

The gray wall and the majestic entrance: the Carandiru Penitentiary Complex's heritage process

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Abstract: This study analyzes the Carandiru Penitentiary Complex's patrimonialization and its contradictions: on the one hand, the architectural marks erasure and, on the other hand, the recognition of what was considered a vestige of its history as the city of São Paulo's (SP/Brazil) cultural heritage. First we dissected the listing process, opened in 1997, and followed its unfoldings until its definitive approval in 2020. In the second part, we problematize the specificities, limits, potentialities, and fissures of an uncomfortable memories neutralization work, which determines what can be said and remembered regarding Carandiru and the massacre that occurred there. The temporal scope is the present time, tracing intelligibility to a history still unstable and, in many moments, unsubordinated to assertive and determining narratives.

Keywords: Carandiru; Massacre; Prison heritage; Prisons; Current time history.

A muralha cinzenta e o pórtico majestoso: o processo de patrimonialização do Complexo Penitenciário do Carandiru

Resumo: Este artigo analisa a patrimonialização do Complexo Penitenciário do Carandiru e suas contradições: de um lado, o apagamento das marcas arquitetônicas; e, de outro, o reconhecimento daquilo que foi considerado vestígio de sua história como patrimônio cultural da cidade de São Paulo (SP/Brasil). Em um primeiro momento, dissecam-se o processo de tombamento, aberto em 1997, e são percorridos seus desdobramentos até seu deferimento definitivo, em 2020. Na segunda parte, problematizam-se as especificidades, os limites, as potencialidades e as fissuras de um trabalho de neutralização de memórias incômodas, que determina o que pode ser dito e lembrado a respeito do Carandiru e do massacre ali ocorrido. O escopo temporal é o tempo presente, traçando inteligibilidade a uma história ainda movediça e, em muitos momentos, insubordinada às narrativas assertivas e determinantes.

Palavras-chave: Carandiru; Massacre; Patrimônio prisional; Prisões; História do tempo presente.

The gray wall and the majestic entrance

In the very first pages of *Estação Carandiru (Lockdown: inside Brazil's most dangerous prison)*, Dráuzio Varella describes his route to the Carandiru Penitentiary Complex: “I took the metro to Carandiru Station, where I got off and turned right, in front of the military police barracks. In the background, as far as the eye could see, stretched a gray wall with guard towers. Next door to the barracks was a majestic entrance with CASA DE DETENÇÃO (House of Detention) written above it in black letters” (Varella, 1999, p. 13), as you can see in Figures 1 and 2.

Figure 1 – The House of Detention’s Entrance portico.
Personal photo archive of José de Araújo Monteiro,
former jailer at the House of Detention. 1990s.



Source: São Paulo Penitentiary Museum.

Figure 2 – Wall and pavilions of the São Paulo House of Detention, 1990s.



Source: Fernando Salla's personal collection.

Nowadays, neither the gray wall nor the majestic portico with its black letters exist anymore. The São Paulo House of Detention, known as Carandiru, was the scene of the deaths of 111 prisoners by military police officers in 1992, in a rebellion containment action that became known as the Carandiru Massacre.¹ Ten years later, in 2002, what was once considered the largest prison city in the country and one of the largest in the world was imploded. First were pavilions 6, 8, and 9, the latter the massacre scene. In 2005, it was the turn of pavilions 2 and 5, ending the House of Detention's implosion and deactivation process. A Youth Park was created on the site, and the House of Detention's two remaining pavilions, 4 and 7, were substantially altered, giving way to a technological college, a library, and spaces for concerts and *soirées*.

Newspapers from all over the country reported the end of the “hell called Carandiru”, according to an article in the *O Estado de S. Paulo* newspaper. The Carandiru implosion

¹The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights Report uses the term *massacre*, in addition to *generalized extermination* and *indiscriminate killing*, to describe the way the victims were executed. In the survivors' testimonies, they reported that the number of dead was much higher than 111. On this subject see: <https://artsandculture.google.com/exhibit/mem%C3%B3ria-massacre-carandiru/XglS6ep1-mKqIq?hl=pt-BR> and <https://www.massacrecarandiru.org.br/>. Accessed on: Apr. 22, 2021.

would be a Sunday attraction: “Neither beach nor cinema. The Sunday program [...] is to watch the implosion of three pavilions of the House of Detention”.² Both the destruction of buildings that could be used for other purposes and the spectacle built around the event are clear indications of the way in which prison memory has been generated. The will to erase this uncomfortable history has swept an important part of the country’s prison memory from the urban fabric.

The State Penitentiary was inaugurated on April 21st, 1920, in the northern part of the city of São Paulo, in the Carandiru neighborhood. Its building was one of the largest constructions made by the São Paulo government in the beginning of the 20th century, and for many years it was considered a model prison. Around it, the Penitentiary Complex was built slowly over the years, encompassing the Women’s Prison, the Criminological Observation Center, the Civil Police Prison, and the House of Detention.

The House of Detention’s construction, which began in 1956, was designed to receive inmates transferred from other units, especially those located on Anchieta Island and Tiradentes Avenue. It was a response to the first major public security crisis experienced by the state of São Paulo between 1940 and 1960, which had as its epicenter the rebellion on Anchieta Island in 1952 (Salla, 2015). In 1975, the House of Detention already housed five thousand prisoners, and thus the model prison idea gave way to new representations, “associated with violence, abandonment, and precariousness”.³ On October 2, 1992, the day of the massacre, there were 7,257 men incarcerated in the institution, of which 2,706 were in Pavilion 9.⁴

The physical erasure of the massacre’s memory is accompanied by the absence of conviction upon the guilty parties. On September 27, 2016, the São Paulo State Court of Justice annulled the trials of the 74 military police officers involved in the episode, all of whom the jury found guilty between 2013 and 2014 (with sentences ranging from 48 to 624 years). The necroscopic reports on the 111 victims, which “clearly indicate that the military police shot with the intent to incapacitate and kill, and not to contain a rebellion. The vast majority of firearm wounds hit the thorax and head. Many wounds reveal vic-

² *O Estado de S. Paulo*, São Paulo, Dec. 7, 2002, p. 15.

³ Information available at: <https://nev.prp.usp.br/noticias/os-cem-anos-do-carandiru/>. Accessed on: Mar. 30, 2021.

⁴ The inmates who were in Pavilion 9 on the massacre day “were primary defendants (serving their first prison sentence) and many of them had not yet been convicted and were protected by the presumption of innocence”, according to Report No. 34/00 of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, available at: <https://cidh.oas.org/annualrep/99port/Brasil11291.htm>. Accessed on: Mar. 30, 2021.

tims already surrendered, kneeling, or lying down”.⁵ The destruction of the architectural remains is in line with the erasure of the guilty.

The largest killing of people in State custody had no one to blame, and the compensation for moral and material damages sought by some family members in civil liability suits were mostly granted by the courts more than a decade after the massacre.⁶

Among the demolitions and the trial developments, the Municipal Council for the Preservation of the Historical, Cultural, and Environmental Heritage of the City of São Paulo (Conpresp) had been processing⁷ the request to list the Carandiru Penitentiary Complex as a heritage site since 1997, and only approved it in 2020. After 23 years, demolitions, implosions, decharacterizations, and renovations, what was left to be re-signified as heritage? In the process, many photographs of the State Penitentiary and its imposing century-old buildings, but none of the terrifying images that have become part of the nation’s memory and circulated in the national and international press.⁸ The massacre images are not part of the document. Here some of them are cited.

This study’s core argument is that the delayed and deformed patrimonialization carries a contradictory image to recognize the memory instituted as official of both the massacre and Brazilian prison history. This is a depoliticized speech on human rights issues, configured on the basis of an erasure policy, weaving a neutralized memory. The Carandiru Penitentiary Complex’s patrimonialization reveals the boundaries of memory when it comes to common prisoners.

The Carandiru Massacre memory allows us to reflect on the complexity of preserving difficult heritages (Borges, 2018; Meneguello, 2020), which enables us to problematize the prison heritage setting as marginal, circumscribed to the edges or excluded from the ordinary consensus, instituting a memory marked by repulse and fear. A dark, obscure memory that one does not wish to activate, linked to a history that one prefers – consciously or unconsciously – not to remember (Martí, 2008). Places and traces pertinent to controversial historical events, marked by trauma and human rights violations, by memory policies

⁵ Information available at: <https://artsandculture.google.com/exhibit/mem%C3%B3ria-massacre-carandiru/XgIS6ep1mKqIq?hl=pt-BR>. Accessed on: Mar. 30, 2021.

⁶ Information available at: <https://artsandculture.google.com/exhibit/mem%C3%B3ria-massacre-carandiru/XgIS6ep1mKqIq?hl=pt-BR>. Accessed on: Mar. 30, 2021.

⁷ Case 1997-0125.758-8, Conpresp.

⁸ “In the United States, hundreds of TV stations have broadcast the rebellion footage. American and European newspapers used words like ‘bloody’, ‘atrocious’, and ‘massacre’. Brazil was denounced to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights of the Organization of American States (OAS), the largest body for monitoring respect for human rights on the continent. The indictment was based on evidence of indiscriminate use of violence, such as shooting inmates with weapons like Colt AR-15 rifles, HK and Beretta submachine guns.” Information available at: <https://memoriagloboglobo.com/jornalismo/coberturas/massacre-no-carandiru/>. Accessed on: Mar. 23, 2021.

aimed at erasure, silencing, and negationism, but often triggered by different groups concerned with reactivating, denouncing, and reupdating the memories linked to such episodes.

This study analyzes the Carandiru Penitentiary Complex's listing process in Conpresp, comprised of five volumes⁹ of a source still unexplored by Brazilian historiography, as well as some of the numerous newspaper reports on the subject, with some questions as the common thread: what determined what should be imploded and what should remain? What is the massacre's place in this process? Is it possible to create a place of memory for a type of violence that persists in the present? Can we speak of a memory policy linked to prisons and common prisoners?

We raised other questions throughout the text. We do not intend to provide answers to such emblematic and latent questions, but to instigate the debate, bringing to light a theme that goes beyond this case and refers to the erasure of certain events and subjects in the setting of what is understood as relevant to memory and cultural heritage. To this end, first we dissected the listing process, opened in 1997, and followed its unfoldings until its definitive approval in 2020. In the second part, we problematize the specificities, limits, potentialities, and fissures of an uncomfortable memories neutralization work, which determines what can be said and remembered regarding Carandiru and the massacre.

The end of hell?

The Carandiru Penitentiary Complex's listing process was opened at Conpresp in 1997, five years after the massacre and five years before the beginning of the House of Detention's deactivation and implosion work. The process requested the complex to be declared a heritage site by means of a "statement of reasons", based mainly on the State Penitentiary's history: "Its historical, architectural, and social importance" (Seção Técnica de Levantamento e Pesquisa, 2005).

In 1999, the Municipal Planning Office (Sempla) requested more information, since it is a "very complex" subject. A study commission was then created to set parameters for the future occupation of the area corresponding to the Carandiru Complex and its equipment, after deactivation.

On August 22, 2001, the commission's report pointed out the importance of preserving

⁹ The case consists of five volumes. In the third volume are the plans for the Youth Park, and the fourth deals with the reform project for the Santana Women's Penitentiary. The part that deals more directly with the complex is the first volume, partly the second and the fifth, which contains the Conpresp's final decision. The document is on paper and available for consultation in person by appointment at Conpresp.

the State Penitentiary, repeatedly mentioned in the process, for its significant historical value, but affirmed that the building was not yet protected either by the Council for the Defense of Historical, Archeological, Artistic, and Tourist Heritage (Condephaat) or by Conpresp, requesting a position from these councils. The “exclusion of any reuse of built areas in the penitentiary field” (8) was emphasized, because, although this reuse was one of the guidelines set by the state government, “the costs and the real capacity of reusing the deeds were unknown, besides the inconvenience of keeping empty and unused buildings” (6). Erasmo Dias, the commission president, signs the document entitled “General Considerations – Deactivation of the Carandiru Complex”, which refers to the “end of hell” when describing the deactivation project scheduled to be concluded in 2002: “When Secretary of Security, Federal Congressman, and State Congressman, we have always been supporters of the Carandiru monstrosity’s deactivation”.

In 2001, the Conpresp’s¹⁰ Resolution 15/2001 (São Paulo, 2001) made official the opening of the listing study on the “Set of State Penitentiary Buildings”, including “the Administrator’s House, and the Remnant Atlantic Forest Vegetation, existing in the so-called Carandiru Penitentiary Complex [...]”. Of the assets mentioned, the Penitentiary Complex’s Control Towers and the House of Detention’s Portal were left out, elements that were pointed out at the opening of the process, in 1997. The opinion of the architect Carlos Lemos, who has acted as a counselor in the National Institute of Historical and Artistic Heritage (Iphan), in Condephaat and in Conpresp, corroborates the importance of the State Penitentiary building, excluding the historical and artistic interest regarding the other constructions:

[...] Determining what is historical or artistic is the latent problem when subjective or political decisions tend to prevail, hence the convenience of collective deliberation, when questions are more easily concealed.

These reflections are persistent when we are dealing with the architectural complex headed by the old Carandiru Penitentiary. There, the possibility of being in front of a work of art is ruled out. The architecture there is simply correct when we examine the primitive building from the 1920s designed by Samuel Antônio das Neves and modified and built by the Ramos de Azevedo office with the foreign models of the time in mind. *The artistic or historical interest of the other annexed buildings is truly negligible, not to say null.*

¹⁰ Document available at: <http://moyarte.com.br/centro-de-sao-paulo/conpresp-condephaat-iphan/resolucao15-01.pdf>. Accessed on: Jan. 22, 2021.

The historical point of view is also relative. It is the first penitentiary in São Paulo built to substitute the old Tiradentes prison, of which the remains of its entrance gate have already been listed by Condephaat, worthy of a memorial stone alluding to the political plans involved there.

Accepting Carandiru Penitentiary as a historical document, we suggest that it be listed simply limited to its perimeter, releasing the surrounding land from official preservation, and at the same time, *deeming more than necessary the total demolition of the prominent constructions, including the House of Detention* (Carlos Lemos, Reporting Consultant, my emphasis).

In the strings and joints between what to remember and what to forget, nothing had been mentioned about the massacre until then. The process is accompanied by a long text entitled *History of the State Penitentiary* (2005), prepared by the Survey and Research Technical Section of the Department of Historical Heritage. The document traces the complex's history from the state prison's creation to the Carandiru massacre, with the event being cited for the first time: "1992 was the year marked by one of the most violent episodes in our recent history. The military police action, when reacting to a rebellion of prisoners, produced the episode known as the 'Carandiru Massacre', with the tragic balance of 111 dead prisoners" (Department of Historical Heritage, *History of the State Penitentiary*).

The document reiterates the importance of making the State Penitentiary a heritage site, due to its historical, architectural, and social value, excluding the possibility of preserving the House of Detention due to its deterioration. As mentioned, the penitentiary building was one of the largest constructions of the São Paulo government in the early 20th century. Thus, "to the exuberance of the pavilions lined up symmetrically, jutting into the landscape, heavy, with thick walls, and the infinity of cell windows, was added the model prison fantasy" (Salla, 1999, p. 193).

The model prison fantasy seems to inebriate the whole listing process' setting, turning the spotlight on the centennial buildings designed by the famous Ramos de Azevedo office, also responsible for designing the São Paulo Municipal Theater. The penitentiary's wall has not been altered in any way over the years, and neither have the pavilions in general, which makes it the oldest prison and in some ways the one that has maintained the buildings integrity since its creation. The State Penitentiary belongs to another time, something distant from the present, representing a desire to "demonstrate civility to Brazil and the world" (Department of Historical Heritage, *History of the State Penitentiary*).

Between the 1950s and 1960s, a series of newspaper reports began to dispel the myth, pointing out the State prisons' wretched condition, contradicting those who still harbored "the illusion that São Paulo built and maintained model institutions of social control" (Salla, 2015, p. 642). The model penitentiary idea appears as an "imagined memory" (Huyssen, 2002, p. 21), which easily erases the problems experienced by the institution

over the years. The House of Detention represents the present, a context marked by overcrowding, lack of medical and legal assistance, lack of staff, which gives rise to violence, riots, homicides, corruption, sexual abuse, drug trafficking (Dias, 2014; Teixeira, 2006).

Regarding the massacre, the document also points out: “The action’s violence shocked the public opinion and was highlighted in all the media, with wide international repercussion. The largest prison in Latin America has also become the greatest symbol of the Brazilian prison system’s failure” (Department of Historical Heritage, *History of the State Penitentiary*).

The text also makes reference to the “megarrebellion” that occurred in 2001, which mobilized in 29 prison units a synchronized rebellion movement led by prisoners belonging to a criminal organization called the First Capital Command (PCC). “Thousands of spectators followed on television, images of the rebellions that spread throughout the State’s prisons. One of the movement’s command centers was the São Paulo House of Detention, with more than seven thousand prisoners” (Salla, 2006, p. 274). The simultaneous rebellions were aimed at pressuring the prison administration to return to the São Paulo House of Detention the PCC leaders, who had been removed from there days before, to the Annex of the Taubaté Custody Center. The rebels also requested the deactivation of the annex, “where the disciplinary rules were extremely severe, with prisoners remaining, for 23 hours a day, isolated in their cells, without any activity and with severe restrictions on visits” (Salla, 2006, p. 275). The episode would make the House of Detention’s inadequate conditions even more evident, corroborating its demolition.

The massacre appears more prominently in the listing process in March 2018, through an opinion of the São Paulo section of the Architects Institute of Brazil (IAB-SP). Besides emphasizing the “model penitentiary’s” historical importance, the document mentions the “painful and controversial memories of the social trauma that made its way into recent history as the Carandiru Massacre”:

Note that such a reading meets some recent discussions in the field of heritage and memory that, especially since the 1980s, highlight the fundamental importance of preserving sites understood as spaces of ‘painful memory’, ‘traumatic memory’, or ‘places of memory and consciousness’, seeking to highlight their fundamental importance for the future construction of new history views from other perspectives, and their pedagogical potential aimed at tolerance and the affirmation of human rights.

The opinion was read at the meeting of March 19, 2018 (Minute of the 667th Conpresp Ordinary Meeting), when the listing of the Carandiru Penitentiary Complex was granted,

generating Conpresp's¹¹ Resolution No. 38/2018, which considers that the complex is “fundamental for the prisons history preservation in Brazil, occupying a prominent place in this trajectory”. According to the article 1 of the referred resolution, it was decided:

TO LIST the Carandiru Penitentiary Complex, constituted by the architectural complex of the State Penitentiary, the building of the Training School for Penitentiary Agents, and the former Administrator's Residence (in its configuration in the 1920's), by the former building of the prison Albergue (current Police Prison), by the two pavilions and civil works remaining from the House of Detention (in its configuration of the 1950's), and by the Atlantic Forest, in its configuration of the 1920's (Conpresp, *Resolução n.º 38*).

What in fact is being perpetuated for future generations after the implosions? What are the reasons for this delayed, deformed, and neutralized recognition of what was left as the city of São Paulo's cultural heritage?

Resolution No. 38 left out some buildings of the State Penitentiary, widely cited and corroborated for their historical value, and therefore the appeal to the resolution's approval was requested on November 14, 2019. The appeal pointed out that the basis of the process opened in 1997 was demonstrated by the history of the State Penitentiary and that Resolution No. 38 did not contemplate the Carandiru Penitentiary Complex in its entirety, which “subtracted the possibility of perfect understanding of this property's incomparable historical and architectural value, the reason for the listing action”. The appeal filed by the São Paulo section of the Order of Brazilian Lawyers (OAB-SP), on February 17, 2020, follows the same line:

Among the buildings excluded from listing, I was startled by the fact that they include the State Penitentiary, a project by the Ramos de Azevedo office, from the beginning of the last century (1911-1920), which introduced in the prisons architecture, the creation of spaces not only for penitence, but also for the prisoners recovery.

The appeal had a favorable opinion, proposing the expansion of the area protected by Resolution No. 38, but followed the vision of preservation in isolation and not as a whole, including the preservation of the

State Penitentiary Pavilions, Kitchen, Laundry, Workshops, circulation system (corridor), Cine-theater, and other intramural buildings: preservation of the original external

¹¹ Available at: www.conpresp.prefeitura.sp.gov.br. Accessed on: Feb. 20, 2021.

architectural features and internal parts or elements such as: the circulation between them (corridors), staircases (guardrails, floors, thresholds), a cell example, etc.

Regarding the House of Detention and the two remaining pavilions: “Preservation of the original external characteristics, such as facades, roofing, filling, and special finishings characteristic of the building’s construction moment”. But after the reforms undertaken over the years, what is left of the “building moment”? The gray wall and the majestic entrance with its black letters indicating House of Detention, pointed out for possible listing at the opening of the process in 1997, were no longer there in 2018. How to maintain the “1950s setting” if the House of Detention’s remaining pavilions had already been completely de-characterized? Regarding the House of Detention, the resolution points out:

Considering that the ‘generous cubes’, the HOUSE OF DETENTION’s pavilions, have been references for more than half a century and represent for the São Paulo and Brazilian population the historical memory, *sad* but not less important, known as the ‘Carandiru massacre’, and have the function of perpetuating to future generations, the disastrous result of this man’s action and contribute so that it will not happen again (my emphasis).

The “generous cubes”, the two pavilions referred to in the resolution, remnants of the House of Detention, are the most visible traces of the massacre, even if uncharacterized. In the interim between demolition and construction, some spaces have had other uses. In 2002, for example, Pavilion 2, demolished in 2005, was markedly uncharacterized by its use in some scenes of the movie *Carandiru*.¹² In 2004, Pavilion 5 was used as housing by workers in charge of the Youth Park construction, most of whom lived far away and preferred to sleep on site.¹³

The demolitions and decharacterization neutralized the potential for reflection on a place that would be fundamental to think the prison, such as the cells layout, the occupation of the place by prisoners, and the reconfigurations instituted by the institutional daily life. Making something a heritage implies, in many ways, setting up a cultural heritage that refers to the past (Macdonald, 2009), but in this case the discussion keeps reverberating in the present, an uncomfortable, awkward past, a “sad historical memory” that one wishes, if not to erase, at least to domesticate, to silence.

¹² Information available at: <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/fsp/cotidian/ff1909200225.htm>. Accessed on: Mar. 2021.

¹³ Information available at: <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/fsp/cotidian/ff1807200415.htm>. Accessed on: Mar. 2021.

“If you do not remember, it looks like it did not even exist”

The category prison heritage has been configured in the last decades permeated by discussions, contradictions, and erasures (Borges and Santos, 2019). Preserving these traces would be to account for the memory of the voiceless, and question whether liberty deprivation should also be an exclusion from history.¹⁴

In an interview published in 2015, Carlos Augusto Mattei Faggin, then in his ninth term as councilor and second as president of Condephaat, commented: “I had a long fight in one of my terms because [Geraldo] Alckmin decided to demolish the Carandiru pavilions. I fought hard, I did not succeed, for it to be preserved as our Holocaust”.¹⁵

If the Holocaust memory has become a kind of global metaphor to designate contemporary tragedies (Huyssen, 2004), such as the Carandiru Massacre, the memory of Carandiru has also been instituted as a national metaphor to identify other stories and memories linked to overcrowded prisons with potential danger of violence and rebellions episodes, called “new Carandirus”.¹⁶ The episode continues to be constantly updated in the present, reinforced by social mobilization every October 2nd, when different civil society segments recall the massacre, dedicating this day to the memory and thematization of other events marked by State violence. Carandiru seems to have become a national commonplace, a prism through which we look at other prison violence examples, which can also lead to trivialization, blocking the ability to see the specifics of each case, naturalizing what happened as part of the Brazilian prison routine. The arbitrariness in the prison system is treated as episodic, and the public commotion over the successive reports of human rights violations does not reverberate in changes concerning the abuses that characterize prison practices. The nature of these institutions is not questioned (Castro, Santos, and Borges, 2021).

Over the years, other “carandirus” have been erased, such as the Cândido Mendes Penal Institute (1940, Rio de Janeiro, partially demolished in 1994), the Frei Caneca Penitentiary Complex (1850, Rio de Janeiro, demolished in 2010), the Tiradentes Prison (1852, São Paulo, demolished in the 1970s), etc. In Latin America, other places related to the memory of prisons, marked by State violence, have undergone similar erasure processes:

¹⁴ Information available at: https://www.liberation.fr/societe/2014/09/18/les-prisons-font-aussi-partie-de-notre-patrimoine_1103194/. Accessed on: Mar. 2021.

¹⁵ Information available at: https://www.em.com.br/app/noticia/nacional/2019/08/07/interna_nacional,1075587/nao-admito-interferencia-de-ninguem-no-condephaat-diz-presidente-dos.html. Accessed on: Mar. 2021.

¹⁶ I am referring here to the numerous reports enunciating the emergence of “new Carandirus”. For an example of this, see: <http://noticias.r7.com/sao-paulo/com-prisoos-superlotadas-sp-cria-novos-carandirus-09092014> and <https://ponte.org/cdp-pinheiros-o-novo-carandiru-de-sao-paulo/>. Accessed on: May 31, 2020.

Sites like Lecumberri in Mexico, Punta Carretas in Uruguay, Carandiru in Brazil, or Buen Pastor in Argentina played an important role in the construction of modernity imaginaries in their respective countries and also functioned as architectural supports for a repression that made it necessary to materially demolish at the end of the 20th century (Draper, 2013, p. 252).

These are buildings that once represented modernity related to prison policies in their respective countries, but are also violence and repression marks, and for this reason were demolished at the end of the 20th century. The destruction of these complexes seems to meet a desire for redemption, as if putting them down would mean the emergence of better days, silencing traumatic pasts, denying that the violence suffered can be repaired and acknowledged.

The opinion of architect Carlos Lemos, cited above, regarding the listing of the Carandiru Complex, when mentioning the listing of the Tiradentes Arch by the State of São Paulo, raises an interesting question. Tiradentes, created in 1852, was demolished in 1972 due to the subway works, and only the entrance portal's Stone Arch, built in the 1930s, remains. In 1985 the Arch was listed by Condephaat.¹⁷ This arch, a vestige of a prison institution whose history served as a house of correction, slave warehouse, and political prison at different times in the country's history, has become a historical monument, and has been established as a cultural heritage site. However, there is no indication of the prison's history at the site, which leads us to think that possibly a large part of the passers-by are unaware of what this remaining prison history vestige represents. This leads to Lemos' questioning: what are the political plans implied there? This lack of identification and connection with the present ends up neutralizing the potential of these places of memory to incite reflection, silencing these past traces that remain in the public scene.

In Lemos' opinion, written in 2001, the historical interest concerning the House of Detention is pointed out as "negligible" or "null", indicating that it should be demolished. The document makes no mention of the massacre. As pointed out, in the listing process the discussions that insert the importance of the massacre as part of the heritage process appear with more force only from 2018. The IAB-SP opinion signals "painful memories", "traumatic", and "places of memory and consciousness", and uses the term *massacre*, not riot or rebellion.

Contemporary discussions regarding memory from the 1980s onward are strongly characterized by the political and traumatic clashes that preceded them (Huysen, 2014).

¹⁷ Information available at: http://www.memorialdaresistenciasp.org.br/memorial/upload/memorial/bancodedados/130740251278039152_192_PRESIDIO_TIRADENTES.pdf. Accessed on: May 22, 2015.

The period is marked by a series of events: the post-Cold War period, decolonization, the end of dictatorships in Latin America, and the intensification of the globalization phenomenon at the end of the 20th century. The present time history, a research area born in France in the 1970's, is crossed by these narratives concerned with the counter-discourses, which deconstruct the official discourses and try to trace other narratives linked to groups that until then had been excluded from historiography.

The importance given to these “painful memories” drives proposals that wish to resignify representational voids, motivating the creation of “places of memory and consciousness” There is, for example, a group of institutions affiliated with the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience, which proposes to link past violations to current movements for human rights.¹⁸ “It is necessary, therefore, that the audience is able to construct a new language from what has been presented and not just repeat words that may be a melancholic experience for them” (Castro, Santos e Borges, 2021). The present time history and its research scope linked to the 20th century have been producing studies on the tragic and its memories, on stories that do not endure, highlighting the way society has been dealing with clumsy inheritances that provoke, among other things, questions concerning the recent past's selection and preservation practices.

The patrimonialization of prisons is linked to political history and the history of civil rights and state violence, which in Latin America leads to the revisiting of spaces linked to dictatorial processes,¹⁹ with the creation of museums and memorials in places where former imprisonment and torture centers operated. This is the case of the building of the former Information Operations Detachment – Internal Defense Operations Center (DOI-Codi): “The history of our country cannot be erased, because it was made with much struggle and blood. Tearing down buildings is the best way to erase history. The Carandiru demolition is the best example of this attempt to erase history. [...] If you do not remember, it seems that it did not even exist” (Ivan Seixas, president of the State Council for the Human Person's Rights – Condepe).²⁰

In the excerpt, Ivan Seixas²¹ cites the Carandiru example to corroborate the Conde-

¹⁸ On these initiatives, see the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience website, available at: <https://www.sitesofconscience.org/en/home>. Accessed on: Jun. 17, 2020.

¹⁹ As is the case of the Villa Grimaldi Peace Park in Chile, a property transformed into a detention center after the coup, the Museo de la Memoria in Rosario, Argentina, located in the building that served as headquarters for the Command of the II Argentine Army Corps, and the Memorial of the Resistance in São Paulo, located in the former building of the State Department of Political and Social Order in São Paulo.

²⁰ Information available at: <https://revistaforum.com.br/blogs/rodrigovianna/brodrigovianna-ivan-seixas-tombamento-do-predio-do-doi-codi-e-um-marco-de-nossa-historia/#>. Accessed on: Mar. 2021.

²¹ Ivan Seixas “was arrested in 1971, at the age of 16, along with his father by the Bandeirante Operation - Oban. Taken to the DOI-Codi/SP they were tortured together. His father was killed under torture at DOI-Codi/SP on April 17, 1971. His entire

phaat's listing of the former DOI-Codi's building, one of the best known and most emblematic torture and repression centers of the Brazilian military dictatorship. The lawsuit (No. 66578-2012) was proposed by himself, one of the survivors of the torture that took place at the DOI-Codi.²² The place is recognized as the site where the most deaths of regime opponents took place as a consequence of torture. Déborah Neves, in the site's listing process, highlights its importance as a fundamental physical support of the violation of human rights, indispensable for us to reflect on the "reasons that led to its recognition as a state cultural heritage".²³

In the DOI-Codi case, it is a matter of the memory of political prisoners whose families resisted in claiming their dead and missing and in elucidating the crimes and torture, seeking the criminalization of those responsible and the recognition of the historical importance of the assets and sites related to the regime.²⁴ While the DOI-Codi remained as an uncomfortable physical support, disturbing the official memory's construction, preventing its sometimes appeasing character and its erasure attempts, the Carandiru demolition represents the erasing of an uncomfortable history, characterized by a type of violence that continues in the present. Common prisoners, in general, are treated as irrelevant as memory subjects. A consensus seems to have been created that the incarceration memory concerns only political prisoners, which sustains an irrelevance attitude toward ordinary prisoners, whose abuses are naturalized. There are few sources that even document the passage of common prisoners through prison.

Myriam Sepúlveda dos Santos (2018), who worked on the organization of the Museu do Cárcere (Prison Museum) in Rio de Janeiro, points out the difficulties in obtaining records and testimonies left by common prisoners in the archives linked to the Ilha Grande penitentiaries in Rio de Janeiro. On the other hand, according to the author, "political prisoners, mostly coming from sectors of the population that held more resources and power, managed to give visibility to what they experienced and witnessed" (Santos, 2013, p. 237). Michel Foucault (2010) in his involvement with the Prison Information Group

family, his mother Fanny, and his two sisters, Ieda and Lara Seixas, were also taken to the DOI-Codi, where they were also raped and witnessed Joaquim being killed". Information available at: <http://www.memorialdaresistencia.org.br/memorial/default.aspx?c=entrevistados&identrevistado=4&identrevista=8>. Accessed on: Feb. 18, 2021.

²² According to a survey by Brasil: Nunca Mais, at least 1,843 people were subjected to some type of torture at the DOI-Codi in São Paulo between 1969 and 1975. Among the victims there are some well-known cases, such as that of journalist Vladimir Herzog and former President Dilma Rousseff. Information available at: <http://spressosp.com.br/2014/01/27/ivan-seixas-e-adriano-diogo-tombam-o-doi-codi-de-sao-paulo/>. Accessed on: Mar. 2021.

²³ Case No. 414, available at: <http://condephaat.sp.gov.br/benstombados/conjunto-das-antigas-instalacoes-da-oban-e-doi-codi/>. Accessed on: Mar. 2021.

²⁴ Case No. 414, available at: <http://condephaat.sp.gov.br/benstombados/conjunto-das-antigas-instalacoes-da-oban-e-doi-codi/>. Accessed on: Mar. 2021.

(GIP) in the 1970s, was already paying attention to the fact that political prisoners did not have the same means of expressing themselves as common law prisoners. The latter without “knowledge, social relations, outside contacts that make it possible to know what they say, what they do, and above all, the political support that bounces back their action” (Foucault, 2010, p. 8).

In the Carandiru case, this difference is crucial and determinant for the absence of recognition and reparation policies, which made possible the the place’s erasure and the impunity of those involved. Susana Draper (2015, p. 63), in dealing with the depoliticization of “museum prisons”, problematizes the fact that common prisoners are never subjects of memory acts, weaving in the discourse limits linked to human rights, which are not articulated to the memory policies when it comes to prisons and common law prisoners. It is as if the prison’s memory were restricted to political prisoners, belonging to another time, disconnected from the current problems.

When we talk about the Carandiru Penitentiary Complex and the common prisoners housed in most Brazilian penitentiaries, we are talking about young people, mostly between 18 and 25 years old, black or mixed race, poor, with little or no schooling, illiterate, without access to the press, to justice, or to possibilities of political participation and visibility channels, remembered by society only when episodes of violence inside penitentiaries gain visibility on the TV news (Borges and Santos, 2019). It is as if this prison violence occurring in the present does not cause social empathy, as if the recurrent illegal punishments inside prisons meet, albeit in a veiled way, the desire for revenge on the part of the populations, since the crime control by the legal-penal system does not satisfy the collective need (Garland, 2009). Official memory policies do not seem attentive to the current social injustices when these concern common law prisoners, or fail to sensitize public opinion to the point where there is a social demand for memory work. But they seem attentive to erase them, as if the physical traces’ destruction would exorcise the ills and point to better days. Prisons and prison violence are not memory. They are an uncomfortable “there it is” that confronts the present and challenges patrimonialization actions.

Preserving Pavilion 9 would involve dealing with disturbing marks. The report on the site recounts the damage found in the pavilions: marks of police gunfire and blood on the walls.²⁵ These scars are part of the present time history and go through places of memory linked to World War II²⁶ and the dictatorship in Latin America, but they are also present

²⁵ Information available at: <https://artsandculture.google.com/exhibit/mem%C3%B3ria-massacre-carandiru/XgIS6ep1-mKqIq?hl=pt-BR>. Accessed on: Mar. 2021.

²⁶ As an example, in a now commercial and touristy area of Berlin, around Friedrichstrasse station, many restaurants keep the bullet marks on their façades so integrated that they are not always detected by tourists.

in the memory narratives of everyday violence in Brazil, as in the Maré Museum, where a glass box containing bullets and capsules, which were collected in the community's streets,²⁷ are deposited behind a wall comprised of more than one hundred bullet holes plaster casts around the favela.²⁸

In 2002, while the deactivation, demolition, and listing works were underway, the House of Detention was opened to the outside public. Visitors had the opportunity to see Pavilion 7, which has been fully maintained with the cells and other spaces that were used by those who served time there.²⁹ Schools and the general public packed the place, an unexpected crowd of about two thousand people:³⁰ “The visitor’s path will start at pavilion 2, located to the left of those facing the prison. [...] The most ‘real’ and preserved area of the prison will integrate the second part of the visitation, which takes place on the 3rd floor of Pavilion 7. There, visitors can only walk in groups of 30 or 40 people, and always with the presence of employees”.³¹

Pavilion 2 was demolished in 2005. On the other hand, Pavilion 7 was one of the remnants, along with Pavilion 4. The visitation to the deactivated House of Detention, which was about to be demolished, allowed access to an area considered to be more real, but what real was this? The visit to the Penitentiary Complex is not necessarily a new thing. The State Penitentiary has already been a mandatory stop for visitors passing through town: “Authorities and personalities from other states and countries, from any sector, almost mandatorily toured its grounds and left in the visitors’ book their standard admiration expressions. Students of different ages and grades went there in great numbers, making the visit another page in their school life” (Salla, 1999, p. 94).

A visit to the “model prison” in the first half of the 20th century bears little resemblance to a visit to the House of Detention in the 21st century. If in the past visits aroused praise that corroborated the myth that the penitentiary represented a “masterpiece in the field of penal treatment” (Salla, 1999, p. 96), in the post-massacre period it was equivalent to the corroboration of a terrifying reality, bringing triggers from the past to the present. The myth that silenced the “tragedies, violence, and lawlessness” (Salla, 1999, p. 197),

²⁷ The Complexo da Maré, in the northern region of Rio de Janeiro, is composed of 16 favelas. With more than 130,000 inhabitants according to the 2010 census (although recent estimates calculate approximately 140,000 inhabitants), Maré is the largest favela complex in Rio. The Maré Museum was created in 2006 and is affiliated with the non-governmental organization Centro de Estudos e Ações Solidárias da Maré (Ceasm). Information available at: <https://rioonwatch.org.br/?p=33059>. Accessed on: Mar. 2021.

²⁸ Information available at: <https://rioonwatch.org.br/?p=33059>. Accessed on: Mar. 2021.

²⁹ Information available at: <https://www.saopaulo.sp.gov.br/eventos/carandiru-visita-monitorada-mostra-pavilhoes-da-casa-de-detencao/>. Accessed on: Mar. 2021.

³⁰ Information available at: <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/fsp/cotidian/ff2109200215.htm>. Accessed on: Mar. 2021.

³¹ Information available at: <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/fsp/cotidian/ff1909200225.htm>. Accessed on: Mar. 2021.

present in the prison routine already in its first decades of operation, crumbles over time, corroded by constant reports regarding human rights violations that are part of the Brazilian penal system's history.

After the massacre and its widespread disclosure in the press, visiting the House of Detention meant seeking sensations and images that would corroborate the violence discourse recurrently reported. One of the reports mentions the student Felipe de Oliveira (16), who left Guarulhos (SP) with two friends to visit the place, because "he was curious to know how the prisoners lived".³² Does knowing unoccupied and uncharacterized pavilions allow you to have that dimension? How to make prison heritage a tool for a politicized discussion on the prison system?

The population's interest in the topic leads to a search for traces in the face of erasure. In the press, some confusions makes people believe that part of the Carandiru walls is still in the Youth Park: "The penitentiary stigma even created rejection at other times. Currently, it only collaborates to attract people. Mainly because of a 600-meter wall: that's where the security guards kept an eye on the inmates".³³ "In the middle of the Youth Park, next to the Carandiru subway station, ruins of a preserved wall still remind us of the existence of the prison that once housed more than 8,000 men".³⁴ "Part of the former Carandiru House of Detention's ruins were also kept inside the park and are available for visitation. Visitors can see the former prison's 600 meters and its cells."³⁵

The emblematic ruins are often mistakenly attributed to the House of Detention, being remnants of two prison units that were never completed. These remnants of the prison past were not part of the old Carandiru pavilions' installations, but of an unfinished project that would increase the number of prisons in the complex (Bianchini, 2018).

In the web of memory policies shaped by the State to silence the massacre and crystallize new and appeasing meanings, two places of memory were created in the place where the House of Detention used to be: the São Paulo Penitentiary Museum and the Carandiru Memory Space. The museum, opened to the public in 2014, has a very rich collection on the history of prisons in São Paulo and uses the term *riot* instead of *massacre*, attenuating the dimensions of what happened. The Memory Space was created by State Decree No. 52,112 of August 30, 2007, and turns to the history of the Carandiru neighborhood, the

³² Information available at: <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/fsp/cotidian/ff2109200215.htm>. Accessed on: Mar. 2021.

³³ Information available at: <https://vejas.abril.com.br/cidades/santana-parque-da-juventude/>. Accessed on: Mar. 2021.

³⁴ Information available at: <http://especial.folha.uol.com.br/2015/morar/santana-guarulhos/2015/10/1695138-parque-da-juventude-da-vida-nova-ao-carandiru.shtml>. Accessed on: Mar. 2021.

³⁵ Information available at: <https://www.saopaulo.sp.gov.br/ultimas-noticias/parque-da-juventude-revitaliza-antiga-area-prisional-do-carandiru/>. Accessed on: Mar. 2021.

Penitentiary Complex, and the Youth Park, not mentioning the massacre in its “mission”³⁶ (Borges, 2018). The massacre continues on the margins of the heritage processes, neutralized by a memory policy that erases it and deauthorizes other translations, a path characterized by disputes over what should be said and what should be silenced.

It is worth mentioning that both places have important collections to think on the history of prisons in Brazil. In the meeting that approves the complex’s listing, it is “suggested the study for the opening of the listing process of two collections, already under the State’s custody, which would strengthen the understanding of the dynamics and daily life of the prison population that lived there in two distinct moments: the collection of the Penitentiary Museum and the collection of the Carandiru Memory Space” (Minute of the 667th Conresp Ordinary Meeting, March 19, 2018).

The collections were left out. It was agreed only to study the possibility of opening its listing, indicating that, “after the procedures related to listing, the process should return to the Department of Historical Heritage for collections analysis”. Both places have photographic collections and objects related to life in prison, but the relevance of the documentary scope housed by the São Paulo Penitentiary Museum must be emphasized as fundamental to the prison system’s history in Brazil, making up one of the largest and most important collections related to the history of prisons in Latin America. Various objects, used and produced by the inmates, such as weapons, tattoo utensils, and artistic material, works of art made in workshops, some pieces dating from the 1920s, such as paintings, sculptures, and furniture made by the inmates, as well as documents such as reports and regulations from different penitentiaries in the state, and opinions from the São Paulo Penitentiary Council. It is also worth mentioning the photographic archive, with 2,600 photographs, and detailed files of inmate tattoos, organized between 1920 and 1940, as well as a large collection of institutional photographs that show prison daily life in different periods.

Conclusively, we can say that prison heritage involves the preservation of prison collections in different supports (documental, three-dimensional objects, photographic, etc.), covering the objects seized and the traces left by prisoners during their imprisonment period (Borges and Santos, 2019). A shifting, inconclusive, and uncomfortable subject that provokes a mixture of ordinary familiarity and strange repulse, preventing prisons and their remains from being understood as a part of history and heritage. This combination of elements, linked to the present time history dramas, authorizes the lack of awareness by the institutions in preserving fundamental sources to think about the histo-

³⁶ Information available at: <https://www.saopaulo.sp.gov.br/ultimas-noticias/parque-da-juventude-revitaliza-antiga-area-prisional-do-carandiru/>. Accessed on: Mar. 2021.

ry of prisons in Brazil and their specificities in the different Brazilian states. The São Paulo Penitentiary Museum's collection is indispensable to understand the history of prisons in Brazil, the internal dynamics, and the institutional practices. Therefore, involving the site in the heritage process is essential to rethink the memory policies related to prisons and avoid that these sources are also erased.

In this text, we tried, on the one hand, to give intelligibility to a heritage process surrounded by contradictions and, on the other hand, to outline the prison heritage specificities and the clashes that this typology brings out. Heritage, in this case, is linked to “a past from which the present cannot or will not completely detach itself. Whether it is celebrating it, imitating it, conjuring it, extracting prestige from it, or just being able to visit it” (Hartog, 2013, p. 197). Conjure, exorcise the memory demons that insist on recalling uncomfortable pasts through depoliticized and neutralizing acts. Such acts seem to be the threads that weave the Carandiru Penitentiary Complex's biased and contradictory heritage process. The heritage judgments that leave out or neutralize the massacre and the actuality it represents regarding the Brazilian prison system's reality construct new meanings, select what should be remembered, erase, rename, or implode what should be forgotten.

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