

Cultural relationships between Albania and Italy and the Face Up project: a shared historical memory about twentieth-century totalitarianisms

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Cultural relations between Albania and Italy have experienced an extraordinary development in recent years, as a result of the commitment of the institutions of both countries, which recognize, in the fields of science, technology, conservation of artistic heritage and historical memory, a privileged ground for cooperation. Witness to this important joint commitment is the signing in Tirana, in June 2022, of a cooperation agreement for the years 2022-2025 between Italy and Albania in the fields of culture and education, as a culmination of the many events that annually characterize the calendar of cultural events that take place, now in a stable form, on both sides of the Adriatic Sea. One example for all are the more than 60 events of the "Italian Week," the second edition of which was held from June 1-7, 2023, covering the entire territory of Albania, from north to south, ranging from science to history, from theatre to art, not forgetting music, with opera performances, dedicated in particular to Giuseppe Verdi.

Within this framework of cultural relations, a special space is occupied by the historical research and the issue of the valorisation and preservation of the archival sources, that constitute the indispensable premise and lifeblood of historical research. In recent years, Italian archives have been engaged in an important effort to reorganize, increase accessibility and, where possible, make available on the web materials related to relations between Italy and Albania, with particular attention to the period of occupation and war (1939-1945). Among the many examples that could be brought in this direction, two of the most recent and particularly significant ones can be mentioned: the funds preserved at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI) and at the Istituto Luce.

At the MAECI's Historical Diplomatic Archive are kept the 135 envelopes of the papers of the Albania Office of the Cabinet of the Minister of Foreign Affairs: after

the military occupation of Albania in 1939, was established an Undersecretariat of State for Albanian Affairs, which, in addition to bringing together all the functions previously exercised by the former Albanian Foreign Ministry, also dealt with internal political and economic-administrative matters, the execution of public works (roads and other infrastructure, land reclamation, etc.) as well as propaganda. In 1941 the Undersecretariat was abolished, and its responsibilities were for the most part transferred to the Albania Office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, until its functions ceased in 1945. Among the documentation of particular interest is that relating to the personal files not only of Albanian exiles, internees and political persecuted, but also of Albanian students present in Italy, Italian personnel employed in Albania, etc. Similarly of great interest are the preparatory materials for the implementation of public works: maps of the territory and roads, mineral deposits, settlements, etc. An inventory of this important fund edited by Dr. Francesca Cinquina has recently been published online.

The Undersecretariat for Albanian Affairs, among other things, signed an agreement with the Istituto Luce, a body founded in Rome by Mussolini in 1924 with the aim of creating a powerful tool for political propaganda through the use of images and the dissemination of documentaries and newsreels. The Istituto Luce therefore created a special department in Tirana aimed at carrying out photographic and cinematographic filming in Albania. Originating from this activity is the Fondo Albania of the historical archives of the Istituto Luce where as many as 7,698 negatives are preserved - about 90 percent of them already catalogued and digitized - documenting the presence of the fascist regime in Albania, with particular reference to the events of World War II, between October 1939 and June 1943. This fund, moreover, is in addition to the no less important material preserved in the cinematographic and photographic section of the Istituto Luce's historical archives, which exhaustively illustrates, with 155 photo reports, 109 newsreels and 29 documentaries, the intensification of diplomatic relations between the two countries starting from the second half of the 1920s: state visits from both sides, official celebrations, military ceremonies, etc. A selection of the photographic holdings of the Istituto Luce's Albania Fund can be viewed directly online.

Also connected to the issue of remote consultation of Italian and Albanian archives is another important recent initiative, that of creating a network of electronically linked access points with the Central Archives in Tirana, an initiative launched in late 2020, partly in light of the difficulties created by the pandemic

crisis, at the initiative of the General Directorate of Archives of Albania. In addition to the 22 access points within Albania, others have also been created for use by Albanian-speaking communities outside the country's borders, in Kosovo and North Macedonia, and starting in 2022, also in Italy, in Calabria and Sicily, thanks to the efforts of Albanian language and culture professors and researchers from the University of Calabria and the University of Palermo.

One of the highlights, in the context not only of cultural relations but also of the path of reconstruction of a shared historical memory between Italy and Albania, was certainly the reopening to consultation of the fonds of the Archives of the Segurimi, the former Directorate for State Security of the Albanian Communist regime: created at the end of World War II by Enver Hoxha, the Segurimi, for four and a half decades a powerful instrument of repression, acted in concert with the establishment of internment camps for dissidents and opponents. Placed under the control of the AIDSSH, Autoriteti për Informimin mbi Dokumentet e ish-Sigurimit të Shtetit (Authority for Information on the Documents of the Former State Security Service), an independent public entity established in 2016, this documentation constitutes an exceptional source for the study of the activity of countering all forms of political and ideological dissent to the regime; in particular, in the first phase of Segurimi's activities, all the activities of repression and persecution against Italians present on Albanian territory are documented with great evidence.

Due to the great importance of this documentary material for the study of historical relations between Italy and Albania in the 20th century, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed in Rome, on April 11 2023, between AIDSSH and the Institute of History of Mediterranean Europe, CNR ISEM, the only center of the National Research Council of the Republic of Italy dealing entirely with historical research. The memorandum, signed for AIDSSH by President Dr. Gentiana Sula and for CNR ISEM by Director Prof. Gaetano Sabatini, is particularly dedicated to the valorisation of archival sources and the implementation of research activities related to the history of the politically persecuted during the fascist occupation of Albania (1939-1943) and the subsequent communist regime (1944-1991), for an unbiased historical reconstruction of some of the darkest periods in Albanian and Italian history, as well as for the elaboration of good practices in the management of archives produced by political organizations in totalitarian regimes and in the preservation of the memory of facts and contexts.

The signing of the MoU between AIDSSH and CNR ISEM was also a positive consequence of the realisation of the project "Face Up. Faces from the past. The fight for freedom and democracy during the regime of Hoxha" a project funded by the EU within the program "Europe for Citizens, Line 1 - European Remembrance (2019-2022)" which had as partners of CNR ISEM for the Italian side the Department of Psychology of Sapienza University of Rome (Prof. Marino Bonaiuto, Silvia Cataldi) and the Fondazione di Storia onlus of Vicenza (Prof. Marcello Verga), and for the Albanian side the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Tirana (Profs. Migena Buka, Theodhori Karaj, Rudina Rama) and the Association "Zeri Qytetar - The Voice of the Citizen" (Dr. Teuta Korreshi), an association engaged in the perpetuation of the memory of the politically persecuted of Albanian communism and in particular in the study of the history of the internees in the Savër camp, near the locality of Lushnje, for more than four decades one of the main places of imprisonment of opponents and dissidents of the Tirana regime.

The Face Up project constitutes another important piece added to the long overdue effort to come to terms with the past of the communist regime in Albania. The combined work of different academic institutions and NGOs explored and brought to light the tragic and painful truth of the politically persecuted prisoners of an open-air labour camp, 27 survivors and their family members gave articulated long verbal testimonies about their life in the that camp. What emerges is an effective and highly repressive method, impregnated with hard-line ideology, and rooted in abuse of power and fear. It was a wall within the country as strong as the one made of armed guards that isolated the country from outside.

The Face Up project in fact included the valorisation of two important historical sources, oral and written: firstly, the interviews with the survivors of the internment camp and their family members, whose testimonies were the subject, at the same time, of collation and analysis work from the point of view of the psychology of the protagonists and the strategies of coping with the traumatic situations constituted by life in conditions of deprivation of personal freedom and permanent repression. Similarly, precisely the documentation preserved in the Archives of the Funds of the Directorate for State Security Sigurimi was enhanced, thanks to the availability of Dr. Ardita Repishti, former director of the Archives and currently a scientific collaborator of the Italian Institute for Modern and Contemporary History in Rome. As part of Face Up project, study meetings were held in Rome and Tirana (April - May 2022) and video materials about the history

of the Lushnje internment camp were produced for dissemination to a wide audience.

These early collaborations brought the attention on a shared historical memory between Albania and Italy to the topic of the liberticidal regimes that both peoples experienced in the 20th century, comparing data and presenting new materials from Italian and Albanian archives, largely never consulted before. It is in this important and well-established context of activities that the international symposium "Activities in the framework of the European day of remembrance for the victims of totalitarian regimes" took place, organized by AIDSSH, with the participation of CNR ISEM, held in Tepelena on August 23, 2023, according to an important annual recurrence that, since 2017, in collaboration with the Municipality of Tepelena, is part of an international program of commemoration and tribute to those who suffered repression and death at the hands of authoritarian regimes. Very evocative, in this sense, appears the choice of location.

Tepelena, in fact, first housed a military camp created by the fascist regime in 1939 and later was the site of an Albanian regime internment camp. More precisely, the camp was established by the Italian army in preparation for the aggression against Greece conducted from Albanian territory on October 28, 1940, triggering the Italo-Hellenic conflict; after the war, the barracks and buildings of the Italian military camp were used to house the families of the internees, until 1953, when the camp was closed due to excessively harsh living conditions, which resulted in extremely high mortality rates among the internees, especially infant mortality, as moreover documented by the summary burials found near the camp. Many of the internees from the Tepelena camp, after its closure, were sent to the Lushnja camp, which operated until the end of the communist regime in 1991.

Each year, on the anniversary of August 23, representatives of institutions, scholars and researchers, and representatives of the religious communities that were subjected to particular persecution, join survivors of the camps and their families to honour the memory of the victims; at the same time, an important dissemination activity is conducted to a wider public, including through the publication of materials and the creation of information and museum spaces, as well as through the creation of a multimedia educational platform, created by the Ministry of Education of Albania in collaboration with Albanian Public Radio-Television, to convey the data and information originating from this intense activity of study and historical research for a shared memory. All these forms of sharing historical memory concur toward the important goal of making the

Tepelena internment camp a museum facility, with Albanian and Italian documents from the period of the Italian occupation and the Albanian communist regime, that will allow students and tourists to approach one of the most tragic pages of 20th century European totalitarianisms.

Within the framework of the path for the recovery of a shared historical memory between Italy and Albania, in which the activities of the Tepelene symposium are included, there is also another research project involving CNR ISEM: it is the project "Accessibility and fruition of state and municipal archives between historical research and tourist valorization. Comparing cases between Italy and Albania" selected for funding under the Scientific Cooperation Agreement between CNR and MoES, Ministry of Education and Sport of the Republic of Albania, for the two-year period 2023-2024, responsible for the Italian side Dr. Geltrude Macrì of CNR ISEM, and for the Albanian side Professor Metin Venxha of the "Fan S. Noli" University of Korçë.

The project began with the questions of whether and how historical archives can be enjoyed by a different audience than the one traditionally composed of specialists, scholars and professionals, and whether archives can be used for the creation of tourist itineraries, both questions that refer directly to the ongoing experience in Tepelena and its future developments. Through an overview of case studies, the scholars involved in the project will compare the modes of promotion adopted in the two countries (educational visits, thematic exhibitions, edition of sources, publications, use of social networks), as well as the use of technologies to guide and enhance the visitor experience, in order to develop common strategies to improve access, interaction and user involvement. In order to initiate a joint reflection on the possibilities of tourist enhancement of historical archives, it is also necessary to study in a comparative perspective the history and enhancement of archives in the two countries, to trace the main criticalities and obstacles for promotional actions in the institutions, to identify and study some cases of good practices, and to identify the elements and solutions that can be generalized and applicable to contexts other than those of origin.

Among the main results expected from the project there is first of all the implementation of activities that develop awareness of the link between communities and the archival records that preserve their historical memory, and the creation of products that spread knowledge of the wealth of archival heritage in the area and raise awareness in society of the importance of preserving archives at all stages of their formation. It is also intended to identify a significant number

of potential visitor itineraries among public archives; use archival sources to promote local cultural heritage; and select archival material for the musealization of the traditions of the respective territories. Finally, special attention will be brought to the understanding of the different ways in which the archival system of the two countries is organized in the territory: although the historical events of Italy and Albania have often been intertwined during the 20th century, the vicissitudes of Italian and Albanian archives have, however, been profoundly different, just as the ways in which the network of state preservation institutions is organized in their respective territories are different today: a system of archives spread throughout all the provinces in Italy, an amalgamated system, the result of a centralization process, in Albania.

The survey started with the identification of the first case studies to be analysed at the State Archives and at the municipal archives of the respective countries, and was then extended to other types of institutions, notably bank archives, which preserve the most significant sources for the reconstruction of Italian-Albanian economic and financial relations. In September and November 2023 and in May 2024, archival knowledge research missions were exchanged in Italy and Albania; in particular, the Italian mission visited the partner university and the main institutes and sites of cultural interest in the city of Korçë, in order to understand the context and the margins for the development of the project in the area concerned; in the city of Tirana, the Central State Archives and the Sigurimi State Security Directorate Archives were then visited, meeting with the archivists responsible for the enhancement activities of the respective institutes, with whom a fruitful dialogue was established to exchange bibliographical and historical information. Similarly, during a mission carried out in Rome in November 2023, the State Archives of Rome, the Capitoline Historical Archives were visited, the Historical Archives of the Bank of Italy, in particular to study closely the project of a virtual study room created here with the most modern computer systems, the Central State Archives, located in the district with the rationalist architecture of EUR, the subject of specific interest for the recent opening of a museum path created within the documentary deposits.

In a subsequent mission in May 2024, the Albanian delegation visited, among others, in Rome the Historical Diplomatic Archives at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, and in Naples, the State Archives of Naples and the Historical Archives of the Banco di Napoli, which has been collecting banking documentation since the 16th century. In all the institutions visited, the

scholars met with archivists responsible for promotion and communication activities and discussed research issues with them. A further visit of the Italian delegation, which this time will also include religious archives and in particular the Franciscan Province Archives and Library in Shkodra, will take place in October 2024 while on December 3rd 2024 the project will conclude with a scientific meeting to be held in Rome, at the National Institute of Roman Studies, where ISEM is based, entitled "Archives and Territory: strategies for valorisation and historical research in Italy and Albania" which will see the participation of all Albanian and Italian scholars involved in the project and archivists from both countries. Finally, among the relationships established recently with Albanian and Italian universities and research centers, a mention should be made of the Memorandum of Understanding for the implementation of joint research and for the mobility of faculty and students signed in November 2023 between the "Fan S. Noli" University of Korçë and CNR ISEM.

The essays collected in the present issue of RiMe. bear exemplary witness to this particularly important and fruitful moment of cultural relations between Italy and Albania on the theme of shared historical memory: they are first and foremost the results of the research activity carried out as part of the Face Up project. These essays have been joined by others with the aim of carrying out a careful reconstruction of the historical context in which to situate the experience of the internment camps of the communist regime in Albania, a political but also economic and social reconstruction, which also goes so far as to represent the historical phase of Albania's exit from dictatorship and its gradual return to democracy and to the natural geopolitical context of belonging constituted by Western Europe.

In the first of the essays, dedicated to *Scientific research in Albanian secret police files, three decades after the regime's fall. The authenticity of files facing their believability*, Ardita Repishti delves into the complex relationship of contemporary Albanian society with its recent historical past, and in particular with the forms of repression implemented by the communist regime between 1944 and 1991. Over three decades after the communist regime fall, Albanian society still manifests some sort of refusal to involve itself in debates on the multi-dimensional violence exercised against political opponents and their family members. An important step in this process of recovering and confronting its memory was the founding in 2016, as an incentive for EU membership of Albania, of the Authority on Access to Information on the former State Security Service, faced serious challenges in providing

believable information by opening the secret files of Sigurimi, the political secret police of the regime, and shedding light on its procedures. In particular, the essay explores the issues of the authenticity of this documentation, its reception, and the use that can be made of it for the purpose of reconstructing a shared memory.

To make the value of this documentary source more explicit, in the second essay, *The walls within. How the party and the state secret police Sigurimi kept the regime strong in communist Albania*, Alma Hado completes a brief review of the contents of the files kept at the Seguirimi Archive by the Albanian Authority of Former State Security Files, established 25 years after the fall of the regime: once the consent of the survivors was obtained, the researcher of the project could go through the dossiers that the representatives of the party and the state secret police kept through the years about each and every one of them and their families. The essay documents the cruelty of the regime as well as the consistency and the determination of its representatives to keep the power and to fight the enemies of the communist party. A thorough analysis of each case through the eyes of the perpetrators reveals, above all, the infinite human strength and the sense of survival under unimaginable circumstances. What makes Saver's story tragically unique is the duration of these atrocities: lives of generations deprived of personal freedoms and subjected to discrimination and persecutions for almost 50 years, a story of oppression, of isolation and sadness, but at the same time of extreme endurance and strength.

From reading the documents and testimonies describing the life of internees in the regime's camps, a question emerges spontaneously: how could we measure the psychological damage of generations living in total isolation and in constant fear? The essays collected in the second section of the booklet primarily aim to answer this question.

In the essay *Meeting the Needs of Hoxha Regime Survivors: An Analysis of the Responsiveness of Albania's New Democratic System*, the authors, Rudina Rama, Blerina Hamzallari, Migena Buka, Edmond Rapti, Theodhori Karaj, and Eralda Zhilla, point out how, in the early 1990s, the fall of the communist regime ushered in a wave of hope and optimism across Albanian society, especially among survivors of labor camps, prisoners, and political detainees. It was nevertheless urgent to adopt strategies in order to assist and reintegrate these survivors into society, employing the social-ecological systems framework and Transitional Justice theory as its lens. This essay analyses these strategies and highlights the necessity of adopting a holistic approach that encompasses legal and policy

reforms, alongside addressing social and psychological needs, to facilitate a seamless transition to a democratic society.

Within this process of reintegration and recovery to civilian life, the different psychological profile emerged clearly between those who, after the end of the regime, chose to remain living in the same location where the internment camp had been based and those who wanted to go elsewhere. In the essay *Differences between the coping mechanisms of people who lived in Savër, Lushnja labour camp, between the ones who fled after the '90s and the ones who stayed in Albania* the authors, Migena Buka, Rudina Rama, Edmond Rapti, Theodhori Karaj ed Eralda Zhilla, examine the responses of ex-detainees in the labour camps in Savër, exploring the reasons behind their choices to either flee Lushnja or stay there in the post-Hoxha regime. Through an in-depth analysis of the contents of the 27 survivors interviewed, the study uncovers how personal trauma, societal views, and resilience influence this decision. It reveals a complex dynamic of trauma processing, resilience, and the decision-making process regarding facing or escaping the past, shedding light on trauma recovery in totalitarian regimes and offering important insights into the paths toward healing and societal reintegration.

Still based on the interview materials conducted on former inmates in the internment camp is the essay *Social relations and internment camps: a socio-psychological analysis on a sample of interviews with former residents from Lushnjë* by Federica Floridi, Silvia Cataldi, Marino Bonaiuto, Alessandra Talamo. The essay investigates the psychosocial factors of internment in the Lushnjë camps, focusing on some specific aspects of group relations in extreme situations: the dynamics of categorization, stratification and differentiation in terms of ingroup and outgroup relationships, and the formation of internal cohesive relationships necessary for survival. Analysing the contents of the interviews, it is emphasized how, even in contexts of violence and dehumanisation, positive authentic relationships can be activated with people from both ingroup and outgroup and is examined the hypothesis of how such relationships can contribute to resilience.

The particular condition of detention in the Albanian communist regime's internment camps is analyzed from another angle in the essay *The situation before and after deportation among the survivors from Hoxha dictatorship regime in Albania* by Eralda Zhilla, Ortenca Kotherja, Rudina Rama, Migena Buka, Edmond Rapti e Theodori Karaj. In this case the focus of the essay is is on the conditions of familiar groups of the survivors before, during and after the experience of the deportation.

For the majority of the interviewed people, the period in the camp was the worst part of live, when they lost many members of their families and their own identity, but, despite of these terrible conditions, many of them elaborated strategies to resist and new form of solidarity and collaboration.

In the essays devoted to living conditions and forms of resistance in the Savër internment camp in Lushnja, Albania provides the backdrop for a narrative focusing on the tragic existences of the individual protagonists of that history and their families. In the next section of the issue, however, three essays delve into different aspects and different historical phases of the politics, economy and society of the country of eagles during communism, focusing on the early years, the middle and finally the final phase of the regime.

In the essay *Society in turmoil. The first economic reforms of a communist nature and the social consequences in Albanian society (1945-1948)* by Metin Venxha and Orjon Ago, are traced the stages by which, by the end of the Second World War, Albania became a communist country. The leader of the Albanian Communist Party Enver Hoxha, like his political opponent Zog, who was at first President (1925-1928) and then King of Albania (1928-1939), followed a policy of international alliances to help the economic reconstruction of the country. Relations with Yugoslavia, already very intense during the Second World War, were strengthened between 1944 and 1948 with a series of economic treaties signed to bring the country out of the post-war emergency phase. After the political break with its Slavic neighbors, Albania turned firstly to the Soviet Union and then to China as the only way to embark on the path of industrialization. The communist leadership violently subverted the social structure of the country in order to follow the Soviet model of a centralized and planned economic policy: private property disappeared completely, together with the bourgeois class, the free market, and individual freedoms. The economy of the early communist regime was the reflection of the political alliances that Albania created within the socialist world.

In the early 1960s Tirana would then interrupt the relations with Khrushchev's USSR, in controversy with the de-Stalinization process, and that with China would be the only international link would remain, destined in turn to be severed in 1978, condemning Albania to the most torturous isolation until the fall of the regime in 1991. But even before 1978, the following can be said. The establishment of communism in Albania went hand in hand with country complete isolation from other countries. The economic and trade relations, as well as borders with Greece, Italy and other countries of Western Europe, were cut off. Communists' opponents

left Albania at the end of the war. A part of those who remained in country were arrested and those who resisted were eliminated over years, while their family members were exiled and imprisoned.

The essay *The repatriation of Albanians from 1946 to 1963 of the 20th century and their integration into the communist society: the case of Korça region* by Orjon Ago and Metin Venxha analyzes a phenomenon that until now has not been studied: just at the time when violence and repression was getting stronger, there were individuals who returned to Albania: according to the documents in the Archive of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Tirana, it appears that a certain number of people returned in the years 50-60s of the 20th century. This category of repatriates is formed by two groups: the first one consists of people who were abroad at the end of the war and had previously left Albania for economic reasons, and the second group were those who fled after 1944 for political reasons related to the communist system. Analysing the documentation available, the essay deepens on the period when these people returned, the countries they came from, the reasons of their return, how the Albanian authorities behave with them and how was their integration into the Albanian society of the time.

In the last historical framing essay, *Bracing against the tide: the final stand of the Albanian Labor Party to uphold communism* by Adelina Nexhipi, is finally analysed the terminal phase of the communist regime. While in the late 1980s democratic movements overthrew the communist regimes in Central Eastern Europe, the Albanian Communists were strongly convinced of the immunity of the country from these currents of political change, that were attributed the demise of communism to ideological deviations from the core principles of Marxism-Leninism. The essay elucidates how Tirana's leadership maintained a belief in the country's capability to persevere in its socialist construction and how the Albanian Labor Party's desperately attempted to preserve the regime.

Finally, the fourth and final section is devoted to a comparison with other cases of authoritarian regimes in the twentieth century that have resorted in a systematic form to the use of violence for the purpose of repressing political dissent, including the use of torture, physical elimination, and internment in camps.

The paper *Exploring the Social Dynamics of Internment: An In-Depth Qualitative Analysis of Human Connections in Totalitarian Environments* by Emanuela Ismaili, Edmond Dragoti, Rudina Rama, Migena Buka, and Eralda Zhilla, starting with the case of the Savër internment camp in Lushnja and the material provided by interviews with 27 survivors, examines the social dynamics within dictatorial

states, focusing on the experiences of individuals interned in Albanian concentration camps. Descriptive and interpretive categories have thus been developed that appear perfectly comparable with other case studies in different contexts: the challenges of seeking external assistance, the importance of intra-camp friendships, the pursuit of love and familial bonds, restricted communication, and the role of survivor groups. The findings underscore the profound impact of oppressive governance on human connections, revealing barriers to assistance, the resilience of interpersonal bonds within internment, and the isolating effects of restricted communication and control.

The two case studies under comparison deal with respectively Italy and Argentina, referring in the former to the years of the fascist occupation of Albania and in the latter to the use of violence in the historical phase preceding the establishment of the last military dictatorship in the years 1976-1983.

In the essay *The Fascist Internment System in Albania and Italy (1940-1943). First stages of research*, Jacopo Calussi analyses some aspects of the fascist occupation of Albania (1939-1943), in particular in the field of repression of Albanian rebels. By means of the study of the archivist sources kept in the State Central Archive of Rome and other military documents, such as war diaries of the occupying armies and reports on war crimes committed by the Italian army between 1939 and 1943, the essay deepens into the fascist internment system within the territories of Italy and Albania, in a particular during the war period.

The case of the fascist internment system in Albania is interpreted here in comparison with other Italian-occupied territories, analyzing their operation, the characteristics of the interned population and the reasons for internment. An interesting comparison is then established between the ways in which internment camps were set up and operated by the Italians in Albania after the 1939 occupation and until 1943, by the German army in Italy after the armistice of September 8, 1943, and the subsequent occupation of the central and northern regions of the country, a confrontation that refers both to the major issues related to the world conflict, such as rationing, management and exploitation of the human and territorial resources of the occupied areas, as well as the maintenance of law and order, repression or agreement with resistance movements, and the management of the Jewish question.

But before arriving at internment camps, for the creation of which total control over a territory is a prerequisite, conditions may occur in which violence is practiced precisely as a condition for ensuring regime change or the consolidation

of an authoritarian regime. In the essay *Criminal Justice and Police in the Process of the Construction of State Terrorism in Argentina*, Osvaldo Barreneche describes this situation with reference to the years leading up to the establishment of the last military dictatorship of the years 1976-1983. State terrorism in Argentina, in fact, began to take shape long before 1976: early stages of this process took place during the late 1950s and, mainly, during the 1960s. This article studies the role of police and criminal judges of the Buenos Aires Province in this preliminary stage during which State violence acquired a definite physiognomy. The emergence of various formal and informal scenarios in which police violence took place contributed to reinforcing the impunity of the law enforcement agents in the exercise of extra-judicial violence. Criminal judges at that time favoured this state of affairs, intervening very little and even permitting such actions.

The examples provided by the contributions presented in this issue of Ri.Me. document with different study proposals, different methodologies and sources and new interpretative cuts, the extraordinary vitality of the research activities in which the path of reconstruction of a common historical memory between the two sides of the Adriatic, between Albania and Italy, is currently substantiated, with reference to the theme of totalitarianisms of the twentieth century and the archival sources with which to study them. It is a vitality that must be translated, at the same time, into an ever-growing commitment to the preservation and promotion of the values of freedom and respect for the rights of the person, against all ancient and new forms of oppression, persecution, segregation.