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Constructing Memories of the Civic-Military Dictatorship in La Plata, Argentina, 1976 to  
the Present

Anna Nicole Underwood Neubauer

A thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty of

JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY

In

Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the degree of

Master of Arts

Department of Graduate History

May 2023

---

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## Abstract

This thesis examines how different organizations constructed memories of the civic-military dictatorship in Argentina. Although Spanish language literature on this topic is very rich, not much English language scholarship is present in the historiography. Using a local history approach and by analyzing primary sources such as newspapers, memoirs, flyers, and police archives, this thesis demonstrates how two groups: the Unión de Estudiantes Secundarios (High School Students Union, UES) and the Montoneros in the city of La Plata drew on the history of their fallen comrades during the civic-military dictatorship to fight for a better future in Argentina.

Introduction: Constructing “*Una Nueva Ciudad Verdadera*,” The Locality of La Plata,  
Argentina

A fountain sprays water quietly in a downtown rectangular plaza. Underneath the Linden trees, students sit in the shade chatting and reading books. From a bird’s eye view, the meticulously planned city forms a perfectly square grid.<sup>1</sup> This is the city of La Plata, Argentina, the capital city of the province of Buenos Aires. Created in 1882, La Plata was intended as a utopian city of progress, or a “*nueva ciudad verdadera*,” a truly new city.<sup>2</sup>

Completely built from scratch, the Governor of the province of Buenos Aires, Dardo Rocha, ordered the construction of the city.<sup>3</sup> Influenced by the ideas of positivism,<sup>4</sup> La Plata was designed with the idea that it would boast “the very latest innovations of art and science.”<sup>5</sup> Education played a key role in this ideology.

Construction on the *Universidad Nacional de La Plata* (National University of La Plata, subsequently UNLP) began in the 1890s.<sup>6</sup> Today the UNLP is home to over 120,000

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<sup>1</sup> Fernando de Terán, *La Plata, ciudad nueva, ciudad antigua: historia, forma y estructura de un espacio urbano singular* (La Plata: Instituto de Estudios de Administración Local, 1983), 42. Unless otherwise specified, all English translations, including any errors, are my own. On the first appearance of a word in Spanish, I will write the word in italics.

<sup>2</sup> Samuel Martland, “Progress Illuminating the World: Street lighting in Santiago, Valparaiso, and La Plata, 1840-90,” *Urban History* 29, no. 2 (August 2002): 237, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44613322>; de Terán, *La Plata*, 7, 39.

<sup>3</sup> de Terán, *La Plata*, 7, 25. For geographical reference, La Plata is located 37 miles (59.5 kilometers) away from Buenos Aires by car.

<sup>4</sup> Positivism is a European philosophy that took on its own ideology in Argentina, as well as in other countries throughout Latin America in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Positivism had intellectual, political, and economic implications. Specifically in La Plata, government officials expressed positivism as they oversaw the construction of the city. The ideology of positivism is reflected in La Plata through the city’s grid pattern and diagonal streets. See p. 162 of Howard Wiarda’s book chapter “Positivism: A Philosophy of Order and Progress,” in *The Soul of Latin America: The Cultural and Political Tradition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001). Also see pages 515, 516, 520, of Arturo Arado’s “Assimilation and Transformation of Positivism in Latin America,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 24, no. 4 (1963).

<sup>5</sup> Martland, “Progress illuminating the world,” 236.

<sup>6</sup> de Terán, *La Plata*, 25; Rosario Marina, “¿Dónde están los indígenas platenses?” *El Día*, October 23, 2016, <https://www.eldia.com/nota/2016-10-23--donde-estan-los-indigenas-platenses>.

students, with 17 different colleges and numerous fields of study.<sup>7</sup> Throughout the years, the UNLP would prove to be an important site for student activism, as it became a space for young people of all political beliefs – but especially on the left – to gather and organize.

La Plata is an important city not only because it is home to the UNLP – the third largest university in all of Argentina – but because it was and still is a crucial site of student activism, union organizing, and advocacy by human rights organizations.<sup>8</sup> These human rights organizations trace their beginnings to during and after the civic-military dictatorship (hereafter ‘the dictatorship’). During the time period of 1976 to 1983, La Plata was a site of both significant resistance and grave violence enacted by the dictatorship. For example, following the protests of high school students for a reduced bus fare in La Plata (the BES, see Chapter One), the dictatorship responded by kidnapping 10 of the students from the organization leading the protests over the course of two weeks in September 1976 in what would later become known as *La Noche de los Lápices* (The Night of the Pencils) and disappeared them to clandestine detention centers, where only 3 survived.<sup>9</sup>

Another event of grave violence carried out by the dictatorship in La Plata was the attack on the Casa Mariani Teruggi. Daniel Mariani and Diana Teruggi, members of the organization the Montoneros, owned a home in La Plata, the location of the secret

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<sup>7</sup> “Inscripción a todas las carreras de la UNLP,” Universidad Nacional de La Plata, <https://unlp.edu.ar/ingreso/>

<sup>8</sup> Ramiro Segura, “Protective Arrangements Across Class: Understanding Social Segregation in La Plata, Argentina,” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 45, no. 6 (November 2021): 1065, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2427.12889>.

<sup>9</sup> Maria Seoane and Hector Ruiz Núñez, *La noche de los Lápices* (Editorial Contrapunto: Buenos Aires, 1986), 26-27; Sandra Raggio, “Narrar el terrorismo de Estado. De los hechos a la denuncia pública: el caso de la <<noche de los lápices>>,” *Cuadernos del CISH* 17-18 (2005): 101.

printing press for the organization's newspaper, *Evita Montonera*.<sup>10</sup> On November 24, 1976, the state brutally attacked the home, killed 5 members of the Montoneros present at the time, and kidnapped Clara Anahí, Daniel Mariani and Diana Teruggi's three month old daughter. The state attacked the home to send a message to not only the Montoneros but to the neighborhood around the home as well: they would not tolerate the free speech exhibited through *Evita Montonera*, nor the so-called "subversives" who lived in the home.<sup>11</sup> Members of the joint forces, including *Comisaría 5° de La Plata* (The 5<sup>th</sup> Police Station of La Plata), Miguel Etchecolatz and Ramón Camps, led these police officers who participated in the attack on the home.<sup>12</sup>

Ramón Camps and Miguel Etchecolatz were two very brutal members of the police in La Plata. Camps served as the police commissioner and led the "*Circuito Camps*" (Camps Circuit), a network of twenty nine clandestine detention centers.<sup>13</sup> Camps and Etchecolatz also served at the *Inteligencia de la Policía de la provincia de Buenos Aires* (The Intelligence Directorate of the Buenos Aires Province Police, hereinafter DIPPBA) that conducted surveillance on people in the Buenos Aires province, including the UES in La Plata during and after the civic-military dictatorship.<sup>14</sup>

The work of Camps and Etchecolatz, such as the Circuito Camps, and the surveillance they conducted under DIPPBA, in addition to their involvement in La Noche

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<sup>10</sup> "El Ataque," Asociación Anahí, <http://asociacionanahi.org.ar/casa/#ataque>.

<sup>11</sup> "El ataque," Asociación Anahí, <http://asociacionanahi.org.ar/casa/#ataque>. The Asociación Anahí notes on their website that "The intelligence department of the police registered her [Clara Anahí] as a 'subversive,' despite her young age." From the original Spanish "La dirección de inteligencia de la policía que él dirigió la fichó como 'subversiva' a pesar de su corta edad."

<sup>12</sup> "El ataque."

<sup>13</sup> "Espacio para la memoria ex CCDTyE Destacamento de Arana," Comisión Provincial por la Memoria, <https://www.comisionporlamemoria.org/sitiosdememoria/ficha/espacio-para-la-memoria-y-promocion-de-los-derechos-ex-ccdtye-destacamento-de-arana/#desafectacion>.

<sup>14</sup> "Fondo DIPPBA," *Comisión Provincial por la memoria*, <https://atom.comisionporlamemoria.net/index.php/fondo-dippba>.

de los Lápices and the attack on the Casa Mariani Teruggi, all contributed to state terrorism during the dictatorship in La Plata. Thus, when examining the history of La Plata, the city represents a microcosm of the dictatorship. By examining this local area, it provides a larger snapshot of the history of the dictatorship. La Plata was and still is a place that significantly contributes to discussions around how the dictatorship should be remembered. By remembering La Noche de los Lápices and the attack on the Casa Mariani Teruggi, organizations honor those who died due to state violence while continuing to fight for change during the 1990s to the present day.

This thesis examines the way in which La Plata remembers the violence of the dictatorship. In particular, I look at how La Noche de los Lápices is remembered on the anniversary of September 16<sup>th</sup> and I analyze how the attack on the Casa Mariani Teruggi is remembered, especially during 1993 and 1994 as organizations turned the house into a site of memory. La Plata offers a microcosm of how civil rights organizations engaged in memory making related to the dictatorship as they continued to fight for the conditions for a democratic Argentina.

Before continuing with the history of the dictatorship in Argentina, it is necessary to examine the creation of Argentina, and more specifically the provincial capital of La Plata, through colonization. What is known today as the province of Buenos Aires – where La Plata is located – is on the ancestral homelands of the Kolla, Gurani, Mapuche, Qom, Tehuelches-Gunun A Kuna, Tonokoté, Aymara, Quichua, Huarpe, Mocoví and Ranquel Peoples, who today continue to live in the greater province and in the city of La Plata.<sup>15</sup> The Council of Indigenous Communities of La Plata estimate that over 10,000

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<sup>15</sup> Marina, “¿Dónde están los indígenas platenses?”

Indigenous people live in La Plata today, showing a history of continuation and resistance.<sup>16</sup> During the process of creating La Plata in the 1880s, Argentina appropriated the land from Indigenous peoples through violence in the province of Buenos Aires. Several military campaigns in the nineteenth century forcibly pushed out Indigenous peoples and mixed-race gauchos to clear the area for capitalist development.<sup>17</sup> Gauchos, or “migratory ranch hands and horsemen of the Argentine pampa [grasslands]” were usually multiracial, mixing Indigenous with European and African ancestry.<sup>18</sup> As ranches in the province of Buenos Aires, and greater Argentina, modernized in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the way of life of the gauchos was challenged as the government applied “legal constraints,” eventually leading to the end of the gauchos as a social class.<sup>19</sup>

It is important to note that the history of La Plata did not start in 1882, when the city was created, nor did the history of Argentina begin with Spanish colonization. As historian Jean O’Brien argues in *Firsting and Lasting: Writing Indians out of Existence in New England* the historiography of New England has pushed Native Americans to the sidelines, while colonizers are seen as “the first” to begin the history of this area. Secondly, through “lasting,” also a significant program in past histories of New England, Native Americans are seen as only existing in previous histories – not the present day.<sup>20</sup> While O’Brien specifically examines the history of New England, her argument can be applied to the colonization of Argentina as well. The Mapuche community today

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<sup>16</sup> Marina, “¿Dónde están los indígenas platenses?”

<sup>17</sup> Richard Slatta, *Gauchos and the Vanishing Frontier* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992), 1.

<sup>18</sup> Slatta, *Gauchos*, 1.

<sup>19</sup> Slatta, *Gauchos*, 6, 58, 90. While gauchos as a recognizable social class may have ended, this is not to say that they disappeared entirely, gauchos began to work on modernized ranches in the pampas or moved to other parts of Argentina.

<sup>20</sup> Jean O’Brien, *Firsting and Lasting: Writing Indians Out of Existence in New England* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press: 2010), 6, 107.

continues to face challenges caused by colonization.<sup>21</sup> To leave out the histories of these Indigenous peoples in Argentina would only contribute to the problems of “firsting” and “lasting” that O’Brien points out in her book.

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<sup>21</sup> María José González, “Los mapuches: en defensa de su territorio ancestral en Argentina,” *AIDA*, August 30, 2022, <https://aida-americas.org/es/blog/los-mapuches-en-defensa-de-su-territorio-ancestral-en-argentina>.

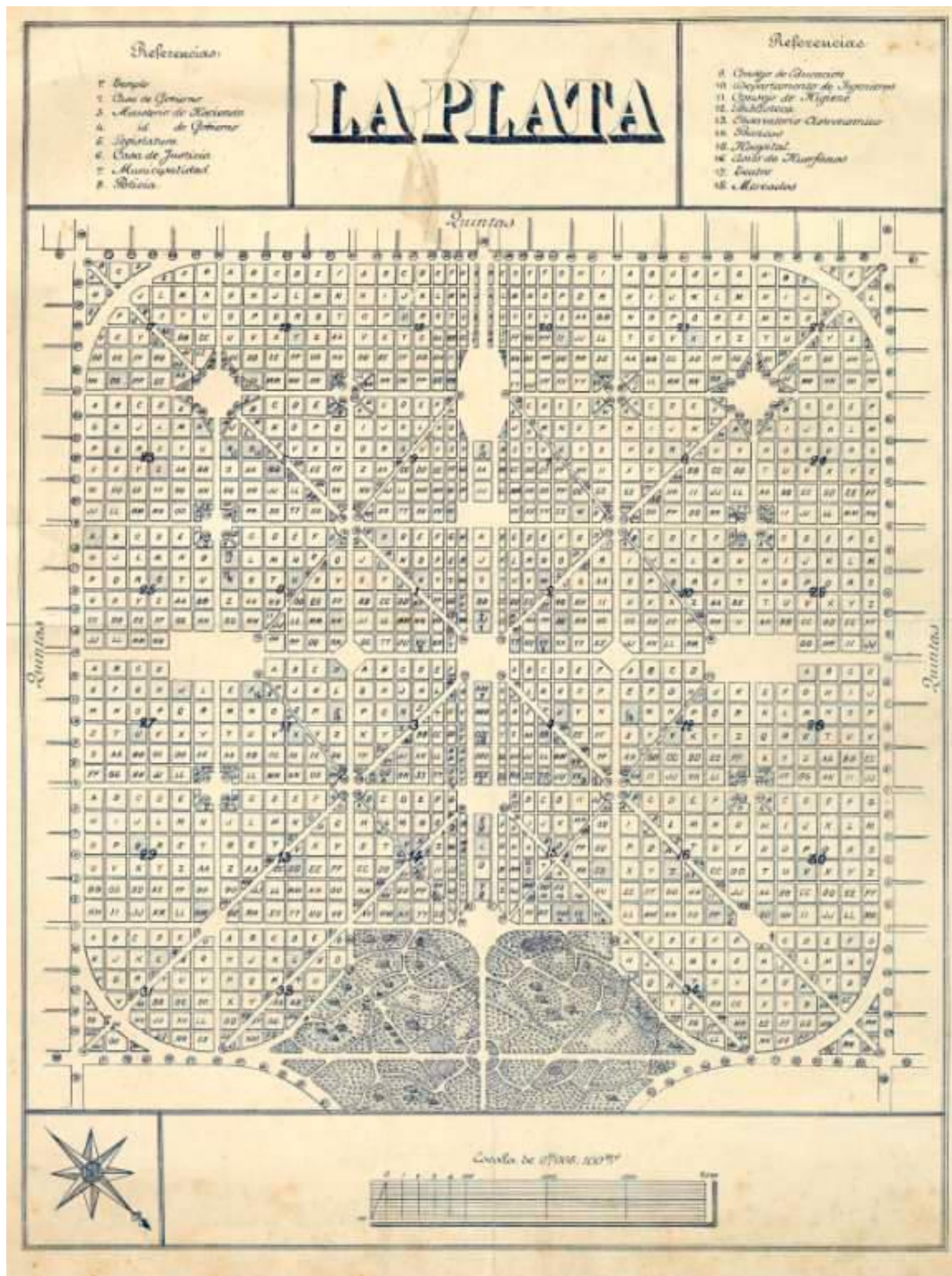


Figure 1. Map of La Plata, 1882. Courtesy of Archivo General de La Nación, Mapoteca II-117, <https://www.facebook.com/ArchivoFotograficoMinisterioDeInfraestructura/photos/a.418905154826633/2564939880223139/?type=3&theater>.



## The Civic-Military Dictatorship in Argentina

Political violence existed in Argentina in the years leading up to the dictatorship, and did not just begin after the coup in 1976. The impact of the country's financial troubles in the 1970s shaped union activism on the left, as many unions became more active politically.<sup>22</sup> On the other side of the political spectrum existed the *Alianza Anticomunista Argentina* (Argentine Anticommunist Alliance, or AAA), which formed part of the political right and became active in the 1970s before the dictatorship. Defined as “an extraofficial death squad” the AAA repressed and exhibited violence against those on the political left.<sup>23</sup> Organizations that the AAA targeted included the Montoneros, a group that carried arms and supported the ideas of Juan Perón.<sup>24</sup>

Tensions in the 1970s reached a boiling point when what became known as the civic-military dictatorship began “On March 24, 1976, [after] a military junta staged a coup d'état in Argentina.”<sup>25</sup> Those considered “suspect” – mainly members of labor unions, students, and those politically active on the left, among others, were forcibly “disappeared” to clandestine detention centers throughout Argentina.<sup>26</sup> As sociologist Emilio Crenzel explains,

Disappearances involved the detention or abduction of individuals by military officers, police personnel, or security forces, either in uniform or dressed in civilian clothes. After they were picked up, these individuals were taken to illegal prisons—known as *clandestine detention centers* and located primarily in military or police facilities—where they were tortured and, for the most part, killed. Their bodies were then buried in unmarked graves, incinerated, or thrown into the sea. The state denied any responsibility in the disappearances when it was confronted

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<sup>22</sup> Thomas Wright, *State Terrorism in Latin America: Chile, Argentina, and International Human Rights* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2007), 98.

<sup>23</sup> Wright, *State Terrorism in Latin America*, 99.

<sup>24</sup> Wright, 98.

<sup>25</sup> Emilio Crenzel, *The Memory of the Argentina Disappearances: The Political History of Nunca Mas*, (Florence: Taylor & Francis Group, 2011), 8.

<sup>26</sup> Crenzel, *The Memory of the Argentina Disappearances*, 8.

with denunciations brought by the human rights organizations that existed prior to the coup.<sup>27</sup> Crenzel also states that while 27% of the disappeared were from the greater Buenos Aires area, “8 percent [occurred] in La Plata.”<sup>28</sup> The clandestine detention centers present in La Plata included Pozo de Arana, Pozo de Banfield, the second precinct, the fifth precinct, the eighth precinct, the Investigations Brigade, the Directorate of Infantry of the Police of the Province of Buenos Aires, BIM 3, and the Penitentiary Unit Number 9 of La Plata.<sup>29</sup>

In addition to state terrorism exhibited through violence in clandestine detention centers, the state also exhibited repression through censorship. At the Museo de Arte y Memoria in La Plata, one of the interpretive signs at the beginning of the Muestra patrimonial states,

The control of culture and information by the majority of the press (exercised by the dictators and the business complicity of the owners of graphic media, radio and television) made it possible to spread distorted news about the events that had occurred, suggesting that the murdered people, generally activists of political organizations, had died in fabricated ‘confrontations’ with the security forces or were ‘subversive criminals.’<sup>30</sup>

Thus, independent newspapers or underground newspapers that printed information not affected by government censorship were essential during the civic-military dictatorship.

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<sup>27</sup> Crenzel, 8. Italics original.

<sup>28</sup> Crenzel, *The Memory of the Argentina Disappearances*, 15.

<sup>29</sup> “Paisajes de la memoria,” *Comisión Provincial por la Memoria*, December 14, 2018, <https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/viewer?mid=1jEollbtOoxowhP33ogpHKpdnFKA&ll=-34.92207479180865%2C-57.94107719655871&z=19>. From the original Spanish: Comisaría 2º, Comisaría 5º, Comisaría 8º, Brigada de Investigaciones, la Dirección de Infantería de la Policía de la Provincia de Buenos Aires, BIM 3, Unidad Penitenciaria N° 9 de La Plata.

<sup>30</sup> English translation by William and Mary students in the exchange program with the UNLP and collaboration with the CPM. From the original Spanish text: “El control de la cultura y de la información por la mayoría de la prensa (ejercido por los dictadores y la complicidad empresarial de los propietarios de medios gráficos, radio y televisión) permitía impartir noticias deformadas sobre los hechos ocurridos, planteando que las personas asesinadas, generalmente militantes de organizaciones políticas, habían muerto en ‘enfrentamientos’ con las fuerzas de seguridad o eran ‘delinquentes subversivos.’” See “Muestra patrimonial, Comisión Provincial por la memoria, Museo de arte y memoria, <https://www.comisionporlamemoria.org/museo/project/memoria/#audio-adultos12>. For more information on the exchange program, see <https://www.wm.edu/as/modernlanguages/hispanic/studyabroad/laplata/index.php>.

However, to those who spoke out against the government, there was a cost. Two journalists in particular, Rodolfo Walsh (see Figures 1 and 2) – who the state killed after Walsh wrote his “*Carta abierta de Rodolfo Walsh a la junta militar*” (Open letter from Rodolfo Walsh to the Military Junta) – and Jacobo Timerman – whom the state detained in clandestine detention centers and tortured during the civic-military dictatorship – spoke out against the government.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Rodolfo Walsh, “Open Letter from a Writer to the Military Junta,” <https://libcom.org/article/open-letter-writer-military-junta-rodolfo-walsh>.



*Figure 2.* Front side of Rodolfo Walsh monument. Photo by Anna Neubauer. This sculpture featuring Rodolfo Walsh is in the Plaza San Martín in La Plata. The location of the monument in Plaza San Martín may have been chosen because Walsh used to play chess at the Club de Ajedrez La Plata located across the street from the Plaza. There is also a plaque at the chess club in tribute to Walsh. For more information, see the Comisión Provincial por la Memoria’s Google Map under “Placa homenaje a Rodolfo Walsh,” <https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/viewer?mid=1jEollbtOoxowhP33ogpHKpdnFKA&ll=-34.91570300000001%2C-57.946556&z=19>.



Figure 3. Side view of Rodolfo Walsh monument. Photo by Anna Neubauer. Although the inscription on the side of the monument looks like it has been worn off over time, the Comisión Provincial por la Memoria has a copy of the text in their “Paisajes de memoria” Google Maps. It states “There is a person shot by a military firing squad who lives. Tribute to Rodolfo Walsh 30 years after his murder and disappearance.”<sup>32</sup> Walsh was disappeared and killed by the state on March 25, 1977, the day after he sent his *Open Letter from a Writer to the Military Junta*.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>32</sup> “Paisajes de la memoria,” *Comisión Provincial por la Memoria*, December 14, 2018, <https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/viewer?mid=1jEoIltOoxowhP33ogpHKpdnFKA&ll=-34.92207479180865%2C-57.94107719655871&z=19>. From the original Spanish: “Hay un fusilado que vive. Homenaje a Rodolfo Walsh a 30 años de su asesinato y su desaparición. Facultad de Periodismo y Comunicación Social y Secretaría de Derechos Humanos del gobierno de la provincia de Buenos Aires. 25 de marzo de 2007.”

<sup>33</sup> Rodolfo Walsh, “Open Letter from a Writer to the Military Junta,” March 24, 1977, <https://libcom.org/article/open-letter-writer-military-junta-rodolfo-walsh>. For the original Spanish version of the letter, see Rodolfo Walsh, “Carta abierta de Rodolfo Walsh a la junta militar,” March 24, 1977, <https://web.archive.org/web/20060209013208/http://www.literatura.org/Walsh/rw240377.html>.

## Jacobo Timerman

“You must remember, I need you to remember, for otherwise I’m obliged to remember for us both.”<sup>34</sup>

Born in in Bar, Ukraine in 1923 to a Jewish family, at the age of five years old Jacobo Timerman and his family immigrated to Argentina.<sup>35</sup> An important journalist in the province of Buenos Aires, Timerman worked as the editor for the newspaper *La Opinión* (The Opinion).<sup>36</sup> In describing the political leaning of the newspaper, Timerman states that “*La Opinión*, curiously enough, was a moderate newspaper. It was often compared to *Le Monde*, but in relation to the ideological position of the French daily, one could say that *La Opinión* was a typically liberal newspaper.”<sup>37</sup> Published every Sunday, the newspaper circulated from 1971-1977, when he was arrested by those who “obey[ed] orders from the Tenth Infantry Brigade of the First Army Corps.”<sup>38</sup> After his arrest, which the military never explicitly gave a reason for, Timerman found himself “held in three clandestine sites in Argentina and two legal prisons.”<sup>39</sup>

Timerman’s experiences as a detainee in clandestine detention centers and legal prisons sheds light on the topics of journalism during the civic-military dictatorship. His experiences also show what it was like to be Jewish during the civic-military dictatorship, and how the state marginalized Jewish people during this time and those who did not fit

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<sup>34</sup> Jacobo Timerman, *Prisoner Without a Name, Cell Without a Number* (New York: Knopf, 1981), 1.

<sup>35</sup> Timerman, *Prisoner Without a Name*, 114.

<sup>36</sup> Timerman, 20.

<sup>37</sup> Timerman, 23.

<sup>38</sup> “La Opinión,” Biblioteca Nacional de Argentina, [https://catalogo.bn.gov.ar/F/YFKKPCVTAXDVEU569PQL6R582TJFLSCESANKM3PAT7AK4QUCXB-41796?func=full-set-set&set\\_number=013704&set\\_entry=000346&format=999](https://catalogo.bn.gov.ar/F/YFKKPCVTAXDVEU569PQL6R582TJFLSCESANKM3PAT7AK4QUCXB-41796?func=full-set-set&set_number=013704&set_entry=000346&format=999); Timerman, 9.

<sup>39</sup> Timerman, 66.

the mold of Christianity, more specifically Catholicism.<sup>40</sup> When writing about his faith in his memoir *Preso sin nombre, Celda sin número*, published in English as *Prisoner Without a Name, Cell Without a Number*, Timerman explains “My Judaism was a political act, but Judaism as a political category proved impossible for the military to understand.”<sup>41</sup> The military frequently expressed antisemitic views to taunt Timerman. Timerman identified as a Zionist and a leftist, and it is possibly due to these identities that the Argentine military kept him alive during his detention, as they believed Timerman had inside knowledge about the Sabios de Zion, a false antisemitic<sup>42</sup> plot that stated Jewish people were trying to take over the country.<sup>43</sup> The state exhibited antisemitism during the civic-military dictatorship, and antisemitism existed as a problem in Argentina beforehand as well.<sup>44</sup> Scholar Estelle Tarcia explains that “‘Official’ antisemitism during the dictatorship was primarily of the clandestine sort: the clearest evidence of state-sponsored antisemitism occurred in the torture rooms of the prisons and detention centers.”<sup>45</sup>

The American organization Jewish Voice for Peace, a grassroots organization on the left, defines Zionism as “a settler-colonial movement, establishing an apartheid state where Jews have more rights than others. Our own history teaches us how dangerous this

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<sup>40</sup> Constanza Dalla Porta and Pablo Pryluka, “Argentina’s Dictatorship was not a ‘Dirty War.’ It was State Terrorism,” *Jacobin*, June 7, 2020, <https://jacobin.com/2020/06/argentina-dictatorship-dirty-war-military>.

<sup>41</sup> Timerman, *Prisoner Without a Name*, 139; on page 72 Timerman explains how the military claimed they did not arrest him due to his faith or profession, and the government never held any formal charges against him.

<sup>42</sup> The Anti-Defamation League defines antisemitism as “The belief or behavior hostile towards Jews just because they are Jewish. It may take the form of religious teachings that proclaim the inferiority of Jews, for instance, or political efforts to isolate, oppress, or otherwise injure them. It may also include prejudiced or stereotyped views about Jews.” See <https://www.adl.org/antisemitism>.

<sup>43</sup> Timerman, *Prisoner Without a Name*, 30.

<sup>44</sup> Estelle Tarcia, “The Holocaust Again? Dispatches from the Jewish ‘Internal Front’ in Dictatorship Argentina,” *Journal of Jewish Studies* 5, no. 1 (2012): 99.

<sup>45</sup> Tarcia, “The Holocaust Again?” 100.

can be.”<sup>46</sup> After Timerman’s release from detention in 1979, the government “stripped [him] of his Argentine citizenship and expelled him from the country.”<sup>47</sup> Timerman moved to Israel, where he stayed until moving back to Argentina in 1984.<sup>48</sup> While in Israel, Timerman saw first-hand the discrimination of the Palestinian people. Reflecting upon the 1982 Lebanon War, Timerman “published a critical book, *Israel, the Longer War* (1982), denouncing the unjust treatment of the Palestinians. This book aroused severe criticism of the author in Israel.”<sup>49</sup>

Timerman’s identity as a Zionist also caught criticism from other people on the left in Argentina. In *Preso sin nombre*, Timerman explains that

Hence *La Opinión* was an adversary of the Left for being Zionist, an adversary of the military government for being terrorist, an adversary of mass culture for publishing sophisticated writers, an adversary of the Left for publishing Soviet dissidents, and an adversary of the family for publishing in its science section an article on the sexual habits of young Americans.<sup>50</sup>

Disagreement among the political left is nothing new, however Timerman faced more extreme reactions to his newspaper from groups on both the far right and the far left. He admits that “During my journalistic career, particularly as a publisher and editor of *La Opinión*, I received countless threats.”<sup>51</sup> Through *La Opinión*, Timerman would “attack the leaders of the extremist military groups directly.”<sup>52</sup> These actions caused Timerman

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<sup>46</sup> Melanie Kaye, “JVP’s Approach to Zionism,” 1. Jewish Voice for Peace further explains that “We know that opposing Zionism, or even discussing it, can be painful, can strike at the deepest trauma and greatest fears of many of us. Zionism is a nineteenth-century political ideology that emerged in a moment where Jews were defined as irrevocably outside of a Christian Europe. European antisemitism threatened and ended millions of Jewish lives – in pogroms, in exile, and in the Holocaust.”

<sup>47</sup> Timerman, *Prisoner Without a Name*, 162.

<sup>48</sup> Timerman, 163.

<sup>49</sup> “Jacobó Timerman,” Jewish Virtual Library, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jacobó-timmerman>. The 1982 Lebanon War occurred when the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) invaded Lebanon.

<sup>50</sup> Timerman, *Prisoner Without a Name*, 124.

<sup>51</sup> Timerman, 20.

<sup>52</sup> Timerman, 28.



to be threatened. He describes how families whose relatives had been disappeared came to him, asking for his help in finding their loved ones. He then published their names, but only if he thought this move would not risk killing the disappeared.<sup>53</sup> Timmerman had to make a hard decision, not knowing if the military would kill someone out of rage that *La Opinión* knew about the disappearances, but also not knowing how to turn the families away if Timmerman calculated that it would be too risky.

An article in *La Opinión* from July 4, 1971 foreshadows how it would become an outlet for political prisoners. *La Opinión* shared an excerpt of the writings of George Jackson, an African American man arrested for stealing \$70 from a gas station in California in 1960. He received a sentence “of one year (minimum) to life.”<sup>54</sup> An activist on the left, Jackson wrote letters during his detention which later became published as the collection called *Soledad Brother: The Prison Letters of George Jackson*.<sup>55</sup> The fact that *La Opinión* gave Jackson a voice in their publication during a time when as a political prisoner a large number of white people, and by extension the United States, viewed him as a “criminal” shows how *La Opinión* would later go on to support those detained and disappeared for their political leanings during the civic-military dictatorship. In addition, this demonstrates Timmerman had an international scope, and used the newspaper to call attention to the injustices of the US in the Cold War, particularly the racism caused by the US government and white people towards African Americans.

### **International Context**

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<sup>53</sup> Timmerman, 59.

<sup>54</sup> “George Jackson: Negro en prisión,” *La Opinión*, July 4, 1971, 15. From the original Spanish: “En 1960, por haber robado 70 dólares en una estación de servicio, el negro George Jackson fue condenado a prisión por un año (como mínimo) o perpetua.”

<sup>55</sup> “George Jackson,” 15.

The Cuban Revolution occurred during the context of the Cold War, when Fidel Castro and his supporters successively seized power over dictator Fulgencio Batista to usher in a wave of socialism. Che Guervara, born and raised in Argentina, fought alongside Castro and wrote a book about by the tactics of guerilla warfare used during the Cuban Revolution.<sup>56</sup> The Montoneros<sup>57</sup> also used guerilla tactics as an organization.<sup>58</sup> To Cuba and countries throughout Latin America, the Cuban Revolution symbolized the triumph of young people and the poor and working classes winning against capitalism and also US imperialism. However, in the eyes of the United States, this revolution poised “the gravest threat the United States had experienced to its continued economic and geopolitical dominance of the Western hemisphere.”<sup>59</sup> The US would go to great lengths to attempt to stop the spread of socialism and communism during the Cold War.

The US also meddled in the dictatorships in Latin America during the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. Operation Condor refers to “the secret repressive network that Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay created in late 1975 to target political opponents beyond their repressive borders.”<sup>60</sup> This context is important to know in the case of Argentina, as the civic-military dictatorship there existed as part of a broader pattern in Latin America. Around the time of the dictatorship in Argentina, Chile faced a similar period of dictatorship and state violence during the years of 1973-1990.<sup>61</sup> Guatemala, El

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<sup>56</sup> Wright, *State Terrorism in Latin America*, 19.

<sup>57</sup> The Montoneros were a guerilla organization on the left created in 1970 that embraced principles of Perónism. See Cintia González Leegstra, “El juicio a Etchecolatz: Nuevos y viejos actores en la lucha por la justicia,” *Intersticios* 5, no. 2 (2011): 132, [https://www.memoria.fahce.unlp.edu.ar/art\\_revistas/pr.14541/pr.14541.pdf](https://www.memoria.fahce.unlp.edu.ar/art_revistas/pr.14541/pr.14541.pdf).

<sup>58</sup> Wright, *State Terrorism in Latin America* 19.

<sup>59</sup> Wright, *State Terrorism in Latin America*, 19.

<sup>60</sup> Francesca Lessa, *The Condor Trials: Transnational Repression and Human Rights in South America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2022), 5.

<sup>61</sup> Wright, *State Terrorism in Latin America*, xii.

Salvador, Peru, Brazil, and Uruguay also went through periods of state violence through dictatorships, although the dictatorships in each country varied in different ways.<sup>62</sup> In addition, “countries such as Paraguay, Bolivia, Honduras, and even Mexico experienced heightened repression in the 1970s and 1980s that included torture, murder, and disappearance” however these countries did not have the systematic plans put in place by dictatorships such as the one in Argentina.<sup>63</sup>

A common factor throughout these dictatorships in Latin America in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century was the involvement of the United States. As historian Thomas Wright explains, “the United States offered virtually unconditional support to the regimes that suppressed human rights as they persecuted leftist parties and groups.”<sup>64</sup> The United States backing these dictatorships can be traced to the mid-twentieth century, when the country operated a military training school in Panama. As scholar Francesca Lessa explains in her recent book *The Condor Trials: Transnational Repression and Human Rights in South America*,

In the late 1940s, the US began to train military forces from friendly nations, and hundreds of Latin American officers studied in Panama at the now infamous US Army School of the Americas (Escuela de las Americas) including leading counterinsurgency techniques. In addition, US advisors were dispatched on the ground to instruct local police and intelligence officers.<sup>65</sup>

To put it another way, the actions of the US contributed to this larger system of repression and torture that would be used by Argentina during their civic-military dictatorship. As a historian who lives in the US, one of the questions I have asked myself during this thesis research is why this period of Argentine history is important for a US

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<sup>62</sup> Wright, xii. He notes that in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Peru Indigenous peoples were targets of the state.

<sup>63</sup> Wright, xiii.

<sup>64</sup> Wright, *State Terrorism in Latin America*, 18.

<sup>65</sup> Lessa, *The Condor Trials*, 21.

audience. Aside from the fact that it is important to know about world history in general, it is essential that we in the US study this history, and our country's role in it. This US involvement and US efforts internationally during the Cold War echo larger issues of imperialism and colonization, particularly with the history of US intervention in Latin America. It behooves us to learn this history.

**“Con hambre no se puede estudiar:” The History of the *Unión de Estudiantes Secundarios* (High School Students Union, UES) in La Plata**

The Unión de Estudiantes Secundarios (High School Students Union, hereinafter UES) was created in 1973 by students at the *Colegio Nacional de Buenos Aires* (National High School of Buenos Aires, hereinafter CNBA).<sup>66</sup> The UES formed as an organization that supported Juan Perón, president of Argentina who had a strong platform on workers' rights and whom the Argentine military had been opposed to and helped overthrow him ending his first era of rule, in 1955.<sup>67</sup> At the CNBA before the civic-military dictatorship, students organized to improve conditions at their high school, where strict rules governed students' conduct and behavior.<sup>68</sup> There is a rich history of student organizing through the UES at CNBA, however, the government tried to cover up this history. During the 1990s, two students from the CNB, Werner Pertot and Santiago Geranio, went looking in the

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<sup>66</sup> Virna Molina and Ernesto Ardito, *El futuro es nuestro*, Buenos Aires, Argentina, 2014. <https://eardito.wixsite.com/futuronuestro/details>.

<sup>67</sup> Molina and Ardito, *El futuro es nuestro*.

<sup>68</sup> Molina and Ardito, *El futuro es nuestro*.

school's archives and in the process 'unsilenced'<sup>69</sup> this important history. Those students later wrote "La Otra Juvenil" ("The Other Youth") about their research in the archives.<sup>70</sup>

Besides the chapter of the UES at the CNBA, other chapters of the organization formed throughout Argentina. High school students founded the UES – La Plata chapter in 1973, the same year that the CNBA chapter was founded.<sup>71</sup> 1973 was a significant year not only due to the founding of this organization, but because it was also when Perón returned to Argentina after his exile.<sup>72</sup> In the 1970s, the aims of the UES consisted of ending social inequalities, championing "popular democracy" and a strong platform on education.<sup>73</sup> While other student organizations on the political left also formed during this time period in high schools and universities, they had different names and objectives, but one common goal emerged: that of "national liberation."<sup>74</sup>

The language of "national liberation" draws from the Cuban Revolution, which served as an inspiration to young activists. In fact, a poster drawing attention to the 22<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of the Argentine revolutionary, Ernesto "Che" Guevara's murder on October 8<sup>th</sup>, 1967, and the upcoming anniversary of La Noche de los Lápices on September 16<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> As historian Michel-Rolph Trouillot describes, unsilencing is the "unearthing of silences" in the historical record. In *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), 58.

<sup>70</sup> Molina and Ardito, *El futuro es nuestro*.

<sup>71</sup> CPM – Fondo DIPPBA División Central de Documentación, Registro y Archivo, Mesa A, Factor estudiantil, Legajo 246, p. 40; Molina and Ardito, *El futuro es nuestro*.

<sup>72</sup> Perón had supporters, called Peronists, on both the left and right. The UES made up part of the spectrum on the left that supported Perón. When he returned to Argentina in 1973, his supporters met him at Ezeiza International Airport and in the process of waiting for him, many of his followers were killed in a skirmish. This became known as the Ezeiza Massacre and showed how divided his followers were. See David Rock, *Argentina, 1516-1987 from Spanish Colonization to Alfonsín* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987), 360.

<sup>73</sup> CPM – Fondo DIPPBA División Central de Documentación, Registro y Archivo, Mesa A, Factor estudiantil, Legajo 246, p. 40. From the original Spanish "una democracia popular."

<sup>74</sup> CPM – Fondo DIPPBA División Central de Documentación, Registro y Archivo, Mesa A, Factor estudiantil, Legajo 246, p. 40. From the original Spanish "una democracia popular" and "Es así como surgen numerosas agrupaciones estudiantiles encolumnadas bajo una diversidad de siglas pero con un objetivo común: sumar al estudiantado al proceso de liberación nacional."

created by the organization *Federación Juvenil Comunista* (Communist Youth Federation) from the 1990s shows Che Guevara. The slogan “we will be like Che” is included on the poster alongside his image.<sup>75</sup> Guevara was well known to the country and symbolized ideals of anti-imperialism – a goal adopted by the UES.

In the present day, the UES in La Plata is still very active. In fact, in 2016 students in UES – La Plata organized for the immediate implementation of the free student bus ticket (the BES, see Chapter 1), using the slogan “con hambre no se puede estudiar” (when hungry you can’t study).<sup>76</sup> Drawing on the work done by activists before them, the UES – La Plata chapter today continues the fight for a properly funded education and human rights. They also exercise stewardship of the history and memory of their comrades disappeared during La Noche de los Lápices. As historian Fawn-Amber Montoya and anthropologist Karin Larkin define in their recent publication *Communities of Ludlow: Collaborative Stewardship and the Ludlow Centennial Commemoration Commission*, “stewardship provides a vehicle for exercising and engaging social memory with contemporary social issues.”<sup>77</sup> Thus, members of the UES are stewards in the present day by connecting this history of their fellow disappeared members who fought for the BES by drawing on their legacy in today’s campaign for the BES.

### **Terminology**

It is important to be intentional with the language used when describing this time period. In this thesis I will use the term “civic-military dictatorship” to describe the

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<sup>75</sup> CPM – Fondo DIPPBA División Central de Documentación, Registro y Archivo, Mesa A, Factor estudiantil, Legajo 78, p. 15-16. From the original Spanish “seremos como el Che.”

<sup>76</sup> Posts by the UES – La Plata, Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/UnionEstudiantesSecundariosLaPlata/photos/pb.100068980547358.-2207520000../1000213463388037/?type=3>.

<sup>77</sup> Fawn-Amber Montoya and Karin Larkin, *Communities of Ludlow: Collaborative Stewardship and the Ludlow Centennial Commemoration Commission* (Louisville: University Press of Colorado, 2022), 80.

period of state violence from 1976-1983. Constanza Dalla Porta and Pablo Pryluka write in, “Argentina’s Dictatorship was not a ‘Dirty War,’ that the violence was produced by state terrorism.” They explain: “In the United States and across much of the Anglophone world, the term ‘Dirty War’ has become a mainstream label to describe the years of dictatorship in Argentina between 1976 and 1983.”<sup>78</sup> However this term is incorrect, because the term “Dirty War” implies that both sides fought against each other with armies. As Dalla Porta and Pryluka make clear, “There were no two sides vying for control over territory, nor was there a professional army (hidden or not) to rival the state’s forces, be they official armed forces, the police, or various paramilitary formations.”<sup>79</sup> While the state targeted armed groups, such as the Montoneros, in reality this “revolutionary resistance was never able to successfully or continuously confront state violence, and they certainly did not use repressive tactics.”<sup>80</sup> In other words, the civic-military dictatorship was caused by one side: the state, and the term “Dirty War” does not accurately reflect this.

Another problem with the phrase “Dirty War” is that the junta historically used the term during the dictatorship.<sup>81</sup> The junta’s use of the term “Dirty War” had been previously used by another repressive state in history. As Dalla Porta and Pryluka describe:

The term “dirty war” deliberately invokes another campaign of counterinsurgency, specifically by the French in Algeria [referring to the Algerian War of Independence]. Indeed, many Argentine military personnel had been trained in counterinsurgency tactics by French intelligence agents. By referring to

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<sup>78</sup> Constanza Dalla Porta and Pablo Pryluka, “Argentina’s Dictatorship was not a ‘Dirty War.’ It was State Terrorism,” *Jacobin*, June 7, 2020, <https://jacobin.com/2020/06/argentina-dictatorship-dirty-war-military>.

<sup>79</sup> Dalla Porta and Pryluka, “Argentina’s Dictatorship was not a ‘Dirty War.’”

<sup>80</sup> Dalla Porta and Pryluka, “Argentina’s Dictatorship was not a ‘Dirty War.’”

<sup>81</sup> Dalla Porta and Pryluka note that the term “guerra sucia” was used by General Reynaldo Bignone, junta leader, for the first time at a press conference near the end of the civic-military dictatorship.

the dictatorship years as a dirty war the junta claimed to link its battle with that of the French, ultimately seeking legitimation from their European counterparts.<sup>82</sup>

It is important to note that this term “Dirty War” is especially prevalent in English language scholarship. While doing research for this thesis, many times I came across pieces of scholarship in English with this term used in the title or as a keyword in the text. In older literature especially is where I noticed this term more. On the other hand, when searching for sources in Spanish, I came across the term “guerra sucia” significantly less. Most often I would find the terms “la última dictadura,” “la dictadura,” “la dictadura militar,” “la dictadura cívico-militar,” and “el terrorismo del estado.”<sup>83</sup> I think, then, it is important to note that this issue of using the term “Dirty War” is more prevalent in English, as Dalla Porta and Pryluka point out in their article. This underlines a larger problem with scholarship in the Global North, particularly with research published only in English.<sup>84</sup> It is important for us as scholars in the United States and the Global North (myself included) to use the language that those most impacted by this history use: state terrorism.

### **Methodology: Local History and Microhistory**

English language literature on the civic-military dictatorship in Argentina has focused mainly on Buenos Aires, the capital city of the country, or on the provinces of Tucumán and Córdoba. By using La Plata as a case study, this thesis sheds light on the significance of activism by students and organizations in the provincial capital of Buenos Aires during the civic-military dictatorship and demonstrates how La Plata served as a

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<sup>82</sup> Dalla Porta and Peyluka, “Argentina’s Dictatorship was not a ‘Dirty War.’”

<sup>83</sup> Meaning, the “last dictatorship,” “the dictatorship,” “the military dictatorship,” “the civic-military dictatorship,” and “state terrorism.”

<sup>84</sup> Dalla Porta and Peyluka, “Argentina’s Dictatorship was not a ‘Dirty War.’”



microcosm of the creation of memories of the civic-military dictatorship. I seek to answer the questions: How does La Plata give insight into the history and memory in regards to continuity and change over time? Why is it important to look at La Plata when asking these questions?

To answer these questions, I will use the methodologies of local and microhistory. Many historians who follow the local methodology argue for the necessity of connecting the local to a broader context. Local historian Joseph Amato maintains that “Local history calls for a clarification of the relationship between the local and the regional.”<sup>85</sup> Similarly, local historian Andrew Witmer explains that “local activities and identities are invariably contained within (and essential to understanding) larger scales.”<sup>86</sup> In other words, local histories need to be connected to regional,<sup>87</sup> national, and global contexts. Local history is not just a small geographical area, it is “Here and everywhere else.”<sup>88</sup>

Historians, like Nicole Etcheson, offer some critiques of the methodology: “Local history is often antiquarian in its focus on details that have little meaning for those without a deep interest in that locale.”<sup>89</sup> This advice is important to keep in mind – unless local historians are able to explain the significance of their local histories, it runs the risk of not interpreting and explaining them fully. Mindful of this, my thesis will show how studying La Plata is important to studying the civic-military dictatorship as a whole.

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<sup>85</sup> Joseph Amato, “Introduction: The Concept and Practitioners of Local History,” in *Rethinking home: A Case for Writing Local History* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2002,) 12.

<sup>86</sup> Andrew Witmer, *Here & Everywhere Else: Small-Town Maine and the World* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2022), 7.

<sup>87</sup> Amato, “Introduction,” 12.

<sup>88</sup> Witmer, *Here and Everywhere Else*, 1.

<sup>89</sup> Nicole Etcheson, “Introduction: Local History, National Contexts: Exploring Microhistory in Henderson, Kentucky,” *The Register* 113, no. 4 (2015): 591.

Unlike local histories, microhistories are not always tied to a geographical place. Etcheson defines microhistories as “look[ing] at detail – what Giovanni Levi called ‘microscopic observation’ of an event, a person, or a place – but does so in order to achieve ‘wider generalizations’ about the past.”<sup>90</sup> I define this project as both a local history and a microhistory because it is examining the locality of La Plata, Argentina – but it does so in the context of the civic-military dictatorship, an event that had implications beyond just La Plata. In that sense I am looking at both a certain geographical area (making it a local history) and also looking at specific events and people in the area – making it a microhistory. I will do this by place the history of La Plata during the civic-military dictatorship in the context of broader Argentine history during this time period. When possible, I will also include the history of other regional areas, such as Buenos Aires, or other provinces in Argentina.

### **Post-dictatorship Argentina**

Interpretative text at the Museo de Arte y Memoria describes the end of the civic-military dictatorship, stating:

The consensus enforced by the military in the first years of government began to fall apart thanks to the resistance. The organization of the mothers and relatives of the detained-disappeared, the workers’ organizations that reconfigured themselves in the struggle, the alternative graphic media and the exiles who sought international alliances to publicize the crimes that occurred were together undermining the basis for state terrorism.

The Mothers of Plaza de Mayo [a group of mothers whose children were disappeared during the civic-military dictatorship] were the founders of the organized civil resistance against the dictatorship. On April 30, 1977, they gathered for the first time to ask for their children and thus broke the wall of silence that the dictatorship had built. That fight spread to the rest of the human rights organizations.

Partial strikes, uncompleted work, and interruption of tasks prevented the identification of union delegates. Dissemination of craft writings that circulated

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<sup>90</sup> Etcheson, “Introduction,” 591.

from hand to hand WERE other strategies of resistance to break the silence and discipline.

On March 30, 1982, a massive march was held in Buenos Aires under the slogan <<peace, bread and work>> where thousands of people participated.

The defeat in the Falklands War in 1982 WAS the final straw that angered Argentines and precipitated the end of the dictatorship. The ex-combatants, silenced upon their return from the islands, suffered silently. Today they demand the right to be recognized as victims of crimes against humanity.<sup>91</sup>

Thus, the end of the civic-military dictatorship in Argentina resulted from several factors: the work of the descendant community of the disappeared, unions, exiles, and alternative media, in addition to Argentina's loss in the Falklands War to the United Kingdom. This history would be silenced by the government, and it was the work of the descendant community<sup>92</sup> and organizations such as the Madres de Plaza de Mayo and students like those of the UES that fought to bring attention to this history and to call for justice.

### **An Overview of this Thesis**

The first chapter of this thesis covers the memorializations of La Noche de los Lápices over the time span of the 1990s to the present day. Primary sources in this chapter include the newspaper *El Día*, the DIPPBA archives, and murals in the city of La Plata. The second chapter covers a brief history of the police chiefs Miguel Etchecolatz and Ramon Camps, as well as the Casa Mariani-Teruggi and the clandestine detention center Pozo de Arana. Primary sources also include newspaper articles, the DIPPBA archives, and personal memoirs. The third chapter looks more at the DIPPBA archives, now housed at the Comisión Provincial por la Memoria (Provincial Commission for Memory), and the surveillance that the police conducted on the Casa Marini-Teruggi as it opened to the public as a site of memory in 1993. Through these archives I analyze how

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<sup>91</sup> "Muestra patrimonial," Comisión provincial por la Memoria, Museo de arte y memoria, <https://www.comisionporlamemoria.org/museo/project/memoria/#audio-adultos12>.

<sup>92</sup> I define the descendant community here as survivors and relatives and loved ones of the disappeared.

the events held at the Casa Mariani-Teruggi drew on the memory of the attack on the home, and how the police through conducting this surveillance continued to echo terminology of the civic-military dictatorship. While this topic can be very sad at times, I hope that by including the stories of activists such as Chicha Mariani, Daniel Mariani, Diana Teruggi, and the students of the UES, that this will show how people resisted, fought for change, and kept alive the hope for a better future even during the challenges of the civic-military dictatorship.

Chapter One: “Verdad, Memoria y Justicia”: Memorializations and Commemorations of  
La Noche de los Lápices

Celebrating the implementation of the *Boleto Estudiantil Secundario* (High School Students Ticket, hereinafter BES), a high school student proudly holds up their BES pass. The BES allowed for a reduced bus fare, which permitted high school passengers to ride the bus at the cost of “two pesos for the [entire] trip.”<sup>93</sup> Other students join in the photo, triumphantly holding up their BES passes, too. This description comes from the movie *La noche de los lápices* (1986) which tells the story of high school students rejoicing in their victory after organizing to create the BES in the spring of 1975.<sup>94</sup> The passing of Decree 4193 in September of 1975 approved the BES following protests held by the *Coordinadora de Estudiantes Secundarios* (High School Students Coordination, hereinafter CES). María Claudia Falcone, María Clara Ciocchini, Pablo Díaz, Claudio de Acha, Gustavo Francés Calotti, Francisco “Panchito” López Muntaner, Daniel Racero, Horacio Ungaro, and Emilce Moler all participated in the campaign for the BES.<sup>95</sup> They were all students at different high schools in La Plata and they helped to lead the CES. In response to their peaceful protests, the police responded with violence, whose repression included using tear gas against the students. Unfortunately, after the civic-military dictatorship began on March 26, 1976, the police and military would respond with only more violence.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Maria Seoane and Hector Ruiz Núñez, *La noche de los Lápices* (Editorial Contrapunto: Buenos Aires, 1986), 51. From the original Spanish: “dos pesos para todo el recorrido.”

<sup>94</sup> *La noche de los Lápices*, directed by Héctor Olivera (La Plata, Aries Cinematográfica Argentina, 1986); Located in the Southern hemisphere, Argentine spring is during the time of fall in the United States.

<sup>95</sup> Sandra Raggio, *Memorias de la Noche de los Lápices: Tensions, variaciones y conflictos en los modos de narrar el pasado reciente* (La Plata: Universidad Nacional de La Plata, 2017), 90-96.

<sup>96</sup> Seoane and Ruiz Núñez, *La noche de los Lápices*, 51; Ivan Baigún, “Juventud. Pasado y presente del boleto estudiantil,” *La Izquierda Diario*, April 21, 2016, <https://www.laizquierdadiario.com/Pasado-y-presente-del-boleto-estudiantil>.

Transportation was a key issue making education accessible to many young people. Relying on the bus to travel to school and around the city of La Plata, many students could not afford to pay the higher rates before the BES was implemented. Many of those who did still have the means supported the accessibility of the BES, which lowered the prices of not only the bus ticket for students, but for the general population as well.<sup>97</sup> However, in October of 1975 the price of the BES increased, following problems with the economy.<sup>98</sup> In June of 1976, during the civic-military dictatorship the BES price increased again, as prices climbed to 8 pesos per section. For students who had to travel home through two sections, the cost was 16 pesos for a one-way trip.<sup>99</sup> By September of 1976 the BES increased by another 25 percent.<sup>100</sup> The students mentioned above, María Claudia Falcone, María Clara Ciocchini, Pablo Díaz, Claudio de Acha, Gustavo Francés Calotti, Francisco “Panchito” López Muntaner, Daniel Racero, Horacio Ungaro, and Emilce Moler, would be disappeared by the joint forces on La Noche de los Lápices for their work on the campaign for the BES.<sup>101</sup>

### **La Noche de los Lápices**

Shortly after midnight on September 16, 1976, six or seven men kidnapped María Clara Ciocchini and Claudia Falcone from the Falcone’s home.<sup>102</sup> Around 2:30 that same morning, the military kidnapped Claudio de Acha from his family’s home, where they claimed he needed to be taken for “Military security reasons.”<sup>103</sup> At 4 that morning, the

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<sup>97</sup> Seoane and Núñez, *La noche de los Lápices*, 51; Articles two and five of the decree allowed for a “fixed rate” ticket for general passengers.

<sup>98</sup> Seoane and Núñez, 52.

<sup>99</sup> Seoane and Núñez, 137; The section system had been used by the government before where the city of La Plata was divided into sections, but it was not used when the BES was first implemented.

<sup>100</sup> Seoane and Núñez, 140.

<sup>101</sup> Raggio, *Memorias de la Noche de los Lápices*, 90.

<sup>102</sup> Seoane and Núñez, 153.

<sup>103</sup> Seoane and Núñez, 154. From the original Spanish: “razones de seguridad del Ejército.”

military burst into the Ungaro's home and kidnapped Horacio Ungaro and Daniel Racero. The military told Horacio's mother that Ungaro and Racero would be taken to be questioned and then returned.<sup>104</sup> The military kidnapped Panchito Muntaner de Lopez from his family's home that morning at 5, when they told his mother that he would be returned after answering their questions.<sup>105</sup> The joint forces kidnapped Gustavo Calotti earlier on September 8th, Patricia Miranda, and Emilce Moler were kidnapped on September 17th, and Pablo Díaz on September 20th.<sup>106</sup> Although the disappearance of these ten students happened on different days, they came to be collectively known as the students kidnapped as part of La Noche de los Lápices - an operation carried out by the joint forces.<sup>107</sup>

Historian Sandra Raggio, and current president of the Comisión Provincial por la Memoria, writes in the journal article "Narrar el terrorismo de Estado. De los hechos a la denuncia pública: el caso de la <<noche de los lápices>> (Narrating state terrorism: From the facts to public denunciation: the case of the La Noche de los Lápices" that the name "La Noche de los Lápices" was not used to describe the event right away, and official documentation by the state did not include this name either.<sup>108</sup>

The students that disappeared had been targets of the military for a while. De Acha, Ungaro and Falcone, who, along with other student activists, had been meeting at the bar Astro, knew they were being followed by the police when leaving the bar to go home. Prohibited from organizing at school since the beginning of the civic-military

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<sup>104</sup> Seoane and Núñez, *La noche de los lápices*, 155.

<sup>105</sup> Seoane and Núñez, 156.

<sup>106</sup> Seoane and Ruiz Nuñez, 26-27.

<sup>107</sup> Seoane and Ruiz Nuñez, 26-27.

<sup>108</sup> Sandra Raggio, "Narrar el terrorismo de Estado. De los hechos a la denuncia pública: el caso de la <<noche de los lápices>>," *Cuadernos del CISH* 17-18 (2005): 101. Raggio also notes that even though this official documentation has not been found, it could have been demolished.

dictatorship, the students didn't have many options of where they could meet safely to discuss political organizing.<sup>109</sup> María Seoane and Héctor Núñez write in their book *La noche de los lápices* that “The bar Astro, on [streets] 48 and 7, was the meeting place where the CES planned, that day, the measures against the suppression of the ticket [the BES]. In the team of the UES of Bellas Artes were María Claudia Falcone, Panchito Lopez Muntaner and Emilse Moler. Claudio coordinated his colleagues from the Nacional, and Daniel and Horacio coordinated those from the Normal No. 3. Pablo, with...other comrades of the Guevarian Youth, represented ‘The Legion.’ María Clara Ciocchini, who already lived with María Claudia [Falcone], was part of the group from Bellas Artes.”<sup>110</sup> Several of the students recalled being followed home from the bar after their meetings, and would go to great lengths to try to throw off the police officers tailing them.<sup>111</sup> Raggio states that there exists in the archives documents detailing that Falcone, Racero, Ungaro and López Muntaner would be targeted for surveillance, although they were considered by the military to not be very dangerous.<sup>112</sup>

Raggio notes that after these students were disappeared on what would become known as La Noche de los Lápices, immediately after this event no newspapers covered what happened and very few members of the general public knowledge knew that these

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<sup>109</sup> Seoane and Núñez, *La noche de los Lápices*, 138-39.

<sup>110</sup> Seoane and Núñez, *La noche de los Lápices*, 136; Bellas Artes, while affiliated with the UNLP, is a high school. Many of the students who were disappeared during La Noche de los Lápices attended Bellas Artes. From the original Spanish: “El bar Astro, en 48 y 7, fue el punto de reunión donde la Coordinadora de Estudiantes Secundarios planificó, esos días, las medidas contra la supresión de boleto. En el equipo de la UES Bellas Artes estaban María Claudia Falcone, Panchito López Muntander y Emilse Moler. Claudio coordinaba a sus compañeros del Nacional, y Daniel y Horacio a los del Normal N°3. Pablo...con otros compañeros de la Juventud Guevarista, representaban a ‘La Legión.’ María Clara Ciocchini, que ya vivía con María Claudia, se había integrado al grupo del Bellas Artes.”

<sup>111</sup> Seoane and Núñez, *La noche de los Lápices*, 136.

<sup>112</sup> Raggio, “Narrar el terrorismo de Estado,” 103.



students had been kidnapped.<sup>113</sup> María Claudia Falcone, María Clara Ciocchini, Pablo Díaz, Claudio de Acha, Gustavo Francés Calotti, Francisco “Panchito” López Muntaner, Daniel Racero, Horacio Ungaro, and Emilce Moler made up part of the over 340 high school students who were disappeared during the dictatorship in Argentina.<sup>114</sup> Only those affected by the event, such as their friends and family members, and classmates at school, noticed these disappearances. As the students were kidnapped during the nighttime, it is probably unlikely that there would have been witnesses to the event. As well, Raggio does explain how family members of the students disappeared filed reports of *habeas corpus*.

In one of the earlier examples of public knowledge about La Noche de los Lápices, the names of three disappeared students – Daniel Racero, Francisco López Muntaner, and Horacio Ungaro – appeared in the La Plata-based newspaper *El Día* in 1978. However, the event had not been named yet, and general public knowledge of what had gone on remained minimal two years later.<sup>115</sup> A press release from CONADEP in 1984 shared the name of the event for the first time, 8 years after La Noche de los Lápices occurred.<sup>116</sup> The following year, in 1985, Pablo Díaz, one of the survivors of La Noche de los Lápices, gave testimony as a witness in the public trial. Díaz’s testimony, as Raggio argues, provided vital to spreading public knowledge of La Noche de los Lápices. During the trial, journalist María Seoane sat in the audience and listened to Díaz speak. Seoane later wrote the book *La noche de los lápices* with co-author Héctor Ruiz Núñez

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<sup>113</sup> Raggio, “Narrar el terrorismo de Estado,” 102.

<sup>114</sup> “Ayer y hoy. Las memorias del pasado en las luchas del presente,” Comisión Provincial por la Memoria, <https://www.comisionporlamemoria.org/project/la-noche-de-los-lapices-guia-de-recursos-para-docentes/>.

<sup>115</sup> Raggio, “Narrar el terrorismo de Estado,” 104.

<sup>116</sup> Raggio, 108.

largely based on Díaz’s testimony. This is significant because as the public had not known about the event before, and one of the first times they heard about La Noche de los Lápices was from a survivor.<sup>117</sup> Pablo Díaz lived through La Noche de los Lápices and the subsequent torture in clandestine detention centers, and through his testimony he shared about La Noche de los Lápices.

### **Commemorations of La Noche de los Lápices**

The earliest example that I could find of an attempted memorialization of La Noche de los Lápices tried to take place in 1987. In the book *Revolutionizing Motherhood: The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo*, scholar Marguerite Guzman Bouvard describes that “In 1987, for example, the principal of the Lomos de Zamoro school informed police that two of his students were organizing a candlelight procession to commemorate La Noche de los Lápices.”<sup>118</sup> This example shows how students at the Lomos de Zamora school, located about an hour away by car from La Plata, tried to plan an event to remember the anniversary of La Noche de los Lápices. However, the school authority – their principal – collaborated with the police, who in their eyes saw this attempt as worthy of arrest. Even though the civic-military dictatorship had ended in 1983, 4 years later in 1987, the police saw this commemoration as “illegal.” In addition, even though this attempt at memorialization of La Noche de los Lápices did not occur in La Plata, it still occurred in the province of Buenos Aires, showing a broader regional understanding of the event, and to the students at Lomos de Zamora, something that deserved memorializing.

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<sup>117</sup> Raggio, 111.

<sup>118</sup> Marguerite Guzman Bouvard, *Revolutionizing Motherhood: The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo* (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 2003), 57.

Memorializations on the anniversary of La Noche de los Lápices continued to occur in the 1990s. Monuments to the students disappeared on La Noche de los Lápices were built in La Plata, the UES built on the memory of La Noche de los Lápices and their disappeared comrades to continue student activism, and legislators created the “Day of the Reaffirmation of the Rights of High School Students.” This section of the chapter uses primary sources from the DIPPBA archive today housed at the Comisión Provincial por la Memoria in La Plata. It is important to note, that many of these documents are police reports, and as such contain biases against the people the police surveilled. In addition, some of the information in these police reports may be exaggerated or simply untrue. Besides police reports, the police also kept newspaper clippings of the events they surveilled. While newspapers have their own biases as well, I will use the information covered in the newspapers to verify the information in the police reports.

On April 6, 1990 in the province of Buenos Aires, the senate approved a law that called for the creation of a monument in remembrance of the students disappeared during La Noche de los Lápices.<sup>119</sup> The law stated that the monument would be constructed in La Plata, either in Plaza San Martín or somewhere else in the city. It described that the students of Bellas Artes High School, where some of the disappeared students from La Noche de los Lápices attended, would take part in the creation of the monument. The law also called for the formation of a committee to oversee the creation of the monument. The committee included the president of the commission of human rights of the senate, the president of the commission of human rights of the delegates, a delegate from the executive branch, and a delegate for the relatives of high school students who

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<sup>119</sup> CPM – Fondo DIPPBA División Central de Documentación, Registro y Archivo, Mesa A, Factor estudiantil, Legajo 78, p. 2.

disappeared during the civic-military dictatorship or disappeared during La Noche de los Lápices.<sup>120</sup> Although it seems like the committee is largely made up of government representatives, the role of the delegate represented the descendant community of disappeared high school students, which is important. In addition, although the students of Bellas Artes did not formally have a part on the committee, it sounds like they played an important role as well, although unspecified. This law is an example of the government and descendant community working together to commemorate La Noche de los Lápices. However, whether the government came up with this idea first or if they agreed to participate based off of pressure from Bellas Artes students and/or the descendant community I am not sure.

Responsibilities of the committee included the creation, construction, and raising of funds for the monument. In addition, the monument needed to be inaugurated on the 16<sup>th</sup> of September, the anniversary of La Noche de los Lápices.<sup>121</sup> Unfortunately I could not find any information on whether this monument came to fruition, or where it is located today. I did not see it when I visited Plaza San Martín, although the monument could have been built in another part of La Plata or perhaps did not hold up with time. I also couldn't find any information about it on the "Paisajes de memoria" Google Maps that the Comisión Provincial por la Memoria put together of monuments, plaques, former clandestine detention center sites, and other places of memory in La Plata. Even if this monument was not built, it shows an early example of the descendant community and government working together to commemorate La Noche de los Lápices. The

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<sup>120</sup> CPM – Fondo DIPPBA División Central de Documentación, Registro y Archivo, Mesa A, Factor estudiantil, Legajo 78, p. 2.

<sup>121</sup> CPM – Fondo DIPPBA División Central de Documentación, Registro y Archivo, Mesa A, Factor estudiantil, Legajo 78, p. 2.

government's role here is important to note, as during the dictatorship the government disappeared high school students. While the government may have just been paying lip service through this legislation, this cooperation with the descendant community to build a monument demonstrates change in the government, even if on a small level.

Aside from this legislation in 1990, in September of that year the police surveilled a commemoration event on the anniversary of La Noche de los Lápices. The police wrote a report on September 14, two days before the anniversary of La Noche de los Lápices on the 16<sup>th</sup>. They described a commemoration event that happened beginning in Plaza Rocha at 2pm. There high school students assembled with banners stating the names of their high schools, or the organization they belonged to (such as the organization Juventud Socialista or Normal I La Legión high school).<sup>122</sup> Then at 3:30pm the students marched to the Obras y Servicio Públicas and then the Legislatura Provincial, followed by the newspaper office of *El Día*. Along the way, the students chanted, protesting against the “security forces and they read the affiliations of the different high schools and the political organizations.”<sup>123</sup> This commemoration of La Noche de los Lápices shows that the memory is linked to physical space, the location of the Obras y Servicio Públicas was where the students disappeared in La Noche de los Lápices marched to during the campaign for the BES in 1975.<sup>124</sup>

The police also included in the surveillance report flyers passed out at the commemoration. Analyzing the language of one of the fliers in particular provides insight

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<sup>122</sup> CPM – Fondo DIPPBA División Central de Documentación, Registro y Archivo, Mesa A, Factor estudiantil, Legajo 78, p. 7.

<sup>123</sup> CPM – Fondo DIPPBA División Central de Documentación, Registro y Archivo, Mesa A, Factor estudiantil, Legajo 78, p. 7. From the original Spanish: “fuerzas de Seguridad y se leyeron las adhesions de los distintos colegios y argupaciones políticas.”

<sup>124</sup> Seoane and Ruiz Nuñez, *La Noche de los Lápices*, 41.

into how the students at the commemoration remembered La Noche de los Lápices and how they participated in stewardship of this history.<sup>125</sup> The flier first begins by describing what happened during La Noche de los Lápices:

On September 16, 1976, a group of high school comrades were kidnapped by the Armed Forces. Although the [unable to read] pretends to make people believe that the comrades limited their struggle to the HIGH SCHOOL TICKET we come to reaffirm their true flags of struggle that are none other than Social Justice, Economic Independence and Political Sovereignty... We complain, yes, but from our complaints arises the need to do things, to fight to end injustices, to end the police hitting us and they don't let us have fun...<sup>126</sup>

To put it another way, the flyer is explaining how possibly the government, although the word is smudged and illegible, confined the history of the students disappeared in La Noche de los Lápices, saying they only fought for the BES. In reality these students fought “for Social Justice, Economic Independence and Political Sovereignty,” things the students in 1990 are still fighting for too. The flyer also mentions how the police stop the students from having fun.<sup>127</sup> While it can be easy to imagine these students as quite grown up due to the level of activism and responsibility they were forced to take on during the dictatorship, in reality these high school students were children. The police’s brutal efforts forced the students to take on these challenges as adults would, while denying them leisure time in their late childhood. As public historian Fawn-Amber

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<sup>125</sup> Montoya and Larkin, *Communities of Ludlow*, 80.

<sup>126</sup> CPM – Fondo DIPPBA División Central de Documentación, Registro y Archivo, Mesa A, Factor estudiantil, Legajo 78, p. 11. From the original Spanish: “El 16 de septiembre de 1976 un grupo de compañeros secundarios fue secuestrada por las Fuerzas Armadas. A pesar que la [unable to read] pretende hacer los creer que los compañeros limitaban su lucha a el BOLETO SECUNDARIO nosotros venimos a reaffirmar sus verdaderas banderas de lucha que no son otras que la Justicia social, Independencia Económica y Soberanía Política... Nos quejamos, si, pero de nuestra queja surge la necesidad de hacer cosas, de luchar para acabar con las injusticias; para acabar con ésta policía que nos pega y no nos deja divertimos...”

<sup>127</sup> CPM – Fondo DIPPBA División Central de Documentación, Registro y Archivo, Mesa A, Factor estudiantil, Legajo 78, p. 11. From the original Spanish: “Justicia Social, Independencia Económica, y Soberanía política.”

Montoya and anthropologist Karin Larkin note, “stewardship provides a vehicle for exercising and engaging social memory with contemporary social issues.”<sup>128</sup> As these students commemorated the anniversary of La Noche de los Lápices, they were also fighting for then-contemporary social challenges in the economy and in politics as stewards of this history.

Another significant event in 1990 was the creation of the “Day of the Reaffirmation of the Rights of High School Students.” Two newspaper articles in the DIPPBA archives highlight the creation of this day. Neither of the newspaper clippings include the name of the newspaper it was taken from. The article first mentions the history of La Noche de los Lápices, explaining how students were kidnapped, tortured, and assassinated for their organizing on the BES. It then shifts to talking about the importance of this memory to the people of La Plata, as it contributed to the growth of a “a collective moral conscience, incorporating human rights among its aspects.”<sup>129</sup> In other words, the community of La Plata rallied around this memory as a way to advocate for human rights.

The article describes the legislators that created this day, Representatives Carlos Raimundi and Franco Caviglia, among others. It also notes that this day will be implemented in the province and will include the collaboration of the Ministry of Education which will dedicate an hour of class to the themes of democracy and human rights.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Montoya and Larkin, *Communities of Ludlo*, 80.

<sup>129</sup> CPM – Fondo DIPPBA División Central de Documentación, Registro y Archivo, Mesa A, Factor estudiantil, Legajo 78, p. 4. From the original Spanish: “conciencia moral colectiva, incorporando los derechos humanos entre sus valores.”

<sup>130</sup> CPM – Fondo DIPPBA División Central de Documentación, Registro y Archivo, Mesa A, Factor estudiantil, Legajo 78, p. 4.

The second article on the creation of this day is very similar to the first one mentioned above. There are a few differences, however. It notes the names of Representatives Alfredo Bravo, Mary Sánchez and Irma Parentella, who the first article simply described as “among others.” There is also a quote from Representative Carlos Raimundi, who is quoted saying:

Just as universal history remembers May 1, 1886, the day of the Chicago Massacre, in recognition of workers’ rights and on March 8, 1857, when textile workers lost their lives fighting for more dignified working conditions as Women’s Rights Day, we propose to institute as High School Students Rights Day on September 16, 1976.”<sup>131</sup>

The creation of the “Día del Estudiante Secundario” occurs so in a larger framework of May Day and International Women’s Day. Thus, when creating the holiday and in his speech, Raimundi draws on a broader context of world history. Raimundi connects the creation of this holiday to labor history. He shows the importance of these holidays in an international context, but also in Argentina as a whole. Sandra Raggio noted in her 2005 article “Narrar el terrorismo de Estado” that this holiday is still prevalent today, and students watch the movie *La Noche de los Lápices*.<sup>132</sup> This holiday is important for teaching about and commemorating La Noche de los Lápices.

In the 2000s, commemorations of La Noche de los Lápices held on or around its anniversary continued. The newspaper *El Día* offers insight into how commemoration efforts for La Noche de los Lápices have continued or changed over time. Over the years, these commemorations have linked memory to specific locations in the city where state

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<sup>131</sup> CPM – Fondo DIPPBA División Central de Documentación, Registro y Archivo, Mesa A, Factor estudiantil, Legajo 78, p. 103. From the original Spanish: “asi como la historia universal recuerda el 1 de mayo de 1886 día de la masacre de Chicago [referring to the Haymarket Massacre], en reconocimiento de los derechos de los trabajadores y el 8 de marzo de 1857 cuando perdieron la vida obreras textiles luchando por condiciones de trabajo más dignas como día de los Derechos de la Mujer, proponemos instituir como Día de los Derechos del Estudiante Secundario en todo el país el 16 de septiembre de 1976.”

<sup>132</sup> Raggio, “Narrar el terrorismo de Estado,” 100.



violence occurred, as in the commemorations in the 1990s. In addition, commemorations in the 2000s took place in a wide array of formats including organized discussions, public art, marches and rallies, and public speeches.

For example, in an article published on September 15, 2008, entitled “Ex estudiantes del Normal 3 recordaron ‘La Noche de los Lápices’” (“Former students from Normal 3<sup>133</sup> remember the ‘La Noche de los Lápices’”), the article covers a ceremony held at the school. It was in commemoration of ten students - Carlos Alaye, Jorge Daroqui, Gastón Dillon, Roberto Fueyo, Inés Ortega, Isidro Peña, Jesus Pena, Julio Pozzo, Daniel Racero and Horacio Húngaro - all who disappeared during the civic-military dictatorship.<sup>134</sup> Audience members included relatives of the disappeared, who received an “analytical certificate” from the school.<sup>135</sup> The mayor of La Plata spoke at the ceremony. In his speech, he underlined “the importance of ‘remembering the past and reflecting on the significance of being here, together, in homage to these comrades and to the struggle they carried out.’”<sup>136</sup> Also present in the crowd, and paying homage to these disappeared students was the Human Rights Subsecretary. The presence of the Human Rights Subsecretary is indicative of the transition to the post-civic-military dictatorship era, where democracy and education had become institutionalized in local and national

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<sup>133</sup> Schools in La Plata are numbered, similar to how public schools in New York City in the United States are numbered.

<sup>134</sup> “Ex estudiantes del Normal 3 recordaron ‘La Noche de los Lápices,’” *El Día*, September 15, 2008, <https://www.eldia.com/nota/2008-9-15-ex-estudiantes-del-normal-3-recordaron-la-noche-de-los-lapices>.

<sup>135</sup> “Ex estudiantes del Normal 3 recordaron ‘La Noche de los Lápices.’” Translator’s note: the phrase “analytical certificate” from the original Spanish “certificado analítico” refers to an official document from the school that lists the student’s grades and courses, a transcript. See <https://www.proz.com/kudoz/spanish-to-english/other/313766-certificado-analitico.html>.

<sup>136</sup> “Ex estudiantes del Normal 3 recordaron ‘La Noche de los Lápices.’” From the original Spanish: “la importancia de ‘recordar el pasado y reflexionar sobre el significado de estar aquí, juntos, en homenaje a esos compañeros y a la lucha que llevaban adelante.’”

governments. The Madres de Plaza de Mayo La Plata, former students and education leaders also participated in the ceremony.<sup>137</sup>

Echoing the theme of government officials speaking at commemorations of La Noche de los Lápices, on September 16, 2011, then president Cristina Kirchner spoke at the inauguration of the Universidad Nacional del Oeste (National University of the West).<sup>138</sup> Christina Kirchner, and her husband, Néstor Kirchner, grew up in La Plata during the dictatorship. Christina Kirchner trained as a lawyer and studied at the UNLP. She is a strong advocate for human rights and politically supports the Justicialista Party.<sup>139</sup>

Although this university is located in Buenos Aires, and La Noche de los Lápices occurred in La Plata, Kirchner felt that it was important to remember La Noche de los Lápices on its 35th anniversary. Her remembrance of the event, both as the president and as someone outside the geographical area of La Plata, shows how the event had broader implications beyond just La Plata. President Kirchner addressed the students of the university, stating ““it [the university inauguration] is the best way to pay homage to the young people who also have the same dreams and illusions that you all do, but they didn't have the same luck of living in a much better, plural country with socio-economic achievements.””<sup>140</sup> Reflecting on the progress of education since the civic-military

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<sup>137</sup> “Ex estudiantes del Normal 3 recordaron ‘La Noche de los Lápices.’”

<sup>138</sup> “Cristina también recordó ‘La Noche de los Lápices,’” *El Día*, September 16, 2011, <https://www.eldia.com/nota/2011-9-16-cristina-tambien-recordo-la-noche-de-los-lapices/amp>.

<sup>139</sup> “The president,” Presidencia de la Nación Argentina, [https://web.archive.org/web/20101220205537/http://www.casarosada.gov.ar/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=1450&Itemid=117](https://web.archive.org/web/20101220205537/http://www.casarosada.gov.ar/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1450&Itemid=117).

<sup>140</sup> “Cristina también recordó ‘La Noche de los Lápices.’” From the original Spanish: “esta ‘es la mejor forma de rendir homenaje a los jóvenes que tenían los mismos sueños e ilusiones que ustedes, pero no tuvieron la misma suerte de vivir en un país mucho mejor, plural y con logros socio-económicos.’”

dictatorship, President Kirchner also remarked that the current educational policy is indicative of a strong democracy.<sup>141</sup> The governor of Buenos Aires, the mayor, and the minister of education were also present at the inauguration, showing a trend of politicians attending commemorative events.<sup>142</sup>

Perhaps paying homage to the working-class backgrounds many of the disappeared students came from, President Kirchner expressed that ““University in Argentina has to be one of the mainstays to recuperate this country, where the children of workers...can go to university and forge a career and a future for us.””<sup>143</sup> University in Argentina is free, although that does not remove all of the barriers that working-class students face when attending university. In order to be physically present at university, students must travel from their homes to the school, which is impossible to do if one does not have enough money to pay the bus fare. Students were organizing for the BES in 1975 for just that reason.

Similar to how the law decreeing that Bellas Artes students would be involved with the creation of a monument dedicated to the students disappeared on La Noche de los Lápices, students from the Albert Thomas high school were involved with the creation of a monument in tribute to the students disappeared on La Noche de los Lápices. The September 25, 2015 edition of *El Dia*, “Monumento a la Lucha Estudiantil” (“Monument to the Student Struggle”) describes that the monument is made up of a large cube, with chains on the outside and colored pencils emerging from the base. The cube,

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<sup>141</sup> “Cristina también recordó ‘La Noche de los Lápices.’”

<sup>142</sup> “Cristina también recordó ‘La Noche de los Lápices.’”

<sup>143</sup> “Cristina también recordó ‘La Noche de los Lápices.’” From the original Spanish: ““La Universidad en la Argentina tiene que ser uno de los puntales para recuperar este país, donde los hijos de los trabajadores, como quien les habla, pudimos llegar a la universidad y forjarnos una carrera y un porvenir.””

and the chains that surround it “represents the oppression that was experienced during the dictatorship.”<sup>144</sup> The six colored pencils sticking out of the cube are a symbol of the six students kidnapped on La Noche de los Lápices who are still missing today - Claudia Falcone, Horacio Ungaro, Francisco López Muntaner, María Clara Ciocchini, Daniel Alberto Racero and Claudio de Acha.<sup>145</sup>

High school students at Albert Thomas designed the monument.<sup>146</sup> They initiated the idea for the monument in 2010, however funding delayed the completion. Five years later, the city had enough money for the monument, and students participated in all levels of creation, including design, planning, and execution. They also collaborated with their teachers.<sup>147</sup> This monument is significant because it honors the students disappeared during La Noche de los Lápices. The monument is also significant because it was student-led, reflecting a continuation of high school student activism in La Plata. In this sense, the monument also honors “all those who followed and continue to fight for the rights of students and public education” as students today still organize for a better and more just future.<sup>148</sup> Memory and place can also be seen through the Monument to the Student Struggle. While none of the students disappeared on La Noche de los Lápices attended that specific school, the location of the monument at a school is fitting.

Besides Albert Thomas High School, the Bellas Artes High School has been very involved in commemorations on the anniversary of La Noche de los Lápices. On the 40<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> “Inauguran en 1 y 58 una obra inspirada en la Noche de los Lápices,” *El Día*, September 25, 2015, <https://www.eldia.com/nota/2015-9-25-inauguran-en-1-y-58-una-obra-inspirada-en-la-noche-de-los-lapices>. From the original Spanish: “representa la opresión que se vivió durante la dictadura.”

<sup>145</sup> “Inauguran en 1 y 58 una obra inspirada en la Noche de los Lápices.”

<sup>146</sup> “Inauguran en 1 y 58 una obra inspirada en la Noche de los Lápices.”

<sup>147</sup> “Inauguran en 1 y 58 una obra inspirada en la Noche de los Lápices.”

<sup>148</sup> “Inauguran en 1 y 58 una obra inspirada en la Noche de los Lápices.” From the original Spanish: “todos los que siguieron y siguen peleando por los derechos de los alumnos y por la educación pública.”

anniversary of La Noche de los Lápices, in addition to the yearly march, different events took place. Bellas Artes held events such as “a vigil with an open mic...live music, projections, and a banner workshop” in addition to a “torchlight march.”<sup>149</sup> The following day, “artistic interventions in the public space” occurred and “a chat led by Emilce Moler, survivor of La Noche de los Lápices.”<sup>150</sup> Moler is the author of the book *La larga noche de los lápices* (The long Noche de los Lápices). Two teachers and their students of the Colegio Nacional painted a mural that debuted on the anniversary.<sup>151</sup> Murals of the disappeared have special significance in the city of La Plata as they contribute to collective memory of the dictatorship. Artist and Professor Claudia Bernardi explains that “The mural is a book of history without words.”<sup>152</sup> Murals of the disappeared in La Plata, specifically of portraits of the students disappeared as part of La Noche de los Lápices, allow for the community to remember the history of this event (see *Figure 4*).

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<sup>149</sup> “Actos y vigilia a 40 años de la Noche de los Lápices,” *El Día*, September 15, 2016, <https://www.eldia.com/nota/2016-9-15-actos-y-vigilia-a-40-anos-de-la-noche-de-los-lapices>. From the original Spanish: “una vigilia con radio abierta, música en vivo proyecciones y taller de pancartas ...una marcha de antorchas.”

<sup>150</sup> “Actos y vigilia a 40 años de la Noche de los Lápices.” From the original Spanish: intervenciones artísticas en el espacio público...y una charla a cargo de Emilce Moler, sobreviviente de la Noche de los Lápices.”

<sup>151</sup> “Actos y vigilia a 40 años de la Noche de los Lápices.”

<sup>152</sup> Claudia Bernardi, “The Disappeared are Appearing: Murals that Recover Community Memory,” *International Journal of Transnational Justice* 14, no. 1 (2020): 197, <https://academic.oup.com/ijjt/article/14/1/193/5643962>.



Figure 4. Mural in tribute to the students from Bellas Artes high school disappeared during La Noche de los Lápices. Horacio Ungaro (left) and Claudio de Acha (right) are pictured in the mural. Photo by Anna Neubauer. Artist(s) unknown.<sup>153</sup>

Other types of art-related events included music, and the showing of the movie *La Guardería* (2016).<sup>154</sup> More events reflect the participation of more people in the commemoration, perhaps representing greater interest over time. In addition, as in years past, the presence of survivors such as Moler and the organizing of events by students shows an environment in which survivors are centered.

The following anniversary of La Noche de los Lápices in 2017 begins similar to other years, with the annual march. However, the 2017 commemoration differed from years' past due to a new demand - that of the reappearance of Santiago Maldonado.<sup>155</sup> Maldonado was an activist and student in La Plata at Bellas Artes, who disappeared for

<sup>153</sup> Also see <https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/viewer?mid=1jEoIltOoxowhP33ogpHKpdnFKA&ll=-34.92216551638048%2C-57.94167114277094&z=19> for more information on the mural.

<sup>154</sup> "Actos y vigilia a 40 años de la Noche de los Lápices."

<sup>155</sup> "Masiva marcha estudiantil a 41 años de La Noche de los Lápices," *El Día*, September 16, 2017, <https://www.eldia.com/nota/2017-9-16-3-35-27-masiva-marcha-estudiantil-a-41-anos-de-la-noche-de-los-lapices-la-ciudad>.

his efforts in reclaiming land back for the Mapuche people the previous August.<sup>156</sup> Students created posters that stated “The Pencils ask where is Santiago Maldonado,” drawing on the history of student activism and connecting the disappearance of students during La Noche de los Lápices to the disappearance of Maldonado.<sup>157</sup>

This article also notes the continuation of place-based memory as the students marched to the Obras y Servicio Públicas building, where 41 years before, students from La Plata came together to protest for the student bus ticket. The article mentions how this scene was shown in the movie *La Noche de los Lápices*. Based on these true events, the movie shows how La Noche de los Lápices was remembered after the end of the civic-military dictatorship in 1983, as the movie was released in 1986. In 1987 the film was “received favorably... at the New Directors-New Films series in New York at the Museum of Modern Art.”<sup>158</sup> In addition, the day after the film was released, outside the office of Olivera a bomb was encountered; it was disabled before it blew up.<sup>159</sup> Every year, protests converge at this spot of the Obras y Servicio Públicas building, which suggests the memory is not only tied to an event, but to a physical space as well.

The 2017 commemoration also featured the speaker Emilce Moler, one of the survivors of La Noche de los Lápices. Drawing on Argentina’s current political context at the time, Moler explains that ““This march is being carried out in the middle of an

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<sup>156</sup> “Masiva marcha estudiantil a 41 años de La Noche de los Lápices,”; Maldonado’s body was later found in the Chubut River in October 2017, for more information see the newspaper articles “Marcha para pedir ‘verdad y justicia’ por Santiago Maldonado,” *El Día*, February 1, 2018, <https://www.eldia.com/nota/2018-2-1-9-10-0-marcha-para-pedir-verdad-y-justicia-por-santiago-maldonado-politica-y-economia>; “Masiva marcha en Plaza de Mayo por Santiago Maldonado,” *El Día*, October 19, 2017, <https://www.eldia.com/nota/2017-10-19-17-46-4-masiva-marcha-en-plaza-de-mayo-por-santiago-maldonado-el-pais>.

<sup>157</sup> “Masiva marcha estudiantil a 41 años de La Noche de los Lápices.”

<sup>158</sup> Shirely Christian, “What’s next in Argentine films? Liberty expands beyond political passions,” *Chicago Tribune*, April 2, 1987, 71 <https://www.newspapers.com/image/388824497>.

<sup>159</sup> Christian, “What’s next in Argentine film?” 71.

adverse economic situation, where education is passing through difficult moments with budgetary matters and teacher salaries.”<sup>160</sup>

The 2017 edition of *El Dia* mentions the history of La Noche de los Lápices, stating,

The night of September 16, 1976 began an operation together with police officers and members of the Battalion 601 of Intelligence of the Army to capture young people between the ages of 16 and 18 years old, and who were mostly from the Union de Estudiantes Secundarios (UES) [High School Students Union]. Claudio De Acha, Maria Clara Ciocchini, María Claudia Falcone, Franciso López Muntaner, Daniel Racero and Horacio Ungaro were taken out of their homes that day; the next day Emilce Moler and Patricia Miranda, and four days later Pablo Diaz.<sup>161</sup>

In 2018, an article in *El Día* used this same exact wording. The article “A 42 años de la Noche de los Lápices, fuerte rechazo al ‘ajuste educativo,’” (42 years after La Noche de los Lápices, String Rejection of the ‘Educational Adjustment’” notes that on La Noche de los Lápices “the tragic day in which adolescents from La Plata who had participated in the fight to establish the student ticket were kidnapped and disappeared. The student ticket today is common currency for all of the children who go to school.”<sup>162</sup> This repetition year after year could be for several reasons. Of course, it is possible this was merely copying. However, I do not think so. It was an attempt to create memory –

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<sup>160</sup> “Masiva marcha estudiantil a 41 años de La Noche de los Lápices.” From the original Spanish: “esta marcha se realiza en medio de una situación económica adversa, donde la educación está pasando por momentos difíciles en materia presupuestaria y de sueldos docentes.”

<sup>161</sup> “Masiva marcha estudiantil a 41 años de La Noche de los Lápices.” From the original Spanish: “La noche del 16 de septiembre de 1976 comenzó un operativo conjunto de policías y miembros de Batallón 601 de Inteligencia del Ejército para capturar a jóvenes que tenía entre 16 y 18 años y que en su mayoría militaban en la Unión de Estudiantes Secundarios (UES). Claudio De Acha, Maria Clara Ciocchini, María Claudia Falcone, Franciso López Muntaner, Daniel Racero y Horacio Ungaro fueron arrancados de sus domicilios ese día; al siguiente apresaron a Emilce Moler y Patricia Miranda, y cuatro días después a Pablo Díaz.”

<sup>162</sup> “A 42 años de la Noche de los Lápices, fuerte rechazo al ‘ajuste educativo,’” *El Día*, September 15, 2018, <https://www.eldia.com/nota/2018-9-15-2-31-5-a-42-anos-de-la-noche-de-los-lapices-fuerte-rechazo-al-ajuste-educativo--la-ciudad>. From the original Spanish: “la trágica jornada en la cual secuestraron y desaparecieron a adolescentes platenses que habían participado de la pelea por instaurar el boleto estudiantil, un logro que hoy es moneda corriente en el día a día de todos los chicos que van a la escuela.”



through a concise slogan—the repetition of language. Alternatively, the same journalist could have written the two articles, which would make sense why they would want to use their previous work. Or, perhaps it shows the desire to precisely convey the history of La Noche de los Lápices - a history that the civic-military dictatorship denied and tried to cover up.

A common theme regarding the BES throughout the years has been a lack of funding for schools. The September 15, 2018 article on the 42nd anniversary of La Noche de los Lápices also reflects on this political context. The article explains that there is a “growing tension between the educational environment and the government” due to the recent education budget cuts.<sup>163</sup> Students also demanded for an increased infrastructure budget for education and expressed their displeasure over the “reduction to the access of the [student] ticket.”<sup>164</sup> In addition, this year the commemoration was marked by “chats, conference cycles, theater, open radios, expositions, and distinct homages.”<sup>165</sup> Similar to previous years, however, was the participation of “union and social organizations, and neighbors” as well as the UES and the Federación Universitaria de La Plata (FULP), who organized the commemoration.<sup>166</sup> The article reported that

The march organized by the Union de Estudiantes Secundarios and the Federación de Estudiantes Secundarios began at 2:30pm in the Plaza Moreno and culminated at the door of the Ministry of Infrastructure of Buenos Aires at streets 7 and 58...during the entire week there were chats and a photography showing on Human Rights.<sup>167</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> “A 42 años de la Noche de los Lápices, fuerte rechazo al ‘ajuste educativo.’” From the original Spanish: “creciente tensión entre el ámbito educativo y el Gobierno.”

<sup>164</sup> “A 42 años de la Noche de los Lápices, fuerte rechazo al ‘ajuste educativo.’” From the original Spanish: “reducción al acceso al boleto.”

<sup>165</sup> “A 42 años de la Noche de los Lápices, fuerte rechazo al ‘ajuste educativo.’” From the original Spanish: “charlas, ciclos de conferencias y cine, radios abiertas, exposiciones y distintos homenajes.”

<sup>166</sup> “A 42 años de la Noche de los Lápices, fuerte rechazo al ‘ajuste educativo.’” From the original Spanish: “miembros de organizaciones gremiales y sociales y vecinos.”

<sup>167</sup> “Estudiantes marchan por los desaparecidos en la Noche de los Lápices,” *El Día*, September 15, 2019, <https://www.eldia.com/nota/2019-9-15-16-42-0-estudiantes-marcharan-en-homenaje-a-los-desaparecidos->

Echoing a theme of art as commemoration, the photography showing was now included on the list of other kinds of art commemoration, such as the mural and monument. There were also events throughout the entire week, and not just on one day. When looking at commemoration events in the 1990s, I did not find anything about events lasting for a week. However, this does not mean that these events did not occur. Perhaps over time, these commemorations become longer as interest grows.

In 2019, the article shares a brief history explaining what happened on La Noche de los Lápices, shorter than the 2018 article history, but the wording appears to be paraphrased and shortened from the year prior. The structure of telling the story looks very similar.<sup>168</sup>

This article is different than previous years, however, because it incorporates the social media accounts of both the UES - La Plata Facebook and Twitter pages. A screenshot of a Tweet included in the article shows an advertisement for the commemoration of La Noche de los Lápices. The Tweet reads “Tomorrow we march for memory, truth, and justice. Tomorrow we march for public education and for our future. Tomorrow we march because we want to be the protagonists of our own present.”<sup>169</sup> Beginning each sentence with the word “tomorrow” reminds the audience that the event will be held the next day, and using the phrase “memory, truth, and justice” draws on the

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en-la-noche-de-los-lapices--la-ciudad. From the original Spanish: “La marcha convocada por la Unión de Estudiantes Secundarios y la Federación de Estudiantes Secundarios, comenzará en las 14.30 en Plaza Moreno y culminará en la puerta de Ministerio de Infraestructura bonaerense, en 7 y 58...durante toda la semana habrá charlas y muestras fotográficas sobre derechos humanos.”

<sup>168</sup> “Estudiantes marchan por los desaparecidos en la Noche de los Lápices.”

<sup>169</sup> From the @UESlp tweet on September 15, 2019,

<https://twitter.com/ueslp/status/1173303674849976320?s=46>. The tweet states in Spanish: “Mañana marchamos por la memoria, la verdad y la justicia. Mañana marchamos por la educación pública y por nuestro futuro. Mañana marchamos porque queremos ser protagonistas de nuestro propio presente. #YoMarchoConLaUES.”

goals of the democratic government to make “effective the right to truth, justice, reparation, and non-repetition of the human rights violations” following the civic-military dictatorship.<sup>170</sup>

The following year in 2019, an article published by the La Plata-based newspaper *El Diario Contexto* reported on the commemoration of La Noche de los Lápices. This article highlights the importance of place-based memory, writing that “The march extended from Plaza Moreno to the Ministry of Public Works...the site where some of the students who disappeared protested to demand the student ticket during 1975, a right denied after the coup d'etat in 1976.”<sup>171</sup> Survivor of La Noche de los Lápices Emilce Moler, politician and professor at the UNLP Florencia Saintout, and Buenos Aires members of parliament, Guillermo Escudero and Miguel Funes attended the event.<sup>172</sup> Five city councilors were present at the commemoration as well, reflecting a pattern throughout the years of politicians attending commemoration events.<sup>173</sup>

Activities at the commemoration included “a performance by the School of Theatre and high school students spoke together with Moller.”<sup>174</sup> Moler speaking with high school students is important as this talk demonstrates the teaching of the new

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<sup>170</sup> Memoria, Verdad y Justicia,” Gobierno de Argentina, <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/derechoshumanos/contenidos-multimedia/memoria-verdad-y-justicia-0>.

<sup>171</sup> Rocio Cereijo, “A 43 años de la Noche de los Lápices, los estudiantes pidieron <<militar con alegría>> contra Macri,” *Diario Contexto*, September 16, 2019, <https://www.diariocontexto.com.ar/2019/09/16/a-43-anos-de-la-noche-de-los-lapices-estudiantes-pidieron-militar-con-alegria-contra-macri/>. From the original Spanish: “La marcha se extendió desde Plaza Moreno hasta el Ministerio de Obras Públicas...sitio donde se manifestaban algunos de los integrantes del grupo de desaparecidos para exigir el boleto estudiantil durante 1975, derecho denegado tras el golpe de Estado de 1976.”

<sup>172</sup> Escudero was born and raised in La Plata. For more information about Escudero, see <https://guillermoesudero.com/guillermo/>.

<sup>173</sup> Rocio Cereijo, “A 43 años de la Noche de los Lápices, los estudiantes pidieron <<militar con alegría>> contra Macri,” *Diario Contexto*, September 16, 2019, <https://www.diariocontexto.com.ar/2019/09/16/a-43-anos-de-la-noche-de-los-lapices-estudiantes-pidieron-militar-con-alegria-contra-macri/>.

<sup>174</sup> Cereijo, “A 43 años de la Noche de los Lápices.” From the original Spanish: “la Escuela de Teatro realizó una intervención y militantes de secundarios hablaron junto a Moller.”

generation about the history of La Noche de los Lápices. The upcoming election, as well as economics, were topics of discussion. Cereijo's article also differs from other reporting on La Noche de los Lápices, and the civic-military dictatorship, as it describes what happened as a genocide. Citing an interview with Moler, she explained how leaders of the dictatorship have not revealed the truth of what happened and “continue to hide where the bodies of the children of La Noche de los Lápices are.”<sup>175</sup> In addition, Moler clarified that the victims of the genocide not only fought for the right to the BES but also “what was in dispute was an economic model that wanted to bring everyone to the level of the most powerful. That is a common thread with today.”<sup>176</sup> Moler's comments show a continuation of the fight for a just economic system, as capitalism continues to oppress students and the working class.

Another speaker was Malena Osiodotti, member of the Coordinadora de Estudiantes Secundarios (CES) (High School Students Coordination). Osiodotti spoke on the importance of rejecting neoliberalism, specifically in relation to the current president of Argentina at the time, Mauricio Macri.<sup>177</sup> Osiodotti also encouraged voters to vote for the Frente de Todos party<sup>178</sup> in the upcoming election. In connecting the past with the present, Osiodotti underscored the importance of politics as a means of change and

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<sup>175</sup> Cereijo, “A 43 años de la Noche de los Lápices.” From the original Spanish: “Los genocidas siguen ocultando dónde están los cuerpos de los chicos de la Noche de los Lápices.”

<sup>176</sup> Cereijo, “A 43 años de la Noche de los Lápices.” From the original Spanish: “lo que estaba en disputa era un modelo económico que quería llevar todo para los más poderosos. Ese es el hilo conductor con el de hoy.”

<sup>177</sup> Cereijo, “A 43 años de la Noche de los Lápices.”

<sup>178</sup> The Frente de Todos party is a party on the left that supports social welfare and education, for more information see <https://www.frentedetodos.org/plataforma>.

“called to ‘build that homeland that we owe to the 30,000 fellow detained and disappeared.’”<sup>179</sup>

In addition, a member of the UES, Matias, spoke at the commemoration. Matias underlined that in regard to La Noche de los Lápices, in order to honor those disappeared on La Noche de los Lápices, it is crucial to create the future they fought for.<sup>180</sup> Saintout, who was a candidate at the time, also spoke at the commemoration. Perhaps this could have been part of a campaign tactic to gain voters, however Saintout seemed to care about the students who were disappeared on La Noche de los Lápices. The article quotes Saintout reflecting on this difficult period of history, where she explains “There have always been those who have survived great horrors and have taken care of that flame which was transmitted, which is present in these kids that are not only the future, but are the most beautiful part of the present. They are what nestles in the present.”<sup>181</sup> Thus, a common theme - also seen through Moler speaking with high school students in 2019 – is the idea that the younger generation will be the guardians and stewards of this history of La Noche de los Lápices, and it is their duty to continue to remember as those before have done.

In 2020, at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, there were not any public commemorations that I could find that were written about. However, in 2020 there was an op-ed written by Miguel Angel Abdelnur published in *El Dia*, on the anniversary of La Noche de los Lápices. Entitled “La Noche de los Lápices: Why the Students?” The article

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<sup>179</sup> Cereijo, “A 43 años de la Noche de los Lápices.” From the original Spanish: “y llamó a <<construir esa patria que se la debemos a los 30 mil compañeros detenidos desaparecidos.”

<sup>180</sup> Cereijo, “A 43 años de la Noche de los Lápices.”

<sup>181</sup> Cereijo, “A 43 años de la Noche de los Lápices.” From the original Spanish: “Siempre ha habido aquellos que sobrevivieron a los grandes horrores y se han encargado de cuidar esa llama, que se fue transmitiendo, que está presente en estos pibes y en estas pibas que no solamente son el futuro, sino que son lo más lindo de este presente. Son lo que anida este presente.”

seeks to answer the question of why students specifically were targeted during the civic-military dictatorship. Abdelnur argues that

The only possible explanation is that they wanted to show society that they held unlimited power over the life of anyone - even children - and that they did not hesitate to use it as many times as necessary in order to maintain it. From Herodes to here, the killing of children means that: The exercise of absolute power through terror, the extreme cruelty.<sup>182</sup>

Abdelnur's argument explains why the civic-military dictatorship targeted high school students during La Noche de los Lápices - to cause fear and intimidation, and show that anyone could be a target. Abdelnur also argues that the resistance of people against the civic-military government, such as in the organization UES, was important towards the struggle for democracy. Abdelnur explains that activism brought about the fall of the dictatorship and the transition to democracy.<sup>183</sup>

### **Conclusion**

While commemorations held on the anniversary of La Noche de los Lápices have changed from the 1990s to the present day, many similarities can be seen. For example, the use of art as a form of commemoration - whether that is through murals, monuments, or film screenings, shows how art is a tool that can be used for healing and remembering. In addition, through the yearly march in La Plata, students bring attention to the relation of memory to place, by highlighting places of significant history. In the later 2010s, as the Internet became more prominent, social media emerged as a tool to spread the word about these commemorations. Events at commemorations of La Noche de los Lápices

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<sup>182</sup> Miguel Angel Abdelnur, "La Noche de los Lápices: ¿por qué con los estudiantes? *El Día*, September 16, 2020, <https://www.eldia.com/nota/2020-9-16-3-30-49-la-noche-de-los-lapices-por-que-con-los-estudiantes-politica-y-economia>. From the original Spanish: "La única explicación posible es que quisieron demostrar a la sociedad que ostentaban un poder ilimitado sobre la vida de cualquier persona – aún de niños – y que no vacilarían en usarlo las veces que fuera necesario a fin de mantenerlo. De Herodes para acá, la matanza de niños significa eso: el ejercicio del poder absoluto por medio de terror; la extrema crueldad."

<sup>183</sup> Abdelnur, "La Noche de los Lápices."

have expanded over the years, beginning with the yearly march, and continuing through talks with survivors, open mics, discussions, music, dance, film screenings, and more. By including survivors, student organizers attempt to center those who were harmed by this history, while survivors have the space to share their thoughts and perspectives. In addition, for those who continue to remain disappeared, the inclusion of family members of the disappeared at commemoration events also provides an opportunity for family members to remember their loved ones. For students, organizing these commemoration events year after year provides an opportunity to be stewards of this history and continue the struggle the UES was fighting for - an just, equitable Argentina, with a fully funded public education.

Chapter Two: State Terrorism and Resistance: Examining Activism through the Casa  
Mariani-Teruggi and the Violence of Miguel Etchecolatz and Ramón Camps

In 2006 a packed courtroom in the Federal Criminal Court Number 1 of La Plata sat in anticipation waiting for the soon-to-be-announced ruling. The judge announced the ruling, and those waiting for the verdict “wept, applauded, and jumped up and down. Outside, hundreds more cheered” as Miguel Etchecolatz, deputy police chief of the Buenos Aires province, was given a life sentence for the crimes he committed during the civic-military dictatorship.<sup>184</sup>

Previously in 1986, following the return to democracy after the end of the civic-military dictatorship, Miguel Etchecolatz had also been tried and found guilty of “91 counts [of torture] and sentenced to 23 years in prison.”<sup>185</sup> However, Etchecolatz received amnesty despite the trial’s guilty verdict.<sup>186</sup> Etchecolatz would not be tried again until after the annulment of the laws that granted him amnesty, *la Ley de Punto Final* (Full Stop Law), and *la Obediencia Debida* (the Due Obedience Law) in 2003.<sup>187</sup> In the trial held in 2006 Etchecolatz faced the accusation “of eight counts of kidnapping, torture, and murder.”<sup>188</sup> Two of those counts were for the illegal detention and torture of Jorge Julio

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<sup>184</sup> “Argentine Sentenced to Life for ‘Dirty War’ Role,” *New York Times*, September 20, 2006, A5, <https://www.proquest.com/docview/433399142?pq-origsite=primo&forcedol=true>. Also see the thesis by Federico Manzi, “Pozo de Arana: Voces que rompen el silencio,” Universidad Nacional de La Plata, 2014, <http://sedici.unlp.edu.ar/handle/10915/40008> which includes a radio documentary of the verdict being read and people cheering.

<sup>185</sup> “Argentina Convicts Ex-police Officials,” *New York Times*, December 3, 1986, A3, <https://www.proquest.com/docview/426369189/abstract/CA4D587B3A674651PQ/1>.

<sup>186</sup> “Argentine Sentenced to Life”; Brian Murphy, “Miguel Etchecolatz, enforcer of Argentina’s ‘Dirty War,’ dies at 93,” *Washington Post*, July 5, 2022, [link.gale.com/apps/doc/A709254537/BIC?u=viva\\_jmu&sid=bookmark-BIC&xid=592bb7e3](http://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A709254537/BIC?u=viva_jmu&sid=bookmark-BIC&xid=592bb7e3).

<sup>187</sup> Cintia González Leegstra, “El juicio a Etchecolatz: Nuevos y viejos actores en la lucha por la justicia,” *Intersticios* 5, no. 2 (2011): 129, [https://www.memoria.fahce.unlp.edu.ar/art\\_revistas/pr.14541/pr.14541.pdf](https://www.memoria.fahce.unlp.edu.ar/art_revistas/pr.14541/pr.14541.pdf). From the original Spanish: “acusado de ocho casos de secuestros, torturas, y asesinatos.”

<sup>188</sup> Leegstra, “El juicio a Etchecolatz,” 141.



López and the murder of Diana Esmeralda Teruggi, who is discussed further in the section on the Casa Mariani-Teruggi.<sup>189</sup> The state kidnapped the bricklayer Jorge Julio López for the first time during the dictatorship.<sup>190</sup> Etchecolatz tortured López, and López survived. He provided key testimony during the 2006 trial that led to Etchecolatz's sentence.<sup>191</sup> López went missing a mere hours before he was supposed to continue with his testimony. It has long been suspected that "active and retired provincial police personnel may have kidnapped López, in order to intimidate other witnesses and impede future trials against humanity."<sup>192</sup> A march is held every year in La Plata on the anniversary of his 2006 disappearance to demand his reappearance.<sup>193</sup>

This violence Etchecolatz committed at times took place in the homes of those he kidnapped, with the help of other police and military forces, but mainly took place in clandestine detention centers. A *New York Times* article that reported on the 2006 trial of Etchecolatz explains his violent leadership in clandestine detention centers, noting "Miguel Etchecolatz...ran clandestine detention centers as provincial police commissioner for Buenos Aires during the military dictatorship from 1976 to 1983, when an estimated 11,000 to 30,000 people were killed in a crackdown on leftists."<sup>194</sup> The testimony of those who survived detention and torture in clandestine detention centers in La Plata, such as in the clandestine detention center Pozo de Arana, discussed later in the

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<sup>189</sup> Leegstra, 131-32.

<sup>190</sup> Andrea Raina, "Marcha a 12 años de la desaparición de Jorge Julio López," *Altheia* 9, no. 17 (2018): 1, [https://www.memoria.fahce.unlp.edu.ar/art\\_revistas/pr.15049/pr.15049.pdf](https://www.memoria.fahce.unlp.edu.ar/art_revistas/pr.15049/pr.15049.pdf).

<sup>191</sup> Pamela Dubois and María Emilia Nieto, "A 15 años de la segunda desaparición de Jorge Julio López. Movilizaciones, actos, y homenajes para mantener viva su memoria y exigir justicia," *Altheia* 12, no. 23 (May 2022): 3, [http://www.memoria.fahce.unlp.edu.ar/art\\_revistas/pr.13178/pr.13178.pdf](http://www.memoria.fahce.unlp.edu.ar/art_revistas/pr.13178/pr.13178.pdf).

<sup>192</sup> "Miguel Etchecolatz, unrepentant dictatorship-era torturer and killer, dies at 93," *Buenos Aires Times*, July 3, 2022, <https://www.batimes.com.ar/news/argentina/miguel-etchecolatz-unrepentant-dictatorship-era-torturer-and-killer-dies-at-93.phtml>.

<sup>193</sup> Raina, "Marcha a 12 años," 1.

<sup>194</sup> "Argentine sentenced to life," A3.

chapter, were crucial to the jailing of Etchecolatz. The sentencing of Etchecolatz in 2006 would not have been possible without the survivors speaking out against him, and the various human rights organizations and lawyers that supported the survivors.<sup>195</sup> In addition to the violence Etchecolatz enacted in clandestine detention centers, he was also responsible for “the abduction of 10 high school students – a crime that became known as the ‘Night of the Pencils.’”<sup>196</sup> La Noche de los Lápices and its memorialization is discussed more in Chapter One, however here it is important to note Etchecolatz’s role in carrying out La Noche de los Lápices.

Writing on collective violence, historian Charles Tilly explains that “Every government includes specialists in violence, people who control means of inflicting damage on persons and objects.”<sup>197</sup> The police in Argentina during the civic-military dictatorship can be seen as one example of “violent specialist[s],” as they led and participated in violence at clandestine detention centers, including torture, arrested and forcibly disappeared those deemed “subversive.”<sup>198</sup> Two notoriously violent police officers during the civic-military dictatorship were Ramón Camps – a former general in the army and “the chief of the Buenos Aires provincial police until his retirement in 1981” – and Miguel Etchecolatz, the deputy police chief of the Buenos Aires province.<sup>199</sup> What links this chapter together is the involvement of Camps and Etchecolatz in various

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<sup>195</sup> Leegstra, “El juicio a Etchecolatz,” 143.

<sup>196</sup> Brian Murphy, “Miguel Etchecolatz, enforcer of Argentina’s ‘Dirty War,’ dies at 93,” *Washington Post*, July 5, 2022.

<sup>197</sup> Charles Tilly, *The Politics of Collective Violence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 35.

<sup>198</sup> Tilly, *The Politics of Collective Violence*, 35.

<sup>199</sup> “Ramon Camps, 67, Argentine General in the ‘Dirty War,’” *New York Times*, August 23, 1994, B6, <https://www.proquest.com/docview/109354123/abstract/C60A5634C2A744B5PQ/1>; “Miguel Etchecolatz, Unrepentant dictatorship-era torturer and killer, dies at 93,” *Buenos Aires Times*, July 3, 2022, <https://www.batimes.com.ar/news/argentina/miguel-etchecolatz-unrepentant-dictatorship-era-torturer-and-killer-dies-at-93.phtml>.

places and events during the dictatorship. Both of them participated in and led the attack on the Casa Mariani-Teruggi, the torture and violence at the clandestine detention center Pozo de Arana, and the surveillance carried out under la Dirección de Inteligencia de la Policía de la provincia de Buenos Aires (The Intelligence Directorate of the Buenos Aires Province DIPPBA Police, hereinafter DIPPBA).

A particularly cruel and vicious man, Camps had been court-martialed under the presidency of Raúl Alfonsín after the transition to democracy in 1983. In a 1986 trial Camps was found guilty of “73 counts of torture” and was given a 25-year sentence in prison.<sup>200</sup> However, similar to Etchecolatz’s amnesty in 1987, a pardon from President Menem in 1990 released Camps from jail and he passed away in 1994.<sup>201</sup> Camps never expressed remorse for the crimes he committed during the civic-military dictatorship. His obituary published in the *New York Times* explains that Camps “was once quoted as claiming responsibility for the ‘disappearance’ of 5,000 suspected leftists. He justified the campaign as the only way to exterminate Marxist subversion.”<sup>202</sup> The *New York Times* obituary of Camps draws from an interview with Jacobo Timerman (see the Introduction), where Timerman explains “‘His [Camps’] beliefs were based on Nazi literature.’”<sup>203</sup> Similar to Etchecolatz, Camps “never offered any significant details to help account for the thousands still missing or give historians insights to piece together the junta’s complex web.”<sup>204</sup>

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<sup>200</sup> “Ramon Camps, 67,” B6; “Argentina Convicts Ex-police Officials,” A3.

<sup>201</sup> “Ramon Camps, 67,” B6.

<sup>202</sup> “Ramon Camps, 67,” B6.

<sup>203</sup> “Ramon Camps, 67,” B6.

<sup>204</sup> Murphy, “Miguel Etchecolatz.”

Etchecolatz's obituary also notes that "More people were arrested or disappeared in Mr. Etchecolatz's territory – the capital Buenos Aires and surrounding areas, including La Plata – than anywhere else in Argentina during the dictatorship's early years, according to prosecutors."<sup>205</sup> The high number of people detained and disappeared in this area could be due to several reasons. First, the location of the UNLP and the large number of students involved in politics and activism made the La Plata area unique. Second, the capital of Argentina, Buenos Aires, and the provincial capital of the province of Buenos Aires, La Plata, are home to many operations of the government and police, such as the DIPPBA.

### **La Casa Mariani-Teruggi**

*La casa de los conejos* (The House of Rabbits) (2008) is a memoir written by Laura Alcoba, from the point of view of her 7 year-old self, when she lived in La Plata, Argentina, before and during the civic-military dictatorship. Her parents were Montoneros, and because of this, Alcoba and her parents had to leave their apartment and live in the houses of friends, so they wouldn't be tracked down by the state or the AAA. The theme of survival during the civic-military dictatorship is expressed in the book as Alcoba details her day-to-day life as a child during this time period. Her perspective is important because many first-person sources, such as the memoir written by Jacobo Timerman, discussed earlier in the Introduction, are from the perspective of adults.<sup>206</sup>

The book also provides a window into how Alcoba viewed the civic-military dictatorship as a result of her parents. Even before the civic-military dictatorship begins,

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<sup>205</sup> Murphy, "Miguel Etchecolatz."

<sup>206</sup> Laura Alcoba, *La casa de los conejos*, trans. Leopoldo Brizuela (Barcelona: Edhasa Literaria, 2008), 16, 19, 43.

the narrator states “People don’t know that we, only us, have been forced to go to war.”<sup>207</sup> In the middle of the book, Alcoba also reflects that “the city is full of people that don’t participate in it [the war] and in certain cases, they seem to ignore that it exists.”<sup>208</sup> This demonstrates how perhaps one coping mechanism used by people during the dictatorship included pretending it wasn’t happening.

The memoir begins in 1975 before the civic-military dictatorship started, and covers Alcoba’s experiences during the civic-military dictatorship after the coup of March 24, 1976.<sup>209</sup> Even before the civic-military dictatorship “officially” began, in 1975 the Montoneros, to whom Alcoba’s parents belonged, faced persecution by the Triple A - the Argentine Anticommunist Alliance. Alcoba’s mother explains to her that the Triple A has murdered and forcibly disappeared militants of the Montoneros, and “due to this we have to take refuge, hide ourselves, and also resist.”<sup>210</sup> As part of this hiding, or what Alcoba calls “living underground,” Alcoba and her mother receive fake papers with a new name, and they take refuge in the home of fellow Montoneros Daniel “Cacho” Enrique Mariani and Diana “Didí” Esmeralda Teruggi.<sup>211</sup>

The Montoneros selected the home of Mariani and Teruggi to be used for the printing operations of their underground newspaper *Evita Montonera*, and a hidden room was constructed for where the printing took place.<sup>212</sup> To explain the activity in the home

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<sup>207</sup> Alcoba, *La casa de los conejos*, 18-19. From the original Spanish: “La gente no sabe que a nosotros, sólo a nosotros, nos han forzado a entrar en guerra.”

<sup>208</sup> Alcoba, 44. From the original Spanish: “la ciudad está llena de gente que no participa de ella y que en ciertos casos, incluso, parece ignorar que existe.”

<sup>209</sup> Alcoba, 15, 97.

<sup>210</sup> Alcoba, *La casa de los conejos*, 17. From the original Spanish: “Por eso debemos refugiarnos, escondernos, y también resistir.”

<sup>211</sup> Alcoba, 43; Laureano Barrera, *La casa de la calle 30: Una historia de Chicha Mariani* (Buenos Aires: Tusquets Editores, 2022), 16.

<sup>212</sup> Alcoba, 56.

– such as why Teruggi, who drove a van delivering the printed newspapers (see *Figure 1* in the appendix), frequently left the home, or why fellow Montoneros sometimes came to the home – the official story was that the home was a place for rabbit breeding. This would explain the delivery of the newspapers (transporting rabbits) and the visits from fellow Montoneros to the home for meetings (people interested in buying rabbits).<sup>213</sup> The rabbit cages could be found outside of the hidden room in which the newspaper was printed, to seem as if there was nothing behind the wall and to support the guise that the home was actually used for rabbit breeding. When Alcoba asked Daniel if people would come to the house to actually buy rabbits, Daniel responded “In theory, yes...but don’t you worry, Argentines only eat beef. No one is going to come...”<sup>214</sup> Thus the selection of rabbits specifically was intentional, as it was believable enough if the military came to inspect the house, but rabbits were not so popular that a ton of everyday people would be lining up to buy the rabbits and wanting to come inside the house.

*La casa de los conejos* also provides a window into the lens of gender during the civic-military dictatorship. Maria del Carmen Feijoo, Marcela M. A. Nari and Luis Fierro’s journal article “Women in Argentina during the 1960s” analyzes the role of women in movements such as Peronism, but the findings of the article can also be applied to the Montoneros in the 1970s. The authors state that women “generally performed anonymous tasks, such as work in the communications networks, and providing hiding places for the persecuted – linked to the ‘reproductive’ life of the organizations.”<sup>215</sup> This

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<sup>213</sup> Alcoba, 75.

<sup>214</sup> Alcoba, 76. From the original Spanish: “En principio, sí...Pero no te preocupes, los argentinos sólo comen carne de vaca. No va a venir nadie.”

<sup>215</sup> Maria del Carmen Feijoo, Marcela M. A. Nari and Luis Fierro, “Women in Argentina during the 1960s,” *Latin American Perspectives* 23, no. 1 (1996): 9.

can be seen through Alcoba and her mother living in Diana Teruggi's (and Daniel Mariani's) home, as well as Diana's role in delivering the newspapers, and the job of Alcoba's mother of operating the printing presses.<sup>216</sup> These were all important jobs done by women that contributed to the organization.

Another example of the perspective of gender can be seen through how Teruggi delivered the newspapers. Alcoba's role was to help wrap boxes, into which the newspapers were hidden. Thus, when wrapped the newspapers would look like a present and not like a box of newspapers. Teruggi chose to deliver the presents, as the Montoneros took advantage of the stereotype that women must not be able to meaningfully contribute to movements. In this way, the Montoneros used the concept of gender to their advantage, as they used the government's sexist thinking against them.<sup>217</sup>

On one occasion, Teruggi brought Alcoba along while she was delivering newspapers to another woman and her child, who were part of the Montoneros. This delivery was also a carefully crafted perspective on gender as well, as the Montoneros made the government think this encounter consisted of only two women, with children, exchanging a present in the plaza. In reality, this encounter represented a highly calculated distribution of underground newspapers, which would be passed along to fellow Montoneros.<sup>218</sup> After the delivery of the present, Teruggi mentions to Alcoba that the women they delivered the present to had been tortured, but she never gave up any information. Alcoba reflects that this woman who did not talk, even when under torture, must "be a strong woman."<sup>219</sup> Therefore, through the roles of Teruggi and Alcoba, and

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<sup>216</sup> Alcoba, *La casa de los conejos*, 112.

<sup>217</sup> Alcoba, 80-81.

<sup>218</sup> Alcoba, *La casa de los conejos*, 112.

<sup>219</sup> Alcoba, 113. From the original Spanish: "una mujer fuerte."

through how the Montoneros utilized the concept of gender, one can see what it meant to be a “strong woman” during the civic-military dictatorship in the eyes of the Montoneros.

While Alcoba and her mother lived at Mariani’s and Teruggi’s home for nearly a year, her mother fled Argentina for exile in France, and eventually Alcoba left Argentina for France as well.<sup>220</sup> Alcoba and her mother moved out before the attack on the house on November 24, 1976. Camps and was led by Etchecolatz ordered the attack to be carried out. Other police and military officers participated in the attack.<sup>221</sup> 5 people were killed in the attack - Roberto Porfidio, Juan Carlos Peiris, Daniel Mendiburu Eliçabe, and Diana Esmeralda Teruggi - that lasted for 3 hours. The attackers used artillery as well as a helicopter to destroy the base of the newspaper operation and to send a message to other Montoneros.<sup>222</sup> Etchecolatz would later be charged for the murder of Diana Teruggi in 2006.<sup>223</sup>

Around 30 years after leaving La Plata, Alcoba returns to see the home, together with Chicha Mariani, the mother of Daniel Mariani and an important human rights activist. At the time, the house was in the progress of becoming a space of remembrance, led by Chicha Mariani’s efforts.<sup>224</sup> Today the house serves as a museum and a space to educate the public about the state terrorism during the dictatorship.<sup>225</sup>

The book *La casa de los conejos* is an example of the production of an individual’s memories of the civic-military dictatorship. While not written during the time Alcoba lived in La Plata as a child, she draws on these memories as an adult to write

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<sup>220</sup> Alcoba, 125

<sup>221</sup> Leegstra, “El juicio a Etchecolatz,” 132.

<sup>222</sup> Leegstra, 132; Gonzalo Leonidas Chaves and Jorge Omar Lewinger, *Los del 73: Memoria Montonera* (La Plata: Editorial de la Campana), 188.

<sup>223</sup> Leegstra, “El juicio a Etchecolatz,” 131-32.

<sup>224</sup> Alcoba, *La casa de los conejos*, 129.

<sup>225</sup> “Casa Mariani Teruggi,” Asociación Anahí, <http://asociacionanahi.org.ar/casa/>.



the memoir. Hispanic-Literature scholar Valeria Rey de Castro's journal article cites two scholars, James Olney and Karl Weintraub, who explain how the genre of autobiography intersects with memory. They describe that "the autobiography is a representation of the past that only exists in the present of the narration, as the events are configured how they are remembered in the actuality of the enunciation and not how they were lived in the moment."<sup>226</sup> Thus, the writing of the memoir was a production of memory, as Alcoba recalled how she remembered her experiences as a child during the civic-military dictatorship in La Plata. As the scholar Patricia Swier mentions in another journal article analyzing *La casa de los conejos*, writing the book was also a way for Alcoba to process the traumatic experiences that she lived through during the civic-military dictatorship.<sup>227</sup> At the beginning of the book, Alcoba describes how she had been waiting to tell this history until she was very old, and there were few survivors from the time of the civic-military dictatorship left. What was stopping her was "the fear of its [the civic-military dictatorship's] glances and a certain incomprehension I thought was inevitable."<sup>228</sup> To put it another way, even though Alcoba exhibited actions of bravery during the time, there was still some fear holding her back. However, after a trip to Argentina in 2003 with her daughter, Alcoba began to remember more of her childhood and felt the importance of writing this history now. At the end of this preface, she concludes that "if in the end I

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<sup>226</sup> Valeria Rey de Castro, "'Narrar desde la niña que fui.' Configurar subjetividades en 'La casa de los conejos y El azul de las abejas' de Laura Alcoba," *INTI, Revista de literatura hispánica* 85/86 (2017): 217. From the original Spanish: "la autobiografía es una representación del pasado que solo existe en el presente de la narración, pues los eventos están configurados como se los recuerda en la actualidad de la enunciación y no como fueron vividos en su momento."

<sup>227</sup> Patricia L. Swier, "Rebellious Rabbits: Childhood Trauma and the Emergence of the Uncanny in Two Southern Cone Texts," *Chasqui: Revista de literatura latinoamericana* 42, no. 1 (2013): 178, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43589520>.

<sup>228</sup> Alcoba, *La casa de los conejos*, 14. From the original Spanish: "que si al fin hago este esfuerzo de memoria para hablar de la Argentina de los Montoneros, de la dictadura y del terror, desde la altura de la niña que fui, no es tanto recordar como por ver si consigo, al cabo, de una vez, olvidar un poco."

make this memory effort to talk about the Argentina of the Montoneros, of the dictatorship and of terror, from the height of the girl I was, it is not so much to remember as to see if I can, forget a little.”<sup>229</sup> Thus, writing this memoir served as an opportunity to process these, at times, traumatic memories, but also to draw attention to this important history. This source is significant because it shows, in a child’s point of view, what the civic-military dictatorship was like in La Plata for the Montoneros. Other memoirs written by survivors after the dictatorship include Jacobo Timerman and Emilce Moler.

### **Surveillance under DIPPBA**

The DIPPBA, led by Camps and Etchecolatz and located in La Plata, conducted surveillance on the activities held in relation to the anniversary of La Noche de los Lápices in the post-dictatorship era, among other surveillance they carried out during the civic-military dictatorship. The archives of the Commission for Memory, today housed at the same former site DIPPBA used to exist in, explains the history of DIPPBA, stating

DIPPBA was created in 1956 under the name Central Intelligence and was dissolved in 1998, in the context of a Buenos Aires police reform. Since its creation, DIPPBA had the constant task linked to the production of information and intelligence action, an element that made it a fundamental link of state terrorism in the province of Buenos Aires.<sup>230</sup>

A memo from September 5, 1997 sent to the Senior Director of Intelligence in La Plata, written by police officer Hector Espinoza reveals an example of the surveillance the police conducted on the organizing efforts for the anniversary for La Noche de los

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<sup>229</sup> Alcoba, 14.

<sup>230</sup> “Fondo DIPPBA,” *Comisión por la memoria*, <https://atom.comisionporlamemoria.net/index.php/fondo-dippba>. From the original Spanish: “La DIPPBA fue creada en 1956 con el nombre de Central de Inteligencia y disuelta en 1998, en el contexto de una reforma de la policía bonaerense. Desde su creación, la DIPPBA tuvo una constante tarea vinculada a la producción de información y la acción de inteligencia, elemento que la convirtió en un eslabón fundamental del terrorismo de Estado en la provincia de Buenos Aires.”

Lápices following the end of the civic-military dictatorship. The report includes a flyer that had been displayed in public, but was taken by the police. The flyer announces a planning meeting on September 6<sup>th</sup> in commemoration of the anniversary of La Noche de los Lápices on September 16<sup>th</sup> and the subsequent march.<sup>231</sup> It begins with a brief history of La Noche de los Lápices, describing

**16 September 1976:** The Buenos Aires police directed by General Camps and Captain Etchecolatz forcibly disappeared 16 secondary students that fought for the student ticket. Only one survived, and the others were tortured and assassinated.<sup>232</sup>

The flyer goes on to discuss the present day, stating “**Today, 21 years later**, the torturer Etchecolatz goes on T.V. and defends everything that he did...Many of yesterday’s people guilty of genocide are those that today repress the workers and the people.”<sup>233</sup> That is to say, workers in the present day face economic challenges that need to be addressed by unions and the leaders of the dictatorship still have a lasting impact after 1983. As the Museo de arte y memoria puts it,

The consequences [of the civic-military dictatorship] continue up to today within the life of the victims and shared social trauma: for them and for us, memory is a tool of construction to publicize the facts and assure that never again is democracy attacked in our country.”<sup>234</sup>

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<sup>231</sup> “16/9 Preparamos una gran marcha” Comisión por la memoria, fondo DIPPBA -DCDRyA, Mesa A, Factor Educacional, Legajo 96. Año 1997,

<https://www.comisionporlamemoria.org/archivos/archivo/noche-de-los-lapices/mesa-A-leg-96.pdf>.

<sup>232</sup> “16/9 Preparemos una gran marcha.” From the original Spanish: “**16 de Septiembre 1976:** La Policía Bonaerense dirigida por el Gral. Camps y el Comisario Etchecolatz hizo desaparecer a 16 estudiantes secundarios por el boleto estudiantil. Sólo uno sobrevivió, los demás fueron torturados y asesinados.”

<sup>233</sup> “16/9 Preparemos una gran marcha.” From the original Spanish: “**Hoy, 21 días después**, el torturador Etchecolatz va a la T.V. y reivindica todo lo que hizo...Muchos de los Genocidas de ayer, son los que hoy reprimen a los trabajadores y el pueblo.”

<sup>234</sup> “Muestra patrimonial, Comisión provincial por la memoria, Museo de arte y memoria, <https://www.comisionporlamemoria.org/museo/project/memoria/#audio-adultos12>. English translation by William and Mary students. Original Spanish: Las consecuencias perduran hasta la actualidad en la subjetividad de las víctimas y en la trama social; por ello, la memoria es una herramienta de construcción para dar a conocer estos hechos y para que nunca más se atente contra la democracia en nuestro país.”

Thus, students in the present day still continue to face challenges from the neoliberal government, such as properly funded education. Memory, as invoked in the flier in 1997 to remember the anniversary of La Noche de los Lápices, and as explained by the Museo de arte y memoria, is an important framework to remember the history of the civic-military dictatorship and to call for justice.

The mention of Etchecolatz on T.V. references his appearance on T.V. on August 28, 1997. Etchecolatz was not the only former leader of the civic-military dictatorship to appear on television. During the mid to late 90s, others who committed heinous crimes during the civic-military dictatorship were offered a platform to “repent” on television.<sup>235</sup> The public recognized Etchecolatz as one of the most well-known leaders from the civic-military dictatorship because he had been found guilty and “sentenced for 23 years in prison” in 1986, but received a pardon in 1987 after the passage of the Law of Due Obedience.<sup>236</sup> Thus, one of the demands listed on the flyer is for the arrest of those who committed genocide and the arrest of “all of the repressors!”<sup>237</sup> As historian Claudia Feld notes, Etchecolatz’s appearance on T.V. stood out for several reasons, he was free at the time of the T.V. segment despite being “a repressor condemned as a torturer – with the proposition of generating a *debate* with one of the victims.”<sup>238</sup> Alfredo Bravo was invited to be the other end of the debate, as Etchecolatz had kidnapped and tortured Bravo during the dictatorship.<sup>239</sup> While initially the debate had been intended as a space to condemn

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<sup>235</sup> Claudia Feld, “El imposible debate entre víctimas y victimarios: notas sobre las declaraciones televisadas de Miguel Etchecolatz,” *Rubrica Contemporánea* 5, no. 8 (2016): 78, 81, <https://doi.org/10.5565/rev/rubrica.115>. From the original Spanish: “arrepentido.”

<sup>236</sup> Feld, “El imposible debate,” 77. From the original Spanish: “condenado a 23 años de prisión.”

<sup>237</sup> “16/9 Preparemos una gran marcha.” From the original Spanish: “a todos los represores.”

<sup>238</sup> Feld, “El imposible debate,” 81. From the original Spanish: “un represor condenado como torturador – con el propósito de generar un *debate* con una de sus víctimas.”

<sup>239</sup> Feld, “El imposible debate,” 82.

Etchecolatz, it turned into an environment in which Etchecolatz questioned and attacked Bravo.<sup>240</sup> Etchecolatz appeared on T.V. to not only gaslight a survivor of the civic-military dictatorship, but also to try to promote his book *La otra campana del Nunca Más* (The Other Campaign of Never Again). The T.V. debate was also intended as a space to push back against the false claims Etchecolatz makes in his book; by publishing his book, Etchecolatz attempted to change the narrative of the *Nunca Más* report.<sup>241</sup> The publication of Etchecolatz's book builds on a previous legacy of leaders of the civic-military dictatorship who tried to create an "official" narrative of what happened while they simultaneously pushed back against the narrative told by survivors and human rights activists. In this way, leaders of the civic-military dictatorship sought to justify their actions.<sup>242</sup>

### **El Pozo de Arana**

The clandestine detention center Pozo de Arana, also known as "Puesto Zorzal, El Campito, [and] Casa de las muñecas" was located on the outskirts of La Plata. Part of the "Circuito Camps" (Camps Circuit), Pozo de Arana was one of the twenty-nine clandestine detention centers overseen by Camps.<sup>243</sup> At the time of its operation from April 1976 to March 1978, El Pozo de Arana was in "a semi-rural area."<sup>244</sup> There were at

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<sup>240</sup> Feld, "El imposible debate," 82.

<sup>241</sup> Feld, 81.

<sup>242</sup> Daniel Feierstein, "Explaining Genocidal Social Practices in Argentina: The Problem of Causation," in *Genocide as Social Practice: Reorganizing Society under the Nazis and Argentina's Military Juntas* trans. Douglas Andrew Town (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2014), 136.

<sup>243</sup> "Tarde o temprano, la tierra revela sus secretos," in *Ciencia por la verdad: 35 años del Equipo Argentino de Antropología Forense* (Quilmes: Universidad Nacional de Quilmes, 2019), 107.

<sup>244</sup> "Espacio para la memoria ex CCDTyE Destacamento de Arana," Comisión por la memoria, <https://www.comisionporlamemoria.org/sitiosdememoria/ficha/espacio-para-la-memoria-y-promocion-de-los-derechos-ex-ccdye-destacamento-de-arana/#desafectacion>; "Sentencia contra Etchecolatz por crímenes contra la humanidad, 2006, 75, [https://www.asser.nl/upload/documents/20120412T014157-Etchecolatz\\_sentencia\\_19-9-2006%20Etchecolatz,%20Miguel.pdf](https://www.asser.nl/upload/documents/20120412T014157-Etchecolatz_sentencia_19-9-2006%20Etchecolatz,%20Miguel.pdf); The CPM says Pozo de Arana opened in May, while "Sentencia contra Etchecolatz," p. 75 says it opened in April. I am going to go by the earliest date mentioned. From the original Spanish: "en una zona semi rural."

least 250 people kidnapped by the state who were forcibly brought to Pozo de Arana, often times after being held at another clandestine detention center.<sup>245</sup> The geographical location of Pozo de Arana, located very close to a train station and an airport, allowed for the transfer of those forcibly detained there.<sup>246</sup> Jorge Julio López, mentioned earlier, was detained at Pozo de Arana, where both Camps and Etchecolatz tortured him.<sup>247</sup> In addition, the Comisión Provincial por la Memoria (Commission for Memory) states on their website that “Thanks to the testimonies of survivors and family members, it is known that the youth of La Noche de los Lápices” and members of the Montoneros “passed through there.”<sup>248</sup> For example, one student disappeared as part of La Noche de los Lápices, survivor Gustavo Calotti, speaks about his experiences when he was forcibly held at Pozo de Arana in the thesis “Pozo de Arana: Voces que rompen el silencio (Pozo de Arana: Voices that Break the Silence)” written by UNLP journalism and social communication student Federico Manzi.<sup>249</sup>

In 2006, Etchecolatz faced another trial. Cintia González Leegstra’s journal article “El juicio a Etchecolatz: Nuevos y viejos actores en la lucha por la justicia (The Etchecolatz Trial: New and Old Actors in the Fight for Justice)” explains the larger context of the trial. This trial was unique because it had plaintiffs – Nilda Eloy, survivor of El Pozo and a medical student at Bellas Artes, and was kidnapped in the middle of the night from her parent’s house.<sup>250</sup> Jorge Julio López, mentioned earlier, had been

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<sup>245</sup> “Espacio para la memoria”; “Sentencia contra Etchecolatz,” says 271 people total were forcibly held at El Pozo de Arana, p. 75.

<sup>246</sup> “Sentencia contra Etchecolatz,” 13; “Espacio para la memoria.”

<sup>247</sup> “Sentencia contra Etchecolatz,” 2.

<sup>248</sup> “Espacio para la memoria.” From the original Spanish: “Gracias a los testimonios de sobrevivientes y familiares, se sabe que por allí pasaron los jóvenes de la Noche de los lápices, militantes montoneros.”

<sup>249</sup> Federico Manzi, “Pozo de Arana: Voces que rompen el silencio,” (BA diss., Universidad Nacional de La Plata, 2014), <http://sedici.unlp.edu.ar/handle/10915/40008>.

<sup>250</sup> Leegstra, “El juicio a Etchecolatz,” 131.

kidnapped by Etchecolatz and his team, and joined as a plaintiff. Also plaintiffs was the Asociación de Ex Detenidos Desaparecidos (AEDD, a group of survivors who had been detained and disappeared during the civic-military dictatorship), la Asamblea Permanente por los Derechos Humanos (APDH) La Plata, and Chicha Mariani.<sup>251</sup> Leegstra stresses the importance of the fact that in this trial, the state was not a plaintiff like the ones held in the 1980s against leaders of the civic-military dictatorship, but rather survivors and human rights organizations who are taking on the responsibility of seeking justice.<sup>252</sup> It is also important to note that the president of Argentina at the time (and current vice president), Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, supported the trial.<sup>253</sup>

During the trial, Jorge Julio López and Gustavo Calotti (one of the survivors of La Noche de los Lápices), among four other survivors of El Pozo de Arana, traveled to El Pozo de Arana along with the judges, their lawyers, and photography experts. There the survivors pointed out the cells in which they were detained, and the use of different areas in Pozo de Arana, such as where mock executions were held.<sup>254</sup> Jorge Julio López identified a well where bodies of those illegally held at El Pozo de Arana were burned by the police after being murdered.<sup>255</sup> In 2007, a forensic team was ordered to survey the area, and in 2008 the archeological team announced the findings of “at least ten thousand fragments of charred skeletal remains, buried in the courtyard.”<sup>256</sup> According to the journal article, “Tarde o temprano, la tierra revela sus secretos (Sooner or later, the Earth

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<sup>251</sup> Leegstra, “El juicio a Etchecolatz,” 130, 131, 132.

<sup>252</sup> Leegstra, 130.

<sup>253</sup> Leegstra, 135.

<sup>254</sup> “El horror del Pozo de Arana, a 30 años,” *Política Hoy*, August 19, 2006, 5, [https://web.archive.org/web/20160307052354if\\_/http://pdf.diariohoy.net/2006/08/19/pdf/05-c.pdf](https://web.archive.org/web/20160307052354if_/http://pdf.diariohoy.net/2006/08/19/pdf/05-c.pdf).

<sup>255</sup> “El horror del Pozo de Arana,” 5.

<sup>256</sup> “Tarde o temprano, la tierra revela sus secretos,” 107. From the original Spanish: “Fue la primera vez que aparecían restos en el mismo sitio donde había funcionado un centro de tortura.”

reveals its secrets),” “it was the first time that remains had appeared in the same place where a torture center had operated.”<sup>257</sup> The preservation of part of these excavations can now be seen by visitors who come to this site of memory.<sup>258</sup>

In 2018 the site of memory at Pozo de Arana opened, after talks with the local community around Pozo de Arana and the police, whom still use the site as a police station today. According to the Comisión Provincial por la Memoria, “In 2016 the Secretary of Human Rights of the province of Buenos Aires” acquired part of Pozo de Arana.<sup>259</sup> Two newspaper articles highlight disagreements over the creation of the site of memory, for two different reasons.

First, a newspaper article published in 2011 entitled “Polémica por el museo del ‘Pozo de Arana’ (‘Controversy over the ‘Pozo de Arana’ Museum)” underlines how some members of the community of La Plata disagreed about the creation of the site of memory. The article describes that initially the entire site at Pozo de Arana, including the functioning police station today, was intended to be part of the site of memory. Perhaps that is why today the site of memory includes only part of the area used by the police, as apparently some community members were concerned about crime in the area and they did not want to lose the police station.<sup>260</sup> In a journal article written by scholar Ramiro Segura, he states that since the 1990s and even more so after the year 2003, a lack of law and order “has become the first or second concern of Argentinian society.”<sup>261</sup> This larger

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<sup>257</sup> “Tarde o temprano, la tierra revela sus secretos,” 107.

<sup>258</sup> “Espacio para la memoria.”

<sup>259</sup> “Espacio para la memoria.” From the original Spanish: “En 2016, la Secretaría de Derechos Humanos de la provincia Buenos Aires.”

<sup>260</sup> “Polémica por el museo del ‘Pozo de Arana,’” *Clarín*, August 12, 2011, [https://www.clarin.com/politica/Polemica-museo-Pozo-Arana\\_0\\_HyeDjN3hv7l.html](https://www.clarin.com/politica/Polemica-museo-Pozo-Arana_0_HyeDjN3hv7l.html).

<sup>261</sup> Ramiro Segura, “Protective Arrangements Across Class: Understanding Social Segregation in La Plata, Argentina,” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 45, no. 6 (November 2021): 1066, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2427.12889>.



national trend regarding security and safety can be seen through the community members concerned about losing the functioning police station at the former clandestine detention center Pozo de Arana. To them the station represented security from “rising crime.”<sup>262</sup> Beside these community members in La Plata, an organization also disagreed about the creation of the site of memory, however for a much different reason.

Second, the organization AEDD did not support the creation of this site of memory. Journalist Ailín Bullentini wrote the newspaper article, in which Bullentini shares a quote from an interview with Pozo de Arana survivor and member of AEDD, Nilda Eloy. Eloy “remarked that ‘Pozo de Arana should not be touched until the judicial process in which it is involved ends’: Eloy was referring to the trial for crimes against humanity committed in the so-called Camps Circuit.”<sup>263</sup> At the time the article was published on September 27, 2011, the trials for the Camps Circuit were still ongoing. Eloy stated that “‘Until they evict the police from there, more than a space for memory, El Pozo will be an interactive museum of what clandestine detention was like there.’”<sup>264</sup> While at first a “interactive museum” may not sound like a bad thing, Eloy is making the important distinction that memorialization of the site could not properly begin until the police station at the former clandestine detention center had left.

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<sup>262</sup> “Polémica por el museo del ‘Pozo de Arana,’” *Clarín*, August 12, 2011, [https://www.clarin.com/politica/Polemica-museo-Pozo-Arana\\_0\\_HyeDjN3hv7l.html](https://www.clarin.com/politica/Polemica-museo-Pozo-Arana_0_HyeDjN3hv7l.html). From the original Spanish: “

<sup>263</sup> Bullentini, “Nuevo espacio para la memoria,” *Página 12*, September 27, 2011, <https://www.pagina12.com.ar/diario/elpais/1-177655-2011-09-27.html>. From the original Spanish: “remarcó que el Pozo de Arana “no puede tocarse hasta que el proceso judicial en el que está involucrado termine”: se refería al juicio por los crímenes de lesa humanidad cometidos en el llamado Circuito Camps.”

<sup>264</sup> Bullentini, “Nuevo espacio para la memoria.” From the original Spanish: “‘Hasta que no desalojen a la policía de allí, más que un espacio para la memoria, el Pozo será un museo interactivo de lo que fue la detención clandestina ahí.’”

Eloy was not the only one who pointed out the problems with having the police station remain functioning at the former clandestine detention center. The organization Justicia Ya!, which has chapters in La Plata and Buenos Aires and “brings together human rights organizations” to work towards “the objectives of Memory, Truth, and Justice” was interviewed in the article mentioned earlier, in which they made clear their disagreement over the presence of the police.<sup>265</sup> The article shares a quote from Justicia Ya!, in which they explained the important point that the police in the station today “were the same force that turned the police station into a torture center [during the civic-military dictatorship].”<sup>266</sup> Thus, by examining the creation of the site of memory at Pozo de Arana, this reveals current discussions, and at times, tensions, in the role of memory and commemoration of the civic-military dictatorship. In addition, it can be noted that the legacy of the civic-military dictatorship, specifically with the role of the police in La Plata, is something still being discussed today. In addition, Eloy’s remarks underline important questions when it comes to memorialization of the civic-military dictatorship. As survivors of the clandestine detention centers are not a monolith, not everyone will agree about how to best memorialize these spaces. If survivors do not agree on how to best memorialize a clandestine detention center, what should be done?

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, several similarities can be found from the topics discussed in this chapter. First, perhaps it can be said that the large degree of violence experienced in La Plata during the civic-military dictatorship could be due to the atrocious violence

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<sup>265</sup> Leegstra, “El juicio a Etchecolatz,” 133-34. From the original Spanish: “que nucleó a organismos de derechos humanos...los objetivos de Memoria, Verdad y Justicia.”

<sup>266</sup> “Polémica por el museo del ‘Pozo de Arana.’” From the original Spanish: “fue la misma fuerza que convirtió la comisaría en un centro de tortura.”

committed by Camps and Etchecolatz in this area, as they were all involved in the attack on the Casa Mariani-Teruggi, Pozo de Arana, and the surveillance carried out under DIPPBA. Also, the importance of survivors of clandestine detention centers and those who lived through this time period speaking out cannot be underestimated, whether that is through the trials of Camps and Etchecolatz, or through personal memoirs such as those by Jacobo Timerman and Laura Alcoba. Finally, in the time period following the end of the civic-military dictatorship, it is important to underline continuities as well as spaces created for memory. The surveillance conducted under DIPPBA until 1998 of the commemorations of the anniversaries of La Noche de los Lápices and the disappearance of Jorge Julio López in 2006 show how traits of the civic-military dictatorship continues through the 90s and 2000s through disappearances. Lastly, the creation of places of memory such as those at the Casa Mariani-Teruggi and Pozo de Arana reflects the work done by human rights activists to educate and remember the crimes committed by the civic-military dictatorship.

## Appendix

Here are photos that I took during a guided tour of the Casa Mariani-Teruggi in La Plata, the tour guide said we were allowed to take photos as long as we didn't use the flash.



*Figure 5.* The car that Diana Teruggi drove around La Plata to deliver copies of *Evita Montonera*. See <http://asociacionanahi.org.ar/>.



*Figure 6.* Side angle of the car. See <http://asociacionanahi.org.ar/>.



Figure 7. In the book *Casa de los conejos*, Alcoba explains the plaque outside the home made it appear more "normal."<sup>267</sup> The holes in the wall are from the attack on the house. See <http://asociacionanahi.org.ar/>.

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<sup>267</sup> Alcoba, *La casa de los conejos*, 129.



*Figure 8.* View from inside the house, looking through the wall that was almost entirely destroyed in the attack. The tour guide mentioned how the police intentionally caused a lot of damage to this wall, as it faced the street and was the most visible. See <http://asociacionanahi.org.ar/>.

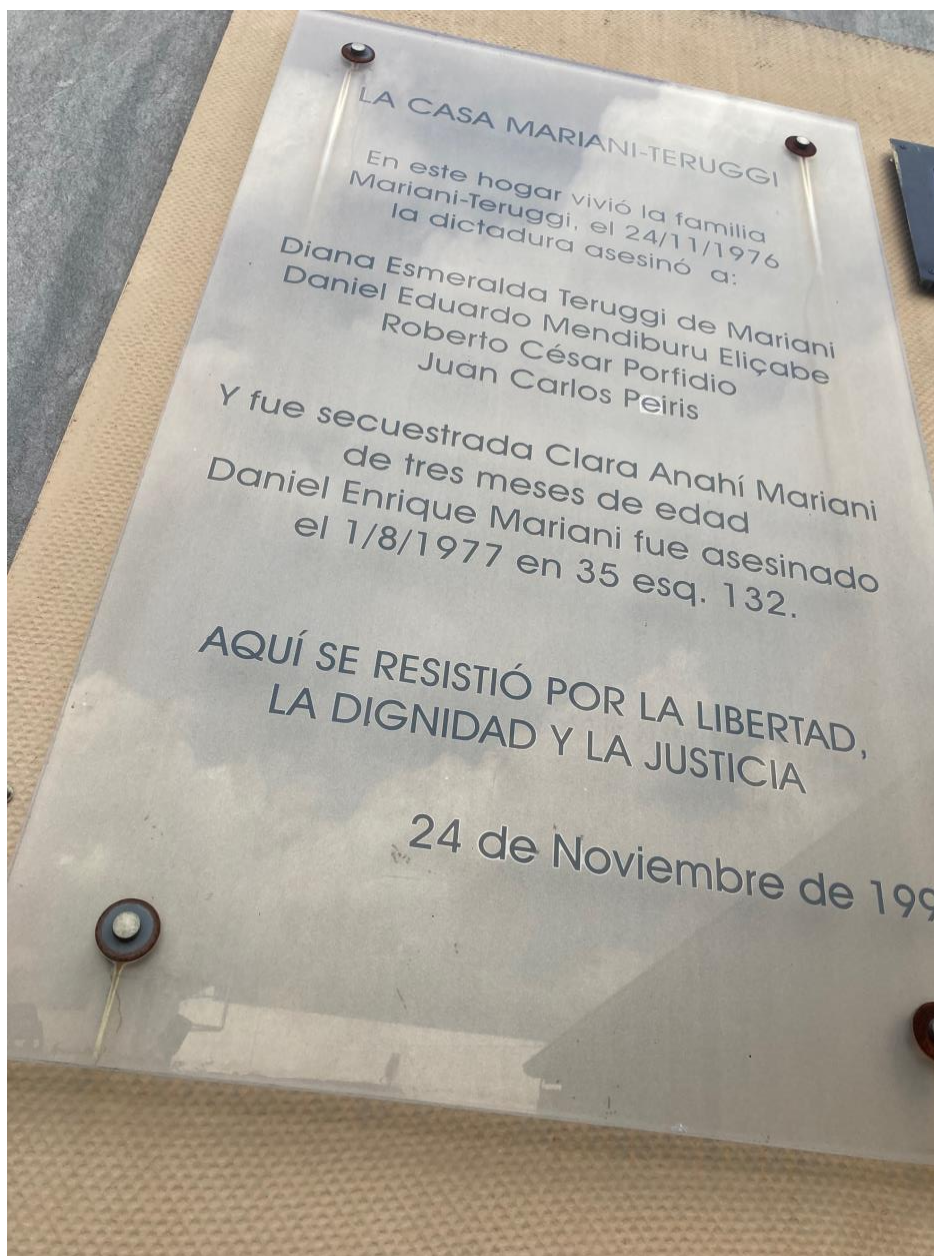


*Figure 9.* A plaque in the terrace. It reads: "House of National Resistance 'Diana Esmeralda Teruggi.' In this house the homeland, justice, freedom, and dignity are defended." See <http://asociacionanahi.org.ar/>.





*Figure 10.* A mosaic in the garden in front of the house. It reads from left to right: “Clara Anahí Mariani. 3 months and a half. Kidnapped. Memory, truth, and justice. Diana Esmeralda Teruggi. 25 years old. Assassinated. Juan Carlos Peiris. 28 years old. Assassinated. Roberto César Porfidio. 32 years old. Assassinated. Daniel Mendiburu Eliçabe. 24 years old. Assassinated. Alberto Oscar Bossio. 34 years old. Assassinated. 24-11-1976 [the date on which the house was attacked by the police, November 24, 1976]. See <http://asociacionanahi.org.ar/>.



*Figure 11.* A plaque in the terrace that reads: “The Mariani-Teruggi house. The Mariani-Teruggi family lived in this home, on November 24, 1976 the dictatorship assassinated: Diana Esmeralda Teruggi de Mariani, Daniel Eduardo Mendiburu Eliçabe, Roberto César Porfidio, Juan Carlos Peiris. And Clara Anahí Mariani of three months of age was kidnapped. Daniel Enrique Mariani was assassinated on August 1, 1977 on street 35 corner 132. Here they resisted for liberty, dignity, and justice. November 24, 1999.” See <http://asociacionanahi.org.ar/>.



Figure 12. A plaque dedicated to Clara Anahí. It reads: Here in the city of La Plata they took away Clara Anahí alive. Clara Anahí Mariani Teruggi. On November 24, 1976 the joint forces of the civic-military dictatorship attacked this house in an operation that lasted close to 4 hours. As a result, Daniel Mendiburu Elicabe, Juan Carlos Peiris, Roberto César Porfidio, Alberto Oscar Bossio, Diana E. Teruggi de Mariani were assassinated and they took away Clara Anahí alive. ‘In this house is all of the history of my family, of my son, and of my daughter-in-law, who was also like my daughter, and I hope that this house is alive forever like it is now, to remember them and so that the memory lives on, so that nothing similar will happen.’ – Words of Chicha Mariani, November 24, 2015.” See <http://asociacionanahi.org.ar/>.



*Figure 13.* A plaque declaring the Mariani-Teruggi house a “National Historic Monument” on the 8<sup>th</sup> of July, 2004 by decree of national executive power number 848. See <http://asociacionanahi.org.ar/>.



*Figure 14.* The machinery that moved the secret wall where the printing press was inside. See <http://asociacionanahi.org.ar/>.

### Chapter 3: Analyzing the Impact of Memory at the Casa Mariani-Teruggi, 1993-94

This house in La Plata will serve as an example  
 for the generations  
 to come as the Anne Frank house in  
 Amsterdam serves as  
 the symbol of all the fierce cowardice of Auschwitz.  
 The teachers  
 of dignity will have to bring their  
 students here  
 so that they can learn to see with their own eyes what  
 state terrorism was,  
 with all its implications of brutality  
 and dishonesty.<sup>268</sup>

-Osvaldo Bayer, November 24, 1999

This thesis chapter will examine how memory was used at the Casa Mariani-Teruggi from 1993 to 1994 by drawing on archives found at DIPPBA, today housed at the Comisión Provincial por la Memoria, and newspapers. In this chapter I will be looking at two events: the reopening of the Casa Mariani-Teruggi on November 24, 1993, and the event held in 1994 on the one year anniversary of the reopening of the home. These events both shared the memory of the attack on the home on November 24, 1976, and sought to revise the previous historiography by sharing the revolutionary history of the Casa Mariani-Teruggi with the larger community of La Plata.

The DIPPBA archive is what scholar Emmanuel Nicolás Kahan explains is commonly called the “archivos de la represión (archives of repression).”<sup>269</sup> These

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<sup>268</sup> “Sitio de Memoria,” Asociación Anahí, <http://asociacionanahi.org.ar/casa/#memoria>. From the original Spanish: “‘Esta casa en La Plata servirá de ejemplo para las generaciones venideras como la casa de Ana Frank en Amsterdam sirve como símbolo de toda la feroz cobardía de Auschwitz. Los docentes de la dignidad tendrán que traer aquí a sus alumnos para que aprendan a ver con sus propios ojos lo que fue el terror de Estado, con todas sus implicaciones de brutalidad y deshonestidad.’” Osvaldo Bayer, 24 de noviembre de 1999.”

<sup>269</sup> Emmanuel Nicolás Kahan, “Qué represión, qué memoria? El ‘archivo de la represión’ de la DIPBA: Problemas y perspectivas,” *Question 1*, no. 16 (2007): 1, [http://www.memoria.fahce.unlp.edu.ar/art\\_revistas/pr.11175/pr.11175.pdf](http://www.memoria.fahce.unlp.edu.ar/art_revistas/pr.11175/pr.11175.pdf).

“archives of repression” have been found in other countries in Latin America such as Guatemala and Paraguay who went through similar periods of dictatorships, as well as countries like South Africa that kept records on the repression present in their nation.<sup>270</sup> The Comisión Provincial por la Memoria – an autonomous organization that today houses the DIPPBA archives. The Comisión Provincial por la Memoria obtained these archives through a law passed in 2000 in the province of Buenos Aires. In 2003, the archives were opened to the public.<sup>271</sup> Kahan outlines several debates around the openings of these “archives of repression.” Many of those whose inhumane and genocidal actions are documented in these archives did not support their public opening.<sup>272</sup> Another debate that Kahan summarizes is the fact that many of these archives contain delicate information about the people surveilled, such as addresses of where they lived, birth dates, or other sensitive data.<sup>273</sup> For example, when I visited the Comisión Provincial por la Memoria to view the DIPPBA archives, I signed an agreement that stated that the information in the archive protects personal data. Also as a researcher, I had a responsibility to protect that personal data if I came across it.

Kahan also mentions the important role of the “archives of repression” in trials. For example, in the trial of Miguel Etchecolatz in 2006, part of the evidence included documents from the DIPPBA archive. These records helped to convict Etchecolatz.<sup>274</sup> Kahan quotes scholar Myriam González Quintana, who explains another important use of these archives outside of the courts. “The documents held here will no longer be a source

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<sup>270</sup> Kahan, “Qué represión, qué memoria?,” 3.

<sup>271</sup> Kahan, “Qué represión, qué memoria?,” 4.

<sup>272</sup> Kahan, “Qué represión, qué memoria?,” 4.

<sup>273</sup> Kahan, “Qué represión, qué memoria?,” 4.

<sup>274</sup> Kahan, “Qué represión, qué memoria,” 5. See also chapter 2, which talks more about the trial.

of suffering, torture or death, but should be a tool for the reparation of the atrocities committed and as a vaccine against oblivion.” To put it another way, González Quintana is referring to how these archives, and the people behind it, were “a source of suffering, torture or death.”<sup>275</sup> However, now in the present day, the archives can be used as a source of healing and an important tool for memory.

These archives from DIPPA are mainly reports written by police doing “‘trabajo del campo’ (‘field work’).”<sup>276</sup> Kahan notes that the DIPPBA archives are composed of “217,000 personal files, 43,250 files on events, 2,500 files on political parties, 3,500 files on the religious factor, 1,000 files on student organizations and 500 files on foreign publications.”<sup>277</sup> In other words, this is a very large archive. In writing this chapter alone, I consulted Legajo 35534, which was almost 60 pages just on the surveillance of the Casa Mariani-Teruggi between 1993 and 1994.<sup>278</sup> This seemed small compared to nearly 200 pages of documents from surveillance on memorialization efforts related to the anniversaries of the Night of the Pencils from 1990-96.<sup>279</sup> It is unclear whether these police officers were undercover or if they infiltrated these organizations involved. Either way, they were able to obtain information by reporting on events held at the home and by collecting fliers passed out or displayed in public.

It is important to keep in mind the biases that the police officers writing these documents had. They did not support the so-called “criminals” who held events at the Casa Mariani-Teruggi. Therefore, it was important for me when reading these sources to

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<sup>275</sup> Kahan, “Qué represión, qué memoria,” 5.

<sup>276</sup> Kahan, 8.

<sup>277</sup> Kahan, 8.

<sup>278</sup> CPM – Fondo DIPPBA División Central de Documentación, Registro y Archivo, Mesa D, carpeta varios, Legajo 35534, ps. 1-57.

<sup>279</sup> CPM – Fondo DIPPBA División Central de Documentación, Registro y Archivo, Mesa A, Factor estudiantil, Legajo 78, ps. 1-199.



read against the grain, and to compare the information given in these sources with information from newspapers, or even better, from the fliers created by the organizations running the event. Of course, these sources have biases of their own.

The reopening of the Casa Mariani-Teruggi was covered by the newspaper *El Día* the day before the event, on November 23, 1993. The article “Un tiroteo del 76 y la ‘reapertura’ de una casa (A shootout in ‘76 and the ‘reopening’ of a house”) first begins by recounting the history of the attack on the house that occurred on November 24, 1976.<sup>280</sup> This article mentions that 8 people died and four were wounded.<sup>281</sup> All of the Montoneros present in the home at the time – Diana Esmeralda Teruggi, Roberto César Porfidio, Daniel Mendiburu Eliçabe, Juan Carlos Peiris, and Alberto Oscar Bossio – were killed, except for baby Clara Anahí who survived and was kidnapped.<sup>282</sup> The article also mentions that there were “victims on both sides.”<sup>283</sup> This could be an example of the “theory of two demons” which accuses both the state and also the militants targeted by the state for their actions.<sup>284</sup> While the article is about the attack on the house, it also takes the time to recognize the police injured in the attack. They were the ones who

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<sup>280</sup> CPM – Fondo DIPPBA División Central de Documentación, Registro y Archivo, Mesa D, carpeta varios, Legajo 35534, p. 4; Cintia González Leegstra, “El juicio a Etchecolatz: Nuevos y viejos actores en la lucha por la justicia,” *Intersticios* 5, no. 2 (2011): 131, [https://www.memoria.fahce.unlp.edu.ar/art\\_revistas/pr.14541/pr.14541.pdf](https://www.memoria.fahce.unlp.edu.ar/art_revistas/pr.14541/pr.14541.pdf). 132; Gonzalo Leonidas Chaves and Jorge Omar Lewinger, *Los del 73: Memoria Montonera* (La Plata: Editorial de la Campana), 188.

<sup>281</sup> CPM – Fondo DIPPBA División Central de Documentación, Registro y Archivo, Mesa D, carpeta varios, Legajo 35534, p. 4. On the website of the Asociación Anahí, it states the names of 5 people who were killed in the attack: Diana Esmeralda Teruggi, Roberto César Porfidio, Daniel Mendiburu Eilçabe, Juan Carlos Peiris, and Alberto Oscar Bossio. The other bodies could not be identified. See Leegstra, “El juicio a Etchecolatz,” 132; Leonidas Chaves and Lewinger, *Los del 73*, 188. It is also important to note that following the attack, the bodies of those murdered were identified, but the bodies were not given to their relatives. It was only when the DIPPBA archives were opened that this information was found out. See “Militantes,” Asociación Anahí, <http://asociacionanahi.org.ar/casa/#victimas>.

<sup>282</sup> CPM – Fondo DIPPBA División Central de Documentación, Registro y Archivo, Mesa D, carpeta varios, Legajo 35534, p. 4.

<sup>283</sup> CPM – Fondo DIPPBA División Central de Documentación, Registro y Archivo, Mesa D, carpeta varios, Legajo 35534, p. 4.

<sup>284</sup> Wright, *State Terrorism in Latin America*, 147.

called for the attack on the home in the first place, thus it is almost ironic to acknowledge them as victims in an attack in which they were the perpetrators.<sup>285</sup>

After mentioning those killed and wounded in the attack, the article begins to describe the upcoming event that will be held at the Casa Mariani-Teruggi. It states that an unidentified political group released a communication. The communication detailed that on the 17<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the attack on the Casa Mariani-Teruggi, the home “would be reopened for all Argentines, recovered from the silence and the false oblivion.”<sup>286</sup> This statement shows the intended audience of the communication, as it was directed towards “all Argentines.”<sup>287</sup> It also shows the purpose of the event: to bring to light the history of the home from the silences of the past. The last sentence of the newspaper article mentions another purpose of the event: as a “tribute to those who resisted and died.”<sup>288</sup> Thus, the purpose of this event was not only to share this history that had previously been silenced by the state, but to remember and honor those who died in the attack on the house.

The day after the reopening of the house, the police saved a newspaper clipping that reported on the event. Although the newspaper is not identified, the type of font used and the formatting of the headline, “‘Reabrieron’ una casa donde hubo un tiroteo en el 76 (‘They reopened a house where there was a shootout in ‘76),” suggest that it is also from the newspaper *El Día*. The article explains that the day before, on November 24, 1993, 50 people attended the reopening. It was organized by the Montoneros, Peronismo que

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<sup>285</sup> Leegstra, “El juicio a Etchecolatz,” 132.

<sup>286</sup> CPM – Fondo DIPPBA División Central de Documentación, Registro y Archivo, Mesa D, carpeta varios, Legajo 35534, p. 4.

<sup>287</sup> CPM – Fondo DIPPBA División Central de Documentación, Registro y Archivo, Mesa D, carpeta varios, Legajo 35534, p. 4.

<sup>288</sup> CPM – Fondo DIPPBA División Central de Documentación, Registro y Archivo, Mesa D, carpeta varios, Legajo 35534, p. 4.

Resiste, and Agrupación Quebracho.<sup>289</sup> There were three speakers at the event – Jorge Reyna, of the Montoneros, Gonzalo Chávez of Peronismo que Resiste, and Carlos Franca of Quebracho, however the newspaper does not report on what they said. The newspaper does state that the goal of the organizers was “convertir a la casa...en un ‘lugar de militancia y un recuerdo para todos los caídos (to convert the home...into a ‘meeting place of militancy and a memory for all of the fallen.’”<sup>290</sup> This article thus confirms the purpose of the event explained in the earlier article “Un tiroteo del 76 y la ‘reapertura’ de una casa.” While both the newspaper articles “Un tiroteo del 76 y la ‘reapertura’ de una casa” and “Reabrieron’ una casa donde hubo un tiroteo en el 76” are helpful in terms of providing an overview of what went on at the reopening of the Casa Mariani-Teruggi on November 24, 1993, police reports before and after the event provide some more possible answers, but also draw questions.

The earliest police report was written the day before the event on November 23, 1993. In the first paragraph, the police report describes the attack on the Casa Mariani-Teruggi. This is ironic, since at the time of the attack Miguel Etchecolatz was the Director of DIPPBA, which carried out this surveillance on the home 17 years later. The language used to describe the attack: “tiroteo entre fuerzas de seguridad y delincuentes subversivos que se produjera en ese lugar y que arrojara como saldo ocho muertos, varios

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<sup>289</sup> CPM – Fondo DIPPBA División Central de Documentación, Registro y Archivo, Mesa D, carpeta varios, Legajo 35534, p. 15. According to page 5 of the same Legajo, Quebracho was a student group associated with the Bellas Artes high school. I was able to find little information on the group Quebracho, besides their website which is now no longer up. I was able to look at their website through the Internet Archive Wayback Machine, available at: <https://web.archive.org/web/20061004042420/http://quebracho.org.ar/>.

<sup>290</sup> CPM – Fondo DIPPBA División Central de Documentación, Registro y Archivo, Mesa D, carpeta varios, Legajo 35534, p. 15. It is also important to note that this newspaper article states that 7 people were killed in the attack on the Casa Mariani-Teruggi, in contrast to the 8 people that the earlier newspaper article “Un tiroteo del 76 y la ‘reapertura’ de una casa” mentions.

heridos, y desaparecidos (shootout between security forces and subversive criminals that took place in that location and left eight dead, several wounded, and disappeared)” seems like the police are trying to distance themselves from what happened.<sup>291</sup> They do not claim ownership of the attack, merely citing the “fuerzas de seguridad (security forces).”<sup>292</sup> It is also important to underline the term that they use to describe the Montoneros who lived in the home: “delicuentes subversivos (subversive criminals).”<sup>293</sup> This term was commonly used during the civic-military dictatorship to justify the murders of political activists, among others, like those of the Montoneros at the Casa Mariani-Teruggi.<sup>294</sup> Using this language was a deliberate choice of the police officer who wrote this report, as it evoked the memory of the civic-military dictatorship.

Kahan traces the history of the words used in DIPPBA over time to describe the people it was surveilling. He states that the language used first began with the term “‘delincuente político,’ el ‘delincuente social’ o el ‘comunista’ genérico, al ‘delincuente subversivo’ y más tarde al ‘delincuente terrorista’ (‘political criminal,’ the ‘social criminal,’ or the generic ‘communist,’ to the ‘subversive criminal,’ and more later the ‘terrorist criminal).’”<sup>295</sup> In the DIPPBA documents that I examined in this chapter, I noticed the term “deluncuente subversive” used often by the police writing the report as they described the Montoneros who lived at the home in 1976.<sup>296</sup>

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<sup>291</sup> CPM – Fondo DIPPBA División Central de Documentación, Registro y Archivo, Mesa D, carpeta varios, Legajo 35534, p. 3.

<sup>292</sup> CPM – Fondo DIPPBA División Central de Documentación, Registro y Archivo, Mesa D, carpeta varios, Legajo 35534, p. 3.

<sup>293</sup> CPM – Fondo DIPPBA División Central de Documentación, Registro y Archivo, Mesa D, carpeta varios, Legajo 35534, p. 3.

<sup>294</sup> “Muestra patrimonial,” Comisión Provincial por la Memoria, Museo de Arte y Cultura, <https://www.comisionporlamemoria.org/museo/project/memoria/#audio-adultos12>.

<sup>295</sup> Kahan, “Qué represión, qué memoria,” 7.

<sup>296</sup> CPM – Fondo DIPPBA División Central de Documentación, Registro y Archivo, Mesa D, carpeta varios, Legajo 35534, ps 3, 5, 6, 12, 13, 14, 16, 24, 37 all use the term “subversive criminals.”

A second police report was also written on the day before the event. It provides more insight into other organizations who were involved with the reopening. The Madres de Plaza de Mayo – Filial La Plata – and the organization Asamblea Permanente por los Derechos Humanos (APDH)<sup>297</sup> were additional groups listed in the police report. The report also notes that on the day following the reopening of the Casa Mariani-Teruggi, the Madres de Plaza de Mayo – Filial La Plata – were going to be hosting an event in Plaza San Martín entitled “Jornada de Resistencia Popular por la Memoria, contra la Represión y la Impunidad.”<sup>298</sup> This event held the following day was planned to be a continuation building off of the events the day before.<sup>299</sup>

Conflicting information can be seen between sources describing the number of people that attended the reopening of the Casa Mariani-Teruggi in 1993. In a police report written at 9:40pm after the reopening of the Casa Mariani-Teruggi began at 8pm, they claimed around 100 people attended the event.<sup>300</sup> However, the newspaper article “Reabrieron’ una casa donde hubo un tiroteo en el 76” stated that 50 people attended the event.<sup>301</sup> There could be multiple reasons for why these two accounts of the event have different numbers of attendees. For example, the DIPPBA could have overestimated the number of attendees to try to make it seem like this event was more threatening, and thus DIPPBA would need more surveillance and funding in the future to track the Casa

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<sup>297</sup> The APDH is a human rights organization that was founded in 1975. For more information, see their website at: <https://www.apdh-argentina.org.ar/por-que-la-apdh>.

<sup>298</sup> CPM – Fondo DIPPBA División Central de Documentación, Registro y Archivo, Mesa D, carpeta varios, Legajo 35534, p. 5.

<sup>299</sup> CPM – Fondo DIPPBA División Central de Documentación, Registro y Archivo, Mesa D, carpeta varios, Legajo 35534, p. 5.

<sup>300</sup> CPM – Fondo DIPPBA División Central de Documentación, Registro y Archivo, Mesa D, carpeta varios, Legajo 35534, p. 13.

<sup>301</sup> CPM – Fondo DIPPBA División Central de Documentación, Registro y Archivo, Mesa D, carpeta varios, Legajo 35534, p. 15.

Mariani-Teruggi. It could also be possible that the newspaper article underestimated the number of people at the event, although I feel like this is less likely. Either way, it is important to point out this discrepancy. This example of conflicting information is only one of several that I have come across while doing this thesis research.

After detailing the number of attendees, the police report describes the speakers present. Priest Eliseo Morales, and “Se. [Señor] Reyna” spoke at the event.<sup>302</sup> According to the report Morales talked about how the Casa Mariani-Teruggi was “el vivo recuerdo de la lucha contra la injusticia (the vivid memory of the struggle against injustice).” He also blessed the house.<sup>303</sup> Morales’ presence at the event as a priest shows the importance of religion to the organizers of the event. While I cannot speak for the other groups involved in the event, for the Montoneros religion was at times important to their organization. In fact, in the book *La casa de los conejos*, mentioned earlier in Chapter 2 of this thesis, Alcoba is taken by her mom, a member of the Montoneros, to be baptized because she did not do that as a baby.<sup>304</sup>

Reyna was a former Montonero who also spoke at the event. The police report mentions that when Reyna spoke, he thanked the audience members that were also former Montoneros and their relatives.<sup>305</sup> He discussed the importance of the “lucha armada y el heroísmo de los que participaron en ella (armed fight and the heroism of

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<sup>302</sup> CPM – Fondo DIPPBA División Central de Documentación, Registro y Archivo, Mesa D, carpeta varios, Legajo 35534, p. 13.

<sup>303</sup> CPM – Fondo DIPPBA División Central de Documentación, Registro y Archivo, Mesa D, carpeta varios, Legajo 35534, p. 13.

<sup>304</sup> Laura Alcoba, *La casa de los conejos*, trans. Leopoldo Brizuela (Barcelona: Edhasa Literaria, 2008), 37-41. Also see Luis Miguel Donatello, “Religión y política: las redes sociales del catolicismo post-conciliar y los Montoneros, 1966-1973,” *Estudios Sociales* 24, no. 1 (2005):89-112, <https://doi.org/10.14409/es.v24i1.2505>.

<sup>305</sup> CPM – Fondo DIPPBA División Central de Documentación, Registro y Archivo, Mesa D, carpeta varios, Legajo 35534, p. 13.

those that participated in it),” referencing specifically the “lucha en el año 1976 (struggle in the year 1976).”<sup>306</sup> Perhaps he was referencing 1976 because it was the year that the attack on the Casa Mariani-Teruggi was carried out by the state, or maybe because it was the year that the civic-military dictatorship began, although the Montoneros had been active before that. It is also important to note that Reyna references specifically the “armed fight.”<sup>307</sup> The Montoneros were armed with guns, and although there weren’t that many in the Casa Mariani-Teruggi, the Montoneros who lived there used the guns to try to defend themselves during the attack.<sup>308</sup> In addition, two days before the attack on the Casa Mariani-Teruggi there was another attack on a home that belonged to the Montoneros. Only instead of this home housing the printing operations of the newspaper *Evita Montonera*, like the Casa Mariani-Teruggi did, it housed guns.<sup>309</sup>

As part of remembering the Montonero’s struggle during the civic-military dictatorship, Reyna gave a ring that belonged to Diana Teruggi, to her parents. The ring had been found “among her remains.”<sup>310</sup> Her ring may have been found when cleaning up the damage from the attack on the house. Some of her relatives helped with some of this cleaning.<sup>311</sup> Giving the ring to Diana’s parents was an important gesture, as probably very little items from inside the house survived the attack. After Diana’s ring was given to her

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<sup>306</sup> CPM – Fondo DIPPBA División Central de Documentación, Registro y Archivo, Mesa D, carpeta varios, Legajo 35534, p. 13.

<sup>307</sup> CPM – Fondo DIPPBA División Central de Documentación, Registro y Archivo, Mesa D, carpeta varios, Legajo 35534, p. 13.

<sup>308</sup> Eduardo Anguita and Daniel Cecchini, “Balas, morteros y tanques: la brutal destrucción de tres casas ocupadas por Montoneros y los increíbles escondites que hallaron,” *Infobae*, November 21, 2020, <https://www.infobae.com/sociedad/2020/11/21/balas-morteros-y-tanques-la-brutal-destruccion-de-tres-casas-ocupadas-por-montoneros-y-los-increibles-escondites-que-hallaron/>.

<sup>309</sup> Anguita and Cecchini, “Balas, morteros y tanques.”

<sup>310</sup> CPM – Fondo DIPPBA División Central de Documentación, Registro y Archivo, Mesa D, carpeta varios, Legajo 35534, p. 13.

<sup>311</sup> Laureano Barrera, *La casa de la calle 30: Una historia de Chicha Mariani* (Buenos Aires: Tusquets Editores, 2022), 241.

parents, a plaque was also unveiled on the front of the house. I have a hunch that this plaque is the one shown in Figure 1.

The plaque as shown in Figure 1 could be the plaque unveiled at the reopening of the house in 1993, for several reasons. First, the words used to describe the home “Casa de la Resistencia Nacional ‘Diana Esmeralda Teruggi’” matches the language exactly that the police used to describe the home in the subject lines of their reports. When the police used this wording of the “Casa de la Resistencia Nacional ‘Diana Esmeralda Teruggi’” they always put it in quotes, like they did with other quotes from people who spoke at the event. This leads me to believe that the police was using this language because it was the language that the organizers were using to refer to the home.

Second, the name of the “Casa de la Resistencia Nacional ‘Diana Esmeralda Teruggi’” is not what the home is known by today. In the present day, the home is open for tours to the public for free every Saturday, run by the Asociación Anahí. The Asociación Anahí was created by Chicha Mariani, the mother of Daniel Mariani, who lived in the home and was married to Diana Esmeralda Teruggi.<sup>312</sup> Chicha Mariani was also one of the founding members of the Madres

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<sup>312</sup> “Chicha Mariani,” Asociación Anahí, <http://asociacionanahi.org.ar/chicha/>.





*Figure 15.* Plaque outside of the Casa Mariani-Teruggi that describes the house as the “Casa de la Resistencia Nacional ‘Diana Esmeralda Teruggi.’ It also states: “In this home the homeland, justice, liberty, and dignity were defended.”

de Plaza de Mayo, and she was an important advocate for human rights.<sup>313</sup> She worked endlessly until her death in 2018 searching for her granddaughter Clara Anahí, who still remains disappeared but alive.<sup>314</sup> The Asociación Anahí calls the home the “Casa Mariani-Teruggi” as seen on their website. Thus, the name “Casa de la Resistencia Nacional ‘Diana Esmeralda Teruggi’” must have been an earlier name used, but not by the Association. It is important to mention that while this reopening of the Casa Mariani-

<sup>313</sup> “Chicha Mariani,” Asociación Anahí, <http://asociacionanahi.org.ar/chicha/>.

<sup>314</sup> “Chicha Mariani.”

Teruggi was occurring on November 24, 1993, an important member of the descendant<sup>315</sup> community who was left out of this event. None of the police surveillance of this reopening mentions Chicha Mariani, which is strange considering she was the one paying for the property and taking care of it. The home was also still in her son's name.<sup>316</sup> The newspaper articles and the flyers from the organizations who hosted the event do not mention her either. I am not entirely sure what happened behind the scenes, but Chicha expressed that she felt this event was “una ofensa (an offense)” to her because she was left out.<sup>317</sup>

Third, this plaque looks different from all of the others: it is a tan color appeared to be made out of a material that rusts, as can be seen on the wall beneath the plaque. The other plaques on the patio and outside before the entrance of the home are more transparent and have a silver coloring. Also these plaques refer to the home as the “Casa Mariani-Teruggi,” and were placed more recently, after the Asociación Anahí was created in 1996.<sup>318</sup>

Finally, there are flyers presumably given out at the event; the language on these flyers match the language used on the plaque. The phrase: “en esta casa se defendio la patria la justicia la libertad la dignidad” is the same exact one used on the plaque.<sup>319</sup> The plaque is located outside of the home; when looking at the house it is on the left wall. This also matches the police description in the report.<sup>320</sup>

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<sup>315</sup> Here in this chapter I define the descendant community as those related to the Montoneros who were killed in the attack on November 24, 1976.

<sup>316</sup> Barrera, *La casa de la calle 30*, 241.

<sup>317</sup> Barrera, *La casa de la calle 30*, 241.

<sup>318</sup> “Asociación Anahí,” Asociación Anahí, <http://asociacionanahi.org.ar/asociacion-anahi/>.

<sup>319</sup> CPM – Fondo DIPPBA División Central de Documentación, Registro y Archivo, Mesa D, carpeta varios, Legajo 35534, p. 21.

<sup>320</sup> CPM – Fondo DIPPBA División Central de Documentación, Registro y Archivo, Mesa D, carpeta varios, Legajo 35534, p. 17.

At this event, the memories of not only the attack on the house but also the memories of Diana Esmeralda Teruggi, Diana Esmeralda Teruggi, Roberto César Porfidio, Daniel Mendiburu Eliçabe, Juan Carlos Peiris, and Alberto Oscar Bossio, and baby Clara Anahí were drawn on as a way to continue the fight in the present day, but also for the future. One page of a police report from December 3, 1993, states the names of the fallen comrades killed and kidnapped in the attack followed by the phrase “PRESENTE EN NUESTROS CORAZONES – POR UNA PATRIA PARA TODOS – HASTA LA VICTORIA (PRESENT IN OUR HEARTS – A HOMELAND FOR ALL – UNTIL VICTORY).”<sup>321</sup> To put it another way, the memory of the Montoneros killed in the attack on the home is kept in the hearts of members, who are currently fighting for a better Argentina, and will not stop until they reach their goals.

In another example of the reopening of the house drawing on memory and history, they call for a broader history of this time period, not just of the history of the fallen. In a flyer saved by the police following the reopening of the house, it describes a need to learn the history of the civic-military dictatorship. The flyer explains ““Estamos convencidos que los pueblos sin memoria no tienen futuro (We are convinced that peoples without memory have no future).”<sup>322</sup> Thus, memory is invoked here not just as a call to action to remember those killed in the attack on the home, but to know the larger past of the Argentine people. In other words, a people’s history is necessary for the future.

One last example of the importance of memory reflects on who is telling this people’s history. In this same police report was a summary of a letter that was passed out

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<sup>321</sup> CPM – Fondo DIPPBA División Central de Documentación, Registro y Archivo, Mesa D, carpeta varios, Legajo 35534, p. 26.

<sup>322</sup> CPM – Fondo DIPPBA División Central de Documentación, Registro y Archivo, Mesa D, carpeta varios, Legajo 35534, p. 20.

to the neighbors around the house. The police quote the letter, which states “la historia la escriben los que ganan eso quiere decir que hay otra historia: la verdadera historia.”<sup>323</sup> Thus, the letter is referencing that the “winners” or those with more power are the ones writing history. This specifically is calling out the state for its writing of history following the civic-military dictatorship. There was often times a pact of silence upheld following the civic-military dictatorship, particularly upheld by those with access to power, such as Miguel Etchecolatz.<sup>324</sup>

The police continue to quote the letter, which describes the need for telling this history to a broader audience in the future:

“Lo ocurrido en esta casa aquel día no era un problema de aquellos ocho argentinos sino de todos, lo que se vivió entonces tiene mucho que ver con lo que sucede hoy en nuestro país. Hoy un grupo de hombres y mujeres, hemos recuperado esta casa del olvido. Queremos que sirva de testimonio para las nuevas generaciones..... What happened in this house that day was not a problem of those eight Argentines but of all, what was experienced then has a lot to do with what happens today in our country. Today a group of men and women have recovered this house from oblivion. We want it to serve as a witness for the new generations.....”<sup>325</sup>

To put it another way, this letter is arguing for the need to teach the history of the attack on the Casa Mariani-Teruggi to all of Argentina. The letter is also connecting the relevance of the past to the present day, as much “of what was experienced then has a lot to do with what happens today in our country.”<sup>326</sup> Thus, understanding the past will

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<sup>323</sup> CPM – Fondo DIPPBA División Central de Documentación, Registro y Archivo, Mesa D, carpeta varios, Legajo 35534, p. 27.

<sup>324</sup> “Muestra patrimonial,” Comisión Provincial por la Memoria, Museo de Arte y Cultura, <https://www.comisionporlamemoria.org/museo/project/memoria/#audio-adultos12>. See also “Miguel Etchecolatz, Unrepentant dictatorship-era torturer and killer, dies at 93,” *Buenos Aires Times*, July 3, 2022, <https://www.batimes.com.ar/news/argentina/miguel-etchecolatz-unrepentant-dictatorship-era-torturer-and-killer-dies-at-93.phtml>.

<sup>325</sup> CPM – Fondo DIPPBA División Central de Documentación, Registro y Archivo, Mesa D, carpeta varios, Legajo 35534, p. 27.

<sup>326</sup> CPM – Fondo DIPPBA División Central de Documentación, Registro y Archivo, Mesa D, carpeta varios, Legajo 35534, p. 27.

contribute to an understanding of the present day. Lastly, the letter mentions the need for those in the future to learn about the house.

The police surveillance concluded that the reopening of the house was largely symbolic.<sup>327</sup> They also inferred that through the politics displayed in this event, the Casa Mariani-Teruggi would be able to count on the support of students on the political left, unions, as well as other organizations that support human rights.<sup>328</sup> However, they saw this symbolic home as worthy of surveillance when the following year, on November 24, 1994, they wrote more reports leading up to and after the first anniversary of the reopening of the home.

For the first anniversary of the reopening of the Casa Mariani-Teruggi, different mediums were used to spread the word about the event beforehand. In addition, different events were held leading up to and on the day of the anniversary of the reopening of the home, in contrast to the year before. On the reopening of the home in 1993, a communication was announced to share information about the event.<sup>329</sup> In 1994, however, a mural was painted by the organization PQR, (Peronismo que Resiste), to announce the event. Unfortunately the police surveillance does not include much information about what the mural looked like, other than that it was painted black with a white background, and that it had the logo of the Montoneros in it. The mural was also 2.5 by 3 meters.<sup>330</sup>

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<sup>327</sup> CPM – Fondo DIPPBA División Central de Documentación, Registro y Archivo, Mesa D, carpeta varios, Legajo 35534, p. 27.

<sup>328</sup> CPM – Fondo DIPPBA División Central de Documentación, Registro y Archivo, Mesa D, carpeta varios, Legajo 35534, p. 27.

<sup>329</sup> CPM – Fondo DIPPBA División Central de Documentación, Registro y Archivo, Mesa D, carpeta varios, Legajo 35534, p. 4.

<sup>330</sup> Or a little bit more than 8 feet by almost 10 feet. CPM – Fondo DIPPBA División Central de Documentación, Registro y Archivo, Mesa D, carpeta varios, Legajo 35534, p. 34.

Another change from the year prior was an event carried out on the day before the event. In 1993, the Madres de Plaza de Mayo had an event the day after the reopening of the Casa Mariani-Teruggi as a continuation of this occurrence. In 1994, the Madres de Plaza de Mayo held an event entitled “Jornada de Resistencia (Day of Resistance).”<sup>331</sup> Events on this day included an open radio for rock groups to perform, and a theater performance.<sup>332</sup> Those that performed were “Genesis Aimara, Los Farabutes del Adoquin, Rumbaires, Ignacio Copani, and Todos Tus Muertos.”<sup>333</sup>

The following day, on November 24, 1994, the first anniversary was attended by 100 people, according to the police.<sup>334</sup> The police also noted in a separate report that before the beginning of the event, only 30 people were there.<sup>335</sup> More people must have joined later, if their data is correct. The police saved a newspaper clipping about the event, which helps to fill in the gaps of their reports, which did not include a lot of information about the anniversary of the reopening in 1994. The clipping explains that the two groups who ran the event, Peronismo que Resiste and Quebracho, each had a person from their organization speak at the event.<sup>336</sup> In addition, Jorge Reyna, who had represented the Montoneros in the event the previous year spoke again at the event in

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<sup>331</sup> CPM – Fondo DIPPBA División Central de Documentación, Registro y Archivo, Mesa D, Carpeta varios, Legajo 35534, p. 51.

<sup>332</sup> CPM – Fondo DIPPBA División Central de Documentación, Registro y Archivo, Mesa D, Carpeta varios, Legajo 35534, p. 37.

<sup>333</sup> CPM – Fondo DIPPBA División Central de Documentación, Registro y Archivo, Mesa D, Carpeta varios, Legajo 35534, p. 42. Out of all of these groups, I was only able to find information about two: Ignacio Copani and Todos Tus Muertes. Ignacio Copani’s website can be found at: <https://copani.co/biografia/>. Todos Tus Muertes’ website can be found at: <https://rock.com.ar/artistas/284/biografia>.

<sup>334</sup> CPM – Fondo DIPPBA División Central de Documentación, Registro y Archivo, Mesa D, Carpeta varios, Legajo 35534, p. 37.

<sup>335</sup> CPM – Fondo DIPPBA División Central de Documentación, Registro y Archivo, Mesa D, Carpeta varios, Legajo 35534, p. 55.

<sup>336</sup> CPM – Fondo DIPPBA División Central de Documentación, Registro y Archivo, Mesa D, Carpeta varios, Legajo 35534, p. 57.

1994.<sup>337</sup> The newspaper clipping quotes Reyna, who noted that ‘esta casa es un simbolo del pasado de toda la comunidad, no sólo de los familiares de los muertos de esta casa, por eso hacemos este acto, porque ignorar el pasado es imposible, y conociendo el pasado podremos pensar en un futuro mejor (this house is a symbol of the past for the whole community, not only the relatives of those who died in this house, so we do this act because ignoring the past is impossible, and in knowing the past we can think of a better future).’<sup>338</sup> Thus, the event in 1994 echoed that of the event in 1993, calling attention to the importance of all of La Plata, and by extension, all of Argentina to learn about this history. To these groups who organized these events, studying the past was an important step to solving the problems in La Plata – and Argentina – in the then-present day.

### **Conclusion**

The primary sources analyzed in this chapter show two consistencies. First, at the Casa Mariani-Teruggi, organizers of events in 1993 and 94 took the matter of teaching this history of the attack on the Casa Mariani-Teruggi to La Plata into their own hands. They drew on the memory of their fallen comrades and the kidnapped baby Clara Anahí to remember why they continued to organize. As stewards<sup>339</sup> of this history, they connected the remembering of the attack on the Casa Marini-Teruggi with challenges Argentina was facing then. However, these events were not without tensions between Chicha Mariani, who was left out of the event in 1993.<sup>340</sup> Second, in these archives the

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<sup>337</sup> CPM – Fondo DIPPBA División Central de Documentación, Registro y Archivo, Mesa D, Carpeta varios, Legajo 35534, ps. 13, 57.

<sup>338</sup> CPM – Fondo DIPPBA División Central de Documentación, Registro y Archivo, Mesa D, Carpeta varios, Legajo 35534, p. 57.

<sup>339</sup> Fawn-Amber Montoya and Karin Larkin, *Communities of Ludlow: Collaborative Stewardship and the Ludlow Centennial Commemoration Commission* (Louisville: University Press of Colorado, 2022), 80.

<sup>340</sup> Barrera, *La casa de la calle 30*, 241.

continuation of the police using the term, “subversive criminals” to describe the Montoneros in 1976 can be seen. In this way, the police tried to justify the attack on the house, that in their eyes was needed to neutralize these “criminals.”<sup>341</sup>

There are no records that I could find, at least in this Legajo, that describe the groups Quebracho, Peronismo que Resiste, and ex-Montoneros, continuing to hold events at the home after 1994. This is not to say that there were no events held by these groups after 1994. In 1996 the Asociación Anahí was founded by Chicha Mariani, along with other members of the Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo and other supporters.<sup>342</sup> On July 8, 2004, the Casa Mariani-Teruggi was declared to be a National Historic Monument, by the Comission of Museums, Monuments, and Historic Places in Decree Number 848 P.E..<sup>343</sup> Today, the home is open on Saturdays for free to the public, as tour guides narrate the history of the home. When I visited the Casa Mariani-Teruggi on March 25, 2023, it was very moving. Before the visit I had only read about the home in books and seen pictures of it online, and visiting in person was very impactful. It was one thing to read about this history, but a completely different thing to be there in person to see an example of resistance during the civic-military dictatorship; and also to see how the state enacted violence in the attack on the house. The identity of Clara Anahí is still unknown today, despite Chicha Mariani’s search for her granddaughter for 42 years.<sup>344</sup> This example of an unknown identity is just one of many that continues to exist in post-dictatorship Argentina, demonstrating the relevancy of this history in the present day.

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<sup>341</sup> CPM – Fondo DIPPBA División Central de Documentación, Registro y Archivo, Mesa D, Carpeta varios, Legajo 35534, p. 32.

<sup>342</sup> “Quienes somos,” Asociación Anahí, <http://asociacionanahi.org.ar/asociacion-anahi/>.

<sup>343</sup> “Sitio de memoria,” Asociación Anahí, <http://asociacionanahi.org.ar/asociacion-anahi/>.

<sup>344</sup> “Chicha Mariani,” Asociación Anahí, <http://asociacionanahi.org.ar/chicha/>.



## Conclusion

### Transitional Justice

After the end of the civic-military dictatorship in 1983, “Argentina began its transition with the presidential and congressional elections.”<sup>345</sup> This election of Raúl Alfonsín signified the transition to democracy. Although there are critiques of Alfonsín’s presidency, perhaps the most important of his work was “the establishment of a truth committee [CONADEP] and his decision to prosecute the members of the first three juntas.”<sup>346</sup> In addition to trying the leaders of the civic-military dictatorship, Alfonsín “also ordered seven surviving Montoneros and EPR leaders to stand trial. Some human rights groups condemned this approach as a nefarious ‘theory of the two devils’ [theory of the two demons] that blamed the guerillas and the military equally for the horrific toll of state terrorism, thus implicitly trivializing the military’s record of human rights violations.”<sup>347</sup> Some scholars have stated that the report written by CONADEP, *Nunca más*, also participated in the theory of the two demons.<sup>348</sup> While other scholars, such as Juan Pablo Angelone, have argued that CONADEP does not ascribe to the theory of the two demons but rather a “different memory – though not antithetical.”<sup>349</sup> The importance of CONADEP needs to be underlined, however, as it “became a model for truth commissions around the world...In Latin America alone, Uruguay, Chile, Ecuador, El

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<sup>345</sup> Wright, *State Terrorism in Latin America*, 142.

<sup>346</sup> Wright, *State Terrorism in Latin America*, 142.

<sup>347</sup> Wright, 147.

<sup>348</sup> Wright, 144; Scholar Emilio Crenzel has written extensively on CONADEP, and his work had been translated into English, Italian, and French. See Emilio Crenzel, *La historia política del Nunca Más: La memoria de las desapariciones en la Argentina* (Siglo XXI Editores: Buenos Aires, 2008), Emilio Crenzel, *Memory of the Argentina Disappearances: The Political History of Nunca Más*, trans. Laura Pérez Carrara (New York: Routledge, 2011).

<sup>349</sup> Juan Pablo Angelone, “Entre dos demonios y tres violencias: La administración Alfonsín y los sentidos de la memoria del terrorismo de Estado en la Argentina contemporánea,”

From a quote in English in the abstract, translation not my own.

Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Haiti, Panama, Peru, and Paraguay followed the Argentine approach.”<sup>350</sup>

As mentioned in Chapter 2, Etchecolatz wrote the book *La otra campaña de Nunca más* (*The Other Campaign of Never Again*) as a way for him to rebuke the *Nunca más* report.<sup>351</sup> The *Nunca más* report and Etchecolatz’s book are also examples of how the government of Argentina acknowledged the history of the civic-military dictatorship afterwards in a time of democracy, but supporters of the civic-military dictatorship and those responsible during that time period – such as Etchecolatz – refused to take accountability. Instead Etchecolatz tried to spread misinformation through the publication of his book.

### **Research Questions**

The example of *Nunca más* and Miguel Etchecolatz’s book provides an answer to one of the research questions of this thesis: When does censorship of the history of the civic-military dictatorship change and why? Is this part of the culture of the region or a shift? Now, after this research the conclusion can be drawn that the transition to democracy following the civic-military dictatorship in Argentina was essential to the start of the government talking openly about this history. It is important to also recognize that organizations like the Madres de Plaza de Mayo, and people such as Chicha Mariani fought to tell this history during and after the civic-military dictatorship, to pushback

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<sup>350</sup> Wright, *State Terrorism in Latin America*, 145.

<sup>351</sup> Claudia Feld, “El imposible debate entre víctimas y victimarios: notas sobre las declaraciones televisadas de Miguel Etchecolatz,” *Rubrica Contemporánea* 5, no. 8 (2016): 78, 81, <https://doi.org/10.5565/rev/rubrica.115>; Emilio Crenzel, *Memory of the Argentina Disappearances: The Political History of Nunca Más*, trans. Laura Pérez Carrara (New York: Routledge, 2011), *Memory of the Argentina Disappearances: The Political History of Nunca Más*, trans. Laura Pérez Carrara (New York: Routledge, 2011), 135.

from the government.<sup>352</sup> In addition, although Argentina had transitioned to democracy in 1983, pushback could also be seen in 1987 through the two high school students in Lomos de Zamora who tried to carry out a candlelight march on the anniversary of La Noche de los Lápices, but were instead jailed.<sup>353</sup>

This early example of an attempted memorialization of La Noche de los Lápices also helps to answer more research questions: When are attempts made towards establishing spaces of memory? Who creates these spaces? What is the intent of these spaces of memorialization? What memorialization has occurred over time and continues today?

High school students, survivors, and relatives of survivors and victims of the civic-military dictatorship, journalists, teachers, among others, work to create these spaces for memory.<sup>354</sup> The government also plays a role, via the creation of laws, such as the one in 1990 that would provide for the creation of a monument in La Plata memorializing the students disappeared, and the law that created “High School Students’ Rights Day” in 1996.<sup>355</sup>

While each particular space for memorialization varies based off of its individual aims, and who exactly is being remembered, one trend is made clear between the spaces of memory analyzed in this thesis. Honoring those killed during state terrorism – such as the students murdered as part of La Noche de los Lápices, or the Montoneros assassinated

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<sup>352</sup> Laureano Barrera, *La casa de la calle 30: Una historia de Chicha Mariani* (Buenos Aires: Tusquets Editores, 2022), 241; Marguerite Guzman Bouvard, *Revolutionizing Motherhood: The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo* (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 2003), 2.

<sup>353</sup> Guzman Bouvard, *Revolutionizing Motherhood*, 57.

<sup>354</sup> “Inauguran en 1 y 58 una obra inspirada en la Noche de los Lápices,” *El Día*, September 25, 2015, <https://www.eldia.com/nota/2015-9-25-inauguran-en-1-y-58-una-obra-inspirada-en-la-noche-de-los-lapices>.

<sup>355</sup> CPM – Fondo DIPPBA División Central de Documentación, Registro y Archivo, Mesa A, Factor estudiantil, Legajo 78, p. 2, 103.

during the attack on the Casa Mariani-Teruggi – as well as connecting this history to challenges in the present day are two important goals. In 2017 when the yearly march on the anniversary of La Noche de los Lápices was held, students recalled those who had been murdered by the state on that day, and connected their organizing for the BES in 1975 to a need to fund education in the present day.<sup>356</sup> In addition, the Casa Mariani-Teruggi shares the history of Diana Teruggi, Daniel Mariani, and the Montoneros who lived at the home, while drawing attention to the fact that Clara Anahí was kidnapped during the attack by the state and that “Her identity is still appropriated today by those who took her.”<sup>357</sup> In this way, these groups that remember La Noche de los Lápices and the attack on the Casa Mariani-Teruggi and the kidnaping of Clara Anahí are important stewards of this history.<sup>358</sup>

Through this thesis, I have illustrated how high school students, and organizations such as the Montoneros have shared the history of the dictatorship as stewards. The UES in the 1990s and to the present day continues to draw on the history and legacy of La Noche de los Lápices. High school students of the 1990s to today also connected the history of La Noche de los Lápices with current contemporary social challenges, such as the lack of funding in public schools. The Montoneros, although no longer an active organization today like it was during the dictatorship, also continued to draw on the legacy of the attack on the Casa Mariani-Teruggi in 1993 and 1994. These events held at the home were only the beginning of what is now a dedicated site of memory open to the

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<sup>356</sup> “Masiva marcha estudiantil a 41 años de La Noche de los Lápices,” *El Día*, September 16, 2017, <https://www.eldia.com/nota/2017-9-16-3-35-27-masiva-marcha-estudiantil-a-41-anos-de-la-noche-de-los-lapices-la-ciudad>.

<sup>357</sup> “Clara Anahí, Asociación Anahí, <http://asociacionanahi.org.ar/clara/>.

<sup>358</sup> Montoya and Larkin, *Communities of Ludlow*, 80.

public. Both of these groups used the legacy of the dictatorship to remember what the state had tried to cover up, and to remember their lost comrades.

In addition, the surveillance conducted under DIPPBA continued through the 1990s. Remnants of the dictatorship, such as this surveillance, can also be seen through the disappearance of Jorge Julio López and Santiago Maldonado. In this way, elements of the dictatorship exist even to the present day in Argentina. When examining the history of La Plata during the dictatorship, it is important to keep in mind all of the components that demonstrate why this place is so crucial to the memories and legacies of the dictatorship. Student and organizations advocated and continue their work today to form a more just and equitable Argentina.

### **Future connections**

In this section I share connections of history related to this thesis. I share these connections not to try to compare the two and say which is worse in terms of violence, but for future avenues for scholars to continue looking into.

Music was an important tool of resistance during the civic-military dictatorship and afterwards. Discussed earlier in Chapter 3, the “Day of Resistance” hosted by the Madres de Plaza de Mayo included bands who performed.<sup>359</sup> If the historiography has not covered this already, it was be interesting to look into the history of these specific bands and how they used music as a platform for resistance. In addition, while not mentioned in this thesis, during my research at the DIPPBA archives hosted at the Comisión Provincial por la Memoria, I came across a police report about a rock festival that was held in 1996

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<sup>359</sup> CPM – Fondo DIPPBA División Central de Documentación, Registro y Archivo, Mesa D, Carpeta varios, Legajo 35534, p. 42. As part of the historiography on rock music and protest in Argentina, see Sergio Pujol, *Rock y dictadura: Crónica de una generación, 1976-1983* (Buenos Aires: Emecé Editores, 2005).

by the Unión de Juventudes por el Socialismo (Young People United for Socialism, UJS) and the Partido Obrero (Workers' Party, PO). The rock festival was to remember Walter Bulacio, who was killed by police 5 years prior. Another goal of the rock festival was to protest against gatillo fácil, or “a form of selective repression, in which those who are systematically persecuted and killed [by security forces or police] are kids from the poor neighborhoods, the Capital, and the provinces,” which is still a problem today (see *Figure 1*).<sup>360</sup>



*Figure 16.* A mural in La Plata of the Organization Colectivo Contra el Gatillo Fácil, that was created in 2013 by Sanda Gómez after her son Omar Cigarán was murdered by the police in La Plata. See Martín Lamberti, “Nueva marcha del Colectivo Contra el Gatillo Fácil en La Plata,” *Nota al pie*, August 25, 2021, <https://www.notaalpie.com.ar/2021/08/25/nueva-marcha-del-colectivo-contra-el-gatillo-facil-en-la-plata/>. Photo by Anna Neubauer.

<sup>360</sup> “Que es el gatillo fácil?” *Andar*, June 24, 2013, <https://www.andaragencia.org/que-es-el-gatillo-facil/>.

Another area for future research could be on state violence in an international context as a reaction by the government in response to student protests. In Mexico in 2014, 43 students were disappeared due to state violence.<sup>361</sup> These students were on their way “to transport their peers to a demonstration in Mexico City commemorating another student tragedy: the 1968 Tlatelolco massacre, when dozens of protestors were gunned down by government forces.”<sup>362</sup> After the police made the students get off the buses in Iguala, the police “shot some of them and took the rest away into the night. After that, little is known about what happened.”<sup>363</sup>

The Kent State shooting in the US on May 4, 1970, is another example of state violence in response to student protest. On this day, the “Ohio National Guard shot student protestors at Kent State University, killing four and wounding nine. It was a turning point in the history of the Vietnam War and underscored the importance of freedom of speech and the right to protest.”<sup>364</sup> Both the 43 disappeared students in Mexico and the Kent State shooting in the US are examples of state violence in an international setting. Perhaps by studying these events, wider patterns of state violence could be revealed.

### **Argentina Today**

The history of the civic-military dictatorship is still relevant to Argentina in the present day. For example, in 2020 a trial began that focused on the violence Trans women faced at the hands of the civic-military dictatorship in the clandestine detention

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<sup>361</sup> Oscar Lopez, “Mexico Says Disappearance of 43 Students Was a ‘Crime of the State,” *New York Times*, August 18, 2022.

<sup>362</sup> Lopez, “Mexico Says Disappearance of 43 Students Was a ‘Crime of the State.”

<sup>363</sup> Lopez, “Mexico Says Disappearance of 43 Students Was a ‘Crime of the State.”

<sup>364</sup> Jennifer Mapes and Sara Koopman, “Sharing Stories of Tragedy: Mapping Narratives of the Kent State Shooting,” *Cartographic Perspectives* no. 96 (2020): 75, <https://doi.org/10.14714/CP96.1665>.

center Pozo de Banfield.<sup>365</sup> The plaintiffs, Valeria del Mar Ramírez, Fabiana Gutiérrez, Paola Leonor Alagastino, Analía Velázquez, and Marcela Viegas Pedro, testified in the trial held in La Plata, that “for the first time in history,” centered exclusively on the harm Trans women experienced at a clandestine detention center during the civic-military dictatorship.<sup>366</sup> The organization El Archivo de la Memoria Trans Argentina (The Argentina Trans Memory Archive) was present at the trial to support the plaintiffs, and their archive is composed of documents and photos that survived from the civic-military dictatorship of the trans community who faces transphobia before, during, and after this time.<sup>367</sup> This trial is significant because it is an example of the trans community seeking justice that has been denied to them for so long.

Another example of the relevancy of the history of the civic-military dictatorship in Argentina today can be seen through the release of the movie *Argentina, 1985* on Amazon Prime on October 21, 2022.<sup>368</sup> The movie was written and directed by Santiago Mitre, starring Ricardo Darín, Gina Mastronicola, and Francisco Bertín.<sup>369</sup> The film is

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<sup>365</sup> María Eugenia Ludueña, “Sobrevivientes trans y travestis declararon ante la Justicia como víctimas del Terrorismo de Estado,” *Presentes*, April 28, 2023, <https://agenciapresentes.org/2023/04/18/sobrevivientes-trans-y-travestis-declararon-ante-la-justicia-como-victimas-del-terrorismo-de-estado-en-el-pozo-de-banfield/>. See Latin Americanist Cole Rizi’s article “No State Apparatus Goes to Bed Genocidal Then Wakes Up Democratic”: Fascist Ideology and Transgender Politics in Post-dictatorship Argentina,” *Radical History Review* 138 (2020): 82-107, <https://doi.org/10.1215/01636545-8359271>.

<sup>366</sup> Ludueña, “Sobrevivientes trans y travestis declararon.”

<sup>367</sup> Ludueña, “Sobrevivientes trans y travestis declararon,”; “El Archivo de la Memoria Trans Argentina,” *Presentes*, May 9, 2019, <https://agenciapresentes.org/2019/05/09/el-archivo-de-la-memoria-trans-argentina/#:~:text=SUSCRIBITE%20AL%20NEWSLETTER-,El%20Archivo%20de%20la%20Memoria%20Trans%20es%20un%20proyecto%20argentino,comunidad%20travesti%20C%20transg%C3%A9nero%20y%20transexual..> The Museo de Arte y Memoria in La Plata created an exhibit entitled “L\*s Otr\*s – Igualdades, Legalidades, Realidades,” featuring art, photographs, and documentaries from the trans community. The exhibit also used the surveillance conducted by DIBBPA on the LGBTQ+ community in the province of Buenos Aires. See <https://www.comisionporlamemoria.org/museo/project/l-s-otrs-igualdades-legalidades-realidades/> for more information.

<sup>368</sup> Raye Smith, “Argentina, 1985’ (2022),” *Valley News*, April 23, 2023, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/889097645, T22>.

<sup>369</sup> “Argentina, 1985,” IMDb, <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt15301048/>.



about the 1985 trial of the leaders of the civic-military dictatorship.<sup>370</sup> Mitre spoke about the support the film saw after its release, stating that “There is a desire to reconcile... To reconcile before this forced division that has been happening for so many years from politics and from the media.”<sup>371</sup> Recently the movie won at the Premios Platino in Madrid, and was nominated for the Best Foreign Film category at the Oscars, although it did not win.<sup>372</sup> 2023 marks the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the return to democracy following the civic-military dictatorship. As part of this anniversary, a showing of the film was held in La Plata at the Teatro Argentino for free.<sup>373</sup>

These events prove that now more than ever, the memory and history of the civic-military dictatorship is at the forefront of Argentine society. Learning the history of the civic-military dictatorship and the resistance during this time is key to understanding La Plata, and more broadly, Argentina today.

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<sup>370</sup> Ed Rampell, “Argentina, 1985,” *Jacobin*, September 3, 2023, <https://jacobinlat.com/2023/03/09/argentina-1985/>.

<sup>371</sup> Daniel Politi, “First Qatar, then Hollywood,” *Vancouver Sun*, March 11, 2023, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/937877453>, B9.

<sup>372</sup> “La película ‘Argentina, 1985’ y la serie ‘Noticia de un secuestro,’ máximas ganadores en los Premios Platino,” *El Día: La Opinión de Tenerife*, April 23, 2023, <https://www.eldia.es/ocio/cine/2023/04/23/pelicula-argentina-1985-serie-noticia-86372347.html>;

<sup>373</sup> “Se proyectó la película “Argentina 1985” en el Teatro Argentino,” Gobierno de la Provincia de Buenos Aires, February 16, 2023, [https://www.gba.gob.ar/derechoshumanos/noticias/se\\_proyector\\_la\\_pel%C3%ADcula\\_argentina\\_1985\\_en\\_el\\_teatro\\_argentino](https://www.gba.gob.ar/derechoshumanos/noticias/se_proyector_la_pel%C3%ADcula_argentina_1985_en_el_teatro_argentino).

## Appendix

As part of my concentration in public history, I have created a website showcasing my thesis research. It is available at:

<https://unahistoriadela plata.weebly.com/>.

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