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Dor Guez

Georgiopolis

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The Revolutionary Potential of the Ruin: On Dor Guez’s Photographic Series of Lydd Ruins

Ariella Azoulay

The ruin carries the memory of the destruction, yet distances the possibility of acknowledging the conditions that created it. According to Walter Benjamin, “in the ruin history has physically merged into the setting.”¹ This quality of the ruin renders it akin to a trap for the photographer or the viewer, who might fix it in its settingness, and erase its historicity. This trap, however, is not a quality of photography. The photograph presents a ruin, yet it does not prevent the spectator from reconstructing its context or embedding it within a narrative. Dor Guez’s photographs indeed purposefully enhance the sublime nature of the ruin, the historicity of whose past has dissolved into an abstract sign; this reinforcement, however, along with the entire ensemble of elements comprising the exhibition “Georgiopolis,” allow one to rethink what a ruin is, and even to consider it not only when it emerges in its quintessential visual form—a partial vestige of a structure. The issue of the ruin becomes even more dramatic when one grasps the tension between the physical creation of the ruin and the moment in which it is fixed as such (in a photograph, for example), as well as between its phantasmagoric dimension and its revolutionary potential. Guez’s photographs, which for the first time present the ruins of al-Lydd² and the city of Lod as debris, illustrate the power of photography to fix an object—“the ruin”—while at the same time, proposing conditions for its deconstruction.

Each of al-Lydd’s ruins has its own story; from the perspective of the people who created these ruins, however, there was barely any difference between the demolished houses that produced them, and if there was a difference—it was annulled in light of the justification there was, in their mind, for their creation. These ruins, whose creation dates back to 1947,

1. Walter Benjamin, “Allegory and Trauerspiel,” *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, trans. John Osborne (London: Verso, 2003), pp. 177-8.

2. Al-Lydd is the Arabic name of the city, changed to Lod in 1948.

are the result of a uniform, standing decision, a decision that tends to be forgotten when a justification is provided: “This house *must* be demolished.” The act of demolition and its justification, repeated obsessively, eradicate the fact that every decision to demolish a house contains a moment of leaping into an abyss—transformation of a lively house into something whose demolition is justified. The similarity between the different ruins generated by the decision to demolish a house is weakened by the voices of a chorus of narrators who verbalize, from first, second, and third hand, the memory of the house before it became a ruin. Listening to their stories, it becomes clear that despite certain similarities, no story redundifies another, neither does it redundify the countless retelling of the frame story of the destruction.

The United Nations Partition Plan of November 29, 1947, was a formative moment in the creation of ruins in the territory of Palestine-Eretz Israel. It gave international validity to the efforts of the representatives of the Jewish Yishuv to determine, by themselves, the future of a place with an Arab majority, into which Jewish immigrants had blended over several decades. The establishment of a Jewish state was the professed, explicit goal, for whose realization the majority of the Jewish population in the land was mobilized to take part in an entire range of activities. The nation-building (*binyan ha’aretz*) ethos infused sense and direction to every thing that had happened here in the late 1940s. Under the guise of construction activities, or concurrent with them, hundreds of thousands of destructive acts were also carried out. These were shaped as a means to obtain the aforesaid explicit goal. The destruction was built into the discourse as subordinated to a higher cause, whereby it was systematically dwarfed, and for several decades never emerged in its exposed form—as literal destruction. It was a large-scale destruction enterprise in which thought, resources, and talents were invested, whose implications went far beyond the instrumental nature ascribed to it by its architects.

The chronicles of the destruction enterprise—which has shaped, and continues to shape, the economic, cultural, political, moral, and civil world of the residents of this place—have yet to be written; on occasion, however, a fault line may be identified which has begun to mark the destruction as the

object of research independent of the justification story conceived by those responsible for it. The fault line enables us to start regarding the destruction as an enterprise in and of itself, to gauge its scope, to reflect upon its depth, and to analyze it not only in the national context.³ Such dissociation is necessary, yet it calls for great caution, lest destruction emerge as one-dimensional—as a delimited activity executed and completed within the boundaries determined by its perpetrators, and all that is left to do now is put it in writing, record it as a chapter of the past.

Guez's series of photographs, taken in Lod in 2009, indicates that the remnants of the havoc wrought more than six decades ago are living materials, ongoing presences. Still, over the years in which the traces of destruction have been scattered in the public sphere, visible for all to see, affecting the space that has taken shape within and around them, they have not become the object of a gaze oriented toward them, nor constituted as such.

Dor Guez now presents these traces for our gaze. In his photographs, al-Lydd's ruins are illuminated by scarce available light, borrowed ready-made light partially originating in the streetlights, partially—in the adjacent housing blocks. By the light of night, the eye encounters ruins which appear more attractive than they are in broad daylight. They are inscribed in the photograph as the relics of an abstract past; their contours as well as their urban setting are slightly blurred by wild vegetation. Guez does not attempt to expose the ruins in daylight, to deprive them of the colorful carpets under which they are immersed, thus enabling them to emerge in their nakedness. Instead of penetrating light, weeding, and an archaeological gesture of uncovering—the totality of elements in Guez's exhibition invites the spectator to observe them through the nocturnal veil enwrapping them, to realize that their settingness is not a lie whose removal would render the truth accessible. If the ruins have a truth, it does not lie in the remnants themselves, but rather in the very ability of many to take part in the generation of truth. Without an act of political imagination, the black veil will emerge as an incidental, external interruption which under certain conditions might be overcome and removed, and not as part of the way in which the ruins appear to the gaze. The way in which they

3. In recent years, Israeli and Palestinian scholars have been gathering data about the scope of the demolition. See: Walid Khalidi, *All that Remains: The Palestinian Villages Occupied and Depopulated by Israel in 1948* (Washington DC: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1992); Eyal Weizman, *Hollow Land: Israel's Architecture of Occupation* (London & New York: Verso, 2007); see also: the databases of the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions (ICAHd; www.icahd.org/heb), and the exhibitions "Constituent Violence" presented at Zochrot [Remembering] Art Gallery, Tel Aviv, March-June 2009 [see: Ariella Azoulay, *Constituent Violence* (Tel Aviv: Resling, 2010)] and the "Architecture of Destruction" [see: Ariella Azoulay, *The Political Ontology of Photography* (Tel Aviv: Resling, 2010)].

appear to the gaze closely corresponds with their mode of existence: they are hidden and bare, prevented and exposed; stamps of a past that cannot be eliminated, and the cornerstones of a future yet to be established. In Guez's photographs the ruins do not shed that which had screened them. They are not exposed as such, laid bare of any guise and justification, nor are they what they momentarily, inspired by the title of the exhibition, seemed to be—the remains of Georgiopolis, an ancient city of which the ravages of time have left only a few traces, bespeaking its lost beauty.

The demolition of the houses whose ruins I observe is dated and spatially pinpointed. With regard to some, it is even possible to reconstruct the exact construction plans and details prior to their demolition, their various functions, the number of rooms they contained, their interior-exterior relationship, their mode of population and state of maintenance. The exhibition's overall syntax leaves no doubt that the ruins in Guez's photographs are the ruins from 1948. Georgiopolis is but one of many layers of the city ruined in 1948, which embraced centuries of Arabic culture, Muslim as well as Christian. It is precisely from the Georgiopolis stratum that treasures have been rescued, such as the church which has become a reserve. Despite its great historical value, however, it has remained virtually secret, known mainly to the Christian community whose members it serves.

Guez's photographs, much like those taken before and during the destruction, form a historical source of information which must be studied by gaze, in writing, and in archives. In sites of disaster produced by the regime such as the one inscribed in Guez's work, photographs are not only a historical source for those to whom the catastrophe pertains and whom it affects. Photographs which enable tracing of a regimental catastrophe are, in fact, photographs of a crime. It concerns the offense of people against other people, which takes place as part of and under the auspices of the political regime. In some cases, especially in democratic regimes, many of the subjects are unaware that they have committed a crime, hence it is a short way to avoid acknowledgement of their involvement in the catastrophe. In my book *Constituent Violence* I characterized this non-acknowledgement as a "civil

invalidity.” In fact, this is a self-deceit shaped and orchestrated by the regime. It enables the crime to appear in the eyes of the perpetrators, or in the eyes of those who collaborate with them, as something other than what it is. Such photographs from places of regime-produced catastrophe are an opportunity, precisely for those with a civil invalidity, to discover in what appears before them not only the traces of a catastrophe, but also those of a crime. From the crime which they had not theretofore acknowledged, they are now invited to reconstruct the hole it gapes in their worldview. For these individuals, an encounter with such photographs may be a sobering moment or phase in the disillusionment with the erroneous perception they had held regarding the distance between themselves and the catastrophe, as well as an opportunity to reassemble the picture of reality so that it will include what appears in the photograph as well as what was omitted from their knowledge.

Guez’s photographs confront us not only with the Nakba as a catastrophe whose boundaries are delimited and which was concluded in 1948. The photographs, juxtaposed with other works in the exhibition, invite us to observe the configuration of the destruction’s presence in the space when the sense of urgency no longer erupts from it. When it appears before us in this way, spatially persistent, one cannot continue thinking it only as a delimited action measured in comparison to the house which it marked as designated for demolition. In 1948 the State of Israel demolished thousands of houses in al-Lydd, and expelled 49,000 Palestinians from the city: of them 19,000 residents of the city, and the rest—refugees from other places. The destruction was also wrought in other parts of the country, destroying residential areas where some 900,000 people had dwelled. The destruction transformed these environments into relics of a past, and the life that had existed in them—into the object of quasi-archaeological study. The oil-press and the tavern, appearing in Guez’s photographs as ruins, illustrate the transformation of the Palestinian present of the late 1940s into an eradicated past. Not in all the photographs do the ruins appear on their own, as timeless stone entities. In one of them—the photograph of the *Market Square* to which I shall later return—they are intertwined in an urban landscape of public

housing blocks, TV antennas and satellite dishes, shipwrecks at high seas, a mast inclined sideways, life run aground, silent loudspeakers, torn sails, and a bonfire indicating that life has returned to this place nevertheless, and with it the cyclicity requiring the metabolism whereby life's leftovers are consumed, making room for the next day.

The acts of destruction and expulsion were not absolute. The ruins and the one thousand people who remained in al-Lydd in 1948 became the surviving remnant. The State was determined to plan their lives down to the minutest detail. It strove to shape their mindsets, their knowledge-gaining opportunities, their ways of life, and also, of course, the scope of their spatial mobility. The destruction, which was not completed by a single bulldozer run, continued its operation. I suggest considering the destruction not only as an act that ought to be examined in terms of the damage it inflicted upon a given existence, but also as a unique form of coexistence—a destructive form of civil discrimination by which the state set out to strike only the non-Jewish population whose aspirations, memories, movements, and needs it endeavored to monitor. The understanding of this destruction as a form of co-existence requires its re-telling, realizing that the destruction it inflicted harmed not only those who were the direct and explicit objects of the act of destruction. The violent, distorted, abusive, false, despicable, and treacherous form of co-existence infected and polluted its perpetrators and collaborators, as much as it did those it intended to strike.

Al-Lydd's ruins are the result of a deliberate act of destruction from that time, an event which has a direct impact on those living today. It is a destruction which was not the opposite of construction, and therefore did not contradict it entirely, nor was it concealed by it or by its perpetrators. A database presenting an exact itemization of the destruction—the number of structures, their nature, function, location, demolition date—such as the database created by Walid Khalidi in his book *All that Remains*, is a necessary foundation for any reflection on the destruction, assuming that the demolition of a hundred houses is not equivalent to that of hundred-thousands; that the demolition of each house separately is not equivalent to the destruction of

whole environments; and that the destruction of residential buildings is not equivalent to the destruction of public buildings. Over the course of time, the gathering of data about the destruction carried out in the late 1940s was supplemented by the gathering and processing of information about a later destruction—during the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, and so on, to the present.

Such a comprehensive picture, which may now be assembled from several existing databases, postulates destruction as a solid category. Its solidity is generated a-posteriori, from the current, daily destruction, which is justified by the regime and outrageous to only a few, to that original, constitutive destruction. The current destruction, carried out mainly in the West Bank and Gaza, but also, on a more modest scale, within the Green Line, uproots house-by-house, individually, having established for each a special file and enriched it with warning notices and decrees, evidence and justifications extracted from both local and international law. That destruction—the one that constituted the Israeli regime in 1948—focused on introducing outlines on site, outlining a nation-wide destruction plan whose justification has constituted the law, which, in turn, has furnished it with inspiration and license—a plan as abstract and general as the aforesaid contours.

The creation of a continuity between these different practices of destruction (in the 1940s and today), as well as the difficulty in seeing through or beyond this continuity, are part of the system responsible for the transformation of destruction into a means, a part of the constituent violence of the regime, preserved by its Israeli citizens of Jewish origin; at the same time, however, these subjects fail to see their contribution to the preservation and reproduction of this regime, as well as the principles underlying its constitution. The continuity between the current destruction and the constitutive destruction lies primarily in the fact that destruction was structured as a vehicle—one in a repertoire of available means whose meaning is determined only according to the target to which they are subordinated. While the target is dissociated from the means and determines its meaning from the outside, the demolition of houses becomes an available means whose use is self-explanatory. When destruction becomes an automatic means in the

hands of the regime, the authorities and their servants become authorized to generate destruction and to generate knowledge that enables and justifies the use of destruction to obtain goals defined as external to it. The Palestinian house has thus lost its sanctity as a home, and can therefore be violated. The Israeli regime has demolished hundreds of thousands of houses since 1947. This continuity between the different acts of destruction reinforces the fact that the early destruction, like the latter, resulted from neither a caprice nor the misconduct of individuals. It was a reasoned destruction, a precise and “responsible” use of destruction-generating means, a part of a policy rooted in the law in a manner which distances it from what might have been otherwise construed as regimental arbitrariness.

Transforming destruction into a means expresses the power of authority, its strength not only to render destruction a matter of course, but also to conceal information pertaining to it, thereby striving to stabilize its meaning alone, to compel its derivation from the target and from the intentions of those implementing it. Tracing the meanings of destruction independent of the subordinated means/goal relations, one realizes not only that it is not a means, but that it is also not entirely in the hands of the perpetrator, as if there were one party that can ruin construction and hide the traces of that ruination. The destruction occurs between those who destroy and those who suffer destruction, and sometimes also between many, as they were before splitting into two parties—those destroying and those suffering destruction. When one begins to regard destruction in this manner, it turns out that the act of destruction destroys not only that which its architects declare that they are destroying, but also the very configuration of life which is devoid of destruction, the destroyer, and the victim of destruction. The ruination and its concealment are akin to betrayal of the pact, the partnership, and the promise which formed the basis for co-existence.

The destruction enterprise initiated by the leaders of the Jewish Yishuv in the late 1940s was not applied, as aforesaid, to isolated houses, or rather, it was applied to them only by way of negation: focused rescue of an ancient synagogue, a Crusader fortress, or “ordinary” buildings which, left

isolated and intact, were no longer perceived as a temptation and a catalyst for the return of the deportees. The new construction which soon surrounded these isolated buildings lent them an “antiquated look” devoid of a concrete history. The destruction began with a momentum, and was aimed at entire residential environments, whose destroyers—who became the masters of the land—no longer wanted their existence. Today it is hard to isolate one cause and tell whether this was due to national, political, economic, demographical, spatial, or cultural reasons—or all of these together. The implementation of the demolition plan was made possible through the collaboration of the new Jewish citizens of the land. Many of them were thrilled by the plan to establish a state for the Jewish people, and were thus harnessed for an act of construction which also included destruction. The destruction included in the plan was built-in as a means to overcome threats and obstacles on the way to its realization: paving safe roads, creating territorial continuity, or absorbing the persecuted Jews of the world. The general goal which could have been obtained in different ways—establishment of a state for the Jewish people—was translated by the leadership of the Yishuv (and subsequently, of the State) into a destructive goal whose means were equally destructive: establishment of a state for the Jewish people on the ruins of the society that had lived here in the late 1940s. In many ways, that society was already the outcome of Jewish-Arab blending that spawned different forms of coexistence. “Coexistence” is not an ideal characterization, but rather a term intended to describe the way in which people lead their lives among and together with other people. Against the backdrop of the forms of life that existed here, the destruction, which was structured and presented as a means, was, in fact, a goal in itself, a purpose.

An architecture of destruction accompanied the demand for Jewish sovereignty over the land, and became an integral part of the war machine set in motion by this demand. Wherever it wrought havoc, the state manifested its sovereignty or spatially marked its claim for sovereignty. The ruin became an expression of the state’s sovereignty, like a flag raised at the heart of an occupied territory, indicating the presence of the new sovereign. The major

type of destruction employed in the late 1940s was one which left of the Arab villages and towns only ruins, fragments of buildings, arches, columns, turrets, so long as they did not fuse into a continuous fabric capable of attesting to the life that had existed here only days or weeks ago. In this sense, the use of the “house demolition” category which appears suitable mainly to describe the destruction acts in the Occupied Territories in the past two decades makes a unique contribution to the preservation of the constituent violence and the structuring of the destruction act as a means, and of the house as its natural object. The type of destruction of the late 1940s is differentiated from the later destruction in that it was motivated not only by the destruction of dwellings, but also by the destruction of possibilities, options, and potentials. The war machine of the Jewish nation state set out to destroy the possibility of Arab life in situ, and with it—the possibility of coexistence between Jews and Arabs. It was a double crime, since it struck not only those whose houses were robbed and demolished, but also their offspring—in depriving them of the opportunity to participate in the world constructed by their parents, a world from which they were uprooted by a regimental crime.

The crime, however, was not perfect. In al-Lydd, for example, one thousand Arabs remained. Shortly after the expulsion and demolition, the state channeled thousands of Jews to the city. The Proclamation of Independence functioned as an agreement which determined the nature of the state’s relationship with the new citizens. The regimental violence, however, continued to constitute the reality of coexistence for those who were a part of this new agreement imposed on them. Like any agreement, the Proclamation of Independence determined, to some extent, the limits of that violence, providing inspiration for the regulation of its permitted forms of implementation. The agreement laid the foundation for the constitutive violence vis-à-vis hypothetical courts of law, where a hearing regarding its violation would conclude with the inadmissibility of such a claim. The relationship between local Jews and Arabs was determined by the clauses of the agreement as well as the “needs of the time.” Neither, however, was sufficient to cope with the outcome of the imperfect crime. The imperfection

of the cleansing crime was manifested by occasional distribution of the seeds of mixing, whose very feasibility the war machine—one of whose deadly weapons was the military government—had sought to eliminate. Even when it did succeed, however, the imperfect crime produced mixtures, fusions, and variegations, including some that were the work of the state itself. For example: a stately private house such as that of Jacob Monayer, Guez's grandfather, which had been confiscated—became the public abode of the Lod Municipality, which acts as though it serves a Jewish community; Arab houses turned into neglected ruins now function as twilight zones for drug dealing, forbidden encounters, and dodgy transactions; other residential houses, which were not demolished for unknown reasons, affected—by virtue of their spatial syntax and the inspiration of the memories and ghosts they embedded—the lives of the Jews housed in them. The latter could not avoid the gaze of the uprooted al-Lydd natives who were not allowed to return to their homes. In the course of time, the Arabs of Lod, along with 150,000 Arab citizens of the state, were allowed to leave their closed ghettos and slightly expand in the space. They built new houses and created new opportunities. Their spatial movement increased the mixing potential which the cleansing crime had endeavored to uproot: a mixing of people, assets, needs, services, loves, exchange, identities, objects, ghosts and demons.

The Jewish regime that arose here transformed the Palestinian presence into a ruin. Guez's decision to present the debris as ruins—allegorical structures which carry the traces of the whole from which they were fragmented—is somewhat reminiscent of the “queer's” decision to refer to himself by the very term applied to him derogatorily. An offspring of two of Lod's ethnic communities, Guez's decision to present the remnants of the Palestinian houses as ruins in twilight may, at first sight, be read as a repetition of the act of destruction which rendered Palestinian houses ruins. The ruins in his photographs, however, are far from perfect. The context which seems to have been cleaned out of some of the photographs is reconstructed in others. It is also interwoven throughout the series of interviews he conducted with Christian-Arabs from Lod, who belong to one

branch of his family—three generations which extend from that traumatic moment to the present. The interviews with them equip the spectator with information which enables her to return to the photographs and read in them incomplete ruins; not scenes of crime cleansed of the memory of the act that generated them, but rather twilight zones where degeneration and regeneration, wonderment and confusion, obscurity and elucidation blend.

Guez presents the twilight forced on the place as a result of the crime, transforming it into an allegory of the city of Lod, as well as the entire country. The twilight bursts forth due to, through, and despite the actions of a regime which set out to destroy certain possibilities of life and acted as if it alone had the power to determine which new possibilities would spring from amongst the ruins. The exhibition extends from the familial memory of which Guez writes, centered on an exhibition curated by his mother in 1971 (as a student at the Ramla-Lod High School) about “The Occupation of Lod”; through an oil painting executed by his father (likewise a citizen of Lod) that same year, whose title, *Ruins of the Old City of Lod*, indicates to the spectator that she must seek the city’s ruins in it; to the encounter with Guez’s grandfather, Jacob Monayer, one of the elders of Lod’s Christian community, who embodies in his very figure the crime which the regime failed to complete.

The meetings with the grandfather take place at the St. George Church, a magnificent Greek Orthodox edifice. One of the photographs, the most intricate among them [pp. 138-139], features a section of the monumental parking lot being “built” next to the church, resembling an asphalt casting which dams the earth’s mouth lest it bespeak the crimes performed on its surface. Passing through the parking lot and the street leading to the church, and standing at its entrance, one fathoms the enormity of the crime and destruction of the Arab City of Lod. The church too is a ruin, a different type of ruin, even though it survived the destruction intact. It is a ruin because the social-spatial fabric in which it was interwoven had been destroyed, rendering it an isolated treasure redeemed by its sanctity. Guez’s exhibition creates a type of threshold, where the near-total neglect outside and the ravishing beauty of the ecclesiastical interior meet.

The light of the monumental chandelier, suspended from the high church ceiling, is refracted on the walls and on the faces of the congregation like a kaleidoscope. The chandelier's light reflects the spectator's gaze back to the chain of burning flames in the photograph *Market Square* [pp. 138-139]. At the center of the parking lot, cum market square, stands an old grave fenced off by a concrete wall and barbed wire. In the photograph, the market square appears empty. The governmental folly inherent in transforming a grave into a place which cannot be visited—but nevertheless magnetizes the city's life bustling in the market set up around it daily—transforms this place into a silent memorial for the impotence of the destroyers in the face of life—a bustling, non-withdrawing, non-yielding life. *Market Square* is the only photograph in which the source of light is present in the frame, albeit in the form of elusive burning flames, thus disallowing it to fulfill its modern function and to provide (in different manners) justification for the enforcement of a form of counter-existence instead of a form of coexistence with others. The light is exposed in its inability to outline clear contours, to distinguish between entities, to illuminate twilight in an absolute manner, and to release the riff from the raff.

Guez's exhibition enables the spectator to imagine the mixing not as a twilight zone at the margins, nor as a delimited sphere of exclusive ruins, but as a form of coexistence which springs from the form of counter-existence, as the song of life, as a revolutionary potential where only the enhancement of its blending may generate enough shared power of togetherness to crush the separation efforts and to re-illuminate, through the mixing, the differences between the demolished and the built-up, between the sacred and the secularized, between the Jew and the Arab. In this new light, the differences will no longer emerge as differences in the subject itself, which the individual can stabilize or collapse as if the entire world were in his hand and he were a super-citizen.

In the twilight zone allotted them, the citizens have erected a city of life. They wanted no sovereignty, they removed the flag from the pole, and sought to dissociate those who wanted to cling to the column left there,

as if it were a pillory. They drove away the super-citizens. Whenever such a super-citizen presented justifications for his actions, they rejected his claimed innocence, or the shame and guilt that were to cling to him had he stumbled; they told him that the righteousness, the shame, and the guilt belonged to the old regime, the regime of the super-citizen, and plucked his pure dove-feathers which prevented him from acknowledging his acts. Their call: “this is the city of citizens” joined the chorus of sounds of the wall that collapsed, the sizzle of secrets and lies conjured up from the earth, the hymns of mixture and hybridity, and the humming of life on the ship. The ship seemed to have sunk at storm—but in fact, it embarked on a new journey, from which one may imagine not only a city of the past, but also the possibility of a city of the future.

The photographs conceal traces of something that had been there, before the camera, during the shoot. Observation of these traces is akin to observation of the facts. The persistence of the gaze, following which the imagination is set in motion, extracts from every fact that which has not become a fact, the unrealized potential, or the potential that was wasted. Neither of these has become a fact; they were, however, inscribed in the photographs as something which may be resurrected. It is in the spectator’s power to do so. I accepted Guez’s request to write about his photographs knowing that it would be an opportunity to imagine what appears to me as the only political horizon for life in this place—blending. Out of and in view of Guez’s photographs, accompanied by the soundtrack of the interviews he conducted with members of his family, the insistence on imagining the potential constantly came up against reality. The more the imagination sailed off on the wings of reality, on the wings of the possibilities which existed and have now dissolved, the less painful and possibly more feasible it became.

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