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The unruly image: memory and transmission in Argentina.

Saab, A.P.

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CHAPTER 7: IMAGES UNDER SCHOOL REGIME

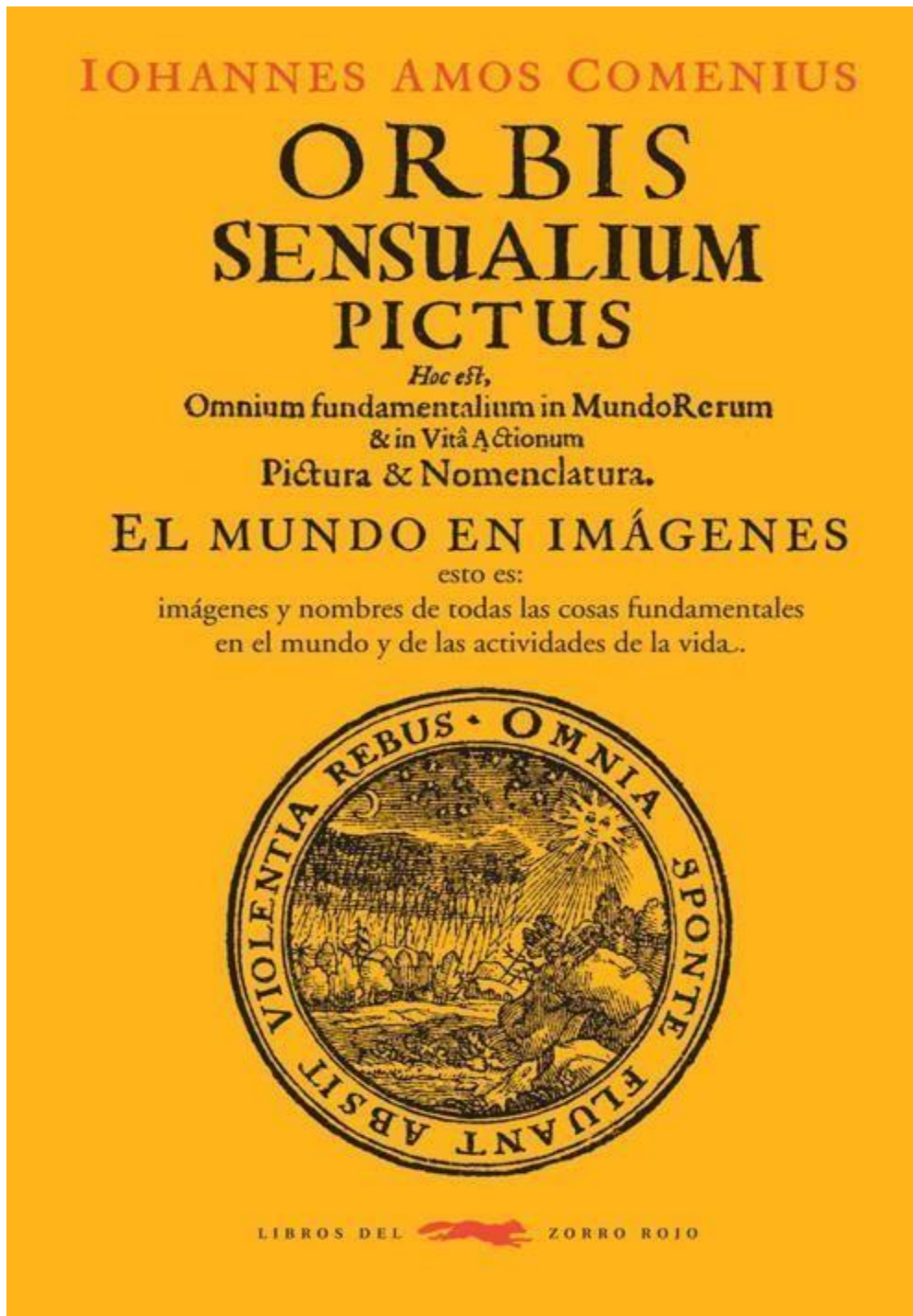


Fig. 1. Iohannes Amos Comenius. Cover of *Orbis Sensualium Pictus*. 1658. 2017, Libros del zorro rojo.

Introduction

The conventional opposition between historical and imaginative has become a real hindrance because what we need now is an aesthetic transformation of the historical. (Ernst van Alphen, "Playing the Holocaust" 157)

What form do you suppose a life would take that was determined at a decisive moment precisely by the street song last on everyone's lips? (Walter Benjamin, "Surrealism" 210)

The school photos do not have the urgency of the Mothers' documentary photos. They are not the made-up memories of the children, nor do they represent Bastera's "images despite everything". The school images are pacified photos, stripped of the urgency of the search, of made-up memory and unconditional risk. They are photos on which "nothing weighs", images that illustrate or provide a face for the information. And yet, many of them – now integrated into schooling – in some way share the same space of images created by those who led the struggles for memory against and outside of the state.

The group of images that make up the third configuration examined in this study results from processes of transmission connected to a manifest desire to educate people about state terrorism in Argentina. The intentionality and systematization of this type of transmission stem from the state, which at the beginning of this century aspired to manage the policies of memory. The result of these policies was materialized in what is known as the pedagogy of memory, of which the main initiatives were set forth in the "Educación y Memoria" ("Education and Memory") Programme created in 2006. This programme is part of a set of "negotiation" processes between the government and social movements. One of the novelties that arose from this new political constellation was the incorporation of a previously excluded sector, namely human rights movements, with the establishment of lines of transmission.

To account for the change in configuration, I will analyze one of the most representative productions of the "Education and Memory" Programme: the volume *Pensar la dictadura: terrorismo de Estado en Argentina (Reflections on the Dictatorship: State Terrorism in Argentina)*.¹⁰⁹ By way of closing, this volume will be briefly contrasted with the publication *Treinta ejercicios de memoria (Thirty Memory Exercises)*, which is

¹⁰⁹ This volume belongs to one of the collections of the "Education and Memory" Programme together with two other texts: *Pensar Malvinas (Reflections on the Malvinas)* and *Pensar la democracia (Reflections on Democracy)*.

considered an antecedent to the “Education and Memory” Programme. The title alludes to the prominence of artistic practices that, in different senses, invigorated memory practices in Argentina. Here, applied to teachings about State terrorism, they seem to depart from the principles of traditional educational transmission. This set of works exposes the possibilities of art: what it is and what it can do with respect to social memory when its objective is pedagogical transmission.

In previous chapters, I reviewed the origin and trajectory of the images that questioned the state’s account of disappearance. They were controversial images that became symbols of protest, on the one hand, or disturbing montages in themselves, on the other. They represented alternative, clandestine, or underground memories. They constituted a sort of counter-archive and finally a space of images from which the narratives and representations of power were contested. This space was developed over a long period that started with the beginning of the dictatorship in 1977 and included the democratic transition and post-dictatorship period under presidents Raúl Alfonsín, Carlos Menem, and Eduardo Duhalde, until the people’s uprising of 2001.¹¹⁰ This chapter will show the clash between the power of this space of images and the Kirchnerist governments’ attempts to transform part of all of this material into school material.

The Unexpected Alliance

From 2003 to 2007, the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo Association (hereinafter AMDPM) and the government of Néstor Kirchner began to establish an unanticipated alliance. As we have seen, AMDPM had previously maintained an intransigent position, not only against the dictatorship, but against all the democratic governments that followed it. In the Mothers’ view, none of these governments had kept their promise to do justice and expose the truth about the disappeared and other victims of the dictatorship. This is unsurprising if one considers that the different administrations (mainly that of President Carlos Menem in the 1990s) attempted to implement various forms of closure and forgetting through pardons and “full stop” (*punto final*) laws. But the Mothers also blamed the post-dictatorial governments for continuing and even deepening (neoliberal) economic policies that the dictatorship itself had imposed by force. This shows the extent to which the Mothers and memory activists

¹¹⁰ In December 2001 in Argentina there was a popular revolt caused by an economic, political, social, and institutional crisis. Under the slogan “Let them all go”, the popular mobilization caused the fall of the government of Fernando de la Rúa, who was succeeded by five presidents in a few months. State repression killed 39 people during mass gatherings in different regions of the country.

merged with social movements. During Menem's administration in the nineties, the Mothers' relationship with the Argentine state was one of continuous confrontation. With the inauguration of Kirchner's government in 2003, this situation began to change. For the first time, the Mothers saw potential in an alliance with the state or, at least, with the new government.

The reasons or motives for this alliance, which was mutually beneficial but had ambiguous results, are complex and have been debated for years. For some, it was merely a form of economic or financial cooptation by the government (Gasulla, *El negocio*), or the result of an exchange of favours that allowed the government to appropriate the banner of human rights to legitimize its policies (Romero, *Breve historia*). For other authors, it was a contingent alliance resulting in the political resignification of the role of the state (Andriotti Romanin, "Actores, Estado"; Montero and Vincent; M. Morales; Retamozo). For the former, the first Kirchnerist government needed to legitimize itself due to its lack of substantial electoral support, creating out of thin air a commitment to human rights that its representatives had never before shown. For the second, in the actions of the new government, the Mothers believed that they had received for the first time a serious response to their historic demands and, in a way, they shared an ideological affinity with the government's political project. It is necessary to emphasize that, regardless of his motives, the new president showed that he was capable of absolutely original measures compared to all previous post-dictatorial governments. These measures were substantial: they involved practices of support, institutionalization, recognition, apologies from the state, and the annulment of laws that prevented the prosecution of those responsible for crimes against humanity.¹¹¹

¹¹¹ Some of the measures were materialized in: the repeal of the Law of Due Obedience and the Full Stop Laws (under National Law No. 25,779 of August 21, 2003); the declaration of the invalidity and unconstitutionality of the pardons granted; the extension of reparation policies for people who suffered human rights violations directly (under National Law No. 25,914 of August 4, 2004 and No. 26,564 of November 25, 2009); the creation of the National Human Rights Plan Program (under National Executive Order No. 696, of May 14, 2010); the creation of the National Memory Archive (2003), the Space for Memory and for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights on the grounds of the former ESMA (2007), the Haroldo Conti Cultural Centre (2008), and the Dr. Fernando Ulloa Centre for Comprehensive Assistance to Victims of State Terrorism (2009), among other spaces; the strengthening of the CONADI (National Commission for Identity Rights; under National Executive Order No. 715, of June 9, 2004) and the Genetic Data Bank (under National Law No. 26,548 of November 18, 2009), among others; the enactment of the National Law of Memorial Sites, No. 26,691, of June 29, 2011; and the marking (from 2005 to 2015) of approximately 200 places that functioned as clandestine detention sites during the last dictatorship.

Under the Kirchnerist governments, Argentina would go further than any other country in terms of an institutional self-critical review of the recent past and the prosecution of those responsible.¹¹² The new government expressed the need to critically remember the dictatorial past as a legislative commitment and resolutely implemented public policies in this direction. There is no doubt that sectors of the Mothers were induced by very understandable political and emotional reasons to discontinue their policy of hostility towards the government and the state.¹¹³

A Momentum That Is Slowing Down

According to Wendy Brown, the type of citizenship that neoliberalism promotes is “sacrificial” in nature (211). It is a citizenship reduced to “human capital” where civic responsibility is actually a form of *accountability*. In political terms, Kirchnerism functioned as a “progressive” response to the crisis of this neoliberal model promoted by President Menem in the nineties, which culminated in the popular uprising of 2001.

The new policy inaugurated in 2003 by Néstor Kirchner, at least on the level of discourse, departed from the liberal logic of a neutral, neo-welfare state, as well as from the old liberal consensus around the theory of the “two demons” that equated guerrilla actions with state policies of terror.

The Kirchnerist style of government was a form of decisionism, but it was also integrative and neutralizing. It turned the state apparatus into a belligerent force in favour of human rights, but at the same time absorbed, through different forms of institutionalization, the political energies that the Mothers’ associations had deployed along with social mobilization (Suárez). This also occurred with other social movements that emerged in response to the neoliberal transformation of the economy and coexistence during the 1990s. It could be said that this new policy promoted two opposite processes: on the one hand, it took on as its own certain demands made by class-based unions and social movements, leaving aside the frankly neoliberal rhetoric that had predominated until that time. On the other hand, it showed a strong tendency towards normalization, isolating and repressing any emancipatory public demonstrations whose militant structure it did not control.

The Kirchnerist government thus attempted a partial return to the old welfare state that was forged under the first “national and popular” Peronist administration (1945–1955)

¹¹² The governments of Néstor Kirchner (2003–2007) and Cristina Fernández de Kirchner (2007–2015).

¹¹³ For a brief review of the current debates on this alliance, see Andriotti Romanin, “¿Cooptación, oportunidades?” 7.

and, with great differences, in post-war Europe. In Europe, the origin of this concept of citizenship can be traced to Thomas Marshall's seminal article "Citizenship and Social Class" of 1950. It was texts like this one, and above all the anti-fascist agreements imposed by the triumphant resistance to the occupation, that founded the exceptional democracy that would govern post-war Europe between 1949 and 1989. Citizenship was here defined as equidistant between the idea of the liberal citizen and the Marxist category of class and was articulated with the economic theories of John Maynard Keynes. In the exceptional circumstances of post-war Europe, this relationship produced the model of a welfare state. For Marshall, public education was central and was supported by a concept of participatory citizenship. In his model, public education was not merely education for the poor, but authentic citizen education. It is clear that the pedagogy of memory as an educational project is part of this attempt to revive the idea of citizenship of a social democratic nature, based on aspirations for a strong civil society, firmly rooted in citizens' rights. This is what Néstor Kirchner was referring to with his proposal for a "serious capitalism" and the Kirchnerist project as an agenda for the enshrinement of rights. It is a compensatory policy that accepts the "fated" nature of capitalism, promising in return to alleviate its most violent effects. A binarism is established around nuances: on the one hand, Kirchnerism recovers certain traditions of the (nationalist, protectionist, and social democratic) "national and popular" Peronist movement, creating a rhetoric of confrontation with models of neoliberal administration while accepting most of its assumptions. These displacements generated a space for the presentation of new and old social demands. These demands were managed primarily by incorporating their political representatives into the state bureaucracy. The Kirchnerist administration needed to broaden its support base, and it achieved this through a mixture "of lucidity and astuteness" (García, "El legado como exterminio" 19). Taking advantage of a temporary export boom, he revived a social democratic strategy comparable to that of the first Peronist administration and the classic policies of European social democracy.¹¹⁴

The government rhetorically reissued the old populist Peronist matrix, which according to Maristella Svampa's definition is

¹¹⁴ Today it seems that the Kirchnerist model is in crisis and we find ourselves at the threshold of a new cycle, characterized by neoliberal and even neo-fascist radicalization.

a certain political-ideological matrix that is part of the “average memory” (the experiences of the 50s and 70s), which employs a disruptive language (the exacerbation of antagonisms) and tends to be supported by three pillars: the affirmation of the nation, the redistributive and conciliatory state, and the link between the charismatic leader and organized masses. (“La década kirchnerista” 14; translated by Marisela Trevin)¹¹⁵

Thus a new political language was inaugurated that could and did sometimes override the attempts made to control it. According to Montero (20), the Kirchnerist governments simultaneously displayed a disruptive intention that took up the cause of the violated rights on the one hand and, on the other, practised a policy of normalization and national unity. This divided the memory movements between those who were part of the structures of the new government and those who remained dissidents. For Svampa, through this dynamic of belligerence and incorporation, the Kirchnerist government, in its first phase, absorbed and neutralized a large part of the social movements that had led the 2001 revolts.

The political and symbolic measures of the new government towards the Mothers and Grandmothers were part of this new impetus. The imprint that the Argentine historical conjuncture imposed on this project (the echoes of the 2001 rebellion) consisted of the reparations to the victims of violation of rights during the dictatorship; that is to say, the figure of the victims and their memory was incorporated as the moral foundation of this new citizenship. Even so, the new model did not put an end to extractivist policies, job insecurity, patriarchal structures in social life and the workplace, or the systematic loss of real purchasing power among workers (Félic). The social reforms it introduced were not aimed at a true transformation of the productive system in the sense of a policy that attacked the core of inequality. The Kirchnerist governments attempted to channel the people’s discontent through the discretionary use of resources and instruments of state compensation (such as social plans), which on the one hand temporarily alleviated the situation of large impoverished sectors, but on the other reinforced clientelist relationships between the state and vulnerable sectors of society, thus consolidating the “naturalization” of marginalization

¹¹⁵ “una determinada matriz político-ideológica que se inserta en la “memoria media” (las experiencias de los años 50 y 70), que despliega un lenguaje rupturista (la exacerbación de los antagonismos) y tiende a sostenerse sobre tres ejes: la afirmación de la nación, el estado redistributivo y conciliador, y el vínculo entre líder carismático y masas organizadas” (M. Svampa, “La década kirchnerista” 14).

and dependency. The Kirchnerist governments politicized the state in a decisionist and personalist manner, acting decisively in favour of the establishment of a national memory of the dictatorship, but, on the other hand, they introduced an element of tutelage in this regard, typical of the populist modality of government. The institutionalization of certain practices of memory was aimed at converting what had previously belonged to the political dimension of events, that is, to the terrain of social antagonism, into the *ethical* dimension of public administration. One of the consequences was, however, that the emblematic images of the struggles for memory in Argentina became, in part, an aspect of the legitimation of the government project. Thus, what previously constituted a *desire* to remember became a *duty* to remember, and many of those who had previously been activists were now state officials. But the political cooperation of the Mothers and Grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo with the Kirchnerist project was not unanimous. There were also significant sectors of Mothers and the human rights movement that maintained an independent policy of confrontation with the state. This was shown by statements made by the Memory, Truth and Justice movement (of the Madres Línea Fundadora [Founding Mothers]) both on March 24, 2010 (during the bicentennial) and in 2016. These statements insist that the progress made in the prosecution of members of the military is not the merit of any government, but of the social struggle. They also criticize the insufficiency of state policies regarding the definitive investigation of the crimes of the dictatorship and the continuation of repressive policies against people's struggles in the present.¹¹⁶ As a result of the disappearance in September 2006 of Jorge Julio López, an essential witness in the trial against notorious repressor Miguel Etchecolatz, which revealed the persistence of paramilitary structures in the state apparatus, the repression of indigenous movements mobilized by the promises of justice made by the government itself in 2010,¹¹⁷ and the criminalization of organizations of *piqueteros* (picketers) not included in structures of cooperation with the government, the government's policies of memory acquired a shadow of ambiguity over time.

¹¹⁶ "The government that proclaims itself a 'defender of human rights' uses this banner so dear to our people to mask its impunity while it represses and uses gangs against fighters for social justice" (*Gathering for Memory, Truth and Justice* 3).

¹¹⁷ On November 23, 2010, during the first administration of Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, the Qom Potae Napocna Navogoh indigenous community, led by Félix Díaz, blocked National Highway 86, which crosses the province of Formosa, in protest against the construction of the headquarters of the National University of Formosa on ancestral lands. The violent intervention of the provincial police led to the death of Qom community member Roberto López and a representative of the police force.

“Education and Memory” Programme

Pedagogy is, as they say, the art of forging the souls of our children, of developing their knowledge, their discourses, their values, even their feelings. Therefore, it is fatally a battlefield, in which the powers of subjection and those of liberation never cease to come into conflict”.

(Didi-Huberman, *Cuando las imágenes* 180)

Pedagogy? The art of “learning to see abysses where there are commonplaces”, as expressed by Karl Kraus.

(Didi-Huberman, *Cuando las imágenes* 182)

The memory-based shift at the turn of the century had helped recreate an academic world committed to critical thinking and political activism. This was the case even before the official fall of the dictatorship. As the revolutionary horizon disappeared from the expectations of social change, memory had led to the emergence of a new kind of politicization. Memory studies expanded the use of a language that allowed one to continue criticizing the system without the need to be directly associated with Marxist or revolutionary thought.¹¹⁸ According to Jelin (“Memoria y democracia”), memory came to be stubbornly associated with the concepts of democracy and human rights. This led to a very specific type of intervention by scholars of collective memory.

In the long history of memory practices in Argentina, two tendencies can be distinguished. The first seeks a general consensus of a rather ritualistic nature around the ideas of tolerance and respect for human rights. It views the dictatorship as a stage that has been overcome and considers that it is sufficient to insist on its condemnation to guarantee a democratic coexistence. Thus, the memory of the atrocities of the past is gradually and imperceptibly transformed into a celebration of the present. This tendency defends the need to reconcile and forget. In its most extreme version, it even engages in relativization and denialism. The different democratic governments had prioritized this way of understanding the relationship with the past.

The second tendency, led mainly by the Mothers, insisted on an essential continuity (or complicity) between the governments of the dictatorship and the governments of the post-dictatorship. For this tendency, the formalization of a parliamentary democratic state

¹¹⁸ For Lazzara, for example, memory has the potential to become the fundamental space from which to develop critical thought and social change (26).

was not the end of the dictatorial process, but rather its continuation by other means. From this point of view, the word “justice” not only refers to the prosecution and punishment of those guilty of crimes against humanity, but also encompasses the social injustices of the present that the dictatorship promoted and institutionalized.

Between 2003 and 2008, Néstor Kirchner’s government, as we have seen, was forced to alter this dichotomy. As the representative of the state, Kirchner took on part of the demands of the activists for memory. He made symbolic measures of great significance for the entire movement for truth and justice and even adhered to the idea that the neoliberal governments of the post-dictatorship during the 1990s represented forms of continuity with the dictatorial project. One could say that this rhetoric and these measures constituted a victory for the human rights movement, and in a certain sense they did, but at the same time their effect was the partial deactivation of the social movements that the 2001 uprising had created. The Kirchnerist administration exacerbated social antagonisms from the state with a promise of justice, but its strategic purpose was to lead the normalization of a society in political turmoil. To achieve this, the president placed himself at the forefront of the movement for memory, truth and justice. This alliance crystallized, among many other things, into a strong commitment to the transmission of the recent past within the school system, and resulted in the formation of the “Education and Memory” (EM) team (of the Undersecretariat of Equity and Quality) by the Ministry of Education in 2006 on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the military coup and inspired by the idea of transforming the relative consensus around the slogan *Never Again* into a state policy. It was an educational proposal that acquired the status of a Programme and, in its national circulation, was entirely financed by the state.¹¹⁹ This pedagogical proposal emerged from

¹¹⁹ The references that provided regulatory support to the Programme were the National Education Law (LEN 26206/06), along with the formalization of the National Teacher Training Institute (INFD) in 2007, and the National Teacher Training Plan (Res. CFE 23/07) in the same year. Under the LEN, the Programme was established as a priority for an “educating State” that seeks to reaffirm respect for human rights, sovereignty and national identity from a “Latin American regional perspective (particularly of the MERCOSUR region); the cause of the recovery of the Malvinas Islands; and the exercise and construction of the collective memory of recent history. These actions are aimed at generating among the students reflections and feelings in favour of democracy, as well as the defence of the Rule of Law and the full exercise of Human Rights” (aspects contained in the LEN, Arts. 3 and 92). From the perspective of the state narrative, memory policies are an act of state responsibility based on the idea of a state that repents of the crimes of the dictatorship. The booklet alludes to a “Copernican shift” to refer to the apology given to the people by the then president Néstor Kirchner (*Pensar la dictadura* 14).

the “30 Years after the Coup” Project (2006) and then expanded with multiple actions within the framework of the proposals of the INFD (National Teachers’ Training Institute).¹²⁰

The Integration of Memory into Schooling

But between both events there is an accumulation of experiences: a war that is no longer “joyful” and a defeat that exposes the ignominy of the dictatorship. It is then that society begins to come to terms with the question of the disappeared, realizes the magnitude of the country’s foreign debt and loads the concept of democracy with positivity. (Jorge Saab et al. 11; translated by Marisela Trevin)¹²¹

The development of an educational program linked to the pedagogy of memory meant the development of a citizen’s ethic that explicitly repudiated the criminal conduct of the state as it had manifested itself during the years of the military dictatorship. Deciding on a school program about this past in turn involves a system of incorporations and exclusions that should be capable of manufacturing a consensus. It should be noted that the transition from memories in struggle to the development of a common national narrative involves all kinds of forceful adjustments. Not only was it necessary to define what to tell, but a system of exclusions was set up. Pollak points out that states not only establish references to the past in terms of social cohesion but also define a series of “irreducible oppositions” that “frame”

¹²⁰ It carries out simultaneous actions with the Programme: “Between the past and the future. Young people and the transmission of experience in recent Argentina” (2007), aimed at Teacher Training Institutes, mainly for teachers and students of secondary education teachers’ colleges. The documents produced in the framework of the project and the program in the first few years form the background of the central theoretical body of my research. The collection “La enseñanza del pasado reciente en la escuela” (“Teaching about the Recent Past in Schools”) of the Ministry of Education, was distributed in three volumes: *Pensar Malvinas (Reflections on the Malvinas Islands)*, *Pensar la dictadura: terrorismo de Estado en Argentina (Reflections on the Dictatorship: State Terrorism in Argentina)* and *Pensar la democracia (Reflections on Democracy)*, 2013. The volume *Holocaustos y genocidios del siglo XX (Holocausts and Genocides of the 20th century)* was subsequently published in 2014. In 2013, the Federal Board of Education (CFE Res. 201/13) approved the creation of the National Continuing Training Programme “Nuestra Escuela” (Our School; PNF). “Education and Memory” would participate in several of the pedagogical proposals implemented under the PNF, in a series of courses and postgraduate degree classes including “Teaching about the Recent Past in Schools”, “Teaching about the Malvinas Islands 35 Years after the War”, and “Memory, Identity and Democracy at the Initial Level”. It is not the intention of this work to emphasize the pedagogy of memory as a public policy, but as an initiative in the framework of processes of integration of culture into schooling that have an impact on the transformation or modification of the meanings of the past.

¹²¹ “Pero entre ambos acontecimientos media una acumulación de experiencias: una guerra que deja de ser “alegre” y una derrota que pone al desnudo la ignominia de la dictadura. Entonces sí, la sociedad asume la cuestión de los desaparecidos, se desayuna de la magnitud de la deuda externa y carga de positividad al concepto de democracia” (Saab et al. 11).

the content to be transmitted (“Memoria, olvido, silencio” 25).¹²² The program could not simply let individual memories and their subjective testimonies speak for themselves; it had to axiomatically place certain limits on the flow of testimonies, opinions, and images of collective memory. One of the instruments for this replacement was the so-called “floors of truth”; that is to say, to ward off denialism, it would be established that everything that had been legally determined would be considered true and not subject to discussion or revision: there had been a dictatorship, 30,000 were disappeared, and this is irreducible to opinion.¹²³ The “floors of truth” were a powerful tool against denialism, as supported by legal decisions on state crimes. The *Nunca Más (Never Again)* report, which documents almost 9,000 cases of disappearances, was republished with an updated prologue in 2006, the year of the establishment of the “Education and Memory” Programme. The new pedagogy of memory in the programme was designed on the basis of these two axiomatic pillars.

It is evident that this way of ensuring the educational transmission of the traumatic past is taken from the way in which teaching about the Holocaust was approached in Europe and the United States. The problem is that this way of defining frameworks or putting limits on speculation about the past, using prohibitions and taboos, usually generates the opposite of what is proposed. As Ernst van Alphen has pointed out regarding conventional forms of teaching about the Holocaust in Europe, the student, subject to strict control of the educational process, loses control over himself. The process of knowledge is regulated and contained by moral prohibitions or “commandments”. This solemnity does not contribute to achieving an affective mastery of the subject, a felt knowledge, in the subject to be educated,

¹²² In the same text, Pollak employed an alternative term to that of collective memory that had been used by Henri Rousso: “To maintain internal cohesion and defend the boundaries of what a group has in common, which includes territory (in the case of States); these are the two essential functions of common memory. This means providing a framework of references and reference points. It is therefore absolutely appropriate to speak, as Henri Rousso does, of framed memory, a more specific term than collective memory. To say *framed* is to refer to a work of *framing*.”

¹²³ The “floors of truth” were explicitly mentioned in some of the materials prepared in the “Education and Memory” Programme and were referenced in the following terms: “an analysis of the distinction between different memories, sometimes opposed to each other, and the State voice regarding the period, established on the basis of what we call ‘floors of truth’, that is to say, events whose veracity is beyond dispute. ... If memories are subjective, if they are subject to dispute and if they change over time, then: Is there no historical truth? Is all memory valid? Do all memories have the same ‘value’? How do we avoid the path of relativism and/or denialism? ... Now, regardless of the variety of circulating memories, it is necessary to know that in these years of democracy we have built real floors. Through the accounts of the witnesses, historiographic knowledge and, essentially, the sentences issued by the Judiciary (from the Trial of the Juntas of 1985 to the judicial proceedings against the repressors that are still ongoing) we can confirm that in our country there was State terrorism, which involved the systematic violation of human rights” (“Memory, Identity and Democracy at the Initial Level”, Course, Class No. 02: Memory and Democracy. “Our School” Program, INFoD, 2015, pp. 1–4).

but rather it usually generates rebellion or boredom (“Playing the Holocaust” 152).

The institutionalization of memory in schools inaugurated an inverted scene of consensus and resistance: this time it was the state that defended the historical claims of the human rights movements. The conservative and liberal opposition that began to group together to the right of the Kirchnerist party always considered this policy a demagogic trap and its powerful media began to lean more towards the opposite side, that is to say, towards the relativization of state terror and sometimes towards denialism. When the Kirchnerist party lost the elections in 2015, a day after Mauricio Macri, the new president, took power, *La Nación*, the influential conservative newspaper, published a highly controversial editorial titled “No More Revenge”. In that editorial, the publication challenged the method and timing of the trials of the dictators and defined the desire for justice by memory activists as “vengeful”. It thus condemned a large part of the Kirchnerist program, as well as the human rights movement itself.

On the basis of the so-called “floors of truth”, the educational teams sought to replace and correct a state voice, a voice that had been discredited on the issue of the dictatorial past, an institutional voice with national reach (Cueto Rúa 4). The government of Néstor Kirchner even defended the old revolutionary militancy, as a large part of the HIJOS movement had done since the nineties. The traditional universalist and neutral perspective on human rights, which had characterized the first post-dictatorship government (of President Raúl Alfonsín), was therefore abandoned. And, thus, the “theory of the two demons” on which the first *Nunca Más (Never Again)* report was based, and which established a moral equivalence between the repressors of the state and those who fought against them, was also abandoned. For some authors, however, this measure reproduced, at another level, a moral judgement of the victims, obstructing critical approaches to the militancy of those years (Barros 15). Another objection was that it established a single subject of memory, preventing the emergence of new meanings around the past (Jelin, *The Struggle*). A third objection that could be formulated is the arbitrary nature of the identification of Kirchnerism with the revolutionary ideas of the seventies.

The practices of memory, as we have seen, closely related to social struggles and characterized by their dissidence and libertarian spirit, acquired a civilizing aspect through the alliance with the state. The teaching of the recent past had to resort to the old formulas of history teaching in schools, in which, as we know, the narrative had always been subject to the needs of the state and its ideological apparatus. It should be noted that the purpose of

history teaching in schools is not so much to foster encyclopaedic knowledge but rather the formation of a national and patriotic citizens' consciousness.

School History Education and the Concept of Citizenship

History as school content has always played a role in the consolidation of national states related to the construction of national identities or “imagined communities” (Anderson). Dussel defines the act of “teaching” as the transmission of a culture oriented towards incorporation into a tradition and recognition in a lineage and a history (“La transmisión” 67). Civic education and the teaching of national history in Argentina were formed within a dichotomous framework, the first expression of which was the already discussed classic essay of Sarmiento, *Facundo o Civilización y barbarie en las pampas argentinas* (*Facundo or Civilization and Barbarism in the Argentine Pampas*). In *Facundo*, the struggle between civilization and barbarism was identified as an existential confrontation between urbanized and Western ways of life, identified with progress and modernity, and traditional, rural, indigenous, and presumably violent ways of life. That is to say, social conflict was interpreted in civilizational (and, subsequently, plainly racial) terms. This model or grand narrative that identified opposing trends at the dawn of the nation became a guiding matrix for the state. Over time, it became a mechanism of political invective and a rhetorical instrument to point out and exclude “the dangerous classes” (Artieda; M. Svampa, *La sociedad excluyente*). The idea of citizenship to which this modern paradigm contributed was the one that was implemented in traditional mass schooling. It should be noted that the Argentine educational system maintained the old programs of school institutionalization related to the teaching of national history practically without alterations. In fact, the successive textbooks that, together with the framework of national anniversaries, shaped the collective historical consciousness, underwent no substantial changes in a hundred years. The gap between school and academic history continued to widen throughout the twentieth century (Amézola 195). This situation continued even after drastic changes at the top levels of the state and despite the profound historiographic renewal (especially after 1955) that took place in Argentine universities.

The school matrix was built on an apologetic, religious (social-Christian and neo-Thomist), Eurocentric, and patriotic history, full of national anniversaries and ceremonies with a militaristic aesthetic and organized on the basis of authoritarian structures. The pantheon of national heroes is made up of the male figures that share the greatest affinity with the dominant classes and the patriotic deeds that are recounted coincide with their

political and economic choices. The traditional concept of citizenship was a *male* construction (until 1983, the country's inhabitant was defined as "the Argentine man"), and obviously a Eurocentric one. Above all, it involved a two-fold denial. It meant the denial of the particularities of indigenous people and immigrants. The cultural homogenization of the population occurred under the mandate of forming "Argentine citizens" and "patriots". The subject of education and the subject of exclusion have been almost inextricable since the emergence of the nation-state. The reading books used in the framework of the Argentine pedagogical project between 1880 and 1940 are, for example, an instance of stigmatization of the indigenous people that completes, at the level of school education, the violent destruction of their sovereignty and political communities (Artieda 25). The mostly European immigration, which made up almost a third of the population in 1914, was also subjected to an aggressive process of acculturation or "Argentinization" (Massone and Andrade 27). The idea of citizenship rooted in this double denial is the pillar on which pedagogical projects linked to nationality and citizenship were historically based.¹²⁴ The construction and transmission of a "certain" collective memory finds in the school a privileged space for its public institutionalization. After 1955 and until 1983, the Argentine ideal of citizenship continued to be Christian, patriarchal, patriotic, and anti-communist.¹²⁵

In the seventies, the National Reorganization Process, which is what the civil-military dictatorship called itself, undertook to eliminate "subversion" both on the streets and in the "souls". The military worked on a long-term project aimed at ensuring a hierarchical system of virtues in which new generations should be trained. The values of work, family, religion, and patriotism were paramount. The nation was considered part of a Christian West and, as a nation, an heir to national-Catholic Spain. The school was the chosen institution to instil these ideas, and Civic Education and subsequently Moral and Civic Education were its powerful ideological weaponry (Sacchi and Saidel 179). The first time that lessons on recent or contemporary national history were taught at school was precisely under the dictatorship, as an effort by the military authorities to prevent "foreign"

¹²⁴ Between 1952 and 1997 we have the following school subjects: 1952, Citizen Culture; 1955, Democratic Education; 1973, Studies of Argentine Social Reality (ERSA); 1976, Civic Training; 1978, Moral and Civic Training; 1983, Civic Education.

¹²⁵ Just one example of what was written in this type of School Civics Education Manuals. In the Manual of Civic Education by Blas Barisani, from 1981, we can read: "Let us not forget that the greatest danger to our country is subversion at all levels. Precisely, to achieve the subversion of the person, international Marxist aggression uses, among other procedures, the destruction of the concept of family, which destroys the profound concept of the homeland" (16).

or “communist” ideological tendencies among the students.¹²⁶ During the post-dictatorship, however, the emphasis shifted from patriotism to the concept of democracy: the Constitution became a symbol and reading its Preamble became a ritual, although the principles of liberal democracy had been stripped of their historical content. Citizenship was restricted to the right to vote and mediated by political parties. The traditional concept of citizenship in Argentina was part of this grand national narrative that still resonates in citizen education texts on topics such as sovereignty, although the idea of sovereignty as state authority always prevails over that of sovereignty as the government of the people.¹²⁷ This is the result of a concept of nation that even in recent democracy continues to return to the dichotomy between “Argentineness” and foreignness, with the latter seen as a threatening constellation.¹²⁸ The aim of the pedagogy of memory program was to intervene in this persistent tradition, but it had to necessarily become part of this heavy inheritance.

Citizenship and Memory

In the idea of citizenship promoted by the Kirchnerist governments, human rights played a central role and this needed to be reflected in educational legislation that took shape in programs and resolutions – 188/13 and NAP (Core Learning Priorities) – that formalized the treatment of the recent past within the educational system.¹²⁹ The problems of what and how to transmit the recent past renewed the debates on citizen education. The old founding formula of educating the “citizen”, “patriot”, and “Argentinian” was not completely suppressed, and in some way it was reinforced as of 2005 (as seen in the part dedicated to

¹²⁶ As Navy Captain Orlando R. Pérez Cobo said in his “Message to teachers from the Provincial Minister of Education and Culture”: “At this moment in time in the country ... we have before us a landscape with two defined areas: one broad area, which represents the vast majority of the population, with its working men and women, its honest professionals and businessmen, its hard-working housewives, clean youth and selfless teachers, dedicated to a vocation that leads to progress and culture; and the other, which represents a minuscule group with shady intentions that seeks to destroy, and exerts violence on a daily basis, murders, kidnaps and steals. ... Therefore, the objective of our educational process must be to comprehensively train our children, ensuring that they adopt a hierarchy of values rooted in Christian morality, national tradition and Argentine dignity, educating them for the optimal fulfilment of their personal vocations, their social roles and the transcendent destiny of man” (Educational Information Bulletin No. 16, 1976).

¹²⁷ “any allusion to a ‘people’s sovereignty’ ends up fading, in the face of the notion of “supremacy of state power” (Quintero and Privitellio 152).

¹²⁸ “the logic of national states in the context of the turbulent 20th century led governments to demand from schools a ‘discourse of reaffirmation’ that was necessarily dogmatic and, therefore, uncritical. In this context, the ‘others’ only had a place as enemies or allies, hardly as different ‘others’ on an equal footing with ‘us’” (Saab et al. 38).

¹²⁹ Federal Board of Education, 2009. National Compulsory Education Plan; Educational Plans; Initial level; Access To Education; Adult Education; Secondary Education; *During the Basic Cycle of secondary education, the school will provide teaching situations that promote in students: ... the construction of a critical, participatory, responsible and committed citizenship.*

the war over the Malvinas Islands). What was incorporated in the new context was the notion of a “violated” or “damaged citizenship” in the immediate past. The damage caused by the dictatorship to the country’s “citizenship” had to be resolved with supplementary citizen education and, in this pursuit, the teaching of recent history was assigned a fundamental role.

In a certain sense, an attempt was made to reverse the classic oppressive role that states had assigned to their official or “framed” histories by precisely promoting the memories that had previously been underground or excluded (Pollack 20). This done from the authority of the state, involved not only a new pedagogy of memory, but also limits, renunciations, hierarchies, and formalizations. An example of this was the recovery of the militant stories of the seventies. This recovery was aimed at putting an end to the prejudice according to which the victims of the dictatorship were viewed as “innocent” (having been repressed without any apparent cause), while shifting the revolutionary horizon that characterized these forms of militancy and redirecting it towards the new “Kirchnerist” ideal of a democracy conceived as an “expansion of rights”.

A “duty of memory” was thus established and obviously what is usually referred to as the “right-wing media” presented this as an “ideological” imposition and insisted quite successfully on publicly defining this connection between the government and human rights organizations as an opportunist and clientelist relationship, in an attempt to discredit not only the government, but also the movements of the Mothers and Grandmothers themselves.

The incorporation of researchers and human rights activists into the ministerial educational apparatus was also not without tensions. For them, this move meant a shift from the status of academic researcher (and possibly social activist) to that of state agent (Cueto Rúa 3). This led to incompatibilities and disagreements that on some occasions led to rifts. Critically reflecting on the formalization of the anniversary of March 24, Federico Lorenz, for example, who directed the program for a period, stated:¹³⁰

¹³⁰ March 24 is the date of the 1976 military coup. It was formalized as a national anniversary in 2002 by National Law 25,633, Article 1 of which establishes: “March 24 is hereby instituted as a National Day of Remembrance for Truth and Justice in commemoration of those who were victims of the process initiated on that date in 1976”. Ministry of Education, <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/educacion/efemerides/24-marzo-memoria#:~:text=El%20D%C3%ADa%20Nacional%20de%20la,10%20de%20diciembre%20de%201983>. Accessed October 10, 2022. According to the school logic, this anniversary is understood as one of the materialities of the pedagogy of memory.

The logic of the anniversary, in this case, conspires against social appropriation (in terms of re-appropriation), and prolongs the effectiveness of the repression: “human rights violations were what occurred in the past”, “now they will never happen again”. It strips a social confrontation of its historicity and politicized; it contributes to eliminating, through the dogmatic installation of a concrete (historical) form of violation of fundamental rights, the possibility of thinking politically about the present society, that is to say, of identifying human rights violations today. (“Rechazo” 5; translated by Marisela Trevin)¹³¹

In general, it can be said that, during the initial period, the pluralistic and transversal militant and academic logic predominated over the rigid ministerial or state logic, but this changed over time. The tension between the investigative vocation of academics gave way to the need for institutionalization, inherent to the state apparatus, and was also influenced by the advance of the restorative and normalizing aspect that ended up gradually prevailing within Kirchnerism itself. This was confirmed by gradual changes of focus. Over time, the memories of the Holocaust, for example, were increasingly highlighted to the detriment of the chapters devoted to the workers’ and people’s struggles prior to the dictatorship. This trend was consolidated when the neoliberal Mauricio Macri became president in 2015. Memories of the Holocaust are generally much less controversial. Its treatment in schools is in line with the practices of the West, particularly the United States. During Macri’s administration, the state budget for educational policies on memory was also drastically reduced.

Criticism of Kirchnerism’s policies of memory came from two directions: according to the political right, the topic of the memory of the recent past was simply one of Kirchnerism’s political “business operations”. From the opposite side, some authors who were committed to the struggle for memory believed that the government was replacing the goal of a more just social order with a mere tribute to the victims of the past. Researcher Federico Lorenz wondered, for example, if memory, cultivated without a connection with

¹³¹ “La lógica de la efeméride, en este caso, conspira contra la apropiación social (en términos de re - apropiación), y prolonga la eficacia de la represión: “las violaciones a los derechos humanos fueron antes”, “ahora nunca más sucederá”. Despoja de su historicidad y politicidad un enfrentamiento social; contribuye a anular, mediante la instalación dogmática de una forma concreta (histórica) de violación a derechos fundamentales, la posibilidad de pensar políticamente la sociedad presente, es decir, de encontrar las violaciones a los derechos humanos hoy” (Lorenz, “Rechazo” 5).

the politics of the present, was becoming an end in itself, that is to say, something like a “consolation prize” (“Rechazo”).¹³²

The Kirchnerist stage of memory opened doors to the memory of the recent past that had been previously closed. It undoubtedly constituted a powerful driving force towards a renewed social awareness of what State terror had meant. But this driving force was limited by its political inability to change the neoliberal matrix that is at the core of radical inequality, to open the secret archives of the repression and to definitively dismantle the repressive parastatal structures that still operate in the sewers of the state. Its promise of justice was limited by the objective of leading an institutional normalization to restore the authority of the state, which necessarily had to result in the partial deactivation of social organizations.

Even so, and thanks to the committed and meticulous work of the academics and activists linked to the project, this educational policy constituted a serious, innovative, and bold attempt to transmit vital contents of historical memory to new generations. For the general interest of emancipation, it is likely that what was most interesting about the Kirchnerist political project was its overflows. That is to say, what is interesting about this government is its excesses. One of them was certainly the educational commitment made by the government regarding the recent past and its transmission in schools.

¹³² Claudio Altamirano and Estela B. Carlotto, *Puentes de la memoria en el campo educativo*. Ministry of Education. “Education and Memory” Programme, 2014, [https://ccc.opac.com.ar/pergamo/opac.php?a=bsqEditor&n=Buenos+Aires+\(ciudad\).+Ministerio+de+Educaci%C3%B3n.+Programa+Educaci%C3%B3n+y+Memoria](https://ccc.opac.com.ar/pergamo/opac.php?a=bsqEditor&n=Buenos+Aires+(ciudad).+Ministerio+de+Educaci%C3%B3n.+Programa+Educaci%C3%B3n+y+Memoria).

The Volume *Pensar la dictadura: terrorismo de Estado en Argentina* (Reflections on the Dictatorship: State Terrorism in Argentina)

Corpus Selection Criteria

The source selected for the analysis of this chapter is one of the main productions of the National Ministry of Education's "Education and Memory" Programme. The *case selection* was made on the basis of the collection *La enseñanza del pasado reciente en la escuela* (*Teaching about the Recent Past in Schools*) of the Ministry of Education, distributed in three volumes: *Pensar Malvinas* (*Reflections on the Malvinas Islands*, fig. 2), *Pensar la dictadura: terrorismo de Estado en Argentina* (*Reflections on the Dictatorship: State Terrorism in Argentina*, fig. 4) and *Pensar la democracia* (*Reflections on Democracy*), 2013. The selection is based on considerations regarding their space of circulation (in schools), their relevance, specificity, and the specific use of the images included in the selection. A survey of the units of analysis showed that the volume *Reflections on the Dictatorship* is one of the most representative texts in relation to the state position. This volume forms the core of the rest of the productions in the collection and plays a central role in delimiting the configurations of memory. It establishes the foundations of the "Education and Memory" Programme and the educational proposal that is subsequently replicated in the remaining volumes. Images of the front cover and back cover of some of the volumes of "Education and Memory" have been included to show the graphic design of the production (figs. 2 and 3).

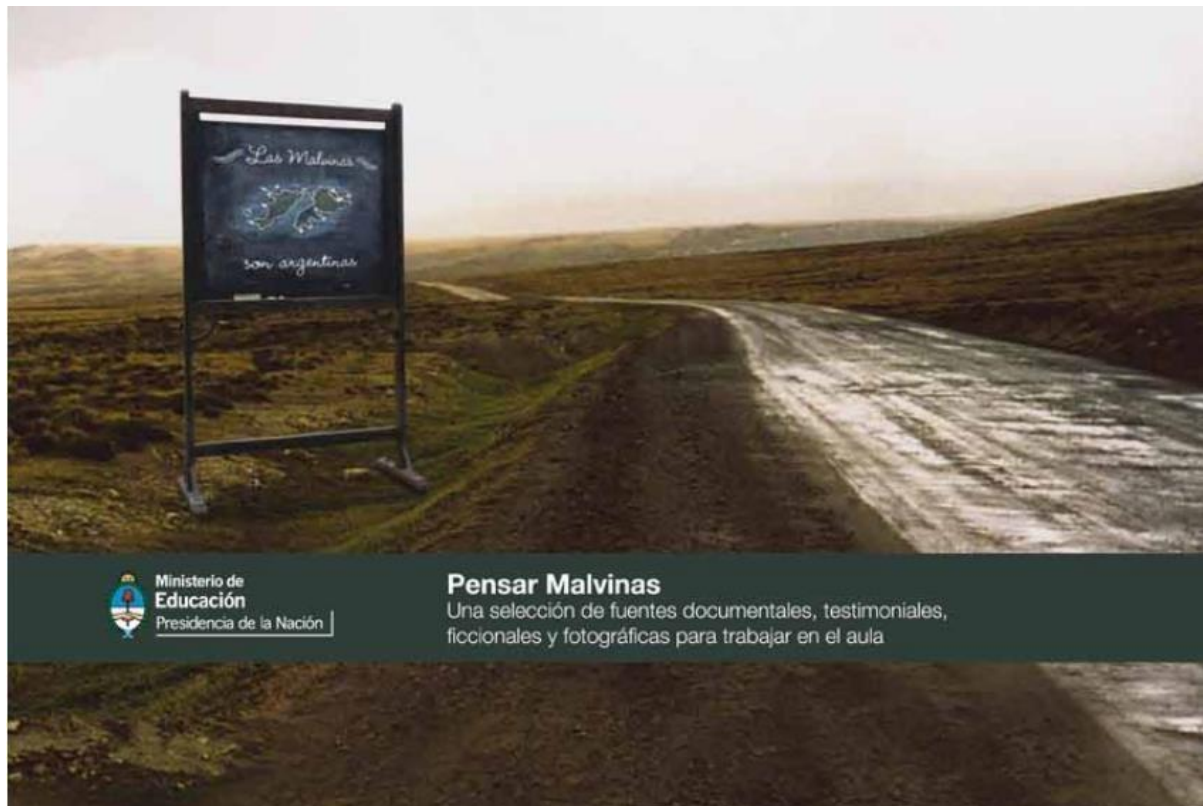


Fig. 2. Cover of the volume *Pensar Malvinas (Reflections on the Malvinas Islands)*. 2014, Programa “Educación y Memoria” (“Education and Memory” Programme).



Fig. 3. Inside back cover of the volume *Pensar la democracia* (*Reflections on Democracy*) with images of other titles from the “Education and Memory” Programme.

Volume Description: *Pensar la dictadura: terrorismo de Estado en Argentina* (Reflections on the Dictatorship: State Terrorism in Argentina)



Fig. 4. Cover of the volume *Pensar la dictadura* (*Reflections on the Dictatorship*). Cover photo: Gonzalo Martínez. Former ESMA. 2004, ARGRA photo library.

The photograph of the former Navy School of Mechanics (ESMA) is on the cover of the volume *Pensar la dictadura* (Fig. 4).¹³³ It was one of the emblematic images of memory politics during the Kirchnerist era. However, this image not only stands out because it shows one of the largest clandestine detention sites in the country, but also because of the presence of a considerable mass of people “taking over” the building that was a bastion of the last military dictatorship. It is an image that contrasts with the other covers in the collection (the other volumes), which show empty spaces or spaces “emptied” by the Nazi genocide, the Armenian genocide and the Malvinas War (see fig. 2).¹³⁴ The photo displays one of the most

¹³³ Link to the volume *Pensar la dictadura: terrorismo de estado en Argentina* (*Reflections on the Dictatorship: State Terrorism in Argentina*): https://drive.google.com/file/d/1eyRb4P1ic2PXZ39LP3RNd71fwBAO8v6t/view?usp=drive_link.

¹³⁴ The photograph in fig. 4 was taken on March 24, 2004, when the government handed over the ESMA to human rights organizations. One of the transformations that remains out of the focus is the signature silhouettes that were placed on the bars that surround the ESMA. This time, the silhouettes were not anonymous but were

impressive transformations of an emblematic space of horror under the dictatorship. It went from being an inaccessible, mysterious, and private place of military repression, to a public space that was “taken over” and converted into an *active* memory space.¹³⁵ *Pensar la dictadura* was published in 2014 and is presented as free distribution material for secondary school teachers in Argentine federal territory. It consists of 190 pages and includes 71 images. It shows 58 documentary images, of which 19 were included in the *sources* section. There are 9 fictional images (for documentary use), of which 5 are used to explain the representation of the dictatorship in the cultural sphere (and stills from films) and 4 are artistic works. There are 4 fragments of images that are used in the presentation of each chapter. There are 35 black-and-white images and 36 in colour.

The photographs used were obtained from different archives: General Archive of the Nation (AGN), Dipba Archive, Provincial Commission for Memory, Héctor Osvaldo Vázquez, CONADEP, Relatives, Antelo family archive, Gente Magazine, and courtesy of Marina Franco and Lucila Quieto.

The structure of the content is based on the presentation of 25 questions distributed in four chapters, namely: “El terrorismo de estado” (“State Terrorism”), “Dictadura y Sociedad” (“Dictatorship and Society”), “La dictadura en el mundo” (“The Dictatorship in the World”) and “El pasado en el presente” (“The Past in the Present”). Each chapter contains an organizational sequence that presents the main contents through questions and answers, sources, an image gallery, proposals for working in the classroom, and photographs. Each section can be distinguished by the background colours of the pages: white is used for the educational content distributed in the format of questions and answers, as well as for the full-page photograph included at the end of each chapter; grey is used for the teaching resources included between the sources and proposals for working in the classroom, and finally, black is used for the image gallery. The following sections are

created by visual artists invited by the human rights organizations to present their work. This off-camera element involves a new displacement of the images, which, using Longoni’s terms, emerges from “inappropriate” conditions: “Why do I view them as inappropriate? On the one hand, because it seems to me that it shows the opposite procedure or the reverse path to that of the *Siluetazo*, which was an initiative of artists appropriated by the crowd and that could be done by anyone, where there is no signature to the device, anyone can become in a silhouette producer. Here, it is the organisations that ask renowned artists to make the silhouettes. But I also think the place where they decide to place these silhouettes is wrong. It is the place that most powerfully symbolizes the extermination and disappearance of people in Argentina, where more than 5 thousand people were disappeared. And the silhouettes end up being placed, not in a march, at the Plaza de Mayo, in a recovered public space, but in the same place where more than 5 thousand people were disappeared” (Longoni, “Arte y Política” 16–17).

¹³⁵ ESMA Memory Site Museum, <http://www.museositioesma.gob.ar/>.

distributed in the teaching resources: prompts for searching for information, reflection prompts, discussion prompts, analysis prompts, research prompts and prompts for working with images. The volumes were coordinated, produced and designed by a group of researchers from different areas and national universities organized by the Ministry of Education through the INFoD (National Teacher Training Institute).

The Place of the Image in School Programmes

Photography works hand in glove with image and memory and therefore possesses their notable epidemic power.
(Georges Didi-Huberman, *Images in Spite* 23)

Unlike the previous configurations, it could not be said that the images in the school corpus constitute a configuration in a strict sense, but rather a reconfiguration that disrupts the image-space prevailing until that time. The “Education and Memory” Programme does not create images, but rather recreates those that already exist in the social sphere and organizes them in a new scenario. This organization is conditioned by an inevitable tension: that which emerges when attempting to articulate the practices of social memory with school practices to establish a state pedagogy of memory.¹³⁶

There are obvious, although decisive differences between the social space in which the images emerged (from the first two configurations) and the school space by which they are organized. Although both spaces are public, the first tends towards dispersal, contagion, invention, and anachronism, while in the second the images of memory are organized according to a hierarchy and linearly subjected to a general design. The preference for the documentary tone of the school programme delimits the images, and more specifically the photographs, as part of an objectively recorded event (documentary use). As detailed in Chapter 3, pedagogical activity has signs that make it unique: it has an objective, it designs didactic sequences, it converts time and space into school time and space, and it also has the intention of teaching and producing learning. This means that the transmission is entrusted to knowledge, to a domain of the subject in encyclopaedic terms, but to a knowledge guarded by prohibitions and moral warnings. What is left out is the sensitive knowledge or felt knowledge of the artistic and political activity that characterized the transmission in the previous period.

¹³⁶ For more information on the differentiation between both practices, see Chapter 3.

Image Sequences: Two Series of images

In order to expose the use of images in the context of formal education, two sequences of images are examined. Both belong to the source *Pensar la dictadura (Reflections on the Dictatorship)*; hereinafter, “the volume”).

For the two sequences, the arrangement of images is analyzed according to the description of series identified in the source. In this case, the concept of *series* involves a unit of meaning within a pedagogical sequence that, in this case, reorders memory discourses and images from 1977 to 2014. The series is meant to establish a linear meaning and order of arrangement. It is linked to the past by the succession of events that operates through temporal continuity. It is flow and course, often without a link to the present. For this research, the images or series of images in the volume *Pensar la dictadura* were selected using patterns of reiteration in the arrangement of the photographs.

The first series, *Imágenes “con-texto” (Images with Text)* reflects the most conventional (“instructive”) attributes of this volume, in which there is a conservative preference for the documentary use of images that tends to fix the photographs to the narrative of a past that is experienced as closed (Didi-Huberman, *Images in Spite* vii). Didi-Huberman points out that with the “purely” documentary narrative one risks “falling back entirely on things to the detriment of relationships, on facts to the detriment of structures”.¹³⁷

The second series, however, shows certain deviations from this dominant model. Although it tends towards the linear and documentary narrative typical of the school logic, certain lines of flight can be identified. I will refer to this set of deviations or possibilities of deviations that involve the reader’s gaze as *memory passages*. They project a significant difference with respect to the previous series. They are a hybrid set that is torn between conservation and innovation, and they are somewhat *elusive* with regard to the strict school format. In this series, three of these *memory passages* do not strictly follow patterns of spatial and instrumental reiteration of the photographs, which are subsidiary to the story, but involve points of distinction or analysis, of an opening to an alternative relationship with the images.

¹³⁷ “Now, there are, strictly speaking, neither complete metamorphoses nor absolute facts. Therefore, there must be *conditions of experimentation* to be able to show the non-ideal character of history, that is, the innate impurity —the incompleteness, the contradictory, conflictual, lacunary nature— of all historical metamorphosis” (Didi-Huberman, *Cuando las imágenes toman posición* 58).

First Series: Imágenes “con-texto”

This selection is considered representative of the central narrative body of the pedagogical proposal of the volume. The order of presentation is organized into a graphic selection (including two pages for each chapter of the volume),¹³⁸ a reference table of the images, and considerations about the contents of the series.

Display of Images

Chapter 1: “State Terrorism”

normalizar el funcionamiento de la economía a partir de la exclusión y la represión de los trabajadores. En aquel momento se suspendió por tiempo indeterminado la actividad de los partidos políticos y de las instituciones parlamentarias. Para el general Onganía el «tiempo económico» tenía prioridad sobre el «tiempo social y el tiempo político».

Con el peronismo aún proscrito y su líder, Juan Domingo Perón, en el exilio, poco a poco se fueron gestando movimientos de oposición en el ámbito sindical, estudiantil, cultural y religioso. Todos ellos desembocaron en grandes movilizaciones de protesta, insurreccionales y violentas, siendo el Cordobazo (1969) su manifestación más contundente. Estas expresiones fueron de a poco alimentando a los grupos armados en formación. Como sostiene Pilar Calveiro, la lucha armada surgió como respuesta a una estructura de poder ilegítima, en un contexto de descrédito general de la democracia como régimen de gobierno, donde la progresiva radicalización de la violencia formaba parte de la política.

En ese marco emergieron los grupos guerrilleros que operaron principalmente en los años setenta: en 1968, las FAP (Fuerzas Armadas Peronistas); en 1970, los Montoneros, las FAR (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias), el ERP (Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo) y las FAL (Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación). Todos ellos buscaron disputarle el monopolio de la violencia al Estado, lo que en ese momento era visualizado por buena parte de la población como una práctica política aceptable.

La creciente movilización de los sectores populares y el accionar de los grupos guerrilleros precipitaron la



29 de mayo de 1969. Agustín Tosco al frente de una de las movilizaciones del Cordobazo. AGN

convocatoria a elecciones nacionales sin la proscripción del peronismo. Tras casi dos décadas de prohibición, signadas por el fracaso de los sucesivos intentos de extirpar al movimiento, el peronismo volvió a ocupar el gobierno no a través de la figura de su líder sino por medio de su delegado personal, Héctor Cámpora. La campaña se realizó bajo una famosa consigna: «Cámpora al gobierno, Perón al poder».

El 25 de mayo de 1973, Héctor Cámpora asumió la

presidencia en medio de un clima de gran movilización social. Las consignas referidas a la «patria socialista» y «liberación o dependencia» expresaban el deseo de un cambio profundo por parte de muchos militantes peronistas, sobre todo de aquellos que se enrolaban en la denominada Tendencia Revolucionaria.

La estrategia de Perón para el período fue impulsar una política acuerdista y conciliadora a través del denominado Pacto Social. Sin embargo, estos objetivos

Fig. 5. *Pensar la dictadura*, p. 24. Photo: Agustín Tosco at the head of one of the Cordobazo demonstrations.

May 29, 1969, AGN (General Archive of the Nation).

¹³⁸ The complete page is presented for this selection to show the distribution of text and image.



1.



2.



3.

estuvieron concentrados en el centro del país. Uno de los más conocidos fue la Escuela de Mecánica de la Armada (ESMA), ubicado en la Capital Federal, sobre la Av. Libertador, en un barrio residencial, poblado y con circulación frecuente de personas. Su máximo responsable era el almirante Emilio Massera. Allí tuvieron lugar algunos de los hechos más aberrantes de la represión. Hoy, más de treinta años después, este centro fue transformado en Museo de la Memoria.

La pregunta quizás más inquietante que surge al conocer las historias de vida de quienes pasaron por la experiencia concentracionaria es cómo fue posible la existencia de este sistema represivo de desaparición forzada de personas. Es decir: cómo fue posible que la sociedad argentina haya producido y albergado campos de concentración en su propio seno.

Según explica Pilar Calveiro el campo estaba perfectamente instalado en el centro de la sociedad, se nutría de ella y se derramaba sobre ella. En su libro *Poder y desaparición* escribió: «Los campos de concentración eran secretos y las inhumaciones de cadáveres NN en los cementerios, también. Sin embargo, para que funcionara el dispositivo desaparecedor debían ser “secretos a voces”; era preciso que se supiera para diseminar el terror. La nube de silencio ocultaba los nombres, las

razones específicas, pero todos sabían que se llevaban a los que “andaban en algo”, que las personas “desaparecían”, que los coches que iban con gente armada pertenecían a las fuerzas de seguridad, que los que se llevaban no volvían a aparecer, que existían campos de concentración. En suma, un secreto con publicidad incluida; mensajes contradictorios y ambivalentes. Secretos que se deben saber, lo que es preciso decir como si no se dijera, pero que todos conocían».⁵

El sistema de centros clandestinos, entonces, disciplinaba al resto de la sociedad, infundiendo temor y obediencia frente a lo que se intuía como un poder de dimensiones desconocidas y omnímodas. Se sabía que algo sucedía o, al menos, había indicios para saberlo, pero la mayoría no sabía exactamente qué era eso que sucedía y otros decidieron directamente no saber como un mecanismo de defensa. Sin cuerpos no hay pruebas, sin pruebas no hay delito, como tantas veces dijeron los militares mismos. La desaparición instalaba en la sociedad una incertidumbre y, sobre todo, un gran temor a lo desconocido y amenazante: ¿qué había pasado con el vecino, el compañero de trabajo, el amigo, el hermano, el hijo?, ¿dónde estaban?, ¿estaban vivos?, ¿estaban muertos?

⁵ Pilar Calveiro, *Poder y desaparición. Los campos de concentración en Argentina*. Buenos Aires, Dóhne, 2001.

Ese efecto era suficiente para imponer una cultura cotidiana del miedo y de la desconfianza («por algo será» o «algo habrá hecho»), del silencio («el silencio es salud») y del autoencierro. Tal vez, un buen ejemplo de esa sospecha y ese miedo difundidos en toda la sociedad sea aquella famosa publicidad del período dictatorial cuyo slogan decía: «¿Sabe usted dónde está su hijo ahora?». La sociedad era controlada y todos se controlaban entre sí. La sociedad se patrullaba a sí misma.

1. Ex CCD El Pozo. Rosario. Darío Ares. Archivo de la Memoria de Rosario.
2. Ex Jefatura de Policía, Rosario. Darío Ares. Archivo de la Memoria de Rosario.
3. Ex CCD La Calamita. Rosario. Archivo de la Memoria de Rosario.
4. Ex CCD en Santiago del Estero. María Rita Ciucci.



4.

Fig. 6. *Pensar la dictadura*, p. 33. Photos of former clandestine detention centres (CDC). Clockwise: 1. El Pozo. Darío Ares. Rosario; 2. Former Police Headquarters. Darío Ares. Rosario; 3. La Calamita. Rosario; 4. Former CDC in Santiago del Estero. The source of the first three photographs is the Memory Archive of Rosario and the source of the fourth photograph is María Rita Ciucci.

Chapter 2: "Dictatorship and Society"

realizado una destacada labor en la recuperación de la identidad de los niños secuestrados por los militares. Gracias a su trabajo, ya son 101 las personas halladas.

Además de las Madres y las Abuelas, existieron otros organismos de Derechos Humanos que realizaron un importante trabajo para denunciar los crímenes de la dictadura. La organización Familiares de Detenidos Desaparecidos por Razones Políticas fue creada en enero de 1976 con motivo de la desaparición simultánea de 24 personas en Córdoba. Además, entre otras, se destacan: el Servicio Paz y Justicia (SERPAJ), creado en 1974; el Movimiento Ecueménico por los Derechos Humanos (MEDH) de 1976 y el Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales (CELS) de 1979. En 1975 también se había formado la Asamblea Permanente por los Derechos Humanos (APDH), a partir de una convocatoria realizada por personas provenientes de distintos sectores sociales (políticos, intelectuales, sindicalistas y religiosos), preocupadas por el aumento de la violencia y por el quiebre de la vigencia de los Derechos Humanos más elementales.

Las denuncias de las desapariciones, la creación de estrategias de visibilización, la búsqueda de los niños secuestrados y la lucha permanente son algunos de los objetivos que cumplieron los organismos a lo largo de todo este tiempo. Nuestra democracia se enriqueció con sus esfuerzos porque gracias a ellos sabemos que hay tres palabras que deben ir juntas: memoria, verdad y justicia (ver pregunta N° 23).



Madres de Plaza de Mayo reclamando por la aparición con vida de los detenidos-desaparecidos. Comisión Provincial por la Memoria.



Parulitos. Símbolo de las Madres de Plaza de Mayo dibujado en distintas plazas de todo el país. San Carlos de Bariloche, Río Negro. Archivo fotográfico Educación y Memoria.

Fig. 7. *Pensar la dictadura*, p. 67. Top photo: Mothers of Plaza de Mayo demanding that the detained-disappeared be returned alive. Provincial Commission for Memory. Bottom photo: symbols of the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo drawn in squares throughout the country. San Carlos de Bariloche, Río Negro. "Education and Memory" photographic archive.

(1981) y Cayetano Licciardo (1981-1983).

El proyecto educativo implicó un doble objetivo. Por un lado, la expulsión de docentes; el control de los contenidos, de las actividades de los alumnos y de sus padres; y el intento de convertir a las escuelas en cuarteles a través de la regulación de comportamientos visibles (prohibición del uso de barba y pelo largo, prohibición de vestir jeans, normas de presentación y aseo).

Y, por otro lado, la internalización de patrones de conducta que aseguraran la permanencia de los valores promovidos y enunciados obsesivamente por la dictadura, todos ellos vinculados a «la moral cristiana, la tradición nacional y la dignidad del ser argentino (...)» y la conformación de un sistema educativo acorde con las necesidades del país, que sirva efectivamente a los intereses de la Nación y conside los valores y aspiraciones del ser argentino», según decía el acta que fijaba los Propósitos y los Objetivos Básicos del Proceso de Reorganización Nacional.

Estos objetivos intentaron materializarse, por ejemplo, en el reemplazo de la materia EPSA (Estudio de la Realidad Social Argentina) por Formación Cívica (Juego Formación Moral y Cívica), «en considerar a la familia y sus «valores permanentes que la caracterizan» como el agente principal de la educación, y en construir un modelo de docente «aséptico».

En el marco de un sistema educativo que se consideraba amenazado por el «virus marxista» se insistía en remarcar que los educadores tenían la responsabilidad de ser los «custodios de la soberanía ideológica» ya que «la incansable búsqueda del ser nacional y la lucha sin

tregua por consolidar su conciencia, no reconoce final».¹⁴

Como afirmó el represor Adel Vilas «hasta el momento presente sólo hemos tocado la punta del iceberg en nuestra guerra contra la subversión. Es necesario destruir las fuentes que alimentan, forman y adoctrinan al delincuente subversivo, y esas fuentes están en las universidades y en las escuelas secundarias».¹⁵

En función de alcanzar esos objetivos se diseñó la estructura represiva de alcance nacional ya mencionada, entre el Ministerio del Interior y el Ministerio de Cultura y Educación, y se instrumentaron una serie de medidas y estrategias represivas como la desaparición, el encarcelamiento, el exilio y el silenciamiento con la idea de atomizar a los docentes, los estudiantes, los directivos, los investigadores, los editores. Además se suspendió el Estatuto del Docente y todas las gestiones gremiales colectivas, hubo inhabilitaciones y cesantías de educadores, control de programas, bibliografías y exámenes. Se realizaron acciones de espionaje, por ejemplo se incluyeron servicios de inteligencia trabajando de celadores y se crearon áreas de inteligencia encubiertas. Se brindaron instrucciones para detectar el lenguaje subversivo en las aulas. Se incentivó a que los padres controlaran, vigilaran y denunciaran a sus hijos si observaban «conductas sospechosas». Se cuestionó la educación sexual, la literatura contemporánea y el evolucionismo.

Como señaló el investigador argentino Pablo Pineau, las estrategias instrumentadas por la dictadura en el

campo educativo implicaron «el principio del fin» de la educación pública heredada de las décadas previas. Las estrategias represivas sentaron las bases para la consolidación de los proyectos educativos neoliberales de las décadas siguientes.¹⁶



Acta escolar durante el periodo de la última dictadura. 1977. Archivo Licha Antelo.

¹⁴ Tomado del documento *Subversión en el ámbito educativo, conocamos a nuestro enemigo*.

¹⁵ Richard Gillespie, *Salvados de Perón. Los Montoneros*, Buenos Aires, Grijalbo, 1988.

¹⁶ Tomado de Pablo Pineau y Marcelo Marilío, *El principio del fin. Políticas y memorias de la educación en la última dictadura militar (1976-1983)*, Buenos Aires, Colihue, 2006.

Fig. 8. *Pensar la dictadura*, p. 72. Photo: school ceremony during the last dictatorship. 1977, Licha Antelo Archive.

Chapter 3: "The Dictatorship in the World"

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¿EN QUÉ CONSISTIÓ EL PLAN CÓNDOR?

El Plan Cóndor fue una operación organizada, a mediados de los años setenta, por los Servicios de Inteligencia de varios países latinoamericanos, entre ellos Argentina, Chile, Brasil, Paraguay y Uruguay. El Plan Cóndor tenía varios objetivos: intercambiar información sobre individuos o grupos insurgentes, facilitar la captura de prisioneros políticos que habían logrado escapar de su país de origen y trasladarse a algunos de los países limítrofes, organizar operativos en común –atentados, fusilamientos– contra aquellas personas consideradas peligrosas o que constituían, bajo el prisma de los militares, serios obstáculos para la aniquilación de los «enemigos políticos». El carácter secreto del Plan Cóndor permitió que en las operaciones conjuntas participaran no sólo fuerzas militares sino también paramilitares, convirtiéndose así la región en una suerte de zona liberada para que las diversas fuerzas represivas actuaran con relativa libertad, más allá de las fronteras del país de pertenencia, a los fines de conseguir los objetivos militares propuestos.

Manuel Contreras, jefe de la DINA (Dirección de Inteligencia Nacional), es decir, del Servicio de Inteligencia chilena, fue quien concibió el Plan y lo defendió ante sus pares en Argentina, Bolivia, Paraguay, Venezuela y Estados Unidos. Este último país avaló el Plan y contribuyó a



El dictador Jorge Rafael Videla junto a Alfredo Stroessner, dictador de la República del Paraguay entre 1954 y 1989. AGN

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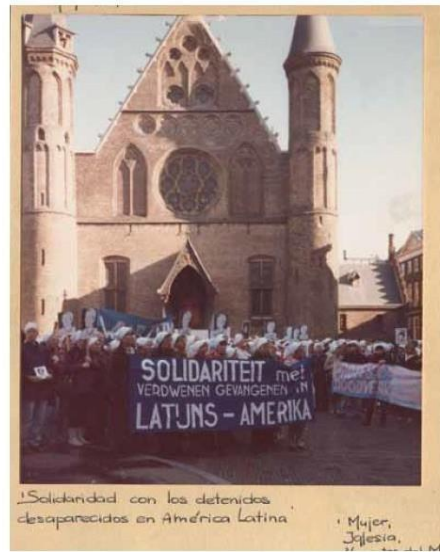
Fig. 9. *Pensar la dictadura*, p. 112. Photo: dictator Jorge Rafael Videla with Alfredo Stroessner, dictator of the Republic of Paraguay from 1954 to 1989. AGN.

del Cáncer que se iba a celebrar en Argentina entre el 5 y el 12 de octubre de 1978, el COBA también desplegó una campaña de desprestigio que tuvo efectos sobre el evento ya que distintos especialistas en la materia decidieron no participar.

En 1979, gracias a estas campañas de denuncia, apoyadas por el gobierno estadounidense del demócrata James Carter, se presentó en Argentina la Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos para investigar los centros de detención, el estado de los prisioneros políticos y la situación de los desaparecidos. La comisión de la Organización de Estados Americanos, tras visitar nuestro país, fijó el número de desaparecidos en 7500, en el exilio ya hablaban de más de 15 mil.

En 1980, Adolfo Pérez Esquivel, presidente del Servicio de Paz y Justicia, y firme defensor de los Derechos Humanos en Argentina, tras realizar un sinnúmero de denuncias públicas sobre lo que acontecía en Argentina, recibió el Premio Nóbel de la Paz.

Por último, el otro acontecimiento que conmovió a todas las comunidades de exiliados y a la opinión pública internacional fue, sin lugar a dudas, la guerra de Malvinas.



Afiche de Cosofam por la solidaridad con los detenidos desaparecidos en América Latina, La Haya, Familiares

Fig. 10. *Pensar la dictadura*, p. 116. Photo: Cosofam poster for solidarity with the detained-disappeared in Latin America. La Haya (The Hague). Family photo.

Chapter 4: “The Past in the Present”



1. Nunca Más. Tapa Anexo Tomo 1.
 2. Nunca Más. Tapa primera edición.
 3. Imagen de la ESMA, durante la investigación de la CONADEP. CONADEP. Fotografía del sector denominado “capucha”, en el tercer piso del edificio donde funcionó el centro clandestino de detención en la Escuela de Mecánica de la Armada (ESMA). El nombre “capucha” era porque en ese lugar alojaban a los detenidos encapuchados.

a la Cámara Federal. Dichas medidas se inscribían en un análisis del accionar militar que pretendía diferenciar la responsabilidad jurídica, política y militar de los altos mandos, los que habían abusado de su autoridad para cometer todo tipo de «exceso» en los actos represivos y, finalmente, quienes habían acatado las órdenes de represión siguiendo estrictamente el principio de obediencia.

Algunas de estas medidas fueron fuertemente repudiadas, tanto por los organismos de Derechos Humanos como por varios partidos políticos. El repudio central se focalizaba en la idea de que fueran los propios militares los que debían juzgar el accionar de sus pares en el pasado; pocos actores confiaban en la imparcialidad de tal tribunal. Este rechazo crecía y tomaba fuerza—incluso entre los diversos partidos políticos y el propio partido radical—la idea que habían impulsado los organismos de Derechos Humanos: crear una comisión parlamentaria que juzgara los crímenes cometidos por la dictadura.

Pero Alfonsín no estaba de acuerdo con esta propuesta porque sostenía que, si se dejaba esta tarea en manos del Poder Legislativo, se generaría un clima político de alta tensión, que favorecería la adopción de condenas radicalizadas por parte de los parlamentarios. De algún modo, Alfonsín temía que, ante esas presumibles condenas, se produjera un enfrentamiento severo con las Fuerzas Armadas que pusiera en crisis la gobernabilidad política. En aras de esquivar esta alternativa, en los círculos cercanos a Alfonsín comenzó a tomar relevancia la idea de crear una comisión integrada por notables de la sociedad civil capaz de llevar a cabo las tareas de

investigación.

En estas condiciones políticas surgió la CONADEP. Si bien varios organismos rechazaron originalmente la idea, muchos familiares y testigos de las desapariciones confiaron su testimonio a la comisión. Como hemos dicho, la investigación se materializó en el libro *Nunca Más*, cuya información resultó sumamente valiosa para llevar a cabo, año después, la entrega del Informe y el Juicio a las Juntas.

Por varios motivos, el *Nunca Más* es uno de los libros más importantes que se han producido en nuestro país desde la reapertura democrática y aún de nuestro siglo XX. El impacto social del libro sigue siendo asombroso, hasta el año 2007, se habían vendidos 503.830 ejemplares y había sido traducido a varios idiomas.

¿En qué radica su importancia? En primer lugar, en que demuestra fehacientemente, contra la idea de que los crímenes cometidos por los militares argentinos habían obedecido a ciertos «excesos», que la dictadura ideó un «plan de carácter sistemático» de secuestro, tortura y desaparición de personas. En segundo lugar, porque reúne un caudal de información apreciable sobre los crímenes cometidos contra la humanidad que resultó sumamente valiosa en el Juicio a las Juntas, además que reforzaba, desde un punto de vista moral, la demanda de castigo a los culpables.

Asimismo, el informe le otorgó mayor legitimidad pública a la voz de los familiares y los militantes de los organismos de Derechos Humanos. La sola publicación de esa información atentaba contra uno de los propósitos centrales de la «política de desaparición»: borrar todas las huellas de los crímenes cometidos.

Fig. 11. *Pensar la dictadura*, p. 141. Images: 1. *Nunca Más* (*Never Again*). Annex Cover. Volume 1; 2. *Nunca Más*. First edition cover; 3. Image of ESMA during the CONADEP (National Commission on the Disappearance of Persons) investigation. CONADEP. Photograph of the sector called “capucha” (hood), on the third floor of the building where the clandestine detention centre operated at the Navy School of Mechanics (ESMA). The name “hood” was used because this is where hooded detainees were kept.

berti y Oscar Bidegain, sobrevivientes de la conducción nacional de Montoneros.

De esta forma, escurdiándose en el discurso de la «reconciliación nacional» y aludiendo a la necesidad del reconocimiento de errores de «ambos lados»¹⁰, Menem relativizaba la experiencia del terrorismo de Estado y la equiparaba con la violencia insurgente: es decir, reforzaba la vigencia de la «teoría de los dos demonios» (ver pregunta N° 20).

A pesar de las masivas manifestaciones de repudio a los indultos presidenciales motorizadas por organizaciones de Derechos Humanos, agrupaciones estudiantiles, partidos políticos, sindicatos, asociaciones profesionales y miles de personas sin filiación alguna, la medida se llevó a cabo poniendo en libertad a los represores/torturadores condenados por crímenes de lesa humanidad y graves violaciones a los Derechos Humanos y dejando instalada la sensación de impunidad y de clausura de toda posibilidad de justicia.

Sin embargo, a partir de la asunción del presidente Néstor Kirchner en mayo de 2003, el escenario jurídico cambió considerablemente. Así lo demostraron una serie de gestos simbólicos y acciones contundentes de su gestión: el relevo de toda la cúpula militar, el juicio político contra parte de la Corte Suprema que había sido designada durante el menemismo, el retiro de los retratos de Videla y Bignone del Colegio Militar, las declaraciones presidenciales afirmando que quería unas

10 En el decreto 2742 del 30 de diciembre de 1990, puede leerse: «Que el Poder Ejecutivo Nacional pretenda crear las condiciones y el escenario de la reconciliación, del mutuo perdón y de la unión nacional. Pero que los actores principales del drama argentino, entre los cuales también se encuentran quienes hoy ejercen el gobierno, los que con humildad, partiendo del reconocimiento de errores propios y de aciertos del adversario, aporten la sincera disposición del ítem hacia la reconciliación y la unidad.»

Fuerzas Armadas «comprometidas con el futuro y no con el pasado», sus expresiones a favor de la nulidad de las «leyes del perdón», y la creación del Espacio para la Memoria y la Promoción de los Derechos Humanos en la ex ESMA.

Asimismo, en julio de 2003 el presidente Kirchner derogó el decreto del ex presidente Fernando De la Rúa que imponía el principio de territorialidad y que impedía llevar a cabo las extradiciones solicitadas por la justicia. En este caso se trataba de un pedido realizado por el juez español Baltasar Garzón para detener y extraditar a 46 represores de la última dictadura. A partir de su anulación la justicia argentina podía considerar esos pedidos y evaluar en cada caso qué decisión tomar.

En agosto de ese mismo año las denominadas leyes del perdón fueron anuladas por el Parlamento, tras lo cual la Cámara Federal de la ciudad de Buenos Aires ordenó la reapertura de las causas de la ESMA y del Primer Cuerpo del Ejército. En junio de 2005, la Corte Suprema de Justicia declaró la inconstitucionalidad de las leyes de Punto Final y Obediencia Debida, lo que permitió y produjo la presentación de nuevas causas por violaciones a los Derechos Humanos como así también que prosiguiera el tratamiento de las causas abiertas con anterioridad, sumándose algunas de ellas a las abiertas en el exterior. A fines de 2007, «existían más de trescientos detenidos bajo proceso, pero sólo habían sido condenados tres de ellos: el suboficial de la Policía Federal Héctor Julio Simón, apodado el «Turco Julián», el oficial de la Policía de la provincia de Buenos Aires Miguel Etchecoatz y el sacerdote Christian Von



Retiro de los retratos de Videla y Bignone del Colegio Militar. AGN.

Wernich»¹¹

Sin embargo, este avance en la justicia se vio empañado por la desaparición de Jorge Julio López, testigo en el juicio contra Etchecoatz, y por las sospechosas muertes de dos imputados por apropiación de menores durante la dictadura, poco antes de prestar declaración judicial. Unos y otros hechos demuestran que la justicia y el «Nunca Más» siguen siendo una tarea a defender y construir.

11 Daniel Luroich y Jaquellina Bisquert, *La cambiante memoria de la dictadura. Discursos públicos, movimientos sociales y legitimidad democrática*, Buenos Aires, Universidad Nacional de General Sarmiento, 2008.

Fig. 12. *Pensar la dictadura*, p. 147. Photo: removal of the portraits of Videla and Bignone from the Military School. AGN.

Reference Table of Images

The presentation in a diagram makes it possible to directly identify the relationship between the written content and the photographic content. There is a linear equivalence between the photographic images and the textual content. It should be noted that the four chapters are distributed according to a series of questions that serve as subtitles. Table 1 highlights the chapter, the questions (subtitles), the photograph number and a reference to its content. The table makes it possible to observe, even without directly accessing the full text, the literal correspondence between questions, photos, and their respective contents.

Table 1

Chapter	Question (Question and subtitle number as presented in the volume)	Figure No.	Content
CHAPTER 1	No. 2. “What was the political-social situation prior to the coup?”	5	Black-and-white photograph of the “Cordobazo”, 1969: worker-student alliance of resistance against the Onganía dictatorship. This event is considered the beginning of the dictator’s downfall.
	No. 7. “What were the clandestine detention centres?”	6	Four colour photographs of well-known buildings that functioned as CDCs in different parts of the country (today they are recovered memory spaces).
CHAPTER 2	No. 11. “What role did human rights organizations play?”	7	Two black-and-white photographs. The image above portrays a group of Mothers of Plaza de Mayo in a demonstration carrying a sign with the legend “We ask that the detained-disappeared be returned alive”. The image below shows the Mothers’ traditional white headscarves that were painted in various public spaces throughout the country. This photo in particular was taken at the San Carlos Square in Bariloche, located in one of the main tourist enclaves of the Argentine Patagonia. The same square and its surroundings are currently the scene of conflicts between the repressive forces of the provincial state and the Mapuche communities.
	No. 13. “What happened to culture and education during the last dictatorship?”	8	Colour photograph referring to education during the dictatorship: the raising of the national flag as a school ritual of homage to national symbols.
CHAPTER 3	No. 15. “What were its connections with the other dictatorships in Latin America?”	9	Black-and-white photograph. Dictator Jorge Rafael Videla with Alfredo Stroessner, dictator of the Republic of Paraguay from 1951 to 1989.

	No. 16. “How was the dictatorship viewed abroad? What role did the exiles play?”	10	Colour photograph. Propaganda of international resistance to the dictatorship. Public demonstration of exiles from Latin American dictatorships held in The Hague, Netherlands.
CHAPTER 4	No. 18 “What were the CONADEP and the <i>Nunca Más</i> report?”	11	Three photographs. The main photo is in black and white; two small colour photographs from different editions of the CONADEP publication <i>Nunca Más</i> are superimposed on it. The main photograph is a replica of one of the images published in the CONADEP <i>Nunca Más</i> archive, 1984. It portrays one of the ESMA spaces where detainees were held with their heads covered.
	No. 20. “What were the Due Obedience and Full Stop Laws and the Decrees of Pardon?”	12	A black-and-white photograph. The portraits of dictators Videla and Bignone were taken down under President Néstor Kirchner’s administration. This is an emblematic image that consolidated the alliance of the Kirchner administration with human rights organizations.

Considerations on the Content of the Images

The material medium of this volume is reminiscent of the rules of school manuals: a display organized according to a hierarchy based on a pedagogical explanation. The images are photographs from heterogeneous sources, generally obtained from the General Archive of the Nation (AGN), the press, and human rights organizations. They are documentary photographs taken from 1977 to 2014. In general, the photographs show spaces, different social actors such as the Mothers and the military, diagrams of repression, press clippings, clandestine detention centres, public squares, graphics of repression, resistance marches, and scenes of repression from daily life. With the exception of one image, this volume does not display the faces of the disappeared, nor the family albums (this distinction will be explained in further detail in the following series).¹³⁹

¹³⁹ The last photo exhibited in the Image Gallery, belonging to the series *Arqueología de la ausencia*

This series of images shows that the school configuration shares the documentary use of images with the first configuration, but its objective is not denunciation. Rather, it is transmission. These images are not proof of existence but instruments of a narrative. For the most part, these photos are part of the documentary materials gathered around the *Nunca Más* report (in its first edition in 1984), and greatly differ from the counter-archive created by the insurgent practices of the Mothers.¹⁴⁰

The school creates didactic sequencing designs that place the images in predictable formats of readability: it is known that the images will complement a text, it is known that some of them will be associated with “image analysis” prompts, and it is known or assumed that they will not be images that *contradict* but rather *create a consensus* and make the act of reading a text more enjoyable or understandable. This serialization of images does not proceed only by reiteration or subordination of images to a narrative, but rather normalizes them in a chronological thread based on a historicist conception of the school narrative. In this regard, the school format imposes a sequential and explanatory order on the images, but in doing so it limits the power of the images. For Benjamin, the power of images lies in their unstable character that allows them to form unprecedented constellations, and thus interrupt the *continuum* of history (“On the Concept of History” 391).¹⁴¹ This makes it difficult to definitively establish the meanings of the past and, logically, the school has trouble domesticating this aesthetic corpus. In this case, the school selection leaves aside the pre-existing images of the first two configurations and replaces them with others that are more accessible to the school system: they must be firmly fixed in a past (understood here, as a *fait accompli*) in order for them to function correctly in a school setting. This increases their disconnection from the present.

These images are part of an informative school logic and follow a pattern of normalization, serialization, and subordination of the image to the text through a clear narrative unity and without the aesthetic risks of the first two configurations.¹⁴² The image

(*Archaeology of Absence*; 2006) by Lucila Quieto, analyzed in Chapter 4 of this work, seems to be the exception: Lucila Quieto and her disappeared father.

¹⁴⁰ In the CONADEP *Nunca Más* archive there are photos of the CDCs (clandestine detention centres), but the faces of the disappeared are not shown. For more information on *Nunca Más*, see Crenzel, *La historia política del Nunca Más*.

¹⁴¹ “The image is to history what the act is to politics, that is to say, the breaking point, the interruption that establishes the very possibility of the series that fails” (García, “La comunidad en montaje” 101–102).

¹⁴² Aesthetic risk is understood as a way in which we proceed to reflect on the complex materiality of images: it involves an exercise of critical rigour, and a particular sensitivity in the sense of affectation (of being involved).

loses its centrality and is articulated in a way that suits an explanatory system. As Rancière has tried to demonstrate in *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, the explanatory logic reinforces the hierarchies between educator and student. It establishes, even without intending to, a difference between the capable and incapable, the authorized and unauthorized. It confirms this difference again and again and hinders the social appropriation of memory images.

Second Series: Memory Passages

Passage I: Memory Boards.

The second identified series is found in the “Image Gallery” section and is presented at the end of each of the four chapters of the volume. I will refer to these – four – unique spaces as *memory boards*. In the volume they are indicated as a complement to the “proposals for working in the classroom” and, more specifically, they are associated with the “prompts for working with images”. The identification of this series is very evident and accessible at first glance, since it occupies a prominent place in the volume. Each of the *boards* consists of three photographs on a black background.¹⁴³ As previously mentioned, *memory passages* refer to the (not necessarily intentional) possibility of decorative figures being recombined, creating authentic images. It is possible for the elements of the series to be combined in various ways, provoking new meanings. These are the passages where photographs escape their function established by mutual agreement. One of these passage areas is the black background. The black background has been one of the most frequently studied qualities in topics related to the arrangement of images.¹⁴⁴ In school syntax, the black background bears a certain similarity to the school blackboard as a surface for inscription: its elements can be deleted, moved, added, excluded, displayed, etc. The black background leads us to think that the order of the figures is arbitrary, that it can be intervened in to create other links between them. There is therefore a system of previously established relationships – in school planning – but also a series of unforeseen possibilities, given the “floating”, “promiscuous” status of images (Buck-Morss, “Visual studies” 224).¹⁴⁵

¹⁴³ The photographs belong to different documentary archives referring to the dictatorship (AGN, Héctor Osvaldo Vázquez and CONADEP/Family archive, the Antelo family archive, Gente Magazine/AGN, courtesy of Marina Franco/Family archive, Lucila Quieto).

¹⁴⁴ Some variables of the use of the black background in the redistribution of the Basterra photos proposed by Brodsky have been analyzed in the first chapter.

¹⁴⁵ “But the fact about images is that they do float in isolation, moving in and out of contexts, freed from their origin and the history of their provenance. The superficiality of the image, its transferability, its accessibility— all of these qualities render the issue of provenance ambiguous, if not irrelevant. An image is stumbled upon,

In other words: although the school narrative imposes a way of interrogating these photographs and connecting them to each other, there are alternative arrangements that allow an escape. We can resort to montage and disassembly operations.¹⁴⁶ To do this, we have the conjunction between the essentially anarchic and polysemic condition of the image and (distracted) observation that opens new layers of meaning.

The scene captured in these plaques with a black background can become, for example, the encounter of three different temporalities: on the one hand, the temporality of the event, dated and portrayed in each photo; on the other, the temporality in which the volume is produced and in which the treatment of the image is subordinated to a state-school time, and finally, the vague or incalculable temporality offered by the black background “impasse”, with which the plaque containing the triad of photos is framed.

On the other hand, the black background points to a potential “off-scene”, a tendency to exceed the visual frame, allowing the images to be completed through imagination and experience. The following examples taken from the source suggest rearrangements and discontinuities with respect to the traditional school use of images. Below is an analysis of the four *memory boards* that belong to the second series.

found without being lost. Arguably most at home when it ‘knocks around the world,’ an image is promiscuous by nature” (Buck-Morss, “Visual studies” 224).

¹⁴⁶ García’s idea of montage in the Argentine case is interesting: “The aim is to suggest an image regime ... that also undertakes the task of constructing *multiple images*, is committed to the risk of asking *how* to account for that excess, that break, how to make visible a scene whose traumatic core is always removed. ... The montage is the *representation that remains* in the imaginary when its constituent removal has been accepted. ... After the explosion of an order of vision, montage is the chaotic record of its disseminated shards. This involves neither the problematic transparency of representation and its fetish-image, nor the quagmire of the mosaic mandate and its taboo image, but the reflective gesture of an image that stages its own conditions of possibility, of an image that begins with the disfigured fragment to build from it a meaning that is nihilistic and constructivist at the same time. The *image-montage* is a possible name for an overcoming of the aporias related to representation in a debate that exceeds the Argentine experience” (*La comunidad en montaje* 38).

Board 1.

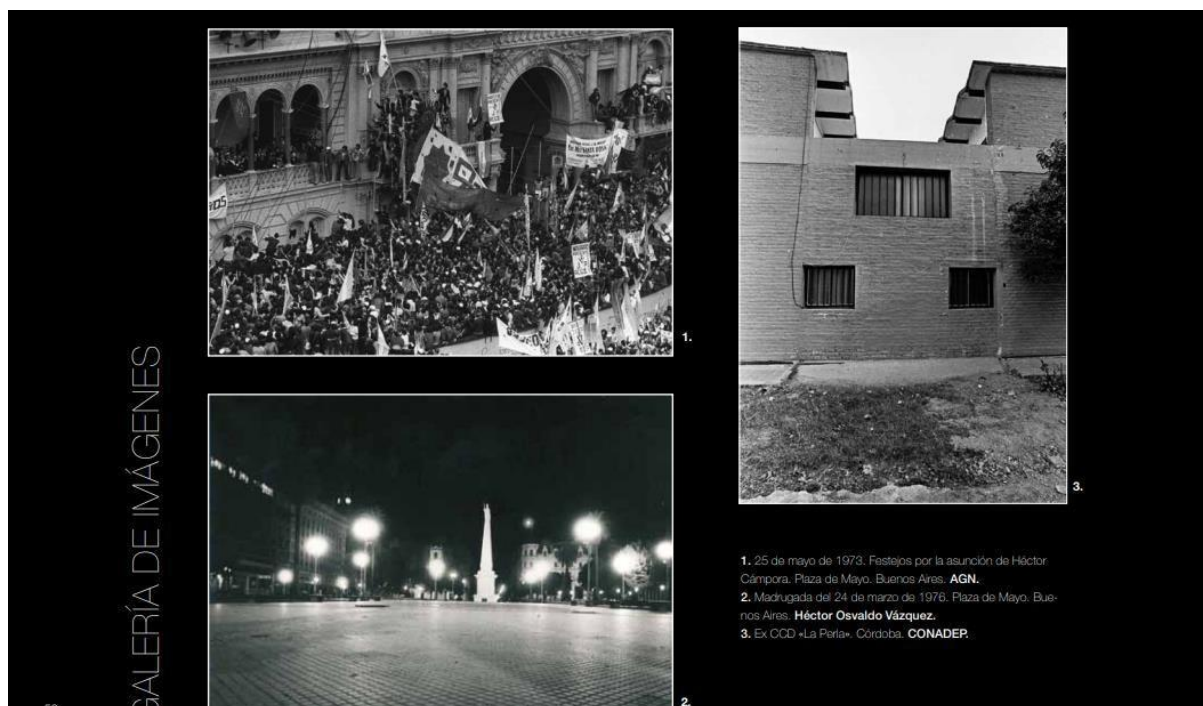


Fig. 13. *Pensar la dictadura*, p. 52. Board 1.

The first scene (fig. 13) shows three documentary photographs. It is a scene that articulates struggle and disappearance through the display of the spaces that functioned as *common places for the bodies that inhabited them*. The photographs present spaces that have some relationship with power. We see moments in which these spaces were collectively taken over to challenge that power. We also see empty or emptied spaces as a visual metaphor for the restored order. They are emblematic spaces in Argentina. The two photos on the left portray various angles of the Plaza de Mayo in different historical periods. The Plaza de Mayo, an emblem of the mass mobilization, is presented in the top photo occupied by a crowd, and in the bottom photo, the same square is shown deserted. Photo 1 shows a scene from the day that Cámpora took office as president in 1973. Photo 2 belongs to H. O. Vázquez, who portrayed the beginning of the dictatorship in the “Madrugada del 24 de marzo de 1976” (“The Early Morning of 24 March 1976”).¹⁴⁷ There is a “before” and an “after” and it is easy to identify the contrast between the square “inhabited” by the people and the sinister emptiness of a square that is an omen of the disappearance of the bodies by which it was previously inhabited. Photo 3 appears on the right side of the first two and shows “La Perla”, one of the most well-known CDCs in the city of Córdoba. These images bring together two

¹⁴⁷ This image was analyzed by Pittaluga (“Imágenes (d)e historia”).

territories that are associated with the collective memory of the dictatorship: the main square and the CDC. They are also active places of memory and, in the case of the Plaza de Mayo, a space that is associated with past, present, and future struggles. Since Buenos Aires was a village, this square has been a meeting place where “history passes” and from which phases and “historical meanings” are consecrated. State terrorism established CDCs as part of the mechanism of this new technology of power, which removes free bodies from the square, to “disappear” them in these new closed spaces where the repressive system materialized. The placement of the figure of the CDC in a vertical photo that encompasses the space *between* both photos of the square seems to represent not only a new space – of confinement, contrary to the square – but a *consequence* or the frightening *fate* of those who embodied the struggles. Using the freedom of the black background, one could undo this chronology, and turn it the other way around. What came first: the confinement or the commotion? Where is the story going? Is the history of Argentine violence not a history of alternation between crowds and emptiness?

Board 2.



Fig. 14. *Pensar la dictadura*, p. 98. Board 2.

The second scene (fig. 14) occurs in the middle of the dictatorship. Photo 1 is the emblematic circle of the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo, an image of international significance; photo 2 is a scene that refers to a characteristic school ceremony, in which traditional patriotic symbols, such as the flag and the national anthem, play a central role. The photo shows teachers and students dressed in their immaculate, radiant white uniforms. We know that popular desire for the Malvinas Islands as unredeemed territory is an achievement of public schools, which instilled in the population a feeling of grievance and loss since the mid-twentieth century. Photo 3 portrays a crowd in Plaza de Mayo supporting the announcement of the launch of the Malvinas War by dictator Fortunato Galtieri (April 2, 1982). A comparison between Photos 1 and 3 shows that the bodies are arranged in the same space but on different days. In Photo 3, the informal and shapeless crowd gathers in the square to express their enthusiasm. It is an image that at first glance is reminiscent of the seventies and the historical Peronist movement, including the marches against the dictatorship, but this time we do not see a popular or populist leader on the balcony, but rather a general of the dictatorship (whose function has always been to empty the square) celebrated by the crowd. The photo captures a paradox, provokes confusion, and disorganizes expectations. The photo links collective joy to the start of a war. It is

reminiscent of the mass “joy” at the beginning of the First World War in 1914.¹⁴⁸ In Photo 1, the perfect circle geometrically and imperturbably represents resistance to the dictatorship. They are photos that complement each other by their tension, a tension created by the arrangement of bodies, and also by the deployment of narratives: from this same circle, the Mothers would turn their backs on the 1978 World Cup, and they would also object to the triumphalism of the Malvinas War. Photo 2 seems to be located at an intersection between the two. It is curious – or perhaps not – that the raising of the flag and the arrangement of the disciplined bodies are placed to honour the national symbol. Here we have several paradoxes: a perfect circle expressing a “disorder” and a reservation with respect to the delirium of national unity. On the other hand, we have a chaotic and patriotically obfuscated crowd, precisely showing subordination and unity. This photo of Galtieri in the square tells us about a liberal/Catholic dictatorship that harnesses the energies of the crowd for its self-preservation. His gesture of greeting, his outstretched arm, even seems to extend to the Mothers. The last photo is a complete expression of the dictatorial aesthetic desire: uniformed bodies at school, in order, controllable and controlled, organized bodies expressing obedience. But isn’t this apolitical connection between disciplined patriotism and the celebratory crowd the fascist moment by definition? In the face of war, society celebrates its own unanimity, its own consensus, and its willingness to obey. Here, the circle of Mothers represents disengagement, the remainder, the unassimilable particle. But weren’t geometric figures precisely used to embody the Dadaist disengagement from the enthusiasm over the First World War in 1914?

¹⁴⁸ The beginning of the disastrous war against Paraguay in the nineteenth century, which bears great similarities to the First World War, did not provoke so much enthusiasm in Argentina, quite the opposite.

Board 3.

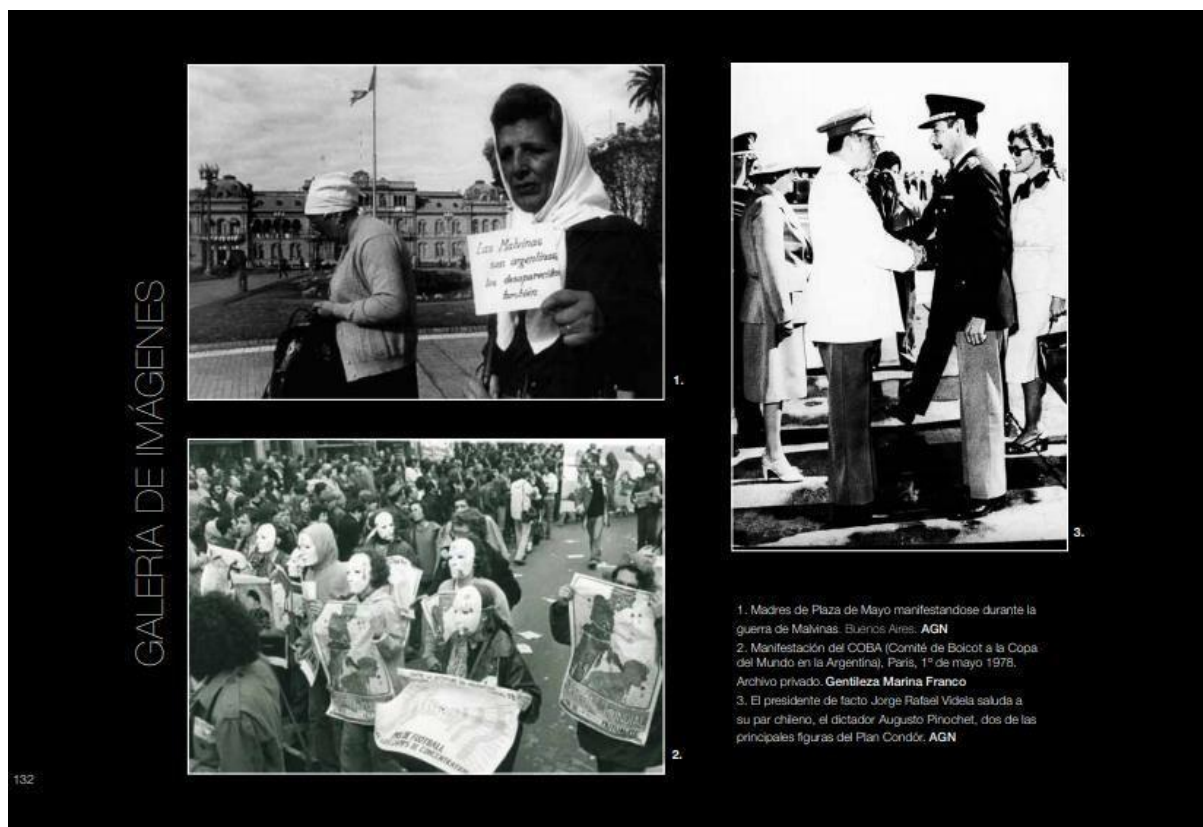


Fig. 15. *Pensar la dictadura*, p. 132. Board 3.

The third scene (fig. 15) brings together two protests and a meeting between two dictators (Videla and Pinochet, dictators of Argentina and Chile respectively) united by Operation Condor and the CIA but separated by their border disputes in the south. Photo 1 was taken during one of the rounds of the Mothers (the “killjoy” Mothers), who remind us that, while the Malvinas Islands are Argentinian, the disappeared are also Argentinian. Photo 2 is a demonstration led by exiled militants in Paris in 1978 against the football World Cup (Committee for the Boycott of the World Cup in Argentina). Note the use of white masks: a controversial form of protest due to its depersonalizing nature. There is a particular colour arrangement throughout the three images: a radiant white on a dark background. The Mothers’ headscarves, the masks of the protesters in Paris, and the Chilean dictator’s jacket are white.

The three elements merge into that neutral colour, the colour without colour. But they have different functions: on the dictator it is a mark of pristineness but on the Mothers it is the white of innocence. Lastly, the white masks allude to emptiness, serial suppression, and the anonymization of bodies. Only forgetting, which in some way is also white, can merge all these figures into nothingness.

Furthermore, in this scene, everyone is wearing an item on their face or head that identifies them according to their aesthetic-political role in the conflict: the headscarves, the masks, and the military cap. The first two emerged as an element of resistance; the third is an omnipresent symbol in the repressive apparatus. The three elements continue to represent an aesthetic position on the social stage and the Argentine memory scene: *politics and police*. They are part of a system of visual tensions where the masks reveal the dual act in which masking and unmasking are simultaneously involved. The masks of the repressor fall when the people wear white masks.

Board 4.



Fig. 16. *Pensar la dictadura*, p. 172. Board 4.

Almost at the end of the volume is the fourth and final scene (fig. 16), with a suggestive triad of images. They are images of the post-dictatorship: photo 1 is a portrait of the trial of the Military Juntas in 1985; photo 2 is a mobilization that identifies the relatives of the disappeared, and in a particular close-up shows children and grandchildren carrying a sign with the inscription “We, the children, do not forget. No more coup leaders”; and photo 3 is part of the renowned artistic photo-montage by Lucila Quieto that inaugurates the series *Arqueología de la ausencia* (analyzed in Chapter 6).

There are two curious aspects to this scene: the first peculiarity is that in a previous edition to the volume, photos 2 and 3 were inverted (photo 2 was located in the centre, below the first two, and the number and placement of photo 3 were different: it was numbered as photo 1 and located on the upper left side); the second peculiarity is that, for the first time, and at the end of the volume, the photo of a disappeared person “appears” in a close-up. It is not the classic documentary photo, but an intervention by Lucila Quieto analyzed in a previous chapter. This photo is also the only one that belongs to the archive of the previous configurations and does not have a place in the body of the volume’s central narrative (I will return to this topic in Passage III). In both editions, the photo of the soldiers “being judged” looks towards the images of resistance in the post-dictatorship.

Passage II: The Fragmented Image

This series differs from the previous one in its composition and distribution. The composition consists of a photograph that refers to the theme of each chapter. The particularity of this selection is that a fragment of the selected photograph appears at the beginning of each chapter, and the complete photograph is reserved for the end of the same chapter: there is a photograph and a fragment of it. It is a duo of images consisting of the same photograph. At the beginning of each chapter, we see the fragmented part. It is a cut-out, a dissected image of the complete photograph that is located on just a few centimetres on the right margin of the full page. This fragment of the image is used as a background on which the number and name of the chapter are printed. The rest of the page is made up of a notable white background on which a brief text is placed that explains the contents of each chapter and that has no particular relationship with the image. The second photo is used as the closing of the chapter and shows the complete image accompanied by a brief text describing it. The fragments or cut-outs function as a preview of the final photo; they do not seem to be random cut-outs but rather reflect the topics considered most relevant by the authors of the volume. One of the virtues of these fragments is that they generate intrigue before the full image is presented. These solitary and arbitrarily dissected parts seem to remain suspended on a threshold of meaning awaiting their completion. This incompleteness at first evokes in a way the *impotence of the unrepresentable*; however, the sequence of impossible questions enters the pedagogical domain with the promise of certainty. The school programme will complete the fragmentary preview, eliminating all ambiguity. It will assign names, ask questions, and formulate the answers to them. However, as has been highlighted before, there is something about the images that remains elusive and leaves a vacant meaning. It is the power of the fragment that, for a period of time, remains available for invention.

Below is the series that consists of 4 pairs of images – fragmented image and full image – corresponding to the four chapters of the volume, respectively.

Fragment 1: The Chapter on “State Terrorism”

Este primer capítulo explica algunos de los aspectos nodales de la última dictadura: cómo se instaló en el poder, cuáles fueron las características del sistema represivo implementado por el terrorismo de Estado, y qué proyecto económico se puso en marcha. También propone un análisis de las cuestiones que otorgan especificidad a la dictadura argentina: el método de desaparición forzada de personas, la existencia de centros clandestinos de detención y el robo de niños.

A su vez, ofrece algunas claves para pensar la funcionalidad del terrorismo de Estado. El impacto de los crímenes cometidos desdibujó –y aún lo hace– la posibilidad de examinar la racionalidad de la violencia. La distancia reflexiva puede contribuir a su análisis: a qué sectores sociales se dirigió la represión, qué consecuencias tuvo para la estructura económica nacional y a qué sectores sociales benefició.

Estas ocho preguntas ofrecen un marco que permite explicar qué fue el terrorismo de Estado en Argentina.



Fig. 17. *Pensar la dictadura*, p. 19. Fragment 1a.

Ex centro clandestino de detención «La polaca»

En la frontera ciudad correntina de Paso de los Libres, funcionó un centro clandestino de detención dentro de la estancia «La polaca». Por este CCD habrían pasado cerca de 300 detenidos-desaparecidos, en su mayoría secuestrados en el paso de frontera argentino-brasileño. El predio, conformado por 40 hectáreas, fue elegido como un punto estratégico del Plan Cóndor (ver pregunta N° 16). Dependiente del ejército, fue especialmente utilizado para aniquilar a militantes de la organización político militar Montoneros cuando en 1980 intentaban ingresar al país durante la denominada «contraofensiva Montonera».

Foto: María Alejandra Mumbach

Fig. 18. *Pensar la dictadura*, p. 56. Fragment 1b.



Fig. 19. *Pensar la dictadura*, p. 57. Fragment 1c.

Fragment 1a (fig. 17) opens the first chapter with the presentation of a cropped image of an outdoor space. The cropped image reveals a striking, colourful background where the vivid colours of nature contrast with the grey of what appears to be an old, dilapidated construction. Further back, in the shadows of the gallery, there is the dark figure of a door, announcing the dark fate of its inhabitants, or prisoners, forced to go through it. The text that accompanies this fragment is not associated with the image but with the (school) contents of the section. Only at the end of the chapter is the complete photo shown and its source revealed (figs. 18 and 19). It is the CDC “La Polaca”. This building housed an operations centre for the annihilation of the Montonero counteroffensive in 1980 at the “Paso de los Libres” border crossing.¹⁴⁹ This photographic selection shows one of the main symbols of the technology of power imposed by state terrorism: the CDCs. As previously mentioned, this selection and that of the entire volume omit the images that refer to the disappeared. When the CONADEP’s *Nunca Más* archive was published in 1984, the omission of the faces of the disappeared was denounced by some dissident sectors of the human rights movements. The only images that the *Nunca Más* archive displayed were those of the CDCs.

¹⁴⁹ From 1979 to 1980 two armed actions were carried out by the Montonera (left-wing Peronist) guerrilla that had gone underground after state repression had killed most of its members.

The Unruly Image: Memory and Transmission in Argentina

That historic document only provided lists of names and dates. It contains no photographs of the disappeared. Does the state, every state, fear the spectral gaze of its victims?

Fragment 2: The Chapter on "Dictatorship and Society"



Fig. 20. *Pensar la dictadura*, p. 59. Fragment 2a.

Esquina militarizada

17 de septiembre de 1976. Un fotógrafo registró, sin ser visto, una escena de la vida cotidiana en la ciudad de Buenos Aires durante la última dictadura. La posición del anciano con la bolsa de compras en el centro de la fotografía propone lecturas divergentes en el contexto de esa esquina militarizada. ¿Su inmovilidad expresa pánico?, ¿tranquilidad? ¿Se trata de una escena común la de los soldados apostados en las columnas del edificio? La esquina es la del cruce entre la calle Miró y la Av. Rivadavia, a pocas cuadras del centro geográfico de la ciudad de Buenos Aires. La pareja de jóvenes que observa desde el umbral del edificio de Rivadavia muestra, a su vez, otro modo de vivir la experiencia del terrorismo de Estado en Argentina.

Foto: Clarín

Fig. 21. *Pensar la dictadura*, p. 102. Fragment 2b.



Fig. 22. *Pensar la dictadura*, p. 103. Fragment 2c.

Chapter two is presented with a fragment of an image that I have previously analyzed and which is extremely suggestive. The fragment (fig. 20) focuses on the figure of a soldier with a weapon in his hand in a combat position stationed in an outdoor urban space. It also shows the diagonal section of the building that suggests the photographer's point of view, occupying the upper half of the fragment. The complete image appears at the end of the chapter (fig. 22). An ordinary man from the neighbourhood with a shopping bag triangulates a scene flanked by a group of soldiers in a combat situation in broad daylight and on a random street in the capital city.¹⁵⁰ As we have seen, the image offers at least two readings of the connections between all these characters. First, it can be read as propaganda, showing the harmony between citizens and the army in the face of a common enemy. The second, more subtle reading, showing the loneliness of the resident, the fear of the teenagers on the side, and the piece of windowsill that reveals the precautions taken by the photographer, presents the terrifying nature of this spatial relationship. This is a paradigmatic case of an image that can only reach its definitive legibility after the end of the dictatorship.

¹⁵⁰ This is one of the images analysed by the historian Roberto Pittaluga, author of *Pensar la dictadura*, who dedicates an academic article to the detailed analysis of this photograph. It is also used for the didactic proposal for working with images that is displayed at the end of the chapter in *Pensar la dictadura*.

Fragment 3: The Chapter on “The Dictatorship in the World”

Este tercer capítulo analiza la relación de la Argentina con el mundo durante la última dictadura. Explica qué fue el Plan Cóndor y cómo éste permitió coordinar la represión con otros regímenes del Cono Sur; cuenta qué pasó con los exiliados argentinos, sobre todo con aquellos que impulsaron las campañas de denuncia de los crímenes que se cometían en el país; y examina la política exterior que, entre otras cosas, condujo a la guerra de Malvinas en abril de 1982.

Durante los años del terrorismo de Estado, las denuncias internacionales por las violaciones a los Derechos Humanos fueron provocando un creciente aislamiento internacional de nuestro país y, de a poco, quedó en claro que la articulación de la política exterior de la dictadura estaba basada, exclusivamente, en el plano represivo.

Estas cinco preguntas ayudan a visualizar qué pasó con la dictadura por fuera de las fronteras nacionales y brindan elementos para comprender qué sucedió en la guerra de Malvinas.

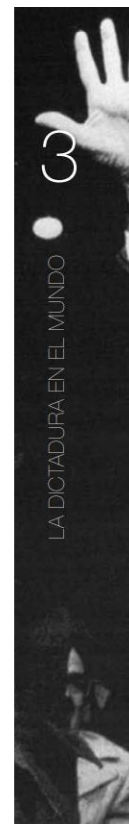


Fig. 23. *Pensar la dictadura*, p. 105. Fragment 3a.

Festejo infausto

Emilio Eduardo Massera, Jorge Rafael Videla y Orlando Ramón Agosti, los integrantes de la Primera Junta Militar, festejan los goles de la selección nacional de fútbol durante la final con Holanda durante el mundial celebrado en Argentina en 1978. La fotografía fue tomada en 1978 por Higinio González, fotógrafo de Presidencia de la Nación. A pocas cuadras del estadio de River donde se jugaba ese partido funcionaba la Escuela de Mecánica de la Armada (ESMA) donde estaban detenidos-desaparecidos cientos de víctimas directas del terrorismo estatal. La victoria de la selección supuso uno de los momentos de mayor hegemonía por parte del gobierno de facto. Durante la celebración en la Plaza de Mayo muchos argentinos ovacionaron al general Videla cuando salió al balcón a saludar.

Foto: AGN

Fig. 24. *Pensar la dictadura*, p. 136. Fragment 3b.



Fig. 25. *Pensar la dictadura*, p. 137. Fragment 3c.

Chapter 3 deals with Argentina's international relations during the period of state terrorism. The fragment at the beginning of the chapter shows an open hand on the upper margin of the photographic cut-out (fig. 23). It is not the back but the palm of the hand that stands out on an extended arm that fades into the chiaroscuro of the photographic shot. Probably the first impression of an open palm reminds us of an imposing gesture or of the well-known "stop" icons. But a certain atmosphere of ambiguity also surrounds this fragment, in which the wide-open hand could refer not to a "stop" but to a greeting, or to the intention by one person to indicate to another their position in a certain spatial location. At the end of the chapter, the full photograph is overwhelming once put into context. It is the hand of dictator Videla celebrating Argentina's victory against the Netherlands in the final of the 1978 soccer World Cup (fig. 25). The text that accompanies the image refers to the championship and the proximity of the stadium to the former ESMA CDC, where some detainees-disappeared who were still alive were able to hear the shouting from the World Cup celebrations. As is well known, the international sports scene served as a distraction from state crimes. A sort of "final solution" was perpetrated during this period, as the fate of the disappeared would be sealed by the "death flights", which were mostly carried out during 1978. The intrigue created by the outstretched hand in the initial fragment is resolved as an unforgettable

gesture. Videla is surrounded by leaders of the dictatorship in suits and ties and with distraught faces, which today seem truly terrifying to us. What victory are they actually celebrating? The two victories are off camera. One is over the rival team and the other, over the abducted bodies. Nobody forgets a World Cup victory. Certainly not in Argentina. But those exultant and sinister faces, *that* celebration and *those* off-camera deaths can never be dissociated. They will constitute a set of elements trapped on a specific date but that will, perhaps, wander infinitely.

Fragment 4: The Chapter on “The Past in the Present”

Este cuarto capítulo indaga en dos cuestiones centrales: ¿Cómo procesan su pasado las sociedades que emergen de un período dictatorial, signado por la muerte y la represión? y ¿cómo impacta en ese proceso la desaparición forzada de personas? Para responder estos interrogantes, este tramo propone un recorrido por las principales acciones llevadas adelante en pos de la justicia y la memoria: los avances y los retrocesos de las leyes; las políticas estatales; las luchas de los organismos de Derechos Humanos; las representaciones culturales del cine, la literatura y la plástica; y las políticas educativas.

Estas acciones se entrelazaron y construyeron la memoria de un proceso signado por una profunda herida, en muchos casos no resuelta y que todavía aguarda justicia.

Estas siete preguntas proponen un reconocimiento de esas diferentes acciones y una reconstrucción de sus trayectorias históricas, para comprender la íntima relación que, desde 1983, existe entre los contextos políticos y las políticas de memoria, verdad y justicia.



Fig. 26. *Pensar la dictadura*, p. 139. Fragment 4a.

«Y sin embargo estoy aquí»

El 24 de marzo de 2006, cuando se cumplieron treinta años del último golpe de Estado, un sinnúmero de actos conmemorativos fueron realizados en todo el país. Los medios de comunicación realizaron programas especiales y a partir de ese año el 24 de marzo fue convertido en el feriado como «Día Nacional de la Memoria por la Verdad y la Justicia». Esta fotografía muestra el acto realizado en la ciudad de Rosario con apoyo del municipio, llamado «Y sin embargo estoy aquí».

Foto: Franco Trovato. Archivo del Museo de la Memoria de Rosario.

Fig. 27. *Pensar la dictadura*, p. 176. Fragment 4b.



Fig. 28. *Pensar la dictadura*, p. 177. Fragment 4c.

In the last chapter of *Pensar la dictadura*, the photographic fragment corresponds to the complete photograph without major visual challenges. At the top of the fragment there are several tiny, diffuse lights that begin to be distinguished as candles in the visualization of the rest of the fragment (fig. 26). Towards the centre and the bottom, one sees first the body of a woman in focus holding a candle, and then another woman wearing the typical headscarf of the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo. Towards the bottom of the fragment, the light from the candles becomes clearer. From there, it is not difficult for observers to complete the image. It is actually a mass mobilization held on March 24 (fig. 28). In this particular event, the text of the complete photograph refers to the commemoration of the 30-year anniversary of the coup, in 2006, in the city of Rosario (Santa Fe). This was also the year of the formalization of the “Education and Memory” Programme and the inauguration of memory policies as they were formulated by the Kirchnerist administration. The image is undoubtedly moving, immediately understandable, and even attractive, but we could say that *it does not provoke unease*. It alludes to a form of commemoration characterized by silence, meditation, and mourning. It has a universal and even religious flavour. It is an image that contrasts with the

notable annual marches held every March 24 in the capital and which are not usually characterized by silence, respect and introspection, but by being massive, challenging, noisy and demanding demonstrations held during the daytime. On March 24, the state crime is commemorated while actively showing a collective repudiation of the current state of affairs. March 24 is an intergenerational demonstration where present-day injustices are also denounced. All kinds of artistic and political expressions that refer to the dictatorship, but also to its consequences, are displayed there. It is not exactly a discreet, circumspect, nocturnal funeral march. It usually involves noise, excitement, movement, and a combination of anger and collective joy; anger at the continued injustice, joy from everyone coming together and knowing that they are not alone in their attitude of struggle. March 24 in Argentina constitutes an open image-space where connections with the past have an impact on the present. They are true collective political acts, where the disappeared are named and where their faces are always displayed. These are surrounded by the crowd and raised upward as emblems of a struggle that is still ongoing. The photo selected for this teaching material perhaps represents the desire to consider the event of disappearance almost as a private tragedy and pain, occurring to a specific group of people, a long time ago. However, it is important that the “Education and Memory” Programme selects a photograph that every person, regardless of their ideas, can sympathize with. The effect it produces is closer to compassion than solidarity; closer to the *institutionalization* of memory than to its political and conflictive potential; closer to consensus than to conflict and antagonism. It perhaps represents the government more than it represents the authentic spirit of March 24. Governments can more easily join a funeral ceremony than an unpredictable mobilization.

Passage III: New Obscurities

I have previously referred to the conservative shift in the treatment of images in *Pensar la dictadura*. In the “Education and Memory” Programme materials, the images shown tend to be treated exclusively as documents and even as illustrations (as indicated in the first series). They are at the service of the narrative and of an informative logic. I have also referred to the relationship between this configuration and the first: both use documentary, evidentiary images, generally from the state archive. In this last passage, I will refer to a manifest omission. It could be said that it is a systematic omission. The school selection of memory images excludes ID photos and family album photos from the memory archives of the first configuration.

According to Ana Longoni, the photographs and silhouettes constitute the visual matrix of memory practices in Argentina. They are part of a political invention that is the foundation of a visual regime in the representation of the disappeared.¹⁵¹

But the disappeared is what does not appear in the volume's images, contrary to what occurs in social memory practices. For Natalia Fortuny:

The category of the disappeared represents a triple condition: the absence of a body, the absence of a moment of mourning and the absence of a burial. This triple absence will be the constituent mark of the struggle for memory in our country, which will of course appear in many subsequent artistic productions (*Memorias fotográficas* 13; translated by Marisela Trevin).¹⁵²

The ID photos play a peculiar dual role in the image-space: on the one hand, as a surface for verifying an objectively proven existence in the state's technical civil registry, and on the other hand, as a surface for filing a claim. That is to say, they were incorporated as critical material in the struggles for memory. But their relationship with temporality is even more complex. They are photos on which several layers of time are superimposed. In one sense, ID photos refer to a time that is inevitably in the past – *someone existed, something was there* – and, on the other hand, they are an image that refers to the relationship between identity and power: they bear the signs of social control based on photographic and corporal subjugation for the purpose of surveillance and punishment imposed by the state (Richard, “Imagen-recuerdo y borraduras”). As traces, they are a testimony of truncated lives and dissident biographies. The display of faces was first an act of judicial evidence, but it later became the banner of a struggle. According to Nelly Richard, the faces “have become the densest symbol of this memory crusade carried out by

¹⁵¹ One of the hypotheses put forth by Longoni is “the capacity that these events (the state repression) had to promote a kind of creative dimension of political practice ... to think basically of two large matrices of representation of the figure of the disappeared in these creative policies, in these visual or performative policies within the Human Rights movement ... And, basically, I distinguish these two matrices around the figure of the photographs and the figure of the silhouette. The silhouette is also associated with the practices of hands, of masks ... We will see the differences or tensions around these two privileged forms of representation that have been established as more or less well-known, reiterated, knowable resources, as unequivocal signs within these struggles in Argentina” (Longoni, “Arte y Política”).

¹⁵² “La categoría desaparecido representa una triple condición: la falta de un cuerpo, la falta de un momento de duelo y la de una sepultura. Esta falta por triplicado será la marca constitutiva de la lucha por la memoria en nuestro país” (*Memorias fotográficas* 13).

victims to remember and make people remember the past” (“Imagen-recuerdo y borraduras” 166).

The pedagogy of memory is presented as the greatest exponent of the teaching of the recent past. For this purpose, it makes a narrative selection that is also aesthetic. The exclusion of these photos is evidently a political decision (its consequences are also political). Not only is it striking that the photographs of the faces of the disappeared are absent, but so are the family album photos. The absence of these two photographic modes of dealing with recent history – the ID card and the family album – constitutes a reservation, as if the school refused to deal with them. Richard refers to a feared “presence effect” (“Imagen-recuerdo y borraduras” 165). There is a fear of the spectral condition of these faces. Their untimely, disturbing appearance seems to problematize the normalizing tendency of the school logic. Luis Ignacio García wrote that these photographs resist

the perpetual media-commercial-totalitarian threat of a flat language, a linear time, a present image and a closed past. The disappeared did not have a grave. For this reason, they are not only disappeared, but always re-appearing, wandering spectres demanding justice. Therefore, the spectres speak from the past, but about the future, and that is why their anomalous irruption into the present is so disturbing ... To take in this power is to allow oneself to be permeated by spectres, to inscribe the tomb that never was. Between law and justice, the sayable and unsayable, document and fiction, the photographs of the Argentine post-dictatorship are also forms that reflect on the structure of contemporary (militant) subjectivity, and question it from its power as an event. (“Espectros” 145; translated by Marisela Trevin)¹⁵³

The family photos displayed in the public square visually deconstruct national fantasies. According to Richard,

¹⁵³ “la perpetua amenaza mediático-mercantil-totalitaria de un lenguaje plano, de un tiempo lineal, de una imagen presente y de un pasado cerrado. El desaparecido no tuvo tumba. Por eso no es sólo desaparecido sino siempre un re-aparecido, un espectro que vaga clamando por justicia. Por eso el espectro habla desde el pasado, pero acerca del futuro, y por eso es tan inquietante su anómala irrupción en el presente (...) Cobijar esta potencia es dejarse atravesar por los espectros, es inscribir la tumba que no fue. Entre derecho y justicia, entre decible e indecible, entre documento y ficción, las fotografías de la postdictadura argentina son, también, formas que piensan la estructura de la subjetividad (militante) contemporánea, y la interpelan desde su potencia de acontecimiento” (“Espectros” 145).

Publicly displaying these photos torn from albums that show people torn from their families, as the relatives of the disappeared do; diverting these photos from their private ritual to turn them into an active instrument of public protest, also shows that the “national” – a simulated extension of the “family” – is nothing more than a parody of unity made up of injured bodies and truncated identities. (“Imagen-recuerdo y borraduras” 168)¹⁵⁴

The school selection of memory images avoids these inconveniences. It omits foundational, emblematic photos of the struggles for memory. It omits a disruptive and untamable set of elements. It avoids dealing with the emblems of a confrontation with the state and the uncomfortable temporality of the spectral.¹⁵⁵

The images of resistance shed light on a political community, that is to say, one that is in conflict. It is a community established around what is missing, the *constituent hole* (Schmucler, *La memoria*) described in previous chapters. But the school provides its own – institutional – translation of this legacy, and the school photos or the photos incorporated into schooling take another direction. They take a cautious detour around these original photos, without displaying them, thus proving their inexhaustible critical power. Although the school syntax seems to fill everything, tell everything, they are texts that avoid uncertainties, the undecidable. They do not expose the gaps in representation.

The material is based on a linear succession, the pace of which prevents the gaze from stopping. It is a light and fast succession, without intensities. “[T]he flatness erases the volume and the folds of historical temporality”; they are images that are easy to *pass through* (Richard, “Imagen-recuerdo y borraduras” 169).

Without the uncomfortable images, the school neutralizes the question about the present and obliterates the evidence of structural conflicts.

¹⁵⁴ “Exhibir en la calle estas fotos arrancadas del álbum que muestra a sujetos arrancados de sus familias, tal como lo hacen los familiares de los desaparecidos; desviar estas fotos de su ritualidad privada para convertirlas en activo instrumento de protesta pública, permite también comprobar que lo “nacional” -extensión simulada de lo “familiar”- no es sino una parodia de unidad hecha de cuerpos lesionados y de identidades truncadas” (“Imagen-recuerdo y borraduras” 168).

¹⁵⁵ The school lesson, on the other hand, usually only addresses problems that the state can or is in the process of solving. The state acts on behalf of the population and not with the population.

Conclusions

[A] fragile, precious reality: the image.
(Walter Benjamin, "On the Image of Proust"
240)

The Initial Images and the Abrupt Contrasts

In this chapter, I have examined the proposals for transmission of the recent past in the framework of processes of integration of memory into schooling.¹⁵⁶ This means, in its most traditional version, an attachment to the school canon of explanatory modes of presentation, the preponderance of the written text, the preference for the documentary image, and the subordination of images to the text in a sequential narrative thread. However, very shortly before the formalization of the "Education and Memory" Programme, there was a different proposal. In 2006, the *A 30 Años (30 Year Anniversary)* Project was created. Its emergence was part of a group of actions linked to the Ministry of Education (ME) for the commemoration of the 30-year anniversary of the last dictatorship. The ME opted for a "tense collage" and "abrupt contrasts".¹⁵⁷ During this period, this proposal for teaching recent history was spread, giving prominence to images in a very particular way. The book was titled *Treinta ejercicios de memoria (Thirty Memory Exercises; hereinafter "the book")* and was one of the first educational productions of the Kirchner administration to reach schools. Thirty images were presented as thirty memory exercises. This source is considered a precursor to the "Education and Memory" Programme. Its introduction at the closing of this chapter is intended to place the school use of images in a broader process of continuities and ruptures, on which significant contrasts in the quality of the transmission are registered.

To Look Closer

Below is a selection of the cover and back cover and four images of this book. This selection was made to prioritize the heterogeneous and non-prescriptive nature of its images.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁶ Processes of integration of memory into schooling exclude alternative forms of transmission of the recent past, that is, the image-space produced in the framework of clandestine or unclear memories. They collect elements from documentary sources and reorder them in a proper school archive, which involves a linear temporal sequence, subordination of the image to the text, and an explanatory narrative.

¹⁵⁷ "Our position, as a Project of the Ministry of Education, was to open a territory large enough so that it could contain even abrupt contrasts that, nevertheless, are recognized in the assessment of democratic life and its institutions. This book could be read as a tense collage, which, based on fragments and dissonant perspectives, demands the articulation of its stories in a multiple, multifaceted body" (National Ministry of Education, *Treinta ejercicios de memoria* 10).

¹⁵⁸ Link to the book *Treinta ejercicios de memoria*: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1bjJ5VrqheXF-FTp0zZToA3ZkT1k0F_S6/view?usp=sharing.

Cover and Back Cover Images

The first three images illustrate the cover (fig. 29), presentation (fig. 30), and back cover (fig. 31) of the book. These images refer to the cards of the board game “Memotest”. This game consists of pairs of identical cards that are mixed together, face down (so that the images on the cards are not visible). They are then arranged in rows and columns to start the game. Each participant must reveal two cards per turn, attempting to find identical pairs: if they do not match, they must be placed face down again. The player who manages to find the greatest number of identical pairs wins. The challenge of this game is to memorize the images and their location on the rows and columns in order to find the pairs before one’s opponent. The book’s cover illustrates the beginning of the game with the cards facing down. The presentation and back cover show the revealed images. These are based on the iconography of the dictatorship: a police cap, a Falcon 400 car (used by the military to abduct people), the Mothers’ headscarf, the 1978 World Cup mascot, a gun, the former ESMA, the Malvinas Islands, a burned book, etc. It should be noted that some of these images refer to a particular story or image contained in this book. For example, the bicycle and the 1978 World Cup mascot are references to some of the stories included in the book. The playful visual beginning of *Treinta ejercicios de memoria* differs significantly from the solemn and organized character of the volume.



Fig. 29. Cover of the booklet *Treinta ejercicios de memoria* (Thirty Memory Exercises).



Fig. 30. *Treinta ejercicios de memoria*, p. 12.

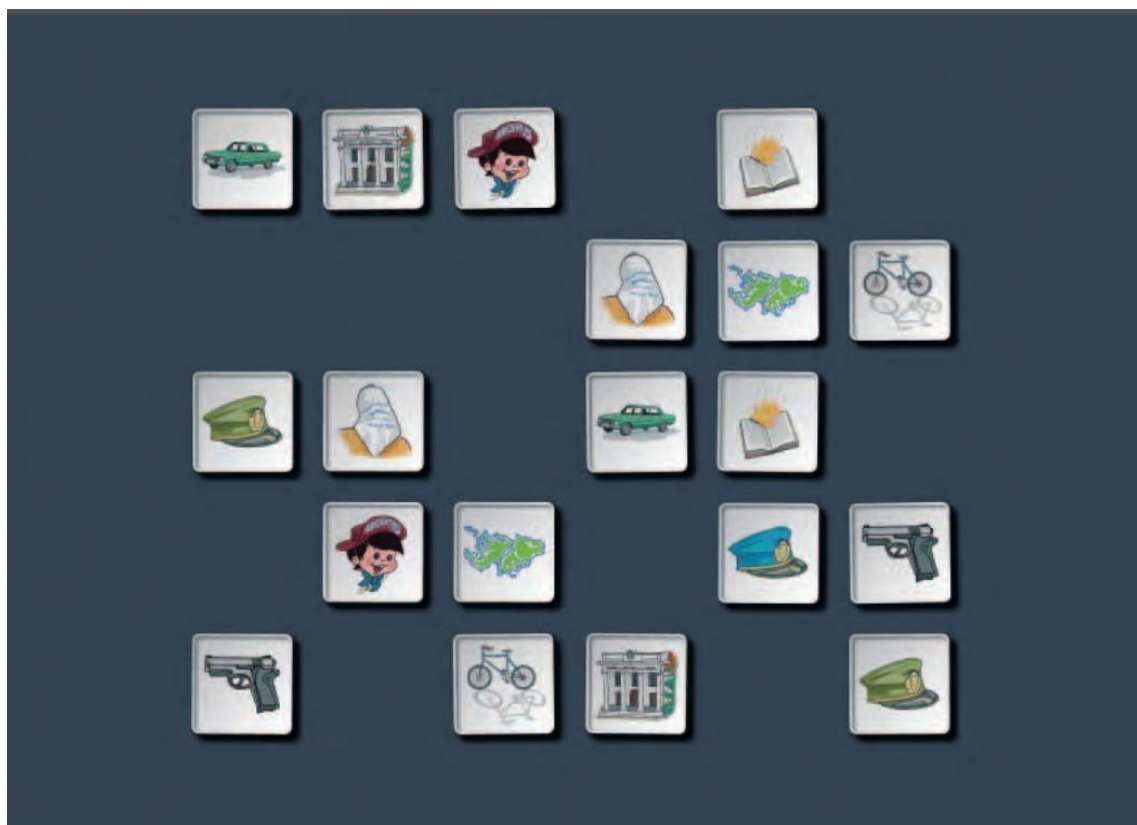


Fig. 31. Back cover of *Treinta ejercicios de memoria*.

Images in the Body of The Text

Ten images with hybrid characteristics (due to the use of different media, their different authors, and their location in the text) are presented in this selection.¹⁵⁹ Some cards with images, with a fragment of the text associated with them, are deliberately reserved for the end of the visual journey. The purpose is to favour a distance from the *images without text* and later contrast these images with the text or a fragment of the text with which they are associated. Unlike in the first series, there is no explicit linear correspondence between image and text. The story is individual (often reminiscent of testimonies) and the narrator is sensitively affected and involved in the content. Finally, considerations are made with regard to these images.

¹⁵⁹ My considerations about these images are presented together, as the objective of this study is not to perform an analysis of *Treinta ejercicios de memoria* in particular, but rather to observe a general contrast with the volume *Pensar la dictadura*.

[30 ejercicios de memoria]



Fig. 32. *Treinta ejercicios de memoria*, p. 30. Image: Carlos Alonso. “Sigo creyendo en el arte” (“I Still Believe in Art”).

<p>Figure No.: 32</p>	<p>Title: “Sigo creyendo en el arte” (“I Still Believe in Art”) (Image 9, p. 31)</p>
<p>Full text: <i>I continue to believe in art and, above all, in its incorruptible, non-sentimental memory that is nonetheless capable of preserving the wounds that reality leaves in us. I do not believe that art can solve any of the world’s problems, especially when ambiguity invades figurative art and banality is consecrated for public use. The States of the world attempt to sterilize us with poverty and terror, but it is with that terrified love that we can create our paintings.</i></p>	
<p>Author: Carlos Alonso (Mendoza, 1929) is a painter and illustrator. He has presented exhibitions all over the world and made illustrations of classic works such as <i>Don Quixote</i> and <i>The Divine Comedy</i>.</p>	

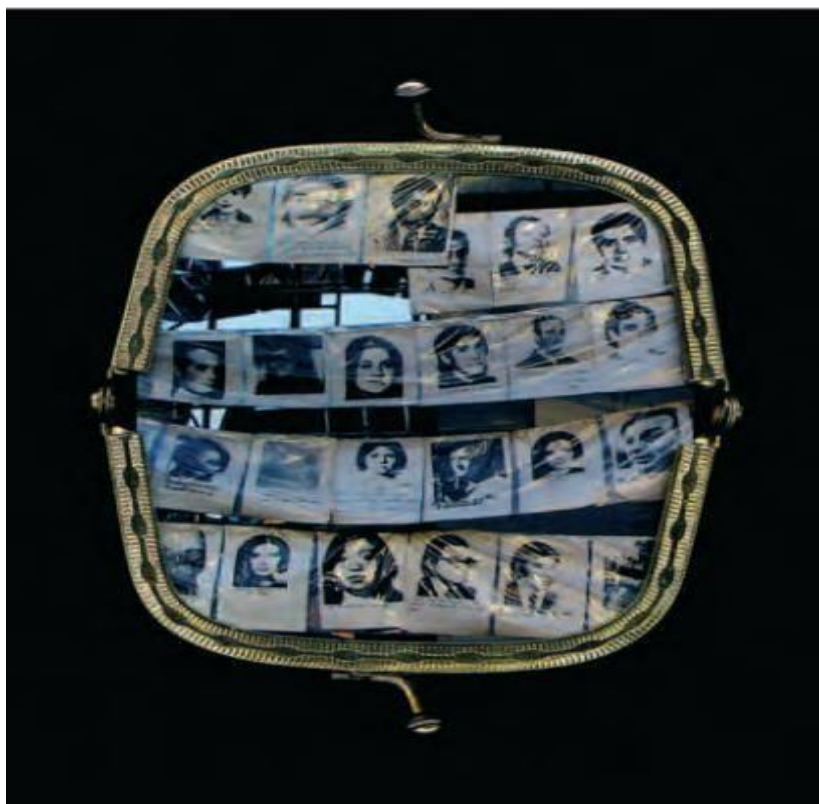


Fig. 33. *Treinta ejercicios de memoria*, p. 38. Image: Florencia Abatte. “La ética contra la historia” (“Ethics against History”).

Figure No.: 33	Title: “La ética contra la historia” (“Ethics against History”) (Image 13, p. 38)
Fragment: <i>Saying “no” is an essential gesture. But for it to work it must be deep; it must go beyond this point or that point. It cannot simply be a commonsense rejection. Eichmann had great common sense. And he didn’t know how to say “no”. A place in each person’s heart asks others not to do them harm. The cry of pain that evil causes in us is not personal. It emerges from the feeling of contact with injustice through pain. It is a reaction that surpasses ideological debates. Words are always insufficient to describe it. There are those who enjoy hearing that part of the heart that cries out in pain in the face of evil; others are unaware of it. Perhaps those spiritual states complement each other. Those who attack it can provide different justifications. Each person “chooses” with their face pressed against the moment of history that they are dealt, against their own minute. But there is no worse argument than that which relies on the strength of a State. There is a desire to kill. And that unites everyone in the</i>	

history of the failure of social systems. Between the body and the systems is that musicality that is out of tune, like a drunken abyss. And the dead, who no longer have any other love than that which wants us all equal and free from harm, simply look on in pain. There is an ethical demand in those gazes. (Written based on texts by Simone Weil and Pier Paolo Pasolini.)

Author: Florencia Abatte (Buenos Aires, 1976) is a writer, journalist and professor. She teaches at the University of Buenos Aires. She published the novel *El grito* (2004) and the volume of children's stories *Las siete maravillas del mundo* (2006).

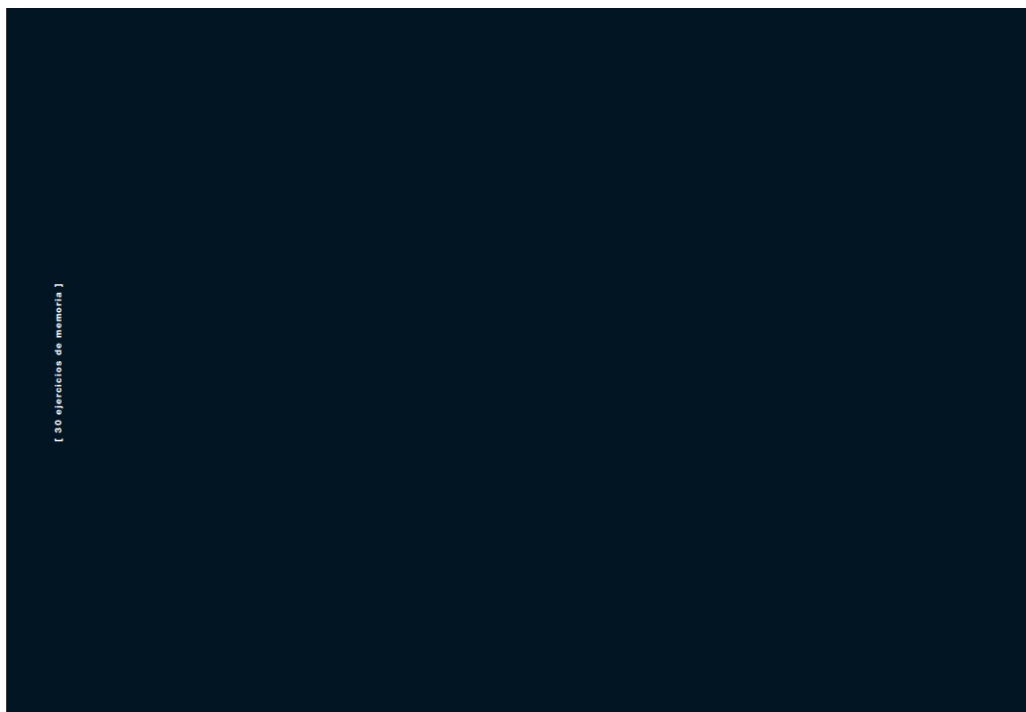


Fig. 34. *Treinta ejercicios de memoria*, p. 40. Albertina Carri. “Una película pasada en sinfín” (“Film on a Loop”).

<p>Figure No.: 34</p>	<p>Title: “Una película pasada en sinfín” (“Film on a Loop”) (Image 14, p. 40)</p>
<p>Fragment: <i>To think of an image that represents the massacre committed by the last Argentine dictatorship is difficult, if not impossible, for me. ... I realize that the disappeared, the dictatorship, the horror, are not the past but are in the present and, as such, they move, they branch out into the fabric of everyday life. The cigarette that I smoke, the letter that I press on to write these words, the dog that watches me with dog eyes, everything around me speaks, screams that infamous time. That is why these lines are presented without an image. She, that image, is inside our bodies, she is in the land we inhabit and she moves like the little dolls in an animation or like the blood of the daughter of disappeared people that runs through my veins. There is no inanimate body, there are stories, memories and moving images, like in a film played on a loop.</i></p>	
<p>Author: Albertina Carri (Buenos Aires, 1973) is a film director and screenwriter. She created the feature films <i>Los Rubios</i> (2003), <i>Géminis</i> (2005) and <i>La Rabia</i> (not yet released). <i>No quiero volver a casa</i> (2000) was her debut film. Her films were presented in festivals in Buenos Aires, Rotterdam, London, Vienna and Toronto, among others.</p>	



Fig. 35. *Treinta ejercicios de memoria*, p. 42. Sebastián Hacher. “La carta de Mariana” (“Mariana’s Letter”).

<p>Figure No.: 35</p>	<p>Title: “La carta de Mariana” (“Mariana’s Letter”) (Image 15, p. 42)</p>
<p>Fragment: <i>When the man leaves, we remain silent. Mariana contemplates the texture of her work and caresses it like a sleeping child. She reads some of the sentences written on the strips of paper she taped on the table. I know she doesn’t need to read: she does it out of habit. For years she has been cutting out lines from that letter and gluing them one after the other. She knows by heart each of the twelve pages that her father left her before trying to escape from Argentina. She says it’s a way to start a dialogue. Every word she adds is a little response to the letter. The blank spaces represent the answers she may never find, the silences that cannot be drawn with any colour. Manolo used a similar table, 29 years ago, to write the letter to Mariana. It was the 23rd of March 1977, at the Antigua Perla bar in Once. It was 2 o’clock in the morning when he finished it. “I have gone underground”, he writes. I am a wanted person... I have been wandering around the city all day. They are the words of a cornered man who is trying to save his life. “I have decided to leave. I must reach my destination for the sole purpose of finding myself again”. But he also knows it’s a dangerous journey. “Today we live and die very quickly. I am not sure I will be able to finish this letter”.</i></p>	
<p>.Author: Sebastián Hacher (Buenos Aires, 1976) is a journalist and photographer. He works from various alternative media outlets, for which he covers news from different Argentine provinces and Bolivia</p>	

Considerations on the Images in the Book

The invitations to collaborate on the production of this book were extended to a broad range of actors and were not limited to experts in history or education. The aim was to include collaborators from many different regions and generations.¹⁶⁰

The production of the book marked an opening to different “memory entrepreneurs”, many linked to communication and art, as well as to political activities.¹⁶¹ The requirements for participation were flexible and participants were asked to submit an image and a text. The exhibition showed a heterogeneous and non-hierarchical variety of objects, works, montages, writings, comics, photographs of the faces and family scenes of the disappeared, photographs of soldiers, etc. The images were not of an instrumental nature in the sense that they completed or complemented written text, nor did they attempt to establish another model of citizenship. None of the written texts was predictable; text and image implied one another but did not correspond to each other.

The images were presented in different formats and sizes and always preceded the written texts. The starting point was the image that was presented followed by the text that started with a title and the name of the author. The text also lacked a predetermined format: the variety of formats ranges from personal stories, poems, reflections on a particular topic, family memories, letters, etc.

This material has a riskier bias in aesthetic-political terms and is less formal than that used in the materials previously analyzed.

¹⁶⁰ The ME formulates it in the following terms: “We asked thirty writers, poets, educators, psychoanalysts, journalists, film-makers, visual artists, photographers and actors to choose a significant image, the one that was most representative of their own experience during those years, whether it was a private or public photo, an art work, a graphic cut-out, an object, or any other image. And based on that image they were asked to write a short text about the reasons for their choice, performing what we call a personal memory exercise. We thus tried to ensure that the exercises gathered here came from different generations and locations in the country, and that they would give us a glimpse of different biographical situations during the years of the dictatorship” (*Treinta Ejercicios de memoria* 9).

¹⁶¹ According to Jelin, “[i]n the field we are concerned with here, that of memories of recent political violence and state terrorism in conflict-ridden political scenarios, what we should find is a struggle among ‘memory entrepreneurs,’ who seek social recognition and political legitimacy of one (their own) interpretation or narrative of the past. We will also find them engaged and concerned with maintaining and promoting active and visible social and political attention on their enterprise. Who are they? What do they seek? What motivates them? At different conjunctures and times, the actors on the scene are diverse, as are their interests and strategies. With respect to the dictatorships of the Southern Cone, the human rights movement has been and continues to be a privileged actor in the political enterprise of memory. Its visibility and capacity to mobilize social support have varied across the countries in the region. In Argentina, its presence and actions have been systematic and permanent, while it has been less continuous and somewhat less significant in Chile and Uruguay” (Jelin, *State Repression* 33–34).

What is often concealed behind an overwhelming number – 30,000 disappeared persons – becomes, in several of these exercises, a specific face and a concrete biography. Thus, *Treinta ejercicios de memoria* contributes to challenging the widespread consensus during the years of the democratic transition, a consensus that promoted the idea that our society, fundamentally its young people, had been a passive target of State terrorism, imagined as a foreign body that appeared like a lightning bolt in a serene sky. The recognition of different militant (political, union, student, and even armed) groups is currently an unavoidable aspect of the critical construction of a history of the social fabric that was dismantled at that time. (*Treinta ejercicios de memoria* 10; translated by Marisela Trevin)¹⁶²

There is also another important difference: the reference to the idea of “(memory) exercises”. An exercise involves participatory action and the active commitment of the subjects involved. In the volume *Pensar la dictadura*, on the other hand, the explanatory tone reinforces the passive role of its audience. In *A 30 años*, the tone is inappropriate for the language of the state. Belligerent terms, such as “resistance” or “against the grain of terror” emerge. Although the book was produced as a school resource, its coordinators believe that it is “particularly open to multiple possibilities of interpretation and its objective will be achieved in each school or teacher training institute if it allows an unexpected irruption, if it has unexpected repercussions among students or sparks a new debate among its readers” (*Treinta ejercicios de memoria* 10).¹⁶³

Within the set of available memorial devices, these cultural artefacts are characterized by the breadth of resources that exceed the classic photographic medium. Their specificity is non-specificity, the impossibility of an order or a hierarchical classification. They are devices of experience built around the recent past that refer to the social and personal memories of a common past. The format is predominantly visual and

¹⁶² “Lo que muchas veces se esconde en una cifra abrumadora -30.000 desaparecidos- se vuelve en varios de estos ejercicios un rostro preciso y una biografía concreta. Es de este modo que *Treinta ejercicios de memoria* colabora a desafiar el consenso extendido durante los años de la transición democrática, consenso que resaltaba que nuestra sociedad, fundamentalmente sus jóvenes, había sido blanco pasivo del terrorismo de Estado, imaginado como un cuerpo extraño que se hizo presente como un rayo en cielo sereno. El reconocimiento de distintas militancias (políticas, sindicales, estudiantiles, incluso armadas) es hoy una zona ineludible en la construcción crítica de una historia de la trama social desmantelada en aquella época” (*Treinta ejercicios de memoria* 10).

¹⁶³ “particularmente abierto a múltiples posibilidades de lectura y su objetivo estará por demás cubierto en cada escuela o instituto de formación docente si permite una entrada imprevista, si desata entre los estudiantes alguna resonancia inesperada o algún nuevo debate entre sus lectores” (*Treinta ejercicios de memoria* 10).

multiple (photographs, paintings, objects, frames, comics), and makes an inseparable pair out of the image and the text, which is, nonetheless, neither necessary nor hierarchical.

The different works are not grouped in a specific way. They follow the order of personal experience: participants could submit “anything” and then write about their choice. The narrative in this case is based on images that are not gathered together by virtue of a historical synthesis. Rather, it appeals to a “rude”, barbaric, and perhaps dialectical view. The proposal or “staging” of this set of images is not linear; it proceeds by jumps, through unstable sequences that refer to “very personal” experiences. It fosters unexpected dialogues between images whose relationship with the story disarms any pretension of totality or narrative closure. The grand narrative of history tends to turn events into fate, and the past into an overcome past. The fragmentary images of memory, however, provide the past with an alternative possibility of connection with the present; these images are the ones that are normally left behind in historicist narratives. In them, ethics confronts history and objects are extensions of our nostalgia and our desire.

The past decomposed into images of memory can help us recompose what was discarded, revive the defeated, and reconstruct emancipatory projects towards the future. “To know, one must imagine for oneself” is the well-known phrase with which Didi-Huberman summarizes Hannah Arendt’s thoughts on the connection between politics and imagination (*Images in Spite* viii). Comenius, the author of *The Great Didactic*, thought the same thing when in 1650 he began to conceive his *Orbis Sensualium Pictus* (figs. 1 and 36). The original project underwent successive migrations, not only due to the author’s turbulent life of political and religious persecution, but also due to difficulties – of a more practical nature – in finding artist engravers in the region. Finally, the book was first published in Nuremberg in 1658. Comenius aimed to condense the world in images with the aim of facilitating the learning of school-age children.¹⁶⁴ The author not only noted the power of illustration as a driving force of children’s curiosity and a stimulus for learning, but also the possibility of creating an aesthetic experience: “There is nothing in the understanding which

¹⁶⁴ Iohannes Amos Comenius was a theologian, philosopher and pedagogue born in 1592 in what is now the Czech Republic. His fundamental work was *The Great Didactic* (1657), which, together with other writings, constitutes what is currently recognized as the foundation of the comprehensive training of the human being, synthesized in a pedagogical treatise on teaching. His avant-garde thought is associated with ideas of the pansophical ideal of education, the elimination of physical punishment, pleasure as the objective of learning, the teaching of Latin simultaneously with the stimulation of the vernacular language, and a fundamental concern for the method, understood as the technique of knowledge transmission. Comenius is an exponent of the political, religious, and cultural crisis of his time. *Orbis Pictus* is a visual encyclopaedia consisting of one hundred and fifty chapters. This didactic book was used for many years in Europe as an official text for teaching Latin.

was not before in the senses. Therefore, skilfully exercising the senses to conveniently grasp the differences of things is the basis of all wisdom, learned eloquence and prudent action in all things of life” (Comenius 6). Imagination was considered a fundamental mediator of thought. The ethical transformation of daily life was possible through work on representations of the material world. In the observation of the world, the education of perceptions and, more specifically, the education of the gaze, had a privileged place in Comenius’s pedagogical ideology. Preoccupation with images is not new. According to Inés Dussel,

rather, it could be argued that in non-literate societies [imagery’s] influence was even greater than it is today, since they did not have the competition with writing that they have now. What is new are the methods of their production and circulation, their participation in a certain visual regime; or, to put it in more sophisticated terms and using the words of the French philosopher Jacques Rancière, what is new is their participation in a new “distribution of the sensible” that has to do with ways of seeing, feeling and saying that are different from the ones we were used to. (“La imagen” 4)¹⁶⁵

The introduction of a pedagogy of memory conceived as a state policy has various consequences upon entry into the school system. For the first time, there is the possibility of systematically and didactically studying the recent past with the assistance of what historical research could offer. This form of organizing knowledge is useful for creating a critical distance from the “toxic” or sensationalistic images that mass media prefer to disseminate. On the other hand, the historicist approach to the material limits the possibilities of the dictatorial past being productively related to the present. The permeability that would allow us to establish parallels with similar events in a previous era is also restricted. By stitching the pedagogy of memory into a government-driven project of democratic citizenship, collective memory is given an exclusionary form that prioritizes the promotion of behavioural norms (tolerance, respect for diversity, human rights) over political analysis. An

¹⁶⁵ “más bien, podría argumentarse que en sociedades no letradas su influencia era aún mayor a la actual, ya que no tenían la competencia con la escritura que tienen ahora. Lo que es nuevo son sus modos de producirse y circular, su participación en un cierto régimen visual; o, para decirlo en términos más sofisticados y usando las palabras del filósofo francés Jacques Rancière, lo que es nuevo es su inscripción en un nuevo “dispositivo de lo sensible” que tiene que ver con maneras de ver, de sentir y de decir distintas a las que estábamos habituados” (“La imagen” 4).

ideal citizenry of caution, prudence, and even obedience is emphasized instead of fostering participatory dispositions. Civic or citizen morality regulates political activity by subjecting it to formal protocols (voting, elections, appropriate and inappropriate places for its exercise). The citizen entrusts the fate of common affairs to their rulers. Let us not forget that the primary objective of the Kirchners' politics was the redirection and deactivation of a popular uprising. Educating to avoid repetition can thus simply become avoiding any repetition, dangerously approaching an attempt to de-politicize society. That is, the sense is created that the source of all evils lies not so much in the disposition to violence of the dominant sectors of the economy and their state agents, but in the insubordination of their social victims. The evil would lie in the passion for an idea, in the readiness to engage politically in an emancipatory project.

Perhaps that is why the "Education and Memory" Programme largely dismisses other images that originated within the movement for memory – a movement that owes its existence precisely to "improper" practices and the invention of unprecedented spaces for political action. The "Education and Memory" Programme differs from the *Treinta ejercicios de memoria* project precisely in its treatment of images. The project involved a dialogue between the school and the proliferation of artistic, personal, and unique images that spontaneously emerged in the space founded by memory practices. In contrast, the "Education and Memory" Programme resorts to the image as an illustration, framed by an explanatory (and somewhat authoritarian) text that turns the image into a documentary extension, not an opportunity for the creation, resignification, and re-politicization of a social reality that continues to be characterized by violations of fundamental rights. The formalization of images in schools excluded political imagination and its creative excesses in memory practices. In a certain way the desire for memory was replaced by the duty of memory. This opens the door to the complementation of this *image deficit* by militant right-wing denialism.

In times of "Googleization", the school preserves Comenius in – among other things – its aspiration to summarize everything, to explain the world. However, the school did not inherit the confidence in the power of images promoted by that pedagogue. State terrorism and its traumatic consequences have generated the need for formal teaching of recent history. Something that is so close to the country's contemporary experience, however, requires images that are freer and fairer than the traditional school image. Faced with codified and chronologically organized knowledge, knowledge that demands obedience and produces saturation, perhaps the reactivation of a new ignorance is needed. I am referring to

an ignorance of the narrative order and epistemic mastery regarding what happened. What is needed, as van Alphen would say, is the reactivation of “a performative mastery of the emotions triggered by happenings” (“Playing the Holocaust” 156).

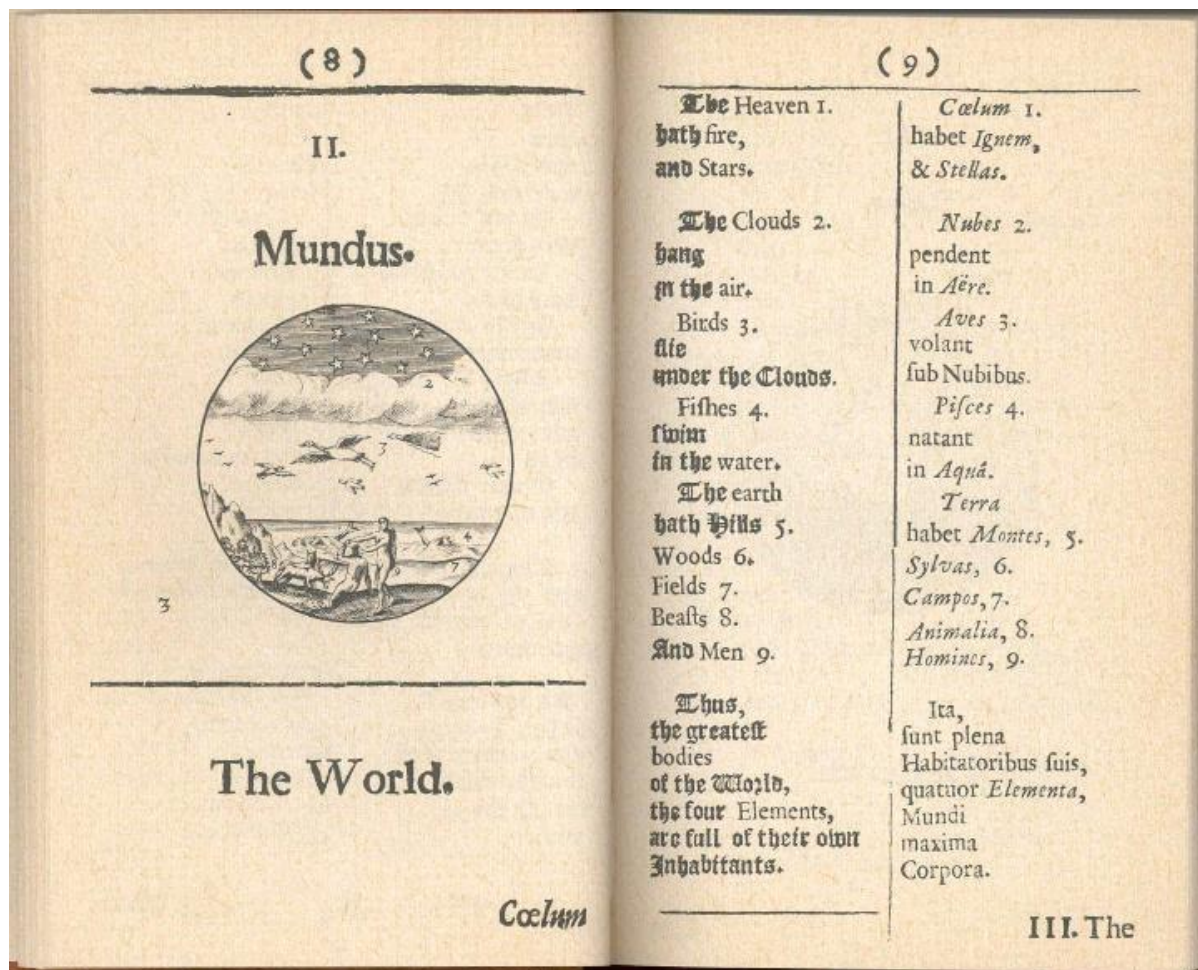


Fig. 36. Iohannes Amos Comenius. *Orbis Sensualium Pictus*. 1658.