

CASA HOGAR

AN OASIS IN TIMES OF REPRESSION



PIDEE / PROTECCIÓN A LA INFANCIA DAÑADA POR
LOS ESTADOS DE EMERGENCIA



p.i.d.e.e.

CASA HOGAR:

An oasis in times of repression

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MUSEO DE LA MEMORIA
Y LOS DEBERCHOS
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CASA HOGAR: AN OASIS IN TIMES OF REPRESSION

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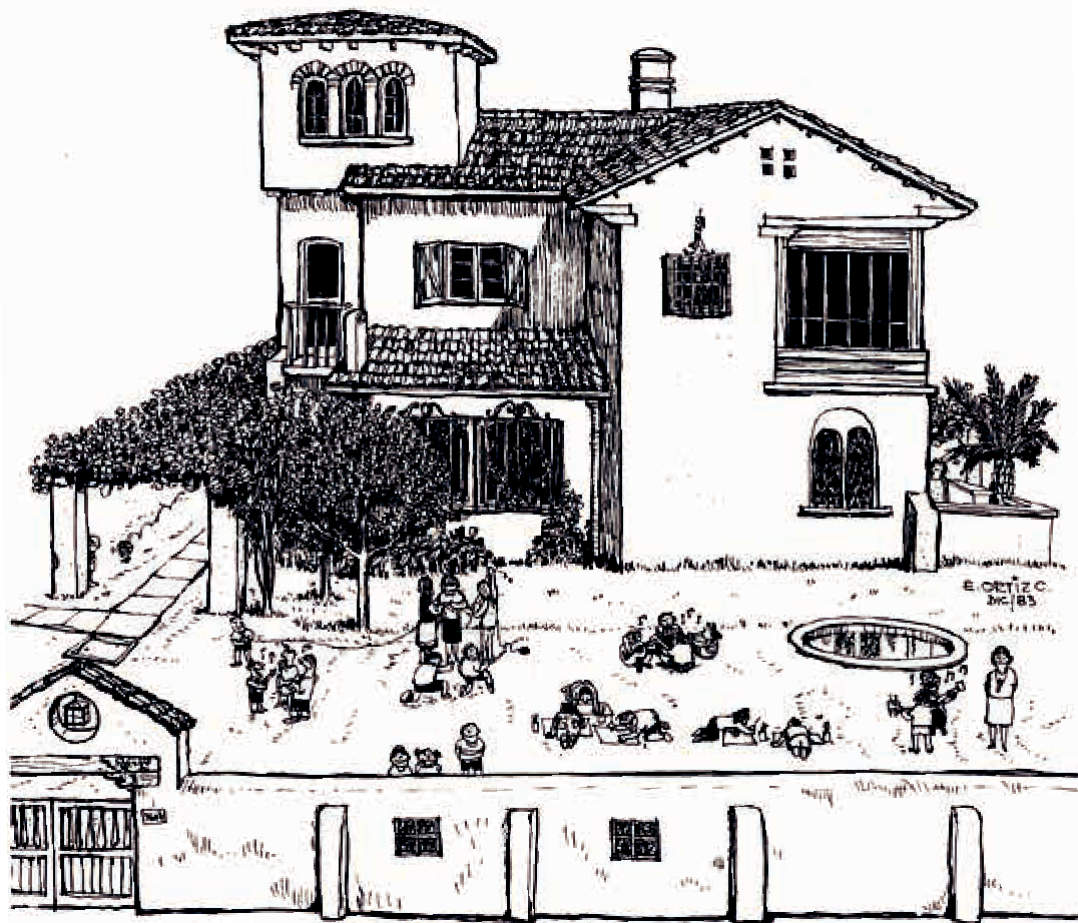
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Gloria Vio Grossi. Social Worker. Married with three children. He joined the PIDEE Foundation in 1984.
Lives in Valparaíso.

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PIDEE Archive

PRESENTATION

Throughout recent history we have seen that in the several wars that have occurred in the world, the most invisible victims have always been children. Not only do they suffer the horror of violence, often being orphaned, mutilated and left with lifelong psychological sequelae, but also the burden of helplessness in a convulsed adult world.

In the midst of adversity, and at the hands of generous and supportive people, experiences of protection for childhood have arisen. Thanks to these first foundations, organizations and institutions have been created that contribute to overcoming the brutal conditions experienced by children in extreme situations.

From the experiences of the Soviet pedagogue Makarenko¹ to the activities of “The Bunker of Aleppo²” aimed at Syrian children in the ongoing war, experiences have emerged from these devastated places that leave us with the hope that just as there are many who are developing the business of war, there are others who strive to ensure that hatred is not what defines the lives of child victims of armed conflict. In such a way, that by helping them overcome the traumatic events, they can rebuild their lives and establish new ways of relating to themselves and others.

1. Anton Makarenko (1888-1939). Pedagogue, he worked with children with the aftermath of war, abandoned, orphans, criminals. From 1920 to 1928, Makarenko headed the “*Maxim Gorky Colony*”, an educational commune for delinquent children and youth sent there by the Commissariat of Public Instruction; from 1928 to 1935 he headed the “*Felix Dzerzhinsky Youth Labor Commune*”. In his books *Pedagogical Poem* and *Flags on the Towers*, Makarenko relates, the life and activity of these two educational communities.

2. “*The Bunker of Aleppo*” is an experience directed by Asmar Halabi. Its purpose is to emotionally save children from the experiences they have endured.

The book we present on this occasion has been built on the basis of 18 testimonies that have been the key to historicize and reflect on what the experience of the PIDEF Foundation's "Casa Hogar" program was. This program was developed between 1985 and 1990 in Santiago, Chile.

This is not the first time the experience has been written about. In 1990, at the end of this program, María Estela Ortiz R. and Chetty Espinoza M., in the hope that children would never again be subjected to the conditions of suffering, abandonment and loss that they suffered as a result of the civil-military dictatorship. The authors wrote about an ongoing experience and titled it "Casa Hogar: Families in Emergency." Its content was based on the chore of the program, the testimonies of two families and the registration system of the 199 children and adolescents who were in Casa Hogar during the five years of operation.

On this occasion, we are called upon to appeal to memory to the construction of an oral archive in which the speaking voices are the children, their fathers, mothers and part of the team that worked at Casa Hogar. From the narration of their own experiences, memories and the resignification of history that occurs with the perspective of time with which we approach past events, we have tried to reconstruct the complexity of the scenario of the 80's. A period marked by anomalous forms in the exercise of power by the civil-military dictatorship, as well as by the strength to face it, both of the families with political and social commitment, as well as by each of the people who formed the Casa Hogar team.

It is important to share that this was not an easy task for the authors. The first call for participation in the project was not answered and, in some cases, was rejected. And the idea of talking about one's own childhood past, still generates resentment and many prefer to keep this period in silence. This led to the decision to include the fathers, mothers and professional members of the Casa Hogar team in this oral registry.

Casa Hogar: "An Oasis in Times of Repression" is divided into three chapters. The first one addresses the historical period with all the political, social


and economic vicissitudes that took place at that time. The second one accounts the intervention model of Casa Hogar in the face of the emergency situation and what the civil-military dictatorship meant for the families. Finally, a third chapter focuses on reflections from a psychological perspective on the experiences of children and adolescents. In each of the chapters there is the speaking voice of the witnesses, which is part of this unofficial history and emerges to present their own experience framed in a social memory of the Casa Hogar community of PIDEE Foundation.

The existence of the Casa Hogar program required many combined efforts. Its work methodology was born from the professionalism and specialty of those who formed the medical, psychological and social care team for children and adolescents. But the hallmark of its functioning is undoubtedly born of the commitment and creativity with which the professionals assumed the challenges, and the deep knowledge of the particularity of the situation of the families and children who took part in the program. Thus, among the professionals interviewed, there is a permanent reference to affection, tenderness, protection, and physical closeness as an expression of a therapeutic that is intertwined with a culture of peer-to-peer affection.

While, the children and young people who were users of Casa Hogar, despite remembering little, or having reconstructed the story with their parents, they have the perception that it was a place that gave them shelter when they and their families were completely unprotected and vulnerable.

In the pages that give shape to this Memory Archive, memories are intermingled with the gratefulness of the witnesses. For the authors, it is the reconstruction of stories of childhood and adolescence in our country. It is a memory record that contributes to the narration of history, to the knowledge of social processes and the reflection of our commitment to childhood and adolescence. It is to look back at an experience of pain and resilience and, in doing so, to affirm that all the pain experienced does not paralyze people when they are willing to go beyond their darkness and fears.

The Authors



“The work of PIDEE in this context in relation to its comprehensive care for childhood, meant the possibility for families who were confronting the dictatorship to have a place of protection and support for their children or grandchildren.”



CHAPTER 1

THE 80'S: ECONOMIC CRISIS, REPRESSION AND POPULAR REORGANIZATION

Ana López Dietz



The civil-military dictatorship in Chile, headed by General Augusto Pinochet, was sustained through violence and repression, deploying a series of mechanisms of control, intimidation and oppression throughout its 17-year duration.

The curfew, mass arrests, executions and disappearances, raids on companies and settlements, the dissolution of congress and political parties, were some of the terror devices used to impose their policy. Mechanisms ensured by communication control, which only allowed newspapers, radio and television stations loyal to the dictatorship to report.

During the first years, especially between 1974 and 1976, the dictatorship focused on repression against political organizations and left-wing militancy, after the first massive detentions between September and December 1973. To this end, a series of official surveillance and control agencies were established that functioned for the detention, torture, monitoring, infiltration and detention of political opponents.

The Directorate of National Intelligence (DINA) was legally created on June 14, 1974, by Decree Law No. 521 of the "Supreme Government", although it had been operating at least since November 1973. In its 1st article, this Decree states

There is created a Directorate of National Intelligence, a military organ of professional, technical character responsible directly to the Government Junta, whose mandate shall be to gather at the national level all information originating in the various fields of action for the purpose of producing the intelligence required for the formulation of policies, planning and adoption of measures designed to protect national security and the country's development. (Decree Law No. 521)¹.

However, there were many other repressive agencies in charge of the different branches of the Armed Forces and Carabineros, such as the Dirección de Inteligencia de la Fuerza Área (DIFA), the Servicio de Inteligencia Naval (SIN), the Army Intelligence Directorate (DINE)

1. Ministerio del Interior. Decreto Ley N° 521, del 14 de junio de 1973. In: Biblioteca del Congreso Nacional de Chile. Online. <https://www.leychile.cl/Navegar?idNorma=6158>.

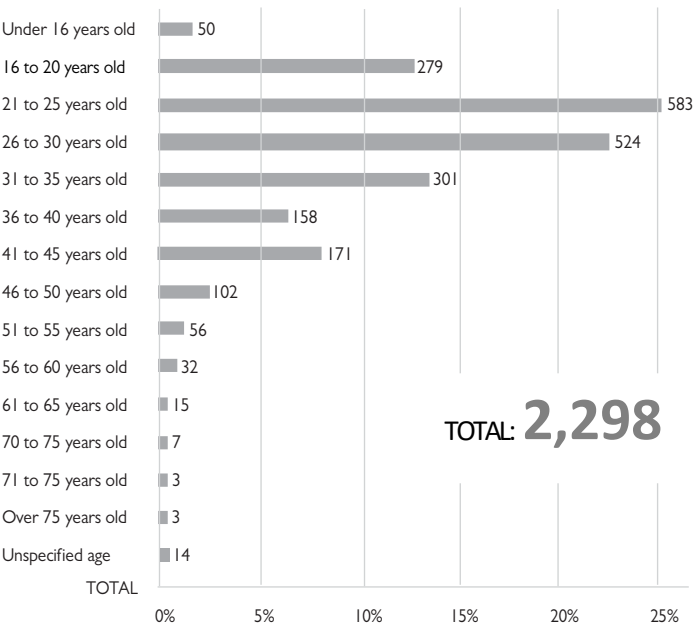


And the Servicio de Inteligencia de Carabineros (SICAR), in addition to a series of other parallel or internal organizations, such as the Comando Conjunto, the Brigada Purén, among others. These organizations had economic and human resources and operated in multiple detention centers, both legal and illegal, such as Tejas Verdes, Villa Grimaldi, 3 Alamos or Londres 38.

In the 1991 report of the Commission for Truth and Reconciliation, known as the Rettig Report, *2,298 victims of repression* were recognized, referring only to the disappeared detainees and executed politicians. According to data provided by the report, of the total number of cases, 2,160 correspond to males and 138 to females². The victims, mostly young people between 21 and 30 years of age as evidenced by the data in the same report. (See graph 1).

2. Comisión Nacional de Verdad y Reconciliación. *Informe de la Comisión Nacional de Verdad y Reconciliación*. Corporación nacional de Reparación y Reconciliación, 1991. P. 1938. Online: <http://www.gob.cl/informe-rettig/>

Graph I: Number of victims by age (disappeared detainees and politically executed)



Source: Rettig Report, p. 1365

The repression of the parties of this first stage (1974 and 1976) of persecution is also reflected in the results of the Rettig Report (Pp.1,365-1,366).

On the other hand, the Valech Report recognized more than *40,000 people who suffered torture*. To this must be added other forms of repression such as exile, relegation or raids. Since 1983, repression has been on the rise again. According to María Eugenia Rojas in *La represión política en Chile*, the arrests recorded by the Chilean Commission of Human Rights and the Vicariate of Solidarity starting in 1979, were as follows:

1979 - 1.325	1980 - 1.129	1981 - 911
1982 - 1.789	1983 - 15.077	1984 - 39.440
1985 - 8.946	1986 - 33.665 ³ .	

3. Rojas, Eugenia. *La represión política en Chile. Los hechos*. IEPALA Editorial: Madrid, 1988. P. 258.



On August 13, 1977, the regime published in the *Diario Oficial* Decree Law No. 1876, which dissolved the DINA, following the international impact generated by the murder of Orlando Letelier in Washington. In compensation, the National Information Center (CNI) was created by Decree Law No. 1878, which existed until the end of the dictatorship. The CNI functioned similarly to the DINA, although it depended on the Ministry of the Interior.

These agencies were protected during the dictatorship by the Amnesty Law created in 1978, with Decree Law No. 2191, which

“Granted amnesty to the perpetrators, accomplices or accessories to criminal acts that occurred during the state of siege between September 11, 1973 and March 10, 1978⁴.”

Since 1979, the government began to promote a series of policies to institutionalize the new political, economic, social and labor measures of the dictatorship, such as the Labour Plan elaborated by José Piñera in 1979, the 1980 Constitution, the creation of the Pension Fund Administrators (AFP) with Decree Law No. 3,500, the Health Insurance Institutions (ISAPRES), with Decree Law No. 3 of the Ministry of Health (April 27, 1981), the General Law of Universities (January 3, 1981), among others.

4. Ministerio del interior. *Informe Nacional de Verdad y Reconciliación*. Tomo I, p. 61. Online: <http://www.gob.cl/informe-rettig/>

During those early years, many human rights organizations began their activities, as was the case of the Pro Peace Committee (1973), National Refugee Commission (1973), Association of Families of the Detained Disappeared (1974), Social Aid Foundation of Christian Churches (1975), Vicariate of Solidarity (1976), Committee for the Return of Exiles (1978), Association of the Relatives of Executed Political Prisoners (1978), PIDEE Foundation (1979), among others.

In this context, and in line with the latter organizations, PIDEE was created in 1979. *"In response to the demand of families affected by human rights violations during the military government, to provide assistance to children affected by disorders derived from the situation they lived in, in the areas of mental and physical health, education and culture, in addition to meeting their basic survival needs⁵."* The institution served nearly 12,000 children throughout the country, with branches in eight regions of the country. The areas of attention provided by the foundation were: social assistance, mental health care, physical health care, psychopedagogy, pedagogical support, therapeutic recreation workshops, a special program for returnees and the Casa Hogar program.

The Economic Crisis and Resistance to the Dictatorship

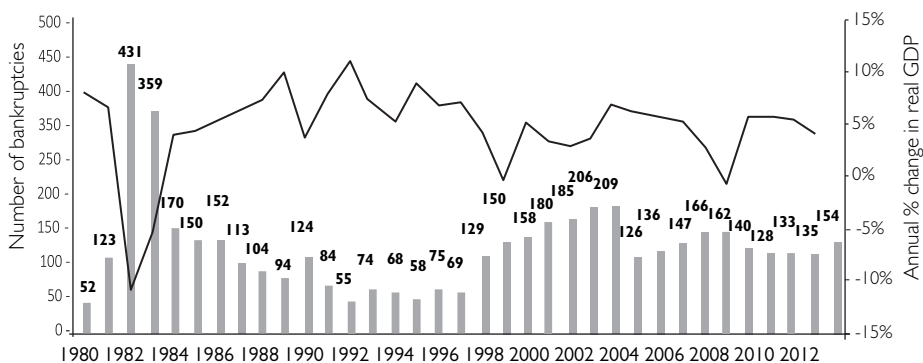
Attempts at organization and resistance by the opposition to the dictatorship began from the moment of the coup d'état, under conditions of harsh repression and persecution. The political activism tried to maintain its structure of operation hiding, emerging also from some of the Human Rights organizations. Shortly after, other attempts at reorganization began, such as the National Union Coordinator (CNS), the National Labour Front (FUT), or the University Cultural Association (ACU) in 1975.

However, it was in the context of the 80's, after the impact of the economic crisis of 1982, that resistance became massive and took to the streets to express itself through popular protests. This forced

5. PIDEE. Fundación para la protección de la infancia dañada por los estados de emergencia. Online: <http://www.pidee.cl/conocenos/>.

Number of Bankruptcies and GDP Growth, 1980-2014

(Bankruptcy registry according to date reported, Annual % change in GDP at chain-weighted prices)



Source: Superintendencia de Insolvencia y Reemprendimiento y Banco Central. Insolvencia y quiebra en Chile. Principales estadísticas desde 1982 a la fecha. p. 12.

the government to change its repressive measures, which were again intensified through raids, relegations and widespread arrests. Torture and execution were also used to silence criticism and struggle against the dictatorship.

The economic crisis especially affected workers and popular sectors. In 1982, several banks and companies went bankrupt or closed, unemployment skyrocketed, as did poverty and misery, *“the economic tranquility of that year, 1982, was interrupted by the decision to devalue the peso against the dollar that the government of the time had to take in mid-June. What was first a jump to \$ 47 CLP, turned in August into a free float that took the dollar to over \$ 80 CLP”*⁶. A document from the Research Division of the Ministry of Economy, points out the number of bankruptcies between 1980 and 2014, providing evidence of the enormous amount produced in the years 1982 and 1983, with more than 700 companies or banks going bankrupt.

The critical economic situation led to the well-known Hunger Marches in 1982. On July 29 of that year, *“a crew of 23 workers from the Minimum Employment Programme (PEM) was arrested on Américo Vespucio and Santa Julia streets for putting up a sign on the road*

6. Morand, Luis. *“Apuntes sobre la fiscalización bancaria en Chile”* In: Superintendencia de Bancos e Instituciones Financieras: Santiago, 2000. P. 15. Online: http://www.sbf.cl/sbifweb/internet/archivos/DISCURSOS_1732.pdf.



that said 'We ask for help to buy bread, because we are hungry'.⁷ In October of that year, the Agrupación de Cesantes de Quinta Normal was created and several protests were held, including that of December 2, called by the National Union Coordinator, to "protest against hikes and unemployment."⁸

According to a 1985 working document of the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences (FLACSO), between 1982 and 1985 "the area sown of the 14 traditional crops (wheat, barley, rye, oats, rice, corn, beans, peas, chickpeas, lentils and potatoes, marigold, rapeseed, beet) decreased, reaching the lowest sowing figure of the century"⁹, which was not compensated by imports, due to the lack of foreign currency. According to figures at the time, the price of 17 staple foods had increased by 18% in the twelve months prior to September 1984, which, together with unemployment and

7. Vicaría de la Solidaridad. *Memoria para construir la Paz. Cronología 1981-1982*. Online: <http://www.vicariadelasolidaridad.cl/cronologia/1981-1982%20.pdf>.

8. *idem*.

9. Gallardo, Bernarda. *El redescubrimiento del carácter social del problema del hambre: las ollas comunes*. Documento de Trabajo. FLACSO, Santiago, Chile. No. 247. May 1985. Online: <http://flacsochile.org/biblioteca/pub/memoria/1985/000931.pdf>.

the withdrawal of the State from social spending, increased social problems and the socioeconomic effects on the popular sectors.

On the other hand, repression intensified with detentions or selective murders against leftist militants, but also with massive raids on settlements, such as the one on December 29, 1982 against settlers of Nuevo Amanecer of La Florida.

The year 1983 was inaugurated with several workers' strikes, land occupations by settlers, marches by unemployed workers and hunger strikes. On March 24, a *"protest against hunger, unemployment and economic policy was held. According to official figures provided by Carabineros, 227 people were detained in Santiago. Similar protests took place in Valparaíso and Concepción."*¹⁰ Other forms of organizations began to spread, such as the committees of the unemployed workers, the common pots (community participation that seek to solve the basic need to eat), the health commissions; new human rights organizations also emerged, such as the National Commission Against Torture.

It is in this context that the days of popular protest took place. On April 21 of that year, the Confederation of Copper Workers, meeting in Punta de Tralca, called a national strike for May 11, 1983, which became the first national protest, surprising the political regime, but also the organizers themselves due to its massiveness. According to the Vicariate of Solidarity *"Unofficial figures published by the press indicate a number of more than 652 cases of detentions throughout the country, two villagers die."*¹¹

The protests expressed the discontent of an important sector of Chilean society with the dictatorship, due to the serious economic difficulties being experienced, but also showed the rejection of authoritarianism and repression. On the other hand, these, in turn, allowed the rearticulation of parties, social movements and opposition groups formed by workers, settlers, women and youth.

After the first protest, the National Workers Command was formed. May 21, 1983 was key to articulate Chilean trade unionism and to call for

10. Vicaría de la Solidaridad. *Memoria para construir la Paz. Cronología 1983-1986*. Online: <http://www.vicariadelasolidaridad.cl/cronologia/1983-1986%20.pdf>.

11. *idem*.

the following protests. As we have already pointed out, the dictatorship's response to the protests was massive repression, directed above all against the popular sectors. On May 14, *"army personnel, carabineros, investigations, and civilians carried out a vast operation and raided more than 6,000 homes in the southern part of the capital, covering the districts of San Miguel, La Cisterna and La Granja. In the settlements of La Victoria, Yoa Goulart, Yungay and La Castrina, it is estimated that ten thousand men are gathered in sports fields and public squares and must submit to a police check. Settlers denounce mistreatment and harassment. Similar operations, in smaller proportions, are repeated in other areas on several occasions."*¹²

On June 14, the second day of national protest took place, culminating in more than 1,000 people detained, 5 people murdered and 70 injured. A few days later, the president of the Confederation of Copper Workers, Rodolfo Seguel, was detained along with many other well-known union, social and political officials.

The third protest was called for July 12. The dictatorship responded with the Proclamation No. 145, according to which *"a 'curfew' is established between*

*20 and 24 hours in the provinces of Santiago and San Antonio. The same measure is taken in Concepción."*¹³ The casseroles (form of popular protest which consists of a group of people making noise by banging pots, pans, and other utensils) were felt in many settlements of Santiago and other parts of the country. Once again, according to human rights organizations, there were more than 1,000 detained throughout the country, two dead and as many injured.

Between 1983 and 1986, more than 20 popular protests took place. One of the most important and massive was that of July 2 and 3, 1986, which ended with numerous wounded, detained and murdered. On that July day, Carmen Gloria Quintana and Rodrigo Rojas Denegri were detained and burned alive.

One of the cases that shook the country was the murder of three Communist Party militants on March 30, 1985. José Manuel Parada, Manuel Guerrero and Santiago Nattino were kidnapped, tortured and later murdered by agents of the Directorate of Police Communications (DICOMCAR).

12. idem.

13. Idem.



In September 1986, the Vicar of Solidarity filed a complaint before the Supreme Court for *“major abuses committed by the police and military forces in the first days of the State of Siege”*; the Board of Directors of the Chilean Human Rights Commission met with the Minister of the Interior, *“expressing its concern about the serious events affecting the country in the context of the State of Siege”*¹⁴. In December of that year, the UN General Assembly again condemned Chile for human rights violations.

The help of human rights organizations, such as PIDEE, FASIC or the Vicariate of Solidarity, was fundamental for the defense of life, collaboration with the persecuted, detained, tortured and relatives of the victims of political repression, as well as to make effective the national and international denunciation of what was happening in the country. Without the lawyers, health workers, welfare workers and other professionals, the repression and its effects would have been even more brutal.

PIDEE's work in this context, in relation to its comprehensive care for childhood, meant the possibility for families who were confronting the dictatorship to have a place of protection and support for their children or grandchildren.

14. idem.

PIDEE and the social emergency: trauma, poverty and precariousness

“When the coup d'état came in Chile, I was ten years old, my family was all detained, the repression was strong in the settlement La Legua, it was the only one, one of the settlements that resisted the coup d'état, we fought, and there were my brothers, my family, there was much retaliation against the family... We had to leave La Legua, we ended up in various parts of Chile, outside the Metropolitan Region, we were in Melipilla, in Batuco, until we arrived in San Juan Lo Gallardo, near Tejas Verdes, and the whole family was arrested” -Roxana.

PIDEE's Casa Hogar was a place of refuge and accompaniment for families who were being persecuted by the dictatorship and who participated or were active in organizations, some of which were involved in armed struggle. PIDEE's Casa Hogar was a shelter to take the children, who often arrived with the trauma of repression and the traces of hunger and malnutrition. In their functioning, Casa Hogar and PIDEE offered comprehensive care, ranging from the provision of a physical space to leave the children and adolescents, where they received physical and psychological health care, support from social workers, and emotional support in a place that tried to be as close to a *home* as possible.

In the context of the civil-military dictatorship, the rights of children arriving at PIDEE were violated in different areas. On the one hand, the direct repression exercised on them, and their families made them direct participants in raids, detention or even torture situations; and on the other hand, they also suffered directly or indirectly from the effects of the economic crisis: hunger, leisure and poverty that weighed on a large part of Chilean society.

Numerous stories testify to the persecution that forced families to abandon their homes, forcing them to leave their children and adolescents in a safe shelter, such as Casa Hogar. Roxana's testimony is one of them. Roxana's father and two of her brothers were detained by the dictatorship. His father was released, but not his brothers, who are still missing. The children's voices tell of the trauma and psychological aftermath that the repression left on Chilean families, affecting their lives and histories to this day.



PIDEE Archive

"We were already young, young children, and we arrived at PIDEE, they sent us because... I was very bad, I had a bad time in the 'ratonera' (action used by the agents that consisted of pretend normality in order to detain people who showed up), [...] we were in the ratonera at the end, and I was bad, my brother too, my brothers peed itself a lot, for a long time, my sister to this day, Galia, who is the youngest, is 40-something years old, but she has many problems, psychological, everything, she was very bad, and we all arrived at PIDEE and here Aminta received us, she gave us a lot of psychological help... we were able to overcome a little bit of sadness, all the bitterness we had, of everything we had been through."

The trauma that affected the children and their families was not only the concrete and intimate experience of political violence or persecution, but also the stigmatization with which they were associated, which in many cases meant being excluded or marginalized in different instances.

"For the fact that we already have two missing brothers we were extremists, we were the extremists at school, we were always marginalized, the neighbors didn't greet us, they were afraid of us because we were terrorists, that was the word that was used with us at school, everywhere, then all that, here at the PIDEE they gave us workshops, they gave us a psychologist, they reinforced us with vitamins, and that's when I arrived here, then time passed..."

Roxana's story is also that of many other families, marked by the trauma of detention, murder or the disappearance of family members. But it is also a story engraved by the lack of resources and the poverty in which thousands of people lived.

"I remember I was wearing red shoes, I will never forget... they were big shoes that we had been given in... within all the help that came from the Vicarage, through the PIDE, we got some big shoes with a gold, red buckle, and the heel was hollow, the top lift was worn out and it was hollow, and I didn't play in the schoolyard, because the hollow heel of the shoe was visible, patched, we went to school patched, we didn't have a uniform, until the year 79 or so, when my mother... my father managed to find a better job, because it was also very difficult for him after he was in Tejas Verdes to join the social and union life, which was his forte, because he was very traumatized very... he was very afraid, so he went to the union, some work, bad work, dictatorship... all those who had been detained, who had been leaders, were blacklisted, he was a communist leader all his life."

From the official's perspective, we can appreciate the affective and material support provided by the institution's team of professionals. Juanita, who was then a nursery school teacher at Casa Hogar, recalls:

"I went to Casa Hogar, a nice, a nice job, sad but nice, because there I had to join the nursery room and I was also in kindergarten. I heard terrible, terrible stories, but despite my emotional burden I gave all my love to those children, because they were children, I understood what was happening, but they were such innocent children, but with an enormous lack of love. And I feel very happy with the rest of the team, of our colleagues, also nursery school teachers, who were able, we were able, despite our own pain, despite what we were going through, to give fundamental support to these children. The little hug, the human warmth that we transmitted to them and they also, without knowing it, gave that affection to us."

As we have already pointed out, Casa Hogar's care was comprehensive, trying to cover the overall health of the children, providing them with emotional support, containment, but also specialized care by professional teams and social workers involved in their welfare.

Gloria, PIDE's social worker, recalls that at that time the children who arrived at Casa Hogar

"They were from many origins... even from different socioeconomic origin, because it had to do with the fact that the repression was transversal. And we had children, here it was not a problem that they lacked money to live (smiles), [...] that was not the issue, the issue was the violation of fundamental rights. And a family coming



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coming from seven or eight years of exile and landing in this country that had changed from heaven to earth, is a family that did not have the possibility of being able to assert itself in any public apparatus. In Casa Hogar the children were in very serious situations, very serious [...] of parents who went hiding and left [the] children, there was no family network or none of the family network wanted to take charge, because of the danger it meant.”

The nature of the children arriving at Casa Hogar was diverse. From toddlers who were only a few months old to teenagers. Some came from exile, others had fathers or mothers who were persecuted, political prisoners or in hiding situations that prevented them from adequately caring for the younger ones.

In addition, the economic situation especially affected the families of militants who found it difficult to find a job, or who were in a situation of precariousness and constant persecution. Roxana recalls that:

“The children were born, I had a very bad economic situation [...], once I had an argument at the Casa Hogar with some tías, because I arrived with Leonor's diapers, she was the one who used diapers the most, I had some blankets and sometimes I washed them with just water, and she told me, but how are you going to wash them with...? I don't have, I don't even have a piece of soap to wash them with, the situation was very bad, they turned the coin around that time, the AFPs started, my father-in-law went bankrupt, he was economically bad, he was detained, everything came together, so it was a lot.”

The children also perceived that harsh reality. Felipe was about 13 years old when he arrived at Casa Hogar:

"I remember that we had, mate, I mean, although my family's economic situation at that time was not, we were never millionaires, we were never rich (smiles), or any of those things, no, but I do remember that there were here, there were children, there were kids who were, you could see that they were worse off than you."

The Casa Hogar also made it possible to combat in part the hunger that affected thousands of Chilean families. For those who were living in Casa Hogar, as well as for those who came for the day, being in that space meant guaranteeing the food they could not get outside, breakfast, lunch, afternoon snack.

"Felipe's parents, Amalia and Alberto, were Communist Party militants. This information is fundamental to understand how they arrived at the Casa Hogar. The children who came to PIDEE belonged to families who, in some cases, were strongly involved in the urgent struggle against the dictatorship. As Philip recalls it was: "A sign of the times, that is to say, my mother, my parents, in the 80's the Communist Party elaborated the policy of rebellion of popular rebellion... And my parents as communist militants adhered to that policy and carried it out, with all the pros and cons that one can argue with respect to it, that's another matter, but they adhered to it. And they both fought and carried it out according to the directives of the Central Committee of the party, whether it was my mom traveling to Cuba with the four of us on her back, with the four of us here in Chile; or my dad doing activities inside Santiago."

Militancy implied high risks for adults and children, which meant that the latter also had to face persecution and repression by the security agencies.

As with other children, Felipe was not the only member of his family to stay at Casa Hogar:

"I was not the only one in the family who came to PIDEE, who came to Casa Hogar, I mean, my sister -I have three brothers-, I have two older brothers and I have a sister who is younger. My sister went to Casa Hogar when she was a baby, when she was a little, small. Then she was with the babies in Casa Hogar, I remember that which functioned as a kindergarten,



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that's why I always say that for me it was a kindergarten. Because there were the babies, the younger children separated from the slightly older ones, and so on, I mean, there was a structure, I don't know if I should say educational or kindergarten structure, but it was orderly in that aspect. And my older brothers, my oldest brother is in his forty-something, and they and my other brother also came to PIDEE; so we were always linked both to PIDEE and to Casa Hogar."

As we can see, many families were also affected in their internal constitution, facing family disintegration or fragmentation due to the persecution of the dictatorship. Sometimes the fathers or mothers had to go clandestinely or go into hiding, at other times, they were detained, some had to travel abroad to perform political tasks. For whatever reasons, the family nucleus was deeply affected.

Many voices, one story: Exile, clandestinely and struggle

The protests against the dictatorship, which became massive since 1983, ended violently. The barricades, molotov cocktails, casseroles and stones manifested anger and indignation with the dictatorship and Pinochet. It was an anger for hunger and poverty, but also for authoritarianism and terror that had been going on for ten years.

Protests generally began in the morning and lasted until late at night. The opposition's instructions stated that children should not be sent to school and that no purchases or procedures should be carried out in public offices. Students stopped classes and workers were urged not to eat lunch in the casinos. Spontaneous rallies were held in downtown Santiago, applauding and chanting slogans against the dictatorship. In the evenings, empty pots and pans began to resound, while young people went out to set fire to the barricades on the corners of the settlements. As the time went by and resistance was strengthened, other actions of struggle were appearing, such as sabotage, throwing chains or bombs against electrical transformers, railways, sentry boxes¹⁵, hunger strikes and attacks.

On the other hand, sectors of the Chilean left proposed to radicalize the confrontation against the dictatorship, appealing to all forms of struggle. The MIR, on the one hand, and the Manuel Rodríguez Patriotic Front, driven by the Communist Party, represented this political and action line. It was mainly young people who committed themselves to these forms of struggle, which meant facing clandestinely, persecution and repression, often leaving family and friends to embark on the frontal struggle against the dictatorship.

Many stories testify to what hundreds of people experienced during the dictatorship. The ones we present here allow us to recreate and think about the scenario in which so many other families passed through PIDEE's Casa Hogar. Stories of exile, of desires to return, but also of commitment to the struggle against the dictatorship.

15. De la Maza, Gonzalo y Mario Garcés. *La explosión de las mayorías*. En Eco Comunicaciones, 1985. Online: <http://www.memoriachilena.cl/archivos2/pdfs/MC0033337.pdf>.



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Rocío was born in 1965 in Santiago. She lived with his mother and two siblings, as his parents were separated. At the time of the coup d'état, Rocío was 8 years old and remembers, among other things, that many children stopped attending her school:

"It was a very strange environment that I - always in retrospect -, as a child, I didn't understand much of what was going on, even though at home they talked very clearly about what was happening. Especially my sister who is three years older than me, she insisted on going to school, she was studying at the Artistic Experimental School which was an innovative educational project at that time, and she insisted on going to school... she insisted so much, so much, so much that she went back and forth, and told us that she had seen bodies -because we lived near the San Carlos Canal-, that she had seen bodies in the Canal, bodies floating, so we lived very strong moments, very contained by our parents, in the sense of insisting that we should not have that exposure."

Rocío remembers that a military truck was parked near her house every day, as a constant threat to those who were known to be opponents of the dictatorship. His father was fired from the hospital where he worked and had to leave Chile quickly to escape possible detention. His mother also decided to leave the country in February 1974,

going first to Argentina, where they were reunited with his father and his father's family. As happened in many other cases, the family group broke up in various parts of the world, beginning an exile that would last about 13 years.

Rocío's mother died on October 5, 1977, which again changed the course of her life:

"My older sister stayed at a schoolmate's house, I mean, she didn't have any major ties with us. My sister Elisa stayed with this teacher who was very close to our family, he was a school teacher, he was a communist, from the Communist Party of Britain and he had become very close to us because we lived in an industrial neighborhood in London where there were no other Chileans, we were the misfits of the place, that... well, that is another story, what we lived through bullying, what today is known as bullying that we experienced firsthand, at that time it was disguised as racism - but it is bullying-. And finally we separated and the following year my father decided to return to England and there the family was reunited and a new direction began, and I went back to school, because I had had to come to Algeria, to study in a French school, to learn French, I didn't understand anything, neither physics nor mathematics, nothing, so I have such a significant educational void that is important -now I am a teacher, I know very well what it means to have those gaps-, (Laughs) and then, well, this whole stage ends in 1983 when I finished high school and there will come another, another story."

Tens of thousands of other people also saw their projects cut short by the coup and the dictatorship, being forced to leave the country, causing the separation of families and disintegration in places as far away as Mozambique, Canada or the USSR.

"When I could, I came with all four [children] to Sweden. I am now in Norway. Sandra and Claudia live an hour from my house and the twins Tania and Nico stayed in Gothenburg" –Sandra.

Luis, or Tito, as he is known, was a member of the Communist Youth (JJCC). In 1973 he was a young high school student living in Valparaíso:

"The repression here in Valparaíso was really fierce from the beginning. The occupation of the city by both the Navy and the Army, of

Carabineros, the Investigations, was very early and very fast, wasn't it? And the repression against the workers, against the students, against all the people in fact, was quite effective, unfortunately, then -and there was cooperation here- besides the reactions and the right-wing forces, of the National Party at that time, of the Christian Democracy, of all the right-wing forces and of the businessmen, here, that is to say, here the company, the Compañía de Vapores of Ricardo Claro, the ships that were converted to detain people, Political Prisoners of the Popular Unity, the Buque Maipo, the Buque Lebu, for example, the Esmeralda was also used by the Navy, although it has always been denied, and here people were murdered.... many people were murdered, many people were made to disappear."

Tito was detained on September 11 and was transferred to the Wanderers Stadium and, later, to a ship belonging to Sudamericana Vapores -one of the business sectors that shows the collaboration of civilians with the dictatorship-. After a couple of days of detention, he was released and began to serve in hiding, joining his communist comrades. Tito was detainee again and transferred to the War Academy, and then he was taken to Isla Riesco until he ended up in the Valparaíso Public Jail, being expelled from the country after a little more than a year in prison. With a hint of irony, he points out:

"They just took me to Pudahuel, put me on the plane and told me, -Well, get off in Dublin-, which is the capital of Ireland."

For Tito, exile was always marked by the idea of returning to Chile.

"The important thing for me was to return to Chile, which is what I did later on, which is what really interested me always, and although it was terrible during the dictatorship, it was also, like the Popular Unity, the most beautiful time, because it gives you the possibility to contribute even with a grain of sand, even if it was a little in the construction of what you did personally, it was something that you could do to free the country from a ferocious dictatorship..."

The exile marked more than one generation of people, leaving its hallmark on those who left as well as on those who remained. Many families ended up divided, unable to see each other again for years. Personal projects were truncated, leaving behind jobs, studies and friendships. In many cases, exile meant facing countries with different cultures, landscapes, geographies and languages

totally different, which were known only by name or on maps. But exile was also an opportunity for many. According to Carmen Norambuena, *"Chilean exiles, like other Latin American exiles, always lived between two temporary polarities: what they left behind in the country of origin, and the new to assimilate in the host country"*¹⁶.

Rocío and Luis met in exile, in England. Both were active in international solidarity campaigns with Chile, which sought to help defeat the dictatorship. For Rocío, the encounter with the reality of what was happening in Chile took place at the age of 14, when she met another Chilean woman who was also in exile.



"I began to meet other people, young Chileans, Uruguayans, Argentineans, all of us who had this story... that was exile, and we also had this great motivation to look for answers, to look for ways to live life in a different way, and that's how I became part of a group that we called 'Los jóvenes latinoamericanos', that's how 'Jóvenes Latinoamericanos' we organized ourselves, we got agreements with sports centers, we went to play ping pong, we went to play tennis, we organized soccer championships, and we also organized meetings of Jóvenes Latinoamericanos, which were like Europeans, where young people from other European countries came."

This activism allowed him to relearn to speak Spanish and raise money to return to Chile to visit his family and learn about the reality of what was happening in the country, in 1984, in a stay that lasted six months. Those were the years of massive popular protests.

"It was a wonderful time for me, I mean, I definitely think that those six months were the richest in every sense, in that they gave me the best treat ever, with my bread and avocado... a marvel... being taken care of and

16. Norambuena, Carmen. "El exilio chileno: río profundo de la cultura iberoamericana". Revista Sociohistórica. No. 23-24. La Plata, dic. 2008. Online: http://www.scielo.org.ar/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S1852-16062008000100006.



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having breakfast in bed was like, I don't know, something wonderful, that affection, but also feeling that nervousness, that fear of going downtown knowing that there was going to be a protest, but not knowing how or when, and participating in those protests was very powerful and at the same time, I think with a lot of naivety, which is something that has saved my life for some reason, because I remember going in the subway, I was in the subway of Santiago, year 84 with "El Análisis", reading "El Análisis" in the subway and an old lady told me -You know, you have to keep that, because... -and I didn't understand, I said -No, I don't understand (speaking in an English-Spanish tone) because I also spoke half gringo."

After her return to England, Rocio joined the JJCC and became even more committed to her participation in the struggle against the dictatorship. It was at that time that he met Tito:

"One day in February I saw for the first time a leader of the Jota (informal name of JJCC) who left me with a crush, to say the least, it was Tito."

From that moment on, they moved in together. Even though each had their own projects, they were always articulated around returning to Chile to fight against

the dictatorship. Rocío returned in October 1986, the year considered decisive in the struggle against the dictatorship, shortly after the attempt on Pinochet's life. She especially highlights the support she received from the Social Aid Foundation of Christian Churches (FASIC) to be able to study with a scholarship at ARCIS. Tito was already part of the FPMR (Manuel Rodríguez Patriotic Front) by that time, and returned to Chile at the beginning of 1987, when his name was published in the lists of people allowed to re-enter the country. For several months Rocío and Tito lived illegal in Santiago. Tito recalls:

"We rented some rooms behind a house in Ñuñoa, because it had to be a more or less middle-class neighborhood, what do I know, for reasons of appearance, and we rented some rooms there, with certain coverage as Manager of I don't know what and we had nothing, but I was Manager, which was absurd, but okay."

Clandestinely is a life experience that also leaves its marks. It means living a life and a daily reality that seems "normal" in times when normal does not exist. Disguise and pretend to try to escape persecution and repression by the State and its intelligence agencies. In fact, Rocío knew little of what Tito was doing and vice versa. Not knowing, silence, was also a survival strategy.

While living there they learned of the Corpus Christi massacre, also known as Operation Albania in June 1987, where 12 young militants of the Front were killed in a CNI operation, many of them friends and comrades in struggle of Tito.

Little by little, the dictatorship closed its repressive siege on the opposition, especially on the militant groups of the FPMR. In September 1987 the two were detained. Tito recalls that he arrived home that day at around 8:00 pm. He realized that something was going on, but thought of Rocío, who was pregnant, so he entered the house anyway. He had the feeling that everything was happening in slow motion. He knew what he faced, the horror of torture and the possibility of death. Uselessly, after entering his house, he tried to resist. At one point he was reduced by the CNI agents and it occurred to him to shout his name and he asked them to warn his father, who was a lawyer, that he was being kidnapped.

OPERACIÓN ALBANIA

*Matanza de Chorus Christi
15 - 16 de Junio 1987-2001*

*Aunque ya no estás:
quiero reivindicar
tu amor por los demás.
reivindicar tu lucha,
que es separar el hombre
digno de los indignos.*

*Agradecemos vuestra presencia
apoyo y compañía durante estos
largos y dolorosos 14 años.*

*Confiamos en el Altísimo en que lograremos VERDAD - JUSTICIA
para nuestros jóvenes.*

Familiares Operación Albania.



Operation Albania Poster.
Museum of Memory and Human Rights Archive

“we were arrested in September after the kidnapping of Colonel Correa, [he refers to Colonel Carreño] because there were massive operations by the repressive forces, and we were arrested in Ñuñoa... we were arrested by a special, terrorist, anti-terrorist command of the CNI, a command that answered directly to Pinochet and that also depended on Álvaro Corbalán, what do I know... well, it was a special command and they were the same ones that had participated in Operation Albania and a special brigade that was destined to repress the Front, they arrested us there... Rocío was 5 months pregnant at the time and they took us... this command was the CNI, but they took us to an investigations headquarters because at that time the CNI supposedly could no longer have people in their barracks, but they took you to the investigations barracks and they took you out of there and tortured you in the CNI barracks or they went to torture you there, so it didn't matter, the other thing was formality, legality, because Pinochet had signed an agreement against torture, what do I know, the United Nations, all this legalistic paraphernalia that the dictatorship suddenly adopted.”

As a result of the torture, Tito had one or two vertebrae broken:

“In the end I ended up, as I told you, in the hospital and there they put me in a cast from the neck to my waist and then I spent four months in the Penitentiary hospital without being able to move, and to this day I have some back pain aftermath, sometimes I am immobilized.”

Rocio's story complements Tito's story. That day she had gone to study like every day at ARCIS. When she returned home, she noticed that there were men in civilian clothes:



"There I don't remember what they tell me, but they told me that they found some papers, they wanted to know who I am, they wanted to know who my... I don't know if they said spouse or what [...] I don't remember very well how he mentioned it, the thing is that they made me enter the house and there I saw that everything was turned upside down, I mean, it was a very small space... a room and it had a kitchen next to it, let's say, it had a kitchen, the kitchen appliance, and we had a table that sometimes served as a dining room, so it was a very small space and they took out everything that was in the closets and started asking me questions."

Flyer. Museum of Memory and Human Rights Archive.

Rocío let them know that she was five months pregnant. For the couple, pregnancy had been a conscious decision, which they also saw as a way of resisting the dictatorship, in the words of Rocío "for me and for us, I think that for us it was part of the struggle, to say 'here is life'."

While Rocío listened to the questions of the CNI agents in her house, she began to feel discomfort and the urge to go to the bathroom, they were contractions, but she did not know it. After being detained, she was taken to the Investigations Headquarters, where she found a van from which Tito was taken, his arms were hanging and his head down. Rocio was in the guardroom for several hours, she asked for medical assistance and food, but no one helped her. After a meeting with the prosecutor, she was transferred to a place called "el pensionado", which had a bunk bed, bathroom and sink. Only then did she start feeding again. Those days she crossed paths with Tito on some stairs:

"The second time we crossed paths, him going down the ladder and me going up... and here is where I say that naivety plays in my favor, because when we crossed paths he tells me in English -last night they spoke to me-, that is what I understood... what he actually told me was -last the night they tortured me-."

Rocio was transferred to San Miguel prison, where she was held incommunicado for seven days. In that place, life crosses her with Flor, another of the protagonists of the voices that make up this book:

"Since I was pregnant, they only kept me in the cell, but they made her mop, sweep, what do I know, and while she mopped, she talked to me... I talked to her when the guard was not there, there was an energy, a very powerful force, and when it was quiet I stayed lying down, and for the first time I felt a kick from my baby and I felt "I am not alone, I am not alone" and from then on, from that moment onwards... Takuri moved and then he did not want to move anymore."

Flor was also a communist militant, detained and tortured by the dictatorship, she had her children Luis and Tania in PIDEE's Casa Hogar. After being released, Rocío found out that Tito was in a medical center with a broken back and was able to accompany him in his recovery. Tito was transferred to the Penitentiary hospital, where Rocio visited and cared for him daily, because he could not feed or bathe himself. The recovery was slow, and Tito had to learn to walk again.

Takuri, the couple's son, was born in January 1988. Rocío divided her time between caring for her young son and Tito. In the meantime, he also made visits to the Vicariate of Solidarity to obtain Tito's release. As a result of a strong international campaign, especially in Ireland and England, Tito was finally released and the three went to live in downtown Santiago. Rocio was advised to take Takuri to PIDEE due to some health problems he was having.

"when Takuri was born I was quite lonely, lonely in the sense that apart from not being with Tito, I was with a baby who cried a lot, in fact, at the first control I went to, which was at 15 days, he had lost weight and the pediatrician I had at that time scolded me, and I was very anguished because I did not know why this child had not gained weight and had lost weight."

"He cried, cried, cried, cried, I went from one pediatrician to another and at some point, I don't know if it was Juanita or not, but someone told me to go to the PIDEE, and well, I made an appointment with the PIDEE and Michelle Bachelet saw me and examined Takuri and told me -Look, it's not normal for this child to cry so much-

because I could not leave him alone, I mean, he was in the crib, and I could not leave without him crying.”

After an initial diagnosis of hypertonia, he was referred to a specialized center, where he was diagnosed with mild cerebral palsy.

“The consequences of cerebral palsy, depending on the level, he tells me about things... that if I understand that it affects cognitive aspects, that it affects aspects of perception, motor aspects and finally, well, he... he concludes that she has a mild hypertonia and explains to me -look, the tonicity of the muscles in hypertonia affects perception and therefore, that is why he will have altered cognitive levels in the future-, and also Takuri presented a slight neck deviation, at that time it was diagnosed as a congenital torticollis, then, he tells me... they explained to me that he was going to start treatment with them, that the treatment implied everything, I mean, from the therapy itself, to the feeding he was going to have at the center.”



PIDEE provided her with a scholarship to attend Takuri's kindergarten, the Antarky

“And so Takuri started going to kindergarten and the controls were maintained at the PIDEE, they also gave us milk and from then on, let's say, while I was in Santiago, which was [...] until 1990, he was cared for by the PIDEE.”

Tito remembers taking Takuri to the kindergarten,

“I remember that at some point, just because of the work we were doing, we also had security problems, so we were followed several times, so in that context we had to leave him there at some point, in the Casa Hogar, because we could not be with him, and that is where he stayed, I do not remember how long he stayed there, but he had to stay, we had to leave him [...] we left him with classmates, children whose parents or I do not know, relatives, had problems and we had to leave him, while we fixed the security problem we had, what do I know, because we could not be with him. But we went to see him at some point, when we left him, I don't know why, I remember having seen the place where he was and therefore we met the classmates who were there, Kike,...(Rocio, "Noe"), Noe too [...] I remember having seen the children, what do I know, those who were there... so I remember, those memories, those fragments of that period, I do have them, now, not the details, because when you live through traumatic periods of your life, some of these memories fade or you have on the other hand, very precise memories, it depends on how it is.”

For Rocio, PIDEE was a place of protection and trust, where she knew her son Takuri would be safe:

“When we took him to the Casa Hogar it was like an automatic reaction [...] we didn't think, ‘we have to protect him’ and we took him to the Casa Hogar, we knew that this space existed and what impressed me and what still remains today, is that it was a space made for children, to such an extent that the bathtub was at a level, at a height that you didn't have to bend down to pick up a child, to take him out of the bathtub [...] the furniture, it was a beautiful place, it was like a dreamed place for a child, and within this dreamed space there was Kike, Noe, who were the parents, but there was also Juanita, the Juanita who worked in the kindergarten and who was also linked to what was going on in the house. [...] I don't remember how long it was there either, but the times I went to see it, it was like a space, besides Kike and Noe

told us -whenever you can, come-, it was not like that 'hey, here there is a schedule from here to there', no, I mean, whenever you can, come and see him, so places like that were completely open spaces, both in affection and physically... after that, when we solved our situation, I don't know how long it took, Takuri joined the PIDEE kindergarten and there he lasted a long time, I think he lasted as long as the kindergarten lasted, and I remember that Takuri had many digestive problems and every day they sent him his food for the night, specially prepared, chopped carrots, what do I know, everything, everything so that he could... his remedies, all his things [...] and well, in fact he was in therapy with SEPAC, he was in therapy for two years. Fortunately, the hypertonia he has, because it is mild and thanks to all the treatment she had at SEPAC, Takuri is where he is right now, let's say, he has sequels, he has sequels undoubtedly, but he is where he is thanks to that treatment. If he hadn't had that treatment, you can speculate, but I don't think he would be where he is now, in the end."

For Takuri, on the other hand,

"The good and bad thing about the Casa Hogar is that it was born in a context where it was necessary because human rights were being violated and help was needed, that's the bad thing, but the good thing is that it was born from the need to give, to give and to care for others."

The story of Rocio, Tito and Takuri's family is representative of the struggle, commitment and dedication of thousands of people who risked their personal safety and their lives to maintain their political practice and fight against the dictatorship. Returning from exile, living in hiding and in constant fear of detention were some of the dangers faced by those who opposed the regime. However, the urgency of the struggle prompted to take these risks, even more so in a context in which popular protests and the reorganization of leftist parties and movements were booming. In turn, the response of the dictatorship in the 80's was to toughen repression, directed both at political and social militants and at the population in general, especially in the popular settlements.




Rocío, Tito and Takuri. Year 1989

How could Rocío and Tito, with their young son Takuri, maintain the security of their family, their militancy and their commitment to the transformation that the country demanded?

As we have been able to observe in these testimonies, the existence of Casa Hogar is thus framed in the context of resistance and organization of popular protests, but also of the response to the repression of the dictatorship. The function of protection, shelter and defense provided by Casa Hogar was fundamental, not only for the children and adolescents, but for the whole family. We understand that spaces such as this one were fundamental in the defense and protection of human rights, especially in the case of childhood.





CHAPTER 2

A SUCCESS IN EXTREME SITUATIONS

María Rosa Verdejo R.

If someone knocks at your door

*If someone knocks at your door a morning
sound of doves and bells
and you still believe in pain and poetry
If life is still true and verse still exist
If someone knocks at your door and you're sad,
open, that is love, my friend.*

Gabriel García Márquez, 1945



In the garden of Casa Hogar, 1986

PIDEE Archive

It has been 32 years since the birth of the Casa Hogar program at the PIDEE Foundation. Reconstructing its history is the key to situate ourselves in a context whose traces remain in the present, and to place ourselves in a scenario where the witnesses, with their voices here in force, were both art and part of an unprecedented reception bet at the time. Through oral stories, which have survived more or less faithful to the events of the time, we wanted to answer and share some questions that help to understand the importance and significance of Casa Hogar for those who were its protagonists, why was this program designed in PIDEE? Who were the subjects of attention? How did this reception and protection space work?

The doors of Casa Hogar were opened in 1985 with the purpose of welcoming and providing a space of safety and protection to sons and daughters who, as children of adults committed to the overthrow of the civil-military dictatorship, experienced a violation of rights to the point of being made invisible and/or treated as adults during raids, detentions, harassment and threats of survival and rape.

“If someone knocks at your door...”

"The first symptoms were those, in other words, there are children who, as a result of violence, are left in a very serious situation and are left on the steps of the Vicarage, and where are they going to go, to a home? No, in any way [...] I mean, here we are family and we have to protect them and look for the best way to protect them [...] and we were already in a very important maturity when Casa Hogar was created [she refers to the fact that there were already several programs being developed in the institution, there was experience of collective work] and we were taking care of children from all the Human Rights violations that their parents or they could have experienced" -Gloria.

Although this program was part of PIDEE's space and comprehensive care, entering Casa Hogar was not -for the rest of the institution's staff and beneficiaries- a matter of crossing the fence of colihues that surrounded it. No, because Casa Hogar was a place where protocols were followed, and histories were respected for safety and protection.

Most of the children were referred from other human rights institutions (Vicarage - FASIC - CODEPU) and entered under the category of "Special Cases." This denomination corresponded to situations of families experiencing security problems; families that didn't have a support network after the detention of parents, follow-up or hiding; families going through a serious economic situation, reaching misery in many cases, as well as health problems of children because their parents or family in charge didn't have the support or the means to remedy them.

All this was framed by the political and social situation that the militants of different political parties and members of partisan groups were experiencing due to the political repression of the time, which added to a deteriorating economic situation.

Eduardo remembers that in that period of history:

"[...] at the beginning of the 80's, there were situations where they [his parents] had to leave the country, first my mother and then my father, until they came back, and we all met again. In some situations, we had to live in other houses, in some situations we also had to go to other houses with my mother.

or with my father in Concepción, to Valparaíso, to Puerto Montt [...] where the political work they did was also carried out [...] until the year 87 when they were detained in our house, I was ten years old, and my sister was five... and there we arrived at PIDEE.”

Model and Structure of Casa Hogar

“Now, what were the deep meanings of this project, because it was not a typical kindergarten as it might be say, but it had a structure behind it in terms of protection of minors whose human rights had been violated, that's what I find super [...] it was an instance of communion of realities of the Chilean society at that time, especially in [with] childhood, which is where these instances of communion have to take place” - Felipe.

The stories of Eduardo and Felipe serve as a counterpoint to the story of Gloria, who, from her experience of working in the program, shows us the type of attention the children and adolescents received:



Casa Hogar Facade, 1988

[It was a] "socioemotional and psychological intervention of containment and very great repair, which today, or at that time had to do with the fundamental effects that occurred in children due to parental separation in many cases [...] to enter into communities that they had never been in their lives, in many cases due to the hiding experienced. In other cases the separation not only had to do with detainees, [there were] the children of detainees disappeared, also of political prisoners and it is a very intense line to maintain family reunification, even when the parents were imprisoned, and there we did a precious work with political prisoners, I think pioneer in the country [...] to ensure or maintain the bond of the child with his father, we achieved the first specialized prison visits where we took the children there."

Family and Protection



Alex two years after the arrest of his mother, Cecilia Valdés, during "Operation Albania".

PIDEE Archive

*There's no doubt it. This is my house
Here I happen, here
I fooled myself immensely.
This is my house stopped in time.*

"This is my house", Mario Benedetti

Casa Hogar's response was quick and effective in the broadest sense. When we look back at the historical moment, memories of repressive events appear that show a transversal and preponderant violence in the 80s. The upsurge of violence was set on a target that encompassed the whole society. And is that the years of that repression have passed more selective –farmers, trade union leaders, university students and political party activists leaders–, a more collective system of repression was installed. Citizens were beginning to feel less fearful, more contentious, the most organized social and political the most

organized social and political organizations were installing the discourse of an illegitimate institutionality while putting into practice challenges that contemplated different forms of struggle.

"There was a situation that shocked me, which was a slaughter in the street called Varas Mena" -Sandra.

"Alex [...] was in the massacre, his mother took off across the roofs with him, imagine, helicopters, everything surrounded, gunshots, killing the uncles who lived with him. We are talking of a baby from like three years old? A three years old boy, seeing him like that, his body, his hair falling out, his terrified face. Actually, it all came to my mind. That is inhumane. I mean, I don't know what words to use to say what happened and it must have marked him for life. In fact, he doesn't want to participate in any of the things" -Enrique.

Through this repressive episode, Sandra remembers that:

"The child was very nervous, but we couldn't take him out either, not for a walk or anything. Time passed, like a month and we went out for a walk. We were walking and a motorcycle passes by, and the poor child grabs a lamppost like this [gesture of embrace] and I mean, a sense of fear, the motorcycle reminded him of something. [...] When I came to PIDEE there were other children who were very damaged, also with their detained dads, the mother dedicated to the search for the detainee disappeared father and others with very serious health problems."

The stories of professionals and/or carers are located in a look beyond the visible of the materiality of what was lived daily in that space. Memories are reiterated in the cries of a girl of about one year of age. On this occasion, as on other occasions, the memories are similar:

"She cried and cried and did not eat and her three older siblings didn't know what to do to calm her down. So, I put her on my chest and she just breath and there I managed to calm her down a bit, but she still didn't eat. There the doctor, Michelle Bachelet, gave instructions on what to do. That case was from Carrizal Bajo¹⁷, where several people was detained and the children [silence], the children began to be harassed, harassed, to be followed to school and that was very terrible. That is why they came to Casa Hogar. They were bigger. There were boys and girls of all ages. The profile was of damaged children, where we could recover something by giving them security, giving them what they didn't have at the time, because they didn't have a support network."

17. The Carrizal Bajo weapons internment was a failed operation carried out by the Frente Patriótico Manuel Rodríguez (FPMR) in mid- 1986. This consisted of entering Chile, by sea and in a illegal manner, a large arsenal sent by the Cuban government of Fidel Castro to the northern town of Carrizal Bajo. These weapons would be used by the FPMR in armed actions against the military regime of Augusto Pinochet. The operation was discovered by Chilean government security services on August 6, 1986.



Situations of risk and the absence of support networks were the essence and reality of those who lived in Casa Hogar. In many cases, this was coupled with the difficulty of the fathers, or the mother, to provide the basic necessities for their sons and daughters. By redefining the reasons for admission, we could argue that the reception of children is inscribed in a “once fictional” look, but that in the light of the stories, images appear that resemble the non-existence of a skin in the eyes.

“Her name was Selene¹⁸, dice Sandra. We had to wait until the child reached a certain age before we could admit her.” Marcela, Selene's mother, after returning from exile in 1984, she joined PIDEE. Marcela has her mother detainee disappeared since 1974. At that time Marcela was 18 years old, in high school, and when she became pregnant, she was placed in a nun's home for single mothers. Her economic, family and emotional situation was absolutely precarious. Marcela remembers from that time:

"when Selene was born, I received the support of PIDEE from the first second because Selene entered Casa Hogar and I entered the Pedagogical Area to give free exams [...] this was also at a very turbulent time and I had no address and ... in that nuns' home, I don't know, we couldn't stay indefinitely, so PIDEE's social worker found me a small apartment, they gave me support to buy furniture, they got a godmother abroad to send me help and with that I studied, but Selene went every day to Casa Hogar's nursery room and received all kinds of attention, she had a very fragile health, she had serious health problems when she was a child. She did not retain her food, so she lost a lot of weight, but Michelle took care of her and the tías took care of her. I have proof of that."

17. Selene Meza Lagos. Admitted on August 7, 1987 due to socioeconomic problems and precarious family situation.

26/mayo/87.

¡Hola mamita!

La mañanita está bien de ánimo y de apetito.

Por la mañana estuvo muy integrada con los niños del otro nivel.

Trabajamos en el área motora fina (pintó a dedo con tempera).

Su colocación toda mañanita rallada asegurada luego firme en el patio en donde la niña Camarino solita en dos oportunidades, y cada vez más firme.

Al almuerzo todo garbanzos porotos + aceite, y el postre falo, asegurada se durmió placidamente en los brazos de la tía.

Por la tarde despertó muy risueña y locita.

Su colocación toda. Leche c/ Nestlé + aceite y Panito c/ paté.

La actividad de la tarde: Se entretuvo con los tíos de cuento, y realizando ejercicios de lenguaje, nombrando algunos nombres de animales.

Camarito se tuñita y de la tía fuimos ^{mañita} te cuento echamos de nuevo a la tía ^{esta} ^{mañita}.

[...] *"At that time, I had no capacity to feel strong [...] I saw myself as very weak, I saw that I did not... I felt very, very null as a mother. I think that when I became a mother, I was alone and... other emotions were born [...] I think that feeling alone, being alone, not having contact with my siblings, not having a father, not having my family because they were in Argentina and Venezuela, so the family I had was the Group of Detainee Disappeared and the PIDE family. It was the family I had. The tías [Sandra and Juanita] became my family, the caregiver Alfonso became my family."*



If we could measure the relationship between the Casa Hogar team and the children, it is likely that we could only draw a horizontal line as a representation of reciprocal relationships, of dedication, care and love impregnated with commitment. When reading and rereading these testimonies, correspondence, concordance and affective compensation appear in the foreground. Underlying each line are those gestures and actions of solidarity that arise when we find ourselves in extreme situations, crises and emergencies.

Juanita says: "how could we not do it if they were the children of our own"

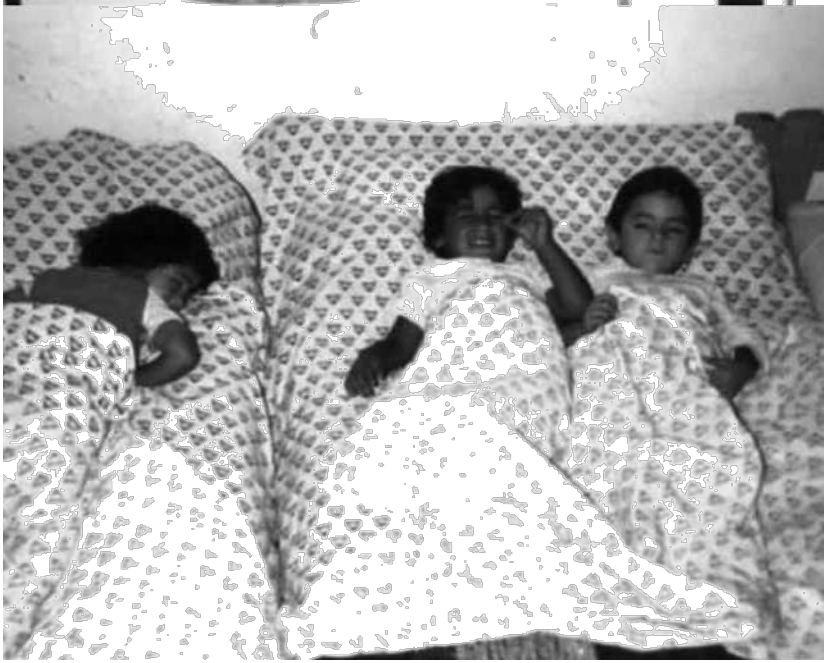
In this intertwined reading of stories, we find episodes that tell us about Tania, a five-year-old girl in a fragile state of health, whose parents -political prisoners-, were incarcerated. Juanita says that Tania was one of the people who marked her in different ways because they had a very strong emotional relationship, and when she [Juanita] left at 6 in the afternoon, she closed the door and take a few steps, she felt how the girl started crying and screaming *'tía Juanita, tía Juanita'. I often left in tears, [...] I had to get to my house.*" But as she left every day, Juanita knew that Tania was left with Jirma and Alfonso who were the guardians, surrogate parents, who would comfort and care for her as she did. She also remembers Pablo, a child who did not fall asleep without the gender diaper that he caressed to sleep, but for Pablo the essential thing was Juanita's hand, if he was not holding her hand, there was no diaper that could replace her presence.



Returning from a walk in the neighborhood

Juanita talks to us about the path that the process meant from the children's entry into a place that was unfamiliar to them, until making them feel like a home:

"At the beginning, the children were a bit elusive, like all children who are unfamiliar at first, in addition to the emotional burden with which they arrived, but later they came closer to tía Maria Teresa, who made delicious things for them in the kitchen, and we celebrated their birthdays. There all together. That helped them in part to fill the emptiness, the sadness they had [...] we all tried to keep this as their home, the material part with toys, activities, we even took them out for a walk in the park. We organized ourselves so that they were not locked up in Casa Hogar. [...] We had experiences... because we were in our uniforms and the children, with their light blue school aprons and white collars, and every time we went out to the square many people from here [in the neighborhood] asked us where the kindergarten was because they wanted their grandchildren to go there and we answered "there is no space" (she laughs); they did not know what Casa Hogar meant."



Nap time

PIDEE Archive

Surrogate parents

"[...] I think it was like being a father, it was like being a father, waking up the kids, putting them to bed, being with them for a while, spending the whole day with them, being the people who welcomed them, hugged them, had to protect them..."

—Enrique

An important and fundamental part of Casa Hogar were the couples who fulfilled the role of surrogate parents, those who assumed the role and responsibilities of nighttime care, the fulfillment of basic needs and material obligations of each child. A work of courage and with great emotional impact. At the beginning of the program, the surrogate parents were Alfonso and Jirma, later Enrique and Noemí.

Both couples currently describe this task as a great learning experience, unprecedented and unimaginable in their lives. For the surrogate parents, the experience left deep traces that were the cause to continue to this day, on the path of childhood protection and development. For them, it was a task born from a social logic that transcended the discursive, as they tried to recreate from the smallest daily gesture to the supports and actions that gave account of protection and the right to be a child, the right to good treatment and the right to have a family.

"It was actually kind of strange (he laughs), but it was like assuming a fictitious paternity. We arrived with our daughter to take charge here and we lived there in Casa Hogar, so we were a family that hosted children at risk, and they lived with us, and that was the idea, to insert them there, to give them trust so that they would be calm..."

-Alfonso

"For me it was like, how could I say? It was like being dad again, something like that... there were children that we treated like real sons, that happened to me [...] there were very sad moments because the children cried, they missed their parents, so we had to take them in and give them trust and treat them well to make them feel comfortable so they could play." "[This experience] for me was something very beautiful... very beautiful and, at the same time, sad because it ended, and we no longer saw those children. [...] there was so much love, so much affection, so much dedication [...] from all that team, all working together to be able to have stability, tranquility, emotion" [...] I learned that one's dedication to them was sincere, a true thing, it was not something imposed, like having studied something and having given it away just like that, easy."

During the interview Alfonso is silent and his story doesn't flow in verbalization. However, in memory he goes through precise passages of his stay at Casa Hogar:

"[...] what I remember the most was a trio of little brothers who came from a very poor stratum, very poor, they arrived here with lice, almost in rags, and among them was a boy. They were three brothers and a girl, I remember one named Yerco, who was a very cute little guy, and I told his mother -leave him to me, give me this child- (he laughs), one felt a lot of affection for the children [...] all the boys and girls had something special. So, when they left, we were sad because they were leaving, as if they were leaving part of us, as if they were something of us, let's say."



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They were sons and daughters, but they weren't!

"we put all the love we could into it, the art, the music, being able to affectively repair that creature through all this love and [thereby] repair ourselves..." -Noemi.

Enrique Espinoza and Noemí Baeza. Second couple of surrogate parents. Both young, from 25 and 24 years old, pedagogy students, they were teachers in an alternative school at the time and members of the folkloric group Calahuala, formed in the Pastoral Obrera Vicarage. Without preamble or preparation - Noemí remembers-, Chetty Espinoza, Casa Hogar's psychologist, approached them with the idea of going to PIDEE as surrogate parents. At the time of the testimony, she looks at Enrique and says that '*we did not respond immediately*'.

After the offer they walked from Plaza Ñuñoa to Plaza Italia holding hands in complete silence but knowing that the answer was 'yes'. The next day, they came to PIDEE feeling privileged for the invitation to be part of this team and, today, they express their gratitude for the opportunity that gave them a mark that they still practice today with children and young people whose rights have been violated.

Naomi on an artistic day with children



"Until that moment we had seen the young people, the adults, the families, but we hadn't realized that childhood was so damaged and a little scared, because as Enrique said, we had to leave everything, offering life and when we arrived there were several pairs of little eyes that were watching us. [...] We put all the love we could, the art, the music, to be able to affectively repair these creatures through all of this love and also repair ourselves, because the impact of how childhood was damaged was extremely intense, because we perceived that the children of Chilean families were damaged, but we didn't know how much and what it meant. We have very beautiful stories, very sad stories too" –Noemí.

"[We had to] earn for the simple reason that we were young. There was a little boy named Alex and another little boy named Takuri; he was so attached to me, he was about one and a half years old and they sent for me to change his diaper, he did not let the tías change his diaper, those things that are part of everyday life remain in our history; also because everyone laughed because they said -look, you and your son are the same-, Takuri had blue eyes and was blond" -Enrique. [Enrique is dark-haired and brown-eyed].

"There are so many stories, for example Alex, our memories are that he arrived within minutes of the events, tiny and we had to take him in, hug him at night, hug him that was our thing, affection, just affection; Tania and

Folkloric dance party with Enrique (uncle Kike)



Lalito. -with Lalito we have wonderful stories that we are also going to tell- but others are very shocking. Once they raided a place near Casa Hogar and the children reacted... and the children reacted and they all went immediately to our bedroom and Lalito's chin was trembling and he said -Tía, relax, I'm going to help here- and he started to play games and sing. I was shocked. Lalito was ten years old, he was the oldest one who lived with us, he lived in Casa Hogar for about three years [...] to this day our hearts tremble at that. Tania told us that when they raided her house, she had to take some vital medicines for her [she was born premature and had health problems], and she saw how they trampled on them and threatened her mother, Flor Lorca... to this day she remembers it. We have contact with her, we see each other all the time"
-Noemí.

In this new school, Enrique and Noemi had to learn to be locked up during the week for the safety of the children, themselves and the institution. And during the weekends to be also on alert, because the contact telephone numbers (PIDEE-UNHCR) had to be in sight for of any kind of emergencies. The responsibility of the children grew in the darkness of the night and in the silence of the weekends the fears, nostalgia, worries and questions of the older ones surfaced. 'cuddle', 'pamper' were the recipes used. Among the challenges for these young surrogate parents was teaching them to play instruments and inventing musical pieces, as Alex remembers- when he communicates with Enrique via Facebook. Enrique and Noemí had to stop making music and put their passion and training at the service of children.



PIDEE Archive

"We had a singing group, music was used, and to this day we use art as affective reparation."

[...] So, we started to arm ourselves with... not an armor, because the armor doesn't allow you to express yourself, but to have the necessary tools, to have the necessary instruments, which were art, strength, love, humor and to constantly reinforce ourselves with the team. They [the team] were always present. [...] That helped us in our work" -Noemí.

Deal with between fear and trust

Outside of PIDEE, in the relationship of the surrogate parents with the blood parents, a bond based on trust was established with respect to the care of the children. For some, all care exceeded their own expectations, and this is clear in the story of Eduardo and Tania's parents, Takuri and Selene's mother. However, Alfonso says that at the beginning and on some occasions, there were some parents who expressed distrust and even jealousy, because they feared that the surrogate parents could keep their children.

It is very likely that in the midst of so much political upheaval and family destruction, will appear in the case of parents in hiding or incarcerated, a certain degree of insecurity regarding the protection and care of their sons and daughters. Perhaps, the very insecurity through which they lived was transferred to the daily lives of their sons and daughters.

"At some point I had to talk to some of the parents about our work with the children and that they should not worry, that there was no interest in appropriating their children [...] that they should be calm and that their sons and daughters would also be well protected and calm here" -Alfonso (surrogate father between 1985-1987).



Casa Hogar's objective in terms of permanence was very clear and it is likely that some parents had some insight into who was caring for their sons and daughters. But as Gloria says:

“The stay was always intended to be temporary, and that meant calm for the parents, knowing that their sons and daughters were protected, and also for the children, who could make this their temporary family (...) the fact that it was a couple, a house that had doors, everything separated, a patio and that there was the love and affection that existed in Casa Hogar fulfilled the objective of a house... no, it wasn't an institution, it was a house (...) and having understood that protection was not only taking care of the children so that no one would harm them, but also processing what they had lived through”

Prison visit: A new encounter

“I believe we were pioneers in the country. Despite the dictatorship, we were able to maintain the child's link with his or her father or mother. We achieved the first specialized prison visits where we took the children there” -Gloria.



PIDEE Archive

Maintaining the link with parents deprived of liberty is a fact that has been well appreciated now a days in relation to the program's achievements. To have achieved that instance of encounter was an unthinkable conquest. The members of Casa Hogar -and also those who were under arrest-, qualify these spaces as a real triumph, a triumph that was difficult to win, but which in the end was achieved.

"(...) we didn't have guardianship over the children (...) nevertheless we went to the prisons, we went fifty times until in one prison, (...) Pedro Monti's was one of the three we won (...) we were guarantors, -that we were professionals of great honor and seriousness, and that we were responsible-. It was difficult, it was difficult, it was difficult and first, they let us in through the official visit, because the prisoner had to say that we wanted to enter and they had to put us on their list (...) we began to enter through the general visit and then, they defined special visiting days for the children [with the right] to go inside their cell with their parents, we even managed to achieve that" - Gloria.

This reunion became even more valuable when time had passed, and the separation was fraught with questions and emotions¹⁹.

"When you arrive [at Casa Hogar] it is like a feeling of sadness because it's not clear what is happening, the parents were taken to prison...they were beaten in front of you. Also, of insecurity for not knowing well, but later, after a few days, you realize that they are taking care of you, that they are looking after you... in reality, there are many sensations (...) when they were released by the CNI we were able to have visits (...) before seeing them we did not know what had happened to them" [...].

"In the Public Prison I remember there were a lot of people, it was like chaos visiting, the prisoners taking out the benches with shade. But it was also all friendly, it wasn't conflict like the prisons show now [he refers to the prison programs they show on television]. Although the place is very similar, but it was all friendly (...) when they came back, they were the same people you were here with" -Eduardo.

19. Espinoza, Chetty et al. Relación Padre-Hijo. La visita carcelaria como un nuevo encuentro. Fundación PIDEE, Santiago, 1989. P. 6 The management with the Gendarmerie was an administrative procedure, hindered by bureaucracy and the bad disposition to resolve situations related to political prisoners. PIDEE had already achieved recognition as a child protection institution by the Gendarmerie, and we had to make the authorities aware of the validity and legitimacy of this request, both from the perspective of the child and his inalienable right to maintain a relationship with his father, and from the perspective of the father in his right to exercise his paternity.



Sandra and Tania (above), Nico and Claudia (below) Gallardo Fuentes, during the two years they lived at Casa Hogar.



The stories of this experience are reconstructed, intertwined, and cross-referenced in similar references. Alfonso mentions in his testimony the situation of a mother with her four children, two twins from two years old and two other children from 7 and 9 years old who stayed for long periods in Casa Hogar. Alfonso's brief story of the brothers' situation led to a telephone conversation with Sandra –who has been in Sweden since 1998– mother of the Gallardo Fuentes brothers: Sandra, Tania, Nico and Claudia, who lived at Casa Hogar for two years.

“In June 1986 the CNI came to my house looking for my husband, after the assault on the Lautaro Bakery. He was taken away and I was detained for five days in the house with the children. It was hell, threats, beatings, they threatened me that they would take the children and the most shocking thing was the threats of rape to Sandra -my oldest daughter- who was 9 years old. We were detained with groups of good and bad people [referring to the civilians who were on duty in the house and had different attitudes]. One night, one of them told me to serve him a cup of coffee and if I could, I had to escape from there. I jumped over a fence with the four children. It was five o'clock in the morning, a bus was passing by that had no route and I asked him to take us, the driver didn't want to, until he let us get on and made us get off near the Plaza de Armas. There I walked to the Vicarage, and I sat on the stairs until they opened the gate. When they saw me with the children I was attended by a lawyer, whom I will never forget. The children were immediately referred to Casa Hogar. They took a cab and took them away and told me that I couldn't see them for everyone's safety. I understood it very well, meanwhile I was going from house to house because they told me that they might be following me. The situation was established in January 1988, I built a shelter and left with the children. But after a month I was raided again, and the children returned to PIDEE for another year and I was taken to a nuns' home. I knew they were well cared for, but you're always afraid that something will happen to your children” -Sandra Fuentes²⁰.

20. Reinaldo Gallardo was released from prison in 1990 and he went to Sweden. “He came to recognize his children, the twins were very young, I always showed them picture of their father, but they did not know him. The encounter was not easy, he arrived unsettled, he had no peace at any time, the shock was for everyone equally. A year later he died, and we went to bury him in La Granja, where we lived in Chile” -Sandra Fuentes.

At first Alfonso didn't know the situation the Gallardo Fuentes family was going through, nor did he know who the parents of the four brothers he was taking to the penitentiary were. When they made a prison visit with the children, he got a tremendous surprise.

"I went with four children to the prison to see their father and when we got there I realized that he was a classmate from high school, I had no idea, it was a surprise and he was very happy that I was taking care of his sons and daughters. It was a great moment, but very emotional as well."

Visits by children to their parents were not exempt from prison protocols. In fact, children were intimidated in physical and emotional treatment. The child's condition was not an issue that mattered in the face of the repression of the moment.

"What shocked us the most when we arrived at the prison, is that the children would stand in front and open up [spread their arms and legs] to be searched. it was a very tough time. Also, when they met with the fathers and mothers, those minutes that the parents enjoyed with their little children was... it also marked you a lot (...) Sometimes the children didn't want to leave and the mothers could not let them go. The case of Tania, who hugged Flor and it was difficult to separate them, (...) the coldness [of the gendarmes' treatment]" -Noemí.

All these images that are captured in the memories affirm the importance of having succeeded in maintaining the parents-children bond. This relationship, viewed from a distance, is described as successful and important by those who were key players and protagonists in its functioning.

"Even though they were on the ground, even though it was full of people, I remember that among the children was the son of Victor Diaz, his father was in the Penitentiary, and the other visits were in the Public Prison (...) in one and the other it was difficult because it was full of tents, groups of people and the children were a bit abandoned. But I think it did serve to create important bonds" -Sandra Correa

Sandra's memories support the relevance of the prison visit for the family system, in which the absenteeism of the father and mother awakened questions of the kind Eduardo asked himself when he entered Casa Hogar, as his parents were detainees. This encounter highlighted the behavior of a repressive system that affected everyone equally, and that

This encounter highlighted the behavior of a repressive system that affected everyone equally.



PIDEE Archive, Santiago, Public Prison.

is reflected in the context related by those who formed this work team and were responsible for taking, being with and returning to the children in the prisons and welcoming them back to Casa Hogar during their return and go on.

“There’s no doubt. This is my home”

“I remember very specific situations, because tía Teresa and tía Katy were waiting for us with delicious things, they kept cookies for me in the kitchen cabinet upstairs, in a little metal box (smiles)... I think maybe it was to (laughs) to calm me down” -Eduardo.

Returning to Casa Hogar the children were often awaited by the tías with that which, beyond idiosyncrasies, is considered a way of expressing affection and love: food. Then the children knew that the hidden cookie and the special dessert hid the affection of those who cared for them, and this gesture was also intended to help balance the children's spirits after sad farewells and calm the tantrums of some of them –as happened to Alex during prison visits.

“Sometimes I arrived with sadness, sometimes as a child I wanted to continue playing, there were several variables, I think it depended a lot on how the visit had been (...) I would go to see the parents and they would show more grief for the situation, I also absorbed that sadness. If I were playing with the parents or with other people – because that also happened– some of them ended up playing with other children's parents, I arrived happier (smiles). If the father was going to leave you and he started crying, or the mother started crying, you also became aware of the situation... I think that's why what we did on the way [back] was to buy a drink or a juice, which I remember was sometimes done, or 'let's go by cab or pass by such and such a place,' which the uncles did.”

Meanwhile, inside the prison, Flor remained with a heavy heart. One day she sat down, took a pencil and in the shade of that enclosed space she wrote to his children, Eduardo and Tania. Luis, Flor's husband, kept the writings and shared them during the interview.

To my son, Lalo.

*From a corner of this prison, I watch you,
I watch you grow my son,
it seems impossible to me that the years flew by,
you are my little offspring,
product of a wonderful love,
my first pain in life that furrowed my skin,
that cradled you, my tenderness,
you matured in my womb, you fulfilled me in life,
with the most beautiful thing in existence, I was a mother.*

*Flor Lorca Melero
Santo Domingo Prison*

To Tania Salas Lorca.

*Daughter, my beautiful girl, how I wish to hold you in my arms,
little piece of moon of starry night, brave little fierce, little star of
my life, your light fills me, I love you so much. Tomorrow, which is
approaching like a beam of hope, you will understand that all the
sufferings were worth it. I love you little part of me.*

*Flor Lorca Melero
Santo Domingo Prison*

TO CONFRONT THE VIOLATION OF THE FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS OF CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS FROM A COLLECTIVE STANDPOINT

The Casa Hogar model today is a mirror. This mirror is the one that leads us to look back on the successes and support for the children, it also allows us to see that it was a pillar that supported that childhood despite the separation of parents and family members. The experience of those who had been working at PIDEE Foundation for years helped to open doors through which groups of people willing to work and respond to the needs of the different situations that affected them entered. Thanks to this commitment and joint efforts, solidarity and the struggle for hope were able to flow, recovering children's smiles.

In 1985 PIDEE already had experience working in Santiago and in regions:

“The work with PIDEE, what was interesting, was a collective construction of a comprehensiveness that you did not have in sight, in the previous work or in the training you had had. It was the protection to that childhood, but in the face of a state that didn't deliver, not only didn't deliver the programmatic offer, but didn't solve the basic issues of society, and these children were (...) families were a danger, an enemy of the system. So, we tried to build a protection system that would not only allow these children to survive, but also to lessen the impact that repression was having on them and their families. (...) There in the small, in the minuscule, in the almost illegal, it was possible to build” -Gloria.

PIDEE Foundation never received legal assistance; that task was in the hands of other human rights institutions. However, work and care had a strong coordination.

“...we worked in coordination with all the other services or all the other Human Rights organizations that were providing these services. And we were providing comprehensive care because we had circuits or networks of specialty care,

[we] had a pediatrician, but everything else were support network circuits that understood the process in a different way, contributions from health centers, emphasizing that all of them were legal... super legitimate, we were all connected (...) it was a work that was discussed (...) and we had a support network through sponsorship, especially from Sweden (...) in which they sponsored [economic support system] the children, and basically it was to contribute to the survival of the children"- Gloria.



Professionals members of different PIDEE Foundation programs

This work project was not built on the pillars of a planned methodology. It was the situation of the moment that set guidelines and solutions. Clearly a bold and fragile process at the same time.

"We were protecting with a house so normal and so vulnerable...So easy to break"

"(...) I can also say that it was an alternative to the care [...] that SENAME is for me today. It is the right of the child to live in a family, in family contexts, it is a basic fundamental right in life, in the development of a person's life" –Gloria.

The stories tell of a gradual construction where the path was made by walking. The care approach was facing contradictions, doubts and fears, because it was a reality, for example, that they could enter and raid the house with the children inside.

"All of this was sustainable because of the conviction that this issue could not happen and that the safety standards that we had to develop had to do with affection and with the protection of life, with our own lives as well."

"...Today, what we are experiencing with children whose rights have been violated is shaking the country, but we don't act, and everyone is available. And you tell the story, or you tell what suffering means for a child, just parental separation, no one is about to endorse such a thing. Therefore, the right to live in a family is a right that we have not realized. And here in Casa Hogar, is an experience, we did not come up with a different alternative and it was not by, by pure luck [...] I think it was our... our gigantic success" –Gloria.

Casa Hogar is an experience of collective work, commitment, solidarity, companionship, and communion, as Felipe points out in his testimony. A profound historical experience, where family ties were woven, without being so, and complicities between the Casa Hogar team and the children who lived there and their families.

It is a story structured by the capacity to respond to the conflicts that arose for families and childhood in a Chile divided and harshly repressed during the 1980s by the civil-military dictatorship.

What we wanted to show with this work of memory is the mark left by this space, both in the children and in the professionals who were part of this team and, above all, the persistence of each one of them in the subsequent journey. It is no coincidence that Gloria Vio today coordinates family reintegration programs in the Valparaíso Region, where her goal is to advance in the deinstitutionalization of children living in SENAME residences. She knows it is possible.

Enrique and Noemí also know this. Once the door of Casa Hogar closed and the children returned to their parents, or left Chile, they were faced with the question: what to do now? In their case, first worry because they were going to be real parents. After this, with the learning and experience acquired in Casa Hogar, they opened other reception spaces for children and adolescents - always self-managed - to receive and educate them. Reception spaces based on the premise that every child is a subject of rights, that is, schools where there is room for everyone -they always say smiling-, those who have learning problems, the children of a Carabineros officer who is discriminated against, and/or those who don't fit in with the educational models of the current prevailing system.

To rescue from the past the function and trajectory of Casa Hogar is, in short, to have the privilege of projecting an experience that, in light of the situation of childhood and adolescents in Chile, can be a reference for any analysis, decision and implementation of attention to the violation of their rights. The children of yesterday, today and tomorrow deserve to be protected and supported. They deserve their rightful place in our society.

"The love that my children received at Casa Hogar they still have it today.

They remember everyone who worked there What they did for my children no one else did, they gave everything for my children. They did a perfect work. There is no way to pay to Alfonso and Jirma and everyone because they gave us the peace of mind that the children were safe and well cared for" – Sandra Fuentes, mother of Sandra, Tania, Nico and Claudia.



Gallardo Fuentes Family, Sweden 2016.

32 YEARS AFTER OPENING THE DOOR OF CASA HOGAR

“Casa Hogar is an experience. We did not come up with a different alternative and it wasn't because of luck (...) I think it was our... our gigantic success” -Gloria.

“Casa Hogar for me was...I think that more than a home, it was my second home because I spent most of my time here (...) it was my security, my home, I felt safe because I knew that outside the walls of the PIDEE house I was at risk, but not inside the house...” -Leandro.

“I think it was one of the few institutions that existed at that time that helped directly, because no, it was not only an entity that took the children, but also the family” -Leonor.

“In the sentimental issue it was tranquility umm...umm, affection, I always felt affection. But the vision when I grew up, I think it is also important, because as a child you see something else, I feel it was important, [it was] the right point that one could call it, [that] helped save lives, you don't know what would have happened to us” -Eduardo.

“For me Casa Hogar meant a kindergarten and later it also meant a kind of shield and a kind of emotional oasis.... And for people who really had a very complex emotional situation” -Felipe.

“I believe that many thought that this was a battle that they were going to win, that, that, that, courage, bravery, concepts, because if I start, I have to say it in concepts, because if I start to relate something, in the end there are many things, but, that, love, that's all I have left of them. I realize that everything was done out of love and that love is strong” -Takuri.





CHAPTER 3

THE DOORS OF RESILIENCE

Gloria Maureira Lagos



*... “to kill the man of peace
they had to unleash the turbulent war
to defeat the man of peace
and silence his modest and drilling voice
they had to push terror to the abyss
and kill more to keep killing
to beat the man of peace
they had to kill him many times
because the man of peace was a fortress...”*

“Allende”, Mario Benedetti

When you think in a house –in this case Casa Hogar– you ask yourself by its characteristics, by the underlying dreams for deciding to build it, by the elements and reasons for committing to this purpose. The image of the doors that accompany the stories and testimonies in this chapter invites us to look at the different spaces of that house with its hallmarks, with the memories they arouse, with the contradictions that are evident, with the protection it gave to so many, with the strength and determination with which the anti-dictatorial struggle was approached. This story begins with “the access keys” that seeks to show the scenery and habitat of this imaginary neighborhood.



FIRST DOOR
ACCESS DENIED



As I write this text, I am reminded of the movie *Chicago Boys*. Representatives of the right-wing sectors adhering to the dictatorship are interviewed, many of them managers of the then state-owned companies (which were sold off -by auctioning them off- with the excuse that they were bankrupt) and who today are big businessmen of strategic companies. They all talk about the “economic miracle.” They are proud of it, of the country that against all reality, between the years 77 and 80 boasted some of the highest development indicators in Latin America.

I remember that when I saw the film, I was wondering what kind of country they were talking about, because most Chileans, the average Chilean, without a doubt, not only did not realize the famous miracle, but also remember that time as one of the hardest moments in their personal and social history. The social cost of the “economic miracle” ranged from high unemployment rates, increasing levels of poverty, loss of liberties and civil rights, among others.

What elements allowed and made possible the so-called economic miracle? in whom was the magic and power of such a 'miracle' concentrated? For this “economic miracle” to occur, certain conditions were required.

The first demanded that the entire country –that no one– questioned the proposed model. Or clearly speaking, that there were no people, organizations or groups of people who could invalidate or confront the dictates of an economic model whose legislation was affirmed in favor of a few. What we do know is that in order to lay the foundations of this model, a backhoe had to be set in motion that banned political parties, unions and any instance of social participation. Those who wanted to defend their labor rights, their different world views, had to be killed, made to disappear, imprisoned, exiled.

This is how the vision was built -it is worth saying, projection- of a successful Chile, of first world, which received praise from the international economic press and was placed as a reference of development in Latin America. To this day, that Chile is made up of a small group of people who concentrate economic power and manage commercial relations as owners of the country's large companies.

In contrast to that Chile of the Chicago Boys, of the manufacturers of the 'miracle', existed for the great majority of the settlements, those who appeared -not in the development indexes, but in the unemployment and poverty rates-, the other face of neoliberal success, the Chile of misery and persecution.

The settlers of this other Chilean reality, that of the most, were stigmatized, erased from the public horizon of their country, disqualified until they were transformed into the image of ignorance, decadence, and violence. They were cloistered in silence. Only in this way was it possible to guarantee the development of the 'miracle'.

“... I was 7 years old at the time of the coup d'eta... I remember that day my mother went to work at the Moneda and returned in an emotional state of disconsolation... It was the first brutal feeling of fear that I had... after that, there was a situation of great terror due to the raids...” –Marcela.

Marcela was detained and at present, despite the innumerable proceedings carried out, the circumstances of her detention are not known, nor where she was or what happened to her. After the mother's detention, the three children were left alone. They did not know under what circumstances the mother or her partner might be found, but after some time, they assumed that he went into exile. Apparently, her family



network was not very strong, and she didn't have the capacity to support her children. Then, Marcela, 9 years old, was sent alone to Venezuela to the home of one of his mother's brothers.

As part of the dictatorship's systematic repression, it developed a communication style to minimize the perception of horror: it was said that what people were experiencing was part of an inevitable punishment, that it was part of a foreseeable fatality. In order to disseminate such a defense, it was necessary to have absolute control of the media, to silence the voices of denunciation, to prohibit the free press. Here is one more component for the development of the 'miracle'.

Roxana has two missing siblings. For her:

"History has to be known. Maybe this will serve for a never again... and for people to really know what happened and what it was like, how hard it was for us, how we spent all those years, in terms of human relationships, needs, fears, the scares we went through... we helped many people and saved lives, but with very big scares."

Despite the persecutions, impoverishment and orphanhood she experienced as a child, she believes that the hardest part was living under the dictatorship for all the years it lasted:

“It was tough stuff with young kids because I didn't want them to go through what we went through [...] That is why future generations have to know that there was a lot of terror, a lot of fear, a lot of hunger, I think that the hardest thing in life, as children, is to go hungry, cold and pain (cries), which no one should have to go through [...] my dreams were interrupted, I was going to study to become a dancer at the Municipal and the coup d'état came and they cut short all your dreams...”

And in between these two extreme visions, there was another Chile; one that was frightened by the bombing of La Moneda, by the military in the streets and that perceived that silence and lack of opinion were the best way to survive. As well as remaining ignorant and oblivious. So much that many of them, good thing, did not know that their country was torturing and violating human rights. Chileans manipulated by a press that spoke only of the successes of the civil-military government, completely managed by censorship and absolute control of the press. And as is typical of dictatorships, a press whose focus is on trivial matters, superficial, with no interest in analysis or discussion of ideas.

“I have told my wife about these things [...] because she belongs to that sector of the settlement that did not experience the things I did [...] she was of the 50% that did not, that never knew anything, that never saw anything... and that's fine, [...] the reality is that there were many people who did not know...” –Felipe.

The focus of our work has been on those Chileans who suffered the unspeakable for 'the miracle' to happen. In the children, in the women, in the families that for years held the guilt of being poor, of being leftists, of being trade union leaders, of taking to the streets to protest injustices. We tried to find out what happened to them when the country was bleeding to death in the early years of the dictatorship and what they experienced as time went by. What happened when they got tired and took to the streets to protest, when they began to take back their voices to call on others; when they went from paralysis derived from fear to emotions of strength and resistance, when sectors of the settlement, still fearful, dared to develop massive protests.

Casa Hogar is a project that appeared within the PIDEE, when people got tired and went out to protest. Its creation was a necessity and at

the same time, was a response to the families of that battered Chile, at a time when popular mass movements against the dictatorship were growing and strengthening. It belongs to the reality of that percentage of a Chile that is progressively daring to take to the streets to demand freedom, despite the fact that repression continued and involved different sectors of the country.



SECOND DOOR

THE CONSTRUCTION DOOR: AN IMAGINARY OF
SECURITY VS. VULNERABILITY



The young people we interviewed in this paper don't remember much about Casa Hogar because they were small children when they were there. In the interviews caught our attention their perceptions of safety generated from being there or living there.

It seems that they did realize, or at least perceived, that their family world was insecure (derived from the permanent persecution), and therefore, all those disturbing and distressing sensations would remain outside as long as they were included in this extended family, protected from any problem, which was Casa-Hogar.

“My mother made me come in because of the security here [...] they knew, everyone knew that if a child came in here, there was no risk that something will happen to him with the military” –Leandro.

The parents, however, knew as well as every member of the Casa Hogar that such security was not real. The dictatorship could have raided at any time or attacked and persecuted Casa Hogar in the same way it did with so many people and institutions for the Defense of Human Rights. Despite this, and with no small amount of work, the Casa Hogar team was able to build, with magic and iron will, that sense of security.

The construction of security or the myths of security, are an unconscious resource of people that, in some way, orders and serenades the emotional state of disturbance derived, in this case, of political persecution. It is expressed in behaviors and calm emotions, serenity and protection of the other that, in turn, generate attitudes of enormous emotional strength. These emotions are frequent in dangerous and threatening situations. And here, in several of the interviewees, we observe these emotions, and also the attitudes of resilience that emerged from them.

Human beings need to build security and hope; a sense that nothing bad will happen. In this way it is possible to transform the sensations of fear, always imprisoning and paralyzing, into emotions from which one is able to imagine dreams, analyze contexts, develop projects, etc. On these emotions, these dreams and the conviction of their necessity and justice, Casa Hogar is born. And also, from the certainty of belonging to a solidary and resolute tribe.

“in all the prisons in the country there were relatives of mine or my husband's [...] I came to the PIDEE and I explained the issue to them, (and I said) I need protection for my children, I cannot fall²¹ into these conditions [...] And I already knew that the PIDEE would receive them, that they were going to be worried about the health of Tania (daughter born with severe prematurity), and Michelle was already working here²².”

by following his story, she names several members of Casa Hogar team, about these she says:

... “all those people, names that you will never forget, they were there to receive my kids and I knew that if this happened, the kids would be here, with everything planned. [...] we went through an awful torture, I disappeared for a while, horrible, horrible, horrible, horrible all that, but the kids were in PIDEE... that's why I could sleep peacefully in prison.

Eduardo and his sister were in Casa Hogar during his childhood, now 39 years old he remembers:

21. To fall: to be arrested

22. Michelle: Refers to the President of the Republic, who at the time was the pediatrician at Casa Hogar and one of the doctors in the PIDEE physical health program.

“There were already cases of people who were murdered, and their children were persecuted afterwards... I think they (the parents) analyzed the issue, and it was the best thing for us to be here (in Casa Hogar), because there were the requirements to be able to take care of us and to have security. [...] [...] At that time I did not know what PIDEE was [...] PIDEE was recognized as a Human Rights organization... and there was support from other countries abroad and that could mean that we had a better chance of staying alive...”

Sandra also relates:

“At some point, we started to receive threats, they called us on the phone and they were swearing at us... there were strange things; we saw cars of special services parked in front... [...] So we started to take shifts, we were staying at the house because we needed to keep these children protected...”

“I think we were pretty daring in feeling so safe... we saw that there was danger, but we felt that we were powerful, like we could take care of the children...” –Sandra.



PIDEE Archive

Trust building, on the other hand, is a set of emotions that allow us to have the serenity to build emotional strengths and develop large scale activities. Some that, from a rational logic, seem incomprehensible. The pretension, the imaginary trust that they will be able to protect the children, arises in these Casa Hogar workers from a solidary and politically committed way of thinking. In political struggles it is common for these emotions to emerge together with other emotions such as mystic and loyalty. And the conviction of justice.

In children, building trust requires some protective structure, but it isn't enough. An example that allows us to observe this is the experience with pets. These are attachment emotions that provide security to the child and, at the same time, allow them to develop affective bonds of another order, different from the one they build with their parents. The degree of projection and empathy generated are capable of emotionally sustaining a child in adverse situations.



... “I played with the turtle... like the turtle understood me, what I was doing here... [...] I talked to her... I stand²³ by the turtle side, I talked to her, and it seemed like she was paying attention to me because she raised her head. [...] I asked her how it feels to be here alone, to be with that big shell, to live in there...I wish I could be like you... if they attack you, if they attack you, you have your protection... [...] at that time, I went through a lot of movies (exaggerating in my mind) ... in the sense... I didn’t know that they killed my mom, my dad and my siblings” —Leandro.

Leandro remembers this bond with the turtle because it represents a painful moment in his life, pierced by fears of orphanhood and loneliness. In his adult story, he relates his anxious fears to the turtle's security derived from his own build. And it is touching the unconscious appropriation that he made as a child, of a supposed security that the turtle had and that allowed him at that moment to feel a certain degree of calm and serenity.

In Leandro's adult story, it is observed how, spontaneously and without being aware of it, when he talks about his relationship with the turtle, there are changes in the verb tenses in such a way that at one moment Leandro seems to be speaking as a small child, and at another moment, he expresses himself as the adult he is today. These oscillations between past and present in a story are frequent in people who are speaking from a very powerful emotional experience that remains in time.

23. I stand (Yo me “ganaba”): Chilean idiom equivalent to “I stand next to... or very close to”



THIRD DOOR

THE HEAVY DOORS OF THE MILITANT MOTHER:
UNEQUAL JUDGMENTS

An issue that transcends the dictatorship is the condition of women in Chilean society. The role of women in patriarchal societies is centered on child rearing. It is clear that this role is practically incompatible with joining political and social struggles. It is a role that has cost women in the Western world great struggles, great misunderstandings, great loneliness. To be able to expand, to be able to articulate this role with their legitimate right to participate on equal terms in the social-political world, is a challenge to this day.

The women we have interviewed, mothers of children who were in Casa Hogar, are women who have actively participated in the political struggle. Most of them, without many conceptual tools to face these contradictions in their role as mothers, but with admirable strength and willpower. They tried to break this exclusionary scheme, facing complaints, reproaches and blames, several of them are doubly admirable.

— *and you, why did you leave us?* The children ask.

“I took courage and told them that I also had the right... to be part of that story... [...] to change life and I also had important responsibilities, even though I was a woman, I saw a tremendous machismo in that. [...] The father (as committed a militant as she is) is on a pedestal, it's not that I feel bad because he's there, but I claimed my part... [...] one has to start by fighting for oneself, to have the capacity to do it, it had to be done, at the cost of anything...”

In any study on emotional development, this capacity to develop oneself in a primary way would be evaluated as a pillar to grow and to exercise other roles in life. This mother is able to recognize the value that the struggle for justice has for her; and from this self-evaluation, takes up as much energy as it is possible to have, to be consistent with itself.

... “We were compartmentalized, I was with the children, but doing my political or military work here and he (the husband) was away, separated for a while. [...] You realize, I feel, that I (he) blame me... I am not going to allow them to blame me, I am not sorry, I know that they suffered, we suffered, and our beloved people also suffered...so I cannot allow my son to come and blame me. [...] The time that

he was gone (the father), that one doesn't count, so I say no, either you blame both of us, or you don't blame either of us..."

We continue to live in a culture that blames women for engaging in political and social activities. It has been very difficult to face the contradictions implied by an activity without schedule and with a power structure closed to women. And at that time, it was also a high-risk activity. It is touching to see the effort that women had to deal with, within their own families, given the different pattern of recognition of political activity for men than for women. This pattern is lived to this day, with frustration, sadness and a feeling of injustice. There is still a long way to go before women's right to be consistent with their views of the world is allowed and visualized as a right and a duty.

"What I have never been able to understand is why he (the son) did not manage to equate that there was an effort and a contribution from both of us, from me, from my family, my brother-in-law, my mother-in-law, my mother, from all of them, so it is hard. [...] if this ends up thrilling us because we are flesh and blood. [...] we were also afraid, sometimes we said: I'll continue with this, or I'll leave it aside... [...] why did you get involved? asked the son and I say, I have the right to do it because I am a revolutionary, a militant.

It is painful to feel that their efforts to overcome fear, to be brave and strong even when they demand to be recognized as revolutionaries, were not and still are not valued.

On the other hand, we must remember that they were also women workers whose support network used to be only their mother or sisters. Repression also weakened these networks due to persecution and impoverishment caused by high unemployment. In other words, they had very little support to take care of their children while they were politically active. Casa Hogar, in this context, became the support network that every society should provide to its women. Not only to enable them to carry out their work while their children were being cared for, but for themselves could develop as individuals and citizens.





FOURTH DOOR

THE DOORS THAT WERE CLOSED:
THE BRUTAL IMPOVERISHMENT



Many experts point out that the civil-military dictatorship corresponds to a conservative counterrevolution. We will not analyze this thesis, which has been reviewed so many times. We only want to point out that the social cost for working families was enormous and sustained over time; and for many of them, unemployment, persecution, the breakdown of the social fabric, transformed them practically into indigents.

“The coup d'état came, I was 10 years old, my whole family was detained, the repression was huge in the town of La Legua, it was the only town that resisted the coup, they fought and there were my brothers, my family, there was a lot of reprisal against my family... We had to leave Santiago, we were in various parts of Chile, outside the Metropolitan Region, in Melipilla, from Batuco to San Juan, Lo Gallardo near Tejas Verdes and there the whole family was arrested... from there they did not return two brothers...who are still detainees disappeared to this day... [...] There we were alone, my mother was arrested in the afternoon, my brother had already been arrested in the stadium, we were 6 children alone, my brother was thirteen, the other one was eleven, I was ten, my sister was seven, six and three... the neighbor with whom my father worked came to leave food for us...” –Roxana





But not all the neighbors were kind, there was another who took over the family home in La Legua, threatening them that if they denounced his malice, he would say the authorities that they were all extremists. This fact shows how the politically persecuted were transformed into Chileans without rights and were at the mercy of various arbitrariness, including being called, without any respect, “terrorists”.

The conditions of extreme poverty were a source of vulnerability for the smallest and most unprotected:

... “(it was) horrible, horrible, I wore big shoes that they had given us at the Vicarage...we went to school in patches, we had no uniform...”

Years later, Roxana brought her own children, who entered Casa Hogar for basically economic reasons:

“I brought them in the morning and look for them in the afternoon... they gave me money for transportation... secretly, one of the assistants gave me a small bowl of food so that the children could eat at night... because there was no job, because the dad was just out²⁴... [...] Casa Hogar at that time was a lifesaver for me, it was a relief.. it helped to alleviate the economic and medical needs for my children at that time moment when doors were closed to you...”

The story of this interviewee could very well correspond to someone living in the middle of a war. For many families, the military coup marks the beginning of a period in which they lived as defeated in a traditional war. Without work, in and out of prisons, without money, without a stable place to live, the children of these families did not have even the most basic living conditions to develop physically and emotionally. For these children and families, Casa Hogar was a refuge of solidarity and concrete support to help them overcome their impoverished situation.

In spite of the horror, they lived through, men and women emerged from their ranks to organize and participate in the protest actions that from 1982 onwards shake the dictatorship.

24. He had recently been released from prison.



FIFTH DOOR

THE HALF-CLOSED DOORS THE SOCIAL
CONSEQUENCES OF TRAUMA

“Of the four, Tania has had the most consequences, here they call it post-traumatic symptoms. She doesn’t leave her son alone, she lends him to me for a while, but she has always told me that she will never return to Chile. It isn’t a child, he is 16 years old, but it doesn’t leave him alone and he will not know Chile” —Sandra.

That our interviewees don’t remember Casa Hogar is to be expected given that at the time they were children only a few years old. However, it is striking that even in adulthood, some people know so little about what happened to their parents and their families in particular, at that time.

Analyzing their responses, it doesn’t seem that they are denial or repression behaviors properly linked to a trauma, but rather to a silent construction around the sufferings of their parents and themselves, as a way of transforming them into traces in time that allow the emergence of new feelings, leaving thus, to more constructive emotions in line with the democratic process.

“Yes, my parents over the years have been very reserved in terms of what they did within the political party in the eighties... they have been forged in the old style of the communist militant... in other words, they knew how to compartmentalize their political work very well. [...] I know that my mom traveled to Cuba and to this day she doesn’t tell anything about that trip... Sometimes, at family lunches we bring up the subject, we throw it around... but my mom, nothing. But about my dad’s activities, which are more secret (even) than my mom’s, we don’t know anything. —Felipe

The attitudes of these militant parents show the seriousness with which they carried out their work and their respect for the silence about it is also a way of protecting their children, until today. They were clear about the fragility of the transition to democracy.

“My dad was scared, my parents were scared, when it was the liaison exercise (Pinocheques “is the name given to a 1989 corruption case in Chile involving Augusto Pinochet Hiriart and his father Augusto Pinochet Ugarte”), because it was all coming back...” -Felipe

“I went to Venezuela (she was sent with her uncle) when I was 9 years old, and I grew up trying to feel normal...I think all children want to normalize our fears and terrors. [...] Unfortunately, my uncle was very damaged by the detention and disappearance of his sister and did not talk about her, so much that it became a taboo subject... [...]”

as a child we don't want to ask too many questions because one understands the atmosphere... My uncle protected himself in silence, it was his defense process to survive his pain..." —Marcela.

For others, their history is familiar to them and is a pillar of their development.

"My mother was detained and kidnapped when she was five months pregnant... my father at that time is in prison, arrested, tortured and also kidnapped. [...] and I was born sick, with facial paralysis. [...] I find it very strange to describe what happened to me as a child because it is all very fuzzy in me. What is clear is that I do have empathy for the violation of human rights, and I cannot deny it, even though I was not a man when it happened, I still feel the pain, that, I think that is how, even though it sounds very dramatic (he laughs), you can still give it a positive side. [...] I personally do that, I feel that I am fortunate, since our generation, being of those who suffered much more directly the repression and abuses and violations of their rights, I feel that we are fortunate, because they don't want to give us the same... and in my case, they have emphasized just that: to treat me with respect, tolerance, affection, love, trust, and loyalty. —Takuri.

In the first two testimonies, avoidance behaviors of different tenor are observed, but they involve keeping quiet about situations related to major losses or high life-threatening situations. It is common to observe in families that have experienced repressive violence, that they don't talk about the issue that has afflicted them as a family. From this perspective, we can point out that the apparent repressive character that the silence of these painful events may have, may rather correspond to adaptive actions. Thus, by relegating to the unconscious space the disintegrating pain of emotional stability, the conscious space is freed from it and with it recovers stability. It seems that silence has a therapeutic effect, as the pain is relegated to unconscious states and thus also remains in a position to be elaborated in time. These are not neurotic behaviors of a repressive type, but rather, as we were saying, adaptive behaviors that are adequately articulated.

“We found children who were... almost alone, and they had to be protected or someone had to take care of them... children who were left on the stairs of the Vicarage, in a very serious situation. And where are they going? To a home? –No way, the manager of this initiative was Estela Ortiz, who is known for believing, for creating... dreams and making dreams come true that at the beginning one doesn’t see possible...” -Gloria.

The dream of developing the Casa Hogar project meant not only will and effort. Much expenditure! Where do we get the money? asked Gloria. However, “At that point we already had a well-established organization (PIDEE), we had a model for working with the children...” At that time - in 1985 - the institution already had a mental health team that had been working for five years and had conceptualized a model of care for children who had experienced trauma. An institution that, at the same time, has organized a physical health care system that provides the professional services that the State of Chile, at that time, had restricted for the country's majorities. An institution that addressed pedagogical problems for the sons and daughters of exiles/returnees. In short, an institution with experience, professional and social maturity that allowed it to take on new challenges.

And they dare.

The purposes and objectives

I would say, in the garden... that is my first memory of the Casa Hogar... we were playing in the yard, there was a swing and I wanted to imitate some older children who were jumping off the swing... and I fell... Yes, it was like a kindergarten... [...] I became aware of what it was like, of what the project meant in social terms, in cultural terms, in political terms... many years later...” —Felipe.

Indeed, one of the purposes of the project was to safeguard the emotional life of the children. To live their childhood with as little interference as possible. That they did not realize that their lives were at risk.

“The interesting thing was that (PIDEE) was a collective construction of an integrality that you had not seen in your previous work or in your professional training... [...] these children were, or the families were a danger, a danger to the system... So, the main goal was to build a protection system that would not only allow these children to survive, but also to lessen the impact that repression was having on them and their families...”
—Gloria.

Seen through the eyes of the time, the general care at PIDEE was a psychological and social intervention for children who had experienced social and political violence. In Casa Hogar in particular, their actions were mainly related to what was happening to the children due to the effects of parental separation. This may be the result of imprisonment, murder or the forced disappearance of one of their parents.

This Casa Hogar model was adapted to the circumstances of children at risk due to persecution and/or imprisonment of their parents. Also, there was the entry of children coming from unknown and changing places, where they lived with their illegal militant parents.

“And there we did precious work with political prisoners, which I believe was a pioneer in the country... of being able to achieve... securing or maintaining the child's bond with his or her prisoners parents... was very important in the (emotional) repair not only of the children, but also of their families...” —Gloria.

Sandra remembers the children visiting their parents in the prison where they were detained:

“We brought things to eat to them, so they prepared the food, then, they prepared the dinner, they prepared everything, and they spent a whole afternoon with their children... played ball, they knew their rooms...”

Juanita speaking:

“when we took them to prison visits with their parents... some children were so accustomed to visits... they began to take off their backpacks and show them the things they were carrying (refers to the search they were subjected to - also children - before entering prison)... it was super exciting, then the parents were happy with the children and they talked to us, they knew that... that the children were doing well...”

The development of these actions by PIDEE suggests that at this point in time, it can be assumed, it is an institution with experience in childhood issues in critical situations and which can pose challenges of great impact on the emotional and social reconstruction of those affected. It is also possible to observe that emotional bonds can be established, A healthy attachment of children to their carers or tías, as they are called in Chile.

Tania became very attached to me, she clung to me, so when I was leaving (she was a boarder), I walked and from the Casa Hogar I heard her crying and screaming... tía Juanita, tía Juanita! ... Me too, many times I left in tears...” —Juanita.

Some of the people who worked in the Casa Hogar project are still linked to the childhood problems in our country. Gloria refers to them, taking Casa Hogar's model of care as a reference.

“Today I compare it to the issue of the institutionalization of children, in which parental separation is no longer (produced) by State violence, but by a violence of context, where children experience violations, and where there are 40 children in an institution without significant (affective) figures. Here (in Casa Hogar) there was a substitute father and mother who were significant figures for the children, who were stable, permanent figures and who gave them the trust to build the basic security of life.”

The surrogate parents have also followed the model they built in Casa Hogar to generate new projects for new social pain. Noemí regarding

25. In Chile, nursery room and kindergarten staff are called “tías”

the school that they have developed with her husband in the central coast "Indigo School", she points out that:

"This school is based on Casa Hogar, it is the same structure, our children take free exams, but they come here, we talk, we make circles, we do yoga, etc..."

Regarding the type of children they serve, Enrique adds:

"Children who suffer from bullying arrive, very damaged... one day I was out sweeping the street. A carabineros van arrives and a carabinero gets out and tells me that he has a son in a school, and when telling what is happening with his son, he begins to cry... we talked and he showed me pictures of his son who had been bullied by his classmates and teachers: he looked scratched, he had been locked in the bathroom while he was in fifth grade... Now the child is here and has passed to seventh grade with free exams and has become more individual, more self-trust... and that, we heal the children here..."

SUMMARY

- Throughout the interviews, we can conclude that Casa Hogar was a project that emerged as a response to the new contingencies. In other words, to a political moment in which it seems that fear is transformed into strength to unite and fight against so much injustice. Massive protests arise and the dictatorship represses them with extreme harshness. The economic crisis of the 80s made it possible for more sectors of the country to join these struggles. Mass organizations emerge to confront various situations of injustice. Also in this period, political-military resistance groups appeared. In other words, the anti-dictatorial mass movements become strong despite the continued repression. It is in this period of increasing anti-dictatorship struggles that Casa Hogar arose to receive the sons and daughters of those who had the courage to fight against the dictatorship. To protect them when their parents suffer repressive attacks.
- o All the interviewees belong to the Chile that paid the social cost of the dictatorship. The weight of repression, misery and lack of opportunities fell heavily on them. And that marks the genocidal profile of the dictatorship's actions. It was not the case then, as has been so often defended, that the brutality and horror were the work of cruel pathological patients. It was a policy to eliminate people who belonged to sectors ideologically opposed to the neoliberal model installed. And it was a genocidal policy perpetrated by agents of the State to install the model by blood and fire.
- o Regarding the work methodology, it should be noted that are joined here, not only a willingness to stand in solidarity with those who were giving the best of their lives to change the country, but also an attitude of generating a serious and sustained project with an efficient technical design. The work team, at that time, has other reference models in the PIDEE Institution, which allows them to be sure of themselves and thus, to dare to a design of permanent questioning of their actions. This design allows changes to be made where they are needed without generating a

development crisis. It is a successful working model that can be replicated in situations of children at psychosocial risk.

- o It is always interesting to be able to evaluate the experience in order to know how close it was to the initial objectives. This report shows that this objective was indeed achieved. In the interviews of parents, as well as of the children who were cared for at that time, these achievements are made explicit. In other words, the impact of the repressive phenomenon on children's lives was reduced and at the same time, an important safety space was given to the parents who trusted that their sons and daughters would be better off there than in the homes of relatives or friends.
- o The Casa Hogar project is a commitment to resilience. It holds the idea that institutional support will allow children who are victims of these violent situations in their families to be able to work through the traumatic situations in such a way that they can grow and develop in a healthy way. We have seen throughout several studies on children in severe social conflicts, wars, and various persecutions, that these supports can effectively become pillars, even if they are minimal and fragile, to ensure that children learn to build hope, to develop their potential, to build dreams and projects that seem valid to them.

***“Because there is always a moment in childhood
when the door opens and lets the future in.”***

Graham Greene



Casa Hogar of PIDEF Foundation. This program was developed between 1985 and 1990 in Santiago, Chile.



MUSEO DE LA MEMORIA
Y LOS DERECHOS
HUMANOS



p.i.d.e.e.



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