

MORE THAN WORDS

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Contents

Poverty is Not By Chance - by <i>Lucía Alessandrelli</i>	3
We Will Never Forget You - by <i>Victoria Gradashi</i>	4
Art in History: The Tanks and The Burns - by <i>Juan Litvin</i>	5
Mothers - by <i>Lara Pollán</i>	7
Racism - by <i>Mirena Pollán</i>	11
The Fall of the Berlin Wall - by <i>Mora Vinokur</i>	13

Poverty is Not By Chance

By Lucía Alessandrelli



Poverty is a social problem. Social class division causes inequality, because there is a difference in the quality of life of those who have money and those who do not. This is very sad because wealthy people have money at the expense of others. This has been happening since the beginning of time. Societies evolve but you can still see the gap between the rich and the poor.

One of the most serious problems is that the rich do not care about the fact that their wealth comes from taking advantage of the most destitute people, they do not care that there are people who die of hunger or do not have a place to live. As long as they have money, nothing else matters. So I wonder: what is the use of having so much money? And to what purpose? Is it because some lives are worth more than others?

Another important issue is the naturalization of poverty. For example, when we walk down the street and see a person sleeping on an old mattress or a family begging for money, we walk past them and continue walking as if nothing happened. Or when people get on public transport to ask for some money to eat, we just ignore them.

Within a capitalist system like ours, this division of classes is necessary, but in my opinion, it should disappear and we should adopt a more egalitarian system, not only based on power and economy, but on the welfare of the people.

We Will Never Forget You

By Victoria Gradaschi

I am not going to talk about beautiful pictures. I am going to talk about an important photo for the development of Argentina's recent history.

In the 90s, Argentina adopted a system of neoliberalism that reduced the power of the state, resulting on a devastating crisis. In December 2001, many people took to the streets demanding every politician to go. The president had to escape. There were protests, looting, and blocked streets all over the country. And there were some murders in the demonstrations—most of them attributed to the police. There was limited proof of the police's actions and some newspapers sowed the seed of doubt in spite of the evidence, such as the type of bullets used and the witnesses' testimonies.

On July 26, 2002 a bridge blockage was organised. A lot of people were going to take part in it. But the police were ordered to suppress it. And that ended up in the murder of two young men, Maximiliano Kosteki and Dario Santillan. And that was when the photo became relevant. The photo was the confirmation of who had murdered Kosteki and Santillan, with no room for discussion.

The day after the event, newspapers said "Crisis causes two new deaths," and there were comments like "It is not known who shot the "piqueteros" (pickets)" and "the killings took place far from the incidents". But since the photos were published there was only one version: you can clearly see the moment when the police killed the men, the blood streaming, and the weapons they used.

Today, in 2017, the situation has not changed much. A month ago, a young man was killed in the south of the country by the gendarmerie, who was demanding his land rights. And the vice president said on the news that the security forces should be given the benefit of the doubt. And this is not an isolated case. The criminalization of protesting and the idea of the need of a "firm hand" are an important part of the official speech.

In this context, it is important to remember the need of independent photographers and journalists with a social commitment, who fight to tell all sides of the story. Their documentation of events can change the course of history and the way in which we interpret how a situation unfolded.





Art in History: The Tanks and The Burns

By Juan Litvin

Art has always been important in the development of society. From the early cave paintings from thousands of years ago, to museums full of sculptures and canvases, art has been present throughout our history. Most of the time, it is made and intended as entertainment, but in some special cases, it also plays a really important role in changing the course of history. The Tank Man and The Burning Monk are just two examples of this. Let us see why.

To begin with, we will start by looking at The Tank Man, a photograph that shows a man standing in front of a row of at least 20 tanks in the middle of Tiananmen Square, China, during this country's 1989 dictatorship. The identity of the man remains unknown to this date, but he has become one of the most famous examples of bravery and rebellion within state-wide oppression.

Multiple people from different walks of life gathered in the square demanding the dictatorial government accountability, freedom of press, and an end to corruption. As a result, security forces were sent to dissolve the protest with violence. The Tank Man was apparently shopping, as he seems to be carrying a few bags in the picture. His state of mind and intentions are unknown. However, judging by these bags, it is believed he just happened to be there and became caught up in the protest. Some believe he might have seen the whole situation and decided he had to do something to stop the brutality, without thinking he was putting his life in peril. Others say he might have had a relative or friend killed during the dictatorship, meaning that he might not have been thinking about himself when he stood in front of the tanks, but instead was acting on his emotions. Whatever his reasons, he was brave enough to stand in front of a line of tanks amid a dictatorship.

The impact this picture made on history is huge. It has reached millions of people, and inspired many to actively defend their rights and countries. Russia is a very good example of this: members of "Glasnost and Perestroika" claimed to have used Tank Man as a reference model of bravery, and encouraged themselves to defend their rights by wondering "if he had the courage to do that, what excuse do we have?"

Secondly, we will analyse The Burning Monk, a picture taken by Mal-



colm Browne in 1963 that shows a monk burning alive in the middle of a Vietnamese street. This self-immolation was done to protest against the banning of Buddhism in Vietnam, which represented about 70-90% of the total population of the country. He, unlike Tank Man, had premeditated his actions and managed to share his message, intentions, and state of mind with the rest of the world. He said he was doing that to show that Buddhism needed its own martyrs to fight such a great oppression.

Diệm, the Vietnamese dictator, neither ended his persecution nor did he agree to meet with Buddhist leaders. The Burning Monk incident, together with over 10 other self-immolations, had great repercussions on the rest of the world that started questioning a regime that oppressed peaceful Buddhists for their religion, and allow for such shocking events to take place.

The role these acts played was truly important for the Vietnamese liberation: it helped make Americans aware of the situation in Vietnam, and showed them how the Vietnamese lacked religious freedom and many other rights. John F. Kennedy commented, "No news picture in history has generated so much emotion around the world as that one." After demanding the end of the protests and violent acts, which was refused, the CIA orchestrated a coup against the "no-longer-useful" Diệm, who was assassinated the following day, effectively concluding the Vietnamese dictatorship.

Taking everything into account, both pictures have played a really important role in history, as they directly influenced some to raise their weapons and fight for their rights. I believe they fit perfectly with the idea that "a picture is worth a thousand words", because they portray situations that not only would be impossible to describe, but also serve as proof of what was happening in some countries that the rest of the world ignored.

Mothers

By Lara Pollán

In March 1976, a Military Dictatorship was unleashed in Argentina under the name "National Reorganization process." The military junta's goal was to reorganise the Argentinian nation, which, according to them, had been infected with communist ideas and politics. They wanted to eliminate the "barbarism" and help "civilize" the country, but the problem was that they created a very thin line between those two terms, and they ended up crossing the civilization line, and applying "barbarism" to civilize. This will be known as the most terrifying and violent period in Argentinian history, and that is why it is so important to analyse and remember every terrible thing that happened to make sure such atrocities will never be repeated.

This military government was based on repression. Repression of those who were different—"the subversives"—who thought differently from those in power, because they inverted the values and principles that the military wanted to establish: Capitalism. These people were caught and taken to concentration camps, where they were tortured until they provided useful information. They did not discriminate: they tortured men, women, teenagers, pregnant women, elderly people, etc. Having tortured them, they were killed, some being thrown into the sea from great heights. You are probably wondering what they did with the babies of the pregnant women that were captured. They were given to their parents' enemies: the military. Nowadays, an organisation called "Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo" is looking for those babies by doing DNA tests, and they have found 122 from the hundreds that are still missing.

"Madres de Plaza de Mayo" is another organisation that has been looking for their sons or daughters' bodies since then, and used to demonstrate in Plaza de Mayo. One they, the police ordered them not to circulate because, as the country was under siege, people were not allowed to gather in public and talk because "they could have a subversive influence". So the mothers started walking in circles around the square, and they have been doing it every Thursday since then. The picture shows a demonstration back in those days where a mother is talking to the police man, probably demanding, as they did, an answer to where her children were. But the policeman gives her no answer, ignores her completely, as the government used to do. They looked the other way and ignored the situation. As the

then Argentinian president, Rafael Videla stated “they are not dead, nor alive, they are ‘disappeared’.”

Not answering, not giving information about where the bodies were was also a method of repression. To suppress their right to say goodbye, to weep, to do whatever they wanted with the bodies of their relatives who were snatched away from their families is another form of repression. This picture shows a *deaf dialogue* between the mothers asking for the truth, and the military government hiding that truth behind silence.



Racism

By Mirena Pollán

In the twentieth century, racism was a fact of life. There were white-only schools to keep white people away from black people. In 1954, the US Supreme Court ruled that segregated education was unconstitutional. Three years later, Elizabeth Eckford tried to attend classes at Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas. She was very happy because she thought she was going to be able to go to school, and to be treated as well as every white girl. But little did she know what was waiting for her at school until she saw the news on TV. The governor had sent soldiers from the National Guard to stop black students from entering the school. When Elizabeth got there, she saw other students walking past the guards, but when she tried to walk past them too, they stopped her and pointed at her with a rifle! At that moment, the crowd behind her started shouting abuse at her. William Count, a photographer at the scene, captured the moment when Hazel Brian, a fifteen-year-old student, was shouting “Go back to Africa”. However, Elizabeth never lost her composure.

Twenty years later, Hazel called Elizabeth to apologize and she told her that she was really ashamed. They met face to face and tried to become friends. But was Hazel being honest? Did she realize how mean she had been? Or was she just trying to clean up her image? We cannot be sure, but in my opinion, this reconciliation did not work because she had a misguided concept of reconciliation. She said, “True reconciliation can occur only when we honestly let go of resentment and hatred and move forward.” But it is more than that: first she had to accept her mistake and understand why it had been a mistake, and only then could she move on. On the other hand, Elizabeth completed Hazel’s definitions by saying “True reconciliation can occur only when we honestly acknowledge our painful, but shared past.”

After the Civil War, Jim Crow Laws came into existence. They were made to separate white people from black people in every way, because black people were considered subhuman. They went to different schools, they sat in different cars on the train, they shopped in different stores, etc. In 1954,

segregated education was ruled unconstitutional, but was that true? Were black people allowed to go to white people's schools? The answer is no. Elizabeth believed it was true, but it was not. The problem was that racism was a fact of life and white people did not want to get "mixed up" with black people. Elizabeth's case is one in a million, and became famous because of William Count's photograph.

This photograph changed the course of history, because although segregated education had been unconstitutional since 1957, it was in the wake of the publication of the photograph that people all around the world became aware of the horrors of racism.

But has discrimination really ended? The answer is no. Discrimination is everywhere, and not only against black people, but also against women, Muslims, people with mental diseases, etc. The problem is no one notices that every little comment counts. For example, there are a lot of insults referring to a person with a mental disease, like "idiot", "stupid" or "retarded". I think that this is what Elizabeth was referring to in the quote above, because nowadays some people do not bother to understand why looking down on others is wrong. This lack of empathy has prevented things from changing, and as a result, discrimination is still all around us.



THE FALL OF THE BERLIN WALL

By Mora Vinokur

This photograph shows one of the most important moments in the world: the fall of the Berlin Wall. After that, the entire world changed and adopted a capitalist system and finally the Soviet Union was dissolved. This event took place in 1989 when the Cold War finished. In the picture, there are a lot of people sitting on the wall as an act of unity. There is also the word "freedom" painted on the wall.

The Berlin Wall was a concrete barrier that divided Berlin from 1961 to 1989. It was constructed by the German Democratic Republic. After the end of World War II, Europe was divided into four occupation zones; each one was controlled by one of the four occupying Allied Powers. Within two years, political divisions increased between Soviets and the other occupying powers. The world was divided into two parts: Capitalism and Communism. And Berlin was the symbol of such division.

In my opinion, this was one of the most important moments in history, because the entire world changed, and the power of the United States was strengthened. I think that is very important to study the economics and political consequences of this event to understand a lot of different things that happened in the world after that.



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