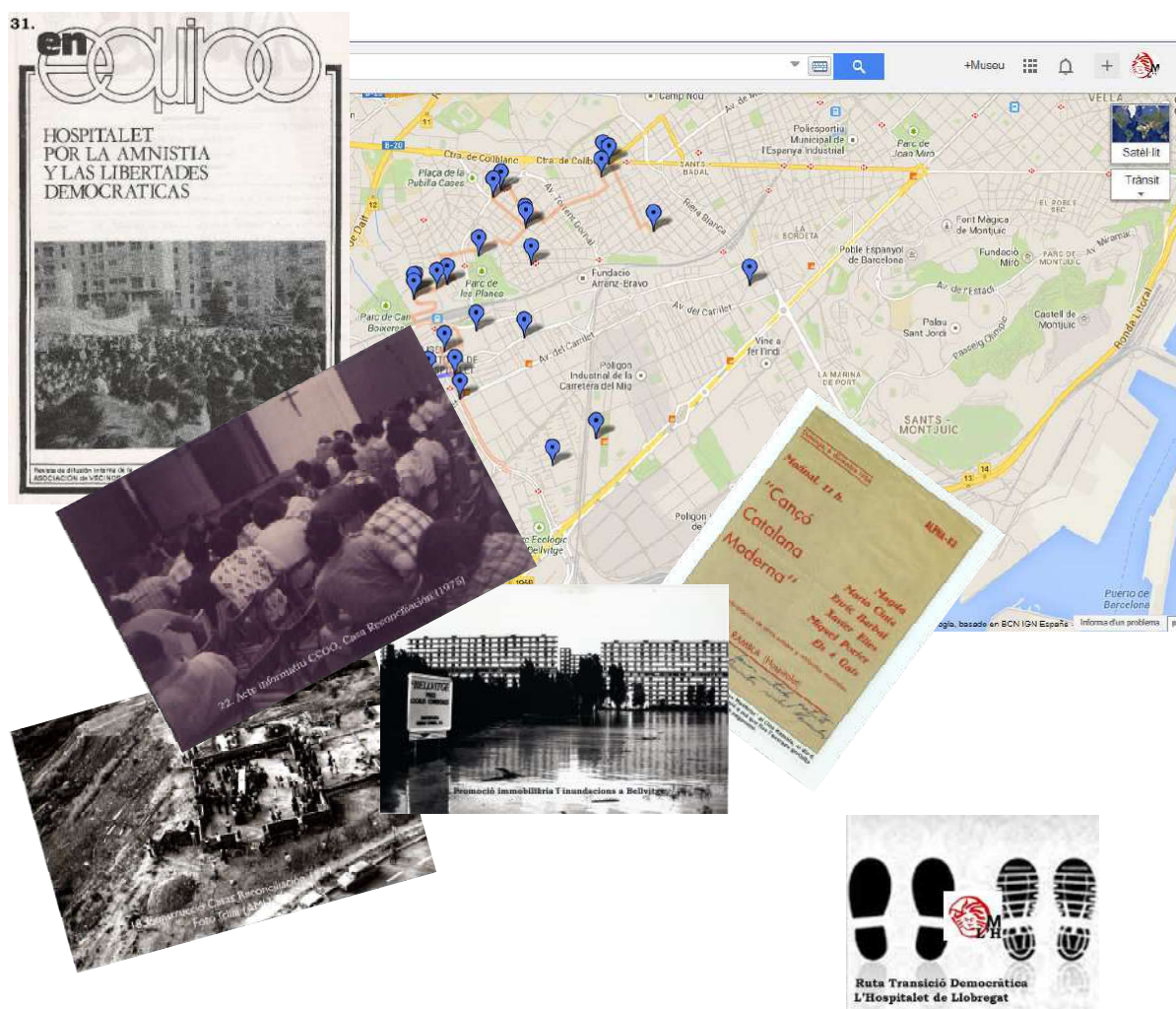




Museu de L'Hospitalet
Can Riera. Espai de memòria

DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION TRAIL IN L'HOSPITALET DE LLOBREGAT. Educational resource



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Ajuntament de L'Hospitalet

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DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION TRAIL IN L'HOSPITALET DE LLOBREGAT

Presentation

The **Museum of L'Hospitalet** will devote the Can Riera farmhouse (16th c.), one of its three main buildings located on the Xipreret Street heritage axis, to democratic memory.

Can Riera-Memory Space of L'Hospitalet features an interpretation, documentation and consultation centre, in addition to educational resources, all conceived to familiarize visitors with the period of the city's history that spans from the 2nd Republic to the democratic transition, and most especially, L'Hospitalet's role in the fight against "Francoism", the ideology of the dictatorship that ruled Spain from the end of the Civil War (1939) until the dictator's death in 1975.

Among the educational resources on offer are a number of workshops and urban trails that deal with the 2nd Republic, the Spanish Civil War and post-Civil War period, with some incursions into the years transpiring between 1960 and 1980 (especially 1970-1980), known as Spain's Democratic Transition.

The design of the Democratic Transition Trail in L'Hospitalet (RTDLH) is meant as an initial step to fill a void in educational resources on this period.

Visitors walking the Trail will face certain time constraints, which has made it necessary to summarize some of the contents. However, if you would like more information, a number of publications and studies have been produced in recent years that are sure to satisfy the curiosity of anyone interested in the subject.

A brief explanation of the Democratic Transition Trail in L'Hospitalet can be given from different perspectives. Whatever the standpoint taken, given the extensive bibliography, there is always a risk of omitting demonstrations, names of activists, organizations or locations. Additional bibliography is provided to complete the information.



Democratic Transition Trail in L'Hospitalet de Llobregat



The Trail is an activity that facilitates the transmission of knowledge to individuals as they follow an urban route. The city, streets, buildings and intersections illustrate and enrich the explanations. The trail reveals the complexity of this setting, and enables visitors to build mental maps that will help their understanding.



Introduction

The RTDLH covers relevant events in L'Hospitalet history from the 1960-80 period. They have been prepared through the lens of local historiography, with special emphasis on the structural convergence of diverse movements (neighbours, workers, religious, cultural and political) as builders of a “new” citizenry, and in their struggles to conquer political, social, economic and cultural rights.

The city of L'Hospitalet was a focal point of the Democratic Transition process that took place in Spain. From 1960 to 1980, an anti-Francoism opposition was consolidated in L'Hospitalet society that was in several ways a paradigmatic predecessor, and a model of reference for other territories.

As a precursor to the Democratic Transition, the time prior to the 1960's was characterized by fierce repression against anyone found in the clandestine opposition to the Francoist regime. Among the women and men of L'Hospitalet who opposed the dictatorship were politicians, trade unionists and cultural activists with republican, anarchist, libertarian and communist backgrounds.

The keys to the uniqueness of L'Hospitalet in the Democratic Transition process can be found in the economic and demographic, and consequently urban changes that the city underwent during this period.

The structural consolidation of this social reality fuelled ever-greater circles of anti-Francoist opposition, albeit with numerous difficulties and individual risks due to the regime's immobilism.

Educational resource

Content and materials:

1. Documentation for educators/teachers
2. Bibliography and websites
3. Trail and descriptions of the sites on Google Maps with links to on-line resources.
4. Activity card
5. Copies of photos and documents to illustrate the explanations.

Aimed at educators and teachers, to enable work on the essential concepts proposed with the students participating in the trail.

The educator's documentation makes it feasible to structure the information and adapt it to the curricular design of the school subject (history, form teaching, philosophy, etc.) and integrate the concepts and resources learned in the educational and training contexts by the students and participants.

General objectives

- Know the historical context of the democratic transition process in Spain in general, and more particularly in L'Hospitalet.
- Know certain historical events that are fundamental to understand the period discussed.
- Evaluate the role of women and men as individual and collective subjects of the processes.
- Assume the democratic values of co-existence and the setting, rejecting any unfair, discriminatory situations.
- Understand the factual and heritage values of historical sources as testimonials to the past.
- Promote the generation of local identity by giving value to public spaces and services that are the results of collective demands.

Development of the activity

Preliminary observations and considerations

- The trail features a total of 25 sites.
- If done on foot, the trail is some 7 km long and lasts approximately two hours.
- Some sites are off the suggested trail. Therefore, it is recommended to listen to the explanation at the prior site.
- Visitors are advised to finish the trail at Site 23, next to the L-1 Bellvitge metro station.

List of sites grouped by districts:

Collblanc and La Torrassa

1. Club Pimpinela - Plaça Espanyola 8-9
2. Parc de la Marquesa - Ctra. Collblanc 67-73
3. Sant Ramon Nonat Parish. Ctra. Collblanc 72
4. Samper and Frasquerias Pedret. Passatge Amat s/n

Pubilla Cases

5. Hospital General de L'Hospitalet, former Red Cross Hospital. Avinguda Josep Molins, 29-41

La Florida – Les Planes

6. Electrical towers. Av. Primavera and Av. Catalunya
7. La Florida Social Centre. C. Enginyer Moncunill 62
8. Nostra Senyora de la Llum Parish C. Enginyer Moncunill
9. Blocs Florida. Plaça Blocs Florida
10. Parc de Les Planes / La Cardoner

Can Serra

11. Torras i Bages Secondary School. Av. de Can Serra, 101
12. La Carpa. Plaça de la Carpa
13. Casa Reconciliació 1974. Can Serra 80-82
14. Can Serra School for Adults. Av. Can Serra 80-82
15. Conscientious Objectors Group of Can Serra. Av. Can Serra 80-82

Centre, Sant Josep

16. La Farga - Altos Hornos de Cataluña S.A. Carrer de Barcelona, 2
17. Centre Catòlic. Rambla de Just Oliveras 34
18. L'Hospitalet City Hall building. Plaça de l'Ajuntament
19. Illa dels Sindicats (Trade Union Block)
20. Sant Josep Parish (Carrer d'Enric Prat de la Riba, 145)
21. Pont de la Llibertat Av. Del Carrilet / Rambla de la Marina

Santa Eulàlia and Granvia Sud

22. Sant Isidre Parish. Carrer de l'Aprestadora, 3

Bellvitge and el Gornal

23. Bellvitge Towers and Residents' Associations
24. Bellvitge Hospital
25. El Gornal Housing Estate

Subject matter addressed on the trail

- Historic and political context
 - State
 - Catalonia
- Central themes in L'Hospitalet
 - Urban planning
 - Population
 - Economy
 - Political – municipal government
- Agents of change
 - Residents' associations
 - Political parties
 - Trade Unions
 - Parish centres
 - Associations movement

Chronological framework and context

The Democratic Transition was a political and social process. What no one can agree on are the years over which it took place. Among the undeniable landmarks of the process are the dates of the dictator Franco's death on November 20, 1975, Spain's first democratic general elections in 1977, the ratification of the Constitution in 1978 (thus consecrating a social, democratic State governed by the rule of law), and the 1980 elections for the Parliament of Catalonia.

A rapid succession of changes in the country's political and social life took place in a brief period spanning less than a decade. Looking back, it can be understood how the natural precipitation of these processes had begun, some timidly, others with more force, many years before.

Certain events that shook the country must also be borne in mind, such as the Atocha attorneys massacre in 1977 or the failed coup d'état of Guardia Civil colonel Antonio Tejero in 1981.

Other dates that may be considered part of the Transition include the assassination of Carrero Blanco in 1973, the NATO Referendum of 1986 and Spain's accession to the European Economic Community in 1986. Some pundits believe that the Transition ended with the victory of the Popular Party and José Maria Aznar in Spain's general elections of 1996.

L'Hospitalet de Llobregat

The city of L'Hospitalet was a focal point of the Democratic Transition process that took place in Spain. From 1960 to 1980, an anti-Francoism opposition was consolidated in L'Hospitalet society that was in several ways a paradigmatic predecessor, and a model of reference for other territories.

The precursor to the Democratic Transition, prior to the 1960's was characterized by fierce repression against anyone found in the clandestine opposition to the Francoist regime. Among the women and men of L'Hospitalet who opposed the dictatorship were politicians, trade unionists and cultural activists with republican, anarchist, libertarian and communist backgrounds.

The keys to the uniqueness of L'Hospitalet in the Democratic Transition process can be found in the economic and demographic, and consequently urban changes that the city underwent during this period.

The structural consolidation of this social reality fuelled ever-greater circles of anti-Francoist opposition, albeit with numerous difficulties and individual risks due to the regime's immobilism.

Population

To understand the influence of the population factor, it is useful to know some initial facts.

- From 1940 (51,249 inhabitants) to 1965 (180,140), L'Hospitalet's population grew by 350%.
- In the 1960's, the population expanded at a rate of 10,000 new residents per year.
- By 1970 L'Hospitalet had 282,141 inhabitants.
- The age distribution was imbalanced toward the young, with 22.49% under 15 and 5.31% over 65 years of age.
- L'Hospitalet had the highest-percentage growth rate of any city in Spain.

- With 300,000 inhabitants, the city would have been entitled to a seat in the Procuradores en Cortes (Spanish Parliament).

The growth trend came to an end in 1986, as the population plateaued at 279,779 inhabitants (of those who left the city, 30% returned to their place of origin, and 70% relocated elsewhere within the metropolitan area). The population underwent a net reduction due to the lack of sufficient housing.

Urban planning

In the 1950's, demographic pressure drove the creation of new districts built around small urban developments: La Florida (Onésimo Redondo Towers, 1955), Pubilla Cases and Sanfeliu.

The 1960's saw the advent of a new urban model, based on housing estates: Bellvitge (1965), Can Serra (1966) and el Gornal (1974).

Conversely, historic neighbourhoods such as Centre, Sant Josep, Santa Eulàlia and Collblanc, traditional centres of population, lost prominence in percentage terms.

The lack of urban planning became apparent, as did the existence of partial plans that could be modified at will.

A growing population added to unplanned urban growth became a source of conflict due to the complete lack of essential and basic services: public transportation, health care, schools, sewers, street lighting, etc.

Economy and society

In the 20th century, L'Hospitalet's economy was mainly defined by the workings of a larger territory; Barcelona's area of influence. In this regard, the year 1957, with the "Stabilization Plan" marked the beginning of an era for L'Hospitalet's industrial network, and on another note, the end of another.

This new period brought the decline of mainstays such as agriculture and the textile industry. One by one, large industrial firms like Vilumara, Trinxet and Tecla Sala closed their doors. To the contrary, this period saw growth in the metal industry and the beginnings of the tertiary service sector.

The heavy influx of immigrants from Andalusia, Extremadura and Castille, most of whom were unskilled labourers, were exploited in an economy of unchecked capitalism. Troubled labour relations led to formation of the first workers' organizations (in 1966, the 1st Commissions Obreres [Workers' Commissions, CCOO]) in L'Hospitalet.

This transformation in production came with a greater dysfunctions between the kinds of jobs available in L'Hospitalet and its residents' quality of life. Agriculture and local industry were no longer the economic mainstays. Together with the demographic pressure and urban growth, these factors drove a gradual suburbanization of the city.

The economic crisis of 1973 had a harsh impact on L'Hospitalet, and brought the system's contradictions to light.



Democratic Transition Trail in L'Hospitalet de Llobregat



The “drivers of change” were: residents’ associations, political parties, trade unions, parish centres and the cultural associations movement. Explanations en route!

Collblanc - La Torrassa

1. Club Pimpinela - Plaça Espanyola 8-9

During the dictatorship, unofficial cultural activities could only be held in a few associations, or in the protected confines of certain parish buildings. By the end of the dictator's regime, these places had become the settings for clandestine trade union or political meetings, residents' assemblies, literacy centres and Catalan language schools.

Club Pimpinela (1945-1972) was able to adapt to the social needs of young people unable to find places to hold their activities. The Club took in a significant number of youths who left the Unió Excursionista de Catalunya (Rambling Union of Catalonia – UEC) due to what they perceived as that organization's lack of commitment to Catalanism (they had not shown support for UEC members detained in 1962 for distributing materials on behalf of Front Obrer Català [Workers' Front of Catalonia]).

Joan Rimbau, born in Havana to Catalan parents, and closely linked to the Partit Socialista Unificat de Catalunya (Unified Socialist Party of Catalonia - PSUC) was club president throughout the second half of the 1960's. He was a firm believer in the value of the associations network.

The first meeting of a fledgling CCOO trade union was held at Club Pimpinela in 1966.

Over the 1962-69 period, until the constitution of the Residents' Association, Club Pimpinela was behind most of the cultural activities in the district. Neither of the two parishes was culturally active at that time.

In the spring of 1976, in a clandestine Bellvitge law office, the L'Hospitalet Local Chapter of the UGT Trade Union was established by Ramon Fernández Jurado, Ignacio Pujana and Garcilaso Aguado. They publicly presented the new trade union a few days later in the auditorium of the Santiago Apòstol School (near Plaça Espanyola). The organizers of the event, aware of the trade union's modest following in the city, were surprised by the overflow crowd that packed the auditorium.

Pictures and documents



2. Pl. Espanyola, Nadal de 1965 (Recull d'imatges Revista El Tot L'H)

No. 2.

Club Pimpinela and Plaça Espanyola, Christmas 1965 (El Tot L'H Image Collection)

2. Parc de la Marquesa - (Ctra. Collblanc 67-73)

The 1970 Partial Urban Plan for Collblanc – La Torrassa, presented by the Municipal Government, affected 998 of the 11,000 households in that district. Plans for facilities such as a park and basketball courts, and the opening of new thoroughfares, would mean the demolition of over 800 homes.

Local residents spoke out immediately; they had not been consulted on the plan, and they were not satisfied with the solutions offered to affected families. A total of 795 appeals were filed against the project. This resident's mobilization, which took the form of meetings, assemblies and demonstrations of all kinds, was covered, to an extent, by Barcelona's La Vanguardia newspaper. The local administration was overwhelmed by the avalanche of residents' protests.

This Collblanc-La Torrassa Urban Plan fuelled citizen mobilization and the creation of the Collblanc-La Torrassa Residents' Association in 1971 (it had its first headquarters at Bar Rius on Carrer Llobregat, and relocated to Carrer Llançà shortly thereafter). The first group formed in Sant Ramon Nonat Parish, to protest the partial demolitions planned for Progrés and Occident streets. With the legal protection afforded by the Associations Law of 1964, this Residents' Association was formally established in March 1971, and conducted some of its activities from parish offices. Other Associations put on film sessions at the Cine Club Buñuel (1975).

On September 25, 1972, the Residents' Association called an assembly at Club Pimpinela to actively oppose the Urban Plan. A Judicial Review Court dismissed the residents' appeals in 1974. The Residents' Associations appealed to the Spanish Supreme Court, where the entire process was halted once and for all, coinciding with the dictator's death in 1975.

The Collblanc-La Torrassa Residents' Association launched other claims and protests, such as the demands for improvements to Riera Blanca, a street shared with Barcelona that often flooded when it rained, as also occurred on Avinguda Torrent Gornal. This activity led to the neighbourhood's recovery of the Parc de la Marquesa, purchased by the Local Council to compensate for the scarcity of green areas. Thus, Parc de la Marquesa stands as a symbol of the struggle to improve the neighbourhood, in the face of the land speculation that has done so much damage to L'Hospitalet.

Pictures and documents



3. Parc de la Marquesa i regidoria dte. anys 70' (recull d'imatges Revista B Tor LH)



No. 3.

Parc de la Marquesa Collblanc-Torrassa local council district office (1970's)

No. 4

Sign "Park Saved by Democracy" 1977. Felip Gómez – Mercè Olivares Collection. AMLH R. 5714

3. Sant Ramon Nonat Parish and Residents' Association (c. Collblanc 72)

Clandestine meetings, especially of the Joventut Obrera Cristiana (Young Christian Workers - JOC) were held **in Sant Ramon Nonat Parish (inside Barcelona's city limits)** throughout the 1960's. The JOC was a training ground for future leaders of workers' and political movements.

The parishes of L'Hospitalet and grass-roots clergymen had an impact on the development of workers' and other popular movements. This position was in clear contradiction to Franco's regime and church authorities.

A debate began within the church (Vatican II Council, 1959-1965) on consecration (administration of the sacraments) and their commitment to workers' movements. A small part of the Catalan church was in transition towards a more progressive form of Catholic thought, and many parishes saw reforms in the liturgy, parish life and the public image of priests. Parish premises became centres where people could get involved, encouraged and led by the so-called "worker priests". They also conducted a number of association activities, the best-known of which were the adult literacy and Catalan language courses already under way in the 1960's.

L'Hospitalet parishes and clergymen responsible for the parish centres:

1. Sant Ramon Nonat: Josep Breu
2. Santa Eulàlia: Jaume Madina
3. Sant Isidre: Joan Carrera
4. Sant Josep: Leandre Gassó
5. Bellvitge: Pepe Ituarte
6. Can Serra: Jaume Botey, Josep Fabró
7. Almeda (Cornellà): Oleguer Bellavista

Starting in the 1960's, a new phenomenon of opposition to the regime came into being, that of the workers' movement, integrated inside another: breaking away from the pastoral practice imposed by National Catholicism. The priests lent citizens their churches and parish buildings to hold then-clandestine meetings. Parish premises offered a degree of security, as they belonged to the church, one of the cornerstones of the Francoist regime.

This activity at the parish level was not limited to L'Hospitalet. It also occurred in Santa Coloma de Gramenet and les Arenes, of Terrassa. The grass-roots clergy movement was organized and coordinated by vicar general Joan Batlles.

A group of parishioners and persons linked to the PSUC was formed at Saint Ramon Nonat Parish. They were led by Felip Gómez and Mercè Olivares. The group would eventually configure the Collblanc - La Torrassa Residents' Association.

In 1978, the Congress of the Catalan Federation of the PSOE was held at Sant Ramon Nonat parish. A new executive committee was elected, including G. Aguado and Secretary Josep Maria Triginer. Triginer played a key role in the process and congress of Socialist unification that was represented by the Socialists of Catalonia Party (PSC-PSOE), of whose leadership he formed part.

4. SAMPER S.A. and *Frasquerias Pedret*. Passatge Amat s/n

This part of Collblanc (Passatge Amat) was an area of major industrial concentration. Among the more prominent companies was *Frasquerias Pedret*, which made glass bottles and jars, and had a workforce of 260 employees in the 1980's. Another notable firm was *Myrurgia*, which also had 260 workers.

The economic crisis of the 70's forced *Frasquerias Pedret* to relocate in the face of opposition from the employees, who locked themselves inside the company in protest. SAMPER workers expressed solidarity and supported them by bringing food during the lock-in.

SAMPER was a foundry of L'Hospitalet's metallurgic sector with a headcount of some 200 workers. There, a small core of PSUC members (José Carrasco and Jaume Valls) established the first Workers' Commission Trade Union organized in L'Hospitalet in 1966.

The CCOO Trade Union was founded in the Sant Medir (Barcelona) parish in 1964. A noteworthy delegation from L'Hospitalet was on hand at that founding meeting.

The Workers' Commissions presented themselves as a trade union alternative to the Francoist union model, incarnated in the "Sindicats Verticals" (Vertical Unions). The Vertical Union or Organización Sindical Española (Spanish Union Organization - OSE) integrated the labour relations of workers (called 'producers') and business owners in a single vertical structure, and supposedly equal conditions.

CCOO deployed an "entryism" tactic in the trade union elections of 1963, using the Vertical Union structure to boost their capacity for action against Franco's regime. A relevant number of workers from L'Hospitalet formed part of the "jurados de empresa" (the vertical syndicates' equivalent to works councils) as union stewards.

At SAMPER, workers claimed basic rights taken up in the regulations then in force, and that were systematically violated, such as holidays, working conditions, hygienic conditions, lunch room, etc. Claims for equal pay were the focal point of the conflict. Following a period of struggle, in which some workers were threatened and dismissed, they managed to get fired workers rehired, and achieved wage equality.

José Carrasco was the union steward. Jaume Valls also played a leading role.

In 1967, police swept the Almeda Parish in Cornellà and arrested 40 anti-Francoist dissidents. Four were from L'Hospitalet, one of whom was Jaume Valls.



No. 5.
CCOO Poster in L'Hospitalet. R. Luque Collection AMLH R. 8726

PUBILLA CASAS

5. Hospital General de L'Hospitalet, former Red Cross Hospital. Plaça Mare de Déu del Pilar; Av. Josep Molins/Av. Isabel la Catòlica/Av. Miraflores

As the entire city was going through the political process of democratic transition, this neighbourhood lived out a cultural and social phenomenon of its own: religious processions organized by rank-and-file citizens, outside the church's supervision.

In 1977, 15 men with Andalusian roots sat in a bar, watching a procession being broadcast from Seville. Spontaneously inspired, they used a table from the bar, some linens and a few beer bottles to improvise their own Holy Week procession float. Once on the street, neighbours joined in, singing *saetas*, Flamenco verses traditionally sung in Holy Week. *"It wasn't a caricature, or a mockery. It was neither folklore nor superstition. It was the expression of an unquenched religious sentiment."* (Botey, 2009). Thus, the *Cofradía 15+1* was born. Over the years, its Easter week processions have become some of the most massively attended concentrations in L'Hospitalet.

This intersection, in front of the hospital that was opened in 1971, is a site of great symbolism in the route followed by the procession. Now, the procession invariably stops here. The *Cofradía 15+1* contrived a mechanism inside the image of Christ Carrying the Cross. In front of the hospital, the Christ figure makes the sign of the cross as a blessing for hospitalized patients. This much-awaited moment is an intensely emotional experience for those present. It takes place in the very heart of the Pubilla Cases and La Florida neighbourhoods. Many individual and collective experiences and emotions attached to family, the surroundings and the neighbourhoods are wrapped up in this "performance" of the Christ Carrying the Cross.

These districts (La Florida and Pubilla Cases), populated by many families of Andalusian descent, express this cultural phenomenon as a continuity and natural evolution of established bonds of solidarity. *"Holy Week processions were a means of demonstrating the self-construction of symbols, even in the most tangible or material sense of the word. (...). The immigration experience had been the backbone of Andalusian ethnicity (...). The processions took ritual elements from different places (...) They were Andalusian processions. And to go about it while feeling part of the society of adoption, even struggling collectively to improve it, and being able to express yourself freely in the cultural domain, were all elements that generated feelings of 'Catalan-ness'."* (C. Parramon, 1999)

Citizens also expressed their opposition to the *status quo* through cultural associations of a more recreational bent, flamenco dancing groups, sports and homing pigeon clubs, etc. The following groups can be mentioned as examples:

- *Peña Taurina (Bullfighting Club) los de Ayer y los de Hoy*
- *Peña Flamenca (Flamenco Dancing Club) Antonio Mairena*
- *Peña Taurina José Vera*
- *Sociedad colombicultura (Homing Pigeon Club) de Can Vidalet*

LA FLORIDA – LES PLANES

6. Electrical towers. Av. Primavera and Av. Catalunya

In the 1960's, the Pubilla Cases and La Florida neighbourhoods were characterized by self-built houses, land speculation and vertical construction. They also had a high population density, precarious urban planning and a lack of services and green areas. These districts did not have a metro station until 1973.

These now-emblematic electrical towers criss-crossed the neighbourhoods. The power cables were not buried until 1993, and after many years of locals' protests.

Pictures and documents



No. 8.
Electrical towers on Av. Primavera



No. 9
Electrical towers on Av. Primavera

7. La Florida Social Centre, carrer de l'Enginyer Moncunill, 62

The 11 towers (104 homes) were built in the mid-1950's by the FECSA utility company for its employees. FECSA transferred the rights to use these premises to Nostra Senyora de la Llum Parish.

Throughout the democratic transition, La Florida Social Centre became one of the strongest links in the chain of opposition to Francoism, as well as a training ground for future political leaders, some of whom went beyond the local realm.

La Florida Social Centre was the most paradigmatic example of the L'Hospitalet where all social agents for change met and expressed themselves. The history of La Florida Social Centre could lead one to the conclusion that the parish was a key stronghold of the anti-Franco sectors of the Catholic church. The parish was not, in fact, a precursor of this school of thought. But as years went by, the Centre continued to receive the support of the parish (C. Parramon, 2008).

Pictures and documents



No. 10.

Nostra Senyora de la Llum Parish church, mid- 1950's

8. Nostra Senyora de la Llum Parish. Carrer de l'Enginyer Moncunill

Father Murillo, a priest with a strong commitment to the working class, opened parish premises to clandestine meetings of workers from CCOO, and members of the PSUC party. The parish was the birthplace of the La Florida Residents' Association, as well as cultural groups and activists that stood as alternatives to official culture. In short, it could be said that it was a centre of anti-Francoist agitation.

La Florida Social Centre was founded in 1961 by Caritas, following the model established by other centres in Barcelona. These centres made up for State shortcomings in areas like health care, schools and social aid (Paquita Fontboté—social worker affiliated with Caritas Diocesana—served as an adviser on topics such as retirement, subsidies, donations, etc.).

New facilities were opened in 1965, offering new community services such as a doctor's office and clinic. A legal office was also opened, to advise citizens on housing and labour matters.

In its early days, there was a dispute between the heads of the Centre and a group of young people from the JOC (Young Christian Workers). In the end, JOC members took over the management of the centre.

La Florida Social Centre defied censorship to screen films, hold talks and stage theatre performances with politically committed subject matter by the Grup Alpha 63 of L'Hospitalet. The Omnium Cultural association

began to offer Catalan classes starting in 1970. It has been noted that, *“Obviously, the Centre was an island of freedom and a school of active citizenship, even then,”* (C. Parramon, 2008)

Around 1975, PSUC members in L'Hospitalet numbered between 30 and 80. Their job consisted of setting up core Workers' Commissions, canvassing, disseminating information and materials (the journals “Treball” and “Mundo Obrero”). These members joined other democratic, non-communist groups that met at La Florida Social Centre. Some of them went on to have outstanding political careers: Santiago Díaz, Salvador Pastor, Clara Parramon, Joan Saura and Dolors Calvet.

The first great demand was for more school capacity, with a major campaign conducted in 1972. The efforts bore fruit in the form of two large public schools for the neighbourhood: the Eduard Fontseré and Joaquim Ruyra Schools.

Other notable examples can be found in the residents' campaign to repurpose a plot known as “EL SEPU” into a green area and recreational facility (a site to hold festivals, bullfights, demonstrations, etc.), as well as the undergrounding of high-voltage lines that ran north-to-south through the neighbourhood from Pubilla Cases (N-II) to the railway (Carrer Primavera and Av. Catalunya), and the urbanization and improvement to homes in the Blocs Florida.

In 1975-1976, a SEPU (Sociedad Española de Precios Únicos) shopping centre was under construction. The builder, which had recently finished construction of the Hotel Princesa Sofía (Barcelona), transferred their crews, between 150 and 200 workers, to this new project. In February, 1976 a general strike was called in the construction sector. The workers' meetings were held in the Nostra Senyora de la Llum parish hall. Over a three-week period, the workers left L'Hospitalet, demonstrating all the way to Barcelona's Via Laietana. They were closely watched by police. Jaume Valls was arrested and held in custody for three weeks for calling the demonstration. In the negotiations, the workers sought paid holidays, a 40% across-the-board pay raise and compensation for occupational accidents.

Pictures and documents



No. 11
Nostra Senyora de la Llum Parish church, mid- 70's

9. Blocs Florida. Plaça Blocs Florida

One of the neighbourhood's first areas of residential concentration was a housing complex located at the end of Avinguda Primavera. The "Bloques Onésimo Redondo" (816 homes built in 1970) were developed by the Obra Sindical del Hogar (Union for Housing Works - OHS). Today, they are known as Blocs Florida (Florida Housing Towers). The urban surroundings have changed a great deal since then.

The demands for renovation of the Florida Housing Towers played out over a long period of time. The refurbishment project, awarded by the administration in 1976, was denounced by the residents' association before the Ministry of Public Works. In 1982 Jordi Pujol, then-president of the Autonomous Catalan Government, visited the works and witnessed the condition of the homes first-hand. Years later, the final urban improvements to the area were completed, albeit with some modifications.

Pictures and documents



No. 12

Florida Housing Towers (Av. Primavera, carrer Pins). Photo J. Ciuret – AMLH



No. 13

Opening of the Onésimo Redondo Housing Towers, 1970

10. Parc de Les Planes / La Cardoner

The Can Serra Residents' Association launched a drive to close the chemical company La Cardoner, with the slogan, "Cardoner, no te queremos oler" (We don't want to smell you, Cardoner), and a campaign for a metro station, which would become the neighbourhood's main transportation infrastructure.

Pictures and documents



No. 14

Demonstration against the Cardoner Company. AMLH

CAN SERRA

11. Torras i Bages Secondary School. Av. de Can Serra, 101

As there was no parish building in the area, services were held in the Torras i Bages Secondary School, and in a rented facility, under the leadership of Parish Priest Jaume Botey i Vallés, who had been sent to Can Serra by the Bishop of Barcelona in 1969 with the mission of forming a Christian community there.

Botey was from that part of the Catalan church that opposed the conferring of sacraments with a sole purpose, and was politically committed to the workers' movement and social demands that the neighbourhood was making.

12. Plaça de la Carpa

The neighbourhood of Can Serra was created out of virtually nothing, with the urbanization of an agricultural area; specifically, vineyards. Before the demographic pressure and needs for housing, political interests converged with those of builders to make a brand-new neighbourhood.

The new buildings were not constructed with the quality that had been advertised, and it was not long before the first problems, in the form of cracks, appeared. Further, the buildings had been built rapidly, without minimal service infrastructures or green areas.

By 1969, 3,000 people lived in the district, and urban plans called for a population increase of up to 27,000. There were nearly 17,000 residents in Can Serra in 1978.

The population was made up of people from other peripheral neighbourhoods of Barcelona, such as Can Tunis, La Bomba, Can Pi, Francisco Alegre, etc.

Plaça de la Carpa is another space won through residents' commitment and drive. According to the approved urban plan, 13 towers of 14 storeys each were to be built on this land in a chequerboard pattern. Protests against this plan fuelled creation of the Can Serra Residents' Association (the 2nd in L'Hospitalet following that of Collblanc).

The name "Carpa" (tent, or big-top) came from the portable theatre installed by the Spanish Ministry of Information and Tourism with the aim bringing scenic arts to the people. Domestic theatre troupes performed there. Minister Manuel Fraga even made an official visit to the facility. Once the Ministry's campaign was over (December 1971), the portable theatre was taken down, but its metal framework was left behind, and remained on the lot for a long time.

In the Plaça de la Carpa, a ceramic plaque commemorates the "La Carpa Drummer". The residents purchased a large drum they would bang at demonstrations and other gatherings. The drumming had become such an integral component of the neighbourhood that whenever anyone heard it, they knew something was happening, whether a concentration, demonstration or festival. The drum accompanied all of the demonstrations that originated in Can Serra, continuing down Rambla Just Oliveras until their arrival at city hall.

Pictures and documents



No. 15
Unpaved streets in Can Serra

No. 16
Portable Theatre of the Ministry of Information and Tourism

No. 17
"La Carpa" Structure, 1972-1973

13. *Casa de la Reconciliació* (1974). Av. Can Serra 80-82)

The Can Serra urban plan called for construction of a parish building in the plot where the Carpa stood. For years, neighbours had been asking that the plot be converted into a green area or that neighbourhood facilities be built there, which is why parish leadership refused to follow through with the plan. As an alternative, the church was offered a plot: a former dumping ground for rubble, with a ditch running through it. The construction project ran up against many difficulties. It was rejected, among other reasons, because it did not have a bell tower.

The parish buildings were built with the altruistic efforts of many volunteers. There were locals from the district, but also individuals from the rest of the city. Parishioners, agnostics, trade unionists, clandestine party members, immigrants and natives all worked side by side. As many as sixty bricklayers and labourers would turn up at weekends to work on the project. The parish building symbolically belonged to the workers and local residents. In other words, it was a paradigmatic case of collective participation, also expressed in the *Casa de la Reconciliació* Manifesto, read on the day of its official opening. This was the origin of the *Casa de la Reconciliació*.

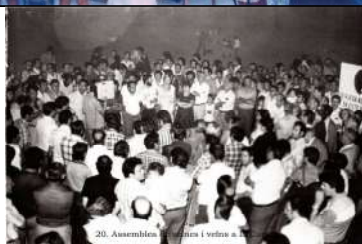
Much thought has been given to the reason for the name, "*Casa de la Reconciliació*". There are a number of possible explanations. Reconciliation of political parties? Reconciliation in the form of political transformation at the end of the dictatorship? Reconciliation of the church in the wake of Vatican II and Pope John XXIII with the working class? Reconciliation among neighbourhood residents, whether or not they were religious? It is said that all those involved agreed on the name.

It is no coincidence that the **Spanish Communist Party**, through its Central Committee, had made a **declaration** years before, "***In favour of a national reconciliation, and of a democratic, non-violent solution to the Spanish problem***" in 1956. The party solemnly proclaimed its willingness to contribute unreservedly to a national reconciliation among the Spanish, to heal the wounds opened by the Civil War, and kept open by General Franco.

It comes as no surprise that the communist party members of L'Hospitalet proposed this name, and that it was accepted by the majority.

Casa de la Reconciliació was a centre offering day care, children's activities, a recreational facility for the elderly and a legal clinic. It was also a venue for many activities, assemblies and meetings held by local residents, political parties and trade unions. *Casa de la Reconciliació* was a place of diversity and tolerance. It was opened in July, 1974. There were also moments of great tension, especially in September, 1975, with the final death sentences of Francoist Spain; prisoners were shot by firing squad, even as the dictator lay dying. Citizens flocked to the *Casa de la Reconciliació* to express their views on the situation, hear the latest news and share their concerns. As was the custom, police surrounded the building, but did not enter.

Pictures and documents



No. 18

Construction of the Casa de la Reconciliació (1974). Photo: Trilla. AMLH

No. 19

Tribute to the elderly during construction of the Casa de la Reconciliació (1974)

No. 20



Residents' assembly at the "Carpa" in Can Serra

14. Can Serra School for Adults

The School for Adults was opened to remedy the high levels of illiteracy. Mercè Romans was one of the educators responsible for the centre. The organizers published educational materials that explained the school's experience and methodology. It was titled, "Así aprendemos los adultos en L'Hospitalet (This is how Adults Learn in L'Hospitalet)" (1977). Using 15 significant and generative words, it became a handbook for adult literacy. Other literacy schools around Spain republished the book in 1980.

The School for Adults offered more than literacy classes. Leading intellectuals committed to the working class taught in its classrooms as volunteers. This is the case of **Manuel Sacristán Luzón** (Madrid, 1925 – Barcelona, 1985), one of the most relevant Spanish philosophers of the 20th century, a key figure in Spain's recent political history. Other noteworthy figures involved with the school were communist philosopher and essayist **Francisco Fernández Buey** (1943 – 2012) and **José María Valverde Pacheco** (1926 – 1996) a poet, essayist, literary critic and historian of ideas.

Jaume Botey told the following stories. The first: Manuel Sacristán offered to volunteer at the School for Adults, on the condition that students not be told who he was. Sacristán thought being recognized as a member of the academic world and an anti-Franco dissident would be a handicap for him. This was proof of his humbleness and modesty. Jaume Botey told him not to worry; his students were truly illiterate (and therefore unlikely to recognize an intellectual). The second is a short speech given by a student named Raimundo. Raimundo took the floor at a meeting, and talked about his experience in the neighbourhood in these terms: *"For me, living in Can Serra has meant more than going to university would mean for someone else. I used to be a coward. Now I'm not. I used to be afraid of the police and now I stand up to them. Before, I would not have known how to debate with the mayor, now I read the maps and I can debate with him... This has been like going to university for me."* (account given by J. Botey).

Pictures and documents	
	<p>No. 21 Can Serra School for Adults</p>
	<p>No. 22 Informative action by CCOO, Casa de la Reconciliació (1975)</p>

15. Conscientious Objectors Group of Can Serra

Another relevant story with an impact at the national level involved the Conscientious Objectors Group of Can Serra. In 1975, this group asked the parish priest of the Casa de la Reconciliació for the chance to substitute their mandatory military service with a community service commitment.

At that time, military service was mandatory for all Spanish men. The conscientious objectors espoused arguments that collided head-on with the socially-accepted militaristic values of the day, values infused with the sentiment of patriotism and National-Catholic fundamentalism, among others. Their anti-militaristic stance was based on values of peace, justice and non-violence, as opposed to militarism, social injustice and blind obedience. They did not make any arguments based on religion, as Jehovah's Witnesses might have.

The objectors met with the fierce opposition of Can Serra residents, including communist and other left-wing party members, who, inspired by iconic figures such as Che Guevara, saw armed conflict as a means for liberation and emancipation of the working class.

The Can Serra objectors agreed to do community service (children's activities group, elderly day centre, nursery school, etc.) as an alternative to military service. This was not a legally-established alternative. Therefore, the military authorities declared them deserters.

Martin Villa, then the civil governor of Barcelona, washed his hands of the matter and declared himself unqualified to take any action against the objectors, despite the personal pleas of Jaume Botey. Villa's strategy was to force fulfilment of the law; in other words, that the objectors be imprisoned. With the detention and jailing of the objectors, it was meant to spark a public scandal and turn conscientious objection into a political reality.

On December 24, 1975, the five objectors of Can Serra published the manifesto, "A road to peace: statement of the conscientious objectors" in which they promised to work in the neighbourhood for two years, and explained the reasons why they did not want to join the military. The statement was relevant because for the first time it brought up a joint claim by a group questioning mandatory military service, instead of an individual case. In the end, the objectors were arrested and jailed in Sant Ferran Castle, in Figueres.

The five objectors of Can Serra were:

1. Ovidio Bustillo, a former seminarian from Palencia
2. Vicente Amurgos, former seminarian from Andalusia
3. Jesús Viñas, a Catalan teacher
4. Guillermo Luis Cereceda, a student from Madrid
5. José Díez Faixat, of Asturias

They were joined by:

- Esteban Zabaleta, a former Basque priest
- and José Antonio Monteserín, a Philosophy and Liberal Arts major from León

The detention of the objectors triggered a support campaign all over Spain. Groups similar to that of Can Serra sprang up in Bilbao, Madrid, Tarragona, Vic and Màlaga.

Pepe Beúnza is considered “Spain’s first conscientious objector”. He objected in 1971, and was tried in a court-martial. He soon had a group of followers. Among them was Jordi Agulló, from Alcoi, considered the “second” objector. Jordi Agulló spent over two years in prison, and ended up settling in Can Serra.

The videos shot in Can Serra by the Video-Nou group were the first attempt to use this medium as a tool to spur social and community life in Spain. In 1978, they produced four eloquently titled documentaries representing the concerns and social reality of the neighbourhood: *¡Qué viene el metro! (The Metro’s Coming)*, *Història Urbanística (Urban Planning History)*, *Escuela de Adultos (School for Adults)* and *El barrio de las fiestas (Neighbourhood of Festivals)*.

The five objectors of Can Serra also produced a document, or rather a manifesto, on their anti-militaristic stance, and commitment to build a society based on the culture of peace. Video of the objectors made by Ovidio Bustillo, Guillermo Louis, José Díez, Jesús Viñas and Vicente Amurgos. Alternative Cinema Co-operative: Can Serra: Conscientious Objection in Spain (1976)

<<https://archive.org/details/objetoescanserra>>

CENTRE and SANT JOSEP

16. La Farga - Altos Hornos de Cataluña S.A. Carrer de Barcelona, 2

“La Farga” was a nickname for Altos Hornos de Catalunya S.A. It was L'Hospitalet's leading metallurgic company, established as a foundry in 1900. Its location in the industrial outskirts of the Centre district was remote at the time. It experienced a major upswing in activity over World War I.

There were labour conflicts during the 2nd Republic. The major trade unions at that time were Unió General de Trabajadores (General Workers' Union - UGT) and Confederación Nacional de Trabajo (National Workers' Confederation - CNT). When the Civil War broke out, authorities adapted the foundry to manufacture materiel.

In the 1960's, they increased their special steel production capacity from 4,000 to 150,000 tons.

The economic crisis of 1973 also affected La Farga, a large industrial facility which by then was embedded in the city centre due to demographic pressure and urban growth. Activity of this type generated large amounts of smoke and heavy transport-vehicle traffic. The unbearable pollution was affecting residents' health and ability to rest. Conflict with the neighbours was imminent.

In 1975, under pressure from residents, the municipal government made a half-hearted attempt to change the zoning from industrial to urban use. La Farga employees faced the prospect of losing their jobs due to the protests of their own neighbours. Local residents proposed that the activity be relocated to a new site. Years went by, but the situation did not improve.

The Sant Josep Residents' Association urged strict compliance with the laws in force for this kind of industrial activity. The company would have had to make investments deemed “inconvenient” to its balance sheet at a time of economic crisis.

La Farga workers found themselves in a double-edged occupational and social conflict. The assemblies were marked by heated debate.

The fight against the air pollution caused by La Farga was led by the Sant Josep Residents' Association (founded in the Sant Josep Parish, led by Parish Priest Leandre Gassó) and supported by all of the city's democratic political groups and trade unions.

The conflict reached its high point with the demonstration-concentration called by the Sant Josep Residents' Association against la Farga in July, 1980. The demonstration was not authorized by the Civil Government. The municipal government, acting mayor and several city councillors made a show of support by attending the demonstration. The demonstration-concentration was violently dispersed. A number of demonstrators, including a city councillor, were injured. The Civil Government told the media that members of the crowd had thrown rocks at police officers.

Actually, and paradoxically, law enforcement officers had assaulted the democratic authorities.

Another concentration was called to demonstrate in front of La Farga the very next day on July 12, 1980. Once again, locals demanded the closure of the industrial premises, and denounced the actions of police the

previous day, the company's strategy of pitting neighbours and workers against each other, as well as the Catalan Government's Minister of Industry's washing his hands of the entire conflict.

All activity stopped at the mill in 1982, and the company relocated 20 kilometres north-west to Castellbisbal, in Vallès Occidental, a county bordering Baix Llobregat. Some years later, the local council purchased the land where the facility was located. **This residents' struggle can be considered the first of an ecological nature.**

Pictures and documents



23. Fums de la Farga

No. 23

Air pollution from La Farga, 1980



24. Manifestació contra la reobertura de La Farga (juliol 1980)

No. 24

Demonstration against the air pollution generated by La Farga (July 1980)

17. Centre Catòlic. Rambla de Just Oliveras 34

The population of L'Hospitalet grew by 230% between 1960 and 1970 (from 122,000 to 282,000 inhabitants). The photo of the city from that period shows small, scattered concentrations of population over a disjointed territory. The growth was not homogeneous throughout all districts. The historic city centre, and neighbouring Sant Josep also received an influx of population, albeit to a lesser degree than others. An additional difference was the pre-existence of a minimal, structured social community.

The Municipal Government was controlled by a mix of conservative Catholic sectors, agricultural landowners from the Marina area and families with ties to cultural entities from the Centre borough, such as the Centre Catòlic and the Casino Nacional (now Casino del Centre). Construction of the districts Bellvitge and Can Serra caused L'Hospitalet to suburbanize and become a "bedroom community" without social or cultural organizations to connect its different parts. (Alpha 63. Fets i llegats (Deeds and Legacies) / Botey 2010 p. 13)

As has already been shown, people residing in the "new neighbourhoods" formed social relationships that replicated cultural elements from their places of origin. In the Centre and Sant Josep neighbourhoods, organizations emerged that were active in Catalan cultural manifestations (Alpha 63, UEC and their groups, such as the Guifré el Pilós Scouts). Another example is the renowned Esbart Sant Isidre (traditional Catalan dance troupe) in the Santa Eulàlia neighbourhood.

As for the cultural activity in the Centre and Sant Josep neighbourhoods, it is interesting to follow the evolution of the organizations that were born and developed during the democratic transition.

Throughout the dictatorship, cultural activities continued to be held within the Centre Catòlic, many of them led by Andreu Trias, to celebrate popular Catalan culture (the *Pastorets* Christmas play, *sardana* dance meets and coordination, etc.).

The Amics de la Música (*Friends of Music*, 1947-early 1970's), was the first cultural organization to be established in L'Hospitalet that was not related with the church or official state bodies. Over a long career, they worked and promoted a broad array of cultural acts, including, especially at the outset, musical events (jazz, opera, folk music, and most memorably, a recital by Joan Manuel Serrat in 1967). Later, under the leadership of Jaume Reventós, they specialized in the visual arts and cinema, holding competitions and film festivals. "Without the Amics de la Música, there would not have been hardly any artistic activity in L'Hospitalet, as is shown by the practical absence of such activity in the rest of the city, since Amics de la Música never moved from L'Hospitalet Centre," (Botey, 2010 p. 20).

In 1963, several young people established Alpha 63. A creative group, the youths did not fit the mould of the organizations that made up L'Hospitalet Centre's cultural life: the parish, Centre Catòlic, Casino and UEC.

"They were from farming families that lived in la Marina, or the working class of the Centre district, small shop-owners, people from workshops, weaving mills, barber's apprentices and artisans from that Hospitalet transitioning from an agricultural to an industrial city. They went from getting by on a little plot of land, or a farm selling eggs or chickens, to getting by as workers at la Farga, Can Vilumara, La Tecla (factories or mills)... alongside the immigrants who came to live in L'Hospitalet or the Baix Llobregat area. (...) The members of Alpha were the children of the losers of the Spanish Civil War and those suffering the reprisals of the Francoist regime. They were the continuation of that republican, Catalanist L'Hospitalet, of unquestionable "Catalanness", with very old roots, lived at home, at school and on the street." (Botey 2010)

They had several different headquarters and premises ("a wandering existence"). Among the first was their base at the Centre Catòlic, in 1963. They only remained there for six months.

Noteworthy among their programmes were activities about cinema, and work in the scenic arts. They founded several theatre groups. *"The theatre they proposed was not naïve. They made their tendencies clear, as well as the fact that they had chosen the theatre as their preferred means of expressing them."* (Botey 2010).

Alpha 63 was attuned to and cooperated with La Florida Social Centre.

Pictures and documents



25 Cartell del festival de "Cançó Catalana Moderna" al Cine Rambla, el dia 6 de desembre de 1964, amb una anotació a mà que fixa l'entrada gratuïta pels socis d'Alpha, al estar al corrent de pagament.

No. 25

"Cançó Catalana Moderna" (Modern Catalan Songs) Festival Poster, 1964



26 Cartell de la sessió de cinefòrum "Cinematografia Catalana" a la sala d'actes del Col·legi Tecla Sala el dia 13 de març de 1965.

No. 26

"Cinematografia catalana" Film Festival poster, 1965

18. L'Ajuntament (City Hall). Plaça Ajuntament 11

City Hall is the seat of local power. Consequently, most of the city's demonstrations and protests end here. The demands that citizens express before its doors can be divided into two groups; those that fall under the competency of the local administration and those that do not. Among the latter, pleas are often made for communication, intercession or mediation between citizens' representatives and another interlocutor, be they governmental, institutional or corporate.

Its symbolism also makes it a key site for the commemoration and celebration of numerous events that arise from the calendar of festivals.

L'Assemblea Democràtica de L'Hospitalet (Democratic Assembly of L'Hospitalet - ADLH)

Throughout the transition, many concentrations took place in front of City Hall. The L'Hospitalet Transition Trail especially commemorates a major unitary mobilization called by the Democratic Assembly of L'Hospitalet.

On July 10, 1976, the Democratic Assembly of L'Hospitalet was constituted as a local chapter of the Assemblea de Catalunya (Assembly of Catalonia - 1971). It was the culmination of a process that had been evolving for several years. At that time, the Democratic Assembly was already an active organization in Bellvitge.

The Democratic Assembly of L'Hospitalet published a constituent declaration signed by 14 political parties and 22 local associations. It was made up of all the city's democratic forces: cultural, sport and residents', feminist associations, trade unions, political parties, etc. The assembly had a standing management committee with representatives from the following political parties: PSUC (communist), MCC (communist), OCE-BR (communist), PSAN (communist), PTE (communist), CDC (liberal), UDC (Christian democrat) and MSC (socialist). In other words, it was governed by a political spectrum that went from the far left to conservative Catalanism. The working-class movement was represented by CCOO.

The Assembly of Catalonia conducted the **campaign "For Catalan and Democratic Local Councils"** and on **April 3, 1976** the Democratic Assembly of L'Hospitalet called a concentration to be held at this site, to deliver a list of signatures to Mayor Vicenç Capdevila. The concentration turned into a demonstration that was violently dispersed by the police.

In that summer of 1976, the March for Freedom was called. This was an action coordinated throughout Catalonia that consisted of a number of non-violent marches (called columns). Protesters called for amnesty, essential freedoms and the reinstatement of Catalonia's Statute of Autonomy. On August 2, the Abat Escarrè column arrived in the Plaça de l'Ajuntament of L'Hospitalet with the support of the Democratic Assembly of L'Hospitalet. Once again, law enforcement officers violently broke up the protest, and made several arrests.

The third significant action by the ADLH was to call and take part in the September 11 "Diada" (Catalan National Holiday) in 1976 in Sant Boi de Llobregat, the first such holiday celebration tolerated by the Spanish Ministry of Governance.

The Democratic Assembly of L'Hospitalet became the centre of political opposition in L'Hospitalet until general elections were held on June 15, 1977. There was internal debate within the organization on the political break that led to its disappearance.

"In L'Hospitalet and other municipalities (...) with large immigrant population groups, it would have been very easy to create a division between immigrants and natives, and yet, that hasn't happened. It hasn't happened thanks to the left wing in general, and the PSUC in particular (...) as the dominant force," (Josep Ribas, 1998).

Regarding the transition and the anti-Francoist struggle: *"My belief is that, without the anti-Franco struggle, without the participation of broad segments of L'Hospitalet society with democratic aspirations (...), of the working class, of the city's residents' movements, there would have been a different model of democracy. That can be extrapolated to the rest of the Spanish State, and it's plain to see in L'Hospitalet," (Josep Ribas, 1998).*

Following the first local elections of 1979, citizens formed a mass concentration at the local officials' swearing-in ceremony.

Election results by number of councillors:

12	PSC-PSOE (socialist)
11	PSUC (communist)
2	CiU (nationalist liberal/Christian democrat)
2	CC/UCD (liberal)

Pictures and documents



27. Manifestació per la manca d'escoles (70)



28. Adhesió a l'Estatut de Sau 1979. Foto J. Hernández

No. 27

Demonstration to protest the lack of schools (1970's)

No. 28

Accession to the Statute of Sau, 1979 Photo: J. Hernández

19. l'Illa dels Sindicats (Trade Union Block) Rambla de Just Oliveras, at the corner of Enric Prat de la Riba Street

An old farm house called Ca l'Oliveras once stood on this now-empty lot. It was used as headquarters of the CNT-controlled Agrícola Col·lectiva (a farming cooperative) throughout the Spanish civil war, until 1939.



Francoist authorities seized the building, as they did with other properties of organizations, trade unions, and political parties. They used it as the head offices of the Central Nacional Sindicalista de L'Hospitalet, also known as the "vertical union". Locals call this area l'Illa dels Sindicats (Trade Union Block).

When reference was made to the SAMPER company in Collblanc, and the first Workers' Commissions of L'Hospitalet, it must be noted that a significant number of L'Hospitalet workers belonged to the vertical trade union "works councils" (jurados de empresa), as stewards. CCOO used "entryism" (getting themselves elected to these councils) as a means of infiltrating the union elections of 1963, then acting through the structure of the vertical union to gain greater capacity to act against Franco's regime.

Some of the noteworthy "infiltrated" stewards were **José Carrasco (1963 elections), Vicenç Ventura (chemical industry), Antonio Ruiz (construction) and Tomás Martínez (metalworkers sector in the 1975 elections)**, who, with Isabel Hernández, fought for equal pay with their co-workers.

While the metalworkers' collective bargaining agreement was being negotiated, the Guardia Civil arrested Tomás Martínez and took him to the Carrer Roselles police station. An emergency demonstration was called the same day to demand his release. The acting mayor, Joan Perelló (1977-1979) intervened on his behalf. Martínez was taken before the magistrate of the police court, who ordered him released a few hours later.

Urban plans called for the construction of several housing towers on this plot, property of the Ministry of Labour. When Ca l'Oliveras was demolished, the Centre Residents' Association fought the land speculation that was behind the project. Thanks to their efforts, the Barcelona Metropolitan Corporation forced the City Government to modify the project and reduce the allowable construction density, thus correcting the scarcity of land for green areas.

Pictures and documents	
	<p>No. 29 Ca l'Oliveras, Vertical Union headquarters</p>
	<p>No. 30 Trade Union Block (1979)</p>

20. Sant Josep Parish. Carrer d'Enric Prat de la Riba, 145

Sant Josep was mentioned in the chapter on La Farga. It was in the industrial outskirts of the historic centre. Industrial premises devoted to ceramics and textiles, represented in firms like Batllori, Tecla Sala, Cosme Toda, Can Vilumara, etc. made up an urban continuum that stretched all the way to the Santa Eulàlia district. As of the 1950's, and especially the 1960's, the construction of housing, Blocs Ciudad Condal and others built without any sort of urban planning, definitively configured the district.

In 1961, Sant Josep Parish Church was provisionally opened in premises on Prat de la Riba street, under Parish Priest Leandre Gassó. He served as the sole parish priest for 40 years.

Throughout Franco's dictatorship, Sant Josep Parish also hosted its share of assemblies and meetings of local residents, workers, political parties and trade unions. Sheltered by the parish, the Sant Josep Residents' Association was established.

The constituent assembly of the Confederació Sindical de la Comissió Obrera Nacional de Catalunya (National Worker Commission Union Confederation of Catalonia - CONC) was held on these premises on November 14, 1976.

(source: <http://www.ccoo.cat/baixllobregat/noticia/143033/ccoo-de-catalunya-lamenta-la-mort-de-lhistoric-dirigent-josep-tablada#.UolQPtIreul>)

It is worth remembering that trial proceedings 1001/72 of the Tribunal de Orden Público (Public Order Court - TOP) of Madrid was held in 1973. The entire leadership of Workers' Commissions Trade Union received prison sentences.

"The creation of the CONC (National Worker Commission of Catalonia) in 1966, which concluded the entire organizational process, emerged from the need to coordinate the different county commissions. It became the highest management body for all of Catalonia."

<http://www.ccoo.cat/aspnet/historia4.aspx>

21. El Pont de la Llibertat (Freedom Bridge) 2007. Av. Del Carrilet / Rambla de la Marina

Without a doubt, "The Bridge" is the city's most striking public memorial.

The name of the sculpture, by artist Arranz Bravo, evokes those brave individuals who sought to bridge two generations; the one that conquered democratic freedom, and the one that had recovered it. The sculptor sought to portray this allegory through a manifestation of his own concept of freedom. To do so, he used two organic shapes that express this as the base for either side of the bridge.

The work consists of two original sculptures in bronze, with a height of 4.5 metres, and a width and depth of 4 metres. Each weighs 3,500 kilos. They are joined by a 20-metre stainless steel arch.

Video of sculpture unveiling: < <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5upUXzvT8hE> >

SANTA EULÀLIA AND GRANVIA SUD

22. Sant Isidre Parish. Carrer de l'Aprestadora, 3.

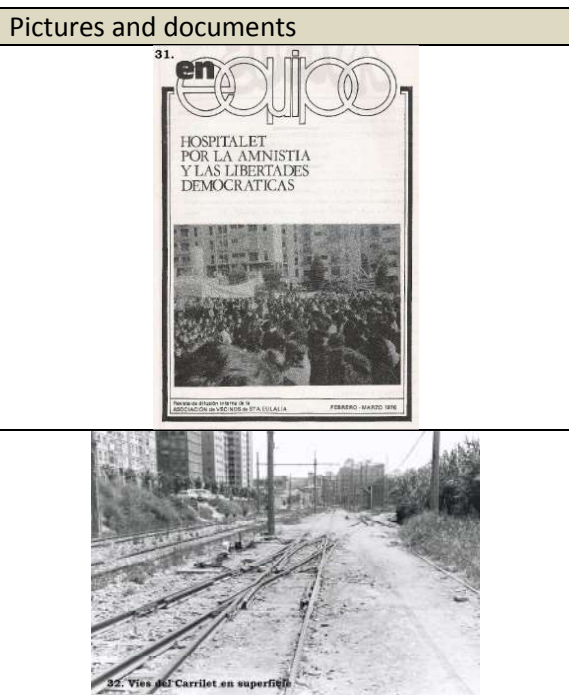
Parish Priest Joan Carrera was also politically committed to working class people. He already had a background in social and political commitment with Young Christian Workers and Acció Catòlica Obrera (Catholic Workers Action - ACO) when he came to the parish in 1976.

Clandestine meetings of the Workers' Commissions were held in the 1960's under the rectorship of Rev. Joan Bonet. The local-level Committee for Solidarity with Political Prisoners worked to secure resources for inmates in prisons such as Ocaña, Carabanchel and Burgos. These local meetings were held in the parishes of Sant Ramon in Collblanc, Santa Eulàlia and Sant Isidre.

Mercè Olivares, a prominent member of the PSUC and resident of the Collblanc neighbourhood, also formed part of the Committee for Solidarity with Political Prisoners.

In 1961, Mercè Olivares took part in an initial women's political meeting at a flat in the Granvia Sud district. In her own words, attendees at those early meetings discussed topics of solidarity with their fellow activists and others imprisoned for political reasons. At the following meetings, they dealt with topics inherent to women's rights such as contraception, abortion, women's liberation, etc. In 1965, this process gave rise to the establishment of the Organización de Mujeres Demócratas (Democratic Women's Organization). Its constituent assembly was held in Sant Isidre Parish, and was attended by 150 women from all points of the Barcelona area.

Workers of the Vanguard, Lamparas Z and INDO companies became involved in labour conflicts in the district.



No. 31
Publication of the Santa Eulàlia Residents' Association, "En Equipo", 1976.

No. 32
Aboveground "carrilet" (narrow-gauge railway) tracks

BELLVITGE AND EL GORNAL

23. Blocs de Bellvitge (Residential Towers) and Residents' Association

This is a unique district made up of two neighbourhoods separated by train tracks, and each with their own distinct personality and history. In 1964, following a succession of modifications to the County-wide Urban Plan of 1953, construction began on the Bellvitge residential estate. The housing project was geared more to real estate developers' profits than to its future residents' quality of life. From 1960 to 1970, the price of a "pam" (span) of land soared from 1.5 to 175 pesetas.

One observer wrote, "The history of Bellvitge, that of its associations and organizations is, to a large degree, one of an ongoing struggle of its residents against these powers (generators of urban spaces), as the interests of the two groups were in clear confrontation," (M. Domínguez, 1991).

In 1968, the keys to 700 homes in Bellvitge were delivered. One of the towers was set aside for residents of La Bomba neighbourhood, following their protracted battle for dignified housing. La Bomba and Can Pi were shanty towns located on the outskirts of Barcelona.

Among their leaders were figures of relevance such as the couple formed by Pura Fernández (1921-1997) and Felipe Cruz (1921-1981), both affiliated with the PSUC, or the veteran POUM activist, Ramón Fernández Jurado (1914-1984) who entered the Parliament of Catalonia as a member of the PSC (socialist) group.

Many anti-Francoist activists learned the ropes at the Bellvitge residents' assemblies.

Their most intense struggle was against the plan to build more towers. Residents permanently blockaded the works. Thanks to the campaign "Ni Un Bloque Más" (Not One Tower More), residents' groups managed to take part in drafting the Partial Urban Plan until it was approved by the Barcelona Metropolitan Corporation in 1977. The modification meant scrapping plans for 18 towers of 18 storeys, and 11 towers of 14 storeys.

At the same time, residents clamoured for basic services. There was nothing of the sort at the time: only the constructed towers, surrounded by mud and open sewers. The locals pressed for schools, health care facilities and parks to be built in the new neighbourhood. All of these shortcomings were worsened by frequent flooding.

One successful achievement was residents' drive for a traffic light between Travessia Industrial andAVINGUDA Europa, as well as public transport. Local women were the main leaders at the head of these efforts.

One noteworthy case in the educational and recreational domains was that of the **Club Infantil i Juvenil de Bellvitge (CIJB)**, established in 1969. It held its meetings at the Nostra Senyora de Bellvitge Parish, until it relocated to its own premises in 1974. "The case of CIJB helps illustrate the arrival in the neighbourhood of other groups with a 'missional' interest in an area that was becoming a paradigm of a marginalized working-class suburb," (M. Domínguez, 1991).

Pictures and documents



No. 33

Publication of the Santa Eulàlia Residents' Association, "En Equipo"

24. Bellvitge Hospital. Carrer de la Feixa Llarga s/n.

The construction of Bellvitge Hospital (renamed "Bellvitge University Hospital" in 1990) was a landmark event for this neighbourhood. It opened its doors in 1972.

Construction employees organized themselves into assemblies. They went on strike for several days, and achieved significant improvements in their employment conditions.

Dragados y Construcciones, the construction company responsible for the building project, faced a very tight deadline by which to deliver the finished hospital. A staff of 500 labourers and 200 technicians worked 10-hour shifts in hazardous working conditions that endangered their personal safety. There were a number of serious accidents. Workers organized themselves in assemblies on the work site. They were led by members of the CCOO and CNT trade unions and the PSUC political party (Jaume Valls, Avelino Agudo and Pantaleón Rubias, among others). The Administration pressured the building company, leading to dismissals, police presence and arrests of the workers' leaders. (J. Casanovas / 1997)

The labour conflict came to an end with an across-the-board salary raise, admission of union representatives, bonuses for working at heights, and the construction of toilets, showers and a subsidized canteen for the workers. The deal fell short of their workers' requests for paid holidays and payment for the days they had been on strike.

This strike helped unite and encourage the construction sector.

Pictures and documents



No. 34

Construction of the hospital and flooding, 1971. Photo R. Zuriguel

25. El Gornal Housing Estate

Construction of the **Gornal Housing Estate** began in 1972. The works evolved along a different course, as it was a public development of the Ministry of Housing. Even so, the project was plagued by problems from the very beginning. Plans for the area dated back to 1959.

The land meant for the Polígon Gornal was already occupied by residents of Campoamor Street, who opposed the plan, in utter disagreement with the expropriation terms.

A total of 2,252 homes were built, practically half those initially planned.

Though the project predates them, it was associated with the floods of 1962 and the government's "Plan to Eradicate Shanty Towns and Ruinous Properties" to meet housing needs.

Occupancy of the flats was regulated according to certain distribution quotas set by the ministry: expropriated residents, trade unionists, law enforcement officers, Local Council employees, needs of the Ministry of Housing, Civil Government, military headquarters personnel, Civil Guard, police senior management, bishopric, Courts, Ministry of Education, etc.

The terms of payment were equal for everyone, and varied depending on the size of the residence.

In 1977 there were still 150 vacant apartments. Some 50 of them were "illegally" occupied by citizens still living in shacks in Can Pi. Successive occupations and evictions took place for a time, until the situation was normalized and legalized.

The residents of the Gornal Housing Estate faced even more shortcomings, if possible, than their Bellvitge counterparts. They had the added difficulty of being hemmed in by barriers in the form of rail road tracks and the Castelldefels motorway. These obstacles made the neighbourhood into something of a ghetto isolated from the rest of the city. There were no chemists, shops, markets or schools. Daily life was difficult. Residents had to cross the train tracks if they wanted to go anywhere, with the danger this entailed.

It did not take residents long to voice their demands, protesting on the streets and in the squares, alongside the city's workers, parishes and associations.

Pictures and documents



No. 35

Urbanization of the Gornal Industrial Estate (photo approx. 1977)

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- Museum of L'Hospitalet: L'Hospitalet witness of the anti-Francoist struggle (15) < <http://www.youtube.com/user/MuseuLHospitalet> >

Trail Route

Some sites are off the suggested trail. Therefore, they are ordered according to the nearest point.

The trail begins in Plaça Espanyola.

S	SITES
S	1. Club Pimpinela Plaça Espanyola 8-9.
1	Walk north-west through Plaça Espanyola toward Carrer del Montseny
2	Turn left on Carrer del Montseny
3	Turn right on Carrer Llobregat
4	Turn left on Ctra. del Collblanc/N-340
S	2. Parc de la Marquesa - Ctra. Collblanc 67-73
S	3. Sant Ramon Nonat de Collblanc Parish. Ctra. Collblanc 72
5	Turn left on Carrer de la Creu Roja
S	4. Samper and Frasierias Pedret. Passatge Amat s/n
6	Turn right at Plaça Sènia
7	Continue down Carrer del Mont
8	Turn right on Av. Torrent Gornal
9	Turn left on Carrer Font
10	Turn right on Carrer Bòbiles
11	Turn left on Carrer Llevant
12	Turn right on Carrer El-lipse
13	Turn left on Carrer Dr. Ramon Solanich i Riera
S	5. Hospital General de L'Hospitalet, former Red Cross Hospital. Avinguda Josep Molins, 29-41
14	Take the first exit out of the roundabout, on Av. Miraflores .
S	6. Electrical towers. Av. Primavera and Av. Catalunya
S	7. La Florida Social Centre. C. Enginyer Moncunill 62
S	8. Nostra Senyora de la Llum Parish C. Enginyer Moncunill
15	Turn right on Carrer Enginyer Moncunill
16	Turn right on Av. Masnou
S	9. Florida Housing Towers. Plaça Blocs Florida
17	Take the first exit out of the roundabout, on Carrer de Sant Rafael
S	10. Parc Les Planes / La Cardoner
18	Take the third exit out of the roundabout, on Av. Electricitat
19	Turn left on Carrer del Molí

S	11. Torras i Bages Secondary School. Av. de Can Serra, 101
S	12. La Carpa. Plaça de la Carpa
S	13. Casa Reconciliació 1974. Av. Can Serra 80-82
S	14. Can Serra School for Adults. Av. Can Serra 80-82
S	15. Conscientious Objectors Group of Can Serra. Av. Can Serra 80-82
20	Turn right on Av. Can Serra
21	Turn left on Carrer Esplugues
22	Turn left on Carrer Tarradellas i Joan Continue to the roundabout
S	16. La Farga - Altos Hornos de Cataluña S.A. Carrer de Barcelona, 2
23	Turn right on Carrer Girona
24	Turn right on Carrer Tarragona
25	Turn left on Rambla Just Oliveras
S	17. Centre Catòlic. Rambla de Just Oliveras 34
26	Turn left on Carrer Barcelona
S	18. L'Hospitalet City Hall building. Plaça de l'Ajuntament
S	19. Illa dels Sindicats (Trade Union Block)
S	20. Sant Josep Parish (Carrer d'Enric Prat de la Riba, 145)
27	Turn right on Rambla Just Oliveras
S	21. Pont de la Llibertat Av. Del Carrilet / Rambla de la Marina
S	22. Sant Isidre Parish. Carrer de l'Aprestadora, 3
28	Continue down Rambla de la Marina Pass through two roundabouts
S	23. Bellvitge Towers and Residents' Associations
S	24. Bellvitge Hospital
S	25. El Gornal Housing Estate

Arriving at Rambla de la Marina

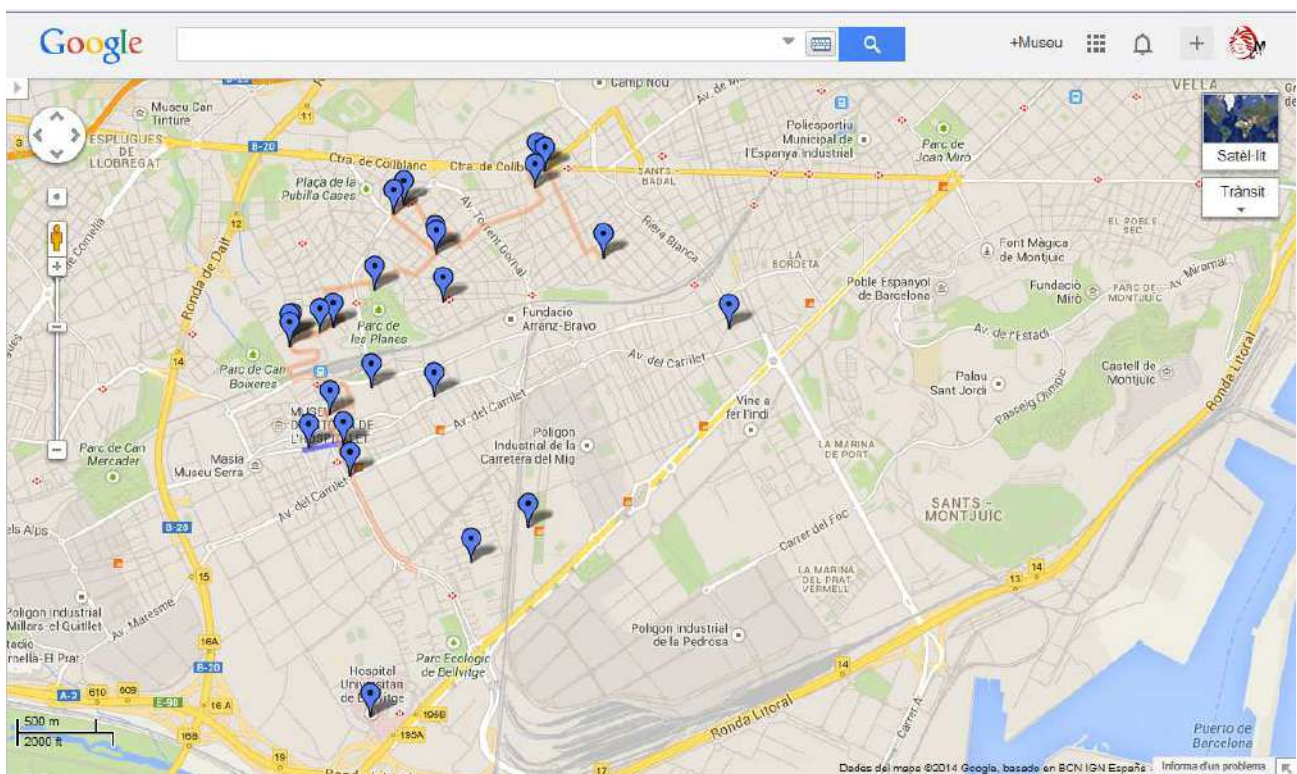
Total: **6.9 km** -

For connection with public transport, we recommend you walk to Metro station L1-Bellvitge.

Route in Google Maps with on-line resources.

Contents of the sites are presented in summarized form to facilitate users' reading and understanding.

<https://maps.google.es/maps/ms?msid=212322510388449092262.0004f1ad900e056f5a3a1&msa=0&ll=41.391685,2.107916&spn=0.040309,0.066175>



Also available at this shortened URL. <http://ow.ly/uZour>

ACTIVITY CARD

1. Write a summary of what you saw on the trail.
2. Define the “democratic transition process”.
3. List the circumstantial factors present in L'Hospitalet during the democratic transition.
4. List the drivers of change.
5. What were the characteristics of “grass-roots clergymen”? What does J.O.C. stand for?
6. What activities were conducted in the parish buildings? Why were they conducted there?
7. List the parish centres that were most active during the democratic transition in L'Hospitalet.
8. The workers' movement was led by the Workers Commission trade union. What strategy did they follow to increase their capacity to act?
9. Why is it said that the La Florida Social Centre was “an island of freedom and a school for active citizens”?
10. Can town planning be a fundamental element for social cohesion? Explain your answer.
11. What were the initial goals of Residents' Associations?
12. Which was the dominant opposition party during the transition process in L'Hospitalet?
13. The Conscientious Objectors of Can Serra were not understood by the local residents or the anti-Francoist opposition. Why not?
14. What alternatives did the Conscientious Objectors of Can Serra propose in lieu of military service?
15. What are the differences between a fully professional and a conscript army? Do you think armies are necessary? Why or why not?
16. What was the first “ecological” residents' struggle of L'Hospitalet? What were the interests in conflict?
17. What was the Democratic Assembly of L'Hospitalet? What were their goals?
18. The news media in general, and print media in particular, played a relevant role during the democratic transition. The editorial lines of some periodicals became a loudspeaker for social movements. Do you know the names of any Spanish newspapers?
19. Could you name the generalist periodicals available in the L'Hospitalet of the 1970's? Which one would you say was most relevant? Why?
20. The death of Franco accelerated Spain's democratization process. Afterwards, a “democratic rupture” and “political reform” were proposed. Find information, and compare and contrast these two concepts.

LIST OF IMAGES AND DOCUMENTS

1. Map of the city and districts

Collblanc and La Torrassa

2. Club Pimpinela and Plaça Espanyola, Christmas 1965 (El Tot L'H Image Bank)
3. Parc de la Marquesa Collblanc-Torrassa local council district office (1970's)
4. Sign "Park Saved by Democracy" 1977. Felip Gómez – Mercè Olivares Collection. AMLH R. 5714
5. CCOO Poster in L'Hospitalet. R. Luque. Collection AMLH R. 8726

Pubilla Cases

6. Portable bull ring for the annual neighbourhood festival (Av. Primavera)
7. *Holy Week in the city. The Cofradía 15+1 organizes five processions.* (Diari L'Hospitalet newspaper archive, 4/10/1995)

La Florida – Les Planes

8. Electrical towers. Av. Primavera
9. Electrical towers. Av. Primavera. Electrical tower
10. Nostra Senyora de la Llum Parish church, mid- 1950's
11. Nostra Senyora de la Llum Parish church, 1970's
12. Florida Housing Towers (Av. Primavera, carrer Pins). Photo J. Ciuret – AMLH
13. Opening of the Onésimo Redondo Housing Towers, 1970

Can Serra

14. Demonstration against the Cardoner company. AMLH.
15. Unpaved streets in Can Serra
16. *Portable Theatre of the Ministry of Information and Tourism*
17. "La Carpa" Structure, 1972-1973
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19. Tribute to the elderly during construction of the Casa de la Reconciliació (1974)
20. Residents' assembly at the "Carpa" in Can Serra
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22. Informative action by CCOO, Casa Reconciliació (1975)

CENTRE and SANT JOSEP

23. Air pollution from La Farga
24. Demonstration against the air pollution generated by La Farga (July 1980)
25. "Cançó Catalana Moderna" (Modern Catalan Songs) Festival Poster 1964
26. "Cinematografia catalana" Film Festival poster, 1965
27. Demonstration to protest the lack of schools (1970's)
28. Accession to the Statute of Sau, 1979 Photo: J. Hernández
29. Ca l'Oliveras, Vertical Union headquarters
30. Trade Union Block (1979)



Santa Eulàlia and Granvia Sud

- 31. Publication of the Santa Eulàlia Residents' Association, "En Equipo"
- 32. Aboveground "carrilet" (narrow-gauge railway) tracks

Bellvitge and el Gornal

- 33. Housing development and flooding in Bellvitge
- 34. Construction of the hospital and flooding, 1971. Photo R. Zuriguel
- 35. Urbanization of the Gornal Industrial Estate (photo approx. 1977)

ANNEX I

