

Robert Born, Barbara Kristina Murovec (Eds.)

Visual Memory and Oblivion

Monuments and Conflicts in Urban Spaces in Central and Eastern Europe from the Nineteenth Century to the Present Day

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In Collaboration with Wolfgang Augustyn

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Barbara Kristina Murovec / Robert Born

The Visual Politics and Public Monuments of Cities
Introduction

Adopting an art-historical approach, the present volume explores the interplay between two areas of research – cities and memory – within the broader context of the visual politics of public spaces, as shaped, constrained or forbidden by municipal or state institutions and actors. Whilst each of these two fields has been comprehensively addressed in recent decades,[1] there are comparatively few studies that synthesise these aspects and concepts from an art-historical perspective with a focus on the regions covered in this volume. A central tenet of our volume is the assertion that public monuments, through their erection, preservation, transformation, erasure or destruction,[2] serve as avenues for political and artistic interpretation of the past and thereby circumvent the objective of providing an accurate historical account. However, the multidirectional memory of the (former) inhabitants is rarely incorporated into urban spaces either in a convincing or fair manner.[3] The artistic style of public monuments plays a crucial role; it is promoted by established art criticism and orchestrated for political purposes. The interplay between artistic and political perspectives in public spaces has a long history, which became particularly apparent in the second half of the nineteenth century and in the post-Second World War decades. During the Cold War, the monumental landscape theoretically mirrored the division of the world into blocs.[4] As evidenced by the articles in this edited volume, contemporary commissioning policy continues to be profoundly influenced by the interplay between art and the humanities, on the one hand, and authoritarian and autocratic power, on the other. Capital cities and locations of strategic importance, including border regions, are considered to be spaces in which visual politics receive particular emphasis and are conveyed as an unambiguous narrative. Notwithstanding the political function of public monuments, however, even within closed art systems, there are differences and artistic deviations stemming from individual creativity. These may emerge from a fascination with the regime, ideological disobedience, the artistic abstraction of the personal pursuit of truth, or, for example, the aspiration to achieve universality or even eternity in artistic expression.

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1 E. g. Assmann 1999. – Eckardt 2014. – Mieg/Heyl 2013. – Pakier/Wawrzyniak 2015. – Nerdinger 2017. – Kogler/Hamedinger 2021. – Kogler/Hamedinger 2024.

2 Cf. e. g. Young 1992. – Thamer 1997. – Gamboni 2018.

3 For the concept of multidirectional memory, cf. Rothberg 2009.

4 Cf. e. g. Drengenberg 1972. – Mittig 1972. – Bowlt 1978. – Rausch 2006. – Saunders 2018.

Studies of monuments from periods of dictatorship,[5] both past and present, reveal striking similarities in the strategies of visual politics throughout Europe during the nineteenth, twentieth and twenty-first centuries, when viewed from a longue durée perspective. Most notably, the profound influence of the prevailing politics and ideology of the era on the visual and spatial agenda within individual countries and cities is evident. The concept of *lieux de mémoire*, as theorised by Pierre Nora (1931–2025), encompasses simultaneously more and less than the aspirations of the present volume.[6] The emergence of this concept coincided with the onset of an international boom in memory and identity studies in the 1980s. In the subsequent period, the concept was initially pursued in several Western European countries from a national perspective, following the French editorial project.[7] Concurrent with the emergence of the first projects that adopted a pan-European perspective,[8] a body of literature focusing on Central and South-Eastern Europe also came to the fore during the first decade of the new millennium. The contributions in this volume adopt an approach similar to that of *lieux de mémoire*, focusing on the historical regions of Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe.[9] A total of fifteen authors discuss, from an art-historical perspective, the processes of nationalisation and heroisation of urban space on the one hand, and overlooked and concealed topics on the other, using the example of twelve cities in nine countries. The visual transformation of space in different political systems and the complex intertwining of power and the political agenda of public monuments are given particular consideration, as are the respective art canons in perception and evaluation.

Although Robert Musil's famous, oft-quoted description of monuments characterises them as invisible,[10] their role in space is always active and memory-binding,[11] which is why one of the important questions is how to deal with the *in situ* preservation and

5 Of particular interest are the exhibitions presented in Vienna and Munich during the decade following the fall of the Iron Curtain, and most notably the exhibition *Art and Power: Europe under the Dictators 1930–45*, which was shown in London, Barcelona and Berlin as part of the prominent Council of Europe Exhibitions. Cf. Exhibit.Cat. Vienna 1994. – Exhibit.Cat. Vienna/Munich 1994–1995. – Exhibit. Cat. London/Barcelona/Berlin 1995–1996.

6 Nora 1984–1992; see also Unfried 1991.

7 An exemplary case study of this phenomenon is provided by the German editorial project: François/ Schulze 2001.

8 Cf. Boer/Duchhardt/Kreis/Schmale 2011–2012. – François/Serrier 2012.

9 Weber/Olschowsky/Petranský/Pók/Przewoźnik 2011. – Bahlcke/Rohdewald/Wünsch 2013. – Hahn/Traba/Loew 2012–2015. An evaluation of the reception of the concept of *lieux de mémoire* in Eastern Europe is given in: Górny/Kończal 2015.

10 Musil 1976.

11 For more see Murovec 2024.

musealisation of contested public monuments.[12] The toppling of monuments in the United States and elsewhere in the context of the Black Lives Matter movement is indicative of the differing attitudes towards monuments on a global scale.[13] However, there has been far less media attention paid to the toppling of Soviet monuments in the Baltic states and Ukraine over the past decade and a half. These actions share clear parallels with the Black Lives Matter protests, both in their performative gesture and in their anti-colonial thrust.[14]

Numerous debates also highlight the ambition to right wrongs or make reparations, a concept that has recently been termed 'memory activism'.[15] Consequently, there is a desire to preserve the 'true' or just memory, and to prevent political populism from dominating public discourse. While such tones may be considered to be at odds with the fundamental task of the art historian, who researches and interprets the past as it was, in the domain of public monuments, it can be concluded that the objective is not necessarily to adopt a neutral ideological stance, but rather to explicitly situate research within a social context. Consequently, our research also reflects an awareness of art history's involvement in the political system, both historically and in the present day. When studying cities as spaces of visual memory, researchers were guided by the realisation that art-historical research fundamentally contributes to the formation of visual and memory politics.

Structure of the Volume

The book explores the history of memorials and monuments, as well as shifting practices of remembrance and monument-related activities, in the following cities: Belgrade (Serbia), Berlin (Germany), Bitola (North Macedonia), Gori (Georgia), Krško (Slovenia), Kyiv (Ukraine), Nuremberg (Germany), Osijek (Croatia), Saint Petersburg (Russia), Ravne na Koroškem (Slovenia), Trieste (Italy), and Zagreb (Croatia). The essays encompass a range of geographical and political regions, including South-Eastern Europe,

12 Some Baltic states have made a political decision to completely remove Soviet monuments; cf. e. g. Jõekalda 2024. – Kuyck 2025.

13 For public monuments and the Black Lives Matter movement, see e. g.: Spiegel 2021. – Boldrick/Clay/Duster/Magee 2022.

14 On developments in the Baltic States: Davoliūtė 2023. – Jõekalda 2024. – Kuyck 2025. In Ukraine, the Euromaidan protests against the policies of the pro-Russian President Viktor Yanukovych, which began in December 2013, were accompanied by a widespread destruction of Lenin monuments. This phenomenon was referred to in a Ukrainian neologism, 'Leninopad' (Lenin fall). The removal of Soviet monuments, which were increasingly regarded as symbols of oppression by Moscow, accelerated in the aftermath of the 2015 decree on Decommunisation and ultimately in the wake of the 2022 full-scale invasion of the country by Russian troops. See Peters 2016. – Betlii 2022.

15 Gutman/Wüstenberg 2023.

Central Europe, the Alpine-Adriatic region, and Eastern Europe, which, to a certain extent, overlap due to the comprehensive coverage of a historical period spanning from the mid-nineteenth century to the present day. Memorials erected in the historical states of Austria-Hungary, Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union are situated in areas that have been embroiled in conflict since the 1990s, thus becoming particularly contested spaces, often referred to as 'dissonant heritage'. Certain studies focus on a single period or even a single monument, while others explore cities and their memorial landscapes over a larger span of time.

The first two articles offer detailed analyses of the evolution of perspectives on the Holocaust and its subsequent impact on visual memory politics in the cities of Trieste and Bitola. Until 1918, Trieste was part of the Habsburg Monarchy, and above all it was a cosmopolitan port where people from many different countries had met and connected for centuries. However, in the aftermath of the First World War, the city became a major centre of Fascism and violence against Slovenes. The primary function of Trieste's monuments has been to commemorate the establishment of the city as an Italian entity and the triumph of the Italian forces. However, this approach effectively erases the city's intricate historical tapestry, failing to differentiate between cause and effect in the process. Additionally, they serve to memorialise the violence perpetrated against Italians in Yugoslavia after the Second World War (*foibe*). Trieste is a highly pertinent case study for the investigation of contested memories and understanding how societies commemorate their violent pasts in public spaces and how borderlands can strengthen nationalism and the exclusion of 'the Other'. The landscape of memory is considerably less complex than is generally assumed. As part of the European HERA project, *Transfer of Cultural Objects in the Alpe Adria Region in the 20th Century*, Daria Brasca and Donata Levi conducted research into attitudes towards Jewish cultural heritage in the Italian part of the region, with a particular focus on the city of Trieste. In their joint text in this volume, the authors shed light on the violence against members of the Jewish community and the confiscation of their property from the perspective of memory politics in public spaces. Notably, public monuments in the city commemorating the Holocaust and Italian collaboration with the Nazis are scarce. The public remembrance of the Holocaust in Trieste has remained limited and fragmented. The majority of these initiatives were pioneered by Jewish institutions or associations, while official authorities only belatedly endorsed commemorative plaques, *Stolpersteine*, and ceremonies, often amidst disputes and ambiguities. The Risiera di San Sabba emerged as a central yet contested site, caught between Holocaust remembrance and nationalist and anti-Communist interpretations. Brasca and Levi illustrate how local, national and ideological tensions obstruct the development of a shared and critically engaged memory of the Holocaust, leaving it overshadowed by competing narratives and political instrumentalisation.

In a similar vein, the period following the Second World War in Yugoslavia provided minimal avenues for the commemoration of the fate of the Jews during the war. Conversely, a significant number of monuments were erected to primarily glorify the national liberation struggle of the partisans. Even the renowned *Stone Flower* (Croat. *Kameni cvijet*) monument in Jasenovac, designed by Bogdan Bogdanović (1922–2010) and unveiled in 1966 on the site of a concentration camp operated by the Independent State of Croatia (Nezavisna Država Hrvatska, NDH) during the war – where Serbs, Jews, and Roma were imprisoned and killed – was primarily regarded as a monument denouncing the occupiers and honouring the revolution rather than serving as a memorial of the Holocaust.[16] The glorification of communist resistance in the post-war period was instrumental in the failure of Yugoslavia to commemorate the Holocaust. The article by Svetlana Smolčić Makuljević examines the once-vibrant Jewish community of Bitola (Manastir), a major Sephardic centre in the Balkans until the Holocaust, and the subsequent erasure of its cultural presence. This centuries-old community was extinguished during the Second World War, when more than 7,000 Jews from Bitola were deported to Treblinka by the Bulgarian occupiers. Their synagogues were destroyed or repurposed, and Jewish neighbourhoods disappeared from the urban landscape. The study by Smolčić Makuljević argues that post-war and post-communist memory politics contributed to this erasure. Within the context of Yugoslav socialism, the remembrance of the Holocaust was predominantly overshadowed by anti-Fascist narratives that focused exclusively on the commemoration of partisan heroes, largely ignoring the broader Jewish tragedy. Today, despite renewed interest and projects like the restoration of Bitola's Jewish cemetery, most sites of Jewish heritage remain unmarked, neglected or poorly preserved. Smolčić Makuljević shows that Bitola's urban landscape reflects a culture of oblivion rather than remembrance.

Two articles focus on Zagreb, the capital of Croatia. In the first study, Dragan Damjanović explores the monumental landscape of the nineteenth century, juxtaposing it with that of another Croatian city, Osijek. The monuments, which were created between the Austro-Hungarian Compromise and the end of the First World War, reflect political tensions, the emergence of national identity and cultural aspirations. While other cities within the Habsburg Monarchy (which later became part of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, and after 1929 the Kingdom of Yugoslavia) also experienced 'competitions' over which historical figures to commemorate – for example in Ljubljana between German- and Slovenian-speaking populations, as well as between conservative and liberal political factions – Zagreb's semi-autonomous position within Hungary makes it a unique case. While the pro-Hungarian government refrained from sponsoring monuments that could potentially incite Croatian nationalism, local authorities, opposition parties, cultural associations and private citizens – particularly in Zagreb – strategically utilised

16 Giergiel/Taczyńska 2024, 464–468.

monuments to writers, artists and military heroes to forge a Croatian national pantheon. The Lower Town of Zagreb emerged as the symbolic centre of this 'Croatisation', while cemeteries such as Mirogoj functioned as sites for politically sensitive commemorations. In contrast, the ethnically diverse and politically loyal city of Osijek avoided national monuments, favouring 'neutral' or dynastic themes instead.

A comprehensive transformation of the memorial landscape took place in the newly formed Yugoslavia after 1945. In addition to sites associated with partisan battles and Nazi violence, city centres, particularly in the republics and border towns, became focal points for the transformation and installation of new public monuments. The most ambitious of these projects endowed the country with a new memorial identity and involved the construction of new socialist districts or even entire cities, such as Nova Gorica on the border with Italy. In her paper, Patricia Počanić explores how public art shaped the identity and daily life of Novi Zagreb, a socialist-era extension of Croatia's capital, developed after the Second World War to address housing shortages. Počanić identifies three forms of public art: monuments, frequently modest war memorials associated with ideological narratives; sculptures, installed in residential areas to humanise 'concrete dormitories' and celebrate labour, youth and everyday life; and temporary artistic interventions, which emerged in the 1970s and 1980s through the New Artistic Practice to democratise art, engage local people and transform public space. Despite their ephemerality, these interventions embodied bottom-up urbanism and Henri Lefebvre's "right to the city", generating collective memories. Počanić evaluates Novi Zagreb's public art as a dynamic interplay between state-controlled cultural policy and grassroots tactics, in which art served as both a vehicle for ideology and a means of reclaiming everyday life.

Milan Popadić, an art historian primarily focused on monument protection, dedicates his essay to New Belgrade, which served as the capital of both the Republic of Serbia and the Socialist state of Yugoslavia until its dissolution in 1991. The author explores the transformation of Ušće, an area located at the confluence of the Sava and Danube rivers, as a case study of how cities embody memory and commemorative identity. Drawing on Alois Riegl's distinction between intentional and unintentional monuments and Ivo Maroević's tripartite model of material–form–meaning, Popadić situates Ušće within the broader discourse of urban memory. This theoretical framework posits the city as both a mnemonic mechanism and a heritage corpus, wherein its factual identity (its historical and social definition) interacts dynamically with its actual identity (its contemporary perception). Within this context, Ušće serves as a poignant example of the tension between urban form as a site of collective remembrance and as a stage for the evolution of political, social and cultural agendas. Historically, Ušće was a no-man's land at the border of empires. During the socialist era, it was radically redefined as a representational space of Yugoslav statehood. This was embodied by structures such as the Palace of the Federation, the Central Committee Tower, the Museum of Contemporary Art and the

Friendship Park. In the post-socialist period, these landmarks have undergone processes of functional and symbolic redefinition, including commercialisation, reconstruction and ideological reframing. Today, Ušće functions as both a commercial hub and a cultural venue, yet the contested plans for its redevelopment highlight conflicting priorities between heritage preservation and neoliberal urban transformation.

The small Slovenian town of Krško, located near the Croatian border, is the final municipality under discussion that was part of Austria-Hungary in the nineteenth century and subsequently Yugoslavia following its dissolution. In their paper, authors Barbara Kristina Murovec and Helena Rožman adopt a longue durée approach in their examination of the town, considering the first public monuments from the late nineteenth century to the present day and drawing comparisons, particularly with the Slovenian capital, Ljubljana. The selection of Krško was not arbitrary; several momentous events in Slovenian history occurred in the surrounding area, including peasant uprisings, the advent of Protestantism, a camp that functioned as a key collection point for the deportation of Slovenes during the Second World War and the resettlement of the Gottscheer Germans from the part of Slovenia occupied by Italy. Nevertheless, numerous features of memorial policy are also relevant to other Slovenian cities. The authorities responsible for erecting monuments in socialist Yugoslavia redefined commemoration through monumental propaganda, celebrating the partisan struggle, reframing peasant revolts as precursors to the Communist revolution and selectively memorialising deportations while silencing post-war Communist violence. Krško's monuments reveal how the negotiation of remembrance and deliberate forgetting are manifested in public space, with each political era reshaping the past to suit its own narratives. Through a case study of Krško, the authors demonstrate that monuments are never neutral, but rather instruments for constructing and rewriting identity. At present, the town's monuments form a layered palimpsest, blending national propaganda, local pride and selective silences.

The following two articles focus on the German cities of Berlin and Nuremberg. In his essay, architectural historian Iain Boyd Whyte chronicles the tumultuous appellation history of a Berlin square, reflecting the fluctuating political ideologies of twentieth-century Germany. Initially constructed during Berlin's westward expansion and named Reichskanzlerplatz in honour of Otto von Bismarck (1815–1898), the square came to symbolise German imperial nation-building. During the Weimar era, the site became a showcase of modern urbanism, featuring broadcasting houses and exhibition halls. In the era of the National Socialists, the square underwent a renaming to Adolf-Hitler-Platz and was incorporated into Albert Speer's overambitious plans for Germania, which included the proposed renaming to Mussolini-Platz and the erection of a colossal militaristic monument by Arno Breker (1900–1991). Following the destruction during the Second World War, the square reverted to Reichskanzlerplatz before being renamed Theodor-Heuss-Platz in honour of West Germany's first president, who had been a critic

of Nazism. Post-war memorials such as the Eternal Flame for the displaced Germans and the Blauer Obelisk were erected to monumentalise democratic values, albeit with less impact than earlier authoritarian symbols. Using the renaming and redesign of the square as an example, Whyte illustrates Berlin's ongoing battle between remembrance and forgetting, demonstrating how the appellations of streets and squares encode power, ideology and memory.

Due to its function in Nazi Germany, Nuremberg features numerous monuments that are perceived as 'difficult heritage', and preserving them poses significant challenges. However, in her essay, Anke Schlecht examines Nuremberg's two at first glance less controversial and most significant fountains, the fourteenth-century *Schöner Brunnen* and the seventeenth-century *Neptune Fountain*, as case studies to illustrate how monuments in public space acquire and lose meaning over time. These two fountains provide excellent examples of how public monuments, intended to be permanent symbols, become dynamic sites of change and discourse that are constantly reinterpreted according to political power, cultural values and public sentiments. Their visibility, controversy and even absence shape urban identity and memory. In Nuremberg, this shifting perception reveals how the city continues to grapple with its layered past, from imperial prestige and a medieval heritage to Nazi appropriation and contemporary efforts to redefine itself as a 'city of peace and human rights'. Following the submission of the article, various groups engaged actively in acts of civil disobedience by dyeing the water in public fountains in Nuremberg and other German cities, including Berlin, Hamburg, Gera, Kassel, Munich and Regensburg. The colour red was chosen to symbolise blood, black to represent oil, and green to denote either poison or greenwashing, depending on the focus of the protests, bringing climate change to the fore – a topic not covered in our book. During the summer of 2025, the water in the *Neptune Fountain* in Nuremberg was dyed a vibrant green. To date, no individual or group has acknowledged responsibility for the so-called 'paint attack', which is likely to diminish the impact of the protest. For a change in perception and awareness to occur, a clear explanation and strong stance are required.

The contribution of Tanja Zimmermann introduces a series of articles on Eastern Europe, combining an art-historical perspective on public space with an approach rooted in literary studies. Her case study centres on nineteenth century Saint Petersburg, a planned city founded by Peter the Great (1672–1725), which came to embody both a real and literary space. Writers and artists created 'city texts' that blended urban topography with myth and memory, thereby shaping the city's identity and its inhabitants' perception of it. As Zimmermann contends, the image of Saint Petersburg underwent a transition, evolving from an idealised 'paradise' to a contested, ambivalent urban symbol. Early feuilletons and panoramas fostered a participatory, kinetic urban culture that intertwined memory, national identity and consumerism. However, Zimmermann's

essay, drawing on numerous literary and artistic examples, demonstrates that the meaning of the boulevard evolved over time to reflect the broader tensions between modernity, nationalism and urban life.

The following essay by Irene Giviashvili provides an insight into the complex cultural and political history of Georgia, shedding light on the role of the city of Gori during the Communist era and contemporary tensions. The city's architecture and urban development reflect Soviet totalitarian aesthetics and global memorial traditions. The Stalin Museum and memorial landscape are powerful yet contested heritage sites. This study explores how Joseph Stalin's cult of personality reshaped his hometown of Gori through architecture, urban planning and cultural memory. Beginning in the 1930s, the humble birthplace of the dictator underwent a transformation into a monumental shrine, reminiscent of international memorial sites such as Lincoln's birthplace in Kentucky. New avenues, hotels and public spaces were constructed to support Gori as a pilgrimage site, culminating in the Stalin State Museum (1957), which was designed to incorporate both Stalinist imperial grandeur and medieval Georgian forms. Presently, the Stalin Museum remains a preserved 'time capsule' of Soviet propaganda, thus giving rise to complex questions concerning the manner in which societies address contested heritage. Despite the removal of Stalin's statue in 2010 and the introduction of exhibits on Soviet repression, the museum still reflects the tension between preserving authentic Soviet-era narratives and preventing their misuse for glorification purposes. Gori's transformation is illustrative of the strategies employed by totalitarian regimes to utilise urban design for the glorification of political leaders, and the longevity of such legacies within contemporary landscapes.

The concluding three chapters of the publication analyse the relationship between cities and visual memory politics in Slovenia, Serbia and Ukraine, with a particular focus on individual monuments. This dynamic is examined within the broader frameworks of Otherness, the populist reshaping of memory through new autocratic commissions and in response to ongoing military conflicts. The Italian art historian Giovanni Rubino examines Dino Basaldella's *Ear of Ravne*, created at the Forma Viva Symposium in the Slovenian town of Ravne na Koroškem in 1965. The monument is both a landmark of abstract-expressionist iron sculpture and a politically charged work of public art. Rubino proposes a dual interpretation of the sculpture, emphasising its aesthetic and political dimensions. From an aesthetic perspective, it is regarded as one of the final notable examples of welded scrap-iron sculpture in Europe. Politically, it is seen as a symbol of the cultural collaboration between Italy and Yugoslavia during the Cold War, representing the integration of art with the dignity of labour. The *Ear of Ravne* thus stands as a unique convergence of modernist form, industrial material and socialist ideology, transforming public sculpture into a tribute to labour and collective identity. Notably, the state narratives of remembrance along the Italian eastern border and the Slovenian

western border were vastly different, bearing the scars of fascist violence against the Yugoslav population and the Yugoslav authorities' subsequent attitude towards the Italian population.

In his analysis of a monument erected in Belgrade a decade ago, Nenad Makuljević addressed the highly relevant issue of how public spaces are used to engender visual politics in the twenty-first century. Specifically, he asserts that the monument to Stefan Nemanja in Belgrade exemplifies the manner in which the autocratic government of Aleksandar Vučić reconfigures urban identity through the utilisation of monuments as instruments of political propaganda. The project, initiated in 2015 under Vučić's direct guidance, circumvented transparent procedures, relied on a politicised selection process and ultimately entrusted the work to Russian sculptor Alexander Rukavishnikov, thereby underscoring both domestic authoritarian control and Serbia's alignment with Russia. The monument itself departs from the traditional religious veneration of Nemanja, with its oversized dimensions, militaristic symbolism and ambiguous iconography constructing a new, politicised cult around him as a national-historical figure. Although it is presented as a revival of Serbian identity, it is actually a populist spectacle: megalomaniacal in scale, opaque in financing and manipulative in meaning. Rather than honouring history, the monument exemplifies how an autocratic regime can use public space to consolidate power and project nationalist fantasies. Serbian monumental politics employs the same approaches as Yugoslavia did after 1945, when it monumentalised the entire country with memorials dedicated to the national liberation struggle, which determined the manner of remembrance for decades to come. Since monuments serve as instruments of the regime, they function not only as conduits for remembrance and forgetting, but also possess the capacity to influence the process of (re)shaping the identity of the population and the landscape.

This agency of monuments also directs the reading of memorials in the article by Dirk Suckow, the final contribution in the book. Suckow examines the history and transformation of Kyiv's Peoples' Friendship Monument. Inaugurated in 1982, it was intended as a Soviet celebration of the 'eternal unity' of Russia and Ukraine, visually expressed through a giant titanium rainbow arch and accompanying sculptures. Conceived as a propaganda project, the monument embodied the Soviet myth of 'peoples' friendship', interweaving the 1654 Treaty of Pereyaslav with narratives of socialist brotherhood, unity and progress. Due to its central location and monumental scale, the monument became a powerful urban and ideological landmark, thus embedding imperial narratives into Kyiv's cityscape. Since Ukraine gained independence in 1991, however, the monument has been subject to continuous reinterpretation and dismantlement. Initially trivialised through everyday leisure activities and activist interventions, the site became a contested location during the Euromaidan protests and following Russia's aggression in 2014. In the aftermath of the full-scale invasion by Russia in 2022, the

'reunification' sculptures were removed, and the ensemble was officially renamed the 'Arch of Freedom of the Ukrainian People'. In the contemporary context, it is being reintegrated into a new commemorative project that pays tribute to Ukraine's defenders. Suckow argues that the monument exemplifies how Soviet symbols can be re-coded to represent anti-imperial memory, shifting from an emblem of enforced unity to one of Ukrainian freedom and resilience.

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The book emerged from a lengthy and specific process. The editors have continued and transformed an initial book project conceived as a collection of papers from an international conference held in Nova Gorica in November 2018, entitled *(Past) Visions of the Future and the Materialisation of Memory in Public Space: Nova Gorica – A Town Built on the Border after the Second World War in Comparative Perspective*. While some of the texts in the volume relate to this event, others were added later, with the final article being included in 2025. The book is being published under the auspices of a renowned series *Das östliche Europa: Kunst- und Kulturgeschichte* and with generous funding support of the Zentralinstitut für Kunstgeschichte in Munich, where Wolfgang Augustyn joined the editorial team. We are especially grateful to him for this.

First and foremost, however, we would like to express our gratitude to the authors of the initial project for their patience in waiting for the book to take its final form. Simultaneously, we would like to extend our deepest appreciation to the authors who joined the project later and enriched the volume with their expertise. Finally, we would like to express our gratitude to the peer reviewers and the co-editor of the series *Das östliche Europa*, Ada Raev, for their meticulous review of the contributions, and to the team at Böhlau Verlag, particularly Julia Beenken, Kristi Doepner and Bettina Waringer, as well as the proofreader Kate Bird. On occasion, book projects represent a special turning point or caesura. This is also true of the present publication, which began in a completely different world and within a different framework of collaborations to that in which it ends. While the present volume is not designed to address the global challenges that are currently being faced, it seeks to facilitate a more profound and nuanced comprehension of the subject matter.[17]

17 The part of the introduction written by Barbara Kristina Murovec and her part of final editing were also supported through a fellowship at the Käte Hamburger Centre for Cultural Practices of Reparation (CURE) by the German Federal Ministry of Research, Technology and Space (BMFTR) under funding code 01UK2401.

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Daria Brasca / Donata Levi

Conflicting Memories in Trieste
The Case of the Holocaust Memorials[1]

Introduction

On the San Giusto Hill, in the heart of Trieste's historic centre, a Park of Memory (Parco della Rimembranza) is dedicated to the memory of the numerous soldiers and civilians who fell in the twentieth century's wars. Towering over the park is a mighty monument to the fallen of the First World War, consisting of a cast-iron sculptural group of five classical warriors by Attilio Selva (1888–1970), inaugurated in 1935 to commemorate the fallen of the 'War of Liberation' against Austria. Near it, an imposing inscription on white karst stone slabs tells: "*Roma è qui, è qui sul vostro colle e sul vostro mare / è qui nei secoli che furono e in quelli che saranno / qui con le sue leggi con le sue armi e con il suo re*" ("Rome is here, it is here on your hill and on your sea / has been here in past centuries and will remain here in the future / here, with its laws with its arms and with its king") (Fig. 1).[2] This is the last sentence of the speech, which Benito Mussolini (1883–1945) delivered in Trieste on 18 September 1938, he announced the promulgating of the Italian Racial Laws (*Regio decreto legge no. 1728*, which was issued on 17 November 1938). The author of the speech and therefore the historical context, has been concealed: Below the inscription on the right, a small slab with the initial M [Mussolini] was erased, presumably after the end of the Second World War. Nevertheless, the Fascist cult of Romanità and imperial aspirations, explicitly conflated with Italian Racial Laws in Mussolini's 1938 speech, continue to play an important role and occupy a central place in the public space dedicated to Trieste's collective memory of the war-related events of the twentieth century. The survival of the inscription to the present day and, at the same time, the fact that it has been deliberately neutralised are emblematic of Trieste's difficult relationship with its Fascist and antisemitic past.

1 This paper is the result of joint research and writing, with both authors collaborating fully, but for Italian academic purposes: Daria Brasca is author of the paragraphs: *The Refusal of Dealing with the Past Between Mystification and Oblivion*; *Holocaust Memories in Trieste*. Donata Levi is author of the paragraphs: *Jews in Trieste. From Integration to Persecution*; *Conflicting Memories*; *A Controversial and Unresolved Past*.

2 Knittel 2014, 212–216; https://www.irsml.eu/Parco_San_Giusto/Parco_Rimembranza.pdf; https://www.atrieste.eu/Forum3/viewtopic.php?t=1480&start=160 [last accessed 20.06.2022].



Fig. 1 Inscription with the last sentence of Mussolini's speech announcing the promulgation of the Italian Racial Laws in Trieste on 18 September 1938, San Giusto Hill, Trieste (© www.atrieste.eu, CC-BY-NC-ND).

Jews in Trieste: From Integration to Persecution

More than eighty years have passed since Benito Mussolini proclaimed the Racial Laws in front of a cheering crowd gathered in the Piazza Unità d'Italia, the main square in Trieste.[3] Mussolini's announcement came as no surprise to Italian Jews, as they had encountered the increasing anti-Semitic propaganda across the entire country. On 14 July 1938, a group of "Fascist scholars, professors at Italian universities",[4] who drew inspiration from Mussolini, published the Manifesto on Race (*Manifesto della razza*) in the national newspaper *Il Giornale d'Italia:* it put forward the theory that Italians belonged to a superior race, excluding Jews.[5] In the same summer of 1938, the Bureau for the Study of the Race Problem (Ufficio studi del problema della razza) was established within the Ministry of Popular Culture, while the Central Demographic Office of the Ministry of the Interior

3 Susmel/Susmel 1959, 144–147; https://youtu.be/IsoQdrnKDK4?si=IX7RvljyudskPBXI; https://www.archivioluce.com/il-discorso-di-trieste/ [last accessed 13.04.2026].

4 La difesa 1938, 2: "gruppo di studiosi fascisti, docenti nelle università italiane".

5 Sarfatti 1994. – Sarfatti 2000. – Collotti 2008.

was transformed into the General Directorate for Demography and Race (better known as *Demorazza*). The initial anti-Semitic measure implemented by the *Demorazza* (to be understood as a prerequisite for proper legislation), consisted of the 'Jewish census', which commenced on 22 August 1938 with the purpose of tallying and documenting the Jewish population residing in Italy. In Trieste, the census registered 6,215 Jews, the highest population share in Italy.[6]

The city was home to a thriving, long-standing and prosperous Jewish community in which Judaism held a prominent position. In fact, it was the third largest in Italy in terms of numbers, and possessed the uniqueness of being seamlessly integrated into local society through its management of city administration and the economy.[7] This integration was based on a general religious tolerance inaugurated by the privileges (religious freedom, ownership of real property and "unrestricted exercise of the arts, crafts, and trades") exceptionally granted to the Trieste Jewish community in 1771 by the Habsburg Empress Maria Theresa (1717–1780),[8] and enhanced by the common identity of economic, cultural, social and political interests established in the middle and upper classes. The most important industrial and land assets of the Italian Northeast were successfully run by Jewish entrepreneurs belonging to powerful Jewish families of Trieste (such as Brunner, Stock, Pollitzer, etc.). Enrico Paolo Salem (1884–1948), the Municipality mayor from 1933 to 1938, belonged to the Jewish community.[9] From the end of the nineteenth century until 1943, the port of Trieste played a significant role as one of the most important 'gateways' to Palestine, from where hundreds of thousands of Jews from Central and Eastern Europe embarked, in what can be described as an exodus seeking refuge from persecution. In addition, the city was an important headquarters for Zionist activities from 1918 onwards.[10]

Thus, the selection of Trieste to announce the racist legislation was not accidental. It was dictated by a strong symbolic charge that the anti-Semitic Fascist propaganda wanted to exploit. Trieste was important not only because of the presence of a stable Jewish population, but also because of the strong nationalist aspirations that prevailed there. Mussolini's speech in Piazza Unità d'Italia was one of the stops on a tour of the sites of the First World War between 18 and 26 September 1938. The trip, organised with great propaganda clamour and coverage, had strong Fascist and nationalist intentions. In

6 Sarfatti 2014, 347.

7 In 1906, 16 per cent of the city council was composed of Jews (Millo 1989, 66–67). – Cusin/De Filippo 1991.

8 Regarding the complex issue of Habsburg policy in Jewish matters, cf. Dubin 1999. – Catalan 2000.

9 Bon 1972, 31–42. – Bon 2009.

10 Hametz 2002, 378–379: "[…] by 1918 the city was recognized as a headquarters for Zionist activity, a centre for the publication of Zionist literature, and a departure point for immigration to Palestine". – Hametz 2007. – Brasca 2022.

Trieste the diffusion of nationalistic ideals was particularly strong, stemming from the old irredentist spirit that had been nurtured in the city before its annexation to Italy. Many Jews of Trieste had been fervent irredentists, and after the First World War, this made it easier to join the Fascist party, in a climate featuring frustration for the only partial fulfilment of war-time promises (the so-called 'mutilated victory').[11] The movement was stronger in Trieste than elsewhere in Italy, where, however, many Jews embraced Fascism as the natural outcome of nationalistic feelings.[12] The biographies of Trieste Jewish leaders of the liberal-national movement, such as Teodoro Mayer (1860–1942), founder and director of the daily national newspaper *Il Piccolo*, Salvatore Segrè Sartorio (1859–1949), entrepreneur and politician, Enrico Paolo Salem, and the lawyer Camillo Ara (1876–1944), President of the Institute for the Industrial Reconstruction (IRI), show clearly how involvement in the irredentist struggle resulted in early joining the Fascist ideology.[13]

The idea of a shared cultural identity emerged with the irredentist spirit and eventually evolved into nationalism, which gained strength in Trieste in the face of the conflicting relations with the Slavic world. Their roots can be traced back to the second half of the nineteenth century and gained momentum under the influence of the Fascist ideology.[14]

For these reasons, as well as the leading role of Jews in trade and finance, the impact of the 1938 Racial Laws was particularly severe in Trieste, fostering opportunistic behaviour and anti-Semitic violence, culminating in several attacks on members and institutions of the Jewish community.[15] This social and economic disruption marked the prelude to the deportations and subsequent annihilation of Jewish people after 8 September 1943, when Trieste became the central hub of the Operationszone Adriatisches Küstenland of the Third Reich.[16] The persecution of the Jews was brutal and systematic, more severe than in other parts of Italy. Jewish people who had not fled in time were arrested and

11 Cf. Perissinotto 2018.

12 Apih 1988, 118–121. – Catalan 1997; I percorsi dell'Irredentismo e della Grande Guerra https://www.irsrecfvg.eu/percorso_irredentismo/ [last accessed 20.06.2022]. From the beginning of the nineteenth century several Jewish leaders of the liberal-national movement (for example Mayer, the industrialists Ettore Modiano, Camillo Ara and Salvatore Segrè Sartorio) left the Jewish communities only for the political purpose that did not mean the disavowal of one's origins and traditions. It was a choice linked to militancy and the will to affirm a single faith in secular and liberal Italy.

13 Millo 1989, 55–74, 223–255, 275–299. – Revelant 2001. – Moehrle 2017. – Sabatti 2021; http://www.atlantegrandeguerra.it/portfolio/camillo-ara [last accessed 20.06.2022].

14 Sluga 2003, 171–202. – Catalan 2003, 35–39. – Vinci 2003, 40–44.

15 Bon 2000, 127–151, 209–233; see also the virtual exhibition by Daria Brasca and Donata Levi: *Judaica Alpe Adria. Traces of Jewish Memories. Synagogues and Judaica in the Julian March during the 20th Century*. https://judaica.dolmenweb.net/en/159/trieste [last accessed 20.06.2022].

16 Osti Guerrazzi 2020, 260–273.

deported.[17] The Trieste Jewish community experienced a devastating blow: out of its members, 668 "did not return".[18]

Two features set apart persecutions against Jews in Trieste as notably harsh. The first is the high number of collaborators, detractors and spies and the involvement – as in many other Italian cities – of the Fascist paramilitary corps in the deportation of the Jews.[19] A significant amount of documentation, used only to a limited extent in post-war trials of Nazi officers and Fascist collaborationists, confirms the extent of the persecution of the Jews of Trieste and the massive looting of their property.[20] Countless detractors and common citizens reported to the Nazi authorities where Jews sheltered, and profiteers took advantage of the confiscated assets, putting them up for sale. The second aspect is the location in Trieste of the only extermination camp in Italy, the Risiera di San Sabba. Its main purpose was to function as a transit camp for Jews facing deportation to Auschwitz, Dachau and Mauthausen, but the Risiera also became the site of mass killings and burning of the bodies of thousands of partisans, anti-Fascists and Slavic people.[21]

The Refusal to Deal with the Past between Mystification and Oblivion

The trauma of the Holocaust has never been adequately addressed or cured, as a comprehensive coming to terms with it would have necessitated an engagement with the Fascist past and the acknowledgement of complicity and guilt of all the groups that played a role, whether passively or actively, in facilitating the Holocaust. The extensive and detailed documentation of the activities and robberies of the collaborators may even have been deliberately overlooked in the process of coming to terms with the history

17 Coslovich 1994, 360; https://www.cdec.it/formazione/percorsi/per-la-storia-della-shoah/statistica-generale-degli-ebrei-vittime-della-shoah-in-italia-1943-1945/ [last accessed 20.06.2022]. According to the data collected by the Centro Documentazione Ebraica Contemporanea (Centre for Jewish Contemporary Documentation – CDEC), the number of deported Italian Jews was 6,806, plus 322 who were arrested and died in Italy. The provenance of 585 of the 6,806 is not known. 554 came from the province of Trieste, the highest number after Rome (1,694) and almost the double that of Milan (300). With regard to the place of internment, however, the same source confirms that 1,196 Jews were arrested and detained in the Risiera before being deported.

18 This is the expression used by the Community itself in the title of a six-page list printed after the war: "Iscritti alla Comunità Israelitica di Trieste deportati negli anni 1943–1945 e che non hanno fatto ritorno" (Registered Members of the Jewish Community of Trieste deported in 1943–1945 and who did not return); see Sarfatti 1988.

19 Sluga 1996, esp. 408–409. – Franzinelli 2012, 173–177.

20 Vetter/Belci 1976. – Vetter 1977, 165–181. – Brasca 2017. – Bolzon/Verardo 2019.

21 Bon 2000, 318–321.

of the Holocaust in Trieste. Between 1945 and 1954, during the Allied administration, the purge policy in Trieste was extremely restricted in order to prevent an escalation of political and social tensions. As a consequence, a large number of Fascist collaborationists went unpunished and only a small number of trials reached a conclusion.[22] Particularly in Trieste, where Jews were firmly integrated into the political, economic and social spheres, the anti-Semitic persecution was (is) seen as a phenomenon imposed from the outside, exclusively related to the policies of the Nazi Supreme Commissioner Friedrich Rainer (1903–1947). The numerous attacks on members of the Jewish community, the violent anti-Semitic campaign of the local press and the Fascists' vandalism against the Trieste synagogue, oratory and school between 1940 and 1942, long before the Nazi occupation, were all downplayed.[23] The collective memory privileged stories of rescue and solidarity of the Trieste population with the persecuted.[24] The Trieste Jewish community itself endorsed these narratives, driven by a desire for reconciliation after years of occupation.[25] As several contemporary Italian scholars have shown, the outcome was a watered-down narrative of Fascist anti-Semitism politics that disavows its social pervasiveness and persecutory effectiveness.[26] The Italian historian Filippo Focardi (b. 1965) aptly observes that Italy has focused on the Nazi occupation, recounting stories of heroism by the resistance, while neglecting the role of Fascism in the events of the Second World War and the Holocaust.[27]

A real process of de-Fascistisation did not take place in all of Italy, but this shortcoming had serious consequences in a border town whose situation can be compared to that of West Germany as an area directly exposed to the Communist bloc. There, silence about the crimes became the price for post-war integration into the Western alliance.[28]

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22 Valdevit 1987. – Franzinelli 2002. – Battini 2003. – Verardo 2018.

23 An example of Fascist feelings among the population is offered by the case of the renaming of streets which – according to an anonymous letter sent to the Fascist mayor Luigi Ruzzier on 21 August 1940 – needed a "vigorous disinfection" (*energica disinfezione*) from Jewish elements; see Giadrossi 2012, 122. Even after the war the traditional prejudices against the Jews survived and occasionally resurfaced in the local press, especially in satirical publications, such as *La Cittadella*, a weekly supplement to *Il Piccolo.* Here some cartoons depicted Jews with the same clichés of physiognomy and morality as in the past. About *La Cittadella*, see Sartori 2014/2015.

24 Olick 2007, 55.

25 Collotti 2000/a. However, this attitude has been generally shared by Italian Jews, eager to integrate and with no desire to claim the specificity of their own experience (Schwarz 2001, 181).

26 Bidussa 1994. – Del Boca 2005. – Fogu 2006.

27 Judt 2000. – Focardi 2005/a.

28 Referring to post-war Germany, the German philosopher Hermann Lübbe (b. 1926) argued in 1983 "that 'partial silence' about the Nazi past had been a social-psychological and political necessity for the transformation of our post-war population into the citizenry of the Federal Republic" (quoted after Herf 1997, 6).

Many more elements contributed to the formation of a consoling and comfortable collective memory. Following the Nazi occupation, the city fell under the control of the Yugoslav troops from 1 May to 11 June 1945. Trieste and its surroundings then came under Allied administration, and it took until 1954 for the city to ultimately be returned to Italy.[29] Therefore, more than elsewhere, insecurities about borders caused national and anti-Slav feelings to escalate.[30] In this context, Fascist collaborationism largely disappeared from the city's collective memory paving the way for strong nationalistic sentiments directed against the Nazis in retrospect and against the Yugoslav threat in the present.

The rapid succession of traumatic events in the short period from 1943 to 1954, with its profound socio-cultural and political upheavals, may have hindered Trieste from thoroughly addressing the memory of the Holocaust. The 40 days of Yugoslav occupation stood as a more enduring, lasting and unprocessed trauma for a large majority of Trieste citizens than the twenty months of Nazi occupation.[31] As a result, the memory of the Holocaust had to contend with an overwhelming volume of conflicting memories.

The Yugoslav occupation and the long-standing prejudices against the Slavs, which were now reinforced by the fear of Communism, were given a significant boost by the alleged mass slaughter in the *foibe* (deep natural sinkholes; by extension, also mine shafts) and by the forcible expulsion have found a particular place in the collective memory of the Italians from Istria and Dalmatia.[32] Both the exodus, widely covered by Italian mass media and the barbaric ritual of 'infoibamenti' (a neologism meaning the act of throwing enemies into the *foibe*) have found a particular place in the collective memory. The political propaganda from both the Italian and Yugoslav sides hinders the accurate assessment of the number of victims of *foibe* (and their kind: either partisans or civilians, or Fascists, etc.) and of migrants forced from Istria and Dalmatia between 1945 and 1956.

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29 Valdevit 1987. – Tonietto 2019, 194–202, 242–259.

30 The need of Italian governments to strengthen an anti-communist bulwark led them to provide financial support to associations, clubs, charities etc. that championed the Italian character of the city but were liable to Fascist infiltration. It also produced long-term effects; see Cattaruzza 2016, 231–232.

31 Cattaruzza 2016, 218–220. In 2020, on the occasion of the 75th anniversary, the Municipality of Trieste established a local Day of Remembrance to celebrate the "liberation of the city from the Yugoslav occupation" on 12 June 1945 (https://www.comune.trieste.it/it/domani-venerdi-12-giugno-il-solenne-ricordo-del-75-%20anniversario-della-fine-delloccupazione-jugoslava-di-trieste-13409 [last accessed 10.04.2026]). In 2015, a plaque was placed in the Park of Remembrance on the San Giusto hill, which reads: "On 12 June 1945, following the Belgrade Agreements, the Yugoslav troops withdrew from Trieste after 40 days of occupation and the people of Trieste began a long and difficult period of waiting before regaining freedom and democracy through their sincere commitment. Trieste 12 June 2015" (*Il 12 giugno 1945 in seguito agli accordi di Belgrado le truppe Jugoslavia si ritirarono da Trieste dopo 40 giorni di occupazione / Il popolo triestino iniziava una lunga e difficile fase di attesa riconquistando con il suo schietto impegno libertà e democrazia / Trieste 12 giugno 2015*).

32 *Foibe* and exodus are strictly linked in collective memory (Ballinger 2003). On the *foibe*, see Pupo/Spazzali 2003. – Pupo 2005. – Oliva 2002. – Petacco 2005.

The lack of concrete data on the number of fatalities encouraged quantitative comparisons between the Holocaust and the *foibe*, which historian Giovanni Miccoli accurately characterises as "outrageous".[33] The ideological polarisation of the political discourse not only produced a kind of gruesome contention (who could count the greatest number of victims or the greatest degree of cruelty) which lasts up to present day, but also blurs and misrepresents the events of the past, by selecting specific events, removing them from their context and offering them to public remembrance.[34]

A case in point is that of the Police Commissioner Ernesto Mari, the Fascist commander of prison guards who took an active part in the deportation of Jews and opponents of the Fascists from Trieste to the Nazi extermination camps. Yet, the Ministry of Defence honoured him with the War Memorial Cross of Merit (Croce al Merito di Guerra alla Memoria) on 5 March 1950. Still more intriguingly, in 2016, the Italian Ministry of Justice, by then headed by a member of the Democratic Party, named the city prison after Ernesto Mari.[35] The motivation arose from the fact that Mari was murdered by Yugoslav partisans in May 1945 and his body thrown into the 'Plutone' *foiba* in Basovizza (close to Trieste) on the Karst plateau. His previous activity went unmentioned.[36] In the same year, the Gorizia prison received the name of Angiolo Bigazzi, another Trieste prison guard, subordinate to Mari, who was murdered with him. Similarly, another persecutor, the Police Commissioner Gaetano Collotti, head of a gang that gained sad notoriety for raids, arrests, torture and summary executions of anti-Fascists and Jews, received a Bronze Medal for Military Valour in 1954 by presidential decree of the Italian Republic for the killing and arrest of "enemy partisans". The medal has never been revoked, despite several parliamentary queries addressed to the Ministry of Justice since 1956, the most recent of which were submitted by the Five Star Movement MPs in 2014 and 2016.[37] The responsibility of Mari, Bigazzi and Collotti for the persecution and deportation of the Jews has thus been sidelined by a deliberate selection of the past to be transmitted.[38]

33 Miccoli 1976, 3–4.

34 Focardi 2020/b, 198–200. – Pupo / Spazzali 2003, 200–204.

35 https://www.ilfattoquotidiano.it/2018/01/24/carcere-di-trieste-intitolato-a-ernesto-mari-comandante-per-conto-dei-nazisti-perche/4113048/; https://www.ansa.it/friuliveneziagiulia/notizie/2018/01/23/carcere-trieste-intitolato-a-maresciallo-mari-polemiche_654993fa-c7d5-487e-a8c1-06bdb176a25c.html [last accessed 20.06.2022].

36 For example, there is no information about Mari's activity and role in the Prison Police web portal before 1945 (https://poliziapenitenziaria.gov.it/polizia-penitenziaria-site/it/caduto.page?contentId=CDT6455 [last accessed 20.06.2022]).

37 http://dati.camera.it/ocd/aic.rdf/aic4_07061_17 [last accessed 20.06.2022].

38 Collotti was awarded a bronze medal by the Italian Republic for an action carried out on 10 April 1943 against partisans near Tolmin (formerly situated in the province of Gorizia, after June 1945 part of the Yugoslav territory and since 1991 part of Slovenia) (Supplemento Ordinario alla Gazzetta Ufficiale, no. 12, 16 January 1954).

Conflicting Memories

The existence of conflicting memories reveals itself also as a struggle to appropriate commemorative spaces. The Risiera di San Sabba is a good example of the case in point. Its cultural role has been recognised late and has always been, and still is, controversial.

In Trieste, the Risiera di San Sabba is the foremost tangible place of remembrance of the thousands of people who were imprisoned, killed or transported elsewhere by the Nazis and their local accomplices, but it was not perceived as a site exclusively dedicated to the remembrance of the Holocaust.[39] In fact, for decades the Risiera has embodied the political struggle between Communism and right-wing movements, polarised in the crude opposition of resistance / acquiescence to Yugoslavia versus nationalism / defence of the Italian character of Trieste, making it difficult to analyse historical events outside a rigid political-ideological framework.[40] The Risiera obtained the status of a National Monument only in 1965 by President Giuseppe Saragat, the first Italian President (1964–1971) to visit Auschwitz in that same year.[41] In response to this decree, the architect Romano Boico (1910–1985) restored and rearranged the Risiera, which was then incorporated into the network of Trieste's civic museums in 1975.[42] Even though the Risiera facts were well-known and reported since 1945, it was not until 1976 that a trial for the Risiera crimes began in Trieste. It met many hindrances and obstacles. The trial was not initiated by Italy; rather, it originated from a rogatory with a request for information issued in 1967 by the court of the Third Frankfurt Auschwitz Trial,[43] in which two prisoner functionaries (Josef Windeck and Bernhard Bonitz), who held positions in the camp, were summoned to answer for their actions and ultimately found guilty.[44] From both a historical and

39 Apih 2000, 49–53. It was estimated that between 3,000 to 5,000 people died in the Risiera. For a general view of the deportation in the Julian March, see Coslovich 1994.

40 Knittel 2014, 191–196. – Cattaruzza 2016, 251.

41 Indrio 1971. – Mucci 1999, 29; Decree of the President of Republic, 15 April 1965, no. 510, 'Dichiarazione di monumento Nazionale della Risiera di San Sabba, in Trieste'. – Pupo 2010, 150–151. According to several articles in the local newspaper *Il Piccolo*, the initiative dates back to November 1962 when the Municipality presented a proposal to the Soprintendenza, but according to Sluga 1996, 403, and Mucci 1999, 28–29, it was the result of lobbying by the Istituto Regionale per la storia del Movimento di liberazione nel Friuli-Venezia Giulia, which since the beginning of the 1960s had promoted research on the Risiera with the aim to reassert the values of the pro-Italian anti-Fascist resistance.

42 Mucci 2015. – Speccher 2016, 252–254. – Tanović 2019, 42–43. – Exhibit.Cat. Trieste 2022. In particular, Mucci points out that the exact title of the commission for remodelling the Risiera was a project of a "Museum of the Resistance in the Risiera di S. Sabba". When it was inaugurated in 1975, it was called Municipal Museum of the Risiera di Sabba (Mucci 2015, 31–32). On the context and the "rediscovery" of the Italian camps, see the chapter "Italian Wartime Camps, Italians in Wartime Camps Traces, Memories, Silences, 1940–2008" in Foot 2009, 71–95.

43 Wolf 2007.

44 On the Risiera's trial see Scalpelli/Collotti 1988. – Coslovich 1999. – Matta 2013.

political perspective, the outcomes of the Risiera trial were scant, unsatisfactory and disappointing, and left many important questions unanswered. The two defendants, Josef Oberhauser, the head of the Risiera, and August Dietrich Allers, the chief of the Einsatzkommando Reinhardt in Trieste, were not present, the role of collaborationists was not called into question[45] and oral witnesses were not questioned.[46] Moreover, in his reasoning, the judge distinguished between innocent and "non-innocent" victims (i. e. partisans and their supporters): "The assertion that 'non-innocent victims' constituted the majority of the inmates of the Risiera meant that, in the course of the trial the role of the pro-Italian resistance was denied, and the Risiera was effectively redefined as a transit camp from which a relatively small population of 'innocents', mainly Jews, were sent away to be murdered beyond the borders of Italy".[47] The Court's attitude reflected the lack of involvement and interest in the Risiera trial on the part of the city. In fact, as the historian Enzo Colotti rightly recalled, "[…] Trieste, the city, isolated the trial, refusing to reflect on itself, on its past, and then inevitably also on its present and its future, which were inextricably linked to a trial like that of San Sabba […]".[48] The Risiera trial remained a "missed opportunity" for the city to condemn the Fascist ideology, a sort of "missing Nuremberg Trial".[49] In this context, the Risiera could hardly be regarded as a concrete memorial of the past of an entire community: it inevitably remained a contested space for commemorative purposes where particular version(s) of the past

45 Around this time, the issue of collaborationism resurfaced in the press following the death of a well-known local collector of war relics and historical war documents, Diego de Henriquez. On 30 January 1975, two articles appeared on a page of the local newspaper *Il Piccolo*, but without explicit cross-reference: one on the recovery of human remains in the waters on the Risiera, ordered by investigators looking for evidence of war crimes, and the other the discovery of documents on collaborators in the archive of the recently deceased collector (Il Piccolo 1975/a. – Il Piccolo 1975/b).

46 Pupo 2010, 49. Aders died on 22 March 1974, before the end of the trial, while Oberhauser was a defendant in three war crimes trials in Germany and Italy. In 1948, he was sentenced to fifteen years' imprisonment by the Magdeburg Landesgericht for his involvement in euthanasia crimes in Grafeneck, Brandenburg and Bernburg. He was pardoned on 28 April 1956 and released after only eight years. In 1963, he was one of the eight defendants indicted by the Munich District Court for war crimes committed in the extermination camp of Bełżec (Case no. 110 Ks 3/64). He was found guilty for aiding and abetting the murder of 150 people and sentenced to four years and six months imprisonment (on the Bełżec trial see Mildt 1996, 213, 219, 240, 256–279; https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/belzec [last accessed 20.06.2022]). He was released in 1965 after serving half of his sentence. In Italy, he was sentenced in absentia to life imprisonment for his crimes in the Risiera, but the Italian extradition request failed. He died in Munich in 1979. He was previously interviewed by Claude Lanzmann (1925–2018) about the Operation Reinhard for the Holocaust documentary film *Shoah* (1985). https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn1004822 [last accessed 20.06.2022].

47 Sluga 1996, 407.

48 Collotti 1988, 230.

49 Apih 1989.

claimed and still claim to be the true one(s). As a consequence, the development of the collective memory of the Risiera remained divisive and a critical debate on its legacy remained controversial.[50]

The issue of the *foibe* was also controversial. It was only after the dissolution of Yugoslavia, and thanks to right-wing lobbying, that it gained national recognition: on 11 September 1992 the old coal mining pit of Basovizza was declared a "national monument".[51] Here in 2007 a 'Shrine' (Sacrario) was inaugurated: it consisted of a grey stone slab (inscribed with a prayer) marked by a large bronze cross, of several plaques and memorial stones (placed by associations of exiles) and of a bronze votive lamp, elements which extoll the idea of martyrdom.[52] In the meantime, in 2004, a national law established 10 February as a Day of Remembrance for the victims of the *foibe* and of the Istrian-Dalmatian exodus (National Memorial Day of the Exiles and Foibe) to "preserve and renew the memory of the tragedy of all Italian victims, of the victims of the *foibe*, of the exodus of Istrians, Dalmatians, and people from Fiume from their territories after the Second World War, and of the most complex period of history on the eastern border".[53]

Merging the facts of the Risiera with those of the *foibe* and the exodus unavoidably obstructs a proper understanding of the history of these two distinct events and fuels a selective memory of one or the other event far from the formation of a shared collective memory. This is the context in which we must frame the memory of the Holocaust in Trieste. We must also compare it with the institutionalisation of Holocaust remembrance in post-war Western culture, with an increasing number of memorials, monuments and museums throughout Europe that commemorate and present the genocide of the Jews to the public.[54]

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50 Purvis/Atkinson 2009.

51 Gazzetta Ufficiale no. 250, 23 October 1992. – Pupo/Spazzali 2003, 225–238. – Comune di Trieste 2008. – Knittel 2014, 203–212.

52 The concept of religious sacrifice in relation to the Holocaust is explored in Garofalo 2016.

53 Law no. 92 of 30 March 2004 (Gazzetta Ufficiale no. 86 on 13 April 2004): "Giornata del Ricordo in memoria delle vittime delle foibe, dell'esodo giuliano-dalmata, delle vicende del confine orientale e concessione di un riconoscimento ai congiunti degli infoibati."

54 Young 1994/b. – Dogliani 2001. – Dogliani 2013. In the 1990s we witnessed a "Holocaust and Jewish museum boom" with the establishment of hundreds of museums, memorials and institutions dedicated to the Shoah in Europe and the U. S. All of these places reflected the past experiences and present lives of their communities according to local political needs and national memory. In general, the main aim of these sites is to educate the next generations by telling the story of the Nazi campaign to exterminate the European Jews during the Second World War. They are all designed to reflect the local and / or national institutional forms of remembrance. On the Shoah memorials and museums in Italy, see Picciotto 2007. – Becattini 2018. Few places in Italy are dedicated exclusively to the Shoah, apart from the Shoah sections in the Jewish museums of the various Italian Jewish communities (Sacerdoti 2003): the Memoriale della Shoah di Milan (https://www.memorialeshoah.it/ [last accessed 20.06.2022]) opened in 2013, and the Museo Nationale dell'Ebraismo e della Shoah (https://

Holocaust Memories in Trieste

If today we look for memorials in public spaces in Trieste that are exclusively dedicated to the Holocaust, we remain disappointed, especially if we consider the increasing number of Holocaust memorials that have been erected throughout Europe since the 1960s. Not only does Italy have the highest rate of Holocaust survivors of all the occupied countries, but the Friuli-Venezia Giulia region "possesses the largest number of World War II monuments in Italy when reckoned in relation to the overall population and the second-highest number of anti-Fascist memorials".[55]

In this context, the situation of Trieste becomes even more significant. It is true that today the notion of *lieu de mémoire* (or site of memory) has come to include not only a specific topographical location, but also "the assemblage of cultural artefacts and discourses that accumulate around a given event or memory over time" (including components in the form of a play, a novel, a film, or an art project).[56] This perspective is undeniably productive, but risks obscuring the role of the promoters and patrons of the individual initiatives and the distinction between the private and public spheres. On the one hand, there are tangible signs promoted by local and / or national authorities, on the other hand, there are those promoted by associations (e. g. the Association of Italian Anti-Fascist Political Deportees and Victims of Persecution [Associazione deportati e perseguitati politici italiani antifascisti – ADPPIA] and other partisan associations) and communities (first and foremost, the Jewish communities). In particular, the focus on public promoters illustrates the impact of decisions or omissions in shaping collective memory. Another risk of the above perspective is to diminish the particular and specific value of public spaces (i. e. spaces that are freely available and are part of everyday life).

From this point of view, it is extremely significant that in Trieste the most revealing testimonies to the Holocaust are not to be found in public spaces, but – quite obviously –

meis.museum/ [last accessed 20.06.2022] inaugurated in 2017. Also worth mentioning is the Shoah Memorial of Bologna inaugurated in 2016; https://www.storiaememoriadibologna.it/memoriale-della-shoah-1215-opera [last accessed 20.06.2022]. The project of the first Italian Shoah museum to be realised in Villa Torlonia, Rome, is still ongoing; see Gordon 2012, 14–24; https://www.museodellashoah.it/fondazione/ [last accessed 20.06.2022].

55 Ballinger 2003, 23.

56 Knittel 2014, 7. Following the studies by Maurice Halbwachs (1877–1945), the French historian Pierre Nora (b. 1931) introduced the concept of the *lieu de mémoire* which gives the title to the well-known volumes published under his direction (Nora 1984–1992; partially published in English: Nora 1996–1998). Nora, basing his studies on French examples, considers the places of memory as fragments of the past that become symbolic places (both material and functional) for remembering. On the Italian 'sites of memory' see the important contribution by the historian Mario Isnenghi (b. 1938): Isnenghi 1996–1997.

in the spaces of the Jewish community. In the Jewish cemetery there is a memorial stele with the names of those killed in the extermination camps[57] while one of the sections of the 'Carlo and Vera Wagner' Museum of the Jewish Community, in its new display (2014–2015), is also dedicated to the Holocaust.[58] Here, near the broken columns which allude to the devastation of the Synagogue in July 1942, well before the Nazi occupation, a selection of common objects is displayed in a long showcase: gold and silver watches, pens, glasses, rings and cufflinks that were confiscated from Jews, destined for "Verwertung" ("Exploitation"), which, by chance did not take place.[59] This is perhaps the most eloquent visual evidence of the Holocaust:

> As extensions of human beings, the personal effects of items worn upon the body or carried by the person (such as shoes, clothes and jewellery) assume enhanced agency – perhaps one reason why the piles of shoes, glasses and suitcases in Holocaust museums work so powerfully as an authenticating device to counter collective forgetting caused by the ravages of time or the politics of denial.[60]

As far as public spaces are concerned, remembrance of the Holocaust is limited to a few memorial plaques sponsored by public and private bodies. Three aspects are to be noted. The first is that all these plaques date from the year 2000. The second is that some of them do not have specific reference to the persecution of the Jews, and do not explicitly mention the Holocaust, although the reference can be inferred from the context. The third relates to the content of the inscriptions, the terms used to define the perpetrators of the crimes and those who were the subject of abuse as well as the character of the abuse.

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57 The Shoah Memorial was placed in the Jewish cemetery in Via della Pace by the Jewish Community of Trieste in 1950. The monument, a concrete stele, lists hundreds of Jews deported from Trieste and tells the story in Italian and Hebrew: To the memory of the deported martyrs in the extermination camps 1943–1945 (*Alla memoria dei martiri deportati nei campi di sterminio 1943–1945*); see https://www.turismofvg.it/fvglivexperience/visita-al-cimitero-ebraico [last accessed 20.06.2022].

58 https://www.museoebraicotrieste.it/en/the-museum/; https://judaica.dolmenweb.net/en/181/the-museum-of-the-jewish-community-of-trieste [last accessed 20.06.2022]. The plaque unveiled in 1998, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the State of Israel, at the side entrance of the museum in Via del Monte no. 7, celebrates the role of Jewish associations in helping Jews to embark for Palestine and calls Trieste "The Gateway to Zion".

59 Soon after the war the belongings of the Trieste Jews were found in Klagenfurt. The objects, transferred to the Jewish Property Office of the AMG in Trieste, were shown to Jewish claimants in 1954. The assets that were not returned to their rightful owners or to their heirs were packed up and for decades remained untouched. Only in 1997 were the objects rediscovered in a vault of the Ministry of Treasury in Rome. In 2000, they were handed over to the Jewish Community of Trieste and exhibited in the museum Carlo and Vera Wagner. The community donated some of these objects to Yad Vashem – The World Holocaust Remembrance Centre in Jerusalem and to the Risiera (Maranzana 2001).

60 Brennan 2018, 235.

A first group of plaques (nos. 1–5) that recall the most significant places of the Nazi-Fascist persecution in Trieste was endorsed by the Association of Italian Anti-Fascist Political Deportees and Victims of Persecution (ADPPIA), one of the many associations formed in the city after the war and motivated by conflicting political ideals.[61] ADPPIA had a strong presence in the Julian area and had a special focus on aiding those who were deported and persecuted in their efforts to obtain reparations and pensions from the State.[62] The plaques set up as part of an ADPPIA project entitled "Memory signs" (*I segni della memoria*), generally featured brass medallions engraved by a member of the association, the artist and writer Giovanni Talleri (1922–2010), who had been deported to the camps of Mühldorfer Hart and Strub in 1944.[63] By taking part in this project, Talleri has contributed to the creation of an itinerary of images marked by medallions that, placed in an ever-changing urban and social fabric, like a secular Via Crucis, highlight the most representative sites of the Nazi-Fascist massacre and deportation in Trieste. In these medallions, the figures are arranged according to obsessive and repetitive patterns, outlining the contrast between persecutors and helpless victims. As a witness to deportation and imprisonment, Talleri continued to translate his personal experience into his œuvre, but his commitment to this project was stronger than ever. The medallions "remain a warning, a silent presence, a cry, a space circumscribed by sorrowful memories, within the eternity of art. […] In the same way, they will show new generations what can never be justified and what must never be repeated" (*rimangono un monito, una silenziosa presenza un grido, uno spazio circoscritto di tristi ricordi, nell'eterno dell'arte. Indicheranno nello stesso modo, alle nuove generazioni, ciò che mai a ragione d'essere e ciò che mai dovrà ripetersi*) (Fig. 2).[64]

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61 The aim is to encourage dialogue, if not unity, among the various associations of former deportees, on this: Bon 2010.

62 Founded in 1947, the Association of Deportees and Political Persecuted Anti-fascist Italians (ADPPIA) was still active in 2018 when it is listed among the associations that promoted various initiatives for the Commemorative Day of 27 January. Between 1990 and 2000, ADPPIA appealed to the Court of Auditors for more than 300 cases in the attempt to overcome a bureaucracy which it still considered Fascist.

63 Galleria artè 2007. Giovanni Talleri was born in Trieste in 1922 to an Austrian-Dalmatian family. On 20 January 1944 he was deported to Germany, first to the Mühldorfer Hart, a satellite camp of the Dahau concentration camp, and then to the Strub concentration camp, from which he escaped as a prisoner of war. After attending a drawing class in Trieste in 1946, he began to exhibit in several Italian cities (e. g. Ferrara, Catania, Rome) and abroad (e. g. Paris, New York). From 1959, he decided to dedicate himself exclusively to painting, while, in the last period of his life, he concentrated on sculpture and literature. Talleri died in Trieste in 2010. Only a few days after his death an exhibition of his works opened at the Civic Museum of Risiera di San Sabba (Exhibit.Cat. Trieste 2010).

64 Galleria artè 2007, 197. All the bronze bas-reliefs have a diameter of 40 cm. The designs for the bas-reliefs in the "Villa Trieste", the railway station and the Brunner School are reproduced in: Galleria artè 2007, 196. In 2005, the Province of Trieste commissioned two bronze bas-reliefs from Talleri:



Fig. 2 "Memory Signs" brochure by ADPPIA, 2004.

On 25 April 2000, on the day of the anniversary of the Italian Liberation, a first plaque was placed under the arches of building no. 4 overlooking the Guglielmo Oberdan square, the headquarters and prison of the Gestapo, whose underground cells extended under the square. The plaque titled "The Torture Prison Cell 1944" remembers the atrocities committed here by the SS and by the Gestapo Command in Trieste from 1943 to 1945. The inscription reads: "In the twenty months / of the German occupation / this building was the headquarters / of the police command – SS / place of suffering and torture, in perennial memory of the victims / ADPPIA placed on 25 April 2000" (*Nei venti mesi / dell'occupazione tedesca / questo edificio fu sede / del comando della polizia – SS / luogo di sofferenze e torture / a perenne ricordo delle vittime / l'ADPPIA pose il 25 aprile 2000*).[65] Piazza Oberdan is one of

Foiba no. 2 and *5 May 1945 Trieste* to commemorate a *foiba* and the anniversary of the death of the demonstrators killed by Tito's troops in the Via Imbriani in Trieste on 5 May 1945 (*Qui, la mattina del 5 Maggio 1945, / Gli occupatori iugoslavi di Tito / spararono sulla folla inerme / In memoria dei caduti / La Provincia di Trieste pose*). Galleria artè 2007. The unveiling of the bas-relief *5 May 1945 Trieste* took place in the Via Imbriani.on 5 May 2005.

65 The building was part of the redesign of the Piazza Oberdan by the Trieste architects Umberto Nordio (1891–1971) and Raffaello Battigelli (1887–1961) in the 1930s. The building at number 6 was built as

the city's most (in)famous squares: the Triestine Slovenian-speaking writer Boris Pahor (1913–2022) defined it as "the place where painful memories of the twentieth century converge".[66] It was the area of the Slovene Cultural Centre (Narodni dom / National House), the innovative multifunctional centre built between 1902 and 1904 according to plans by Max Fabiani (1865–1962), which was torched on 13 July 1920 by Fascist squads.[67] The same quarter was also the location of the Special Court for the Defence of the State (Tribunale Speciale della Difesa dello Stato) that between 1927 and 1943 pronounced 31 death sentences, 26 of them against Slavic people.[68] ADPPIA's resolution to have the inscription on the monument in Italian only was strongly criticised by another important association, the National Association of Former Deportees to Nazi Camps (Associazione Nazionale ex Deportati nei Campi Nazisti – ANED), which in turn was accused of feeding anti-Italian sentiments and of being too close to Communist ideals.[69]

On 11 November 2000, ADPPIA placed another brass bas-relief by Talleri on a boundary wall in via Bellosguardo no. 6, the site of a villa which had been confiscated from a prominent Jewish family, the Arnsteins.[70] The villa, demolished after the war, was better known as the "Villa Triste" because it was the headquarters of the Special Inspectorate of Public Security for the Julian March (*Ispettorato speciale di pubblica sicurezza per la Venezia Giulia*), instituted by the Ministry of Interior in 1942.[71] The Trieste Inspectorate, the first one established in Italy, had the above-mentioned Gaetano Collotti as its leader and gained notoriety as the site of torture and murder of both Jews and anti-Fascists.[72] The plaque reads: "Here stood 'Villa Triste', / place of suffering and torture, /headquarters of the command / of the Special Inspectorate / 1942–1945, / in everlasting recollection of the victims. / ADPPIA placed it in November 2000" (*Qui sorgeva "Villa Triste" / luogo di sofferenze e di torture / sede del comando / dell'ispettorato speciale / 1942–1945 / a perenne*

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the headquarters of the Italian Fascist youth organisation (Opera Nazionale Balilla). Since 1972, it has been the seat of the Regional Council of the Autonomous Region Friuli Venezia Giulia (http://www.carbonaio.it/immagini%20trieste%20-%20citta%2042.htm [last accessed 20.06.2022]). Il Piccolo 2000/a. The plaque was unveiled by Domenico Riva, a member of the Patriotic Action Groups (GAP) of Trieste, who was imprisoned by the Gestapo and then pardoned on Hitler's birthday in 1944.

66 Pahor 2010.

67 https://www.narodnidom.eu/it/la-mostra/13-luglio-1920-la-notte-dei-cristalli-di-trieste/ [last accessed 20.06.2022]; see also Pemič 2014.

68 Franzinelli 2017, 145–146.

69 Divisi anche i deportati. L'ADPPIA: Il Piccolo 2004/a.

70 Il Piccolo 2000/b. The plaque was unveiled on the occasion of the important Historical and Legal Conference on Pensions for War Veterans (*Convegno Storico-Giuridico sulle Pensioni di Guerra*) organised by the ADPPIA; the proceedings were published in 2001.

71 Villa Triste is the name of various places of torture used by the Fascists in several Italian cities such as Trieste, Rome, Florence and Milan. This plaque doesn't mention the fact that the villa had been confiscated from a Jewish family, the Arnstein (Freund 2014, 33–39. – Brasca 2019, 90–91).

72 On the Collotti gang, see Pupo 2010, 36–37, 135, 290. – Fogar 1992, 39.



Fig. 3 Memorial plate with Talleri's bass-relief in Via Bellosguardo 6, Trieste, 2000 (photo by Donata Levi, 2023).

ricordo delle vittime/l'ADPPIA pose nel novembre 2000).[73] The bas-relief, titled "Villa Triste", shows two men attempting to tie a third to a chair, alluding to the interrogation and torture practices of the Inspectorate (Fig. 3).

On 26 January 2003, three years later, as part of the Day of Remembrance celebrations, ADPPIA placed another plaque with Talleri's brass bas-relief entitled "The Roundup 1944" at the "Guido Brunner" school in the Trieste district of Roiano (Via

73 In 2010, a marble plaque commemorating those arrested was erected by some anti-Fascists and ex-deportees' associations: the National Association of Italian Partisans (Associazione Nazionale Partigiani d'Italia – ANPI / VZP), the National Association of Politically Persecuted Anti-Fascists Italians (Associazione Nazionale Perseguitati Politici Italiani Antifascisti-ANPPIA) and the National Association of Ex-Deportees into the Nazi Camps (Associazione Nazionale Ex Deportati nei Campi Nazisti-ANED). The plaque, put on the facade of one of the two buildings located in via Cologna no. 6–8, where the Inspectorate headquarters moved towards the end of 1944, informs us that: "The Special Inspectorate for Public Security for the Julian March had its headquarters here until 30 April 1945. Here our blood and pain redeemed our and your freedom […]" (*L'Ispettoratto speciale di Pubblica Sicurezza per la Venezia Giulia qui ebbe sede fino al 30 aprile 1945. Qui sangue e dolore la nostra e la tua libertà hanno riscattato […]*). https://igufinarranti.altervista.org/villa-triste-a-trieste-ispettorato-speciale-di-pubblica-sicurezza-fascionazista/ [last accessed 20.06.2022]. In 2019, the buildings were bought by a local construction company for renovation and conversion into a 40-apartment complex. During the refurbishment, cells that were once used by the Collotti gang were found on the ground floor of one of the buildings. The construction company decided to entrust the cells to the National Association of Italian Partisans with the aim of preserving the memory of the place (https://ilpiccolo.gelocal.it/trieste/cronaca/2019/08/04/news/a-trieste-l-ex-casa-delle-torture-diventa-residence-1.37298965 [last accessed 20.06.2022]).



Fig. 4 Commemorative plaque with Talleri's bass-relief at Trieste Central Station, 2003 (photo by Donata Levi, 2023).

delle Ginestre, 1). The Nazis used the school (which was named after a Jewish benefactor) as a collecting point for people (including Giovanni Talleri) who were to be sent to concentration camps: "During the Nazi occupation (1943–1945) / this school was converted into a prison, where hundreds of patriots / were waiting to be deported / to the Nazi extermination camps / placed by the ADPPIA on 26 January 2003" (*Durante l'occupazione tedesca (1943–1945) / questa scuola fu trasformata in prigione / qui centinaia di patrioti / stavano in attesa di essere deportati / nei campi di sterminio nazisti / L'ADPPIA pose il 26 gennaio 2003*). It is the only plaque where the term "patriots" is used, suggesting it is meant to refer to Italian patriots.

Later that year, a similar plaque found its place in via Flavio Gioia (definitely not in a noticeable spot) on a building next to the Trieste central railway station. From there, 76 convoys left for the extermination camps, the highest number from Italy between September 1943 and April 1945. It reads: "From this station, during the twenty months / of German occupation (1943–1945) / the majority of death transports / departed from Italy / bound for the Nazi extermination camps / In perpetual memory of the victims / placed by the ADPPIA on 8 September 2003" (*Da questa stazione nei venti mesi / di occupazione tedesca (1943–1945) / partí la maggior parte dei trasporti della morte / diretti dall'Italia / ai campi di sterminio nazisti / A perenne ricordo delle vittime / L'ADPPIA pose l'8 settembre 2003*) (Fig. 4).[74]

74 Maranzana 2003. – Il Piccolo 2003/a; https://www.agoravox.it/Shoah-deportazioni-memoria-Che.html [last accessed 20.06.2022]. Alongside the inauguration of Talleri's bas-relief, an exhibition of 19 of his drawings about his imprisonment (1944–1945) was launched at the Risiera (*Giovanni Talleri.*



Fig. 5 Commemorative Plaque with Talleri's Bass Relief at the Jewish Hospice 'Pia Casa Gentilomo', Trieste, 2004 (photo by Donata Levi, 2023).

On 29 January 2004, again as part of commemoration of the Day of Remembrance, at the Jewish Community Hospice ('Pia Casa Gentilomo') in Via Colonia n. 29, a commemorative plaque, decorated as usual with a brass bas-relief by Talleri, was placed in memory of the 54 elderly residents who were deported from the home to Auschwitz on the night of 20 January 1944.[75] Talleri's plate reads: "It was in this charitable shelter that, in January 1944, racial atrocity was committed and the deportation to the Nazi concentration camps took place." (*In questo generoso asilo fu inferta nel gennaio 1944 l'offesa razziale e perpetrata la deportazione verso i lager nazisti*) (Fig. 5).

Disegni della deportazione, 9 September–14 December 2003). The exhibition was promoted by ADPPIA and the Civic Museum of Trieste (Il Piccolo 2003/b. – Battocletti 2003. – Dorfles 2005). The drawings were published in Talleri 2005. Today, the drawings are preserved in the Civic Museum of the Risiera di San Sabba.

75 Bon 2000, 321–322. – Il Piccolo 2004/b. – Galleria artè 2007, 190. On 20 January 1947 another memorial plaque was placed on the building by the relatives of the deported home residents. On 8 September 2002, ADPPIA also placed a plaque from the series in the Risiera on the same wall where other commemorative plaques from different associations and authorities have been placed. In view of the strong museographic character of the Risiera, we have decided to exclude these materials from our survey. The ADPPIA plate was inaugurated on the 59th anniversary of the use of the Risiera as an extermination camp. The plaque, accompanied by a Talleri bronze bas-relief titled *The Death Prison Cell*, reads: "In memory of all those / who knew how to accept / suffering and death / with courage and dignity" (*In memoria di tutti coloro / che seppero accettare / le sofferenze e la morte / con coraggio e dignità*), see Il Piccolo 2002/a. – Galleria artè 2007, 171; https://www.pietredellamemoria.it/pietre/sacrario-della-risiera-di-san-sabba/ [last accessed 20.06.2022].