



MUSEO
SITIO DE MEMORIA
ESMA



HISTORIAS SIN OLVIDO

In the Officers' quarters where the Clandestine Detention Center of Torture and Extermination set up in the Naval Mechanics School operated. There were more than 700 places of illegal detention during the last dictatorship from 1976 to 1983.

Here, in the ESMA approximately 5000 men and women were detained or missing. They were members of political parties or social activists, revolutionary organizations either armed or unarmed, workers, trade union members, students, professionals, artists and members of religious orders. Most of them were dropped alive into the ocean.

Here, in the ESMA the Navy planned abductions and systematically carried out murders. Here, prisoners were kept in hoods and shackled. Here, they were tortured. Here, the Navy made them disappear.

Here, in the ESMA children were born in captivity and were separated from their mothers. Most of them were illegally adopted or robbed. We are still looking for many of them.

Here, in the ESM a crime against humanity was perpetrated.

**memory,
truth &
justice**

ESMA MUSEUM AND SITE OF MEMORY Former Clandestine Centre for Detention, Torture and Extermination

The ESMA Museum and Site of Memory will remain closed until further notice as a preemptive measure against the spread of Coronavirus in our country.

Contents not suitable for children under 12.

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Argentina **unida**

Secretaría de
Derechos Humanos



Ministerio de Justicia
y Derechos Humanos
Argentina

MEDIA OPERATIONS OF DICTATORSHIPS IN URUGUAY AND ARGENTINA

The last military dictatorships in Argentina, Uruguay and Chile developed a wide political propaganda that included cinema, TV and press photography. Media outlets were used to develop a campaign military officials called “psychological actions”: media operations that aimed to establish the theory of a “subversive devil”, justify repression and create a culture of fear as a form of implementing social discipline. One of the main resources they used to design these campaigns were the photographs from press archives provided by newspapers after media outlets were closed, confiscated and intervened, journalists were censored, persecuted and jailed, and dozens of members of the press were kidnapped and murdered.

Susy Chalet - Orletti Automobiles

Argentina / SID, Uruguay

The Susy Chalet is located on Avenue of the Americas and Santa Bernardita street, in the Shangrilá seaside town in the state of Canelones. The place was used as the setting for a Condor Plan operation in which the Uruguayan state reteded that 24 Uruguayan men and women were presented to the public as if they had just been captured when in fact they had been kidnapped months before for political and ideological reasons and kept in the clandestine detention center known as Orletti Automobiles in Argentina and then clandestinely transferred to Uruguay.



Newspaper El país, Uruguay, Operation Chalet Susy.

On July 24, 1976, 24 people were kidnapped and transported on Air Force airplanes to the Base #1 of Carrasco Airport in Montevideo. Once there, the group was held captive and tortured again in a house in Punta Gorda for approximately 10 days before they were taken to the Defense Information Service (SID). They are forced to participate in a fake barbecue and an arrest at the house in Shangrilá seaside town, in exchange for losing their status of disappeared and being taken to official prisons, where they were able to have contact with their families.

The joint armed forces rented the Susy Chalet to stage the barbecue. On October 23, 1976, the group was taken to the Susy Chalet on military vehicles together with several soldiers who pretended to be prisoners as part of the operation. At the house, the repressors had created a sort of stash inside the fireplace removing the top bricks, in order to pretend they had found guns and propaganda material of the Victory of the

People Party (PVP), an organization most of the kidnapped victims were members of, while making enough noise so the neighbors would hear something strange was going on in there. They also sent two of the kidnapped women along with soldiers to a grocery store to buy vegetables and make the whole situation look more credible. They staged the barbecue at 1 pm and the fake military operation for their capture was conducted at 3 pm. That day, TV and radio networks broadcasted information about the fake detention. The detained people were transferred back to SID. On Saturday, October 28, the group was taken back to the Susy Chalet again –that day it was very hot, yet they were wearing the same winter clothes they had at the time of their original kidnappings, back in June. The military called the media to the front door of the house, so they would be able to film and photograph the detainees, who were forced to step out of the house one by one and state their names loudly before the press. On the next day, a newspaper headline read: “*Hard Blow on New Subversive Outbreak. 62 Rebels Caught. Shangrilá: Base Dismantled, Weapons Seized.*”.

El hecho tuvo amplia difusión en la prensa internacional, ya que la dictadura necesitaba mostrar que el *peligro guerrillero* seguía latente, en un contexto internacional adverso por las denuncias en foros internacionales de la sistemática violación a los derechos humanos en Uruguay. Supuso también un intento de evitar, sin éxito, la suspensión de la ayuda fiscal del gobierno de Estados Unidos a las fuerzas militares y policiales en Uruguay, conocido como “Enmienda Koch”.

Alejandrina Barry

Montevideo, Uruguay

A group of Argentine activists from the Montoneros organization were kidnapped between November 15 and December 15, 1977. Juan Alejandro Barry and his wife Susana Mata were murdered in a joint operation by both Argentine and Uruguayan armed forces. Alejandrina, their 2-year-old daughter, is taken by Uruguay’s repression forces, who use her to set up a media operation through Argentine and Uruguayan media. Alejandrina was handed to her paternal grandparents in the port of Montevideo on December 29, 1977. The Argentine dictatorship used the opportunity and, in complicity with Atlantida Publishing House, wrote three articles between December 1977 and January 1978, in which they created the false truth about “a daughter of terror was abandoned” with “a mother who left her alone by killing herself” and “a father who died in a confrontation”. These three articles, denounced by Alejandrina as part of civilian complicity, were published by *Somos* magazine on December 30, 1977 with the headline “*The Children of Terror*”; by *Gente* on January 5, 1978, with a story that stated “*This is also terrorism. Alejandra (sic) is alone*”, and by *Para Ti* on January 16, 1978, with the headline “*They didn’t care about Alejandra*”.



Atlántida Publishing House. Alejandrina Barry in Uruguay.

Norma Arrostito

ESMA, Argentina

On December 2, 1976, the Argentine dictatorship issued a release informing Esther Norma Arrostito, member of the Peronist organization Montoneros' founding group, had been killed in a confrontation in Lomas de Zamora. However, on that day she actually had been kidnapped by a task force and imprisoned at ESMA. Media outlets gave wide coverage to that information, which would be proven false years later. A Gente magazine issue from December 9, 1976 ran on its cover a picture of her with the headline "Dead" together with the time and date of the standoff the Army staged. Arrostito remained kidnapped in ESMA, displayed as a trophy for the other branches of the armed forces and used to break the morale of the other kidnapped victims. She was murdered at ESMA on January 15, 1978.



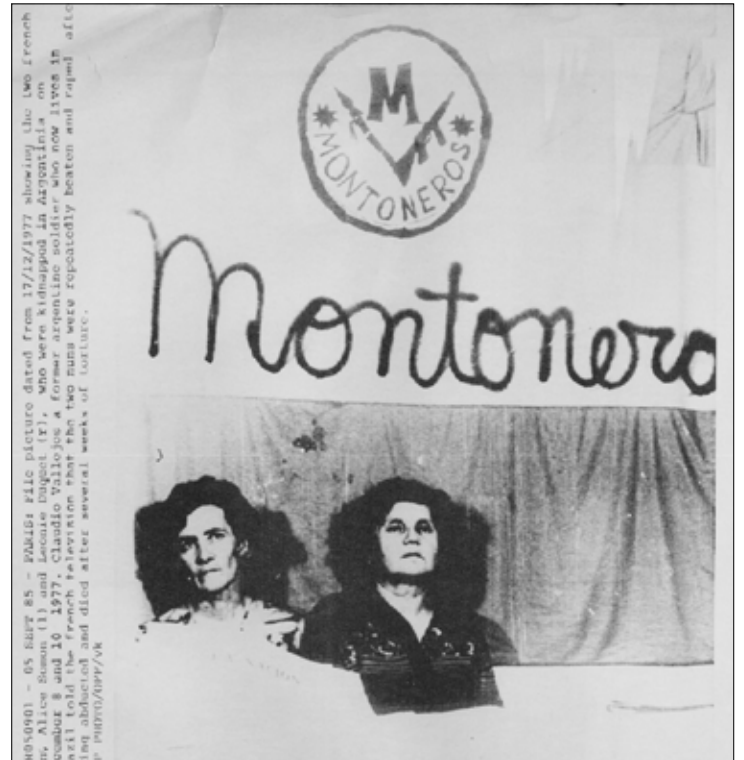
Gente magazine. Norma Arrostito.

The French Nuns

ESMA, Argentina

Alice Domon and Léonie Duquet were nuns from the congregation of the Foreign Missions in Paris who had been sent to work in different communities in Argentina. On December 8, 1977, the ESMA task force kidnapped several relatives of desaparecidos, human rights activists, and the nun Alice Domon at the front door of the Church of the Holy Cross. Léonie Duquet was kidnapped two days later from her home in Haedo. The twelve people were kidnapped after an infiltration operation conducted by Alfredo Astiz, who pretended to be the brother of a desaparecido in order to approach the Mothers. The Navy insistently denied those kidnappings, which resonated within the international community. In an attempt to clear any suspicions, Massera's subordinates ordered a detainee to paint a flag with the Montoneros emblem, which they used as the background of a photo they took of the nuns in the ESMA basement. Domon was forced to write a letter to the Mother Superior of their Congregation, saying she had been kidnapped by "a group that opposed the Videla government". On December 15, 1977, La Nación newspaper published a wire from EFE news agency entitled "Alive and In Good Health". The news reported that the Mother Superior of the Congregation stated from France that sisters Léonie and Alice "are alive and in good health". It clarified that the source of the information came was the Apostolic nuncio of Argentina. The twelve people were transferred and disappeared through the so-called *death flights*.

The remains of Duquet, human rights activist Ángela Auad and Mothers of Plaza de Mayo Azucena Villaflor de Vincenti, María Ponce de Bianco and Esther Ballestrino de Careaga, were identified by the Argentine Forensic Anthropology Team (EAAF) in 2005.



Nuns Leonie Duquet and Alice Domon at ESMA.

Thelma Jara de Cabezas

ESMA, Argentina

Thelma Jara de Cabezas was kidnapped by an ESMA task force on April 30, 1979. She was held at ESMA until December of that same year. Her case is emblematic not just because she is the mother of a disappeared person and a founder of the Association Relatives of Disappeared and Detained for Political Reasons, but also because she is the victim of a media operation designed by the Navy together with Atlántida Publishing House to pretend her many reports against the civic-military dictatorship were part of an "anti-Argentina campaign". On September 10, 1979, Para Ti magazine published an interview entitled "The Mother of a Dead Subversive Speaks Out". The interview took place at the 'Selquet' cafe in the corner of Figueroa Avenue and Tagle street. Journalist Alberto Scola says the editor-in-chief Agustín Juan Bottinelli told him to go to that place and conduct the interview. Afterwards, he handed the interview's audio recording over to him. Bottinelli allegedly forged the article, modifying the real answers Jara de Cabezas gave Escola regarding her actions to find her son Gustavo, who had disappeared on May 1976, replacing her words in order to undermine the circulating versions about a procedure for illegal detentions and forced disappearance of people, including Thelma's. In 2014 Bottinelli became the first journalist indicted on crimes against humanity, charged with coercion for the article published in 1979. In 2015, the Federal Chamber dismissed the charge and revoked the indictment.



Para Ti magazine. Thelma Jara.