The magazine of the EUROM - European Observatory on Memories

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Observing *Memories*

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The use and abuse of memories of the working class in 21st century Britain

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Observing *Memories*

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The European Observatory on Memories (EUROM) is a transnational network of institutions and civil society organizations committed to research and promotion of remembrance policies and memorial initiatives. Its main goal is to promote collective and citizenship memories through a plurality of approaches and diverse perspectives. EUROM is led by the University of Barcelona's Solidarity Foundation with the support of the program 'Europe for Citizens' of the European Commission.
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COVER IMAGE

The statue of Robert Milligan outside the Museum of London Docklands on 9 June 2020. The statue has been covered by a rug or blanket and is holding a cardboard sign saying "Black Lives Matter" | Chris McKenna (Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International licence)

EDITORIAL

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La Model prison of Barcelona.
Inside views of the 4th gallery, where a memory center is supposed to be built I EUROM

First of all, it goes without saying that we dedicate this issue to everyone who has in any way suffered from this wretched, unforeseen and entirely unjust pandemic, either in first person or through their loved ones. I say unjust, first because of the healthcare crisis itself and then because of its terrible knock-on effects. But I also say unjust because the people who are most vulnerable to the pandemic are our older family members, who have already suffered and lived through a few or even many of the conflicts that we as students of the past have addressed a thousand times. Some of them have survived more than three wars and two dictatorships and now are gone with the wind, not knowing when or how or where. This issue is dedicated to all of them for the struggles that they have fought in the past to leave us a better world, and to everyone else who has taken up their legacy and fights on for a universal justice that remains so necessary.

After the first month of lockdown and my attempts to grasp the reality of what was happening in our world, I conducted some online classes as I do every year on memory and public space, history, contemporary art and new forms of transmission. At the time, I was lost and bewildered, not to mention sad and disoriented, much as I imagine most of the citizens on our planet were. We still are. The only idea that came to mind was to propose a straightforward creative activity on the concept of "contemporary confinements", so that my young students would produce a digital creation based on examples that related the past to the present in a specific space, such as the one we had been using to address memory and memorial heritage: Barcelona's vast penitentiary known as La Model.

Our resources of time and space and our working conditions were far from ideal. However, my delight was enormous when I found that the transmission of a concept or space from our recent past into the reality of our present became a tool of infinite memory with boundless potential. This might

come across as obvious, but the results were and have been effective and enlightening. While my students may not have had the expertise of a professional or an academic, each and every one of their proposed projects nonetheless made use of many of the elements that we too draw on as we unravel the knotted skein of the most current work on memory: the use and interchange of diverse disciplines, digital techniques, creative resources, versatility, a multiplicity of prisms and interventions, the blending of theoretical and physical elements, links between different scales of language and experience, plasticity in practices, a capacity for dynamism and adaptation, and many more. Most surprising was a persistent effort among my students to involve society and think of the public as a recipient of each and every small project or cultural activity that they produced. A young art student put her approach as follows:

> "I'm going to do an audio-visual project to convey the process of planting a cherry tree in memory of my grandfather and everyone else who has been alone in a critical situation, with a long history and many loved ones at their back. To counter so much anger, loneliness and helplessness with life, caring and humility. I want to project the result onto one of our classroom walls, together with text/subtitles about the process of creation, reflection and memory."

The student's grandfather recently wrote down the story of his life in a notebook, engaging in a form of written transmission that has salvaged such a great many personal, invisible stories and turned them into collective stories. However, our approach, which looks beyond the first two decades of the present century, is to promote and embrace the project of the young artist as a mode of transmission that not only regenerates memory, but also forces it to interact with our infuriating present. Many other projects have produced diverse and varied results too: a song, a video installation, a text, a piece of art, a reflection, a proclamation or declaration. They have amply achieved their goals as well, thanks to their dynamic use of digital tools, whose employment this time has been imposed by physical isolation.

Using the modest example set out above, I am thinking of the manifold nature of memorial work. Academic specialities of all sorts come into play when we retrieve, rethink and design a project or even a space for memory, including art, architecture, anthropology, sociology, political science, work with new technologies, and more. We have also seen how different social groups become involved in the effort and how, depending on each country, place, region or city, political power and the state, they always come into contact with an open narrative about the past.

A thousand analogous examples will come to mind from each of our professional and personal realities. At the European Observatory on Memories, our aim is to draw on the participation of neophytes and novices and to bring them together with professionals, experts and academics. The present issue of our yearly journal Observing Memories sets out to share these and other reflections on a concept that is becoming ever broader and more widespread: democratic memory.

The work of memory is a process. The conclusions of comparative examples and theoretical cases help us – or should help us – to learn from history and its memorial transmission and apply new formulas that draw on more and better engagement from our fellow citizens. This is the engagement that guides our actions, research and efforts to mobilize professional academic processes in and with

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View of the remodeling works of La Model prison of Barcelona during the summer of 2020 I EUROM

society in order to build collective memory. The challenge is to hold onto the tension between the varying scales and dimensions of such a process or processes. And this is precisely what we want to share in the present issue of Observing Memories. The aim of our journal is to reflect, learn and share knowledge, but always with a multifaceted engagement from all quarters.

Dynamic engagement helps us to strengthen the transmission of the past in the present through cultural projects and processes, and ensure the public's access as a core element in our recovery or resignification of memory and its physical or virtual spaces. Hence, at the close of the second decade of the twenty-first century, it is necessary to undertake a variety of activities to bolster our knowledge of the different digital uses of the recent past that arise in the international arena. Memory maps, which feature databases of international memorial spaces, offer a tool to visualize the importance of memorial work and provide a foundation of digital information from which to obtain data on memorial institutions anywhere on the five continents of the globe.

Another key element in memorial activation is the proliferation of networks, platforms and groups of professionals who promote transnational memory as an arena for debate, participation, and the management and promotion of shared memorial projects. These networks and platforms are also useful when critically analysing the process of memorialization and public policies on memory at a comparative and international level. Memory and its challenges in the twenty-first century must necessarily be transnational, digital, cultural and comparative, to name but a few of its characteristics.

Ultimately, our practice in this respect must be mixed, blending analysis, observation, learning and transnational work. That is what lies at the heart of our journal: to be an international window onto ideas, analyses and examples that reflect memory's multiplicity. These ingredients shape our democratic reality and the socio-political map of today's Europe. The very concept of Europe is a juxtaposition and memorial multiplicity constructed day by day. This wealth, when compared to

parallel processes (including those on other continents), enables us to assert that memorial diversity should be a hallmark of public policies on memory at the transnational scale. Without ignoring or forgetting the heavy burden of the consequences of Nazism and Stalinism in terms of building democratic narratives, we also encounter other processes that have engendered transformative values that cannot be reduced to a second tier, such as the struggles waged against fascism and dictatorship, struggles for civil rights, processes of peace and justice, democratic movements against autocratic regimes, resistance movements and struggles for freedom.

This encapsulates one of the many aims of the European Observatory on Memories. Our goal is to seek forthrightly, without political pressures or aims, to address the complexity of our subject matter through a network of European memory, while also taking into account and respecting the diversity of memories, each with its own distinctive features. The challenges of our world and of our Europe grow ever more complex. However, as we have noted at the launch of our virtual exhibition and book on the seventieth anniversary of the Schuman Declaration, this is about "a Europe full of hopes and possibilities that must never forget the people and the individual or collective processes that have fought for and shaped our free societies and our memory and democratic values of peace and social justice". This explains why it is so important to hold onto and expand a political and social Europe and to strengthen policies on memory and citizenship, as well as projects and places of memory. Time and again, such policies and places of memory are also policies and places of resistance, transgression and subalternity.

In the present issue of Observing Memories, we want to train a particular spotlight on the relationship between social media and memory. There is no mistaking the increasing importance of social media as channels of information and purveyors of new experiences of socialization, public mobilization, political debate, entertainment and more. They are also becoming increasingly significant transmitters of memories, new narratives about the past, and exciting discussions and conflicts that drive constant interaction among users. But which users generate the most influential messages? How do these messages spread? What kind of reception do they have? What generates discussion? There is no end to the questions that are worth striving to analyse through a plethora of case studies. The historian Matilde Eiroa and the telecommunications engineer Mariluz Congosto have shed light on the Twitter discussion threads and thousands of tweets generated in relation to the event that marked the memorial policy of 2019 in Spain: the exhumation of the dictator Francisco Franco and the removal of his remains from the Valley of the Fallen to his family mausoleum. In the context of the commemorations of Europe Day in 2020, the historian Celeste Muñoz has taken a look at the polarization on Twitter between Eurosceptics and pro-Europeans, marked by discussions of "Brexit" and the current pandemic. Both cases – the exhumation of the Spanish dictator and the celebration of Europe Day – are products of the research project "Online Memories" sponsored by EUROM and built on the firm conviction that it is important to bring interdisciplinary, transnational work to the study of the transmission of memory. Speaking of transmission, however, we also have one of the world's most authoritative, widely recognized and respected voices in "memory studies": Marianne Hirsch. This issue features a fascinating interview with Hirsch on her career and the concepts that she has forged, taking a look at contemporary conflicts and debates (from Black Lives Matter to today's feminism) and the role of memory in democratic societies.

In the “Europe insight” section, we have delved into the following question: can memory bolster democracy and prevent the emergence of new discourses of hate? And we have done so from a number of different angles. First, the winner of the 2018 European Book Prize, the journalist Géraldine Schwarz, once again probes the figure of the “Mitläufer” in order to explain how, although we recall what happened in the Second World War and the Holocaust, we have forgotten how it was possible and the implications that such forgetting entails. Second, the political scientist Sarah Gensburger offers a full analysis of the opportunities and complexities of transmitting democratic values through policies on memory. Lastly, to round out the section, we include an interview with Spain’s current State Secretary for Democratic Memory, the historian Fernando Martínez López, who discusses the various challenges, issues, lines of work, new draft legislation and other aspects of new public policies on memory that are being pursued in his country.

In the “Overview” section, we feature an interesting piece on one of today’s leading specialists in the history of the workers’ movement, the historian Selina Todd, who highlights the distinction between the public memory and popular memory of the working classes in order to grasp the logics of today’s left in Great Britain. The architect Julian Bonder takes us deeper into the complexities of the transmission of memory through commemorative monuments and the challenge of public space as a site of socialization where the public learns narratives of the past. Also, the historian Vjeran Pavlakovic examines the status of monuments dedicated to the international brigades in today’s Croatia and looks at the discussions that their memory elicits.

As in every previous issue, we also have a section of short reviews, which may be bibliographical or memorial in nature (such as the pieces written by the EUROM historian David González or the Columbia University student and EUROM fellow Luis Gasca) or may take us on an interesting journey through the former Iron Curtain (provided by Michael Cramer). Lastly, in the “Sightseeing” section, we feature the much-valued collaboration of Nora Hochbaum, director of one of the foremost memorials in Argentina: the Parque de la Memoria, or Memory Park, a monument to the victims of state terrorism. In her detailed piece, Hochbaum describes the significance of the place, the challenges and achievements, her lines of activity (such as the relationship between art and memory), the immense work being done and the challenges that remain.

In closing, I would like to express my public gratitude to every author who appears in the present issue and to the entire team and all of my colleagues who make the journal possible year after year. This year the challenge has been even greater because of our not especially propitious circumstances. My special thanks go to Ricard Conesa in publishing and content, Fernanda Zanuzzi in promotion and design, and Oriol López, Celeste Muñoz and David González for their unstinting work. Let me conclude with a heartfelt embrace for each and every one of you. I wish you all an enjoyable read, the best of health, good cheer and much good fortune now and in the year to come!

Jordi Guixé
Director of the European Observatory on Memories

DEEP VIEW

In or out?
Social reaction to the exhumation of Franco from the Valle de los Caídos

Matilde Eiroa
Mari Luz Congosto
Universidad Carlos III de Madrid
HISMEDI Project (uc3m.libguides.com/Hismedi)

From black and white...

Forty-four years passed between the interment of Franco on 23 November 1975 and his exhumation on 24 October 2019. In Spanish society, a range of feelings have been expressed about the final location of the person who was dictator for four long decades. His death and burial in the Valle de los Caídos (Valley of the Fallen) had a strong impact in the media and in society that was almost paralysing. This was due more to the political consequences Franco's death would have than to the formal procedure of his funeral. The ceremony within the basilica, which culminated with the placing of a slab engraved with his name and the obligatory protocol, was accompanied outside by Falangists, traditionalists, ex-prisoners, provisional second lieutenants, Legionnaire knights, brotherhoods of fighters, Portuguese *Viriatos* and members of the Portuguese secret police (PIDE), Romanian iron guards, Croatians, Italian fascists and German neo-Nazis, in a multicolour landscape of blue, black and brown shirts adorned with the medals of Mussolini, Hitler, Salazar and Franco. The monument erected under the direction of Franco with the labour of Republican political prisoners already fulfilled the purpose for which it had been constructed. It housed the embalmed body of Francisco Franco, *Caudillo de España por la Gracia de Dios* (Leader of Spain, by the Grace of God), as he was called insistently by his entourage of hagiographers from 1939, the end of the Civil War.

After his death, the media put Franco's portrait on the front page and special issues described the physical decline and last days of the elderly dictator. The perspective was one of irreparable loss. *Franco was presented as hero, saviour of the fatherland, providential man, the best statesman, an exemplary head of household, the sentinel of the west* – in reference to his position as anti-communist guardian – and other descriptions that compared him

50 Spanish pesetas coin of 1957, with the effigy of Francisco Franco | Amfeli, CC BY 4.0
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with historical figures such as Alexander the Great, Napoleon, Charles V, Cesar or Hercules.

The social reaction to this historical event was polarised. We cannot provide exact numbers of those who were glad and those who began heartfelt mourning. The opposition to the Franco regime, Republican exiles, the entire labour and student movement, and millions of other Spanish people celebrated the death with quiet festivities in homes and clandestine meeting places. For them, this was a moment of hope with the start of a period that, from their perspective, would inevitably lead to the establishment of the democracy. On the other side were groups that supported Francoism, such as owners of big businesses, bankers and the military, as well as broad sections of society that were comfortable under the regime. Uncertainty seemed to be the only feeling shared by both positions, as all were aware that a time of profound changes was coming. Images of long queues of people waiting to file past the body show the interest in the figure of Franco, whether it was to pay respects or to ensure that he was dead, as many opponents stated. So the preliminary stages of the transition began, while Franco's regime came to an end.

On the first anniversary of Franco's death, some of the newspapers with the largest circulation in Spain put the dictator's image on front pages tinged with nostalgia, mourning and evocation. Franco was presented as a man who had received a country at war – as if he had not contributed to the war's outbreak – who had given it the longest period of peace in national history. The repressive policies he had used to achieve this were not explained. The Spanish king and queen, Don Juan Carlos I and Doña Sofía, presided over the official funeral service in the basilica of the Valle de los Caídos. Meanwhile, in the Plaza de Oriente in Madrid, where Franco had often summoned the masses when he needed what were known as "Actos de afirmación nacional" (acts of national affirmation), pro-Franco groups organised a gathering in homage to his memory. From then on, the Confederación Nacional de Excombatientes (National Confederation

of Ex-Fighters, from Franco's army) along with Franco's family, members of the military, former ministers and well-known figures in the regime such as Blas Piñar or José Antonio Girón presided over commemorative ceremonies to cries of Franco, Franco, Franco, singing of the Spanish Falange's anthem *Cara al Sol*, and some violent acts in streets and bars in which bystanders were made to do the Fascist salute or sing the aforementioned anthem. At the gathering of 1976, *El País* newspaper counted around a hundred thousand participants, a number that dropped to around six thousand in 1978, one thousand five hundred in 1989 and the same number again in 2000. Although the figures have fallen, these gatherings have not disappeared. They reflect the persistence of far-right groups in the Spanish political spectrum during the years of democracy.

The date of Franco's death, which came to be known as 20-N, continued to be a key day for gatherings of the far right. The acts of homage to the dictator, which always culminated with a mass at the Valle de los Caídos and prayers in the military barracks, were transformed into a day of remembrance, but also a day of protest against the nascent democracy, lamentation for the disappearance of the dictator's political legacy and criticism of the new historical phase that was beginning to open up cautiously. The gatherings always included a display of pro-Franco marketing, such as caps, kerchiefs, flags, medals, keyrings, calendars and framed photographs of Franco.

...to colour

With the arrival of the twenty-first century and the birth of the associative movement for the recovery of historical memory, the fate of the Valle de los Caídos was put on the discussion table. Franco was the only dictator whose remains had survived in a mausoleum in a democratic country. The mausoleum had been constructed to enshrine the values of the dictatorship and glorify Franco's victory in the Civil War, the source of his legitimacy. He had died of old age, not killed in conflict, and his cadaver shared a burial place with the bodies of over thirty thousand people from the two armies that had fought in the war. The associations demanded an end to this painful situation in which victims were buried next to their main executioner. Political parties with parliamentary representation agreed to do something with the largest crypt in Europe. However, the decisions were postponed, especially during Mariano Rajoy's term in office (2011-2018), as he rescinded the budget set aside for compliance with the Ley de Memoria Histórica (Historical Memory Law, 2007).

The new president of the government since June 2018, Pedro Sánchez, announced that one of his executive's measures would be to exhume Franco from the Valle de los Caídos, to meet a democratic obligation that had been adopted years ago. In February 2019, an order was approved to carry out the exhumation and transfer of the general's body to a place chosen by his family. However, Franco's grandchildren appealed, and the courts suspended the order. Finally, on 24 September, the Supreme Court endorsed the exhumation of Franco and his interment in the Mingorrubio cemetery, close to the Palace of El Pardo, which had been his usual residence. A month later, on 24 October, the funereal procedure took place before the eyes of millions of spectators who watched this historical moment from their homes.

Beyond the parliamentary debates and discussions of politicians before the media, an intense controversy emerged on Twitter between people of varying ages and profiles. Under the hashtags #exhumaciónfranco (Franco exhumation), #elvallenosetoca (the valley shall remain) or #unboxing, opposing opinions were observed, as we will see below. From 31 March 2019, when the provisional suspension of the exhumation was in force, to 24 October, the date of its execution, we monitored the reaction on the internet. Over this period, activity, both for and against, depended on the progress of the events. On 4 June, when the Supreme Court paralysed the exhumation, the number of tweets reached 50,000 per day. On 24 September, when the same Court endorsed the exhumation, the number of daily tweets doubled. Finally, on 24 October, the day designated for the

disinterment, the number of messages increased fivefold. In this last month, there was intense participation on Twitter about the preparations for the event, but also about Franco and his dictatorship.

In the analysis of social networks, the social group against the exhumation, which identifies with right-wing and far right political parties, was found to have a strong, uniform structure of connection. In contrast, groups in favour were divided into subgroups around nuclei of associations for historical memory, left-wing political parties or people who wanted to express their opinion [graphics 1 and 2].

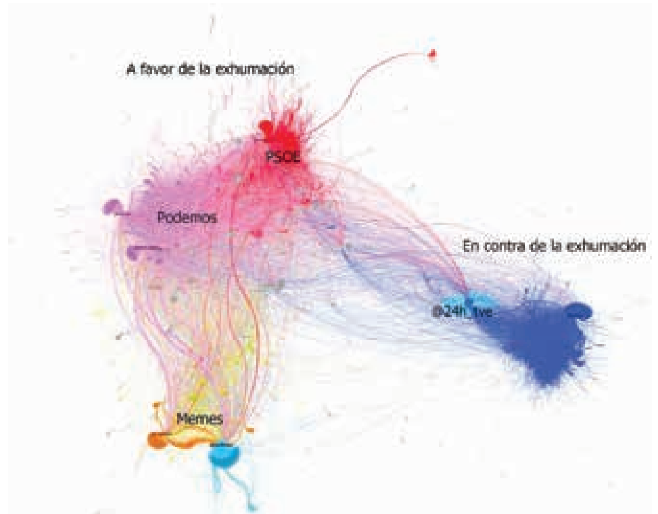
In the period between 22 and 26 October, the dates before and after the event, over a million tweets were posted. The division of opinions was not so radical because there was mass participation in which many users did not have a clear opinion, but their messages were widely shared. However, a clear separation can be seen between the far-right party VOX and its supporters compared to other groups [graphic 3].

Between the Supreme Court's ruling of suspension (4 June) and endorsement (24 September), the controversy was enriched by the appearance of a new actor: humour. On Twitter, sarcastic and ironic messages often circulate that ridicule all kinds of events and are sometimes on the limits of black humour. In the case of Franco's exhumation, humour came from the social bloc in favour of taking him out of the Valle. The messages swept up many users who would not have participated in the discussion otherwise. Much of this humorous content was expressed in the form of memes, some trivialising the situation, others making fun of the dictator himself.

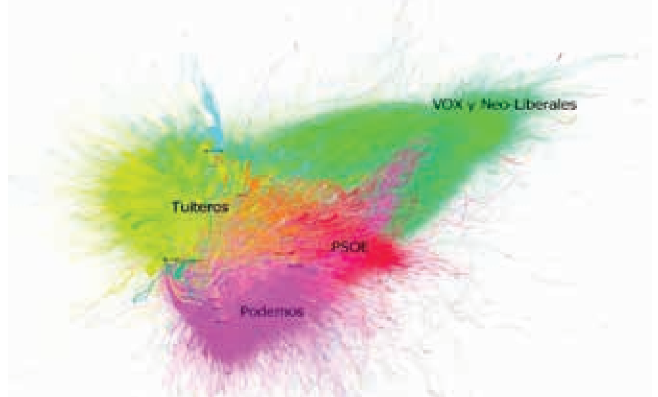
Regarding doubts about how the disinterment and reburial process would be carried out, various memes circulated that proposed solutions. One showed an image of the children from Steven Spielberg's famous film E.T. (1982) transporting the dictator on their bicycle.

Another satirical post showed Franco's old ally Adolf Hitler driving him out of the Valle in one of his majestic Mercedes Benz cars. So the Führer saved the Caudillo from a new difficulty.

Graphic 1 | Source: Monitoring of Twitter. Compiled by the authors.



Graphic 2 | Source: Monitoring of Twitter. Compiled by the authors



Graphic 3 | Source: Monitoring of Twitter. Compiled by the authors

Source: Monitoring of Twitter.

Source: Monitoring of Twitter | Author unknown

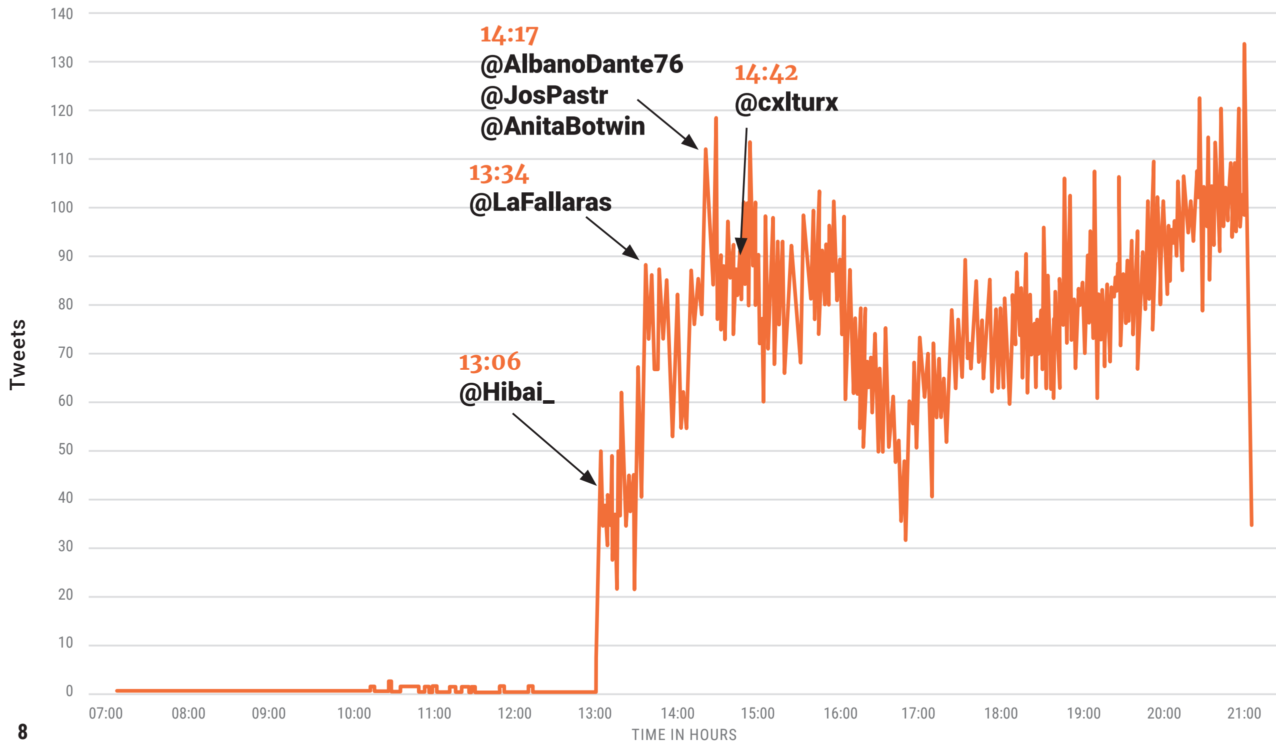
One of the memes that circulated most on Twitter and WhatsApp groups referred to the fact that Franco's removal from the Valle would take place on a Thursday, which is the day that many students start to go out for the weekend:

Translation: "What are you doing on Thursday? I'm going out!" | Source: https://cronicaglobal.elespanol.com/cronica-directo/curiosidades/franco-memes-exhumacion_286284_102.html

The historical event, which was eagerly awaited by the left-wing parties and the associative movement for historical memory, generated a lot of controversy about the exhumation protocol. On the day, the hashtag #Funeraldeestado (State funeral) trended. This term began to be used widely even before the start of the ceremony. At 1 p.m. on 24 October, its use shot up when some influential figures on the left picked it up, particularly individuals associated with the Unidas-Podemos party. However, others stated that they were against using this concept, as they argued that it should be applied to deserving governors, not to a dictator.

Outside the Valle, as at the time of Franco's burial in November 1975, and in the surroundings of the Mingorrubio cemetery where the body was taken, several dozen members of the far-right and people nostalgic for the Franco regime congregated. They carried banners with messages supporting

Tweets of "state funeral" per minute 24-10-2019



Source: Monitoring of Twitter. Compiled by the authors

the dictator, in the style of the darkest years of the regime. Slogans such as Viva Franco (Long live Franco), Arriba España (Up with Spain), the Falange anthem Cara al Sol, the fascist salute, and the presence of Antonio Tejero, the Civil Guard policeman who led a coup attempt on 23 February 1981, were the elements adorning the interment in the new tomb. The Franco family, the Francisco Franco National Foundation, the Benedictine community that lives in the Valle, the Association for the Defence of the Valle de los Caídos and other neo-fascist groups are the collective that aims to pay tribute to and recover the general's reputation.

A few days after this event had occurred, Twitter users dropped the topic. There was a slight upturn of 22,000 tweets on 19 November, the day before the anniversary of the dictator's death.

Forty-four years after his demise, opinions about Franco have a very similar ideological map to that found in 1975, but with the addition of satire. Social networks have revealed clearly and comprehensively the public opinion about a decision that was considered necessary and urgent by much of Spanish society that is eager to close the past.

DEEP VIEW

Online Memories: *The battle over online memory on Europe Day*

Celeste Muñoz
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The Online Memories project and new social media narratives

On 26 March 2019, the Barcelona city government installed an upright historical marker in front of the local headquarters of the National Police in the centrally located thoroughfare of Via Laietana. The gesture was all but a symbolic act of remembrance that might have gone unnoticed except for the media firestorm that it touched off on social media. The reason: it was a troubling reminder of torture. The standing marker was installed by the Barcelona city government as a way to restore society's remembrance of the Francoist dictatorship, pinpointing and identifying a place that is recalled even today for the brutality inflicted on myriad citizens by the regime's political police. Of course, the reactions were varied and conflicting. Broadly speaking, studies of the collective public memory of our past may well focus on the processes of contestation surrounding the historical marker, which has suffered a slew of attacks while the police look on passively, almost in complicity. Such an analysis is doubtless very relevant. What interests us here, however, is to analyse and chart the spontaneous remembrance emerging on social media, which undoubtedly offers a genuine example of the conflict over memory. The "casus belli" of the conflict was a controversial tweet posted by then city councillor Carina Mejías, who criticised the marker as an "offense" against the police. Her statements were quickly met with responses from others on the platform. Soon more than 7,000 tweets had been posted with the hashtag #CuentaseloAMejias (Tell it to Mejías), reflecting hundreds of personal accounts of torture suffered at first hand or by family members during and after the Francoist dictatorship.

1-2. Commemoration material of the European Parliament on the 70th anniversary of the Schuman's Declaration | © European Parliament

This was one of the first online phenomena analysed by the Online Memories project, which was sponsored by the European Observatory on Memories in 2019 with the primary aim of collecting European narratives and online debates over commemorations and holidays in the EU context. Clearly, the technological shift instigated in the nineteen-nineties and the new forms of political participation through social media arising in the twenty-first century have transformed the past decade, consolidating social media spaces since 2010 as lively structures with a major potential to have an impact on election campaigns and social mobilisations, to name but a few examples. However, relatively little attention has been given to the capacity of the various agents in these spaces to generate new discourses that can also serve as political weapons in the context of EU commemorations (as shall be seen in the analysis of Europe Day). This study focuses not only on the narratives themselves, but also on identifying the countries where the commemorations have had a greater or lesser impact online and on making comparisons of the year-on-year results for the same holidays. The principal challenge, however, involves the methodology – or to put it better, the creation of a new methodology.

In the field of history and in studies of historical memory, our familiarity with the use of procedures for online data mining is still limited. This is a shortcoming that calls for attention in the training given within the disciplines in question, because the internet of today amounts to the archives of tomorrow – and tomorrow is clearly here now. In order to prepare future biographies, the public profiles on social media will obviously provide crucial information; today's political conflicts and processes, such as Brexit or the Covid-19 crisis, have an online footprint that contains key data for any future historical reconstruction and analysis. The field of historical memory is not – nor should it be – apart or immune from this reality. Teamwork among professionals trained in the field of new technologies is vital to formulating the new methodologies that are required. For the present study, the collaboration of Dr. Mari Luz Congosto has proved crucial. Dr. Congosto has taken charge of collecting and processing the metadata used in the analysis and training the researchers on the project

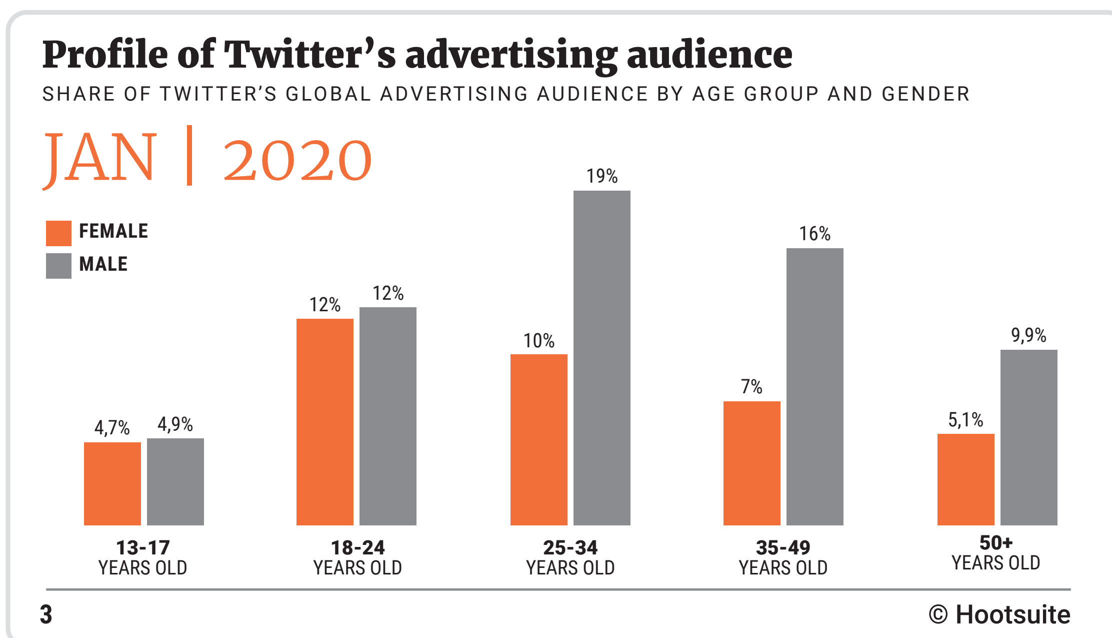
team in order to ensure that the complex intricacies of the resulting charts are easy to understand. Interdisciplinary work is fundamental to the pursuit of any research that currently lacks methodologies because it is emerging in nature.

In summary, the team's methodology makes use specifically of the trending topics and key words (without hashtag) that are associated with a commemoration. Generally, searches of this type tend to limit the linguistic field, but not the geographical field. As a result, the aim throughout the project has been to progressively expand the language possibilities in the sampling. This has enabled the team to identify a growing number of new communities by language use and increasingly include voices from Eastern Europe. This approach, together with the establishment of time bands for tweets (primarily in order to discard information from North and South America), has enabled us to define affinity communities based on the interactions of users and the similarity of their tweets. These affinity communities are the units that structure the analysis. Lastly, the need to establish a sociological profile of Twitter users has become increasingly important, with its inclusiveness and employment data providing another key plank in formulating the methodology and understanding the content.

The sociological profile of Twitter users

First, it is necessary to bear in mind that Twitter has a "bubble" effect. That is, many of the phenomena that happen on the platform are of little importance elsewhere. By contrast, some phenomena go viral, do have an impact on public opinion and can even generate so-called "fake news", which has found a ready breeding ground on Twitter. The aim here is not to determine the reason why one debate is marginalised to a mere online existence while another transcends it. Rather, it is to take into account that the population substrata that engage in their creation are very specific. To this end, it is crucial to identify the substrata in order to establish any patterns (by gender, age, country, etc.). This undertaking is hard because Twitter only supplies very partial information and academic studies at present are very local and limited. However, it is possible to lay out some of the information that must be taken into account.

In 2018, 21.8% of Twitter users accessed the platform's content from Europe. To be exact, 14.2% did so from Western Europe and 7.6% did so from Central and Eastern Europe. This represents 56.5 million Europeans in total. While the figure is not massive, it is nonetheless fairly representative.

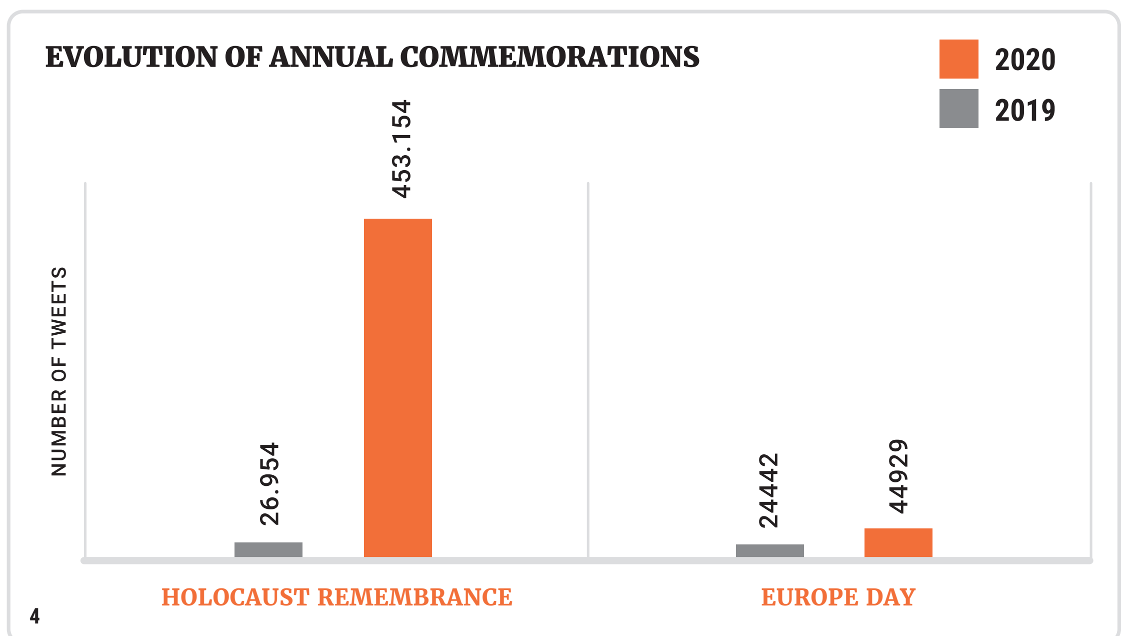


3. Distribution of Twitter profiles by age group and gender (2020). | Source: Hootsuite.

Based on the overall figures provided by Twitter, we also know that the platform is predominantly male (66%) and young (53.6% of users are between 18 and 34 years of age); users access the platform primarily with their mobile telephones; they live in urban areas; they have a high technological profile; and they have gone to university. Also, unlike other social media like Facebook, most users who access Twitter do so in search of information (56%), making it a politicisation space of major impact. Lastly, at the European level, the platform's popularity varies by country. For example, the United Kingdom (17.1 million) and Spain (4.1 million) rank as the European countries with the highest activity on Twitter, together accounting for more than a third of the continent's profiles. By contrast, Germany ranks as the European country with the lowest activity on Twitter.

Commemorations

The project has examined a wide range of commemorative holidays and related phenomena. The commemorations are sometimes one-off events, such as the centenary of the end of the First World War or the thirtieth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. These events cannot be tracked systematically, because they are limited to specific anniversaries. By contrast, institutionalised commemorations such as Europe Day, Holocaust Remembrance Day and Black Ribbon Day (in remembrance of the victims of totalitarian regimes) do leave an annual trail so that their evolution can be tracked over time. To this end, the analysis combines both types of phenomenon, with their disparate impact in terms of the volume of information that they engender.



4. Evolution of annual commemorations. | Source: Own elaboration.

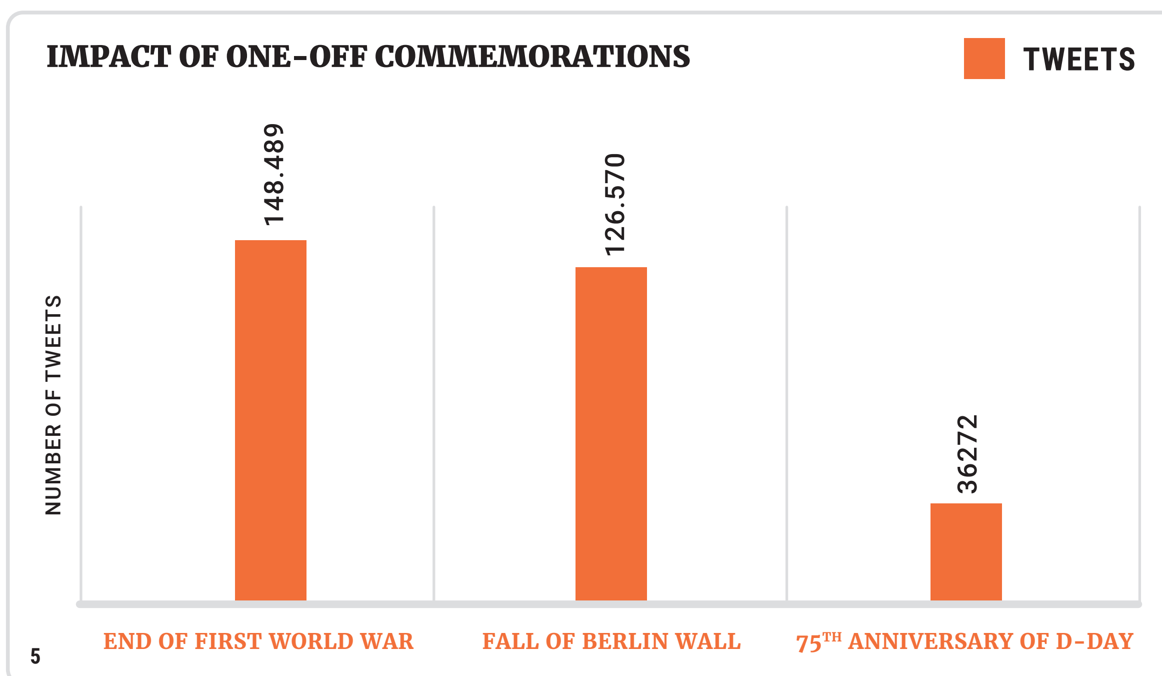
For example, if we take Holocaust Remembrance Day or Europe Day as a benchmark, Twitter saw an increase both in interest and in impact from 2019 to 2020. Europe Day doubled in impact, while the impact of Holocaust Remembrance Day grew by a factor of twenty. In principle, the latter growth can be explained by the seventy-fifth anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, which prompted increased participation by EU institutions and the media. This generated much more content in 2020, which was replicated in greater participation by leading figures and subsequently by other users. The analysis has also shown how messages on current issues are repeatedly mixed with messages about the past, relating the hate of the Holocaust with Brexit or with the rise of the far right across Europe today, or relating Europe Day with the need to seek unity in the battle against the Covid-19 pandemic.

As for specific one-off commemorations, the analysis has shown that they tend to have a greater impact on the platform, generating a higher volume of information and more trending topics. This is almost certainly due to the relative newness of institutional events, which occupy more of the political agenda throughout the year and therefore generate a great deal of interest. As shown by Chart 2 below, the thirtieth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall in 2019 and the centenary of the end of the First World War in 2018 had a high following. At the European level, however, the fall of the Berlin Wall generated much greater impact than any other event. By contrast, a greater volume of the tweets on the armistice of 1918 came from the Americas (identified by using time bands).

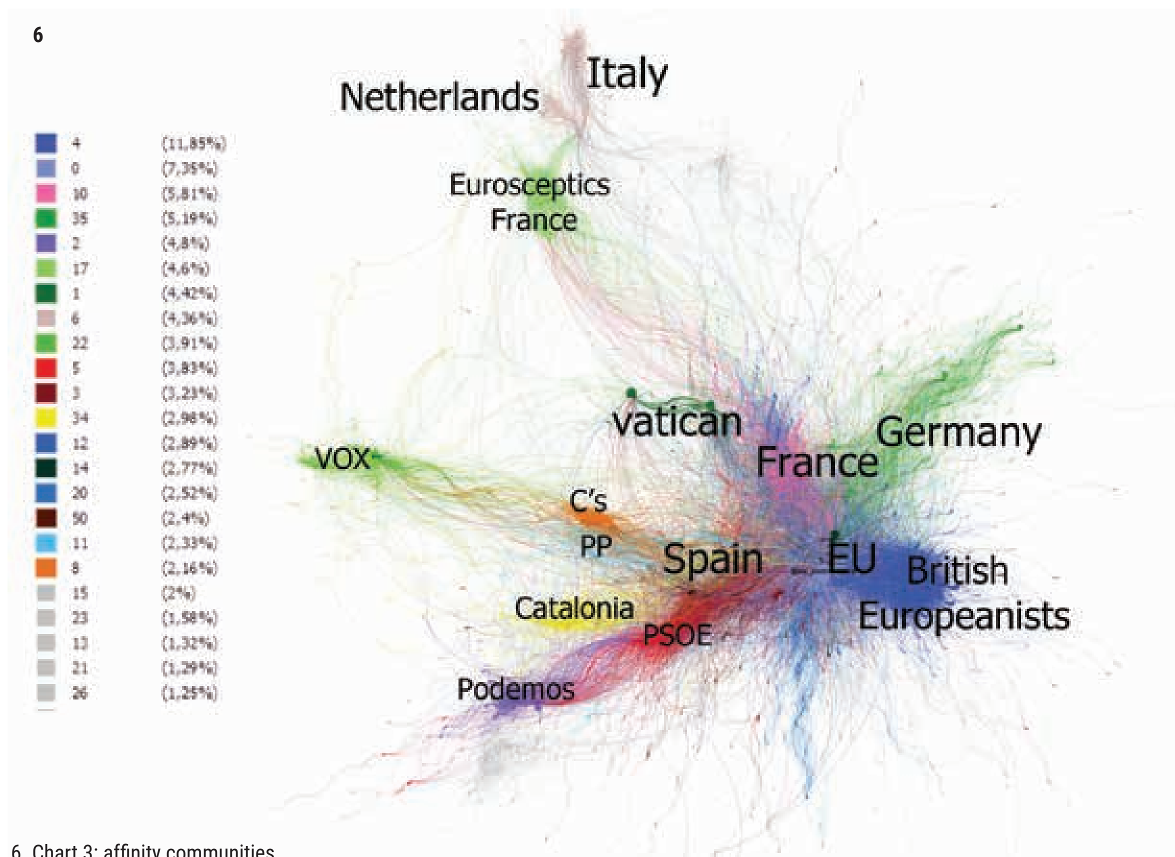
While all of the analyses will continue throughout 2020 and 2021, the results of greatest interest here concern Europe Day. This is the commemoration that will be used in the comparisons and the constant monitoring analysis in order to identify the political uses of the date and the various meanings that it is given on Twitter.

Europe Day

Europe Day, which is celebrated each year on 9 May to commemorate the 1950 Schuman Declaration, is a key date on the European calendar. Representing a foundational moment for the European Union, the date seeks to commemorate the collaboration and efforts undertaken to overcome the differences of the past and build a present together. The celebration of the date continues to have an increasing impact in



5. Impact of non-structural commemorations. | Source: Own elaboration.

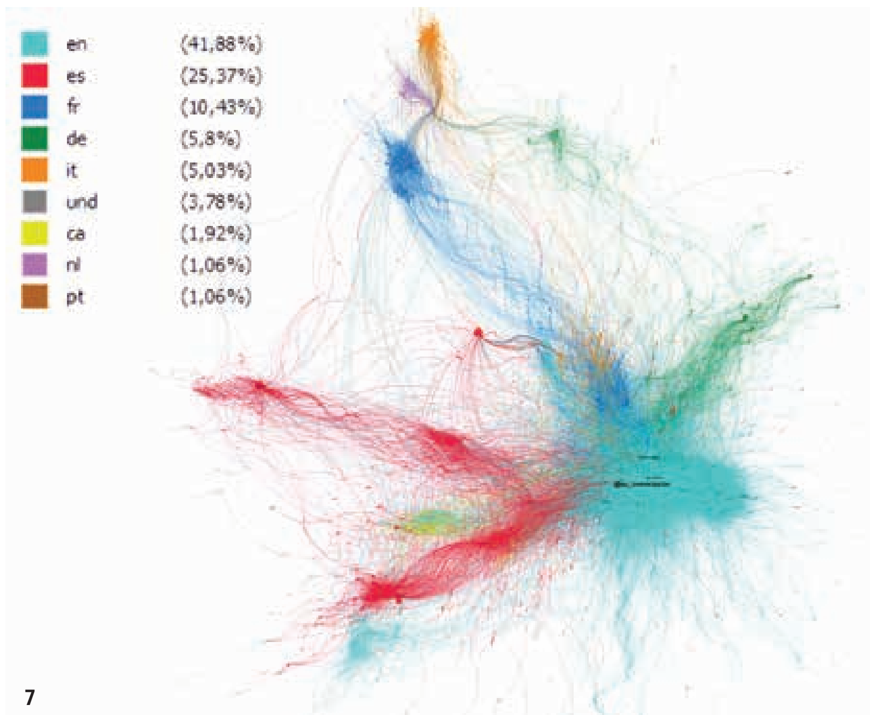


6. Chart 3: affinity communities.

the media, which could also explain the growth of its impact on Twitter from 2019 to 2020. However, there are no monocausal explanations. At the time of the celebration of Europe Day in 2020, the continent – and indeed the whole world – was in the midst of a widespread lockdown. The Covid-19 pandemic of 2020 and the ensuing large-scale quarantine have resulted in an unprecedented situation for most of the generations experiencing them, so it makes sense that their impact would be the focus of a large proportion of the debates. In addition, preliminary studies suggest that the pandemic and lockdown may well have fuelled increased use of the internet and social media as sources of information and communication, helping to drive the growth in content relating to Europe Day as well. Moreover, the Schuman Declaration celebrated its seventieth anniversary in 2020, which is another element to bear in mind when analysing any growth in the date's celebration. Indeed, the hashtags #70Schuman and #Schuman70 were both very popular.

Focusing on the identification of communities linked to the celebration, it is important to highlight that there was a broad dispersion across isolated, very heterogeneous groups. Also, the language and ideological communities appear to be enormously fragmented between pro-Europeans and Eurosceptics.

From the charts above, a comparison of the language communities – led by English [turquoise], followed by Spanish [red] and French [green] – shows that there has been a decline in linguistic diversity and a rise in the hegemony of English from 2019 to 2020. The second of the two charts provides much more large-scale information. In both charts (3 and 4), the communities on the upper-left side are related to Euroscepticism (whether French, Italian, Dutch or Spanish), while the communities on the lower-right side are pro-European (but to varying degrees, with a critical, albeit pro-European left that tends slightly toward the Euroscepticism pole at the bottom of the chart). In addition, the European Commission and its institutional offshoots appear as an important community (7.35%) in the middle of the chart at the epicentre of the phenomenon. The largest community overall is made up of British pro-Europeans (11.95%), who treated the celebration as an ideal opportunity to weigh



7. Chart 4: language communities.

in against Brexit. Indeed, the separation between the right and the left is apparent in the language communities within every state, marking an internal polarisation that appears to be sharper than for any other celebration. Lastly, if we compare the changing makeup of these communities between 2019 and 2020, we detect a sharp increase in Euroscepticism, especially in France and Italy. Also new in 2020 is the appearance of the Vatican (4.42%) through its account @pontifex, which acted as a bridge between Eurosceptics and pro-Europeans, given that the account interacted with both communities.

In the content analysis, the tweets with the greatest impact were once again put out by the European Commission in relation to the Schuman Declaration (3,900 retweets). The European Commission seized on the opportunity to call for political unity in the face of the Covid-19 crisis and it posted a video with messages of support from top EU leaders (830 retweets). In comparison with the previous year, it is also important to highlight that all of the posts from the account @UE_Commission had only 3,772 retweets in 2019, so we can observe an increase in the institution's reach in social media. However, a discourse analysis of the conflict between pro-Europeans and Eurosceptics provides more clues than the EU's own institutional context does, if we are to gain a better understanding of the new formulas of commemoration.

For example, we can observe a large pro-European community active in the United Kingdom, logically because of Brexit. In this group, the tweet with the greatest impact was posted by the political analyst Derek James (@derekjames150), who raised the question: "On #EuropeDay2020, how many of you wish the UK was still a member of the EU?". However, leading political profiles, particularly members of the Labour Party, also played an important role, including David Lammy (@DavidLammy) and Richard Corbett (@RichardGCorbett). The overall thrust of the community, broadly speaking, was to challenge Brexit by means of discourses centred on the idea of fraternity. Noteworthy in this respect was the absence of a contrary discourse in the UK from Brexiteers, who are generally highly active in social media but were not very mobilised on the occasion in 2020. Turning to France's pro-European community, the most popular tweet was posted by President Emmanuel Macron, who quoted President of the European Council Charles Michel and posted the official video mentioned earlier. Macron's discursive line was to use the celebration to address the Covid-19 crisis by drawing a political parallel

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On the 70th anniversary of the Schuman Declaration, I hope that it will continue to inspire those with responsibilities in the European Union. They are called to face the social and economic consequences of the pandemic in a spirit of harmony and cooperation. #EuropeDay2020

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between the founding of the EU and its present healthcare challenge. By contrast, the tweet in Germany with the greatest impact and reach came from an activist called Daniel Mack (@danielmack), who posted a timeline with the continent's periods of war and peace and ended with a statement that the European Union "ist das Beste, was uns passieren konnte" ["is the best thing that ever happened to us"]. Among Spain's pro-European community, the most popular tweet was posted by the multifaceted communicator Javier Aroca, who recalled the EU's early principles of solidarity, especially toward Germany, in a clear allusion to the current situation and the need to apply the same principles to Southern Europe in a context of systemic crises and need in those countries (@JavierArocaA: "En virtud del Acuerdo de Londres de 1953, se condonó, anuló o hubo una quita de la #deudaexterioralemana. Entre los condonantes estaba España y todos los Estados del sur de Europa. Feliz #DiadeEuropa. En particular a #Alemania" ["By virtue of the London Agreement of 1953, Germany's external debts were forgiven. Those who agreed to write off the debts included Spain and all the nations of Southern Europe. Happy #DiadeEuropa. Especially to #Alemania"]). In the same vein, the Second Deputy Prime Minister Pablo Iglesias quoted Schuman and posted an excerpt of the declaration to argue on behalf of the same foundational organising principle. Indeed, most of the content posted by pro-European politicians in Spain harked back to those values of unity and solidarity in hopes that the solution to the new Covid-19 crisis, which has hit Spain particularly hard, would not be austerity and cuts to social spending as happened in the wake of the financial crisis of 2008. This line is similar to the one adopted by Pope Francis, who was especially active over the entire day.

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In the case of the Eurosceptic community, we noted earlier that its presence on the platform has continued to grow, including tweets that could be categorised as hate crimes owing to their high degree of xenophobia. In France, where the phenomenon is particularly pronounced, the tweet with the greatest impact in 2020 came surprisingly from an anonymous profile with very few followers (345). The tweet introduced a survey on France's membership in the EU (the result was that 88% of respondents voted for France's departure). Along similar lines was a tweet posted by the politician Nicolas Dupont-Aignan (@duponaignant), who is a founder of the right-wing populist party Debout la France (see image 12). The profile of the popular influencer Kelly Betesh, who has over 15 million followers, also had a major impact on the day through her posting of a photo in which she wrapped herself in the French flag as a symbol of her rejection of Europe Day. Other examples of Euroscepticism on Twitter appear in Italy and the Netherlands. In these communities, the tweet with the greatest impact came from the account @ Jeroen99271706, which posted an image of the EU flag being set on fire in protest. In this respect, it is important to underscore that most of the tweets from the Eurosceptic community in Italy came from the political milieu of the Lega Party on the right. In the case of the Netherlands, the politician Geert Wilders (@geertwilderspvv), leader of the far-right PVV Party, went viral with the post of an explicit photo under the slogan "Nexit" in a clear allusion to Brexit. Lastly, in Spain, the far-right Vox Party and its followers were the main sources of Eurosceptic

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content, posting tweets that made reference to national sovereignty and the fight against illegal immigration.

To conclude the content analysis on Europe Day, it is also necessary to look at the tweets that could be characterised as Eurocritical, an area that lies at one end of the pro-European group and tilts slightly towards the Eurosceptic community but is not part of it. Unlike the Eurosceptics, Eurocritical sectors are found mostly within the parliamentary left, which does not support a break with the European Community, but does call for democratising reform. One example would be a tweet from the Euro MP Erik Marquardt of the Greens/EFA Alliance, who criticised the EU states for being "more concerned with the next elections than with the next generations". Along the same lines was a tweet from Sawsan Chebli of Germany's SPD Party, who seized on Europe Day to criticise the EU's immigration policies and recall the refugees housed in the Moria refugee camp on the Greek island of Lesbos. These spaces were also characterised by humour and the use of memes. A popular tweet in this vein was posted by Ulrike Guérot (@ulrikeguerot), a founder of the EU reform movement called European Democracy (see image 15). Likewise, in Spain, a cartoonist at the satirical magazine @eljueves resorted to humour in a tweet that enjoyed a fairly wide distribution on the day.

Conclusions

After laying out the overall project and the specific analysis of Europe Day, it is necessary to offer a few final reflections that are in no way meant to be definitive. The Online Memories project will continue to provide much more information in order to carry out much more thorough and rigorous analyses. At present, however, it is necessary to recognise the usefulness and validity of the present paper. First, this is because of the significance of the narratives and phenomena that it examines. Despite their lack of any physical materiality such as that provided by the completion of commemorative monuments or heritage initiatives, they nonetheless constitute new formulas of remembering in the present and the future. Second and closely linked to the first point, the project is significant because of its methodological work, which has few precedents. This work furthers the consolidation of the "digital social sciences". Along the same lines, it will also be important to work through any ethical dilemmas that may arise, together with any case law established by each state to punish hate crimes on social media (which are sometimes a double-edge weapon in that they politically limit the freedom of expression and atomise dissent or opposition). Social media are one of the political battlefields of the twenty-first century. As a result, their usefulness as a source is fundamental. Third and last, the present study is significant because of the results themselves. By analysing Europe Day, it has been possible to identify the countries where the date's commemoration is more deeply entrenched and those where it is almost non-existent; detect the remembrance of Schuman and his declaration in the present (in interpretations that are also conditioned by the present); learn which ideological communities reach beyond the constraints of language; ascertain the rise of Euroscepticism, its connections and its methods of influence; rapidly spot the impact of Covid-19 on access to the internet and on political discourse (in nascent form); and ultimately, gain a continental retrospective view through the analysis of a vast amount of information.

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INTERVIEW

Interview with Marianne Hirsch

Marianne Hirsch | Institute for research on Women, Gender, and Sexuality

1

“Memory studies are a fruitful site to think citizenship *beyond the bounds of nation-states*”

Marianne Hirsch is William Peterfield Trent Professor of English and Comparative Literature at Columbia University and Professor in the Institute for Research on Women, Gender, and Sexuality. She is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and a former President of the Modern Language Association of America. Born in Romania and educated at Brown University, where she received her BA/MA and Ph.D. degrees.

Hirsch’s work combines feminist theory with memory studies, particularly the transmission of memories of violence across generations. Along this interview we talked about her academic trajectory and the concepts she coined, and also about interdisciplinarity, the relationship between memory and new technologies, and the transmission of trauma across generations, its role in the social movements (feminism, Black Lives Matter...) and its possible uses to strengthen democracy.

1. One of the main themes of the current issue of Observing Memories is the relationship between the new technologies and social networks in the transmission of memory. While it’s been said that Twitter may one day become an indispensable source of analysis in the study of political thought, what new contributions can it and other social networks make to our study of the transmission of memory? Can social networks help us to counter hegemonic narratives of the past or is there a danger of them actually bolstering these narratives?

This is a great question. Social networks are just that – networks – webs of transmission that intersect and overlap. Memory also circulates through webs and networks, as different groups define themselves and their identities according to certain understandings of the past, understandings that can conflict with those of other groups. When versions of the recollected past are built and circulate through social media, they are supported by the likes and dislikes, the agreements and disagreements that these platforms enable. I believe that this process is ideologically neutral: it can be used by different groups for their own benefit. And, as we now know too well, a lot of falsehood can circulate in social media, affecting the present that is built upon these versions of the past.

But social networks do more and do good as well: they generate informal archives that contribute to the formation of memory and the writing of history. As people scan, upload and exchange images and documents held in private and family collections, as they contribute individual and communal stories and anecdotes, they supplement official archives and preserve small stories that might otherwise be left out of the historical record. I’ve had some wonderful help finding images and documents from people interested in some of the obscure towns, ghettos and camps I was researching. Such crowdsourced archives have become invaluable in enlarging, deepening and materializing official histories.

2. After beginning your career in the field of comparative literature and feminist theory, your work has also become a benchmark for scholarship in memory studies. You've always defended the importance of interdisciplinarity when dealing with the past. Over the years, what challenges have been involved in pursuing and reconciling the many disciplines that comprise memory studies?

Interdisciplinarity is both what attracted me to memory as a field of study, and what I feel I need to learn about the workings of personal and cultural memory. The opportunities for interdisciplinary and transnational collaboration are especially exciting. To understand how the past is transmitted and how it shapes the present and future, I've had to read and be in conversation with colleagues from history, anthropology, political science, literature, the arts, architecture, law, human rights, psychology, psychoanalysis, neuroscience and more. Memory studies is one of the most interdisciplinary fields in the Humanities and Social Sciences. And, in addition, the study of memory is intimately tied to practice. The working groups in which I have been involved over the years include not only scholars and artists, but also practitioners – archivists, curators, memory activists of many kinds. But, as your question suggests, these conversations and collaborations are not always easy.

Some historians, for example, resist the authority of individual recollection and discount it as evidence. Other memory scholars respond that individual ordinary stories are essential if we want to understand the intimate dimensions of a traumatic past, how it is lived, and how it is recorded beyond official records. In another example, when neuroscientists discuss the epigenetic inheritance of trauma, their research is based on minute studies of rat brains and behaviors. But those of us in the humanities may be too quick to see our own assumptions about the bodily and psychic after-effects of trauma confirmed by this research. It will take years to find the neuroscientific evidence we seek.

Very different assumptions undergird each of these fields and it often takes a while to see that we might not even mean the same thing at all when we use basic terms like "memory." That may be why we are all qualifying, defining and redefining our terms, why we keep adding prefixes and suffixes. But, importantly we are also drawing on each other's work across disciplines in quite unprecedented ways and this cross-fertilization promises to make memory studies not so much interdisciplinary as trans- or even post-disciplinary. Beyond that, the transnational networks and collaborations that have defined the field also affect its disciplinary and interdisciplinary formations. Fields like anthropology and sociology, for example, have different inflections in Europe than they do in the United States, gender studies move in different directions, and so on.

And feminist, anti-racist and decolonial commitments that have been central for memory studies are also differently shaped in different locations. I am excited by the efforts of younger scholars to "decolonize" memory studies thus enabling it to build on the progressive commitment to social justice in a global perspective that so many involved in this field share.

3. You first coined the term "postmemory" in an article on Art Spiegelman's Maus in the early 1990s, and since then you and many other scholars have gone on defining and refining it. After almost thirty years, how has the importance of postmemory changed? How useful has the term been and what uses has it been put to?

Yes, the idea of "postmemory" emerged for me from my own experience as a child of parents who survived persecution and ghettoization as Jews during the Second World War in Nazi Europe. I needed a term for my relationship to the memories my parents transmitted to me which, at times, felt like my own memories – they were so much more vivid and powerful than my own childhood recollections. But, of course, they were not my own. These experiences that shaped me

so profoundly occurred before I was born. Art Spiegelman found a form through which to express the complex relationship the second and subsequent "postgenerations" have to the traumatic histories they have inherited – the simultaneous identification and disidentification, the curiosity and need, the desire and envy, and also the fear, rejection and abjection of that past.

I've been surprised at the widespread use the term has enjoyed and I've learned a great deal from the ways in which it has informed work on the transgenerational memory of slavery, dictatorship, authoritarianism, torture and terror, partition, and more recent wars and genocides.

I suspect that these multiple uses are enabled by the fact that my initial conceptualization of postmemory was quite capacious, leaving me to refine and tighten it over many years in different publications, as you observe. If it was, and still is, a work in progress, however, it is due not so much to my rush to publish an unfinished argument, but to the many conversations in this burgeoning field that I've been fortunate to join, and to the inspiring work on the memory of painful pasts done by scholars, artists and activists across the globe.

What I call a "structure" of intergenerational transmission is not in any way limited to the Holocaust but describes the experiences of, and the aesthetic forms used by, what Eva Hoffman called the "postgenerations" of many other traumatic histories. But each of these histories also has particular dimensions and working across them has changed my understanding of each one. To name just a couple of examples, speaking with child survivors of the Rwandan genocide interested in postmemory out of concern about how the trauma they are passing down will affect their children and grandchildren provoked me to think about what our Holocaust survivor parents might have done differently. Focusing on the afterlives of apartheid in South Africa and the lack of economic reparations for its victims has enabled me to see how important geopolitical and economic factors are in the shapes that postmemory takes in sites of continued poverty and inequality.

The critiques of postmemory have also been instructive and have helped refine my understanding of contextual differences in intergenerational transmission. Postmemory has been a common but also hotly debated reference point for the postgenerations of the Latin American dictatorships. Is it too much focused on the past, rather than the future, some scholars have asked? Too geared to trauma rather than the political ideals of the victims of political disappearance? And does not the absence of the disappeared parents make their children themselves the victims, thus complicating the numbering of generations?

But scholars of the Holocaust have criticized my initial conceptions as well. While I had been eager to underscore the mediated qualities of memory and postmemory and thus to minimize their biographical and familial locations, enlarging the circuits of transmission beyond family, children of survivors quickly pointed out that their own experiences were particular to the familial context. In response, and with their help, I worked to distinguish between "familial" and "affiliative" postmemory. This has been a crucial elaboration that enabled other thoughts as well, about how our acts of contemporary witness of distant contemporary catastrophic events might be structurally similar to intergenerational postmemory. We experience these events at a distance, often unable to intervene, and we ask ourselves what our responsibility might be to address or redress wrongs that we are not ourselves suffering, or responsible for, but that affect us profoundly. This practice of co-witnessing, in the terms of Irene Kacandes, is something I've been thinking about a great deal, especially during this spring and summer of trauma and social distance.

4. During the last years you have been working in other concepts, like "mobile memory" or "stateless memory". Could you please tell us what do they mean?

During this last decade, I've been struck over and over by the discrepancy between scholarly discussions in memory studies and public memory

The Katastwóf Karavan, by Kara Walker (2017)
I Alex Marks and Kara Walker

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projects in different parts of the globe. Scholars of memory have worked to move beyond the nation-centered beginning of the field in the work of Pierre Nora and others, and to reconceive memory as transnational and transcultural, building on the assumptions that memory moves in and across various networks of exchange and that nations are neither static nor clearly circumscribed but in constant active contact with one another. In contrast, recently opened public memory institutions and recent commemorations have become more and more monumental, supporting nationalist and ethnocentric imaginaries. I'm thinking here of recent memorials and memory museums like the Memorial to the Victims of German Occupation in Budapest, for example, or the September 11 Memorial Museum in New York, as well as monumental nationalistic commemorations of the First World War, D- Day, the 1967 War, the Easter Rising in Ireland and so many others.

I've written about mobile memory and stateless memory in an effort, precisely, to contest these renewed ethnocentric, monumental and masculinist memory practices and institutions, and to recover some of the critical potential of the field which, in its earlier formations, was inspired by the idea of "counter-memory" and by counter-memorials – in the work of memorial artists like Maya Lin, Horst Hoheisel or Renate Stih and Frieder Schnock, for example.

In dialogue with work on transnational, transcultural, cosmopolitan, multidirectional, diasporic conceptions of memory, I have explored memory's mobility and thought about how it can be aesthetically, and, indeed, museologically figured. Through what media, what forms of presence and action, what aesthetic strategies, circuits and itineraries can memories be transmitted beyond the confines of national frames, challenging rather than reinscribing singular histories and nationalist imaginaries? How can they do so while still doing justice to their rootedness in the local and the historically particular? What specific theories of memory might best be attuned to memory's politics, seeking out and identifying counter-nationalist and counter-identitarian strategies? I have focused on memory's mobility by highlighting memory projects and artistic works that are small and anti-monumental and that cross borders. I've been especially inspired by the wonderful work of women artists like Mirta Kupferminc, Silvina der Merguerditchian, Doris Salcedo, Yin Xiuzhen,

The Texture of Identity, by Silvina Der-Meguerditchian
silvina-der-meguerditchian.de/

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Wangechi Mutu, Kara Walker, to name just a few examples.

I've thought about stateless memory, more specifically, in response to the current global refugee crisis and the increasingly impermeable borders of nation-states. Building on Hannah Arendt's reflections on statelessness during and after the Second World War, I've spoken and written about stateless memory, specifically, because I see memory studies as a fruitful site in which to think beyond the bounds of citizenship as delimited by the nation-state. I do this again in dialogue with artists who show us how we think of statelessness not just as a condition of victimhood and abjection. Even as we know that stateless people are subject to nation-states for rights, we can still attempt to imagine ways of being in the liminal interstices between and beyond national borders. I see stateless memory as a pause or suspension in both the aspiration to citizenship and in the performance of mobility and migration, whether chosen or imposed. In the pause that is statelessness, I hope to allow for the imagining of alternative potential relationships between contemporary subjects and citizenship, national belonging, and home.

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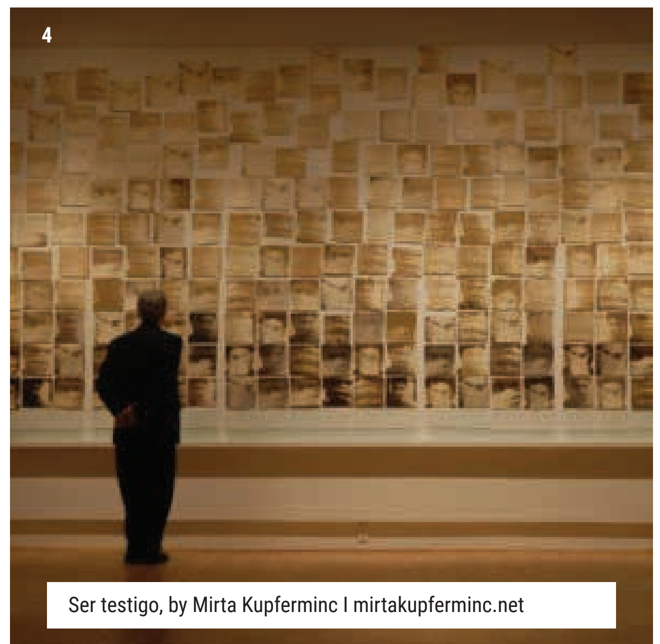

Ser testigo, by Mirta Kupferminc I mirtakupferminc.net

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Objects that tell stories, by Silvina Der-Meguerditchian (To Mnemosyne's Health!, Berlin 2015) I silvina-der-meguerditchian.de

5. Holocaust studies have been particularly present in research on the transmission of trauma across generations. Do you think this has affected the study of other cases of memory transmission, leaving aside memories of resistance, militancy and activism? Has it overshadowed other types of response to historical traumas?

Thank you for this challenging question. This is something I've been thinking about a great deal. Because of the dedicated work Jewish victims did to document and testify about their experiences of persecution and murder, and because of the urgency descendants and scholars of the Holocaust began to feel in the 1980's and 1990's about the impending death of survivors and eyewitnesses, this event has spawned a vast array of historical and theoretical work on memory and trauma. That remarkable and authoritative work has informed analyses of other instances of historical trauma, for the most part in helpful ways that show structural connections and interrelations as well as divergences and specificities that resist any possible conflation of` these histories. Certain kinds of racialized persecution – against Jews, Blacks, indigenous peoples – can fruitfully be connected by studying the structures of Euro-American imperialism and colonialism and the internal and external "others" they have created. Responses by those suffering resulting ethnocentrisms and racisms also follow some connected strategies – assimilation and aspired integration, on the one hand, resistance, refusal, and celebration of difference, on the other.

The Holocaust itself is not a uniform event, of course. It comprises so many different kinds of experiences – ghettoization, deportation to forced labor, concentration or death camps, refugeehood, hiding, passing, murder. Yet in popular discourse, the term has come to mean, simply, Auschwitz and numbers on a forearm. This kind of reduction might be inevitable over decades, but it does not foster a productive kind of memory politics. The real problem arises when one event, like the Holocaust conceived in this narrow way, is represented as a limit case and when it becomes a template against which other cases of trauma and survival are measured.

If descendants of persecuted and murdered political activists remember partisans fighting in the Spanish Civil War, anti-apartheid activists in South Africa, victims of forced disappearance in Latin America, Turkey and elsewhere, dissidents in Soviet bloc regimes, to name just a few examples, refer to the Holocaust as a paradigmatic case of persecution and murder, the political work and the passions, hopes and aspirations that made their ancestors vulnerable would indeed be obscured. I have found that looking at memory connectivity, across these histories, is especially helpful in moving beyond the focus on traumatic recall and return, to the memory of activism, resistance and hope. What future were our subjects envisioning? How can we avoid back-shadowing, that is, seeing them only through the knowledge of what later happened, rather than granting them the future they were imagining in the past?

I have been very interested in thinking about how the memory of violent pasts can be mobilized in the interest of a better future, and thus the memory of activism and activist movements is especially important. I'm inspired by my colleagues who participated in the project on Women Mobilizing Memory, and by the work that Ann Rigney and her group, as well as Yifat Guttman and Jenny Wüstenberg and their collaborators are doing on memory activism.

6. In recent years the feminist movement has gained ground, flexing its muscles every 8th of March in the form of mass demonstrations in capital cities across the world, campaigns against violence against women and girls, protest initiatives like the Me Too Movement and public performance pieces like "The rapist is you". What role has memory played in advancing the movement? What role can it play?

Memory is crucial in these movements. The memory of gender violence and women's and gender non-conforming people's vulnerability to gendered

Holocaust memorial monument in a mass grave where the executed by the Francoism in Barcelona are buried. Cemetery of Montjuïc I EUROM

persecution are transmitted and inherited across generations, viscerally and materially, as well as psychologically. The philosopher Susan Brison even argued that women have an embodied postmemory of rape. And they also have postmemories of how generations preceding them have both accommodated to and resisted, even refused, compulsory heteronormativity and subordination.

Recent feminist demonstrations and demands for equity and recognition on behalf of women and LGBTQI populations follow on a long tradition of organized struggles against misogynistic and homophobic bias and violence –connecting to long histories of anti-racist struggles as well. Memory is important here as well. We have so much to learn from the tactics of emancipation, suffrage, abortion rights, labor and so many other movements of the past. These activist memories and memories of activism are instrumental in shaping these new movements, both inspiring them by example and showing up past shortcomings. I hope that my generation has been able to transmit our passionate hopes and struggles for change, even as we need to recognize that these battles still have to be fought time and again.

Of course, every generation also needs to find its own way. As someone who came to feminism in the 1970's, I am acutely aware of some of the mistakes my generation made, but also of some of our bold tactics and generative analyses, some of which have been forgotten, critiqued and superseded by younger generations. But I am also seeing transgenerational and transnational continuities in the demands for rights and recognition among feminists and the renewed energies that protests against sexist and homophobic violence and harassment are enjoying right now.

7. As we speak, Black Lives Matter is gathering momentum in cities across the US in the wake of the murder of George Floyd by a Minneapolis police officer. You've spoken about how Toni Morrison's novel Beloved affected you in its description of the transmission of the memory of slavery and, right now, confederate monuments across the States have become a flashpoint in protests against racism. What weight does the memory of slavery have in these expressions of social indignation caused by discrimination against black people?

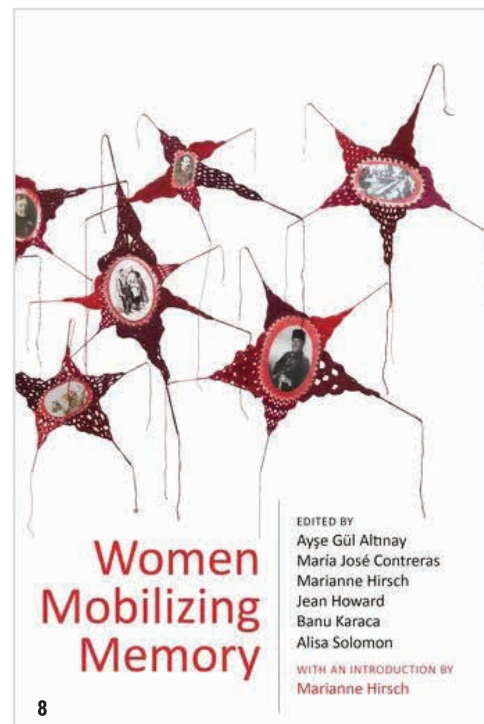
The protest against anti-Black racism in the United States and across the globe do not just reference the memory of slavery but its continued consequences and after-effects in both Black and white communities. The line between enslavement, the period of Reconstruction during which former slaves were first granted rights and then cheated out of the benefits promised by abolition, the racist separations and persecutions of the Jim Crow era and current social and economic and social inequalities in the United States is continuous. How can we separate the memory of slavery from these present conditions? Don't we need to think them together, carefully analyzing how one is compounding the other?

The monumental disparities in the death rates of Blacks and other people or color from the Coronavirus show us how these inequalities have created insurmountable social vulnerabilities. So while the Confederate statues that are still standing in many US cities testify to the fact that this country has not yet worked through the crimes of enslavement and its aftermath, the tremendous inequalities in income, health care, educational opportunities, incarceration, etc. show us some of the concrete forms of repair and reparation that need to be accomplished along with and beyond memory work.

8. Memory is regularly called upon to provide an antidote to undemocratic movements, but although we've seen a major increase in memory studies, we're also witnessing rising levels of political authoritarianism and a new outbreak of far right-wing sentiment that jeopardises democratic systems in different countries. Can memory serve to strengthen democracy? If it can, why haven't we been able to use it to do this? And how might it still be used to slow the expansion and growth of the far right?

This is a really important question for those of us engaged in this field out of a commitment to social justice and a democratic future. We have to acknowledge that memory serves right-wing authoritarian causes as much as it does progressive ones. Authoritarian regimes often invoke, or create, "memories" of perceived injuries in the past to shape group identities and to mobilize populations around shared "wounds."

But, yes, memory can indeed strengthen democracy. It can do so if it means coming to terms with and attempting to repair past injustice. If it means acknowledging how past injustices benefit some populations in the present – as, for example, the economies of enslavement benefit whites in the United States even if they arrived here generations after abolition. If it means being aware of how we are implicated in these continuities and working to foster a radical form of equality and justice in the present. Memory alone cannot do that – it must inspire a practice of activist engagement. But such a practice also cannot thrive without memory and historical knowledge.



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Women Mobilizing Memory Book Cover

Black Lives Matter Protest | Johnny Silverloud CC.

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Learning to learn from History

Géraldine Schwarz
French-German writer, journalist and filmmaker, author of the bestseller "**Those Who Forget: My Family's Story in Nazi Europe – A Memoir, a History, a Warning**"

Up until World War II, remembering history served only to glorify the nation, stir up revanchism, or sanctify heroes. After 1945, the trauma of war, totalitarianism, and the Shoah gave birth to a new ambition in Europe: that of learning from history. Did it succeed?

The 75th anniversary of the end of the war coincides with an international health catastrophe that is putting us all to the test. Our reactions show that we have at least learned a fundamental lesson from the twentieth century: when we cease to be human, we destroy ourselves.

At a time when the technological and economic vision reduces man to algorithms, consumers, users, identical and substitutable models, the majority of Europeans have reaffirmed that each of us is unique and non-replaceable and has a fundamental right to life and physical integrity. Faced with utilitarian doctrines which accept the sacrifice of a minority in the name of the so-called general well-being, most of us have agreed that no one should be entitled to decide on the right to live or die, or to compare the value of one life with another – old or young, sick or in good health, French or German.

The solidarity shown by the younger generations with the older ones, the healthy with the sick, and (even though slightly late) of European countries with each other, have shown that in a situation of crisis we are able to let humanism guide our actions. The pandemic has reminded us that our ability to be human not only gives meaning to our lives but is the condition for all of us to survive.

But this teaching of the past remains fragile. Will it be able to resist the autocratic temptation that hangs over our societies, and the growing scourge of conspiracy theories? Will it be able to resist the amnesia that is eating away at us, the demagogues who are rewriting history, and the artificial intelligence that is replacing our memory?

Géraldine Schwarz | Picture: Astrid di Crollalanza

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Today, humanity is again threatened by worldviews that make humans a means and not an end – which reduce them to simple pawns at in the service of an ideology, a capitalist logic, or technological experiments. In societies which have never known freedom and which authoritarian rulers refuse to enlighten, many people consent, or resign themselves, to being mere instruments, provided they enjoy a minimum of material well-being and entertainment.

But even in Europe we are not spared the risk to lose sight of the fact that politics, economics and technology must always be at the service of man and not the other way around. Some admire the economic success of China or the world power of Vladimir Putin. Others dream of Franco or Mussolini. Crimes and oppression disappear behind the fascination with conquest, the law of the fittest, the virile orchestration of power.

Are we becoming amnesic? Have we forgotten the untold suffering? The fratricidal wars and the bombings? The tyrants who destroy the identity of humans, terrorize them, torture and manipulate them into disposable clones in the service of crime? Have we forgotten the promise of Europe: "never again"?

No, we haven' forgotten "what happened". But we forget "how it was possible".

If the Third Reich, Vichy-France, Mussolini, Franco and many others could commit crimes to such extend, it was/is? because the attitude of the majority of the society allowed them to. Their attitude was an accumulation of cowardice, opportunism, conformism, blindness and indifference, which, when combined, created the conditions necessary for the rise and consolidation of criminal regimes. In German, there is a word to design them: *Mitläufer*, those who follow the current.

We have not lost the memory of the crimes but the memory of our own moral fallibility. But precisely, we can not learn from the past if we don't ask ourselves: how can ordinary citizens, or a society as a whole, become complicit in a criminal regime?

This reflection is essential because it sends each of us back to our present-day responsibilities – to our contradictions and the consequences of our actions and behaviour. It helps us realize that one doesn't have to serve an unfair system directly to

be complicit with it. Following the crowd through indifference, opportunism or conformism is also a form of complicity.

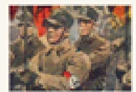
History may not repeat itself, but these socio-psychological and collective mechanisms that influence the behaviour of an individual and a society remain the same today as they were a hundred years ago. Populists, demagogues and autocrats have understood this well. No need for them to resort to oppression or force, which are prohibited in a democracy; the good old methods of manipulation are enough: spreading fear, designating scapegoats, causing division, sowing hatred and chaos. In this climate, all they have to do is take on the role of the saviour who has heard the needs of the people but has been ostracized by the corrupt establishment for having the courage to speak forbidden truths.

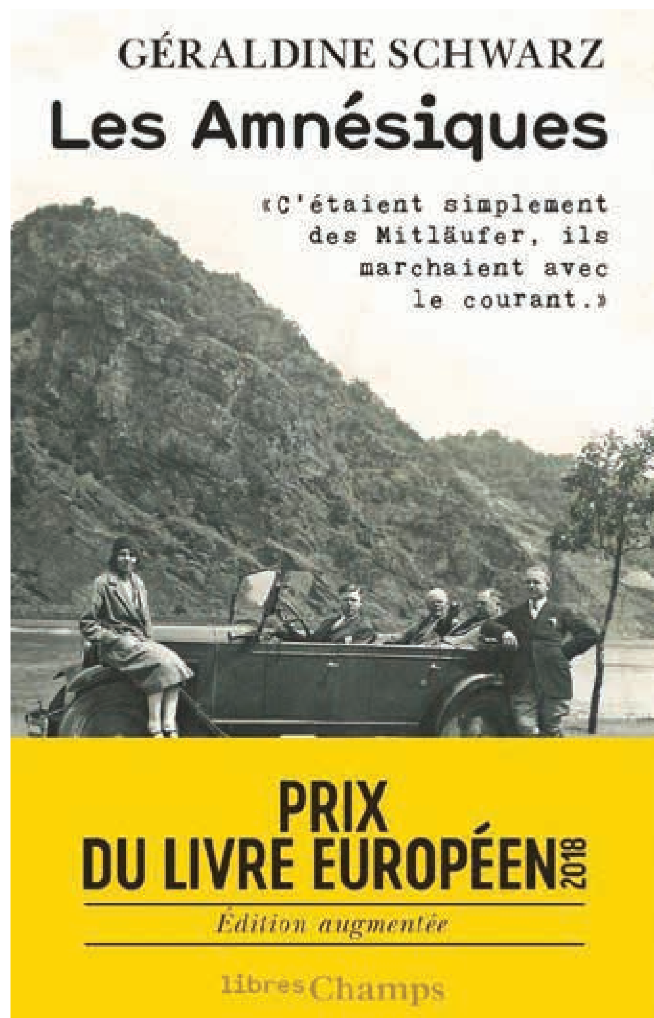
Although in the minority in most European countries, populists claim to be the sole representatives of the people – as if the people were a homogeneous bloc incapable of nuances and differences. They promise to return to the people control over their destiny, in what would be “real” democracy. In fact their paternalism infantilizes the population and paves the way for dangerous antidemocratic abuses. Politicians who declare “I am the people” are claiming to be the direct emanation of the popular will; History has shown where this can lead: to consider that there is no need any more to consult the people.

The myth of the providential martyr still exerts an important power of attraction today as it did in the past. Isn’t it tempting to take refuge in the role of the victim and entrust our salvation to a saviour rather than assume our responsibilities as citizens in a democracy?

Another psychological weapon of the Third Reich that populists and autocrats use today is distorting the meaning of words. Tricking us into lowering our guard, they pretend to stand for values that most of us hold dear. Some even go so far as to include the terms of freedom or democracy in their names… the Freedom Party of Austria, the Dutch Forum for Democracy, the Czech Freedom and Direct Democracy.

We have to look behind the slogans to





understand. The freedom becomes that of comparing strangers to parasites; democracy becomes the dictatorship of one opinion, that of the “true patriots”; defending Europe amounts to “re-establishing old paternalistic values” from a time when people “didn’t venerate human rights”.

Hatred is disguised as “freedom of speech”, anti-Semitism as “freedom of opinion”, authoritarianism as “illiberal democracy”. The unacceptable is masked to become acceptable. How many see in populist rhetoric the chance to pass off their frustrations as courage, their resentment as resistance against “political correctness”? How many adopt the same provocative and simplistic discourse to hide their ignorance in the face of the complexity of the world?

It is so reassuring to be part of a self-proclaimed chosen people, a white, Christian and heterosexual club with strict rights of admission – so tempting to wield control without possessing any other merit than that of one’s origins or skin colour. The Third Reich was a master in this: it flattered the narcissism of non-Jewish Germans by calling them the master race and at the same time worked to undermine their moral values. Evil became good and good became evil. “Empathy is a weakness” was a motto of the SS.

This reversal of the moral compass is all the easier when minds are confused, as at present. We are going through a period of multiple crises – pandemic, climatic, political, technological, economic – where it is difficult not to lose our perspective. Demagogues of all stripes are exploiting this fertile terrain to spread false information, to discredit the facts, to denigrate scientific reasoning and argumentation, to impose the irrational and the emotional, and to disseminate aberrant conspiracy theories. The purpose is to undermine our values and our knowledge. The lie was already at the heart of the totalitarian system. The aim of that strategy, wrote political scientist Hannah Arendt, is not for a society to believe these lies but to lose the ability to distinguish right from wrong and to judge or act. And a society which doesn’t share anymore truths and values disintegrates and can be easily manipulated.

The German philosopher Theodor W. Adorno analysed how the confusion between belief and knowledge can lead to a delusional representation of the world and translate into acts of madness. In Dialektik der Aufklärung (1944) he describes the various stages. We begin by refusing to confront our opinion – by definition subjective, and so with limited validity – with others, to verify their origin and justification. Opinion then becomes conviction, that is/means, a simple explanation of the world that requires no reflection. We then take refuge in the stubborn rejection of any argument, any reality, any evidence that might contradict this conviction, which is often nothing more than a mixture of rumours, conspiracy theories, emotions, and amalgamations. Then, Adorno goes on, from conviction one passes into

paranoia: our opinion becomes an integral part of our personality, and any contradiction is felt as a personal attack. One ends up projecting one's inner feelings onto the outside world and taking one's opinion as truth. Paranoia can lead to acts of madness, as delusional anti-Semitism led to the Holocaust.

Adorno's analysis is very topical at a time when beliefs and conspiracy theories threaten to replace the words of experts. How did we come to this? Triumphant individualism has exacerbated the idea that everyone is entitled to defend, without limits, their particular rights, desires, opinions, beliefs. If at first sight this may seem to serve democracy, in reality it threatens it because no collective project can emerge from the juxtaposition of a multitude of diverse demands, often divergent, even antagonistic, alongside the rejection of the principle of representation. This danger is amplified by social networks, which, far from encouraging Internet users to exchange their ideas and points of view and to build nuanced theories, actually radicalizes them and locks them in their own certainties, due to the logic of personalization algorithms. Little by little, users can end up regarding their opinions as universal truths.

However, there is no inevitability about this. The demagogues use the means of today, but the methods of yesterday, and so we can identify them. The socio-psychological mechanisms that make us so vulnerable have not changed since the French sociologist Gustave le Bon published "The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind" in 1895, a reference work for Benito Mussolini and Hitler's Propaganda minister Josef Goebbels. Therefore memory can be a powerful weapon against manipulators and can help us to know ourselves better and sharpen our awareness of our malleability.

But to reach that, countries must have the courage to face the shadows of the past and transmit the memory of their own fallibility to their citizens. Unfortunately, few in Europe have had this courage. Germany has been a pioneer in placing the role of Mitläufer at the heart of its task of coming to terms with the past. After twenty years of amnesia, in the 1960s a younger generation forced society to face its responsibilities for the crimes of the Third Reich. This reflection made it possible to transform collective guilt into democratic responsibility. It allowed something positive to grow from a negative legacy: the building of one of the world's soundest democracies.

This model could inspire certain societies which persevere in denying their past responsibilities as Mitläufer in criminal systems – Fascism, Stalinism, or colonialism –They have trouble understanding that to transform the weight of the past into wealth, one must not ignore its shadows but rather confront them. A repressed history always returns at a gallop, in the form of community and international tensions, racism, and populism.

Facing up to the shadows of history shouldn't be done in a culture of guilt. Nor should it be instrumentalised to stir up hatred or sectarianism. It is not a moral accessory to look good. Keeping memory alive can do much more than this if we learn to approach it intelligently. It can guide us to understand the world instead of suffering it, to avoid mistakes, to identify dangers – those that come from others but above all those that come from ourselves. The message is empowering: humans are not as helpless as they may think, and they often have the choice to use their power.

Memory can serve not only democracy but Europe as well. With a transnational approach we can learn changing perspective, placing ourselves in the shoes of yesterday's enemy, accepting the view of another country or community on our own history, posing questions and engaging in dialogue. Bringing together European histories at local, national and also family level can help us to shape a European memory that can guide us in these times of disorientation and give us the perspective and the experience necessary to face the challenges that await us.

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In her family research, Géraldine Schwarz got deeper into the Mitläufer figure through the life of her grandparents. Left: her grandfather Karl Schwarz in front of his oil business, 1950s. Right: her grandmother, Lydia Schwarz, at the end of the 1920s. | Personal archive

Can the Past change the Future?

A sociological reflection about what memory public policies actually do

Sarah Gensburger
Research Professor in Social Sciences,
French National Center for Scientific Research, author of *Beyond Memory. Can we really learn from the past ?*, Palgrave, 2020 (co-written with S. Lefranc)

Following the death of George Floyd at the hands of a white Minneapolis police officer on 25May 2020, and the widespread uprising against institutionalised racism it triggered, June 2020 was marked all over the world by demands for changes to the way the past is remembered in the public space. These demands include pulling down statues, modifying plaques in the street, and renaming buildings. On 19 June, the European Parliament adopted a resolution to call "for the EU institutions and the Member States to officially acknowledge past injustices and crimes against humanity committed against black people, people of colour and Roma; declare slavery a crime against humanity and call for 2 December to be designated the European Day commemorating the Abolition of the Slave Trade; encourage the Member States to make the history of black people, people of colour and Roma part of their school curricula." In this context, the transmission of the past, whether by the implementation of a commemoration or de-commemoration (in the form of dismantling statues) are presented as a way to fight against racial discrimination and to bring about social change. These recent events are a powerful example of the memorial paradigm that has been established over the last twenty years both at the European level and internationally. It also simultaneously sheds light on the fact that the exponential development of memory policies to fight against racism and anti-Semitism have very clearly fallen short of their goal. This article sets out to explore this observation and draw lessons from it. To what extent can memory be considered a democratic value and an efficient tool to build peaceful, inclusive, and tolerant European societies?

Exhibition "14-18, it is our history!" poster

Can memory transmit political values?

In 2014, in a large survey study entitled *Memory to come*, more than 31,000 young people aged between 16 and 29, citizens of 31 different countries, mostly from the European Union, were asked about their attitudes to memory and the future[1]. Ninety per cent of them declared that "knowing the history of the Second World War makes it possible to avoid the errors of the past, prevent it from happening again"; they also agreed with the statement that knowing this history allowed them to "learn to respect those who are different from us" and "help the victims". Among the respondents, 83% said they thought concentration camps sites should be preserved. The main reason given for this was the need to "avoid it happening again". Conversely, they rejected the proposition that "it is the past, we have to put it behind us and forget". Comments by ordinary European citizens are concordant with this, whether they are collected from visitors to memorial museums or during interviews on attitudes towards the past conducted outside any interaction with memory policy tools. In other words, most Europeans agree that public reminders of past collective violence are important in order to pacify societies, to lessen the attraction of

[1] *Fondation pour la mémoire de la Shoah and the Fondation pour l'innovation politique*; results and discussion (in French) *Mémoires à venir. Enquête internationale réalisée auprès des jeunes de 16 à 29 ans dans 31 pays*, 2014, http://www.fondapol.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/MEMOIREaVENIR-RESULTATS-A2-BD2.pdf

calls for discrimination, and in so doing, to guard against the risk of history repeating itself. Memory is, without any doubt, a contemporary European value.

As important as it may be, however, this fact does not tell us anything about the actual capacity of memory policies to transmit and promote values beyond that of memory.

We face a paradox here: memory became a value because of its supposed capacity to transmit democratic principles such as tolerance and inclusiveness, but we have to admit that this alleged capacity is seriously challenged today.

Indeed, after more than twenty years of active European memory policies, the advance of terrorism, populism, hate crimes and discrimination in contemporary European societies forces us to look more closely into how these memory policies work and how we can improve them. The very idea that memory policies transmit and foster democratic values must be put into perspective and assessed in the light of empirical data and social sciences studies.

One of the major events of Europe's shared history is with no doubt the First World War. Between 2014 and 2018, the Centenary of the Great War gave rise to a large number of commemorations, exhibitions and other memory initiatives. In the European Union, most of the exhibitions tried to present the event from a European perspective, insisting on the necessity of understanding the feelings and views of the former enemies who became partners in building the Union. Between 2014 and 2015, one of these exhibitions entitled "14-18, it is our history!" was held in Brussels. It aimed to tell the story of the war from an everyday life perspective and to reach visitors through their emotions. The curators based themselves on the idea that, when confronted with the impact of war on victims they can identify with, visitors will reject war and conflict today and in the future. Through the exhibition, its promoters wanted to reinforce citizens' commitment to peace and, in doing so, their adhesion to the European project. This exhibition was visited by almost 200,000 visitors.

A group of Belgian researchers specializing in social psychology and political science decided to study the impact this exhibition actually had on visitors. Visitors were asked to express their opinions on a number of issues as they entered and left the museum. In social psychology,

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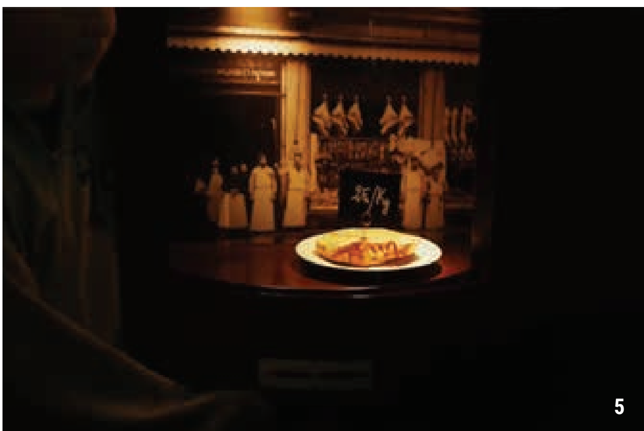

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2-6: Different parts of the exhibition “14-18, it is our history!”

these measures are traditionally used to quantify pacifist sentiments. The results were very clear. As they left the exhibition, the visitors' support for pacifism had waned and in nationalistic stereotypes had grown; most of them expressed a determination to fight the Germans. Instead of the intended focus on pacifism and European coexistence, the exhibition's depiction of raw emotions and the figures of victims provoked a defensive reaction and a form of desire for vengeance against the "Other", here mainly the Germans [2].

Even though empirical studies of social appropriations of memory policies like this one are still rare, the few that have been published raise important questions about how memory policies (both in Europe and beyond) might move forward[3]. It also suggests that the European Commission should order an in-depth and innovative sociological study on the social appropriations of remembrance policies and initiatives by ordinary citizens, ranging from rejection to support. If memory has become a European democratic value, it is nonetheless impossible to know for sure what kind of values and political positions it induces. For example, the existing (and again far too scarce) empirical research on historical analogies has shown that the very same memory policies can inspire opposing views of the present and incite different behaviours. The controversies on how to make sense of the current "migration crisis" in Europe in the light of the Holocaust may be the best example of this phenomenon. Studies have shown that it is easier to reinforce norms in groups that are already predisposed to them than to convince people who are genuinely intolerant or simply indifferent. In this way, rather than transmitting values, memory policies first of all actualize values which preexist in people's minds, no matter how diverse they are. Even though it may seem paradoxical, it is important to acknowledge that an effective memory policy may have to take the risk of creating misunderstandings, and that for this reason it should not be excessively didactic.

What is more, several studies conducted in European countries such as Sweden and France have highlighted the fact that an increase in historical knowledge about the Holocaust has not produced a change in attitudes among students who consider themselves close to the extreme right. First, many of these students already have an extensive knowledge of the period they glorify. Second, encountering lessons on the past at school does little to change their convictions; in fact, memory policies and commemorations tend to reinforce their extreme opinions [4].

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2 Bouchat, P., Klein, O. & Rosoux, V. (2017). L'impact paradoxal des commémorations de la Grande Guerre. *Matériaux pour l'histoire de notre temps*, 121-122, 26-31.

3 For more examples, see Sarah Gensburger and Sandrine Lefranc, *Beyond Memory. Can we really learn from the past ?*, Palgrave, Memory Studies Series, 2020.

4 Eckmann, M. & Eser Davolio, M. (2002). *Pédagogie de l'antiracisme: Aspects théoriques et supports pratiques*. Geneva: Loisirs et Pédagogie.

Social interactions and the impact of memory

Another unavoidable and overarching observation is that before they can produce lessons of the past for the future, memory policies provoke interactions in the present. Memory is appropriated through social interactions – rejection or support, recognition or interpretation. Although they are indeed faced with the past, both the promoters and targets of memory policies must first experience things (school textbooks, exhibitions, memorials) or exchanges (between students and teachers, between state or Union representative and citizens, between NGOs and people, and so forth) that are meaningful in the moment, in the context and their social situation. Memory policies do not resolve conflicts from the past, and nor do they foretell the future behavior of their audience. Their memorial message is by nature distorted, because it is always embedded in the social relations, including the economic inequalities, symbolic dominations and power relations of any kind that give it meaning today.

There is, for example, a gap between teaching recommendations and practices. Although the "civic dimension" is emphasized by teachers, as was clearly demonstrated in the Swiss case, and although in France many do use the pedagogical tools proposed by the Ministry for Education during classes dedicated to the violent past, the factual content of the curriculum often remains the core of the class. Teachers do not always follow the imperatives of this ritual of civic conversion through memory, and certainly do not do so systematically. Aside from a theoretical acceptance of the importance of the past in building today's society, they do not adopt the civic function ascribed to them as automatically as we might think. For example, and although we do not have a comprehensive study on this, there is reason to believe that the international day for the memory of the Holocaust and the prevention of crimes against humanity, 27 January, is often ignored by teachers [5]. This gap between expectations and practice is not due to the teachers' lack of support for values of humanism and tolerance, but primarily to the social space of the classroom.

The classroom is indeed a space for interactions between a professional, the teacher, and students who also live in other spaces of socialization. In France, training for history teachers is primarily focused on their knowledge of their subject, rather than on pedagogy or didactics. Once, after receiving a kind of professional socialization, they reach the classroom, most teachers transmit facts, in keeping with the official curriculum rather than the commemorative calendar. In doing

5 DE COCK Laurence et HEIMBERG, Charles (2014), «La Journée de la mémoire et ses pratiques scolaires. Une évocation critique», *Revue pluridisciplinaire de la Fondation pour la mémoire de la déportation*, décembre, p. 119-126.

so they confirm that the school remains a space for knowledge. Through their professionalism, teachers effectively disappear behind their authoritative discourse, which is primarily directed at the examinations set for their pupils. Moreover, they persuade the students (and indeed the parents) that a consensual reading of history is possible [6]. Turning away from this professional habitus to construct an articulation between history and memory depends on having the time and the ability to adopt a certain pedagogical distance – something that seems unlikely given the organization and means available, at least within the French national education system.

Citizenship education is therefore not simply the transmission of a lesson in memory that consolidates the civic dispositions of students who are attentive because their knowledgeable and impassioned teacher makes good use of emotions and identification. This more or less factual or moral content is indeed transmitted, but along with a host of other messages, some of which are reactive, intentional, and significant (political rejection, emotional support, etc.), and others which have no connection to the content, nor intention, nor even a clear meaning. The school system transmits a range of things that are not always consistent or intentional; the hidden curriculum, rules of behaviour, educational style, participation practices, the valorization of knowledge, the organization of ideas. It is also the space for the transmission of non-pedagogical learning, insults, love letters, and social skills shared in the playground. Memory transmission at schools takes on its full meaning in these moments where "noise", rules, and "meaningless talk" abound. These chaotic encounters can give them great strength, for example when a student who wants to fulfil the expectations of the teacher (which overlap with those of his or her family environment) identifies with an eye-witness account of history, and finds fulfilment in this role that brings together academic, civic, and moral validation. But the proliferation of background noise can also mean that the message – in spite of its clear strength – will not be heard, or will provoke hostility.

So, the importance of this socially embedded dimension of the impact and appropriations of memory policies calls for a shift in the centre of attention. It may not be effective to focus only on the contents, topics and artefacts of memory policies, as has mainly been the case until now. It is necessary to pay at least equal attention to the social situations in which transmission is meant to take place and to the identity and legitimacy of the agents of this transmission. In European societies where schools no longer give the impression of being able to promote social justice and fight economic inequalities, teachers may not be the best actors for ensuring an active and efficient transmission of memory and democratic values. I will take a last example to highlight how taking the social embeddedness of memory policies seriously may be the main challenge for European memory policies today. For a long time now, Europe has organized holiday camps or programmes that bring together adolescents from countries whose memories are conflicting, starting with France and Germany, to help them overcome hostile memories. It would be nice to believe that, in the end, whole societies could be won over to peace and tolerance by the magic of contact between presumed enemies. But, alas, the situation is more complicated.

These young people are not official representatives of their national or community groups; they are also members of social groups, possibly the recipients of their parents' political allegiances, and above all individuals, who take either the side of conflict or friendship in their interactions with others. What is created within the safe space of the camps and programmes is not easily transposed into a society that is deeply divided and belligerent. Friendships constructed in conditions of relative equality are threatened by the everyday experiences of inequality and differences. Sociologists have shown that the criteria for equality are not always satisfied; the equality found in a

6 TUTIAUX-GUILLON Nicole (2008) « Histoire et mémoire, questions à l'histoire scolaire ordinaire », dans S. Ernst, *Quand les mémoires déstabilisent l'école. Mémoire de la Shoah et enseignement*, Paris, Institut national de recherche pédagogique.

combined curriculum or the opulence of a holiday camp cannot be guaranteed when they return to their "real life"[7]. Worse still, the contact itself between different social groups could end up reinforcing logics of social distinction and detachment [8], which may occur if the teacher or another authority figure imposes a meeting between individuals belonging to unequal groups, without ensuring that these inequalities do not determine perceptions and are not expressed with contempt (a task that is by no means easy). The transmission of the violent past, in which victims and perpetrators both feature, can reinforce the assigned community identities that it is supposed to overcome.

* * *

Taking stock of memory policies today, in Europe and beyond, requires us to take seriously the complexity of the social appropriations of the past. Moreover it is important to avoid the danger of disconnecting the status of memory as a European value from its usefulness as a tool for promoting tolerance, inclusiveness, equality, emancipation. I would like to end with a final story; A few years ago, I conducted an in-depth fieldwork among visitors of an exhibition on the history of Jewish children in Paris during the Occupation. All the visitors clearly linked this memory exhibition with the promotion of values such as tolerance and fight against racism, Anti-Semitism and discrimination. But at the end of the interviews I conducted with them, certain visitors expressed, of their own initiative, ethnic stereotypes that were themselves vectors of discrimination – even after stating at the beginning of the interview that their visit to the museum was to respect the duty of memory and fight against hatred and intolerance. One women interviewed as she came out of the exhibition talked at length about the fact that there were relatively few "visitors of colour" and "from immigrant backgrounds'' among the exhibition-goers, a sign for her that these groups do not fully adhere to the Republic and its principles, and that they are "not really French": "we do not have the same history [...] or the same values" [9]. This brings us a full circle.

In this example, being confronted with memory policies was no longer seen as a vector of democratic values, but as a sign that those values are shared or not. It closes the group that it is supposed to open. Memory policies indeed have their "experts" and those who are ignorant but we must be careful that this distinction does not reinforce the dynamics of exclusion that these policies are supposed to combat.

7 Hammack, P. L. (2009). The cultural psychology of American-based coexistence programs for Israeli and Palestinian youth. In C. McGlynn, M. Zembylas, Z. Bekerman & T. Gallagher (Eds.), *Peace Education in Conflict and Post-Conflict Societies: Comparative Perspectives.* New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
8 Oberti, M. & Preteceille, E. (2016). *La ségrégation urbaine.* Paris: La Découverte.
9 Sarah Gensburger, « Visiting History, Witnessing Memory. A study of a Holocaust Exhibition in Paris in 2012 », *Memory Studies*, 2019, 12 (6), 630-645.

Commemorative processes in Spain should become an inescapable part of a common European memory

Interview with
Fernando Martínez López
Historian, Spain's State Secretary for Democratic Memory

Fernando Martínez López is a professor of Modern History in the University of Almería. He dedicated an important part of his research to study the political trials during Francoism and coordinated the mass graves map project in Andalusia. He became general Director for Democratic Memory of the Spanish government in 2019 and Secretary of State in 2020. Last year he dealt with the exhumation of the dictator Francisco Franco from the Valle de los Caídos. He is in charge of developing memory policies in Spain and faces new challenges, such as the debate about a new democratic memory law. We talked to him about the present and the future of memory policies in Spain and Europe.

The historian and Spain's State Secretary for Democratic Memory, Fernando Martínez I Secretariat of State.

1. This is the first time Spain has had a Secretariat of State for Democratic Memory. What are the challenges that lie ahead? What resources and tools will it have?

Indeed, the creation first of a Directorate-General for Historical Memory and then of a Secretariat of State for Democratic Memory, which falls under the Ministry of the Presidency, Relations with the Cortes and Democratic Memory, represents a clear commitment from Pedro Sánchez's government to protect, disseminate and raise awareness of the processes to build a democratic memory of Spain's recent past and to recognize those who suffered persecution and violence as a consequence of the Civil War and Franco's dictatorship.

The main challenge lies in decisively strengthening our country's democratic memory policies, in line with transnational human rights narratives and practices. In this context, it is first essential to ensure that commemorative processes in Spain become an inescapable part of a common European memory. On a broader level, we must also develop close interfaces with similar processes in Latin America, which can also teach us a great deal. Similarly, at state level, it is vital that national policies be harmonized and coordinated with those being developed by the autonomous communities.

Obviously, each remembrance process has its own unique characteristics, and it is essential not to confuse or mix concepts; however, the globalization of memory can be used as a tool for truth, justice and reparation to establish parallels and affinities and thus enrich our analysis of each process.

With respect to resources, we are currently awaiting budget approval, but the incorporation of this Secretariat of State into the Deputy Prime Minister's Office will make a difference to the budget allocation.

The draft bill of the Democratic Memory Act, which was approved by the government on 15 September, is intended to serve as a key tool and a guide for fostering democratic memory policy and

addressing outstanding issues, thereby remedying the unmet objectives of the 2007 Historical Memory Law, all while taking account of the recommendations of international organizations and the demands of the remembrance movement. Thus, the state's responsibilities will include exhumations and resignification of the Valley of the Fallen, now that Franco has been removed from his mausoleum.

2. Compared to the rest of Europe, Spain has a shortage of remembrance museums, interpretation centres and resignified sites that address the country's traumatic past. Why do you think this is? Do you envisage an active policy to create new spaces for the transmission of memory?

Without a doubt. We plan to start remedying the situation this parliamentary term, but we are aware that it's long overdue. We know about many initiatives undertaken by the autonomous communities, town councils and also, to a great extent, social and cultural associations to resignify and construct spaces. Under Zapatero, some memorials were financed through government subsidies, but few received direct funding. From now on, the central government will pursue a more proactive policy to create remembrance spaces on a different scale, including local initiatives that are entrenched in the territory and in specific events or experiences. In this regard, it is significant that the general chapter on the Duty of Memory within the draft bill contains, by way of a guarantee of non-recurrence, a specific section on democratic memory sites that will play a commemorative and educational role, and institutional mechanisms will be developed to integrate these into the international networks that respond to similar historical memory construction processes linked to conflicts and human rights violations, especially at European and Latin American level. In particular, the policy aims to safeguard and raise awareness of the extermination or forced labour camps in which thousands of exiles or dissidents were confined, in coordination with the countries where these are located.

3. Some historians have cited research problems as a result of difficulties gaining access to certain documents (due to the Official Secrets Act, the Data Protection Law or simply understaffed archives). What relationship does the Secretariat have with National Heritage or the State Archives? What role does the Historical Memory Documentary Centre in Salamanca play in this respect?

Within the chapter dedicated to victims' right to the truth, the draft bill contains a section on archives and documentation, the true written memory of the state, which regulates access to public and private records and archives and specifically mentions the Historical Memory Documentary Centre in Salamanca, in light of the criteria of archival policies in defence of human rights drawn up by UNESCO and the International Council on Archives. In this respect, there are even plans to modify the Official Secrets Act within a year of the entry into force of the Democratic Memory Act. This would guarantee the right of access to the public information contained in all files belonging to the central government in relation to the Civil War and Franco's dictatorship. At the same time, it is important to acknowledge that major progress has been made over the last two years through the ministerial resolutions of 20 September 2018, 30 January 2019 and 22 July 2020, which applied to the historical archives maintained by the Ministry of Defence and allowed the public to access many records relating to the Civil War and the dictatorship, including those marked private or confidential, provided that the corresponding documents date from before 26 April 1968, when the Official Secrets Act came into force, and that there is no real threat to defence or national security.

4. One of the articles published in this journal addresses the impact of social networks, specifically Twitter, on the exhumation of Francisco Franco. It was a historical event that had the country's media on high alert. What were the main challenges faced by the Spanish

Experts visitng the Valle de los Caídos during the study trip organized by Memory Lab in Spain, 2017 | EUROM

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External view of the Pazo de Meirás, Franco's summer retreat in Galicia | Ird ge, CC BY-SA 3.0 ES, via Wikimedia Commons

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government in relation to the exhumation? Is there any evidence that Mingorrubio Cemetery, where Franco is now buried, has also been turned into a neo-fascist pilgrimage site?

Franco's exhumation was a triumph for democracy that closed a dark chapter in Spain's history and brought justice for the victims of the Civil War and Franco's dictatorship. It's true that it took place after a great deal of discussion on social networks and in the media. The dictator's supporters exhausted all possible legal channels, so it fell to the Supreme Court to authorize the decision of Pedro Sánchez's socialist government and order that the exhumation go ahead in accordance with a mandate from the Congress of Deputies.

Therefore, the main problems have been widely publicized. The Benedictine community of the Valley of the Fallen, Franco's family, the Francisco Franco National Foundation, the Association for the Defence of the Valley of the Fallen and other far-right groups all radically opposed the move and attempted to block it. This was the main reason for the delay. However, there was a positive side to the problems. They provided a clear picture of the ultra-wing sentiment that can arise when people feel that part of their heritage is under threat, in this case the body of the dictator. An interesting portrait of Spanish society, including politicians, the media and certain institutions, emerged. The facts speak for themselves: the abbot of the Benedictine priory at the Valley of the Fallen declared that he was oblivious to the country's laws and was willing to defy the order, the dictator's family used the media to defend his legacy and demand honourable treatment, and those nostalgic for Francoism went to the Valley of the Fallen to show their support for this resistance. The politically charged image of the Franco family, accompanied by the abbot, carrying Franco's coffin on their shoulders onto the plaza of the Valley of the Fallen in utter solitude also speaks volumes. This image is in stark contrast to those of his burial and shows that, although sociological Francoism is tenacious, support has fallen drastically.

There's no data to indicate that the new location of Franco's grave in Mingorrubio is becoming a neo-fascist pilgrimage site. Should that happen, we'll take whatever legal measures we deem appropriate. In any case, the draft bill stipulates that part of the remit of public administrations is to prevent acts carried out in public that discredit, disparage or humiliate the victims or their families, that glorify the military coup or dictatorship or that pay homage or grant distinctions to any individuals or corporations that supported the military coup and the dictatorship.

5. One of the big questions relates to the future of the Valley of the Fallen, the great mausoleum where the dictator was buried. What does the government plan to do with the site and how does it intend to address the underlying conflicts (the more than 33,000 people buried there, the Benedictine community that guards the site, resignification of the space, etc.)?

The resignification of the Valley of the Fallen in terms of democratic memory is a priority. We will endeavour to ensure that state policy in this matter is in keeping with the most advanced initiatives in Europe and the rest of the world. We are aware of the complex nature of the task, but we're not starting from scratch; far from it in fact. Resignification is a long process that started some time ago. A crucial moment came when the process crossed paths with the movement for the recovery of historical memory, especially when attempts were made to exhume the first mass graves in around 2003. These were found empty, and all that was left of the graves were scattered remains. This was the case with an exhumation in Aldeaseca (Ávila) led by Fausto Canales who, in his fight to recover the remains of his father and uncle and through his important public and media presence, has helped shed light on the relocation of the remains of Republicans to crypts in the Valley of the Fallen without the knowledge or permission of their relatives, information that was not in the public domain. This has turned him into one of the key

figures in the process to resignify the Valley of the Fallen, together with other individuals and groups who have spent years fighting for the recovery of their relatives' remains. The fact that there are Republicans in the crypts and that their relatives are demanding that their remains be recovered has put the monument on the radar of the remembrance movement. However, the 2007 Historical Memory Law already included a specific article on the Valley of the Fallen and an additional provision that gave rise to the 2011 Expert Commission, which issued many recommendations and proposed, albeit not unanimously, the exhumation of Franco and advised, this time unanimously, that José Antonio Primo de Rivera's remains be relocated to a side crypt, thus dismantling the Francoist funeral hierarchy of the monument. When Rajoy was no longer in power and the aforementioned difficulties had finally been overcome, the green light was finally given to exhume Franco. Throughout this process, the Valley of the Fallen has been the subject of public debate and has taken on new layers of meaning that have nothing to do with the arguments of the Benedictine monks and their allies. The new law intends to go one step further: the site will be turned into a civil cemetery to recognize the people buried there and will form the basis for the development of a comprehensive, well-grounded education on the monument, like a kind of set-in-stone lesson on Francoism, as expressed in its most infamous architecture. This resignification will entail critical and open explanations, interpretations and revelations to override the hegemonic reading of the monument that still prevails.

6. The government is working on the development of a new democratic memory act. Can you tell us about the main characteristics of this new act? Is there anything that might stop it from being passed by the Congress of Deputies?

Pedro Sánchez's government has exercised its constitutionally recognized legislative powers to prepare a draft bill for the Democratic Memory Act, whose text was approved by the Council of Ministers on 15 September. The draft bill seeks to recover, protect, disseminate and promote an understanding of democratic memory with a view to fostering cohesion and solidarity between different generations of Spaniards with respect to constitutional principles, values and freedoms. This will ensure that Spanish citizens can effectively exercise their individual and collective right to access information about the events that occurred in relation to the vindication and defence of democratic values and fundamental rights and freedoms in the course of Spain's contemporary history. Likewise, it reiterates recognition of those who suffered persecution or violence on political, ideological or religious grounds during the Spanish Civil War and the dictatorship, and contemplates complementary measures to remove factors that divide citizens and to promote bonds based on constitutional values, principles and rights.

Key proposals include placing the victims of the Civil War and Franco's dictatorship at the centre of public action; creating a census of victims; recognizing Spanish women's active and unique contribution to the struggle for democracy; creating instruments for collaboration and cooperation between regional governments and the participation of citizens and associations to coordinate democratic memory policy; creating a national DNA bank and a Prosecutor's Office to investigate the events that occurred; promoting the right of access to documentary archives; creating provisions for the reparation of victims; incorporating democratic memory into the Spanish education system; declaring democratic memorial sites, with a particular focus on the resignification of the Valley of the Fallen; adopting measures to prevent glorification of the Civil War and Franco's dictatorship by removing symbols and elements opposed to democratic memory, as well as distinctions, titles and decorations awarded to the protagonists or promoters of the uprising, the Civil War or the dictatorship; and establishing a penalty system to ensure compliance with the law.

7. Victims of the Franco regime and many of their

relatives had to turn to another country, Argentina, to seek justice and reparation. The United Nations has pointed out the stumbling block posed by the Amnesty Law passed in October 1977 during the transition to democracy in the investigation of the crimes of the Franco regime. Do you think this law should be repealed or some kind of commission created to investigate the crimes of the dictatorship, as Spanish remembrance associations are demanding?

The law does not provide for the repeal of the 1977 Amnesty Law. We can still remember a time during the late-Franco period when we'd go out into the streets and shout, "Freedom, amnesty and statute of autonomy!" Renowned Spanish legal experts argue that the 1977 Amnesty Law "is more cited than read" and understand that it is intended for political crimes rather than genocidal acts and crimes against humanity. It is important to keep in mind that Spain had ratified the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights just months before the Amnesty Law came into force. It should be noted that the draft bill for the Democratic Memory Act expressly stipulates that, in accordance with Article 10.2 of the Spanish Constitution, the public authorities shall interpret that law in accordance with international human rights treaties ratified by Spain, without prejudice to its direct application where appropriate. It also stipulates that the state will guarantee the right to investigate the human rights and international humanitarian law violations that occurred during the Civil War and the dictatorship, as well as during the period between the dictator's death and the approval of the Spanish Constitution, and will create, to that end, a Democratic Memory and Human Rights Prosecutor's Office, whose role will be to promote the search for victims of the events under investigation with a view to properly identifying and locating them. I think it is important to highlight the fact that the new public prosecutor has decided to expressly revoke the order issued in 2016, which hindered the investigations carried out by Judge María Servini in Argentina.

8. At the time of writing, a trial is under way relating to Pazo de Meirás, one of the dictator's summer residences. The Franco family wants to sell it, despite questions over ownership. Meanwhile, the Francisco Franco National Foundation continues to retain documentation and make apologies for the dictator. How can we fight against these anti-democratic actions?

The Solicitor General of the State quite rightly defended the public nature of Pazo de Meirás in court and demanded that it be returned to the state. The judge ruled that the Franco family must give up the property. With respect to the other questions, the answer is clear and outlined in the draft bill: Franco apologism and the direct or indirect incitement to hatred or violence against the victims of the Civil War or Francoism, based on their status as victims, run counter to the public's interest. And, as you know, the law states that failure by a foundation to pursue aims of general interest constitute grounds for dissolution.

9. What is your opinion of the memory policies and programmes promoted by EU institutions? What are their main challenges?

One of our priorities is to link Spanish memory policies much more closely to those of Europe. Above all, we must explicitly state that to commemorate Spain and its regions is, without question, to commemorate Europe. For example, part of the resignification of the Valley of the Fallen involves recognizing it as a European monument that can be compared and contrasted with architecture designed during other European fascist movements, such as those that took place in Italy and Germany. Obviously, every architectural structure used as political propaganda is idiosyncratic and must be interpreted "inwardly". However, they are still paradigmatic expressions of the social, political and ideological movements that emerged throughout Europe in the first half of the 20th century and can therefore also be interpreted in a transnational context.

That said, the challenge lies in knowing the

extent to which genuinely European memory policies can be implemented or whether, as is so often the case, they are an unequal and sometimes contradictory sum of a set of national policies.

10. In September 2019, coinciding with the 80th anniversary of the start of the Second World War, the European Parliament passed a resolution that equated Nazism with communism (2019/2819 RSP), which caused quite a stir among both European and Spanish commemorative entities. What do you think of this persistent view, which is usually promoted by conservative political parties and Eastern European entities and institutions?

In my opinion it's a fallacy. It's an argument used mostly by Eastern European countries to whitewash the collusion of elites and much of the population with totalitarian regimes on both sides, while allowing them to portray themselves as the victims. It is important for researchers (and, don't forget, I'm a historian) not to confuse certain social, political and ideological processes with others. The political practice of categorizing Nazism and communism under the common umbrella of "totalitarianism" obscures and hinders one's understanding of the nature of the appalling events of 20th-century Europe, whether they be death camps, genocides or gulags. Obviously, it has political potential as a populist simplification, but we cannot be guided by those parameters.

11. What weight do state administrations – in this case, the Spanish government – carry with the institutions responsible for the politics of remembrance in the European Union, and what is the relationship between them like?

It is clear that it must be strengthened from an institutional standpoint, especially given the Europeanist perspective of our approach to promoting democratic memory. We have EUROM and other specialist organizations to achieve this. Having said that, we also consider it important to develop stable cooperative relationships with remembrance institutions in Latin American countries. These relationships are already being built in the case of Argentina and Chile, with the Museum of Memory and Human Rights in Santiago, for example.

12. One of the democratic threats currently facing Spain and the European Union is the growing influence of the extreme right. What role should public memory policies play and what specific measures do you think should be taken to combat this threat in Europe and Spain?

Public memory policies must help act as a dam against the rise of the extreme right in Europe. Well-informed, critical citizens who are aware of the tragedies of the past, who are open to differences and reject essentialism, cannot accept these neo-fascist messages. But we mustn't be naive. Decades of democratic memory policies in Europe, the transnational hegemony of cosmopolitan memories linked to the Holocaust and mass violence, and the ethical triumph of the "never again" paradigm – perhaps more fragile than we ever realized – have not yet succeeded in stemming this tide. Because of new information flows on social media, the enormous ease with which information overload occurs and the spread of fake news, often promoted by governments themselves, we now find ourselves in new and extraordinarily complex circumstances. We have no choice but to adapt. Although there are no single solutions or actions and this undeniable surge is forcing us to critically rethink the preventive measures developed in recent decades, we cannot afford to do away with strengthening education on human rights and democratic memory; quite the opposite, in fact. Perhaps the first task is to thoroughly rethink the tools used to design education programmes, the formats used to express them, the languages used to convey them and the target audiences, since the most classical formulas are clearly not working anymore.

OVERVIEW

The use and abuse of memories of the working class in 21st century Britain

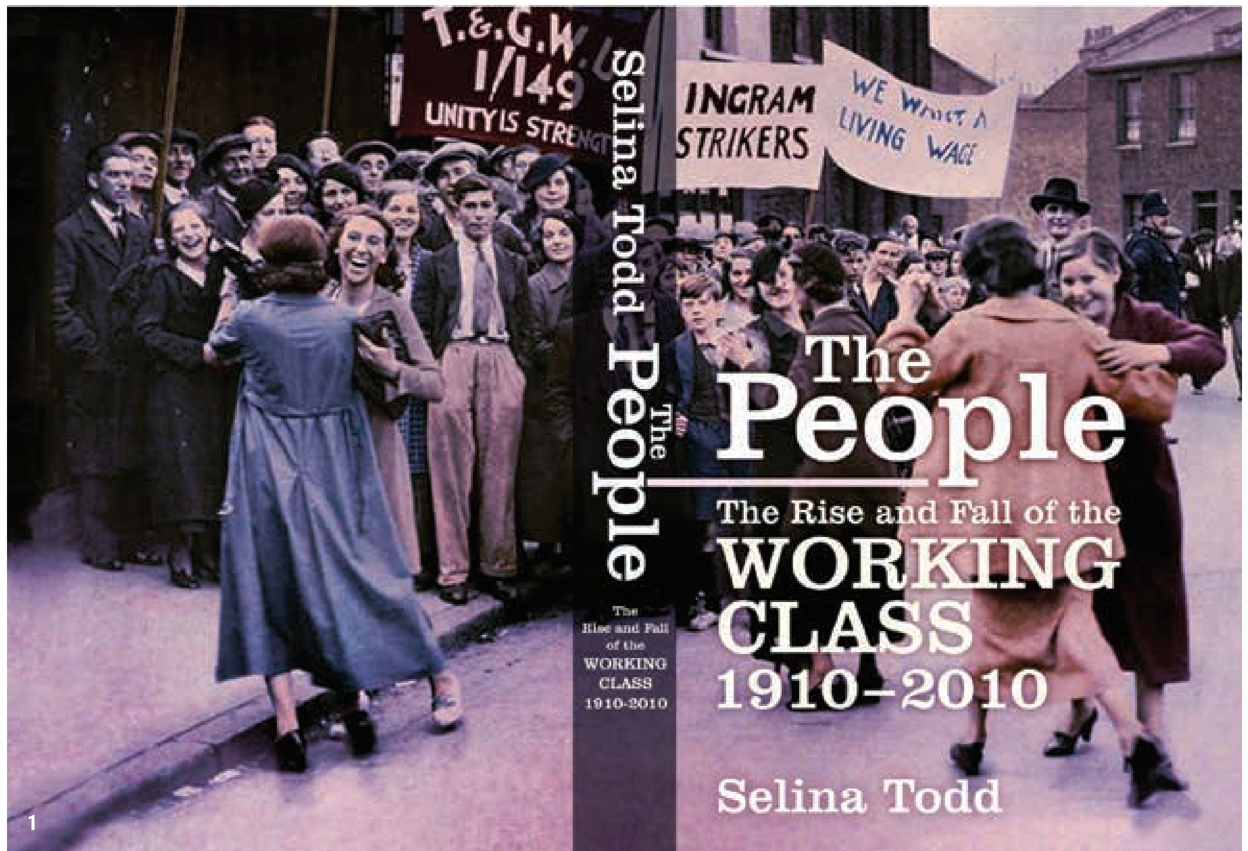
by **Selina Todd**
Professor of Modern History.
University of Oxford.

The public history of the working class, as told by most British politicians and the media, is one of decline and disappearance. In a prizewinning essay published in 2009, the writer and journalist Andrew O'Hagan lamented the loss of a 'sense of pride and worth that was said to be in boom in the years of austerity' following the Second World War, and its replacement by the 1990s with a 'working class [who] were no longer a working class.... people who craved not values but designer labels and satellite dishes' and formed 'the most conservative force in Britain'. O'Hagan is not alone in believing that affluence and technology had corrupted 'my own people'. 'Once they were celebrated as heroes in plays, books, and films', declared the writer Andrew Anthony in the Observer newspaper shortly after the financial crash of 2008. 'Now they are derided as reactionary and bigoted losers.'

Since 2010, the public memory of the working class has become more conflicted. The notion that 'they' are reactionary bigots has been strengthened by the result of the Brexit referendum of 2016. Most journalists overlook that many affluent residents of southern, rural England, voted to leave the European Union. They focus their ire on the deindustrialised areas of northern England – constituencies which also helped give Boris Johnson's Conservative Party a landslide win in the 2019 General Election.

But this public memory of the working class was challenged in 2015, when Jeremy Corbyn, a left-wing veteran MP, was elected leader of the Labour Party. Labour rapidly became Europe's largest social democratic party, and many of Corbyn's supporters lived in Britain's former industrial heartlands. They were among those voters who defied media predictions to give Labour a huge increase in parliamentary seats in the General Election of 2017.

Corbyn's victory did not spring from nowhere. In 2016, more than 60 percent of British people described themselves as working class. This had been the case throughout



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the early 21st century, and media commentators struggled to explain it. As a historian of working-class life, I had long suspected that the public memory of the working class was at odds with the popular memory of working-class people. In 2008 I set out to investigate this, and in 2014 published my book The People: the rise and fall of the working class. The 'fall' of the subtitle does not imply that the working class has disappeared – rather, that mainstream politics and the media conveniently forgot about them.

The public memory of the working class is devoid of politics and divorced from work. I realised that this derived from social surveys of Britain conducted in the 1950s and 1960s, when affluence encouraged the theory that everyone was becoming middle class. Among the most illuminating studies were Richard Hoggart's semi-autobiographical The Uses of Literacy and Michael Young and Peter Wilmott's Family and Kinship in East London, both published in 1957. These books became bestsellers. They highlighted that working class people's lives were worthy of serious consideration. But they were not comprehensive: they focused on neighbourhoods, not workplaces, and on family life rather than trade unionism. They fed some powerful myths: that 'traditional' working-class men worked in heavy industry while women were full-time housewives; that working-class people lived in the same place for generations; that 'their' interests lay in domestic stability, not in political change.

Post-Thatcher, we are in an era of deindustrialisation, attacks on trade unionism, legal restrictions on popular protest and growing inequality. In this context, these myths feed an argument that the working class no longer exists. After all, we're now in a world where women go out to work, heavy industry has declined, and migration is a fact of life. Alternatively, these myths bolster politicians' claims that working-class voters can only be won over by promises to curb migration and restore socially conservative values. Most

Selina Todd

dangerously, this public memory suggests that being working-class is a lifestyle that has now been lost through the greed and selfishness of working-class people themselves. In fact, as the American writer Walter Benn Michaels has pointed out, class is a product of economic and political inequality. Celebrating or mourning an 'authentic', depoliticised working class simply leaves us with a status quo that condemns a majority of people to worse health and shorter lifespans than those at the top of the pile.

The popular memory of the working-class has long been more political, and less parochial, than the public memory. In the 1970s and 1980s, Britain had a flourishing community publishing scene, and state schools also encouraged children to undertake project work in their neighbourhoods. These initiatives produced hundreds of working-class autobiographies and oral histories which show how memories of strikes and resistance shaped the lives not just of protestors, but of their children. These provide excellent resources for the study of popular memory. Some state schools trained children in undertaking oral history interviews – I was fortunate to be among them, and it's a skill I have used in my career as a historian.

Autobiographies and oral histories remind us that until 1939, the largest single group of working people in Britain were servants, not miners or steelworkers. The typical servant was a teenage girl, often a migrant. 21st century migrant care workers and call centre staff have more connections to the past than we might assume – and those links might help us explain why unionisation has risen among part-time, women workers since 2000.

These memories can change our understanding of working-class history. They also reveal the importance of memory itself, as a tool with which to question oppression. In 1926, a General Strike occurred in Britain: millions of workers downed tools. But the Strike was a failure for the labour movement. The trade union leadership capitulated after just nine days and Britain's miners – who had instigated the dispute – were locked out of work for months. But the autobiographies of former servants shows that the memory of the strike, the possibilities it suggested, and a desire to carry on their fathers' struggle, led many young women to question their own subordinate position. As factory work increased in the late 1930s, servants who were the daughters of miners and steelworkers led an exodus from domestic service, and began to unionise in the factories. In 1945, they were among those voters who gave Labour a landslide election victory, swept to power by promises to establish a welfare state and full employment.

After 1945, the welfare state depended heavily on migrant workers, especially women, as nurses, teachers, cleaners and care workers. As the Black British journalist Gary Younge wrote earlier this year, we badly need to reclaim this memory as part of working-class history. Many aspects of modern history that evoke pride in Britain (especially the establishment of the National Health Service in 1948) relied on women and migrants.

Of course such memories can become romanticised. Younge reminds us not to forget the racism his family faced and the sexism that prevented so many women of his mother's generation from fulfilling their potential. In the 1970s, working-class women (Black as well as white) organised as trade unionists and parents to create a new women's movement, provoked by anger at the sexism they encountered from male trade unionists and activists, as well as from the state. Researchers need to learn to ask the right questions to tap into these memories. If we miss them, we may imply

that feminism, or anti-racism, were and are only of interest to a university-educated middle class.

The popular resonance of such memories has been made more evident in recent years. Corbyn's victory galvanised new public history projects. Each September, the village of Burston in Suffolk commemorates the longest strike in British history. In 1914, Burston's schoolchildren and their families struck in solidarity with their schoolteachers, who were sacked for helping local agricultural workers to unionise. Striking children, teachers and farm workers don't feature in the 'public' memory of the working class promoted by most politicians and the media. 'Between the 1980s, when the commemoration of the Burston School Strike began, and 2015, we'd have maybe fifty to 200 people coming to the event each year', says the commemoration's organiser, Miles Hubbard. But 'since Jeremy Corbyn became Labour leader, we've had several hundred; we could have thousands if we could accommodate them.' Trade unionists from across the country join environmentalists, local teenagers, Labour Party activists, history enthusiasts and curious locals to mark the event.

Corbyn has now resigned as leader of the Labour Party. Covid-19 means that large gatherings like that at Burston are no longer possible (the commemoration is suspended in 2020). But Burston reminds us that the traces of a radical working-class past survive at the grassroots. They are sustained by popular memory, passed down through family stories, or kindled into events by campaigners like Miles Hubbard. How to engage those memories and create from them a public history that can offer renewed hope and commitment for the 21st century – a century that will require internationalism, solidarity and imagination - is an urgent challenge. But if working-class history tells us anything it is that change is always possible, and often comes at the most unexpected times, from surprising quarters.

Banner: "We Are All Immigrants", created by supporters of Manchester's fan-owned FC United of Manchester, in 2019 | Selina Todd

OVERVIEW

Cultural Memory of Yugoslav Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War[1]

Vjeran Pavlaković
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In June 2019, I was in the state archives of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Sarajevo, digging through a totally disorganized box of photographs, when I found the image that had been eluding me for years. It was in the collection of Čedo Kapor, a Spanish Civil War veteran from Trebinje who later rose to prominence in the Partisan movement during the Second World War and held numerous political positions in Tito's Yugoslavia. The photos were piled up inside a box, with pictures from the Gurs internment camp in southern France mixed in with photographs of Partisans marching through the harsh Herzegovinian landscape and ribbon-cutting events with communist party dignitaries in the 1970s. A number of images in the collection included the unveiling of various monuments, but one caught my eye. The monument featured a shirtless Partisan defiantly striding forward with a raised fist, an archetypal figurative depiction of the Yugoslav resistance movement that can be found on monuments throughout the former Yugoslavia. But what was different was the inscription on the base, written in Spanish: No pasarán. Behind the dignitaries and soldiers in the photograph I noticed a striking building, currently the Academy of Applied Arts at the University of Rijeka campus, but once the command centre of the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) barracks located on Trsat hill in Rijeka, Croatia. Until 1991, the barracks were named after the nearly 2,000 volunteers from Yugoslavia who had fought to defend the Republic in the Spanish Civil War.[2] During the Croatian War of Independence, the Croatian Army and military police had occupied the barracks, which were then handed over to the city of Rijeka and finally transformed into the university campus that opened in 2011. Since then I have heard rumours that a monument to the Spanish Civil War had

1 This research was supported in part by the University of Rijeka under the project "Riječki krajobrazi sjećanja" (uniri-human-18-273).
2 *Kasarna španskih dobrovoljaca* (Barracks of the Spanish Volunteers).

Unveiling the monument to Yugoslav volunteers in the Spanish Civil War in the Rijeka barracks in 1977 | Archive of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Čedo Kapor collection.

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once been located on the site of the former barracks, but the building of the campus had completely changed the landscape and all my efforts to track down information on the possible existence of a monument were fruitless. For some years I had been discussing putting together an exhibition on Yugoslav monuments to the Spanish Civil War with Oriol López Badell, from the European Observatory on Memories, and the inability to find reliable information on the Rijeka monument had frustrated me even as the preparations for the exhibition moved forward for 2020 when Rijeka was to be the European Capital of Culture. But spotting that single image in a box of photographs brought my search of nearly a decade to an end and gave the final impetus for completing the exhibition.

The story of this one monument is an apt anecdote for describing the relationship of contemporary Croatia and the memory of volunteers who fought in the Spanish Civil War: we can say that there is more collective amnesia than collective remembrance. The exhibition "Cultural Memory and the Spanish Civil War" (Kultura sjećanja i Španjolski građanski rat),[3] organized as part of the Rijeka 2020: European Capital of Culture programme, sought to break through the fog of forgetfulness and engage the public in a dialogue about this important part of not only the history of Rijeka, but the history of Croatia, the former Yugoslavia, and above all, Europe. According to the meticulous research by French historian Hervé Lemesle, 1,910 volunteers from the former Yugoslavia had fought on the Republican side in the Spanish Civil War, with approximately half coming from Croatia. While many were communists or were recruited by communist parties in Europe and North America, around half had no political affiliation and fought in Spain because

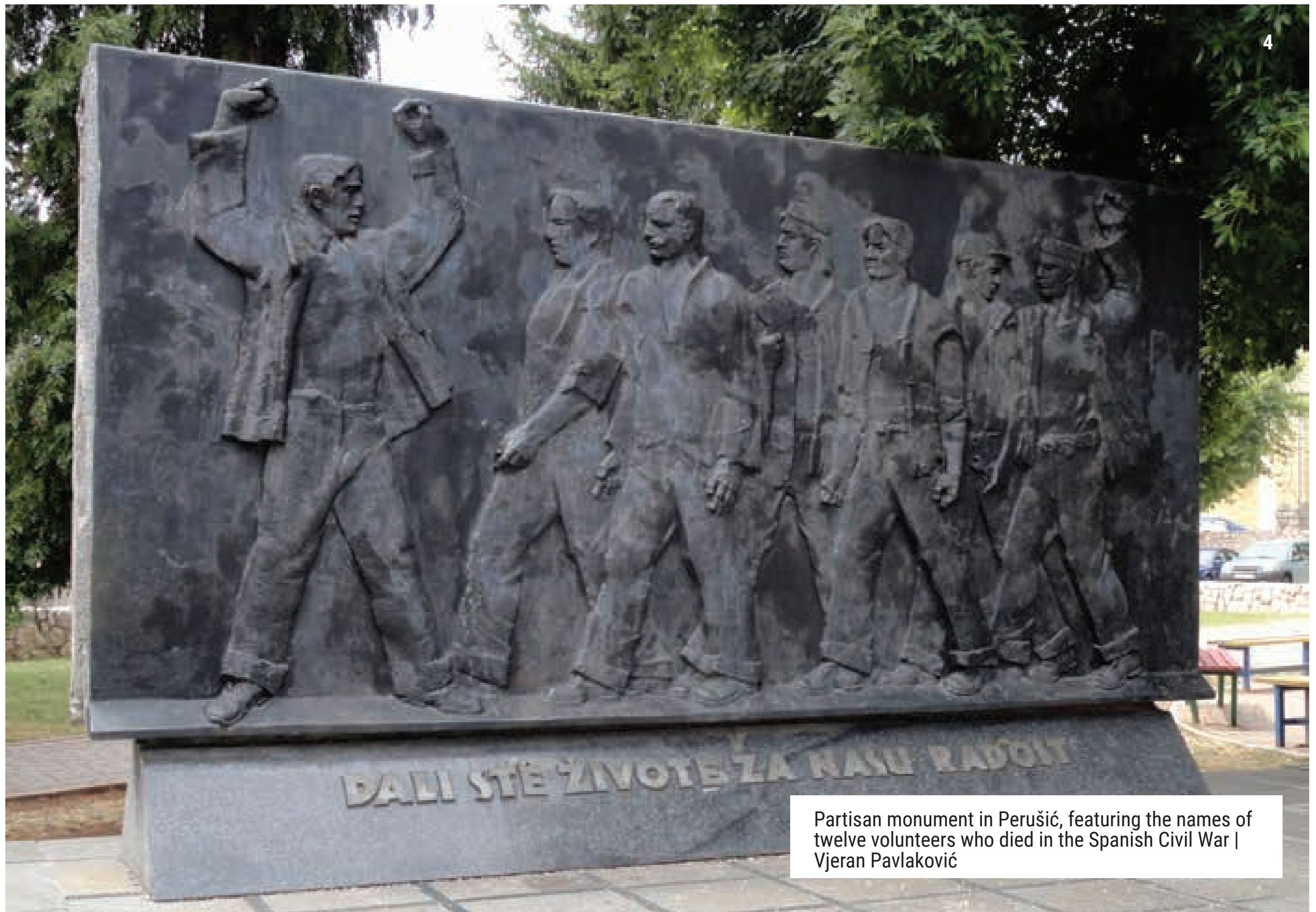
3 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1F1MA_yGjss. The exhibition was held on the University of Rijeka campus in January 2020 and in the pedestrian street Korzo in the centre of Rijeka in March 2020. It is scheduled to be displayed in Pula and Sarajevo (Bosnia - Herzegovina) later in 2020.

Photo of Edo Jardas and Steve Nelson (Stjepan Mesaros) in Spain | Croatian State Archive in Rijeka, Edo Jardas collection

Restored bust of Robert Domany in Plaški, 2020 | Vjeran Pavlaković

they saw defending the democratically elected government against fascism as an opportunity to fight against injustice and express international solidarity with the Spanish people.

This exhibition did not seek to glorify war or offer an ideological interpretation of the past, but rather to acknowledge the sacrifice of individuals who travelled to an unknown country to defend democratic and humanist values in a turbulent age characterized by the rise of fascism. The values of peace, dialogue, tolerance, and international solidarity are those that need to be reflected upon, 80 years after the Nationalists proclaimed victory and implemented a brutal dictatorship that lasted over 35 years. Rijeka2020 is an opportunity to place Rijeka within the broader context of European events in the twentieth century, and the Spanish Civil War was that moment when one country inspired artists, writers, activists, workers, and antifascists from around the world to rally around the cause of democracy. Although the cultural memory of the Spanish Civil War in Croatia has faded over the past 30 years, the exhibition sought to spark a new understanding of this conflict and the lessons we can draw from it in order to not repeat the mistakes of the past. Moreover, the exhibition's reflection on memory politics more broadly was intended to draw attention to the fact that other aspects of Croatia's antifascist past have been deliberately erased from public space and collective memory since the disintegration of Yugoslavia in the 1990s. While it is not surprising that new historical narratives would merge in the wake of Croatia's War of Independence (Domovinski rat, 1991-1995), it is problematic that Croatia's antifascist heritage of the twentieth century was subject to nationalist revisionism that sought to rehabilitate Nazi-fascist collaborators, the Ustaša regime, as a counterweight to the Partisan movement of the Second World War. Reactions to this exhibition, along with the work of many civic organizations in Croatia over the past decade, indicate that despite the rise of populism, extreme nationalism, xenophobia, and radical-right groups across Europe, many segments of Croatian society



Partisan monument in Perušić, featuring the names of twelve volunteers who died in the Spanish Civil War | Vjeran Pavlaković

continue to nurture the antifascist values necessary to foster an open and tolerant society in the twenty-first century.

This is particularly relevant for Rijeka and the Croatian Littoral (Primorje), since one of the mottos of Rijeka2020 is the "Port of Diversity". The exhibition listed over one hundred names of volunteers from Rijeka and the surrounding region, a testament to the antifascist sentiment of this part of Croatia that arose due to the experience with Italian fascism in the 1920s and the even greater deprivations of the Second World War. Most of the volunteers fought in the International Brigades, and nearly half lost their lives in distant Spain. Those that survived had to endure internment camps in France and Germany as well as difficult journeys back home, where several hundred of them joined the Partisan movement. The Spanish volunteers from Yugoslavia, known as naši Španci (Our Spaniards), were particularly valued because of their military experience and ideological discipline, which was invaluable during the first year of the antifascist uprising. The exhibition was the result of new research conducted in archives in Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Serbia, contributions from scholars participating in a conference held at the University of Rijeka in June 2019 (including participants from EUROM, the University of Barcelona, and the Pavelló de la República Library), and local history students.[4] Two panels focused on the contribution of women in the Spanish Civil War, including short biographies of the sixteen women from Yugoslavia who primarily served in the medical corps. A panel on anarchists from Yugoslavia who fought outside the International Brigades highlighted the fact that their participation remains largely under-researched, since many of them were Italian-speakers from the region of Istria and were generally ignored by communist historiography. Another topic which unfortunately was not covered in this exhibition but awaits the efforts of new scholars is the participation

4 Students created a website about the project as part of their research on the Spanish Civil War: https://kulturasjecanjasgr.wordpress.com.

of Istrians in Franco's forces, either as Italian volunteers[5] or Slavs who were mobilized to fight in Spain against their will.[6]

The exhibition included the personal biographies of two volunteers from the Croatian Littoral – Edo Jardas, who served as Rijeka's mayor in the 1950s, and Vladimir Ćopić, the highest-ranking Yugoslav commander in the International Brigades. Eduard "Edo" Jardas (1901-1980) was born in Zamet, now a neighbourhood of Rijeka, and became a communist a few years after he emigrated to Canada in 1926. He was initially involved in organizing forestry and mine workers into communist-run unions and became the editor of Borba, a Croatian-language Party newspaper. He arrived in Spain in late March 1937, where he commanded a machine-gun unit for the Dimitrov Battalion and the Third Company of the Lincoln-Washington Battalion. He was wounded twice, the second time so severely that he needed to be evacuated to France. In 1938 Jardas returned to Canada, where he became a member of the Central Committee of the Canadian Communist Party and continued his publishing activities. After the Tito-Stalin split in 1948, Jardas returned to Rijeka on the ship Radnik ("Worker"), which had been commissioned to ferry returnees to Yugoslavia after the Second World War. After serving in the Yugoslav embassy in India, he was Rijeka's mayor (president of the City People's Council) from 1951 until 1959, as well as a member of the Central Committee of both League of Communists of Croatia (SKH) and Yugoslavia (SKJ). His personal collection in the Croatian State Archive in Rijeka contains not only considerable information on Yugoslav volunteers who had come from North America, but a great deal of material on the activities of the Spanish Civil War veterans' organization which was very active in promoting the memory of the struggle against Franco.

Vladimir "Senjko" Ćopić (1891-1939) was the most famous revolutionary from the Croatian Littoral in the interwar period. He was born in Senj and studied law in Zagreb, but his studies were cut short by the outbreak of the First World War. As an Austro-Hungarian soldier, he was captured and sent to a Russian POW camp. Ćopić was not allowed to join the Yugoslav Volunteer Corps because he refused to swear an oath to the Serbian King Petar Karađorđević. As a result, he was not allowed out of the camp until the October Revolution, and soon after his release, he joined the Bolsheviks. In 1919, he returned to Yugoslavia to spread communist propaganda, and participated in the Party's founding congress in Belgrade in April. He was immediately elected to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (KPJ), and after it was banned he was sentenced to two years in prison.

In 1925, he was forced to flee to the USSR, where he attended the International Lenin School for four years. Ćopić worked in Prague as a Comintern instructor to the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, and from 1932, together with Milan Gorkić and Blagoje Parović, de facto led the KPJ. After a conflict with Gorkić, Ćopić volunteered to go to Spain, where he arrived in January 1937. He became a political commissar and then the commander of the Fifteenth International Brigade, also known as the Abraham Lincoln Brigade. He led the brigade in the battles of Jarama and Brunete.

In the spring of 1938, he was singled out by Josip Broz Tito as one of only two intellectuals who should be considered for working in the party leadership (the other being Božidar Maslarić, another Spanish Civil War volunteer). Ćopić arrived in Moscow in late August 1938, roughly at the same time as Tito. The two comrades wrote reports for the Comintern on the condition of the party and plans for re-establishing its activity among the masses in Yugoslavia. However, the NKVD arrested Ćopić on 3 November 1938, and he was shot five months later. The Soviet Union rehabilitated him in 1958. In 1976,

5 A recently discovered document from the fascist administration in Pula (Pola) lists the names of five volunteers who died in Spain, indicating that there were many more volunteers who fought there and that there were many others from other parts of Italian-occupied Croatia and Slovenia.

6 Since Istria and Rijeka were part of the Kingdom of Italy during the interwar period, Croats or Slovenes found guilty of various offences ranging from smuggling to nationalist activities were often sent to fight in Spain as an alternative to prison in the 1930s.

his hometown of Senj unveiled a bust of Ćopić, which is presumably stored in the Senj city museum after being removed from the square that bore his name until the 1990s.

The example of the missing monument from the Rijeka barracks and Ćopić's removed bust are two examples of the broader issue of monuments in Croatia – not only their construction but also their destruction. In Croatia alone, around 3,000 out of 6,000 Partisan monuments and plaques were removed, destroyed, damaged, defaced, or transformed in the 1990s, only a few of which have been restored. The situation with monuments in other Yugoslav successor states varies, often depending on the intensity of the wars in the 1990s. Slovenia managed to preserve almost its entire mnemonic landscape of the Second World War, while Kosovo and Bosnia-Herzegovina witnessed considerable destruction coupled with the erection of hundreds of new memorials to the more recent wars.[7] The exhibition in Rijeka presented information on monuments to the Spanish Civil War that have been built around the world, particularly in Europe and North America, but also in the former Yugoslavia. While certain monuments were built to individual volunteers in the Spanish Civil War (such as Ćopić in Senj, Nikola Car "Crni" in Crikvenica, or Anton Rašpor in Klana, all towns on the Croatian Littoral), other monuments dedicated to the Second World War integrated Spanish fighters into the broader antifascist narrative, especially since many of the Španci who managed to return to Yugoslavia fought as Partisans. This means that many monuments referencing the Spanish Civil War have suffered the same fate as other Partisan monuments since the 1990s; they were destroyed, damaged, or

7 For a sense of the amount of money spent on the building of new monuments in Bosnia-Herzegovina, see https://balkaninsight.com/2020/01/03/bosnia-spends-e2-million-on-divisive-war-memorials/.

Edo Jardas and volunteers from Canada | Croatian State Archive in Rijeka, Edo Jardas collection

Unveiling of the statue to Blagoje Parović in Nevesinje (later removed to the outskirts of town) | Archive of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Čedo Kapor collection

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Yugoslav veterans of the Spanish Civil War attend the Sutjeska commemoration in 1978 (from the book Za mir i progres u svijetu)

removed. Croatian Serb rebels in Korenica destroyed the monument to one of the most famous Spanish volunteers, Marko Orešković "Krntija", because he symbolized cooperation between Croats and Serbs. The local government in Nevesinje (Bosnia-Herzegovina) moved the massive monument to Blagoje Parović to the outskirts of his hometown, even though the central square where he used to sit still bears his name. In the Croatian town of Plaški the bust of Robert Domany, a Jewish volunteer killed while leading a Partisan unit in 1942, was stolen along with several others in the 1990s and finally restored in 2016.

Although the majority of the monument destructions took place in the 1990s, the struggle to preserve the antifascist cultural heritage continues to this day. This is another reason why it was important that this exhibition should emphasize the value of transnational remembrance. When the local government attempted to remove the centrally located Partisan memorial and ossuary in the town of Perušić, activists and the Croatian antifascist association reacted to prevent the ongoing removal from the public space of those who fought against fascism. The monument is not just dedicated to fallen Partisans and civilian victims of fascist terror from Perušić, but includes names of twelve volunteers who died in Spain. Interestingly, two of the most vocal advocates for preserving the monument are veterans of the Croatian War of Independence, as noted in a recent article with the headline "They won't give up their Spaniards" (Ne daju svoje Špance).[8] Although monuments of the 1990s war compete with antifascist memorials in public space and veterans' organizations have been among the sharpest critics of memorializing the Partisans, this is an example of cooperation and evidence that the memory of all tragic conflicts of the twentieth century can be commemorated within the proper historical context.

8 Novosti, 3 July 2020, https://www.portalnovosti.com/ne-daju-svoje-spance.

Photo 8: An attack on a village captured by Vlajko Begović while part of the XV International Brigade (Belgrade City Archive, Vlajko Begović collection)

The exhibition of cultural memory and the Spanish Civil War not only sought to provide information on the forgotten history of Yugoslav volunteers who fought for the Republic, but on many ongoing issues related to memory politics in both Croatia and Spain, as well as throughout Europe. After struggling with the legacy of Francoist memorials for decades, Spain is still building memorials to Republican forces or victims of Francoist terror that were denied under the dictatorship and the subsequent years of silence, in places such as Málaga or Fuentes de Andalucia. Last year's decision to remove Franco's body from the Valley of the Fallen was another reminder of how Spanish society is still coming to terms with the legacy of the Civil War, not to mention the still unresolved issue of thousands of victims who remain in unmarked mass graves. Croatia continues to seek a balance of investigating communist crimes and its own exhumations without completely succumbing to revisionist narratives that seek to erase all of the contributions of the Partisan movement, while simultaneously trying to create an inclusive commemorative culture for the Independence War in the 1990s. Rijeka2020, although greatly reduced due to the global Covid-19 pandemic, nevertheless provides an opportunity to engage in a European dialogue about difficult pasts, and this exhibition is an example of a comparative approach in dealing with the legacies of war and dictatorships but also international solidarity and cooperation.

Photo 9: Temporary monument built in the Gurs Internment Camp | Archive of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Čedo Kapor collection

Photo 10: Vladimir Ćopić | Tammiment Library, ALBA collection

10

OVERVIEW

Memory-Works:
On Memory, Ethics & Architecture

Julian Bonder
Architect Julian Bonder + Associates &
Wodiczko + Bonder, Cambridge, Massachusetts
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"The Act of Remembering is of the Present and its reference is in the past and thus absent"
– Andreas Huyssen[1]

"Society is the miracle of moving out of oneself"
– Emmanuel Lévinas[2]

Few words have been so ubiquitous in contemporary culture as the word "memory". Since the 1980s the – perhaps obsessive – pursuit of memory has become omnipresent. Memory in its many forms has become a key marker in such diverse fields as historiography, psychoanalysis, visual and performative arts, information technology, and media studies. The culture of memory has impacted the relationships between politics, architectures, public art and public space, as well as the conception, creation and realization of various forms of expression of memory in our cities.

The construction of memorials and museums all over the globe seems significant in the sheer vastness and magnitude of their number, as well as in the significance that these sites of memory may have in, and for, affected communities. Examples of this are the creation of

1 Andreas Huyssen, *"Introduction," in Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003).
2 Emmanuel Lévinas, *Difficult Freedom: Essays on Judaism*, Seán Hand, trans. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997)

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Parque de la Memoria de Buenos Aires I Photo: parquedelamemoria.org.ar

official and community-based memorial spaces, the emergence of spontaneous memorials, pilgrimages to sites of memory, and many other forms of commemorative practices. Even though the 'culture of memory' has spread over the globe, and memory's political uses are varied, at their core, these remain tied to the histories of specific communities, nations and states. An important aspect of the culture of memory may be found in the way the struggle for justice and human rights and the remembrance of traumatic events have been strongly linked to one another, as many nations – Germany, Chile, Spain, Mexico, Rwanda, South Africa, Argentina, Colombia, United States, Guatemala, Peru among so many others – seek to create democratic societies in the wake of histories of mass exterminations, slavery, apartheids, segregation, military dictatorships, and totalitarianism.

Even though monuments and memorials have been built around the globe for many centuries, the atrocities, crimes and disasters of the recent past have been self-consciously inscribed into our build environment as never before in history. Few cities in Europe, South America or the United States do without public spaces dedicated to some such commemoration, and the nearly instinctual response of public authorities and communities, to public debates on such diverse issues as the "desaparecidos", the Holocaust, recent wars, civil rights and slavery is to erect some kind of physical marker about these complex and difficult histories. Memorials in such diverse locations as Washington D.C. and Berlin, Buenos Aires and Krakow, Gorée and Nantes, Liverpool and Santiago, New York and Barcelona, remind passer-bys of wars, genocides and crimes against humanity. As a result, architects and artists, alongside with activists, public historians and cultural agents find themselves playing an important role in public discourses about history, memory, ethics, politics and the public domain.

So, how do we understand the critical significance of design, art, architecture and action in the public sphere upon conceiving and creating memorial spaces and democratic public spaces? How can we contribute to elaborate the ethical implications of Arendt's description of the public sphere, and by extension the democratic public space, as "the space of appearance" in the widest sense of the word? How do we position ourselves as architects, artists, teachers, and students, when working on such projects?
Architectures, landscapes and public spaces, serve to frame human experience, and at the same time, are catalysts for the process of memory. Historically the architect's role has been to create a theater for action and of memory, capable of embodying truths that make it possible to affirm life and contemplate a better future. While we, as architects (and artists), imagine projects and embark on journeys that leave traces over the skin of the earth, our work often lies in unveiling, unearthing and uncovering, as well as anchoring histories and memories in and onto territories, sites, and cities. It is in the face of catastrophes, historic traumas, and human injustices that the architect's (and artist's) public roles become increasingly complex and problematic but also necessary.

Memorials, Monuments, Public Space

A memorial's historic role is to preserve a memory of the past and provide conditions for new responses to and in the present. "Memorial", "memento", "monument" (like "monitor") suggest not only commemoration but also to be aware – to mind and remind, warn, advise, and to call for action. As our political and ethical companions, memorials should function as environments for thinking about the past and the present, fostering a new critical consciousness in democratic public space. The Latin word monumentum derives from the verb monere ("to warn"), and thus signifies something that serves to caution, or remind with regard to conduct of future events. Instead of a form, a shape, or an image, monumentality may well be a quality, the quality that some places or objects have to make us recall, evoke, think, and perceive something beyond themselves. As a place of memory work and common remembrance, a monument or memorial is intended to be historically referential. As embodiments of memory through art in the public realm, their value is not only based upon or derived from the artwork but from their ability to direct attention to larger issues, a certain point beyond themselves. As James Young notes in *The Texture of Memory*: "their material presence is meant to turn invisible, transparent, bridging between the individual memory work and the events or people

Figure 2 – Parque de la Memoria, Buenos Aires
| Courtesy: Marcelo Brodsky

they recall". Their significance lies in the public dimension and the "dialogic character of memorial space", that is, the space between the stories told or the events remembered, and the act of remembrance (memory work) they help frame.

To be public and to be in public is to be exposed to alterity. According to Hannah Arendt, political equality means visibility; conversely, political inequality and invisibility go hand in hand. Hence, in considering Arendt's notion of the public sphere as 'the space of appearance', we should question not only of how we appear but of how we respond to the appearance of others – those others that, as French philosopher Emmanuel Lévinas reminds us, are not an object of comprehension but an enigma of a Face that resists possession, cannot be fully known and cannot be reduced to content. That is, at its core, a question of the ethics and politics of living together in a heterogeneous space. If democracy, as Claude Lefort reminds us in "The Question of Democracy", is based on uncertainty and legitimized by the declaration of rights – the right to declare in public, among them – and by the presence of others, we should recalibrate how we assess the success of democracy and indeed of democratic public space. These can, and perhaps should, be measured by their capacity to encourage and enable the process of disrupting the continuity of the history of the victors with the memory of the vanquished and the nameless through political, cultural, spatial, and yes, architectural and artistic means.[3]

3 Examples include endeavors that seek reparative justice and symbolic justice, marches and public demonstrations, organizations that fight against present-day forms of slavery, mass incarceration and other forms of oppression, Truth and Reconciliation Commissions, the removal of monuments from Public Space, and many more. Other examples include artists and collective groups that contribute with their works to make visibly visible the nameless and the vanquished such as Alfredo Jaar, Cindy Sherman, Barbara Kruger, Marcelo Brodsky, Grupo Arte Callejero, Acción Poética, Jenny Holzer, Priscilla Monge, Benvenuto Chavajay, Forensic Architecture, Chto Delat, Muntadas, Krzysztof Wodiczko, Kara Walker, Carrie Mae Weems, David Hammons, Elizabeth Alexander, Theaster Gates, Doris Salcedo, Tania Bruguera, Oscar Muñoz, Fire Theory, Regina Galindo, Anne Bouie, Jean-François Boclé, Martin Puryear, Hank Wills Thomas, Marilyn Nelson, among many others. Much of our collaborative work at Wodiczko+Bonder is based on these issues and questions.

Figure 3 – Robert E. Lee, Monument in Richmond + Black Lives Matter | Image Courtesy: Brooke Newman

To work through the conception and design of memorial and democratic public spaces more generally requires a persistent attempt to work within and to transform the public domain in our contemporary cities. Cities have typically built memorials and historic landmarks that celebrate the memory of those they define as "heroes". In so doing, cities have explicitly not created environments where the voices of the nameless and vanquished, the victims, witnesses, and "survivors" of today's or yesterday's crimes and injustices can be heard. At the same time, we should note that in our present – despite the Covid-19 pandemic where the other can be seen as source of contagion, as a source of fear – significant movements and protests against racism, as well as against forms of representation of oppression and oppressors, are taking place. As a very important example, the Black Lives Matter movement taking to the streets in the United States and around the globe strongly re-affirms and makes visibly visible that public space, and by extension the democratic public space, is indeed a space for assertion of political and cultural rights and of public appearance. In a powerful way and in defiance of fear, people all over the world, in solidarity with victims and survivors of past and present injustices, are standing with and close to each other acting as witnesses and agents of significant processes, protests and actions. These processes are effectively disrupting the 'continuity of the history of victors' and of many cities' symbolic narratives. The dismantling, transformation and removal of monuments – erected in the past to support mythical and false versions of histories as well as to celebrate violent hegemonic figures – are clear manifestations that the fundamental struggle to establish a more just society, continues to play out in our democratic public spaces.

To continue this path and to accompany these public processes, I would like to suggest that, we, as artists, cultural agents and architects who want to deepen and extend the significance of the public domain have a twofold task: to create works and public programs that, one, help those who have been rendered invisible to "make their appearance

Figure 4 - George Floyd March in Nantes at Memorial to the Abolition of Slavery | Photo: Frank Dubray – Ouest France

explicitly" and, two, to develop citizens' capacity for public life by asking them to respond to, rather than react against, that appearance. One such transformation, done a few years ago by my design partner, Krzysztof Wodiczko, is the Hiroshima Projections that transformed the remains of the Hiroshima A-Bomb site, into a 'speaking and declaring monument'. Survivors proactively declare in public and through their projected testimonies 'demand' viewers to find ways to respond in and to the present.

5

Figure 5– Hiroshima Projections | Courtesy: Krzysztof Wodiczko

Memory-Works: The Working Memorials

Engaging with the question of how history and histories, memories and traumas will be "appropriated", "re-presented," and "inhabited" and how these will be inscribed into the public domain and our built environment thus raises a whole host of issues that we should attempt to address: Can memorials work through and shed light over difficult memories, past and present injustices, collective traumas, while inviting the public to engage in the necessary transformative, pedagogic, healing and re-constructive work? Can we envision site-specific memorials that will frame collective and spontaneous acts of remembrance, will demand pro-active engagement, and will contribute to envisioning a better world? Architecturally and artistically, can or should memorials

attempt to engage new generations and visitors in the search for memory, through the absence of direct signs, or overt metaphorical representation?

Such issues and complex questions (often without answer) call out for a conscious and humble approach as we need to be mindful and weary of the expectation of creating instant metaphors and artificial meanings. Given that often, and especially, in the wake of human catastrophes a "redemptive aesthetic" that asks us to consider art as a correction of life, emerges in the affected communities, it is important to constantly remind ourselves that neither art nor architecture can (nor should these practices attempt to) compensate public trauma or mass murder. What architectural and artistic practices can do is establish a dialogical relation with those traumatic events and contribute to frame the complex and often difficult process toward understanding and, perhaps, only perhaps, healing.

At the same time, I believe that upon conceiving and designing these projects (monuments, museums, memorials) we should be aware of significant risks, such as the objectivation of memory, the aesthetization of suffering or worse, its banalization. But these are risks that we should take, with care and respect, so that memory does not stay immersed inside but is affirmed in the public domain. Aesthetics should be at the service of ethics, and of life. As James Baldwin writes in "The Fire Next Time":

"One must say Yes to life, and embrace it wherever it is found – and it is found in terrible places. ... For nothing is fixed, forever and forever, it is not fixed; the earth is always shifting, the light is always changing, the sea does not cease to grind down rock. Generations do not cease to be born, and we are responsible to them because we are the only witnesses they have. The sea rises, the light fails, lovers cling to each other and children cling to us. The moment we cease to hold each other, the moment we break faith with one another, the sea engulfs us and the light goes out".

The thesis or premise of this approach is those memorials that work – in other words "working memorials" – can foster and encourage new kinds of public engagement aiming to make the world a better place. Through various modes of perception, imagination, and experience these projects should serve to re-inscribe sites into the cognitive maps of cities and their cultural and physical landscapes. Their ethics, aesthetics, and politics should then articulate discursive, interrogative, pedagogical, emotional, and therapeutic potentials. Shaped by an awareness of the need to address a plurality of publics and generations these "working memorials" may become active agents for culture and dialogue, demanding responsibility and eliciting "response-ability", human rights activism, and civic engagement.

A final (quite unfinished) note

I would like to suggest that working on such projects demands very precise, dialogic and committed attitudes towards design, towards techniques and materials, towards sites of memory, towards history, towards democracy, and especially towards the Faces and voices of others. It, thus, involves establishing clear critical-ethical frameworks to position ourselves as profoundly engaged and committed witnesses in our present and for our future. This approach involves inhabiting distance as one's place for action – inhabiting the distance between act and remembrance, recollected worlds and worlds to be transformed. It entails asserting "presence" and "authorship" through a dynamic interaction and imbrication of conceptual and material worlds within (and without) the work, with the goal of ultimately effacing oneself and disappearing from the scene. This is the attitude, and the approach I bring to my teaching (in seminars, lectures, and design studios on memory and public space); to my design work for projects (see below), and to multiple endeavors and collaborations across disciplines (including EUROM, Radcliffe Institute on Universities and Slavery, and the Symbolic Reparations Research Project). It is an approach that involves understanding art, architecture, and landscape as mediums capable of shedding light over a limited set of truths and values in a space located between the questions, the publics, and the instruments of our practices. It involves attempting to contribute to the construction of a "democratic" and "agonistic" society, as authors, designers, architects, engaged witnesses and sentient subjects, through an ethics of deference to the "other" – that is, "moving out of ourselves",¬ following Lévinas – when proposing transformative actions in the public domain.

In essence, what I would hope to suggest is, first, that we need to conceive a new approach to memory and memorialization in the public domain, one that understands memory as an action – a verb – rather than an object or a noun. Second, I believe we should attempt to broaden the understanding and sense of the word "memory" – which as a subject in the last few years of discussions about public space has come to mean, almost exclusively, evoking traumatic histories and events (this is a complex issue that should be further amplified and elaborated). Third, I think we should reimagine works and practices across many disciplines, including architecture, design, public art, and cultural activism, in relation to history and memory, with a renewed sense of public agency and purpose.

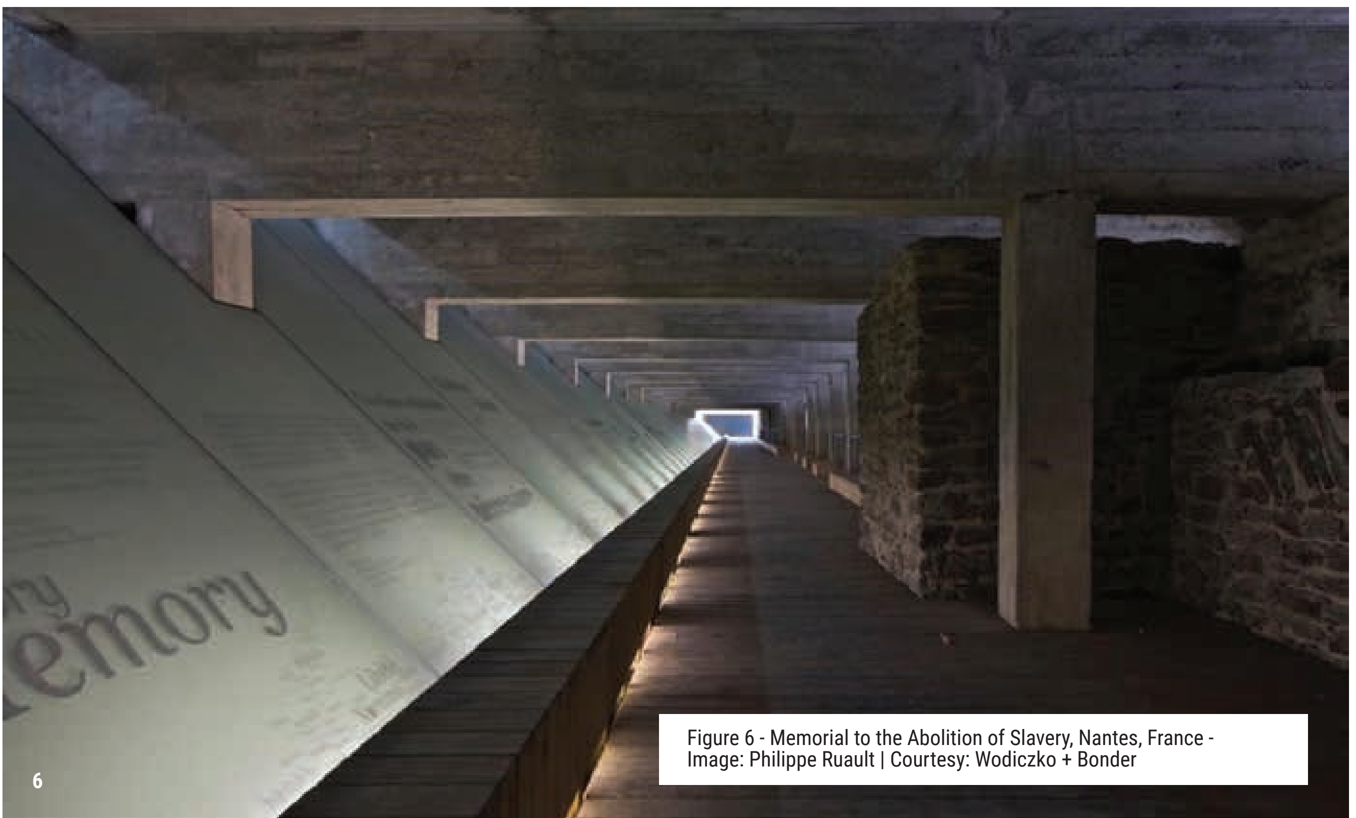

Figure 6 - Memorial to the Abolition of Slavery, Nantes, France - Image: Philippe Ruault | Courtesy: Wodiczko + Bonder

Memory-Works / Projects

Memorial to the Abolition of Slavery in Nantes, France

Wodiczko + Bonder

The Memorial to the Abolition of Slavery in Nantes, France was designed by our transdisciplinary-collaborative firm Wodiczko + Bonder, established by artist Krzysztof Wodiczko and myself to focus on art and design projects that engage public space and raise the issues of social memory, survival, struggle, and emancipation.

The memorial was commissioned by the city of Nantes in 2004, and opened to the public in 2012, with more than 1.5 million visitors to date. It entails a physical transformation and symbolic reinforcement of 350 meters (about 1,000 feet) of the coast of the Loire along Quai de la Fosse in the center of the city (Figure 6 -Nantes Esplanade).

As a metaphorical and emotional evocation of the struggle for the abolition of slavery – above all historic, but which continues into the present – it includes the adaptation of a preexisting underground residual space, product of the construction of the Loire embankments and ports during the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries. It provides space and means for: remembering and thinking about slavery and the slave trade; commemorating resistance and the abolitionist struggle; celebrating the historic act of abolition; and bringing the visitor closer to the continuing struggle against present-day forms of slavery.

By shedding light over difficult pasts and presents, both in Nantes and the world, and as an ethico-political, artistic, landscape, and architectural project, this unique urbanscape and memorial space has become an inclusive public space, and serves as an instrument for individual contemplation, an agent for collective conversation and a catalyst for transformative action (Figure7-8-9 Nantes)

7

Figures 7-8-9 - Memorial to the Abolition of Slavery, Nantes, France - Image: Philippe Ruault | Courtesy: Wodiczko + Bonder

8

9

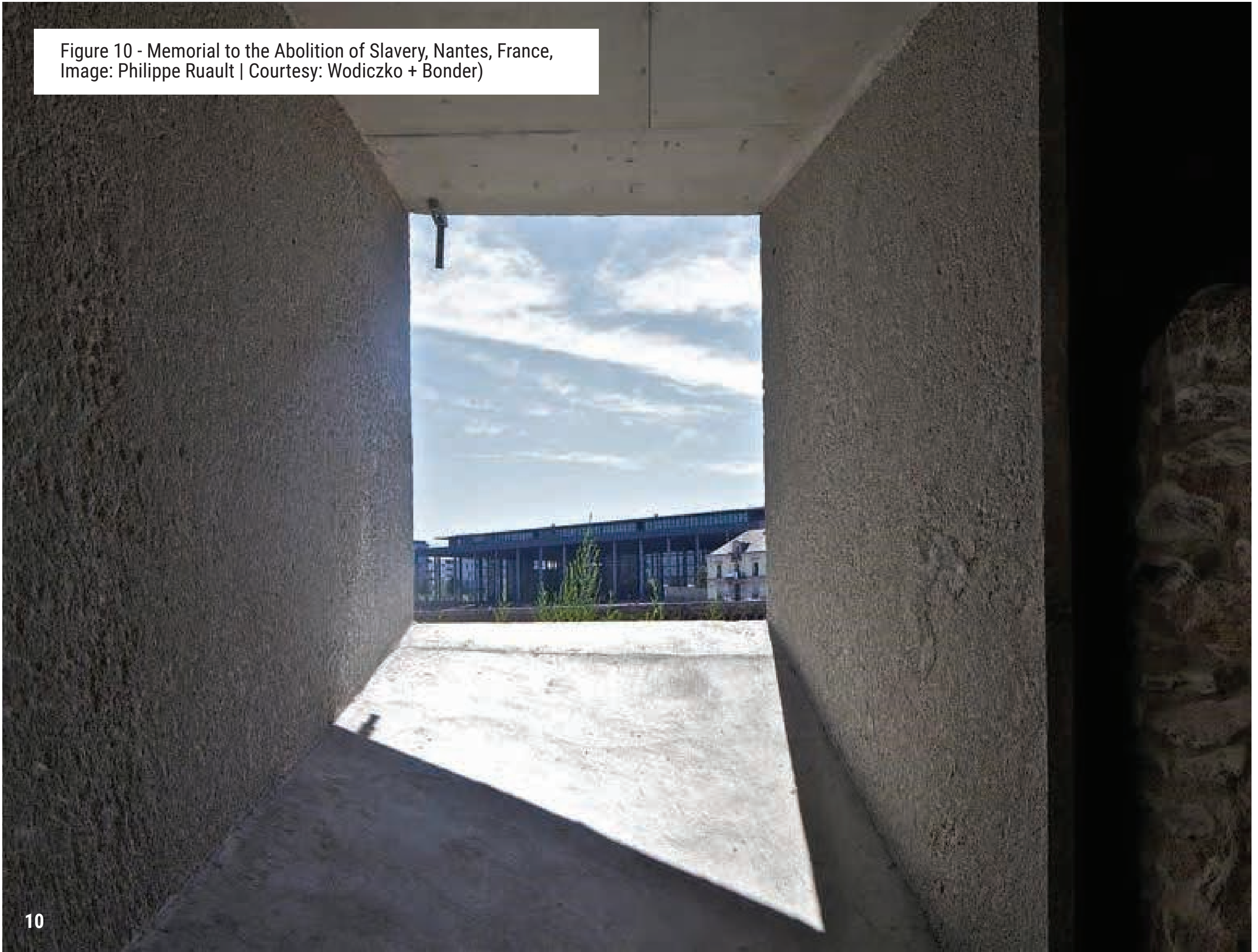

Figure 10 - Memorial to the Abolition of Slavery, Nantes, France, Image: Philippe Ruault | Courtesy: Wodiczko + Bonder)

10

National Holocaust Monument in Ottawa, Canada

Wodiczko + Bonder

This proposal proceeds through two fundamental, complementary gestures: exposure and immersion, which together create a layered, in-depth experience through which visitors discover and interpret both the history of the Holocaust and the memory of events which drove its survivors to Canadian shores. In this Working Monument, we literally propose to excavate the totality of the site to expose the limestone bedrock – found about three to four meters below the surface – thus creating a meaningful space below the level of the city, but open to the sky, in order to anchor new meanings, stories, and memories, in which visitors will find themselves immersed. Conceptually and formally, the project proposes: to reveal the bedrock beneath the surface; to provide a rich new soil inserted into the bedrock, and to plant groves of Aspen trees as symbolic reference to the cultivation of new life and memory; to provide a spatial experience of walking along ramps, downward, along and around the bedrock and the grove of trees; to visit the hall of names; and listen and watch the 'eternal flame' animated by especially recorded voices of the Holocaust survivors.

As an active and responsive public space, the project will include in its programming, narrative, and mission a strong connection to world events in the present. Rather than seeking to fix a particular memory in perpetuity, this monument will seek to respond to every generation's need and will to remember. We hope visitors to the monument to be changed inwardly by their visit, just as the national Canadian landscape will be changed outwardly by the monument.

Figure 11– Memorial Space, Ottawa | Image: Wodiczko + Bonder

Figure 12– Martin Luther King Jr. & Coretta Scott King Memorial, Boston | Image: Wodiczko, Bonder, Thompson, Wood

The Ripple Effects - Martin Luther King Jr. & Coretta Scott King Memorial, Boston

Wodiczko, Bonder, Thompson & Wood

The project, designed as a living memorial, has embraced the historic and unique task of creating a monument not to a single hero but to a partnership of two extraordinary people. The proposal for the Boston Common embeds this dual monument in a deep history of activism, signaled by the memorial to Shaw and the 54th Massachusetts Infantry, and to carry that meaning and purpose into the future. This project proposes to both celebrate Martin Luther King & Coretta Scott King – their lives and accomplishments – as well as to invite present and future generations to see themselves as catalysts for an ongoing process of emancipation and transformation. The site organized by a mound on the east side and the Beacon Towers, on the west. They symbolize the continuing presence and inspiration of the Kings' leadership, while at the same time – through the sound of specially designed bells and the pulses of light-monitoring – they continually inform visitors on current state of the emancipation process, globally, nationally, and in Boston.

This new public space and forum for engagement is created in order to inspire learning, dialogue, and activism now and later. It is not only a symbolic ground for public assembly, for civic celebrations, for cultural activity, individual and group reflection and discussion but also a socially engaging interactive environment, which – as an affirmation of life, love, fellowship and community – will embody a welcoming message, in and from Boston, for generations to come.

Links

Memorial to the Abolition of Slavery, Nantes - Memorial to the Abolition of Slavery: https://memorial.nantes.fr/en/

Unearthing Traces of Rhode Island's Slavery and Slave Trade - design studios: https://www.acsa-arch.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/2015-16-Unearthing-Traces-of-RIs-Slavery-and-Slave-Trade-DP-Winner-Submission.pdf

Citizen's Voice: Julian Bonder- EUROM: https://europeanmemories.net/videos/interview-julian-bonder-architect-and-professor-at-roger-williams-university-usa/

Radcliffe Institute Conference, Universities and Slavery: Bound By History - Universities and Slavery: https://www.radcliffe.harvard.edu/news/radcliffe-magazine/bound-history-universities-and-slavery

Symbolic Reparations - Symbolic Reparations Research Project: https://symbolicreparations.org/

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REVIEW

BOOK

Transitional Justice in Comparative Perspective: Preconditions for Success

El-Masri, Samar; Tammy Lambert; Joanna Quinn (Eds.). (2020). Palgrave

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Transitional Justice in Comparative Perspective: Preconditions for Success, edited by Samar El-Masri, Tammy Lambert and Joanna Quinn, is a volume of individual country case studies focusing on the societal and institutional preconditions that contribute to the effectiveness of transitional justice measures. The case studies span conflicts of various lengths and degrees of violence, including those in Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Gambia, Lebanon, Palestine, and Uganda. Contributors include specialists in economic development, political science, transitional justice, data science, anthropology, among others. This diverse collection serves as an opportunity to analyze general procedures in transitional justice such as amnesties, truth commissions, and tribunals within the context of specific lenses and regions.

Though existing literature highlights the importance of implementing transitional justice that contextualizes specific conditions across regions, this volume provides concrete examples and data relating to the degree of efficacy of these measures in their specific countries. The editors of this collection recognize its potential as a comprehensive foundation for transitional justice professionals and scholars to expand our understanding of how certain preconditions can be established at a sociocultural and institutional level for individual country case studies beyond those addressed within the volume.

The preconditions, also described as "ameliorating factors," include cultural diplomacy, judicial education, language used in peace agreements, microcredit incentives for disarmament, democratic uncertainty, among others. Chapters on democratic uncertainty (i.e. cultivating trust in the prospect of greater democratic agency), the changing use of "victimhood" within Colombia's peace agreement, and the necessity of microcredit schemes in the DRC as a means of demobilization together demonstrate the comprehensive nature of the volume by validating and qualifying the notion of "uncertainty" after conflicts.

Chapter 3 serves as a foundational discussion of democratic uncertainty, written by a political scientist specializing in democratization, Peter A. Ferguson. His conclusion that people determine their commitment to transitional justice based on how accessible democratic institutions become, aside from any initial political or socio-economic benefit, reveals the significance of these reliable democratic institutions for sustainable peace and development. This generalized trend noted in societies transitioning from authoritarian regimes is later validated by the Colombian case study on the language analysis of the peace agreement. This language analysis revealed the prevalence and expansive definition of "victim" and "victimhood" in the conflict. Though this is not directly related to greater democratic accessibility, expanding the definition of who is considered a victim, allows future citizens to claim certain protections and entitlements as victims even if their particular intersectional victimhood is not addressed explicitly today. Regardless of other economic and political factors affecting the execution of the peace agreement, this open-ended definition of victims within the armed conflict was meant to garner support from a greater portion of the population, that is, by giving those whose grievances were not redressed, an opportunity to establish their particular claims in the future. On the other hand, the Congolese case study qualifies the general benefits of structured uncertainty, as was the case in Ferguson's analysis and in the Colombian peace agreement. Regardless of future prospects of justice or expanded civil rights, the DRC's established economic dependence on the continuation of war necessitated greater initial financial incentives in the form of microcredits to promote demobilization. Even if the principles behind democratic uncertainty and other institutional preconditions may have been helpful in strengthening the DRC's transition, its particular economic reality warranted a discussion of this more pressing issue and ameliorating factor.

In general, the different chapters do not contradict each other, rather they highlight how scholars can investigate the efficacy of established transitional justice procedures within these social, economic, and political factors. By using conflicts of different characteristics and regions, it allows scholars to continue the conversation of the ameliorating factors that were present or absent in other conflicts, possibly determining their effectiveness and the longevity of peace and reconciliation.

REVIEW

BOOK

The multiple forms of the banalization of the Holocaust. The Memory Monster,

Sarid, Yishai (2020). Restless Books

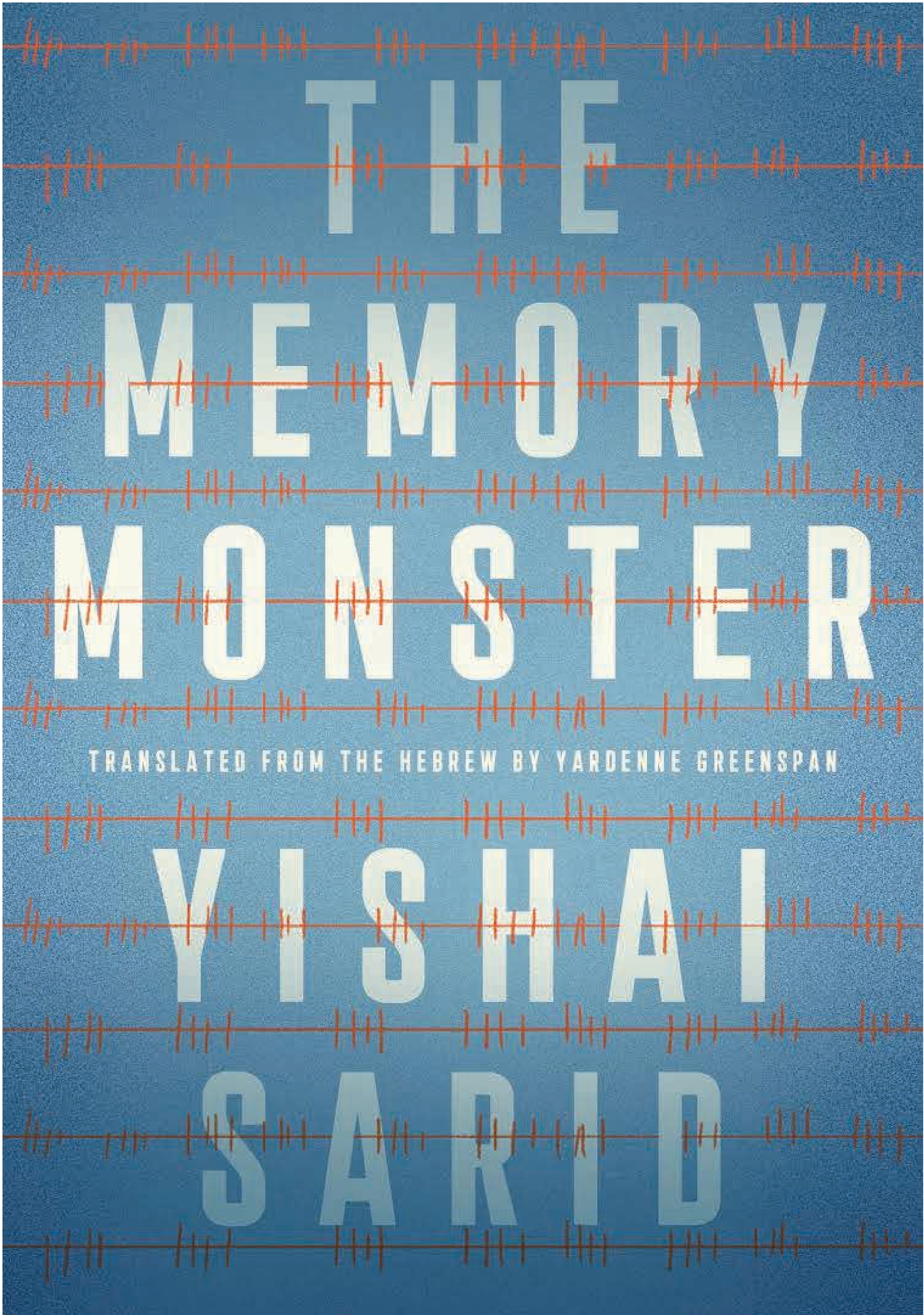
David González
Historian, professor at the University of Barcelona | Project manager at the **EUROM**

*"**The Memory Monster**", by Yishai Sarid (Tel Aviv, 1965), originally published in Hebrew in 2017, has been published in several languages since 2019. The English, Catalan and Spanish versions all came out in 2020.*

In this novel, the author analyses, criticizes and denounces a key feature of his own social reality: the trivialization of the Holocaust through its spaces of memory, and through the various mechanisms of memorial transmission, both in his homeland, Israel, and abroad. This trivialization takes the form of a memory monster.

The book's early pages clearly presage the problems that will emerge as the plot develops. Our protagonist, a Holocaust historian who works as a guide in Poland, chooses his speciality not due to any sense of vocation but for purely practical reasons. He would have liked to study some other period of history, but, in order to find work, he finds himself obliged to specialize in a productive field. Thus, from the start of the book, the Holocaust is depicted as a powerful cultural industry offering tempting job opportunities in the field of historical dissemination. Thus, through his connections with the Yad Vashem Memorial, the protagonist qualifies as a tour guide and begins to work accompanying groups, mostly Israeli teenagers on school trips, through the Holocaust spaces of memory in Poland.

The continuous contact with adolescents presents him with a dilemma. As a committed historian, he concentrates his efforts on helping his charges to understand what happened, but the attitudes of the groups he takes around the sites eventually make him loathe his


THE
MEMORY
MONSTER
TRANSLATED FROM THE HEBREW BY YARDENNE GREENSPAN
YISHAI
SARID

Yishai Sarid | Althazarius, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons

work. Sometimes it is their behaviour he despises: for instance, the adolescents' use and abuse of social networks during visits, or the mindless way that some of them take photographs, selfies included. In many other cases, though, a much deeper issue is at stake, which is to do with the education they have received inside the Israeli national educational system. Our protagonist senses an excess of patriotic fanaticism in which he sees himself as a cog in a great industrial machine.

We should see this latter point as a criticism of the way in which the duty of memory is managed, the way in which the indispensable task of analysing and understanding the past becomes merely part of an obligatory curriculum. Our protagonist struggles with the contradiction that obliges him to act as a guide in front of an audience of schoolchildren whose motivation is zero and who hardly ever provide any response that would help him feel that his work was worthwhile. Sometimes he hears pernicious comments about how Israel should learn from the Germans in order to fight the Arabs, or how weak the Ashkenazi Jews were to allow themselves to be treated in such a way by the Nazis.

The monster of memory forces our protagonist to take part in this trivialization of the Holocaust, to put up with these adolescents and their disrespectful behaviour. In fact, though, none of the groups he shows round, however select and elevated, are free of blame. When he accompanies a senior Israeli official, the minister of transport, on a tour, he realizes that his guest is far more concerned about the chance for a photo session than about the visit itself. Piotr Ciwinsky, director of the Auschwitz-Birkenau memorial museum, recently warned of this misuse of the places of memory of the Holocaust by the political class for propaganda purposes; if politicians see their visits as photo opportunities, he noted ironically, how can we expect adolescents not to take selfies at the camps, especially when these photos are an essential part of their audiovisual code of communication?

Through the reflections of the protagonist, Sarid bravely poses some complex questions that, in a way, point to the heart of the contradictions of the

State of Israel itself. Among the examples are the reaction of a group of adolescents visiting the camps who call for a tougher stance from Israel towards the Arabs, or the comment of a pupil after the visit that one has to be a "bit Nazi" to survive, justifying violence against innocents on the grounds that "the children of today are the terrorists of tomorrow".

The monster of memory is created by the contradictions that the protagonist must endure inside the global framework of the commercialization of the Holocaust. It is to be found in the forced adaptation of places of memory to the tourist industry, and in many other instances in the book. The monster of memory makes an appearance when a video company uses human suffering as the main selling-point for one of its video games, or when the Israeli army prepares the recreation of the liberation of a concentration camp, or when a film director prepares a kitsch product on the history of the camps. The monster of memory embraces any practice or discourse that is likely to trivialize the real history of the Holocaust.

Sarid stresses the need to criticize the use and abuse of the Holocaust; perhaps more importantly given his nationality, he stresses how important it is that Israelis should criticize it, especially its exploitation for commercial purposes. Just as Peter Novick (2000) warned us of the dangers of the Americanization of the Holocaust story, or Tim Cole (1999) and the always controversial Norman Finkelstein (2000) reminded us of the need to dissociate the historical event (the systematic murder of six million Jews) from the excessive mythologization of the commercialized narrative of the Holocaust, Sarid argues that a misuse of the memory of the Holocaust can indirectly promote the growth of the extreme right. Cole (1999) himself came to the same conclusion in noting how the recreation of non-real spaces of the Holocaust for tourist consumption was an effective argument for denialist discourses.

All these implicit criticisms make Yishai Sarid's "The Memory Monster" an important book today, especially at a time when the market for novels set in the context of the Holocaust has reached saturation point. It is particularly significant because this is not a novel about the Holocaust but about the memory of the Holocaust.

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REVIEW

MEMORIAL PARK

The Biddy Mason Memorial Park *and the Importance of centennial monuments after COVID-19*

By Luis Ángel Gasca Triviño
Undergraduate Student, Institute for the Study of Human Rights, Columbia University
Fellowship stundent at EUROM (2020)

Biddy Mason memorial park in Los Angeles | Luis Gasca Triviño

1

Despite the closures of memorial sites during the COVID-19 pandemic, 2020 was characterized by its active historical discourse with the spread of the Black Lives Matter protests worldwide. Rather than depend on novel exhibitions for memorialization initiatives, anti-racist activists arduously reflected on controversial monuments of the past. Across the country, centennial monuments honoring slavery and oppression have been defaced and toppled. These events are now immortalized on social media for the removal of traumatic and divisive landmarks across the country.

The controversies surrounding the toppling of monuments on media platforms can only captivate the public for so long. The temporary nature of media attention thus warrants an enduring discussion of what remains of these monuments and also what other existing monuments deserve more visibility. Los Angeles, located in a region founded on the exploitation of Native Californians by Spanish missionaries and a destination for the Black community during the Second Great Migration, is home to two memorials depicting this great disparity in visibility and historical dialogue — the controversial defaced statue of Spanish missionary Junipero Serra and the memorial park of formerly enslaved and philanthropist Biddy Mason.

According to the Los Angeles Times, the outrage behind the toppling of Father Serra's monument in the city's historic district began with the indignation of Native Californians over the Vatican's decision to elevate Serra to sainthood status in 2015. The momentum of the Black Lives Matter protests against Confederate monuments empowered these activists to generate greater historical accountability for Serra's exploitation of their ancestors.

Visiting Father Serra Park after seeing images of the toppled statue, I was disappointed to find the defaced statue completely removed and the area cleaned up of any evidence. The remaining pedestal, where Serra once proudly held a model mission and cross in his hands, showed no visible signs of protest or alteration. Instead the fenced enclosure and the pedestal's prominent location continues as a gateway to the historic district of Downtown. It survives with an intact commemorative plaque recognizing Serra's service to the Church, while being dismissive of the exploitation his mission perpetuated. As it stands today, juxtaposed against the skyline and beautiful landscaped lawns, the monument's original bias is preserved by far more than its fenced enclosure.

Five minutes away in the heart of Downtown, lies a seemingly inconsequential, 24-meter long, poured concrete wall. Etched with faded portraits, inscriptions, and external molds of miscellaneous biographical

objects, the wall carries a timeline of Biddy Mason's life as an enslaved person in Mississippi to her life as a successful real estate entrepreneur in Los Angeles towards the end of the 19th century. Regardless of her contributions, the wall's beautiful simplicity is overshadowed by its placement in a narrow corridor between commercial buildings and a parking structure — a stark contrast to the prominent vantage point Serra still holds even after his statue was publicly defaced and reviled.

Though the wall is placed in a geographically relevant location on the original site of the Mason homestead, the surrounding area holds few visible signs leading to the memorial as opposed to the ones leading to Father Serra Park and other colonial monuments. Lessened accessibility is what makes the difference between visiting one of the memorials on a school trip, stopping by on your commute, or being included in a tour itinerary of Downtown. The surrounding area, thus, gives visitors the first impression of who the historical figures were and how relevant they continue to be. Walking towards the grandiose Serra mount versus the unforgiving shadow and smog from the neighboring parking structure above Mason's portrait, visitors get a clear indication of what historical narrative receives heightened institutional support.

Inspecting the segments of the wall, I discovered the gradual transformation of the city through much of the 19th century within the context of Mason's life starting from 1810 on the north side. The timeline begins with demographic information about the history of Mexicans and Americans of African descent within the city rather than with Mason's own birth. Mason first appears 26 years into her own timeline with the following plaque.

1836. Engraved on a gold plaque, Mason is placed in the greater context of slavery as an 18 year-old who became the property of the plantation-owning Smith family from Mississippi that year. This plaque is found under "She learns midwifery" and next to the external molds of medical instruments used by midwives. This panel of the timeline serves as a powerful transition from Mason's early life as property to an independent and influential figure in her new community. After 10 years of wages she is able to buy the former homestead I found myself standing in, with a copy of the property deed engraved to the side. The plaques become their most legible and defined when we get closer to her legacy in the city: her grandsons' commercial ventures, her activism, her philanthropy towards Angelenos made homeless by seasonal floods, and finally for her role in organizing the First African Methodist Episcopal (F.A.M.E.) Church in 1872. The end of the memorial on the south side ends in 1900 before it opens up to the rest of the park leading to the main streets of the 21st century.

Serra’s legacy lives through the trauma of Native survivors while Mason’s activism and entrepreneurship continue to contribute to the welfare of thousands of Angelenos through F.A.M.E. Church. Serra’s memory as a founder seems institutionalized, protected, immortalized through authority and tradition. Mason’s memorial, on the other hand, due to its unconventional placement seems to be preserved by the resistance of a community living with the legacy of her contributions. Installed in 1989, almost a century after her death, the memorial reclaims a sliver of lost land in the middle of the historic site.

As access to new museum exhibitions normalizes towards the end of the pandemic, it is our responsibility to remember the unprecedented historical dialogue that took place in 2020. Historical dialogue fueled by grass-roots organizations confronting institutions and uprooting systems and icons entrenched by landmarks over many generations. We have the responsibility to engage with existing memorials from the perspectives and grievances of today, educating ourselves on the societal forces that tear us down and also those that have built us up.

Context

https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2020/jun/10/columbus-king-leopold-ii-statues-could-be-next-to-fall-black-lives-matter-protests

https://www.bbc.com/culture/article/20200612-black-lives-matter-protests-why-are-statues-so-powerful

https://europeanmemories.net/magazine/perseverance-and-place-a-review-of-the-national-museum-of-african-american-history-and-culture/

https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jul/15/edward-colston-statue-replaced-by-sculpture-of-black-lives-matter-protester

REVIEW

ROUTE

The Berlin Wall Trail and the Iron Curtain Trail

Michael Cramer
Member of the **European Parliament** (MEP) from 2004 until 2019

Recently we commemorated the 30th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall and of the Iron Curtain in Europe. The wall around West Berlin was 3.60 m high and 160 km long. Its appearance and location changed over the course of time: the barbed-wire fencing was replaced by pre-manufactured concrete segments, which were in some parts reinforced with metal grid fences. Between the "outer border wall" facing West, and the "inner border wall" facing East was the notorious, brightly-lit "death strip" with the "patrol path", from where GDR border troops guarded the frontier. On the GDR side only selected people were allowed to live in the neighbourhoods directly behind the Wall; their friends and relatives had to be registered before any visits and needed to obtain a special permit. More than 300 guard towers, 30 headquarters, 20 bunkers, flood light systems, signal and alarm fences, as well as dog running areas and tank traps were installed to prevent people from escaping to West Berlin.

Before the construction of the Wall, about four million people had successfully escaped the GDR. Afterwards, people from the East continuously tried to cross the barricades. One hundred and twenty-eight people lost their lives at the Berlin Wall. Of the 80 marksmen responsible who were identified after the end of the GDR and taken to court, 77 received suspended sentences.

The "Berlin Wall Trail" is an exciting route, full of history. It takes cyclists past many important and famous landmarks. There are also many names that serve as a reminder of past events, such as Checkpoint Charlie and Potsdamer Platz. The route also passes the "Bösebrücke" in Bornholmer Straße, which became famous on 9 November 1989 when the first people crossing the border were greeted with cheers and sparkling wine. The legendary

Crossroad of *Eurovelo* 6 and 13 (Iron Curtain Trail). Slovakia | Michal Klajban CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons

"Oberbaumbrücke", the "East Side Gallery" or the remaining Wall segments in Niederkirchnerstraße are also well worth a visit. Another interesting site is the "Parliament of Trees against War and Violence" by the artist Ben Wagin, whose work became part of the new buildings of the Bundestag on the Eastern bank of the river Spree shortly after the fall of the Wall.

The "Berlin Wall History Mile" continues on the outskirts of the Wall Trail, where information boards bearing historical photos and texts in German and English direct the attention of passers-by to places that highlight particular aspects of the divided city. The steles – just like the signs saying "Berlin Wall Trail" – are 3.60 m tall, just like the Wall once was. Apart from the information boards there are also steles and commemorative crosses for the fugitives killed, in order to remind the public of their fates.

When people talk about the Berlin Wall they usually refer to the inner city border strip between East and West Berlin. However, the Berlin Wall is in fact much longer; it also includes the 120-kilometre border between West Berlin and the surrounding Land of Brandenburg, which can also be explored by bike. Far away from the hustle and bustle of the big city, this stretch winds through pleasant countryside and woods. Of particular historical interest is the Glienicker Bridge, the site of many spy exchanges between Americans and Soviets.

When fully finished EV13, the Iron Curtain Trail, will follow this route | © European Cyclists' Federation www.ecf.com

Thanks to the positive media response, on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the construction of the Wall the Berlin Senate decided to put all remnants of the Wall under protection as monuments and to develop the entire length of the route as a signposted and bicycle-friendly pathway. It is an attractive combination of history workshop and bicycle tourism, of recreation and culture. The inner-city section between Bernauer Straße and the Oberbaumbrücke is especially informative and interesting, making it an ideal spot not just for cycling but also for a walk through history and through the politics of an era.

The "Berlin Wall Trail" has become part of Berlin's Tourism Programme and is the first project that connects city tourism with soft tourism. In recent years it has developed into a tourist highlight. Today, even some five star hotels advertise the route and offer bikes and guides to their guests. In Berlin it is possible to experience history by bike during the day and then enjoy the reunited city in the evening at a concert, at the opera, or at one of the many theatres.

But not just Berlin, but Germany as a whole was divided into East and West by a 1,400 km long death strip with 3,000 km of fences, vehicle traps, 830 watch towers, flood light systems, walls and bunker complexes. To keep the memory of the former border strip alive, it was necessary to develop it for soft tourism. Additionally, it was planned to protect the flora and fauna through the establishment of a European Green Belt in the former death strip. In December 2004 the German Bundestag voted unanimously in favour of this. The plan was initiated by the Foundation for Environmental and Natural Protection in Germany (BUND) and is now changing of the death strip into a living space for around 5,000 different animal and plant species. In it, there are today 150 nature reserves, numerous flora-fauna-habitat areas and biosphere reserves.

But it was not only Berlin and Germany that were

divided; for decades, Europe was split in two by the "Iron Curtain", which ran from the Barents Sea at the Norwegian-Russian border down to the Black Sea at the Turkish-Bulgarian frontier. Today, it no longer divides us. It is a symbol of a common past in the reunited Europe. This is another reason why in the autumn of 2005 a large majority in the European Parliament from all the countries and all the groups voted in favour of the motion initiated by Michael Cramer to include the "Iron Curtain Trail" in its report entitled "New perspectives and new challenges for sustainable European tourism". It is also intended to help build and strengthen a common European identity. The trail includes countless monuments, museums and open-air facilities that remind visitors of the division of Europe and how it was overcome by the peaceful revolutions in East and Central Europe. Twenty countries take part of this project, 15 of which are current member states of the EU.

The route runs along the Western border of the former Warsaw-Pact states. It touches the Norwegian-Russian and the Finnish-Russian border and then passes the coast lines of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Kaliningrad, Poland and the former GDR. The path then leads from the peninsula Priwall at Travemünde until the state-triangle between Saxony, Bavaria and the Czech Republic and follows en route the former inner-German border strip. It then passes over the elevations of the Bohemian Forest, past Mähren and the Slovakian capital Bratislava, where it passes the Danube. After the Austrian-Hungarian border, the trail continues through Slovenia and Croatia. Between Romania and Serbia, the route mostly follows the course of the Danube, finally ending at the Bulgarian Black Sea coast at the northern tip of Turkey, after having crossed Bulgaria, North Macedonia and Greece.

The Iron Curtain Trail is a ride through history, politics, culture and nature. We Europeans can be very happy that Marianne Birthler, Vaclav Havel (1936-2011) and Lech Wałęsa have served as patrons of this project.

Under the slogan "Unbuilding Walls" the Iron Curtain Trail and the Berlin Wall Trail in 2018 were part of the Biennale in Venice. In 2019 the Iron Curtain Trail was certified by the Council of Europe as a "Cultural Route".

Michael Cramer wrote the ***"Berlin Wall Trail"*** and a five-volume bicycle guide to the 10,000-km-long "Iron Curtain Trail" in English and German, published by the Austrian publishing house Esterbauer-Verlag.

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Michael Cramer, Member of the European Parliament (MEP) from 2004 until 2019

A historical memory project for the future: *Parque de la Memoria – Monumento a las Víctimas del Terrorismo de Estado*

Nora Hochbaum
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Writing in times of pandemic about the experience of the Parque de la Memoria – Monumento a las Victimas del Terrorismo de Estado (Park of Memory – Monument to the Victims of State Terrorism) perhaps raises again the issue of how we work on historical memory and how we construct the future. At times when reality challenges us and we know little about what awaits us as a community, as a country and as global citizens, it is even more important to remember. We must learn from our experiences and construct collective memory that brings us together and gives us the strength and tools we need to endure the challenges and give hope to the next generations.

Human rights organisations in Argentina know a lot about convictions, the investment of energy, tenacity and, above all, love. For 42 years, the Madres y Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo (Mothers and Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo) have been an example of the fight to construct a country that defends historical memory, truth and justice. The park was built on the foundations of this struggle. It was not conceived to heal wounds, but is a place for remembrance, homage, testimony and reflection.

When the state commits crimes against its citizens, without any control and through an organised system, we call it state terrorism. This happened in Argentina and Latin American in the 1970s and at the start of the 1980s. Thousands of people disappeared or were assassinated. They were tortured, illegally detained and even today their whereabouts is unknown. They were stripped of their identity, buried as "no name" in shared graves or tossed into the waters of La Plata River. Many others were forced into exile.

The unprecedented crimes committed by Argentinian state terrorism include the establishment of over 200 clandestine detention centres, and the confiscation and theft

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Parque de la Memoria - Monumento a las Víctimas del Terrorismo de Estado

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of over 500 babies and children who were deprived of their identity, their family and their history. Today, now that our Grandmothers' association has recovered and restored the identity of 130 grandchildren, we know that the path of "never again" is long, that there is still far to go, and that nobody can bring loved ones back to their families or return missing citizens to the country. However, the creation of spaces like this one contributes to teaching about and the permanence of their legacy and memory.

In July 1998, when Buenos Aires City Legislature approved by law the construction of the park and the monument, some laws were still in force in Argentina. These were the Law of Due Obedience and the Full Stop Law, which prevented those responsible for state terrorism crimes from being tried. The laws of impunity were declared unconstitutional by the Argentinian Supreme Court of Justice and void by the Congress of the Nation in 2003. Over the years, this made it possible to put on trial hundreds of people who were guilty of genocide, repression and appropriation, members of the armed

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Sculpture “30.000”, by Nicolás Guagnini | Agustín Carrasco, Parque de la Memoria

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Sculpture “Reconstruction of th Portrait of Pablo Míguez”, by Claudia Fontes I Parque de la Memoria

and security forces, under the concept of crimes against humanity.

The park project was an unprecedented experience of participation: human rights organisations, the University of Buenos Aires and the Executive and Legislative Powers of the City worked together to define this space. From the outset, the project had some innovative and creative aspects for the period, particularly the inspiring perspective without limited horizons. Today, the park combines the power of the Monument to the Victims of State Terrorism, which lists the names of missing and assassinated people, with a public art programme comprised of over ten large-scale sculptures, the programming of contemporary art exhibitions, a solid education project and the creation of a public database, among other aspects.

Another of the initial, innovative achievements was to give this project a permanent legal and administrative framework, in order to maintain public policies of human rights. In institutional terms, the creation of a Board of Management comprised of human rights organisations, the University of Buenos Aires and the Executive Power of the City of Buenos Aires guarantees these public policies. The consensuses and agreements that were worked on at length were key from the outset to ensure that this space had a clear, permanent future, regardless of the political situation or supporters of the time. The Park of Memory was declared a National Monument and Heritage of Buenos Aires, which firmly consolidated its position in the urban fabric of our city.

This operational model enables us to consider and conceive management tools and policies of action that are designed to incorporate and produce new sensations and perspectives on all expressions of art, education and recreation, and the use of the public space, as well as to expand and include programmes and actions on the new rights and demands that need to be resolved in our society. Clearly, nothing can heal the wounds, but today this

7. Entrance to the Parque de la Memoria I Parque de la Memoria

11. The database contains information regarding the life and circumstances of disappearance and/or murder of each of the persons whose names are engraved in the Monument. This information is completed with digital documentation, such as photos and newspaper articles. I Photo: Parque de la Memoria

Institutional visit of the German Chancellor, Angela Merkel (2017)

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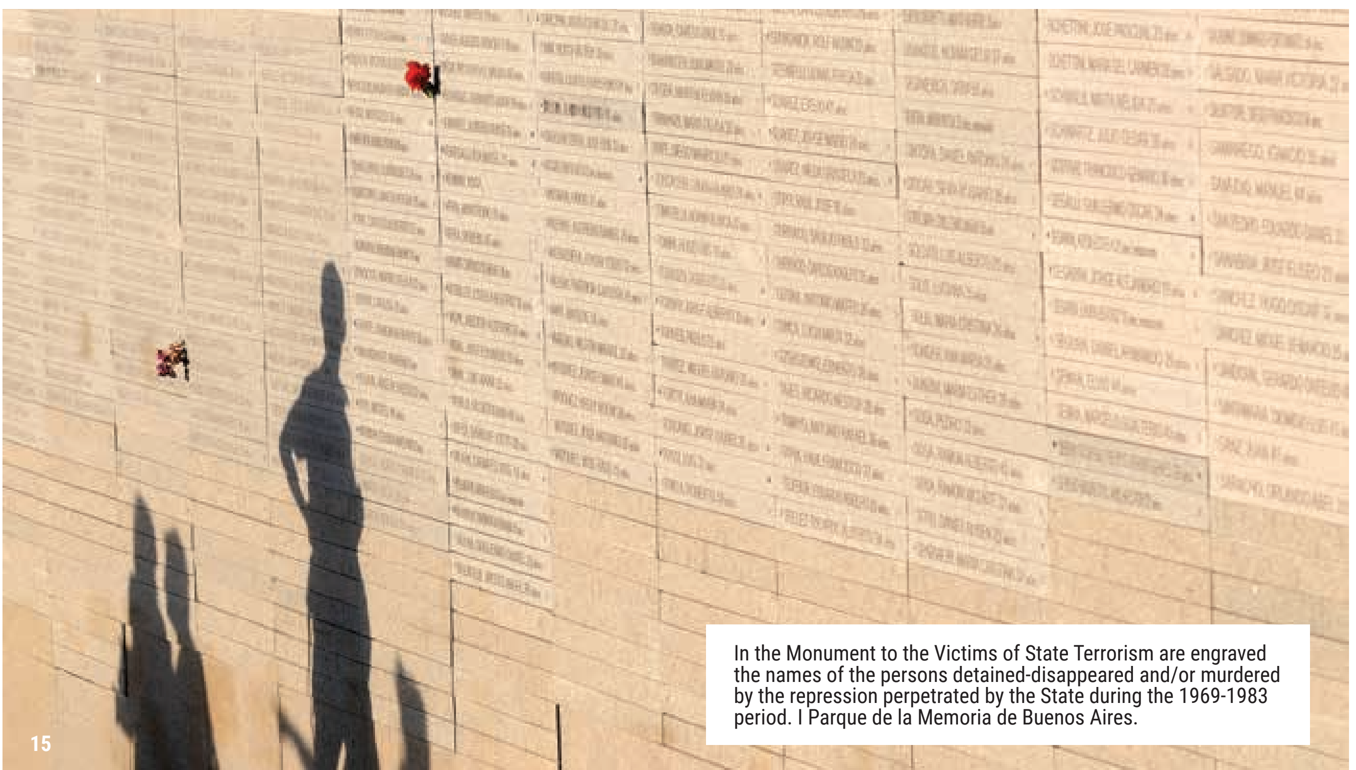

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In the Monument to the Victims of State Terrorism are engraved the names of the persons detained-disappeared and/or murdered by the repression perpetrated by the State during the 1969-1983 period. I Parque de la Memoria de Buenos Aires.

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The Education Area develops a series of tours of the Monument to Victims of State Terrorism, the Public Art Program and the temporary art exhibitions of the PAyS Gallery. I Photo: Parque de la Memoria

space in an emblematic project dedicated to memory. It is considered one of the first and most singular memorials of state terrorism in Latin America.

Along with the monument, a public database was created that contains information about the life and circumstances of the disappearance and/or assassination of each of the people named on the monument. This information is complemented by digital documentation, such as photographs and press notes. The repressive action of state terrorism was characterised by its secrecy and complete concealment of information about the victims, for example, their names, figures, dates and destinations. Consequently, the database is not definitive or closed: it is under permanent construction and continuously updated. It is open to future entries that arise from other documentary sources, information generated through the reopening of trials for crimes against humanity, and new accusations against the Argentinian state.

We consider that memory is a collective process that is constructed over time. That is why, since the foundation of the park and monument, art has been considered vital to encourage reflection and encounters. The park's art department is in charge of implementing the plan for constructing new sculptures and drawing up the programme of visual art exhibitions that are shown in the PayS Gallery (Present Now and Forever). The decision to include art in the remembrance project recognises that art provides a form of reflection that is critical but sensitive, that can challenge routine memory and prompt a dialogue with visitors that involves not only their intellect, but all their senses.

As the visual art exhibitions are conceived as social spaces for thinking and debate, the exhibition programme proposes a dynamic link between past and present. It aims to question, from a poetic perspective, various topics associated with the memory of state terrorism, human rights and the tensions between art, history and politics. In terms of curatorial practice, these issues are not tackled literally or by clinging to factual history, but by

resorting to various formats and strategies to enable critical, plural interpretations of the projects and works that are presented, and to associate the past with problems that are still relevant today.

The link with art is also what has made the park one of the most visited spaces by schools and groups of children and adolescents in the City of Buenos Aires. The education department organises ongoing guided visits, workshops and special activities that tackle current topics relating to human rights, to build bridges between the past and the present. The shaping of identity, freedom of expression and diversity are topics that are always on the agenda, to generate spaces for reflection and work among young people and thus strengthen the construction of critical interpretations of reality.

To transmit is to meet with others because the challenges of democracy are largely at play in the public space. Therefore, the idea is to create meeting places, to give meaning to the collective, to find common spaces without specific forms, prejudices or preconceptions. This concept of permanent, dynamic construction and alert minds has enabled us in these twenty-two years to form and consolidate a large network of relations in our community, with our students, artists, activists, teachers and researchers, as well as strong ties with other countries and communities.

All these relations are what constitute the impetus to continue to construct a suitable strategy for work, production and action. Each one of the challenges that has been set involves continuing to work as a team to think about, imagine and develop a place that honours the work carried out by preceding generations and is always open to the future generations. Today, it is clear that new and challenging questions are arising about almost everything, with few, uncertain answers. However, I am certain that when I look at the work we do and the commitment of each person who in one way or another constitutes the park, we will find new ways to connect, to hug, to reflect together and accompany each other in the most difficult times, to construct a "new normal" that is fairer and more caring.

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21: Scholars visitin the Monument to the Victims of State Terrorism | Augusto Carrasco

22: Institutional visit of the president of the French Republic, François Hollande, in 2016

23: Brazilian musician Caetano Veloso | Patrício Cabral, Parque de la Memoria

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Other EUROM Publications:

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

Past and power. Public policies on memory. From global to local. Jordi Guixé (Editor). [Edicions UB, 2016]

Commemorative books

Along the wall strip. Berlin, 30 years under transformation. El Globus Vermell, 2018

Schuman 70. 70th anniversary of the Schuman Declaration. 2020.

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