

Nº 17 TIEMPOS DE TRANSFORMACIONES

THE GUERRILLA: EASY TO COME IN, DIFFICULT TO LEAVE

Alzira Alves de Abreu

The purpose of this paper is to study a series of oral history interviews with some youths that, in Brazil and immediately after 1968, opted for the guerrilla as a means of political action. For our interviews we chose a few specific topics, such as the motivations which led these young people into the guerrilla, life in clandestinity and the attempts they subsequently made to leave such an organization.

THE FIFTH COLUMN IN THE REPUBLICAN REARGUARD IN MADRID

Javier Cervera Gil

During the Spanish Civil War, the rearguard was a domain of crucial importance to understand the development of the conflict. Fully aware of this, the Nationalists -the victorious side- did their best not only to keep a strict control of their own rearguard but to "contaminate" the enemy's too, since the Republicans did not pay too much nor enough attention to what was happening behind the front lines. This is the context that surrounds the Fifth Column phenomenon, an organization which developed a great activity, and had enormous importance, in Republican rearguard places such as Madrid, but was non-existent in the Nationalist rearguard. The Fifth Column developed its action in all fields of antirrepublican secret activities (espionage, sabotage, defeatism, infiltration, etc.) but, most peculiarly, it did so in a systematic way and within a normalized organization. In Madrid, the Fifth Column took two distinct forms: the autonomous Fifth Column and *Falange Clandestina*, which organized its own activities; the latter was of much greater importance than the former and assembled more or less twenty secret networks. Fifth Column action must be known in order to understand the Civil War development in Madrid, and even the ending of the conflict in march 1939.

GENDER AND ECONOMIC DECLINE: THE PENNSYLVANIA ANTHRACITE REGION, 1920-1970

Thomas Dublin and Walter Licht

Deindustrialization has received a great deal of attention in the United States in the last fifteen years with dramatic declines in employment in the steel and automobile industries. Journalists and scholars have concentrated their writings on the impact of plant closings on semi-skilled male workers. This paper contributes to discussions of deindustrialization by examining economic decline in anthracite coal communities in northeastern Pennsylvania, a region that saw the cessation of underground mining in the 1950s and 1960s. Drawing upon oral interviews with more than eighty residents and former residents of the region, the authors explore the gendered impact of industrial decline and the influence of decline on gender relations in working class families. They argue for the initial reinforcement of separate male and female spheres with the closing of the mines but the eventual undermining of male dominance in the changing economic circumstances.

ÉLITES CHOICE IN MEXICO

Graciela de Garay

This paper refers the way Mexican élites choose their architects to accomplish their projects and preserve their power. This process is an expression of political culture that can be tracked down to the 1920s, when the postrevolucionary period was beginning.

Since then, Mexican élites have based their choices on confidence assets. Merits and expertise have little to do with the election making process. In any event, choosing architect, nowadays, seems an archaic

proceeding, where democracy has little or nothing to say. Personal relations, kinship, friendship, loyalty, are still at the top of the requirements to become a member of the political elite. Paradoxically, urban complexity and political modernization scarcely contribute to the democratization of the craft. No doubt the times of Lorenzo de Medici are back again.

Should we leave the political élite to decide the future of our cities?

THE EXHIBITION THAT SPEAKS FOR ITSELF

Anna Green

Oral history has always played a subordinate role to the collection of material objects in museum exhibitions. Consequently the potential of oral histories, to make links between past and present, and explore subjects where no material representation exists, is neglected by museum curators. A large oral history project in a New Zealand railway community provided the opportunity to construct a museum exhibition around story-telling and sound. This posed particular problems concerning the selection, editing and sequencing of the oral extracts, in addition to the technical difficulties of playing a number of voices simultaneously within an exhibition space. Finally, the curator sought to engage the listeners' own memories through raising questions in the exhibition guide and encouraging visitors to record their memories and comments in a book.

"ONCE WERE THE MOTHERS OF IRON", COUNTRYWOMEN IN FINLAND

Hilkka Helsti

In Finland people tell stories about mothers who have given birth to their babies in the middle of the working day, without anyone's help. The origin of these stories can be found in the cultural transition of the latter half of 19th century. The stories tell about breaking the taboos, dealing with pregnancy and childbirth. Beside these stories there is in the oral history material a great deal of narration about working immediately before the birth and soon after that. Hard work dominated countrywomen's life for a long time past, the new phenomenon was to give up the working restrictions which were included in the birth taboo. Working capacity and diligence have been matters of honour for the mothers of that time. It's interesting to compare the image of a strong woman conveyed by this oral history material to the ideals which were expressed in the middle-class discourses at the same time. The middle-class ideal of woman was a housewife who devoted to the her family and children. These women were often characterized as physically weak, passive, tender and emotional.

WOMEN, FAMILY AND TRANSGENERATIONAL SOCIAL MOBILITY IN JAIPUR, INDIA

Ajay Khandelwal

Typically, social mobility studies have either described caste mobility or individual mobility. They have been based on standardised questionnaires and the analysis has been largely quantitative. General social mobility studies have failed to account for the life paths of women. We argue that if we are interested in individual mobility then we must also study life trajectories of women. Based on life stories with twenty families in Jaipur we argue for the importance of intergenerational transmission in shaping life paths. Our familial perspective has showed that occupational models were just as likely to be passed down female as male lines. We discovered that such influence could often be traced over the generations. Family systems analysis has helped us to understand how individual trajectories were shaped in the wider context of interlocking socio-emotional familial relationships. For women risers the family was often a conservative force. There was evidence that Significant Others were also a key influence in shaping their life paths.

THE HANDING DOWN OF EXPERIENCES IN FAMILIES OF THE POLITICALLY CONDEMNED IN COMMUNIST HUNGARY

Zsuzsanna Kôrösi, Adrienne Molnár

As a part of the retaliation after the repression of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution 229 persons were executed and approximately 22000 sentenced to prison in Hungary. The regime kept in dismay the whole society, but family members and parents of those executed and imprisoned were stigmatised as enemies of the regime and thus inflicted by severe measures. Both the revolution and the following retorsion were considered taboo issues by the Hungarian society until the 1989 change. The paper analyses what strategies of communication adopted the spouses of the executed with the children regarding the loss of the father, his revolutionary activity, the revolution itself and what impact this had on the socialization and the life of the children.

AN ORAL HISTORY APPROACH TO THE WORLD OF GOODS

Orvar Löfgren

This paper explores the potentials and problems of an oral history approach to consumer history. Drawing on a Swedish material of both written narratives and life history interviews on "my life as consumer" I discuss some of the ways in which such narratives are structured into genres, but also their often hidden moral messages about right and wrong in consumption practices. How do the narratives differ with gender, generations and class positions?

I also show how these kinds of materials may bring forward other aspects of consumer competences and skills which tend to be less visible in consumer research. Finally, I touch on the problem of the attractiveness of using objects and commodities as "coat-hangers" for constructing life histories.

THE EVERYDAY EXPERIENCE OF MIDDLE-CLASS HONG KONG CHINESE IMMIGRANT WOMEN IN CANADA

Guida Man

Using indepth interview data with thirty Hong Kong Chinese immigrant women from middle-class families, this study provide a space for Chinese immigrant women to voice their actual "lived experiences" in Canada and in Hong Kong from their own perspectives. It demonstrates how, as a result of the migration process, the difference in the social organization of household work and paid work in Canadian society vis-a-vis Hong Kong society has tremendous impact on the Chinese immigrant women's everyday lives in Canada, intensifying their daily workload, and affecting their relationships with family members.

ITALIAN ORAL HISTORY: ROOTS OF A PARADOX

Alessandro Portelli

In spite of its continuing international recognition, italian oral history is not recognized in academic culture and institutions in Italy. This article traces the roots of this paradox to the non-academic and politically involved degrees of italian oral history since the 1950s. The dialogue, conflict, and reciprocal contribution of oral history and other disciplines -anthropology, history, literature, linguistics- became both a factor of isolation and are reason of strength, as it forced oral history in Italy to recognize challenges and define its standards and methods with theoretical clarity while retaining the goal of social relevance.

THE ORAL SOURCES DEPARTMENT HISTORICAL BACKGROUND IN THE ARXIU HISTÒRIC DE LA CIUTAT

Lluís Ubeda

The purpose of this paper is to emphasize the enthusiasm and high-mindedness which characterize Agustí Duran i Sanpere, who from his post of director of this Archive, which he himself had founded, promoted the creation of a Word and Sound Archive in the Thirties, as well as that of a Record Library in the Fifties. For several reasons and in spite A. Duran i Sanpere's efforts to include the so-called new documents as part of our historical and cultural heritage, neither of these projects could materialize. In 1983, the creation of a specific section on oral history was the beginning of a task which, with different means and in a different context, A. Duran i Sanpere always sought to consolidate.