

EDITORIAL

It was 2012, ten years ago today, when we launched a ground-breaking and certainly ambitious project: the creation of the European Observatory on Memories. The public presentation was in 2014, but in the background and with the support of the programme Europe for Citizens, we had started to sign the first collaboration agreements with different European members with a view to launching a programme and various projects in the framework of a new horizontal work network on memory policies on an international scale. Memory work in a transnational dimension and in a permanent exchange of experiences was a new method; not unprecedented, but essential after the first decade of the 21st century.

I still remember the first roadmap proposal, folder in hand, in a couple of offices in Brussels with the then director of the Bobigny Station Memorial, Anne Bourgon, defending that the network action of multiple European memories was a good way to generate a multiplier effect and a platform for learning and permanent growth. The other axis we defended was citizens' activity in memorial heritage processes or in inclusive proposals in the projects. European sponsorship was not only necessary for funding, but also for the political and structural framework of action, supporting the European Commission's synergy to promote memorial values within citizens' programmes. The Observatory's proposal was well received and it was a great success to be able to coordinate it from the Solidarity Foundation of the University of Barcelona. The director of the foundation, Xavier López, immediately approved the creation of a memories work area in the framework of broader and more established cooperation and human rights projects such as those conducted by the university foundation. With the Solidarity Foundation we have been able to grow with autonomy and professionalism, and it has created a work synergy that straddles the academic world, organisations and civil society. We have also been able to develop the work of memories in plural, extensively, from small local projects to more ambitious international proposals. The activation of the concept "Glocal" was achieved partly thanks to the concept of plurality and multiplicity. The objectives, structure and design of the programmes have grown over time and have humbly consolidated our platform. The idea was also to establish relations with other networks, such as ICMEMO, with which we have worked intensely and, in addition, we have shared the golden rules (in 2012 we began writing a memorandum of "best practice advice" for the policies, actions and programmes of memory, considering the multiple failures, asymmetries, interference and political manipulation of museums, institutions and professionals that had occurred -or were occurring- in different parts of Europe -and not only-). Actually, and unfortunately, these golden rules are more necessary and present than ever in societies which, paradoxically, are continuously exposed to conflicts and crises.

Ten years have passed and we have survived and grown in size, and we like to think in content too. I want to publicly congratulate the whole team which, from the start, has collaborated on a permanent or temporary basis with EUROM. Vocation, effort and professional conviction are essential qualities when

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dealing with sensitive and at times conflictive topics such as the field of memory practices and the uses of the past in contemporary societies. Without a human team, and without a diverse and therefore intensely rich network of members, this journey would not have been possible. We hope it will continue for many more years to come.

That is why this 2022 issue, after some strange and tumultuous years of pandemics and other nearby conflicts, we have decided not to present one single line of themed contents, and we have approached experts and professionals from different fields that we believe are key to address the present and the future in the debates and policies of memory. This is a current situation that affects us and tests us permanently and that in some way revisits some of the more classic problems (East-West, relativism and imperialism) or debates that have taken the public sphere by storm, such as colonial memories, gender, or the debates on values, rights and citizens that the CERV programme promotes from the European institutions.

Thus, as regards content, it is no coincidence that one of the magazine's long articles is written by the lawyer Reed Brody, also known as the "dictator hunter" as a result of his work defending human rights in various countries, denouncing human rights violations in Nicaragua, collaborating with victims in the cases against the dictator Augusto Pinochet of Chile and Jean-Claude Duvalier of Haiti, among others. In "Talking about Rose: Justice and memory in Chad", Brody brilliantly tells us how, with the cooperation of the victims, huge detective work was carried out to reconstruct in documentary form the repression of Hissène Habré, dictator of Chad between 1982 and 1990, and heroic episodes such as that of Rose Lokissim, which were fundamental to be able to put Habré on trial, years later, in Senegal. At a time like the present, when democracy is under threat in different parts of the world and certain leaders believe they can enjoy impunity, it is worth remembering and explaining how justice, sooner or later, reaches different parts of the world.

In the European section—and without straying too far from current impunity—, the renowned historian Georges Mink has put on his long distance glasses to describe the evolution of memorial components in the geopolitical strategies that have affected Eastern Europe, and how Vladimir Putin, at the head of the Russian government, is using a militarised collective memory and exploiting the mobilising capacity of the narratives of the past (especially of the Great Patriotic War) to fulfil his territorial ambitions for Ukraine. Furthermore, changing subject, but within the framework of European memory policies, Marie-Louise Jansen explains the project she coordinates: *Contested Histories in Public Spaces*, a project promoted by the Institute for Historical Justice and Reconciliation (IHJR) and the EuroClio-European Association of History Educators. This project has collected more than 500 cases from 139 different countries, identifying statues, monuments, places and space names that make up an uncomfortable heritage that is being socially protested against (spaces linked to the memory of colonialism, imperialism, fascism, authoritarianism, communism, etc.) and in this article, Jansen makes us reflect on Europe's need to face its past through different spaces that remember slave trafficking.

This year we have dedicated the interview to one of the most influential

thinkers in the field of memory studies, professor Andreas Huyssen. We talk not only about his vast work and about the concepts he has created (such as urban palimpsests), but also about highly topical issues, such as the political situation in the United States, the role of memory to fight the far right, the debates stemming from current monumental iconoclasm towards statues that remember slavery or colonial rule, the relations between art and memory, the use of memorials in the public space and the impact of tourism in places of memory.

In the section of brief articles, there is an article by the curator and art historian Clémentine Deliss, who will make us rethink and reconsider the role of museums today; historian Keith Lowe analyses the role played today by monuments dedicated to the heroes and martyrs of the Second World War; historian Clàudia Wasserman talks to us about iconoclasm towards statues that remember slavery and colonial rule in Latin America; following the famous film *Great Freedom* (2021), alongside the director and screenwriters Bernhard Steinmann and Thomas Reider, we will explore the history of persecution and struggle of homosexual people in Germany; and, finally, historian Celeste Muñoz and anthropologist Sarai Martínez will share the first results of the Redress Network project for Spain, a project about reparation initiatives fostered by Columbia University and with participation from the NIOD-Institute of Holland and EUROM.

As with previous issues of the magazine, there will be reviews of books (in this case by Daša Duhaček and Ricard Conesa) and films, such as the recently released *Canción a una dama en la sombra*, written by the director, the Chilean film-maker Carolina Astudillo.

To conclude, historians Jose Miguel Gastón and César Layana, from the Navarra Institute of Memory, a member of the Observatory network, will explain the profound work being carried out by this institution, developing an intense public policy of memory that ranges from the creation of a network of memory spaces to a large selection of educational projects, and including the exhumation of mass graves and the creation of a large database of documentary research, among other lines of work. An example to be followed in terms of dealing with the memory of the Civil War and the Franco dictatorship in Spain.

We have tried to maintain the informative and analytical level of previous issues. I would like to close this editorial by once again thanking the editing team for their work, and also the wide team of scientific and editorial advisers composed of colleagues who also represent inter-territoriality and multi-disciplinarity.

I hope you enjoy the read and that you join us, at least...for another 10 years!!!



Jordi Guixé

Director of the European
Observatory on Memories