significant step forward in publicly defending their cause through demonstrations and other public actions laden with symbolic significance. A key moment was the success of the 1979 commemoration ceremony at the former Bergen-Belsen camp, which gathered around 2,500 people: German and international Romani representatives, genocide survivors and their descendants, Jewish representatives, and German and European parliamentarians. Shortly after, in 1980, a group of activists staged a hunger strike at the former Dachau camp to demand recognition of Romani Holocaust victims and to protest against the police's continued use of Nazi criminal records. The campaign gained the support of the Social Democratic Party, and as a result, in 1982, the



6. Pond at the memorial monument on Sinti and Roma genocide, Berlin | Picture by Mike Peel. Wikimedia Commons

*Zentralrat deutscher Sinti und Roma* (Central Council of German Sinti and Roma) was established. During his visit to the newly established Council offices in Heidelberg, the then Chancellor of West Germany, Helmut Schmidt, officially recognised for the first time the existence of a genocide on racial grounds.

One of the Central Sinti Council's most active battles from the late 1980s onwards was the fight for memory, demanding a rightful place in official Holocaust discourse and in the nation's history. The project to build a memorial in Berlin as a site of remembrance and respect for the victims, an idea launched in 1988, became an opportunity to push this campaign into the public eye. This opinion was already stirred by competing views on the Holocaust's meaning for national identity, the extent of recognition due to different victim groups, and the impact of these debates following the unification of the two Germanys in 1991. Indeed, the controversy over the memorial was long and was finally resolved by the German Parliament, which in 1999 agreed to build separate monuments for the various victim groups.

Some survivors became personally involved in the struggle to have their collective suffering

under Nazism incorporated into official narratives. A handful of storytellers recognised the need to bear witness to their experiences through autobiographical writing and memoirs, with the dual purpose of attempting to overcome their trauma and forcing their neighbours to look them in the eye. The effort to break the wall of silence was especially significant as younger generations were now able to distance themselves from Nazism without having yet been educated about the persecution of the Romani people. Philomena Franz, the first Sinti to publish her memoirs as a survivor, began writing after her son was insulted at school as a "Zigeuner". Recognising in this insult the same kind of racial prejudice that had driven the wheel of Romani genocide under Nazism, she began speaking to teachers and students about what had happened to her people, following a need to testify. From there, she began writing, something that had not been possible before the cultural and political shift of the 1980s. Her memoirs, published in 1985, paved the way for other survivors to follow (Ceija Stojka, Lily van Angeren-Franz, Walter Winter, Ewald Hanstein, and others).

7. Romani families at Asperg, Germany, 22 May 1940 | German Federal Archive – Digital image Archive: R 165 Bild-244-47. Bundesarchiv, R 165 Bild-244-47 / CC-BY-SA 3



Transcending – though not solving – national specifics, the memory of persecution suffered under Nazism has become a fundamental element of contemporary Romani identity in a transnational sense. In Spain, for example, where the Gypsies were not affected as such by Nazi racial policies, local associations commemorate the Holocaust in connection with the so-called “Great Round-up”, an 18th-century plan for the mass imprisonment of Spanish Gypsies aimed at their biological extinction. In Germany, meanwhile, associations competing with the Central Sinti Council have linked the historical suffering of the Nazi genocide with the plight of Romani migrants arriving from Eastern Europe, who lack the protection of German citizenship.

## From the overexposed Jewish Holocaust to the blurred Romani genocide

The first memorial plaque in remembrance of the Romani genocide was installed at Dachau in 1982. It was not until 2005 that the European Parliament issued a resolution affirming the need for recognition, and then in 2012, the memorial for these victims of National Socialism was inaugurated in Berlin. This timeline reflects a delay in both recognition and study compared to the Jewish Holocaust. The gap had already formed in the immediate post-war period. While it is true that mainstream German (and European) society did not initially recognise the specificity of the Jewish genocide, and that antisemitism continued to be concealed behind questionable “denazification”, it is also true that Jewish victims could early on rely on a range of agencies and material resources to claim their rights. Similarly, scientific research soon gained momentum, fulfilling its dual social role of providing academic (and even judicial) support



8. Philomena Franz, the first narrator of the Roma genocide, with her memoir in hand, 2022 | Picture by David Navarro, as part of the author's research project

to survivors and promoting political and civic engagement.

As part of an active programme promoted on both sides of the Atlantic by Jewish groups, academic studies on the genocide of the Jewish people developed especially from the foundational work of Raul Hilberg (1961). The history of the Jewish Holocaust grew in scale as the discourse of its uniqueness was affirmed. There were also prominent Jewish historians, such as Henry Friedlander and the aforementioned Sybil Milton, who advocated for a broader focus on victim groups and addressed the Romani case in their studies. It is regrettable that the censorship of meaning recently imposed by the intergovernmental organisation IHRA (International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance) in defining “antisemitism”, with the aim of excluding comparisons and discussions of other genocides, betrays the legacy of these scholars and Jewish Holocaust survivors such as Simone Veil. Veil, who was President of the European Parliament in 1979, attended the protest organised by Romani activists at the Bergen-Belsen camp.

The academic study of the Romani genocide

also shows a significant delay compared to the Jewish case. We can compare the date of Hilberg’s foundational work in 1961 with that of the book that played a similar academic role in Romani studies: Michael Zimmermann’s *Rassenutopie und Genozid. Die nationalsozialistische “Lösung der Zigeunerfrage”* (Racial Utopia and Genocide: The National Socialist “Solution to the Gypsy Question”), published in 1996. Following this inspiration, it has only been since the early 21st century that research on the Romani Holocaust has begun to develop and organise into academic programmes, as shown by two key state-of-the-field publications coordinated by Anton Weiss-Wendt (2013) and Celia Donert and Eve Rosenhaft (2023).

However, although the research into these two genocides differs significantly in terms of timing and resources, the most radical difference lies in the realm of public knowledge — the body of information and representations we manage as citizens, which shapes our perception of social issues. While the Jewish Holocaust is a topic that cinema, literature, the media, memorials, and museums have long introduced into mainstream



9. Magdeburg criminal police photos of Ena Lauenburger, 1939 | © Landersarchiv Sachsen-Anhalt, Magdeburg

culture, becoming a familiar reference point that – at times – prompts reflection, the Romani genocide is far less present in such cultural products. There are initiatives in the form of blogs, documentaries, and exhibitions, but much more work is needed to transfer this knowledge. Only sustained efforts over time can transform academic understanding into public knowledge, whether in a civic, educational, or commemorative sense. As long as the Romani genocide remains practically invisible in these spaces, our societies will not confront the anti-Gypsy racism embedded in the DNA of mainstream culture. We will continue to use language and engage in social practices that normalise a benign-seeming, yet insidiously harmful, form of racism (jokes, humour, TV programmes etc.) which, in reality, serves as a cultural support for actions as deadly as Nazi racial policy. And we are late: xenophobia and extreme nationalism, hallmarks of our present political moment, are not likely to foster self-criticism. This lack of memory poses a particularly grave danger.

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**Some resources:**

- BERGER, Karin: *Unter den Brettern hellgrünes Gras* (2005), documentary on the life of Ceija Stojka, survivor of the Romani genocide.
- GATLIF, Tony: *Korkoro* (2008), film depicting the story of a Romani family under Nazi persecution.
- KOS-KRAUZE, Joanna and Krauze, Krzysztof: *Papusha* (2013), biopic about Polish poet Bronisława Wajs.
- NAVARRO, David: *My Holocaust. Philomena Franz* (2022), open-access documentary available in EN/ES: <https://miholocausto.com/>
- ROSENHAFT, Eve: "Strangers in Their Own Land: Romani Survivors in Europe 1945" (2021), open-access documentary on the life of Erna Lauenburger: <https://www.nationalww2museum.org/war/articles/romani-holocaust-survivors-1945>
- SIERRA, Maria: "Philomena Franz, narrator of the Romani Holocaust, study on the first Romani woman to recount her experiences under Nazism, EN/ES: <https://miholocausto.com/en/estudio/>
- What happened to Unku?*, open-access documentary on the life of Erna Lauenburger: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5e3tbdHNFYW>

# On the Margins of Memory

Anja Kožul

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“...Did they kill the Roma, too? The greatest ‘murder of truth’ about the Roma concerns their genocide in the Second World War. Thousands of books, hundreds of thousands of texts, and millions of articles have been written about this last great global catastrophe and the suffering of various peoples in it. Entire libraries have been dedicated to the suffering of Serbs, Croats, Jews, and all others in this region. This is a positive step because truth, no matter how bitter, must be remembered. And what better way to preserve it than between the covers of a book, on celluloid, or some other medium. The truth about the suffering of the Roma in this region has been neglected, forgotten, and relegated to oblivion, kept away from public eyes and ears. Why? Because it suits everyone else. Nobody asks the Roma how they feel about the concealment of the truth of the genocide against them. And who would even ask them, when so many of those who knew this truth are no longer alive? The records answering the questions of who and how many of the Roma were killed, as well as when, how and why, are scarce, almost nonexistent. For example, from the end of the war onward, almost all researchers of genocide in the Independent State of Croatia claimed that there were virtually no records of Roma suffering in that place of torture. Tons of pages have been written on the subject, but there is little that addresses the genocide against the Roma. Darkness and silence...”

This excerpt from the book *They Killed the Truth About Us* by Dragoljub Acković, a Roma activist and journalist from Serbia, vividly illustrates and summarizes the injustice done to the Roma minority following their tragic mass suffering in World War II.



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1 | 2. Roma Holocaust Memorial Day, Roma Memorial Center Uštica | Picture by Veljko Kajtazi (Flickr)

The suffering of the Roma and Sinti in World War II across Europe remains, even decades later, full of significant historiographical gaps, scientific inaccuracies, and memorial oversights. The knowledge about the crimes against the Roma and Sinti is still lacking, and research on the genocide of this group is insufficient and largely marginalized. Innocent and utterly defenseless victims are not equally represented in the culture of remembrance with respect to other victimized peoples.

One case in Croatia that we will present here illustrates this culture of oblivion. For a full 45 years, from 1977 to 2022, the cemetery in Marija Gorica near Zagreb, Croatia's capital, commemorated what was long-believed to be the suffering of Jewish victims at the hands of the Waffen SS in the nearby village of Hrastina. The truth, however, is somewhat different. It was, in fact, the last massacre of the Roma and perhaps the only crime against the Sinti in the Independent State of Croatia (NDH). Over 40 people – Roma and Sinti, including pregnant women and children – were killed in a single night. This horrific massacre took place on the night of April 24–25, 1945, just weeks before the country's liberation from fascism. The members of the artistic circus troupe of the Winter brothers were murdered by the First Ustasha Defense Brigade, known as the Luburić Brigade (named after their commander Vjekoslav Max Luburić).

This circus group, as historians note, brought joy and song to villages and towns during the grim wartime years. Constantly fleeing from Nazis and their collaborators, this group of Roma and Sinti hid and fled abroad to escape the ravages of war. In Marija Gorica, they held several performances for the local villagers in April. The Usthas noticed them and forced them to put on a show for them as well. On the abandoned estate of a partisan family in Hrastina, they were subjected to torture, rape, culminating in murder, and even desecration of the dead until the early hours.

This important discovery of the massacre of Roma and Sinti is the result of the research for a book published by the Jasenovac Memorial Site, *The Massacre of Roma and Sinti in Hrastina in 1945*. The authors are Mario Šimunković, researcher, Đorđe Mihovilović, senior curator at the Jasenovac Memorial Museum, and Ivo Pejaković, the then-director of the same museum.

Đorđe Mihovilović spoke about the circumstances surrounding the creation of the book, as well as the importance of historical sources, including a large number of testimonies from locals provided to the State Commission. In an interview with the newspaper *Novosti* at the time of the publication of this article, he pointed out that the researchers' interest in this period in the Zaprešić



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3 | 4 | 5. Roma Holocaust Memorial Day, Roma Memorial Center Uštica | Picture by Veljko Kajtazi (Flickr)

area began in 2018, specifically from the perspective of the suffering of people from Hrvatsko Zagorje in Jasenovac. Through the research and analysis of documents from domestic and foreign archives and museums, as well as antifascist associations, insights were gained into this unusual case. Until this book was published, the massacre had been believed to be an SS crime against a Jewish group.

The first commemoration with complete and reliable information on the ethnic origins of the victims was held at the cemetery in Marija Gorica in April 2022. Veljko Kajtazi, the political representative of the Roma in Croatia, member of the Croatian Parliament, and leader of the commemoration, stressed the importance of honoring the Roma victims of World War II, especially since the public knows very little about these victims of the Ustasha genocidal policy.

“I am very pleased that the massacre in Hrastina is being presented to the public to draw attention to this tragic event and to rectify the injustice done to the victims. The massacre that took place on this day in 1945 is one of the greatest Ustasha crimes against the Roma committed in the Independent State of Croatia, and it may have been the last mass crime against the Roma and Sinti on occupied European soil during World War II. I sincerely support initiatives like this so that the victims of all affected peoples find their permanent place in our collective memory. Through this commemorative gathering, we aim to introduce the public for the first time to new historical facts and the tragedy of the Roma people during World War II, along with the restoration of the memorial site, with a promise to return here every year to maintain this

place with dignity and not forget this tragic event,” Kajtazi said on April 24, 2022.

The umbrella organization of the Roma in Croatia, Kali Sara, reached an agreement with the Alliance of Antifascist Fighters and Antifascists of Croatia regarding the maintenance of all cemeteries in the country where Roma were killed during World War II. Veljko Kajtazi noted that, for decades, the fact that the victims from Marija Gorica were Roma was unknown simply because they had different names.

“Even today, we still see many Roma changing their first and last names to survive in the communities where they live; even newborns are sometimes given names from the majority population,” Kajtazi said.

Ivo Pejaković, former director of the Jasenovac Memorial Museum, emphasized the lack of visibility of the trauma suffered by the Roma population, noting that the official term for their suffering – *Samudaripen* – is still not well-established outside of expert circles and among the interested public. As he says, years of effort by individual researchers, such as Danijel Vojak, have helped raise the level of available knowledge about the Roma, not only during World War II but also earlier. Nonetheless, despite these efforts, most of the stories of Roma life, especially those involving their suffering, remain untold.

How is it that the mass extermination of Roma and Sinti during World War II has not been significantly recorded and the data remains incomplete? What are the causes of this? First and foremost, why did this group have to wait several decades for the recognition of their victimhood? It is worth recalling that the West German authorities initially refused to acknowledge that the Nazi regime in Germany committed genocide against the Roma. They claimed that the Nazis applied “the usual criminal policy they used for other criminals.” The view that all Roma are criminals and thieves is centuries old. Official requests for the recognition of Roma and Sinti victims were even dismissed in courts. This continued until the 1960s, when Romani organizations managed to win legal battles in the courts. The then German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt

officially acknowledged the suffering of the Roma and Sinti in 1982.

In the book *The Nazi Persecution of the Gypsies*, published in 1999, author Guenter Lewy focuses on the little-known and poorly documented subject of the Nazi persecution of Roma and Sinti during the Third Reich. The book represents a pioneering effort to gather documentary evidence from German and Austrian archives. He emphasizes the fact that Roma and Sinti remained marginalized and without adequate legal and social support after the war, and their persecution was largely overlooked in historical and legal processes. This work provides a thorough understanding of the systematic persecution of Roma and Sinti. The political scientist aimed to redress the historical invisibility of their suffering, stressing the importance of combating prejudice and documenting genocide in order to preserve the memory of the victims.

“The suffering of the Gypsies was overshadowed by the massive tragedy of the Jewish people... and not a single Gypsy was called to testify before the various tribunals,” Lewy wrote. The author argues that Roma were reluctant to speak about their experiences due to cultural norms and trauma, but also out of fear of further discrimination, which made research more challenging. Due to a justified historical distrust of institutions, their persecution has remained less well explored. The persecution of Roma and Sinti has long been neglected in historiography, especially compared to other groups such as Jews.

In the research paper ‘Roma during the Holocaust,’ Danijel Vojak writes that the suffering of Roma in the Independent State of Croatia (NDH) was tangentially and unsystematically researched in Croatian historiography after 1945. Historian Narcisa Lengel-Krizman began investigating this subject in the 1980s and published the work *The Genocide of the Roma – Jasenovac 1942* in 2003, with the support of the Jasenovac Memorial Museum. Lengel-Krizman notes the lack of systematic scientific studies on the suffering of Roma. She uses terms such as “peripherality of research,” “forgetting,” and “slipping from global attention.”

This “collective scientific amnesia about the Romani Holocaust,” as Vojak describes it, is gradually changing within the Croatian scientific community, primarily through the publication of translations of European scientific works, such as the three-volume series *The Gypsies during the Second World War*, published by Ibis-grafika between 2006 and 2009. The publication features articles by a number of French, German, Bulgarian, Czech, and other scholars, including Giovanna Boursier, Reimar Gilsenbach, Marie-Christine Hubert, Michelle Kelso, Elena Marushiakova, Vesselin Popov, Ctibor Nečas, Erika Thurner, Michael Zimmermann, Herbert Heuss, Henriette Asseo, Frank Sparing, among others.

Vojak believes that the scale of suffering experienced by the Roma during World War II is comparable to their suffering in terms of the marginalization or suppression of the culture of remembrance (in this case, the culture of forgetting) regarding their victims after the war. He notes that Romani victims were not specifically commemorated during the Yugoslav period. It wasn't until 1971 that the first and only memorial dedicated exclusively to the Romani victims of World War II was created

in the village of Uštica. This village was one of the central sites of the mass killing of Roma as part of the Jasenovac concentration camp system during the war. Vojak agrees with scholar Heike Karge, who sought to explain this commemorative practice of the Yugoslav authorities as part of their official cultural policy, in which the ethnicity of the victims, including the Roma, was submerged in the collective ideological discourse of “victims of fascist terror.” This pattern was prevalent in most European countries.

The attitude of the Croatian authorities toward the commemoration of Romani victims gradually changed as a result of the recognition of Roma as a national minority in the Republic of Croatia (2002), which led to the strengthening of the political influence of Romani political representatives and their non-governmental organizations, as researcher Vojak notes. Veljko Kajtazi, together with Romani NGOs, initiated the regular commemoration of Romani victims in Uštica in 2012. August 2, recognized as the International Day of Remembrance of Romani Victims of the Samudaripen/Holocaust, was chosen as the date of commemoration.

We live in an era of increasing historical



6. Roma Holocaust Memorial Day, Roma Memorial Center Uštica | Picture by Veljko Kajtazi (Flickr)



revisionism and are witnessing the rise of the extreme right in Europe. Fake news and distorted historical facts that spread through mass media and social networks reach an enormous number of people. From political arenas to the media, scientific and educational institutions, pseudoscientific research is disseminated in an attempt to distort collective memory, revise the past, and consequently destroy the dignity of the victims. In such an atmosphere, it is challenging to nurture a culture of remembrance. All of this becomes even more problematic when we consider that Romani and Sinti victims have never been studied systematically, even in more favorable times. Lies and prejudices about the Roma have persisted for centuries, and their exceptionally poor position is difficult to improve. Probably the most vulnerable ethnic minority on European soil suffers from racial harassment, mockery, segregation in schools, social exclusion, and poor quality of life.

Anna Míšková, a historian at the Museum of Romani Culture in Brno and a Czech delegate to IHRA, notes in a text on the occasion of the Day of Remembrance of the Genocide of the Roma, August 2, that the discrimination of this ethnic group did not end with the liberation of concentration camps

but continues to this day, clearly evidenced by the widespread distortion and neglect of the genocide against the Roma.

“Unfortunately, the genocide against the Roma remains one of the lesser-known crimes of the Nazi era. This lack of recognition represents a harmful form of distortion that serves to perpetuate harmful stereotypes and ongoing discrimination against the Romani community. It is a clear reminder that distortion is not limited to the denial or minimization of the Holocaust but extends to other victims as well. We still encounter denial or questioning of the suffering of Roma and Sinti during World War II. There is still a belief in society that Roma were killed because of their way of life, their inadaptability, and even hereditary criminality,” Míšková writes.

She believes that distorting history threatens to destabilize historical truth, undermine collective memory, and jeopardize the integrity of the lessons learned from this grave human rights tragedy. “The erasure of the genocide against the Roma from the narrative of Nazi crimes symbolizes enduring social marginalization, reinforcing centuries-old prejudices, stigmatization, and discrimination. The distortion of history in various forms is a powerful

weapon used to incite hatred, extremism, and xenophobia. The distortion of the genocide against the Roma is not an isolated historical untruth; it resonates in the present and directly affects the social position and mental health of the Romani community. The persistent prejudice against the Roma, manifested through social exclusion, discrimination, and segregation, reveals a troubling continuity from the past,” Míšková emphasized.

The visibility and importance given to the commemoration of Romani and Sinti victims varies from country to country. Perhaps the most striking recent example is the commemoration in Donja Gradina, Bosnia and Herzegovina, near Jasenovac, just across the Croatian border. Eighty years after the night when 2,897 Romani people were killed in Auschwitz, August 2 was marked in this place with no high state or institutional representatives present. Samudaripen, the International Day of Remembrance of Romani Victims of Genocide during World War II, was commemorated by the Committee for Roma in the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina and about thirty young Roma.

As reported by *Novosti*, the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees, which should have the commemoration of August 2 marked on its calendar, informed the Committee for Roma that they were “unable to pay travel expenses and attendance in Donja Gradina due to budget restructuring.” This justification was awkward and indeed disrespectful. Furthermore, no state institution sent either a floral wreath or a delegate.

Despite all the declarations, primarily the Jasenovac and Poznań Declarations, as well as positive legal and subordinate legal acts prescribing the integration of Roma and honoring their victims in World War II, such unacceptable behavior continues.

The Jasenovac Declaration emphasizes, among other things, the need to encourage state and other institutions and organizations to adequately commemorate the International Day of Remembrance of Romani Victims of Samudaripen, particularly at the sites of their suffering. It establishes that there needs to be state and general

societal recognition of the suffering of Roma during World War II in European and other countries, especially in light of the increasing discrimination they suffer. Furthermore, it is important to encourage scientific and other research related to the persecution of Roma during World War II as necessary for the appropriate recognition of their suffering. The improvement and coordination of the work of educational institutions in European and other countries is also imperative to educate the population adequately on the suffering of the Roma. In this context, we need to promote Romani culture, language, and history within educational institutions at all levels. Regarding the representation of this topic in the media in European and other countries, it is important to encourage properly informed writing and reporting on their suffering.

In 2023, the Government of the Republic of Croatia adopted a Conclusion on the Adoption of the Non-binding Working Definition of Antisemitism of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, including definitions of anti-Roma racism and discrimination. At that time, Prime Minister Andrej Plenković stated: “...All three definitions have been supported by Croatia during their adoption, and they have been adopted or endorsed at the national level by numerous member countries of IHRA. The purpose of these conclusions is to mandate all bodies of state administration to use these definitions in their work to improve education, research, and information about the Holocaust and systematically encourage remembrance of the genocide against the Roma and the Holocaust...(...)...the working definition is an expression of awareness that we must oppose the denial of the Holocaust and the distortion of facts about it, that such actions should be condemned at the national and international level, and that they need to be examined on a global scale.”

Examples illustrating anti-Roma sentiment/anti-Roma discrimination include: the distortion or denial of the persecution of Roma or the genocide against them; glorifying the genocide against the Roma; inciting, justifying, and committing violence against Romani communities, their property, and

individuals; forced and involuntary sterilization, as well as other physical and psychological violence against Roma; insisting on discriminatory stereotypes about Roma and against Roma, and affirming such stereotypes; blaming Roma, using hate speech, for real or imagined social, political, cultural, economic, and public health problems; stereotyping Roma as individuals engaged in criminal activities; using the term “gypsy” as a pejorative; endorsing or encouraging exclusionary mechanisms directed against Roma based on racially discriminatory assumptions, such as exclusion from regular schools and institutional procedures or policies leading to the segregation of Romani communities; adopting policies without a legal basis or setting conditions that allow for arbitrary or discriminatory displacement of Romani communities and individuals; holding Roma collectively responsible for the real or imagined actions of individual members of Romani communities; spreading hate speech against Romani communities in any form, such as in the media, including the internet and social networks.

The European Union and international organizations have recognized the problem and are trying to address discrimination and violence against Roma through various initiatives and programs. One of them is the Strategy for the Integration of Roma. The European Union has adopted national strategies for the integration of Roma to improve their access to education, housing, employment, and healthcare. Punitive measures against discrimination have also been prescribed. The European Union mandates strict measures against racial discrimination and encourages member states to strengthen legal frameworks for the protection of Roma.

However, despite these efforts, violence and discrimination against Roma remain a serious problem. All of the above leads us to question the broader implementation of these civilizational and very important declarations, strategies, and laws. On paper, many things may look ideal, but there is a long way to go to their concrete application and sincere adoption and the recognition of the suffering of a community as well as their current position.

Those who fight daily for the rights of vulnerable national minorities, such as the Romani minority in Europe, know this best. Unfortunately, the long period from the end of the bloody Second World War to today has more recently been marked by a constant rise in hate speech and the flourishing of neo-Nazi groups. The Romani minority suffers from both institutional racism and economic marginalization.

The increase in extremism and anti-minority attitudes in some European countries further complicates the overall situation. We must not lose sight of the fact that right-wing populism and extremist groups in countries like Hungary, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia increasingly use anti-migrant and anti-Roma rhetoric. This often leads to violence, attacks on Romani settlements, and hate speech and crimes.

In Hungary, radical groups such as Jobbik have been linked to violent incidents against Roma, including physical assaults and arson of homes. In Bulgaria and Romania, Roma often face police brutality and violence from local communities. Racially motivated attacks on Roma in Central and Eastern European countries unfortunately continue to occur, many of which end tragically.

To remind us of the most horrific attacks on Roma, we highlight a few examples of the brutal violence to which they are subjected. In Slovakia, in the town of Moldava nad Bodvou in 2013, police carried out a violent raid of a Romani settlement under the pretext of searching for the perpetrators of alleged crimes. During this incident, dozens of Romani residents were injured, and Romani families reported the destruction of property. A few years earlier, in 2009, also in Slovakia, in the town of Zehra, a group of racists attacked Roma in their homes. While beating them, they shouted racist slurs. Minority organizations reported the trauma suffered indirectly among the wider local Romani community following this incident.

The neighboring Czech Republic has recorded equally gruesome crimes against Roma. Probably the most well-known racially motivated crime in the Czech Republic occurred in 1995 when four



8. Roma Holocaust Memorial Day, Roma Memorial Center Uštica | Picture by Veljko Kajtazi (Flickr)

young men aged 17 to 21 broke into a family home in Žďár nad Sázavou, where a Romani family lived. One of them struck Tibor Berky with a baseball bat multiple times on the back of the head, inflicting fatal injuries. His five children witnessed the murder. In Vítkov in 2009, three Molotov cocktails were thrown at the family home of a Romani family, causing severe injuries to three-year-old Natálie Kudriková. She survived but suffered permanent disfigurement due to burns covering 80 percent of her body. The perpetrators were later convicted, but the case highlighted the danger of rising racism in the country. In Teplice in 2021, during a police intervention, Rom Stanislav Tomáš died after an officer pressed his knee on his neck while he was lying on the ground. The incident provoked outrage in the Romani community, and many compared it to the case of George Floyd in the USA.

Hungary has recorded several deadly attacks on Roma during 2008 and 2009. The perpetrators of these crimes used firearms and Molotov cocktails. One of the deadliest attacks occurred in the village of Tatárszentgyörgy, where a father and son from a Romani family were killed after their home was set on fire. The attackers shot them as they attempted

to escape. In the village of Kisléta, racists broke into a Romani family’s home, shot and killed the mother and severely injured her daughter. This case was part of a series of attacks on Roma in Hungary that caused shock and protests throughout the country.

In Bulgaria, an attack occurred near Plovdiv in 2021. During protests by extreme-right groups, hatred was unleashed against Roma. They attacked Romani settlements, terrorizing and threatening residents, creating fear among the Romani community across the area.

These tragic cases highlight the ongoing challenges faced by Roma due to ethnic intolerance, often fueled by prejudice and discrimination. International organizations regularly warn of the rise of xenophobia and extremism, and the attacks on Roma in European countries reinforce the need to strengthen protection of and respect for human rights.

# Democratising the Memory of Gusen: *The Participatory Process for the Creation of a New Memorial Space in Austria*

Christian Dürr

Historian, Mauthausen Memorial

## The Gusen Camp

The Gusen concentration camp began construction in December 1939 and officially opened on 25 May 1940, with the arrival of over 1,000 Polish prisoners. From the start, it was part of the SS's plans for the economic exploitation of the granite quarries in the region through the forced labour of concentration camp prisoners. The camp held a special position within the system of concentration camps named after its main camp, Mauthausen, which included over 40 subcamps. More than a subcamp, Gusen was considered a twin camp to Mauthausen.

Especially between 1940 and 1942, Gusen also functioned as an extermination centre within this system. For certain groups, such as members of the Polish intelligence, Spanish Republicans or Soviet prisoners of war, transfer to Gusen often meant a death sentence. Of the over 4,700 Spanish victims of the Mauthausen/Gusen camp complex, more than 3,800 died in Gusen.

Starting in the summer of 1943, the quarry industry lost importance in favour of arms production. Most prisoners were used as slave labour for the construction of factories and armament production. The company Steyr-Daimler-Puch AG (SDPAG) manufactured rifle parts, and the aircraft manufacturer Messerschmitt began producing the Me 109 in Gusen. In response to increasing Allied air attacks, in early 1944 the SS built the tunnel complex known as "Bergkristall" in the neighbouring village of St. Georgen, one of the largest underground armament factories in the Reich.

Prisoners transferred to Gusen for construction work were housed in a new barracks camp known as Gusen II. On 27 and 28 February 1945, the Gusen complex, including subcamps Gusen I and II, as well as Gusen III in Lungitz, which had just opened in December 1944, reached a peak of over 26,000 prisoners.



1. The Gusen concentration camp after its liberation, May 1945 | Photo: US Signal Corps, US National Archives and Records Administration

On 5 May 1945, the Gusen concentration camp was liberated first, followed by Mauthausen, by a reconnaissance unit of the 3rd U.S. Army. Of the at least 71,000 people imprisoned in Gusen I, II, and III between 1939 and 1945, at least 35,800 lost their lives.

## Gusen as a Space of Memory

At the end of July 1945, the U.S. Army withdrew from Gusen and Mauthausen, and the two former camps became part of the Soviet occupation zone. What happened to both places in the post-war period was very different. In the case of the former Mauthausen concentration camp, in June 1947 the Soviets handed it over to the Republic of Austria, obligating the Austrian state to preserve it as a space of memory. The Soviet decision was crucial in ensuring that large parts of the former Mauthausen concentration camp have been preserved in their original state to this day.

Meanwhile, at the site of the former Gusen concentration camp, Soviet occupying forces continued to exploit the quarries by creating a new state-owned company called USIA. By the late 1940s, most of the



2. Remains of the formation square and former command center of Gusen, known as "Jourhaus," 1955 | Photo: Mauthausen Memorial, Simone Bonnet Collection

former camp and its facilities had been destroyed through looting or the sale of barracks and construction materials. In the autumn of 1947, the Soviets attempted to disable the "Bergkristall" tunnel system through explosions.

After the withdrawal of the Soviets from Austrian territory in 1955, most of the former camp became property of the Republic of Austria. Some lots were returned to their former owners, but most of the properties of the former Gusen I and II camps were parcelled out and sold as building land. Residential developments were literally built over the foundations of the former camps and still exist today.

Some original buildings from the camps have been preserved to this day. These include the main entrance building and the commandant's office, known as "*Jourhaus*"; the prisoners' brothel building; two two-story brick buildings for prisoners; two barracks used by the SS for administrative purposes and the stone crusher, which was one of the largest in Europe at the time and was built with slave labour from Spanish prisoners, among others. After 1955, all these buildings became privately owned and were used as private residences or for commercial and industrial purposes.

The quarries of the Gusen concentration camp continued to be used for industrial purposes in the decades following 1955. Meanwhile, the victims' cemetery established immediately after liberation by the Americans was abandoned by the late 1950s, and the remains of the deceased were exhumed.

The only tangible and recognisable remnant of the concentration camp was the old crematorium oven amidst the new residential area. For local and national authorities, it represented a nuisance. The transfer of the oven from its original location could only be prevented thanks to the intervention of international survivor organisations. In the 1960s, they purchased the land on which the remnants of the oven were located and



3. The Gusen Memorial today | Photo by Stephan Matyus, Mauthausen Memorial

erected a memorial monument at the site. The so-named “Gusen Memorial,” inaugurated in 1965, remains today the main commemorative site for Gusen survivors and the families of deportees from different parts of the world. The Austrian state finally took responsibility for the preservation of the memorial in 1997.

In 2003, a small visitor centre was added to the monument, where a permanent exhibition on the history of the camp was inaugurated in 2005. In the early 2000s, the Republic of Austria also took responsibility for the remains of the “Bergkristall” galleries. A section of about 800 meters in length was technically equipped so that it can now be opened to visitors several days a year.

## The Participatory Process

In recent years, the Republic of Austria has negotiated with private landowners linked to the concentration camps in Gusen. In 2021/22, it finally acquired several plots in the area of the former Gusen I camp. Several buildings of special historical value are still preserved there, such as the two SS barracks, architectural remnants of the former formation square (*Appellplatz*) and the stone crusher. An agreement could not be reached with the owners of the former command centre, the “*Jourhaus*,” and the two prisoners’ buildings. The Republic also acquired land in *St. Georgen*, where the main entrances to the “*Bergkristall*” tunnel system were originally located.

In the coming years, these newly acquired parcels will be transformed into new memorial spaces and will be linked to the Gusen Memorial and other existing commemorative interventions, such as the visitor centre with its permanent exhibition on the history of the camps. In this way, the memorial site of Gusen will be considerably expanded.

To provide the project with the broadest possible democratic basis, the Mauthausen Memorial, the institution tasked with carrying it out, initiated a participatory process inviting various interest groups at the international, national and regional levels, as well as experts from various disciplines. Among them were survivor organisations and family members of victims, diplomatic representatives from countries with citizens deported to Gusen, commemorative initiatives from the Mauthausen/Gusen/St. Georgen region, and residents of the municipalities of Langenstein and St. Georgen.

From mid-2022 to mid-2023, a wide variety of participation formats were organised. These ranged from all-day workshops to focus interviews, informational events for the local population, and a special roundtable discussion with experts from various scientific fields. All discussions in the different participation formats were recorded by the *art:phalanx* team, which was in charge of the process, and analysed using qualitative methods.

In parallel with the participation formats, a team of architects from the *heri&salli* studio worked on the foundations of the planning for the future memorial space in the form of a master urban plan, continuously incorporating all the results of the discussions. The final report of the process was published in October 2023 and presents the opinions, expectations and concerns of all participants in the process as a whole. It highlights the topics discussed and reflects, at the same time, the broad consensus on the decisions and guidelines reached by the participants.



4. The stone crusher today | Photo by Bernhard Mühleder, Mauthausen Memorial

5. Assembling the master plan, workshop within the participatory process | Photo by Julius Sevcik, Mauthausen Memorial



The master plan, in turn, provides clear and well-founded recommendations for future design measures. It divides the entire space into different zones, assigns functions to them, proposes specific uses for the existing buildings, recommends the construction of certain new buildings, defines necessary infrastructures and establishes design guidelines. Thus, it will serve as the basis for an international architecture and design competition, which will be the next step of the project.

At the time of writing this text, final preparations are being made for the announcement of the competition, with results expected to be published in the second half of 2025. From then on, the project will enter the implementation phase, which is currently estimated to last until 2031. The result will be a new memorial space that serves both as a commemorative site and as an educational centre.

The focus will be on presenting the historical site, its architectural remnants and its archaeological vestiges. The goal is to make them legible to visitors through design methods and place them in their historical context. In the former SS barracks, a new permanent exhibition on the history of the Gusen concentration camp will be created, which will also

provide ample space for educational programs with groups. At the same time, the current visitor centre will house a new exhibition on the history of the site from 1945 to the present.

Additionally, a new building will serve as an information centre and will offer space for offices and a generous storage area for museum objects. In the area adjacent to the stone crusher, a new commemorative space titled “Room of Silence” is planned, while the current Gusen Memorial will remain the central site of commemoration.

On 11 October 2023, the Austrian Federal Government decided to present a draft amendment to the Commemorative Monuments Act to the National Council. The amendment ensures funding for the design process based on the master plan and assigns its implementation to the Mauthausen Memorial. The expansion of the Gusen Memorial is the largest memory project in Austria since the founding of the Mauthausen Memorial in 1949. The international dimension of National Socialist persecution, which is also inscribed in the history of the Gusen camp, demands that the interests of all affected groups at the international, national and regional levels be taken into account.

# “Martyred Villages” in Europe

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**Babeth Robert**

Director of the Memory Centre of Oradour

**W**hile working on the emblematic site of Oradour-sur-Glane, researchers involved in the ANR Ruines project<sup>1</sup> explored the phenomenon of “martyred villages” found in several European countries, including Spain, Italy, Greece, and the Czech Republic. The term refers, sometimes in an official capacity, to localities that experienced mass massacres and extensive destruction of infrastructure, often affecting small, peripheral communities. This contrasts with “martyred cities” which were obliterated through large-scale bombings. Questions raised about the emergence and use of this category led to the launch of the “VILMA” research project in 2022, structured around five key themes: 1. The cultural and political construction of the contemporary “martyred village” as a category embodying collective recognition, rooted in the late 19th century. 2. The management of destruction’s remnants and the transmission of memories, reflecting the material and community reconstruction. 3. The political investment in these localities, including monumentalisation and commemorations. 4. The diversity and challenges of heritage-making processes. 5. The networks and exchanges established between European “martyred villages”.

This collaborative research began with five exploratory seminars held between February 2022 and May 2023<sup>2</sup> in Oradour-sur-Glane, La Chapelle and Vassieux-en-Vercors (France), Marzabotto (Italy), Lidice (Czech Republic), and Distomo (Greece). It also included studies of Belchite and Corbera d’Ebre (Spain)<sup>3</sup>. These seminars combined site visits,

1 The ANR Ruines project (2018–2024) investigates the social and political uses of war ruins. See <https://ruines.hypotheses.org/1554>

2 The initiative is supported by the Memorial Centre of Oradour, the MSH Paris-Saclay, and the PLACES laboratory at CY Cergy Paris University.

3 Stéphane Michonneau, *Belchite, Ruines-fantômes de la guerre d’Espagne*, Paris, CNRS Éditions, 2020.



1. Oradour-sur-Glane, France | Memory Center of Oradour

meetings with scientists, and discussions with local memory policy stakeholders. A mid-term conference held in Oradour and Limoges from 22 to 24 May 2024 brought together researchers and stakeholders from various sites, laying the foundations for a European project.

Before addressing the heritage challenges of these sites, it is important to highlight the variety of atrocities and destruction they suffered in vastly different wartime contexts. Lidice stands out as an exception: its destruction in 1942 was a calculated act of retribution for the assassination of Reinhard Heydrich by Czechoslovak resistance fighters. Executed methodically, the process of destruction was more systematic, resulting in the complete obliteration of the village, including its cemetery and surrounding landscape. Elsewhere, atrocities were concentrated over shorter periods and affected smaller areas, particularly in Oradour and Distomo, where most of the killings occurred within a single day and were focused in the village centre. Finally, it should be noted that victims were not always limited to the inhabitants of the local community but could also include combatants, refugees, and residents of neighbouring hamlets. As for the destruction, it consistently involved looting, pillaging, and burning but sometimes only affected part of the infrastructure, as in Distomo.

In Oradour, on 10 June 1944, soldiers of the SS *Das Reich* division arrived near the village around 2 pm. They encircled it, gathered the population from within the village and its immediate vicinity, and killed all those they found, burning the bodies. A total of 643 civilians



2. Oradour-sur-Glane, France | © Maggie Jones

- children, women, and men - were killed. The village was then looted and set ablaze. The soldiers who committed this massacre had been operating for weeks along the western edge of the Massif Central, conducting numerous actions against the resistance. It was in this context that they carried out the largest massacre of civilians in France during the Second World War, in terms of the number of victims. Among the 643 victims, the majority were long-term residents of the commune, whose families had lived there for generations. Others were newer residents, refugees who had arrived since the war's outbreak. Among them were a significant number of Mosellans, as well as children entrusted to families in what seemed a safer location than a major city. Others included Spanish Republicans who had fled Franco's Spain, Jewish individuals (both French and from Central and Eastern Europe), and people who happened to be in Oradour on the afternoon of 10 June 1944, such as passing cyclists.

The materiality of these massacres is embodied in the ruins, which remain a prominent and distinctive feature, although their visibility varies today. The site of Oradour, where ruins extend over 10 hectares, is unique in this regard, especially as it also preserves artefacts recovered from the debris. In contrast, while the ruins at Belchite are similarly extensive, they have not been subjected to any coherent conservation



3. The Memory Center of Oradour-sur-Glane (Haute-Vienne, France) | Memory Center of Oradour

policy. Thus, the general use of the term “martyred village”, with its heroic and victim-focused connotations, reflects a unifying interpretation of diverse realities.

Due to this diversity of circumstances and the political developments of the post-war period, the monumentalisation of “martyred villages” has progressed unevenly and at different paces across regions. Some cases saw early monumentalisation, such as Oradour, which was classified as a Historic Monument as early as 1946; Lidice, which was immediately and enduringly elevated as a national symbol; and Belchite, which was quickly appropriated by Franco’s regime as a showcase of its propaganda. In contrast, sites like Marzabotto, Distomo, or Corbera experienced later processes of recognition. The fluctuating political use of these sites has led to periods of intense commemoration, alternating with moments of deliberate amnesia



4. La Chapelle-en-Vercors, The courtyard of the executed, June 2022. © Mathilde Greuet

(as in Greece between 1949 and 1977) or relative neglect (as with Lidice after 1989). While the site of Lidice, elevated as a symbol during the communist era, has seen renewed political interest in recent years, other sites have faced different challenges. In Marzabotto, for example, the centralisation of memory in the village (crypt-memorial, museum) long overlooked the scattered traces in the Montese hills, where much of the massacre took place. In Oradour, the “martyred village” became a pilgrimage site as early as late 1944, attracting many visitors. General de Gaulle’s speech during his visit in March 1945 confirmed its status as a national symbol. Official visits increased, and the village was awarded the Croix de Guerre and the Legion of Honour. In 1947, Vincent Auriol laid the first stone for the reconstruction of a new Oradour-sur-Glane beside the ruins of the original village. A turning point in the political significance of the site came in 1953, with the Oradour military trial held in Bordeaux. While the verdict condemned all the accused, Parliament passed an amnesty law days later for 13 Alsatians forcibly conscripted into the *Das Reich* division. This law was not well



5. Site of the former village of Lidice in the Czech Republic. 2009. © Peter Stehlik



6. Memorial dedicated to the victims of the Distomo massacre ©, A. Hertzog



received in Oradour, which returned its decorations in protest. The National Association of the Families of the Martyrs of Oradour-sur-Glane (ANFMOG) rejected the memorial built by the state to house the victims' remains and erected its own ossuary in the communal cemetery. It took approximately 30 years for relations between the village and the state to normalise. Since then, the political reinvestment in the site has been actively maintained. Two French Presidents, François Hollande in 2013 and Emmanuel Macron in 2024, visited Oradour alongside their German counterparts – an unprecedented act.

The forms of monumentalisation reflect a shared European commemorative culture, including cemeteries, necropolises, ossuaries, and war memorials. Human remains left on site, and the tributes paid to them, contribute to the construction of the “martyred village” concept by metonymy. These remains are, in some sense, incorporated into the ruins, even when later relocated to the villages' peripheries. This transfer of sacrality varies: ruins may be preserved (as in Belchite) and protected (as in Oradour and Corbera d'Ebre), rebuilt (as in Lidice), rediscovered and



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7 | 8. Belchite, Spain | EUROM

exhumed belatedly (as in Marzabotto), or erased (as in Vassieux and Distomo, where new villages were rebuilt on the original sites).

The heritage preservation of these sites, closely tied to memorial tourism, adopts different approaches depending on the context. At Oradour, with approximately 300,000 visitors annually, it focuses on memory and history. In Lidice, it incorporates an artistic and cultural dimension, including a collection of artworks. At Corbera, an outdoor sculpture museum complements the site. In Distomo, an ethnographic museum is part of the offering. In Vassieux and Marzabotto–Montesole, located within natural parks, naturalist and memorial registers intertwine in defining contemporary heritage values. At Belchite, the preservation of the few remaining ruins accompanies recent tourism developments, currently attracting around 40,000 visitors annually. In Oradour, however, the fragility of its ruined heritage is threatened by tourist activity, although the Ministry of Culture is reportedly increasing its investment in conservation efforts, supported by a subscription campaign launched by the Heritage Foundation. Ultimately, heritage preservation has clearly emerged as a shared concern since the 1980s, even as the political use of “martyred villages” as grand national symbols has diminished. These sites, once heavily mobilised in the immediate post-war period, continue to be reinvested in various ways today.

## Interview with Mayki Gorosito



1. Mayki Gorosito, Director of the ESMA Museum and Memory Site, during the ceremony for recognition as a Cultural Asset of Mercosur (2023) | ESMA

### Transforming trauma into testimony: *Mayki Gorosito* on the ESMA Museum's role in memory, justice, and Human Rights

**M**ayki Gorosito is the Executive Director of the ESMA Museum and Site of Memory, a museum and memorial located within the former Navy Mechanics School of the Argentine Republic. During the civic-military dictatorship (1976–1983), it was the main Clandestine Centre for Detention, Torture, and Extermination, where approximately 5,000 people were abducted, tortured, and disappeared. As a result of a gradual process involving public administrations and a large group of human rights organisations, the former ESMA is now the principal space of memory of the dictatorship and an international reference for the preservation of the heritage of repression and incarceration. In September 2023, the ESMA Museum and Site of Memory was added to the list of properties recognised as UNESCO World Heritage.



2. UNESCO World Heritage Celebration Event, with Estela Carlotto, President of the Grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo and Mayki Gorosito, Director of the ESMA Museum and Site of Memory | ESMA

In this interview, we explore the various memorial processes associated with the former ESMA: its transformation from a military facility where political dissidents were tortured and murdered into a site of memory; its role as a key heritage landmark for human rights in Argentina; the political disputes surrounding the site; the challenges of its inclusion in the UNESCO World Heritage List; and the potential threats posed by Argentina's current political situation.

**How has the process of converting the former military site into a site of memory unfolded? What stages can be identified throughout this process?**

**MG:** The Site-Museum is located in what was the Officers' Casino of the Naval Mechanics School, which until 1976 operated as a prestigious educational centre in Buenos Aires, dedicated to the training of non-commissioned officers. The Officers' Casino was the core of the repressive activity within the 17-hectare site, although the rest of the buildings, including educational institutions, also supported the illegal operations. The entire structure served as both a school and a Clandestine Centre. With the return of democracy in 1983, the ESMA became a symbol of the crimes committed by the civic-military dictatorship. Human rights organisations aimed to reclaim and redefine the space, initiating an extensive process to meet this initial challenge. In this context, the ESMA was not only deactivated as a site of



2. Unveiling of the UNESCO World Heritage Plaque, 2023. From left to right: Abel Madariaga, Grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo, Victoria Donda, Undersecretary for Analysis and Monitoring of Strategic Policies of the Province of Buenos Aires, Mayki Gorosito, Director of the ESMA Museum and Memory Site, Buscarita Roa, Grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo, Tristan Bauer, Minister of Culture, Estela Carlotto, President of the Grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo, Horacio Pietragalla Corti, Secretary of Human Rights, Martin Soria, Minister of Justice, Tati Almeida, Mothers of Plaza de Mayo Founding Line, Graciela Lois, Relatives of the Disappeared and Liliana Pellegrino, ESMA survivor | ESMA

repression, but the school itself also began a rapid decline in reputation and institutional standing. In those early years, which included the creation of the National Commission on the Disappearance of Persons (CONADEP) and its subsequent inspection of the ESMA, and following the new political and judicial cycle in relation to Argentina's recent past in the 2000s, the military institutions were gradually removed from the site. However, this phase was not without controversy and setbacks. For example, the site narrowly avoided an attempt at demolition in 1998. Following the inauguration of President Néstor Kirchner, on 24 March 2004, an agreement was signed between the National Executive Power and the Government of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires to create the Space for Memory and for the Promotion and Defence of Human Rights. This was formalised in November 2007 with the creation of a Public Body as an inter-jurisdictional public law entity. The Commission established to discuss different proposals for the Space for Memory, with the participation of human rights organisations and survivors, unanimously decided that the Officers' Casino building should be preserved as the historic site. Beyond this, the entire site was designated as a Space for Memory. As such, the ESMA Museum and Site of Memory was inaugurated a few years later, on 19 May 2015, by President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner. The content and the museographic project, along with the work carried out, were authorised by the judicial bodies responsible for the site and agreed upon by the various interested parties, including survivors, human rights organisations, cultural heritage specialists, and site of memory experts, among others.

**Few places like the former ESMA exemplify the plurality of actors (public administrations, memory and human rights associations, etc.) involved in the memorialisation process of a site. Has this diversity been a challenge or an advantage? Have the interests of all parties been easy to balance?**

**MG:** It has been an advantage in the sense that we have a well-established and powerful participation framework. The Site-Museum's team works daily with the Advisory Council of Human Rights Organisations and creates spaces and initiatives for the informed and active participation of the survivors. This ensures multiple perspectives are considered, and the consensus that formed the foundation of its institutionalisation continues to be respected. Regarding coexistence, the Site-Museum is located within the boundaries of the buffer zone, made up of the Space for Memory and for the Promotion and Defence of Human Rights which houses public institutions and civil society associations at both national and regional levels. It is administered by an Executive Body made up of representatives from the national government, the government of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires, and the Human Rights Organisations Directorate. The Site-Museum maintains dialogue and coordinates its agenda with all these actors, sharing the common goal of working towards *Nunca Más* and the preservation of memory.

**At any point, did military units pending relocation coexist with human rights organisations and/or the Site of Memory itself? If so, how did this coexistence unfold?**

**MG:** The process of coexistence began in October 2004 when the decision was made to vacate several buildings, including the Officers' Casino, and grant the Bicameral Commission - comprising representatives from the National Secretariat for Human Rights and the City's Subsecretariat for Human Rights - provisional tenure of these buildings for free use as part of the Space for Memory. In 2005, the first guided tours of the former Officers' Casino took place, following an agreement with the Navy that allowed a subdivision of the site, fencing off certain areas to enable the coexistence of military and civilian sectors and the exclusive use of the assigned buildings. That year also marked the beginning of regular meetings of the Bicameral Commission, involving representatives from various human rights organisations, survivors, and staff from the Space for Memory, to agree on issues related to the complete recovery of the site and the construction of the new institutional framework. By 2006, the authorities of the Navy vacated and handed over another five hectares with their respective buildings. Meanwhile, within the human rights organisations, there were discussions and attempts to reach consensus. Some survivors argued for leaving the place untouched, while others

3. The Basement Room of the Permanent Exhibition | ESMA



proposed transforming the buildings into the new institutions that exist today. Finally, at the end of 2007, the final eviction of the remaining Navy-occupied buildings was achieved. On 20 November of that year, a new agreement was signed by President Néstor Kirchner and then-Mayor of the City, Jorge Telerman, continuing the accords from 2004, and establishing the creation of the Public Entity for the Space for Memory and for the Promotion and Defence of Human Rights.

**The former ESMA is the most notable Clandestine Detention Centre of the civic-military dictatorship (1976–1983), not only due to its historical significance but also because of the national and international projection of the current site of memory. How does this influence its relationship with other spaces of memory from the dictatorship? Does it assume any leadership or co-management with any of them? At what level?**

**MG:** Although the ESMA Museum and Site of Memory has a different institutional dependency than other spaces of memory in Argentina – since it is under the Human Rights Secretariat, whereas some other sites depend on the National Directorate of Sites, provinces, or municipalities – the connection and dialogue are fluid. There is no co-management model, but rather a close relationship with joint participation in some actions and initiatives. Specifically, regarding the Museum and Site of Memory’s nomination to the UNESCO World Heritage List, we received unanimous support from the Memory Spaces in our country. In this context, we organised working meetings with all of them and are currently seeking avenues for mutual cooperation and collaboration.

**The former ESMA is part of a network of spaces of memory whose very existence serves as evidence in transitional justice processes. How is such a responsibility managed? How is this idea reflected in the museographic and/or educational approach?**

**MG:** Since its inauguration, the Site-Museum has ensured that the building retains its unaltered condition, to preserve its status as judicial evidence and allow access to new discoveries, relying on the reversibility of the museographic display. Construction marks, inscriptions, and objects found in the building have been recorded, identified, and classified according to the conservation protocol of the National Directorate of Sites of Memory and validated by testimonies and documents admitted as judicial evidence. In addition, at the museographic level, the protocols used during the monitoring and supervision of the Site-Museum’s works were endorsed by conservation experts, the Human Rights Organisations Advisory Council, and National Criminal Court No. 12, which remains responsible for safeguarding and preserving the judicial evidence at the ESMA. Therefore, maintaining a fluid and ongoing dialogue with this court is essential. At an educational level, the status of judicial evidence and the actions of preservation are conveyed to visitors within the framework of memory pedagogy that we develop through guided, self-guided, or audio-guided tours. Indeed, safeguarding a site that could serve as evidence for the conviction of perpetrators and genociders is an enormous, unique, and unparalleled responsibility.

**In reference to this, spaces of memory that address recent historical events must confront the potential relationship with both the collective of perpetrators and that of bystanders. How is this issue dealt with at the former ESMA?**

**MG:** In the Golden Hall (in the tour, it corresponds to the room where the visit concludes), the faces of the perpetrators are displayed in an audiovisual device that details the accusations and convictions. The content presented at the Site-Museum has the weight of being based on the testimonies of survivors provided to the judiciary, which form the foundation of the information displayed in the various rooms. The purpose of the Site-Museum, since its creation decree, is to convey what happened at the Clandestine Centre, its causes, and its consequences.



4. Mayki Gorosito, Director of the ESMA Museum and Memory Site, during the World Heritage Celebration Event, | ESMA

**In 2023, the ESMA Museum and Site of Memory was included as a heritage asset on UNESCO’s World Heritage List. What was the process of inclusion? What are the characteristics that make the ESMA Museum and Site of Memory considered as World Heritage?**

**MG:** The implementation of the work plan for the candidacy of the Site-Museum to UNESCO’s World Heritage List was extensive, rigorous, and complex. At the same time, it opened multiple connections and possibilities to develop institutional potential. On the one hand, it involved preparing a nomination dossier with an interdisciplinary team made up of professionals from various fields of knowledge, such as journalists, historians, communicators, specialists in heritage, human rights, and international cooperation. Then, informing all the actors involved in the governance of the Site-Museum and the Public Entity for the Space for Memory and for the Promotion and Defence of Human Rights, and demonstrating the integrity and authenticity of the site. In addition to proposing, as exceptional universal values, that the Site-Museum is a testimony and symbol of State terrorism based on forced disappearance,

and of the value of social consensus as a means to achieve justice. Beyond proposing an Exceptional Universal Value, we also had to demonstrate the integrity and authenticity of the site. We also organised regular meetings to inform Memory Spaces across the country and defined a strategy to gather support. We created a map of institutions and key figures from academia, sub-regional integration bodies, parliaments, organisations and social movements, cultural sectors, the sports sector, UNESCO chairs, trade unions, and feminist and LGBTIQ+ organisations. Through meetings, we informed them of the candidacy and what the Site-Museum symbolises and bears witness to, not only for Argentina but also for the world. From them, we received hundreds of endorsements, which were fundamental in broadening consensus. At the national level, I highlight the unanimous support from the Chambers of Deputies and Senators of the Nation, the Legislature of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires, the Federal Council for Human Rights, and the Council of the Judiciary. Regarding the international sphere, we also worked to generate support, establish synergies with diplomatic representations, international organisations and networks, and maintain contact with sites in other

countries already included on the World Heritage List and with the ICOMOS organisation. In that regard, we prepared for two years to receive the inspection from that organisation. The inspector held meetings with authorities from the national government, the government of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires, the Public Entity for Memory and for the Promotion and Defence of Human Rights, various Memory Spaces and Sites across the country, the Ministry of Justice and the Secretariat for Human Rights, the National Commission of Monuments, the Argentine National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO, Federal Criminal Court No. 12, civil society, the MERCOSUR Institute of Public Policies on Human Rights, the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience, and the Latin American and Caribbean Network of Sites of Memory, as well as with various staff members and authorities from the Site-Museum. Additionally, during the years of work on the candidacy, we set up visibility spaces in Argentinian embassies and consulates in 23 countries around the world. Along with other communication tools, this aimed to strengthen awareness among different communities and governments about what the Site-Museum symbolises and bears witness to. In the same field of internationalisation and global visibility, we produced and exhibited the temporary exhibition “Argentinian Memory for the World: Heritage of the ‘Never Again’” at the Argentinian Consulate in New York, the United Nations headquarters, and the Los Pinos Cultural Complex in Mexico City. Furthermore, from the Site-Museum, we actively participated in the Open Working Group meetings convened by the World Heritage Committee to present Argentina’s position regarding the nominations of Sites of Memory associated with recent conflicts, which had been suspended until the States Parties reached an agreement on how to address them and lifted the moratorium. After this entire process, in September 2023, through decision 45 COM.8B.53, the World Heritage Committee finally recognised the Site-Museum for being “highly representative and closely and tangibly associated with the illegal repression of armed and unarmed opponents and dissidents, executed and coordinated

by the dictatorships of Latin America in the 1970s and 1980s, and based on the forced disappearance of persons, in a climate of global geopolitical tensions between opposing visions of the world’s socio-political order”. At this stage, we are working to meet UNESCO’s recommendations and continue strengthening the institution in all its dimensions.

**The process of restoring value to the Ex ESMA as a space of memory cannot be understood without the support and promotion efforts carried out by Kirchnerism. Given the current political climate, where Argentina is experiencing a noticeable political regression, what threats are looming over the site’s management?**

**MG:** Naturally, the importance different governments place on the Memory, Truth, and Justice agenda varies. I believe it is crucial to emphasise that at the ESMA Museum and Site of Memory, we work to ensure that this agenda, as well as the institution, are regarded as state policy. The Site-Museum was inaugurated in 2015 and has operated under three administrations. Throughout these periods, with different presidents (Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, Mauricio Macri, and Alberto Fernández), and various ministers of justice and secretaries of human rights, we continued to function and were able to develop the Work Plan for the UNESCO World Heritage List candidacy. Of course, the progress, setbacks, and complexities were varied, depending on how those administrations viewed this agenda. In this new, complex, and uncertain political scenario, we believe it is essential to keep building, expanding, and deepening consensus. When facing new dilemmas, we must recall the processes through which consensus was achieved and work towards building new ones. Additionally, we must continue professionalising the institution, expanding audiences, strengthening regional and international connections, and carrying out actions to protect and preserve the heritage with a management approach that is gender-sensitive, sustainable, and accessible.



Of course there are always threats, which can translate into closures, lack of funding, attempts to interfere in content and disregard for international and regional commitments, among other issues. However, I believe that the Site-Museum must not only maintain high-level management in these areas but also strengthen and deepen its ties with human rights organisations, survivors, judges, students, teachers, researchers, trade unionists, artists, athletes, and the general public, as well as with the hundreds of national, regional, and international actors who legitimise and defend it.

**More broadly, how is the position of the new Argentine government affecting, or going to affect, memory policies and the promotion of human rights?**

**MG:** In the case of the Site-Museum, we have managed to maintain the continuity of staff, prevent the alteration of content, and continue implementing the strategic management plan submitted to UNESCO, as well as the scheduled activities, with the ongoing support of the Human Rights Council Advisory Committee. This is not the situation for other Memory Spaces in the country. In this context, we continue working to sustain a public policy that has regional (MERCOSUR), global (UNESCO), judicial, and heritage endorsements.

**Finally, based on your experience as a manager in the field of memory, how do you perceive the promotion of European memory policies? What differences or similarities do you find in comparison to Latin America?**

**MG:** The countries of Latin America were victims of brutal dictatorships, with specific political, historical, social, and economic differences, but with similarities and points of convergence in the characteristics of those processes. A fundamental aspect of memory policies in Latin America is that they are linked, to a greater or lesser extent, to the participation and demands of survivors, the families of victims, and human rights organisations. In Argentina, for example, other key aspects relate to the role of the judiciary and the consensus reached around the principle of 'Never Again'. In Europe, I understand that the progress and setbacks vary between countries depending on their political processes and the level of social participation. What I consider fundamental and necessary is the cooperation and political and inter-institutional dialogue between actors committed to the deepening, construction, and defence of memory, truth, and justice policies and initiatives on both continents.

# How do we tell what has happened to us?

Diana Castelblanco

Professor, Jorge Tadeo Lozano University in Colombia

In his work *Voices from Chernobyl* (2015), in the chapter ‘Monologue on Why People Remember’, the Belarusian writer Svetlana Alexievich presents us with the testimony of the psychologist Piotr S., who asks, why do people remember? “Is it to restore truth? Justice? To free themselves and forget? Because they realise they have been part of a great event? Or because they seek some form of protection in the past?” This is the account of an ‘ordinary’ man, reflecting on one of the human tragedies that, beyond the intention to quantify it through the force of its death toll, impacts as profoundly as the Holocaust, the repression and disappearance of people during the civil-military dictatorship in Argentina, or the more than nine million people recognised as victims of the social and armed conflict in Colombia.

While statistics shake our collective conscience, they also overshadow the individual stories behind these numbers, diluting our understanding of the human condition imposed in such circumstances. A story, a singular voice, among others, resists oblivion by unearthing images from the past, images that appear with overwhelming force in the present, reminding us that in the contest over numbers, the profound meaning of what has been lived must not be lost.

But what does it mean to remember? It is to have an image of the past. How is this possible? Because this image is a mark left by events, one that remains imprinted on the spirit. “The truth is that when we recount true events from the past, what we draw from memory are not the events themselves, but words created by the imagination, imprinted upon the spirit like marks engraved on the senses as they pass by” (Ricoeur, 1996, p. 44).

## So, how do we tell what has happened to us?

In the case of Colombia, “testimonial narratives have been so numerous that one volume of the Final Report of the Commission for the Clarification of Truth, for Coexistence and Non-Repetition – CEV – (2022)<sup>1</sup> It was dedicated to these words created by the imagination. This volume, titled *Cuando los Pájaros No Cantaban: historias del conflicto armado en Colombia* (When the Birds Didn’t Sing: Stories of the Armed Conflict in Colombia), is also known as the *Capítulo Voces del Informe final*. (Voices Chapter of the Final Report).

By listening to victims, perpetrators, and other involved actors, the Commission identified a narrative structure where the everyday emerged as a prominent aspect of the war. The history of the conflict was made up of “stories within stories”, that is, fragments within narratives that recounted life, subjectivities, and intimate experiences of violence. An everyday structure wrapped in time as a triple present: “a present of future things, a present of past things, and a present of present things” (1996, p. 124). A kind of temporal indeterminacy of memory, as it appeared in a present from which the past was remembered, while simultaneously being a present from which the future was envisaged. In this way, victimising acts were addressed not only from the traditional approach of “listening as a gesture of the past,” focused on specific moments of violence, but also incorporated a future perspective, considering the expectations regarding the processes of truth, justice, and reparation to which the Colombian State committed itself, within the framework of the Peace Agreement signed between the National Government and the FARC-EP (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia—People’s Army in 2016.

(...) this volume sought to compose a polyphony of the war through the most intimate experiences of those who lived it. It therefore focused its efforts on delving into the memories of violence using a narrative that connected a past which, in tangible terms, has not been left behind- since violence continues in Colombia - an uncertain present, and a “future” imagined from that uncertainty and through efforts to build “peace on a small scale” (2022, p. 9)

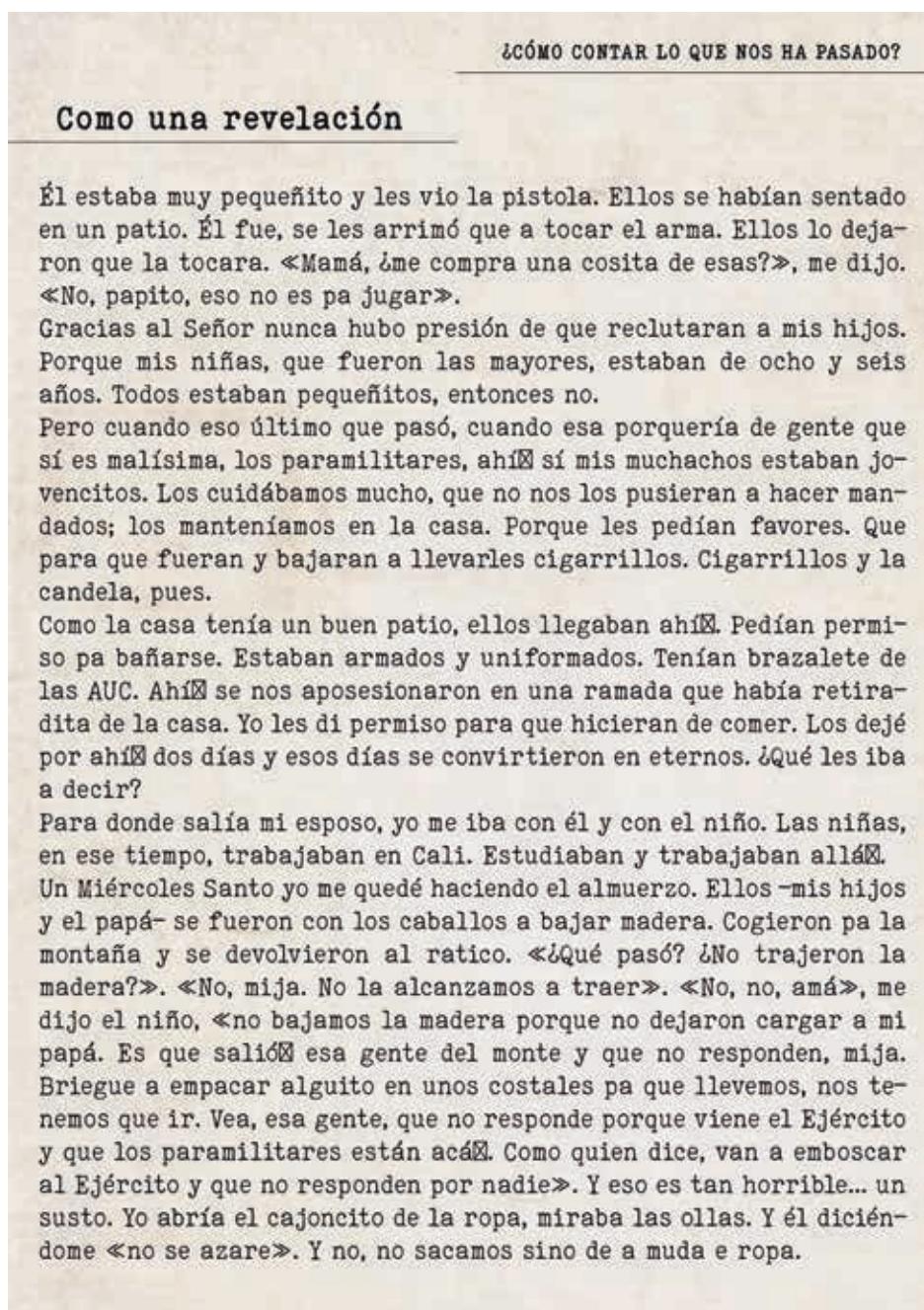
Thus, the stories of violence and their images became traces left by past events, an interpretation of experiences in the present, and a sign with

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<sup>1</sup> The CEV is one of the three entities created by the Peace Agreement between the Colombian State and the FARC-EP, signed in November 2016. The other two entities are the Unit for the Search of Disappeared Persons (UBPD) and the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP).

anticipatory meaning about the future as a possibility. *Cuando los pájaros no cantaban* recounts the tragedy and the circumstances that preceded it; it tells of the silences and absences that pervaded the experience, as well as the traces and scars it left behind. However, these are also stories of life; of people's efforts to imagine, from their present, a future as a possibility, which, according to the Truth Commission, seems elusive in Colombia. The Testimonial Volume is divided into three books: *El libro de las anticipaciones* (The Book of Anticipations), *El libro de las devastaciones y la vida* (The Book of Devastations and Life), and *El libro del porvenir* (The Book of the Future).

Below are a few fragments from these stories, among the more than 150 compiled in this archive:



1. "Like a Revelation". A woman recounts dreams and visions of the Virgin that warned her of armed groups entering her territory (2022, p. 73)

This testimony speaks of the fear of forced recruitment of minors by paramilitaries and of forced displacement as the only alternative to protect oneself from clashes between armed groups.

## ¿CÓMO CONTAR LO QUE NOS HA PASADO?

### La culpa no es del río

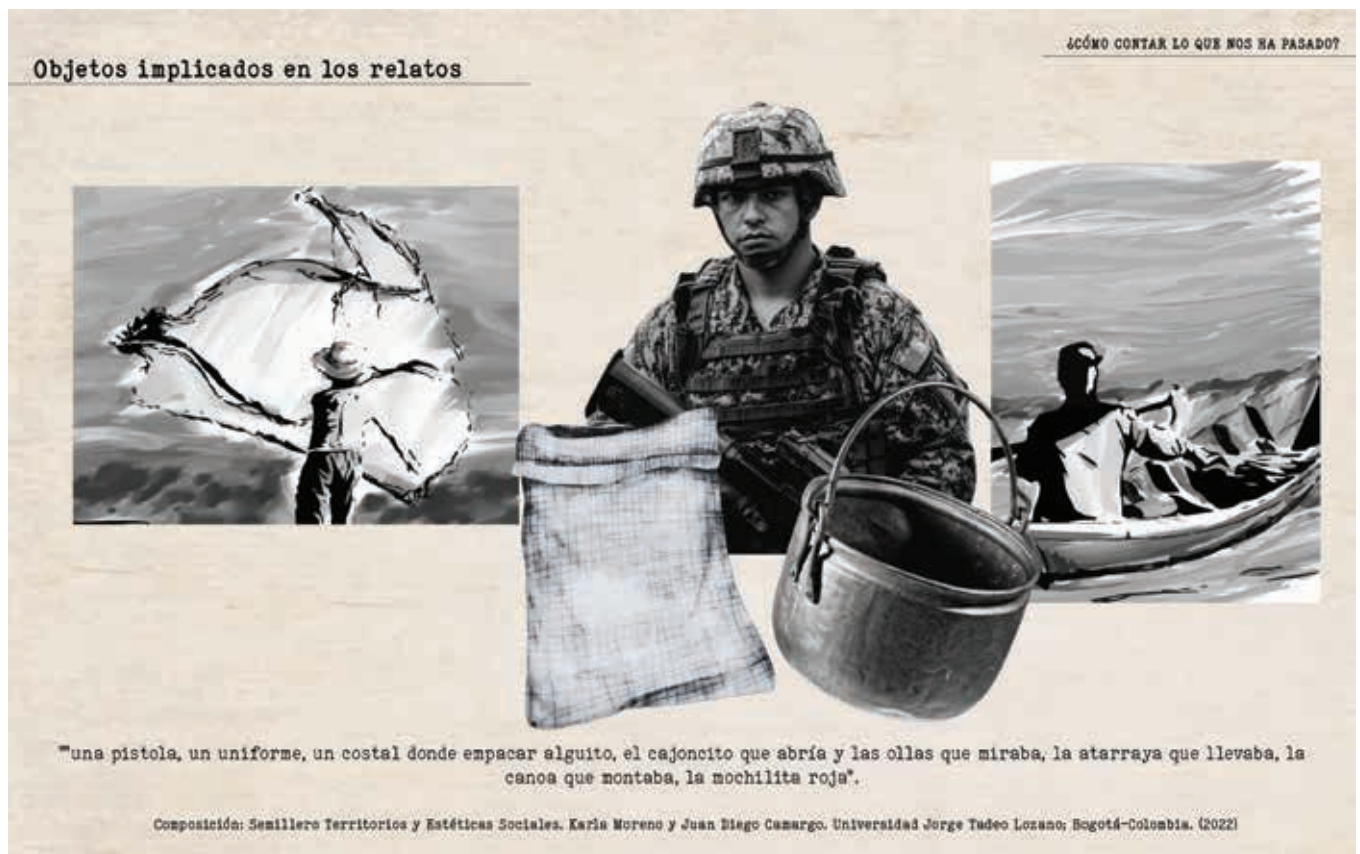
La gente siempre dice: «Si no existiera el río, no hubiera pasado eso», porque el río se convirtió en el cementerio, prácticamente. Pero yo les decía: «No le echen la culpa al río; el río no mató a la gente». Lo hacían porque para ellos era más viable que no lo encontrarán rápido, de que se perdiera la evidencia. En el agua los pescados van a borrar las huellas. Es difícil que pues el cuerpo todavía tenga piel. Yo digo que el río fue beneficioso para los malos y que nosotros perdimos el lugar donde nos íbamos a bañar. Uno ya ni se metía al agua. Juro que desde el 2001, 2002, no volví a pescar. Desde que vi a un muchacho que lo sacaron del río: las sardinas se le estaban comiendo una parte de la lengua, los ojos, la oreja... No volví a pescar. Yo era de las que me iba con la atarraya, yo misma la hice. Llevaba una mochilita roja, y eso era lleno de sardinas, de pescado grande. Con las sardinas hacía atún, imagínate. Desde que vi al muchacho no he vuelto a saber qué es comerme una sardina, ni a pescar en el río. Me imagino a toda la gente, a todos los pescados que devoraron la gente. ¿Y uno comerse esos pescados? Uno se pone a pensar en toda la sangre que ha caído al río. Uno antes se bañaba, tomaba de esa agua, iba a cocinar. Cogía agua del río y pues decía «ah, el agua se hierve y no pasa nada; hervida mata todo». Uno se tomaba el agua. Le echaba un poquito de limón y tomaba. Ahoritica yo no soy capaz de tomar de esa agua. Ellos lo siguen haciendo. O sea, no en gran cantidad, ni tan visible, pero igual siguen matando y tirando gente al río. Se perdieron muchas prácticas y muchas buenas costumbres. En el homenaje que le hicimos al río, empezamos haciéndole una sanación. Lo hicimos en La Balsa, donde montamos en las canoas. Le echamos flores, hubieron poesías alusivas, alabaos. Comenzamos por reconocer que el río no tenía la culpa(...).

2. "The River is Not to Blame A Black woman, part of a victims' organisation, explains that the river is not to blame for the paramilitaries making it complicit in the war. (2022, p. 137)

In this testimony, the river, used by perpetrators to hide bodies, symbolises the social, cultural, and environmental impact of the conflict. Its transformation into a place associated with violence and loss, interrupting everyday practices like fishing and water use, also reflects the processes of displacement caused by the conflict.

According to the Commission, in this volume, testimony is defined as an “articulation of experience”, where personal and social processes intertwine. This concept of articulation not only includes the use of words but also extends to visual and poetic languages – symbolic, textual, performative, and object-based representations – that form a tapestry of “textures of experience” from which to try to “understand the social processes through which the public image of the past is constructed” (Jelin & Vinyes, 2021, p. 9).

It is important to highlight that people do not only testify with words but also **through the objects involved in their narratives**: “a gun, a uniform, a bag to pack a few things, the small box they opened, the pots they looked at, the fishing net they carried, the canoe they rode, the little red backpack.”



3. Composition: Seedbed of Territories and Social Aesthetics. Karla Moreno and Juan Diego Camargo. Jorge Tadeo Lozano University; Bogota, Colombia. (2022)

These are images that enrich and deepen the testimonies, attending to “a piece” of reality and “an interest” of the one narrating that reality. Objects, while understood as a singular voice, give us access to the historical, territorial, and differentiated reality of the conflict in Colombia, as they speak, more than about themselves, about how we can understand the social world in which they are situated. These are cultural expressions – images – in which versions of the past and events associated with places and communities are contested. It is an approach to history “from below”, not only because of *who narrates* but also *how that past is narrated*: a narration in the key of everyday life.

Those who tell their stories hold onto objects to organise their memories in a coherent, lasting, and stable form where the past can reside. The focus is less on explaining the facts than on making sense of that past in order to understand it, as the objects provoke and evoke a sensitive attitude towards human experience. Objects present in the physical spaces of daily life; absent objects, remembered and narrated through words; objects that represent intimate expressions intimate expressions that oscillate, move, flee, and return in an apparent disorder, with an intense range of emotions: passions, hatreds, attachments, fears, arrogances, disappointments, desires, liberations, or reprisals (De Certeau, 2000).

In these stories, the objects are numinous in the sense described by Rudolf Otto (1991), as they suggest a mystery, evoke terror and fascination that delve into the depth of memory, the experience of the past, and the expectation of the future. They are witnesses that survive time, while also acting as provocateurs of testimonial practice - of words - and thus of memory and remembrance. "The past - what is absent, what has ceased to be - returns, embodied in the object that vectors both words and gestures" (Avila & Landa, 2022).

Carlos Martín Beristanin, advisor to several truth commissions in different countries and a commissioner in the Colombian Truth Commission, said that "objects symbolise the relationship with origins, ancestors, the founding myths of collective life, a type of debt to those who are no longer here" (Beristanin, 2021). There are also memories in objects, as the Commissioner said when referring to the uniqueness of the Colombian conflict; to the differential, ethnic, and territorial approach that was adopted during the peace negotiations between the National Government and the FARC-EP (2016).

In the interest of reconstruct these territorial narratives, focusing on the victims and recognising the ethical and aesthetic dimensions of the of the communities, The Truth Commission created the

*Fondo Documental de la Colección de Objetos de la Memoria* ('Documentary Fund of the Memory Objects Collection'). This archive represents the memories of victims of the armed conflict in regions such as Cauca, Casanare, Caquetá, Córdoba, Guaviare, Huila, Meta, Nariño, Santander, and Valle del Cauca, among others. It comprises more than 100 objects donated to the Commission by victims or members who have led social processes of denunciation or reparations for the damages caused by the war for many years. The objects stand as memories of the wounds left by violence in these regions and represent territorial memory, referring to the experiences that evoke origins, identity, and the community, in line with the so-called "differential approach to the Colombian conflict".

**The stove:** The fire pit is a significant object at the Truth House, where gatherings were held. This fire pit was built with the intention of bringing people together around food to talk about their experiences of the war. Buenaventura, Valle del Cauca, Colombia. 2 November 2021.



4. Archive: Juliana Sandoval, curator of the exhibition "Objetos sagrados, palabras preciosas" (Sacred Objects, Precious Words) at the Centre for Memory, Peace and Reconciliation, Bogotá-Colombia. (2022).

**Basket of veins:** During the process “Women Speaking and Doing: Justice, Search and Truth,” a basket was collectively woven. As they wove, the women reflected on the impacts they had experienced, both personal and collective, how they faced them, and what should be done to prevent their recurrence. The basket, a traditional handmade object used by Afro and Indigenous communities in their daily activities, symbolises these reflections. Buenaventura, Valle del Cauca. 2 November 2021.



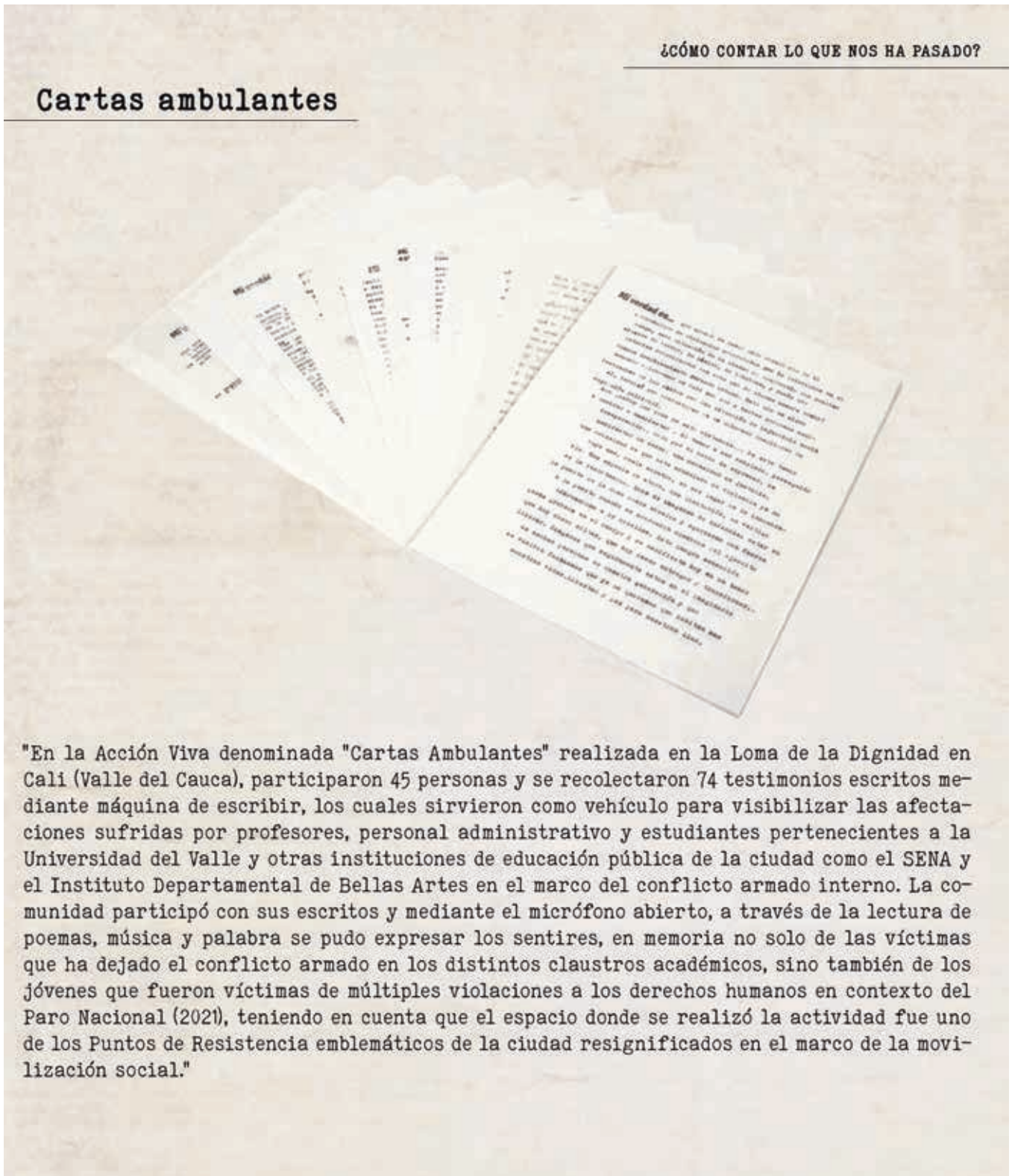
5. Archive: Juliana Sandoval, curator of the exhibition *Objetos sagrados, palabras preciosas* (Sacred Objects, Precious Words) at the Centre for Memory, Peace and Reconciliation, Bogotá, Colombia (2022).

**Catumare:** The indigenous delegates from the Caño Negro and Cachiveras de Nare reserves in Guaviare presented an empty catumare as a symbol of their waiting for the remains of members of their community who joined armed groups and have not returned. In their tradition, when one of their leaders dies, they are buried in the *maloca*, and in the fifth year, a celebration is held where their remains are painted and placed in the catumare. After three days of commemoration, they are buried permanently. San Jose del Guaviare, Guaviare. 19 November 2021.



6. Archive: Juliana Sandoval, curator of the exhibition *Objetos sagrados, palabras preciosas* (Sacred Objects, Precious Words) at the Centre for Memory, Peace and Reconciliation, Bogotá, Colombia (2022).

**Travelling Letters:** On 1 September 2021, the Truth Commission held the Living Action *Cartas Ambulantes* (Travelling Letters) at Loma de la Dignidad in Cali, an artistic event that highlighted the impacts suffered by the university community during the armed conflict, promoting truth clarification and non-repetition. Seventy-four testimonies were typed on typewriters, with the participation of 45 people. Cali, Valle del Cauca. 19 November 2021



7. Archive: Juliana Sandoval, curator of the exhibition *Objetos sagrados, palabras preciosas* (Sacred Objects, Precious Words) at the Centre for Memory, Peace and Reconciliation, Bogotá, Colombia (2022).

In commemoration of the National Day of Memory and Solidarity with Victims, on 9 April 2022, the exhibition “*Objetos Sagrados, Palabras Preciosas*” (Sacred Objects, Precious Words) was presented at the Centre for Memory, Peace, and Reconciliation in Bogotá, Colombia. There, some of the Memory Objects were displayed, accompanied by the narratives that the victims and social leaders constructed around them. By being integrated into the context of the exhibition, these objects move away from their original use to form a new social device that defines what and how to remember what has happened to us (Guglielmucci, 2021).



8. Exhibition “Sacred Objects, Precious Words” at the Centre for Memory, Peace, and Reconciliation, Bogotá-Colombia. (2022). Taken from: <https://www.elespectador.com/el-magazin-cultural/la-suma-de-las-vozes/en-los-objetos-tambien-hay-memorias/>

These objects are representations of memory to denounce human rights violations, to resist forgetting, to recognise oneself as a victim, to reaffirm identity, to reconstruct events; in general, to evoke an image of the past. An image which, in the Colombian context, is associated with a specific form of war: **detritorialisation and loss of identity**. Everyday objects like a pot, a cast net, a basket, or even abandoned houses, not only represent the political reality of forced displacement but also reflect social relationships and personal experiences, where words like “abandonment” and “loss” are part of the fabric of the experience that led to fragmented identities and torn communities.



9. Exhibition "Sacred Objects, Precious Words" at the Centre for Memory, Peace, and Reconciliation, Bogotá-Colombia. (2022). Archive: Juliana Sandoval, Exhibition Curator

## So, how do we tell what has happened to us?

Words and objects bring us back to the idea that remembering is an attempt to make sense of experiences that are difficult to fully narrate. However, lived life and narrated life are not the same (Ricoeur, 2006). The stories we tell do not always capture the entirety of lived experience, yet they are essential in trying to understand and humanise our experiences. Objects, together with words, face the challenge of dealing with the inassimilable. Their function is not merely to restore the original context but to create a new environment, woven with a connection more metaphorical than contiguous with the fabric of violence. Sometimes, these objects make visible microhistories, in Ginzburg's sense (1994), singling out details from subaltern subjects to achieve surprising representations of what has traditionally been rendered invisible in historical accounts, "the ruins of the social". At other times, they are configured as metaphors that replace the focus on "the real" with an aesthetic value that reworks the grand narratives of the past or empowers those narratives to formalise a historical account.

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# The End of Dictatorships in Portugal and Spain: *Historical Contexts and Public Memories*

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In the 1970s, the collapse of the *Estado Novo* (New State) and the Francoist state took place, two of the longest-lasting dictatorships in the contemporary history of Western Europe. This year marks half a century since the military coup carried out by officers of the Armed Forces Movement (MFA) that overthrew Prime Minister Marcelo Caetano, leading to the Carnation Revolution on 25 April 1974. Next year will mark 50 years since the death of the dictator Francisco Franco on 20 November 1975, who became head of state during the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939) and the beginning of the political shift towards the transition to democracy in Spain.

The Iberian dictatorships emerged in the context of the rise of European fascism during the interwar period. Although differing in origin and development, both shared common elements in their forms of governance. Their downfall also occurred within a historical context where the international order of the Cold War was entering the phase of détente. However, this did not mean that the political confrontations maintained by the two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union, were removed from closely observing the events taking place on the Iberian Peninsula, seeking to influence the respective transition processes through their foreign policies in favour of their geopolitical interests.

Our aim is to first offer a brief historical contextualisation of these recent pasts. Secondly, we intend to comparatively examine the public memory in both countries, with the aim of analysing some of the characteristics of the memory policies surrounding the end of the respective dictatorial regimes and their management within the framework of the processes of transition to democracy: What meaning has been given to them? What stories have been constructed around these pasts? What have been their political uses and the debates derived from them?



1. Demonstration of construction workers, March-April 1977, Ferran Street, Barcelona | Arreu Collection, Historical Archive of the CC.OO. of Catalonia

## **Dictatorial Crises and Democratisation Processes: Their Differentiated Contexts**

The Portuguese dictatorship, known as *Estado Novo*, was established by António de Oliveira Salazar in 1933, years after the coup d'état of 1926, which ended the First Republic. This political regime was characterised by strong authoritarianism, nationalism, and corporatism. For over four decades, Salazar and his successor from 27 September 1968, Marcelo Caetano, ruled by suppressing political freedoms and repressing dissent, despite Caetano's promises of reforms and changes to sustain the regime itself.

The colonial wars fought by Portugal, starting in the 1960s, led the *Estado Novo* to become embroiled in costly and bloody wars in Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea-Bissau. These conflicts significantly weakened the dictatorship. The economic and human toll of these wars became unsustainable, while internal opposition and growing discontent, as well as international pressure, increased. Thus, the 25 April 1974 coup, led by a group of MFA officers, paved the way for a rapid and complex process of decolonisation, granting independence to its African colonies. This event, known as the Carnation Revolution, was marked by a low manifestation of violence and widespread popular support. The image of soldiers with carnations in the barrels of their rifles became the symbol of this process.

This event not only brought an end to nearly half a century of dictatorship but also set the country on a revolutionary path. Policies aimed at deep social transformation, including the nationalisation of banks and much of the large industry, with some instances of collectivisation, were supported by significant popular mobilisation. The group of MFA officers closest to communist positions announced in March 1975 that the “transition to socialism” had begun within the Ongoing Revolutionary Process (PREC).

The constituent elections of April 1975 gave victory to the Socialist Party of Portugal, founded two years earlier on 19 April 1973 in Bad Münstereifel (FRG), and led by opponent Mário Soares, who had been exiled in Paris since 1970. In the following months, the country came close to civil war, but on 25 November, the attempt of another coup led by groups of officers advocating for further advances in the PREC failed. This outcome would facilitate the socialists, supported by conservative political groups concentrated in the provinces north of the Tagus, to put an end to the political influence of officers close to the positions of the Portuguese Communist Party. Subsequently, the Constituent Assembly, meeting in plenary session on 2 April 1976, approved the Constitution of the Republic, whose Article 1 declared it “a sovereign Republic, based on human dignity and the popular will, committed to transforming into a classless society”.

Spain’s democratisation, like Portugal’s, was not without tensions and challenges. In the Spanish case, the assassination of Prime Minister Admiral Carrero Blanco, following an attack organised by the Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA) in Madrid on 20 December 1973, deepened the dictatorship’s crisis. Arias Navarro, the Minister of the Interior, was appointed by Franco as the new Prime Minister on 31 December of that same year. Arias was tasked with designing reform and opening policies, remaining in office after Franco’s death and the proclamation, two days later, on 22 November 1975, of Juan Carlos I as king and head of state. Nevertheless, Arias Navarro’s failure to reconcile reforms with the regime’s survival became evident. On 5 July 1976, the monarch appointed Adolfo Suárez, then Secretary

General of the Movement, as Prime Minister. From then on, steps were taken towards a process of political reform driven by groups from the Francoist political establishment, as well as agreements with the main leaders of the political opposition. This led to the general elections on 15 June 1976 which aimed to consolidate a liberal parliamentary democracy. The Spanish Constitution, voted in a referendum on 6 December 1978, which put an end to the Fundamental Laws of the regime that emerged victorious in the civil war, stated in its Article 1 that “Spain is constituted as a social and democratic State of law, which promotes as the highest values of its legal order liberty, justice, equality, and political pluralism. National sovereignty resides in the Spanish people, from whom the powers of the State emanate”.

The end of both dictatorships is often included in what is termed the “Third Wave of Democratisation” (Huntington, 1994), conceived as negotiated processes for the establishment of liberal-democratic systems. This phenomenon had an initial impetus that, in addition to Portugal and Spain, included the fall of the Colonels’ dictatorship in Greece, which occurred on 24 July 1974. However, this democratising wave would extend until 1991, affecting transition processes in Eastern Europe with the Soviet collapse, as well as those experienced in the Southern Cone of Latin America.

Nonetheless, the political and social rupture that occurred in Portugal would not fully align with this model nor would have distinct characteristics that should not be overlooked. In fact, systematic comparisons are often made between the Portuguese Revolution and the Spanish Transition, portraying the latter as a model process due to its combination of moderation, reconciliation, and negotiation, contrasted with the radicalism, violence, and rupture symbolised by the process initiated on 25 April in Portugal. In the effort to group and compare the Portuguese case with Spain’s process of democratic consolidation, it is often overlooked that the Portuguese transition “was a post-revolutionary (or even anti-revolutionary) outcome.” This revolution, with openly socialist goals explicitly stated in its constitutional text, saw its political and social model

rapidly evolve towards a traditional liberal–democratic direction, aligning with the liberal–conservative turn in the West in the late 1970s (Loff, 2024).

In conclusion, the paths to democratisation were different. Both countries certainly consolidated democratic systems that endure to this day and achieved full integration into the international community. However, neither of these transitions was inevitable or pre–planned, nor did the political actors of the time necessarily see it that way, given the uncertainties of these processes. In Spain, a negotiated transition was chosen, which was not solely the result of elite negotiations but was also shaped by pressure and protest from the streets, which intensified in 1976. In Portugal, the process was initiated by a popular revolution, particularly led by groups of young officers from the colonial army, influenced by revolutionary ideas.



2. Portuguese people on an armored car during the Carnation Revolution, April 25, 1974 | Unknown author. Source: Centro de Documentação 25 de Abril, Wikimedia Commons.

## Traumatic Pasts, Shifting Pasts: Battles Over Public Memory and Its Management

Unlike Spain, where the memory of the dictatorship remains a markedly divisive issue, Portugal has, until recently, seen greater consensus around the condemnation of the *Estado Novo*. In this case, the regime's repression and limitations have been widely acknowledged, and there is a notable effort to educate new generations about this dark period in Portuguese history. This is because the processes of reconciliation and justice have differed between the two countries. In Spain, the transition was largely negotiated, which led to a "politics of forgetting" that avoided prosecuting those responsible for Francoist crimes to facilitate democratic consolidation. This has led to current debates on historical memory and the need for justice for the regime's victims. In contrast, the Carnation Revolution in Portugal allowed for a more open process of justice and reconciliation. Although elements of forgetting were present, the consensus around condemning the *Estado Novo* has been more pronounced.

Moreover, the memory of the Portuguese Revolution has been widely celebrated every 25 April. The country commemorates Freedom Day, marking the end of the dictatorship and the beginning of democracy. This date is a moment of reflection on democratic achievements and a tribute to those who fought for freedom. It has become a central element of Portuguese collective memory, with commemoration and ritualisation not only serving to remember the past but also to affirm democratic values in the present. In contrast, in Spain, this symbolic calendar, which includes 6 December 1978, the date of the Referendum for the approval of the Constitution, though celebrated annually as a public holiday, is difficult to place on the same level of social significance and public celebration.

However, the legacy of the Carnation Revolution remains complex and ambivalent in the country's collective memory. In the early years of the political transition, anti-fascist memories were dominant.

The political actors of the time promoted a narrative of breaking with the dictatorial past, but also of subversion and transformation of the political and social order. From 1976, during the consolidation process, under constitutional governments, a conservative and counter-revolutionary discourse began to develop, seeking a homologation that aligned with the illusory desire to view the Portuguese case as the start of a third wave of democratisation. This was the result of a discourse about a country that began to deny the revolutionary moments of its democracy as foundational, instead portraying them as a prior, distorting force that had to be corrected (Loff, 2024).

Over the years, the memory of the Revolution (1974-1975) has been the subject of historiographical debates and historical revisionism. There have been reinterpretations that reflect the changes in the country's political and social context. This battle for memory in the public sphere was clearly expressed on the 20th anniversary of the Carnation Revolution in 1994. The uses of that memory in different historical contexts have allowed it to be instrumentalized to serve contemporary political aims. Today, this issue remains vital, not just as a memory of the past, but as an active resource that influences current Portuguese politics. In fact, it has become an ideological battleground. Debates about its meaning and consequences have reflected broader political divisions in society. While the left has generally celebrated the Revolution as an emancipatory and progressive moment, certain sectors of the right have sought to minimize its impact or reinterpret its achievements, portraying it as a chaotic interruption in national history.

Nonetheless, the memory of the Revolution and the 25th of April has played a significant role in shaping national identity, rooted in the values of freedom, democracy, and social justice. School textbooks and educational programmes have been key tools in conveying official narratives about the Revolution. However, these narratives can vary and sometimes face tensions between a more critical view and a more celebratory interpretation of events. This suggests that national identity is not



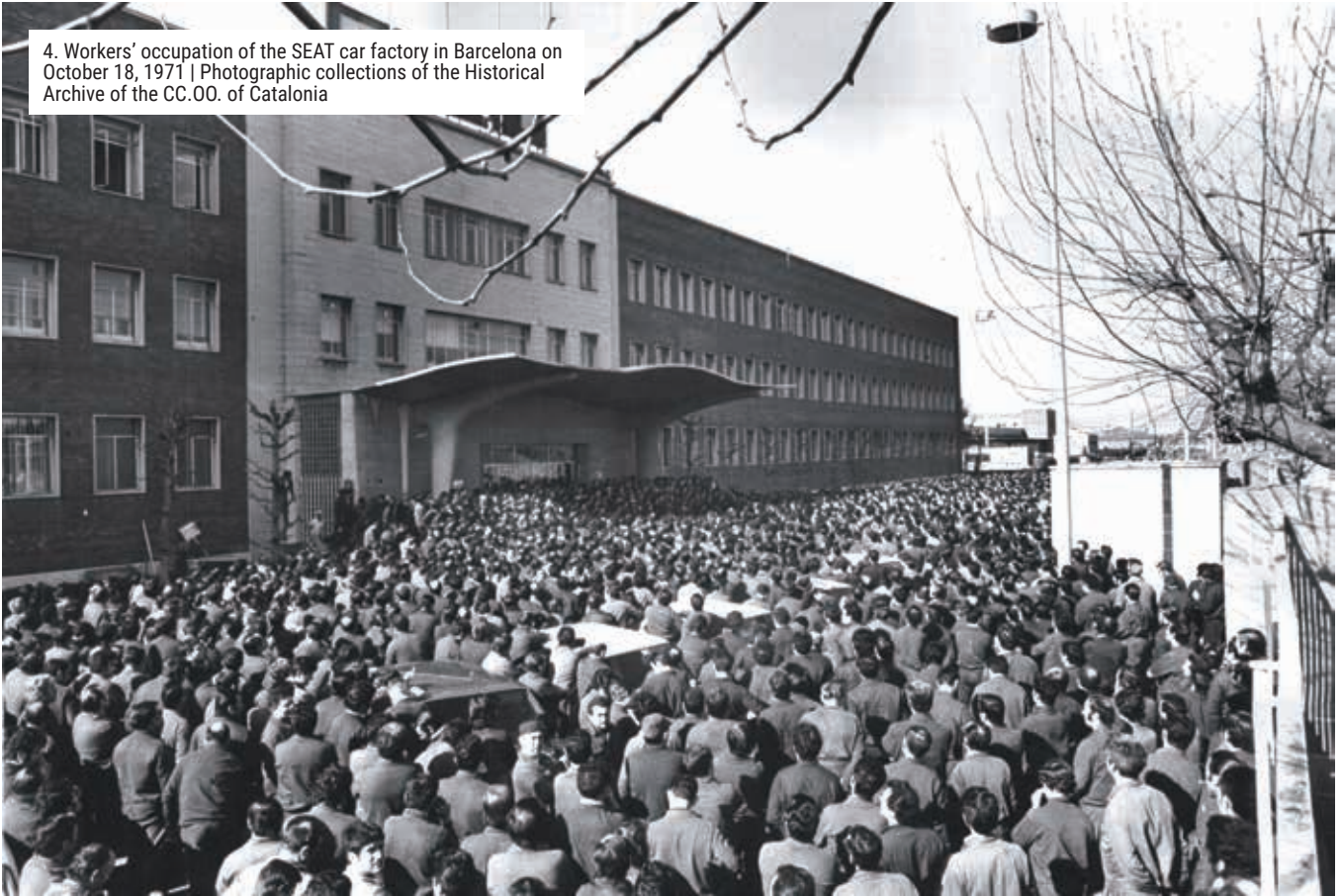
3. Temporary exhibition "25 de Abril SEMPRE!" (April 25, ALWAYS) celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Carnation Revolution (2024) at the Aljube Museum of Resistance and Freedom | Photo by Ricard Conesa (EUROM)

monolithic and is subject to reinterpretation and dispute, especially in times of political or social crisis. For example, during the austerity years and economic crisis at the end of the 2010s, revolutionary memory was invoked both by those advocating for redistribution and social protection policies and by those criticising state intervention and pushing for neoliberal economic reforms.

In Spain, the political instrumentalisation of memory and the myth of the country's transition to democracy has also occurred. Over the years, Spain's Transition has consistently been presented as "exemplary," even as a "model" to guide political change processes that took place in the 1980s and 1990s. This Transition is considered a legacy upon which the official memory legitimises Spanish democracy itself. However, from 2011 onwards, amid the social damage caused by the Great Recession of 2008 and the rise of the 15-M movement in a new political cycle, a narrative questioning the entire Transition process gained strength.

As a result, we now face a series of narratives and representations about the Transition, accompanied by evaluations, judgements, and proposals on how to manage that past. Although some of these narratives are often presented as new, they all have a long history.

4. Workers' occupation of the SEAT car factory in Barcelona on October 18, 1971 | Photographic collections of the Historical Archive of the CC.OO. of Catalonia



This brings us to the political uses of the past in constructing the narratives around the Spanish “Transition”. Its “rewritings,” linked to the dichotomy of “model/counter-model”, or, seen another way, the “myth/anti-myth” dynamic, have prevailed and have not necessarily contributed to a better understanding of the historical significance of that period, which could strengthen democratic values and culture.

In education, the school narrative about the Transition in Spanish secondary and high school textbooks connects it to the paradigm of modernity. In other words, the end of Francoism and the establishment of the democratic regime are confined to a few decisive years, during which Spain’s long process of economic, political, social, and cultural modernisation, which began in the 19th century, is said to have inevitably triumphed. This overshadows the violent conflicts of the 20th century. It can be argued that the narrative of the Transition in classrooms is a product of this same historical process and takes on a functional role, aimed at transmitting, in a reconciliatory and uncritical

manner, certain identity values and the exaltation of national unity.

Recently, when reflecting on concepts like memory – both individual and collective – the value of witnesses, reparation, and the question of whether or not to forget, historian Álvarez Junco referred to a “dirty past”. In Portugal, the annual celebration of the Carnation Revolution and the condemnation of the *Estado Novo* reflect a relatively broader consensus on the importance of remembering and learning from a “dirty past”. However, in Spain, while the transition to democracy was achieved, “many things were left unresolved”, something for which the same author argues that one should “defend the Transition with reservations, without triumphalism” (Álvarez Junco, 2022). This is because, in the Spanish case, the struggle for recognition and reparation for the victims of Francoism remains an unfinished issue. After the government of José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero passed the so-called “Historical Memory Law”, Law 52/2007, the Spanish authorities, under Mariano Rajoy’s government, faced a normative challenge in 2014 regarding democratic memory.

This came from Pablo de Greiff, the UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation, and guarantees of non-repetition, and from the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances. In their two reports, following a visit to Spain, de Greiff highlighted the need to implement a policy of Truth, Justice, Reparation, and Guarantees of Non-Recurrence. These are the principles of transitional justice, endorsed by international law, and applied in countries with a traumatic past marked by mass human rights violations.

The approval of the new Democratic Memory Law in October 2022, by the coalition government led by Pedro Sánchez, was an acknowledgement of this problem. It also provided an opportunity to move forward, albeit with difficulties, in a country where high political polarisation and the so-called “culture wars” spurred by the far right do not provide the best environment to emphasise the importance of remembering and learning from a “dirty past”.

## Conclusion

The *memories* of this period remain a vital and often controversial subject. The range of issues arising from the proposed comparison would reveal the nature of *collective memory* as inherently a field of conflict between different memories, as well as its impact on contemporary politics and society. These debates invite reflection on their importance and raise questions about how narratives of the past can and do shape our present and future.

Lastly, it is worth adding that these historical processes and their memories teach us about resistance, the struggle for freedom, and the complexity of political transitions. In other words, they remain relevant today, not only for understanding the past of both countries but also for reflecting on the current and future challenges and threats to the defence of democracy and human rights worldwide.

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# The Mosaics of Flight *by Angelo Canevari in Forlì*

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**T**he architectural and artistic heritage of Forlì includes a work of great value, both from a cultural and historical point of view – the mosaics in the former Aeronautical College, now a school for 11–14-year-olds. This is a truly impressive work of art dating back to the second half of the 1930s, based on drawings by Angelo Canevari and dedicated to the theme of flight. More precisely, they depict the myth of flight and the relationship between man and the conquest of the skies as interpreted by the Fascist regime. The mosaics are perhaps the most striking example of the ‘dissonant’ heritage of the city of Forlì – the ‘città del Duce’ rebuilt as a showcase for Fascism in the 1920s and 1930s, but a city awarded the ‘silver medal for its part in the Resistance (‘Medaglia d’argento al valor militare per attività partigiana’) and with a strong post-war tradition of antifascism. The mosaics have an undoubted artistic value alongside a cultural and historical value as an example of the propaganda of the Fascist regime.

This surprising visual narrative composed of black and white marble tiles (with, as we shall see, a single exception of the use of the color green on one occasion) has an intrinsic artistic value: the combination of the rediscovery of the mosaic in a contemporary key with the some of the main elements of Futurism such as the thrill of speed, the exaltation of technique, the choice of dynamic lines and geometric shapes, the exaltation of heroic deeds. All this is interpreted according to an interpretative key closely linked to the vision of the writer and poet (but also airplane pilot and military man of action) Gabriele D’Annunzio, and intimately tied to the ideology of the regime.



1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5. The mosaics at the former Aeronautical College in Forlì an artistic masterpiece from the late 1930s, created from designs by Angelo Canevari. They vividly depict the myth of flight and humanity's pursuit of conquering the skies, as envisioned through the lens of the Fascist regime. These mosaics stand as one of the most striking examples of Forlì's 'dissonant heritage,' reflecting a complex and layered historical narrative | Pictures by Ricard Conesa (EUROM)

## D'Annunzio's Futurism

As well as being influenced by the futurism of Filippo Tommaso Marinetti and “Aeropittura” (a current of the movement focused on the enthusiasm for flight, courage and power), the Forlì mosaics of the history of flight were strongly influenced by D'Annunzio's thought, itself central to the ideology of Italian aviation during Fascism. His work included a reappraisal of the myth of Icarus, exalted in poems such as “L'ala sul mare” (‘the wing over the sea’), “Altius egit iter” (‘he flew even higher’) and “Ditirambo IV” (Dithyramb IV’) and in the novel “Forse che si forse che no” (‘Perhaps yes, perhaps no’). In D'Annunzio, however, the image of Icarus is the opposite of that in antiquity where, for example in Ovid, the curious young man loses his life for not having respected his father's advice for him to be prudent. For D'Annunzio, Icarus becomes instead a heroic example of one who accepts a challenge, and in this he is supported by the example of Phaeton, another imprudent youth. In 1909 D'Annunzio had declared that modernity had already surpassed both the myths of antiquity and the dreams of the Renaissance and he recruited both Icarus and Leonardo as precursors. These two, in fact, became the key symbols for Fascist aviation in Italian Aeronautical Exhibition of the Palazzo dell'Arte in Milan in 1934, to whom were added the contemporary figures of Francesco Baracca (the hero of the Great War), Italo Balbo (the commander of the trans-oceanic flight to Chicago and New York in 1933) and, indeed, Gabriele D'Annunzio himself, the indomitable pilot who flew over Vienna during the First World War dropping anti-Austrian leaflets. It was this exhibition which inspired the work of Canevari for the mosaics in Forlì.



## The Aeronautical College, a pearl of rationalism

The architectural context of the building in which they are located undoubtedly contributes to making the Forlì mosaics unique. The mosaics can be found in the courtyard of a large, monumental complex designed by one of the great exponents of rationalist architecture in Italy, Cesare Valle. The building was designed in the mid-1930s, built in 1937 and inaugurated in 1941 and was dedicated to the memory of Bruno Mussolini, son of the Duce and an air force officer who died in a plane crash in Pisa in August the same year. The Aeronautical College is situated at the end of the avenue (then Viale Mussolini, now Viale della Libertà) leading up from the new Forlì railway station which at the time represented the main access point to the city. The station and the avenue were also the beginning of the route taken by the political pilgrimages of the 1930s to the dictator's birthplace, in Predappio. This was a route created and managed

by the organizations of the Fascist regime to bring hundreds of thousands of people every year, often for free or at very low cost, to discover the places of Benito Mussolini's childhood.

To fully appreciate the value of the mosaics, then, we need to take into account their architectural and urban context and the different and overlapping levels of communication involved. The building itself was a monumental complex created to inspire awe on the part of those who looked at it from the outside. Inside, the art adorning the walls (in addition to the mosaics of flight there are also mosaics and drawings of terrestrial globes and the constellations) was intended to impress the students of the Aeronautical College as well as guests. Added to this aesthetic value, the building had a pedagogical function, that of pervading the minds of the students who studied in these spaces every day, inspiring the young people who were preparing to become future air soldiers and assigning them a precise identity: heroes and warriors who were contemptuous of danger.

## Angelo Canevari and contemporary mosaic

The mosaics were designed by Angelo Canevari (Viterbo 1901–1955). A graduate of the Academy of Rome and an expert in mural decoration and furnishings, in 1931 he joined the futurist movement of Aeropittura and became well-known thanks to his specialization in mosaics, carrying out a number of works in the Foro Italico in Rome. The mosaics for the Aeronautical College of Forlì were assembled by the Luigi Rimassa company of Rome, following Canevari's drawings, on panels which were then fixed to the walls. The tiles, regular in cut and size (each tile is about one square centimeter), were bound together with cement leaving small spaces in the interstices so as to obtain an effect of notable homogeneity in colour (black and white) and regularity in form. The materials were all Italian: mixed white limestone from Trani, Botticino and

Istria and black carbonaceous limestone. Art critics recognize in Canevari's mosaic work a valorization of two-dimensionality, an energetic contrast between static and vigor, with evident references to the mosaics of Roman villas of the late ancient period.

## The history of flight, propaganda and war

The work was located in the entrance reserved for the students of the Aeronautical College. They arrived up a ramp flanked by more black and white mosaics depicting imperial eagles recalling both Roman times and the heraldic symbol of Forlì. After passing through an imposing portal, they would enter the Cortile Italico leading to the classrooms, the gym, the great hall, the reception rooms and the large external square for physical activity. The mosaics are displayed in four sections along the walls of this courtyard, under a portico. The first

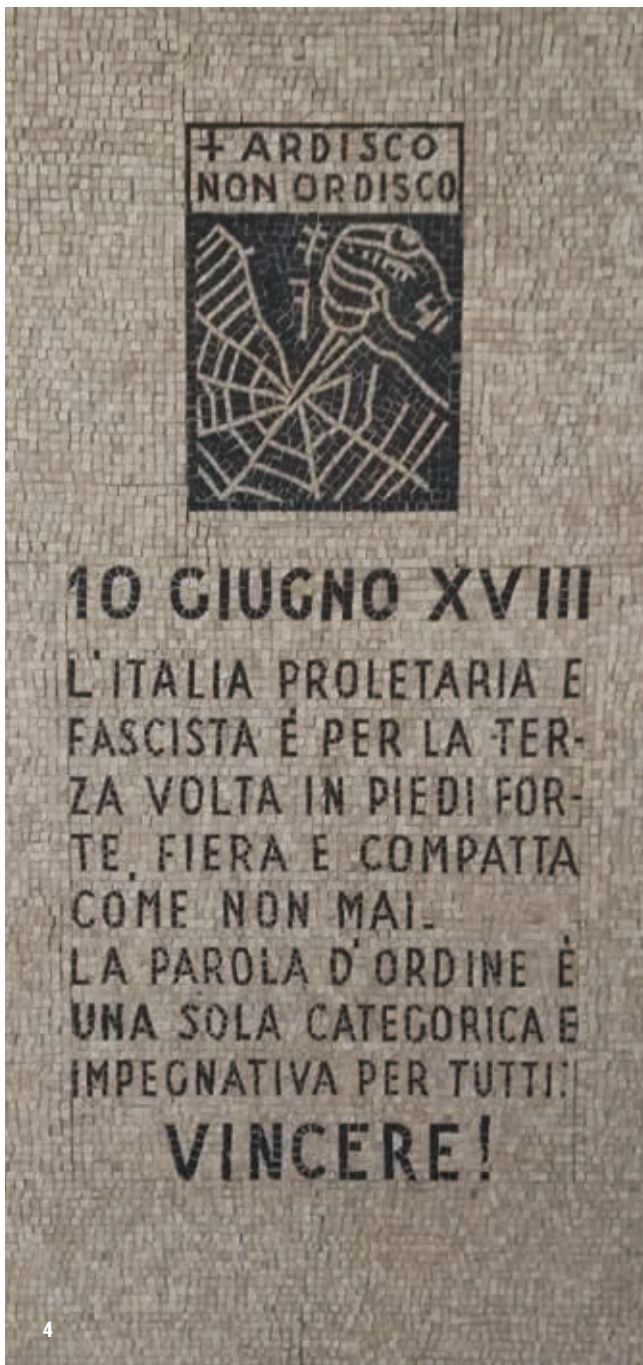


section features four mosaics dedicated respectively to the ancient myths of Icarus and Phaeton, to the modern genius of Leonardo Da Vinci, to the first military use of aviation in the Italo-Turkish war in Libya in 1911-12 and to the myth of Francesco Baracca in the Great War. To the right of the entrance, the second wall of the portico is dedicated to aeronautical experiments from the 17th century onwards, from parachute prototypes to imaginary flying machines, from hot air balloons to airships, culminating in the invention of the Wright brothers in 1903. Here we may note the first of a number of

errors which, out of respect for the work of art, have remained unaltered. The first is the surname of the inventors of the motorized flying machine which, in the mosaic, appears as 'Wright'. Constellations and zodiac signs appear as a background to the drawings and captions.

The ideological fulcrum of the route is the point of contact between the second and third sections. Here there is a declaration attributed to Mussolini dating back to 1909: "The four primordial elements are now in the power of man. We have gone beyond the law that forced us to crawl on the ground. The dream of Icarus, the dream of all generations is becoming reality. Man has conquered the air." The two sections are separated by a frieze with the Latin motto of D'Annunzio "Memento audere semper" ("Always remember to dare"), and a phrase by D'Annunzio himself which summarizes the "educational" spirit of the mosaics: "Limits to strength? There are no limits to strength. Limits of courage? There are no limits to courage. Limits of suffering? There are no limits to suffering. I say that 'no more beyond' is the most outrageous blasphemy against God and man."

The third wall is dedicated to the feats of Italian civil aviation in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century: the birth of the air force in Italy, the exploits of Italian pilots (speed, distance, length) and their memorable feats achieved on all continents in the 1920s and 1930s. The ideology of 'going beyond' is reiterated at the end of this section. At the end of the section appears the only exception to the exclusive use of black and white: the use of green tiles used to represent three small mice, symbol of the 205th Bombing Squadron "Sorci Verdi" considered to be an elite unit of the Italian Air Force. Next to the drawing is the peremptory slogan: "Living dangerously". Here too we may note two mistakes. The date of the birth of the air force is incorrect: not March 23, 1923 (as written), but March 28, and the in the illustration of the Atlantic crossing in formation led by Italo Balbo is announced as the "Decennial Air Cruise 1932" whereas it in fact took place in 1933.



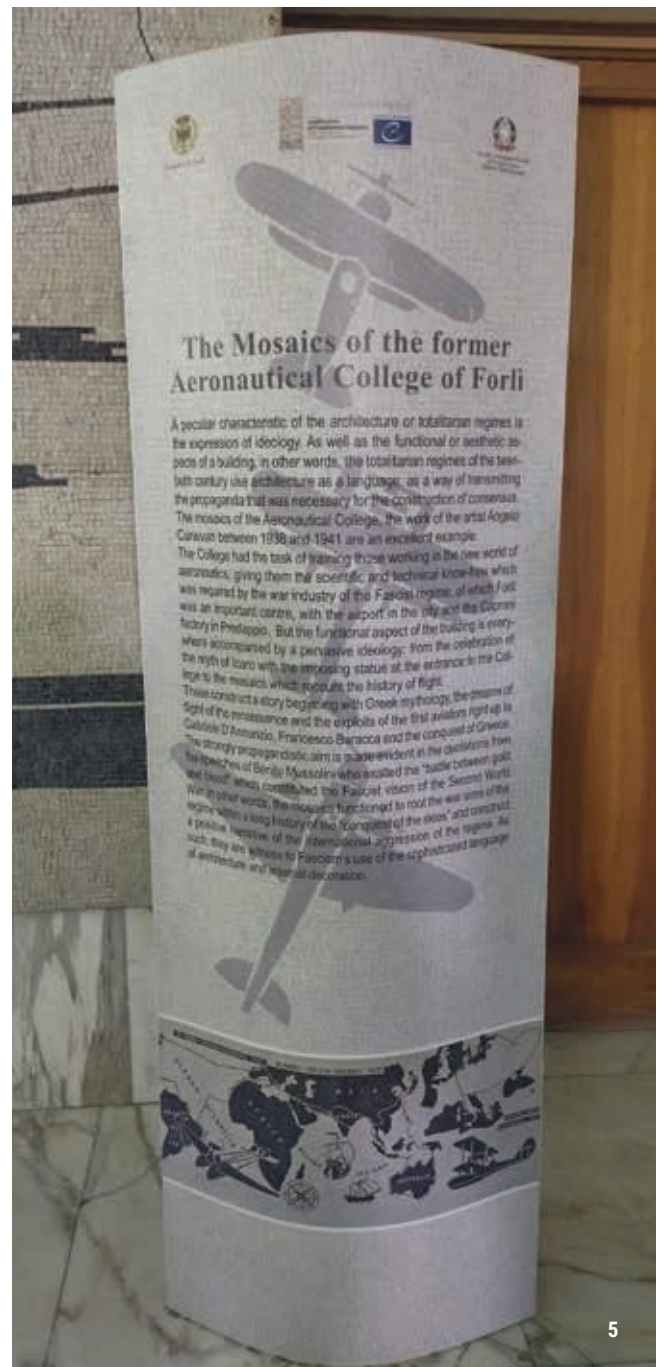
The last section, preceded by a lateral appendix on stratospheric experiments, is dedicated to the military activity of the Air Force between 1940, the year in which, on June 10, the Duce announced Italy's entry into the war alongside Nazi Germany, and 1941, the year of the inauguration of the Aeronautical College. "Vincere" and "Vinceremo" are the mottos of Mussolini that open and close the section, followed by words praising military action and by depictions of airplanes hurtling through the skies, dropping bombs and engaging in acrobatics. This hymn to supremacy is accompanied by a statistical caption noting the tonnage of the bombs dropped on Greece, the bullets fired, the number of enemy planes shot down.

The final section, then, is a true hymn to war and victory from which the relationship between propaganda and reality emerges with great clarity. The mosaic closes, at the end of the fourth wall of the portico, with a dedication of the Aeronautical College to Bruno Mussolini, flanked by the fascist motto "Credere Obbedire Combattere".

## Art, history and reflection

After Forlì was liberated from the Nazis and the Fascists on 9 November 1944, the building, although damaged by the war, was used by Allied troops to house soldiers stationed in the immediate vicinity of the front line. Since the end of the war, the building has been used as a school for children aged from 10 to 13 and for a time, during the closure for the summer holidays, as the Forlì Trade Fair, before its move to the outskirts of the city. The mosaics are still present, in good condition, tolerated despite the dissonance of their political and historical message: the Fascist interpretation of the challenges of flight, the sympathy for the young Icarus, who in the educational programs of the Republic inspired by the democratic Constitution appeared once more as a symbol of imprudence than of heroism, and above all the panegyric to war. Rediscovered thanks to the activities of the ATRIUM cultural route and initiatives of the Fondo Ambiente Italiano, the

mosaics of flight of Angelo Canevari have been relaunched on the national and international level, both for their aesthetic value and for the historical content they exhibit. They are valuable material for students of the history of art and of the propaganda and ideology of Fascism, they can be objects of interest for a critical cultural tourism, and they can constitute a valuable starting point for civic education. As such they are a perfect examples of that "dissonant heritage" that is increasingly an important element in public heritage and historical memory.



# *Spanish migrant and exiled women in the French Resistance. The construction of a memory between experiences and expectations<sup>1</sup>*

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**T**he participation of Spanish women in the French Resistance remains one of the great unresolved issues in the historiography of Republican exile and the Second World War. For decades, researchers and activists on both sides of the Pyrenees have denounced their neglect by both academia and society, an assertion that is now largely untrue. In recent years, the growing concern for gender issues and women's history has led to a greater public presence and their inclusion across the board in the most recent research. However, there are still no specific studies of this particular group of women, largely due to the problem of the limited availability and fragmentation of sources, as well as the way in which they have been constructed in memorials since 1944.

In addressing the role of Spanish women exiles and migrants in the Resistance, memory intervenes both as confirmation and negation. The memories of/about these women testifies to and militates against their triple-fold exclusion from the most hegemonic period in history. Firstly, because they were women in an environment (the Resistance) that is masculinist in its historical construction, and in which French historiography continues to struggle to include women in the narrative and achieve a more pluralistic history. A second axis of exclusion was precisely that of their condition as foreigners (emigrants or exiles) on French soil, who are often also absent in the narratives, despite the fact that, as Gaston Laroche pointed out, "It is impossible to write the history of the dark and glorious years of France's liberation struggle without mentioning the participation of the immigrant combatants (...), who were called foreigners [but also foreigners] because they offered France their freedom and their blood." Finally, these women were absent from the narrative of the Second World War in their country of origin,

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<sup>1</sup> This article is part of the REMEMCHILD project, supported by the CERV programme.



1. Stolperstein for Neus Català Palleja  
| Picture by Francisco Peralta Torrejón.  
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International

Spain, due to their migratory and exile trajectories and their anti-fascist ideology. The regime established in 1939 controlled the country and all its expressions until the late 1970s, when the manifestations of the “era of the witness” in other countries in Europe had already begun. And, likewise, as memorialist legislation from the 2000s onwards has shown, we still have difficulties in constructing a complete history of the anti-fascist and anti-Francoist struggle beyond 1939 and from a gender perspective.

How can we historicise 80 years on the participation of women of Spanish origin who took part in the Resistance? How can we combat this triple-fold exclusion from a period in history when the physical disappearance of the protagonists increases the lack of available sources? How can we construct a historical account that avoids

generalities and does not seek to fit the perspectives of female subjects into a history already written from an androcentric, nationalist and partisan point of view? How can we integrate multiple trajectories, militant experiences of varying degrees and maladjusted discourses into a univocal account of the Resistance? We must start by entering into these experiences and interpreting them in context, not only to “fill in the gaps”, but also to problematise the process of memorial simplification.

The coup d'état by conservative forces against the Second Spanish Republic marked the beginning of a civil war and accelerated the politicisation of broad sectors of society in the fight against the international fascism of the 1930s. Moreover, for women, the Republic had signified, on the one hand, access to political citizenship and, on the other, the exercise of that citizenship through politicisation, commitment and progressive presence in public spaces. Thus, the women who had played a leading role in the cultural and political avant-garde of those years were also at the forefront of Republican

resistance during the Spanish Civil War, whether as militia(wo)men in the first months of the war, on the so-called work front, or in political or humanitarian functions. Some of them continued their lives and political careers in exile and joining the Resistance did not involve a break with the actions and decisions they had taken during the war in Spain or before. This marks a difference with what historians of women's participation in the Resistance in France have called a “paradox” in the commitment of French women, who, despite not having rights as citizens (the right to vote), demonstrated their dedication as true citizens through their actions.

Published in Spanish in 1984 and later in French, the testimony of Neus Català and the 43 other Spanish women who took part in the Resistance, some of whom were also deported, remains one of the main sources for studying and understanding the experiences and role of Republican women fighters in France. Most of these women, including Neus Català, arrived in France between 1936 and 1939, when the fall of Catalonia and the



2. Neus Català during an exhibition | Fundació Pere Ardiaca, CC NonCommercial-ShareAlike



end of the war triggered an unprecedented exodus of half a million people from almost the entire Spanish mainland to the French border. According to different sources analysed – among others, by Maëlle Maugendre and Alba Martínez – it is estimated that there were between 90,000 and 95,000 women among them at the height of the exodus. But this collection of testimonies also represents other migratory trajectories. In fact, in addition to the relationship between exile and the Resistance, there are the accounts of Spanish people from previous waves of migration, especially as labourers during and after the war of 1914–1918. The subsequent participation in Resistance networks and activities of women such as Carmen Asensi, Sabina González and Jesusa Bermejo is evidence of the importance of the construction of transnational networks and support for the Republican cause during the civil war and the attention given to the refugee population by the Spanish community in France.

Thus, the involvement of Spanish people in the Resistance can only be studied from the general perspective of the social and political movements of the 1930s and 1940s, and on a transnational scale. Even across the border, the exiled community in France never ceased to view the Spanish Republic as the ultimate objective: the memory of a stolen dream and the desire to return to Spain to re-establish it. But in the meantime, their lives were marked by the urgency of everyday life, the challenges of adjusting to life in France, the challenges of reuniting separated families, the desire to get out of refugee camps or concentration camps, the need to find work, dealing with health problems and maternity issues in exile. The most recent works on Spanish Republican exile from a gender perspective have highlighted the importance of this everyday dimension, its implications in research and, in this case, also its relationship with other issues of political history, such as the Resistance. The account

by Nieves Castro, a member of the Resistance in Toulouse, published in Spanish in 1981, gives us an idea of how central these experiences were in her life:

We were in the concentration camps until, for the convenience of the French state, they made us leave (...) In the Argeles camp myself, as I could see no way out of that city of boards and sand, I signed up for the companies that went out to work in the fields or in factories, but in the latter it was not possible: because of the young age of the girl they did not want me; so I chose to go as a peasant. I didn't understand a leaf about the countryside, what I wanted was to go out and work in the fields.

As part of these trajectories, participation in the Resistance was preceded in France by the development of the first political work, solidarity networks and the reconstruction of structures in internment camps. After the German occupation in June 1940 - extended to the whole of metropolitan France in November 1942 - the first acts of disobedience and resistance to the occupiers also

involved the foreign population, including the Spanish migrant and exiled community. According to one of the first researchers on Spanish women in the Resistance, Maria Fernanda Mancebo, Neus Català estimated 400 Spanish women, but it is feared that there were many more. However, especially in the early stages, the definition of what has been called "Resistance" poses problems. As has been argued in the history of women and gender, the silences of a history told in masculine terms have erased the number of women from the accounts. As resistance fighter Josefa Ramos recalls: "There were many women whose names I don't remember. Because I also moved around and wasn't always at home, so I didn't know them all. But they were all the liaisons of the different maquis".

In recent years, research on women's participation in the Resistance has highlighted the fact that, for the most part, they were confined to roles considered to be auxiliary tasks and, when describing their activities, spoke of the 'feminine skills' mobilised. For this reason, one of the avenues of research currently open - such as the 187 records of homologation of Spanish-born women worked on by Marina Hurtado - is also incomplete: activity and recognition do not always go hand in hand. Diego Gaspar Celaya has called this imbalance a "mutilated recognition" for women, due to the difficulties in having a large part of their activities recognised as part of the Resistance networks.

Yet, despite the categorisation as auxiliaries in unrecognised tasks, we can distinguish a set of missions that were crucial in the realisation of Resistance activities. Among them, the role of liaison agent or courier was better and more often performed by women, as they were usually checked less frequently. This differentiation of tasks not only explains the sexist character of the Resistance, but also that of the repression. In Catherine Lacour-Astol's study of the Resistance in northern France, accusations of "aiding the enemy" and "concealment" can be found among the main reasons for the arrest of women. In other words, although they were less visible, they were no less dangerous. Neus Català, in her testimony, echoes the

gendered distribution of tasks within the Resistance, while underlining the importance of all the activities that enabled the structural functioning. That is why “we were not only auxiliaries, we were active fighters”, but “As women, we were generally used as liaison officers of the vast information network, crossing mountains and borders, meeting points, supplies, solidarity with prisoners and in prisons, where we were in charge of emergency care”.

But, as mentioned above, these resistance activities had to be balanced with the concerns and challenges of everyday life. Several women carried out espionage or sabotage work in their workplaces for the occupying forces, while others disguised their courier or liaison activities with prams or baskets containing handicrafts and other items. For example, Soledad Alcón, Celia Llaneza or Rosa Laviña carried out espionage or sabotage work at their workplaces for the occupation forces. Others disguised their actions as messengers or liaison officers with prams or baskets containing handicrafts and sewing tools, such as Anita Díaz, as well as by cycling, such as Teresa Gebelli. Regina Arrieta, who had to leave her son with her sister to devote herself entirely to the Resistance, was worried: “I had to work, to raise my son, to be part of the Resistance”. Her account, one of the most vindictive in the collection of testimonies collected by Neus Català, ended as follows: “At the end of the day, we are auxiliaries. For them, honours; for us, oblivion”.

The anti-fascist struggle of these women did not stop there. The duty of memory of those who had lived through the horrors of the war - including deportation - led them to continue on the front line of transmitting it to the new generations. Conchita Grangé, who came from an emigrant family in France, had joined the Resistance at the age of 17 and was deported to Ravensbrück in 1944. On her return, she became involved in the Resistance and Deportation memorial movements in the city of Toulouse. Regina Arrieta, Nieves Castro and Neus Català combined their political militancy in the anti-Franco movement in France with the work of transmission and, in the case of the latter, the collection of testimonies.



4. Conchita Grangé. Prison Saint Michel | Picture by Rocío Negrete. Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International.

## MUSEUMS

# Remembering the Struggle, Learning from the Past: *The New National Museum of Resistance and Freedom – Peniche Fortress*

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### 50 years later

**O**n 27 April 2024, the doors of the new national museum were opened. The President of the Portuguese Republic, Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, presided over the official ceremony as part of the 50th-anniversary celebrations of the Carnation Revolution. Half a century after the prisoners were freed, the terrible Peniche Fortress has finally become an essential museum for understanding the longest dictatorship in Western Europe and celebrating the Portuguese people's fight for freedom.

To the sound of *Grândola, Vila Morena*, the Armed Forces Movement (MFA) succeeded in ending Marcelo Caetano's dictatorship on 25 April 1974. Citizens from all walks of life protested outside prisons and detention centres. In the early hours of the 27th, the prisoners of Peniche were released. This marked the beginning of the Ongoing Revolutionary Process (PREC), which would last until the military counter-coup of November 1975 and the adoption of the Constitution in April 1976. During that period, a wave of popular political participation would lead the last great revolutionary movement of the 20th century, capable of challenging the capitalist order in Western Europe. As historian Fernando Rosas explains, although the revolution ended in 1976, its political achievements and social advances would shape the country's constitution and its later democratic system.

Fernando Rosas, in addition to being a renowned scholar of the dictatorship of António Oliveira Salazar (1926/1933–1968), is one of the many people who shares his testimony as a political prisoner in Peniche Fortress. But before this prison became a museum where the voices of regime opponents could be heard, a long time had to pass – years of citizen protests and mobilisation to prevent the site from disappearing altogether.

1. Views of the *Museu Nacional Resistência e Liberdade* – Peniche Fortress from outside the grounds | Photo by R. Conesa



## The Campaign

In September 2016, the Peniche Fortress lost its status as a protected historical monument, paving the way for its possible conversion into a private hotel resort. The recent transformation of the headquarters of the dictatorship’s political police (PIDE/DGS) on Rua António Maria Cardoso in Lisbon into a luxury condominium was still fresh in people’s minds. The immediate reaction of antifascist groups and former political prisoners, who gathered thousands of signatures and organised mass meetings to halt the process, was crucial. On 29 October of that year, more than 600 people gathered at the fortress to approve the ‘Call to the Government in Defence of Peniche Fortress as a Symbol of Repression and the Struggle Against Fascism’. Soon after, the government of António Costa reversed its decision, and the Ministry of Culture set up a commission to address the future of the site. On 27 April 2017, the Council of Ministers, meeting at the fortress, approved Resolution 73/2017, dedicated to the restoration of the fortress and the

creation of a national museum. Throughout the process, the involvement and drive of associations such as the *União de Resistentes Antifascistas Portugueses* (Union of Portuguese Antifascist Resistance Fighters – URAP), which includes many former Peniche political prisoners, was essential.

In September 2017, shortly before the start of the restoration work, the monument *Homenaje a los Presos Políticos en la Fortaleza de Peniche* (‘Tribute to Political Prisoners at Peniche Fortress’), created by sculptor José Aurélio, was inaugurated at the initiative of the Peniche Municipal Council and URAP. From then on, the various construction phases, public tenders, and museological and architectural projects to enhance the fortress would take place. In the April 2019 commemorations, the first phase of the National Museum of Resistance and Freedom was inaugurated, but the site, with its various visitable spaces, memorial sites, and exhibitions, would not be completed and officially opened until April 2024.

"Nomeai um a um todos os nomes. Lutaram e resistiram.  
A liberdade guarda a sua memória nas muralhas desta fortaleza"  
António Borges Coelho

INO LUZ ROCHA · ABEL ALBINO GARCIA · ABEL AUGUSTO ABREU · ABEL AUGUSTO NEVES · ABEL CARLOS HIGUEL · ABEL FERREIRA CAI  
SÃO HANEDE · ABEL SOARES SILVA · ABÍLIO ENCARNAÇÃO PEREIRA · ABÍLIO GUIHARÃES · ABÍLIO JOSÉ OLIVEIRA · ABÍLIO LUÍS  
SOUSA MARQUES · ABÍLIO VENÂNCIO FERRE · ABUNDÂNCIO JOSÉ · ACÁCIO BARATA LIMA · ACÁCIO JOSÉ COSTA · ACRÍSIO GUILHER  
INO ANTÓNIO CHAVES · ADELINO ARLINDO NOGUEIRA · ADELINO BORGES · ADELINO CASTRO · ADELINO DOMINGOS · ADELINO FRANCI  
INO JOSÉ · ADELINO JOSÉ REBELO · ADELINO MARQUES ANDRADE · ADELINO MENDES · ADELINO PAIS · ADELINO PEREIRA SILVA · A  
INO SILVA · ADELINO TEIXEIRA PIRES · ADÉRITO NUNES · ADOLFO ANTÓNIO OLIVEIRA · ADOLFO ASSIS RAHDS · ADOLFO BARROS  
NO DINIS AYÁLA · ADOLFO GARCIA LAGO · ADOLFO JOAQUIM SOUSA · ADOLFO MADEIRA · ADOLFO MENDES · ADOLFO TEIXEIRA PAI  
NO AUGUSTO BARROSO · ADRIANO CORREIA SILVA · ADRIANO FERNANDES · ADRIANO LOURENÇO ANUNCIACÃO · ADRIANO MARIA CI  
NO MENDES · ADRIANO ROSÁRIO PEREIRA · AFONSO ASSUNÇÃO RODRIGUES · AFONSO COSTA FARO · AFONSO CUNHA HELO · AFONS  
O JOAQUIM MONTEIRO · AFONSO PENA XABREGAS · AFONSO PEREIRA · AFONSO SILVA GREGÓRIO · AFONSO SOUSA CARDOSO · AGEND  
INHO ARAÚJO · AGOSTINHO ARAÚJO\* · AGOSTINHO CONCEIÇÃO SABOGA · AGOSTINHO DUARTE HESQUINHA · AGOSTINHO FERNANDES AN  
ENHO LOPES · AGOSTINHO LOPES MENDES · AGOSTINHO LUCAS · AGOSTINHO MOREIRA RAFAEL · AGOSTINHO PEREIRA SILVA · AGO  
I COSTA · ALBANO COSTA PÁDUA · ALBANO PEREIRA · ALBANO RODRIGUES CUNHA · ALBERTINO DIAS TEIXEIRA · ALBERTINO FERI  
O ALHEIDA GARCIA · ALBERTO AUGUSTO BARREIRA · ALBERTO CARVALHO · ALBERTO EMIÍDIO HODDES · ALBERTO EMÍLIO ARAUJO  
O FERNANDES SILVA · ALBERTO GOMES · ALBERTO GOMES MAIA · ALBERTO JESUS SALSINHA · ALBERTO JOSÉ TAVARES · ALBERTO JI  
O HONIZ SILVA · ALBERTO MONTEIRO SANTOS · ALBERTO MOREIRA · ALBERTO NUNES MAURÍCIO · ALBERTO OLIVEIRA VILACA ·  
O PINTO · ALBERTO ROQUE PINTO · ALBERTO SANTANA VALE · ALBERTO SANTOS SARAIVA · ALBERTO SILVA PROENÇA · ALBERTO SI  
ANTUNES BARREIRA · ALBINO BAIIRÍNHAS · ALBINO COELHO JÚNIOR · ALBINO DOMINGOS JUBILEU · ALBINO LUIZ · ALBINO  
PEDROSA DUARTE · ALBINO QUARESHA FRANCISCO · ALBINO SERRANO SILVA · ALBINO SILVA · ALBINO REBOCHO GIL · ALB  
RE ALHINHO OLIVEIRA · ALEXANDRE BOTAS · ALEXANDRE FERREIRA · ALEXANDRE GERALDES · ALEXANDRE HIPÓLITO SANTI  
RE SILVA · ALEXANDRINO RODRIGUES FERNANDES · ALFONSO PEÑASCO BARBA · ALFREDO ANTÓNIO PEREIRA · ALFREDO ASS  
COELHO GATO · ALFREDO COSTA PEREIRA · ALFREDO FERREIRA VAZ · ALFREDO FILIPE OLIVEIRA · ALFREDO GARCIA · AL  
GUAPARRÃO SANTOS · ALFREDO JOAQUIM · ALFREDO JOSÉ REIS · ALFREDO LOPES SANTOS · ALFREDO MARIA REGUENGO ·

## The Place

2. Detail of the Memorial dedicated to the political prisoners incarcerated in Peniche between 1934 and 1974, with the 2,626 documented names so far | Photo by R. Conesa, EUROM

Although the Peniche Fortress began construction in 1572, it was not completed until 1645, shortly after Portugal's independence was restored. The military outpost of Peniche, with its roles of coastal control and surveillance, shaped the lives of its inhabitants. The various phases of the site and its impressive architectural features are explained in the former chapel. But before reaching this, as we enter the fortress, we encounter the memorial dedicated to the political prisoners incarcerated in Peniche between 1934 and 1974, displaying each of the 2,626 names of documented prisoners so far. We also pass by the *Parlatório* (the Parlatory), built in 1968, the preserved building where prisoners could receive visits from family and friends, always under surveillance and preventing any physical contact. Another restored building is *O Segredo* (the Secret), the unique round fort where the punishment cells were located. These were small, dark, and unventilated cells where prisoners were kept in isolation at the mercy of their guards.

The goal of the museum, as described by its director, Aida Rechená, is: "Positioning itself as a museum of memory and human rights, it aims to be a source of knowledge, research, pluralistic reflection, appreciation, defence, and promotion of universal values such as freedom and equality". To achieve this, it has facilities that excellently combine modern museology with the monumental heritage of the site,



3. Monument Homenaje a los *Presos Políticos en la Fortaleza de Peniche* (José Aurélio), promoted by the Peniche Municipal Council and URAP, inaugurated in 2017 | Photo by R. Conesa, EUROM



4. The new permanent exhibition *Resistência e Liberdade* | Photo by R. Conesa, EUROM

a comprehensive and detailed exhibition on the dictatorship and the struggle for freedom in Portugal, and various spaces spread throughout the spectacular fortress that looms over the Atlantic Ocean. The museum offers educational services, a bookshop, a programme for collecting testimonies, temporary exhibitions, and a full cultural programme. And although at first glance it might seem that the grandeur of the fortress could overshadow what is displayed inside, the content matches the setting, especially with its excellent permanent exhibition *Resistência e Liberdade* ('Resistance and Freedom').

The exhibition draws from the latest knowledge of the different aspects surrounding the dictatorial period in Portugal, explaining through a rich museography (audiovisuals, projections, maps, documents, photographs, objects, cell reconstructions, etc.) its various episodes: the construction of the *Estado Novo* (the Portuguese variant of European fascism); the formation of its police and repressive system; its prison network; the (spectacular) escapes that took place in Peniche; colonialism and the Colonial War; the Resistance and opposition movements; life in hiding; and the liberation. Throughout the exhibition, visitors encounter a narrative that moves from personal testimonies to international contexts, weaving together a story that ranges from the everyday to major political themes, all addressed with meticulous detail. To conclude, visitors can also see the *Memorial aos que deram a Vida pela Liberdade* (Memorial to Those Who Gave Their Lives

for Freedom), which records the names of those who died due to torture and prison conditions, those killed in the streets, fields, and cities, those deported to the Portuguese colonies, or those murdered in the Tarrafal concentration camp. However, as noted, not all the names have been recorded yet, as hundreds of victims of repression from military and popular uprisings, those deported and killed in colonial concentration camps, those who died from illnesses caused by torture and prison conditions, and those who remain anonymous are still to be identified. This work continues.

Along with the Museu do Aljube – Resistência e Liberdade, opened in 2015 in a former building that served as a detention centre for the PIDE/DGS in Lisbon, the Museu Nacional Resistência e Liberdade – Peniche Fortress stands today as an essential place of memory to understand Portugal's dictatorial past and to honour the struggle of its people for freedom.

**More information at:** [museunacionalresistencialiberdade-peniche.gov.pt](http://museunacionalresistencialiberdade-peniche.gov.pt)



5. Image of *O Segredo*, the round fort where the punishment cells were located (photo: R. Conesa)

## BOOKS

# *Making Monuments from Mass Graves in Contemporary Spain. Resistance through Remembrance.*

Daniel Palacios González, 2024 (AHM).

International First Book Award of the Memory Studies Association (MSA) in 2023.

**Yayo Aznar**

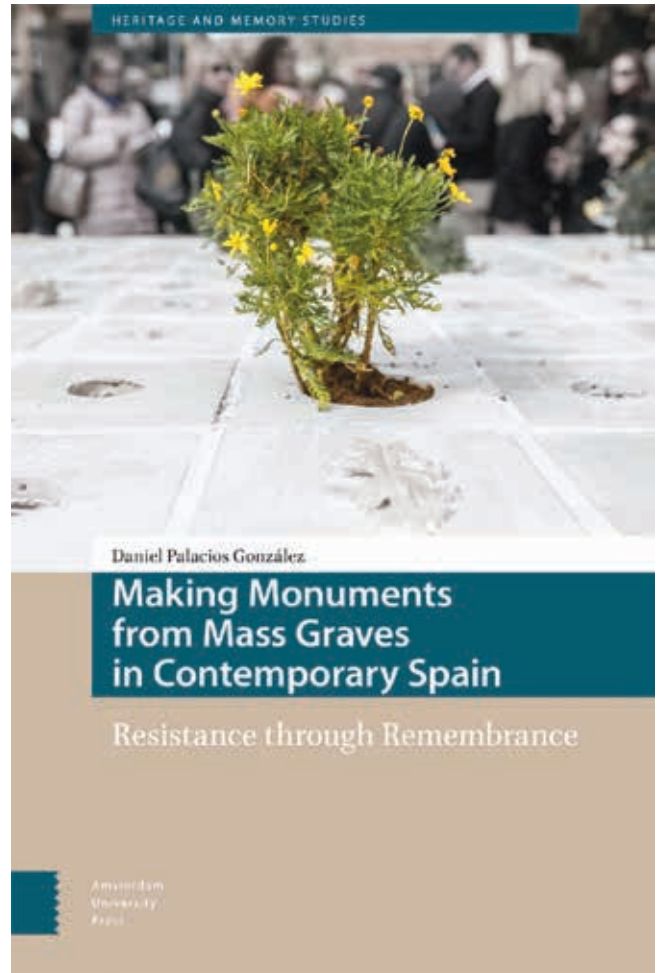
Art Historian, National University of Distance Education (UNED)

## *The Skin of Memorials*

**W**e never quite know what to do with memorials. Sometimes we debate whether to tear them down or not, or even consider turning them into outdated memory centres which have proven useless time and time again, beyond allowing the government of the day to draw a line under the matter. Other times, we debate – laden with guilt – whether to build them at all, even launching open competitions for artist proposals, which we usually close with no real conclusion, again to move on from the issue without causing too much pain. Art always has something to say about these matters. In any case, it is clear that all the politics surrounding memorials is a sanctified form of exaltation carried out by current leaders or community figures, as part of a narrative that is useful for power structures or their immediate political interests (Álvarez Junco). So, any debate in this context may seem entirely pointless.

But the fact is, Nietzsche was right: monuments must be of use to humankind, though perhaps not only in the way he explained, and which the 20th-century dictators understood so well. Daniel Palacios' book focuses on “other memorials” that we do not debate, at least not officially, but that enter the academic world with full merit thanks to this book. These are memorials built through civic initiative, though not always entirely separate from political groups, ones that are created because those involved feel the urge, “as their bodies demand it”. From the first visits by families of those executed to the mass graves during Francoism, to the more “ambitious” memorials after the Transition, the author highlights the creation of small, humble, everyday constructions, often with no aesthetic pretensions whatsoever. The author believes that memory resides more in the actions of the living than in the bodies of the victims, though that memory would not exist without the presence of

the murdered bodies. We must, with Daniel Palacios, understand the monumental practices around mass graves as a gesture, rather than simply an artefact. A gesture that does not end in itself, but in the relationship established between the dead and the living, who read the history in the graves and monumentalism it as a form of experience and resistance, rather than as an institutional decision that can always be debated. In fact, these memorials, which not only include a small stone construction, but also an entire ritual that typically begins when the grave is opened, hark back to the pre-memorials during Francoism (those forbidden visits to the graves, all the strategies to be able to leave even a simple flower at the mass grave, which the book also covers). By involving bodies in this way, they avoid the risk of becoming monuments to oblivion, because in the bodies of the living, an experience is created. This is similar to what Michelet described after the French Revolution, when he gathered testimonies of people recounting how they saw their region, their fields, their country “for the first time”, no longer deformed by the theological-political institution of royalty, no longer someone else’s property. In other words, an experience tied to the skin and to memory, also tied to our beliefs. The experience is imprinted on the bodies, of both the living and the dead, and that is where memory resides, indisputably, beyond and far above the political management of the moment. Perhaps that is why, because this experience is possible, some families question the emptying of mass graves, and consequently the disappearance of the graves themselves, along with the possibility of a memory filled with fighters, not just victims, filled ultimately with resistance.



Daniel Palacios González

## BOOKS

# Shaping Revolutionary Memory. *The Production of Monuments in Socialist Yugoslavia.*

Sanja Horvatinčić and Beti Žerovc, 2023 (IZA Editions)

**Daniel Palacios González**

Art Historian, National University of Distance Education (UNED)

Can a vast memory culture developed by thousands of people and interacting with millions over decades be fetishised and reduced to one word that strips it of all value? Perhaps that is what we see when we come across the term *Spomenik*. In recent years, gigantic modern Yugoslav monuments, labelled under this concept, have been shown in exhibitions, photobooks and tourist guides and have delighted scholars and artists in Western Europe and the United States. However, far from making them better known, the term has obscured the significance of Yugoslav monuments. In contrast, the book *SHAPING REVOLUTIONARY MEMORY. The Production of Monuments in Socialist Yugoslavia*, edited by Sanja Horvatinčić and Beti Žerovc, is an excellent antidote to the formalist and depoliticising revisionism of Western art history and memory studies on Yugoslav monuments dedicated to Anti-Fascist Resistance, People's Liberation Struggle and the Revolution.

This book condenses authors with long years of experience working on monuments, and it is an excellent contribution in terms of theory, methodology and documentation and an example of how to research this kind of heritage. The authors of this book associate the symbolic dimension of these monuments with their material reality; they do not separate them from the specific forms of social communication they perform, nor do they separate these same forms of communication from their material bases. They show how the production of monuments after the war and the revolution did not come out of nowhere. On the

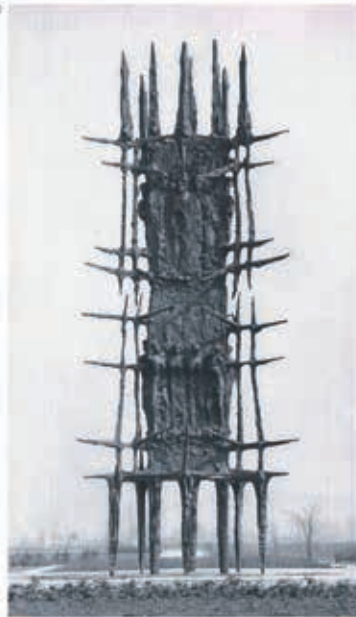
# SHAPING REVOLUTIONARY MEMORY

The Production of Monuments  
in Socialist Yugoslavia



Sanja Horvatinčić and Beti Žerovc

one hand, there was a previous tradition of monument production that cannot be neglected (after all, *Spomenik* merely means ‘monument’ in the South Slavic languages). On the other hand, shaping a series of cultural models and policies in a changing socialist context also marked the production of these monuments. In this context, the book explores the production of monuments by craftsmen and local communities based on their own agendas, as well as the major artistic productions sponsored by large institutions and federal entities. Monument



production is seen as part of an economic framework that implied a new possession of the means of production (including the production of cultural memories), leading to new forms of artistic work and also of social self-representation through monuments that often pursued communicative strategies typical of an environment in which land ownership and political participation differed radically from the pre-revolutionary reality. These situations are not free of contradictions, which the book also addresses: from the debates surrounding artistic quality versus amateurism to the poor participation of women in the structures of government and the promotion of memory policies. Therefore, the book presents a diversity of opinions and the complexity of reality. In the face of the

orientalism imposed on these monuments, this work provides critical knowledge that allows us to disarticulate hegemonic discourses and brings us closer to their historical reality. At the same time, with its extensive graphic material, including more than 500 illustrations, it is the best publication on this type of monument since those produced during socialism.

The linguist Valentin Voloshinov theorized a century ago how every ideological product possesses a significance, representing, reproducing, and substituting something outside it: appearing as a sign. Thus, he considered the fact that consciousness could be manifested only in images, words, and meaningful gestures. In this way, physical images,



300-303  
 Monument to the Battle of the Sutjeska, Miodrag Živković (sculptor), Đorđe Zloković (architect), 1971 (figs. 300-301); and the Memorial Hall, Ranko Radović (architect), Krsto Hegedulić (painter), 1971-1975 (figs. 302-303), at the Sutjeska Memorial Site, Tjentište, Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The memorial ossuary by the architect Sakib Hadžihalilović was inaugurated in 1958; it was followed by an elaborate memorialization project that encompassed the wider area of Sutjeska. The interior of the Memorial Hall was heavily damaged after 1991, but it has recently been partially restored. The original interior design is pictured (fig. 303).

such as monuments, become signs and, without ceasing to be part of material reality, they reflect and refract reality in a certain way. But what determines the refraction of an ideological sign? Voloshinov was categorical in this respect: the social interests in a struggle. When today, we see how monuments to Anti-Fascist Resistance, People's Liberation Struggle and the Revolution have been reduced to an artefact attractive in form to the Western artistic gaze, (*Spomeniks*), we see how the same social interests in the destruction of Yugoslavia underlie the use of the term and the reduction of Yugoslav memorial culture to a select curatorship of large-scale abstract monuments. But all is not lost. Voloshinov claimed that "the historical memory of mankind is replete with dead ideological signs incapable of

being an arena for confrontation of living social accents. However, thanks to the philologists and the historians who continue to remember them, these signs still retain the last vestiges of life." Against the death sentence of the fetishisation of the *Spomeniks*, the work of Sanja Horvatinčić and Beti Žerovc thus contributes to advocating these memorials of the Antifascist Resistance, People's Liberation Struggle, and the Revolution as retainers of these vestiges of life, remaining signs capable of generating confrontation in the towns and landscapes where they still stand, in the face of post-socialist revisionism, nationalism and neoliberalism.

**CINEMA**

# Hidden History, Living Memory: *Antoni Benaiges* in “*The Teacher Who Promised the Sea*”

**David González**

Historian, EUROM project manager

“*The Teacher Who Promised the Sea*” is a Spanish-produced film directed by Patricia Font, starring Enric Auquer and Laia Costa in lead roles. This fictional feature is inspired by the true story of Antoni Benaiges, a Republican teacher from the Freinet pedagogical school, who was killed by a Falangist squad in July 1936.

The plot of “*The Teacher Who Promised the Sea*” unfolds along two timelines: the 1930s and a present set in 2010, marking the opening of the Pedraja Mass Grave in Burgos. Each timeline has its own protagonist: the teacher Antoni Benaiges in the past, and Ariadna, the great-granddaughter of a Francoist victim and granddaughter of one of Benaiges’ former students, in the present. The interplay between these timelines adds dynamism to the storyline, holding the viewer’s attention and lending significance to the film’s conclusion.

The story begins in the present with a phone call Ariadna receives, informing her that her elderly, senile grandfather, Carlos Ramírez, had started proceedings to locate his father, Bernardo, believed to be buried in a mass grave in Burgos. This is where Ariadna’s journey begins – a physical journey to the Pedraja Grave and an emotional one that, through the phases of her obsessive investigation, leads her to confront a traumatic family past of which she had no prior knowledge. It is a journey filled with both progress and setbacks, mirroring the broader process of recovering historical memory in Spain. The director of the archaeological excavation at the Pedraja Grave warns Ariadna about what she might

HISTORY'S LESSONS MUST NOT BE FORGOTTEN.

5 GOYA  
NOMINATIONS

BEST ACTOR  
BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS  
BEST ADAPTED SCREENPLAY  
BEST COSTUME DESIGN  
BEST ORIGINAL SCORE

WINNER  
AUDIENCE PRIZE  
BEST FILM  
2024 GAOCHI AWARDS

ERIC AUQUER LAIA COSTA LUISA GAVASA

# THE TEACHER WHO PROMISED THE SEA

A FILM BY  
PATRICIA FONT

★★★★★

"A GEM.  
An unmissable film."

ANGELA VIORA  
AUSTRALIAN BOOK REVIEW

★★★★★

"A JOY.  
Wonderfully done."

STEPHEN ROBERT  
THE AUSTRALIAN



1. Movie poster | Filmaffinity



2. Bañuelos School in Bureba today, with a superimposed historical photo | Picture by Sergi Bernal

encounter along the way: “Some people open their doors to us, inviting us to eat and sleep, while others won’t even look us in the eye”.

At the grave, a local elderly man approaches Ariadna to tell her that his former teacher, a Catalan named Antoni Benaiges, might be buried there. The elderly man, Emilio, was once a student of Benaiges at the school in Bañuelos de Bureba. Emilio plays a dual role in the story, appearing both as a young schoolboy and as a warm-hearted elderly man who helps with Ariadna’s investigation.

Antoni Benaiges was born in Mont-roig del Camp (Tarragona) in 1903. After graduating as a teacher, he consolidated his implementation of the Freinet method in his classes while teaching in Vilanova i la Geltrú. There, he crossed paths with Patricio Redondo, a libertarian-minded teacher and a strong proponent of this educational approach in Spain. After passing the civil service exam, Benaiges was appointed to Bañuelos de Bureba (Burgos) in 1934, where he taught until the end of his life.

The story’s central moment comes with the discovery of a notebook titled “*El Mar: visión de unos niños que no lo han visto nunca*” (The Sea: A Vision of Children Who Have Never Seen It). The elderly Emilio accessed the notebook thanks to contact with Antoni Benaiges’s family, who had preserved some keepsakes of the teacher. The small notebook, created by Benaiges’s students, was printed on a press that the teacher himself had acquired through the cooperative of Freinet educators he belonged

to. One of the pillars of the Freinet method was empowering children to create and narrate their own stories, which was made possible through the use of a printing press and the autonomous, cooperative work that children carried out around it. The children of Bañuelos de Bureba, having never seen the sea, inspired the notebook's creation, prompting Antoni Benaiges to invite them to visit his hometown, Mont-roig de Camp (Tarragona), so they could see the sea for themselves. Antoni had to contend with the hesitations and opposition of some families, including those of Emilio and Josefina, the daughter of the mayor of Bañuelos de Bureba. Benaiges's genuine persistence and his students' excitement ultimately overcame these reservations, and he secured permission from all families to take the children to see the sea.

Tragically, the trip was never to happen. On 19 July 1936, amidst the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, Falangist squads took control of the area and arrested Benaiges at the *Casa del Pueblo* in Briviesca. They tortured him, paraded him around, and destroyed the physical remnants of his pedagogical work, smashing the printing press and burning the notebooks. A few days later, he was killed, and to this day, the exact location of his remains is still unknown.

The film concludes with the elderly, frail Carlos Ramírez gazing towards the sea with a melancholic, contemplative expression as he listens to his granddaughter Ariadna's tender words about his teacher and his father, Bernardo. The scene is poised between the resignation and suffering of the past and the modest but hopeful sense of reconciliation in the present.

"The Teacher Who Promised the Sea" brings to light issues that help viewers understand the educational processes experienced during the Spanish Second Republic (1931–1936/39). In a context where the Catholic Church held most of the resources and influence over the school system, and in a society facing illiteracy levels unworthy of a modern nation, the Republican educational reform of those years aimed to tackle this systemic backwardness, and would become a major target for Francoist repression. The secular teachers who worked during this period were, depending on the case, purged, detained, and even tortured and murdered. Such was the fate of Antoni Benaiges, who happened to be in Briviesca (Burgos) on that fateful 19th of July 1936, still preparing the children's trip. If not for this, he would likely have been on holiday at his family home in Mont-roig del Camp (Tarragona).

"The Teacher Who Promised the Sea" skilfully uses the resources of audiovisual language to establish a fluid dialogue between different ways of approaching the past. It speaks to us of history—a finite, bygone past. It speaks of the unrestrained violence and political, social, and moral repression that took place in Francoist Spain following the coup of July 1936. But it also speaks of memory, of how this past echoes in the present, weighing on victims whose redress faces political, social,

bureaucratic, and administrative obstacles. The identification and dignification of victims buried in thousands of mass graves across Spain has been one of the primary struggles of the memorialist movement in Spain since the beginning of the 21st century.

The revival and recovery of Antoni Benaiges's memory has been made possible by the work of numerous individuals, particularly the photographer and documentarian Sergi Bernal, who has led efforts to uncover the story of this teacher. Bernal participated as a photographer in an exhumation at the Pedraja mass grave in August 2010, attending independently to document the process. On his way back to Barcelona, he received a call informing him that a local man had come to the grave, stating that a Catalan teacher who had taught in Bañuelos de Bureba might be buried there. This revelation led Bernal to unravel a story that would bring him deeply in touch with the memory of Antoni Benaiges. Bernal learned that Patricio Redondo, another Freinet teacher, had gone into exile in Mexico, where he continued to teach using the Freinet method, and he connected with Benaiges' family, who had kept all the notebooks Benaiges had printed at the school in Bañuelos de Bureba.

Bernal's connection to Benaiges activated one of those mechanisms that moves memory from a dormant, passive state to one that is alive and active. In the effort to reclaim the memory of many victims in the region, the forgotten story of this young, idealistic teacher emerged—his legacy still remembered in 2010 by those who had once been his students at the Bañuelos de Bureba school. The story of the promise of the sea, linked to the notebook "The Sea: A Vision of Children Who Have Never Seen It", deeply moved Bernal, who became unwavering in his commitment to research and share Benaiges's story. The scene in which Bernal received the call about the possible presence of a Catalan teacher in the Pedraja grave is recreated in the film through the characters of Emilio and Ariadna. Emilio, in turn, seems to be inspired by Eladio Diez, an elderly man from Bañuelos de Bureba and former student of Benaiges. Eladio, whose family preserved the few notebooks that had survived the July 1936 burnings, collaborated with Bernal by providing materials and sharing his invaluable testimony.

Since the rediscovery of Benaiges's memory in 2010, his story has left a profound mark and has been told through various formats<sup>1</sup>, including literary essays, theatre, and previous audiovisual works leading up to "The Teacher Who Promised the Sea". The film by Patricia Font has been well received in several countries, such as Italy, Taiwan, and Australia, and has become another piece in the activation of a living, useful memory with the power to impact the present. One



3. Box containing the notebooks owned by Jaume Roige Benaiges, nephew of Antoni Benaiges. Mont-roig del Camp (2010) |Picture by Sergi Bernal

<sup>1</sup> Notable among the many tributes to Benaiges's legacy are the essay "The Teacher Who Promised the Sea" (VV.AA. Ed. Blume); the play "The Sea: A Vision of Children Who Have Never Seen It" (by Xavier Bobés and Alberto Conejero); and the documentary "El retratista" (The Photographer) (by Alberto Bougleux and Sergi Bernal).



touching example of the vitality of this memory process could be seen in the summer of 2024, when the Benaiges School Association, founded in Bañuelos de Bureba to preserve the teacher’s legacy, promoted the “Benaiges Mission” initiative alongside other organisations. This project supports a summer camp in which some thirty children aged 8 to 13, from disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Granada and Madrid, travel from Bañuelos de Bureba to Mont-roig del Camp to experience the sea. What better way to honour the memory of Benaiges and his students than to fulfil the dream those children couldn’t realise in 1936.

# Activating Archives Against Revisionism, Denialism and Propaganda

**Csaba Szilágyi**

Chief Archivist and Head of Human Rights Program at the Vera and Donald Blinken Open Society Archives (OSA)

Archives have prominent roles in memory work. They do not preserve or carry memories *per se* but provide documentary and material sources for collective memory creation and, increasingly, space for memorialization. A 2020 UN report on memory practices in the aftermath of grave human rights abuses explicitly relates the effectiveness of memorialization—the “fifth pillar of transitional justice”—to the existence of and access to relevant archives. Knowledge creation in archives is as dependent on the availability and content of key documents as on the agency and curatorial decisions of the archivist. Beyond determining what is preserved for posterity and how archives are accessed and used, archivists assign memory values to records in their custody; a process that is by nature selective, as it highlights certain sources for memory formation, while leaves others in the shadow of oblivion. From this position of power, archivists “are responsible in the present for how we narrate the past” in the archives, which are the space of contestation and political struggle for multivocal narratives and self-representation. EUROM’s cooperating partner in Budapest, the Blinken OSA Archivum (the Archivum) operates on this theoretical foundation.

An international archives, research and education center and urban cultural venue established in 1995, the Archivum preserves and makes available records relating to the history of communism and the Cold War—and human rights movements and violations worldwide—,post-authoritarian and post-conflict societies, and marginalized communities including ethnic, religious and sexual minorities and people with disabilities. It also serves as a safe haven for archives and even archivists at risk. The Archivum promotes free, open, and equal access to recorded information in a welcoming archival infrastructure and research environment.

The Archivum positions itself at the intersection of a socially conscious, mainstream archival institution and broadly conceived community archives, which involves



1. Interior of the Blinken OSA Archivum | Dániel Végel

representatives of the communities inscribed in its records in the archival work (appraisal, cataloging and exhibitions). It offers professional support, transfers knowledge and, on occasion, “repatriates” (copies of) relevant document collections to these communities. Throughout its various activities, it strives to recontextualize and mobilize records in its care for evidential, human rights and social justice purposes, and memory work. As an activist archive, it reflects on and offers professional responses to matters of societal concern, including human rights abuses and social injustice, historical oblivion and revisionism, genocide denial and triumphalism, political propaganda, and (mis) appropriation of memory and mnemonic practices.

As the teaching–research unit and archives of the Central European University (CEU) founded by the Hungarian–American philanthropist and investor George Soros in 1991, the Archivum contributes to the overall mission of the CEU in supporting socially and morally responsible, self–reflective critical thinking, promoting open and democratic societies based on the rule of law, and respecting human rights, diversity and human dignity. Its founder—with the core values of the CEU—was seen as an enemy of Hungary’s current far–right, autocratic, and populist regime, and the university was forced to relocate its academic programs to Vienna in 2019/20, due to an ill–willed change in the higher education law (“Lex CEU”, 2017), which targeted the CEU’s dual Hungarian–American accreditation. Although in a 2020 judgement, the European Court of Justice concluded that Hungary broke EU law and annulled “Lex CEU,” teaching activities remain in Vienna to date, while non–degree, research, academic support, and civic engagement programs are carried out in Budapest, including the Archivum and a larger part of the now public CEU Library, the best English language social science library in the region.



2. Archival storage of the Blinken OSA Archivum | Edit Blaumann / Budapest100

Set in this contemporary geopolitical context, the Archivum's largest foundational collection, that of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's Research Institute, epitomizes the struggle of oppressed societies and individuals of the communist bloc for fundamental rights and freedoms. Established in Munich (then West Germany) at the height of the Cold War, the two American radio stations were intended to counterbalance the information hegemony of the Soviet Union, while the Research Institute collected background information and provided analysis for their broadcasting services. Besides airing what they considered "real and truthful" news to audiences behind the Iron Curtain, their growing archives quickly became a repository of systemic human rights violations and state sponsored political violence, censorship and propaganda, dissident and political opposition movements, and religious and cultural resistance, and—following the fall of communism—the transition to constitutional democracies.

Concurrently, the Archivum acquired and built a significant collection on global human rights, including records on forced internal displacement and migration, persecution of dissidents and minorities, attacks on civilian population during armed conflicts, war crimes, and genocide. One of the strengths of this documentation is the *Yugoslavia Archive Project* with over 35,000 records covering

the post WWII history of the region, a large part of which cover human rights abuses committed during the violent dissolution of Yugoslavia and subsequent criminal trials and forensic investigations. The donors include international organizations, human rights NGOs, and private individuals, such as the UN Expert Commission on Investigating War Crimes in the former Yugoslavia, Physicians for Human Rights, the American Refugee Committee's Balkan Chapter, and the American journalist David Rohde.

These documents are proving increasingly meaningful and useful sources for critical inquiry and memory work given the democratic backsliding of (Southern and Eastern) European countries, the resurfacing of new (but in fact, old and reinterpreted) conflict zones and the emergence of authoritarian and populist trends globally, the increasing need to understand what went wrong subsequent to the collapse of communism, the roots and causes of these antidemocratic changes, and to find antidotes by examining past forms of oppression and rights violations, and instances of resistance and resilience.

The three examples below illustrate how the Archivum turns its records inside out, uses its expertise and archival space in support of memory work applied to contemporary phenomena that are of concern in our society.



3. Designated site of the Srebrenica Memorial Center Archive before renovation in 2019 | Csaba Szilágyi



4. The newest storage module of the Srebrenica Memorial Center Archive in 2023 | Csaba Szilágyi

## The Srebrenica Memorial Center Archive

The genocide committed against over 8,000 Bosniak civilians by the Bosnian Serb Army in the UN “safe area” of Srebrenica in July 1995 was Europe’s worst mass atrocity since the Holocaust. While it was declared genocide by two international courts, and sentences totaling 206 years in prison were handed down by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia to 17 accused, it is relativized and denied widely in Republika Srpska and Serbia, and by their close allies, such as Russia and Hungary.

The Archivum had been active in preserving, publishing, and promoting archival documentation on the prehistory, fall, and afterlife of Srebrenica. A pioneering exhibition entitled *Srebrenica-Exhumation* in 2010, based on unique forensic documentation from its own collections, numerous blog posts and scholarly articles, public events and institutional cooperations—including with Sarajevo artist Šejla Kamerić in her *Ab uno disce omnes* multimedia installation—ensured that the Archivum kept the memory of victims and survivors of the Srebrenica genocide on the agenda.

A more recent (2019–2022) cooperation between the Archivum and the Srebrenica Memorial Center (SMC), with the participation of the Dutch peace organization PAX, aimed at establishing a modern archive for preserving crucial documentation for the study of the Srebrenica genocide. The project involved designing and equipping the facility on the premises of the SMC—a prewar battery factory and the former HQ of the Dutchbat III peacekeepers from 1994 to 1995—staff training, and organizing working visits at memory institutions in The Netherlands,

Germany, and Hungary. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the SMC Archive was opened in July 2021. The Archivum donated newly digitized collections and relevant duplicate copies from its repositories. The final act of this collaboration was an international expert meeting held in December 2022, at which prominent archivists, memory scholars, historians, forensic scientists, and activists, together with representatives of victims' associations, discussed the importance of archives in justice making and memory work.

The outgoing High Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Valentin Inzko, imposed changes in the criminal code outlawing genocide denial in 2021. The United Nations General Assembly recently adopted a non-binding resolution which designated July 11 the International Day of Reflection and Commemoration of the 1995 Genocide in Srebrenica. (The only EU-member state which voted against it was Hungary, along with Russia, Belarus, North Korea, and Serbia, among others.) However, by making relevant documentation on human rights abuses, war crimes, and genocide openly and freely available to everyone, and located in the place of the trauma, the SMC Archive remains a permanent and effective tool for combating the culture of societal denial and triumphalism. Today, any relevant discussion on the roots, causes, execution, and memory of the 1995 Srebrenica genocide must start in the archives.

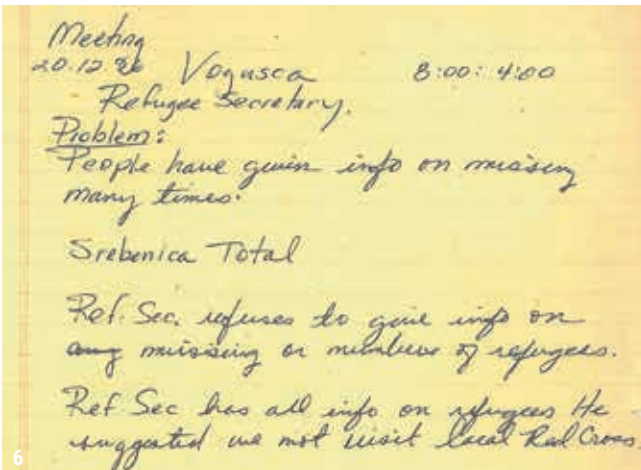
## Telling the Global Refugee Story

In the summer of 2015, an unusually high number of refugees from the Middle East and Central Asia crossed Hungary's southern borders on their way to Western Europe. The influx caught the authorities off guard, and the few refugee camps left in the system filled up very quickly. Improvised transit zones were created at the main railway stations in Budapest, where over 1,000 refugees waited in subhuman conditions for their situation to be solved. While the unwelcoming authorities hesitated and were busy disseminating xenophobic propaganda against the refugees, the local population and civil society organizations offered basic services by distributing water, food, clothing, and other personal effects.

The contrast between the official handling of this refugee crisis and the country's positive recent history of refugee administration, including the welcoming of the UNHCR regional office, and illegal refugees from Romania and the German Democratic Republic in 1989, and the hospitality towards people fleeing the former Yugoslavia during the 1992-1995 wars could have not been more stark. Not to mention the case of over 200,000 Hungarian refugees, who escaped after the bloody suppression of the 1956 Hungarian revolution by Soviet tanks and found new homes in various countries across the globe.



5



6

5. Hungarian refugees arriving aboard USNS General Leroy Eltinge in Brooklyn Army Terminal, New York on January 1, 1957 | National Archives and Records Administration

6. Minutes of a meeting with a local refugee administrator and a Physicians for Human Rights employee in the aftermath of the Srebrenica Genocide on December 12, 1996. | Source: Blinken OSA Archivum

As a first reaction, the Archivum immediately opened its exhibition gallery for collecting dry goods for the refugees; later, in the fall, it organized a special section entitled Screening the Refugee Crisis as part of its annual Verzió International Human Rights Documentary Film Festival, and a filmmaking workshop, which focused on the individual faces and voices of people on the move. Following this line of action, the Archivum decided to produce a curated online collection entitled *Refugee DocsMap*, by revisiting its already cataloged documentary film collection (mostly from Verzió submissions since 2003), and selecting 600 items related to the global experience of displaced people at varying stages of their journey.

In order to focus on the unique, yet universal individual stories of migration spanning from the early 20th century until present time, the Archivum reworked its methods, describing the selected

films in a new way that considered a specific set of metadata including the country of origin, the temporal span, and a more personal description of the experience, as well as a set of keywords from the UNHCR's Master Glossary of Terms. For copyright reasons, instead of the digitized films themselves, the Archivum added weblinks to publicly available trailers and their original archival catalog entries. All this data was plotted on a map, so the resulting visual geographic catalog offered a correlated map and list view of films on a split screen. Browsing options included the country of origin and specific refugee keywords. The platform offered a more intuitive access to visual stories of refugees and also served as a resource for informing and diversifying public discourse, as well as sensitizing diverse audiences and helping them to establish responsible and morally acceptable approaches to the complex aspects of migration.



7. Forced inhabitation place or yellow star house for Budapest Jews in Katona József Street 28. (13th district) | Fortepan / Lissák Tivadar

## Unforgetting the Yellow Star Houses

Although its collective focus is on recent history, the Archivum also ventured into topics related to the memory of the Holocaust. In 2004, it organized a physical and an online exhibition entitled *Auschwitz 1945-1989*, which reconstructed the first two official Hungarian communist exhibitions in Auschwitz in 1965 and 1980, respectively.

Partly building on this experience, the Archivum launched the *Yellow Star Houses* public history project to reflect on the official Hungarian Holocaust Memorial Year 2014, which promised controversial events and inaugurations. Another motivation was to honor the memory of the last prewar owner of the Archivum building, the textile industrialist Leó Buday-Goldberger, who was deported to the Mauthausen concentration camp, where he died of starvation.

The project memorialized the forced cohabitation of Budapest's 220,000 Jewish citizens in almost 2,000 buildings allocated by mayoral decree, effective of June 21, 1944, all of them marked with a large yellow Star of David. This tragic and shameful intermediary stage between being forced to wear the yellow star and later being transferred to the walled ghetto, is hardly mentioned in the history of the Budapest Jewry, and thus barely remembered.

The pivotal element of the project was an interactive map (available on the EUROM website) showing the current view and location at street, district, and city level of all existing and demolished yellow star houses. Relevant historical documents obtained from archival research were added to the website, and, where possible, to individual houses, including pertinent decrees, lists of houses, photographs, letters, personal recollections, and video testimonies. These sources are complemented by a timeline of events and a glossary. The platform is open to further recollections from anyone who used to live in the houses.

After the map was launched, the Archivum invited people currently living in all the surviving

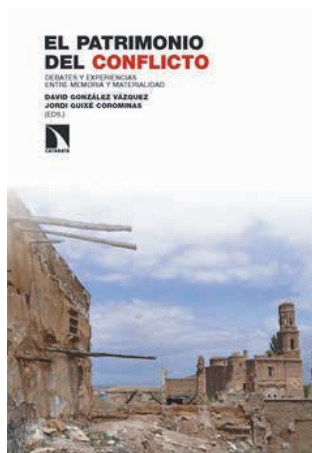


former yellow star houses to create and participate in a public event on June 21, 2014, commemorating Jewish families who used to live there 70 years before. There were over 120 positive responses and open-house events were organized, such as mini exhibitions based on historical documents pertinent to the buildings, musical performances, and tours, recording over 10,000 visitors across the city. Recordings of local commemorations are available on the Archivum's YouTube channel. The day culminated in a closing ceremony at the Goldberger House, the current home of the Archivum, where an open-air piano concert (Beethoven: Appassionata) was organized under an enlarged photo of Jewish men wearing yellow stars on their jackets, lined up for inspection at the Kistarcsa internment camp just outside of Budapest in the spring of 1944, projected onto the façade of the building. Among them was Leó Buday-Goldberger.

## Epilogue

Records are never complete or finite, they are “always in a process of becoming.” Every interference, exchange with the record by the creator, archivist or user activates the record for a new purpose, providing it with a new meaning. As the above practices show, archives sensitive to inclusion and social justice, such as the Archivum, can facilitate collective memory creation by mobilizing records within and even outside the archival space, whether physical or online, allowing different users to engage with the recordings of an often traumatic past. Memory work performed in these spaces can have healing and redressing effects and help restore the damaged social status of various neglected and underrepresented communities or individuals.

# Other EUROM Publications:



**The heritage of conflict.** David González and Jordi Guixé (Coord.) [Los Libros de la Catarata, 2024]



**Sarajevo, amor meu.** Jovan Divjak. Entrevistes (amb Florence La Bruère) [Bellaterra Edicions, 2022]



**Diez años de leyes y políticas públicas de memoria.** Jordi Guixé, Jesús Alonso Carballés, Ricard Conesa (Ed.) [Catarata, 2019]



**Past and power. Public Policies of memory.** Jordi Guixé (Ed.). [Edicions UB, 2016]

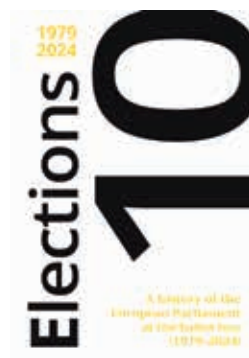
## Commemorative books



**Ventotene 80. 80th Anniversary of the Ventotene Manifesto.** [EUROM, 2021]



**Schuman 70. 70th anniversary of the Schuman Declaration.** [EUROM, 2020]



**Elections 10. A history of the European Parliament at the ballot box (1979-2024).** [EUROM, 2024]



**The Yugoslav Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War: History and Cultural Memory.** Vjeran Pavlakovic and Oriol López Badell (Ed.) [2020]



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