

SPACIO MEMORIA DERECHOS HUMANOS

FROM CLANDESTINE DETENTION CENTRE TO REMEMBRANCE AND HUMAN RIGHTS CENTRE

"ESMA, a machine that runs with the dead..."²

The ESMA campus, originally intended for housing and training junior officers of the Navy - located at Del Libertador Ave., main city access at the north of Buenos Aires - was one of the largest Clandestine Centres of Detention maternity units and a warehouse to keep the goods stolen from the hostages

Based at the Officers' House (Casino de Oficiales) and relying on the suppor and coverage of the other campus facilities, the Task Force GT3.3.2 (as abbreviated in Spanish), established in 1976 by former Admiral Emilio Massera, ran devastation and disruption of grassroots organizations and the abduction and disappearance of about five thousand people.

The Navy's political power within the armed forces had declined since the

GT3.3.2 to "discipline" society: The visibility of the ESMA at the urban core, the illegal operations in plain sight and the display of hooded prisoners to special against the other forces.

Although the ESMA facilities were primarily used by the GT3.3.2, this task force made them available to various related repressive forces: the Aeronautic

² Martín Gras, The ESMA System (unpublished)

REMEMBRANCE AND HUMAN RIGHTS CENTRE

In 2004, the Federal Government and the Government of the City of Buenos Aires, with an active involvement of human rights organizations, created the "Remembrance and Human Rights Centre". Both jurisdictions - the State's and the City's- signed an agreement establishing the campus' restitution to the City¹ and the Navy's eviction. At the same time, a bipartisan commission was created to oversee this process. In 2006, an Ad-Hoc Committee representing human rights organizations and ESMA survivors joined this commission.

In 2007, after the property's final handing over, the Public Consortium was formed to govern the Remembrance and Human Rights Centre.

REMEMBRANCE AND HUMAN RIGHTS CENTRE

FROM CLANDESTINE DETENTION CENTRE TO REMEMBRANCE AND HUMAN RIGHTS CENTRE

The recovery of the property formerly occupied by the Naval School of Mechanics (ESMA, as abbreviated in Spanish) is part of the historical battle carried out by human rights organizations in Argentina, starting with the resistance against dictatorship and remaining strong until today. These tenacious actions in pursuit of Remembrance, Truth and Justice were assumed by our country as State policies since 2003.

The longing of human rights organizations and survivors to recuperate the ESMA property (symbolic extermination centre during the dictatorship years and place of military resistance and public controversies surrounding the collective memory since the restoration of democracy, in 1983) was accomplished within this context.

The Centre is a public site that works to promote remembrance about the tragedy this society suffered, contributing to the collective comprehension of our past and committed to our society's present problems and needs. It was also conceived as a place to pay tribute to the victims of the civic-military dictatorship.

Multiple political and social institutions and organizations coexist here, working to preserve remembrance and to defend and promote human rights through different perspectives, strategies and methods.

Various activities, such as promoting public policies on human rights, researching and publishing, safeguarding of buildings and documents of symbolic value, empowering different cultures, and fostering academic and political discussions, all merge into this unique place. This heterogeneity is vital to its openness towards different players and generations.

¹ The land had been ceded by the City Government to the Federal Government in 1924, to be used for educational purposes only

The Public Consortium for the Remembrance and Human Rights Centre was created to preserve the collective memory about State terrorism, to serve as symbolic reparation to the victims, their families and the society as a whole and to contribute to the promotion and defense of human rights.

As governing body, its fundamental goal is to refunctionalize the premises formerly occupied by the ESMA and to define and implement remembrance policies within the Centre. Complying with this goal, the Public Consortium must safeguard those buildings, which were the axis of operations for the clandestine detention centre, as well as facilitate the coordination of all projects on remembrance and human rights.

The Consortium is a public institution, composed of the Federal Government, the Government of the City of Buenos Aires and human rights organizations. It enjoys administrative and financial autarky and it is autonomous in matters within its purview.

It is chaired by an Executive Body composed of one representative for each jurisdiction and another representative for the human rights organizations board. The Federal Government authorized the National Memory Archives for this role and the City Government authorized the Department of Human Rights and Cultural Pluralism.



THE PUBLIC CONSORTIUM

ITS MEMBERS

Executive Body

-Paula Maroni by the National Memory Archives, representing the Federal Government.

-Gustavo Peters Castro by Department of Human Rights and Cultural Pluralism, representing the City of Buenos Aires.

-Valeria Barbuto by the Human Rights Organizations Board.

Human Rights Organizations Board

-Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo (Grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo)

-Asamblea Permanente por los Derechos Humanos (Permanent Assembly for Human Rights)

-Asociación Madres de Plaza de Mayo (Mothers of Plaza de Mayo Association)

-Asociación Buena Memoria (Good Memory Association)

-Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales (Centre for Legal and Social Studies)

-Familiares de Desaparecidos y Detenidos por Razones Políticas (Relatives of the Disappeared and Detained for Political Reasons)

Fundación Memoria Histórica y Social (Historical and Social Memory Foundation)

Hijos e Hijas por la Identidad y la Justicia contra el Olvido y el Silencio (Sons and Daughters for Identity and Justice against Oblivion and Silence)

-Herman@s de Desaparecidos por la Verdad y la Justicia (Siblings of the Disappeared for Truth and Justice)

-Liga Argentina por los Derechos del Hombre (Argentine League for the Rights of Men)

-Madres de Plaza de Mayo - Línea Fundadora (Mothers of Plaza de Mayo - Founding Line)

-Movimiento Ecuménico por los Derechos Humanos (Ecumenical Movement for Human Rights)

-Servicio Paz y Justicia (Peace and Justice Service)

CONTACT INFORMATION

Archivo Nacional de la Memoria (ANM) (National Memory Archives)

(H.I.J.O.S.)

Casa de Nuestros Hijos. La Vida y la Esperanza. Madres de Plaza de Mayo -Línea Fundadora (Home of Our Children, Life and Hope - Mothers of Plaza de Mayo - Founding Line) www.madresfundadoras.org.ar (+5411) 4343-1926/1282 / 4702-9920 ext. 59

Casa por la Identidad. Abuelas de Plaza de Mavo (Centre for Identity, Grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo) www.abuelas.org.ar | (+5411) 4384-0983 / 4702-9920 ext. 60

Centro Cultural de la Memoria Haroldo Conti (Haroldo Conti Cultural Centre for Remembrance) www.derhuman.jus.gov.ar/conti | (+5411) 4702-7777 | Hours: Tuesday to Friday - 12pm. to 9pm. Saturday and Sunday - 11am. to 9pm.

Centro Internacional para la Promoción de los Derechos Humanos (International Centre for the Promotion of Human Rights, sponsored by UNESCO) www.cipdh.gov.ar | (+5411) 4702-1211 / 4701-8937/8532 ext. 133

Educ.ar SE

(Educ.ar State Society) Educational Website: www.educ.ar | (+5411) 4704-4000 | Encuentro TV Channel: www.encuentro.gov.ar | PakaPaka TV Channel: www.pakapaka.gov.ar | DeporTv: www.deportv.gob.ar

Espacio Cultural Nuestros Hijos (ECuNHi), Asociación Madres de Plaza de Mavo (Our Children Cultural Centre - Mothers of Plaza de Mayo Association) www.nuestroshijos.org.ar | (+5411) 4703-5089 | Hours: Monday to Friday - 2pm, to 9pm, Saturday -10am, to 2pm

30.000 Compañeros Presentes / Familiares de Desaparecidos y Detenidos por Razones Políticas (30.000 Comrades are Present / Relatives of the Disappeared and Detained for Political Reasons) www.familiares.org.ar | (+5411) 4953-5646

Iniciativa Latinoamericana para la identificación de Personas Desaparecidas (ILID) (Latin American Initiative for the Identification of the Disappeared) www.eaaf.org/iniciativa 0800-333-2334

Instituto de Políticas Públicas en Derechos Humanos del MERCOSUR (IPPDH) (MERCOSUR Institute for Public Policies on Human Rights) www.mercosur.int/ippdh

Memoria Abierta (Open Memory) www.memoriaabierta.org.ar / (+5411) 4702-9920. ext. 850

Museo Malvinas e Islas del Atlántico sur (Museum Malvinas and South Atlantic Islands) www.museomalvinas.gob.ar /(+5411) 5280-0750/0799. Hours: Wednesday to Friday - 10am. to 20pm. Saturday and Sunday - 12pm. to 20pm.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION Buses 15, 28, 29, 117, 130, Trains | Ferrocarril General Mitre (ramal Tigre): Rivadavia Station

el Libertador Avenue, 8151 (C1429BNB) - Autonomous City of Buenos Aires - (+5411) 4702-9920 | www.espaciomemoria

www.derhuman.jus.gov.ar/anm | (+5411) 4702-1211 / 4701-8937/8532 | Hours: Monday to Friday -8am, to 8pm. For questions or interviews, please call from 9am, to 6pm

Casa de la Militancia. Hijos e Hijas por la Identidad y la Justicia contra el Olvido y el Silencio

(Centre for Activism - Sons and Daughters for Identity and Justice against Oblivion and Silence) www.hijos-capital.org.ar | (+5411) 4953-5646 / 4702-9920 ext. 58

REMEMBRANCE AND HUMAN RIGHTS CENTER

SYSTEMATIC PLAN OF ILLEGAL REPRESSION

Since the coup of March 24th, 1976, a civic-military dictatorship was introduced in the country "implementing the most profound terror the Argentine society has ever known"1. This dictatorship enabled an authoritarian, economically recessive and socially unjust political model, demanded by the great powers of the world and by some of the largest international economic groups.

This coup was not an isolated event. It was inserted into a political culture crossed by practices of State violence and by the continuous alternation between military dictatorships and restricted democracies throughout the twentieth century.

Under the mobilized society of the early seventies, the military began to develop illegal operations moving steadily towards the usurpation of State power. The "Triple A" and other right-wing organized groups (armed and financed by the Ministry of Social Welfare and other sectors of the Government), murdered and abducted over 1500 victims, many of which are still missing.

The covert crimes committed by the police and the military, along with an increasing repressive policy (Decree of Annihilation) paved the way for a coup which overthrew a Constitutional Government, eliminated all vestiges of democracy and institutionalized the systematic and massive exercise of State terrorism.

"On March 24, 1976 - Rodolfo Walsh pointed out in his letter to the Military Junta - you overthrew a Government which you were part of, whose discredit you helped to shape as executors of its repressive policy and whose end was marked by elections called for nine months later."

The planned decisions to eliminate organized activism, to dismantle grassroots organizations, to discipline society, and even to empty its memory, required to place all State institutions at the service of terror. After the 1976 coup, the dictatorship institutionalized and reinforced the repressive mode previously rehearsed: the kidnapping-torturing-disappearing methodology, the clandestine detention centres as tools of destruction and extermination of prisoners and as a way to spread terror throughout society.

In this network of over 500 clandestine detention centres deployed across the country, the Naval School of Mechanics (Escuela de Mecánica de la Armada, ESMA) was an iconic gear.

¹ Rodolfo Walsh, A Writer's Open Letter to the Military Junta.

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September 8th			organizations demanded		ident Kirchner, Special guided tours g with survivors, to the former	Guided tours to the former Officers'
			the property's		ed the ESMA for clandestine deten-	House were opened
(Inter-American Commission on			restoration to the	the firs	irst time. tion centre began.	to the public.
Commission on Human Rights)			City Government as the ESMA failed	March	h 24th Public Between July and	The National
visited the ESMA.			to comply with its		t at the ESMA. September, the	Memory Archives
The hostages were			educational purpose.		President Argentine Forensic	were installed at the
March 24 th ESMA taken to an island at personnel performed the district of Tigre.			January 6th		unced the navy's Anthropology Team ion to turn the identified five	campus.
operations within the Several structural			President Carlos		pus into a site members of the	April 30 th Our
framework of the modifications were			Menem ordered to		emembrance. group that used to	Children Cultural
Military Coup. made at the Officer's House to			transfer the ESMA to Puerto Belgrano		igned an / meet at the Church ement with the / of Santa Cruz,	Centre, of the Mothers of Plaza de
May The Navy's try to erase any			and proposed to			Mayo Association,
Commander in Chief, December 8 th to evidence that could			demolish the			s was created.
Admiral Emilio 10 th Three founders match the Massera, created the of the Mothers of March 17 th Horacio allegations made by			buildings to set a monument for		embrance and Aires coast by the is completed and, c an Rights Centre. end of December November 30th, th	on e May The Haroldo
Task Force 3.3.2 (GT3). Plaza de Mayo Maggio, who was survivors.			national unity.			Conti Cultural Centre
(Azucena Villaflor de kidnapped and held						for Remembrance
July 15th Sergio De Vincenti, Esther hostage for several October 12th At the Tarnopolsky, serving Ballestrino de months at the French National					ted to oversee unidentified bodies: signed at the Golde process. the three founders Hall of the former	n was founded.
the compulsory Careaga and Mary ESMA, managed to Assembly, three				npus to try to stop		June 29th 30 years
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to his outside partners - Church of Santa - Generativities of the Maila Mail, Ancia the first reports of - Cruz to publish an - activities of the - Millia and Sara	March The NCDP					from the former
what was happening open letter of GT3.3.2 and on the Solarz de Osatinsky)	(National Commission		flights", in which the child abductions the ESMA. September 30 th acc	ordance with Act	re began. Auad. There was Government signed	ESMA to the River
in there. He was complaint, were status of its victims. gave testimony discovered and kidnapped by the He was offering a vast	on the Disappearance of Persons) visited At the Military		hostages were (considered a crime The conferences "The 392 thrown alive into the against humanity) October 16th The Museum we want" can			Plate Stadium. It was named "The
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GT3.3.2, along with the ESMA, along and his body was on victims and	paying special survivors denounced		Plata" river. Later, in Emilio Massera, annulled the ESMA rights organizations wer	re put at the began		Game for Life and
his parents, sister with several family shown, at the repressors. Other and wife. All of them members and two ESMA, to the other survivors filed new	attention to the the repressors and Officers' House. the crimes committed		Spain, he was tried amongst others, demolition and in an effort to create disj and convicted to was imprisoned for declared it National the Museum for Mu		se, along with were thrown alive Human Rights e other buildings, from airplanes into Centre.	Human Rights". The Public Consortium was
are still missing. French nuns. hostages. complaints abroad.	there.		and convicted to was imprisoned for declared it National the Museum for Mu 1084 years in prison. these crimes. Cultural Heritage. Remembrance. Rer		e other buildings, from airplanes into Centre. recovered. the sea.	formed.
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d'état CIVIC-MILITARY DICTATORSHIP March 24th THE DICTATORSHIP BECAN. A Military Junta composed of Lieutenant General Jorge R. Videla, Admiral Emilio Massera and Brigadier Orlando Agosti, overthrew for the Rights of the River Plate Stadium, at a short distance from the ESMA. Human rights organizations had documented over Stadium, at a short distance from the ESMA. Adolfo Pérez Esquivel, head of the Peace and Justice Service, von enforced disappear- ances. December 10th and th1 The Mothers of Plaza de Mayo organizat the first march of Resistance. 1937 The Argentine League for the Rights of man, LADH (as abbreviated in Spanish), was founded. March The Ecommiscion on Plaza de Mayo assumed power at the River Plate Stadium, at a short distance from the ESMA. March The Grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo asthieved the restitution of their first grandchild, who was abduced and illegally appropri- ated in October 1977. This was achieved with the help of "Clamor", an organization of the Archdiocese of Sao Paulo, Brazil. December 10th and th1 The Mothers of Plaza de Mayo achieved the restitution of their first grandchild, who was abduced and illegally appropri- ated in October 1977. This was achieved with the help of "Clamor", an organization of the Archdiocese of Sao Paulo, Brazil.	e. repressed leaving one protester dead and many jailed. Collective habeas for their crimes. The Congress annulled it on December 22nd of that same year. December 9th December 9th Second to Iffe Plaza de Mayo. Collective habeas that same year. Jorge R. Videla were sentenced to life April 16th to 19th The first Corpus before the Federal Supreme December 10th Democracy was re-established. Raul minisonment. "carapintada" April 2nd Falklands Alfonsin took over as president-elect. Lambruschini and or lando Agosti was a mass protest 16th, Argentina December 14th The surrendered. Marine Alfredo Astiz was arrested by the December 14th The Disappearance of Persons, was created. Sentences. June 18th Congress passed the Law of passed the Law of pappropriation of "Multipartidaria" at Plaza de Mayo. The	by President Carlos imprisonment in with the Pact of San constitu Menem. absentia, in the case José de Costa Rica to interr	tuent bly gave utional rank rnationalmarches across the country at the coup's 20th anniversary.Human rights organizations made a petition to the City Council to build a a petition to the City Council to build aCongress repealedItal the Impunity LawsItal cons on humanMarch 28th The first step in the internationalmonument with the state terrorism at prosecution of the riverside of the violations was bill was passed on judge Baltazar Argentine dictators for genocide and terrorism. Testimonies and International orders of capture began in June.Muman rights the Impunity Laws for the Tuth, led organizations, began a greed, before the to 3.Ital the Impunity Laws for genocide and with these trials.Ital the Impunity Laws for genocide and terrorism.Ital the Impunity Laws for genocide and terrorism.Ital the Impunity Laws for genocide and terrorism.Ital the Impunity Laws for genocide and terrorism.September The first trial for the Truth, led organizations, began a greed, before the to 3.September The first trial for the Truth, led organizations, began a greed, before the to 3.September The first truth, ledSeptember The first truth, led organization, began a greed, before the to 3.September The first truth, ledSeptember The first truth, led organization, began a greed, before the to 3.September The first truth, ledSeptember The first truth, ledSeptember The first truth, ledSeptember The first truth, ledSeptember The first to 3.September The first to 4.Septem	2001 2002 2003 2004 and and a construction of the second	June 14 th The Supreme Court declared the unconstitutionality of the Impunity Laws. The trials on crimes against humanity were reset. September 18 th First sentence achieved after the Impunity Laws were declared unconstitutional. The Police Officer Julio Héctor Simón was sentenced to 25 years in prison. September 18 th "First sentence achieved after the Impunity Laws were declared unconstitutional. The Police Officer years in prison. September 18 th "First sentence achieved after the Impunity took place, since tha annulment of the Impunity Laws. Cristino Nicolaides and other six "Battalion 601". A	e Luciano Benjamín Santiago Omar convicting about a Menéndez was Riveros and other hundred suspects, sentenced to life repressors were amongst them: the
d'état CIVIC-MILITARY DICTATORSHIP March 24th THE DICTATORSHIP June The Military Junta composed of Lieutenant General Jorge R. Videla, Admiral Emilio Massera and Brigadier Orlando Agosti, overthrew the Constitutional Government and assumed power at the forefront of the self-styled "National Reorganization Spanish) was founded. June The Military Junta inaugurated the World Cup 78, at the River Plate Stadium, at a short distance from the ESMA. Human rights organizations had documented over S800 cases of stations at a short distance from the ESMA. Adolfo Pérez Esquivel, head of the Peace and Justice Service, won Ruman Rights December 10th and Tith The Mothers of Plaza de Mayo achieved the resitution of their first grandchild, who was abducted and illegally appropri- ated in October 1977. This was achieved with the help of "Clamor", an organization of the Artholicese of Sao Paulo, Brazil. 1927 The Ecumenical 1926 The Ecumenical	March 30th Marches of the "CGT Brasil" across the county, were brutallyMarch 23rd The military issued the self-annesty Law to prevent prosecution for their crimes. The Congress annulled it on December 22nd of that same year.September NCDP presented its report "Never Again" to the Congress.December 23rd The military junta began.The National Bank of Genetic Data was created (Law 23,511), pushed by the Grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo.e.repressed leaving on protester dead and many jailed. Collective habeas corpus before the Federal Supreme Court.March 23rd The military issued the self-annesty Law to prevent prosecution for their crimes. The Congress.September NCDP presented its report "Never Again" to the Congress.December 23rd The military junta began.The National Bank of Genetic Data was created (Law 23,511), pushed by the Grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo.e.December 22nd of that same year.December 9th December 10th Democracy was re-established. Raul Afrido Astiz was arrested by the Disappearance of Persons, was created.December 10th Democracy was re-established. Raul Afrido Astiz was arrested by the Disappearance of Persons, was created.December 14th The NCDP, National Commission on the Disappearance of Persons, was created.December 14th The NCDP, National Commission on the Disappearance of Persons, was created.June 18th Congress passed the Law of Due Obedience. Only appropriation of minors and property	October 8th The first repressors' pardon was granted by President Carlos Menem. The French Justice sentenced Alfredo The IACHR stated August Menem. Astiz to life imprisonment in absentia, in the case of the nuns of that nationality, who were kidnapped and held at the ESMA. The iACHR stated were incompatible August Constitu Menem. December 29th Carlos Menem broadened the pardons, including those of the former Commanders already convicted at the The iACHR stated that Impunity Laws were incompatible August Constitu Menem,	t The marches across the country at the coup's utional rank 20 th anniversary. 20 th anniversary 20 th anniversary. 20 th anniversary 20 th anniversary. 20 th anniversary 20 th anniversary 20 th anniversary 20 th anniversary. 20 th anniversary 20 th annin anniversary 20 th anniversary 20 th anniversary 20 th annivers	Presidencies of: Ramón Puerta Adolfo Rodríguez Saá Eduardo Camaño Idemned the herals Carlos árez Mason and har Riveros to life unconstitutionality inst Italian zens. Trials gan in other intries as well.	June 14 th The Supreme Court declared the unconstitutionality Laws. The trials on crimes against humanity were reset. September 18 th Julio López, a key witness in the trial against the repressor Miguel Etchecolatz, disappeared just hours before the	The former head of the 3rd Army Corps, Luciano Benjamín Menéndez was sentenced to life imprisonment in Córdoba and then again in Tucumán, where the former General Antonio Domingo Bussi received the same sentence. The men accused of the "Fátima Massacre" and of the "little school of Neuquén", amongst others, were sentenced as well.

FOUNDATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS

March The NCDP	
(National Commission	
on the Disappearance	
of Persons) visited	At the Military
the ESMA facilities	Juntas Trial, E
paying special	survivors den
attention to the	the repressor
Officers' House.	the crimes con
	there.

