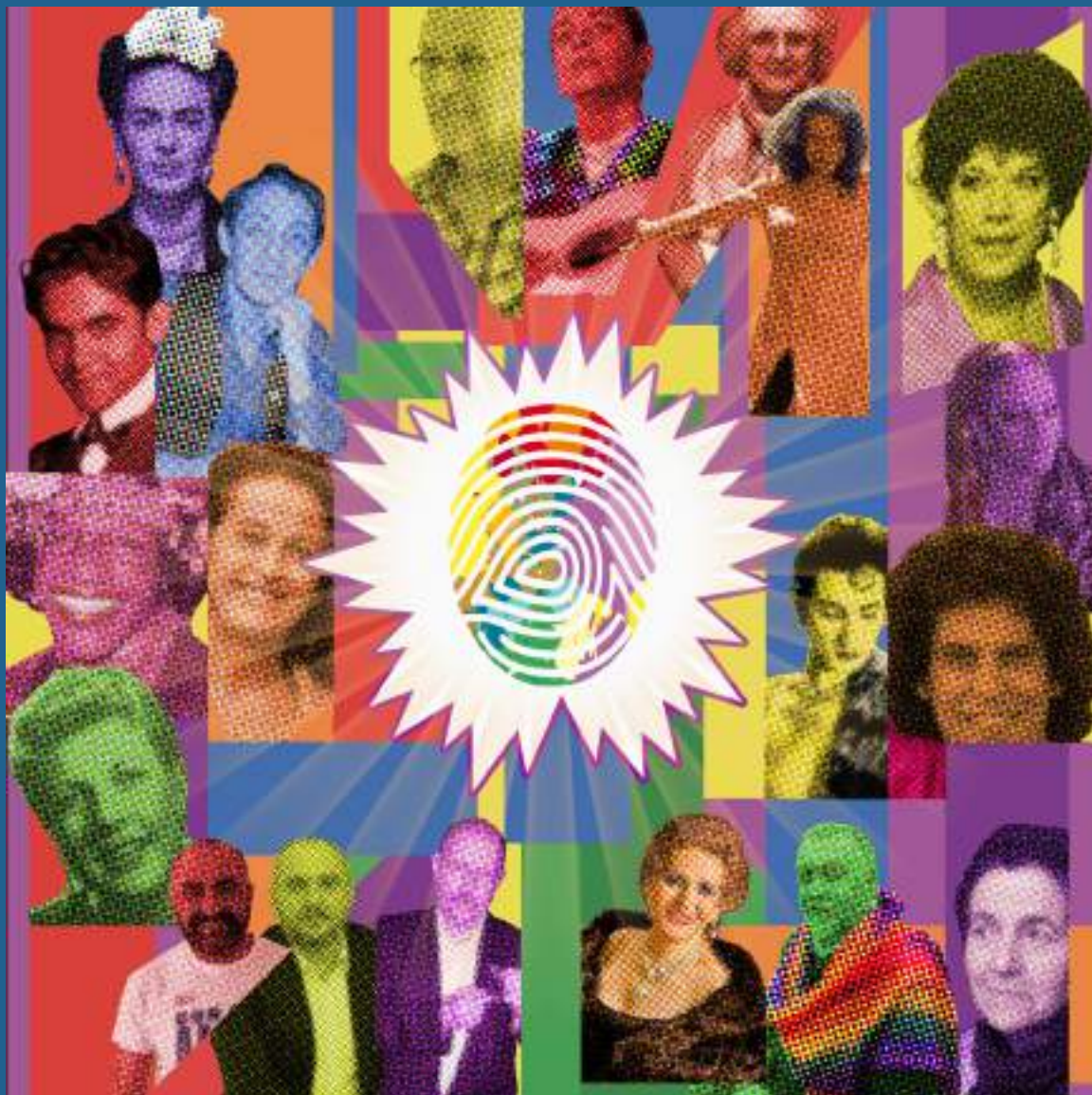


# BEGOÑA ALLEY IN THE LGTBI+ MEMORY

Freedom and repression of sexuality in  
Torremolinos during the Franco regime  
(1962-1971)

THIRD  
EDITION



Fifth Anniversary of the Asociación Pasaje Begoña.





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Consejería de Inclusión Social,  
Juventud, Familias e Igualdad

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## PRESENTATION



**W**hen the Asociación Pasaje Begoña asked me to present the third edition of this paper I did not hesitate: it seemed like a great idea and I was delighted to accept.

We cannot protect what we do not know exists, that is why this publication is so important. Its pages take us back to nine thrilling years in the 60s in Torremolinos. Right in the heart of Begoña Alley, “a veritable island of freedom” where, in spite of the repressive times sweeping Spain, celebrities, intellectuals, bohemians, hippies, artists, aristocrats, members of the jet set and anonymous tourists, spent time together in an avant-garde and diverse atmosphere. In a liberal, cosmopolitan atmosphere of mutual respect. A place where everyone could be themselves, where they could be and feel free regardless of their identity, orientation, age, background or social class.

The years have gone by and we still need to learn more about the past of LGBTBI people, about their struggle and their commitment towards the arduous goal of true equality. That is why it is so important to learn about places in the Historic LGBTBI memory such as Begoña Alley in Torremolinos. This paper also describes the paths of anonymous LGBTBI people who reflect the everyday lives of a community who serve society as a whole to continue normalising diversity.

This document will also enable LGBTBI people to learn about the tough circumstances in which their predecessors were forced to live. There are many challenges facing the community in order to obtain true equality. And there





are also many lessons left to us by previous generations who fought so that we could be free and more equal today.

We hope that this paper contributes to highlighting how we are all equal with respect to dignity, rights and obligations. This study describes numerous examples of personal growth, of coexistence, respecting the diversity of those heroes and heroines from the LGTBI collective who are no longer here, but who knew how to leave us an extraordinary legacy.

In 2022 Begoña Alley was nominated by the European Parliament House of European History as a candidate for the European Democracy Site distinction. This candidacy and the setting up of the European Space for LGTBI Memory establish Begoña Alley as a great European example of memory, reflection and the spreading of values which are in perfect harmony with those at the very core of the European Union: respect for diversity and human dignity, freedom, tolerance, social justice and protection, and the rejection of any type of discrimination.

Finally, I would like to thank the hard work of the Asociación Pasaje Begoña over the last five years, and encourage them to continue discovering, recovering and protecting the historic memory of the LGTBI community. And of course, you can count on the support of the Regional Government of Andalusia for this.

Similarly, I would like to thank all those people who selflessly dedicate their time and enthusiasm to making this thrilling project to recover the LGTBI memory come true. In particular, the LGTBI Memorialist network, the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience, the researchers from the LIESS network and from Pablo de Olavide University who have led this study.

I hope you enjoy it,

Loles López Gabarro,  
Regional Ministry for Social Inclusion, Young People, Families and Equality.  
Regional Government of Andalusia



# INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, democratic countries have experienced a growing process to make sexual diversity visible. Significant steps have been taken in the recognition of certain civil rights claimed by LGBTBI+ minorities, which are embodied at regulatory level (elimination of repressive laws, the introduction of the Same Sex Marriage Act, the Gender Identity Act...), and which enable progress along the path that Fassin (2006) calls *sexual democracy*. Nevertheless, these transformations, although important, are not enough to put an end to lesbophobia, homophobia, biphobia and transphobia (hereinafter, *homophobia*) which continue to exist in society. It should always be remembered that history does not move in a linear manner, as is clear in both the international sphere and in Spain, where in recent years there has been clear evidence of homophobic speeches and certain difficulty moving forward in legislative areas such as gender self-determination.

For decades, especially in dictatorial political systems such as Franco's dictatorship, these minorities have been pathologized and criminalised, subjected to marginalisation and severe violence. The rejection of anyone who does not conform to the heteronormative model is deeply rooted in society and is difficult to overcome. This is why we consider that an important step in the politics to recognise citizen rights includes publicising the repression to which LGBTBI+ collectives have been and are subjected as well as the forms of resistance adopted to survive in a hostile environment. In short, the need to recover the historic memory of these groups and ensure that this memory becomes part of history in its own right, a history that is also laden with silence and oblivion with respect to women, racialized groups and anyone who did not fit the normative physical standards or whose practices did not respond to heteronormativity, that is, who could be called a *sexual dissident* (Dollimore, 1991).

The democratisation processes of society and the overcoming of dictatorial regimes have led to the appearance of a number of memorialist movements which have placed society before a mirror to face their past, restore the humiliated memory of the victims of dictatorships and to put the rights of the collectives that were the object of repression on the table. This is no mean feat, as memorialist movements are well aware, as it tends to clash with the institutions and pressure groups who are unwilling to look at certain areas of the past and are determined to cry *revenge* when all that is asked is justice and a right to repair. But if memorialist movements have encountered endless numbers of obstacles in their path, in the case of sexual dissidents we encounter two specific problems for rebuilding the past and requesting the right to memory, with all that this entails.

The first obstacle is linked to the persistence of homophobia. Society shows some condescension against this type of repression, which lacks the epic nature assumed by other types of dissidence against the Dictatorship. Nor should it be forgotten that this oblivion is linked to the *sense of shame* felt by the victims themselves in reporting the violence against them due to the stigmatizing nature that non-heteronormative sexualities continue to have. Reporting abuse implies recognising the sexual condition, which is often difficult for the elderly, especially in certain contexts. If, in the case of the men, it is complicated to talk about the repression experienced, it is even more so for lesbian women who, to a large extent, continue to be invisible (Juliano and Osborne, 2008). The families of victims have played an important role in the process to recognise the memory of victims of political reprisals. However, this has not been the case with sexual dissidents as, often, the families are ashamed and keep them hidden. This defencelessness of the sexual minority victims of reprisals makes them victims twice over: once because of the violence incurred and once because of the oblivion to which they are subjected.

The second fact is related to the non-recognition of these reprisals as *political* reprisals, understanding political in a restricted form that excludes everything to do with the poorly named *private domain* (as the feminist movement reminds us, what is private is also political). Regardless of the level of awareness of the people concerned, their actions and wishes questioned the legal grounds of a regime supported by the *virility* of the men, the reproductive *femininity* of the women and a sexuality understood purely in biological terms. This non-recognition as victims of political persecution results in their exclusion from the first law of amnesty, after all, homosexuals were classified as what today would be called in geostrategic language *collateral damage*. We should not forget that, although with some undertones, homophobia was perpendicular to political ideologies at this point in history.

The actions of sexual dissidents took on a political nature, just as the perfectly planned repressions they experienced. Therefore, approaching the repression and resistance of these collectives is not merely a question of justice, but also of a need to understand society as a whole. This implies a more detailed look at the lives of the women and men who were humiliated, persecuted and imprisoned, and an analysis of the different forms of violence used against the individuals who were treated as sick and delinquent because of their non-normative physical standards or sexual orientation. For these people, a visit to the police station or prison did not serve to *atone for their guilt*, as their stigma was not eliminated on leaving the cell. Many were obliged to bear the pressures of their environment and, in order to live with certain dignity, forced to abandon their homelands and their people and become *sexual exiles*.



## BEGOÑA ALLEY IN THE LGTBI+ MEMORY

The end of the Dictatorship did not suppose the immediate start of a process to report the experiences of sexual dissidents during the Franco regime. The struggle of the recently emerged Spanish LGTBI+ movement focussed on eliminating the Francoist laws which remained in place during the transition until the early nineties (Llamas y Vila, 1997), and left the recovery of the LGTBI+ memory to one side.

Spain is not the only country where the recognition of the repressions experienced by sexual minorities has been a slow and complicated process. In Germany, the persecution of homosexuals during the Third Reich was not recognised until 1985, and trials for this reason were not stopped until 2002 (Ugarte, 2003). France did not address the question until the history of a homosexual survivor of the German concentration camps was published in 1994 (Seel and Le Bitoux, 2001).

In Spain, an important step towards undoing the oblivion was the creation of the Asociación Ex-Presos Sociales (Association of Former Social Prisoners) in March 2004, formed by people from the gay, lesbian, transsexual and bisexual collective who were victims of the Franco regime and the start of the Spanish transition (Ugarte, 2008). They demanded «a law to compensate the victims of the repression against LGTBI+ individuals which would permit the investigation of the archives in order to determine more precisely, without restrictions and without trauma, the extent of the repression and the amount of compensation» (Asociación Ex-Presos Sociales de España, 2016). In 2005, a report by Amnesty International reported on the silence surrounding victims of the Spanish Civil War, and included LGTBI+ individuals. In this respect, the Historical Memory Act (Law 52/2007 of 26 December) recognises the repressions suffered for reasons of gender and sexual orientation. Although its application has been very limited, it has enabled the compensation of some LGTBI individuals who were imprisoned during the dictatorship. This law was followed by a series of regional regulations, such as Law 2/2017, of 28 March, on the Historical and Democratic Memory of Andalusia that also recognises the existence of repression against LGTBI people.

On 20 July 2021, the Council of Ministers passed and presented to the Spanish Parliament, for discussion, the Draft Project of the Democratic Memory Act that seeks to “preserve and maintain the memory of the victims of the War and Franco’s dictatorship”, as well as the “absolute redress” of these victims. The Asociación Pasaje Begoña has actively participated in this draft project with numerous proposals directed at giving visibility to the LGTBI+ community and the places frequented by LGTBI people and associated with their historic memory.

In this context, it is not surprising that the memory of the collectives forming the Spanish LGTBI+ movement has been largely based on international



references that have little to do with their own experiences. There is huge ignorance surrounding the repression, the resistance and the setting up of the sexual liberation movement in Spain. Therefore, we believe it is necessary to study the past closely and reclaim the people, places and events that have defined the life of these collectives. The significance acquired today by Begoña Alley and the Great Raid which took place in Torremolinos in 1971 should be understood in this sense.

Since 2 January 2018, when Jorge M. Pérez and Juan Carlos Parrilla, creators of the Asociación Pasaje Begoña, accidentally found an old press cutting referring to the raid in Torremolinos, and to date, there has been a very surprising process in place to recover the memory of Begoña Alley and to give it its heritage value. This is an event which had been cast into oblivion in spite of the repercussions at the time and which was publicised, as we were able to confirm at a later stage, in both the national and international press. Almost fifty years of silence surrounding a memory that today once again forms part of our present and our future.

The creation of the Asociación Pasaje Begoña is a wake-up call bringing together a significant part of the local society in Torremolinos, some of the people who lived through the event or who frequented Begoña Alley, and a number of associations and political parties. The success of this recovery process is largely thanks to the organisational capacity of the founders of the association, who quickly managed to create an impressive network of very diverse people. Excited about a project that implied approaching a part of history from multiple perspectives, involving anthropologists, historians, artists, activists, writers, etc. who outlined different ways of looking at an event that would be given a new meaning. The concurrence of multiple factors helps us to understand the enthusiasm with which this memorialist process has been adopted both by a significant part of the LGTBI+ activist movement and by the majority of the political spectrum, with the exception of Vox.

The recovery of information about Begoña Alley and what we now call the *Great Raid* is contributing to learning more about the everyday life of the sexual dissidents and to creating a genealogy of LGTBI+ in Torremolinos which links to the history of the international LGTBI+ movement. It comes as no surprise that some activists look for parallelisms with the gay benchmark of all time: Stonewall Inn. Just as in the United States, in Spain a place had been found which offered refuge to a homosexual environment. Statements in the press such as «the Spanish Stonewall» have had considerable media impact and contributed to publicising, both nationally and internationally, the significance of Begoña Alley and the Great Raid. The two stories share many common elements. Both took place in a transition process between the *pre-gay society*, in which venues with a marked homosexual nature were be-

ginning to emerge, and the *gay period*, in which establishments were set up exclusively for the homosexual population. The two places were also heavily raided. However, it is true that there are also significant differences: while at Stonewall we saw a riot that is remembered as the origin of the LGTBI+ movement, the consequences of the raid in Torremolinos did not go beyond silence and oblivion. The connection between both scenarios has a significant symbolic element which contributes, on the one hand, to enriching the history of the LGTBI+ movement by incorporating new references which do not come exclusively from the English-speaking world and, on the other hand, the recognition at international level of local stories, which continue buried in the silence of official stories. There is still a long way to go to find out more about, in the words of Jorge M. Pérez, «the other *Begoña Alleys* around the world», and in Spain.

So it is not surprising that the story we relate here has been received with enthusiasm by the LGTBI+ movement, and by the local gay population, which has seen a part of their lives claimed back, a part that until now seemed to be a mere anecdote. This is linked to another factor that helps us to understand the circulation of this process to reoccupy the memory. To some extent, Torremolinos needs to reinvent itself as a tourist destination. In this reinvention, it is necessary to give content to slogans representing the city as a diverse location with a population from every corner of the world, a place where everyone is welcome and where there is, of course, no lack of people who, from the start of tourism in the area, have had a significant presence in the town: the population today known as LGTBI+.

Tales about Begoña Alley and the Great Raid have helped to give visibility to the LGTBI+ collective in tourist settings. Therefore, it is no surprise that members of the City Council (currently formed by different political parties) have supported this type of initiative as much out of political interest, focusing on a tolerant and diverse society, as economic interest. The LGTBI+ population is truly important and the offer of venues destined for use by this collective is of great importance, in addition to events aimed at this sector of the tourist market (festivals, pride days, cultural activities...) which mobilise thousands of people.

That said, how should the political success of this initiative be understood? How is it possible that such varied political parties as PSOE, PP, Ciudadanos and Podemos have reached an agreement in this process and supported parliamentary initiatives led by the Asociación Pasaje Begoña? This was the case of the declaration of Begoña Alley as the «birthplace of the rights and liberties of LGTBI people» made by the Presidential Commission of the Parliament of Andalusia (2018) and by the Cultural Commission of the Congress of Deputies (2019). In addition, in the case of the Cultural Commission of the Con-



gress of Deputies, the declaration considers it a «Site of Historic Memory». It seems clear that the politically correct discourse about LGTBI+ is assumed by the different political forces. Reclaiming Begoña Alley as a place in the LGTBI+ memory is less conflictive than reclaiming other sites of memory that bring to light the repressive role of the Franco regime in a far harsher manner, in a political context in which discussions thought to have been overcome by society are brought back to the table. This fact is not without risk, as can be clearly seen in the international sphere.

Thus, we have witnessed a coming together of social, economic, political and media interests that has encouraged a very fast memory recovery process and its consequent heritage status. Nevertheless, we should ask what is being reclaimed. Some critics of this process insist that Begoña Alley was never a gay space and that, as such, the raid should not be considered as a Government action against the gay community. Memory has many faces and interpretations. In the recovery of the memory of Torremolinos, the forgotten presence of homosexuals at the venues in Begoña Alley is precisely what is underlined. This, as we will see, was more than significant and, in fact, this site was and continues to be a benchmark for the LGTBI+ population all over the world. Does this mean that Begoña Alley is claimed to have been exclusively gay? Not at all; what is being claimed is a space where homosexuals and heterosexuals coexisted, a space which enjoyed unusual visibility in the Spain under Franco. Begoña Alley represented a space of freedom for homosexuals, but it was also so for other groups who, although heterosexual, did not fit with the standard of sexuality. Begoña Alley was also a place of coexistence, regardless of origin or sexual choice.

That said, we are aware that, although this is what we seek to claim in this memorialist process, there were also relations of power between men and women, between heterosexuals and homosexuals and, naturally, between social classes (some examples are given in this paper). We are also aware that the decision to tolerate these spaces was clearly for the purposes of propaganda, and sought to provide a more amenable image of the dictatorship, whereas in other contexts repression was the norm. Reclaiming a part of history involves remembering the good and the bad sides.

The highlighting of the importance of Begoña Alley and the Great Raid is resulting in a huge scientific and artistic production that claims back sexual dissidence. The procedure to recovery Begoña Alley is a political (but not party), scientific, cultural and artistic proposal which seeks to look at the past and throw light on certain dark areas. That said, above all it is an initiative for the present and the future which involves presenting to primary and secondary schools and universities the history of repression and the resistance of the LGTBI+ movement, which found an essential space for enjoyment and





also for resistance in the parties and social contexts linked to the bars and nightclubs.

Another of the regularly received criticisms of this procedure to recover the LGTBI+ memory is its connection to the economic interests of the town to promote leisure, and consequently, consumption. The questioning of the economic benefits that this initiative may offer Torremolinos ignores an important fact. That this space was, from the very start, directly linked to the market, with all the contradictions that this implies. Maybe, from the perspectives that consider, not without reason, that the repression of sexuality is linked to an unfair socio-economic system, this explication is inadequate. However, in this case, it was decided to take a step forward, to give visibility to the presence of the homosexuals who suffered from the repression in a very specific context, and to highlight their memory, which is also ours, and simply that. Without a doubt, for those starting out on this thrilling journey there are still many battles to be fought, but we shall leave that for another occasion and focus on the story in question, the story in this paper.

The Book *Begoña Alley in the LGTBI+ Memory* has been written to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the Great Raid, and also springs from the unusual coordination between activists and investigators who have shared spaces for research, reflection and even writing in a book created jointly and which is partly the result of the Asociación Pasaje Begoña itself, and of two investigations currently underway: *Destinos turísticos gays en España: identidad, globalización y mercado*, financed by the Ministry of Science and Innovation (PGC2018-095910-B-I00), *Represión de los disidentes sexuales en Andalucía durante el franquismo y la transición*, financed by the Council for Economic Transformation, Industry, Knowledge and Universities of the Regional Government of Andalusia, and the European Union (FEDER) (UPO-1264661).

The book is divided into four chapters:

- The first chapter looks at the context of tourism and addresses the contradictions implied by tourism under the Franco regime at a time of economic opening and political repression in which the negative influence that this activity could have on the population in a context marked by National Catholicism was viewed with some concern. The same chapter discusses the shaping of Torremolinos as a tourist destination until the seventies, underlining the presence of the homosexual population.
- The second chapter looks at Begoña Alley and the characteristics of a space in which the presence of sexual diversity was particularly significant. The characteristics of the building are analysed together





with the social contexts that reigned over the nightlife of Torremolinos for some years, as well as the atmosphere experienced in this small alley where people from all walks of life mingled together, each one in search of their particular *alley*.

- The third chapter looks at the characteristics of the repression of homosexuality in Fascist dictatorships, specifically in Spain and in Andalusia. It explains that not everything was freedom in Torremolinos, and repressive mechanisms were in operation.
- The final chapter analyses the Great Raid, which took place on 24 June 1971, and brought the golden era of Begoña Alley to an end. Although this event subsequently fell into oblivion, it had far-reaching national and international repercussions.

The book ends with three annexes. The first contains the exceptional account by José Luis Yagüe, at that time chief editor of the “Sol de España” newspaper in Malaga, and currently chair of the journalists of Malaga, Marbella, Campo de Gibraltar and the Costa del Sol. Mr Yagüe was a privileged witness to the golden age of Begoña Alley and to the Great Raid.

The second annex presents some of the main characters from the nights in Begoña Alley. Not only does this include people from show business and celebrities, but also anonymous individuals who lived, worked and had fun in Torremolinos. Some of these, such as Manuela Saborido Muñoz —Manolita Chen—, continued the struggle after the Great Raid and have become references in the LGTBI+ movement in Spain.

The third annex describes the activities of the Asociación Pasaje Begoña. We thought it of interest to include this documentation to give visibility to the great work of this association and to provide materials we consider of unquestionable interest for researchers focussing on the heritage status processes of the LGTBI+ memory.

We trust that this text serves as a tribute for those who resisted the repression and who opened paths towards accepting diversity as a part of the wealth of a democratic society. We hope you enjoy this journey in time just as we have.

Before closing the introduction, we would like to thank the different institutions and people who have contributed with their work and support to making this book a reality: to the collaborators from the Asociación Pasaje Begoña, who were there at all times publicising and providing information for this work, and to all those who have carried out and continue to carry out important creative and publicity work; to everyone who knew Begoña Alley and the Great Raid and who have offered their testimonies; to the different



historical archives for facilitating our work; to the people who have contributed with their interviews to enrich this work; a special thanks to Javier Caró for his selfless contribution to the work, with the design of the cover; to all those who have provided photos to illustrate this book: Ángel Larrinoa, Avelina González, Doris Alza, Gino Felleman, José Luis Yagüe, Juan Antonio Fra Medina, Juan-Ramón Barbancho, Manuela Saborido, Paco Prieto, Ramón Cadenas, Serafín Fernández, Vito Montolio and Wim Kuipers and, lastly, our thanks to the entities that have funded this research, both the Ministry of Science and Innovation and the Regional Government of Andalusia, and in particular, the Council for Equality and Social Policies and Conciliation, who are responsible for the publishing.





## CHAPTER I.

# TOURISM AND HOMOSEXUALITY IN TOR-REMOLINOS

## TOURISM AND MORALITY DURING THE FRANCO REGIME

The end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century saw the development of tourism in Spain, at that time an emerging industry mainly associated with the Bourgeoisie and summer spa resorts. The World Expos, both in Barcelona in 1888 and in Seville in 1929, contributed to publicising the image of Spain, previously recreated by Romantic Travellers. In the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there was some progress in the development of the tourism infrastructure with the creation of the tourist Paradors or the network of roadside inns. Nevertheless, a series of factors delayed the growth and establishment of this activity. The Crash of '29 had a direct impact on the tourist industry. «In 1930, there were 440,000 foreign visitors, in 1932 the number of tourists had dropped by almost half, and there were even fewer visitors in 1934» (Correyero, 2011: 3). Subsequently, the Spanish Civil War and the Second World War were essential for understanding the difficulties faced in consolidating tourism. Until 1949 the number of foreign visitors received in 1930 was not exceeded (Vallejo Posada, 2015).

Economic growth after the Second World War, the gradual development of means of transport and communication routes, and the improvement of the social and economic conditions of workers, helped to boost the development of tourism. In the case of Spain, the fifties brought the end of the period of autarchy and international isolation resulting from the civil and military coup that had led to a bloody civil war. The Dictatorship gradually gained international recognition. In 1953, the Pact of Madrid was signed with the United States, in which the government agreed to the installation of four North American military bases in Spain. The international stage had changed and the Cold War favoured foreign recognition of the Franco regime, having a direct impact on the development of the tourism industry in a period of economic expansion.

This opening up forced Spain to make a number of changes to promote an activity that, together with payments sent by the emigrants, permitted the reception of a large quantity of currency. To promote the development of tourism, it was necessary to open up to the outside, to deregulate the economy and to transform security and border control policies (Pack, 2009). Nevertheless, as we will see below, this increased interaction with democratic

societies was viewed with hope from an economic point of view and with fear from a social and political perspective. This was because, for some sectors of the Franco regime, opening the doors of the country could mean the introduction of subversive political ideas and the arrival of new customs that could go against the values of National Catholicism.

The Church and the more conservative classes feared the arrival of harmful influences. The potential impact of tourism opened the discussion on its possible harmful effects. This concern was exacerbated when Spain started to promote the coastal regions, resulting in a massive arrival of foreigners seeking entertainment. The way in which tourists dressed, the use of bikinis or the display of behaviours considered inappropriate were in the line of fire of the more high-minded social sectors and government authorities. Numerous religious and political texts warned of the dangers of the presence of the thousands of foreigners that visited Spain (Pack, 2009).

The problem of morality linked to the development of tourism became part of the political discussion, although a pragmatic vision ended up imposing itself.

A vision that understood that the economic benefits from this sector were far greater than the moral harm it could cause. Tourism was seen as an important

resource that the State could not do without. First the Directorate General of Tourism (1939-1951), and then the Ministry for Information and Tourism (1951-1977) countered the arguments against this activity and underlined the positive aspects, insisting that its impact was not as harmful as some would have. In fact, tourism was clearly used for the purposes of propaganda to portray a *friendly* image abroad. This propaganda of the regime was not only intended for external consumption. The Spanish, in the different means of communication, including the NODO, saw how foreigners wanted to come and enjoy a *different* country, with beautiful beaches, gorgeous women and a whole series of clichés that tried to combine tradition and uniqueness with modernity. These stereotypes were taken from essentially Andalu-



**The Dictatorship used flamenco as a tourist attraction. Flamenco celebrations, 1964. Photograph courtesy of Manuela Saborido (Manolita Chen).**

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sian references and built upon the basis of a simplified image of Andalusia. In any case, to boost tourism it was necessary to maintain a delicate balance between the liberal sectors who stressed the economic benefits of the activity, and those who saw it as a political and moral threat.

To keep the opponents of tourism happy, the types of behaviour that the most prudent found scandalous were regulated, especially in coastal areas. One of the most controversial questions and which raised the most hackles among the conservatives was the clothing worn by tourists and which the Spanish imitated, especially swimsuits. Two years after the end of the Spanish Civil War in 1941, the Directorate-General for Security regulated *indecent* practices on Spanish beaches: nudism and bikinis were banned; the proximity of men and women was advised against; it was compulsory to get changed in beach huts and to wear bathing robes when not in the water. «It was a real obsession among the clergy at that time, imagining that men and women could mingle in their underwear offering the awkward collusion of their nakedness» (Abella, 1996:110). Every year, as summer approached, the Directorate-General for Security repeated the same bans. This obsession continued to grow as tourists arrived at the Spanish coast.



**During the Franco regime, the Church played a crucial role in many of the everyday activities. A priest opening a street in Torremolinos. Documentary collection from the Regional Historic Archives of Malaga.**



In 1951, the National Conference on Morality in Beaches and Pools was held in Valencia. It was attended by public and religious authorities, and addressed the problems of morality in bathing zones. In the conclusions, the authorities were urged to control the nudism of foreign tourists and to maintain separate bathing zones for men and women. Some of the conclusions of the National Conference on Morality in Beaches and Pools are described below (The Episcopal Orthodox Assembly of Spain, 1951).

3. The Congress reverently expresses the desire that the Episcopal Orthodox Assembly of Spain appoints a priest to advise with authority the corresponding bodies of the Ministry of the Interior and the Directorate-General for Security with respect to this aspect of morality.
4. The Congress desires that all the Diocesan Commissions for Orthodoxy and Morality operate, act, advise and oversee.
5. The Congress believes the organisation, by the hierarchy, of a major national campaign for DECENCY is opportune.
6. The Congress anxiously requests the Public Powers to put an end to the nudist and paganising invasion of foreigners that vilify the honour of Spain and the Catholic sentiments of our Country.
7. It is imperative that dancing on the beaches, at swimming pools and many other places in swimsuits is strictly forbidden. This is a serious outrage that is spreading and cannot be tolerated.
8. The separation of genders during bathing is considered essential to safeguard decency.
9. The Congress requests the Minister for the Interior to advise the Civil Governors to accept the collaboration of the Catholic laypersons presented in each Diocese by the Prelate himself, so that their orders are complied with throughout the country, granting them powers as auxiliary police officers, such that they can truly act without prejudice to this.
10. The Congress implores the National Commission on Morality and Orthodoxy to establish rules about what is understood as an acceptable bathing suit, both for women and for men.

The Asociación Cruzada de la Decencia (Crusade for Decency) was founded in 1954, and its members were obliged not to use beaches or swimming pools or wear clothing counter to morality. There were even some who proposed the creation of the figure of the tourist chaplain for the hotels (Vogel, 2017). But one thing were the regulations and another their application. Compliance with these by-laws fell to the civil governors. As a result, the laws were not applied in the same way all along the Spanish coast. There were frequent clashes between civil and religious authorities who imposed moral rules





without always following the same criteria.

There was constant suspicion in the more traditional sectors of the Dictatorship. In 1963, the Civil Government of Malaga recommended «religious, moral and humane training for those who, one way or another, were in direct contact with tourism. In 1964, a report from the public prosecutor warned of the harmful influence of foreigners on young Spanish citizens:

In the tourist areas most influenced by foreign customs, the moral conscience, so deeply-rooted in good Spanish customs, is gradually being lost. Sadly, people today are not shocked by anything, displaying a dangerous indifference to the presence of homosexuals and prostitutes, who do not hide from public displays of their repugnant personality, problems which dominant the atmosphere of frivolity existing in these lands influenced by tourism and of huge concern for all civil and religious authorities who, in spite of efforts to prevent it, have not managed to contain this serious risk, of such moral and social transcendence (Fernández, 2005:307).

In the areas most frequented by foreigners, the authorities took greater care not to bother the tourists because of the image they might give of Spain. So determined was the Franco regime to portray the country abroad as a modern country, it could not permit the *hounding* of the visitors. The rules governing bathing clothes would slow the arrival of tourists and give a retrograde image of the country. Tourism would place Spain in the spotlight of the international press, who frequently discussed the persecution by Spanish police of tourists for *immoral* behaviour (sunbathing in a bikini, kissing in public...). Spain could not afford the luxury of driving travellers away to other Mediterranean destinations by imposing restrictions on styles of dress or forms of behaviour (Pack, 2009). The Regime adopted a permissive attitude towards *immoral* or *illegal* conduct. So for example, tourists could walk along Spanish beaches wearing a bikini although the law forbade its use out of the water. Civil governors and the police had express orders to be *flexible* towards foreigners (Pack, 2009:132). In fact, there were a number of incidents between tourists and local authorities. One example occurred in 1950, when two foreigners were arrested for being aboard a boat in Malaga harbour during the Virgen del Carmen procession, as this was considered disrespectful behaviour during a religious celebration. The two tourists protested to their respective consulates and the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs reprimanded the Malaga authorities for this type of behaviour towards foreigners and indicated the need to advise the Ministry before taking more drastic measures (Cerón Torrelblanca, 2017). This permissive attitude was enhanced with the arrival of Manuel Fraga in the Ministry of Information and Tourism in 1962. His determination to promote this sector encouraged greater *tolerance* of the customs arriving from abroad, giving way to a more pragmatic perspective.



As we have seen, tourism during the Franco regime lived between the hope that it would bring in foreign currency and the suspicion of an activity that involved contact with people from democratic countries. The spread of political ideologies contrary to the Regime was always a concern, although Franco's government believed they were able to control these ideas. Of greater concern was the negative influence on morality that the tourists might exercise by introducing *unhealthy* forms of behaviour, contrary to the Catholic doctrine, which could alter the good customs of the country. Among these forms of behaviour, those linked to sexuality were the most worrying.

For National Catholicism, as indicated by Alonso Tejada (1977:21), the centre of immorality was sexual conduct: «Morals par excellence were sexual morals». Not all the Spanish population were considered equally vulnerable. Young men and women were the most exposed to the dangers of corruption. The Catholic Church, to whom the Franco regime granted the authority to control the country's morality, insisted on the need to prevent young Spanish girls from being *contaminated* by imitating foreign women, who flaunted their bodies not only on the beaches, but also in the streets, and from imitating conducts *inappropriate* for *good* Spanish women, such as smoking, drinking and mixing with men. Young people, as they were in education, were another of the groups that required protection from these bad examples; however, this was not the same for men.

For the men, "given their nature", tourism could not pose a threat from a sexual point of view. To the contrary, contact with foreigners would serve to publicly demonstrate and strengthen their masculinity. A very generalised idea was that, compared to the *unmanly* refined North European, the real man was to be found in the south. Spain portrayed itself as the reserve of European masculinity, and this was one of the main attractions of the country. It was widely known that European women, in addition to the sun and the beauty of Spain, came in search of these men, the *Latin lovers*, the *Iberian males*. If the Spanish man represented virility and the warrior values of the conquerors of the Spanish Civil War (Alcalde, 2017), the female Swedish tourist personified uncontrolled female sexuality, the objective of the sexual conquest of Spanish men, as «this hegemonic masculinity was based on the demonstration of virility and the capacity for sexual conquest» (Nash, 2018). In another article, the same author indicates in relation to the myth of the *Swedish female*:

She wielded femininity from different gender standards and, at the same time, gave a new meaning to the tourist otherness: personifying female tourists from the north of Europe as "the others". This portrayal of cultural otherness was embodied by a stunning, slim, seductive, tall and blue-eyed blonde. Her evident erotic corporeality dressed in a bikini went against the rules for modesty and decency assigned to Spanish girls. She became the prime example of sexual permissiveness, of female empowerment, in addition to the attributes

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accorded her of independence, modernity, beauty, youth, whiteness and Ar-yan ascendancy. Her young body exposed to the public eye gave off an aura of femininity completely out of line with the portrayals of the local matronly women. In this respect, the worship of the female tourist's body was a central dimension in the reconstruction of aesthetic and moral values away from the traditional attributes of Francoist femininity and it became a refuge from the chauvinist Celti-Iberian look. The sexual sublimation of her figure also revealed a challenge for those strict moral controls of National Catholicism (Nash, 2020:44).



**Torremolinos, in the sixties. Photograph courtesy of Ramón Cadenas.**

In contrast to the widespread image of the foreign woman in search of the *Don Juan of the beach*, we have no equivalent figure for the homosexual tourist who came to Spain attracted by the charms of its men. The regime was aware of this reality at all times and went to great lengths to hide it. It was necessary to control the sexuality of the Spanish men who did not come up to the strict standards of virility of the military dictatorship. Homosexuality was to be persecuted, not only because it was perverted, but also because abroad it brought the national masculinity into question and smeared the reputation of the *Iberian male*. If Spanish cinema of the time was spreading the message that Scandinavian women were scanning the shores for *real* men, what it did not show was that, at the same time, Mediterranean countries such as Italy, Morocco and Algeria were holiday destinations for European males who found the exoticism of the south in other men. Spain was a destination with what, in today's terms, could be qualified as *sexual tourism*. At those times, the economic differences between the north and the south of Europe were enormous, and this deeply defined the way in which the Mediterranean was

viewed. The relation was conceived in terms of Orientalism and neo-colonialism, where the men of the south were portrayed as primitive and subordinate (Nash, 2020).



Bar in Begoña Alley, in the sixties. Photograph courtesy of Ramón Cadenas.

In the tourists' imaginations and desires, the local men and women seemed highly sexualised and racialised—hypersexualised and hypercorporealised—(O'Connell and Sánchez, 1999; Kempadoo, 2001; Alcázar, 2010). The demand for sexual tourism is closely linked to discourses that naturalised the inequality of class, gender and race (O'Connell and Sánchez, 1999). Tourists who sought sex in third world countries used these differences to reinforce their identity and their position of superiority over the natives (Kempadoo, 1999; Sánchez, 2000; Piscitelli, 2004). Although the local population who want sex with tourists can also, at the same time, exploit a relationship that allows them to enjoy other bodies that offer economic benefits and status (Valcuende and Cáceres, 2014). If, for the tourists, dark Mediterranean bodies were an object of desire that could be obtained cheaply by travelling to Spain, for the native inhabitants the men from the north were equally attractive for a number of reasons. For many Spanish people who visited these tourist zones, being able to enjoy these *superior*, less inhibited bodies and to escape from the daily contexts in which sexual repression was more direct, was a liberation. Having a casual relationship was easier in the tourist context, among other things, because it was possible to access certain spaces such as apartments or guesthouses. In addition, they could obtain gifts, invitations to visit other countries or, simply, the possibility of drinking and eating in restaurants. These were some of the attractions of meeting tourists, without directly including paid sex, which was also frequent in these settings. Money, exoticism and youth were part of a *negotiation* that gave rise to multiple forms of sexual exchange that have been studied in other tourist destinations (Valcuende and Cáceres, 2014) but which have been barely touched on in

Spain. In fact, the new tourist destinations appearing in Spain were becoming especially attractive for Spanish homosexuals. In this respect, Torremolinos was the first national reference and an important international focus of attention. Homosexuals from all over Spain travelled to this town on the Costa del Sol in search of work or entertainment. Of course, the Regime was well aware of this fact, but kept it hidden away, as it was another of the tolls it had to pay for economic development. We will return to this point later, but first we should put the shaping of Torremolinos as a tourist destination into context.

### TORREMOLINOS AS A TOURIST DESTINATION

The weather, the proximity to Malaga and its strategic position made the Costa del Sol in general, and in particular what was initially a district of Malaga<sup>1</sup>, Torremolinos, a privileged place that attracted a huge variety of travellers. This region, before the golden age of tourism that started in the fifties, was a spa resort and place of rest for certain social sectors. Tourism for health, a minority sector, set the scene for what was to become the leisure tourism industry.

Initially Torremolinos was discovered by the people of Malaga as the perfect place for rest, leisure and for taking the waters of the sea, which were attributed beneficial properties against many skin diseases, rheumatism, and chest ailments. From there came the creation of the former tuberculosis sanatorium next to the beach, called the Santuario Marítimo de Torremolinos. Then came the Gibraltarians who paved the way for the British (Lara, 1997:227).

Richard Ford, en su *Manual para viajeros por España y lectores en casa* (1845), afirma que el clima de Málaga era el mejor del sur de Europa para los enfermos de pulmón y añade que «en la agradable aldea de Torremolinos don Nicolás Parody, que hablaba inglés, había adaptado una hermosa hacienda, con toda clase de comodidades, para los que acudían a estas tierras buscando una mejoría en su quebrantada salud» (Heredia Flores, 2000:5).

Some hotels were forerunners before the fifties. The best known is Santa Clara castle, popularly known as the *Englishman's hotel*, as it was initially the residence of George and Ann Margaret Langworthy:

In the early years of the 20th century, they visited Malaga and fell in love with the area to the point that they did not leave, choosing the former estate of

.....

1 From 1924 to 1988 it was a borough of Malaga, and since then it has been an independent town.





the castle and the neighbouring Santa Clara in Torremolinos as their home. At the end of the 20s, it was converted into the first hotel in the area, popularly known as the Englishman's Hotel or the Englishman's Castle, built in what was to later become the Costa del Sol. A hotel that served as a meeting point for intellectuals and artists of the time, and for wealthy foreigners who viewed the residence as the perfect place to spend a few days of rest surrounded by beautiful gardens, with an admirable climate and marvellous views of both the mountains of Malaga and Granada and of still untouched beaches (Enciso y Navas, 2014:13).



Aerial view of Torremolinos, in the fifties. Wim Kuipers Collection.

Later on, the civil-military coup of 1936—which put an end to the Republic after a devastating civil war<sup>2</sup>—, the Second World War and the international isolation of the Dictatorship contributed to the halt of the tourist industry.

- .....
- 2 Malaga was hit particularly hard during the repression of the Franco regime, as was made clear by one of most terrible events in the Spanish Civil War, known as the *huía* or *desbandá*. In the case of Torremolinos, in 2018 documents were found confirming the existence of a *labour* camp in 1938. The prisoners may have played an important role in the creation of the runway in 1939. For further information, see the newspaper Público: <https://www.publico.es/sociedad/memoria-publica-letrinas-barracones-presos-politicos-campo-concentracion-torremolinos.html> (date consulted: 22/03/2019).

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**Plaza Costa del Sol, Torremolinos, 1946. Colección de Wim Kuipers.**

Up until the start of the 20th century, tourism was a minority activity associated with the upper classes. It was not until the fifties that we were to witness a radical transformation of the sector.

The revolution started in the 50s: Torremolinos became the pioneer nerve centre of European tourism. Some hotels with character and history already existed in Torremolinos in the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. These included the Castillo de Santa Clara, the Parador de Montemar (1934) and the Hotel La Roca, opened in 1940 (García-Moreno et al., 2016:260).

The Regime promoted this destination in subsequent years, or rather it could be said that it was the destination that contributed to promoting the *friendly* image of the Regime. Franco's visit in 1956 was no coincidence, during which «the new villa, inn and golf course in Torremolinos run by the Directorate General for Tourism» was opened (noticiario NODO, 1956). The tourism industry was growing at a dizzying pace and radically transforming the economy of the area. Although it is true that this growth was characterised by a lack of planning which was left in the hands of the private sector (Cavilanes Velaz de Medrano, 2014), resulting in disastrous town planning, with serious consequences for the environment and landscape.

Up until the sixties, old photos of Torremolinos portrayed a small pretty Andalusian village which at the time depended, in administrative terms, on the City Council of Malaga. However, in a very short time this small village of country folk and fishermen underwent huge transformation in all areas. The new activity required labour in the construction and services sectors. Thus, the former inhabitants gradually gave up work in the fields and at sea to take up far more profitable economic activities.



**Torremolinos, 1953. Photograph of Griffith courtesy of the Hotel Meliá Costa del Sol.**

This stage saw huge urban development and the massive abandonment of many rural zones; the Costa del Sol had found another source of income. This period, during which tourism began to play a central role, is of special interest from an economic and cultural point of view as we witness a change in the meaning of the value of land, resources and labour:

In Torremolinos, Fuengirola, Marbella, etc., the value of land was only just above zero: it was possible to buy hectares of land for half a dozen notes. Properties pompously called “haciendas” were left barren, traversed if at all, by simple goats and barefoot goatherds. Small hotels began to fill; the guesthouses in the fishing village of Torremolinos were overflowing (...) A plot of land, an allotment was purchased for twenty thousand *pesetas* and three months later were resold for twenty thousand *duros* (Palomino, 1972:214).

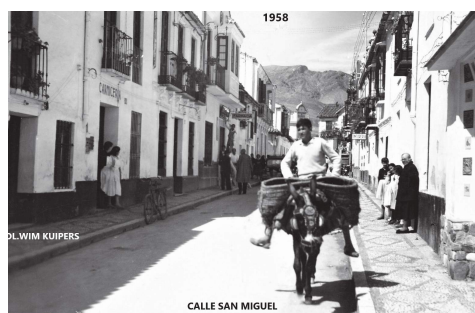
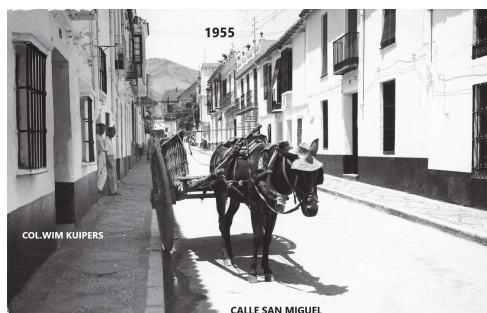
For Jurdao (2013), this transformation in the meaning of land throughout the Costa del Sol brought the peasant way of thinking face-to-face with that of the speculators, for whom land acquired a monetary value mainly from its location. This facilitated what the author considers as a colonising process with unquestionable consequences for the development of other sectors such as agriculture:

As hotel tourism irrupted on the Costa del Sol in the sixties, there was large-scale construction all along the coast. Hotels were erected at high speed and cities appeared whose names were to become world famous: Torremolinos, Benalmádena, Fuengirola, Marbella, Estepona. This urban activity, such as the new El Dorado, drew huge numbers of men away from the Andalusian countryside to the construction industry. Young farmers from Mijas abandoned the peasant family economic structures to go to work as builders on the coast.





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**Calle San Miguel, one of the main arteries of Torremolinos, in the fifties.  
Wim Kuipers Collection.**

Parents were left to tend the land alone, unable to continue working the land due to lack of labour. This resulted in the colonisation of the masses of peasants, owners of farmland, by developers who appeared in search of easy business. A speculative component surrounded land purchase transactions (Jurdao, 2013:75).

The region adapted to the new needs, in the same way that local populations had to respond to the demands of the market and the visitors. In fact, the accounts collected from that time show that the cultural differences between the tourists and the local population did not generate significant conflict. As one resident from the town mentions in the documentary *Bajo el sol de Torremolinos*: «Well, look here, they help us to live, that's the most important thing, before all this it was dead and now, they've brought life to the town, and whether you pick up different customs is secondary».

In la Carihuela beach, a former fisherman's quarter, two elderly men enjoy the warm winter sun. It is easy to talk to them. They are used to being asked questions in *palinguis*. «It would have been around the forties. Some men with plenty of money arrived in Torremolinos and said, "We're going to turn this into gold". They rushed about, studying the land. Us locals, we just smiled because, you know what, there were so many mosquitoes blocking their noses. They talked about draining the marshes, about hotels... Everything was very strange because ever since I'd been around, Torremolinos had been a small fishing village that every morning at dawn took the fish to Malaga».

The gaze of the old men follow the first bathers in bikinis on their way to the beach. «They started to buy land. Carlota Alexandre owned half of Torremolinos. At that time property was worth almost nothing. Four allotments, the odd fruit tree... We lived from fishing. The sea was all that we had. The development happened overnight».

(..)

Gradually the fishermen began to hang up their nets. A new El Dorado was





starting. But many months of sunshine, effort and promotion were required for Torremolinos to create the present image in the minds of the Spanish and foreigners. It was practically unknown in the fifties. The *boom* came in the sixties. From that moment, Torremolinos became one of the most important names in national and international tourism. As Luis Merino Bayona, deputy mayor of Torremolinos, told us, it was the poster town for tourist Spain abroad».

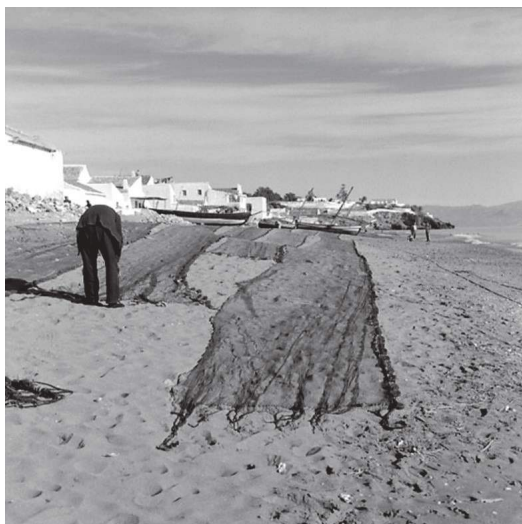
Construction work began on hotels, housing developments, tourist resorts. Thousands of people visited every year. Those who had hesitated before about the possibilities of the Costa del Sol, and in particular Torremolinos, rushed to invest. El Dorado del Sol was becoming a reality. Travel agents included Torremolinos as a top destination. The Government realised that the economic salvation of the country lay in tourism, and embarked on its promotion, providing facilities and protecting it. The British, the French, the Germans and lastly the Scandinavians chose Torremolinos as the perfect place to spend their summer. Calm, peace, sunshine, attractions and a little flamenco, *typical Spanish* with bulls included and foreign currency. «Together with Majorca and Sitges on the Costa Brava, Torremolinos became the number one tourist destination in Spain», says Mr Merino (Merino, 1973).

Gradually, the local residents began linking their activities, one way or another, to what became the only two economic sectors in the town: building and tourism. Some accounts describe how rooms were rented in private houses prior to the big development of the hotel and property industry. This process involved a radical change from a cultural point of view, as workspaces such as the beach had become places of entertainment and the elements characterising the fishing industry became tourist objects that formed part of the décor in restaurants and other places of leisure (Maccanell, 2000).



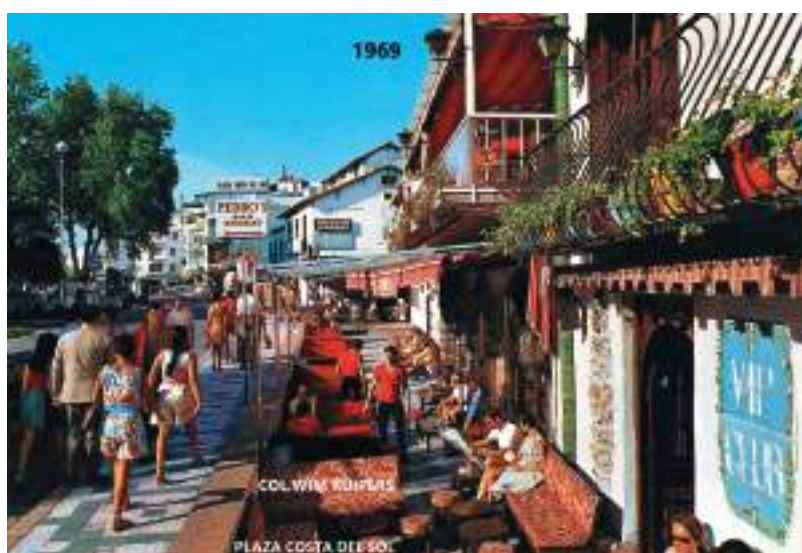
**Torremolinos, a traditional fishing village. Fishing boats on la Carihuela beach, end of the fifties. Europeana Archives.**

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**Fishing tackle on la Carihuela beach, end of the fifties. Europeana Archives.**

Gradually a series of infrastructures and services appeared, combining modernity with local colour, intended for tourists who arrived in search of *lo diferente*, recreating a tourist scenario based on a series of images that offered *lo español* and *lo andaluz* as part of the tourist attraction. Visitors and the local population had to learn to live together in a world defined by contrasts, as described by Goytisolo in his novel *La isla* (1961): «Sitting at the Central, we watched the comings and goings of the summer tourists: young men in shirtsleeves and jeans, new wave Zazous, pretentious foreigners. On the pavement, women dressed in black and peasants».



**Bars in the Costa del Sol Plaza, Torremolinos, 1969. Wim Kuipers Collection.**



Goytisolo's novel reflects two social worlds that share the same space from different cultural and economic logics. On the one hand, the people able to travel to enjoy the beach, on the other hand, those who had to learn to live with and from tourists, as Fernando Sánchez Dragó described in his novel *Eldorado* (1984:82) with a certain air of superiority with respect to the local population:

With the locals —fishermen, builders, greengrocers, caretakers at the town hall— neither folk tales nor drinks worked. Their truths and their principles —or their lies and values were irreconcilable with ours. And what could you do! They were chained for life to their nation, to the straw-coloured plains of the Meseta, the secular ups and downs of their uprisings, to the petty tyrants, to the forty-something prostitutes, to the scrounging canons, to the vulgar dialect of the suburbs, to the urban misery, to the sharp pains of hunger wild from the fields of cereal, to the cities strangled by the garrotte of the suburbs, to...

In effect, what could they or what could we do! Each to their own and God with no one. They were not even curious or had the guts to come out of their shacks. They stayed on their porches weighed down and hypnotised by the sequins that arrogantly paraded before them, never approaching, and with impatient or indifferent eyes followed the glittering procession of designer females with pointed breasts and slim males with a hint of elegant rushes grown on the other bank of the river of life. Their voluminous black smocks were always scrupulously clean and the whitewashed faces of their shacks like a mirror reflected the grimaces, afterglows and winking of the sunlight. They were both proud and submissive at the same time. They let themselves be transformed into exotic and well-dressed backdrops, asking nothing in return, and gently adapted to the absurd rules of hygiene dictated by the mayors. They did not bother anyone and no one bothered them. Sometimes when the guest houses in San Miguel street or the lavish beehive shaped hotels were full to the brim —this tended to happen in mid-August and at other dates ringed in red by opulent and golden beings from Europe and the Americas—, then, as the month of dreams and utopias collapsed on the two beaches and the silent mountain, the humble people stretched their limbs and rented out the bedrooms of their wedding nights for thirty pennies a day. So with money and with resignation, they opened their shutters just a little to the air from the world they did not want and that would never belong to them.

The differences between the local inhabitants and residents was again clear in the memory of David Mathis Johnson, who arrived as a child on the Costa del Sol, in 1957:

David's first impressions of Torremolinos were not too good. He recalls being beaten up for being American, and his fear of some of the town's crazy char-



acters. The fact there were no Christmas trees, hamburgers or television also bewildered the youngster (Bryant, 2017)<sup>3</sup>.

The tourists who arrived in this area were looking for exoticism, which the Franco regime promoted to obtain foreign currency and portray a friendly, modern image of the Dictatorship. The colourful image of the tourist destinations helped to erase the black and white vision of inland Spain. However, without a doubt, there is one factor of particular interest when trying to understand the heterogeneous nature and cultural diversity that appeared in the area: the strategic position of Torremolinos. All these circumstances made the Costa del Sol a central space in which many different economic and political interests came together, and at the same time in a liminal space, able to attract an *alternative* public. This was highlighted by Molinero (1970:17-19):

The proximity to Malaga (11 kilometres), Marbella (45 kilometres) and Tangiers is essential for understanding their life. Malaga offered all the benefits of a big city, the touch of joy of its people and the money necessary to prevent the entertainment from declining in the low tourist seasons. On the other hand, Torremolinos offered the ease and anonymity of a party held in a far-out district.

Marbella cooperated with its fame, money and desire for fun. For the people of Marbella, Torremolinos was a warm welcome thanks to its parties behind closed doors. In exchange, it received ambitious *gigolos*, *gogo dancers* and the labour of those who did not acclimatise to the dynamics of Torremolinos.

Tangiers provided the typical from the Arab world: clothing, trinkets, drugs and Moroccan men. It benefited from the contraband and the springboard this rapprochement with Europe meant for its young people.

Effectively, its proximity to Malaga, to other tourist destinations and to the north of Africa, and also to Gibraltar and the North American military bases, contributed to the town becoming rapidly known in Europe and in the United States. And it would play a significant role in the comings and goings of tourists, business people, soldiers, travellers, self-starters, artists and writers all looking to rest, have fun, escape, for a healthy place, to earn a living or make a fortune. That said, two key elements explain the success of this area. The first is linked to a business sector that was a trailblazer for a long time and that developed a powerful industry, with facilities able to satisfy the

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3 David's first impressions of Torremolinos were not particularly good. He remembers being beaten up for being American and his fear of some of the town's crazy characters. The fact there were no Christmas trees, hamburgers or television also bewildered the youngster.



most demanding tourists of the time and to compete with the best tourist destinations in the world. And all that, and here is the second factor, at a truly competitive price. Tourists could access hotel services of better quality and at lower prices than in other European countries (Palomino, 1972), although it is true that this came at the cost of brutal urban development that would bring significant environmental costs.

Torremolinos represented, as can be seen in the NODO documentaries, an excellent international letter of introduction, but also the myth about modernity dreamed of for inland Spain:

Torremolinos has become paradise for this influx of newcomers. The rate of construction rises relentlessly (...). There is a steady flow of cosmopolitan people and folk from all over the world and of every race stroll along the streets and promenades. It is fashionable to walk in pairs, and the dogs, faithful imitators of man, follow the rule. Fans of the Côte d'Azur, Saint-Tropez, Ischia and Capri, attracted by the splendour of the Costa del Sol now burn their ancient idols and find happiness with the first free space they find in these Spanish landscapes. In less than five years, the perspective of this area has been totally transformed with the growth of buildings around the fishing villages, which now hide behind the mass of great hotels and the latest model of residential centre (Noticiario NODO, 1962).

The huge buildings, extraordinary hotels and plentiful leisure activities around the beaches were the backdrop to which large numbers of celebrities came, feeding the tabloids and gossip magazines.

Twenty-four beauty queens arrive at Malaga airport in pursuit of the title of Miss Spain 1964. The Costa del Sol welcomes them, offering the perfect setting for the event. Torremolinos is the centre of this tourist paradise, to which so many foreigners come. This representation of the world can admire the beauty of the Spanish woman, in the variety of all its regions. The large buildings house a cosmopolitan community created in recent years by virtue of this growing phenomenon that attracts people of all nationalities to Spain. The beauty queens are staying in luxury hotels, where they occupy the rooms in twos. As they start to unpack their suitcases, we see the regional dresses they will show off at the exhibitions and parades (...) (Noticiario NODO, 1964).

That *select* destination of the sixties became known internationally through the elite and *alternative* tourists, which later on helped to make it popular. In later decades, this *pioneer* style of tourism would change to mass tourism, a process which, with all its special features, was reproduced in other coastal zones (Santana, 1997), where overcrowding meant saturation and, on the whole, the displacement of these *pioneers* to other places. Torremolinos was no exception, with the development of other nearby spots, such as Marbella, to where they moved.







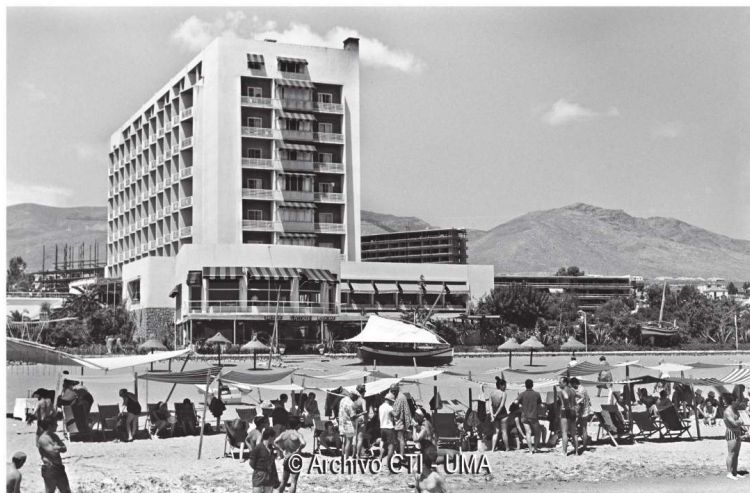
**Postcard of Torremolinos combining some of the traditional clichés: local colour, sun and modernity.**

By way of summary, we could say that the miracle of tourism in Torremolinos took place thanks to a favourable economic climate, its strategic location, the improved means of communication—including the airport and the development of charter flights—the new demand for leisure spaces after the post-war periods, to the convergence of abundant labour coming from a primary sector in crisis, and the arrival of foreign entrepreneurs and capital<sup>4</sup>.

The reasons given in the previous paragraphs also help us to understand the particularly liberal character of the travellers and tourists who chose Torremolinos as a leisure destination or place of residence. In spite of the debates produced among the different currents of the Franco regime—analysed in more details in later sections—the Regime was not about to be morally delicate and relinquish the high income from this industry.

In later decades, the minority tourism of the fifties was joined by other types of tourists including nationals in search of leisure and an escape from daily routines. At the end of the day, a series of licences on the fringes of everyday life are usually permitted in tourist destinations. This makes these spots especially attractive for those people seeking settings where they can freely express their gender and sexual identity. It is no coincidence that many sexual dissidents from Andalusia went into exile in big cities like Barcelona, but

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4 Some accounts in the interviews point to the significance of the earthquake in Agadir in 1960, which destroyed the city and forced tourists and investments to divert elsewhere, a theory that is also maintained by Gavilanes Velaz de Medrano (2012).



**The signature Hotel Pez Espada, 1963. Archives of the University of Malaga (UMA).**

also both temporarily and permanently in the coastal regions, where they could work outside the political and social repressions they experienced in their places of origin (Arnalte, 2003).

4S (*sun, sea, sand, sex*) tourism which became a way of life for many people, also enabled Spaniards and foreigners to meet in these spaces of freedom, as, although it is true that the Dictatorship was a time of direct repression against homosexuality, it is no less certain that this also occurred in other countries. The relative permissiveness experienced in Torremolinos, both because of its liminal position and because of the relative tolerance of the Dictatorship, served to shape a place that attracted many sexual dissidents. In fact, it is of note how many of the lives of the main players in the tourism development, of the travellers and tourists who met in Torremolinos, did not respond to the established standards of heteronormativity (see the Annex of celebrities). The configuration of an alternative space was portrayed in a literary production that contributes to strengthening an idea that has emerged in several interviews: Torremolinos as an «island of freedom».

## **TORREMOLINOS: BETWEEN MYTH AND REALITY**

TORREMOLINOS, Spain.- A new Riviera is rapidly growing along the spacious sandy beaches on the south coast of Spain, bathed in sun. This transition in the Costa del Sol, or the Sun Coast, is similar to what took place in the Gold Coast of Florida in its early days. One big difference is that this type of Spanish Riviera is surrounded on three sides by olive groves, Moorish castles and snow-capped peaks. On the fourth side, of course, is the Mediterranean Sea.

## BEGOÑA ALLEY IN THE LGTBI+ MEMORY

As one strolls along the beach, one can count 11 hotels under construction. The steel and concrete structures, with six or seven floors, are erected as dramatic symbols of the change that is taking place here. This coastline, home to 3000 years of human history, has become a holiday spa resort all year round with swimming pools, bikinis (topless suits are not permitted here), water skiing, golf, tennis and hordes of bronzed British, German, French, Scandinavian and American tourists.

Until recently, the Costa del Sol was little more than a chain of quiet fishing villages, with nets drying in the sun and primitive boats anchored offshore. Today landowners speak of the sale of properties for \$1 million and of the personal incomes of the former fishermen, now happy serfs for the tourists, which are way above the average annual salary of \$258 of the recent past (Spain's Costa del Sol says 'yes' to tourism; 1964).

Torremolinos was the counterpoint to a Spain in black and white. Not only did it become an international reference, but it was also an open door to the world that permitted the portrayal of a very distant reality of a country that, paraphrasing the historian José Luis Gutiérrez, «was managed like a barracks». It is not surprising that the arrival in 1954 of the Swedish students who stayed at the Swedish Holiday School in Spain, located in Playamar, remains alive in the shared memory of this town.

Young people were often found walking along the central roads in their swimsuits and garish outfits. Even in the areas further from the beaches, the more audacious dared to sunbathe without swimsuits. Perhaps one of the most talked-about nudes was that featuring Brigitte Bardot in 1957. There was no going back. The development of tourism in Spain would be unstoppable and become the driving force behind important social changes in the country. At the end of the sixties, this town had become a veritable benchmark, a myth:

Torremolinos has been so mythologised that just pronouncing its name in a public place or among friends is enough to produce the expectant silence that preceded any conversation about drugs, Swedish girls or homosexuals.

It has been associated with a "place of debauchery" to such an extent that the adjective "Torremolinero" serves to qualify a person who visits, thinks and lives in line with the "standard" type created by the best known town on the Costa del Sol (Molinero, 1970:17-19).

There is no doubt, Torremolinos personifies the development of Spanish tourism under the Franco regime better than any other place. In this coastal spot, Northern Europeans seek, in addition to sun and sand, the most typical elements of Spanish culture. The contrast between the foreign population and the national population contributed to recreating a series of stereotypes that were reflected in films from the Franco regime which showed that *Spain is different*. Torremo-







Welcome to Torremolinos poster.

linos had become a stage to be displayed and in a film setting. There were numerous films that portrayed the contrast between the prudent Spaniards and the licentious foreigners, personified in the figure of the Swedish girls, and a few Spaniards dazzled by the beauty and *debauchery* of the tourists. In this respect, the deputy mayor at the time, Luis Merino Bayona remarked in an interview given in 1973:

They are small-time *playboys*, who want to score no sooner than they've arrived. They drag themselves from club to club in search of «that flirtatious Swedish girl» everyone was talking about in Madrid or in Segovia some friends who had heard such tales.

From early in the morning they swagger along the beach on the trail of an *easy pick-up*. Glances, smiles in *Spanglish*... They usually end up with no money and no *flirting*, but they make up for it in their imagination and incite other young Spanish men to «live the life of Riley in Torremolinos» where, they claim, «everything is easy» (Mellado, 1973).

Cinema highlighted the profound contradictions brought about by tourism in a society that was coming to terms with a new reality between fascination, disdain and repression, as described in the excellent work by Zamurreño (2010). The long list of films that touched on the subject of tourism one way or another is headed by *Amor a la española* (Love, Spanish-style):

The first full-length feature film to look at the tourism phenomenon and revel in the clichés emerging in the Costa del Sol was *Amor a la Española* (1966), a Spanish-Argentine comedy directed by Fernando Merino and set in Torremolinos, and was one of the components of the well-known “landismo” style. A satirical comedy that aimed to show Spaniards the benefits of tourism. *Amor a la Española* is a repetition of the goodness of a Costa del Sol full of hotels, beaches and streets crowded with thousands of foreigners waiting to be conquered by Spanish males. Clichés and reality come together to show the audience the straight and narrow path of the regime's morality in spite of the ravings and sexual desires of their main characters. In spite of the crude proposal, 2,053,657 spectators headed to the cinema to enjoy the adventures of two Spanish prototypical men on the beaches of Torremolinos (Zamurreño, 2010).

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A very different reality was hiding behind this portrayal. One to which the cinema rarely gave any time<sup>5</sup> and which, on the other hand, Spanish and foreign literature described far better by capturing some of the aspects that singled out these tourist destinations.



**In the sixties and seventies, the Costa de Sol became the setting for numerous films.**

Many writers looked to the coastal towns for inspiration, sometimes simply to place their stories in a more or less glamorous context or, at least, to move away from the reality of the rest of the country. Other times, it was to reflect the changes taking place as a result of the influence of tourism. Depending on the point of view of the person interpreting this reality, Torremolinos was portrayed as a place of modernity or as a space filled with frivolity and corruption. One way or another, it is noticeable how, in the majority of novels set in this town, homosexual, lesbian, trans or bisexual characters appear as

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5 There are some exceptions, such as the film directed by Pedro Olea, *Días de viejo color* (1967), which moves away from the stereotype of Torremolinos and portrays the nightlife, drugs... Nevertheless, this is a propaganda film from the Regime used to promote Spain's tourist image and convey the idea of modernity. It has a moralising touch as it uses the tourists' way of life to reinforce the traditional values of the locals (Fernández Pena, 2015).

a way of recreating the uniqueness of this setting.

Since the end of the fifties, Torremolinos shaped itself as an alternative space within Spain, the entrance for new trends: music, fashion, customs... Shops for people with a certain purchasing power multiplied, along with bars where you could listen to the latest records from the United Kingdom or the United States, and clubs where well-known national and international groups played. In the sixties, any Spanish musician hoping to keep up with the latest musical tendencies had to pass that way. It would be difficult to understand the transformation experienced by Spanish music in the sixties without considering the importance of the role played by this tourist destination. Paco Roperro, in the documentary *Bajo el sol de Torremolinos* states:

People from England or Finland or thereabouts would tell me that it is the only town in the world where so much music comes together. Torremolinos revolutionised the music scene, let's start there, because groups came here from all over Spain, from Madrid, from Seville, from Barcelona, from Zaragoza... To play in Torremolinos was like an exam, the ultimate test.

The *alternative* profile of many of these tourists explains how it was possible to hear tracks, in this town, that were at the top in the most avant-garde nightclubs in London, Berlin or New York. The proximity of the American military bases also contributed to the arrival of new trends in music.

The growth of nightclubs with live music attracted leading Spanish groups: Los Bravos, Los Brincos, Los Mustang, Los Sírex... Torremolinos was not only a place where they could perform but also a showcase to abroad. What's more, it was possible to obtain records, hi-fi equipment, lights, etc.

Although it was possible to listen to music in almost all the venues, the underground clubs in Pizarro Alley were the most notorious and attracted the most modern audiences: Top-Ten, Top-Twenty, El Grotto... We can get some idea of what these places were like through some of the films set in Torremolinos. In the 1966 film, *En Andalucía nació el amor* we can see how a crowd of young people dance barefoot to the sound of the group, Los Silver at El Grotto club. In *Días de viejo color*, made in 1967, one scene is set in the London Town discotheque, where people dance to the psychedelic sounds of Los Relámpagos.

Torremolinos became the Mecca for anyone who dreamed of becoming a professional musician. Not only did they have the opportunity to play at some of the many leisure venues, but they could also meet foreign musicians. It is not surprising, therefore, that many started their professional music careers in this town and formed top groups. Groups coming out of Torremolinos include Los Íberos, a group who played in the *beat* style formed by Enrique Lozano from Malaga, singer and guitarist for the group. Los Gritos are also from Tor-

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remolinos. Another of the many groups connected to this town are Los Ángeles from Granada, who based their operations there and played at the leading clubs: Top Ten, Papagayos..., inspired by the British musical influence. Live music began to decline as the clubs were replaced by discotheques, although some of these still offered concerts in the seventies.



Los Iberos, one of the many groups connected to Torremolinos.



At The Blue Note it was possible to hear the famous Dutch jazz pianist, Pia Beck.





But music was not limited to pop and rock. The huge varieties of venues made it possible to enjoy all sorts of rhythms. The more select hotels livened up the nights of their guests with orchestras.

Foreign tourists were also able to enjoy Flamenco shows. The image of Torremolinos combined modernity with the *exoticism* of the south. Flamenco shows, associated with tourism started to appear in the main Spanish cities from the fifties onwards, and of course, there was no shortage in Torremolinos: La Bodega Andaluza, Las Cuevas, El Jaleo...



**The latest clubs and discotheques lived alongside venues of all types in Torremolinos. Flamenco show at La Bodega Andaluza. Wim Kuipers Collection.**

Begoña Alley is a clear reflection of the musical variety that could be heard at Torremolinos. At many of the venues (La Sirena, for example), young people danced to the sounds of the latest music, but it was also possible to enjoy jazz played by Pia Beck at The Blue Note, the voices of María Dolores Pradera, and Juliette Gréco at Le Fiacre or watch a flamenco show at El Jaleo.

Well-off kids, alternative thinkers and hippies mingled in the streets of Torremolinos with Hollywood stars, intellectuals, politicians, writers, members of royalty from all over the world, heads of state and international celebrities: John Lennon, Brian Epstein, Anthony Quinn, Judy Garland, Sara Montiel, Massiel and so on. The attraction of Torremolinos did not only lie in its beaches and the glamour of its hotels, parties and nightclubs, but also in its avant-garde atmosphere of freedom and diversity.

If we take a look at some of the novels written in the sixties and early seventies that were set in Torremolinos, the atmosphere of apparent freedom



**Pia Beck with her orchestra, in the sixties.**  
Courtesy of Gino Felleman.

and diversity experienced by this coastal resort at the height of the Franco dictatorship is remarkable: streets filled with tourists in skimpy clothes, bars where it was possible to listen to music in fashion in London or New York and, especially, sexual behaviour very far from the strict morals of the Franco regime and particularity persecuted by the dictatorship.

In the early sixties, Torremolinos had already become an international holiday reference point. In 1961, in his novel *La isla*<sup>6</sup>, Juan Goytisolo uses this town as the setting for the frivolous and idle life of the Spanish and European upper classes:

It has become a country apart, on an island... Husbands deceive their wives. Wives deceive their husbands. The priest makes threats and everyone ignores him. Virginity has been wiped from the map and all the men are queers.

This upper class only thinks about having fun and does not fit with the morality of the time:

That old woman is called Betty- whispered Dolores. She's seventy-two and has a load of grandchildren, and she still comes to look for fishermen. It's the blonde one who sleeps with her (Goytisolo, 1961: 34).

The novel by Fernando Sánchez Dragó, *Eldorado*, is set at start of the sixties, although not published until 1984, and allows us to imagine the atmosphere of those times:

The big hotels, tiny cafés, discreet brothels. And everywhere, warm and fear-some women, within reach and disdainful, scandalously wrapped in multiple layers, ribbons and baubles on malignant underwear: erect brassieres, baroque stays, whalebone corsets, skimpy slips, magnificent garters, intense furore of stockings (...) calle San Miguel and the Madrid press. Youthful studs

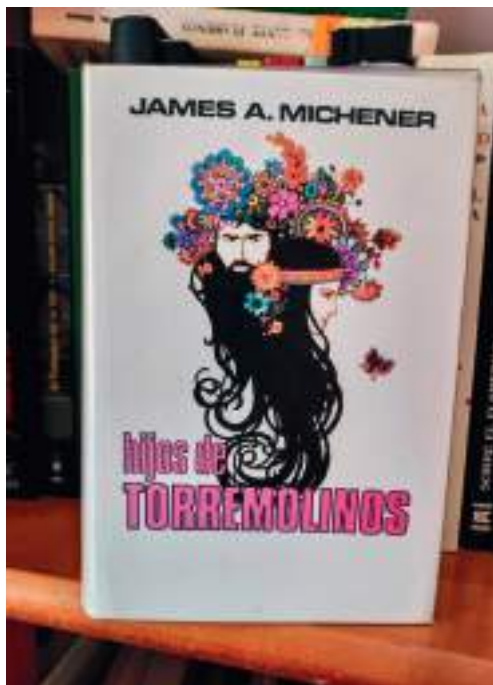
.....  
6 Proof of the international pull that Torremolinos was beginning to have is this novel was published in the United Kingdom in 1972 under the title of *Sands of Torremolinos*.



with the shirts in the latest fashion (Dragó, 1984:188).

This atmosphere did not go unobserved by national travellers or by the foreigners who visited the town in Malaga at that time. The American writer, James Michener (1907-1997), who travelled around Spain at the end of the sixties, relates how all the foreigners he met in Spain recommended he visit Torremolinos:

It's the living most..., the capital of gustibus..., the new wave..., the perpetual party. It's Sweden on-the-sand. You must see it. Several other advisers had recommended Torremolinos in somewhat similar phrases: it had become the international capital of the Mediterranean, superior to Positano, more fun than Nice and less expensive than either (Michener, 1968).



Cover of the novel by Michener, *The Drifters* (1971), published in Spain under the title of *Hijos de Torremolinos*.

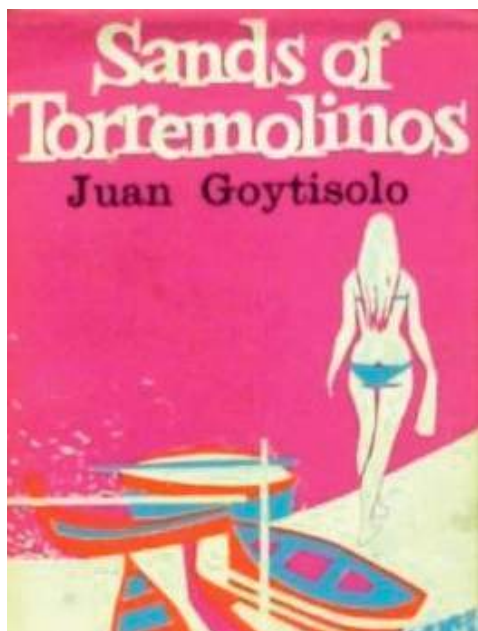
Michener had the chance to check it out for himself. He moved to Torremolinos for a season, and is still remembered writing at the Café Central. This strange cosmopolitan atmosphere of freedom in a dictatorship is reflected in one chapter of his novel *The Drifters* (1971), published in Spain under the title of *Hijos de Torremolinos*:

For some reason that no one understood, the Spanish police—one of the toughest and most efficient in Europe—allowed the resort a freedom known nowhere else in Spain. German Nazis held formal meetings, although not in public places. French, Belgian and Norwegian quislings lived in safe refuge. Drugs flowed in and out of the town on regular delivery routes, and through the alleys there was a constant passage of young people either hopelessly filthy or degenerate beyond redemption. They lived in hovels or slept along the beach, and were prepared for any kind of abnormality. Americans contributed substantial numbers to this drifting population—girls from good colleges and young men whose parents believed they were at some European university—but the majority were German, French and Scandinavian (Michener, 1973:361).

During this period, Torremolinos was, to use the literary term that Juan Goytisolo gave it in his novel *La isla* (1961), an island of freedom, an island where

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sexual dissidents found and would continue to find their place, and where Begoña Alley would play a vital role as one of the emblematic venues during a decade of Torremolinos-style nights.



*La isla*, a novel by Juan Goytisolo set in Torremolinos and published in English under the title, *Sands of Torremolinos*.



## CHAPTER II.

### BEGOÑA ALLEY

#### TORREMOLINOS AS A HOMOSEXUAL DESTINATION

though in some of the novels which describe the changes experienced by this town, such as *La isla* by Goytisolo or *Eldorado* by Sánchez Dragó, the homosexual atmosphere is barely portrayed, we know that at that time, Torremolinos was already gaining national and international fame as a summer holiday destination frequented by men in search of sex with other men. The cosmopolitan atmosphere made it possible for those with non-standard sexualities to find a space where there could express themselves freely.

In the early sixties, bars already existed that were visited by an openly homosexual clientele. There is some consensus that the first establishment of this type in Torremolinos was Tony's Bar<sup>1</sup>, opened, it would appear, in 1962 and belonging to a foreigner. Since then, there were to be many venues of this type springing up all over the town. It makes little sense to classify these bars or venues as *gay* or *homosexual*, as that would be an anachronism, given that, at that time in Spain, these concepts were barely used and the category of *gay* was just being created. Nevertheless, when some of those businesses were run by openly homosexual men or women, they acquired this hallmark. In the majority of these joints, *sexual deviants* mingled with a mainly heterosexual public, and behaviour was permitted that would have been unthinkable in other places (signs of affection between people of the same gender, transvestism...).

As the British traveller and writer, Nina Epton, described in her book *Andalusia*, in 1968 Torremolinos was already an important point in the geography of European homosexual tourism:

"Have you seen Torremolinos by night?" I was asked by several Spaniards, three-quarter parts in fascination and one rebuffing the tales they had heard about immoral foreigners. Torremolinos was reputed to be gay.

In the popular imagination of Franco's Spain, Torremolinos was portrayed as a place of *debauchery*. Alfonso Paso, in his novel, *¡Solo diecisiete años!* (1969),

.....

1 Although there is some consensus that Tony's was the first openly homosexual bar in Torremolinos, we do not know exactly where it was located. The most commonly accepted theory is that it was at the start of Calle Cauce, on the corner with Avenida Palma de Mallorca. Its first owner was a foreigner, but it changed hands several times. Real or not, in the collective imagination, Tony's is portrayed as the trailblazing homosexual bar that opened a period of freedom in this town.

describes a town filled with Swedish girls, openly homosexual men and women and others who flirted with ambiguity. In the work by José María Sanjuán, winner of the Nadal award in 1967, *Réquiem por todos nosotros*, these are the types of characters that appear, such as Loto, a sophisticated homosexual decorator who mixes with the *rociero* *pansies* from the area. Similar, James Michener, in his novel *The Drifters*, describes this same atmosphere of permissiveness: «Unusually effeminate young men walked hand-in-hand».

Perhaps one of the novels that best portrays the homosexual atmosphere of Torremolinos is *Au revoir Torremolinos* (1971), by Fernando González-Doria. Homosexuals of a very different profile parade through this work, together with the venues where they met. Members of high society whose social position allowed them to live their sexuality avoiding the controls of the State. This is the case of Tito, a young Andalusian gentleman who «belonged to the upper classes of Seville, and whose father held a diplomatic posting in some South American country. He wore an elegant double-breasted suit of white alpaca, his shirt open at the neck and a blue necktie knotted around his throat» (1972:24). He moved in the *depraved* atmosphere of the town: «This effeminate and corrupt riff-raff swarming around Torremolinos will be the ruin of me». Or Pietro, an Italian who wanders around Torremolinos in search of a fling: «I have a date with a very nice American who I met this morning on the beach. I suppose he'll want to come up and have a drink in my apartment» (1972:99). This novel lists and describes several venues frequented by homosexuals, including *Pourquoi pas?* «a small American bar on the ground floor of some blocks in La Nogalera», *Tabú*, *Don Pepe*, *Madrigal*, *Pogo's* or *el Incógnito*, a «whisky club hidden away in a corner of a tiny square, as minute as a sweet shop, but so well-known all over Torremolinos» (1972:63). González-Doria describes the motley atmosphere of this joint:

Although mainly young people, there were men of all ages, and a huge variety of nationalities, joined by a common bond, by a language that certain beings speak with a look, and which for them is like a message filled with suggestions, rejections, agreements, invitations to a friendship that, started in this way, might last a lifetime, or might die and fade away, as if they had never existed, after just a few moments... (González-Doria, 1972:63).

These clubs and bars were not the only places where sexual dissidents could openly express themselves in Torremolinos. Many tourists stayed at apartments where they organised private parties and which offered more relaxing settings than the public meeting places might include. Although in some cases hotels or guesthouses, these were more unusual than tourist flats or houses.

The beaches were common places of contact. Certain sections at certain times of the day became alternative meeting places. In the novel *Eldorado*,

Sánchez Dragó describes the different atmospheres that could be found on the sandy beaches of the town:

There were three different zones on the beach, frontier, retiring, isolated. First, at the foothills of the rock. There were small shops, picnic areas, nets, empty bottles, parched packaging, crusts. And the sand, the finest and hottest, the sharpest, the whitest of sands.

Next came the adjacent area, the second zone: the sunshades, deck-chairs, folding chairs, children with burnt shoulders, fat-bellied fathers of families, the oily forty-somethings, the rosy-cheeked, freckled, extremely thin, forgetful young English girls. And the sand, always the sand, torrid, scorching hot, silica, spiky, with a thousand stings ready to attack.

And lastly, between the natural water-line and the artificial barrier of civilisation (although not as a mid-point or place of passage, but as a Sioux reserve or warrior camp), we, the ones who stupefy ourselves, who see the body as the only truth, young people, the last Mohicans, the furies, the graces, teenagers with legs like strong winds, damp sand, empty pedal boats, rubber sandals, crushed cigarette packets, used and decapitated matches (Sánchez Dragó, 1985:21).

At some liminal points of the beach, the more daring went naked and, at night, these places became meeting places for homosexuals. It is not surprising that Torremolinos was regularly visited by people from other inland towns, who came at weekends or on bank holidays in search of entertainment and sex. This is what M. tells us:

The first time I went to Torremolinos was with two heterosexuals (...) they made me do certain things, I didn't feel comfortable, so I stopped going with them, and then with my group of gay friends we went almost every weekend, we slept in the cars we took. We showered on the beach and dressed where we could, usually on the steps of el Bajondillo. We've all done it on the steps of el Bajondillo, we would go in summer, in winter (...) There was an area, el Po-seidón beach was the area most frequented by gays at that time. Usually, the



*Au revoir Torremolinos* (1971), by Fernando González-Doria.







**Los Periquitos Picnic Area, el Bajondillo beach in Torremolinos. Courtesy of Avelina González.**

ones who went there were the ones who had tickets to the discotheques, because in those days most of us were broke, and, then with the older foreigners who arrived and started to have fantastic houses, extraordinary bungalows, and us, who were young and handsome, we showed off (laughs) and sold ourselves for a beer and a night in bed. If we hadn't already had an adventure before, which normally we had (M., 74 years old).

The *gay* bars in Torremolinos were frequented mostly by men. This does not mean that the lesbians who visited the town did not go to these places. It was possible to find some women there, as Goytisolo described in his novel *La isla* (1961:104):

There was a group of lesbians at the neighbouring table. The oldest was wearing a checked shirt and watched Nicole hungrily. The baron said he hated homosexuals. I said I couldn't stand lesbians, but that I got on well with queers. Queers are funny, said Nicole. The baron said he preferred men with hairy chests.

Although the majority of meeting places were linked to men, female homosexuality found its own spaces of permissiveness in those places managed by lesbians, which does not mean that these places could really be defined as *gay*. This is the case of the piano bar, The Blue Note, belonging to the Dutch pianist and singer Pia Beck. In the wake of this legendary venue, several places sprung up run by foreign women, and other bars and restaurants opened and served as a meeting point for this collective.

That said, Torremolinos was not only a place for those exclusively devoted to having fun, but also for those who came in search of a living. Homosexuals



**Pia Beck at her jazz club, The Blue Note. Courtesy of Gino Felleman.**

and transvestites from all over Andalusia and many other places in Spain travelled to the town in the summer season in search of work and fun. They earned their living working in restaurants, hotels and bars and, at the end of the working day, enjoyed the entertainment offered by Torremolinos. For many Andalusian homosexuals, Torremolinos became the first stop before emigrating to Barcelona or other Spanish or European cities. It was their first contact with homosexual spaces for socialising. Some of the accounts point in this direction, as is the case of Manolita Chen, who spent a season working in Torremolinos, or Doris Alza, who, although she had «three salaries», decided to go in search of other opportunities, as did many other homosexuals: «When I woke up from the sexuality, I liked boys, I looked at other boys, who were older, and I said to myself: “I don’t want to die like an old queer”, I mean, I’m not criticising this, but I say what I feel, and I don’t want to die as an old queer, I don’t know how I want to die, but not as an old queer (...)». Obviously, economic factors were vital for understanding the emigration to Torremolinos. That said, the possibility of escaping from the social control was a decisive element for understanding the affluence of homosexuals to this town. Many of them ran venues that, initially, without being directly gay, served as meeting points and as settings for socialising for sexual dissidents.

The local population of Torremolinos became accustomed to this uninhibited atmosphere and somewhat accepted it as natural. It should not be forgotten that tourism became the sole economic backbone of the town, on which all its inhabitants depended one way or another. This would explain why they rented beds to same-sex couples in guesthouses and even in private homes.

Even when homosexuality in this town was far more normal than in other regions, we should not forget that, at that time, it was still persecuted in a large





**Manuela Saborido Muñoz (Manolita Chen).**  
Courtesy of Manuela Saborido

part of Europe, and that Spain was a State dominated by a conservative religious ideology that condemned and persecuted such practice. In Torremolinos, as is to be expected, there were ultraconservative sectors who suspiciously watched what was going on there. Nevertheless, this group was smaller than in other towns, as when the development of tourism began, Torremolinos was not a village, but a suburb of Malaga, with much less social control: it had only one church and religious celebrations such as Holy Week, did not carry much weight. That said, the presence of homosexuals belonging to the elite and aligned to the Regime were also of note. We have collected some accounts that show how this group, containing more than one distinguished name from the Franco regime, used their position in power to have sexual relations with young men in this town. Mind you, «when they saw us in the street, they ignored us».

The more conservative groups from Malaga watched what was happening in Torremolinos with concern, as they saw it as a place of vice and perversion. For years, it was not acceptable for young people from the capital to go there because of the *dangers* involved. In spite of these prejudices, Torremolinos became a place of leisure for the people of Malaga who wanted to feel freer. Some young people from Malaga would leave their homes wearing more formal clothes and change when they got to Torremolinos. For homosexuals from Malaga and other neighbouring towns, Torremolinos was a model of freedom and a growing town where Begoña Alley occupied a particularly significant place, and where the transformations experienced by a population with a huge influence on the rest of Spain, and particularly in the nearest villages were very much in evidence. Something was changing, and tourist destinations were having a significant influence on these transformations. The document shown below, referring to a report from the Civil Guard in the nearby town of San Pedro de Alcántara, shows the transition period from the pre-gay era to the gay era. It would be necessary to wait a few more years until the sexual liberation movements came into play, but

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the ground was prepared.

Torremolinos played an important role in the visualisation of homosexuality, and in the context of this population, Begoña Alley was at the centre of its nightlife. In the next chapter, we take a closer look at the characteristics of this urban space and the heterogeneous atmosphere that characterised the venues in the alley for almost a decade.

AHPM  
Dirección General de la Guardia Civil

**CONFIDENCIAL** A INFORMATIVA

Núm. 545

ORIGEN: 3100.251ª Comandancia Guardia Civil.- Málaga

DESTINO: Excmo. Sr. Gobernador Civil de la Provincia.- Málaga

FECHA: 28 Enero 1.969.-

ASUNTO: 155.- Varios:-

En la noche del día 23 del presente mes, aparecieron colocados en las paredes de varias calles de la localidad de San Pedro Alcántara, de esta provincia, un total de seis carteles consistentes en hojas de almanaque del año 1.968, del Monte de Piedad y Caja de Ahorros de Ronda, escritos por la parte de atrás a tinta y mano en letras de molde lo que sigue: "NO PEDIMOS MARIHUANA, SOLO QUEREMOS QUE ALGUNOS HOMBRITOS (si es que quedan) NOS DEJEN LA JUANA", "SEÑORITAS, NO LOS CAEN A TODOS PORQUE LOS HOMBRES TAMBIEN SON COSA NUESTRA: IGUALDAD DE OPORTUNIDADES, 22/1/69, 1º DIA DE LA EMANCIPACION DEL MARIQUITA MARREJA EL TER-CER SEXO!!", "22 ENERO DIA DE LA EMANCIPACION DE LOS MARIQUITAS-COMUNISMO NO MARIHUANA NO!, MUJERES PARA QUIEN LAS QUIERA !HOMBRES SI!!", "MARIQUITAS EN MAR-CHA. NO SOMOS "BACHOS" PERO SOMOS MUCHOS. JUNTO VENCEREMOS LOS PREJULICIOS 22-1-69, DIA DE MARIQUITA", "LOS MARIQUITAS DE SAN PEDRO (que somos muchos) PROTESTAMOS DE LA CRECIENTE COMPELENCIA QUE NOS HACEN LOS DE ESTE+POSA Y MARBELLA Y DECLARAMOS LA GUERRA A LOS MARIKAS DE PROFESION (Mas de 80% de los llamados "BACHOS" 22 ENERO 1.969. DIA DEL MARIQUITA". Cuyos carteles fueron recogidos en dicho día por los Agentes de Policía Municipal de la referida localidad.

El contenido de esta Nota Informativa sólo se comprobará si así se solicita de este Servicio. De nuevo informo, de estimarse que la N. I. carece de veracidad o contiene algún error.

*Diez Cantos fue cree la idea una broma.*

Note from the Civil Guard reporting the appearance of signs proclaiming the «Day of the Queer». The mayor of Marbella, Francisco Cantos, was forced to argue that it had been a joke.





**Aerial view of Torremolinos, 1959. Identification of the place where the Begoña Building stands today. Wim Kuipers Collection.**

## THE BEGOÑA BUILDING

With the development of tourism in Torremolinos, the town experienced frenetic construction work aimed at making the most of the space, combining buildings intended for tourist dwellings with commercial premises, creating narrow alleys, sometimes covered, between streets and squares. The Begoña building, crossed by the alley of the same name (privately owned and for public use), is a characteristic example of this type of architecture.

This construction, built in 1962 by José María Azumendi, is located in the current Avenida Palma de Mallorca in Torremolinos<sup>2</sup>. In 1961, the builder purchased a pretty bungalow from Carolina de Vega Maqueda (known as Carola de la Vega), which was demolished for the construction of the Begoña Building.

The building has fifty-five commercial premises and one hundred apartments. Viewed from the street, it is barely possible to make out three different levels, although in fact it has a basement, ground floor and four more floors. Except for the top floor, which is smaller, each floor has an area of 1176 square metres. Originally, the building was set apart from the town centre, encouraging the concentration of numerous small nightclubs, playing all types of music: flamenco, rock, folk, jazz...

.....  
2 This constructor also built the well-known building Los Maite de Benalmádena.

## BEGOÑA ALLEY IN THE LGTBI+ MEMORY



**Advertising for the sale of premises and apartments in Begoña Alley.**

Originally, the basement was divided into three large premises, and the ground floor had twenty-eight. Today, many of these have been joined together to increase their size. The first floor had twenty-two commercial premises and twelve apartments. Today all the property on this floor is for residential use. The second floor has forty apartments and the third floor has thirty-three. The fourth floor has fifteen apartments and one commercial premises, and the top floor only has one commercial premises.

This building was named Begoña in honour of the constructor's sister. On 1 March 1981, its name was changed to Gil Vicente Alley, and thirty-eight years later, on 31 October 2019, the City Council of Torremolinos, at the request of the Asociación Pasaje Begoña, agreed to restore the original name of the alley, following a favourable report by the City Street Planning Commission. The signs that restored the name to this alley were put up on 1 April 2021.



**Begoña Building was built, 1962. The contract was signed and payment of the land was completed when the construction of the building was well advanced. Documentary collection of the Asociación Pasaje Begoña.**







**First bylaws of the community of residents of Begoña Building, 1962. Documentary collection of the Asociación Pasaje Begoña.**

Incidentally, in order to complete the payments of the purchase, Azumendi used the down payments he received from the sale of the commercial premises and apartments. The sales contract and the final payment of the land to the former owner is dated 30 April 1962. Nevertheless, in the last months of 1962, Azumendi finished paying the people, materials and supplied required to open Begoña Building.

José María Azumendi founded several companies, the best known of which is Construcciones Azumendi S.L. First bylaws of the community of residents of Begoña Building, 1962. Documentary collection of the Asociación Pasaje Begoña. The first commercial premises and apartments in Begoña Building were sold off plan in 1962.

Over this year and the next, all the available properties were sold. The first premises were opened and started operations in the last quarter of 1962.

From the sales contracts consulted, both the qualities and specifications of the property and the sales price were very high for the standards of that time. Starting a business in one of the small premises in Begoña Alley (approximately twenty-five square metres) was not within everyone's reach, as reflected in the words of the American multimillionaire in the novel *Au revoir Torremolinos* (1971): «Now you've seen the guy I sacked earlier... He started off as my chauffeur, and stole enough money off me to be able to open a bar for homosexuals in Begoña Alley...» (1972:24). The table below shows the comparison of sales and rental prices for 1962 in the centre of Madrid and in the Begoña Building.

Some of the apartments in Begoña Building were sold fully furnished, and decorated with paintings by the renowned and highly-valued artist, José Cerdá. Incidentally, Azumendi gave one of the floors free of charge, although only provisionally, to the Mayor's Office of Malaga in Torremolinos (remember that, at that time, Torremolinos was only a district of Malaga), which subsequently moved to Avenida de los Manantiales.

BEGOÑA ALLEY IN THE LGBTI+ MEMORY

YEAR, 1962:	CENTRE OF MADRID	BEGOÑA BUILDING	DIFFERENCE
PURCHASE OF APARTMENT	150 000 pesetas (900 Eur) Medium-sized flat of 100 m2 9 Eur/m2	150 000 pesetas (900 Euros) Medium-sized flat of 19 m2 47.37 Eur/m2	The purchase price per m2 of a flat in Begoña Building was 5.2 times more expensive than in the centre of Madrid
RENTAL OF COMMERCIAL PREMISES	1000 pesetas/month (6 Eur/month) Medium-sized premises of 80 m2 0.075 Eur x m2/month	1000 pesetas/day (180 Eur/month) Medium-sized premises of 25 m2 7.2 Eur x m2/month	The average price per m2 of a commercial premises in Begoña Building was 96 times more expensive than in the centre of Madrid

Sources: archives of the Asociación Pasaje Begoña and digital newspaper archives of *La Vanguardia* newspaper.

THE ATMOSPHERE OF BEGOÑA ALLEY

Entertainment venues such as bars, discotheques and clubs have always been essential for the sociability of men who are looking for relations with other men. These establishments take on a special relevance in times of direct repression of sexuality, as occurred in Spain during the Dictatorship. These establishments have provided important settings for the emergence of gay identities (Weeks, 1993; Achilles, 1998), in that they serve as meeting points that enable the generation of networks and fields for strengthening identity.



Postcard of Begoña Alley, 1969. Wim Kuipers Collection



For homosexuals, bars and discotheques played a role that for other collectives may have been fulfilled by the Church or family (Achilles, 1998). It is no accident that the raid experienced by the transvestites and homosexuals at Stonewall Inn led to what officially has been recognised as the first uprising which over time would become known as the *LGTBI movement*. These types of events have taken place at different times in other countries around the world, as is the case of the raid on the Abanicos bar in the Ecuadorian city of Cuenca, which led to the emergence of the sexual liberation movement in Ecuador. Repression of these contexts of sociability was understood as an attack on the few places where, for a long time, homosexuals were able to express themselves with some freedom. The link between gay bars and tourist destinations is therefore no coincidence. Tourist enclaves, as we have seen above, enabled escape from direct social control. Torremolinos is a paradigmatic case in which this process is highlighted. In the past the city was visited by young men from Malaga and other areas inland whose reasons for emigrating included their sexual option. Torremolinos made it possible for many young people seeking to escape the contexts of repression to discover a new world. In fact, there are many accounts that show how travelling to Torremolinos was a voyage of discovery, it was a place for men to meet, and it was also a place that, in the past, had welcomed many exiles. Today we can still find people from different countries in this city looking for a place to express their sexual and gender identity freely.

That said, if Torremolinos was the setting which enabled the discovery or reaffirmation of homosexuality, for many Begoña Alley was the temple in which dreams came true. It was a place where people did not exactly go to pray and where a huge variety of people mingled together: a true tower of Babel. Cultural diversity and sexual diversity characterised the ten years of the existence of this *street of sin*. And Begoña Alley, just like the Holy Trinity, was three in one. There were different *Begoña Alleys* over time, and even at the same time, for the users who sought diversity in this building. Possibly in the early years, many of these venues had a more exclusive nature, but the tourism was fundamentally aimed at foreigners with a certain purchasing power. By many accounts, it was necessary to dress up to get into some bars.

Later, the Begoña became popular, regardless of the fact that each place was intended for a particular audience, possibly depending on the time of day. That said, the different types of bars were very close to each other and the street passing through the building is narrow, night-time can be confusing and ends up knocking down barriers or, sometimes, creating them.

There was a quick-change artist who was a cabaret artist I... in Puerto Rico, and she dressed as a woman (...), she wasn't shot up or anything, and she attracted attention and upstairs (from the Sirena) there was a bar of whores and the owner was queer, (...) he went to La Sirena to find her... and took her up-



## BEGOÑA ALLEY IN THE LGBTI+ MEMORY



**The Blue Note was one of the most exclusive venues in Begoña Alley.**

**Photograph courtesy of Gino Felleman.**

stairs: «Come with me I'll introduce you to some people», and the people were plain-clothes cops, young, but everyone liked L..., and they began to touch her up and the drinks were flowing... and when drunk, the other bastard goes and says to them: «But she's a bloke!», «what?», «yes, yes, it's a bloke», «that's not possible». They asked for her documents and took her to the police station (...). They called me and the police said to me: «Explain to us», «well, you can see what she is». The one who was writing the report, who was called AT writes *Antonia*, and says: «What the hell are you on, can't you see it's a bloke!», «oh, sorry». And they took her to Malaga in a police van, she was suffocating inside, everyone touching her up and in the end the consul got her out the next day (Interview with the owner of the bar at Begoña Alley).

The account highlights something that is made clear in other accounts: transsexuality and transvestite shows were not common in Begoña Alley, although they would become more widespread and popular in other places years later. But it is true that some venues permitted camp behaviour, public displays of affection between men or ambiguity in dress, such as in *La Sirena*, that, according to one of the owners, was one of the keys to success at this venue, although, except in very small groups or at certain times, it was necessary to keep some control over the displays of affection:

The policeman was in plain clothes, his name was M... very fat and he used to come, the bar full of people, with its low ceiling, everyone sweating, and he would keep control:



«Hey you, watch that arm!» and a blow to the Dutchman because he was holding the other guy around his neck. «Hey! what's up, what's up?», «¿What's up? You're in Spain, for Christ's sake, not Amsterdam» (Interview with the owner of a bar in Begoña Alley).

The above accounts show how the police knew about what went on at the Begoña, among other things because the police station was close by. The secret police would turn up at these joints, sometimes for work and sometimes for leisure, although this did not stop people from being able to do a series of things that were unthinkable in other places.



La Boquilla Bar, 1965. Photograph courtesy of Ramón Cadenas.

The people who went to Begoña Alley went for a drink, to listen to jazz or flamenco, to eat at a restaurant, to visit the *prostitutes* who went from bar to bar, to meet friends, to be effeminate without fear of what people might say and, of course, for work and sex. This is what we heard in one interview:

I remember that I went there to score, everyone scored there, it was international, there were people from all over the world. Then we would go to the steps to the cemetery and the beach, and then... There were only two lights there, one and another... and you can't imagine how wasted you'd get, because you couldn't see, sometimes someone would take out their lighter to see the face of the gentleman... (Interview with user of Begoña Alley).

Each establishment had its own public and there was no shortage of joints that attracted the more transgressive: La Sirena, La Boquilla, The Blue Note,



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Le Fiacre, Serafino, Incógnito, La Cueva de Aladino, Gogó, Eva... These venues changed continuously, many only survived for a few months in times where life went by at a dizzying pace and all these changes were reflected in Begoña Alley.



**Sara Montiel at a party in Begoña Alley, 1965. Photograph courtesy of Ramón Cadenas.**

The small venues where the nightlife thrived and which stayed open until the early hours of the morning made Begoña Alley the centre of modernity in Torremolinos. Some of the visitors who lived in the Begoña at that time indicated how the atmosphere of the town exceeded that of cities like Madrid.

In the early years, the venues in the alley did not have a closing time, which encouraged tourists and employees from other businesses in the town to end up there. It was not only the entertainment or the music that attracted the people, but part of its charm also lay in the hodgepodge of people who turned up there and the atmosphere of freedom existing there.

The attraction of Torremolinos in general, and Begoña Alley in particular, is described perfectly by Manolita Chen, who worked in the town for a time and was able to enjoy the nights at the Begoña. Here he describes something that dazzled the young lad from the country who was discovering a new world:

At the time in 1962-63 I was working in a restaurant in San Miguel, which was also a gay bar, I think it was called Las Guapas. Only Begoña Alley was freedom, it was another world, those lights, for us it was like being in New York, we had never seen anything like it in our lives, the neon bar lights, I don't how to describe it, they were such beautiful lights... (...).





**Marga Samsonowski at The Blue Note, 1965. Photograph courtesy of Gino Felleman.**



**People of all ages and social classes at La Sirena, 1964. Photograph courtesy of Ramón Cadenas.**

It may have been easy for tourists and visitors to go to *sin alley* whenever they wanted, but this was not the case for everyone. T., who was working as a waiter in the Begoña, relates the following:

## BEGOÑA ALLEY IN THE LGTBI+ MEMORY



**Ramón Cadenas with a group of tourists. Photograph courtesy of Ramón Cadenas.**

The other day I was watching a dance with a pop singer on TV, and the boy dancers were wearing a uniform of high suede leather boots, skimpy leather shorts and sleeveless t-shirts. I was surprised because that was our uniform for work, in Torremolinos, in a nightclub. Fifty years have gone by and just look, it was like was like something normal (...). At that time in Malaga you could buy clothes and go out in them if you were very brave. I wore them, I always went out dressed (...), but many people weren't able to go out dressed like that from home, they took them in a bag and changed in the toilets somewhere.

It was not surprising that the people who came from Malaga or other inland towns would arrive in Torremolinos in their *decent* clothes and then change to blend in with the motley fauna of this landscape.

Paco Prieto, a man from Torremolinos who I met at the Begoña, says he took in epic survivors and that's true, as we'll see later in the stories of some of the people who passed through the bars in this tiny street. However,



**The bars in Begoña Alley were very small. Photograph courtesy of Ramón Cadenas.**





Fancy-dress party, 1968. Wim Kuipers Collection.

he also took in workers, men who led a double life, village boys in search of adventure, single women, couples, *rogues of both sexes*.

Antonio D. Olano (1974:301) defines Begoña Alley as «the street of sin». Over time, Begoña Alley became a space where everything illegal or forbidden was possible.

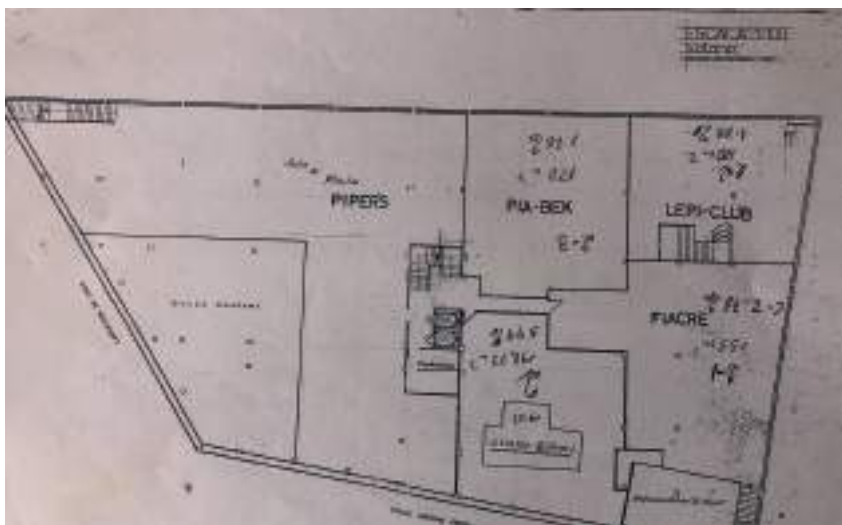
It is not a street. Begoña Alley is a mini Chinese district. Space was optimised to the maximum in a series of small dens of iniquity where all the revelry involved drinking, listening to Mexican, flamenco-style, French, Argentinian, British, Portugues, Peruvian songs... (...). Begoña Alley is a compressed version of Soho, Pigalle, San Pauli... (Palomino, 1971).

Olano describes the last years of the Begoña, which came to an end with the Great Raid. Until then, the authorities had consented to this atmosphere. However, things were beginning to change, the raid in 1971 closed a cycle, but before looking at those events, we should take a look at the venues which defined an era.

## EMBLEMATIC VENUES OF BEGOÑA ALLEY

The work involved in identifying, allocating a timeline and finding the exact location of the different venues was not easy for a number of reasons. First of all, the municipal archives do not contain accurate records of the opening and closing dates. Some delay has been observed in the communication of the municipal cases of venues opening and closing and the transfer of ownership. In addition, in the period studied (1962-1971), the survival of these establishments was short-lived: some joints did not manage to survive more

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**Original plan of the basement of the Begoña Building, 1962. Documentary collection of the Asociación Pasaje Begoña.**

than a few months. More than once we have found a venue with the same or similar name in a very short period of time in several different locations. Lastly, due to the passing of time and the lack of graphical accounts of the exterior of the venues in Begoña Alley, it has been necessary to reconcile the different versions to which we have had access through personal accounts, literature and specialised magazines of the time. Not everyone who visited Begoña Alley was aware of what was going on there. Some people enjoyed the atmosphere of diversity on the ground (where there more restaurants and venues offering shows), but were completely unaware of what was going on upstairs or in the basement. And as we mentioned earlier, although it was one single space, people experienced different *Begoña Alleys* according to the sexual options and preferences.

As can be seen in the photos, originally the basement was occupied by larger venues, dance rooms and nightclubs. In particular, the mythical Blue Note, Le Fiacre, Lepi Club and the legendary Piper's. These were larger reserved areas where anyone, regardless of their identity, orientation, origin or beliefs, could be and feel free.

The ground floor, at street level, consisted of restaurants, flamenco halls, social clubs and even a photography studio. At the entrance, in the left-hand corner of the alley, was the well-known Wimpy burger bar, one of the most famous in the Costa del Sol, and to the right the offices of the Banco Central. Then came all the small premises, including, incidentally and as an example of modernity, the first Chinese restaurant on the Costa del Sol and, probably, in Spain; it was called Oriental and opened in 1964.



The offices of Construcciones Azumendi were on the first floor together with a medical practice visited by a large number of people during the day as well as the small venues visited by people from the LGTBI collective, with a lot of comings and goings at night. Some of the best-known establishments on this floor were La Sirena (side staircase on the mezzanine floor), La Boquilla, Tabarín, El Cancán, La Cueva de Aladino, El Gogó, etc.

A description follows of the most famous venues from that time:

**Don Quijote Nightclub (1968-1972).** One of the owners was Francisco Javier López Tapia. It is said that sequins, high heels and bright colours were the order of the day here. This famous whisky bar set a trend as here it was possible to taste whiskies from all over the world and listen to the latest music from the most remote corners of America and Europe. Sangria was prepared with Quitapenas wine once a week for foreign groups. Some accounts insist that this is where the legendary Tony's Bar was located.



**Begoña Alley. Documentary Collection of the Asociación Pasaje Begoña.**

**El Refugio Nightclub (1964-1970).**

On the first floor of Begoña Alley, it was owned by Diego Quiroga. It was frequented by the owners and waiting staff from the other venues. In February 1967 a successful meeting was held with the owners and tenants of the nightclubs, bars and clubs in Begoña Alley, at which a set of rules for coexistence was approved, bringing with it significant improvements. Diego Quiroga organised a system for buying drinks that consisted in each customer paying for a bottle of whisky that was kept in a locker under lock and key. This meant that access was free because the 'landlord' of a locker could invite anyone they wanted. El Refugio may have been a faithful witness to how much fantasy existed in the presumption of scoring, an opportunity offered to the barmen, maître d' and receptionists. Diego the Magician, with his tricks, kept his customers permanently entertained with magnificent light shows that kept the room dimmed, perfect for couples to get lost in. Diego Quiroga

was also the first person to use playback. On one occasion he gave a surprise screening of a black and white film that caused a scandal, as it touched on a forbidden subject, that of sex.

**Bar Eva (1969-1971).** This venue was one of the most affected by the Great Raid against the homosexual atmosphere. It was searched, closed and fined ten thousand pesetas «for breaching the law and good customs and for permitting licentious behaviour». It did not open its doors again after that day.

**Bar Gogó (1971).** This was a very short-lived venue, as it opened only one month before the Great Raid. It escaped the huge arrests because they closed the shutters a few moments before the arrival of the armed police. It was seriously threatened against opening its doors ever again. The owner, Ramón Cadenas, is one of the current privileged witnesses from the golden age of Begoña Alley.

**La Boquilla Bar (1964-1968).** Its owner was a North American Jew whose grandfather was from Triana. This was one of the first bars in Begoña Alley visited by LGTBI people. One of its customers was Salvador Dalí's beautiful transsexual muse, Peki d'Oslo, later known as Amanda Lear. Other well-known customers at the bar included the fashion designers Herrero and Olle-ro, Sara Montiel and Nati Abascal.

**La Cueva de Aladino bar (1965-1969).** The bar was known for the stalactites suspended from its low ceilings and was one of the venues preferred by the homosexual clientele. It was much frequented by foreign tourists. Like many of the others, it endured numerous searches and inspections. After the Great Raid, many homosexuals took shelter in the Holanda Bar even though this was not specifically a homosexual bar.

**La Sirena Bar (1964-1972).** This belonged to the Basque entrepreneur Ángel F. Larrinoa Setién. This bar fast became known as the "*the queers' bar*" and was subject to many searches and notices to close from the authorities. Its owner had to use numerous strategies to avoid the fines and notices to close, even hanging a photo of the dictator Francisco Franco himself in a visible spot to give the impression that it was a place where «order and moral were respected». He also employed a waitress as a sign that the place was not exclusively for men. Accounts describe this place as great fun and varied. Although it was small, the most glamorous parties on the Costa del Sol were held here. It changed name several times, including the name Larri Club in honour of the owner's surname.

**Le Fiacre nightclub (1963-1970).** This nightclub was classified at the time as «booming and scandalous» thanks to its famous cage, in which customers locked themselves to have a good time, dance and be acclaimed. The public at Le Fiacre, in addition to groups of young people wishing to come out,





**La Sirena bar changed its name in 1967 to become Larri after the surname of the owner Ángel Larrinoa. Documentary collection of the Asociación Pasaje Begoña.**

was made up of foreigners and bohemians whose achievements included always being up to date with the pomp and ceremony of the French. Many still remember the dance sessions in the cage of the Jamaican supermodel and actress, Grace Jones. Le Fiacre was a French-style venue where renowned artistes performed, of the ilk of the Frenchwoman Juliette Gréco and the Spanish woman María Dolores Pradera. Its motto was «forbidden to forbid». Incidentally, one of the bars of the premises was frequented by LGBTI people.



**Drawing of the lighted sign for Sala Le Fiacre. Author: Juan Antonio Fra Medina.**

**Oriental Chinese restaurant (1964-1967).** This was advertised as the first Chinese restaurant on the Costa del Sol, but it may well have been the first in all of Spain. It belonged to Fook Hing Lam Chiu, better known as Pablito. The House of Ming, a mythical Chinese restaurant on the Paseo de la Castellana in Madrid, claimed to be the first to open its doors in Spain around 1965. However, we have documents and accounts showing that, in 1964, our darling Pablito was already working flat out in Begoña Alley, offering the most exotic dishes from China to those who visited him. In 1967, Pablito's restaurant was called Cantón and moved to bigger premises in calle Antonio Girón. Subsequently, and under the same name, it set up in Plaza de la Gamba Alegre.

**Piper's Club Discoteque (1967-1974).** This large nightclub belonged to the French-Italian Tamellini. It doubled in size in 1970 to reach 3,200 m2. It had the latest technologies in music and lighting. Much remembered are the logotype and the light aircraft hanging from the ceiling of the premises. As many as eight people were employed to organise the long queues that formed to get in the club and which caused huge traffic jams on the Malaga-Cadiz road.



Drawing recreating the mythical Pablito at the entrance to his restaurant. Author: Vito Montolio. Documentary collection of the Asociación Pasaje Begoña.



Entrance to Piper's Discoteque. Documentary Collection of the Begoña Alley.

**Tabarín Bar (1964-?)** This venue was also known for being the first place where a full strip took place in a show in Spain. The first performances by Camarón de la Isla as a flamenco singer were held here and the place was frequented by owners of other businesses. This was where the so-called Operation Crystal was first conceived, consisting in collecting and selling all the returnable glass bottles found in the streets after a long weekend of partying. The money collected was given to social causes and charities. The initiative lasted several years and managed to collect considerable sums of money.

**The Blue Note Jazz Club (1965-1969).** The owner, the Dutchwoman Pia Beck (1925-2009), was considered by many as the best jazz pianist in the world. She was one of the first international performers who never hid her homosexuality. The great loves of her life were her partner, Marga Samsonowski, and their three children. Pia Beck was behind a concert to raise funds to protest against homophobia and clashed with the American homophobic performer, Anita Briant. The Pride of the Netherlands still commemorate the clash. The Hague City Council conserve her valuable legacy and one of the bridges in Amsterdam bears her name.

**Tony's Bar (1962-1963).** This is considered to have been the first homosexual bar in Spain. The first owners were a British homosexual couple. It was frequented by mostly British tourists. Give the constant repression of the Dictatorship, it was short-lived and occupied several locations in the Begoña zone. Several accounts place it at the start of calle Cauce, in Begoña Alley and in calle Antonio Girón.



In a very short time, the place that housed these venues grew too small and new businesses sprung up in the vicinity, such that the whole area became known as the Begoña zone or Begoña district. In addition to all the bars and clubs linked to homosexuals came all sorts of discotheques, cocktail bars, jazz clubs, flamenco clubs, nightclubs and restaurants. More than fifty venues have been identified. In addition to those already described, other well-known names included Au Rendez Vous-Dancing, Baccara, Bossanova, Can-

**Drawing of the lighted sign for The Blue Note club. Author: Juan Antonio Fra Medina. Documentary collection of the Asociación Pasaje Begoña.**

## BEGOÑA ALLEY IN THE LGTBI+ MEMORY

Can, Coimbra, Chantal, Dusseldorf, Disney Club, El Apollo, El Cordobés, El Incógnito, El Fauno, El Oso Blanco, La Espiga de Oro, La Simón, Le Grenier, Los Argentinos, Los Flamencos, Mi Bohío, Montecristo, Poggos, Saturno Disco, Serafino, Sootck, The Duke of Wellington, Ye-Yé and the Wimpy Burger Bar.



Entrance to Mi Bohío club, Begoña zone.  
Wim Kuipers Collection.



Drawing recreating the entrance to The Blue Note club. Author: Vito Montolio.  
Documentary collection of the Asociación Pasaje Begoña.





## CHAPTER III.

# FASCISM AND HOMOSEXUALITY. FRANCOIST LAWS AGAINST HOMOSEXUALITY. THEIR APPLICATION IN ANDALUSIA

### FASCISM AND HOMOSEXUALITY

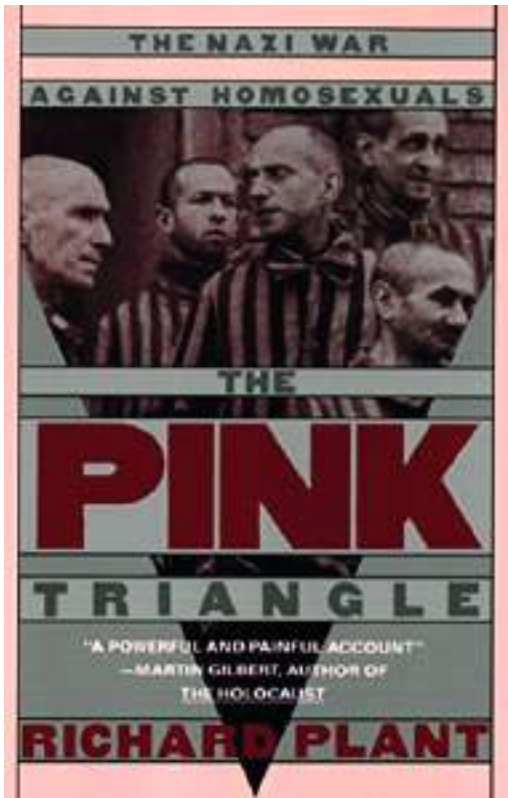
Until only a few decades ago, homosexuality and, in general, sexual diversity, was rejected by all political ideologies.

Suffice it to say that communist countries such as the Soviet Union or Cuba described this sexuality as a bourgeois vice. On the other hand, the fascist totalitarianism associated it with the depravity or degeneration of the left. The fascist regimes include Nazi Germany, the most extreme example of persecution and punishment of homosexuality, but by no means the only one: Vichy France, Mussolini's Italy, Stalin's Soviet Union, Salazar's Portugal and Franco's Spain imposed harsh punishments on anyone with dissident sexualities.

It is striking how, from the twenties onwards, all the European fascist dictatorships turned their sights on homosexuality and adopted policies or laws against homosexuals. To understand this position, it is necessary to consider certain values associated with fascism: an aggressive masculinity linked to a militarised society; the importance of reproduction, highlighted by demographic policies aimed at raising the birth rate, the traditional role given to women; and, in some cases, a racist ideology that extolled the cleansing of any behaviour considered *degenerate* and which contaminated the *race*, such as homosexuality. If, on the whole, fascisms adopted anti-homosexual policies, the toughness and mechanisms adopted for repression varied considerably from one country to the next.

Many historical studies of these regimes have reported the persecution endured by political and trade unions dissidents and ethnic and religious minorities. However, the attention given to the repression of homosexuals is limited and comes late. It is significant that accounts given by German homosexuals sent to Nazi concentration camps did not start to come to light until the seventies. And it was not until the eighties that the stigmatisation of homosexuality in Hitler's Germany and the institutionalised and radical nature of the repression experienced by homosexuals at this time was first reported (Lautmann, 1981; Giles, 2002; Jensen, 2002; Micheler and Szobar, 2002; Phillips, 2008; Boden, 2011). These studies highlighted the tightening of the German anti-homosexual laws with the arrival of Hitler to power in 1933.





The pink triangle was the badge that homosexual prisoners in the Nazi concentration camps were forced to wear. *The Pink Triangle* (1986), by Richard Plant, was one of the first works to address the study of homosexuality in Nazi Germany

The Nazi party reported homosexuality as a deviation from normal behaviour and considered it an illness that went against the interests of Germany. Real German men should have children and contribute to the enhancement of the Aryan race. Homosexual meetings and groups were forbidden, raids were carried out in gay bars and clubs and the Gestapo drew up *pink lists*. Thousands of men were imprisoned. From 1935, the legislation became even stricter as paragraph 175, enforcing tougher punishments was added to the German criminal code. Sentences varied, ranging from several years in prison to, on occasion, the death penalty. In many cases, homosexuals were taken to concentration camps along with Jews, political dissidents, Jehova's witnesses, gypsies, alcoholics, prostitutes... The exact number of homosexuals punished in this way is not known, but may be between 5,000 and 15,000 people. As a distinguishing mark, homo-

sexuals were forced to wear a badge, a pink triangle, on their legs or arms. Castration, obligatory or *voluntary*, was a punishment applied to some accused of homosexuality (Giles, 2002).

In addition to these radical repressive measures, the Nazi regime adopted corrective elements aimed at *re-educating* the young men accused of homosexual behaviour, recruiting them for short periods of time in order to dissuade them from these practices in the future. Lesbians were persecuted to a lesser extent, although they also endured the brunt of these laws (Schoppmann, 1996).



Far less attention has been given to the situation of homosexuals in Mussolini's Italy (Ebner, 2004; Goretti and Giartosio, 2006). This lack of interest is partly because there was no openly anti-homosexual law in fascist Italy. It is true that homosexuality was not considered a crime; however, fascism was very hostile towards homosexuals. The fascist combat squads that helped Mussolini to power not only attacked left-wing militants, but also anyone who did not fit with the idea of heteronormativity. The regime and its ideology encouraged local authorities to persecute them. Homosexuality went against the fascist project to convert Italians into a race of conquerors who would create an empire. The idea of racial superiority encouraged the myth that Italy was free from homosexuality and that the Italians were, in this respect, *healthier* than

in other countries. The fascist police were authorised to arrest, interrogate, imprison or use any individual. Together with prison, one of most common punishments was «political confinement» to one of the nearby islands, such as the Tremiti archipelago, in the Adriatic (Goretti and Giartosio, 2006).

Nor is there extensive literature on the repression of homosexuality in the so-called Portuguese Estado Novo, a political regime with many similarities to that of Franco (Pereira Bastos, 1997; Almeida, 2010; Correia, 2016, 2017; Afonso, 2019). Prior to the Dictatorship, homosexuality was already punished in Portugal, but with the arrival of Salazar the laws were tightened. A decree in 1936 compared homosexuals to beggars and they were locked up in *specialised* centres. But with the review of the Criminal Code in 1954 came specific legislation for homosexuality, establishing punitive measures very similar to those of the *Vagrancy Act* in Spain: internment in prisons and work colonies.



**One of the sentences for homosexuals in fascist Italy was confinement to the islands.**





Studies of the repression of homosexuality during the Estado Novo in Portugal are still very limited. *Homossexuais no Estado Novo*, by São José Almeida, and *Homossexualidade e Resistência no Estado Novo* (2019), by Raquel Afonso.

## FRANCOIST LAWS AGAINST HOMOSEXUALITY

The Franco regime did not stop at monitoring the behaviour of homosexuals and morally condemning homosexuality, but drafted laws that severely punished sexual acts between members of the same sex. Unlike in other European countries, Spanish law at the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century did not include homosexuality as a crime, but this does not mean that socially it was not a stigmatised practice. It was not until 1928, during Primo de Rivera's dictatorship, a regime whose fundamental pillars, in the same way as the Franco regime, were the Catholic Church and the Army, that homosexuality was included as a crime in the Criminal Code. In this code (Royal Decree Law 1598, of 8 September 1928) the offence of indecent assault was reformed and Article 601 stipulated that the committing of such assault by a person of the same sex as the victim was an aggravating circumstance that significantly increased the prison sentence. In addition, Article 616 makes specific reference to homosexuality as a form of public outrage such that «the person who, habitually or scandalously, commits indecent acts with a person of the same sex will be punished with a fine of 1,000 to 10,000 pesetas and a spe-

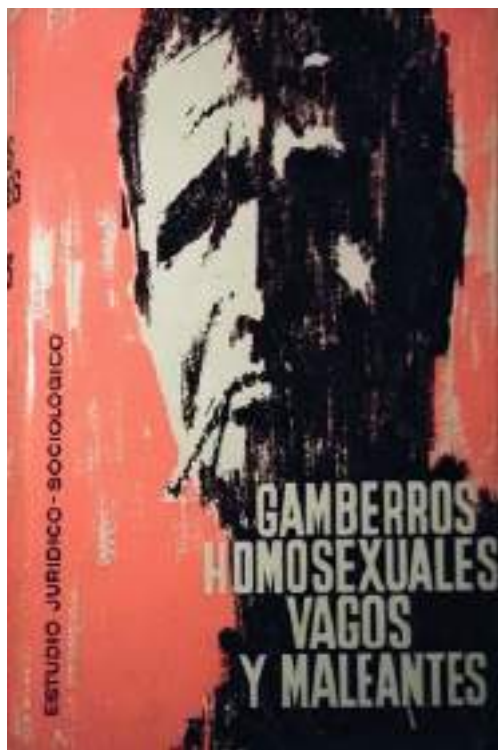
cial inhibition to holding public positions for six to twelve years» (p. 1505). With the arrival of the Republic, these provisions disappeared from the Criminal Code, and the 1932 code returned to the definition of indecent assault in force prior to 1928.

The establishment of the Franco regime implied the return to a repressive legislation against homosexuality that was once again criminalised. For this, the Franco regime reformed a Republican law from 1933, the *Vagrancy Act*, a regulation for the control of vagabonds, nomads, pimps and other *antisocial* elements, and which could result in imprisonment for up to three years. The Dictatorship included homosexuals among the socially *dangerous* groups. It is significant that Franco did not adopt laws against homosexuals until 1954 (Law of 15 July 1954), as until this time, the Regime had been occupied with persecuting political elements considered more dangerous. It is also of note that this regulation was approved just after the agreement with the Holy See in 1953. This amendment of the Republican law, which explicitly included homosexuals in its Article 2, indicated that what was set out «are not penalties as such, but safety measures, imposed with a twofold purpose to prevent, with the aim of collective guarantee and the wish to correct subjects who have fallen to the lowest moral level». In theory, the aim of the law was not to punish, but to *protect and reform*.

In 1954, Special Vagrancy Courts were established. In 1958 there were ten, three in Andalusia, one in Seville, which covered western Andalusia and Badajoz; another in San Roque (Cadiz) for the Campo de Gibraltar; and a third in Granada for eastern Andalusia. This law stipulated the imprisonment of homosexuals for an indefinite time, with a maximum of three years and subsequent surveillance for up to five years. Once detained a file was opened and they had a criminal record, with the resultant lifetime stigma. Article 6 of the amendment of 1954 of the Vagrancy Act laid down that just as ruffians, beggars or pimps, homosexuals should be confined, among other measures, explicitly stipulating that «homosexuals subject to this security measure should be confined to special institutions and, in any case, in absolute isolation from all others».

Some prisoners were taken to concentration and forced labour camps, euphemistically called «work establishments» or «penitentiary agricultural colonies». Among these centres was the so-called Penitentiary Agricultural Colony of Tefía, in Fuerteventura (Olmeda, 2004; Gutiérrez Dorado, 2008), an airfield converted into a concentration camp that was opened in 1954 and remained in operation until 1966. Other camps were those of Burgos and Nanclares de Oca, in Álava. Nevertheless, these were not the only centres of internment. Many homosexuals were imprisoned in special buildings in the big city prisons: Carabanchel in Madrid, the Modelo de Barcelona, Valencia or Seville. When they entered jail, the prisoners did not know how long they would be





**Antonio Sabater, judge at the Vagrancy Court for Catalonia and the Balearic isles, was one of the toughest persecutors of homosexuality. In his work *Gamberros, homosexuales, vagos y maleantes* he justified the punishment of homosexuality.**

imprisoned, as it was the prison director who decided with his reports when prisoners would be released.

The afore-mentioned article 6 of the law of 15 July 1954 also stipulated that, following imprisonment, defendants would be «forbidden from residing in a certain place or region and obliged to declare their address», which in practice implied forced exile under surveillance.

One might wonder what led the Franco regime to enact this law. Obviously there were numerous deeply-rooted social prejudices against this collective, but this could not have been the only reason; the culture of the fascist regimes should be added to the virility and violence, the rejection of what was seen as a weakness and feminisation of men. In the case of Spain, the Franco regime had its own influence that differentiated from other fascist regimes: that of the Catholic Church. The church had a huge influence over many everyday aspects and used the

Government to impose its moral standards. In addition, the Franco regime sought to restore the moral order that the Republic had disrupted. Homosexuality questioned a clearly established order with a clear distinction between men and women. The judge of the Vagrancy Court, Antonio Sabater, stated in 1962 in a book published with the significant name of *Gamberros, homosexuales, vagos y maleantes* (Hooligans, homosexuals and vagrants) that homosexuals endangered the family, and he compared homosexuality to a curable disease. Oddly enough, these are the same arguments that the Church continues to employ today.

The Vagrancy Act of the Franco regime remained in force until 1970, when it was replaced by another, the Law on Danger and Social Reintegration (Law 16/1970, of 4 August). The new law introduced a substantial change, as it did not consider homosexuals as dangerous, but rather those who practised homosexuality. If for decades homosexuals were categorised as flawed people who threatened the established morality, in those times medical disser-



## BEGOÑA ALLEY IN THE LGTBI+ MEMORY



**The County Prison in Huelva was one of the two centres used for the *reintegration* of homosexuals. It was declared a Site of Historic Memory in Andalusia in 2014.**

tations were imposed and homosexuality became seen as a pathology to which scientific treatment must be applied. This was certainly nothing new, as, since the start of the 19th century, psychiatrists and psychologists had had their sights on homosexuality and labelled it as an illness. Nevertheless, in Spain, these theories did not start to spread among the popular and legal spheres until the second half of last century. The law sought to have a rehabilitating nature and, therefore, it established the need for these *sick people* to be treated by experts in specialised centres, creating prisons specifically for their *rehabilitation*. In 1973, two prisons were set up for this purpose in Badajoz, specialising in *active* homosexuals, and in Huelva, specialised in *passive* homosexuals. Huelva prison had already been receiving homosexuals since the sixties. Until then there were no exclusive establishments, they were simply separated into separate modules. As we will see, the idea that homosexuality was a disease was becoming more and more prevalent. In theory, these prisons would be equipped with *qualified* personnel to *cure* these *sick people*. The medical assessment boards at these centres were supposed to have a criminologist, a psychologist, an educator and a psychiatrist; however, this was never the case. The maximum internment time for homosexuals was reduced from five to three years, but the minimum age of criminal responsibility was lowered to seventeen. In the Spanish prisons, *sexual deviants* continued to be treated as delinquents and were subjected to much harassment. Punishment and repression were presented to the public as an attempt to help. Thus, far from moderating their position towards homosexuality, the Regime strengthened it. From then on, homosexuals were not only deprived of their freedom, but were also exposed to all types of harassment in the prisons. Some authors calculate, extrapolating the data from the reports from the Supreme Court Prosecutor's Office, that some 3600



cases of homosexuality were processed between 1970 and 1979. The direct consequences were 1000 imprisonments (Monferrer and Calvo, 2001), but the indirect repercussions were far greater: the stigma and social rejection of all those for whom a file had been opened.

The repression was not limited to legal detention and internment. An Order from the Ministry of Education and Science in 1971 included *homosexuality* in the «table of physical defects or illnesses preventing entry to the National Body of Primary School Teachers» (Order of 1 February 1971, p. 2304).

And what about the women? It is of note that the laws did not make explicit reference to lesbians. Baidez (2007) indicates that the inclusion of lesbianism was the subject of parliamentary debate in the Social Danger Law, but it was finally decided not to include it as the term *homosexual* already covered it. Did they receive the same legal treatment? It was important to deny, although it was hidden and not named, the possibility of an independent female sexuality. For Dolores Juliano (2012), there was no legitimate model that allowed women to develop or live their sexual desire, hence the little visibility given to independent forms of female sexuality and the attempts of the Franco regime to ignore and eradicate the sexual and gender dissidences of women. In the same sense, Raquel Osborne (2008) highlights that the concealment was convenient for the Regime, as to openly counterattack the model of the woman with desires portrayed by lesbianism would remove power from the image of sexual passivity sought in the official discourse of the Dictatorship. In the case of homosexual women, she states that «the belittlement has become a strategy of self-assumed silence» which will last beyond the Dictatorship. Another example of this silence can be found in the fact that it was not until 2012 when the first woman requested compensation for the time spent in prison on account of her sexual condition (Asociación Ex-Presos Sociales de España, press cutting). For Albarracín (2012), this denial by the Regime of the existence of lesbians, this «thick wall of silence» which Raquel Osborne (2008) talks about, although it generated and generates a lack of social recognition, it also provided loopholes so they could live without being so bothered, with a certain freedom in some physical spaces and with social skills in which they used their own shared codes of communication. This invisibility meant that they were not even explicitly included in the repressive laws, although different and powerful mechanisms of repression did exist: family, the Church, psychiatrists, educational institutions, marriage...

Franco's death did not result in the immediate abolition of this repression legislation. Neither the pardon of 1975 nor the amnesty of 1976 included the «social dangers», as they were not considered «political crimes». In the middle of 1978, at the request of the PC, the PSOE and the UCD, the Law on Social Danger was amended. In January 1979 several articles were deleted, including the one referring to «homosexual acts». From then on, pressure

## BEGOÑA ALLEY IN THE LGTBI+ MEMORY

Cover of case file 96 from 1974 from the Special Courts for Social Danger in Malaga. The punishment the prosecutor demanded for the crime of *female homosexuality* was very harsh. The accused was acquitted following legal proceedings that lasted years.

Case file 159 of 1977 from the Special Courts for Social Danger in Malaga. The defendant was only accused of *homosexuality*. She was condemned to four months of *rehabilitation* in Huelva prison.

was applied to change the law on public scandal, which was eliminated in 1983 and finally abolished in 1989. The Law on Social Danger was completely abolished on 23 November 1995.

Although we cannot blame the Franco regime for the strong homophobia existing in Spanish society, there is no doubt that this legislation, which has been in force since 1954, has largely contributed to encouraging the rejection of anyone who does not live their sexuality in a *conventional* manner. The homosexual collective was totally stigmatized as much by religion as by medicine and the law. Homosexuals became potential criminals who were to be mistrusted.



## THE APPLICATION OF THE LAWS OF THE FRANCO REGIME IN ANDALUSIA

It is difficult to calculate the number of Andalusians who were affected by these laws. Until all the cases from the Vagrancy Courts become available, we will not be able to obtain an approximate idea of the extent of this repression. The law was not applied to all imprisoned homosexuals and there are no documentary records of some of the arrests nor of the poor treatment handed out by the forces of public order. The harshness with which the Vagrancy Act was applied was also very variable. The law was sufficiently ambiguous to permit different interpretations, which explains why not all the accused were condemned; essentially it depended on the judges. With the information we have to date, we can say that, while the Courts of Seville were very strict and condemned the majority of the accused, the courts of Granada were more lenient and acquitted many of those incriminated due to lack of evidence. When a person was arrested, the judge asked for reports from the Town Hall, the neighbours, the police or the priests. The police reports were particularly tough, especially those of the Civil Guard, who exaggerated the slightest detail so that the individuals were condemned. On the other hand, the reports from the town halls and the neighbours tended to be positive and exculpatory. The information provided by the ecclesiastical authorities varied considerably: while some priests had no compassion whatsoever, the parish priests in some villages submitted positive reports for the accused.

The majority of those accused of homosexuality came from urban environments, regional capitals and agricultural cities. Seville, Malaga and Granada were the cities with the most detentions for homosexual practices, but the high number of convicts from small towns should not be dismissed. As a rule, whereas in the cities the arrests were made in public places (parks, cinemas, beaches...), where the police tended to be on the lookout, in the smaller villages, detentions were usually the result of complaints. Until the sixties, in the majority of large towns in Andalusia, there were hardly any homosexual bars, and consequently meeting spaces were linked to public places or areas of prostitution. These establishments were all masculine, which partly explains why there were no arrests of lesbians. Relations between women tended to take place behind closed doors.

If male homosexuality was considered a social danger, female homosexuality was doubly so, as femininity was linked to motherhood and, consequently, to reproduction. The denial of the sexual agency of women helped to keep them invisible, especially in a context in which women's access to public spaces was far more limited (except in the case of sex workers), such that relations between women were less visible. Thus, the application of these laws was far less. On the same lines, Pura Sánchez (2012) compares the cases

of a man and a woman and points out that male homosexuality, being more visible, took on more significance and was more heavily punished. Remember that lesbians were not explicitly mentioned in the repressive laws. Nevertheless, in the case of women there were other powerful mechanisms of repression. In addition to the informal control mechanisms —family, Church, educational institutions or marriage (Osborne, 2012)—, institutional repression was also imposed outside the prisons. Many homosexual women often ended up in psychiatric units, as they were considered mentally ill. It is very complicated to track the stories of these women, as quite simply they were classified as *crazy*. Although we have not been able to locate the files to confirm this until now, we do have some accounts that are quite clear in this respect.

Many lesbians also ended up in religious establishments dependent on the Women's Trust, such as the Adoratrices. In most cases, they were shut away in these centres at the request of their own families. We have some accounts that describe how the nuns were responsible for *guarding* and punishing the conduct of these women.

Although not many, we have some cases in the Vagrancy Courts of Andalusia of women who were subjected to the repressive laws against homosexuality. When the informal controls failed, the State intervened. Some prostitutes fell victim to this law for operating in the public sphere. Similarly, the force of the law fell on those women who moved in what were considered male circles, such as *homosexual* bars, or who challenged the parental authority.

One characteristic common to a large number of those condemned by these laws is that they came from the lowest strata of society. Many were illiterate and held precarious jobs. For example, the large number of detainees who worked as painters or whitewashers, a trade that was associated with homosexuality in Andalusia for many years, is of note (Cáceres-Feria and Valcuende del Río, 2014). There are few upper class convicts, not only because they were able to move in private circles where it was more difficult for them to be caught in the act, but also because if they had sufficient funds, they would



**The dancer from Malaga, Eusebio Valderrama, one of the many Andalusians who was subjected to the Vagrancy Act**



appeal against the sentence to the Special Chamber of the Courts for Social Danger and Rehabilitation, located in Malaga. On some occasions, this High Court would repeal the sentence and pardon the accused. The mediation of political or religious authorities was another mechanism for avoiding prison.

The information we have reveals that transvestites and the effeminate became the preferred target of the police all over Spain. In his study on homosexual prisoners, Alberto García Valdés (1981:149) states:

Most of the time, the Law on Social Danger was applied to a certain type of homosexual, the effeminate. The reasons are clear. This group is characterised by their lack of caution. Also, many work as prostitutes on the streets, where the police can find them easily. So, arrest is inevitable, unless the police have something more important to do. Sometimes, and from the accounts of the detainees, the simple fact of being effeminate was sufficient reason for detention, even if they were not soliciting.

This has been confirmed in the case of Andalusia, where police reports clearly indicate that the police took it out on the effeminate. Any «lack of decorum» in the style of dress (even in carnival) or in their gestures was enough to arrest someone. The Regime punished any discrepancy with the regulatory standards of gender, as effeminacy was associated with a lack of virility and with homosexuality. In some cases, individuals with homosexual practices were pardoned if they claimed they were drunk; however, this was not the case with effeminacy or transvestism, for whom there was no possible excuse. It is denigrating to see how the accused had to provide witnesses to confirm they were not effeminate by *vice* but by *birth*.

That the laws were not applied in the same way to everyone is clear from the case files from the Vagrancy Courts and Social Danger and Rehabilitation Courts. When one of the two people involved in a homosexual act was effeminate, the whole force of the law fell on him, in some cases resulting in the condemnation of the one and not the other, as being effeminate was a sign of vice and corruption. While sexuality could be hidden in the private sphere, gender reversal implied a danger that altered the social order. There is a long-standing tradition of transvestism in Andalusia: transvestites were already performing in the cafés with live music in Malaga and Seville of the 19th century, and the cabarets in Barcelona during the Republic (La Criolla, La Sacristía...) were where many transvestites from the south found work. This is one of the reasons that explains the high number of Andalusians who were caught under these laws. The impact of this legislation was devastating. Not only were thousands of people deprived of their freedom for periods of up to three years, but also, the sentence forced them to live outside their province of residence for long periods, implying the uprooting of the defendants, who also had to carry the stigma of prison for years. Many lost their jobs and lost



## BEGOÑA ALLEY IN THE LGTBI+ MEMORY

contact with friends and family.

We would have a mistaken idea of the Francoist repression if we were to reduce it solely to the application of these laws. Under the cover of this law, many local authorities acted with impunity. Manolita Chen from Cadiz describes how she was imprisoned with other transvestites and homosexuals for being a transvestite at the start of the summer, so that visitors to her hometown, Arcos de la Frontera, would not have a bad image of the town. In some towns, the local police force systematically shaved the heads of the effeminate men in the town. Beatings and humiliation were the order of the day. The accounts we have clearly show the impact of prison on many of these individuals, even though in some cases the prison sentence was the minimum. They were almost all marked for life by their experience in prison.



**The first books to address the repression of dissident sexualities during the Franco regime did not start to appear until early 21st century.**

## FREEDOM AND REPRESSION OF HOMOSEXUALITY IN TORREMOLINOS

A review of the case files from the Archives of the Vagrancy Court in the province of Malaga provides a huge amount of information about the impact of tourism on the way in which homosexuality was lived in Andalusia, mainly on the Costa del Sol. Until the forties, Malaga appeared in the reports on public morality as a province with «good morality», essentially in the capital city, where, according to the police, «homosexuality is almost imperceptible». By contrast, other Andalusian provinces such as Huelva were rated as having low morality, where homosexuality, especially female, is very high.

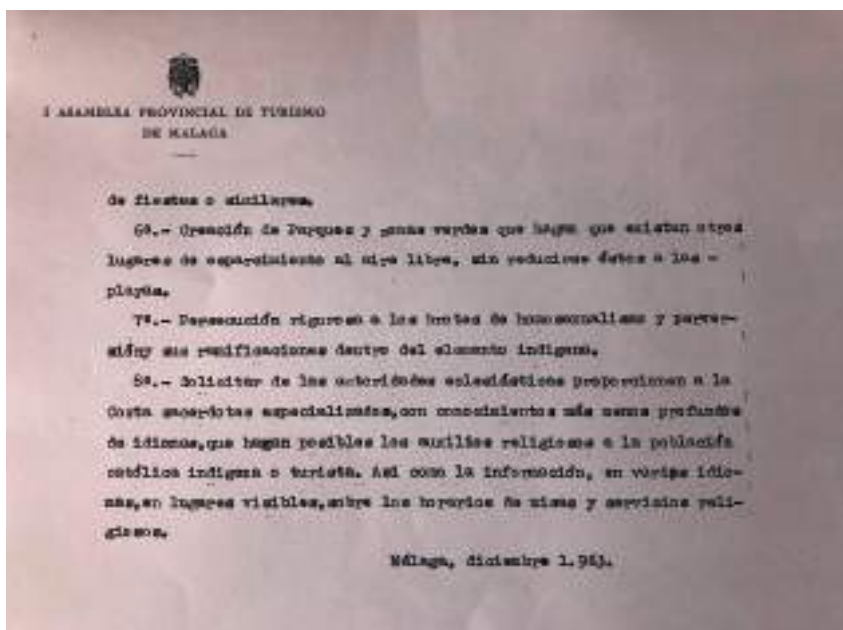
However, at the end of the fifties, the situation was turned around. Reports of all types warned about the spread of homosexuality in Spanish tourist destinations. At the 1<sup>st</sup> Tourism Congress in Malaga, held in December 1963, together with measures such as the introduction of improvements to facilities, the promotion of green zones, etc., other measures were proposed, aimed at reducing the harmful effects of this activity on morals: more priests with a knowledge of languages and «rigorous persecution of the outbreaks of homosexuality and perversion and its ramifications within the local population».

A document published by Cáritas in 1965 warned of the public growth in homosexuality, especially in areas closely linked to tourism:

«Costa Brava, Costa del Sol and Barcelona seem to be the areas with the highest frequency and appearance of homosexuality, including in the form of prostitution» (Cáritas Española, 1965:187). In the report from the Supreme Court of 1971, the public prosecutor for Malaga warned of «the increase in the heinous sodomitic vice, encouraged in the Costa del Sol by foreign elements that congregate there» (Ramírez Pérez, 2018).

In spite of this apparent opening, the voices that mistrusted the perverse effects of tourism remained present until the end of the Dictatorship. In 1963, the Civil Government of Malaga recommended «religious, moral and humane training» for those who, one way or another, were in direct contact with tourism. In 1964, a report from the Public prosecutor warned of the harmful influence of foreigners on young Spanish citizens:

In the tourist areas most influenced by foreign customs, the moral conscience, so deeply-rooted in good Spanish customs, is gradually being lost. Sadly, today people are not shocked by anything, displaying a dangerous indifference to the presence of homosexuals and prostitutes, who do not hide from public displays of their repugnant personality, problems which dominant the atmosphere of frivolity existing in these lands influenced by tourism and of huge concern for all civil and religious authorities who, in spite of efforts to prevent



Documentary collection from the Regional Historic Archives of Malaga.

it, have not managed to contain this serious risk, of such moral and social transcendence (Fernández, 2005:307).

But there would be no going back. The development of tourism in Spain would be unstoppable and become the driving force behind important social changes in the country.

The freedom of Torremolinos lived alongside the repressive laws of the Franco regime. It is true that in this part of the Costa del Sol, the State looked the other way. This does not mean that on occasion the Dictatorship did not make its presence felt in the town and demonstrated that it was aware of all that went on there and that it was not prepared to allow it to increase. In most cases, the authorities were obliged to act on complaints from certain conservative neighbours who did not approve of the atmosphere in which they lived. However, they tended to merely make an appearance and inspect the activities taking place in some venues.

Small raids took place on a regular basis, with customers ending up at the police station and, sometimes, in prison. Some accounts *play down* these arrests, which merely held the customers in custody for a short time. This seems to indicate that the summer visitors did not give much importance to these controls. In the novel by Sánchez Dragó *Eldorado*, at the start of the eighties, he describes a private party where the guests do not seem to take the presence of the Civil Guard at all seriously:

—Go on up. Usually they are on the terrace and from time to time the Civil Guard turn up, to take us away in handcuffs for disturbing public order and the peace of the Franco regime. This tends to happen even three days or so. Don't worry. It's fun. (Sánchez Dragó, 1984:112).

The establishments open at night, especially nightclubs, had some control measures in place to warn guests of the presence of the armed forces, such as hidden bells pressed by the doormen when the police turned up:

They had fitted a device or bell, hidden on the right side wall, depending on the entrance, which was pressed by the employee, the "doorman" (...), who had to make three different calls to the inside of the club. If pressed only once it was for guests to be correctly welcomed, for the owner or administrator, and three successive rings when it was the Civil Guard or Police.

On arrival of the non-commissioned officer and auxiliary forces at the place indicated, the afore-mentioned employee was forewarned, so that no call could be made ahead, and it would be possible to observe that deeds contrary to morals or other criminal acts were being committed, although the instructions were not obeyed, indicating that scandals and disturbances may be committed, and a possible source of immoral deeds, as is laid out (Directorate General of the Civil Guard, 1970. AHPM).

Rather than trying to put an end to the atmosphere in Torremolinos, it seems clear that the function of the police was to prevent the situation from getting out of control. It was as important to contain immoral behaviour, as it was to know that everything was under control. Close police surveillance and the fines imposed on entertainment venues were intended to be dissuasive and to serve as propaganda. The press and radio reported this news to demonstrate the power of the State.

As Antonio D. Olano remembers (1974:206-207):

Torremolinos. A city with no laws? No, because - in the first place- it is not permitted to become a city, administratively it is a district of Malaga. In second place, because the authorities try to maintain order and there are laws. Some even say they are applied too strictly in times of massive «raids», almost without discrimination. Let us say on the other hand, in favour of the agents of this Law, that if they do keep check, they do so cautiously, ensuring that each person lives without disturbing others. Neither in the exercise of their authority or in their uniforms are they visible. Even the Police Station is tucked away (...).

In the same way that the leisure establishments were controlled, the police regularly visited the beach to check on those foreigners who «from their appearance» were suspected of not having sufficient resources to keep themselves. To avoid any problems, all they had to do was take out their passport

and some notes to demonstrate they were in the country legally and had independent means. Nevertheless, some of these tourists were on occasion deported.

Together with these occasional measures, sometimes the police intervened in a more forceful manner. When homosexuality went from more private spheres to the public spheres, or the red lines of *morality* were crossed, there was no hesitation in applying the applicable laws. Almost always, these were cases linked to scandals that the Dictatorship could not permit. Torremolinos was no exception and when *necessary*, the Vagrancy Act and the Social Danger Law were also applied.

The arrival of people from all over in search of entertainment made it possible for many to try to obtain benefits from the tourists, especially the wealthier ones. As Antonio D. Olano (1974) states, «the business of love» was not always linked to monetary payment, but often the locals let themselves be courted and moved with the tourists, who invited them to eat or to night clubs. Those who devoted themselves to a «looking for foreigners», although sometimes they received money, did not always do so for this reason. Nevertheless, the sex trade also grew, both male and female, between people of the same or opposite sex.

Some entertained their obligation for leisure by strolling along the beach, showing their face at the steps of the Lookout and going to the date in the apartment of the sweet Scandinavian because «he pays well» and because it doesn't hurt to be polite and every little bit helps and «who's a queer!» (Olano, 1974:182).

The Regime was particularly *sensitive* towards male prostitution and the full force of the law came down on those who worked in this line of business. In 1960, the police in Torremolinos arrested a young twenty-four year old man for disturbing the peace, «by performing homosexual acts with foreigners living accidentally in the neighbourhood», with the aggravating circumstance of being «an invert» and a repeat offender. This young man worked on and off in the fishing sector and lived from «working with foreigners, charging for sexual aberrations». This sort of arrest was the norm at this time. In 1961, a married individual was accused of theft when he tried to change a 100 dollar bill. The prisoner told the police that this money was given to him by a foreigner for «sexual relations» and he was automatically charged under the Vagrancy Act.

The bars in the town received visits, in addition to the usual clientele, from young men from the town or surrounding areas looking to make money. Another meeting point was the beach, especially at dusk. In 1963, a twenty-seven-year-old man was caught naked with a British tourist on Bajondillo beach.





As he had a previous record for «depravity» and was classified as an «invert», he was charged under the law on «Homosexual acts».

It was not always a casual activity, some made it their way of life. In February 1970 in Torremolinos a young man was arrested for «friendship with members of the upper class, such as counts, marquis...». The police proposed charging him under the Vagrancy Law.

It is difficult to define the frontier between pleasure and business. Often when a man was caught by the police with a foreigner, he declared that he was not an invert, but that he had done this because he needed the money. This is the case of a young nineteen-year-old Castilian boy who was holiday in Malaga in 1966 and who visited a flat in Torremolinos with several people, including a Swiss citizen: «As the defendant did not have any money and said individual offered him two hundred pesetas, he left with him».

Together with those dedicated to prostitution, another group much harassed by the Regime were effeminates and transvestites, who became the favourite target of the police all over Spain. A lack of decorum in style of dress was reason enough to be arrested, although in Torremolinos, the presence of foreigners wearing all sorts of outfits enabled greater freedom in this respect.

The Regime was aware of the need for caution in the presence of citizens of other countries, as it was necessary to avoid staining Spain's international image at all costs. Even so, on more than one occasion, foreigners were caught up in the raids carried out by the police.

Although the homosexual atmosphere in Torremolinos was mainly male, smaller numbers of lesbians could be found in some *gay* bars. The more tightly closed circles of the women and their meeting in intimate situations explains why they were rarely victims of these persecutions. It was only when women transgressed the gender behaviours and copied male roles or publicly displayed their sexuality that they were exposed to the same laws as the men.

## CHAPTER IV.

# OPERATION TORREMOLINOS: THE GREAT RAID

### 24 JUNE 1971. THE GREAT RAID

As we mentioned above, although in Franco's time there were small police raids in Torremolinos, on 24 June 1971, San Juan night, we witnessed a raid without precedent in Begoña Alley. The number of arrests varies with the source, although the majority agree that some three hundred people were identified, of whom more than one hundred were arrested and «transferred to Malaga for later identification».

Heavy fines were imposed, bars closed down and, as mentioned in the international press, many tourists

returned to their home countries. The official reasoning was clear: to put an end to the focal point of «immorality» existing in this area. This time it was not just another raid, as is shown by the fact that the country's leading newspapers reported the incident:

According to the campaign started by the government authorities of Malaga, in order to safeguard morality and good customs, on 24 and 25 June, police officers carried out a series of investigations in the numerous nightclubs in Torremolinos. Proof that the government authorities had good reason to order this investigation of recreational venues, is that more than one hundred people were detained —mostly foreigners — and what is even more explicit, for violating the most fundamental standards of public morality, no less than ELEVEN establishments of the so-called Nightclubs have been

**LA VANGUARDIA ESPAÑOLA**

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**DETENCION DE 300 PERSONAS  
EN ALGUNAS SALAS DE FIESTA  
EN TORREMOLINOS**

**Plan gubernativo para  
saneamiento en los medios  
de raro ambiente**

Málaga, 26. — Un plan gubernativo para saneamiento y clarificación en los medios de raro ambiente de Torremolinos ha dado como resultado esta madrugada la detención, por la policía, de trescientas personas que se encontraban en los sectores de Begoña y adyacentes, donde más proliferan las salas de fiesta y similares.

Para esta operación se desplazó desde Málaga numeroso personal de la policía gubernativa y municipal y a las cuatro de la madrugada concluyó su misión. Entre los detenidos figuran sospechosos de drogadicción, mujeres de vida fácil, invertidos y amigos de la propiedad ajena.

De los detenidos en un principio, 114 fueron trasladados a Málaga para su posterior identificación y luego fueron puestos en libertad muchos de ellos.

Como se sabe, en Torremolinos existen unos seiscientos locales de diversión, pero donde más abundan es en el barrio de Begoña y alrededores. — Europa Press.

**La noticia de la Gran Redada del Pasaje Begoña apareció en numerosos medios de comunicación españoles y extranjeros.**

closed down, while a further TWELVE establishments of the same kind have been “voluntarily closed” by their owners to avoid bigger problems. This is the balance of “Operation Torremolinos”, more than one hundred people arrested, 11 nightclubs closed down, and a further 12 venues closed by their owners, and all for nothing less than breaking the most elementary rules of PUBLIC MORALITY (Clemente Iniesta, Eco de Canarias, 4 July 1971).

Reasons of a moral nature were the arguments put forward to justify the police action:

The Civil Governor has decreed the closure of CAMELA nightclub, and the closure of the bars EVA and NOE, all public bars in the district of Torremolinos.

The decision of the Civil Government is motivated by the recurrent breaches of the applicable legislation on public morality and good customs, and the applicable legal provisions generally applicable with respect to the operation and management of this type of establishment.

Similarly, the Civil Governor has decreed a fine of 10,000 Pesetas and notice to close for PIPER’S nightclub, also in Torremolinos, for allowing under-age individuals access to the premises (Closing down of a nightclub and two bars in Torremolinos. *Diario de Málaga*, 25 June 1971).

This raid was considered necessary for the «regeneration» of Torremolinos:

A government plan for the restructuring and cleaning up of the strange atmospheres found in Torremolinos led to the arrest by Police of three hundred people who were in the area of Begoña and neighbouring zones in the early hours of this morning.

Numerous members of the national and local police forces travelled from Malaga for this operation, concluding their mission at four in the morning. Among those arrested are suspected drug addicts, loose women, invertes and friends of the owner (In Torremolinos. Arrest of three hundred people. *ABC*, 27 June 1971).

While the national press reported the news giving the official view, this was not the case with the foreign press. The raid had significant impact in the European press, especially in Germany, which criticised the toughness of the repression, the transfer of the detainees to Malaga, the conditions of detention and the damages caused to German tourists. In fact, the Spanish embassy in Bonn reported on the monitoring of the news, showing the concern of the Dictatorship for the international repercussions of the raid.

## BEGOÑA ALLEY IN THE LGTBI+ MEMORY

OFICINA DE INFORMACION  
DIPLOMATICA

TELEX

EMBAJADA EN  
BONN

1.7.71

"FRANKFURTER RUNDSCHAU"

"DETENCIONES EN MASA"

De su corresponsal en Bonn, Hans Lerchbacher

El Ministerio Alemán de Asuntos Exteriores carece hasta el momento de un informe detallado sobre las detenciones llevadas a cabo recientemente en Torremolinos. Estas fueron las palabras de un portavoz del mencionado Ministerio al ser interrogado ayer sobre este asunto. Se dice que el número de detenidos oscila entre 140 y 300. Al parecer, la policía detuvo arbitrariamente a numerosos turistas, obligándoles a permanecer largas horas en la Comisaría. Según la emisora "Europa Welle" del Sarre, jóvenes de ambos sexos fueron objeto de malos tratos por parte de la policía española. Se desconoce hasta el momento el motivo de tales detenciones, pero según declaraciones de algunos turistas a su regreso a Alemania, obedecieron a una medida de la policía encaminada a "proteger la moral y las buenas costumbres". Las agencias alemanas de turismo han dirigido una protesta al Gobernador Civil de Málaga.

"FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE"

"ALEGRES, PERO DECENTES"

De su corresponsal, Madrid

Informa que "para proteger la moral" se han cerrado 23 locales en Torremolinos.

"STUTTGARTER ZEITUNG"

DETENCIONES...

De su corresponsal, Dieterich

Comenta las detenciones llevadas a cabo por la policía en Torremolinos y alude al cierre de numerosos locales, afirmando que los detenidos fueron objeto de malos tratos por parte de la policía. Dieterich señala la coincidencia de que esta acción de la policía tuviera lugar justamente casi el mismo día en que las Cortes se iban a reunir para aprobar la nueva Legislación de Orden Público.

Desde Madrid

## Los Indeseables de Torremolinos

Por JOSE GASCH

En algunas partes de Europa y no sé si también en ciertos medios norteamericanos donde se tiende a interpretar mal todo lo que se refiere a España, se está intentando desacreditar a este país en cuanto a la libertad y seguridad que disfrutan aquí los turistas. Aprovechándose de una botida dada por la policía entre elementos de mal vivir incrustados en cierta zona de Torremolinos, en Málaga, se ha querido presentar toda una novela sobre persecuciones y molestias a los turistas.

Nada más lejos de la verdad. Todo el que haya visitado a España no importa cualquiera de sus regiones o ciudades, sabe que si hay algún país en el mundo donde se vive en paz, con seguridad, sin sobresaltos ni molestias, ese país es España. A nadie se le pide la documentación, salvo que ocurra algo que justifique esa medida. La libertad de que disfrutan todos, extranjeros y nativos no la supera ningún país. Uno llega incluso a sorprenderse de cómo en la Admisión debido a la carencia de los funcionarios españoles, permiten la entrada en el país de personas que vienen en plan de hippies, descalzos, sacos, molestando, embarrumbando y con una mochila a la espalda por todo equipaje. Sin embargo nadie les prohíbe la entrada, aunque a veces se trata de un falso turismo que sirve para introducir en el país drogas, proxenetismo y otros vicios, pero aquí se respeta tanto a las personas, sus gustos y modo de ser, que precisamente por eso, de unos años a esta parte se están mezclando con los verdaderos turistas muchos delincuentes profesionales.

Limpio de ese elemento los Centros turísticos, es obligación de las autoridades y es una medida de protección que todas las personas decentes deben agradecer. To-

do lo que ocurrió hace pocos días, que al iniciarse la temporada turística en la Costa del Sol, concretamente en Torremolinos, la policía advirtió que llegaban, como adelantándose a tomar posiciones, muchos malvivientes que vienen del extranjero, pero que en rigor no son turistas, son los vampiros del turismo y los que hacen imposible la vida a los demás, salvo en el caso de que se encuentren con personas afines a sus vicios y desórdenes. Gente que se dedican al contrabando y venta de marihuana y otras drogas, que viven al margen de la moral y de la Ley, que muestran todo lo que tocan y que no pueden ser clasificados como turistas se concentran todos los años en un rincón de Torremolinos. Año tras año, la policía lucha contra esos elementos, cuidando mucho de no producir escenas que resulten molestas para quienes sean inocentes y no participen en la conducta de los que confunden al turismo con un permiso para romper todas las leyes de la moral y de la decencia. Pero ese tipo de delincuentes es muy avaros, se crecen y llegan a creer que la condición de turistas y el pasaporte extranjero, equivalen a una patente de corso. Le invaden todo, le ensucian todo y lo que es peor contagian a nuestra juventud.

Este año se decidió cortar por lo sano, es decir dar una batida en forma antes de que llegase la gran afluencia de verdaderos turistas que acogían aquella zona como lugar predilecto. En la madrugada, a una hora de esas en la que normalmente sólo andan por la zona a métodos en bares y fuguritas, quienes tienen poco que ver con el trabajo y con la moral, la policía recogió a unas 350 personas; la mayoría estaba compuesta por extranjeros, es cierto, pero extranjeros

bien conocidos de la policía como drogadictos, proxenetes, ladrones, etc. Todo lo que se les hizo fue conducirlos a Málaga, establecer la identidad de cada uno y expulsar a aquellos que por su hoja penal merecían esta decisión. No es pues, como se ha dicho en algunas publicaciones que parecen empujadas en desacreditar a los turistas que vienen a España, una persecución gratuita para que la gente se acueste a las diez de la noche ni mucho menos. Se arrestó una botida a los elementos molestos, muchos de los cuales están reclamados por la INTERPOL, y llevan una vida que justifica cualquier medida que se tome contra ellos. Es más, quienes conocen de primera mano el problema creado en aquella zona de Torremolinos consideran que la policía ha sido muy blanda porque sólo expulsó de allí a quienes las pruebas obligaban a castigar. El deseo de los verdaderos turistas, es verse libres de la plaga de grobianos, molestos, proxenetes, y delincuentes que se mezclan con la muchedumbre de viajeros que estragan España.

Lo que ha hecho la policía es advertir que ya está harto de confundir la caballerosidad de las autoridades españolas y su respeto a la personalidad de cada cual, con un permiso para traficar en drogas y en trata de blancas y en cualquier otro tipo de inmoralidad. El turista genuino en España de todas las libertades que no sean incompatibles con la decencia. Pero pretender que bajo el título de turista entres y actúen impunemente en el país gentes que vician de la cárcel o tan cívico de ella, es olvidarse de que todavía España da más importancia a los valores espirituales y morales que al dinero que pueda producir la propagación del delito.

Madrid, 5 de julio de 1971.

Some of the media close to the regime tried to explain the protests about the Great Raid as an orchestrated campaign against Spain.





place where the music played is mostly South American.

That said, the question asked is what happened to cause this sudden change in strategy with respect to Torremolinos and, in short, why did the Great Raid take place. This is even more surprising if we consider that, for years, the Franco dictatorship had tried to portray an image of modernity towards tourism. It is no coincidence that the Minister for Information and Tourism from 1969 to 1973, Alfredo Sánchez Bella, was a member of Opus Dei. During the latter stages of the Franco regime, we witness a cutting down of freedoms that formed part of a wider policy to try to stop what was already a public outcry and demanded by broad sectors of Spanish society: the arrival of democracy.

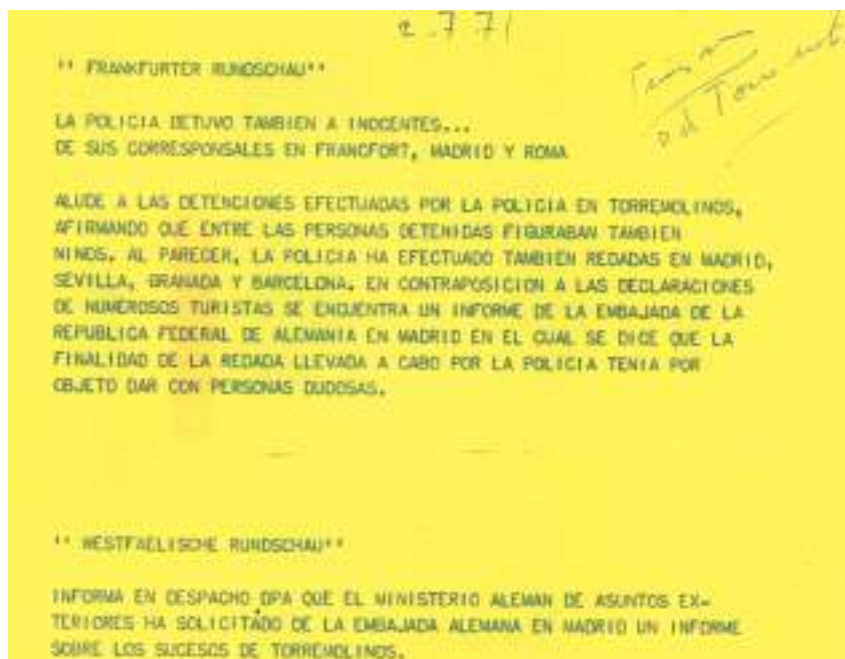
In Torremolinos, many people blame the governor of Malaga at that time, Víctor Arroyo, for the raid. It was said that he did not welcome certain atmospheres in Torremolinos such as Begoña Alley, as, apparently, one of his sons was a frequent visitor there, and the role that the governor's wife may have played is also highlighted. An account follows from someone who was present at the event, José Luis Yagüe, given to the website Torremolinos Chic:

We experienced the sadly famous raid which put an end to the splendour of the famous Magical Nights of Torremolinos and in particular to Begoña Alley as a result of the operation which embarrassed Spain and contributed to diplomatic protests for the mistreatment received by hundreds of foreign tourists, including the children of people of high standing in Europe, who were up in arms about the abuse handed out during the ruthless detection.

The evening before, the wife of the governor had visited Torremolinos with some friends. All of a sudden, they found themselves in the midst of the dazzling atmosphere of Begoña Alley, with pubs and bars and coloured lights, striking girls and an atmosphere that the lady could not have imagined. She hurriedly returned to the Palacio de la Aduana (Customs House), the home of the civil governor and filled his head with such stories that, without wasting any time, he organised a full-scale raid, sending the grey vans of the Armed Police, buses and any vehicles they could find, including municipal ones, to Torremolinos. Hundreds, maybe more than four hundred, were arrested and, as there were no cells available, they were taken to the side alley that goes up from the former Post Office on Paseo del Parque, towards Calle Alcazabilla. The detainees were held in the vans for hours and hours, until international pressure put an end to the nonsense.

Two reporters from the *Sol de España* newspaper recorded, on those shoe-box-type tape recorders of that time, the most impressive accounts of the poor treatment received. These were confiscated. But they wrote their story, which I supervised and encouraged as head, at that time, of the editorial office of the *Sol de España* newspaper on the first floor of the Alameda Principal.

## BEGOÑA ALLEY IN THE LGTBI+ MEMORY



**Photo of the request from the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs requesting a report on the Great Raid from their embassy in Madrid.**

The accounts of those two reporters who experienced the violence with which the police acted are horrifying. Their great crime was that they had been enjoying the music, the drink, the girls or boys and the fantastic atmosphere that existed in Begoña Alley and the surrounding areas. But that enjoyment had shocked the governor's wife...

That said, beyond the people's understanding and the role that the governor Víctor Arroyo may have played, it is clear that the raid on Begoña Alley was by no means the only one and furthermore, a raid of this size cannot be attributed solely to the decisions of a civil governor: the order came directly from Madrid. This raid cannot be understood without first understanding what was happening in the rest of the country.

In 1971 the regime was dying and being increasingly challenged. A regime in which repressive mechanisms against any dissident voices were encouraged. As the German press recalls, the Burgos Trials began in 1970 and the response to the Dictatorship was growing more visible at work, on the streets and in universities. The Dictatorship, through new laws such as the Law on Social Danger and Rehabilitation, tried to slow the dying moments of a system that was increasingly challenged from within and outside Spain. While it is true that Torremolinos was raided, the press of the time reminds us that it was not the only raid.

The fact that the Dictatorship was experiencing the death throes of a dying regime is made particularly clear in the case of homosexuals. While in other European countries, anti-homosexual legislation was evolving and such sexual practices were decriminalised, in Spain the laws became stricter. In 1970, the Vagrancy Act was replaced by the Law on Social Danger and Rehabilitation. The change in legislation was closely linked to the transformations taking place in the country: economic modernisation, the arrival of new ideas, tourism and, above all, the Regime's attempts to improve their image abroad (Terrasa, 2004; Baidez, 2007).

From the sixties onwards, the Franco regime not only had to deal with Spanish *deviants*, but also with those from abroad, as with the rise in tourism foreigners began to appear along the Spanish coast who «would pervert the local even more». Under this new law, the *deviants*, including homosexuals, were considered sick individuals who, as well as being imprisoned to remove them from society, also needed to be *rehabilitated*.

The change in the politics of the Franco regime with respect to homosexuality is yet one more factor that helps us to understand the Great Raid.

It is clear that, at the time of the raid, the somewhat elitist nature of Begoña Alley at the start had changed and what some local sectors considered a lack of control was beginning to emerge: non-compliance of local orders to close, prostitution drugs... In fact, we know that, prior to the raid, the neighbours had made complaints to the police in this respect.

Although homosexuality was not the only reason to explain the raid, it was an essential element. Some of the complaints from the neighbours refer to people who were «inverts» or «boasted about being inverts». Homosexuality was becoming more visible in a period of transition between the pre-gay period and the gay period (Guasch, 1995), and it is not surprising that this visibility was beginning to be seen as a problem by some of the local population and, of course, by the repressive government. The accounts collected in our paper not only demonstrate the importance of Torremolinos as a setting that attracted numerous homosexuals, but also, the place had become a reference whose negative influence from the official moral point of view was spreading to other areas. It is not surprising that it was in the spotlight.

At that time, Spain was already a power in tourism with an image and a reputation, and it was no longer so worried about the possible repercussions of this action. The model of tourism was changing: the times of an exclusive Torremolinos were no longer. If, at the start of the sixties, the Regime was interested in promoting an image of modernity in Europe, at the start of the seventies, this class of tourists brought bad press for the town that was becoming a popular destination for families. Little did it matter that a handful of modern, eccentric individuals and *deviants* would stop going when the

## BEGOÑA ALLEY IN THE LGBTI+ MEMORY

*Denuncia* 17/4 (DOC 5)

REPUBLICA DE ESPAÑA  
GOBIERNO DE MÁLAGA  
Secretaría General de Instrucción  
19 NOV 1971  
MÁLAGA, 17-11-71

EXCMO. SR.

~~D. Antonio [redacted]~~, mayor de edad, casado, vecino de Málaga, oficina en c/. Barroso, 1, 1º, como Secretario-Administrador de la Comunidad de Propietarios EDIFICIO BEGOÑA, de Torremolinos, a V.E.

EXPONE: 1ª) Que en el Apartamento nº 307, de dicho Edificio, se hospeda una mujer de raza y nacionalidad india, cuyo nombre y demás circunstancias desconocemos, por no ser la propietaria del apartamento, que todas las noches, escandaliza, a los demás vecinos y ocupantes del inmueble.

2ª) El apartamento en que se aloja, carece de luz eléctrica, y de todo mobiliario. Existen unas mantas en el suelo, en las que, en ocasiones, se la ve echada, con sus acompañantes; pues, unas veces, son más de un hombre, los que pernoctan simultáneamente, en el mismo apartamento. Trasciende a los demás vecinos, los gritos y peleas, frases ofensivas, palabras malsonantes, recriminaciones recíprocas, en que se imputan consumo de drogas, etc.-

3ª) La presente denuncia, la ratifican las personas que por su vinculación al Edificio Begoña, conocen los extremos que anteceden.

Son estas personas:

Dña. ~~María Victoria [redacted]~~, Presidente de la Comunidad de Propietarios.-  
Dn: ~~José Sánchez Martínez~~, Conserje de referido inmueble.-  
Dn: ~~[redacted]~~, Portero de noche de referido Edificio.-

Por lo expuesto, a V.E.

SUPLICA: Tenga por presentado este escrito, en nombre de la Comunidad de Propietarios que represento, y, en su virtud, acuerde dar las órdenes oportunas, a los agentes de su Autoridad, para que dicha persona, abandone Torremolinos.-

Málaga, 17 de Noviembre de 1.971.-  
M. [redacted] Pres. [redacted]

Five months after the Great Raid, the Begoña Building went from glamour and sophistication to absolute decay.



whole of the Spanish coast was being invaded by hordes of British or German families. Mass tourism and the financially elite's choice of other places such as Marbella revealed a change of cycle, the end of an era which became clear with the gradual decline of Begoña Alley.

The Great Raid was a tough setback for the sexual dissidents who had found a place where they could express themselves in Begoña Alley, but this did not mean the end of bars for *homosexuals* in the city. Although with less presence and visibility, some establishments remained in the area surrounding Begoña Alley, especially in La Nogalera. This is the case of *Pourquoi pas?*, a bar which remained open from 1968. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that things were never the same again.

There are many accounts that remember the Great Raid of Begoña Alley. Once such account is that of Ramón Cadenas. After completing his military service, this young man from Seville worked in Belgium, where he saved enough money to open a small bar in Begoña Alley, on 1 June 1971, shortly before the raid. He describes how the police positioned themselves with machine guns at both entrances to the Alley «and sent everyone to the police vans»:

A friend told me there was going to be trouble, and he told me to be careful, there was going to be big trouble. It was around eleven at night, and when I saw the police vans go past, not the usual ones, but big vans, one after the other, I thought oh oh, I told the waiter to close and I told the customers to stay inside, I shut the doors and windows, and we stayed inside, until it was over. That's how I got away (Documentary *La memoria homosexual*, 2020).

Antonio César Muñoz also remembers the Great Raid, although more vaguely:

I was very young, I'd liked my freedom since I'd been young, and we arrived at a place called Begoña Alley in Torremolinos, which exuded freedom. Not just one type of freedom, but freedom in general. On the night of the raid, I was very young and was at Piper's discotheque. Quite by chance, I was wearing a white shirt that day. One of the waiters was a friend of mine and he said to me, Antoñito, come here inside, they're taking everyone away, pretend you are a waiter. I stayed there and I was really quite young, and it's all a bit hazy. I haven't read it in the papers, I don't know why, but I was there.

As mentioned above, there were many foreigners among those arrested. Some of them told the press in their countries about the hell they had gone through. A German newspaper of that time, published the news with the headline «We were fenced in like cattle», stating, «Spain offers more: as well as sand, sea and sun, foreign tourists in Spain can also experience the cells of the medieval prisons. To find "vagrants", 300 tourists were imprisoned for a whole night». And it gives the statements of German tourist, Robert Furrerer, «Spain is dead for me».

### TORREMOLINOS AFTER THE GREAT RAID

There are some who claim that the persecution of the atmosphere of freedom in Torremolinos was the cause of the decadence of the town from the seventies. However, there are many reasons for this decline. The start of the decade was a turning point for tourism and for the homosexual collective, as it was a time of development for mass tourism, in search of sun and beaches. International tour operators controlled the market, cheap hotels ousted the exclusive establishments and the visitors demanded other forms of entertainment. Torremolinos was no longer a summer destination for the elite and became a destination for sun and beach tourism. On top of that, the tourism industry faced a major economic recession after 1973, the so-called *oil crisis*, which left its mark and took more than a decade to recover from.

Not only was the tourism model transformed, but there were also major changes in relation to homosexuality. Throughout the sixties in the United States, a movement formed which defended the rights of homosexuals, ending with the Stonewall riots in 1969. In Western Europe the repressive legislation against homosexuals gradually disappeared in the seventies, and an increasingly visible international homosexual community was slowly forming. New tourist destinations with a markedly gay character were appearing rapidly, not only in Spain, but also in other parts of the Mediterranean.

In spite of everything, Torremolinos continued to maintain the hallmark of a *place of freedom*, and was visited by Spanish and foreign homosexuals in search of entertainment. Gay magazines advertised it as one of the homosexual tourist centres in Europe. In this respect the account of Torremolinos given by the writer Antonio D. Olano in 1974, describing the decadence of Begoña Alley is quite significant. However, in his description of the entertainment venues in the city, he makes it clear that several bars for homosexuals still remained. Another interesting aspect in this description is that he does not use the terms *deviants* or *homosexual*, the terms used until the seventies. Instead, he refers to *gays*, and *gay bars*. His account shows how the times had changed and how homosexuality outside Spain was beginning to be seen differently, it was another era:

Now that the British music scene makes «gay» fashionable, now that David Bowie conceals his problem of masculinity and makes himself up like a London bus, now that some Biblical sins and Greek virtues are not only pardoned, but also understood and in some countries even praised, it is possible to speak of «gay power» with some calm, as much as can be expected (D. Olano, 1974: 286).

Olano makes it clear that the *gay bars* after the raids were no longer all concentrated together in the same area: «Gay bars, and non-gay bars were found everywhere. They are found in the street and rarely in particular estab-



ishments». It seems to be clear that the gay community had been born and arrived in Spain. Begoña Alley was now a thing of the past and a new reality was beginning.

The homosexual atmosphere continued in Torremolinos after 1971, as can be seen by the fact that the raids continued to take place, even during the Transition. In 1974, the High Courts published a report on delinquency in Malaga and highlighted the «immorality» of many tourists and the many cases of social danger in which «the majority of those arrested are young men, lost to homosexuality or drugs in the circles operating in Torremolinos, Marbella or Fuengirola» (ABC, 15 September 1974).

In 1980, the police raided several gay discotheques in Torremolinos (Saturno, Bronx...) and made many arrests. Just as in the past, there were some foreigners among those arrested who complained about the treatment received and the lack of freedom in Spain. This was not the last case of repression. The Dictatorship had come to an end, but the laws of the Franco regime remained in force.

## ANNEX I.

### FULL GLORY, DECADENCE AND THE COME-BACK OF BEGOÑA ALLEY.



Drawing of the signs lit up in Begoña Alley. Author: Roberto Torres Delgado





## ANNEX 1.

### FULL GLORY, DECADENCE AND THE COMEBACK OF BEGOÑA ALLEY.

*By José Luis Yagüe Ormad  
Chairman of the journalists of Malaga, Marbella,  
Campo de Gibraltar and the Costa del Sol  
Privileged witness to the golden age of Begoña Alley and to the Great Raid.*

**24** June 2021 is the 50th anniversary of the Great Raid of Torremolinos, an event that put an end to the splendour and halo of freedom and modernity that had thrived in the famous Begoña Alley. At that time, both in Seville and in Torremolinos important commemorative and reconciliatory ceremonies were held with the people who most featured in Begoña Alley, during its golden era and the great raid. Several observers from that era were present alongside the respective mayors, Juan Espadas and José Ortíz and other dignitaries including the Interior Minister, Fernando Grande-Marlaska, the Secretary of State for Security and international representatives from Stonewall Inn, New York and Pulse, Orlando.

The massive raid on Begoña Alley required the mobilisation of all the Forces of Public Order for Malaga and the province to arrest over 300 people, who were crammed in the small passageway through the Customs House. The National Police Headquarters were on the ground floor and the Offices of the Civil Government and the Governor's residence on the other floors. The event was witnessed live by the journalist who writes these words, José Luis Yagüe Ormad. That day, he was acting as Chief Editor of the "*SOL de España*" Newspaper, whose offices were on the first floor of the Alameda Principal in Malaga, while the management, edition, layout and printing were at that time in calle Valentuñana Alta, in Marbella.

Two young intrepid trainees who were doing their placement at the Offices located above Electromésticos Gallardo, on the right side of the Alameda, ran up the stairs to the office in quite a flap. "We've got the exclusive of the year, cried Luis. But the Armed Police (the grey forces) *have confiscated the tape recorders where we had recorded the interviews and eye-witness accounts, that we're going to try and reconstruct*", he shouted at José Luis Yagüe, who quickly encouraged then to write down everything after he had been given the details of the situation.



**José Luis Yagüe. Editor of the *Sol de España* Newspaper 1971**

This is how the “SOL de España” offered a full report on the events from eye-witnesses while other newspapers in Malaga were limited to a brief “*official note*” which tried to justify the Great Raid in line with the instructions of the regime. But the scandal was so great that European ministers took moves to demand that Franco immediately release their subjects, as in addition to tourists from various countries, among the detainees were children of ministers and renowned dignitaries in Europe. The foreign press reported the incident, giving it the extreme importance it deserved.

Today, 50 years later, I, José Luis Yagüe Ormad who also experienced the golden era of the nights of Torremolinos and the dazzling world of art, avant-garde and freedom enjoyed at Begoña Alley, describe my version of the events

## **TORREMOLINOS, WHERE THE TOURISM BOOM OF THE COSTA DEL SOL WAS BORN**

Between 1965 and 1970, Torremolinos was the jewel in the crown of Spanish tourism. Plaza Costa del Sol was buzzing with people out for a good time. The *El Jaleo* flamenco show offered an attractive billboard on a daily basis. To sit and enjoy a drink while watching the people go by at the legendary *Pedro's* was a special privilege. Flamenco was all the rage. Flamenco parties became famous at *El Mañana* followed by *Las Cuevas*, on Las Mercedes hill, a branch of *Las Brujas* in Madrid. The performance of *La Contrahecha* with the *Las Brujas* ballet was an event I'll never forget. The atmosphere was mostly around Plaza Costa del Sol. *Le Bilboquet* discotheque, which had an amazing

atmosphere, was in a basement there. A bit further up the hill towards the market, *El Dorado* was in its golden years.

Not long before, Frank Sinatra had been arrested by the Armed Police at the hotel *Pez Espada*, for insulting Franco. The *Pez Espada* was the greatest and its owners, jeweller Mato, from Madrid and the Basque builder Alberola, ran it with much love and attention. Next door, *el Remo* was visited by many celebrities and the beach club was a delight. Antonio, who never hid the fact that he was a homosexual, started the succession of monuments to the “pescaito” (fried fish) of La Carihuella, competing against Prudencio, whose nephew Félix Cabeza, was the most friendly and quick-witted waiter on the staff. So much so that a few years later he started *La Dorada* empire with the best fish restaurants in Seville, Madrid, Barcelona and even París.

The Spanish tourism boom started in Torremolinos. I met a party-goer, a successful Basque constructor in London, Jesús Tamborero. Tired of the Civil Guard shutting down the nightclub in his small housing estate at the mouth of the river Guadarranque, full of Brits who flew into Gibraltar, he took advantage of the fact that the Air Minister, General González Gallarza (one of the owners of Larios Gin) was allowing commercial flights from Great Britain, Belgium and France to land at the formerly closed air force base of El Rompedizo home to 50 German Heinkel-111 bombers, the famous “Pedros”. These were the first British charter flights to Torremolinos, and they were quickly joined by Sabena, the Belgian airline, the Dutch KLM and later Transavia who filled the hotel *Alay* for Miguel Sánchez, the manager at that time.

That was the tourism boom. And Torremolinos had got a good head start. Even Prince Alfonso of Hohenlohe, also chairman of the Developers’ Association of the Costa del Sol, who built the Torremolinos Conference Centre, had opened a branch of the Marbella Club at the King Club de la Nogalera, with an exquisite luxury restaurant next to a delightful nightclub that helped to create the atmosphere of the already famous nights of Torremolinos, almost opposite the recently opened *Tifanys*.

The atmosphere of the main square in Torremolinos extended as far as Bajondillo beach along San Miguel street, with its latest fashion stores, souvenir shops for the tourists and the *Asador de Frutos*, open until the early hours with its grilled steaks and the delights of this Castilian cuisine that made it famous. Frutos Herranz Sanz arrived from Castile and its first stall was at Los Alamos petrol station, just next to where its great restaurant was built. Frutos was the great complement to San Miguel street and especially to its most famous meeting point, Begoña Alley.

Begoña Alley was somewhat unique in the Spain of that time that wanted to open itself up to tourism and the freedom of entertainment and leisure, as



sought by Manuel Fraga with his mind open to the new Europe.

Begoña Alley was a unique and inconceivable place in the final years of the Franco regime. A bastion of coloured lights, the best music, bars with a variety of atmospheres, a diversity of people and music, lots of music.

Pia Beck dazzled everyone with her romantic jazz on the piano, while female couples held hands, caressing and kissing each other, unleashing their true feelings.

There was something different to be found at each of the venues with music, atmosphere and pleasure. Some of the bars, with intermediate floors, allowed male couples who liked each other to enjoy and satisfy their feelings. And there were others where heterosexuals could be with any girl they liked. There were no differences. Everyone was the same. Begoña Alley, with its bars and pubs, one after the other, was the paradise of freedom and enjoyment. It was not necessary to be gay or lesbian to enjoy the music, the atmosphere, a drink, and free company that was not necessarily the same sex. There were many couples who went to Begoña Alley for a drink, to listen to Pia Beck playing the piano, to see the famous quick-change artist "La Otxoa" or to revel in the intimacy of the coloured neon lights, the music and the atmosphere.

People from all over Europe could be seen in Begoña Alley, or in the *Bilboquet*, *El Dorado* or *El Jaleo*. The Swedish flocked to Torremolinos in search of fun. People came from Madrid on a weekend break, sometimes using "el Golfo", the Caravelle aircraft operated by Aviaco that flew from Madrid to Malaga, in the early hours, stopping in Seville and arriving in time to catch the atmosphere at Begoña Alley and in Torremolinos at its best moment, before dawn.

It was all about enjoyment. Champagne corks could be heard popping at all hours. Young people, homosexually inclined or not, yearned to spend a night in Torremolinos and Begoña Alley.

But lo and behold one day, the wife of the civil governor in Malaga Víctor Arroyo, received a visit from some of her friends from Madrid who wanted to see Torremolinos. She took them to the stores in La Nogalera and Calle San Miguel, filled with swimsuits and attractive different-coloured sarongs. Suddenly they wandered into Begoña Alley, attracted like dragonflies in the night by the coloured lights. They peeped into some of the bars and left scared away by what they "saw" there. Such freedom could not be allowed. The lady, as bold as you like, went straight to her husband's office, the Civil Governor of the province and the Regional Chief of Movement, Victor Arroyo. The things she must have said to make him suddenly "*by command and control*" mobilise all the available Public Order forces. And as there were not enough buses or cars to transport them, he mobilised the grey trucks with a

## BEGOÑA ALLEY IN THE LGTBI+ MEMORY

canvas awning belonging the Post Office with a PMM registration (Ministerial Vehicle) which would serve to “throw together” the hundreds of people who were arrested. There are some who believe that the governor had already been thinking of making a move on Begoña Alley, but it was the cries of the enraged Lady governor that led to the immediate decision to carry out the Great Raid in Begoña Alley.

I reckon between 400 and 500 people were arrested in the Great Raid on Begoña Alley. Some of those there describe it as being in complete Nazi style, typical of the Dictatorship that still reigned in Spain. There were no valid excuses, not even “*you don’t know who I am*”. The only answer was *Shut up and get in the truck!*

They closed the entrances to Begoña Alley so that no-one could escape. Everyone was thrown in the trucks. Those of us who witnessed it in first person remember the screams and chilling cries. And the police beating them into silence. There was no distinction: homosexuals, transsexuals, sympathisers, or simple customers, waiters or workers in Begoña Alley.

All the detainees were taken to the centre of Malaga. They closed the Police Station alleyway blocking it off with trucks and a double line of policemen, so that no-one could escape. Meanwhile they tried to book each one of the detainees. They recommended applying the Vagrants Act and the Social Danger and Rehabilitation Law to more than one of the detainees, especially focussing on any homosexuals who openly declared that they were gay. Sad and regrettable.

With the operation of the governor, Víctor Arroyo, Spain cast a black spot on its start as a powerful tourist destination and international repercussions were impressive.

Today, 50 years later, the LGTB collective would like to remember Begoña Alley as the first call to sexual freedom heard in Spain and also as the tremendous force of repression that tried to drown it out. It is closely linked to the sad history of Stonewall Inn, the gay bar in Greenwich Village, New York, which was subjected to a police raid in the early hours of 28 June 1969. This raid led to the riots that resulted in the growth of the movement in favour of LGTB rights in the United States, later endorsed by Barak Obama.

The group of volunteers from the Asociación Pasaje Begoña, with Jorge

M. Pérez García, the chair and representative, have been successful in their struggle to recover the good name of the Alley and what was the embryo of the LGTB movement in Spain, receiving significant recognition at Andalusian, national and international level.





The memory and recognition of all those people who came out, hundreds of whom were beaten for their sexual condition in that terrible monument to the most intransigent fascism in the form of the Great Raid, must not be forgotten as the blackest page in the history of tourism on the Costa del Sol.



**José Luis Yagüe today.**

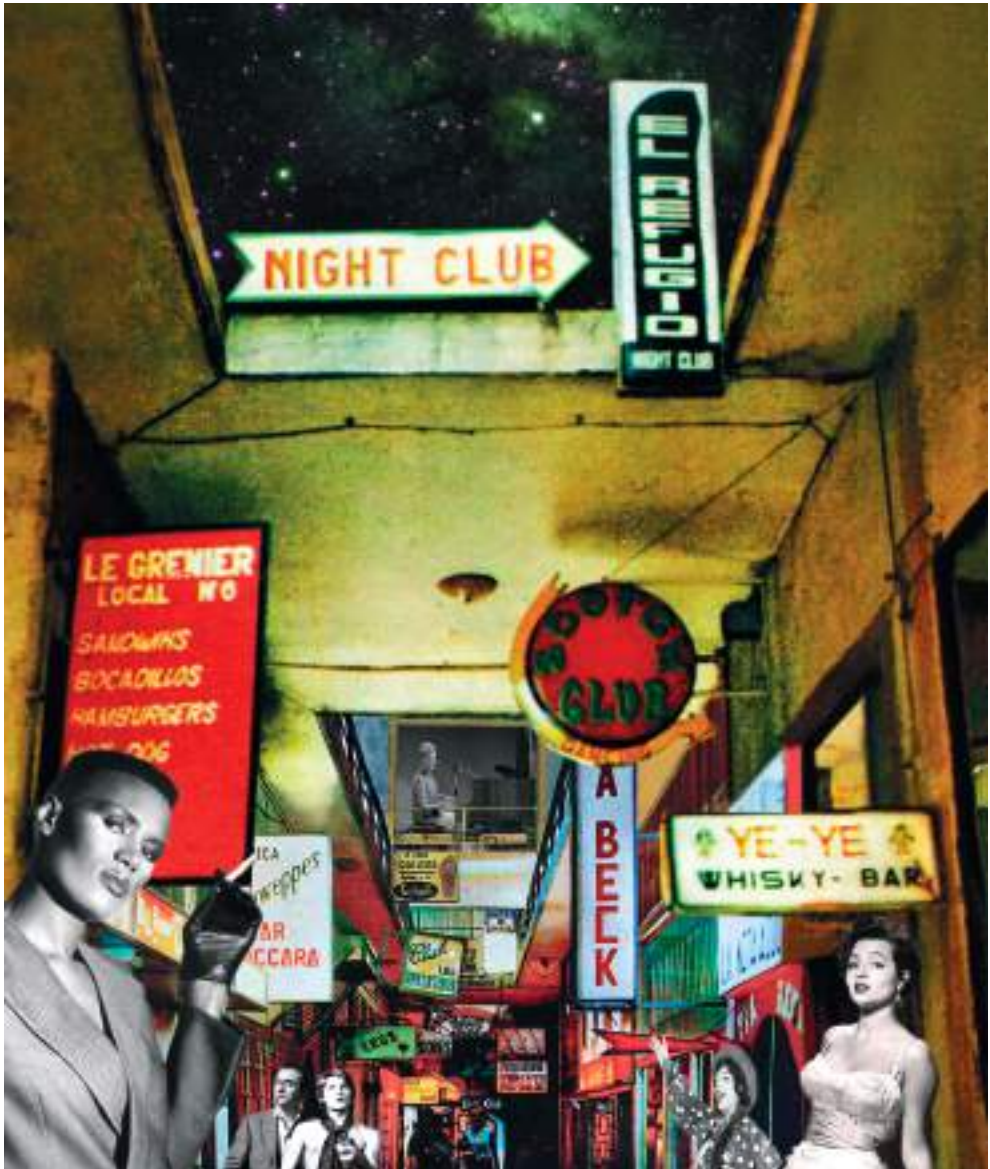
*José Luis Yagüe Ormad*

*Chairman of the journalists of Malaga*

*Marbella, Campo de Gibraltar and Costa del Sol*

## ANNEX 2.

### CUSTOMERS, VISITORS AND CELEBRITIES IN BEGOÑA ALLEY



Photomontage of customers of Begoña Alley. Author: Carlos Cañada Campoy.



## ANNEX 2.

### CUSTOMERS, VISITORS AND CELEBRITIES IN BEGOÑA ALLEY

This second Annex takes a look at some of the people who left their mark on Begoña Alley, whether as casual visitors, workers, customers, businessmen or performers at the small venues. These include the thousands of visitors and tourists, Spanish and foreign, from all corners of the world, who arrived in search of an escape from everyday life and, in many cases, to express their identity and escape from fears and prejudices. Begoña Alley was part of their lives and they all helped to shape the history of what is defined as an *island of freedom* in the context of the puritan Spain marked by the repression of the Franco regime. Thus, they made it possible for this tiny alleyway to become one of the greatest exponents of coexistence and respect for diversity. After all, the sense of the Alley came from those who made it possible, who enjoyed the nights of fun and also those who were unlucky enough to experience the brutality of the Great Raid.

It was very difficult to select the most relevant characters from Begoña Alley because everyone who went there has a story worthy of telling. Even so, we have chosen some significant examples that represent the diversity with the aim of bringing the meaning and visibility of this extraordinary place to light. Thus, we look back on some of their biographies and anecdotes referring to the Alley that remain in the memories of those who experienced, and continue to experience, the spirit of Begoña Alley.

**Amanda Lear** (Ho Chi Minh, 1939). A famous French singer, model, artist and writer who used to work as a *stripper* under the pseudonym of Peki d'Oslo. She performed several times at restaurant in the Hotel Pez Espada in Torremolinos and visited Bajondillo beach and Begoña Alley with her friend Ramón Cadenas. She modelled for renowned designers including Paco Rabanne, Yves Saint Laurent and Coco Chanel. She was a muse for Salvador Dalí, with whom she claimed to have a very special relation. There has always been speculation about her transsexual identity.

Ángel Fernández Larrinoa Setién (Bilbao, 1940). Owner of the legendary “Bar La Sirena” in Begoña Alley from January 1964 until the Great Raid in 1971 (even though he had recently renewed the annual operating licence which did not expire until April 1972). During the interview, Ángel describes many anecdotes about the tricks he had to perform to keep the bar open and to avoid fines, inspections and to renew his operating permits and music licences. To avoid suspicion, he had to register the bar in the name of a French woman to

whom he paid 200 pesetas a day. She won the friendship of the authorities to attain their objective. Ángel longingly recalls the legendary quick-change artist “La Otxoa” singing as she went down the stairs at “La Sirena”. After the Great Raid, Ángel lived in New York. From there he returned with new ideas to set up his new businesses far away from Torremolinos. In Bilbao he opened the “High”, the first LGBTI bar in the city. He went on to open up many more in the same town, including the “Sperma”, “Nervión” and “Santuario”. Today he owns several properties in Malaga and Torremolinos but he has never returned to Begoña Alley.



Ángel F. Larrinoa during the interview. Documentary collection of the Asociación Pasaje Begoña.

**Ángel López Peláez.** Regular at Begoña Alley, he was known as Alpelaé. Born in Adamuz, Cordoba, he moved to the Canary Isles where he could earn a living, and where he made his first incursions into the world of boxing. After a while, he hung up his boxing gloves, took out a camera and landed in Torremolinos. Thanks to his charisma, sense of humour and imagination, he became one of the most popular characters in the area. He was the first itinerant photographer to use a Polaroid camera (which he had brought from the Canary Isles). Dressed as a bullfighter, he went about with clowns and even some monkeys, tiger cubs and lions that he placed in the arms of the tourists while snapping away. No-one rejected his photos. He also added a touch of humour, using ventriloquism at spontaneous performances such as the popular «little mouse, will you marry me?», capturing local and foreign audiences.

**Antonio Gala** (Brazatortas, Ciudad Real, 1930). Playwright, novelist, poet and essayist. He was a frequent visitor to Begoña Alley in the 60s with his friend, the poet from Cordoba who lived in Torremolinos, Pablo García Baena. His literary discussions were well-known at the different venues in Begoña Alley. He won the Planeta award with his first novel ‘El manuscrito carmesí’. This was followed by many other novels: ‘La pasión turca’, ‘Más allá del jardín’, ‘La regla de tres’, ‘Las afueras de Dios’, ‘El imposible olvido’, ‘Los invitados al jardín’, ‘El dueño de la herida’. ‘El pedestal de las estatuas’. Some of his more famous work was adapted to the cinema. He received the National Literature Award, the National Calderón de la Barca Award, the City of Barcelona Award, the Foro Teatral Award, the Spectator and Critics’ Award and the Quijote de Oro Award among others.

In 2002 he started the Antonio Gala Foundation in Cordoba to support young artists.





**Coccinelle** (París, 1931 - Marseilles, 2006). She was a famous actress, *vedette* and transsexual French singer. In 1953, she emerged under the name of Coccinelle ('ladybird' in Spanish) and made her début as a chorus girl and *vedette* in the hall of *female impersonators* and *drag queens* Chez Madame Arthur, where she imitated the French actress Danielle Darrieux. Occasionally she also worked at the Paris nightclub of Le Carrousel, where she mixed with celebrities such as April Ashley and Bambi, other well-known trans *vedettes*. Marilyn Monroe is said to have been her inspiration and female ideal. In her home country, she founded the Dévenir Femme association to help those people wishing to change gender. She went to Torremolinos to take part in the film *Días de viejo color*, made by the Spanish film director Pablo Olea, and on several occasions she performed at Le Fiacre nightclub, according to accounts from the time.

**Doris Alza.** A trans female and LGTBI activist from la Sierra de Cádiz. Aged barely twenty-two, she moved to Torremolinos, where she lived for almost a year, finding work at the hotel Riviera. The atmosphere of freedom in Torremolinos in general and of Begoña Alley in particular made her very happy at that time. The first time Doris visited Begoña Alley she went in barefoot, «as Brigitte Bardot». «I was very modern and *hippie*», she says in her memoirs. She remembers her nights at the venues in this emblematic alley with affection, places such as the Ye-Ye bar, a club with live music where los Brincos and los Rebeldes could be seen. In her usual humorous manner, Doris Alza describes how, when the song *Los chicos con las chicas* (boys with girls) by Los Bravos was playing, the whole place would sing along with the words «boys must be with boys».



Doris Alza. Courtesy of Doris Alza.



**Elmyr de Hory** (Budapest, 1906 - Ibiza, 1976). He was born Hoffmann El-emér. He was a famous artist and the charming Hungarian forger featured in the film by Orson Welles, and sold more than a thousand forgeries in his lifetime. His forgeries became famous after Clifford Irving wrote a book about him and he subsequently appeared in the documentary *F for Fake*, by Orson Welles. At the end of the seventies, forced to escape from Ibiza, he decided to search for a new paradise and settled on the Costa del Sol. That was when he became a frequent visitor to Begoña Alley. The Great Raid of Begoña Alley of 1971 brought about his early return to Ibiza.

**Esmeralda de Sevilla** (Seville, 1933-2021). Alfonso Gamero Cruces flew his homosexuality on a flag: "I'm queer, with a capital q". She will always be remembered as La Esmeralda de Sevilla. A unique and ground-breaking artiste who never failed to move her audience, the herald of sexual liberties even though she had lived through one of the worst points of the Franco regime's repression. Assistant and faithful friend of Marifé de Triana with whom she shared her love for Torremolinos. She was a regular customer in the golden era of Begoña Alley where her "dirty" jokes in which she was the star are still remembered. Those who knew her called her irreverent, bold, provocative, unique and, above all, brave in spite of having to live through the tough times of the Francoist repression. She was the owner of one of the most famous stands at the Fair of Seville.

**Francisco Aparicio Díaz** (Jerez de la Frontera, 1915-Torremolinos, 1997). A highly educated and popular parish priest. Author and translator of several religious publications. He arrived in Torremolinos in 1961 to take charge of San Miguel Church. Many accounts claim that it was thanks to him that the very existence of Begoña Alley was possible and that the place became the greatest measure of fun, visibility and affective-sexual freedom. He allowed what many high-minded priests of the time would never have allowed because his priority was not to maintain the strict morals imposed by the church. Instead, he was more concerned about other social causes. Francisco Aparicio made it possible to construct 250 houses in the neighbourhood known as the "Los Pisos del Cura" (The Priest's Houses) in the area of El Calvario de Torremolinos.

**Fook Hing Lam Chiu.** Better known as Pablito in Torremolinos. Originally from Hong Kong, he has two daughters who were born in Torremolinos, Sonia and Mari Carmen. He was the owner of the Chinese restaurant, Oriental, in Begoña Alley. Pablito was much loved for his kindness and charm in the streets of Torremolinos. His long and varied list of customers included the greatest *celebrities* of the time. To attract people into the restaurant, Pablito stationed his ancient grandparents at the door of the restaurant dressed in traditional Mandarin style. His business grew so much that in 1967 he moved to larger premises in Calle Antonio Girón in Torremolinos, calling the restau-



rant Cantón. Subsequently, and under the same name, he set up nearby in Plaza de la Gamba Alegre.

**Grace Jones** (Spanish Town, 1948). Singer, composer, super model, producer and actress from Jamaica. She began her career as a model in New York and later moved to Paris, where she worked with names such as Yves Saint Laurent and Kenzo, appearing on the covers of prestigious fashion magazines including *Elle* and *Vogue*. She became world-famous thanks to her characteristic androgynous appearance. For one season, she worked as a go-go dancer at Le Fiacre nightclub in Begoña Alley.

**Guelfo Tamellini.** He revolutionised the nightlife of Torremolinos with the opening of Piper's discotheque in the basements of Begoña Alley. This legendary venue with an area of 500 m2 opened its doors in October 1967 and continued to grow until reaching 2000 m2, beating records of all kinds: volume of drinks sold, capacity, number of rooms, etc. Many singers of the time launched their records at Piper's and even Madonna visited some years later. Few venues like this marked so many people so much. For years, it was a hallmark for the nights of entertainment on the Costa del Sol and it has appeared in several novels based in Torremolinos.

**Helmut Berger** (Bad Ischl, 1944). This Austrian actor, who became partner to Luchino Visconti and starred in many of his films, was a customer of Begoña Alley in his youth. His favourite venue was La Boquilla. Among the regulars at Begoña Alley he was known as *la Semáforo* (the traffic light) thanks to his habit of leaning against a nearby traffic light while waiting for his friends. During his years of fame in the film world, *Vogue* magazine declared him «the most handsome man in the world».

**John Lennon** (Liverpool, 1940 - New York, 1980) and **Brian S. Epstein** (Liverpool, 1934 - London, 1967). John Lennon and the manager of The Beatles, Brian S. Epstein, visited Torremolinos in 1963. Lennon himself recalls this in his memoirs, where he addresses the matter of being gay: «I went on holiday



**Pablito with one of his customers at his Chinese restaurant. Photo courtesy of Fook Hing Lam Chiu.**



to Spain with Brian Epstein, where the rumours went around that he and I were having a love affair. Well, it was almost a love affair, but not quite. It was never consummated. But it was a pretty intense relationship. It was my first experience with a homosexual that I was conscious was homosexual... We used to sit in a cafe in Torremolinos looking at all the boys and I'd say 'Do you like that one, do you like this one? I was rather enjoying the experience, thinking like a writer all the time: "I am experiencing this, you know"». They both liked to sit on the first floor of Begoña Alley in a plastic chair next to the handrail and watch the boys passing by. Recently, John Lennon's widow, Yoko Ono, has responded to the rumours about the singer's sexuality and recognised his bisexuality, and the love-affection relationship between her husband and his manager. Brian Epstein visited Begoña Alley on several occasions until his death in 1967.



La Otxoa. Cover of one of his albums.

**José Antonio Niefra** (Bilbao, 1947). Better known as la Otxoa, he was considered the first great transvestite in Spain. Witty singer and composer, he wrote, among many other hits, the LGBTI anthem *Libérate*. Historic LGBTI activist, he has told very varied tales of sexual diversity through his songs, almost all of which feature gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transsexuals. La Otxoa has always defended that LGBTI visibility, even at the height of the Dictatorship, was the best form of protest. He worked in La Sirena bar (which



**Manolita Chen, la Petróleo and la Salvaora. Courtesy of Manuela Saborido.**

belonged to another Basque, Ángel Larrinoa) and at the Apollo, where he met artists such as Massiel, Mikaela and el Dúo Dinámico. He was also a frequent visitor to others including Le Fiacre, where Grace Jones worked as a go-go dancer, or el Jaleo, with the dancer Mariquilla. He remembers Torremolinos and Begoña Alley «like a fairy tale, the people, the shops, the atmosphere, a place of freedom and healthy entertainment, and lots of flirting».

**José Eduardo Gómez and Salvador Rodríguez.** Known artistically as la Petróleo and la Salvaora, respectively, these two transsexual women (remember that the term transsexual was first used in the nineties and until then the word *transvestite* was used incorrectly). The story of la Salvaora and la Petróleo is very endearing. Lifelong friends and an artistic couple. At the height of the sixties, they were named queens of the Carnival of Cadiz. They met when they were thirteen and nineteen years old. They used to go to Torremolinos and Begoña Alley with the legendary Manolita Chen, la Tanque and la Marifé. Later they accompanied Lola Flores at her concerts around the world. In the local districts of Cádiz, la Petróleo and la Salvaora featured in many carnival songs. They are much loved and respected all over Andalusia.

**José Lacuey Pueyo** (Sos del Rey Católico, 1935 - Torremolinos, 2004). Pepe Lacuey, as he was more popularly known, was a reference in Torremolinos life. He studied art, music, the guitar and singing in Barcelona. After living in Paris and other European cities, he settled in Torremolinos in 1964. A multi-talented man, Pepe was also an artist, sculptor, musician and poet. He opened El Trobador bar in Begoña Alley, allowing him to meet most of the celebrities of the golden era of Torremolinos and in particular of this alley. Pepe Lacuey was much loved in this town.





**Manolita Chen.** Courtesy of Manuela Saborido.

**Manuela Saborido Muñoz, Manolita Chen** (Arcos de la Frontera, 1943). A trans woman who had felt she was a girl since she was four years old and who had to deal with discrimination, abuse and the rejection of her family and friends. Her life is filled with sweet and sour moments. In the mid-sixties, Manolita arrived in Torremolinos and was dazzled by the neon lights and the atmosphere of freedom in Begoña Alley. There she met other people like herself, different and fascinating: la Petróleo, la Salvaora, la Tanque, Juanita la Burra... In Torremolinos she started working at El Gato Viudo, which she remembers fondly as it was where she could finally be herself. She was the first trans woman in Spain to have her real identity on her ID and she also became the first transsexual mother in Spain, adopting five children with severe disabilities. In one of her interviews she describes how she married by the trans ritual. Renowned in show business she was a famous *vedette* in Spain and abroad. She also became a successful businesswoman in Arcos de la Frontera.

**María de los Ángeles Félix Santamaría Espinosa, Massiel** (Madrid, 1947). A Spanish singer, actress and composer. In 1968, at the age of twenty-one, she won the Eurovision Song Contest at the Royal Albert Hall in London with her song *La, la, la*, written by el Dúo Dinámico. Her win came as a huge surprise, as she beat the favourite, the British singer Cliff Richard with his song *Congratulations*. From then on, she became established as a singer on the national and international sphere, with well-known songs including *Deja la flor*, *Lady Veneno*, *Brindaremos por él*, *Mirlos, molinos y sol*, *Tiempos difíciles*, *El Noa Noa*, *Eres*, *Acordeón* or *El amor*. Massiel was also one of the famous customers in Begoña Alley, particularly in 1967 thanks to her par-

ticipation in the shooting of the film by Pedro Olea *Días de viejo color*, set in Torremolinos and which includes numerous scenes shot at venues in this emblematic alley.

**Marie-Juliette Gréco** (Montpellier, 1927). A French actress and singer nicknamed by the press as «the muse of the existentialists». She became a regular at the cafés, where she mingled with celebrities including Miles Davis and Jean Cocteau. One of the best-known voices of French singing and her hits include *Si tu t'imagines* and *Les feuilles mortes*. Her main films are *The Roots of Heaven* and *The Sun Also Rises*. She visited Costa del Sol as tourism was taking off. She was a customer of Begoña Alley and performed on several nights at Le Fiacre nightclub, the French establishment that would later be

taken over by Piper's Discotheque. Sartre said that the singer had «Millions of possible poems» in her throat. Juliette Gréco held the mike and sang the words of Gainsbourg and avant-garde poems.

**Micaela Rodríguez Cuesta** (Seville, 1936 - Madrid, 1991). Better known by her stage name of Mikaela, she was a singer of *copla* and a Spanish actress. She recorded her first record in 1956 and became a radio hit of the time, which launched her career with secondary roles in films and leading roles in plays and musicals. She received a contract to travel to Mexico, where she performed in plays, films and on television. From then on, she appeared in a number of international television shows, and in 1964 recorded one of her greatest hits: *El toro y la luna*. Throughout her career, she mixed with literary figures of the time and performed roles and songs signed by intellectual poets. She was a regular and popular customer in Begoña Alley, where she performed on several occasions.

**Miguel de Bonanza, la Miguela.** A popular quick-charge artist and defender of the rights of the LGTBI col-



Drawing of Miguel de Bonanza, la Miguela.  
Author: Vito Montolio.

lective. He was the owner of a legendary bar in Benalmádena, Casa Miguel, visited by singers, actors, bullfighters and many celebrities at the end of the sixties. Those who knew him highlight his extraordinary artistic and human abilities and, above all, his sense of humour. Some remember how, during one of the regular police raids on Torremolinos (especially in Begoña Alley) during the Franco regime, they saw Miguela suddenly running towards the police van and, on asking him where he was going, he replied, «This time I want to get a seat».

**Paco Prieto.** This resident of Torremolinos smiles at the time when Begoña Alley was referred to as «Sodom and Gomorrah». At an early age, he started to work in the branch office of the Banco Vizcaya opposite the alleyway in Plaza Costa del Sol and he witnessed the events of those years. He describes how many of the owners and customers of Begoña Alley held accounts at his branch. Paco Prieto witnessed how the bars and nightclubs of the famous alley were venues where love between men, between women or between men and women was accepted. «It was a modern place, free and filled with life. Everything was possible. It was not only for gays», recalls this privileged witness of the golden era of Begoña Alley, and of its subsequent decline and abandonment.



**Pia Beck with her partner Marga Samsonowski.** Courtesy of Gino Felleman.

**Pedro Olea** (Bilbao, 1938). Director, producer and screenwriter. His début as a film director was with the film *Días de viejo color*, filmed in 1967 in Torremolinos. The film starred Luis Eduardo Aute, Coccinelle and Massiel among others. Many of the scenes in this film were shot at different venues in Begoña Alley. Pedro Olea has fantastic memories of the shoot in Torremolinos and, in particular, of this emblematic alley.

**Pia Beck** (The Hague, 1925 - Torremolinos, 2009). A recognised Dutch pianist of international fame, a transgressive performer who openly recognised she was a lesbian. Together with her partner, Marga Samsonowski, and their three children, Pia Beck settled in Costa del Sol in 1965 and opened her own jazz club in Begoña Alley, the famous Blue Note, which became one of the most

select venues in the alleyway. Incidentally, she played the grand piano while she served at the bar. Pia Beck became popular in Torremolinos, where she used to go out in her convertible with her family. She sponsored a concert in Miami to raise funds against homophobia and against the thesis of the homophobic American singer, Anita Bryant. She also had a radio programme and wrote travel guides particularly directed at the Dutch population. In fact, she became a great ambassador for Costa del Sol in the Netherlands. A large part of her legacy can be found in the city council of The Hague, and a bridge in Amsterdam bears her name.

**Rafael Neville** (Malaga, 1926 - Sardinia, 1996). 5th Count of Berlanga de Duero, son of Edgar Neville and Ángeles Rubio Argüelles and grandson of Carlota Alessandri, he was of those responsible for bringing the great celebrities of the time to the coast of Malaga and for promoting Torremolinos and Begoña Alley as a diverse place and LGTBI reference. He was transgressive with a great personality and ingenious at inventing the most ridiculous things. There was the time he dressed another character from the zone, el Titi, as a woman and introduced her to everyone as a member of the nobility, recounts the count of Casa Padilla.

Rafael Neville was an endearing person who strongly displayed his desire to live and defined himself as the greatest exponent of the «educated queer»: he spoke several languages, he was good at public relations and a top designer. He received warning that the civil governor was «fed up to the hilt» of the spread of so many «queers» in Torremolinos and was preparing to take strong measures or throw them all into the sea. On hearing this, Rafael exclaimed, «There's no way we'll all fit». His life is full of other amusing anecdotes, such as one told by Francisco Lancha: his mother and members of the family were received by the Pope at the Vatican. His Holiness asked Rafael Neville about his profession to which he replied, to the astonishment of his mother, that he was an engineer. As soon as the visit was over, his mother told him off for lying. He replied, «What did you want me to say? That I'm a queer in Torremolinos?»

He disagreed with the retrograde ideas of the Franco regime with respect to morality. He was the author of several letters refuting that «sexual dissidents and long-haired» tourists were dangerous. He clashed with several leading figures, including the maximum authority of the Franco regime in the province: the civil governor of Malaga, a top representative of the central Government with full powers and with whom he had a curious tug-of-war. Rafael Neville sent an invitation to the governor with drastic consequences:

«Rafael Neville Rubio Argüelles, Count of Berlanga del Duero and, by the grace of God, queer, has the honour of inviting you to a party at his house». As expected, the governor did not make an appearance at the party. However,





he replied with the immediate expulsion of Rafael Neville from the province of Malaga. Rafael Neville was forced to leave his home in Malaga and his beloved Torremolinos to seek refuge in Sardinia (Italy). There, he developed his skill as an urban developer and created, with Paolo Riccardi, Porto Rafael. In the mid-sixties, he moved to Gran Canaria, specifically to the district of Mogán, where he again employed his skills in the construction of what is known today as Puerto de Mogán. His special style of architecture and design led to this area becoming known as the Venice of the Canary Isles. Neville died far from Torremolinos in 1996 in Porto Rafael.

**Ramón Cadenas** (Seville, 1945). He was a privileged witness to the golden era of Begoña Alley and to the Great Raid of 1971. He was one of the many people who arrived in Torremolinos wishing to live their sexual orientation in freedom. Born in Seville, he settled in Torremolinos at a young age, intro-



**Ramón Cadenas** in one of the venues in Begoña Alley. Courtesy of Ramón Cadenas.

duced by Brian Epstein (manager of the Beatles), who he had met at the Seville Fair. Ramón worked as a waiter in different bars, performed as a go-go dancer and mixed with many celebrities from the worlds of film, culture, art and politics. He became a reference for the nightlife in the diverse atmosphere of this emblematic place. He became the owner of one of the venues in Begoña Alley, the Gogó bar. He opened his business just days before the Great Raid, as a result of which he only stayed open for twenty-one days. After the raid he received serious threats which prevented him from resuming business and he was forced to leave Torremolinos for a time. Cadenas categorically claims that no-where in the world was there such a wonderful place for the LGTBI collective as Begoña Alley in Torremolinos, and he knows what he is talking about, as he had the chance to travel to many countries.



**Román Troncoso Rueda “El Titi”** (Chiclana, 1933-Torremolinos, 2004). A much-loved character in Torremolinos, he features in a thousand and one delightful tales from the start of the tourism boom in Torremolinos. Although a deaf-mute, he was able to communicate perfectly with locals and visitors. He delighted tourists in Plaza Costa del Sol in the 60s and made himself available to them. He started by carrying luggage and running errands for visitors to Torremolinos. Very obliging, and honest, el Titi would often be seen running towards the shop owned by María Contreras “Mariquita la tendera” (one of the first grocers’ open in the 60s), buying newspapers at Pedro Navarro’s kiosk (the first place to sell international newspapers) or accompanying wealthy families and celebrities of the time to the different venues in Begoña Alley.

When running errands, “El Titi” was always in a hurry and he made the sound of a motorbike. Incidentally, he was so well-loved that, on one occasion, the local police in Torremolinos stopped him and pretended to fine him for “speeding”. He died in Torremolinos at the age of 71.

**Sandra Almodóvar.** Vedette and actress. This is another person who experienced the golden era of Begoña Alley. Like so many others, Sandra Almodóvar arrived in Torremolinos in search of freedom, the chance to be herself without fear and to enjoy her desire to be a woman. Her sexual condition as a trans woman had caused her great problems since her childhood and was the reason why she finally decided to run away from her home town of Melilla in order to survive. Sandra was the victim of many raids, and was even imprisoned for six months in Badajoz. After a season living in Madrid, she was discovered by the film director, Pedro



**Sandra Almodóvar.** Courtesy of Manuela Saborido.



**Sara Montiel surrounded by admirers in Begoña Alley. Courtesy of Ramón Cadenas.**

Almodóvar, for whom she worked in one of his films, *Bad Education*, and from where she got her stage name. She is famous for her imitations of the great Sara Montiel. Today she is a great artiste who combines the *vedette* and quick-change artiste shows with her daily life in Torremolinos, surrounded by people who love her and for whom she always has a joke and a smile.

**Sara Montiel** (Campo de Criptana, 1928 - Madrid, 2013). A film actress, singer and Spanish film producer, she was considered the most beautiful face in Spanish cinema. She also obtained Mexican citizenship in 1951. Her fame reached Mexico, Cuba and the United States. After her adventures in America, back in Spain, she consolidated her status as an international star with the films *El último cuplé* and *La violetera*, which revealed her particular style as a singer. Both films were box-office successes. She became a commercially successful actress, especially in the 1950s and 1960s, and took part in more than fifty films. She retired from the film industry in 1974, but continued as a musician until the end. She visited Begoña Alley several times when she was a confirmed film star. Several graphical accounts show this.

**Serafín Fernández Rodríguez** (Madrid, 1938). A privileged witness to the golden age of Begoña Alley. In his account, Serafín gives a passionate and detailed description of the climate of freedom of Torremolinos and in Begoña Alley during the 60s. Chance prevented him from being arrested during the Great Raid as only minutes before he had met a German boy and they had left Begoña Alley. On their return they found a Dantesque scene: everything

## BEGOÑA ALLEY IN THE LGBTI+ MEMORY

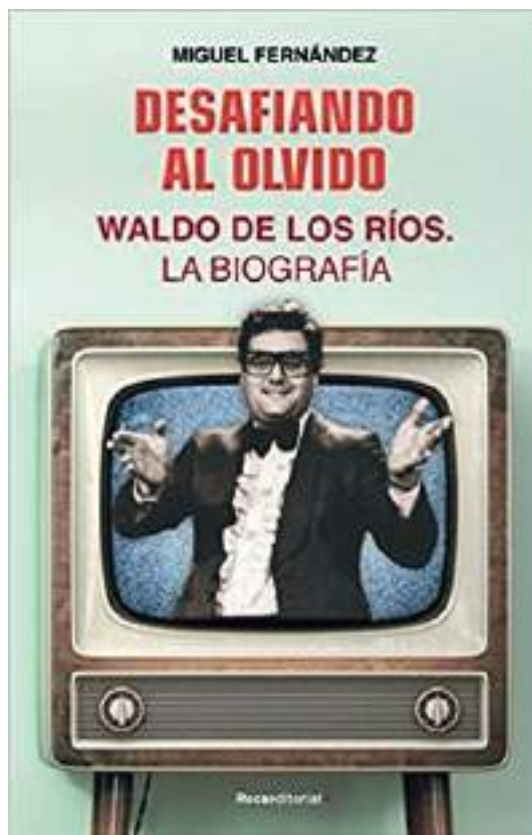


**Serafín Fernández at Bajondillo beach. The 60s. Photograph courtesy of Serafín Fernández.**

empty, bars closed, fear and uncertainty. After the Great Raid, he emigrated to Germany where he still lives. He has lived his life so intensely and so passionately that, together with his husband, he starred in a documentary called “Fernández Pratsch” in which they relate their relentless search for freedom. The documentary has been screened in several countries and received numerous awards. Every year Serafín returns to Torremolinos and takes the opportunity to recall and relive those fascinating years.

**Waldo de los Ríos** (Buenos Aires, 1934 - Madrid, 1977). The birth name of this internationally renowned Argentinian pianist, composer, arranger and orchestra conductor was Osvaldo Nicolás Ferraro. In 1962 he moved to Spain. He is remembered for his ability to transform well-known pieces of classical music into pop music. In 1970, De los Ríos had already reached the top of the charts in Europe and America with *Ode to Joy* from *Beethoven's ninth symphony*, which he arranged and conducted for the singer Miguel Ríos. Waldo always kept his homosexuality hidden; in fact, he married the actress and writer Isabel Pisano. In the summer of 1966, he spent three months in Torremolinos, where he conducted the orchestra at the Pez Espada hotel and frequently visited Begoña Alley.

**Wim Kuipers** (Amsterdam, 1941). He is registered with the consulate of the Netherlands as being the Dutchman to have lived the longest in the province of Málaga. He discovered Torremolinos and the Costa del Sol in the early sixties. He was a privileged witness to the early days of Begoña Alley as a par-



**Miguel Fernández's work takes us to the biography of a musician who defined an era.**

adigm of national and international tourism. Kuipers trained in the hotel and catering trade in Holland and in Switzerland, and his first professional destinations included the deputy management of the Al-Andalus Hotel in Torremolinos. He was the owner of the Florida restaurant, from where he embarked on the continuous promotion of Torremolinos and the Costa del Sol by sending more than 500 000 postcards to customers and friends from all over the world over the years. Florida restaurant was the first in Torremolinos to have a sliding glass-roofed terrace and heating. It also used the first known light source in the town. Kuipers was also successful in the travel agency sector and, later on, in the property business with his agency WIMA. A square in the Almeria town of El Ejido is named after him. Wim

Kuipers was a regular customer of Begoña Alley and remembers his experiences in this emblematic alley with affection.

**Other people who passed by the venues in Begoña Alley:** Addy Ventura and Lita Alba, great vedettes from Spanish magazines, Alain Delon, internationally famous French film actor; Bibiana Fernández, trans woman, actress and collaborator on a number of TV programmes, Bibiana Montoya, trans woman and Spanish activist; Camarón de la Isla, famous flamenco singer who is said to have performed in the Alley, together with a flamenco group, at the start of his career; Diego Quiroga, owner of El Refugio bar; Dúo Dinámico, Spanish singers and composers; the Rothschild Family, one of the most influential families of bankers and financiers in the world; Graham Greene, renowned British writer, scriptwriter and literary critic; Gino Michael Felleman, son of Pia Beck and Marga Samsonovski; Gisia Paradís, famous Spanish actress from the sixties; Harold Norse, American writer from the beat generation and known defender of LGBTBI civil rights; Juanita la Burra, la Marifé and la Tanque, three well-known trans women who were regulars in Begoña Alley;

## BEGOÑA ALLEY IN THE LGTBI+ MEMORY

Luciana Paluzzi, an Italian actress friend of Helmut Berger; María Dolores Pradera, an internationally famous Spanish singer; María Jiménez, a famous Spanish singer; Marga Samsonowski, wife of the famous Jazz pianist Pia Beck; Mariquilla, famous dancer from the golden era of Begoña Alley; Marujita Díaz, renowned *copla* singer and Spanish actress; Paco España, Spanish actor and popular quick-change artist; Paul Bowles, renowned American writer, composer and traveller; Pedro Moreno Moreno, known as Violeta la Burra, pioneer of quick-change performers in Spain; Rafael Herrera and Enrique Ollero, known as Herrera and Ollero, a pair of Spanish haute couture designers; Raphael, internationally renowned Spanish singer and actor; Salomé, Spanish singer and winner of the Eurovision contest in 1969, etc. The list would be never-ending but we end by naming anonymous people including Antonio Cañete, Antonio López, Antonio Molina, Diego Carrasco, Juan Antonio Moreno, Juan Martín, Manuel Carrasco, Manuel Cortés, Manuel Ruiz, Mariquilla, Paco Castillo, Paco Parrondo and Tomás Chacopino.

In recognition of their struggle in favour of freedom and diversity, in 2021 some of the people featuring in Begoña Alley and who appear in this annex were awarded the Medal of Honour of the City of Torremolinos, the maximum institutional recognition awarded by the town.

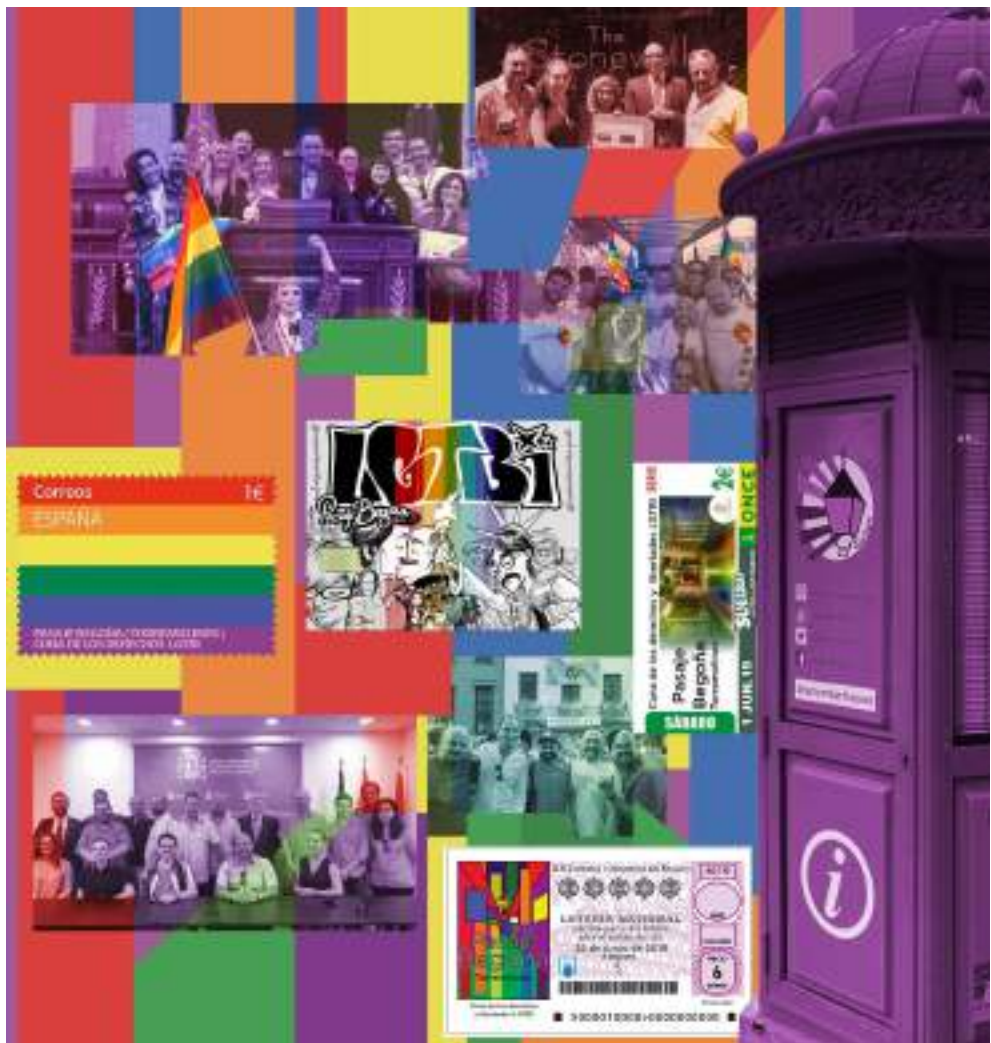






## 2018-2023. FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ASOCIACIÓN PASAJE BEGOÑA. BEGOÑA ALLEY.

*Five years given to discovering, protecting and spreading  
the Historic LGBTI memory.*



**Image of some of the achievements of the Asociación Pasaje Begoña.  
Author: Roberto Torres Delgado**



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### A.- ASOCIACIÓN PASAJE BEGOÑA 2018-2023

#### Five years discovering, protecting and spreading the LGTBI memory

The Asociación Pasaje Begoña was founded on 20 January 2018.

#### Mission

To discover, protect and spread the Historic LGTBI Memory so that the LGBTI collective can take its place in the world with dignity.

#### Vision

LGTBI visibility in all areas of daily life. To raise awareness about the past struggles of LGTBI people and the challenges which are still pending in order to obtain effective equality.

#### Values

That all individuals are equal in dignity and rights, with the same support and opportunities. Respect for sexual, affective, bodily and/or family diversity, LGTBI visibility, research, transparency, quality, innovation and social commitment to the LGTBI collective. To investigate and publicise, through culture, the huge intangible heritage left to us by past generations of LGTBI people.

In the past five years, more than 160 projects have been completed. All of these are linked to the recovery of the LGTBI Memory through Research, Culture and LGTBI Visibility. In addition, the association seeks to restore the splendour of the sixties to Begoña Alley as an example of coexistence and respect for diversity.



Author of the image: Juan Antonio Fra Medina. Asociación Pasaje Begoña.



The plan of action approved by the General Assembly of the association focusses on the following six strategic lines: SCIENTIFIC PROJECTION. HISTORICAL PROJECTION. EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL PROJECTION. RECOVERY OF PUBLIC USE SPACE. INSTITUTIONAL COOPERATION AND PROMOTION AND SOCIAL IMPACT AND RECOGNITION.

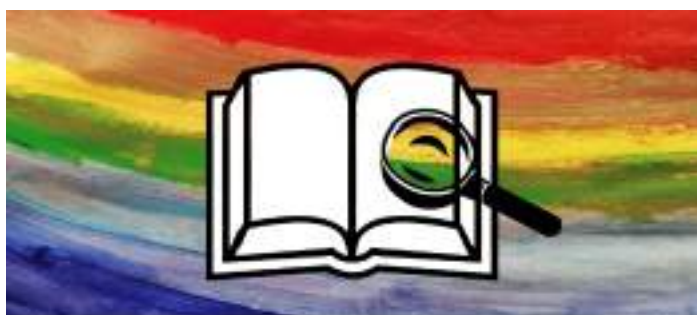
The most important milestones of each of the strategic lines are as follows:

## B.- SCIENTIFIC PROJECTION.

- **Collaboration Agreements:** More than 10 collaboration agreements signed with different universities, public administrations and scientific institutions for research in LGTBI Memory.
- **Research.** Participation in more than 15 studies, TFG, TFM and research into LGTBI Memory and sexual-affective diversity.
- **Scientific papers.** Participation in 12 scientific papers about Begoña Alley and other Places of Historic Memory published in journals and publishers of international renown.
- **Scientific events:** Collaboration at 10 scientific Seminars, Congresses and Symposiums linked to the LGTBI Memory.
- **Chair of Diversity.** The constitution of the Chair of Diversity is currently underway at Pablo de Olavide University. This will bring together numerous academic and activist initiatives that we are working on.
- **General Archives of Andalusia.** An application has been submitted through the Manolita Chen Foundation to sign a collaboration and deposit agreement, in the General Archives of Andalusia, for all the historic LGTBI material that has been recovered over the years: photos, documents, publications, etc. This material is available to general public for consultation. The documents deposited will gradually increase depending on the historical material collected.
- **Other collaboration.** In addition to the close link with Pablo de Olavide University in Seville, we highlight other important collaborations including, the University of Malaga, the UNED, the General Archives of the Administration of Alcalá de Henares, the LIESS Network, the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience, the Archivo Arkhé, the Maricorners Initiative, the Pedro Zerolo Foundation, the Pedro Zerolo Film Archives, the LGTBI Memorialist Network, Torremolinos Chic, the AASA Association, etc. with whom we have conducted numerous scientific, academic and cultural initiatives.



Logotype of the LIESS Network



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Red Memorialista  
LGTBI

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Logotype of the LGTBI Memorialist Network.



## C.- HISTORICAL PROJECTION.

### • **European Space for LGBTI Memory**

The European Space for LGBTI Memory is a project which has been ongoing since 2023. It is located in Begoña Alley. We have been receiving numerous letters of support from public administrations, NGOs and private institutions to support the project and help to bring it to fruition in the near future.

It is a multi-purpose space in which the different uses complement each other with the common thread of the huge intangible legacy and the historical significance of Begoña Alley. The goals of this project are:

- To promote the democratic values of equality and freedom through the recognition of Begoña Alley as a European Space for Historic LGBTI Memory.
- Comprehensive development of Begoña Alley and its surrounding area, from a historical, cultural, economic and social perspective.
- Enhancement through Culture, Creativity and Education of the democratic values and the defence of the fundamental rights of equality, freedom and respect for diversity.
- Reflection and cultural exchange through the national and international promotion of Begoña Alley and the town of Torremolinos as an LGBTI reference

### • **Parliament of Andalusia: declaration of Begoña Alley as the birthplace of LGBTI rights in Andalusia and Spain.**

On 3 May 2018, the Presidential Commission of the Andalusian Parliament, with the unanimous approval of all the political parties, adopted a non-legislative motion (PNL) which urged the Regional Government of Andalusia to recover Begoña Alley as the «birthplace of LGBTI rights in Andalusia and Spain».

The parliamentary proceedings of the case 10-18/PNLC- 000078 can be consulted:

- ✓ Presentation of the PNL: Official Gazette of the Parliament of Andalusia number 665 of 26 March 2018 (Page 24 and following).
- ✓ Debate of the PNL: Agenda of Sessions of the Parliament of Andalusia number 517 of 3 May 2018 (Page. 66 and following).
- ✓ Publication of the approval of the PNL: Official Gazette of the Parliament of Andalusia number 705 of 25 May 2018 (Page 11 and following).



- **Congress of Representatives: declaration of Begoña Alley as a Site of Historic Memory and birthplace of the rights and freedoms of LGTBI people.**

On 13 February 2019, the Commission of Culture of the Congress of Representatives unanimously approved a non-legislative motion (PNL) urging the Government of Spain to recover Begoña Alley as a Site of Historic Memory and birthplace of LGTBI rights and freedoms. The PNL also envisaged the cultural promotion of this site and the creation of a historic archive and LGTBI centre of interpretation.

The parliamentary proceedings of the case 161/003772 can be consulted:

- ✓ Presentation of the PNL: Official Gazette of the Parliament number 437 of 23 October 2018 (Page 31 and following).
- ✓ Debate of the PNL: Agenda of Sessions of the Congress of Representatives number 730 of 13 February 2019 (Page. 21 and following).
- ✓ Publication of the approval of the PNL: Official Gazette of the Parliament number 511 of 07 March 2019 (Page 26 and following).

- **Full member of the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience.**

The Asociación Pasaje Begoña is a full member of the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience. This is the only global network of historic sites, museums and memory initiatives. It has over 275 members in 65 countries. This prestigious coalition connects past struggles with today's protests for human rights. Further information can be found at [www.sitesofconscience.com](http://www.sitesofconscience.com).

- **Candidate for the European Democracy Site Award 2022.**

Nominated by the House of European History of the European Parliament.

- **Twinning of Begoña Alley with the legendary Stonewall Inn in New York.**

On 26 June 2019, as part of the World Pride 2019 activities in New York, the twinning ceremony took place between these two Sites of Historic LGTBI Memory. The twinning ceremony was organised by the Secretary of state for Tourism, the Secretary of State for Equality, Turespaña, the Instituto Cervantes, the Spanish Consulate General in New York and the Permanent Mission of Spain to the United Nations.

- **Twinning with the historic Pulse Nightclub in Orlando (Florida).**

In 1 April 2021, the protocol was signed for the twinning of the Asociación Pasaje Begoña with the Pulse Foundation of Orlando, Florida. The twinning ceremony took place in Torremolinos as part of the ceremonies to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Great Raid on Begoña Alley.





- **Declaration of Begoña Alley as a Tourist Attraction Site in Andalusia.**

On 21 February 2020, the Asociación Pasaje Begoña started proceedings to request the Regional Government of Andalusia declare Begoña Alley as a Tourist Attraction Site. On 01 December 2020, the declaration of Begoña Alley as a Tourist Attraction Site was published in the Official Journal of the Regional Government of Andalusia.

- **Other Begoña Alleys around the world.**

Contact is maintained to create a network of sites around the world that are hallmarks of freedom and repression for the LGBTI collective. The purpose of this project is to investigate, protect and publicise the historical significance of these sites and the huge lessons still to be learnt about the defence of rights and freedoms and respect for diversity.

- **Site of Historic and Democratic Memory.**

On 22 February 2018, the Asociación Pasaje Begoña started administrative proceedings to request the Regional Government of Andalusia declare Begoña Alley as a Site of Historic and Democratic Memory in Andalusia. It was necessary to include a large number of documents (nine reports attached) linked to the unique historic and cultural nature of Begoña Alley and the importance of its preservation. At the time of publication of this book, the ruling by the Board of Culture of the Regional Government of Andalusia is still pending.

- **Archivo Arkhé LGBTI.**

The Archivo Arkhé is one of the largest LGBTI documentary collections in the world. It was opened on 20 February 2023 and is located in Calle Doctor Fourquet in Madrid. The Asociación Pasaje Begoña has signed an agreement with the Archivo Arkhé and attended the opening exhibition displaying numerous historic documents for this emblematic site.

- **The soul of Begoña Alley.**

The soul of Begoña Alley remains alive to remind us of the importance of respect for diversity, and the promotion of equality for everyone. Even the most traumatic memories, such as the Great Raid of Begoña Alley, allow the past to be linked to current matters regarding the respect for human rights. A beautiful video has been made, using pieces from songs written by Pablo Alborán, in which 128 people from 8 countries have taken part, uniting their voices to demand that the «soul of Begoña Alley remains alive». The video reminds us that there is still a long way to go to achieve full equality.

- **Creation of the Fundación Manuela Saborido, “Manolita Chen”.**

Manolita Chen is a recognised Spanish transsexual activist. She was a customer and privileged witness of Begoña Alley. One of the most significant pro-

## BEGOÑA ALLEY IN THE LGTBI+ MEMORY

jects of the Asociación Pasaje Begoña has been the creation of the Fundación Manuela Saborido “Manolita Chen”. It is currently on the Board of Trustees.

- **Commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Great Raid.**

2021 was the fiftieth anniversary of the Great Raid of Begoña Alley, and a number of different acts of protest took place in more than 20 cities and towns in Spain. These include Torremolinos, Seville, Madrid, Valencia, Málaga, Cadiz, Fuenlabrada, La Palma, Vigo, Rota, Chiclana, Almensilla, etc.

- ✓ **Presence of International Guests:** The following were invited to Spain and were with us at many of the commemorative celebrations:

- Frederick Folk. Member of the Stonewall Inn Foundation. Participant in the Stonewall Inn riots of 1969, a waiter at the inn for more than 50 year.
- Barbara Poma and Leah Shepherd. President and Director General respectively of the onePULSE Foundation. An organisation that commemorates the PULSE Nightclub. A cruel terrorist attack against the LGTBI collective took place at this venue. 49 people died and dozens more were injured in the attack.
- Manuela Saborido “Manolita Chen”. Trans activist, president of the Foundation which bears her name and privileged witness of Begoña Alley. At the commemorative acts, Manolita represented everyone who took part in making Begoña Alley a unique place in the 60s.

Some of the most significant events of the commemoration include:

- ✓ **Act of State in Seville.** Held on 24 June 2021. Tribute to the protagonists and visitors of Begoña Alley and the victims of the Great Raid. Presided over by the Interior Minister, it was attended by a large number of witnesses to the era.
- ✓ **Act of State in Torremolinos.** Held on 25 June 2021. Tribute to the customers and visitors of Begoña Alley and the victims of the Great Raid. Presided over by the Secretary of State for Security.
- ✓ **Reception of the President of the Congress of Representatives.** On 28 June 2021, the president of the Congress of Representatives held an audience with representatives from the Asociación Pasaje Begoña and witnesses from that era. The hearing was organised by the Fundación Pedro Zerolo. Following the audience, there was a visit to the Congress of representatives and the placing of the LGTBI flag on the façade of the Congress of Representatives.
- ✓ **Reception of the President of the Senate.** On 28 June 2021, the president of the Senate held an audience with representatives from the Asociación Pasaje Begoña and witnesses from that era. The hearing was



organised by the Fundación Pedro Zero. A visit to the Senate followed the audience.

- ✓ **Meeting with institutional representatives of the LGBTI movement.** Organised by the Fundación Pedro Zero, representatives of the foundation and from FELGTB, COGAM, MADO and the Pedro Zero Film Archives attended the meeting. Held on 26 June 2021 at the offices of the Pedro Zero Film Archives. It was attended by representatives from the Asociación Pasaje Begoña, witnesses of the era and international guests from Stonewall Inn and the onePULSE Foundation.
- ✓ **MADO Awards 2021.** Representatives from the Asociación Pasaje Begoña, some of the witnesses of the era and international guests from Stonewall Inn and the onePULSE Foundation attended the MADO Gala 2021 where awards were given to the most significant institutions in LGBTI matters.
- ✓ **Other commemorative activities at Madrid Pride 2021.** Participation in several of the activities of Madrid Pride 2021 including the arrival in Madrid of the Trans Flag and the tribute to Cristina Ortiz "La Veneno".

## BEGOÑA ALLEY IN THE LGTBI+ MEMORY



Photo showing representatives from different political parties, moments after the unanimous approval of the PNL.



### Twinning between The Stonewall Inn and the Begoña Alley 50th Anniversary of The Stonewall Inn riots





The Stonewall Inn, New York City

Pasaje Begoña, Torremolinos

### Hermanamiento entre The Stonewall Inn y el Pasaje Begoña 50 Aniversario de los disturbios del Stonewall Inn

Two historical sites and birthplaces of the rights and freedoms of the LGBTQ community  
Dos lugares históricos y cuna de los derechos y libertades de la comunidad LGBTI

New York City, June 26th, 2019  
Nueva York, 26 de junio de 2019



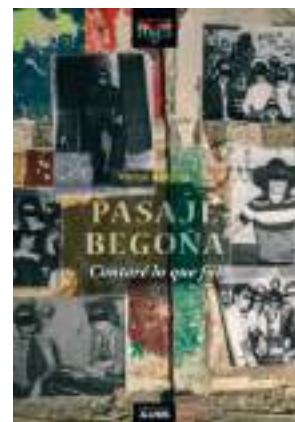
Photo of the plaque for the twinning of Begoña Alley with the Stonewall Inn.



Photo of the plaque for the twinning of Begoña Alley with the onePULSE Foundation.

## D.- EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL PROJECT.

Since 2018 more than 80 cultural and educational projects have been carried out to promote the LGBTI Memory and to publicise the results of the research. These include educational and cultural talks, literary competitions, plays, exhibitions, the publication of several books and novels, audio-visual products, guided visits, poems, songs, etc.



Photos of the exhibition, the novel and the comic about Begoña Alley. Example of some of the many other educational and cultural initiatives about the historic tale of this site.



### E.- RECOVERY OF PUBLIC USE SPACE

*“We need the story of Begoña Alley to have a place where it can be displayed, told and shared. And the place needs a story to mobilise its recovery. The tale of its history”.*

The principal initiatives regarding the recovery of the public use space of Begoña Alley to help this space shine again as it did in the 60s include the following:

#### • **Improvement of co-existence and social climate in the Begoña Building**

The Asociación Pasaje Begoña has played a huge mediating role to eradicate the problems of coexistence that have been historically associated with this emblematic site: drug trafficking, rubbish and filth, substandard housing, high rates of irregular occupancy, social marginalisation and continuous neighbourhood disputes. After five years of work, solutions have been found to the majority of the problems. Cleaning and surveillance have been improved, decent housing has been provided for families in need, and mediation has taken place in the neighbourhood disputes. This has resulted in a radical improvement to coexistence and a significant reduction of social conflicts.

#### • **Renovation of the Begoña Building and of Begoña Alley**

The Community of Owners of the Begoña Building have agreed to the comprehensive renovation of the building. Renovation work is already under way with the initial technical projects and the application for grants from the ‘Next Generation’ Funds for the efficient renovation of residential buildings. The renovation work includes walls, structures, electricity, plumbing and cladding.

The Begoña Building has four floors for residential use, plus the ground floor and the basement for commercial use. The Building is crossed by our beloved Begoña Alley, which divides it into two parts. Both the building and the premises that were home to those legendary bars are accessed through the alley, which is a narrow passageway that serves to create its unique and attractive character.

The Asociación Pasaje Begoña has the expert collaboration of the REBS (Real Estate Business School of Torremolinos). This is a Real Estate and Urban Development School of reference in this area. The challenge we face is to make the physical space into an attractive place to visit, a place that is sustainable and efficient with respect to residential coexistence, and to prepare the spaces necessary for the development of the cultural project.

The Begoña Building was seized by bailiffs and had lost all traces of what it once was, reaching an unsustainable level of deterioration on all floors,



making it unsuitable for coexistence and for visiting. The City Council of Torremolinos had issued numerous Enforcement Orders for the preservation of the building, which its residents were unable to comply with due to the confiscation and the economic difficulties facing the association of owners.

The creation of the European Space for LGBTI Memory offers the opportunity to rescue the building from a fatal end. On completion of the renovation work, we will have an open plan space, designed to be transformable, according to the cultural and creative proposals received. This is not only an exhibition space but also a space for creation and discussion: exhibitions, workshops, shows, networking, events area, whose connection will be the reflection on diversity and LGBTI equality.

BEGOÑA ALLEY is taking its first steps towards recovery. We intend to make use of all the support and rekindled expectations to promote its recovery, bring them together around the European Space for LGBTI Memory: a cultural project that revitalises the objectives defined.

As such, the **CULTURAL** component of the renovation project is clearly defined:

Our main objective is the recovery of the LGBTI Memory through culture. To achieve this, we work on the national and international projection of Begoña Alley and Torremolinos as a cultural destination of diversity, freedom and equality.

The Cultural Offer of Begoña Alley will have the following departure points:

- **European Space for LGBTI Memory. Begoña Alley Centre for Interpretation.** A place for the exhibition and recovery of the European historic memory of the LGBTI collective. Here the creative and proposed activities will cover every sort of cultural exhibition, including music, plastic and digital arts, theatre, etc. In short, a creative meeting space committed to our collective memory.

The space will be home to two lines of permanent exhibition:

- ✓ **The space designed for the completion of a historic tour** of what Begoña Alley meant as a place of freedom and diversity, in the darkest times of the most recent Spanish history. At the same time, there will be an exhibition of the accounts, places and people who have been important for the Historic LGBTI Memory of all Europe. This is an immersive hall that takes the visitor on a tour that highlights the historic events and Places of Memory of reference, using innovation and technological tools that will allow the visitor to not only discover, but also share the stories told, from a strict perspective of the events and at the same time, emotional and educational point of view.

## BEGOÑA ALLEY IN THE LGTBI+ MEMORY

- ✓ **The 'Archaeology of Leisure'**, as hallmarks of LGTBI tourism. The content proposal for this line is the highlighting of the LGTBI sector for the Costa del Sol destination, from an economic and tourism point of view.
- **Design of cultural itineraries** complementary to the story of the Alley (the birth of tourism in Torremolinos, the architecture of relaxation, art, music, the celebrities who came to visit and their stories, etc.)
- **Cultural exchange activities:** School of Spanish for foreigners. Offering groups of visitors knowledge of the language at various levels, using the story of Begoña Alley as the common thread. Promoting greater cultural immersion and the attraction of the visit.
- **Design of the complementary leisure Offer.**
- **Management of temporary residence** for groups of visitors. Similarly, in the residential part of the building, this whole process has kindled interest in making the flats available to the project for use as temporary accommodation.

### OTHER INITIATIVES CARRIED OUT FOR THE RECOVERY OF THE PHYSICAL SPACE

- **Retro-style LED lighted sign.**

Located on the upper handrail at the entrance to Begoña Alley from Av. Palma de Mallorca.

- **Replica of lighted signs from the most important LGTBI sites in the world.**

In 2021, five retro lighted signs were installed in Begoña Alley. These are exact replicas of the signs that were installed outside the former venues in Begoña Alley. Other signs are replicas of the lighted signs at Sites of LGTBI Memory around the world such as the Stonewall Inn or The Pulse Nightclub. The aim is to gradually install other lighted signs which serve to publicise the Sites of LGTBI Memory. People who were closely linked to each of the signs were present at the opening ceremony.

- **Graffiti murals**

One of the most emblematic projects was the painting of four large graffiti murals. One of the murals pays tribute to the space of diversity represented by Begoña Alley, another recalls the famous and anonymous people who frequented the alley, the third mural makes reference to the Great Raid of 1971 and the fourth pays tribute to the concepts of freedom and equality held up by Begoña Alley.

- **General informative plaques**

Each plaque is mounted inside the mural. The different plaques refer to why





Photos of one of the murals and of the lighted signs in Begoña Alley

## BEGOÑA ALLEY IN THE LGTBI+ MEMORY

Begoña Alley was an international place of reference. They mention the twinning with Stonewall Inn in New York, the recognition by the Parliament of Andalusia and by the Congress of Representatives as a Site of Historic Memory and birthplace of LGTBI rights and freedoms in Spain (May 2018 and February 2019, respectively) and to the specific events that are described in each mural. The texts are written in Spanish and in English.

### • Individual commemoration plaques

The individual plaques are mounted on the walls of each of the venues in Begoña Alley. They pay tribute to the primitive venues and recall the example of diversity and the struggle against LGTBIphobia left to us. The texts are written in Spanish and in English.

## F. INSTITUTIONAL COOPERATION AND PROMOTION.

The main initiatives for the promotion of this site and the institutional cooperation to reclaim the LGTBI Memory are as follows:

### • Participation of Begoña Alley in different PRIDE and Orgullos celebrations

These include regular participation in the Torremolinos and Malaga Pride events and in the Andalusia and Madrid Pride events. In 2019, it took part in the WorldPride event in New York.

In 2023, the Asociación Pasaje Begoña set up the 1st Diverse Literature Award in collaboration with the publishers Siete Islas, MADO, Muestra t, Shangay and Ritual Hoteles. This initiative has been included in the cultural programme of Madrid Pride 2023.

### • Act to compensate the victims of the repression

Two of the most symbolic acts of the 50th Anniversary of Begoña Alley took place in June 2021. An act of State presided over by the Interior Minister in Seville, and another similar act, presided over by the Secretary of State for Security, in the town of Torremolinos.

Both events remembered the victims of the Great Raid of Begoña Alley and a whole generation of LGTBI individuals who fought so that today we can be freer and more equal. Numerous authorities, social entities, witnesses of the era and international representatives from Stonewall Inn (New York), and the onePULSE Foundation (Orlando, Florida) attended the two events.

### • Participation in platforms, work teams and networks

The Asociación Pasaje Begoña takes part in numerous platforms, work teams and networks. The participation of the association in the activities of the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience is of note, together with its





constant collaboration with the ILGA, EPOA and INTERPRIDE networks and the participation in the EAPN Network for cooperation with the other social entities representing marginalised collectives or collectives at risk of social exclusion. We also collaborate on the work team with the National Police to prevent, identify and take action against hate crimes. This service is available to visitors to Begoña Alley for the promotion of safety and the prevent of crime.

- **Presentation before international social entities**

Begoña Alley has been presented, among others, to LGTBI federations and government organisations of Germany, Brazil, Columbia, Equatorial Guinea, Las Vegas, Lithuania, Los Angeles, New York, the Netherlands, Portugal, San Francisco and Turkey.

- **Cooperation with the different public administrations**

Begoña Alley has been presented to the different international, state, regional, provincial and local public administrations and they have been asked to recover and promote this site.

- **Presentation to the diplomatic missions**

Begoña Alley has been presented to various Spanish and foreign diplomatic missions, including the embassies of the United States and the United Kingdom in Spain, the Permanent Mission of Spain to the United Nations, the Spanish Consulate General in New York, etc. A project has been submitted to present Begoña Alley to the Spanish embassy in Buenos Aires and to the List of diplomatic missions of the European Union in Uruguay. This project is carried out in collaboration with GTMI Magazine.

- **Participation in the International Tourism Fair (FITUR)**

In 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023 Begoña Alley was presented as a tourism reference for Andalusia both at the Regional Government of Andalusia stand and in the FITUR LGBT+ section.

## BEGOÑA ALLEY IN THE LGTBI+ MEMORY



Photo of the reception of the Spanish Ambassador to the United Nations.



Photo of the Regional Government of Andalusia stand at FITUR 2021 and FITUR 2022.



## **G.- SOCIAL IMPACT AND RECOGNITIONS.**

### **• Social Impact.**

More than 100 reports in national and international communication media about the historic importance of this site.

### **• National Lottery to commemorate Begoña Alley**

On 22 June 2019, the SELAE dedicated the drawing on the Spanish National Lottery to Begoña Alley. And the drawing for the National Lottery ticket of 22 June 2019. Twelve million lottery tickets were issued, taking the image of Begoña Alley to every corner of the country.

### **• ONCE lottery ticket commemorating Begoña Alley**

On 1 June 2019, coinciding with the Torremolinos Pride March, the ONCE lottery ticket was dedicated to Begoña Alley. Ten million tickets commemorating Begoña Alley were issued.

### **• Post Office stamp commemorating Begoña Alley**

The National Philatelic Commission, at their meeting held on 30 October 2019, agreed to include a stamp commemorating the LGTBI flag and Begoña Alley in the post office stamps for 2020. This stamp is one of the few in the world that commemorates the LGTBI segment. It came into circulation on 15 June 2020 and was one of the most sold stamps in the history of the Spanish Postal and Telegraph Service. The video of the presentation of the stamp can be seen on the corporate website of the Asociación Pasaje Begoña. It also included the decoration of mail boxes, offices delivery vans and any corporate image of the Post Office.

The Begoña Alley Post Office stamp was a runner-up in the prestigious "World Post & Parcel Awards 2021" considered the Oscar awards of the global logistics and postal sector. In addition, the promotion of the Begoña Alley Post Office Stamp called "Not just yellow" received the Efficiency 2021 award for the Best Campaign without external resources.

In 2022, a letterbox was installed in Begoña Alley in Torremolinos with the colours of the LGTBI flag and a video in commemoration of the Post Office Stamp.

### **• Corporate identity**

Begoña Alley has a corporate identity manual, as well as several of its own logotypes. Both the manual and the logotypes can be downloaded from the association website.

### **• Radio programme**

The Asociación Pasaje Begoña set up a weekly radio programme of their

own called “The soul of the Begoña”. The first season of the programme was broadcast from September 2020 until June 2021 every Saturday from 12:00 to 13:00 h, and every Tuesday from 17:00 to 18:00 h (Spanish mainland time) on Radio Arcoíris ([www.radioarcoiris.es](http://www.radioarcoiris.es)).

In 2022 several members of the association collaborated in the “*SER DIVERSA*” (*BE DIFFERENT*) section of the “Hoy por hoy” programme of Cadena Ser. It was broadcast between March 2022 and October 2022.

### • **Links with other organisations.**

The Asociación Pasaje Begoña does not receive public grants. For this reason, sometimes it is important to establish synergies and strategic alliances with various organisations in order to set up joint projects. For example, thanks to the collaboration with the public Spanish Postal and Telegraph Service, Correos y Telégrafos, it was possible to carry out several very significant projects.

### • **Recognitions**

- o Award +SOCIAL Regional Government of Andalusia 2019.
- o Triángulo Award 2019 COGAM.
- o Premio del Círculo de Empresarios (Business Society Award) 2019.
- o Cruz al Mérito Social de la Guardia Civil (Civil Guard Social Merit Cross) 2019.
- o Malagueño año in 2019 awarded by Diario Sur.
- o Medal of Honour City of Torremolinos 2021.
- o Social Action Award 2021 Campo de Gibraltar.
- o Runner-up in the “World Post & Parcel Awards 2021”
- o Efficiency Award 2021 for the Begoña Alley stamp for the “Best Campaign without external resources”.
- o Premio Imparables (Unstoppable Award) 2022 for the best research project.

### • **Social Networks**

Presence on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, TikTok and Youtube. More than 18,000 followers on various social networks.



PASAJE Begoña



Image of the National Lottery ticket of 22 June 2019.



Photo of the ONCE lottery ticket of 1 June 2019 coinciding with the Torremolinos Pride March.

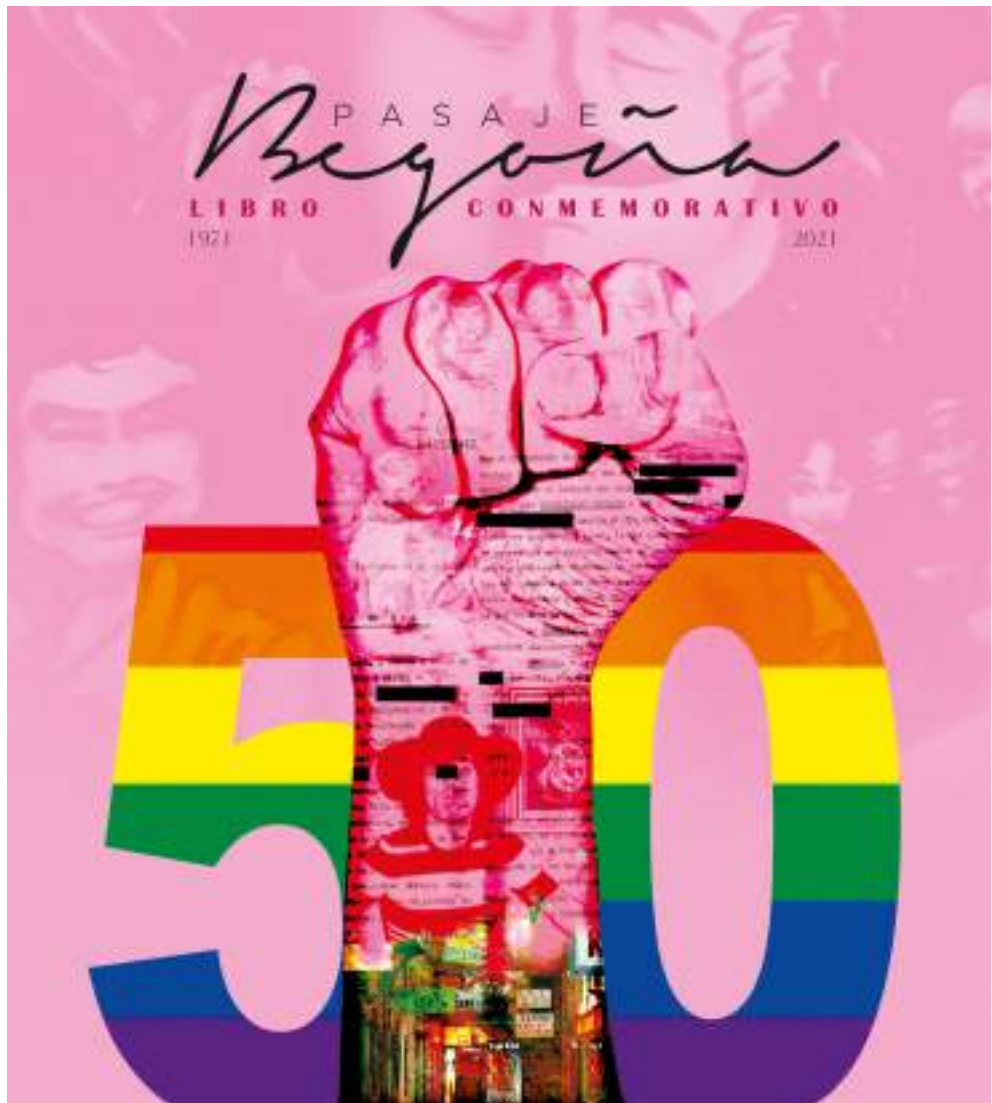


Photo of the Begoña Alley stamp.





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