

Castell de Montjuïc | Exposició

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Cercant la llibertat

Les protestes del 68 a Ljubljana, Varsòvia i Barcelona

in search
of freedom
1968-2018

Beletrina

EUROM
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Fundació Solidaritat
UNIVERSITAT DE BARCELONA

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CASTELL
DE MONTJUÏC

Ajuntament de
Barcelona

The Montjuïc Castle in Barcelona hosts the exhibition “In Search of Freedom”

- *The traveling exhibition "In Search of Freedom: 1968-2018" is part of an eponymous European project that focuses on the historical and contemporary understanding of the protests of the 60s and 70s in Europe;*
- *Led by the publishing house Beletrina (Slovenia), the project is represented in Spain by the European Observatory on Memories of University of Barcelona's Solidarity Foundation (EUROM);*
- *The exhibition was coordinated by the director of the National Museum of Contemporary History of Slovenia, Kaja Sirok, and was co-produced by the EUROM (Spain) and the History Meeting House (Poland) with the support of the programme Europe for Citizens of the European Commission.*

Barcelona, November 27, 2018 - Has the search for freedom changed in the last 50 years? This is the question posed by the exhibition "In Search of Freedom: 1968-2018" that will be on display in the Castle of Montjuïc in Barcelona until March 31, 2019. Produced by the National Museum of Contemporary History of Slovenia, the European Observatory on Memories of the University of Barcelona's Solidarity Foundation (EUROM), and the History Meeting House (Poland), it is part of an [eponymous European project](#) that focuses on the historical and contemporary understanding of the protests of the 60s and 70s in Europe. Before arriving in Barcelona, where it received the support of the City Council, the exhibition has been shown in Ljubljana (June, 2018), and in Warsaw (September).

The exhibition "[In Search of Freedom: 1968-2018](#)" intends to expand the historical and contemporary understanding of the protests that took place in the 60s and 70s in Europe, emphasizing the particularities of the struggles experienced in Spanish territory, in Poland and the former Yugoslavia. The selected material includes 31 photographs of Catalan, Spanish, Slovenian and Polish funds, as well as reproductions of newspapers, banners and an audio visual document showing some of the protests that took place in the three territories. There are also a set of 43 images that illustrate the search for freedom nowadays, and that have been selected through a [contest](#) promoted on Instagram in the framework of the In Search of Freedom project. The texts have been adapted from articles signed by the researchers Hrvoje Klasić, of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of the University of Zagreb, and Piotr Osęka of the Institute of Political Studies of the Polish Academy of Political Sciences, and by Dr. Mary Nash, head of the Research Unit in Multiculturalism and Gender of the University of Barcelona.

HD pictures are available in the following link:

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=19iFigREl2531ow4iA3bsRqp4XQhNmtD7>

Has searching for freedom changed in the last 50 years?

The international project In Search of Freedom: 1968-2018 offers an answer to this question and through the examination of the images of student protests across Europe, paints an image of the world as it then was, juxtaposing it with the imagery selected in an Instagram contest and a contemporary collection of testimonials from student activists. Those that lived through the shortages and dangers of WWII were astounded by the 1968 protests in which students across Europe fought for various political ideals. The former were unable to comprehend the younger generations' desires and aspirations for a different world. Today, in a time of growing social inequality, it seems that the issues and questions already posed in 1968 are still relevant. The exhibition is a part of the project [In Search of Freedom: 1968-2018](#), centred around the historical and the contemporary understanding of 1968.

The project focuses on this important point in our common history in order to better understand the past and foster change in the future. Re-examining the message of 1968, it promotes the importance of remembrance and a lively and independent civil society in shaping democracy. Bringing together partners from Poland, Slovenia and Spain, it targets mostly students through intergenerational dialogue and active participation. At lectures and panel discussions, students have deepened their knowledge about the 1968 protests in different national contexts and raised awareness of their common European values; memory archives with personal stories of the 1968 witnesses are created by the three partners to stress the local dimension; an Instagram contest involved students throughout the World, inspired by positive cases of the past fight for freedom, to create their own personal vision of a free and democratic society. The material gathered during these activities will appear in book form, in a Workshop study module on the civil rights movement as well as at the International travelling exhibition in Ljubljana, Warsaw and Barcelona.

Spain 1968: freedom to achieve

The Franco dictatorship that followed his victory over the democratic Second Republic in the Civil War of 1939 accounts for the distinctiveness of the situation in Spain in 1968. Bloody repression, lengthy prison sentences, iron censorship, and public policies of depredation affected those defeated in the war. Underpinned by National Catholicism, the normative discourse of Francoism and the legal system it established legitimised a patriarchal social system as a cornerstone of the New State. By the late 1960's anti-Francoist resistance was forged within underground trade unions, the political opposition, students resistance, and emerging feminist groups. The *utopia of the future* and *putting imagination in power* were vague goals compared to the basic requirements such as subsistence, the struggle for democratic and citizenship rights, or better salaries for the Spanish workers. The institutionalised political violence lasted up to the last days of Franco's regime, and claimed its last victims in September of 1975 when five people were executed by a firing-squad. Shortly after, in November of the same year, Franco died. The common fight, then, was for amnesty.



The selected material for this exhibition is an attempt to illustrate the struggles that took place in the 60's and the 70's in Spain, looking for the connections they may keep with the spirit of May 68. The path starts with a portrait of the musician Francesc Pi de la Serra, who belonged to the group of Catalan artists who opposed the regime through their artistic work and under the censorship. At age 19 he was arrested for painting a wall in the name of the Pacifist Organization of Catalonia, the "OPC", a fake movement he created together with a couple of friends. After three nights at the police station of Via Laietana he was tried and sent to Ceuta, Morocco, to comply with compulsory military service. During the 18 months he spent there he disobeyed orders, destroyed weapons, opened official correspondence, and even escaped. At the same time, he was awarded the National Music Prize. The photo was taken in 1965

during a short performance he made to attend a demand of the officers of his regiment. As he started to sing his awarded theme, 'The man of the street' (L'home del carrer), he was immediately asked to stop. "In Spanish!", shouted the Colonel. "No, I sing in Catalan". After finishing the military service, he continued on anti francoist activism as a professional musician and as a member of the PSUC.

The Polish March 1968

The origins of the anti-Semitic campaign of March 1968 date back to June 1967 and the Six-Day War. Israel's victory over the Arab states (supported by the USSR) violated the Cold War balance of power. In a public speech, Władysław Gomułka, the first secretary of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party, compared Polish Jews to the fifth column, suggesting that they were a hidden ally of Israel, with which the Polish People's Republic had broken off diplomatic relations. Gomułka's words were picked up by the Polish United Workers' Party's faction led by Mieczysław Moczar, the then Minister of the Interior. The Security Service (Służba Bezpieczeństwa, SB), which was under Moczar's command, began to make lists of »Zionists« (a term used by the press to refer to Poles of Jewish origin) and began surveilling many of them.

At the same time, in March 1968, student demonstrations took place. Their direct cause was the brutal suppression of the rally at the University of Warsaw. Students from almost all universities in the country demanded upholding freedom of speech and assembly. At several universities students organized sit-in strikes. The protests were accompanied by street manifestations that turned into clashes with the militia.

The student rebellion was rapid but short-lived; it was pacified in two weeks. The strikers were expelled, arrested, or conscripted into the army. The leadership of the Ministry of the Interior used student demonstrations as a pretext to launch the previously prepared mechanism of purge. The press presented the youth protests as a result of a conspiracy conceived by the »Zionists«. Newspapers were filled with anti-Semitic propaganda, according to which Polish Jews were blamed for system faults and economic hardships.

Accompanied by an aggressive press campaign, the so-called unmasking of the hidden Zionists began in the country. Polish Jews, or people recognized as such by the SB officers, had their lives disrupted; they were laid off work, expelled, or deprived of their income. Anti-Semitic inscriptions appeared on doors of their homes and many received threatening phone calls at night.

The state authorities implemented special procedures enabling emigration to Israel in exchange for the renouncement of the Polish citizenship. Under those regulations, nearly 13,000 people left Poland between 1968 and 1971, including many academic lecturers, journalists, and artists. Only less than 30 percent of emigrants actually settled in Israel, others emigrated to Sweden, Denmark, France, Great Britain, or North America.



Estudiants fugint de les tropes de la Milícia Civil i de l'ORMO. Cracòvia, 8 de març de 1968. Tadeusz Zagódzinski, Agència Polonesa de Premsa.

Student demonstrations 1968–1971

Just as in other parts of Europe, 1968 was also very turbulent in Yugoslavia. Open outbreak of dissatisfaction first occurred in Belgrade, where students at the beginning of June clashed with the police. The conflict developed into demonstrations and, after brutal police intervention, into real rebellion. The main cause of student protests was domestic social and economic conditions. With the support of professors, students unambiguously set themselves on the side of critics of reform measures. They accused state and political leaders of opening the door to capitalism and causing social stratification and unemployment through their support of market principles.



Events in Ljubljana coincided with the student unrest in Belgrade. A meeting on June 6, 1968, was mainly organised and led by socially deprived students. The immediate reason for it was the decision of the management of the Student Settlement to increase rents. In addition to demands that the Republican Executive Council increase the scholarship fund and for the introduction of social security for students, they also posed broader political demands, including ordering economic conditions in the country and the prevention of unjustified enrichment of individuals.

Radio Študent began to broadcast in May 1969. It had an important informative and propaganda role in the student movement at Ljubljana University.

From the spring of 1970, students more decisively intervened in political, and especially international events.

In the spring of 1971, student protest actions reached a peak with the occupation of the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana. The reason for the occupation was repressive measures against the student movement in general and individual students, although the real causes were social relations, failed economic policies, social differentiation, and the unregulated social position of the university and intelligentsia. The socialist-oriented student movement strove for more ordered relations in society.

In the following academic year, the student movement split into various currents, predominantly radical left, but which existed only for a short time. Institutionally, the movement was transformed after the entry of the Community of Students into the Alliance of Socialist Youth of Slovenia.

This exhibition was made by National Museum of Contemporary History of Slovenia, on behalf of the Museum Kaja Širok, Ph.D.

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About the European Observatory on Memories

The [European Observatory on Memories](#) (EUROM) is a translational network of institutions and organizations committed to the analysis and promotion of remembrance public policies. Its main aim is to contribute to reflect on recent history, standing up for the diversity and plurality of memories. EUROM is led by Fundació Solidaritat of the University of Barcelona, with the support of the Europe for Citizens program of the European Commission.