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OPENLY

#7

A PERIODICAL FOR DEALING THE PAST

МИРОВНА АКЦИЈА
AKSIONI PAQËSOR
PEACE ACTION

Openly
A Periodical for Dealing the Past

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KURVE Wustrow

Peace Action
2024

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INTRODUCTION

Note to ourselves: Don't forget!

Inconspicuous rice soup or orchestrated stand-still

Slowly, one by one, the small coconut bowls with the rice soup 'Kanji' are carefully handed with encouraging smiles from one attendee to another on the 15th commemoration of the massacres of Mullivaikkal in Sri Lanka (18th of May 2024). With some faces shadowed with grief and others shining with defiance, these faces mirror the ambivalence of this subtle, implicit and yet highly symbolic commemorative gesture. It is not only exercised by Tamils in Sri Lanka but commemorated jointly in spirit by Tamils worldwide in defiance of their forced dispersion.

For many, memories of the war are intertwined with weeks of queuing up for their only meal for survival, 'Kanji', boiled rice in water, eventually sea water, whilst trapped in Mullivaikkal's thin stretch of beach, claimed as a 'No Fire Zone'; which, however, was attacked nonetheless. In Mullivaikkal, Kanji gave hope and stood for resilience at a time when all of humanity seemed to have turned a blind eye to them.

Sharing Kanji means to honour and remember the hardship and brutal killings of the Tamil minority during the Sri Lankan Civil War but also its resilience. As long as no official commemoration is allowed and no official recognition or investigation of the gross human rights violations took place, the yearly Kanji ritual, merely tolerated by Singhalese[1] officials, continues to provide moments of unity and resilience while Sri Lanka remains a divided society and the Tamils an oppressed minority.

1.1. Two Tamil members sharing rice soup in the 15th commemorative ceremony of the Mullivaikkal massacre.[2]

1. The ethnic majority in Sri Lanka.
2. https://www.tamilguardian.com/content/kanji-and-calls-unity-mullivaikkal-commemoration-mannar

On another day in another place, an air-raid siren pierces through the cities at 10 a.m. sharp, echoes from buildings, and shakes people to the core even though they knew it was coming. As if programmed, the world seems to come to a halt. Motorists climb down their bikes in the middle of the road, workers drop their tools, people stop their conversations and stand still – to observe two minutes of solemn reflection on the victims, survivors and resistance fighters of the Shoah.[3]

1.2. Israeli drivers stopping traffic to commemorate for minutes of silence. [4]

The Holocaust and Heroism Remembrance Day was deliberately chosen to commemorate Jewish resistance and heroism in the wake of genocide. By contrast, the European Holocaust Remembrance Day is commemorated on the day of the liberation of the Auschwitz concentration camps by the Soviet army. The Israeli National Memorial Day changed names and practices that were also passed into law and include mandatory public commemorative events in schools and institutions, flags at half-mast and cafes and restaurants being closed during that day. Following the Hebrew calendar, it takes place at 27 Nisan and commemorations start at sundown with a state ceremony held in Warsaw Ghetto Square at Yad Vashem, the Holocaust World Remembrance Centre in Jerusalem. After speeches by the President and the Prime Minister, Holocaust survivors light six torches symbolising the approximately six million Jews murdered in the Shoah. The Chief Rabbis recite prayers, marking not only the state but also the state-religious level of this day of remembrance.

3. The Hebrew term for the genocide of the Jews by the German Nazi Tyranny and its collaborators during the Second World War.
4. https://i.huffpost.com/gen/1763148/thumbs/o-ISRAEL2-900.jpg?1

Who we remember is who we are

Both mentioned commemorative practices share their intention of remembering, honouring, and respecting persons and/or events in the past that are meaningful to a group of people, a collective and a community; the Tamils and Jewish Israelis. Yet, the differences are nonetheless striking. The Holocaust and Heroism Remembrance Day in Israel is an officially institutionalised event by the state, a reminder instructed from 'above' so to say. The events, people and stories that are remembered reflect the so-called state narrative, meaning the story of a nation that its people can identify with. It serves as a point of orientation and mobilisation, to unify and feel as 'one, us, we', however, automatically excluding others. These 'others' might not only be other nation-states but also minorities within the state, because most national and state narratives tell the stories of the majority which can be based on ethnicity, religion, skin colour, or other identity markers.

By contrast, the Kinja-ritual has been established by a minority community, from 'below', as an act of countering the official state narrative in which the suffering of the Tamils is not included. Notwithstanding, it holds the same power and meaning of identification, orientation and mobilisation for the community, no matter how dispersed geographically.

These different forms of practices, from above or below, also show that the representation of commemorated events or people is not perceived in the same way. Not even by members of the group it is meant to represent. Some can strongly identify with it, others cannot. Not only can the perception of these practices change over time, but also the practices themselves, thus leading to new forms of representation of the group.

The fact that collective narratives' function is to provide a stable basis of identity; 'this is where we came from, this is who we are now, this is where want to go'; but actually, are temporary, constructed and thus constantly changing, is an often-overlooked paradox. Collective identities can be reinvented, usually after particularly incisive events, such as revolutions, independence, or the break-up of empires and federations.

Such events and associated people that are considered worthy of remembering have been selected from history to constitute the core of the shared memory and identity of the group, the collective memory. The collective memory can be an extract of collected memories, private memories of people that have become accumulated and abstracted to represent. However, they do not tell every story and every perspective. Counter-narratives and -memories challenge the official ones and nudge people to 'discover' the bigger picture of history, their image of themselves and others and ultimately, nothing less but their understanding of the world.

To emphasise, events and people are selected like the finest pearls and put on a necklace to display and to draw focus on, usually moments of heroism and trauma. The selection is a choice about what to display and what to conceal and leave out. The question arises on whether an incomplete picture is a wrong one, thus if the highlighting of some stories presents a wrong history. Important to point out, in any case, is that the fact that choosing some pearls, and remembering some things, go hand in hand with forgetting others. Critically, forgetting can be a wilful oblivion, a collective amnesia, where the commemoration of one means the silencing and invisible-making of the other.

The collective memory manifests itself in commemorative practices, but also in memorials and historical museums, and as narratives learnt in the formal education system or cultural productions in theatres, books and art. These represent an important factor of collective memory: space. How much space does a collective provide for remembering, for whom and what, when and how? The more space, the more important. The presence of a memory manifested in material space, e.g. memorials, is oftentimes equivalent to the presence of a memory manifested in immaterial space mentally, e.g. folksongs.

As mentioned with the practices above, other manifestations also hold the potential discrepancy between presentation and perception. While socialist memorials in East Germany once intended to ignite a sense of pride and unity, they now intend to remind people of a dark chapter in history. However, they might have triggered opposition back then and nostalgia now – or people might have walked past them ignorantly all the while.

Such memorials, just like the two 'from above' and 'from below' commemorative practises presented in the introduction, furthermore show the fine difference between memory culture and memory politics. Cultural manifestations such as traditional dressings, songs, etc. contribute to the identity formation of any kind of collective. Memories that are central to the group's identity and self-image are shared and remembered to form and consolidate the collective in a memory culture or culture of memory.

The politics of memory or memory politics describes the strategic organisation of memory/ies by political agents, usually aimed at an institutional, formal, nation/state level. While memory culture and memory politics overlap, this distinction is nonetheless useful to keep in mind. Particularly when looking at alternative or counter-narratives of memories 'from below' that challenge the majority or state narratives and their manifestations (practices and memorials) 'from above'.

Not only will global forms of remembering, or memorialising, be the thematic focus of this year's Openly Magazine but in particular those that are created in so-called memory activism. Memory activism uses peaceful, creative actions to create such alternatives and counter-narratives of the past to reflect differently on the present and imagine an alternative, more equal and inclusive future for a collective. In response to memory politics but also drawing from memory culture, memory activists create joint commemorations of 'enemies', remember those that were forcefully forgotten, make concealed chapters visible, and re-claim urban and mental spaces by contesting memorials – even beyond national borders. We hope to broaden our and your horizons with inspiring examples from Palestine-Israel, Venezuela, Germany, Great Britain, South Korea, Northern Ireland and South Africa.

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Remembering together and each other's pain

memory activism in Israel-Palestine

I cannot explain to my children: 'what is war?' What can I tell them?
That there is one person who wants to kill another?
That there are children dying every day?
This war [...] is against all people who want this place to be filled with good.
That want peace and security for their children.

Rima Jawabra Khatib, mother of two, CfP activist, Palestinian and Arab-Israeli, co-host of the Joint Memorial Ceremony.

I do not want your children to die while fighting mine – I do not want my children to die while fighting yours, since we have already lost too many family members to this violent conflict. This is the painful common ground on which the joint Israeli-Palestinian organisation The Parents Circle - Family Forum (PCFF) was founded by Israeli families in 1995. Today it involves over 700 families, all of whom have lost an immediate family member to the ongoing conflict.

2.1. A cartoon of two weeping mothers, one Israeli and one Palestinian, united in their pain, for the exhibition 'Cartooning in Conflict'.[1]

The first meeting between bereaved Palestinians from Gaza and Israeli families took place in 1998. However, the contact broke after the second Intifada[2]. Yet eventually, contact was established with Palestinian families from the West Bank and East Jerusalem, who joined in with the activities of the PCFF. This relationship established the essence of the Parents Circle's work today from their offices in Beit Jala (Palestine) and Ramat Ef'al (Israel).

1. https://www.theparentscircle.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/c5_1055-1024x558.b197b0.webp
2. The second Intifada (Arabis for 'uprising') was a major uprising by Palestinians against the Israeli occupation, characterised by a period of heightened violence in the Palestinian territories and Israel between 2000 and 2005.

The families promote dialogue, tolerance, reconciliation and peace and utilise all resources available in education, public meetings and the media, to spread these ideas. They oppose the occupation with the firm belief that it is possible to end the conflict and therefore wish to influence the public and political decision-makers to choose reconciliation and the path of peace over violence and war. Their main force is to avoid the use of bereavement for further violence and retribution. To this point, PCFF has won more than 23 national and international prizes for their unique work.

2.2. A cartoon of an Israeli and a Palestinian digging digging graves next to each other for the exhibition 'Cartooning in Conflict'. Translation from French: Israel and Palestine – sharing/dividing (partager means both to share and to divide) the land/the earth.[3]

PCFF's work involves Dialogue Meetings, Narratives Experiences and International Peace Day and seeks to remind everyone that war is not a predetermined fate, but only a human choice. Members tell their personal stories of bereavement and explain their choice to engage in dialogue instead of revenge. To strengthen marginalised voices, they opened a Women's and Youth section too. PCFF's projects often showcase the absurdity of war and life in the shadow of bereavement from which springs the aspiration for reconciliation. They aim to start conversations with all parts of society in creative and low-threshold ways.

Another one of their pillars of activism is the Joint Israeli-Palestinian Memorial Day based on their painful common ground of traumatic loss. For the 19th time the Joint Memorial Day Ceremony by PCFF and their partner's Combatants for Peace (CfP) under the motto "Sharing Our Humanity, Honoring Our Children. Stop The War" took place on the 12th of May 2024.

3. https://www.theparentscircle.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/c2_1055-1024x558.b197b0.webp

.The ceremony was streamed from Jerusalem and "is radically different from the typical ceremonies that promote a narrative that war and death are inevitable and necessary" (CfP). Instead, Palestinians and Israelis mourn together through artistically sharing stories and remembering people and events diversely. The recordings of this year's and previous ceremonies can be watched on the organisations' websites and YouTube pages[4]. In the following, I would like to report of my virtual attendance at the 19th Joint Memorial Ceremony.

2.3. The flyer of the 19th Joint Ceremony depicts tears that water scorched earth like rain and make a withered tree come back to life. [5]

4. You can watch the 2024 ceremony here: https://www.theparentscircle.org/en/pcff-activities_eng/memorial-ceremony_eng/. All screenshots taken at the event are from this source.

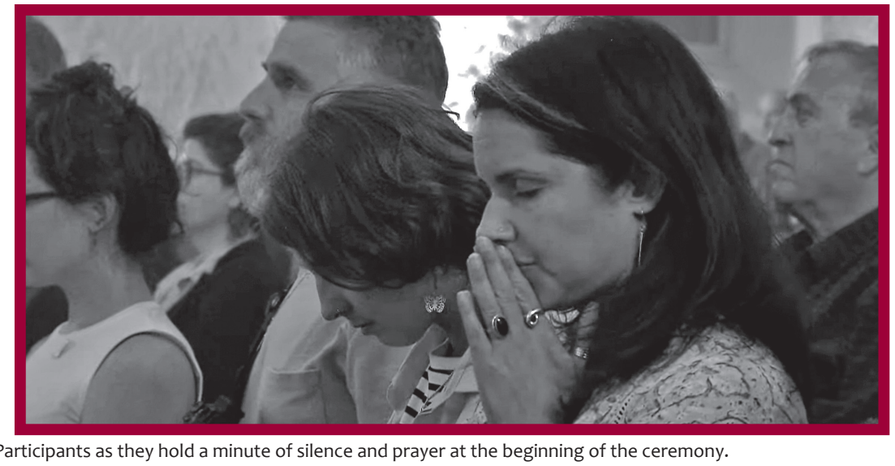
5. https://cfpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/fbpost2024-tekkes-etjrui-tb.png

It's hard to express the void left behind, the meaninglessness of a death that could have been avoided. […] The unbearable pain I feel as a son who has lost his mother is not just personal […] society as a whole is paying[…] I look at my children heartbroken that their father too might not live to see peace. How many generations of bereavement must there be until we understand that the only way for all people between the Jordan River and the sea to live in security and freedom is through peace? […] The only obstacle holding us back is will. […] Now, against my will, the torch has been passed on to me. […] May it be extinguished on my watch so I don't have to pass it on to my children.

Yonatan Zeigen on the death of his mother, Canadian-Israeli Vivian Silver who was one of the foremost feminist peace activists in Israel.
She was killed in the massacre in the Kibbutz Be'eri on October 7th.
For over a month she was believed to be a hostage until archaeologists were able to find her remains in a security room she had been trying to hide in.

The ceremony, similar to COVID-19 times, was held in a small venue and largely virtual meeting space. The horrific war between Hamas and the Israeli State which has by now spilled into the region has consumed the majority of mental and physical spaces of meeting and building trust that had been built for decades. Particularly Palestinian organisational members and activists were unable and prohibited to travel to the event under even more oppressive restrictions than before. The terrorist attacks of the Hamas on Israeli civilians on October 7th 2023 killed more than 1,000 people, including more than 30 children[6]. The Israeli Defense Forces responded with an ongoing killing of by now approximately 35,000 Palestinians in Gaza, of which over 11,000 are children[7]. Over 90,000 are injured with hospitals not only out of electricity, water and medications but also targeted by missiles.

Even when watching the ceremony virtually from afar, one can feel the black, heavy veil of unimaginable pain and sorrow which unites the weeping and praying audience. Hosted in Arabic and Hebrew with subtitles in English, it is remarkable how the filmed clips of children, stories of survivors and families of the deceased, accompanied by art can leave the virtual, international audience both shaken and comforted.



2.4. Participants as they hold a minute of silence and prayer at the beginning of the ceremony.

6. https://web.archive.org/web/20231217222630/https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20231215-israel-social-security-data-reveals-true-picture-of-oct-7-deaths
Disclaimer: numbers of dead and injured vary in media and officials' reports in ongoing conflicts. Firstly, because unfortunately the numbers continue to rise by the day, secondly, because it is hard to verify and report deaths and injuries with the limited resources given in an ongoing war, and lastly, journalists have hardly access to verify the provided numbers.

7. https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/tracking-gazas-war-death-toll-ministry-health-improves-accuracy-latest-casualty-report

In a video clip at the beginning of the ceremony, Tina, the oldest child of a Palestinian family in Ramallah, wearing a 'Grateful' jumper, says: "I feel like animals understand us more. They don't hurt people." While drawing pictures like so many children around the world in this very moment, Israeli and Palestinian children casually speaking about bombings, nightmares about expulsion or going to security rooms are heart-wrenching and disturbing. They tell how they thought they had dreamt of missiles and bombings but it turned out the next day that it had really happened. They also dream of peace, their families being happy and united, able to return to their homes and of a different life, like 11-year-old Hiyuli says: "to fly away". She also says she wished: for everyone, all the hostages, to return home, and for everyone who died to come back to life."

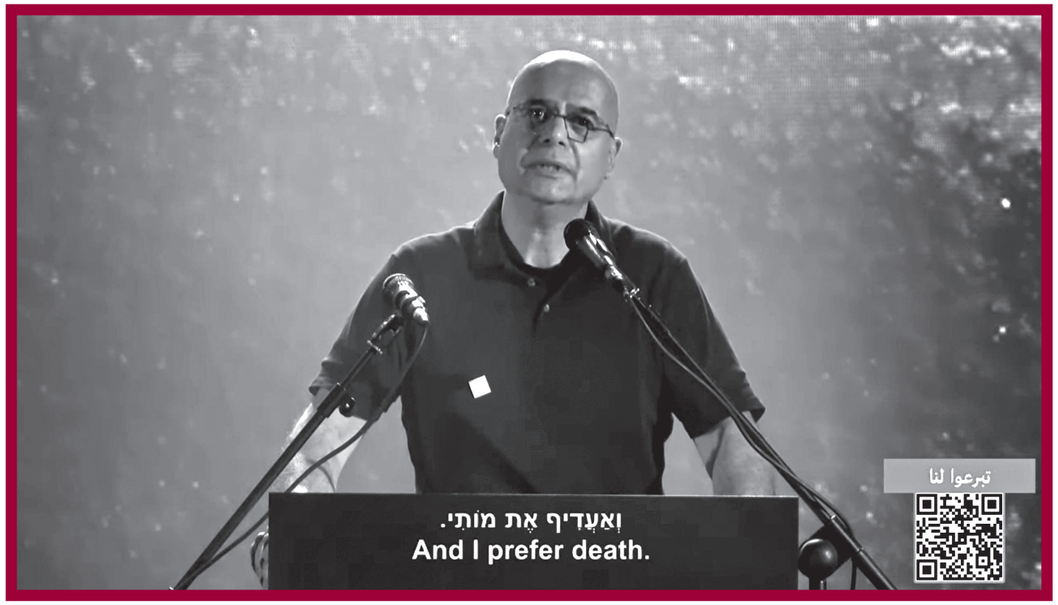
2.5. Hiyuli recounts having upsetting dreams after October 7th.

What I dream of? […] Maybe I'll be a lawyer, and successful, to defend my people. For us to live in security. And for the war to end tomorrow. That's it.
-Tina

War is their reality. And while adults in power have the choice to continue or stop the war, children have no choice in growing up in it and war becoming the only life they know. And it will shape them forever. A war can never be undone. And a childhood can never be brought back and repeated. The ceremony features the far-too-short story of another child born without any of his doings into the hands of conflict that eventually clenched its fist on him, narrated by his mother:

My name is Michal, mother of Laor Abramov. Laori was a wonderful person, my only son, the love of my life, my source of pride and hope in this world […]
Laor went to dance at a party and never returned. He never returned, because he was killed in a bomb shelter at Re'im Junction on October 7th […]
I am still living the day of October the 7th, every moment of every day […]
The life I had before ended on that day, when my Laor helplessly faced absolute evil, imprisoned in a death trap […] I have remained there with him. […]
When I do occasionally succeed in raising my head from my personal grief […] I find one purpose for which to live, which is to seek out what I can do to help our wounded humanity heal, so there will be no more mothers here who are crushed by killing, by loss, by violence and war […]
There are no victors in this war, nor will there ever be. We have all already lost. […] Today of all days I want to ask everyone who is able to always choose compassion and love over everything else. Even if it is very small.

Michal's pain, courage and resilience are representative for the, too many, PCFF's parents who lost a child to this violent conflict; and are a beacon of hope for the entire world proving that violent revenge is not the natural and only option as a response to violence. Allowing the weeping audience, holding hands with each other whether being friends or strangers, to catch a breath after such heavy inputs, wonderful music and poetry such as the following extracts followed.



2.6. Palestinian poet Luai reading his poem on reconciliation.

Should compassion cease to beat in my heart
Or love dwell within me
Should hope no longer be found within me
Despite and everything and no matter what
For all human beings
[…]
And my soul be gravely inflicted
With rage and consuming vengeance
I'll know my soul has left me
[…]
For then I'll cease to by myself
I'll know I've been beaten
And I prefer death

Luai, Palestinian poet

2.7. Artists Yael Deckelbaum and Layan Hawila performing the song “Prayer of the Mothers” in Hebrew and Arabic.

From the North to the South, from the West to the East,
hear the prayer of the mothers,
bring us peace.

Art allows the audience to let the words sink in according to their own capacity and comfort. The ceremony does not sugarcoat, avoid or simplify anything and yet it does not intend to shock and overburden viewers but invites them to empathise, build a connection with everyone watching and join in a moment of compassion and solidarity. While the ambience of collective grieving and remembering at the venue can, of course, only be imagined by virtual viewers, the ability to pause and repeat thanks to the recordings does not only allow viewers from other countries and abilities but also with discretion to their mental health capacities, join in.

With children being at the heart of the event, the ceremony involving children’s voices is especially meaningful. The twin teenage girls Rona and Inbar from Tel Aviv whose grandmother was killed in a terrorist attack before their birth wrote an open letter to the children in Gaza – from child to child. In the letter, they also motivate other Israeli kids for nonviolent activist steps in their daily lives to make a change. But mainly, they share their wish to cook, dance and sing with friends again, rather than seeking shelter at night, and eventually, hopefully, share these things with Palestinian children, too.

We know we are just children who want to have a normal life, who just want to grow up and live in peace. […] We hope one day we will meet you, our friends in Gaza, face to face, without walls.

Their words echo in the Jerusalem Youth Choir’s self-written song about the pain, loss and hopes of children in Palestine and Israel. The Choir, made up of East and West Jerusalem young singers, performed the song in Arabic, Hebrew and English.

2.8. The Jerusalem Youth Choir performing a song about children’s grievances in war and dreams of a peaceful future in Arabic, Hebrew and English.

The stories of Palestinian activists Najlaa and Ahmed remind us that mothers and fathers too are daughters and sons, sisters and brothers of someone. Neither Ahmed nor Najlaa were able to attend. Ahmed, due to the oppressive travel restrictions, recorded a video message while Najlaa wrote a letter for the ceremony in order not to be recognised and threatened for choosing the path of reconciliation - a fear and threat all activists in both Israel and Palestine face.

CfP activist Ahmed Ahelou shares his life trajectory which shows that the children who once grew up in war hold disrupted biographies of descendants in their memory and hearts as well as generational trauma in their minds and bodies – because he is one of them. His family is in Gaza and thus they are some of those nameless faces and bodies shown in the horrific news and statistics that we have become far too accustomed to see. It dawns upon viewers who are privileged enough to have not lived in war times how gigantic the toll on the people in this region must be, that the ever-dooming terror, existential fear and oppression of daily violence, generation for generation, brings with it.

And how inhumane a life threatened by it is, even if a basic livelihood is granted. Fighting with tears, Ahmed explains the despair and paralysis of having been in constant mourning over family losses, to watch his family fight for survival as their flourishing market streets have turned into rubble, overflowing with the “smell of death”, and of not having heard of some family members for over a month.

2.9. This "Bowl of Reconciliation" was one of 136 ceramic bowls provided to artists of different nationalities and religions to present their vision of reconciliation through art and then displayed at a PCFF exhibition. This bowl is painted in the colours of the Palestinian flag, covered with a 'glass ceiling' on which an injured white bird sits, assumingly a peace dove, streaming with blood and unable to rest inside the bowl. [8]

Najlaa, born in Gaza, lives in the West Bank and joined PCFF after her brother's death. The occupation had prevented her from seeing him on his wedding day, or visiting his newborn twins, for whom she was honoured to pick their names. Despite her security concerns, she chose to bravely share her story that was read to the audience by the social activist Ghadir Hani.

Should I first talk about exile in my homeland or about my brother who was killed or about my family in Gaza? I longed for my mother to be at my side when I gave birth, or when I was sick and desperately needed her, her motherly love and nurturing. We filed many requests for her to visit but all were denied […] and I couldn't get the permit to visit them.
…he [brother] would laugh with all his heart when he played with them. He would always send me pictures of them. Today, they are not even two years old […]
One day during this war, my brother Abd Al-Rahman went out to look for milk and diapers for his babies and for food for my sick elderly parents. […]
But the war insisted on extinguishing my hope and joy […]
They killed him while walking on the streets though he posed no threat whatsoever. Our hearts cried for him in pain and sorrow […]
My brother's chapter is one part of the painful sorrow.
In this war I've lost more than 20 family members […]
I know that one the other side there are many who believe in peace and in ending the occupation [….]
My message today as a Palestinian woman […]
We, Palestinians and Israelis, must strive with all resolution to change this reality for the sake of a better future for our children, a future free from pain, fear and occupation.

8 . https://www.theparentscircle.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/h_1055-1024x558.b197b0.webp

Najlaa's pain expressed in Ghadir's trembling voice is piercing through the audience's hearts. No matter how similar and innumerable the stories of Gaza – the unbelievable ache will never cease to throw a less heavy stone on one's chest. The audience unites in grief and boundaries between "them and us" have turned absurdly irrelevant. And the wall of abstract distance from viewers abroad has been reduced to a slim veil. At least temporarily.

Both Ahmed's and Najlaa's stories show the absurdity of oppression and occupation, the arbitrariness of violence, and the deep cuts into families and lives.

The toughest experiences were during the wars my family lived through. These were the toughest times with the worst feelings anyone could feel, constantly worrying what might happen to them. Then this war came in which the occupation carried out the most atrocious nakba […] in Palestinian history.

The Nakba/Naqba (Arabic for "catastrophe") is the term used by Palestinians to describe the traumatic and tragic beginning of the continued displacement and erasure of the Palestinian people since 1948 when more than 700,000 people became refugees – of which many descendants have been stateless refugees ever since. Calling the current war another Nakba emphasises the lived experience of the horrors of the present as a continuation of the past. Which emphasises the importance of not forgetting the past to not ignoring the present and, hopefully, even when hope is a rare resource these days, preventing more suffering in the future.

This is why CfP organises a sister event to the Joint Memorial Ceremony, the "The Joint Nakba Remembrance Ceremony" which took place on the 15th of May under the theme "From Pain to Liberation".

2.10.This is the flyer of the Joint Nakba Remembrance Ceremony.[9]

9. https://cfpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/440960808_758688893084004_2533632003209383291_n-1536x864.jpg

2.11. A scene from the Nakba Remembrance Ceremony when a Palestinian refugee explains the hardship of reliving the Nakba as "history repeats itself".[10]

2.12. A scene from the Nakba Remembrance Ceremony when the Jewish Israeli speaker is calling for empathy for Palestinians among the Jewish audience in remembering their own transgenerational pain of a history of expulsion.

10. The Ceremony can be viewed at: https://cfpeace.org/joint-nakba-ceremony/

By breaking the taboo of naming the event as such in Israel, by honouring the experience and history of the Palestinians, both ceremonies aim to "liberate us from the mental cage" (CfP) of current memory politics, and allow the complexity of truth and human stories to enter and slowly dissolve the hardwired national narratives built on exclusion and denial.

The Combatants for Peace (CfP), who are like Peace Action funded by the German Civil Peacebuilding Service, were founded by ex-fighters of the Israeli army and of Palestinian armed groups who refused to demonise, dehumanise and kill the perceived 'enemy' who might just be a Palestinian kid or Israeli teenager. The film "Disturbance of Peace" tells the stories of CfP members disturbing the status quo in non-violent ways to work for peace[11]. CfP is a grassroots movement of Israelis and Palestinians, working together to end the occupation and bring peace, equality and freedom. Committed to joint nonviolence since their inception in 2016, they use civil resistance, education and other creative means of activism to transform systems of oppression and build a free and peaceful future bottom-up. CfP is the only movement worldwide that was founded by former fighters on both sides of an active conflict. As a result, they were nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2017 and 2018. They work from their Tel Aviv and Beit Jala offices and act through many local activist groups.

2.13. Activists from CFP protesting as a human chain.[12]

A major pillar of CfP is its education and outreach programmes, such as the Israeli and Palestinian Freedom Schools which address Israeli and Palestinian youth respectively. They aim to lay the groundwork in trust-building and peace education to empower the youth's potential to become non-violent peace activists and advocates and to "imagine and construct a new reality rooted in dignity and equality for all." The Freedom Schools aims to build a political, grassroots alternative to the army and armed groups by empowering young people to develop skills for social change and political awareness.

2.14. Impressions from CFP activism in the Jordan Valley.[13]

11 . https://www.disturbingthepeacefilm.com/
12. https://cfpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Frame-13.jpg
13. https://cfpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Frame-13.jpg

The participants build a network of relationships within social society. In the spirit and from the founding experience of CfP, targeting youth before they enter the army service or combative groups is vital. The schools' being called Freedom Schools resonates greatly with the German term for non-violence which is a positive term: Gewaltfreiheit. It means free from violence, conglomerating the words violence and freedom and thus stressing the notion of gaining freedom when renouncing violence.

"I could see that nonviolent co-resistance is not a slogan, but a real act."

Abed S. Palestinian Freedom School Graduate 2022

CfP also engages in environmental peacebuilding and activism against violent settlers in the Jordan Valley. Activists accompany and protect Palestinian farmers with kettle through their presence from settlers' violence. Additionally, they support locals in their battle for water access and security against climate catastrophe and the occupation's oppression. The yearly olive harvest combines the environmental and protective aspects when CfP activists help in the harvest and hope to avert the up to 100 violent settler attacks that farmers face sometimes in just 10 days. In the occupied West Bank during the current conflict, more than 700 Palestinians were killed including ca. 160 children[14]. Settlers' terrorism is even illegal by Israeli law, however, it is also financially supported by the government.

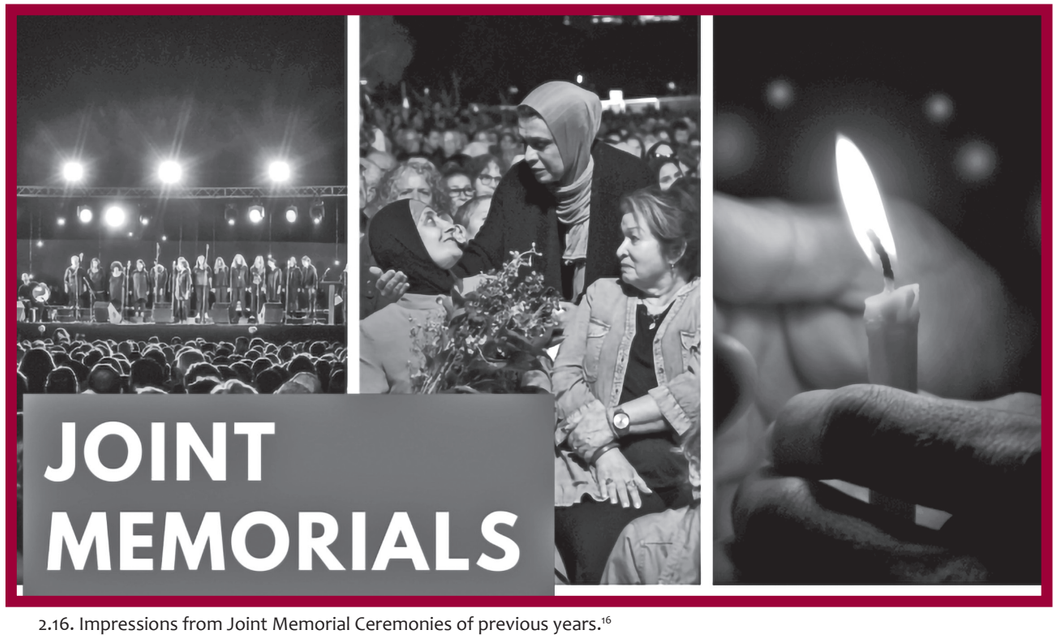
2.15. A cartoon for the exhibition 'Cartooning in Conflict' depicting Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organisation throwing stones at each other, showing the absurdity of war rhetoric when Israel wonders if it retaliates or initiates with the next throw.[15]

CfP, similarly to PCFF, reaches out to people with low threshold events such as the "Big Picture Seminars" to reach pre-army youth 18-20 y/o and introduce them to Israeli and Palestinian mentors and "Stories of Transformation / Transformation Lectures" of Palestinian and Israeli CfP activists, reaching hundreds of people each year. One example of this personal transformation stories is that of CfP member and former IDF soldier Chen Alon:

14. https://www.aljazeera.com/news/longform/2023/10/9/israel-hamas-war-in-maps-and-charts-live-tracker
15. https://www.theparentscircle.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/c6_1055-1024x558.b197b0.webp

My grandfather immigrated to Palestine before the Second World War because he was a Zionist. He was the only member of his family to escape the gas chambers of Poland, and so I was brought up with the belief that Zionism literally saved my family. [...] I believed that enemies who wanted to destroy us surrounded our Jewish state and that men like my father, who fought in the 1967 war, were there to protect us. However, when my father came back from the Yom Kippur war in 1973, he was deeply psychologically damaged and from a very young age I was exposed to his trauma. I went into the army wishing to fix things, but instead I got locked into the same cycle.I was drafted in 1987 at the beginning of the First Intifada. [...] I was sent everywhere and did everything. [...] One night we had to meet an agent from the security forces in order to find a wanted terrorist. My men surrounded a house and we entered with our flashlights. People were sleeping on mattresses all over the floor. Then the agent woke someone up and dragged him to the jeep. It was a 10-year-old child. 'How can this be the "wanted terrorist""? I asked myself.

BThe importance and magnitude of their engagement in the Memorial Ceremonies is because the loss of fighters and civilians is often claimed by the ruling parties and instrumentalised in national narratives: heroic deaths, martyrs, defenders of the nation, the innocent angels, etc. The individuals who lost their lives and their affected communities remain invisible. Oftentimes, the claiming intensifies the pain and anger. So does the impression that the death was ultimately 'pointless' when nothing is won, nothing has changed, but the losing game on the citizens' side just continues.



2.16. Impressions from Joint Memorial Ceremonies of previous years.[16]

16. https://cfpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/8-1187x1536.png

By uniting in grief and counter-war action, the communities re-claim their loved ones, re-claim the power of their individual and collective narratives and emerge from the trauma of powerlessness and being at the mercy of events. By presenting an alternative way of commemorating their loved ones, they offer an alternative way of understanding the past and present and visualising the future. By creating alternative narratives, they establish new forms of memory culture. Being the families of 'the fallen' they grant these events and actions great legitimacy and authenticity. If someone whose child was murdered by 'the enemy' can take a step towards 'the others', couldn't someone else?

It is understood as a binary choice: you are either with us or with them. Today we are all on the same side: the side of humanity.

Rima Jawabra Khatib

Sharing the pain of loss but living in two blatantly different worlds in the same place exemplifies the injustices better than anything else and making these inequalities visible is in itself an important step for respect, trust and change. Acknowledging the shared aspects of injustice and pain that come with armed conflict while also acknowledging the gross injustices suffered by the Palestinian population can contribute to bereavement, dialogue, reconciliation and peace (PCFF) – in this small collective as well as the respective bigger ones.

CfP and PCFF do groundbreaking work in memory activism by challenging the memory politics constructed to remain in spirals of violence and vengeance. They put themselves at risk at the forefront of nonviolent peace activism, show vulnerability and personify hope. In the ceremonies, they manifest the impossible. The unbelievable pain of loss is embraced and confronted with the – unimaginable? – embrace of solidarity and empathy by 'the other, the enemy'. The ceremonies prove that war is indeed a choice, not a destiny and that above all: "Death is impartial and war is blind" (Yonatan Zeigen). The hard work and resilience of so many families and activists in PCFF and CfP make them a shining role model of how nonviolent peace and memory activism can build bridges over the deepest and scariest abysses this world is witnessing.

We are here and we're going nowhere. That is a promise, not a threat […]
And the solution? Freedom, justice and equality.

2.17. Artists Samira and Neta singing and performing poetry in Hebrew and Arabic, including citations of Jewish and Muslim scriptures and prayers condemning violence.

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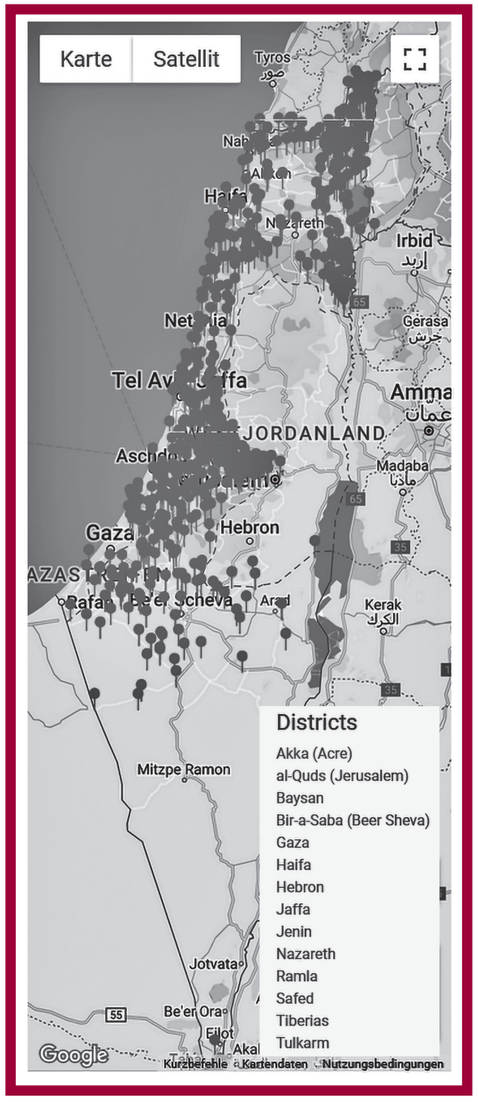
IF WALLS COULD TALK

MAPS AND MURALS OF MEMORIES

My mum is a history teacher. Thus, visits to historical sites were rather the norm than the exception on weekends and holidays. And one of her most frequent phrases was: "If those walls could talk… what would they say? What did they witness? Whose stories would they tell?" Likely, they would not exclusively chat about 'legendary' big battles and so-called heroes but about everyday people, their grievances and curiosities throughout our human history.

Palestine

The few walls left in Al-lydd/Lod, Hawsha or Al-Araqib, Palestine, would probably recount the lives of their former inhabitants. How children played inside their walls, how elders watched them with a cup of tea, when the cries of newborn babies filled their walls at night or when someone took their last breath in this, their home. If they could, they would also tell the story about the deafening silence within them after massacres, lootings and expulsion. Until the day they were torn down.



But they cannot talk. No memorial, plate, or event commemorates the people and their homes. The Israeli NGO Zochrot, however, does exactly that. They offer "guided tours in Palestinian sites that have been emptied of their residents and destroyed during the Nakba" (Zochrot). Tours are held in Hebrew for Jewish Israelis. Zochrot's focus on this target group derives "from its practical and moral responsibility for Palestinian refugeehood and its privileged position of power in the current regime" (Zochrot). But, also to stimulate political, social and cultural change from below.

In this form of memory activism, Zochrot challenges the ruling memory politics and Israel's national narrative in a very practical way, by shedding light on the forcefully forgotten and forbidden past – none of which are marked or remembered in said place. By gathering and presenting evidence with low-threshold access, they consolidate and legitimise the counter-narrative. This approach provides a safer space for those perceived as members of the 'powerful, oppressor, etc.'-group while firmly pushing participants out of their comfort zone. Zochrot creates and guides a collective experience of voicing questions, grief, anger, confusion and resistance.

In addition, Zochrot expands the low-threshold access and 'visible-making' of the individual experiences of the Nakba and many tri-lingual materials as well as an interactive map of the Nakba. This is even available as an app called "iReturn – Navigate Palestine, Imagine the Future"[1]. In a unique and pioneering way, Zochrot uses technology to "re-tell a suppressed history and to reveal Israel's hidden landscape of ethnic cleansing and forced expulsions […] but also envision a just, viable, and peaceful solution" (Zochrot). Visiting the places, giving voice to the silenced people and walls, the Palestinian 'other' becomes a human, an individual, to empathise and identify with. Overcoming the separation between 'them and us' is the first step towards understanding, reconciliation, activism and peace.

3.1. A digital map of places telling the stories of the Nakba. [2]

1. https://www.zochrot.org/ireturn
2. https://www.zochrot.org/villages/nakba_map/en?Nakba_Map

Northern Ireland

3.2. “Bloody Sunday. A group of men, led by a local priest, carry the body of Jackie Duddy, the first fatality of the day.”[3]

Some walls not only decided to tell history but present memories like in a slide show. Street art on murals has been a popular choice to memorialise historical moments and people all over the world. Whether it is to commemorate idols like Nelson Mandela or remember victims of injustices like George Floyd. Some artists that keep stimulating ‘society’ to question political, cultural and social reality in such a creative way even become world famous, like Banksy. Pictures can speak when words fail, a picture can speak to millions of people of different mother tongues, to those who are illiterate or have difficulty reading. Pictures can carry emotions and meaning beyond generations and backgrounds. So, particularly when it comes to sensitive and emotional (his)stories, murals might tell a more in-depth story than a commemorative plate ever could.

A great example is the so-called “People’s Gallery” in Derry-Londonderry in Northern Ireland. These 12 murals by “The Bogside Artists”, who also offer tours of the murals, are famous for remembering the times of the so-called ‘Troubles’, the Northern Ireland violent conflict. Described as a “human document”, the murals speak of the people’s struggle for justice, freedom and democratic rights (Discover NI). Bogside, a majority Catholic neighbourhood experienced its own collective trauma during the ‘Battle of Bogside’, days of riots to which the British Army was deployed. Derry was also the setting of the infamous ‘Bloody Sunday’, commemorated in the accordingly named U2 song, a massacre of civilians by the British Army which escalated the Northern Ireland Conflict.

The Bogside Murals/People’s Gallery intends to keep the buildings and people alive as the world has moved on after the Good Friday Agreement, which ended most of the violent battles in Northern Ireland. They have captured representative moments and people to counter the forgetting and ‘brushing over’ the memories of war and establish a memory culture from below. The murals depict victims, fighters, activists and their families, remember demonstrations, violence and peace as well as the everyday life during The Troubles.

3. https://traveladdicts.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Derry-Northern-Ireland-mural-Bloody-Sunday.jpg.webp

3.3. “14 year old Annette McGavigan killed in crossfire near her home in September 1971. She was the 100th victim and represents the 3000 people who died during the Troubles”[4]

Germany

In Germany, instead of walls, some pavement stones ‘talk’ - because German memory activists took the idea of ‘stumbling over history’ literally. They started inserting so-called ‘stumbling stones’ on the pavement to commemorate families and individuals who suffered from grave injustices, such as expulsion, incarceration and murder during the Nazi dictatorship. According to the Talmud[5] scripture, a person is forgotten once their name is forgotten. For that not to happen, thousands of stumbling stones have been placed all over Germany, and Europe.

They are a frequent and normalised eye-catching sight in German streets – I have stopped, read and commemorated countless times when ‘stumbling over’ one of them and learning from the horror that happened in this house, this street, not so long ago. Of course, they do not actually make you fall but function as eye-catchers rather than foot traps. However, not everyone approves of the idea. Some Jewish community representatives, e.g. in Munich, have criticised the Jewish people and stories were ‘trampled over’ and that commemorating on the street was disrespectful in comparison to more traditional ways such as plates on houses. Yet others from the many communities and families that were affected approve of and promote the idea. For instance, many schools encourage their students to keep an eye out in the neighbourhood, research and present the stories of those who could have been their neighbours, in a time that could have been their reality, too.

On the first look, these memory activists are in line with the memory politics and culture presenting the Holocaust as a core memory and point of re-invention of the German nation. Notwithstanding, a broader societal reflection, the persecution of perpetrators and the creation of collective responsibility and accountability in the German Federal Republic/West Germany was only triggered by youth protests and activism in the 1960s and 1970s. Thus, the Stolpersteine represent the notion of spreading memories

4. https://hopsskipsandjumps.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/DSC_7318-1536x1024.jpg
5. The Talmud is one of the most important scriptures in Judaism and also considered one of the ‘pillars of Judaism’. In the simplest sense, it discusses Jewish law and teaching. https://www.talmud.de/tlmd/was-ist-der-talmud/

and responsibility from state symbolism to the individual, every day and everywhere. By exposing and countering the collective amnesia of the diverse groups of victims and survivors, the memory activists also countered the memory politics of sealing the Holocaust as an isolated event in the past without addressing continuities and consequences. The Stolpersteine provoke a subtle ‘pause and think’ and map the memories of tyranny through our daily lives.

3.4. Stolpersteine commemorating victims who used to live in the building which is the “Kunstpavillon” art gallery today in Munich’s Old Botanical Garden: Hermann Fries *1909, arrested 1942, executed 12.8.1948, Stadelheim Prison. Antonia Pfülf *1877, humiliated and disenfranchised, escaped into death on 8.6.1933 [suspected suicide, edit.]. Walter Klingenbeck *1924, in resistance, arrested 1942, executed 5.8.1943, Stadelheim Prison. Private photo, K. Schmitz

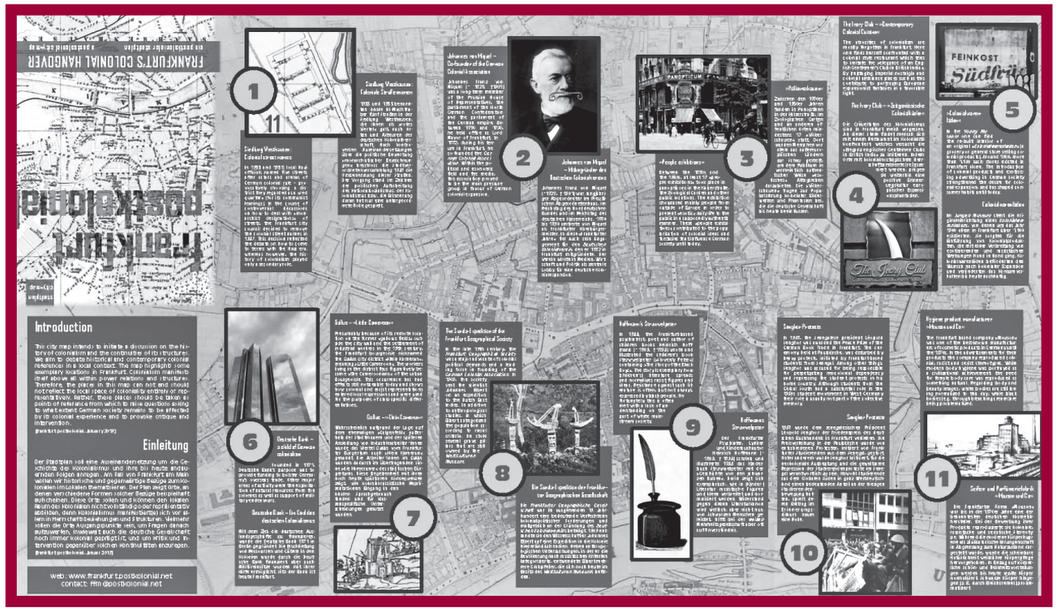
In fact, even the so-called World Champion of Memory Culture Germany has had a full-blown successful collective amnesia, a blind spot in its memory culture and mental memorial map: Germany’s colonial past and atrocities. I hardly remember it as a topic in school’s history class and only learnt about it through my passionate history teacher mum and at university. I remember a collective notion that “Britain, France and Belgium were worse and the German Empire lost the colonies quickly after World War One so it is not of importance”. Thanks to Namibian activists and politicians advocating and suing, bilateral negotiations on reparations and retribution of bones and cultural artefacts progressed and led to the official recognition of the genocide – however, only in 2021.

German colonial soldiers committed the first genocide of the 20th century when executing a war of annihilation between 1904 -1905 against the Herero and Nama, local communities that live in today’s Namibia. Because local groups rebelled against the human rights violations and colonialist exploitations, soldiers killed approximately 100,000 people in concentration camps, executions and when chasing families into the desert to die of thirst, heat and hunger. Despite ‘losing its colonies’, Germany, like any other European country, kept benefitting from the exploitation of the colonies – until this day the Global North has been building its wealth upon the exploitation of peoples and natural resources of the Global South.

This colonial past-to-present has left its traces. However, despite shouting from street names, shop signs and exotically decorated walls of houses, they remain invisible and unheard. Particularly in cities that have been economically wealthy and important, street names ‘honouring’ colonial predators or the colonies’ asserted names, businesses still bearing colonial-era names, including racist descriptions of black people and buildings decorated with exotic animals and racially stereotyping and condescending art are everywhere to be found, e.g. in Hamburg, Berlin or Frankfurt am Main. Simultaneously, the culture and representatives of Afro-German people who have been residing in Germany for more than 100 years, have been meticulously made invisible and forgotten. Consequently, German memory politics have silenced crimes and memories which therefore found no way into the racially selective memory culture of those ‘worthy’ to remember.

To uncover the blind spots and shape the changing memory culture and politics through memory activism from below, the full stories that have been kept unheard within the walls and streets must finally be seen and heard. People who live and work in these cities and houses have usually never questioned their address or pharmacist’s shop name. Certainly, they have not learnt about Afro-German historians, poets and activists who have been contributing to German culture, economy, education, art and society for more than a century, such as Audre Lorde. To change all that, memory activists have created free city walking tours called ‘decolonising tour’ or ‘postcolonial tour’ that remind of Zochrot’s tours at the beginning of the article. Inhabitants and tourists experience a hidden past and present, an alternative narrative of the places and a challenging counter-perspective on what they have been told and perceived so far.

So, in case you think about visiting Germany in your holidays or when you visit family there, take a closer look at Stolpersteine and take a different path on a decolonising tour – the truth is only one speaking wall away.



3.5. A city guide tour map of Frankfurt Postkolonial. [6]

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Contested Memorials – Contested Memories

Role of memorials

One of Paris' must-see landmarks is the Arc de Triomphe, located on the historic Champs-Élysées avenue. It is positioned on a slight hill and offers a unique view of the city's monuments and skyline. A favourite among tourists, it also inspired similar monuments across Europe. The construction of the Arc de Triomphe began under Napoleon I in 1806, was revived by King Louis XVII in 1823, and continued under Charles X as a tribute to French military victories. It became a public gathering point during revolutionary protests against the monarchy. Completed in 1836 under Louis-Philippe I, the monument was inscribed with key battles, military feats, and generals' names. Until the end of the 19th century, more names were added as aristocratic families sought to honour their ancestors' sacrifices and heroic actions.

I remember reading the names on the arch, craning my neck until I felt dizzy, imagining the lives behind those names-how old they were, what they thought before they died, and how their lives would have turned out without war. It made me profoundly grateful to have grown in the spirit of the European Union and German-French friendship, characterised by exchange programmes and school trips, despite the pain of three major wars. Though crossing the border for cheese and crêpes feels casual, I can never forget how much blood was spilt over these borders.

4.1. L'Arc de Triomphe in Paris. [1]

1. https://tse2.mm.bing.net/th?id=OIP.tnfwxVvXGCJVYZaVYCbgqQHaEq&pid=Api

The traumatic First World War claimed over 18 million lives, with nearly 1,400,000 French soldiers among them. After the Versailles Treaty, a victory parade was held at the Arc, but the night before, grieving families gathered there to honour their fallen loved ones with flowers. A sombre victory. The monument, a cenotaph, bears the inscription: "To those who died for the homeland 1914-1918."

Since 11 November 1920, the Arc de Triomphe has housed the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Many soldiers remained unidentified, leaving thousands of families with no closure. In 1920, hundreds of thousands mourned together as a symbolic family during the soldier's funeral procession. In 1923, the Flame of Remembrance was added. To this day, the flame is rekindled at 6:30 pm by veterans, honouring the fallen daily. Both memorials were public-driven ideas, not just government decisions. They can be seen as an interesting addition, if not 're-claiming' of the majestic arch of the kings and aristocrats.

4.2. The Remembrance Flame and the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Inscription: "To those who died for the homeland 1914-1918."[2].

Memory encompasses more than just facts and history; it delves into meaning, culture, and psychology. Memorials connect individual and collective memory while abstracting individual to collective memory. Memorials are like sticky notes saying: Don't forget about this! and aim to combat forgetting by solidifying memories into a physical form that becomes unavoidable. They therefore play a powerful role in memory politics, culture and activism. Memorials provide a tangible representation of ideas, victims, movements, and heroes in various forms and styles.

Memorials are objects of art and ancient human expression. For instance, cave paintings are artistic expressions of what those people wanted to remember and what they wanted to be remembered by. Memorials can explore themes of absence and presence, e.g. the absence of a specific name and face on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, or permanence and impermanence. For instance, there were temporary memorials for Toše Proeski after his tragic death which later evolved into a permanent museum and chapel in Kruševo. Consequently, memorials are cultural artefacts designed to give shape to and "shape a certain past" (Metz 2016:288).

However, when doing so, they are limited in the array of tropes they are supposed to transmit, e.g. trauma, sadness, nationalism, violence, militancy, etc. Metz argues that in fact, the primary, though not only, function of memorials is not to teach historical facts but to transmit an affect, an emotion, and activate it (289). This means that memorials hold codes that people who are socialised and educated according to a specific narrative will be able to decode accordingly and feel the affect more strongly than others who have not. Memorials do not only teach a fact or story but also convey meaning and emotion.

2. https://www.paris-arc-de-triomphe.fr/en/discover/the-unknown-soldier

Thus, memorials do not simply capture a memory; they embody an interpretation, a specific perspective, and a lens through which we view the past, present, and future. This lens acts as a filter, shaping our understanding of what is remembered. The process of memorialisation involves selection, exclusion, and emphasis, privileging certain memories over others while rendering many invisible and forgotten. This is problematic, as history is inherently pluralistic, and perspectives on events and individuals evolve with each generation. Consequently, coding memorials in the process of memorialisation, essentially 'freezing' a memory, "interrupts the functioning of memorials as flexible vessels for fluid memory" (289).

While memory, history, and identity are dynamic, memorials often appear fixed in time and form, failing to reflect evolving narratives. They can embrace or resist the dynamism of memory. And as such symbols of identity, memorials may become targets of contested memories, often triggering painful recollections. Many are "destroyed or appropriated at moments of political upheaval" (291), serving as sites for identity formation and political discourse. This issue is particularly relevant in the context of nation-states because the:

"symbolic labour of creating identities in newly formed nation-states often involves some definition of the collective Self against an Other; sharing historical ties, cultural traditions, and common borders, neighbouring nation-states quite naturally play this role, especially during times of instability and competition" (Kian-Woon & Waterson 329), leading to "memory-related disputes" (ibid.).

Challenging Japanese Collective Amnesia - Comfort Women Statues

[Trigger warning for readers: the following article talks explicitly about sexualised violence and torture.]

You can't stay quiet when you suffered what they went through.

Virginia Suarez, Human Rights lawyer in the Philippines representing survivor 'comfort women'

"We hope to get justice before we die," says Maria Quilantang (Guinto & Simonette 2023). The nearly 90-year-old Filipina is a leader of the local group 'Malaya Lolas' or 'Free Grandmothers.' They are among the last survivors of the so-called 'comfort women.' The term 'grandmothers' is how many survivors refer to themselves in their local language, such as in South Korea. 'Comfort women' is the cruel euphemism used by the Japanese Imperial Army during World War II for the 200,000 girls and women they kidnapped, trafficked, and forced into military brothels as sex slaves. Most victims were from South Korea, but others came from the Philippines, Taiwan, China, and Indonesia. This was a state-sponsored system, with recruiters trafficking mostly minors to "comfort stations" located throughout the Empire and its colonies, such as Shanghai, for their soldiers.

By combining cultural expressions, the Maya Lolas have been gathering for decades, often living with each other, comforting one another and have been singing their songs to speak the truth and demand justice. As they sing, they recount how they were taken from their homes in their early teens; Maria was only eight years old when she was dragged through the streets to a rice field and was imprisoned in a "blood-red house" (ibid.). Gang-raped, tortured, held captive, and deprived of food and water, Maria recalls their only source of drinking water was from the deep footprints of water buffalos in the mud of the rice fields filled with rainwater (ibid.).

"Many were killed or killed themselves. Those who survived and returned home did not share their stories of horror for decades, for fear of being stigmatized."

(Allen 2015)

The surviving 'comfort women' were deprived of their childhood, education, future, and happiness. They faced discrimination from their families and communities and were often forbidden to speak about their experiences, compounded by a lack of psychological support to discuss their trauma. The silencing, however, added and reproduced both the injustice committed against them and the trauma. Today, sexual violence is recognised as a weapon of war and torture. However, both then and now, it remains one of the few extreme forms of violence and human rights violations where the victim or survivor is often held collectively responsible due to patriarchal norms and misconceptions. Additionally, only military—primarily male—victims were considered true victims of war and memorialised in monuments like the Arc de Triomphe until civilian victims gradually received more recognition.

Thus, for female victims and survivors of sexual violence to break the enforced silence is an act of immense bravery. Even more so the Grandmothers face additional invisible-making and silencing as elderly women. It was in August 1991 that Kim Hak-soon from South Korea became the first woman to break over 50 years of silence by testifying about her experiences as a sexual slave for the Japanese military. Her testimony paved the way for survivors across Asia to begin sharing their stories (Allen 2015). Since then, the survivors and their allies have been on the long and arduous journey to receive recognition, respect and reparation as well as an official apology for all the crimes and their state-organised scope from Japan. Problematically, countries have waived claims for reparations in Peace treaties with Japan after the war. Today, international courts can only urge the national governments to compensate and apologise to their citizens.

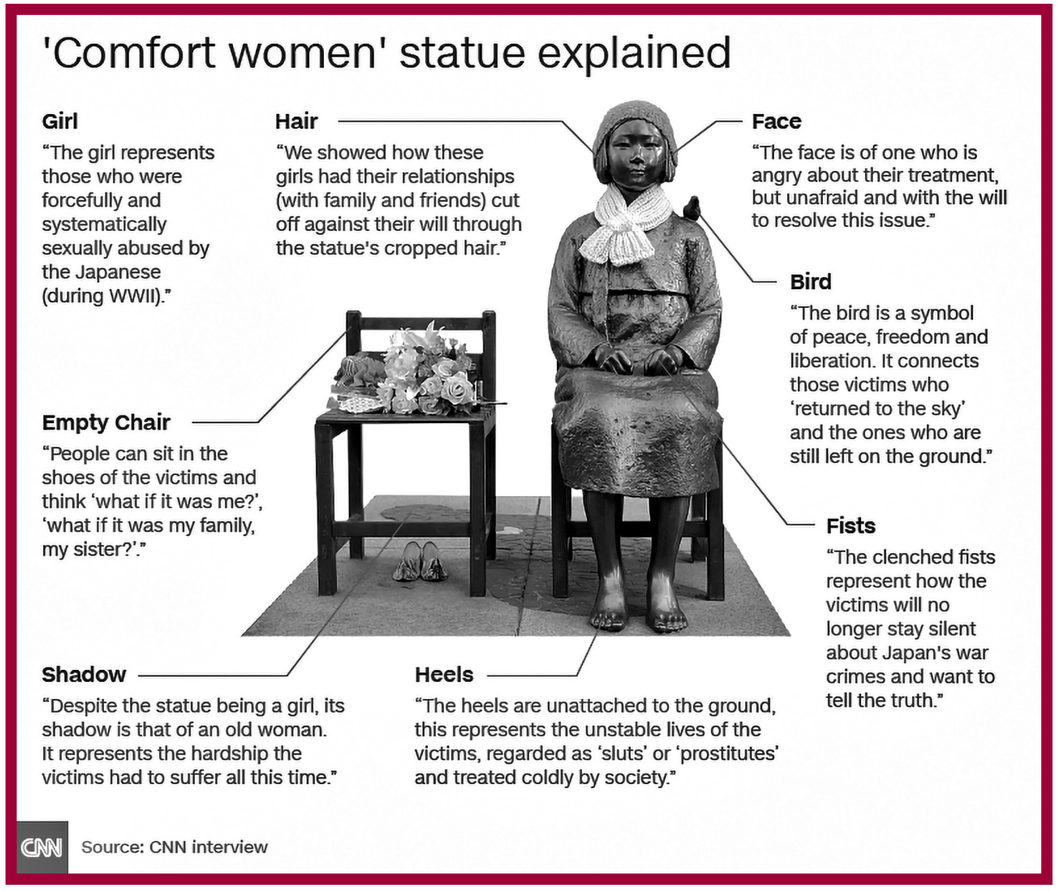
However, for over 80 years, Japan's memory politics have been characterised by collective amnesia and denialism, not only limited to the sexual slavery issue or foreign citizens. Notably, the first 'comfort women' were kidnapped Japanese girls (Dudden 2022). Upsettingly, one of Japan's arguments is that the underage girls all over occupied and colonised territory had volunteered to enter work contracts as prostitutes, raising strong moral, legal and logical questions. Dudden explains that Japan's:

"denialism continues to attack this history and labels victims 'liars' or 'money grabbers' and whitewashes most evidence as 'fake' despite abundant academic and juridical peer-reviewed material as well as governmentally published documentation that verifies the litany of horrors during this shameful episode".

In 1993, Japan acknowledged its military's involvement in establishing and managing so-called "comfort stations," expressing "sincere apologies and remorse" (Han & Griffiths 2017). However, Japan is so committed to keeping this chapter of history closed that any acknowledgement by other countries of the term 'sexual slavery' is often perceived as 'anti-Japanese' and 'pro-Korean.'

The survivors and allies are active as memory activists, telling the true and complete history of which the girls and women had been erased; to emphasise, both in their countries as well as in Japan. While still marginalised in other countries, South Korean survivors and memory activists managed to push the issue into national and international public interest, established the commemoration of 'comfort women' in memory culture and politics, and triggered a diplomatic memory dispute between Japan and North Korea that required international mediation over years.

In 2011, after decades of advocacy, a statue representing a 'comfort girl' was unveiled outside the Japanese embassy in Seoul. Interestingly, it was only meant to be a commemorative stone marking the 1000th day of protest after demonstrators had been gathering in front of the Embassy since 1992. But the Japanese Embassy reacted in such outrage that the artists decided to go up a level and created a beautiful and thoughtful statue of a small girl who silently stares in defiance, symbolically at Japan.



4.3. The 'Comfort Women' statue in Seoul explained.[3]

The unveiling of this statue ignited a growing diplomatic conflict between the two countries. Statues representing 'comfort women and girls' have become significant symbols and gathering points for activists and survivors. The statue in Seoul exemplifies the importance of memorials in commemorating historical events, educating the public, honouring victims, and demanding justice. And it is important to stress that there are rarely statues of women in the first place. A statue of a girl triggering a diplomatic dispute illustrates how memorials convey meanings and emotions, leading Japanese diplomats to feel insecure, uncomfortable but mainly offended crossing their paths daily.

The number of such statues is increasing, as they are being erected not only at former 'comfort stations' or activist sites but also abroad, where survivors and diaspora communities reside, as well as in locations where locals wish to commemorate and educate others about these women's silenced stories. Examples include a statue in Shanghai featuring a Chinese and Korean girl holding hands, and another in San Francisco depicting a Chinese, Filipina, and Korean girl standing together.

3. http://i.cdn.turner.com/cnn/.e/interactive/html5-video-media/2017/01/12/South_Korea_comfort_woman_infographic_medium.png

4.4. Former "comfort woman" Grandma Yong-soo Lee reaches out to touch a section of the Comfort Women Memorial statue after it's unveiled at St. Mary's Square park in Chinatown in San Francisco, Calif. on Friday, Sept. 22, 2017. [4]

4. Paul Chinn / The Chronicle 2017/ https://s.hdnux.com/photos/66/13/33/14202571/5/960x0.webp

4.5. Bronze busts of former sex slaves, or “comfort women” for Japanese troops in World War II, at the House of Sharing shelter in Gwangju, South Korea. July 3, 2022. [5]

Since 2011, South Korean administrations have refused Japan’s requests to remove the statue outside the embassy. Similarly, the German government declined Japan’s Prime Minister’s direct request to the Chancellor to remove a statue. Only Japan has officially sought the removal of statues representing its past victims.

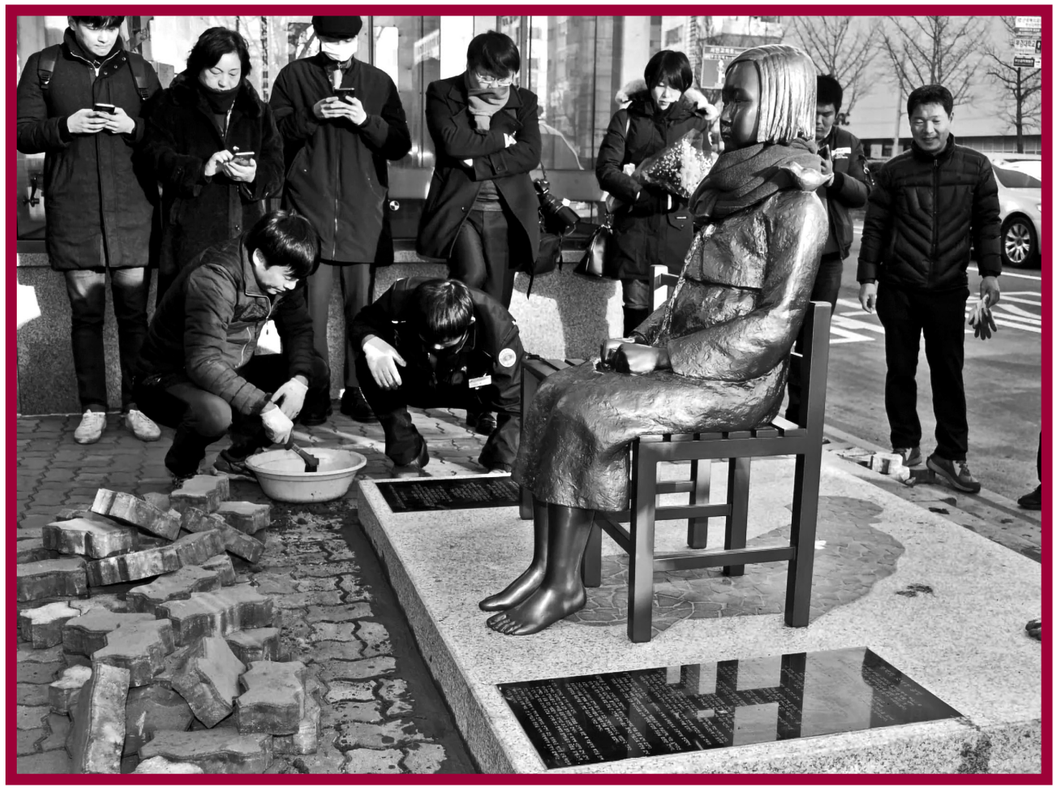
“It’s about the way women get treated in war. It’s not anti-Japanese»

Reverend Bill Crews from Ashfield Uniting Church, Sydney, responding to threats of legal action by a Japanese lobby group, supported by diplomats, demanding the removal of a ‘comfort girl’ statue he hosts in the churchyard, claiming it incited offence and racial hatred against Japanese (Dunlop 2016).

As these silent protests spread globally, the diplomatic row escalated, with Japan and South Korea publicly blaming each other during UN meetings, prompting allies like the USA to mediate, leading to a 2015 agreement. The Japanese government agreed to provide 1 billion yen ($8.3 million) to a survivor’s fund, while South Korea accepted the issue as “resolved” (Yan et al. 2015). Characterising it as a “final and irreversible resolution,” then-Prime Minister Shinzo Abe publicly expressed “his most sincere apologies and remorse to all the women who underwent immeasurable and painful experiences and suffered incurable physical and psychological wounds as comfort women” (ibid.). However, activists were dissatisfied, feeling humiliated by the lack of acknowledgement of the state-systemised human rights violations which to this day are not addressed in Japanese history textbooks. No responsibility for the prevention of future violations was taken either. Japan remained unwilling to confront its past, rejecting calls for a truth commission and educational reforms. Additionally, the Japanese government continued to demand the removal of the statue from its embassy.

5. Woohae Cho/The New York Times/ https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/styles/image_with_caption/public/2022-09/20220916-skorea-comfort-women-6-nyt-ac.jpg?itok=VN5hOBmG)

In 2017, another statue was erected by activists in front of the Japanese consulate in Busan, South Korea, prompting Japan to recall two top diplomats and freeze diplomatic relations. Initially erected by a civic group, the statue was removed by authorities due to a lack of permits but was reinstated after a public outcry. Japan argued that its installation violated the 2015 agreement and claimed that approval from Japan was necessary for erecting the statue near its consulate. Local activists, however, asserted that the statue, known as the Statue of Peace, symbolised peace and women’s rights. They keep demanding an official acknowledgement and apology, along with individual compensation for all survivors. This dispute exemplifies the role of memory activism, memory politics and of memorials.



4.6. The erection of a statue in Busan has caused a diplomatic incident[6]

6. https://media.cnn.com/api/v1/images/stellar/prod/170106125618-01-comfort-woman-statue.jpg?q=w_1110,c_fill/f_webp

Goodbye Lenin! – Removing Soviet Era statues

4.7. Scene from the film 'Goodbye Lenin' when the statue of Lenin is removed. [7]

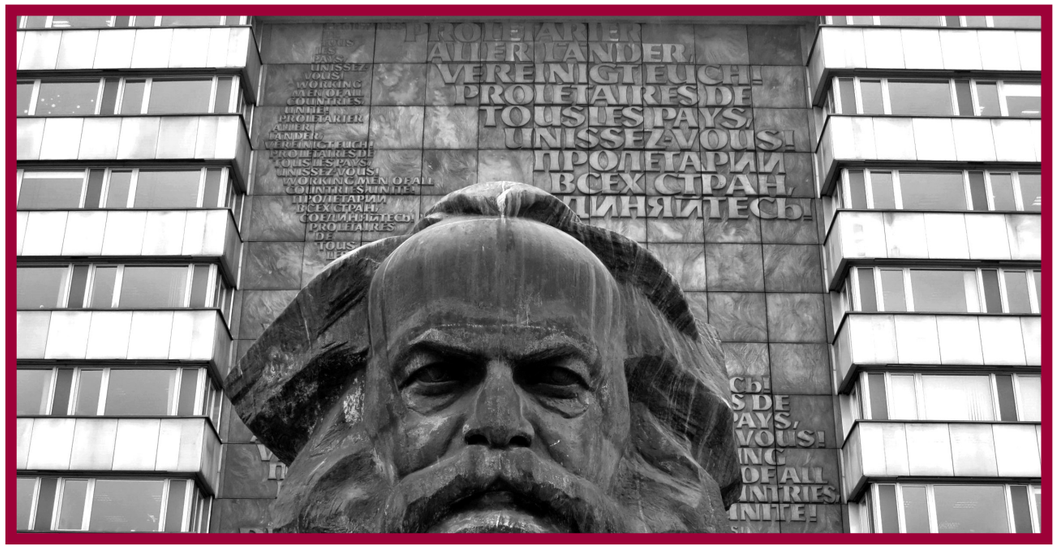
4.7. Scene from the film 'Goodbye Lenin' when the Mother leaves her bed and is faced with the new world of the German reunification.

In the film "Goodbye Lenin," a woman in East Germany lies in a coma as the Iron Curtain falls. A staunch believer in socialism and a supporter of the German Democratic Republic's (GDR, 'East Germany') system, she must not experience any stress upon waking, leaving her family in a dilemma given the historical events. To protect her, the son pretends that the GDR still exists, playing old TV news recordings, placing East German labels on West German products, and wearing his old clothes. Eventually, she wanders into

7. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kehu8QBHCCk

the streets and encounters a transformed world, complete with Coca-Cola advertisements, new cars, and fashion. Coincidentally, it's the day the Lenin statue is being taken down, symbolising the farewell of an old system and ideology in favour of a new one.

Statues and monuments in the style of socialist realism had already served as memorials during their communist regimes, reminding passers-by of the proletarian struggles and their perceived victory over capitalist oppression. Some served as identity markers celebrating the ideology of Lenin and Marx and their core message of uniting all workers in the world in a collective struggle for a more just world order.

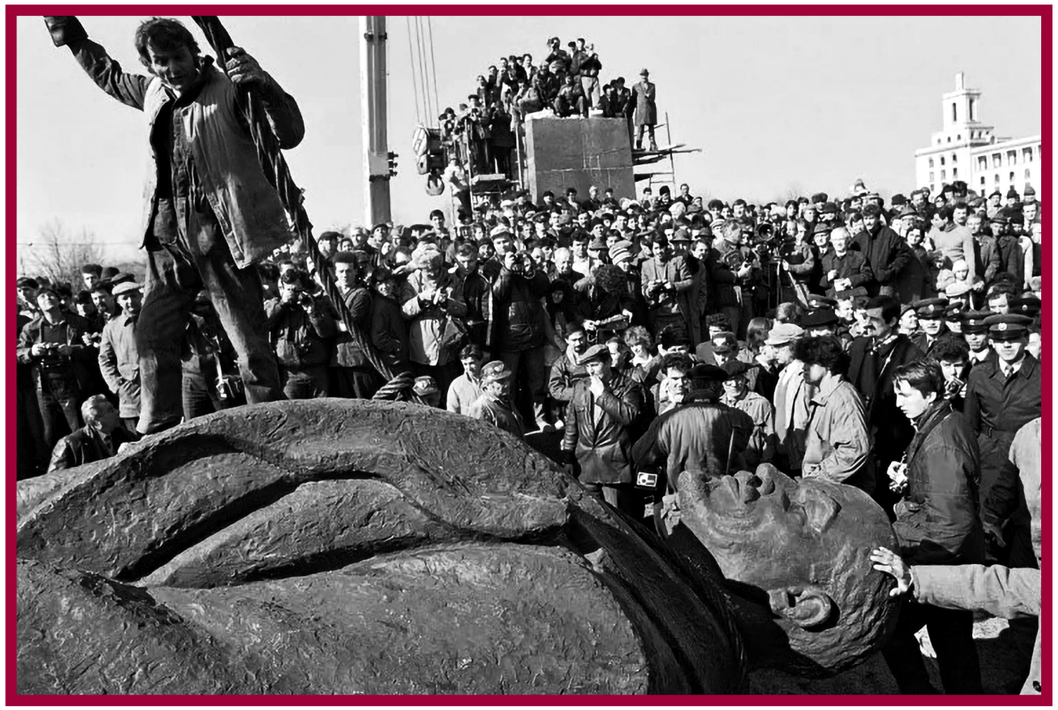


4.8. Portrait bust of Karl Marx in the German city of Chemnitz.[8]

A prominent monument is the massive head of Karl Marx in Chemnitz, formerly Karl-Marx-Stadt during the GDR. Erected in 1971, it is the second-largest portrait bust in the world. Behind it, on a former SED (Socialist Unity Party of Germany) building, are famous quotes from Marx's works in several languages, including "Proletarians of all countries unite." After 1989, it became a gathering point for the peaceful 'Monday Demonstrations' against the regime, causing the fall of the Berlin Wall. Discussions about removing or selling it as modern art emerged after reunification, but the City of Chemnitz and the artists' descendants opposed this. The monument remains a city landmark and a site of collective identity, often attracting both right-wing and left-wing protests that try to align with its historical significance.

While Marx's head remains cherished, others weren't so lucky. During and after regime changes, the toppling of statues by protesters or their removal by new administrations symbolises the break from the past, marking the end of an old identity narrative and collective memory while opening the door to a new one. As ideologies and systems shifted dramatically, memory culture and politics were tried to be transformed overnight. This phenomenon was especially prevalent in countries emerging from communist dictatorships, such as Lithuania, Georgia, East Germany, Albania, and Romania, as well as in non-European nations like Ethiopia. For many, these statues represented oppression, whether from their own governments or Russian dominance in the Soviet Union and its satellite states. The slogans of unity, equality, and liberation seemed ironic in the face of violent state repression and corruption that hindered political expression and perpetuated socioeconomic crises. The following examples show how protestors became memory activists and historical symbols of change themselves by taking matters into their own hands claiming their past, present and future back.

8. https://global-geography.org/attach/Geography/Europe/Germany/Pictures/Saxony/Chemnitz_-_Brueckenstrasze_Karl-Marx-Monument_1/Chemnitz_-_Brueckenstrasze_-_Groesztes_Karl_Marx-Denkmal_weltweit_IMG_1065.jpg

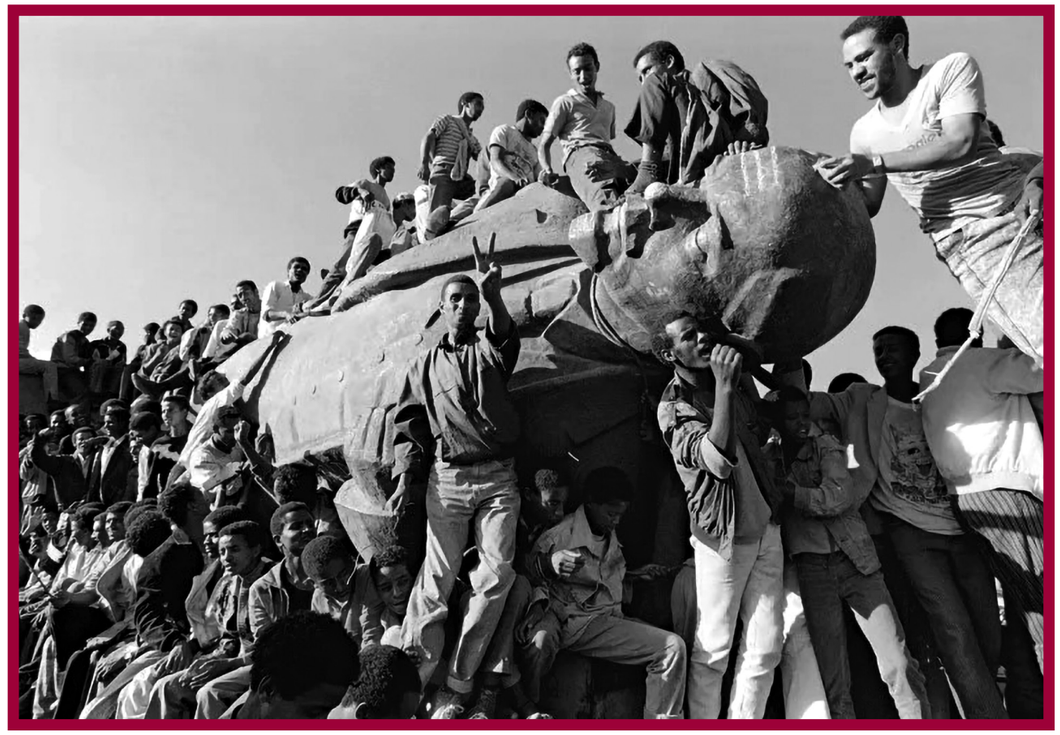


4.9. Protesters in Bucharest toppled a Lenin statue from its pedestal in Bucharest on 5 March 1990 after the communist leader Nicolae Ceausescu and his wife Elena were executed by firing squad months earlier.[9]

4.10. 20 February 1991: Albanians push over a bronze statue of the late communist dictator Enver Hoxha on the central square of Tirana. [10]

9.https://d.ibtimes.co.uk/en/full/1401921/ethiopia-lenin-statue.webp?w=745&f=065089234b9cd906af99b84902092f23

10.https://d.ibtimes.co.uk/en/full/1401924/hoxha-albania-statue.webp?w=745&f=ea9f46f5391c48c72ae0e61558baa91a (original: Reuters)



4.11. 23 May 1991: Ethiopian youths chant as they stand on a toppled statue of Lenin in Addis Ababa, two days after Ethiopian pro-communist strongman Mengistu Haile Mariam was overthrown.[11]

The statues that remained, however, continued to serve their memorial function, albeit with new meanings. This illustrates how a single monument can evolve in its significance, evoking a range of emotions, including liberation, nostalgia, anger, and melancholia. In some cases, newer generations may overlook these monuments altogether, viewing them as just another part of the cityscape. However, as mentioned above, memorials can be seen as frozen memories that are contested or trigger trauma. And so, the removal of Soviet-era monuments did not conclude with the fall of the Iron Curtain. In several former Soviet Republics, there has been an ongoing struggle over social, cultural, and memorial identity. This conflict pits those seeking closer ties to Russia against those wanting to align with the European Union and the West. During periods of unrest, old communist statues often become targets. A notable example occurred during the Euromajdan protests in Ukraine in 2013 and 2014, where demonstrators opposed their government's decision not to sign an association agreement with the EU. Protesters toppled a Lenin-statue in Kyiv and installed a golden toilet instead.

11. https://d.ibtimes.co.uk/en/full/1401925/ethiopia-lenin-statue.webp?w=745&f=631456d7bd702f2b2ce5be48e41d6cef (original: AFP)

4.12. “A statue of Soviet state founder Vladimir Lenin was toppled by protesters during a rally organised by supporters of EU integration in Kiev, on 8 December 2013. Crowds attacked it with hammers during mass protests against then-President Viktor Yanukovich and his plans for closer ties with Russia...”[12]

4.13. “...Anti-Russian protesters then installed a golden toilet on the plinth that was once the home of the statue of Lenin.”

In Georgia’s case, it was a pro-Western government that ordered in 2010 to remove many Soviet-era monuments after the Russio-Georgian War in 2008.

12. https://d.ibtimes.co.uk/en/full/1401948/lenin-statue.webp?w=745&f=a17e74363a2e9eb80b5295958ee9df20 (original: Reuters)

4.14. “On 25 June 2010, a giant bronze statue of Soviet dictator Josef Stalin was removed from its pedestal on the central square of his hometown of Gori in Georgia. The monument was torn down amid a crackdown on Soviet-era monuments by pro-Western President Mikheil Saakashvili, two years after Georgia lost a five-day war with Russia. The town’s authorities later voted to erect the statue at the town’s Stalin Museum.”

“On 25 June 2010, a giant bronze statue of Soviet dictator Josef Stalin was removed from its pedestal on the central square of his hometown of Gori in Georgia. The monument was torn down amid a crackdown on Soviet-era monuments by pro-Western President Mikheil Saakashvili, two years after Georgia lost a five-day war with Russia. The town’s authorities later voted to erect the statue at the town’s Stalin Museum.” (Sim 2014).

Many sought to move beyond the East-West dichotomy by rediscovering and redefining their national traditions, customs, and identities. While some hoped to overcome the conflict-driven Cold War narrative, the Russian war against Ukraine has felt like a regression, reopening old wounds, especially in the Baltic States of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. These small nations suffered greatly under the Nazi invasion and subsequent Russian occupation, leading to their annexation into the Soviet Union. Hundreds of thousands were imprisoned, tortured, and killed, while their languages and customs faced severe oppression. The invasion of Ukraine reignited deep-seated trauma and panic.

Consequently, Soviet-era monuments in Lithuania quickly became targets for vandalism and removal. Local administrations ordered the statues’ removal from cemeteries, cities, and parks. In Estonia, the national government addressed societal tensions by mandating the removal of all remaining Soviet-era monuments to prevent hostility and avoid reopening old wounds, asserting that they would not allow Russia to use the past to disrupt peace in Estonia (BBC 2022). Many in society view these monuments as symbols of Russia’s imperialism and militarism, triggering traumatic memories. Keeping them would contradict the unwavering solidarity felt with Ukrainians, who share a history of oppression and occupation with the Baltic states.

The announcement by Estonia prompted a diplomatic outcry from Russia, labelling it an “outrageous war against history” (ibid.) and placing Estonia’s Prime Minister on a wanted list in response. While there is broad consensus regarding fear of Russia and support for Ukraine, not everyone agrees on the removal of all Soviet-era monuments. Some historians advocate for a distinction between socialist art and militarist symbols, such as the Soviet tanks that commemorate the military victory over fascism and Nazi Germany, as well as the liberation of occupied territories and concentration camps.

Such tanks are part of the Soviet Honorary Memorial in Berlin, which honours the sacrifices of the Soviet army in liberating Europe, and Berlin, from Nazi occupation. However, the memorial has faced criticism, with some public figures and politicians advocating for the removal of the tanks, arguing that they have shifted from symbols of liberation to symbols of oppression. In Germany, this discussion is particularly complex. In 2022, memory activists decided to smartly drape the tanks in Ukrainian flags, thus evolving the memorial according to the new context and also hiding, but not removing or damaging the tanks. Notwithstanding, it provoked outrage from the Russian Embassy in Berlin.

4.15. A Soviet tank at the Soviet Honorary Memorial in Berlin veiled in an Ukrainian flag by activists. [13]

Memory activists then resumed placing a destroyed Ukrainian tank, in which most likely Ukrainian soldiers were killed by the Russian army, in front of the Russian embassy in Berlin on the anniversary of the Russian invasion. The tank had been moved with support from the Ukrainian Defence Ministry and was temporarily tolerated by Berlin authorities, also much to the anger of the Russian Embassy.

13.https://bilder3.n-tv.de/img/incoming/origs23235638/9192792383-wo-ho/d3df5d9cd970f6c0f6e010b32958e9c7.jpg

4.16. A Ukrainian tank destroyed by missiles placed in front of the Russian Embassy by activists. [14]

He Must Fall!

Removing memorials as an act of decolonisation: Bristol's Colston, Cape Town's Cecil, Caracas' Columbus.

On May 25th 2020, the world was shocked by the killing of the non-armed, non-violent African-American man George Floyd, 46, in front of a shop in Minneapolis, USA, by a White male police officer arresting him. The officer had kneeled on his neck for more than nine minutes during which Floyd begged in distress to be released saying: "I can't breathe" more than 20 times. The scenes were captured on video by public bystanders filming while urging the police to stop. They didn't. And George Floyd died within 30 minutes.

This horrific case triggered angry protests all over the world against institutionalised and systemic racism, racial profiling and police violence against BIPOCs (Black, Indigenous and People of Colour). The Black Lives Matter movement united the world in solidarity with BIPOCs. It sparked public discussions and demands, particularly in North America and Europe to finally, seriously and responsibly, deal with racism in their society. That includes seeing today's racism in its historical context as a continuation of colonial history and slavery.

Social movements and protesters have urged governments, museums, and education systems to confront their colonial past and address current racism, advocating for the decolonisation of processes, institutions, national narratives and architecture to foster a fairer future. Successor states of colonialism, like the Netherlands, Great Britain, and Spain, often fail in this regard. As we see in another article, "If Walls Could Talk", places and streets remain named after colonialists who perpetrated atrocities, reflecting a culture of collective amnesia around colonial crimes and a glorification of imperialism. This attitude breeds ignorance towards non-White immigrants from former colonies, who have lived and contributed to the 'motherland' for generations despite facing exploitation and discrimination.

In memory activists' actions, protesters damaged names, buildings and particularly statues of colonialists in an attempt to demand a different memory culture from below, revolting against the sugar-coating version from above. One famous example is the collective toppling of the statue of slave trader Edward Colston in Bristol. The city's fame and wealth were built on the slave trade and capitalists became incredibly wealthy through it, like Colston.

14. https://www.rbb24.de/panorama/beitrag/2023/02/berlin-unter-den-linden-panzerwrack-abtransportiert.html

"Colston made his fortune through human suffering. Between 1672 and 1689, ships are believed to have transported about 80,000 men, women and children from Africa to the Americas. However, in the city he called home, his memory has been honoured for centuries." (Parkes 2020)

This memory signifies gratitude and pride for the wealth and fame brought to the city, but largely for his philanthropy. Edward Colston's name adorned streets and buildings, and his statues had long stood in Bristol. This changed on June 7, 2020, when Black Lives Matter protesters toppled his statue, smeared it with red paint to symbolise blood, and knelt on its neck to reference George Floyd's death before throwing it into Bristol Harbour, from which Colston had derived his wealth. While politicians and authorities were outraged, protesters across the UK celebrated, deeming it time to stop honouring slave traders who, by modern standards, committed crimes against humanity. Colston represented oppression and injustice, and his glorification perpetuated racism and violence against BIPOC communities. This act of defiance against intolerance sparked debates among legal authorities about the balance between the right to protest and the issue of property damage. The statue was retrieved from the harbour and moved into a public space where a critical exhibition about him was installed and public discussions on how to deal with colonial past take place.

4.17. Protesters symbolically kneel on the throat of Edward Colston. [15]

15. https://ichef.bbci.co.uk/news/1024/cpsprodpb/176DD/production/_112756959_mediaitem112756958.jpg.webp

4.18. Protesters throwing Colston's statue into the Bristol Harbour.[16]

Another notable instance of a colonial statue's removal occurred at the University of Cape Town, driven by persistent student protests. South Africa was initially colonised by the Netherlands in 1652, followed by the British Empire in 1806. While it gained independence in 1910 and full sovereignty from Britain in 1931, the cruel apartheid system was legally instituted in 1948, enforcing racial segregation between the White minority and the Black majority. This oppressive system under which Black people were subjected to gross racial discrimination and violence, persisted until decades of civil rights activism led to Nelson Mandela, who was committed to non-violent peace activism, becoming the first Black president in the first democratic elections in 1994.

The long-standing unequal distribution of rights, representation, and resources has led to significant disparities in land ownership and wealth in South Africa, benefiting White citizens. Notorious townships, where Black South Africans live in extreme poverty, exist alongside luxury apartments owned by White South Africans in cities like Johannesburg and Cape Town. In response to this continuance of racial inequality, the University of Cape Town (UCT) students expressed their offence at having to pass Cecil Rhodes' statue daily.

Cecil Rhodes was an imperialist, businessman, and politician who dominated the global diamond trade, exploiting both Black African labour and land. As Prime Minister of the Cape Colony, he established discriminatory policies against Black Africans and supported a militaristic raid that contributed to the Second Boer War. Some praise him for introducing infrastructure to British colonies in Africa, e.g. his infamous vision of trains going from 'Cap to Cairo', and his philanthropic efforts to education, which is why there is a scholarship at Oxford University named after him, a Rhodes University in South Africa and his statues in front of UCT. But many view Rhodes as the ultimate symbol of colonialism and the ongoing need for systemic decolonisation and reparations.

Protests and student strikes at UCT in March 2015 prompted by students' 'vandalising' the statue provoked such widespread student protests in support that Cecil Rhodes' statue was successfully removed in April 2015. The slogan "Rhodes Must Fall!" encapsulated the students' demand for change in memory culture and politics and rendered their action in memory activism.

16.https://ichef.bbci.co.uk/news/1024/cpsprodpb/2DD0/production/_126882711_4c9db055-d6a4-4386-a56a-010d5f-1b90a0.jpg.webp

4.19. Protesters smearing paint on Rhodes' statues. [17]

4.20. Protesters smearing paint on Rhodes' statues. [18]

Another decolonising moment is the renaming and reframing of October 12th. It used to be, and still is particularly by White people in North America, celebrated as Christopher Columbus Day, commemorating what they consider his bravery and sense of exploration of the American continent that led to colonialist expansion, the killing of Indigenous people, eradication of their culture as well as exploitation and violent settlement of their lands. However, particularly native peoples of the American continent challenge this narrative, arguing that Columbus could have hardly discovered land inhabited by diverse and rich cultures

17. https://ichef.bbci.co.uk/ace/standard/624/mcs/media/images/82217000/jpg/_82217409_026675040-2.jpg.webp
18. https://ichef.bbci.co.uk/ace/standard/624/mcs/media/images/82217000/jpg/_82217409_026675040-2.jpg.webp

and peoples for more than 20,000 years before his arrival. Thus, October 12th is also celebrated as Indigenous Peoples Day, commemorating, invisible-making and reviving Indigenous culture, knowledge and presence, giving thanks for its enrichment and perseverance despite genocidal actions by colonisers.

During the Black Lives Matter movement, statues of the Italian explorer and coloniser, who sailed under the Spanish flag, all over the USA were subject to protest, similar to the events in the UK, and regarded as symbols of the continued violence and discrimination of BIPOCs. In many US cities, Columbus statues were toppled, removed or damaged to symbolically demand to decolonise narratives, institutions, school books and museums and to commit to anti-racist attitudes and actions.

4.21. A beheaded Columbus statue in Boston, USA. [19]

In fact, Venezuela was the trailblazer in declaring October 12th officially Indigenous Resistance Day in 2002, to counter Columbus Day in the USA. In its capital Caracas, Columbus was 'brought to trial* earlier than in the USA. On his third voyage, he 'discovered' modern-day Venezuela, firmly planting the Spanish flag on its earth in 1498. In a mock trial, several social movements 'prosecuted' him, declared him 'guilty' and toppled one of his statues in Caracas, Venezuela's capital. They showered it in red paint, in the symbolic blood on which the modern states of the American continent were founded, dragged it through the streets and hung it (the only violent aspect of otherwise non-violent protests). The symbolic act of justice led to spontaneous dances and celebrations by indigenous communities and their allies through the streets of Caracas. By 2005, all statues of Columbus had been removed from Venezuela's streets by an act of the state, a symbolic and final liberation. In this case, memory activism and memory politics created space for a more nuanced and self-determined memory culture.

19. https://th-thumbnailer.cdn-si-edu.com/kRL-0gDF0NiY3-_GSfRvC9iErO0=/1000x750/filters:no_upscale():focal(2107x668:2108x669)/https://tf-cmsv2-smithsonianmag-media.s3.amazonaws.com/filer/2d/5f/2d5fe769-23aa-495c-8063-512a33f32421/2020_jun11_columbus.jpg

Conclusion

Whether through activism or political decisions, the removal of 'visible memories' does occur. However, the idea that this erases history might be exaggerated; the Soviet era or colonial violence are unlikely to be forgotten without their monuments. Nonetheless, these memorials shape public spaces, raise questions about ownership, interpretation, and management, highlighting tensions between activists and authorities. In Germany, in the light of the uncanny success of the extremist and racist right-wing party AfD, voices arose arguing that symbols of Nazi Germany were removed too hastily, leaving new generations unable to grasp the all-consuming realities of dictatorship. But, should survivors have tolerated such reminders in their daily lives? Would these monuments not indeed attract right-wing protesters and symbolically legitimise their perseverance? Ultimately, we must recognise the evolving meanings and shifting identities associated with monuments, as history is merely a 'wind of change.'

Toppling statues means for many claiming back the space of a narrative and presence that is perceived as oppressive and occupying. The removal of some statues and the emergence of others reflects that just because some memories had been absent from public memory culture, they have not been forgotten. Rather, they were waiting to be seen and heard. People keep asserting their right to memory. Because "what is suppressed or sustained in memory both informs and shapes the aspirations and character of a person or community, in the present and the future" (Kian-Woon & Waterson 340). Because the lens on the past that memorials provide shapes the vision of the future. And "every instance of human will to remember in the contestation of memory, is an appeal to recognize the legitimacy of alternative visions" (ibid.). Particularly towards a more just and peaceful future. To remember means to become.

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