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For a Legal Protection of Places of Hurtful Memory of the Military Dictatorship in Juiz de Fora, Brazil (1964-1985)

Por una protección jurídica de los lugares de memoria dolorosa
de la dictadura militar en Juiz de Fora, Brasil (1964-1985)

Por uma proteção legal de lugares de memória sensível da
ditadura militar em Juiz de Fora, Brasil (1964-1985)


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Abstract: **Objective:** The indication of the places of memory of the military dictatorship in Brazil is still incipient in this country. Thus, this work intends to indicate such places in Juiz de Fora, Minas Gerais, protagonist of the 1964 coup to democracy, not only because General Mourão Filho's troops were stationed there a materialization of what was already planned in the barracks; but because it was the headquarters of the Military Region, where its audit collected hearings from witnesses and organized trials, and civilian and military facilities were used as spaces for torture and serving sentences. **Methodology:** Through concepts such as "dark heritage" and "places of sensitive memory", we will try to demonstrate how silencing is preponderant in local public policies, whether in the non-identification of these places, or in the listing processes that privilege aesthetic and stylistic aspects to the detriment of memories of the dictatorship. **Originality:** Since the places discussed in this article are not object of public policies in favour of collective memory, this work will indicate buildings that were places of State violence and generally go unnoticed in the city's landscape. **Conclusions:** The erasure of the dictatorial past in Juiz de Fora, and in Brazil in general, is a strategy of covering up responsibilities.

Keywords: Brazil, cultural heritage, dark heritage, military dictatorship, sites of hurtful memory.

Resumen: **Objetivo:** la indicación de los lugares de memoria de la dictadura militar en Brasil es aún incipiente en ese país. Así, este trabajo pretende señalar lugares de memoria de la dictadura en Juiz de Fora, Minas Gerais, protagonista del golpe de 1964 a la democracia, no solo porque las tropas del general Mourão Filho salieron de allí como materialización de lo que ya estaba planeado en el cuartel; sino porque fue la sede de la Región Militar, donde su auditoría reunió audiencias de testigos y organizó juicios, así como porque las instalaciones civiles y militares sirvieron de espacio para la tortura y el cumplimiento de sentencias. **Metodología:** a través de conceptos como "patrimonio oscuro" y "lugares de memoria sensible", intentaremos demostrar cómo el silenciamiento es preponderante en las políticas públicas locales, ya sea en la no identificación de estos lugares, o en los procesos de vuelco que solo hacen referencia a aspectos estético-

estilísticos del mercado inmobiliario ligados a la memoria de la dictadura. **Originalidad:** dado que los bienes discutidos en este artículo no son objeto de políticas públicas a favor de la memoria colectiva, este trabajo señalará edificios en donde tuvo lugar el uso de la violencia ejercida por parte del Estado y que, generamente, pasan desapercibidos en el paisaje de la ciudad. **Conclusiones:** el borrado del pasado dictatorial en Juiz de Fora, y en Brasil en general, es una estrategia de encubrimiento de responsabilidades.

Palabras clave: Brasil, dictadura militar, lugares sensibles de la memoria, patrimonio cultural, patrimonio oscuro.

Resumo: **Objetivo:** a indicação dos lugares de memória da ditadura militar no Brasil ainda é incipiente nesse país. Assim, este trabalho pretende indicar lugares de memória da ditadura em Juiz de Fora, Minas Gerais, protagonista do golpe de 1964 à democracia, não apenas porque as tropas do General Mourão Filho saíram de lá (materialização do que já estava planejado no quartel) mas porque foi a sede da Região Militar, onde a sua auditoria recolheu audiências de testemunhas e julgamentos organizados, bem como porque instalações civis e militares serviram de espaço para a tortura e o cumprimento de penas. **Metodologia:** por meio de conceitos como “patrimônio sombrio” e “lugares de memória sensível”, demonstraremos como o silenciamento é preponderante nas políticas públicas locais, seja na não identificação desses lugares, seja nos processos de tombamento que privilegiam apenas aspectos estético-estilísticos do mercado imobiliário ligados à memória da ditadura. **Originalidade:** visto que os bens tratados nesse artigo não são objetos de políticas públicas em favor da memória coletiva, o trabalho indicará edificações que foram lugares de uso da violência do Estado que passam geralmente desapercibidos pela paisagem da cidade. **Conclusões:** o apagamento do passado ditatorial em Juiz de Fora, e em geral no Brasil, é uma estratégia de encobrimento de responsabilidades.

Palavras-chave: Brasil, ditadura militar, lugares de memória sensível, patrimônio cultural, patrimônio sombrio.

*Only the redeemed humanity
will get its past through.*

Fuente: WALTER BENJAMIN 1

Introduction

Benjamin is accurate. There is no redemption through the obliteration of the past. On the contrary, only by looking at it, its wounds could be treated. The scars will remain, but the bleeding may be contained. The past facts can only be cited for redeemed humanity, says the author. Appropriating the past in the present does not mean revisiting it or knowing it in all its contours, but articulating it, appropriating it as it “flashes in the moment of danger”.² Nostalgia for this gloomy part of the Brazilian history tries to diminish the claims of the victims of torture and murder practiced by the Brazilian State. One of them, in a session of the National Congress in 2016, dedicated praises to Colonel Carlos Alberto Brilhante Ustra —the only person recognized as torturer by the Justice and then by the National Truth Commission (CNV)— who ended up becoming president of Brazil.

Silva Filho informs that “the hermeneutical battle for the meaning of the past is something visible in the Brazilian political context”.³ If this remained transparent for more than 10 years, this has become more

accentuated now during the administration of President Jair Bolsonaro, who, among many other authoritarian measures, organized in 2020 political police within the Ministry of Justice, to observe and control public officials labeled by the government as anti-fascists. Being anti-fascist in Brazil, in the current days, is subject to inspection.

This fact is not a coincidence: it is a permanent construction started yet during the dictatorship when large sums of public resources were invested in creating a positive memory about the authoritarian regime through official advertising, private press vehicles, and civic public celebrations. That's why it became common to say that dictatorship was civil-military, not just only military —because the private sector not only benefited from the dictatorship's policies but was also an economic and ideological supporter of the government.

If the government created the nickname “milagre econômico” (economic miracle) to designate the short period between 1968 and 1973 when Brazil's economy increased at impressive rates (an average of 10 %) or founded the Assessoria Especial de Relações Públicas (Special Public Relations Office) to improve the official propaganda about civic values based on patriotic ideals carved in the shape of monumental public works, the private sector built them. Underneath the celebration around the impressive economic figures were the wage squeeze, the deepening of social inequality, censorship, and violent repression. Also sponsored by the private sector, including multinational companies like GM, Ford, Volkswagen, Mercedes Benz, Siemens, Light and White Martins and known by U.S. Government.⁴

Based on the principles of Transitional Justice, the Comissão Nacional da Verdade (CNV–National Truth Commission), installed in May 2012 by the Brazilian State, had as its main objective to investigate the crimes committed by the State and by private entities during the period of the dictatorship (1964-1985), revealing practices, names, places, and policies of persecution. Public servants —civil or military—, public and private companies had their names published in a final report that summarizes the responsibilities of Brazilian State in human rights violations, conspiracy, and kidnapping of democracy. It was the first time in History that the State recognized and apologized for the crimes committed.

The kind of Democracy developed throughout 34 years between the publication of the 1988 Constitution and that of the final report of the CNV in 2014, could not accept the apology. Since the mid-1990's, conservative sectors of Military Forces have pressured the Executive Branch to not characterize their responsibility for violations of rights, alleging that Brazil was in a “war” at that time, and that the State just reacted to a non-existent “communist threat” of political left. In this way, the advances in the recognition of forced deaths and disappearances were timid, the law that gave amnesty to the State's crimes never had a revision that would put an end to the “reaction” narrative and, therefore, there was never any criminal conviction of any agent by the Justice.

Therefore, the National Truth Commission represented a threat to the impunity of military and civilians who acted directly in the Dictatorship and contributed to the creation of an adequate scenario to destabilize democracy with corruption as the main argument to shorten the government of Dilma Rousseff, responsible president for the creation of the CNV, a leftist militant in the past.

Brazil was, in its own way, on the same path as its neighbors Argentina and Chile, settling accounts with part of its past, precisely with the intention of strengthening democracy. The final report of the CNV presented recommendations to avoid repetition, among which the identification of places of violation of rights and its possible recognition as cultural heritage.

The Juiz de Fora relevance

Due to this gap in history and, consequently, the responsibility of the State and the crimes perpetrators, we propose an investigation on how Juiz de Fora, a city in Minas Gerais, deals with its past, present, and its relationship with the recent dictatorship. The city led the materialization of the coup, on March 31, 1964, with the march of troops of Gal. Mourão Filho departing from Juiz de Fora towards Rio de Janeiro (one of the main nuclei of the repression of military governments and capital until 1960). It was also the headquarters of the 4th Military Region, of trials and hearings of suspects and witnesses in the Military Audit, in addition to torture sessions and arrests in civilian and military installations.

Despite the national and historical importance of Juiz de Fora to understand the recent past, relevant places are not considered cultural heritage and do not have a legible indication of their relationship with the harmful practices of the Brazilian State, such as the *Linhares* Penitentiary, the 10th Infantry Regiment, and the 2nd Military Police Infantry Battalion. However, there are places listed during the Mayor Tarcísio Delgado (PMDB-MG) administration, between 2000 and 2004, but without any (public sign?) reference those as places of memory of the dictatorship. These include the Civil Police Station, the Headquarters and Army Police, and the 4th Military Audit, despite the National, State, and Municipal Truth reports indicated all these places as a passage for hearing and trial, torture or serving sentences in that period. The first three are indicated by the survivors of the dictatorship, next to the Headquarters, as places of mortification and prison. Only the building that housed the police station was no longer linked to public security institutions and started to house the music conservatory.

Transforming places of torture into places of memory is above all “a political act that contains contradictions and disputes because it is a matter of choosing one or some of these memories over others”.⁵ To understand the reason for silencing, we will do as Benjamin teaches: brush history against the grain. Silva Filho states that the politics of the 20th century “takes on a new aspect: it is a *mourning policy* in which the

memory is the main weapon”.⁶ Thus, to explain the involvement of Juiz de Fora with the government of 1964, we will show that history has left the city’s places to escape the “temptation to forget”. As much as it was not expressed publicly and politically until then, it is essential to name the places of memory, recognizing “the difference between forgetting facts and forgetting resentments”.⁷

In the final CNV report published in 2014, it is noteworthy that there are 25 occurrences of “Juiz de Fora”. Some of them are here for illustration, and there are also examples from other sources and bibliographies as “Members of the MR-26 joined the preparations of the Caparaó Guerrilla, and one of them, Milton Soares de Castro, was detained in that mountainous area and killed in the interrogation phase of the IPM established in Juiz de Fora”.⁸

Or even, through the Minas Gerais Truth Commission report:

Randolfo Fernandes de Lima, Raimundo Nonato Pereira, Flavio Ferreira da Silva, Oswaldo Waldir Brandão, Guido de Souza Rocha and Antonio Ribeiro Romanelli [...] were prosecuted by the Military Justice of the 4th Military Region in Juiz de Fora, accused of breaking the Law of National Security (Law 1802/53).⁹

As an example, the experience of São Paulo on the recognition of difficult memories places as heritage, cited by Neves, in his work “Doi-Codi II Army: the experience of preserving a sensitive heritage”. While the author tries to analyze the possible successes and mistakes of the process of recognizing a place, Juiz de Fora did not even start the debate. And it is not an exception: there are few places linked to repression and human rights violations considered cultural heritage in Brazil. Knowing this, Neves states:

As it is a pioneering study in its form and result, it is a guide for other listed places, being possible, with distancing, to analyze the successes and gaps, opening space for the adoption of new measures aimed at the preservation and use of these spaces impacting not only on the work of preserving heritage but also on collaborating to strengthen democratic values, which always seem to be under threat.¹⁰

From the several concepts that involve the theme, using them as theoretical support for this article but without the intention of developing them because it is not the intention of this author or there is no space for it, we can have the dimension of the ambivalent relationship between memory and forgetfulness. For example, “traumatic memory”;¹¹ “traumatic places or places of unwilling memory”;¹² “memory of pain”; “dark heritage”; “difficult memories”;¹³ “traumatic memories”;¹⁴ “places of sensitive memory”, “difficult places”.¹⁵ These categories can give us the dimension of the tension between silence and denunciation, between truce and conflict, between preservation and destruction. We will use them here for similar purposes, although they are not necessarily synonyms.

What is important here is the relationship between silencing and complicity, between denunciation and renovation, between conscience and memory. As proposes by Pollak, “the boundary between the speakable

and the unspeakable, the mentionable and the unmentionable, separates” an underground collective memory “from dominated civil society or specific groups, from an organized collective memory that sums up the image that a majority society or the State wants to transmit and impose”.¹⁶

Then we try to understand the concepts that will be theoretical support for this work, to later investigate the places of the mining town that is so immersed in the guts of history and dictatorship memory and understand forgetfulness as a political strategy.

Unlisted places

Some places of memory of the dictatorship are places that trigger pain, strongholds of imposed forgetfulness, effacement, silencing; some of them continue to be occupied by security forces (and violence). The places presented here still not be a subject to any public policy regarding collective memory or, as Assman says, they were not assimilated as “traumatic places or places of unwilling memory”¹⁷ by the state to identify these places as sensitive memory is to resume “a memory that activates the present”.¹⁸ More than that, it is an “ethical task”.¹⁹

The well preserved and contextualized “is that thing that educates us without the intention of educating us that carries the memory for the fact of having only been concerned with its present”.²⁰ The emergence of these buildings from the mists of oblivion may “restore dignity to victims and their families, and, through educational actions, stimulate reflection so that facts like these are no longer repeated”.²¹

However, intentional, strategic silencing dangerously conceals responsibilities and consents, with the repetition of the inadmissible. To prevent these places from being “spaces of forgetfulness”,²² we enumerate them.

The José Edson Cavalieri Penitentiary, better known as *Linhares* Penitentiary because of the name of the neighborhood in which it is located, was transformed into a political prison between 1969 and 1981.²³ It was one of the places for the punishment of political prisoners, as well as a place of torture. The testimony of the human rights activist Gilney Viana, detained for more than seven years at the *Linhares* Penitentiary, authenticates this information:

[...] torture in the physical sense that you go there and do a systematic thing for you to get information or for you to punish the guy for something, it wasn't usual in *Linhares*, it wasn't. What existed was psychological, psychological, [but] there was beating, [...].²⁴

The 10th Infantry Regiment (now called the 10th Infantry Battalion), located in the *Fábrica* neighborhood, was one of the units used for a prison space in the context of the military dictatorship. Several statements made to the CMV-JF demonstrated that the Regiment was included in

the state violence system present in Juiz de Fora during the dark years of the military regime.

This unit was even used as a temporary prison due to the full capacity at the Headquarters, as in the statement by João Carlos Reis Horta, called “João Comunista”: At one o’clock in the morning, an Army jeep stopped and put me in the jeep and took me to the Headquarters in Mariano [Procópio]. Then I got there, it was full of prisoners, I had no vacancy. They said: “oh, take it to the Tenth, there is still a place there”.²⁵

In the CMV-JF report, we also found that:

“Then we went there to the Tenth [...]. We stayed there for three or four days.” [...]. This statement is corroborated by the testimony of Avelino Gonçalves Koch Torres: “Then I realized that there was even this guerrilla because João Carlos was imprisoned, in the Tenth, here in Juiz de Fora, I went to visit him”.²⁶

Finally, the 2nd Military Police Infantry Battalion (today called 2nd BPM), in Santa Terezinha. According to CMV-JF:

The building was partly demolished in an expansion process that took place in 1972, preventing the current location of spaces where militants who passed through the unit may have been incarcerated. The 2nd Battalion is also mentioned in the cmv Final Report among the four locations in Juiz de Fora where there were records of serious human rights violations between 1964 and 1985.²⁷

The absence of architectural appeal is no justification for not listing the building. Its historical link to the attacks against Human Rights is enough to declare it a place of sensitive memory, somber heritage, as an icon for the non-repetition of arbitrariness that happened during the military regime and perpetuated in detention houses throughout the country. Regardless of changes promoted by reforms, and the absence of aesthetic, architectural appeals, these buildings cannot be relegated to forgetting or erasing the memories there anchored by the military dictatorship and its crimes. It is no coincidence that the places indicated by the CMV-JF as torture and prison centers are not listed as cultural heritage. It remains as installations of the public security services and the prison system. It works as a political strategy of oblivion.

If Neves affirms, about the listing of Doi-Codi II in São Paulo, that 2014 “it was an appropriate political moment for the listing of this nature, after all, 50 years of the coup, the Federal government—under the command of the President Dilma Rousseff, a leftist militant who was arrested and brutally tortured”, and that the government “was committed, through the CMV, to produce a settlement of the State’s accounts with society, the theme was recurrent in the press and the elucidation of crimes generated social expectation”,²⁸ what about the place where it had occurred torture and imprisoning?

The National Human Rights Program (PNDH3) in Guideline 24 (Preservation of historical memory and the public construction of truth) the necessity to “indicate the creation and maintenance of museums, memorials and documentation centers on resistance to the dictatorship”, as an “action to fulfill the strategic objective of encouraging initiatives to

preserve historical memory and the public construction of the truth about authoritarian periods”.²⁹ However, eleven years after its publication, there has been little progress in this field, highlighting the tension and dispute for this memory.

Invisible places

Since transition to democracy in the mid-1980, “the listing places are strengthened throughout the country and formally detached from architectural language as an indispensable and intrinsic value to recognition as heritage”.³⁰ The field of cultural heritage expanded the understanding of which values should be recognized in listed buildings and started to have a more accurate look at what happened in these places, much more than their artistic or architectural quality.

In São Paulo, i.e., the headquarters of the State Department of Political and Social Order–Deops/SP, was listed by Condephaat (Defense Council for the Historical, Archaeological, Artistic and Tourist Heritage of the State of São Paulo) in 1999, although its main recognized value has been the architectural; since 2008, houses the *Memorial da Resistência*, the only museum dedicated to dealing with state violence in Brazil. It was also listed by the same council in 1985, the remaining stone portal of the *Tiradentes* prison, also the aforementioned was Doi-Codi listed in 2014, protected after documentary research and based on testimonies of survivors, something unheard of until then; now an interdisciplinary group, that gather state, civil society, and public universities requires the carrying out of archeological and architectural research and the transformation of the site into a memorial.³¹ Finally, the cession of the property located at 1249, Brig. Luís Antônio Avenue, where the Military Audit, the OAB (Brazilian Bar Association) and the *Núcleo pela Preservação da Memória Política* for the construction of the Memorial for the Fight for Justice.³²

In opposition, Juiz de Fora has intention to list places as cultural heritage to purge the presence of the past, even though the violence perpetrated by the State is still present both in the arbitrariness committed by security agents and in the sensitive memories of those affected, and in the non-punishment of those responsible for torture and death.

However, at least three listed buildings are related to the military regime, but those affiliations are not highlighted in administrative processes that instructs the preservation request. Obviously strategic. They were the buildings that formed housed Police Station, Headquarters and Army Police, and the Military Auditorship. These are the cases we now explain.

The Police Station (Rua Batista de Oliveira, 377) was listed by Municipal Decree 6910/2000, after its deactivation, in which was considered:

I–the historical and cultural value that involves the estate ; II–its integration with the central area architectural landscape; III–that the building maintains the original template and the traditional implementation of the facade alignment along the public road; IV–the facade is composed according to the formal repertoire of *art-déco* design, entirely dominated by the verticality of the continuous pilasters that reach the entire height, from the ground base to the base of the plateau; V–the presence of details that accentuate vertical lines, the axis of symmetry, modulation and geometric motifs; VI–the building should be a living testimony to the city’s *art-déco* scene, similar to other architectural examples; VII–be the property testimony and record of the paths taken by the public security of our city; [...].³³

The architectural and aesthetic qualities of the property are highlighted, leaving the simple mention “testimony and record of the paths taken by the public security of our city” to its status as a monument-document, not to mention its relevance as a place of memory. As a vestige of what is claimed considering the connection with 1964 coup and dictatorship, the CMV-JF report indicates that “José Villani Côrtes held the presidency of the Bank Workers Union and the Consumers Cooperative at the time of the coup” when Cortes testified to CMV-JF, he stated: “I was the first prisoner of the revolution in all of Brazil because when I got arrested there at the Juiz de Fora police station, at Rua Batista de Oliveira, there was no one arrested there, there was only me”.³⁴ Given this important information, a question remains: why the Decree does not contain the literal information about political arrests that occurred there?

The silence over the Army Headquarters and Police is more striking. Known today as the 4th Infantry Brigade (or “March 31 Brigade” -, referring to the date of the 1964 coup, and demonstrating that there is no silence about the coup), the Headquarter was indicated in testimonies as a place of arrests and torture sessions conducted by the Brazilian State. It became the property of the Army with the dismemberment of the land that belonged to what today is the Mariano Procópio Museum, inheriting part of its architectural ensemble (*Palacete Frederico Ferreira Lage*), and listed by Municipal Decree 7008/2001:

I–the historical and cultural value that involves the estate; II–its integration with the set of buildings from the 19th century, located around the Mariano Procópio Museum; III–the decorative embellishment of the main facade of the building, representative of a refined eclecticism; 1st Art–The property located on Rua Mariano Procópio, numbers 828 and 830 are listed. 2nd Art. The preservation objects, whose registration in the Listed Buildings Book is authorized, covering the construction volumetry and the facades of the property, [...].³⁵

Not even the existence of an internal plaque (nameplate) with the title of the Brigade, indicating the date of the 1964 coup was enough for the decree to include the use of military installations as a place of memory about the Dictatorship. Nostalgia for the building’s architectural typologies was preferred over the link to the 1964 military, making the memory of the estate more “tolerable” and “palatable”, creating an official narrative that silences any dispute for the memory of the period. Although the Headquarters/4th Company of the Army Police, located in

the Mariano Procópio neighborhood, that sheltered crimes of the last Brazilian dictatorship, it is erased in the Municipal Decree as a place of torture and death.

As stated in the CMV-JF report, the “headquarter was officially installed in 1916 in Juiz de Fora and remained in the city until the transfer of the headquarters of the 4thRM to the capital Belo Horizonte”,³⁶ in the 1990s. An example of the conflict over memory due to the exaltation of the memory of the military defenders of the coup at the expense of difficult memories indicates the CMV-JF:

When the 1964 coup was launched, the unit—which was responsible for commanding this military region—was already located at Mariano Procópio Street, [...]. The building currently houses the Command of the 4th Motorized Infantry Brigade, named “*Brigada 31 de Março*”. General Olympio Mourão Filho in the headquarter orchestrated important details of the coup and it was also there that many political prisoners who were in the city were arrested. The headquarters along with the Linhares Penitentiary was the most mentioned place in the statements given to the CMV-JF.³⁷

The appreciation of Afonso Celso’s testimony contained in this document, shows how the headquarters practiced violence:

Subjected to torture at the headquarters in Juiz de Fora, Afonso Celso also suffered physical, psychological, and moral torture. He was the target of threats, mockery, and pressure. Afonso Celso and Murilo Pinto were slapped and “[...] forced, under threats, to be naked, in front of the wall, to be ‘caressed’ on the buttocks, by the lieutenant Marcos, who acted with insults and beatings”.³⁸

President Dilma Rousseff was arrested twice in Juiz de Fora “first in May 1970, and second in January 1972”.³⁹ She claims that in 1970, “after being heard in testimony, she was hooded so she could not identify her location. Then, she was thrown into a cell where she remained in isolation. The only contact was with her torturers, who subjected her to violent interrogations”.⁴⁰

Dilma adds that she was “[...] subjected for almost a month to interrogations and all sorts of tortures”, which were intense, attested in the excerpt of her testimony highlighted: [...] throughout the day, *pau-de-arara*, drowning, electric shocks, spanking paddle, in an infernal rotation and, at times, the horror of the simultaneity of all these harassments. Then, in Juiz de Fora, I discovered that few minutes could last for centuries and the difference between sanity and madness was in not allowing yourself to be very aware of it [...] I would like to point out that, in Juiz de Fora, these physical tortures were added to psychological tortures, with the most common as the interruption of sleep with early warning, almost always during the night, that, in a few more minutes or hours, a new session of torture would begin, threats of death or deforming physical damage. Usually, they threatened me with facial injuries. The long periods of nudity I was subjected combined with food deprivation were intended to break my morale and undermine my physical resistance.⁴¹

According to CMV-JF “it is not possible to say that this report concerns the headquarters since the student and leftist activist said she was wearing a hood and could not identify the location”. However, “in Dilma Rousseff’s second arrest in Juiz de Fora, starting in January 1972,

there is the confirmation that the unit was the headquarters, where she stayed for six months”.⁴²

Finally, we will approach the building that has hosted the 4th Military Audit (*Pça Antônio Carlos*). Municipal Decree 7145/2001 explains the intervention of the Public Power in preservation, considering:

I—the historical and cultural value that surrounds the properties; II—its importance in the context of the Historical and Architectural Nucleus of *Praça Antônio Carlos*, which also includes the former facilities of *Companhia Pantaleone Arcuri*, *Companhia Mineira de Eletricidade* and *Companhia Têxtil Bernardo Mascarenhas* and *Escola Normal*; III—the diversity of architectural styles present in this set, such as the eclectic orientation and the vigorous Baroque-inspired ornaments of its oldest building; the *art-déco* orientation in simplified lines of the other building next door; and the typically neocolonial orientation of the third building with a side facade facing *Praça Antônio Carlos*; IV—[...]; where offices of the Brazilian Army are currently installed, including the wall and the guardhouses of access in the *art-déco* style.⁴³

The link with one of the myths that established the city’s memory together with Ferreira Lage was more important than explaining their connections with the memories of pain, transforming it into scenography for the urban landscape that ensures reflection and educational training provided by “traumatic places or places of unwilling memory”.⁴⁴ According to the MERCOSUR Institute of Public Policies on Human Rights:

Developing principles on public policies on memory regarding serious violations of human rights presupposes setting parameters for the design and implementation of effective measures to guarantee the peoples’ right to memory linked to a past characterized by state violence, repression, and overthrow system of human dignity.⁴⁵

The documents found in the Auditorship of the 4th Military Judicial Circumscription (CJM) warn that the space was used for different purposes: “to provisionally detain prisoners who came to Juiz de Fora just to participate in hearings at the Auditorship, prisoners pending trial, prisoners being transferred to another unit, as interrogation place”.⁴⁶ The CMV-JF also highlights that “testimonies also show that it was the area where Doi-Codi works in the city and received interrogators from other locations, mainly Belo Horizonte that apparently, conducted the most violent interrogations”.⁴⁷

Returning to President Dilma testimony, she “was brought back to Juiz de Fora and had her trial in the Auditorship of the 4th Military Region of Minas Gerais. She was convicted in the three States where she was prosecuted (Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, and Minas Gerais)”. Despite appealing the decisions, she was imprisoned for three years. “In 1977, because her name was included in a list made by Gal. Silvio Frota, in which 97 civil servants were called as dangerous ‘infiltrators’, she lost her first job”.⁴⁸ “The marks of torture are me. They are part of me”, said the president.⁴⁹

An example again taken from the CMV report illustrates the link of this building as an archive of “traumatic memories”,⁵⁰ transmuting it into a somber heritage: “In 1964, due to the military coup, [Helber José Gomes Goulart] began to be persecuted and responded to a process at the Military Audit of Juiz de Fora”.⁵¹

Tarcísio Delgado, Former Mayor of Juiz de Fora “acted in the defense of political prisoners”.⁵² This does not rule out the possibility of considering him a supporter of convenient silences. Like the old Auditorship, the 4th Army Police Company, the 10th Infantry Regiment, and the 2nd Infantry Battalion are still military departments. This is a terrible barrier to brushing history against the grain.

Final notes

Dealing with the memory of the dictatorship is essential for Brazil to become a mature democracy. Taking our neighbors as an example, “the memory of the dictatorship was crucial for the success of the transition to democracy in Argentina”, explains Huyssen.⁵³ According to him, “strengthened the memory of the crimes of the dictatorship, new voices were raised to defend the recovery of the forgotten political dimension of the fate of the disappeared”.⁵⁴

This is the goal here when dealing with the memory of Juiz de Fora and its difficult, painful, traumatic, somber nuances, but essential to not allow the praise of torture and barbarism. These buildings are places of memory, pain, mourning, traces, and documents, even proof, when combined with other documentation, as photographs, documents, testimonies, that they were the headquarters of the mortification of bodies and lives in the name of an authoritarian ideology, as insidious examples of human rights attacks.

Abdalla Júnior teaches that, among the military, there is “a general discomfort with the judgment of their governments/acts by public opinion”. The historian is right because they “collaborated with the regime for twenty-one years” and “would have to face their past, the consequences and attitudes act, positions held outside the critical sieve of civil society”.⁵⁵ Similarly, “more than half a century after the 1964 coup and the memory of the years of the military dictatorship, this still bothers Brazilians”.⁵⁶

It is the past that does not pass. In Brazil, historically there is conciliation rather than accountability,⁵⁷ creating an adequate scenario for the continuation of rights violations even in times of democracy. This hypothesis is sustained by Rossi’s statement: “the history of the 20th century, as we well know, also when we try to forget it, is full of censorship, erasure, concealment, disappearance, condemnation, public retractions, and confessions of countless betrayals, besides declarations of guilt and shame”.⁵⁸

The way amnesty took place in Brazil is one of the main reasons to prevent this past from passing. Law 6683, enacted in 1979, has imposed a “renewal”, a “start from scratch” into the country. For Seligmann-Silva, “the amnesty, with the Brazilian State transforming it into an ‘annulment of any criminal sense (...)’ managed to convince ‘society that any search for memory, truth, and justice would only be revanchism’”.⁵⁹ Ricœur teaches:

But amnesty, as institutional oblivion, touches on the politician’s roots, through it, in the deepest and most disguised relationship with a past declared forbidden. The more than phonetic, and even semantic, the proximity between amnesty and amnesia points to the existence of a secret pact with the denial of memory that [...] removes it from forgiveness after proposing its simulation.⁶⁰

By amnestying political persecuted - duty of the State in search of the beginning of reparations -, but also executioners and torturers, the country legitimized the military version of the recent past and even its return. Starling points out that

Most of the times, the memory operations that took place from the beginning of 1979, chose to build a narrative simplification, but with an effective impact, which has been working in two directions: at one end, it establishes the rupture between the recent past and the present; in the other, it produces forgetfulness.⁶¹

Forgetting, in this case, is an “ethical slip”,⁶² because, as for state violence, there is a “duty not to forget”.⁶³

In Brazil “the archives are closed, and the corpses are missing”.⁶⁴ Let these places in Juiz de Fora become open archives, research documents, places of memory, and sites of conscience. Who knows? Even corpses can appear.

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