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# Franco's Fascist Activities in a Nazi Hideout?: Teyú Cuaré, Misiones, Argentina

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**Abstract** The discovery of a probable Second World War criminal hideout, located on the border between Argentina and Paraguay, led to a detailed analysis of each construction and to the excavation of the shelter itself and its surroundings. Close to the main house was evidence for a pit that had been filled in and covered with vegetation. When excavated, the pit was found to have been opened and filled in twice, possibly to hide and then retrieve an object about a cubic meter in size. As the object was withdrawn, a kind of offering was left behind, buried in a special place: a Spanish military belt belonging to Franco's army. Construction of the dwelling was dated about 1945, but unknown is whether pit is contemporary or dates to 1955, when the entire site was possibly abandoned. The second opening of the pit must have taken place before 1975, when such military belts were no longer used. Although the site is attributed to regional Nazi activities, the removal of the belt must be associated to the neo-Nazi events that took place there and as a consequence is probably associated with Franco's Fascism. The site is still one of its kinds in Latin America.

**Keywords** Teyú Cuaré · Misiones · Nazism · Franco · Argentina

## Introduction

The Second World War failed to generate in Latin America any type of specific building or military structure. It is true that a great quantity of criminals sought refuge on the continent, with or without the assistance of either the government or local groups. As far as we know, they did not require special military constructions for the purpose or civil buildings that would serve as hideaways. The criminals dwelled in

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normal houses of greater or lesser luxury, their children attended state schools, they used hospitals just like other citizens and, save for a few exceptions, went mostly unnoticed, although some communities took pride in protecting them (Goñi 1998; Jackisch 1987, 1997, 1998; Jackisch and Mastromauro 2000; Klich 1999; Mending 1998). A few of them, like Mengele, lived in hiding moving from one country to the next, but beyond the fact that they had to hide, disguise their identity or bribe authorities, there were no structures built for them (Camarasa 2008). The finding of a site—apparently built for the purpose of hiding someone safely in a rather inaccessible settlement located on the border between Argentina and Paraguay on the right side the Paraná River—turned out to be important archaeologically and historically (Schávelzon and Igareta 2017a). The settlement is organized around a central dwelling, a house in the modern sense of a family residence, but including many other structures and walls, all made with local stone, used for secondary functions (Fig. 1).

Close to the main house was evidence of a pit dug to deposit an object about a square or cubic meter in size, which was later to be retrieved. The second opening of the pit left behind as a memento or offering a Spanish military belt dating to the time of General Francisco Franco (1892–1975), the Spanish dictator and Adolf Hitler's staunch ally.

We consider that this find makes possible the existence of Nazi and neo-Nazi activities, as well as of Spanish Fascism in the country, different from what, up to now, has been considered to have taken place (Hennessy 1979). The support of Argentinean military governments and the national army to different fascisms throughout the twentieth century is well-known, but we are unaware of hidden structures of this type (Potash 1971a, b, 1994). The Argentine army has traditionally been nationalist, anti-Communist, and anti-Semitic, beliefs that brought it close to Nazism and Franco fascism.

### The Ruins of Teyú Cuaré, Misiones, Argentina

A settlement comprising three buildings and several ancillary buildings was found in 1976 (Botinelli 1976) in a small region on the border between Paraguay and Argentina, the jungle area with the second greatest concentration of war refugees in the country. Its study allowed the development of the idea that local neo-Nazi groups had built an inaccessible hideout for unknown purposes at the end of a valley between rock cliffs. The site had not been mapped in the national or provincial cadastres until 1999, although



**Fig. 1** Lateral wall of Structure I. Notice the use of almost uncut stone and the modern machine-made window

it was located near the town of San Ignacio, Misiones, Argentina (Stefaňuk 1991). The difficulties in accessing the place kept it hidden. The first reference to appear in newspapers dates to 1976, but this was an isolated episode. Nevertheless, we believe that the site was related to the end of one set of activities and the beginning of another, being first a hidden locally supported Nazi site and then a neo-Nazi sanctuary. The construction associated with Nazism might date to 1945, while the site may have been abandoned around 1955. The second period is considered to relate to neo-Nazi activities. We use Nazi for the European National- Socialist's and neo-Nazi for the people at other countries who did not go to the war but supported the ideology, at that time or latter on.

Three distinctive main constructions were identified at the site, as well as associated lesser structures and a great quantity of low walls and other possible defenses and small buildings and terraces. The construction was carried out using simple stone, most slightly uncut, which marks a strong difference with European architecture. It is difficult to envisage the existence of modern houses with twentieth-century designs, including sanitation and the spatial layout of its time built in an architectural style that looks old and of lesser quality. Without detailing this contradiction, almost nonsensical due to the poor quality of construction, while at the same time highlighting how well camouflaged the construction is in its surroundings, the main hypothesis is that it was the work of a group of local people untrained in modern construction, who had previously only built uncut stone or wooden cottages. These builders had to adjust their knowledge to blueprints which demanded certain amenities: toilet with toilet paper, running cold/hot water, a modern wood stove, internal bathroom, bath tubs, and good quality paved floors, large windows, servants' quarters, and a steady supply of water.

This unusual architecture was the result of building per the requirements, without attracting unwanted attention, with no contact with the nearby towns, leaving no written records, lacking an experienced work force, with minimum access to iron pipes (barely a few meters), practically lacking wall tiles (except for the bathtub area), with few floor tiles (to cover kitchen and bathroom floors), few bricks (used only for inside walls), and using a minimum of lime and cement. No road led to the town of San Ignacio, seven km away, until 1999. It was perhaps built in a short period, choosing what was possible rather than what was desirable, without contact with the city market for construction materials. In spite of these restrictions, one of the buildings shows elements that refer to Germanic building traditions in design, decoration, construction, and the use of space and topography (Weimer 2005) (Figs. 2 and 3).

## **Nazis in Argentine History**

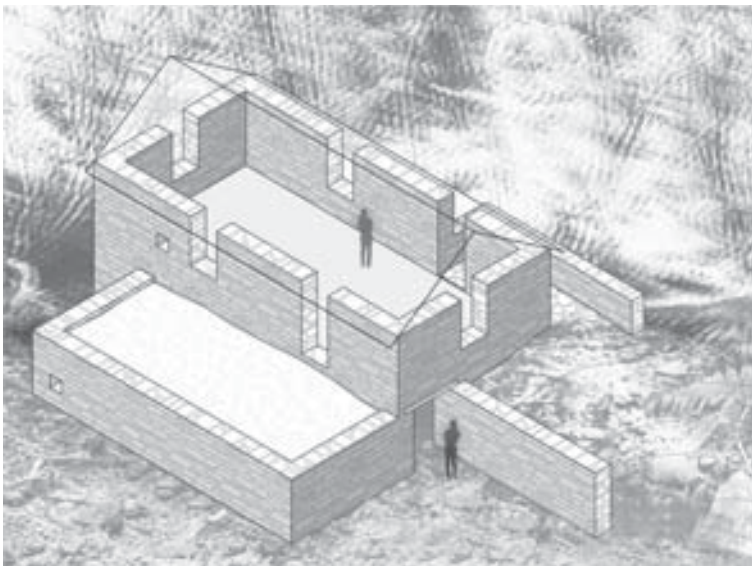
Argentina is a country that since the National Constitution of 1852 started being open to international immigration. Clearly, at that time it was not entirely "open," as Africans did not have permission to enter the country. There had always been restrictive mechanisms that were based in covert forms of racism, but the policy towards Europeans was always an open one. That, and its strong development in the nineteenth century, led to the settlement of relatively big Germanic populations along the territory, from Germany or different regions among the borders, from eastern France to the Volga Russians, as the limits constantly changed. The element in common was the tongue; language was the nucleus of their identity as German. An important amount of them

**Fig. 2** Teyú Cuaré, Structure II.  
Entrance still standing,  
not collapsed yet and its  
machine-made lintel



settled in the Misiones jungle region, between Brazil and Paraguay, in a zone that just before 1900 was integrated to Argentina. It was possible to obtain land at low prices, though much effort had to be put into adapting the jungle environment. Colonization was supported and the National State did not apply taxes or restrictions.

There are no accurate figures, but it is possible that in the country by 1945 there was over 100,000 German speakers; only between 1933 to 1945 arrived 45,000 just from



**Fig. 3** Reconstruction of Structure II, a rustic copy of a traditional kind of Germanic construction. (Fig. 2 is the lower door.) (Drawing F. Gireli)

Germany alone (Mending 1999; Sarramone 2011). And it was a powerful group (or groups) with a strong identity. The Second World War generated conflicts between them because part of that population was Jewish, and while there were admirers of Hitler, there was also strong opposition. Even though, the topic was still present and many militant groups tried to attract them to the political cause.

Military governments in Argentina were pro-Germanic since 1900, especially toward Prussian as they travelled there to be trained (Potash 1971a, b), and the anti-Semitic and anticommunist traditions were strong in the upper classes from which the military hierarchy came from. Nazism did not have a big impact in Argentina as this high society was principally Catholic, but the State and its armed forces—that during the most part of the century ran the country—, admired Franco's and Mussolini's fascism far more than Hitler's. For that reason Argentina did not ally with the United States but remained neutral during the war, until a few months before its end in 1945. Argentina could not face alone in the continent the United States and the other Latin American countries, but also the people in charge didn't want to set aside the policies they admired: the country was at least a possible safe-haven, if the war was lost.

When the war came to an end, the current Argentinian president was a Hitler admirer, anti-Semite, anticommunist, and product of a sequence of three military leaders that took turns to govern after the *coup d'état* of 1943. The last of these terms had General Edelmiro Farrell as president and General Juan Perón as vice-president, who in 1946 became president in free elections.

Perón was partially instructed in Italy and had observed and published content about the German military instruction. He shared his ideology and politic views with European fascisms and generated in Argentina a populist-nationalist policy, which was confrontational with the United States. It was a vertical-militarist government, where the leader was worshipped in a very similar way as Perón's idols. His government freely allowed (and helped bureaucratically), all Nazi refugees or fascists who requested shelter. An office was established in Italy for that purpose, having in charge an ex Nazi SS soldier from Argentinian origin who lived some time in Spain. Because of this, several high-ranking personalities like Adolf Eichmann came to Argentina. Some of them even became part of Peron's and his wife personal guard and friends. (Martínez 1984). They had protection and didn't need to hide as could have been expected by the end of the war, all was simple and without restrictions, very few were deported after years and years of international attempts that were boycotted by the governments.

Finally, with time, the Second World War became just a memory, something that happened far away and a long ago. Still, some neo-Nazi and pro-fascist groups remained and as there was also an important Spanish migration, there had always been a constant support for Franco, the only one that remained in power. These small groups, to the present, have misunderstood its origins and differences, focusing only on anti-Semitism and violence, but still existing.

## Site Chronology

Excavations inside and outside the structures and the discovery of four garbage pits yielded an assemblage of several thousand objects which allowed the dating of the place and its activities with near certainty. The story of the occupation of the site began

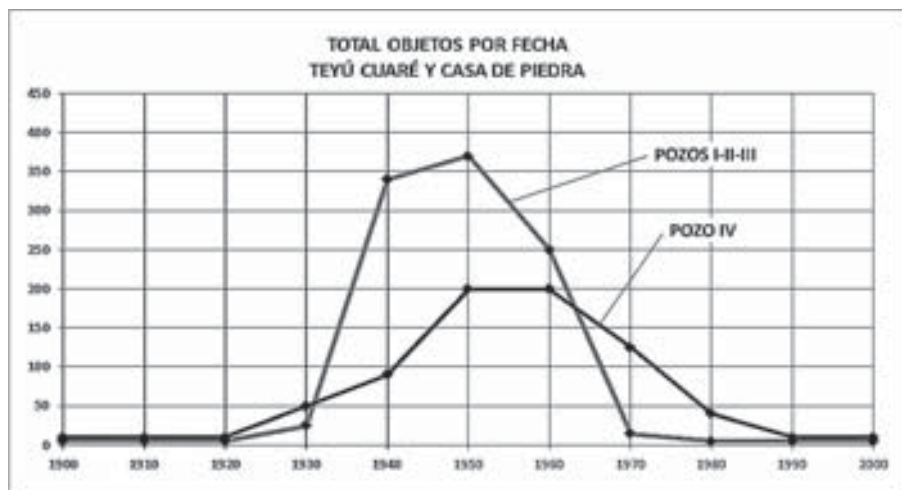
in Prehispanic times and it is common to find, scattered in the jungle, knapped stones and Guaraní pottery, which bear witness to the many centuries during which nomadic indigenous groups used the area before and after the Spanish conquest. A hypothesis not yet proven is that the War of the Triple Alliance (1861–56) between Brazil, Uruguay, and Argentina against Paraguay brought about the construction of simple walls made of stacked stones, small terraces, and paths surrounded by vegetation. Such elements are easy to find in the region even though the war was far away. There are also remnants of activities like logging and other early twentieth-century uses along the river. The area is strategic since it marks the boundary between Argentina and Paraguay where the Paraná River is the narrowest. For those who know the area, it is a difficult but direct route for smuggling across the border. The discovery of a couple of coins and other elements can be explained perhaps by the fact that European immigrants crossed there into Paraguay from Brazil from 1870 onward, carrying the objects with them. It is a good place to cross the river, although it is difficult to cross the jungle, considering there are open places with easy access to the border nearby.

The objects found in the buildings and in the associated garbage pits allowed the dating of the constructions to between the 1940s and the 1950s, with a greater concentration around 1945. There are few remains prior to that date and even fewer dating to the period after the 1950s, and all of these are not associated to domestic life but to passing travelers, fishermen, military maneuvers, or sporadic visitors (Schávelzon and Igareta 2016, 2017a, b). We believe that the site was in use between ca. 1945–55. There was a later use derived from the original one, apparently only as a remembrance site, such as activities commemorating what had taken place there: this is what we consider the neo-Nazi period. The site may also have been impacted by military maneuvers, hunters, fishermen, and isolated travelers.

Two significant findings support the Nazi presence (not necessarily German Nazis). A group of four coins placed under the foundation of Structure I: two German coins minted in 1938 and 1940, a 1942 Argentine coin, and a 1944 Paraguayan coin. And within a metal box hidden inside a wall in *Casa de Piedra* Structure I (a nearby settlement similar to five others that surround the main area), a German can containing coins from Yugoslavia (1938), two from Germany 1939, and one each from Argentina (1939), Slovenia (1942), and Bohemia (1940–44). The coins were associated with a photograph of Hitler and Mussolini and other objects from that time. The most recent coin is from 1944 and the oldest from 1938 (Fig. 4).

## Explanation for the Construction of the Settlement and Its Use

The grounds for considering the site as a hideout for Nazi refugees are: the dating of the site to around 1945 (at the end of the Second World War) the only time at which all those coins could have coexisted, as well as the great density of luxury items, including part of two expensive German porcelain sets and objects such as military buttons. Most intriguing is the existence of some high quality glassware, expensive medicines, silver-plated cutlery, Women's cosmetics, remains of winter female clothes and wooden gloves (under the tropical sun?), and other luxury objects not to be used in a jungle environment. The use of a bath tub and a water closet with toilet paper is evidence of a daily life of people from outside the region. Indeed, the presence of coins, photographs, and documents associated to World War II, the hidden location of a site that went unnoticed almost until the twenty-



**Fig. 4** The 1800 objects retrieved from four garbage pits showing probable dates for the site

first century –with one exception–the simple but modern building that turned out to be more functional than the regional one, the fact that it was all done in secrecy and without the necessary resources, the absence of documents on the place –it is not registered in regional cadastres nor are there land ownership papers–the lack of communication with other towns, the inexistence of references to it as a geographical place among the neighbors, the difficult access via the river even for those who know the area, the fact that it is an impossible site to live in due to the excess dampness and the rocky outcrops that enclose it, the absence of arable land, the financial investment needed to build and maintain the settlement, the enclosing walls which hampered circulation and the different actions taken to modify nature on the banks of the river to give an impression of inaccessibility. And above all, the fact that the settlement is centered on a structure which was the main house, made up of only two bedrooms, a small kitchen, a bathroom, a sitting room, and an annexed servants room. In other words, it is a good-sized settlement for a family and a large retinue of servants in their immediate surroundings.

Considering the objects found in the garbage pits, it seems the compound was not occupied permanently by those who commissioned it or for whom it was designed and built. And although there are luxury objects, there are few of each kind and there is little that can be attributed to domestic household consumption. Conversely there is more evidence of objects related to a broader and poorer social group (servants or guards?) including canned food, which is nonsensical when there are hunting, farming, and fishing opportunities in the region (albeit outside the enclosed settlement) and when fishing in the river is not only exceptional but famous. This leads us to conclude that the finished settlement awaited its dwellers, and was maintained and kept in good conditions with only sporadic use.

The history of the protection of Nazi criminals in Argentina is well known as a part of the Argentinean history. But what the Nazi ignored in 1945 just before the end of the war, the same of the local Nazi admirers, was what would happen to them upon arrival in a country that was ready to welcome them but which had ever-changing military governments and great political instability. Until the accession to power of Perón in June 1946 there were no real guarantees of protection



(Buchrucker 1987; Goñi 1998; Martínez 1984). Was the settlement built and then became unnecessary? We must remember that Eichmann lived in a normal home in a normal city (Arendt 1965).

## Structure IX

Near Structure II (a possible two-story house in the Germanic tradition, only the ruins of which remain), and overlooking the river, although it could not be seen from the water, we identified a rectangle defined by four low stone walls, mostly collapsed, less than 35 cm high, and  $1.2 \times 1.0$  m in surface. It was oriented along the same axis as the greater structures (ca.  $30^\circ$  W) without evidence of having had a proper floor. In other words, the stones seemed to mark a surface. The ground was slightly sunken and free of vegetation, suggesting it had been excavated and filled in. This led to the conclusion that there must have been something inside it, and someone later dug into it.

We made a trial excavation assuming it might be the grave of a child, and excavated  $1 \text{ m}^2$ , noting that the earth was not compact and confirming the surface evidence that it had been excavated and refilled: the vertical walls could be clearly distinguished from the filling due to its different degrees of compacting. It was dug to a depth of 1.8 m, at which point the ground was sterile and compact. The original bottom of the old pit was slightly irregular. A lizard cave (*Tupinambis teguixin*) crossed the pit half-way up without altering the structure, in what seemed to be recent activity. The only object found in the pit, besides a few minor stones which had fallen to the bottom, was a stone tool of the type used to cut other stones, resembling a chisel or axe, which could have been pre-historic or historical, and which we believe was part of the earth that was used to fill the pit. On plain sight, it is just another stone. What we could interpret was that it was an empty pit that had been refilled, the purpose of which was impossible to determine. The stones surrounding the space, the placing of the pit, and its orientation indicate that they belonged to the rest of the site, but only that. The earth walls of the pit bore the marks of two different activities on the same site: 1) excavation, 2) refilling of the pit, 3) a new excavation, and 4) a final quick refilling, and probably with the stones around it (see Fig. 3).

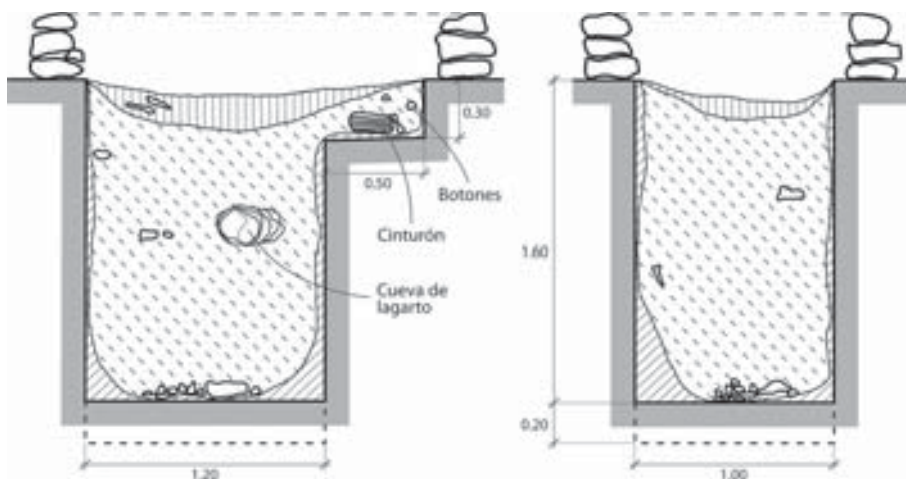
The stones that surround or mark the place must have been placed during the second activity (i.e., when it was re-opened), since they surround the total excavated space including an annex that we believe was added later and which we shall now examine. The historicity of the construction was indicated by a rusty can placed among the rocks surrounding the rectangle, which meant that it did not date to a different time from that of the other mid twentieth-century buildings in the area (Fig. 5).

During a new project season the excavation was continued to explain the pit. An unusual situation was encountered: what had seemed a simple vertical, square hole had an extension 30 cm deep by 1 m wide in one of its sides. In it had been placed a military leather belt, rolled up and tied, 1.2 m long with a Spanish Army buckle dating to the times of Dictator Francisco Franco. It was part of the official Spanish Army dress uniform of the Franco Fascist period but not a Fascist Falange belt; it was worn by the so called Civil Guard Army Legion. The belt did not have that shape before Franco, and after 1970 the hitch was substituted for one made of baser metals. The design on the belt was that of a long cross with a welded red enamel inlay, which had been removed leaving behind remains of the withdrawal, so it can be dated indistinctly to the decades from 1940 to 1960 (Fig. 6).

**Fig. 5** Excavation of a rectangular structure showing original walls and the way in which it was enlarged



The 120 cm length of the belt is the established length for Spanish Army belts and it was worn at 107 cm, pointing to a person weighing about 100 k, while the abrasions indicate that at that point there was great tensile stress, given that the leather is damaged. Two black buttons were found close to the belt but are not directly associated: one is a woman's button in bakelite with art decó decoration, and the other one is possibly a man's button worn out by scraping on the surface. They were almost in the same place but higher up. The belt's thread stitches were gone and that is why the buckle had broken free, at the point of greatest tear and wear. We think it possible, given the separation between buckle and belt, that the buckle may have detached before



**Fig. 6** Sketch of the pit; the original excavation is in black while the red lines indicate the excavation carried out to retrieve what had been buried. On one side was found the rolled-up belt (Drawing F. Gireli)

its ritual burial. It was buried rolled up tightly so that there is no doubt that it was laid intentionally, rather than dropped accidentally or discarded. The placing of the belt was a special and intentional event that took place after the pit had been dug out. Its significance is impossible to infer (Fig. 7a and b).

The queries posed are seemingly endless: Was something about a square metre buried in the pit and later retrieved? Was there a special reason for placing the rolled dress uniform Spanish army belt? Does the fact that it was nestled in a specially excavated place rather than thrown into the pit mean anything in particular? Why a pit from which an object was removed would, be re-filled and surrounded by stones, as if to remember the place? Why wasn't the belt thrown into the pit or placed at the bottom of it? Any unfilled hole of that depth would go unnoticed in the jungle for a long time and nature would slowly fill it in. Surely in 20 or 30 years it would be almost invisible or nobody would care.

### Dating the Event

The discovery is difficult to date since there were two different operations, as we can deduce, coincidental and sequential: a first excavation to bury something and a second one to retrieve it. During the second excavation, a small opening was made in which the

**Fig. 7** a and b Restored Spanish Army belt and its buckle, which is missing red enamel cross removed before the ritual interment (Pictures P. Frazzi)



belt and the two buttons were placed. The cut stone left buried at the bottom, together with other small stones, could belong to any period and could simply have fallen there as one more stone. It is difficult to notice if it is an artefact, and if it was used as a stone it might explain the sequence of events: if the stone walls were placed after the second excavation and at the start of the last refilling process, one stone might well have fallen in during the activity.

We do not believe that this interment took place prior to the time of the construction of the site (ca. 1945) but rather later or, at least, contemporary to it. Of the two buttons found associated to the place, one is a common button with no assignable date other than twentieth century, and the other one dates to after the 1920s or 1930s.

Assuming that the interment of the belt as a memento was an event that took place after the original excavation and associated with the recovery of what had been left underground, it was probably associated with a Fascist or neo-Fascist action at the site. The only other object found in Teyú Cuaré of Spanish origin is a silver coin with the image of Franco, which shows signs of having been part of a *rastra* (i.e., a belt decorated with coins, typically local, dated 1949).

Another angle to the discovery was supplied by the high degree of deterioration and the complex restoration of the belt. Experience has showed that leather objects buried in refuse pits on that area leave almost no evidence, although there are some fragments of cloth and thread. The level of dampness is very high throughout the year. This leads us to conclude that the interment of the belt cannot date to the time of intensive use of the garbage pits but to a later time. Two factors aided its conservation: it was placed high up above the water table at times of floods and had been tightly tied up so that it was a closed, compact unit. Had it been simply dumped inside, the deterioration would have been much greater.

## Nazi, Neo-Nazi, and Franco Neo-Fascist Activities

Misiones was settled from the nineteenth century by immigrants coming mainly from Central Europe, especially from the territories that made up the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and above all from what is now Germany, Austria, Poland, and Russia. Part of that population supported Hitler from the very beginning, considering that many had been forced to emigrate due to the First World War and the harsh economic situation. Networks of support and solidarity were created. When the political situation in Germany suffered a transformation with the annexation of Austria, an event much celebrated in the country, and with the rise of violent anti-Semitism, a series of lesser support groups began to operate in the country. From the start of the war, the presence of Nazi spies and supporters has been proved more than once (Kannapin 1968; Katz and Kannapin 1968; Newton 1977, 1995). It is not that the National Socialist party had many members: they were a minority (and by this time there were a large number of refugees who were German Jews), but Nazism infiltrated itself into education, economy, and politics and in this the national military were their main source of support (Camarasa 1992, 1995; CEANA 1998; DAIA 1998; Newton 1992). The German economy was extremely powerful in the country, not necessarily pro-Nazi but definitely influential (Garbelly 2003).

Were there in Misiones or across the border, in Paraguay, groups who might have been able to carry out the Teyú Cuaré constructions in absolute secrecy in 1945? Absolutely, and in addition they knew the territory and construction costs were low (Eidt 1971; Gallero 2009, 2010; Mending 1995; Sarramone 2011; Seiferheld 1985). The labor force was unskilled and inexperienced: beyond the cutting of stone, the rest of the settlement could have been built by a mason with limited skills. In other words, the place could have been built as a secret hideout to offer it to whoever needed or requested it (which of the two is impossible to ascertain). We also assume the site was not occupied for long, although it was kept in conditions for several years before it was abandoned. The place is exceptional and only a local could have known of its existence, even if life there was hard due to dampness and the jungle.

After it was abandoned, the place might have been remembered by the groups or individuals who kept Nazism alive, or it might have been the 1976 publication which aroused interest in the relationship between the place and its ideology. This is where neo-Nazism makes its appearance, a different generation using the premises for commemorative ceremonies, even if it just meant visiting the place associated with Martin Bormann's survival legend and leaving swastikas on the walls. Visitors have been frequenting the area until fairly recently, and the practice of coming to the area may still continue. The connection between these two stages and the described archaeological event and the Spanish belt is hard to understand. It must be noted that a great number of the swastikas carved on the walls are inverted, i.e., rotating in the opposite direction, which proves the lack of knowledge about true Nazism that existed in the 1970s, when the swastikas were carved and dated (Fig. 8).

During both historical periods Franco Fascism was important in Argentina, since its greatest source of immigration, in a national scale, is Spain. The Civil War unleashed floods of immigrants, opinions, and confrontations. However, we have never heard of pro-Franco Phalanx groups organized in a systematic manner. There was no national Phalanx party to receive members, although there were associations that openly



**Fig. 8** Celebration of the *Anschluss* at Buenos Aires (Photo from a private collection, Buenos Aires)

supported the dictator, and the very same national state, during the Perón administrations, backed Franco. Neither have we found connections between both groups (Neo-Nazi and Franco Fascist) beyond the similarities that bind all the Fascist movements, making the finds at Teyú Cuaré unique, since they were associated with Franco's army and not the Phalanx.

It must be noted that in Argentina, so far removed from European Fascisms and with a Nationalist and Populist government that has been recurrent throughout the last 70 years, it is difficult to pin-point ideological factions –the existence of a strong left-wing anti-Hitler Nazi group is a recent find (Friedmann 2010). And it has been difficult not only for the academic world but also for the activists, especially due to the role played by Catholicism in political right-wing groups.

The Fascist nationalist groups admiring Franco coalesced after the Second World War and the Phalanx and its ideas influenced the creation of the Nationalist Liberating Alliance founded in 1935 and, later on, that of Tacuara. This Phalangist nationalism was militarist but anti-Peronist. Conversely, Perón was clearly Francoist and his wife Eva's journey to Spain was the culmination of the relationship between the two, which would climax when Perón himself chose Spain as his refuge-for-life. Finally, Peronism, a movement that was military, vertical, populist, and right-wing, would attract or repel political activists for years. The country thus never had defined policies or organizations that could be termed Nationalist, Francoist, Phalangist, or Neo-Nazi. In the eyes of the people, all of these organizations, in time, were considered identical or acting and expressing themselves almost identically, even to the point of mixing everything up at the popular level and when spreading ideas.

## The Legend of Bormann at Teyú Cuaré

The first public association of Teyú Cuaré with Nazism dates to 1976 (Botinelli 1976), with the beginning of a military dictatorship in Argentina, when a journalist arrived at the site with Navy and Police help and spread the news. It was he who, by publishing the discovery, made the place known. The site remained abandoned, but it was associated with Martin Bormann for the first time, claiming that it was the house in which he was sheltered during Peron's government. We ignore what caused the publication of the story, which had the support of the State, but there was little material evidence beyond an interview with a local fisherman who was of German Jewish descent. He believed his father had seen Hitler's secretary once when he was a child. Thus came into being a legend which placed Bormann at a precise location when up to then several books had claimed that he lived as a refugee moving around the region (Farago 1974; Manning 1981; Whiting 1996), thus supporting the regional legend that he had chosen that part of the world as his shelter. The books written by Nazi-hunters coinciding with the region were unaware of the existence of the site. However, the belief took hold and from that year on wards neo-Nazi supporters began to arrive and turned the site into a place of worship, leaving messages on the walls or destroying them in search of treasures. The oldest graffiti belongs to a local man with a German surname and is dated 1978. Unfortunately, when the State Park was created in 1999 it accepted these legends and placed signposts informing the visitors that one of the constructions had housed Bormann, and this belief is only slowly being abandoned.

## Conclusion

Archaeology shows that in this unusual site a vertical excavation was carried out,  $1.2 \times 1$  m per side and 1.6 m deep, with vertically dug sides, in which something was deposited and then covered with earth. Sometime later the pit was re-opened to the same depth, the shovels breaking up the floor of the first excavation, and it was filled with earth for a second time, but not before some stones had fallen inside. One of these stones showed that it had been previously cut and shaped. There is nothing to give us a clue of what had been buried in the pit.

During the second opening of the pit, an annex was dug out in one of the sides of the pit and a tightly rolled Spanish military belt was carefully placed there. When it was filled with earth, two plastic buttons went in too.

What was buried there? Why was it recovered? When did the burial and removal take place? Can this be associated with the original activities of the site –local Nazis– and later to Neo-Nazi or Neo-Franco Fascist activities? Does the presence of a Spanish military and luxury object have any special significance to the neo-Nazi supporters or is it associated to Spanish Falangism in one of its two events? Why leave an Army belt and not a Falanx one in this case?

We believe there are no possibilities of answering these questions and there is a complete lack of documents, precisely because of the characteristics of local neo-Nazism and Francoism. But they give the site a greater significance, and if something was buried during construction and use of the place (ca. 1945–55) and if it was recovered at a date later than that of the coin (1949) and before Franco's death when the belts went out of use (1975), we would have a possible hypothesis revolving around local Nazi, neo-Nazi, and/or Francoist activities in the region.

The archaeology of wars, of genocides, of hatred in all its shapes, has been one of the most significant aspects of recent years (González-Ruibal 2016; Harrison and Scofield 2010; McGuire 2008). This is connected with the end-of-the-twentieth-century break with post-modernity and the stark need to end with science's blindness or short-sightedness: if it is possible to study civilization, or civilizations, we should also analyze anti-civilization.

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