



MUSSOLINI BAS-RELIEF

Bolzano, Italy

46.4973435, 11.3387031

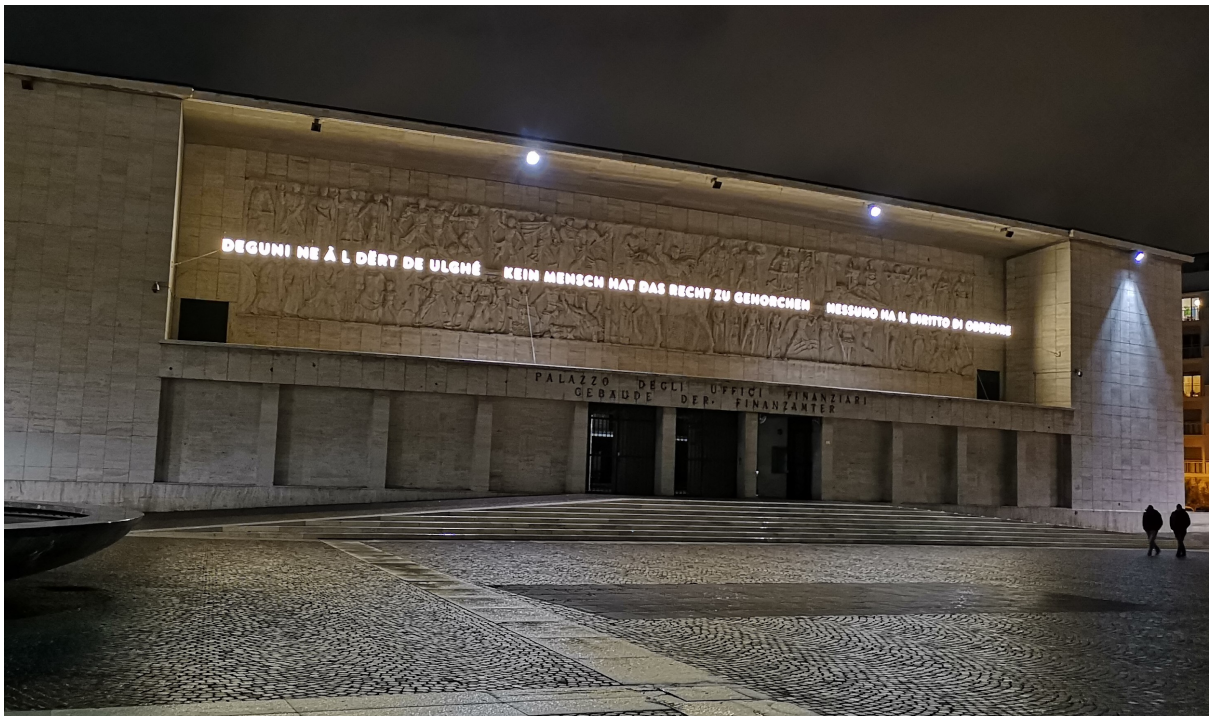


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Executive Summary

Unlike many monuments of past fascist leaders that have been eradicated throughout Europe, Bolzano, the capital of South Tyrol, Italy, still includes a monumental bas-relief that depicts Benito Mussolini and reminds locals of the Mussolini Fascist regime of Italy. For fifty years, the bas-relief divided opinions between left-wing groups, who argued for removal, and neo-fascist groups, who argued for it to remain untouched. It remained as the centre of protests for glorifying fascism, and reminded both South Tyrol's Italian-speaking and non-Italian-speaking citizens of a difficult past. This case study examines how artistic interventions can serve as a means to recontextualise a painful historical legacy.

Introduction

Following the end of World War II, the Allied Control Commission's bulletins and reports recommended that Italy destroy the country's remaining Fascist monuments or relocate them to museums.¹ However, this policy was not enacted consistently and as a result, many Fascist buildings and monuments remain standing scattered across Italy. One of these is the monumental bas-relief in Bolzano, South Tyrol, depicting Benito Mussolini and a glorified version of the Fascist Regime's history on the town's financial offices and *Casa Littoria*, the former headquarters of Mussolini's Fascist Party. In 2011, the Autonomous Provincial Council of Bolzano-Bozen organised a public competition to choose a project to recontextualise the bas-relief. In 2017, the quote 'Nobody Had the Right to Obey' from political theorist Hannah Arendt, written in the three local languages, was added in neon-LED lights. This case study explores the role of artistic intervention in redesigning controversial historical sites.

Background

In the aftermath of World War I, Italy was in a severe economic crisis, the government divided and political instability intensifying. Within this context, Benito Mussolini the founder of the National Fascist Party was able to begin his rise to power with the help of his 'Black Shirt Squads', a paramilitary force consisting by former soldiers who used violence and terror to intimidate, torture or even kill those who opposed Mussolini.² On October 28, 1922, he led a crowd of the Black Shirt Squads in a March in Rome. Fearing the escalation of a civil conflict, the king of Italy Victor Emmanuel III appointed Mussolini as Italy's Prime Minister, a position he held until his death in 1945.³ As an ally of Adolf Hitler in the Second World War, Mussolini led a totalitarian regime of racism, anti-Semitic and political persecution, as well as brutal colonial conquest, particularly in Ethiopia.⁴ During his dictatorship, Mussolini as a fascist leader as closely allied with both Nazi Germany and General Franco in Spain, whom he assisted during the Spanish Civil War 1936-9. He secured his position in the 1924 elections and remained in power until the Italian surrender at the end of World War II and the subsequent Allied invasion of Sicily in July 1943. Mussolini was arrested some days later on July 24 but managed to escape to the North of Italy where he established a new Fascist government with the help of Nazi Germany. However, this was short-lived as he was assassinated by a group of partisans on April 28, 1945.⁵

Following the end of his rule, there has been both a public and political condemnation of Fascism, and attempts to reorganise and continue the fascist party are expressly banned under Italian Law, most notably the 1953 Scelba Law blocks the reconstitution of the Fascist Party.⁶ Nevertheless, neo-fascist groups on the political far-right, like *Forza Nuova* (far-right political party founded in

¹ Ruth Ben-Ghiat, "Why Are So Many Fascist Monuments Still Standing in Italy?" *New Yorker*, October 5, 2017.

² Daily History, "How did Mussolini Rise to Power as the Dictator of Italy," *DailyHistory.org*, July 25, 2021.

³ Charles Keserich, "The Fiftieth Year of the "March on Rome": Recent Interpretations of Facism," *History Teacher* 6, no. 1 (1972).

⁴ Emilio Gentile, "Mussolini, Benito," *Dizionario biografico degli italiani* 77, (2012); Editors of Britannica, "Benito Mussolini," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, January 30, 2018.

⁵ John Foot, "Benito Mussolini. Italian dictator," *Britannica*, last updated July 25, 2021.

⁶ Ruth Ben-Ghiat, "Why Are So Many Fascist Monuments Still Standing in Italy?" *New Yorker*, October 5, 2017.

the 1990s), are prevalent and vocal in their support of the preservation of fascist buildings and monuments.⁷

Piffrader Bas-relief in Bolzano

Bolzano is a northern Italian town which serves as the capital of the region of South Tyrol. The region is located on the Austrian–Italian border, and was part of the Habsburg monarchy for centuries before it was annexed by Italy in 1919.⁸ After the annexation, the region of Tyrol was divided in two at the mountain pass of Brenner Pass.⁹ Today, South Tyrol is inhabited by a multi-ethnic population of 450,000, with a German-speaking majority and a considerable number of Italian-speaking citizens, whose numbers increased greatly after the Italian regime encouraged Italian citizens to settle in the region,¹⁰ there is also a small minority of Ladins.¹¹



Figure 1: "View of the Bas-Relief before the installation." Image by HaTe via Wikimedia Commons [CC BY-SA 3.0](https://commons.wikimedia.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/)

The bas-relief is part of Bolzano's financial offices, which used to be the headquarters of the National Fascist Party from its construction in 1939 up until the end of World War II.¹² The relief was designed by the South Tyrol sculptor Hans Piffrader, who moved to Bolzano-Bozen in 1931 and was part of the Fascist Union of Fine arts. The construction took place between 1939 and

⁷ Senato della Repubblica, "Costituzione della Repubblica Italiana," *Senato della Repubblica*, December, 2012.

⁸ Gerald Steinacher, "Fascist Legacies: The Controversy over Mussolini's Monuments in South Tyrol," *European Yearbook of Minority Issues Online* 10, no. 1 (2013): 647–66.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Bethany Bell, "South Tyrol's Identity Crisis: Italian, German, Austrian...?", *BBC News*, December 8, 2012.

¹¹ Jan Markusse, "Relaxation of Tensions in the Multi-Ethnic Border Province of South Tyrol: The Importance of Cross Border Relations," in *Nationalising and Denationalising European Border Regions, 1800–2000: Views from Geography and History*, ed. Hans Knippenberg and Jan Markusse (Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 1999), 133–51.

¹² Südtirol, "Gerichtsplatz," *Südtirol*, n.d., accessed March 11, 2021; BZ' Light on dictatorships, "The monumental Bas-Relief in Bozen-Bolzano: Hannah Arendt's Paradox," *BZ' Light on dictatorships*, n.d., accessed March 29, 2021.

1942, as part of the architectural project of Guido Pellizzari, Francisco Rossi and Luis Plattner for the construction of *Casa Littoria* (House Littoria-Latina).



Figure 2: "Mussolini on a horse." Image by Carlo Minucci via Flickr [CC BY-NC-SA 2.0](#)

The relief is made of 57 stone panels of different widths and 2.75 m high organised in two rows. Its size makes it 'the most impressive bas-relief from the Fascist Era.'¹³ The centre shows Mussolini on horseback and his slogan '**Believe, Obey, Fight**' carved in Italian. The panels represent a glorified version of Italian fascist history, it encompasses the 1922 March on Rome, the colonisation of Ethiopia of 1935-41, and the Italian assistance to General Francisco Franco during the Spanish Civil War.¹⁴ There are also depictions of various party leaders, and soldiers returning from battle.¹⁵ The last three panels were not installed until 1957, as they

arrived in Bolzano in 1943 a few months before the fall of Mussolini.¹⁶

Bolzano is also home to another fascist symbol, the *Monumento alla Vittoria*, (Monument to Victory), an arch completed in 1928 to commemorate the victory of World War I, which was converted into a museum in 2014.¹⁷ The arch has historically served as a focal point for tensions between the German and Italian populations of the area, as it is seen as a celebration of Italian annexation of South Tyrol.¹⁸ During Mussolini's dictatorship, the region's German-speaking inhabitants suffered harsh discrimination and oppression, the use of German in schools and in public was often prohibited, and German surnames were Italianized.¹⁹ The town became a highly ethnically divided town with an Italian majority and a German-speaking minority concentrated in the older parts of the town.²⁰ This 'forced Italianisation' and repression, in



Figure 3: "Monumento alla Vittoria." Image by Sailko via Wikimedia Commons [CC BY 3.0](#)

¹³ BZ Light on Dictatorships, "The Bas-Relief: The History Of Fascism In Images," *BZ' Light on dictatorships*, n.d., accessed October 19, 2021.

¹⁴ Gerald Steinacher, "Fascist Legacies: The Controversy over Mussolini's Monuments in Fascist Legacies: The Controversy over Mussolini's Monuments in South Tyrol South Tyrol," *European Yearbook of Minority Issues* 10 (2011), 653.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ BZ Light on Dictatorships, "The Bas-Relief: The History Of Fascism In Images," *Bas-Relief Bolzano*.

¹⁷ Città di Bolzano/ Stadt Bozen, "Premio museo europeo 2016," *Città di Bolzano/ Stadt Bozen*, April 12, 2016.

¹⁸ Gerald Steinacher, "Fascist Legacies: The Controversy over Mussolini's Monuments in Fascist Legacies: The Controversy over Mussolini's Monuments in South Tyrol South Tyrol," *European Yearbook of Minority Issues* 10 (2011), 651.

¹⁹ Gerald Steinacher, "Fascist Legacies: The Controversy over Mussolini's Monuments in South Tyrol," *European Yearbook of Minority Issues Online* 10, no. 1 (2013): 647–66.

²⁰ Gerald Steinacher, "Fascist Legacies: The Controversy over Mussolini's Monuments in South Tyrol," *European Yearbook of Minority Issues Online* 10, no. 1 (2013): 647–66.

turn, led the German-speaking population to withdraw from public life, and become increasingly marginalised.²¹

Even decades later, the remnants of the divisions created during the time of the Fascist regime still remain rife.²² Testimony of this division is reflected in the town's architecture itself, where Gothic Germanic structure fuses with buildings constructed by the Italian Fascist regime.²³ Furthermore, the German-speaking citizens of Bolzano, and South Tyrol in general, still do not consider themselves to be Italian and are forced to live among reminders of 'fascism's continued legacy in the form of various monuments.'²⁴ Many of the region's German speakers continue to believe in the ever-lasting hostility between the two language groups.²⁵ Others paint a more amicable picture between the two language groups, revealing that 'relations between the German and Italian speakers eventually started to improve in the 1970s when South Tyrol was granted autonomy.'²⁶ There are also small separatist movements that have a history of campaigning for reunification with North Tyrol in Austria.²⁷

History of the Contestation

The bas relief has been a subject of controversy in the region for many decades. After the Second World War, the Allies recommended Italy remove its fascist monuments from public spaces. However, the bas-relief was only completed in 1957, when the final three panels were added.²⁸ This triggered the first major contestation over the relief, as following this completion the South Tyrolean Peoples Party (SVP) orchestrated a protest against what they believed was 'the revival of the Mussolini cult of personality',²⁹ claiming that in Bolzano, his regime 'transformed the town and divided it along ethnic lines'³⁰ with the bas-relief being emblematic of this divide.

Over the following decades, the monument suffered several attacks, Tyrolean nationalists attempted to bomb the Victory Monument in September 1978 and April 1979 respectively.³¹ In the 1970s, the SVP along with smaller left-wing groups in the area called for all of the town's fascist monuments to be pulled down, however, this was never acted upon. On the other hand, through the 1980s and 1990, neo-fascist groups became more prominent and continued to highlight the importance of preserving the remaining standing fascist monuments.³² The main party vocal in advocating for this preservation was *Lega Nord* (North League - LN), a far-right political party, affiliated with Italy's Northern Region. LN ideologically appealed to many Northern neo-fascist groups, beliefs that the North was more productive than the rest of the country,

²¹ Alessia Setti, "When Conflict Is Written in Stone: Fascist Legacy in South Tyrol," *EURAC Research Magazine*, March 1, 2021.

²² Elizabeth Schumacher, "German-Speaking Italy and the Legacy of Fascism," *Deutsche Welle*, May 5, 2017.

²³ Bethany Bell, "South Tyrol's Identity Crisis: Italian, German, Austrian...?," *BBC News*, December 8, 2012.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ Gerald Steinacher, "Fascist Legacies: The Controversy over Mussolini's Monuments in South Tyrol," *European Yearbook of Minority Issues Online* 10, no. 1 (2013): 655.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*, 656.

³² *Ibid.*

particularly the South, were 'taking advantage of Northern Italian workers.'³³ In the national elections of 1994, the LN rose to power as part of the centre-right government coalition of 'the Freedom Pole' led by Silvio Berlusconi. Disenchanted with the coalition, LN abandoned it and re-formulated its program, on the basis of a call for a referendum for the independence of the North, which further aligned its ideologically with neo-fascist groups and Tyrolean nationalists.

To German-speaking citizens of the area, the bas-relief and other monuments have been a reminder of the regime that annexed them into a state that had never truly accepted them and had in many ways oppressed and marginalised them during the forced Italianisation within this period.³⁴ Moreover, the monuments served as an emblem of this long standing division, hostility and friction between the two language groups, created by the Fascist regime.³⁵

A particular area of contestation surrounding the bas-relief is its glorification of Mussolini and the timing of its completion. During this period while countries such as Germany underwent a process of denazification of public spaces where all representations of prominent Nazi figures like Adolf Hitler were removed, Mussolini's legacy remained largely untouched.³⁶ His legacy remains supported in ultra-right wing and neo-fascist groups that are still common in the Italian political sphere even today. *Casapound* (an Italian neo-fascist movement) are one such group among whom Mussolini is affectionately referred to as *Il Duce* (The Leader) and his policies and figure revered.³⁷ While in office, former Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi was known as a Mussolini sympathiser, while in 2005, he celebrated the election of Giovanni Benussi as mayor of Bolzano, a man who believed that 'fascism had done much good.'³⁸

The presence of these groups and public figures highlights the great fracture between the two sides of this contestation. To the German inhabitants of the South Tyrol region, Mussolini was not only a fascist leader but one who outlawed their language and culture for decades and pushed them out of their cultural home.³⁹ While for many neo-fascist groups Mussolini remains a revered and respected figure.

From Mussolini's Bas-Relief to Hannah Arendt's Neon Quote

In 2011, a competition was announced by the Autonomous Provincial Council of Bolzano-Bozen. Artists, architects, historians and anyone involved in the cultural sphere were welcomed to present ideas for the transformation of the relief into a monument of memory, to create an 'architectural and artistic dialogue.'⁴⁰ Out of 486 ideas presented, five joint winners were chosen

³³ Michele Conte, "Far-Right Identities in Italy. An Analysis of Contemporary Italian Far-Right Parties," *University of Lund*.

³⁴ Alessia Setti, "When Conflict Is Written in Stone: Fascist Legacy in South Tyrol," *EURAC Research Magazine*, March 1, 2021; Bethany Bell, "South Tyrol's Identity Crisis: Italian, German, Austrian...?" *BBC News*, December 8, 2012.

³⁵ Ibid.; Elizabeth Schumacher, "German-Speaking Italy and the Legacy of Fascism," *Deutsche Welle*, May 5, 2017.

³⁶ Susan Nieman, "There are no nostalgic Nazi memorials," *Atlantic*, September 14, 2019.

³⁷ Tobias Jones, "The fascist movement that has brought Mussolini back to the mainstream," *Guardian*, February 22, 2018.

³⁸ Gerald Steinacher, "Fascist Legacies: The Controversy over Mussolini's Monuments in South Tyrol," *European Yearbook of Minority Issues Online* 10, no. 1 (2013): 659.

³⁹ Alessia Setti, "When Conflict Is Written in Stone: Fascist Legacy in South Tyrol," *EURAC Research Magazine*, March 1, 2021; Bethany Bell, "South Tyrol's Identity Crisis: Italian, German, Austrian...?" *BBC News*, December 8, 2012.

⁴⁰ BZ' Light on dictatorships, "The Monumental Bas-Relief in Bozen-Bolzano: From Hans Piffarder to Hannah Arendt: 2011: A Competition of Ideas," *BZ' Light on dictatorships*, n.d., accessed March 29, 2021.

by a special commission created for the evaluation of the projects, its members were designated by the Italian State, the Provincial Administration of South Tyrol and the City Council of Bolzano.⁴¹

The relief was transformed and recontextualised with a quote by philosopher, historian, and political scientist, Hannah Arendt.⁴² The LED-illuminated inscription was added in the 'three official languages of the province (German, Italian and Ladin)', reading: 'No one has the right to obey' a direct response to the existing slogan on the relief.⁴³ This artistic intervention aims to 'highlight the reflection made by parts of civil society' on the relief.⁴⁴ The two artists who made the proposal, Arnold Holzknecht and Michele Bernaridi, explain that the intervention is explicitly minimal to contrast the 'grandiloquence' of the fascist-era art, while the quote is a direct answer 'to the invitation to blind the obedience contained in the fascist slogan.'⁴⁵ 'The addition of the words has a polyphonic effect. Instead of erasing the traces of the past, the artistic installation offers a powerful anti-fascist message in response to Mussolini's demand to believe in fascism, obey his demands and fight for its cause.. Behind the quote, the original relief is still visible, this is intended 'to emphasize that memory - and therefore history - is not a 'blank state' but rather 'constantly reinterpreted through the lens of the present.'⁴⁶ In front of the monument, visitors can find information plaques that explain the relief's history and context.



Figure 4: 'Inauguration of the installation.' Image by Bartleby08 via Wikimedia Commons [CC BY-SA 4.0](#)

The governor of South-Tyrol, Arno Kompatscher, declared that the modification of the monument was committed to the 'values of humanity and democracy', and that this artistic intervention intended to transform the site from being a 'monument of warning' of 'what was once a provocation of fascism.'⁴⁷ The installation further intends to demonstrate historical 'sedimentation' in which the present builds on the meaning of the past. At the public opening of the installation on November 5, 2017, the mayor of Bolzano attended, an orchestra performed and a minute's silence was held for the victims of the fascist regime.⁴⁸

⁴¹ Ibid

⁴² Ibid

⁴³ Ibid

⁴⁴ BZ' Light on dictatorships, "'The monumental Bas-Relief in Bozen-Bolzano: From Hans Piffrader to Hannah Arendt,'" *BZ' Light on dictatorships*, n.d., accessed March 29, 2021.

⁴⁵ Carlo Invernizzi-Accetti, "A small Italian town can teach the world how to defuse controversial monument," *Guardia*, December 6, 2017.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Huffington Post, "A Bolzano Monumento Di Epoca Fascista 'coperto' Con Una Frase Di Hannah Arendt," *HuffPost*, November 6, 2017.

⁴⁸ Amministrazione Provincia Bolzano, "Bassorilievo Piffrader, il 5 novembre si accende l'installazione," *Amministrazione Provincia Bolzano*, October 27, 2017.

The installation has been considered a success because it generated almost no controversy, not nationally or locally, and it has been praised as a 'far smarter strategy' than either taking down the relief or leaving it as it was.⁴⁹ The main criticism it received was the predictable recriminations of some conservative intellectuals, politicians and also neo-fascist groups. Vittorio Sgarbi, art critic and conservative-liberal politician, described it as 'wasted money.'⁵⁰ Politician Michaela Biancofiore of *Forza Italia* (centre-right political party) spoke of the 'erasure' of history and of Italian identity.⁵¹ While the local branch of the neo-fascist group *Casapound* criticised it heavily, calling it a 'Taliban act against art and the Italian community.'⁵²

On the other hand, there was barely any criticism from those who believed that the bas-relief should have been removed.⁵³ In response to the criticism, the mayor of Bolzano, Luigi Spagnolli, stated in a press conference in april 2011: 'Frankly I do not accept the reaction of certain people who think the operation does not make sense', the mayor added that the initiative 'aims to bring together the extremely opposed. Personally, I think it is important to search for a shared and shareable solution.'⁵⁴

Decision-Making Processes

In 2011, in a letter sent to the President of the Autonomous Provincial Council of Bolzano-Bozen, Luis Durnwalder, the Italian Minister for Culture, Sandro Bondi, addressed the controversy of the Fascist-era monuments of Bolzano. In his letter, Bondi assured that the restoration works of the Monument to Victory would include contextualisation of its history, which would involve local institutions in the decision-making process.⁵⁵ Following the Minister's proposal, on February 2, 2011, the Autonomous Provincial Council of Bolzano-Bozen announced a competition for ideas to transform the façade. It was open to anyone involved in the cultural sphere, in total 486 projects were submitted. The criteria of the proposal were that it could take any form as long as this would 'transform the bas-relief into a place of memory, so that it was no longer visible directly by accessible thoughtfully, with appropriate explanatory texts' and would create a dialogue between the building and the square it is located on.⁵⁶

The projects submitted were judged by a special commission of five, appointed by the Italian State, the Provincial Administration of South Tyrol and the City Council of Bolzano: Ugo Soragni (architect and chairman), Andrea di Michele (professor at Bolzano University), Hannes Obermair (researcher at Eurac Research), Christine Roilo (archivist and director of the South Tyrol archives),

⁴⁹ Carlo Invernizzi-Accetti, "A Small Italian Town Can Teach the World How to Defuse Controversial Monuments," *Guardian*, December 6, 2017.

⁵⁰ Susanna Turco, "Cosi a Bolzano hanno 'smantellato' il bassorilievo gigante di Benito Mussolini," *L'Espresso*, November 6, 2017.

⁵¹ HuffPost, "A Bolzano Monumento Di Epoca Fascista 'coperto' Con Una Frase Di Hannah Arendt," *HuffPost*, November 6, 2017.

⁵² Sergio Rame, "Un led per coprire Mussolini. Polemica a Bolzano: 'Atto talebano,'" *Giornale*, February 5, 2017.

⁵³ Alto Adige, "Ladinser: 'Il bassorilievo di Mussolini deve essere definitivamente rimosso,'" *Alto Adige*, February 10, 2011; Gerald Steinacher, "Fascist Legacies: The Controversy over Mussolini's Monuments in South Tyrol," *European Yearbook of Minority Issues Online* 10, no. 1 (2013): 664.

⁵⁴ Città di Bolzano/ Stadt Bozen, "Decisioni Giunta Comunale. Conferenza stampa sindaco Spagnolli," *Città di Bolzano/ Stadt Bozen*, April 19, 2011.

⁵⁵ BZ' Light on dictatorships, "The Monumental Bas-Relief in Bozen-Bolzano: From Hans Piffarder to Hannah Arendt: 2011: A Competition of Ideas," *BZ' Light on dictatorships*, n.d., accessed March 29, 2021.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

and Silvia Spada (from the Municipal Museum of Bolzano).⁵⁷ The submission of ideas and selection of the winners was followed by a long process of discussion, the final decision was taken by the Autonomous Provincial Council of Bolzano-Bozen and the mayor of the *Comune* of Bolzano.⁵⁸

In 2014, after some bureaucratic delay, the Minister for Cultural Heritage and Activities, Dario Franceschini, assured his support in a meeting with the President of the Province, and later on, he gave the written confirmation of his Ministry's support and of Minister Pier Carlo Padoan, responsible for the *Palazzo delle Finanze* where the bas-relief is located.⁵⁹ After the confirmation of the State's support, the project continued and the installation was finished and inaugurated in 2017.

In this case, the decision-making process included both the local and national governments, as well as the public input through the submission of project ideas. The process was transparent, as all the calls were made public, discussed in press conferences and published online. During this process, the committee created a detailed website⁶⁰ where visitors could find information of the significance of the bas-relief but also remain updated on the installation process.

Summary and Conclusions

The bas-relief of Mussolini in Bolzano remained in place for fifty years without any official attempt to remove it or re-contextualise it, despite the violent and non-violent protests from left-wing organisations and Tyrol nationalists. It stayed in place, in the former Fascist headquarters, as a constant reminder of Italian Fascism and the fracture between South Tyrol speaking communities, the Germans, Italians and Ladins. In 2011, the Public Administration made a public call for projects to recontextualise the bas-relief, deciding on a LED-illuminated quote by Hannah Arendt, 'Nobody Has the Right to Obey' in the three local languages. For the local authorities, the quote has successfully managed to re-contextualise the monument and change its significance. In contrast to Mussolini's obey which absolves individual and collective responsibility, it now highlights the individual choice to obey and the responsibility that may arise from the actions taken.

Bolzano's solution has been praised as a middle way to recognise the Italian fascist past without glorifying it. It has become an example of how contested monuments can be repurposed and contextualised to fit modern values without erasing them. This case study raises questions over the extent of public participation in dealing with contested histories, and how such monuments can and should be adapted - or if they should be allowed to remain at all. The case also invites the

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Amministrazione Provincia Bolzano, "Bassorilievo di Piazza Tribunale a Bolzano: fino al 7 marzo il concorso di idee," *Amministrazione Provincia Bolzano*, March 1, 2011.

⁵⁹ Amministrazione Provincia Bolzano, "Dalla Giunta: verso soluzione per bassorilievo di Piffraeder," *Amministrazione Provincia Bolzano*, September 30, 2014.

⁶⁰ BZ' Light on dictatorships: <http://www.basrelief-bolzano.com/en.html>.

public to reflect on the role of history in contemporary society and the complex dynamics of historical memory in coming to terms with the past.

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About Contested Histories

In recent years, there have been many contestations over memorials, street names, and other physical representations of historical legacies in public spaces. These contestations often reflect deeper societal tensions whether triggered by political transitions, demographic shifts, inter-ethnic strife, or a growing awareness of unaddressed historical injustices.

The Contested Histories project is a multi-year initiative designed to identify principles, processes, and best practices for addressing these contestations at the community or municipal level and in the classroom. Conflicts about history, heritage, and memory are a global phenomenon, and, although each case is different, comparative cases can indicate lessons learned and reflect best practices.

About IHJR at EuroClio

The Institute for Historical Justice and Reconciliation (IHJR) is a research centre at EuroClio - European Association for History Educators in The Hague, The Netherlands. The IHJR works with educational and public policy institutions to organise and sponsor historical discourse in pursuit of acknowledgement and the resolution of historical disputes in divided communities and societies.

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