



Revista Tempo e Argumento

E-ISSN: 2175-1803

tempoeargumento@gmail.com

Universidade do Estado de Santa

Catarina

Brasil

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Carandiru: the uses of a massacre's memory

Revista Tempo e Argumento, vol. 8, núm. 19, septiembre-diciembre, 2016, pp. 386-415

Universidade do Estado de Santa Catarina

Florianópolis, Brasil

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Carandiru: the uses of a massacre's memory¹

Abstract

The Carandiru massacre, which took place in 1992, is characterized as a symbolic landmark in the history of the Brazilian penal system. The recollection of this past talks to issues like the dimension of what happened, impunity, the attempt to erase and shape memory, and the institution of massacre as a metaphor for new tragedies. In this process, we can observe the construction of two possible pasts: one undertaken by the State, establishing an official memory, and the other linked to various segments of organized civil society. I analyze the uses of this memory and its recollection strategies, and these categories are understood through the history of the present time and the public history.

Keywords: Carandiru; Memory; Public History; History of the Present Time.

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To cite this translation:

BORGES, Viviane Trindade. Carandiru: the uses of a massacre's memory. *Revista Tempo e Argumento*, Florianópolis, v. 8, n. 19, p. 386 - 415. set./dez. 2016. Original title: Carandiru: os usos da memória de um massacre

DOI: 10.5965/2175180308192016004

<http://dx.doi.org/10.5965/2175180308192016004>

¹ Research with funding support from the Brazilian National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq), Universal Public Notice 443433/2014-3.

Carandiru: os usos da memória de um massacre

Resumo

O massacre do Carandiru, ocorrido em 1992, é caracterizado como um marco simbólico na história do sistema penal brasileiro. A rememoração desse passado dialoga com questões como a dimensão do ocorrido, a impunidade, a tentativa de apagamento e conformação da memória e a instituição do massacre como metáfora para novas tragédias. Nesse processo, pode-se observar a construção de dois passados possíveis: um empreendido pelo Estado, instituindo uma memória oficial, e outro ligado a diferentes segmentos da sociedade civil organizada. Analisarei os usos dessa memória e suas estratégias de rememoração, categorias estas entendidas a partir da história do tempo presente e da história pública.

Palavras-chave: Carandiru; Memória; História Pública; História do Tempo Presente.

Uses of memory: between the history of the present time and the public history

On October 2, 1992, the Military Police of São Paulo State invaded the Carandiru Penitentiary to repress a rebellion. The action killed 111 prisoners in half an hour. The photos of the bodies, naked and lined up on the concrete floor, ran the world as a symbol of Brazilian barbarism. The massacre also became a synonym for impunity. After 24 years, no police officer was arrested. Authorities at the time, such as Governor Luiz Antônio Fleury Filho, were not even prosecuted. Now the case gains another shameful chapter. The Court annulled the judgments that condemned 74 military police officers. All appellants were free, despite the severity of the crimes and the sentences of up to 624 years in prison. The appeal's rapporteur, Appellate Judges Ivan Sartori, advocated for the military police officers' acquittal. When justifying the vote, he tried to rewrite history. "There was no massacre, there was self-defense," he claimed. The statement is astounding because the victims were unarmed and all policemen were alive. Forensic medicine counted an average of five shots per body, many of them fired in the back and in the head².

² <<http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/colunas/bernardomellofranco/2016/09/1817475-a-nova-vergonha-do->

The report concerned, by the political columnist Bernardo Mello Franco, published in the *Folha de São Paulo*, a newspaper with a great national circulation, therefore a key social player in the history of the present time, dates from September 28, 2016, and it shows the contemporaneity of an episode of the penal system that took place 24 years ago. Soon after the news was conveyed, several memes took over the Brazilian social media: photographs of the massacre accompanied by the phrase 'We did not forget' and others showing statistical data that contradict the claim of self-defense, such as the fact that 90.4% of the victims were shot in the head and the neck. In addition to demonstrations like a Public Note by the Brazilian Institute of Criminal Sciences, putting the decision into question³. These claims spread quickly, in a constant reinvention movement, permeated with new images and new sentences that transmute incessantly. In this flow, the event is legitimized as State's guilt, a discourse that is uttered not as a version, but as 'truth.'

There are many ways of dealing with the past and all of them involve conflicts, interests, power relations, deletions, and exclusions. Recalling the past, selecting from it what must be remembered, is not a natural thing, but a process that involves selection. The history of the Carandiru massacre has become a public issue, a moving history, in full swing, written by means of plenty of material that spread it to an ever-widening audience, meeting the social demands that wish to discuss it. An institutionalized and non-institutionalized public history, but produced and shared in a range of settings established by professionals and non-professionals.

The history surrounding the Carandiru gained national and international repercussion. A place of thugs, robbers, murderers, political prisoners, and drug dealers. The site of the country's greatest prison tragedy. How can we deal with a past marked by a tragic history that reveals human degradation? Could we erase this past by demolishing, sweeping from the urban fabric these symbolic landmarks?

I analyze herein a plot marked by disputes, problematizing the uses of the massacre's memory, involving memory policies linked to the history of the present time

carandiru.shtml>. Accessed on: 01/12/2015.

³ <<http://www.ibccrim.org.br/destaques/229-Nota-Publica>>. Accessed on 11/14/2016.

and debates arising from the possibilities of the massacre's public history. I intend to compare the vast cultural production that constantly reupdates the memories about this past that does not come to an end and the way it faces, articulates, and challenges the strategies to erasure and/or appease this history of horrors, realizing the resonances and the complexity of these confrontations in various social segments, which also act in their resignifications.

To do this, I use key categories for the history of the present time and to the public history, focusing on the uses of memory and its relation with social demands⁴. The History of the Present Time⁵ refers to France, to the Institute of the History of the Present Time (IHTP), created between 1978 and 1980. From this perspective, themes long worked on in history, such as those linked to memory, gain new meanings when compared through issues about the recent past and/or the way how this past has been reconfigured, understood, and/or experienced (VARELLA et al., 2012).

Nowadays, we can observe the hegemony of memory understood as a 'value,' sometimes opposed to history, which results in a will of society to act on the past, fix it, reassess it (ROUSSO, 2007). Broader issues, such as those associated with the uses of memory become allegorical when they refer to recent traumas and tragedies and the social demands that permeate the history of the present time.

Public History, born in countries such as the United States, England, and Australia, also addresses these issues, acting as a

⁴ Other categories interconnect history of the present time and public history, herein not seen as historiographic genres, but rather as proposals that might provoke debates and confrontations in the field of history, such as the historians' role in face of the public debates and their social, political, and cultural reverberations. As well as the possible appropriations of history by various audiences and history works and their multiple languages. I focus herein only on issues of the use of memory. With no intent to exhaust the theme, regarding the History of the Present Time see: (BÉDARIDA, 1993), (CHAUVEAU; TÉTART, 1999), (LAGROU, 1999), (ROUSSO, 2007), (RICOEUR, 2011), (DOSSE, 2012). Likewise, regarding Public History see: (CAUVIN, 2016), (GROOT, 2016).

⁵ In Latin America, the discussion has been consolidating through institutions interested in devoting research to the History of the Present Time, seeing this as a field of study, such as the Universidad de la Republica (from Montevideo), in Argentina, the Universidad de los Andes, in Colombia, and the Santa Catarina State University, in Brazil. From this, we have a series of publications on the subject in Latin America. With no intent to exhaust the theme see: (FERREIRA, 2002), (SARLO, 2001), (MARQUES et al, 2003), (PORTO, 2007), (VENGOA, 2010), (BRESCIANO, 2010), (FERREIRA 2010), (VARELLA, 2012), (DELGADO, FERREIRA, 2014).

[...] conceptual umbrella capable of harboring all that has been thought and written like: uses of memory; uses of the past; social demand; public perception of history; scientific dissemination of history; interpretation and curatorship; empowerment and action research; media, literary and artistic appropriations of history, and so on (SANTHIAGO, 2016, p. 26).

Public history might be a space for the consolidation of a debate, an effort to think of these themes by means of a notion of history making with and for the subjects and groups analyzed and the way how these groups have been telling the stories they regard as important, seeing that the historical practice is not limited to academic environments. Public history seeks to expose the use of historical skills outside the traditional academic context of history, reaching non-specialized groups through various resources, such as exhibitions, historical sites, audiovisual presentations, games, websites, among others (CAUVIN, 2016)⁶.

Addressing contemporary themes means dealing with criticism in relation to the absence of retreat, requiring from the researcher some caution to weave the instruments needed for their critical analysis. In this web, the historian is also an active agent in the struggles brought by social demands, apprehending a history in the full unfolding of the facts, contemporary of the object he intends to analyze, sharing with those whose history he longs to narrate very close essential categories, as well as the same key references (CHARTIER, 2000, p. 215-218).

The notion of present time allows us to revisit the past and its potential certainties and uncertainties. The concept of 'present time' refers to "what belongs to the past and remains contemporary, or also has a meaning for us of the contemporary that is not contemporary" (DOSSE, 2012, p. 11). The history of the Carandiru massacre is a complex political theme, a public debate, a close past that is still very current.

⁶ In Brazil, this field has been consolidating since 2011, when the Brazilian Network of Public History was created, which provides meetings and publications (MAUAD et al, 2016) (ALMEIDA e ROVAL, 2011). The International Federation for Public History exists since 2010 and it also provides international meetings on the subject. In Latin America, the large number of works produced by Latin American researchers during the last international meeting, in Bogotá, Colombia, in 2016, reveals the urgency of the theme. In this regard see: <<https://faciso.uniandes.edu.co/images/Documentos/3rdInternationalPublicHistoryConference.pdf>>. Accessed on 11/15/2016.

The uses of the past are inserted in a conflictive construction of meanings, permeated with disputes of memory, selection, forgetfulness, and social demands. The history of the present time was swept away by a true memorialistic outburst, a culture of memory (HUYSEN, 2000) that has spread even through spaces and experiences related to suffering and trauma. These places seem to constantly narrow the gap between past and present, allowing future generations to remember tragedies they did not experience. In this context, we can observe an effort concerning the act of recalling, preserving, remembering, in face of the imminent risk of forgetting.

There is a contradiction inherent to recollection procedures, necessarily involving selection and forgetfulness. Memory is the result of a social interaction procedure; it is both inside us and outside us (SANTOS, 2007). The discourses are inscribed in circular power relations, which support each other, but also move away and challenge each other. What to remember and who to remember are major issues to be discussed when thinking about the uses of memory. "The preparation of memory takes place in the present and in order to respond to requests from the present. It is from the present, indeed, that remembrance receives encouragement, as well as the conditions to come true" (MENESES, 1992, p. 11). It is at the present that this tragic past has been systematically resignified. The tragedy continues to echo in the social sphere and it talks to previous historical conditions linked to the history of the Brazilian penal system. This article aims to provide a history of the past in terms of the present (FOUCAULT, 1987, p. 29). A "present time that we belong to" (FOUCAULT, 1989, p. 104-105) and this leads us to put shared and naturalized arrangements into question. From this perspective, the research takes its imbrications related to the history of the present time, placing the subject and the object immersed in the same temporality, which, so to speak, did not end, connecting the current events by means of history.

A movie, a Museum, a Memorial... resonances and charms Historical elements and social demands

Among the symbolic spaces linked to memories, the history of the prison tragedy that marks the Carandiru has been apprehended in various ways. Through a quick search on the internet, we can easily list a vast editorial, audiovisual, and museological

production, among others, responsible for interconnecting historical elements and social demands from various sectors of civil society and the State. According to the report that opens this article: “When justifying the vote, he (the appellate judge) tried to rewrite history. *There was no massacre, there was self-defense*, he claimed.” The history of the massacre is still being written, a weave that escapes the researcher, a past that has been constantly resignified.

When advocating for self-defense, the appellate judge contradicted a series of official documents widely disseminated through digital media and freely available for the population, such as the Legal Medical Opinion, which concluded that there was intention to kill, since the shots fired by the police focused mainly on the thoracic region and the head, information that is widely spread in social media through memes, almost concomitantly to the dissemination of the new court decision through the press. The Report by the Criminal Institute of the Scientific Police, which states that police action aimed at the victims’ death or immediate incapacitation and also information from the Laboratory of Legal Medicine of the São Paulo State University in Campinas, which corroborate this information (PEDROSO, 2012)⁷. Providing the population with these documents helps weaving the history of the massacre, by making tools for public debate available.

The history of the massacre has been constructed in several places: reports of survivors and witnesses, publication of books, songs, documentaries, plays, exhibitions, movies, TV series, academic events and papers, etc. These places intertwine memory and history, instituting places of memory “in the three senses of the word, material, symbolic, and functional, simultaneously.” Places marked by a multiplicity, which can be “provided by concrete experience,” or like abstract places; “portable” or “topographic,” or even “monumental” and “architectural” places (NORA, 1993, p. 21-22). In this process, the tragedy has been constantly revisited, allowing new meanings to be assigned to such a past by various social segments (GROOT, 2016). From the song *Haiti* (Caetano Veloso,

⁷ Several documents, such as the civil police investigation, photographs and administrative proceedings, international proceedings, reports, civil liability proceedings, jury court sentences, testimonies, and military police investigation, are available on the internet at: <<http://www.massacrecarandiru.org.br/post/lista-de-materiais-disponiveis-nesta-plataforma>>.

1993) to the books *Estação Carandiru* (Drauzio Varella, 1999), and *Diário de um detento* (Jocenir, 2001), including the booming success of *Carandiru: the movie* (Hector Babenco, 2003), many things were produced about the Carandiru over 24 years after the massacre⁸. This movement marks a memory will in constant conflict with intent to erase, constituting a complex web of power relations and confrontations responsible for weaving this past in the present.

In the article *Massacre do Carandiru: inação, descontinuidade e resistências* (RODRIGUEZ et al., 2015, p. 92), the authors report that in 2013, faced with the possibility of using audiovisual resources during the testimonies and debates in one of the sessions of the trial of the massacre, the Public Prosecutor's Office authorized the exhibition of an excerpt from the movie *Carandiru*, by Hector Babenco. The final 10 minutes of the movie were designed with powerful audio. According to the authors:

Unlike the other judgments in which the judge allowed defendants to leave the symbolic position of the dock and sit in the audience to watch the trial, in that first one all of them were on the stage with their backs to the wall where Hector Babenco's movie was projected. Some remained impassive. Others wring necks to accompany the scene – would it be the first time they watched the movie? We will never know the extent of the impact of this audiovisual narrative on the jurors' certainty, but we, those who were present, experienced one of the most shocking moments of the whole trial.

The passage concerned shows the entrance of the Military Police in Pavilion 9 until the end of the operation. According to the authors, the exhibition of a part of the movie

⁸ There is no intent herein to exhaust the theme, just to mention some works inspired by the massacre to highlight the magnitude of the work to apprehend this traumatic past. There are many reports by survivors and witnesses that have resulted in publications, especially in the early 2000s like (RODRIGUES, 2002), (ZENI, 2002), (BISILLIAT, 2003), (RAMOS, 2001). Books with images of the Carandiru and the prisoners' daily life (CASARIN, 2013). It is also possible, quite easily, to cite some songs, such as *Diário de um detento* (Racionais MC's, 1997); *Casa cheia* (Detentos do Rap, 1998); *Terror no Carandiru* (unknown author, 1993); *Carandiru da morte* (Pedro Anderson, no date), in addition to *Manifest* (Sepultura, 1992). The episode also gained award-winning documentaries, such as *Entre a luz e a sombra* (2009) and *O prisioneiro da grade de ferro* (2014). In 2013, a website specialized in providing material for school research, aimed primarily at teachers in search of material for their classes, published a quiz with this proposal: "Test your memory about the Carandiru massacre." The test recalls data such as the death toll, the slowness of justice in condemning those involved, as well as other major aspects, such as the fact that the rebels did not take hostages. Using a didactic resource, the website recalls the massacre, retrieving key information to grasp the extent of this tragedy. See: <<http://educacao.uol.com.br/quiz/2013/10/02/teste-sua-memoria-sobre-o-massacre-do-carandiru.htm>>.

might have been one of the most shocking moments of the whole trial, they had their experiences marked by these forms of conveying the past (GROOT, 2016). The potentiality of Babenco's movie appears as a key instrument, serving on that occasion to potencilize the meanings woven for the episode during the trial. Exhibiting the final excerpt, which shows the police invasion and the prisoners' slaughter, contributes to a constant reupdating of the massacre's memory.

Groot (p. 26, 2016), citing the work by Rosenstone and Parvulescu (2013), argues that popular movies have the potential of broadening historical knowledge, influencing the imaginary and the way people remember certain facts. The screening of Babenco's movie in one of the judging sessions seems to fit the proof function, it contributes to the context of a meaning of closeness to what 'really' could have happened on October 2, 1992. The past may be systematically reconfigured through the traces it has left behind (GROOT, 2016). In this way, the movie, based on real facts, acts in a similar way to history, working with possible vestiges within a past that no longer exists, whose full access is not possible to us, but whose fragments attest the existence, proving what has happened.

Many elements observed in the film are somehow represented in the museum that keeps the traces of the Carandiru. In 2014, the Museu Penitenciário Paulista started working at new headquarters, located within the former Carandiru complex, also incorporating a new collection: vestiges left by the prisoners of the former House of Detention. There, we can see knives, coloring objects, and weapons made by inmates, objects in which they ingeniously hid drugs, elements related to religiosity, the gadget used to manufacture 'maria louca' (a type of spirit drink) and many *teresas* (ropes made by inmates using the material they found in prison: sheets, clothes, etc.). They are vestiges of forbidden creations, resistances against the institutional limits, elements also observed in Babenco's movie. The objects exhibited extrapolate the formal limits, awaken in those who see them complex and dynamic forces that made their existence possible; they may be taken by the viewer as metaphors. They are metaphors of life in jail, the power of creation before the limits imposed by confinement. They cause enchantment, shock, grab the attention of whoever observes them in a myriad

permeated by a mixture of fascination and fear, convey a sweeping feeling of intensity (GREENBLAT, 1991, p. 250).

The museum was created in 1939, undergoing various changes over the years, consolidating itself in the 1960s, when a commission was appointed to organize the space.

The intent of the Museu Penitenciário Paulista is producing information and knowledge about the criminal legal science and its execution, observed in the very history of the Sistema Penitenciário Paulista, as well as to approach its characteristics, development, and evolution. Its mission is constituting a space open to the general public, capable of providing reflection on the penitentiary history and punishment.⁹

By displaying the collection related to the Carandiru and telling the history of the penitentiary system of São Paulo State, the Museum creates metaphors about the prison space. However, they are calming metaphors, which seem to seek regeneration. Out of all the elements observed in Babenco's movie that can be identified in the museum, certainly the most emblematic, the massacre, is addressed in a veiled manner. If, in the Jury Court, the final 10 minutes of the movie, marked by the police invasion and the bloody takeover of Pavilion 9, shocked some viewers, in the museum it seems as if that part was suppressed. Only in the end of the exhibition the spectator sees a banner that explains the deactivation of the House of Detention and the 1992 'riot.' In the description, the word massacre is not used, the death toll is not mentioned, none of the many photographs that run the world are displayed, only the following text: "On October 2, 1992, a fight between prisoners at Pavilion 9 served as the trigger for a riot that culminated in the invasion of the Military Police. This episode has resonated in our country and even in the whole world. It is the theme of books, films, and songs." Among the possible choices for remembrance, the Carandiru is pointed out as "a historical site for the Sistema Penitenciário Paulista," "a landmark of the Brazilian prison universe, both in its legal-police sense and in its symbolic, cultural, and social aspect." However, the motivations that produce these meanings are not mentioned, the massacre's memory is, therefore, an absence within the museum's proposal.

⁹ <<http://museupenitenciario.blogspot.com.br>>. Accessed on 08/08/2016.

In Brazil, there are few museums and/or prison memorials that think of the prison space from the perspective of cultural heritage, as a part of the cities' history and urban fabric; these discussions are still sparse. In the United States, public history has been addressing issues such as mass incarceration and provoking reflection on the prison museums. On the website of the Eastern State Penitentiary¹⁰ we can access a list that divulges around 100 museum-prisons existing in the world, about 40 of them only in the USA; the list leaves Brazil out. In the USA, public historians began to think through this reality. In a recent publication, the historian Heather Ann Thompson (2010) teased, calling her colleagues to this effort: "It is time for historians to think critically about mass incarceration and to begin considering the repercussions of this phenomenon never seen before" (p. 705).

Issues such as mass incarceration bring Brazil and the United States closer; more than this, both here and there, the State

[...] has not been able to ensure the basic requirements for the incarceration of individuals. Prisoners, regardless of their dangerousness, age, recidivism, type of crime, are jailed in facilities, usually crowded, under poor sanitary conditions, kept mixed together from the time they remain waiting until the post-trial period. (SALLA, 2006b, p. 287)

In the United States, mass incarceration has given rise to a series of debates about the creation of prison museums. In addition to the preservation of buildings (which generally date from the 19th century to the mid-20th century), American historians have asked how the preservation of this history can contribute to arouse reflection on the prison reality in the country (BRUGGEMAN, 2012)¹¹.

One of the world's best-known museum-prisons is that of Alcatraz, where violence is presented as a decontextualized spectacle of the past, showing the institution and its history as exceptions. The inmates are situated like the others, the different ones; the contrast with them becomes the basis for a fragile and precarious unity between the

¹⁰ <<http://www.easternstate.org/node/608>>. Accessed on 09/09/2016.

¹¹ As for the public history and its concern with the prisons' history see also: (STRANGE, 2003), (WILSON, 2008), (SMITH, BERGMAN, 2010), (THOMPSON, 2010), (MORRISSEY, SCHWARZER, 2011), (WELCH, 2015).

‘normal’ and adjusted society and the ‘others,’ the deviants, placed at a distance away from what we believe to be our essence. In this way, there is no silencing, but a spectacularization that is lost in the void.

In Brazil, these issues still appear timidly, but they certainly deserve to be thought of. As for the museums or spaces of memories in Brazilian penitentiaries, it is worth mentioning the Museu Penitenciário (in São Paulo), the Museu do Cárcere (in Rio de Janeiro)¹² and the Memorial da Penitenciária de Florianópolis (in Santa Catarina)¹³. Other states are thinking of memory spaces, such as Paraná, Rio de Janeiro, Mato Grosso, and Pernambuco. The work carried out by Myriam Sepúlveda dos Santos (2005) in the implementation of the Ecomuseu Ilha Grande was one of the pioneers in seeking to preserve the memory of violent practices and ethical and moral arbitrariness, which are either stereotyped or totally ignored by society. According to the author:

The biggest challenge faced by the Ecomuseu Ilha Grande is the preservation of the history of a site that people have repeatedly sought to erase from memory. The prison was demolished by using two hundred kg of dynamite by order of Governor Nilo Batista, in April 1994, a fact that repeats a similar measure taken on the occasion of the deactivation of the Colônia Penal Cândido Mendes, located close to Vila do Abraão, also in Ilha Grande, in 1962, during the Carlos Lacerda administration. These destructions may be considered as attempts to erase the country's prison memories. (SANTOS, 2005, p. 394)

The absence of discussions and preservation policies related to the prison heritage¹⁴ in Brazil has led to the disappearance of important buildings. Like the Ilha

¹² See: (SANTOS, 2005).

¹³ See: (BORGES, 2014).

¹⁴ While the United States is concerned with the prison museums and the potentialities of these spaces for the discussion of mass incarceration (BRUGGEMAN, 2012), in France the discussion refers more to the preservation of buildings. The term ‘prison heritage’ is used by the French. It gained strength recently in France, through initiatives such as the Colloque L’architecture carcérale, des mots et des murs, organized in 2010 by the École Nationale d’Administration Pénitentiaire, and publications such as the book entitled *Prisons: Patrimoine de France* (2013), which provides 2,500 photos of French prisons, highlighting the marks left by inmates, such as drawings, paintings, and writings on walls and buildings. The opening for the visitation of the Prison de La Santé, in Paris, during the French Heritage Days of 2014, marked the emergence of the theme within the discussions on cultural heritage in France. In 2016, the magazine *Crimino Corpus* published the dossier “Patrimoine et Architecture Carcérale,” with articles addressing the theme in France and Switzerland. The need to preserve the heritage related to prisons must be seen not only in its built dimension, but from a broader and rather diffuse perspective, involving immaterial and material aspects. From this perspective, I see the prison heritage from three

Grande prison, other prison spaces have been erased throughout history. Without attempting to exhaust the theme, I cite as examples the Complexo Penitenciário Frei Caneca (Rio de Janeiro, 1850), the Presídio de Tiradentes (São Paulo, 1930), the Carandiru (São Paulo, 1956). Others had a part of their buildings put down, such as the Presídio Central de Porto Alegre (Rio Grande do Sul, 1940) and the Presídio do Ahú (Paraná, 1903). And of some of them there are only ruins, like that in Ilha Anchieta (São Paulo, 1902).

The Complexo Penitenciário Paulista, known as Carandiru, began to be built in the 1920s, after the creation of the Penitenciária do Estado. From the 1950s onwards, in an attempt to unburden the institution, which had been suffering from overcrowding since the 1940s, along with the Penitenciária do Estado, the Casa de Detenção (1956), the Penitenciária Feminina (1973), and Centro de Observação Criminológica (1983) were built, forming the popularly known Complexo Penitenciário do Carandiru.

The Carandiru had up to 8,000 inmates, exceeding its capacity by 200%. Built to house less than 3,000 prisoners, on October 2, 1992, there were 7,200 prisoners. It was considered as the largest penitentiary city in the country and one of the largest in the world. But it was not only overcrowding that haunted the place, it lacked medical and legal assistance, many prisoners who had already served their sentences remained in the institution along with mentally ill individuals, prisoners of high and low dangerousness, all mixed together, besides the shortage of employees, generating violence, riots, homicides, corruption, sexual abuse, drug trafficking, corruption (DIAS, 2014), (TEIXEIRA, 2006).

In 2001, one year before the implosion of the Carandiru pavilions, the municipality of São Paulo listed the Conjunto de Edifícios da Penitenciária do Estado: a Casa do Administrador (from the 1920s) and the remaining vegetation of the Atlantic Forest,

interconnected perspectives. It deals with the preservation of the memory of subjects involved in the prison's daily life: sentenced individuals, their relatives, and the employees of the institutions, problematizing the intangible dimension of the prison experience, their routines and their daily practices. It also includes the preservation of prison collections, documents, and/or three-dimensional objects: prisoners' records, registration books, photographs, identification chairs, uniforms, furniture and utensils, including here the 'forbidden creations by prisoners,' traces they have left during the period of imprisonment. The preservation of these collections by the institutions does not always occur in an adequate way, implying the loss of major sources to think about the history of prisons in Brazil and their specificities in the various states of the federation.

“considering the artistic and historical interest of architectural and landscape elements of the so-called COMPLEXO PENITENCIÁRIO DO CARANDIRU” – leaving out the buildings of the 1950s, site of the massacre, demolished in 2002¹⁵.

In 2002, 10 years after the massacre, the Carandiru was completely deactivated; prisoners were transferred to penitentiaries in the state's countryside. And on December 8 that year, Pavilions 6, 8, and 9 were imploded, the latter was the massacre's site. Destroying a part of the buildings of a prison space that for nearly 50 years had been regarded as the largest in Latin America, scene of a massacre known nationally and internationally, is a clear attempt to silence. As we will see, only 2 pavilions were reinserted in the city's dynamics, gaining new uses, although totally uncharacterized and having a shy reference to the history that marks the place.

The erasure of physical vestiges related to the Carandiru is corroborated by one of the new uses of this space: the Parque da Juventude. Built to erase a 'bad memory,' the park enables the practice of sports and leisure moments under a 'bucolic atmosphere.' It also has a large library (with a 4,257 m² area and about 30,000 items) and two school facilities – the Escola Técnica Estadual (ETEC) Parque da Juventude and the ETEC de Artes¹⁶. On the website of the City Hall of São Paulo it is possible to find a shy mention referring to the former functions of the place where the park exists today:

Built on the site of the former Casa de Detenção de São Paulo, popularly known as the Carandiru, the Parque da Juventude was inaugurated in 2003, and is one of the most visited places in the northern area of the capital city. It is a 240,000 m² sports, cultural, and leisure complex, with a more than complete structure.¹⁷

Both on the website and in the physical space, there is no mention of the massacre. The change of scenery promoted by the park is a work to regenerate memory, enabling the rehabilitation of a previously stigmatized space. Inside the park, one of the

¹⁵ The State listing of a building, a process established by the Resolução 15/01 from the CONDEPHAAT (Conselho de Defesa do Patrimônio Histórico Arqueológico, Artístico e Turístico de São Paulo), is under analysis and it has not been concluded, yet.

¹⁶ <<http://vejasp.abril.com.br/materia/santana-parque-da-juventude>>. Accessed on 12/31/2015.

¹⁷ <<http://www.cidadedesaopaulo.com/sp/br/o-que-visitar/atrativos/pontos-turisticos/4388-parque-da-juventude>>. Accessed on 12/31/2015.

only vestiges left by the physical structure of the Carandiru, the 600-m stone wall that allowed agents to watch the prisoners, appears dissociated from the place's history and the dimension of the tragedy there. Taken only by the curiosity it arouses, the ruins of the former Casa de Detenção generate a spectacularization that does not establish a connection between the past and the present.

The stigma of the penitentiary even came to create rejection in other times. Currently, it only collaborates to attract people. Mainly due to a 600-m wall: it was from there that the security guards were watching the inmates. "Many people avoided visiting us because of the negative image of the prison. But this particular point became an attraction"¹⁸.

The 'negative' image became an attraction, the stigma of the penitentiary attracted visitors. Visiting the massacre's scene requires reflection because it involves delicate moral issues. Morbidity or fear they exert can spark a fascination to debate in the void, which guarantees the survival of tragedy, but completely emptied of political sense. Visits to spaces linked to suffering and death, called dark tourism (FOLEY and LENON, 1996), (LOGAN, 2009), thanatourism (SEATON, 2002), or morbid tourism (BLOM, 2000), have only recently become a subject of academic studies, and the studies that deal mainly with the reception of these experiences are still very incipient. Pointed out as an attraction, the former wall seems to have been wrapped by the emblematic aura of this traumatic past.

The ETEC Parque da Juventude occupies the only two remaining pavilions of the old Carandiru. The place began its activities in February 2007, 15 years after the massacre, and it houses the Espaço Memória do Carandiru. The school is introduced in a similar way, as an innovative and open project, establishing a counterpoint to the old institution that existed there, representing, therefore, its opposite.

Occupying an area of about 6,000,000 m, in a building (re)built from the viewpoint of an innovative and open project, in contrast to the initial occupation (Casa de Detenção), the ETEC 'Parque da Juventude,' has 15 classroom whose environment follows the curricular component [...].¹⁹

¹⁸ <<http://museupenitenciario.blogspot.com.br/2012/12/no-ano-que-se-aproxima-apresentaremos.html>>. Accessed on: 05/31/2015.

¹⁹ <<http://vejasp.abril.com.br/materia/santana-parque-da-juventude>>. Accessed on: 11/23/2015.

The Espaço Memória do Carandiru, located within the school, was instituted through the Decreto Estadual 52.112, on 08/30/2007, and is closed. According to the document, the space has as objectives:

- I - providing the general audience with historical, social, and cultural information about the Carandiru, organized into permanent exhibition and temporary exhibitions;
- II - providing students and scholars with specific programming related to the Carandiru's memory;
- III - conducting educational work along with the population as a whole.

Constituted by decree and having functions delimited by it, the space, like the Museu Penitenciário, establishes the official memory of the event. The quest to provide the audience with information of a 'historical nature' adds a sense of authenticity to the memory preserved and produced there. The information found on the website does not shed light on the circumstances of October 2, 1992, seeking, in a calming tone, to give voice to victims and executioners. By means of a conciliatory narrative, the version of the prisoners and the police authorities is shown: "One version of the facts is that the prisoners decided to bring the rebellion to an end and that some handed the weapons over. The police version says the weapons were thrown by the windows against the police officers."

Issues such as impunity and the slowness of the trial of the police officers involved are addressed in a veiled manner by the memorial. One of the most controversial cases, that of Colonel Ubiratan Guimarães, commander of Metropolitan Police Service of the Military Police, who was in charge of leading the operation, is mentioned in a careful way: "Colonel Ubiratan Guimarães was the commander of Metropolitan Police Service of the Military Police and led the invasion. He was one of the 86 policemen tried. He was sentenced to 632 years in prison, but waited for his appeal outside the prison. He was elected a representative in 2002." The text does not mention that the colonel waited as a free man until he was murdered in 2006. Other relevant data are missing, such as the fact that Guimarães was elected a representative from the PSD, with the emblematic number 14111, which refers to the 111 dead in the massacre. Later in the text, the calming nature

becomes even more apparent, relativizing the colonel's condemnation, although it points out the position of the human rights groups in this regard: "19 years later the case is still controversial. On the one hand, the operation chief says that he acted in the strict fulfillment of his duty. On the other, human rights groups believe that there was intention to exterminate the prisoners and complain that no one was punished."²⁰

In the work *Carandiru não é coisa do passado* (RODRIGUEZ et al. 2015, p. 25)²¹, Ines Virginia Prado Soares and Paula Bajer Fernandes Martins suggest as a strategy of symbolic reparation to the massacre's victims the construction of 'a memory place' within the Parque da Juventude, "where the massacre, its causes and circumstances, would be addressed," which could indicate the State commitment not to repeat the tragedy. The authors refer to the notion of reparation in a broad and diffuse sense, an approach that is close to international law, linked to the various types of harm that the victims may have suffered as a consequence of certain crimes. Symbolic reparations "may include, for instance, official apologies, rehabilitation, renaming public spaces, creating celebration days, building museums and parks dedicated to the victims' memory, etc." (GREIFF, 2010, p. 44). From the viewpoint of human rights, the creation of a remembrance place linked to the massacre should include the victims, never the killers. This is surely why the Espaço Memória Carandiru and the Museu Penitenciário were not mentioned in the publication mentioned above. These places aim at the construction of a certain 'official' memory of the massacre and, certainly, seek to act in the sense of reparation; however, the conciliatory way, which gives voice to victims and killers, not promoting a rather direct discussion that blames the State for what happened, prevents the capacity for redemption.

The process of constructing memories linked to the massacre is much more complex than the dichotomy 'official memory' versus 'unofficial memory.' The porosity between these two facets, which contradict each other and challenge each other, reveal

²⁰ <<http://www.cursophd.com.br/unidade/135>>. Accessed on: 11/23/2015. In 2014, 21 years after the massacre, the last 15 indicted military police officers were convicted. Altogether, 73 police officers were convicted of 77 deaths, 3 were acquitted. They received sentences ranging from 96 to 624 years in prison. Concerning the responsibility of the massacre see (FERREIRA, MACHADO, 2012).

²¹ The publication was launched on October 2, 2015, during another act to remember the massacre, followed by a long debate with the authors.

contours linked to subjective aspects that go beyond the proposal of this article. The Museu Penitenciário, for instance, is constantly visited by former inmates, some of them motivated by the possibility of recording their testimonies, contributing to the project "Memória Oral do Sistema Penitenciário Paulista"²², or even encouraged to donate objects and photographs. This search evidences the capillarity of memories and discourses woven into power relations, a power that is exercised over things, capable of modifying them, using them, consuming them, or destroying them (FOUCAULT, 1995, p. 240). Searching the museum in two different moments of the year 2016, I managed to witness a former prisoner who was there on the massacre's date, taking his son to see the exhibition. At one point in the visit, he corrected the way how an exposed object had been assembled, the gadget that manufactured 'maria louca,' a kind of artisanal *cachaça* produced in prisons. That same day, he donated an image of Iemanjá, a very popular female orixá in Brazil, which he said to have been done by inmates within the Carandiru. There was no clue in the image to prove its origin, only the account of its donor assigned it with meanings related to religiosity within the complex, attesting its importance as a part of that past. Months later, on my second visit, the image concerned was already in the exhibition space, i.e. the object was assessed by the institution's collection commission, which accepted the donation and the information about its origin and, more than that, allowed it to appear as a part of the exhibition. In this second visit to the museum, I saw the same man leading some visitors and I was informed by the guide that he started working as a monitor. If, on the one hand, certain social segments ask about the State's position concerning the tragedy, pointing out the absence of a memory place that enables the reconciliation with this past, other subjects, who have experienced what happened, seem to feel represented in the space considered as providing an official memory. Memory exceeds the attempts to control.

²² <http://www.sap.sp.gov.br/download_files/pdf_files/revista/revista-sap-dez-2014.pdf>. Accessed on 11/14/2016. The project records testimonies by former prisoners who have lived in the Carandiru, as well as statements by authorities related to the prison system, public safety experts, and researchers related to the theme.

A metaphor for new tragedies

The myriad of cultural works that resignified the Carandiru massacre contrasted with the strategies to erase and/or appease. We can perceive resonances of these two perspectives in various social segments, which also act in the resignifications and uses of this memory (LOWENTHAL, 2003).

For more than 20 years, the anniversary of the massacre has been marked by the participation of social movements, prisoners' relatives, and victims of State violence. Among them, it is worth noticing the Rede 2 de Outubro, created in 2011 by a set of organizations, social movements, and cultural groups. The group, which adopts the massacre's date as its name, has held meetings, seminars, debates, and other activities whose purpose is denouncing and thinking through the imprisonment conditions, on the selective nature of the penal and prison system, and on the use of violence by the State. The network shared the "perception that the social dynamics that produced the Carandiru massacre is still in force and it keeps promoting massacres."²³ The passage quoted dates from 2012, we can perceive in it the relationship that the group establish between the Carandiru massacre and the possibility of new prison tragedies. In 2016, the movement's website indicates as its goal the search for "strategies to fight against the prison and penal system."²⁴

The network mixes with other non-governmental organizations, such as the Pastoral Carcerária de São Paulo. In 2012, 20 years after the tragedy, a demonstration took place in the Praça da Sé:

"The demonstration does not only resume the Carandiru's 20 years of memory, a clear situation that we have not forgotten and we will never forget what happened, but it is also a public denunciation of all these policies of massacre of the peripheral, black, and poor populations, which still happens today," said Rodolfo Valente, lawyer of the Pastoral Carcerária in São Paulo and a member of the Rede 2 de Outubro.²⁵

²³ <<https://memoriacarandiru.wordpress.com/complexo-penitenciario-carandiru/>>. Accessed on: 11/13/2015.

²⁴ <<https://rede2deoutubro.milharal.org/category/multimidia/>>. Accessed on: 11/13/2015.

²⁵ <<http://carceraria.org.br/pastoral-carceraria-lembra-20-anos-do-massacre-do-carandiru.html#sthash.Je7b9CFj.dpuf>>. Accessed on: 11/13/2015.

The annual demonstrations seek to 'resume' the massacre's memory, instituting a duty of memory, a social debt to be paid. Remembrance updates the tragedy, brings past and present closer, drives the attribution of new meanings, making tragedy a metaphor used to identify other overcrowded prisons and those with potential risk of episodes of violence and rebellion, named as 'new Carandirus.'

The web of discourses about the event echoes in the present through utterances that seek to represent the trauma. It is observed that, during the 24 years that followed the massacre, the speech that called for justice and asked for the punishment of those guilty turned into a rather comprehensive discourse, which demands from the authorities solutions to the overcrowding of Brazilian prisons, in order to avoid 'new Carandirus.'²⁶ The use of massacre as a metaphor to think of new tragedies in prison spaces works as a key category in the process of tragedy remembrance by professional and non-professional groups, instituting new meanings and potentializing the dimension of the event.²⁷

In this web, the Primeiro Comando da Capital (PCC) has been a key part. The website of the Espaço Memória Carandiru points out that the destruction of the complex's physical space might have been an initiative of the state government to dismantle the PCC's command structure. The PCC was created on August 31, 1993, one year after the massacre, as a response to increased police lethality and the riots and rebellions with violent outcomes that became usual in the prison system's daily life since the 1990s (DIAS, 2014). The early appearances of the PCC in the press date from 1997, gaining greater visibility since 2001, by means of a simultaneous mega-rebellion in 29 prison facilities, then it became recognized by the government.

²⁶ I refer here to the numerous reports that utter the emergence of 'new Carandirus.' For instance, see: <http://noticias.r7.com/sao-paulo/com-prisoas-superlotadas-sp-cria-novos-carandirus-09092014>. Accessed on: 05/31/2015.

²⁷ Similarly to this use of tragedy, Andreas Huyssen (2000, p. 13) analyzes the holocaust as a metaphor for other tragedies: "it is precisely the emergence of the Holocaust as a universal figure of speech that allows the Holocaust's memory to begin to grasp specific local situations, historically far away and politically different from the original event. In the transnational movement of memory discourses, the Holocaust loses its quality as the index of the specific historical event and starts serving as a metaphor for other histories and memories."

The massacre symbolizes the failure of a policy for humanization of the prison system, marked by the use of violence, a process that had its tragic outcome in 1992 (cf. Salla, 2006b, 2007).

Created within the do Anexo da Casa de Custódia de Taubaté, a prison representing what has been most arbitrary in the prison system of São Paulo State, the PCC emerges anchored in the discourse of the unity between prisoners as a form of struggle against the oppression perpetrated by the State. (ALVAREZ, SALLA and DIAS, 2013, p. 74)

The constitution of the PCC as a response to violations of human rights, literally mentioning the Carandiru case as a fuse, as prisoners' reprisal against the State inflection, is a part of the political discourse from the very command.²⁸ The political and ideological discourse used by the PCC becomes clear by denouncing violence in the prison system represented by the Carandiru massacre and the torture in the Anexo de Taubaté, mentioned by the founding members of the PCC in its 'manifesto' (TEIXEIRA, 2006, p. 129).²⁹

The use of tools like the YouTube for conveying songs commissioned by the PCC from within the prisons provides a wide scope to denunciations made and serves to reupdate the massacre's memory, constantly referred to by the PCC. In 2015, a song commissioned by the PCC to rapper Cascão reached more than 150,000 views within 20 days.³⁰

As previously mentioned, the availability of documents related to the massacre on the internet at the Plataforma Memória Massacre Carandiru³¹ broadens the reach and

²⁸ The PCC has been studied mainly by researchers in the field of sociology, who point out the need to analyze the ambiguity of this discourse that "talks about loyalty, solidarity, and unity in the fight against injustice and oppression within prisons" and, at the same time, it is impregnated with strict values, provides for the death penalty without appeal or judgment for those who do not follow its norms. In this regard, see: (ADORNO and SALLA 2007).

²⁹ "The Anexo da Casa de Custódia e Tratamento de Taubaté was inaugurated in 1985, then it became the Centro de Readaptação Penitenciária. It was aimed at prisoners who were leaders of rebellions, violent, it kept prisoners under harsh imprisonment conditions" (ADORNO, SALLA, 2007).

³⁰ <http://www.cartacapital.com.br/sociedade/pcc-encomenda-musica-e-manda-201csalve-geral201d-3359.html>.

³¹ The project was proposed in 2015, a partnership between the Núcleo de Estudos sobre o Crime e a Pena of the Fundação Getúlio Vargas (FGV) Direito SP and the Brazilian National Association of Human Rights, Research, and Graduate Studies (ANDHEP).

provides tools for public debate. The project aims to gather documents and materials that allow reflection on the tragedy, making available a variety of sources previously inaccessible to research.

The project *Memória Massacre Carandiru* aims to resume and gather documents and materials in a digital format about the episode that became known as the Carandiru Massacre. Although it has had wide repercussion in the national and international public sphere, the memory of this episode is at risk. The site of such a violation of human rights has been demolished and there is no official initiative for the preservation and discussion of the facts so far (author's emphasis).³²

The project began with a research entitled “Carandiru não é coisa do passado” [“Carandiru is not a thing of the past”], referring to the topicality of a past still present. In addition to official documents, mentioned above, the project proposes a collaborative platform that invites people to participate, donating materials such as photographs, documents, letters, videos, etc. A purpose of the platform is also discussing the current conditions of the Brazilian penal system, reinforcing the massacre's memory as a metaphor for thinking of new tragedies. In this remembrance process, an attempt to control a durable loss, we can observe a duty of memory that generates devices, evidencing the prominence of memory as a form of managing the past or representing it.

Final Remarks

I have tried to problematize a current issue from the perspective of the history of the present time and the public history, seeing them not as historiographic genres, but as positions that enable a series of debates in the field of contemporary history. My intent was examining a clash within the hard work of apprehending a history still in progress, whose reverberations have modified this text up to the last moment. The article was designed until the deadline for submission, ironically on the massacre's date: October 2. Therefore, these considerations are certainly not final. I am dealing herein with an unfinished history, sure that upcoming events may change the proposed analysis.

³² <<https://memoriacarandiru.wordpress.com/complexo-penitenciario-carandiru/>>. Accessed on: 11/11/2015.

The history of the present time, focused on the 20th century, has produced much about the tragic and its memories, histories that do not pass by, which are always present³³. If in the United States we can notice a concern of historians in positioning themselves regarding mass incarceration and increased violence within prison facilities, realizing the urgency of this social demand linked to an unprecedented phenomenon, in Brazil the participation of history in this debate is still shy. The overcrowding of Brazilian prisons has never reached such alarming levels³⁴, prison violence and its apex, the Carandiru, unveil events never seen in history before and they constitute issues that arise in the 20th century. These new social phenomena were invested by initiatives to control official memories, which are distinct from and opposed to memories engendered by various social actors.

It is also up to historians thinking of the era of our own time, trying to create a reflection that enables a relative backward step, which connects the past to the present. Problematizing prison spaces and their practices, comparing them based on historical, cultural, and memory values, is not a simple exercise. The demolitions and the abandonment of buildings coexist with attempts of memory domestication, interpellated by social uses that also institute new meanings and appropriations that escape any attempt to control. I tried to glimpse these conflicting memories, the games of interests, the power relations, their deletions and exclusions. Recalling the past, selecting from it what must be remembered, is not a natural thing, but a process that involves selection. The history of the Carandiru massacre has become a public issue, a moving history, in full swing, written by means of plenty of material that spread it to an ever-widening audience, meeting the social demands that wish to discuss it.

I have dealt herein with a past that does not pass by, a confrontation between an attempt to erase it and willingness to act upon it. Problematizing this process reflects

³³ See: (AREND, 2009).

³⁴ According to the Brazilian National Survey of Penitentiary Information (INFOPEN), from June 2014, Brazil surpassed the mark of 600,000 prisoners. According to the document, the country has the fourth largest prison population in the world, behind only the United States, China, and Russia. In a recent report released by the Ministry of Justice, data revealed an alarming situation: the 1,424 prison facilities existing in the country have a capacity of 376,669 people, but currently they house 607,730 prisoners. See: <<https://www.justica.gov.br/noticias/mj-divulgara-novo-relatorio-do-infopen-nesta-terca-feira/relatorio-depen-versao-web.pdf>>. Accessed on 19/11/2016.

social impatience, this obliges the historian to think through experiences conveyed urgently. Faced with institutional practices marked by overcrowding and violations of human rights, the Carandiru is not a thing of the past, but a part of the concerns of the present.

I believe that, due to these reasons, not only what happened in Carandiru, but the penal system and its social effects, incarceration and its institutional practices, are themes to be dealt with by history. Demolishing, sweeping from the urban fabric these symbolic landmarks does not erase the memories that surround them, which keep resonating in the public debate. So, I answer only one of the questions proposed at the beginning of this paper, the other question still remains: How can we deal with a past marked by a tragic history, which reveals human degradation? And here I add another matter of concern: How can we think of memory related to prisons?

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Carandiru: the uses of a massacre's memory
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Received on 09/30/2016
Approved on 11/16/2016

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Programa de Pós-Graduação em História - PPGH
Revista Tempo e Argumento
Volume 08 - Número 19 - Ano 2016
tempoeargumento@gmail.com