



DICTATORSHIP NEVER AGAIN

MEMORIES OF POLITICAL REPRESSION AND RESISTANCE

CONTENT IN
ENGLISH

MEMORIAL DA
RESISTÊNCIA
DE SÃO PAULO

DICTATORSHIP NEVER AGAIN **MEMORIES OF POLITICAL REPRESSION AND RESISTANCE**

During the civil-military dictatorship (1964–1985), the building housing the **Memorial da Resistência de São Paulo** was also the headquarters of Deops/SP, the political police. Responsible for monitoring, persecuting, and detaining those seen as threats to the regime, repression was a constant part of daily life. This involved administrative actions, interrogations, and systematic acts of violence.

Today, this space takes on new meaning by highlighting diverse acts of resistance against State authoritarianism. Combining period images, historical documents, and testimonies, the exhibition “Dictatorship Never Again: memories of political repression and resistance” depicts the dictatorship as part of an ongoing, contested historical process, with its impacts still deeply etched into the nation’s life.

This timeline covers the period from 1937, when the Estado Novo [New State] was established, to 1988, when the Federal Constitution was enacted. It shows that authoritarianism is not a one-time event but a repeated response by a country dealing with ongoing social conflicts, continuously challenged by a society that persistently demands its rights.

The dossiers, files, and reports created by Deops/SP, available here for public review, expose a machine designed around generating an “internal enemy.” Alongside these official archives are the voices of men and women detained in these cells, as well as activists and family members who witnessed the dictatorship’s crimes and recent police abuses. Their testimonies, collected in the Memorial da Resistência collection, stand as a strong refusal to forget and to allow impunity.

The State’s recognition of this building as a site of memory results from a collaborative effort between civil society—represented by the Permanent Forum of Former Political Prisoners and Persecuted Individuals of the State of São Paulo—and the State Government. Reflecting years of struggle for reparations, this museum reminds us that there is no democracy without memory, and no justice without confronting the past.

Memorial da Resistência de São Paulo
[São Paulo’s Resistance Memorial]

NATIONAL TRUTH COMMISSION (2011–2014)

Twenty-six years after the adoption of the Citizen Constitution, the Brazilian government officially acknowledged the human rights violations committed during the civil-military dictatorship through the National Truth Commission (CNV - Comissão Nacional da Verdade). Created by Law No. 12,528, the commission operated from 2011 to 2014 with the goal of investigating serious human rights abuses that took place between September 18, 1946, and October 5, 1988.

434 individuals were recognized by the CNV as politically dead and disappeared.

During the period studied by the CNV, 8,350 Indigenous people were estimated to have been killed. This figure, based on data from only ten of the groups examined, includes 3,500 Cinta-Larga (Rondônia), 2,650 Waimiri-Atroari (Amazonas), 1,180 Tapayuna (Mato Grosso), 354 Yanomami (Amazonas/Roraima), 192 Xetá (Paraná), 176 Panará (Mato Grosso), 118 Parakanã (Pará), 85 Xavante de Marãiwatsédé (Mato Grosso), 72 Araweté (Pará), and at least 14 Arara (Pará). The report highlights that the actual number of Indigenous victims is likely much higher, as investigations to date have been inadequate. It recommends continued and expanded investigations through a dedicated commission.

Between 1961 and 1988, 1,196 peasants—women and men—and supporters of rural movements were identified as dead or missing, according to investigations by the Peasant Truth Commission (CCV), a civil society organization established in 2012 by rural social movements and academics. The report indicates that the true number of victims is likely higher

ACCESS

The result of intense civil society mobilization, the CNV culminated in the drafting of a final report, organized into three volumes and available for public consultation.

The creation of the CNV also inspired the formation of similar commissions at the state and municipal levels, as well as within civil society institutions, such as labor unions.

REGULAR TESTIMONY COLLECTION

Since its opening in 2009, the Memorial da Resistência has been committed to conserving Brazilian political history through the Regular Testimony Collection program. This collection features interviews with former political prisoners, families of those who were killed or disappeared, social movement activists, and others affected by episodes of State violence and resistance, spanning from the civil-military dictatorship to today.

At the Memorial, these testimonies are seen as vital tools for contemplating the authoritarian past and its effects today. They form a non-dominant collection of voices that go beyond official records and deepen our comprehension of the efforts related to memory, truth, and justice.

The collective processing of traumatic memories requires careful care and reception practices. In this immersive space, created by artist Bianca Turner, the artwork *Ponto de Encontro* [Meeting Point] (2026) combines excerpts from three collections: Memories of the Civil-Military Dictatorship, Memories of Violence in Democracy, and Marginalized Memories: Social Order and Normativity during the Dictatorship. Transdisciplinary dialogues on the memory of authoritarian regimes and art are crucial for mediating and sharing these experiences with the public. Together, these narratives create a meeting space that encourages listening and participation.



RATED 12+

This content may be sensitive for some visitors due to its portrayal of violence.

DEOPS/SP: THE ORDER OF REPRESSION

For nearly sixty years, the São Paulo State Department of Political and Social Order (Deops/SP) monitored the lives of the state's citizens under the guise of preventing and suppressing crimes of a political and social character. Founded in 1924, it quickly set a policing example that was adopted by other states, increasing its reach during Brazil's dictatorial periods: the Estado Novo [New State] (1937–1945) and the civil-military dictatorship (1964–1985).

Until its abolition in 1983, Deops/SP held numerous functions and became a notorious center for repression and torture. Its specialized units—handling Political and Social Order, Firearms and Explosives Control, and Foreigners, among others—became key parts of a system designed to fight the so-called “internal enemy.” This category was created by the State itself to define anyone who questioned the order, values, and norms it sought to uphold as a threat.

Teachers, students, workers, members of religious groups, professionals, associations, clubs, and political parties all faced punitive surveillance, especially after 1964. Repression extended beyond guerrilla groups and left-wing organizations: in reaction to the rise of new ideas and civil society's efforts to defend its rights, Deops/SP adopted persecution as a strategy, transforming social mobilization into a police concern.

Following this system of control, the Deops/SP archives contain more than just police inquiries and investigative reports. They also store important resistance materials like pamphlets, posters, and manifestos created by a population defying authoritarian rule. Alongside period images and records, these documents illustrate the sacrifices involved in securing liberty and emphasize the importance of protecting it. They serve as a reminder that democracy has never been simple and is never assured.

Structures of repression

This display features organizational charts and maps illustrating the structure of Deops/SP and other agencies within Brazil's repressive apparatus. The political police in the capital formed in response to a period of intense mobilization, including the 1924 Revolt. A few months afterward, the agency was created under the pretext of restoring order.

Feel free to browse, but please handle it carefully.

Memories of the building

This drawer contains photos of the building's interior from the 1940s and 1950s, when Deops/SP shared these floors with other Public Force agencies. The lack of images from the civil-military dictatorship era highlights how the State concealed its repression mechanisms.

Feel free to browse, but please handle it carefully.

The National Security Doctrine

In Brazilian political history, the term "subversion" served as a means of repression and social control, often linked to perceived threats to national stability and frequently associated with anarchists and communists. The country's initial law targeting political crimes was passed in 1935, defining offenses against the "political and social order." After 1964, measures against "subversives" intensified with Institutional Act No. 2 of 1965 and the first National Security Law of 1967, which emphasized the notion of the "internal enemy." Consequently, fear and suspicion grew, driven by the belief that the threat inhabited the nation's own borders.

The intelligence of repression

This display niche features documents that directed Deops/SP operations, including manuals on managing classified information and relevant country laws. Since 2021, Brazil has implemented Law No. 14,197/2021, which repealed the former National Security Law (Law No. 7,170/1983). The new legislation removes terms like "political and social order" and criminalizes offenses against the Democratic Rule of Law, such as attacks on the electoral process.

Feel free to browse, but please handle it carefully.

Surveillance archives

These drawers contain files on monitored individuals and organizations. After Deops/SP was dissolved in 1983, the agency's archives remained closed, held by the Federal Police in São Paulo. In 1991, civil society efforts led to their transfer to the Public Archive of São Paulo; from 1994, they became accessible with a signed liability waiver, balancing the public's right to information with individual privacy protection. Currently, about 3.5 million documents are available for consultation online or in

person by appointment.

Feel free to browse, but please handle it carefully.

Persecution of communists

Founded in 1922, the Brazilian Communist Party (PCB) attracted support from workers and intellectuals inspired by the Russian Revolution, promoting improved working conditions, union rights, land reform, and the fight against capitalism. To elites and authorities, however, it was a threat to national unity, Christian values, morality, property, family, and social stability. Viewed as part of an international and “subversive” movement, communists faced decades of persecution and repression. The PCB remained largely illegal throughout its history, especially during the Vargas Era and under the civil-military dictatorship.

Monitored individuals

This display niche contains records of individuals accused of communism. Before using index cards and dossiers, these records served as Deops/SP’s primary tool for organizing investigative data. Sorted by names of people, parties, companies, or entities, the roughly 150,000 volumes included arrest warrants, reports, testimonies, photographs, and detailed suspect files.

Feel free to browse, but please handle it carefully.

Persecution of foreigners

Between the 1930s and 1940s, Deops/SP heavily scrutinized foreigners. Due to the Spanish Civil War, Spanish anarchists and communists faced suspicion, and immigrants from nearby Soviet Union countries, like Lithuanians, were closely monitored. The Foreigners’ Precinct, a branch of the agency, expanded its files and reports when Brazil entered World War II in 1942, heightening surveillance on citizens from Axis powers such as Germany, Italy, and Japan. For these individuals, daily life involved travel restrictions, bans on speaking their native languages publicly, property confiscation, and ongoing surveillance.

Extremist cells

This drawer contains documents seized by Deops/SP during operations against suspects accused of participating in extremist organizations. In 1942, after Brazil cut diplomatic ties with the Axis countries, Deops/

SP increased surveillance not only on left-wing movements but also on Nazi, fascist, and Japanese groups operating in the country, such as the Shindo Renmei.

Open to learn more.

Persecution of the press and arts

Deops/SP's measures extended into the press and cultural spaces, stifling opposition, critical thought, and the spread of ideas that challenged the established order. The repression of artistic works, newspapers, and other publications—many of which operated secretly—resulted in the confiscation of printing equipment and books, as well as the detention of activists. The agency kept detailed records of the personal and professional lives of artists, intellectuals, and journalists, fostering a climate of fear and insecurity. Prior to censorship in 1970, this was a key tool used to silence media and cultural expression, forcing newspapers and journals to submit their content for regime approval.

Clandestine press

Within this display niche, there are Deops/SP surveillance documents on clandestine printing presses and books labeled as “subversive.” The police agency's practices included ransacking newspaper offices (*empastelamento*) and monitoring “subversive” publications by examining the unique marks left by printing press machines.

Feel free to browse, but please handle it carefully.

Persecution of workers

Deops/SP targeted not only political activists but also workers like railway employees, factory workers, and rural laborers fighting for basic rights and improved conditions. In a systemic crackdown, strikes and union activities faced severe suppression, with participants called ‘agitators’ by police. This persecution intensified through direct cooperation between factory owners and the police, who compiled detailed lists of perceived opponents and shared them with security agencies. These lists were used as grounds for dismissals, persecutions, and arrests.

Streets under surveillance

This display niche features Deops/SP surveillance documents on popular demonstrations. The funeral of worker Santo Dias, a union leader killed by police forces during a strike picket, drew thousands of people and became a milestone of mobilization. The same happened with the Cost of Living Movement (Movimento do Custo de Vida), which originated from meetings among São Paulo women in the Mothers' Clubs of the South Zone and mobilized the population in response to inflation and rising living costs.

Feel free to browse, but please handle it carefully.

Why did Deops/SP gather files on workers?

Rafael Cantinho Filho, who led the Investigations Cabinet in the 1920s, reported that the initial files of Deops/SP did not originate from other police departments. Instead, over one hundred thousand worker cards were supplied by factories, illustrating how social control was embedded in administrative routines. This practice of exchanging information persisted throughout the agency's operations, continually subjecting workers to suspicion.

Persecution of students

The student movement developed as one of the primary centers of resistance and opposition to the civil-military dictatorship. In universities and high schools, young people organized around demands such as the democratization of education, increased funding for schools, and opposition to censorship and repression. The National Union of Students (UNE) and the Brazilian Union of Secondary Students (UBES), although outlawed, kept their activities clandestine, serving as platforms for mobilization and protests. The repression against these movements was intense and violent, with agencies like Deops/SP and DOI-CODI monitoring, persecuting, arresting, and even killing students.

Students as targets

This display niche features Deops/SP intelligence documents related to university students and their political activities. The identification of leaders and the persecution of professors—many of whom were dismissed—demonstrate how the civil-military dictatorship instilled fear across academic circles.

Feel free to browse, but please handle it carefully.

What did it take to be monitored by Deops/SP?

Even attendance sheets for courses labeled “subversive” were gathered by the political police. Students’ names were recorded in files for future investigations, indicating that the police’s attention extended beyond crimes to include monitoring ideas. This form of control was preventive, arbitrary, and lacked evidence, turning even the act of thinking into a potential threat.

Persecution of Black associations

From the Brazilian Black Front (FNB) to the Unified Black Movement (MNU), various Black movements strengthened the fight against racism, police violence, and racial discrimination in Brazil. Deops/SP closely monitored these groups, tracking events and demonstrations, spying on meetings, and arresting members—showing that the political organization of Black people was seen as a threat to the established order rather than a genuine form of citizenship. Contrary to the idea of a “racial democracy” promoted by the State, these activists revealed the racist nature of Brazilian social structures and fostered new ways of resistance and collective awareness.

Unified Black Movement

This display niche contains documents gathered or created by Deops/SP concerning the MNU (Unified Black Movement). Established in 1978 and still active, the organization played a key role in highlighting Black rights during the 1988 Constituent Assembly, including the demarcation of quilombola lands and the promotion of Afro-Brazilian history in educational institutions.

Feel free to browse, but please handle it carefully.

Persecution of the women’s movement

Women’s political involvement during the civil-military dictatorship was closely monitored, highlighting the extensive reach of Deops/SP operations. Calls for fundamental rights like access to public services, along with rising feminist movements, were seen as threats not just to the political and social order but also to the patriarchal system and traditional gender roles. Women played a pivotal role in the amnesty movement, advocating for daycare, transportation, and housing, as well as in the labor union movement and the drafting of a new Constitution. These efforts demonstrate their ability to mobilize and their vital contribution to the development of Brazilian democracy.

Women's organizations

This display features a list of entities labeled as feminist by the military regime. It demonstrates that women's issues were not viewed as valid demands addressing social inequalities but were instead considered political risks, believed to be vulnerable to infiltration and manipulation by organizations labeled as "subversive."

Feel free to browse, but please handle it carefully.

Persecution of the LGBT+ movement

During the civil-military dictatorship, repression against the LGBT+ community served as a tool for social and moral control, with police forces persecuting and brutalizing those who challenged the conservative heteronormative norms of the time. Dissident sexualities were viewed as deviant and threatening to the traditional family, leading to arbitrary arrests, torture, and extortion of gay men, lesbians, and especially transvestites, who were targeted in specific operations. Deops/SP played a key role in monitoring demonstrations for sexual and gender rights, but this repression also faced opposition: in São Paulo, the early 1980s saw the community organize one of the first public protests defending homosexuals, condemning police violence and asserting their right to occupy urban space.

Persecution of religious leaders

During the civil-military dictatorship, acts of crime and violations faced strong opposition from progressive religious leaders across different faiths, who stood up for social justice and human rights. Notable figures in the Catholic Church, like Dom Paulo Evaristo Arns and Dom Hélder Câmara, spoke out against torture and disappearances, becoming targets of government repression. Similarly, socially active Protestant leaders, including Methodists and members of the ecumenical movement, were also investigated and imprisoned. Practitioners of Afro-Brazilian religions such as Candomblé and Umbanda were profiled, with sacred objects confiscated and rituals monitored by security forces under the guise of social control.

Testimony of a Brazilian political prisoner

This drawer contains documents related to the imprisonment of Tito de Alencar Lima. Since it discusses instances of violence, the content may be sensitive for some visitors.

Open to learn more.

Monitoring of religious spaces

This display presents information collected by Deops/SP on various religious entities. It includes mapping churches, congregations, spiritist centers, and their leaders, as well as monitoring ecumenical initiatives considered potentially “subversive,” such as the memorial mass for the murdered journalist Vladimir Herzog.

Feel free to browse, but please handle it carefully.

Persecution of subversive organizations

Guerrilla groups and left-wing movements, labeled as terrorists and enemies of the state, were seen as the main threat to the military regime. Groups like PCdoB and ALN, active in the Araguaia Guerrilla War and urban protests, along with PCB and PORT, which pursued non-violent political activities, showed various ways of resisting the dictatorship. In response, the regime used surveillance and interrogation tactics to build an intelligence network aimed at crushing any political dissent. Members of these groups were investigated, detained, tortured, killed, or made to disappear by the state’s repressive forces, with Deops/SP playing a key role in these actions.

Documents belonging to a former political prisoner.

Maurice Politi, convicted for his involvement with the National Liberation Action (ALN), was detained in several prison facilities during the civil-military dictatorship, including DOI-CODI/SP, Deops/SP, the São Paulo House of Detention (Carandiru), and the Presidente Venceslau Penitentiary. In these prisons, inmates regularly exchanged clandestine notes on tiny scraps of paper to communicate with the outside world and evade searches. At the Presidente Venceslau Penitentiary, Politi copied the prisoners’ manual to highlight the abusive prison rules to his lawyers. After his release in 1974, due to his Egyptian birth, he had to report periodically to the Deops/SP Foreigners’ Precinct so authorities could monitor his whereabouts until he was expelled from Brazil in 1975.

Incarcerated opponents

This display section features documents related to “subversive” organizations and their imprisoned members. Often, imprisonment involved the confiscation of personal belongings, which were never returned following detention.

Feel free to browse, but please handle it carefully.

Resistance in the Deops/SP cells

One of the first actions taken by Deops/SP upon taking over this building was to create a prison space, the total number of inmates in which remains unknown to this day. Amidst the news filtering in from outside and rare moments of sunlight, the detainees transformed the cells into spaces of coexistence and courage. At the same time, they performed acts of solidarity in response to the violence imposed by the police, supporting each other after torture sessions. During the building's renovation, which began in 1998, some cells were demolished, and the remaining traces—such as inscriptions on the walls and floors—were erased.

Torture

This drawer contains the account of a political prisoner describing the violence experienced under State custody. During the civil-military dictatorship, physical and psychological abuses were systematic practices used during interrogations. At Deops/SP, arrested individuals were taken to various rooms across the building's floors and subjected to torture sessions. Rather than being an exception, these abuses became a method, leaving a legacy that prompts reflection on the ongoing violence by the State and the conditions of incarceration in the country. Because it details episodes of violence, this content may be distressing for some visitors.

Open to learn more.

Did surveillance and control end with the abolition of Deops/SP?

After its abolition in 1983, a new agency took over espionage activities: the Department of Social Communication (DCS). It inherited staff and similar surveillance and archiving methods, focusing on dossiers related to information from the written and televised press. The DCS continued its operations until 1999, when media exposés led to its closure.

Memory, Truth, and Justice

Despite ongoing surveillance by Deops/SP, lawyers, relatives of the disappeared, human rights defenders, and organized movements continued to mobilize. They demanded an end to repression and the release of exiles and political prisoners, notably through the Amnesty Movement that began in the 1970s. Even after the police agency was abolished in 1983 and the civil-military dictatorship ended in 1985, these

demands persisted: civil society continues to fight for Memory, Truth, and Justice, seeking accountability and transparency about the crimes committed during that period, many of which still require investigation and reparations.

Lawyers of the resistance

This display niche contains Deops/SP surveillance documents regarding lawyers who reported violence against political prisoners.

Feel free to browse, but please handle it carefully.

What does amnesty mean to you?

In 1979, the Amnesty Law (No. 6,683) was enacted to free political prisoners and facilitate the return of exiles, driven by strong popular pressure against the authoritarian civil-military dictatorship and its restrictions on rights. However, the law's victory was ambiguous: it provided impunity for State agents responsible for torture, forced disappearances, and murders, who continue to evade legal accountability. The term "amnesty" remains controversial today, often used as a shield to avoid responsibility for serious crimes.

What does the Deops/SP seahorse mean?

From the 1950s onward, the animal appeared on index cards, folders, and surveillance documents as an allegory with moral importance. A São Paulo Police Magazine article described the seahorse as a sentinel — ever upright, observing and protecting the waters within a "social ocean" filled with currents of ideas, gales of doctrines, and storms of agitation.

What are fingerprints used for?

Dactyloscopy (fingerprinting) was introduced in Brazil in the early 20th century during significant workers' strikes, initially developed to identify prisoners and suspects. Gradually, fingerprinting expanded to the broader population: what started as a surveillance measure evolved into a symbol of citizenship, exemplified by the old Identity Card, also known as the RG, issued by police authorities.

What did the State fear about immigrants?

Deops/SP was a common destination for many foreigners before and during the civil-military dictatorship, handling tasks like issuing safe-conducts and authorizations for moving between cities. Many individuals were also barred from relocating or were arrested for speaking their

native language in public. There was a pervasive fear of movement, networks, and ideas outside of State control.

Is fighting for land a crime?

Opposition to agrarian reform was a key factor behind the 1964 coup, as it challenged land ownership patterns that threatened economic interests and local authority. During the civil-military dictatorship, opposition groups ran political education programs in rural regions, occasionally providing guerrilla training. However, government actions heavily repressed the countryside, leading to the persecution, imprisonment, torture, and assassination of leaders and activists.

Why did Deops/SP collect files on workers?

Rafael Cantinho Filho, head of the Investigations Cabinet in the 1920s, stated that the earliest Deops/SP files originated not from other police bodies but from factories: more than 100,000 worker cards were provided by companies, illustrating how social control was exercised through administrative procedures and kept workers under continuous suspicion.

What did it take to be monitored by Deops/SP?

Even attendance sheets for courses labeled as “subversive” were gathered by the political police. Student names were recorded in files for future inquiries, indicating that the police monitored not just crimes but also ideas. This form of control was preventative, arbitrary, and based on no evidence, transforming thought into a potential threat.

Are women’s struggles always the same?

The collective effort to combat sexism and gender-based violence has not diminished the unique experiences of Black women, which are influenced by specific forms of discrimination and centered on an agenda that combines gender, race, and class considerations.

Are good morals a police matter?

Besides Deops/SP, police repression was organized via agencies like the Morals Precinct (Delegacia de Costumes), which was responsible for overseeing and punishing behaviors considered contrary to “public morality.” This included targeting prostitution, “vagrancy,” as well as Umbanda and Candomblé rituals, highlighting issues of social inequality, racism, and the prevalent Christian moral standards in Brazilian society.

Can a person be arrested without a charge?

Authorities like José Wilson Richetti, head of the Central Sectional Precinct, orchestrated numerous police raids targeting travestis and homosexuals, resulting in arbitrary arrests, discrimination, humiliation, and violence. These operations became a normalized tool for control and surveillance over these groups, often leading to mass arrests justified as “investigation” (averiguação) without any formal charges.

Did Deops/SP act alone?

The police agency operated alongside a wide-ranging repressive network that included other precincts, the Armed Forces, the National Intelligence Service (SNI), torture centers like DOI-CODI/SP, and prison units. Many victims were first kidnapped and taken to secret locations. Later, they were transferred to Deops/SP, where an identification file was created, enabling their families to locate the detained individuals. After initial detention, they were transferred to prisons such as Tiradentes Prison, the Hipódromo, or Carandiru.

Who was Delegate Fleury?

Fleury, known for his brutal methods and leading the São Paulo Death Squad, served as a Deops/SP delegate (police chief) from 1968 to 1973, until his murder conviction. He escaped prison after Law 5,941—the so-called “Fleury Law”—was enacted, which allowed first-time offenders with good backgrounds to await trial outside jail. After his tenure at Deops/SP, he joined the State Department of Criminal Investigations (DEIC). He died in 1979 by drowning in an incident shrouded in mystery to this day.

Did repression end with the abolition of Deops/SP?

After its abolition in 1983, the Department of Social Communication (DCS) took over the surveillance functions of the previous agency. It used similar staff and methods for monitoring and archiving, focusing on information from the press and television. The DCS continued its operations until 1999, when media exposés led to its shutdown. Despite its abolition, the control policies persisted, leaving a lasting impact on the nation’s democratic processes.

BIOGRAPHIES OF DEOPS PRISONERS/DISAPPEARED**Carlos Marighella (1911–1969)**

Considered the military's top public enemy, Marighella was politically active from a young age, campaigning within the Brazilian Communist Party (PCB) and facing multiple arrests. Born in Salvador, Bahia, he later moved to Rio de Janeiro, joined the Central Committee, and oversaw the party's press. Arrested in 1936 and again in 1939 in São Paulo, he endured torture at Deops/SP and was imprisoned on Fernando de Noronha for six years. After amnesty in 1945, he served as a federal representative until the PCB was banned in 1947, which led him to go underground. Following a split from the party, he established the National Liberation Action (ALN) in 1968, growing into a prominent guerrilla group. He was killed in an ambush by Deops/SP agents on November 4, 1969.

Astrojildo Pereira Duarte Silva (1890–1965)

Born in Rio Bonito, Rio de Janeiro, Astrojildo Pereira moved to Niterói at a young age, beginning his activism in 1911 by spreading anarchism and working for small newspapers. In 1922, he launched the magazine Movimento Comunista [Communist Movement] and joined the Brazilian Communist Party (PCB), serving as secretary-general until his dismissal in 1930. Arrested by Deops/SP in 1931, he withdrew from party politics to focus on intellectual pursuits, especially literature. He rejoined the PCB in 1945, directing the magazine Literatura and collaborating with party newspapers. After the 1964 coup, he was arrested again and was later released in 1965 for health reasons, the year he died.

Osório Thaumaturgo César (1895–1979)

Originally from João Pessoa, Paraíba, Osório César moved to São Paulo as a young man to pursue his studies. In 1925, he became an anatomical pathologist at Juquery Psychiatric Hospital in Franco da Rocha, São Paulo. He dedicated forty years to the institution and was a pioneer in using art as therapy, founding the Free School of Fine Arts of Juquery within the psychiatric colony. His involvement with the communist movement, which included trips to the Soviet Union and publishing the book 'Que é o Estado Proletário?' [What is the Proletarian State?] (1933), resulted in multiple arrests, including detentions at Deops/SP in the 1930s. In 1965, under pressure from the military regime, he was compelled to retire.

Eulália da Conceição/Maria da Cruz (1895–1979)

Born in Paraty, Rio de Janeiro, she endured multiple persecutions by Deops/SP during the 1930s, with at least two imprisonments. Her file offers limited details, showing she was sometimes listed as Eulália da Conceição and other times as Maria da Cruz. She was accused of encouraging factory workers to unionize, took part in the Praça da República conflict in Santos, São Paulo, in 1932, and joined the Brazilian Communist Party (PCB). She served on the Women's Commission, which was tasked with spreading communist propaganda and recruiting new members. A close friend of Patrícia Galvão (known as Pagu), she resided between São Paulo and Santos, working as a weaver, domestic worker, and cook.

Mário Xavier de Andrade Pedrosa (1900–1981)

Mário Pedrosa, born in Timbaúba, Pernambuco, was a writer, journalist, and art critic who became involved in political activism early on. He was very active in the progressive press in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. Pedrosa joined the Brazilian Communist Party (PCB), and after his expulsion, he founded the Trotskyist-leaning Communist League in 1931. His Deops/SP records indicate he was detained multiple times between 1932 and 1936. During Brazil's dictatorships, he lived in exile: in 1937, in France, he helped establish the Fourth International, and in 1971, in Chile, he worked with Salvador Allende's government. He is recognized as one of Brazil's most influential art critics. After returning to Brazil in 1977, he was a key figure in founding the Workers' Party (PT).

Edgard Frederico Leuenroth (1881–1968)

From Mogi Mirim, São Paulo, Edgard Leuenroth was a notable Brazilian typographer, journalist, and anarchist activist. He played a key role in the labor movement and the social press. He distinguished himself by founding and contributing to numerous libertarian periodicals, especially *A Terra Livre*, *A Lanterna*, *Luta Operária*, *Spartacus*, and *A Plebe*—the latter being one of the main outlets for broadcasting and organizing the 1917 General Strike, which led to his arrest on charges of being the “psycho-intellectual” behind the strikes. Detained multiple times by Deops/SP, he stayed true to his ideals and dedicated his life to the workers' cause and its memory. Today, his collection is part of the Edgard Leuenroth Archive (AEL) at Unicamp.

Patrícia Rehder Galvão (1910–1962)

Born in São João da Boa Vista, São Paulo, she moved to the city in 1925 to start her writing career at *Brás Jornal*. In 1931, she became a member of the Brazilian Communist Party (PCB) and played a role in organizing a dockworkers' strike in Santos. Known as Pagu, she was associated with the modernist avant-garde and wrote the column "A Mulher do Povo"—which critiqued bourgeois feminism—for *O Homem do Povo*, a newspaper co-founded with Oswald de Andrade. An active activist, she was arrested 23 times, including by Deops/SP in the 1930s. After being released in 1940, she distanced herself from the PCB and adopted Trotskyist views. In 1954, she moved to Santos with her husband and son, working for *A Tribuna*. In her final years, she fought lung cancer and lived in seclusion.

Antonio Benetazzo (1941–1972)

Born in Verona, Italy, he was the son of migrants fleeing fascism and arrived in Brazil as a child. He participated in the Center of Popular Culture (CPC) and joined the Brazilian Communist Party (PCB) in 1962. As a visual artist, he studied philosophy and architecture at the University of São Paulo (USP). In 1968, he was arrested at the 30th National Union of Students (UNE) Congress in Ibiúna, São Paulo, and the following year, while underground, he joined the National Liberation Action (ALN) and attended political training courses in Cuba. After returning to Brazil, he was arrested in 1972: his Deops/SP file claimed he threw himself under a truck during a police operation—a version thoroughly disproved by investigations, which show he was tortured to death at DOI-CODI/SP. He was buried as an indigent in an unmarked grave at Perus Cemetery, but his family later transferred his remains.

Heleny Telles Ferreira Guariba (1941–1971)

Born in São Paulo and holding a philosophy degree from USP, Heleny Guariba was an activist with the Popular Revolutionary Vanguard (VPR). She was arrested by Deops/SP in 1970, taken through Operation Bandeirantes (the forerunner of DOI-CODI/SP), and detained at Tiradentes Prison until 1971. After her release, she was re-arrested months later by DOI-CODI/RJ agents in Rio de Janeiro and was never seen again. In 1979, survivor Inês Etienne Romeu claimed to have seen a young woman she believed to be Heleny being tortured over three days at the "House of Death" (Casa da Morte) in Petrópolis, Rio de Janeiro.

The National Truth Commission states she was murdered at that site by agents on July 24, 1971.

Damaris Lucena (1947–2020)

A native of Codó, Maranhão, she worked in a factory and was a union leader, securing the first victory for extended breastfeeding rights in factories. In 1970, her husband, Antônio Raymundo de Lucena, a member of the Popular Revolutionary Vanguard (VPR), was executed inside their home in Atibaia, São Paulo, in front of her and their three children. She was taken to the police station where she was tortured by local police chiefs and Sérgio Fleury of Deops/SP. She was later transferred to Operation Bandeirantes (the future DOI-CODI/SP), and was released in exchange for the kidnapped Japanese consul Nobuo Okuchi, in an operation carried out by the VPR. Before leaving, Deops/SP opened a file on her, and she rejoined her children. She lived in exile in Mexico and Cuba, from where she exposed torture practices in Brazil. She returned to Brazil following the Amnesty Law in 1979.

Olavo Hanssen (1937–1970)

Born in São Paulo, he was a metallurgist, a blue-collar worker, and an activist with the Trotskyist Revolutionary Workers' Party (PORT). He was arrested multiple times for taking part in demonstrations and distributing pamphlets. In 1970, he was detained in the Vila Maria Zélia neighborhood of São Paulo, taken first to Operation Bandeirantes (the future DOI-CODI/SP), and later transferred to Deops/SP. In May of that year, authorities claimed he had died by suicide from poisoning, and his body was found in a vacant lot near the Museu do Ipiranga. Nonetheless, his fellow activists in prison insist that Olavo died as a result of torture inflicted on him inside the political police facilities.

Helenira Resende de Souza Nazareth (1944–1972)

Helenira, originally from Cerqueira César, São Paulo, moved to the city's capital to study literature at USP. An active member of the student movement and the Communist Party of Brazil (PCdoB), she was arrested during the 30th UNE Congress in Ibiúna, São Paulo, in 1968. She passed through Tiradentes Prison, Deops/SP, and Carandiru, remaining there for two months. After her release that same year, she went underground and joined the Araguaia Guerrilla, receiving training in the Amazon. In 1972, during Operation Parrot (Operação Papagaio), carried out by the Armed Forces, she was arrested, tortured, and killed. Her body has not been recovered.

Maria Nilde Mascellani (1931–1999)

Born in São Paulo, she earned a degree in pedagogy from USP and worked in the São Paulo public school system during the 1950s and 1960s. She served as the coordinator of the São Paulo Vocational Education Service (1962–1970), which introduced an innovative approach to public middle school education in the state. The Vocational Schools (Ginásios Vocacionais) were targeted and shut down by the dictatorship, and Maria Nilde was forcibly retired in 1970 under Institutional Act No. 5 (AI-5). In 1970, she was arrested by Deops/SP on charges of violating the National Security Law, but was released the same year and went on to teach at PUC-SP. Her political rights were restored in 1984.

Isaltino Benedito Veiga dos Santos (1901–1966)

Hailing from Itu, São Paulo, he was a journalist and a prominent figure in the São Paulo Black movement. He helped establish the Palmares Civic Center and held the position of secretary-general in the Brazilian Black Front (FNB). His activism drew the attention of the political police, leading to close surveillance of his activities. As a signatory of the Popular Front manifesto, he was detained by Deops/SP and confined at the Maria Zélia political prison in São Paulo. In 1954, he took part in efforts to reorganize the FNB in Rio de Janeiro, an organization dissolved in 1937 by the Estado Novo dictatorship. Over his career, he contributed to the Alvorada newspaper and Senzala magazine, and was also a member of the Brazilian Press Association (ABI).

Tito de Alencar Lima (1945–1974)

Born in Fortaleza, Ceará, he was involved in the Catholic Student Youth (JEC) and engaged in cultural and popular education initiatives. After the 1964 coup, Friar Tito relocated to Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais, where he completed his novitiate with the Dominican Friars. He was ordained in 1967, and then moved to São Paulo to study philosophy at USP. In 1969, he was arrested on charges of collaborating with the National Liberation Action (ALN). Two years later, he was exiled along with 69 other political prisoners. Traveling through Chile, Italy, and France, he faced ongoing struggles to overcome the psychological scars of the torture inflicted at Deops/SP and Operation Bandeirantes (later DOI-CODI/SP). He died by suicide on August 10, 1974, at age 28.

Gastone Lúcia de Carvalho Beltrão (1950–1972)

Born in Coruripe, Alagoas, she started studying economics in 1968 and

was active in the Catholic Student Youth (JEC). In 1969, as a member of the National Liberation Action (ALN), she traveled to Cuba for guerrilla training. A Deops/SP file states she died in a shootout with agents in 1972. However, investigations by the National Truth Commission concluded she was murdered while in State custody. Gastone was buried as an indigent in an unmarked grave at Dom Bosco Cemetery in Perus. It was only in 1975 that her family was allowed to access her remains, which were then moved to the family tomb in Maceió, Alagoas.

Dênis Casemiro (1942–1971)

Born in Votuporanga, São Paulo, Dênis Casemiro was a bricklayer, rural worker, and active member of his city's Farmers' Union. In 1967, while residing in the ABC region of São Paulo, he joined the Red Wing (Ala Vermelha) and later the Popular Revolutionary Vanguard (VPR). He operated in Maranhão with the aim of organizing a rural guerrilla, but was arrested in São Paulo by Deops/SP in April 1971. During detention, he was tortured for weeks and died in custody. While official reports offer false accounts of the events, testimonies from political prisoners implicate Delegate Sérgio Fleury as responsible. Initially buried as an indigent in the Dom Bosco Cemetery in Perus, his remains were later identified, exhumed in 1990, and reburied in Votuporanga in 1991.

Eduardo Collen Leite (1945–1970)

Originally from Campo Belo, Minas Gerais, he studied in São Paulo and worked as a telephone technician. Known as "Bacuri," he was an activist from a young age, involved with Workers' Politics (Polop), the Popular Revolutionary Vanguard (VPR), and later the National Liberation Action (ALN), where he became a leader. In 1970, he was arrested in Rio de Janeiro and transferred among several repression units, including DOI-Codi/SP and ultimately Deops/SP, enduring 109 days of continuous torture. On October 27, he was removed from his cell and was never seen alive again. On December 8, authorities issued a false account claiming he died in a shootout on the São Paulo coast, hiding the extreme violence he had faced. His body, returned to his family, showed unmistakable signs of torture.

FORMER PRISONERS PANEL LABEL

Following the abolition of Deops/SP in 1983 and the building's designation as a historic site in 1999, efforts for remembrance and reparations for victims led to the establishment of the Memorial da Resistência, which opened on January 24, 2009. A key act during its reopening was inscribing the names of former political prisoners on the cell walls. This space, still open to new inscriptions, received further contributions in 2025, supplementing the existing ones.

RATED 12+

This content may be sensitive for some visitors due to its portrayal of violence.

DEOPS/SP PRISON SPACE**Cell 1**

The audio installation includes interview clips from the Memorial da Resistência's Regular Testimony Collection program, showcasing the daily experiences of political prisoners in this former jail. These stories detail the cell conditions, the relationships formed inside, the news from the outside, and the survival tactics that allowed life to continue despite harsh repression.

Diorama

This scale model depicts the cells of the so-called "Fundão" [The Deep End], demolished during the building's renovation from 1998 to 1999. It shows a caring gesture between female political prisoners, with Rosemeire Nogueira comforting Vera Lúcia Nicoletti, who had just endured a torture session. In the audio recording, Rose recounts the episode, illustrating how solidarity acted as a form of resistance and survival in prison.

Listen with headphones.

Testimony of Rosemeire Nogueira (2008).

[Memorial da Resistência de São Paulo Collection / Regular Testimony Collection Program]

Cell 2

Created by artist Bianca Turner, the installation encourages viewers to explore the remnants of the prison on the walls, resembling an excavation. The images, taken in 1999 by photographer Fernando Braga from the Public Archive of São Paulo, show the state of the cells and their inscriptions before renovation. This prompts reflection on how these histories have been erased.

Cell 3

After transforming this space into a museum, former political prisoners—who shared the cell with the original inscriptions during the civil-military dictatorship—added new markings to the walls. These were created based on their narrated memories. The scenographic reconstruction features a wooden floor and bathroom fixtures. The doors, iron bars, columns, and metal structures remain from the time when Deops/SP operated here.

Cell 4

The audio installation features interview excerpts from the Memorial da Resistência's Regular Testimony Collection program, highlighting acts of solidarity among former political prisoners in response to the violence inflicted by Deops/SP. These accounts illustrate how the brutality of repression contrasted sharply with the collective resilience that kept lives and bonds intact within the cells.

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