



**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**  
HISTORIAS SIN OLVIDO

**Secretaría de**  
**Derechos Humanos**



**Ministerio de Justicia**  
**y Derechos Humanos**  
**Argentina**

The story is based on court documents

# ADVOCATING IN DIFFICULT TIMES LAW AS A FORM OF RESISTANCE



► The Round of the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo.

Ever since the mid-20th century, lawyers in Argentina and Latin America have played a major role in political activism, union struggles, demonstrations for freedom and the defense of human rights. The politicization of their professional activities was not a byproduct of their college education, but of each professional's connection with political activism.

In the 1950s and 1960s, members of the Communist Party found in the Legal Party Commission and in the Argentine League for the Rights of Man (LADH) a space of activism, knowledge and experiences that trained and guided them in their professional activities. In 1967, a group of lawyers gathered around Raimundo Ongaro and the CGT de los Argentinos (CGTA), all of them coming from various political-ideological traditions such as combative Peronism, progressive radicalism and the new left. They served both the general defense of union and trade union interests, as well as specific legal defenses in cases of detention for political and social reasons, thus articulating their professional activity with political activism.

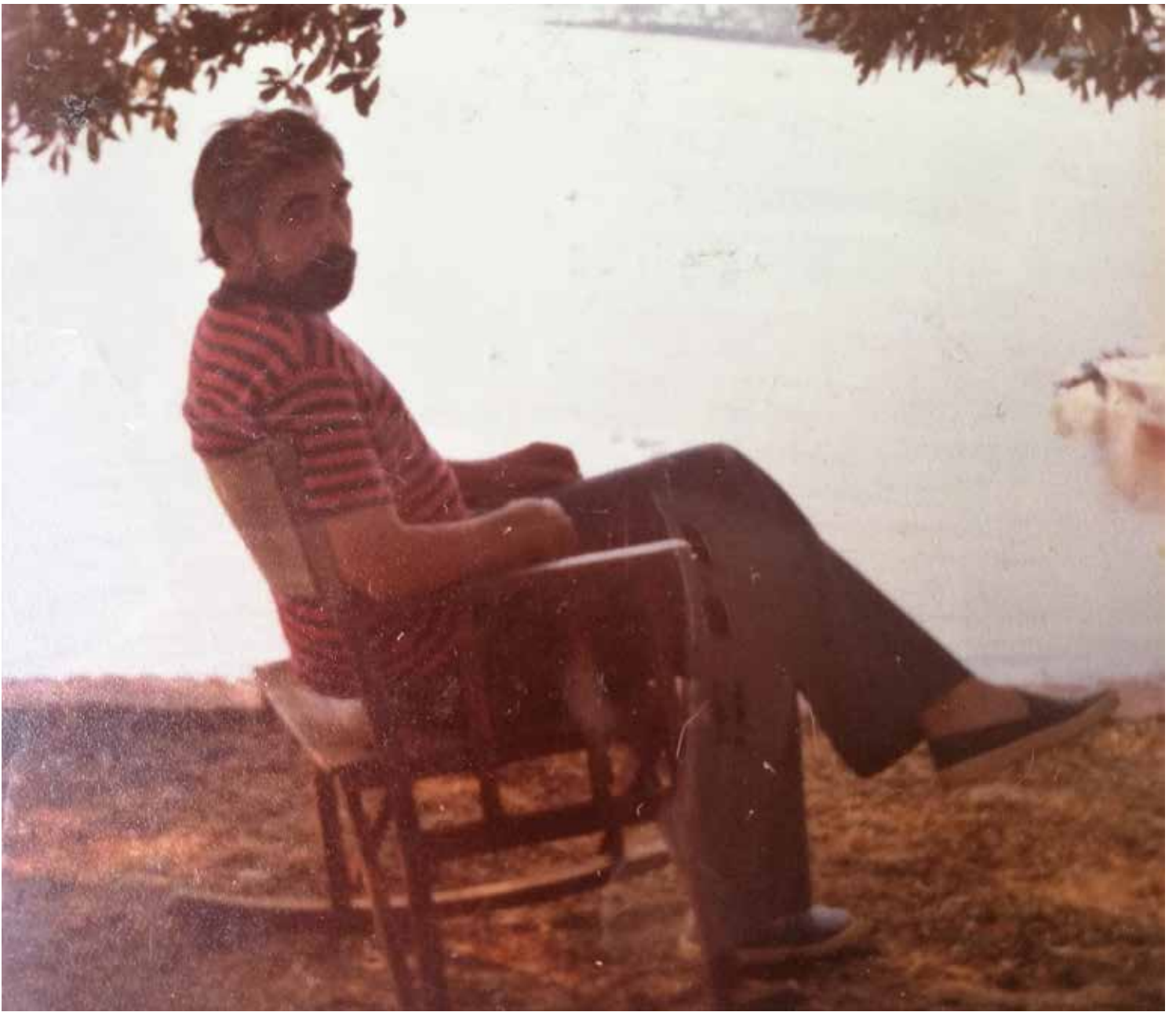
In December 1970, Dr. Néstor Martins (a member of the CGTA group of

lawyers) and his client Nildo Zenteno were kidnapped and disappeared, a fact that exacerbated the disagreement of a group of professionals towards the Buenos Aires Bar Association, as they questioned it for having done very little for Martins and his client. This situation, together with the new repressive conditions, led in 1971 to the creation of the Trade Union Bar Association, known as "The Unionist", thus acquiring greater political, corporate and professional presence and weight.

On July 31, 1974, the Triple A assassinated Peronist lawmaker Rodolfo Ortega Peña, an emblematic figure of "The Unionist." It was the first homicide claimed by the vigilante group, and it turned lawyers into one of its recurring targets. Some professionals received death threats at their offices or homes, the Peronist right-wing intimidated them through the pages of *El Caudillo* magazine, and several bombs exploded in offices and corporate headquarters such as "The Unionist." Some people went underground, others chose exile; some of them dedicated themselves to the private sector and others chose to continue their work, which became more dangerous and necessary as time went on.

Beginning in 1976, with the establishment of State terrorism, habeas corpus filings, assistance to relatives of detained-disappeared persons, the creation and engagement of human rights organizations, and the reports of international civil and political rights violations all became common practices among the legal strategies of resistance. The systematic disappearance of lawyers acquired a special relevance; According to the Report of the National Commission on the Disappearance of Persons (CONADEP), between 1975 and 1980, at least 23 lawyers were murdered for political reasons and more than 110 professionals were kidnapped and disappeared, of whom at least 20 were at ESMA. (17 men and 3 women). At least 90% of these disappearances occurred between March and December 1976.

Lawyers, as defenders but also as victims of repression, began to develop strategies that would allow them to intervene in defense of the victims of State terrorism using available legal tools. Later, faced with the obstacles that were created to perpetrate impunity, they designed ways and strategies that contributed to their removal in order to be able to try those who committed these crimes.



## Daniel Víctor Antokoletz

He was born in the City of Córdoba on February 22, 1937. The son of a teacher and a diplomat, due to his father's work he lived in several Central American countries until he was 11 years old, when his family settled in San Nicolás de los Arroyos.

At the age of 20, he moved to Buenos Aires with his sister María Adela. He went to Law School in the Argentine Catholic University, from which he graduated in 1964. Daniel specialized in Public International Law. He was associate professor of Sociology of International Relations at the UBA and Public International Law at the UBA and the University

of Belgrano. He was Head of Studies at the Catholic University of Mar del Plata and Head of Studies and Research at the University of Belgrano. He wrote numerous publications on subjects of his specialty.

Since the early 1970s, he worked on the defense of political prisoners both in Argentina and Chile, gaining recognition within the circle of international law professionals. In this context, he crafted a report on violations of the right to asylum for the Third Congress of the Argentine Association of International Law. In addition, he systematically denounced the living conditions in the several prisons he visited, as well as human rights violations in Argentina.

He also wrote the statute of the Argentine Commission for Human Rights (CADHU), which was sent clandestinely to Spain at the beginning of the last civil-military dictatorship.

Daniel was kidnaped on the morning of November 10, 1976 from his home in the Palermo neighborhood together with his wife Liliana María Andrés by an ESMA Task Force. His wife, who was liberated 7 days later, knew from comments of the guards that she was held in the Capuchita area while Daniel was in Capucha. She was able to see him only once while in captivity, in the restrooms area on the third floor of the Officers' Club. Daniel is still missing.

After Daniel's kidnapping, his mother María Adela Gard de Antokoletz began searching for him in churches, embassies, and government offices. Adela worked as a rural teacher and later as a court clerk in San Nicolás, Morón and San Isidro and also engaged in union activity within the judicial branch until she retired. Her father had been a known radical Yrigoyenist leader in San Nicolás, and she had married a diplomat. She was, along with her sisters Julia, María Mercedes and Cándida, one of the fourteen women who founded the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo Movement on March 30, 1977. She was also one of the mothers who created Mothers of Plaza de Mayo – Founders in 1986. Adela passed away on July 23, 2002, at the age of 90.

