

MUM/E

Museu Memorial de l'Exili

The Exile Memorial Museum

The Exile Memorial Museum (MUME) in La Jonquera, inaugurated on 16th February 2008, is the first museum facility dedicated to the preservation of the memory of Republican exile and its legacy. The museum has a permanent exhibition that tells the story of the exile from the start of the Spanish Civil War until the years of the transition to democracy (1975-1981), a temporary exhibitions room and a classroom for educational workshops. One of the main objectives of the centre is to disseminate the memory of the Republican exile while fostering the idea that exile is a constant in universal history, especially in contemporary times.

The managing body of MUME is formed by a consortium made up of the Government of Catalonia (Memorial Democràtic), La Jonquera Town Council, the Regional Council of Alt Empordà and Girona University.

The museum, whose main areas of interest are memory, history and critical reflection, acts as an interpretation centre that recalls the displacement of people caused by the Spanish Civil War and especially the exile of those defeated in that conflict indissolubly linked to the Europe of the rise of totalitarianisms, the prelude to the Second World War. In accordance with this historical vision, the museum remembers the many men and women exiled in 1939 who continued fighting for freedom from the ranks of the French Resistance, the Allied forces or the distant Eastern Front. Moreover, the thousands of Republicans who were sent to the Nazi concentration camps on a journey that, for the majority, was only one way, deserve special attention. The centre also considers the large part of the exiled population that, to escape the Nazi barbarism and Franco's persecution, were forced to seek asylum thousands of kilometres away in American or African lands.

Located in La Jonquera, on the same border crossing used by most of the exiles of 1939, MUME combines museum functions, through the permanent and temporary exhibitions, with historical research and education. The latter point is fundamental in the sense that MUME's priority is to encourage the critical training of

people, promote democratic values and contribute to achieving a fairer and freer world. Moreover, one of its other ambitions is to culturally invigorate the town of La Jonquera.

The Exile Memorial Museum in La Jonquera forms part of the Network of Spaces of Memory in Catalonia, created by the Memorial Democràtic of the Government of Catalonia, and is one of its centres of territorial reference. Within this Network and focused around MUME, the itinerary *Retreat and Paths of Exile is underway*. This initiative consists of the localisation and signposting of places and paths in the area of Alt Empordà which had a prominent role during the evacuation of Catalonia and the great exodus of 1939. In this memorial initiative, with the collaboration of the Regional Council of Alt Empordà, MUME acts as an articulator and generator of cross border links with other similar institutions with the aim of creating a great memorial map dedicated to the Civil War, exile and the Second World War, whose epicentre is the Pyrenees mountain range.

Therefore, the objective of the Exile Memorial Museum is to disseminate and explain a crucial episode in our past, essential to understanding the democratic character of our present. Moreover, despite the importance given to our past, it also seeks to draw attention to other historical and geographical realities that have suffered or still suffer the effects of violent conflicts, forced displacements of people and humanitarian disasters. For this reason, the Department of Cultural Programming of MUME attaches great importance to temporary activities of a marked polyhedral and interdisciplinary nature.

In short, based on scientific and analytical rigor, the museum seeks to offer a historical vision as documented and accurate as possible, linked to the pursuit of truth and the achievement of a dignified memory. It therefore avoids mythicising and saturating accounts that lead exactly to the opposite of what they seek; that is to the profusion of oblivion and amnesia. The historical past is too complex and there is no room for simplifications, or should not be. In this way, bearing in mind this complexity, the exhibition rooms of MUME bring together and reflect the critical, intellectual and also emotional richness provided by the complementariness between history and memory.

