

LAST WITNESSES

VOICES OF DAUGHTERS AND SONS OF PEOPLE
WHO SURVIVED POLITICAL IMPRISONMENT

MAURICIO WEIBEL - NADIEZHDA OLIVA

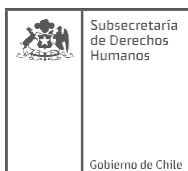


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PIDEE Foundation, Protección a la Infancia Dañada por los Estados de Emergencia,
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Human Rights of the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights and in collaboration with
the Museum of Memory and Human Rights.



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Voices of Daughters and Sons of people who survived political imprisonment.

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We are grateful to those who gave their testimony, to the Human Rights Program Unit of the Undersecretariat of Human Rights of the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights and to the Museum of Memory and Human Rights, and to all those who made this book possible, especially to:

Alejandro Villablanca Rojas, Sociologist, native of Victoria, he is the son of former political prisoner Vilma Rojas, detained in the Coronel prison, belonging to a family linked for several generations to the Communist Party.

Carolina Tapia Caris, Social worker, and mother of two children. Her father, Germán Tapia Hermosilla, controller of a textile company in the government of Salvador Allende, was a political prisoner in 1973, in the Estadio Nacional.

Claudia Troncoso Sazo, Journalist, daughter of former communist leader, Sergio Troncoso Cisternas, of the National Confederation of Construction Workers. Her family faced several episodes of detention and relegation during the civil-military dictatorship (1973-1990).

Eduardo Martínez Santos, Architect, he is married and has two children, his father Jorge Martínez Muñoz, a former MIR militant who was detained in the Talca prison and in the former Public Prison between 1982 and 1989.

Isabel Plaza Lizama, Dance Pedagogue and mother of 2 children, coordinates the Human Rights Education Observatory of the Faculty where she works. Her mother, Rosa Lizama, and her father, Francisco Plaza, were arrested and taken to Villa Grimaldi, both of whom belonged to the MIR.

Ivonne Zúñiga Escalona, Physical Education teacher and mother of two children. First, her father, Luis Zúñiga Acevedo, had to face the detention of his grandfather, Neftalí Zúñiga Contreras, at the dawn of the civil-military dictatorship. Later, she had to face the same situation in the 80's.

Lorena Hermosilla Rivera, homeowner, is the eldest of four children. She is married and has three children. Her father Ricardo Hermosilla Díaz, a member of the Communist Youth, became a member of the Manuel Rodríguez Patriotic Front and was detained in August 1984 in the former Public Prison.

Lorena Oñate Salinas, Social worker, she has five children and belongs to a family of historical communist roots affected by various human rights violations during the civil-military dictatorship. Daughter of Baltazar Acosta Galaz, former political prisoner and granddaughter of Alfredo Salinas Vázquez, detainee disappeared.

Mariana Dastres Quezada, Nutritionist, mother of a daughter, her father Hernando Dastres González, a militant of the Communist Youth, was detained in Quinta Normal and taken to the Talca Prison and then to the former public prison. Her six-month pregnant mother was expecting his younger brother at the time.

Tamara Vidaurrázaga Aránguiz, Journalist, is dedicated to teaching and university research on human rights and memory. She is the daughter of Ignacio Vidaurrázaga and María Soledad Aránguiz, both of whom were members of the MIR and were detained in Operation Alfa Carbón in southern Chile in 1984.

«Our inheritance was left to us by no testament»

René Char, French partisan poet.



Photograph 1. *In tribute to our founder María Eugenia Rojas Baeza on the 40th anniversary of PIDEE Foundation.*



Photograph 2. PIDEE Children's Party

*«I wanted quite simply to be a man among men. I would have liked to enter
our world young and sleek, a world we could build together »*

Frantz Fanon, Black Skin, White Masks.

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LAST WITNESSES / Voices of Daughters and Sons of people who survived political imprisonment.

Introductory words

This study continues an effort of rescue, systematization and dissemination, promoted this decade by the Fundación de Protección a la Infancia Dañada por los Estados de Emergencia (PIDEE Foundation), which seeks to put into circulation the memories articulated by children whose families were victims of human rights violations during the civil-military dictatorship (1973-1990).

On this occasion, the testimonies correspond to those who were daughters or sons of people who survived political imprisonment during the military regime, in which some 30,000 people were held in enclosures where torture was systematically practiced, according to the Report of the National Commission on Political Imprisonment and Torture.

Alejandro Villablanca, Carolina Tapia, Claudia Troncoso, Eduardo Martínez, Isabel Plaza, Ivonne Zúñiga, Lorena Hermosilla, Lorena Oñate, Mariana Dastres and Tamara Vidaurrázaga, in strict alphabetical order, contributed their stories to these pages, for which we are deeply grateful.

We understand the strength, pain and courage behind their words. To them, and those close to them, all our affection and respect.

The text, which is born of love and reflection, begins with an introductory

chapter, entitled The Context of Repression, which conceptually and historically reconstructs the policies and actions of repression that affected the Chilean people.

The following chapters analytically articulate the testimonies collected, which allow us to visualize and, above all, articulate the memories of those who were active witnesses of the resistance against one of the main reorganizing genocides that has existed in the history of Chile and whose consequences persist to this day, expressed in the political, economic and social segregation of millions of people.

It's also interesting to know the resilience journeys of these last witnesses of the barbarism faced by the country, when we are almost half a century after the military coup of 1973.

To all of them, once again, our thanks.

Vivian Murúa Arroyo

Executive Secretary

PIDEE Foundation

The Context of Repression

The discovery in 2013 of thousands of secret archives of the Chilean military dictatorship (1973-1990), in the vaults of the National Archive, made it possible to reconstruct the daily unfolding of what various Latin American authors have theoretically defined as genocidal social practices.

That is, the use of a series of technologies of power selectively arranged by the State to facilitate or provoke a transformation of the relations between State, economy and society.

Incidentally, this perspective of analysis is framed within the debates on the «politicides» that took place in the 20th century in Europe, Asia or Africa, a concept developed by authors such as Barbara Harff and Ted Gurr (1988, 329-371) and, in the case of Latin America, by the contributions of Daniel Feierstein (2007), who coined the concept of «reorganizing genocide. »

The former emphasizes that, unlike the classic conception of genocide (defined as the mass extermination of an ethnic group or people), «politicide» points to «the promotion and execution of policies by the State or agents of the State, which result in «the death of a substantial number of people of a group» (Feierstein, 2007: 60),

based on their political opposition to an authoritarian regime, i.e. to a political project.

Feierstein -from this logic- defines genocide as a social practice. That is, as «that technology of power whose objective lies in the destruction of the social relations of autonomy, cooperation and identity of a society, through the annihilation of a relevant fraction of that society (either by their number or by the effects of their practices) » (2007:66).

Ergo, the use of terror and the annihilation of a social sector has the strategic objective of establishing new social relations and new identity models.

That is -in fact- what happened in Chile under the military regime. Indeed, the secret documents of the civil-military dictatorship, which range from personnel hiring guidelines to strategies for the development of international relations, make it possible to observe the institutionalization of a set of social practices that legitimized both a campaign of extermination and daily control, which were functional for the various transformations carried out during that period and which, in some cases, persist to this day.

Effectively, by incorporating the concepts of «genocidal social practices» and «reorganizing genocide» into the analysis, it's possible to observe how governmental actions contributed to the implementation of symbolic (stigmatization, denial of identity, inversion of guilt) and material (control, coercion, denunciation, surveillance) devices that were essential to establish new meanings and new power relations within society.

The pain of the victims, therefore, was not the consequence of the mere wickedness of unchecked State agents, but the result of a schematic process of repression and transformation, which had political consequences, but also human and daily consequences for broad sectors of the population and the militant opposition.

In fact, genocidal social practices operated in a moment of pre-production, which was the construction of negative otherness, a moment of production, which implied extermination, first, and social transformation, later; and a moment of post-production that consisted of the symbolic validation of the transformation (and even of the extermination).

The review of the secret and reserved documents of the military dictatorship found in the National Archive allowed us to observe, in addition, that these moments were in fact intertwined and mutually and permanently required, but that they were also limited by the actions of resistance and memory of various organizations and collectives.

In schematic terms, the genocidal social practices that operated within Chilean society were basically the following: i) Construction of identity and negative otherness, ii) Articulation of State and public policies with a security perspective, iii) Offensive and defensive containment of autonomous actors (NGOs and the Catholic Church, for example) and iv) Symbolic and constitutional crystallization of the transformation.

It's important to emphasize that, despite social resistance, the global deployment of these processes made it possible -after the end of the dictatorship- to consolidate a neoliberal transformation that structurally modified social relations in Chile. And that this was accompanied by a discourse of denial and hatred that persists to this day in certain sectors, including the press.

This process, which for now we will only mention exploratorily, lasted in democracy through the persistence of genocidal social practices, through alternative models of coercion, such as the criminalization of social protest, the demobilization of social actors, the socio-territorial segregation of the population and the concentration of the media, among others.

The reorganizing genocide that took place in Chile was not only the disarticulation and physical extermination of a group, but essentially represented the transformation

of a society through coercive social and institutional mechanisms that sought to build new relationships and equilibrium between society, economy and politics.

In its most radical form, it involved the supplanting of one culture by another and the denial of human rights violations. This is the central point. Certainly, not all genocides, nor all the social practices that underpin them, result in transformations in the relations between State, economy and society. Nor are all these transformations naturalized, as happened in Chile.

That is, the genocidal social practices (known by its Spanish acronym PSG) deployed by the dictatorship of General Augusto Pinochet (1973-1990) resulted in the naturalization of power devices and of a new conception of development -and of the country- throughout the last three decades, a transformation assumed as valid even by broad sectors of those who fought against the same civil-military dictatorship.

At this point, it's necessary to emphasize that what happened in Chile was not an isolated process in Latin America. Not a historical accident in the global process of standardization of state political violence.

Under the influence of the National Security Doctrine, the region, and especially the Southern Cone, were the scene of persistent and coordinated genocidal social practices in the second half of the 20th century, aimed at establishing socially atomized, politically depoliticized and economically neoliberal societies.

This was expressed in structural transformations in the labor market, social security and socio-territorial segregation, among a variety of other dimensions, which persisted with different depths and naturalized in the democracies that emerged after the military dictatorships of the second half of the 20th century.

In this context, perhaps the central issue is to understand that the problem of state repressive violence is first and foremost a civilizational problem, as Enzo Traverso (2001) argues.

In fact, as a social and historical practice, genocides have existed for centuries, but their technologies and deployments have varied.

The Armenian genocide, the 100th anniversary of which was marked in 2015, is considered the first of modernity because of the direct action of the state in it.

These processes, whether in Armenia, Cambodia, Chile or East Timor, had as a distinctive feature the use of technologies of state power that sought through extermination and terror to bring about structural changes in social relations. This is central.

A CONTROVERSIAL CONCEPT

The concept of genocide emerged as a neologism coined by Raphael Lemkin (1944), which, over the following decades, has generated consensus and divergence regarding its legal and theoretical conception.

The horrors of World War II, including the Shoah, did not prevent governments from initially reducing the concept of genocide to ethnic eliminations, discarding its political, social and cultural dimensions, for example.

This generated a series of divergences and debates about the intentionality of the genocide, the nature of the groups included (ethnic, political, sexual) and the total or partial degree of extermination. Perspectives such as those of Frank Chalk and Kurt Jonassohn (1990), Israel Charny (2000) and Vahakn Dadrian, among other authors, who agreed that genocide is the intentional destruction of a collective by the State.

However, they diverged with respect to the extent and scope (objectives) of this extermination. Due to these differences, authors such as Feierstein (2007) characterize these historical processes as genocidal social practices, which for their deployment require certain «modes of training, refinement, legitimization and consensus» (2007: 35).

In this perspective, it's possible to affirm that genocidal social practices do't end with the annihilation of certain population or political groups but continue to underpin and preserve the process of social reorganization, including mechanisms of symbolic realization (and denial of the other).

These transformations, according to Feierstein (2007) imply a redistribution of wealth and power. Eventually, the crystallization of a constitutional armistice and the imposition of structural changes, as happened in Chile.

These practices can only be developed if there is a prior transformation of identity and otherness in the societies where they occur, which implies stigmatizing and making invisible the resistance and militancy, precisely of the persecuted.

That is, «genocidal social practices require an initial conceptual moment», which Feierstein (2007) calls «the construction of negative otherness. » It's a reduction of the multicultural identities that can exist in a State, through the dehumanization of the fellow human being, as a previous step to identity normalization.

GLOBAL STANDARDIZATION OF PSG

At this point, it's important to understand that the political violence used by Latin American States in the second half of the 20th century was the product of a process of standardization of genocidal social practices, deployed globally in the framework of the colonial wars that emerged after the end of World War II and the containment of political-social struggles in various countries (Salazar, 2012).

In several continents, the repression and defense of regimes that carried out structural transformations through these methods turned States into organizations that planned and executed permanent political-repressive actions.

This process was also linked to the idea of the powers, especially France and the United States, that it was acceptable or even legal to deploy such large-scale interventions (Weiner, 2008).

At the same time, in the Cold War, the confrontation in open and clandestine operations between the capitalist world and the socialist bloc, after the end of World War II in 1945, marked transversally the ideology and meaning of Latin American military corps and their political actions in the region.

Between 1947 and 1949, the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (known by its Spanish acronym TIAR) and the North Atlantic Treaty in Europe emerged as strategies to guarantee Washington's influence in key areas for its access to raw materials and technology, respectively.

Then came three events that built an important part of the ideological basis of the Latin American and Chilean Armed Forces, sustaining the repressive policies and their standardization.

First, the creation in Panama, in 1946, of the Latin-American Ground School, precursor of the School of the Americas, the institution that trained thousands of officers and repressors who operated from 1960 to 1990 in the continent, among them Manuel Contreras¹, the first director of the DINA and Pinochet's student at the War Academy (Weibel, 2012).

¹ General Manuel Contreras Sepúlveda (1929-2015) was the director of the National Intelligence Directorate (known by its Spanish acronym DINA), a repressive organization that murdered hundreds of Chileans. In addition, in 1976 he participated in the formation of the Condor Plan, the repressive coordination of the secret police of Chile, Uruguay, Paraguay, Bolivia, Peru, Argentina and Brazil. He died in prison, with more than a hundred sentences against him.

Second, the opening of the Superior War College in Brazil, a country where the National Security Doctrine and its thesis of the «internal enemy» were consolidated after the military dictatorship established in 1964, following the overthrow of President Joao Goulart.

Finally, the aforementioned successful overthrow of the reformist Guatemalan government of Arbenz, through the «PB Success» mission, which validated early on in Washington the effectiveness of the CIA's covert operations in the region.

The French defeat in Vietnam in the Battle of Dien Bien Phu in 1954 and the triumph of the Cuban Revolution in 1959, ratified in parallel in the military academies of the west the need to promote training in counterinsurgency strategies.

The objective of this effort was to stop the communist advance, confused with any social demands or war of national liberation.

The detailed construction of files with background information on individuals, the standardization of internal enemies, extermination methods and repressive or torture manuals had these origins. It was not random. It was not simply a spontaneous or unconscious banality of evil. There was a historical path situated within the framework of the colonial wars and the Cold War, in addition to the geopolitical supremacy of the United States in Latin America.

The counterinsurgency struggle and the need to neoliberally transform societies was converted into a central activity of the State and the repressive bodies had, therefore, an ever-political role (Weibel, 2012).

All this, as a requirement, to install a neoliberal counterrevolution, impossible to carry out in a representative democracy (Álvarez, 2008).

The horizon of meaning of this process was undoubtedly the National Security

Doctrine assumed as an ideological body by the Latin American armed forces and law enforcement agencies in the second half of the 20th century.

This doctrine defined the existence of «internal enemies», associated with social and revolutionary movements, while formalizing the concept of «low intensity warfare» as a space of operation. That it is ideologically justified the civil-military occupation of the States and the public space in Latin America, through practices of political violence.

THE MODELS OF HORROR AND COERCION

This process of global standardization of political violence is therefore not a historical accident but can and should be interpreted theoretically from the perspective of political science.

As Policzer explains, «from Hobbes to Weber, coercion defines our public institutions» (Policzer, 2014), through various models ranging from countries living under democratic regimes to those subjected to totalitarianism, whether political or religious.

Coercion is also a dimension of the political action of non-state organizations that in some circumstances reach certain levels of territorial domains, such as guerrilla movements, terrorist organizations or drug cartels (Policzer, 2006).

At this point it's important to understand, as Tilly (2000) states, that the State makes war and that war makes the State. That is, the deployment of different levels of coercion necessarily requires a transformation of the State itself, which implies different efforts and resources.

In the Chilean case this occurred through a civil-military effort indispensable for the deployment of a genocidal social practice, whose objective was to enable a profound neoliberal transformation in social relations.

Coercion and its institutionalization are, therefore, eminently political acts. To paraphrase von Clausewitz, and his famous phrase about war, coercion is the continuation of politics by other means.

The above assumes that the organization and deployment of coercion are also political processes, which involve defining from the spheres of action of coercive teams (agency) to their modes of organization and what Policzer (2014) calls internal and external monitoring (control) mechanisms.

How much do culture and official history, as ideology, influence the formation of these modes of coercion? How do organizational models of coercion also influence the depth and scope of human rights violations? For now, these questions remain open.

In the case of Chile, coercion operated under a model that can be defined as global bureaucratic.

That is to say, as a repressive political deployment of the State, in which civilians and military participated in a coordinated and active manner in macro, meso and micro-political spaces.

This global bureaucratic coercion, expressed in control devices, administration mechanisms and an Internal War Plan that included the ministries, was supported by the construction of two external security rings.

The first of these rings, in the logic of the Cold War and the Security Doctrine, was the Condor Plan, created in November 1975 in Santiago de Chile with the participation of the secret police of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay.

The second was the Foreign War Plan, which was essentially an information and psychological warfare operation against Chilean or progressive collectives around the world.

The coordination began in September 1973, but it's from 1975 onwards that the power of the DINA, and its ability to coordinate ministries and departments, grew with the support of General Pinochet (Weibel, 2012).

A first step occurred on February 20, 1975 when Pinochet granted absolute power to the DINA to review the hiring of all public officials.

The measure, which lasted until the end of the regime, was applied to prevent any opponent from entering the public administration.

In 1979, the National Information Center (known by its Spanish acronym CNI) climbed another institutional rung. Its director, Odlanier Mena, informed the ministries that the secret police would not only issue files on the officials, but also required to have the executive organization chart of the ministries, with an explanation of all the movements of officials.

But the institutional relations of the DINA and the CNI with the ministers and their subordinates were much deeper, of close political-strategic collaboration.

There was a mutual transfer of information obtained by infiltrators who reported to the ministries or the secret police indistinctly.

There were also joint operations, distribution of analyses and exchange of political opinions on the external scenario. All strictly letterheaded as reserved or confidential.

In this way, the most intimate strategies of the dictatorship passed smoothly through the desks of the authorities under the coordination of the CNI, including the intelligence operations associated with the handover of power around 1990.

Beatings and the use of electricity in extermination camps coexisted with political discussions about the limits of repressive policies. «How many prisoners to have? How

to distort the accusations of human rights violations? What to do with opponents? Expel them from the country or relegate them to the mountain villages? » (Weibel, 2012; 77).

The horror of those years was not savagery.

PSG and family journeys of the victims

The genocidal social practices, and the consequent reorganization of relations between State, economy and society in Chile, had consequences in the individual and collective memories of victims and their families. In collectives and territories, in the ways of interpreting the past and litigating the future, even intergenerationally.

This research delves precisely into the views and resignifications constructed by the daughters and sons of people who survived political imprisonment during the civil-military dictatorship. An imprisonment that on many occasions was another expression of a variety of repressive devices that affected these families, in the context of their militant journey, in opposition to the civil-military dictatorship.

It's a work² that reconstructs subjectivities, reinterpreted from the present, from the advances and debts in Truth, Justice and Memory that the country has experienced

2 *It's important to point out that this book is part of another series of investigations carried out by the Fundación de Protección a la Infancia Dañada por los Estados de Emergencia, (PIDEE), which have reconstructed similar processes in the children of individuals and families who suffered various human rights violations, such as exile, disappearance and execution of some of their members.*

since the recovery of democracy in 1990³.

It's a text that attempts to explore how the structural devices of genocidal social practices were expressed in the persecuted families. And, above all, how they were able to address this persistent violation of their human rights.

These are the voices, sometimes concordant and sometimes divergent, of the last witnesses of a barbarism that, as we have said, was profoundly political and reorganizing. A technology of power that, in the words of Feierstein (2007), always has as its objective the destruction of the social relations of autonomy, cooperation and identity of a society, through the annihilation of a specific political sector.

It's the view -we insist- of the devices of repression from those who were denied and silenced. Those who, even legally, could be politically and socially prosecuted and curtailed, as established by the Constitution at that time.

In short, it's the story of those who, through different subaltern paths, were able to construct memory, as part of a dispute with official history.

At this point, it's important to emphasize that the reorganizing genocide that took place in Chile, structured around successive plans and rings of security and control, methodically deployed a series of symbolic and material devices of coercion and control. It was not random. Nor unbridled wickedness.

These symbolic devices included -among others- processes of stigmatization, denial of identity and inversion of guilt.

3 *The Christian Democrat lawyer Patricio Aylwin Azócar (1918-2016) was the first president of Chile, after the recovery of democracy in 1990. On the other hand, General Augusto Pinochet (1915-2006) remained commander-in-chief of the Army until 1998, when he became a senator-designate, a position reserved for him by the 1980 Constitution, approved in a plebiscite without electoral records.*

In the material devices of repression, meanwhile, control, coercion, denunciation and surveillance, to name a few, emerged (Weibel; 2019).

Indeed, these practices were expressed institutionally and systematically. Likewise, its consequences were not only the reorganization of the relationship between State, economy and society. They also affected the social fabric and the daily lives of persecuted individuals and families, as we have noted.

The repression, as the testimonies collected show, was therefore not an isolated and particular act in the life of these households, but a permanent threat that affected the lifestyles, language and social relations of those affected, for example.

As a result, several resistance and memory devices emerged in these families, which we are interested in highlighting in this book. Also, the difficulties, silences and conflicts.

These social and political histories are reconstructed through the eyes of child survivors (now adults), witnesses to the detention of their fathers and mothers. They are also victims of raids on their homes and of prison search and control mechanisms.

They are also victims of the practices of denial of the other, expressed in their own social relations in schools, in addition to the media and even territorial environment in which they had to grow up and be formed.

The memories of Alejandro Villablanca Rojas

Alejandro Villablanca Rojas⁴ (1977), a native of Victoria, in southern Chile, is the son of former political prisoner Vilma Rojas and a member of a family linked for several generations to the Communist Party, an organization that that faced hiding in the 20th century, during the government of Gabriel González Videla (1946-1952)⁵ and the civil-military dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet (1973-1990).

«That's right, that is, my family, my grandmother was one of the first militants of the Communist Party, she is from the south too, she was born in Tortel, but later they moved to Victoria and she, as I was saying, was one of the first militants of the Party. I think her mother also had, had a strong tendency, I think, from what she said, a very marked influence of the

⁴ Interview available both in the Audiovisual Archive of the Fundación de Protección a la Infancia Dañada por los Estados de Emergencia (PIDEE), and in the catalog of Museum of Memory and Human Rights of Santiago of Chile.

⁵ Gabriel González Videla was a radical politician who governed the country between 1946 and 1952. After coming to power with the support of the communists, in 1948 he signed the Law for the Defense of Democracy, which outlawed the CP. The measure unleashed a systematic repression, one of the symbols of which was the Pisagua prison camp in the north of the country.

Spanish Civil War⁶, of all the influence that existed at that time. »

His family, according to his story, was inserted for decades in the social and productive fabric of the region, linked to the union activity of the Railroads⁷ and the labor world. That framed his militant journeys, mainly in the Barrio Norte of Concepción.

«And of course, I come from a family with working class roots. Well, almost most of my aunts, later on, were from the Party, uncles who were also militants in the Patriotic Front⁸, which was, as we all know, for people who don't know, a very difficult time, because at that time the Party decided to arm itself in the face of a dictatorship that was killing them. In this sense, self-defense, if one could say so, is understood as such.

Part of my family, some uncles took that path, others followed the path of the party, and my mother, in those cells, was detained, she was detained with another aunt, Angélica Rojas, who was also detained for five years, she was also an active militant.»

In this context of militancy and resistance to the dictatorship, his family suffered the economic crisis that began in 1982 and 1983, when the banking system went bankrupt, the foreign debt crisis and unemployment rose to 27 percent, according to figures from the National Institute of Statistics (NIS).

6 *The Spanish Civil War was a confrontation of political and even religious nuances, which pitted the Republican side, defender of the Second Republic, against a fascist and monarchist rebel side, led by the military Francisco Franco, who established a dictatorship that lasted from 1939 to 1975.*

7 *The history of the railroad in Chile began in 1848, with the construction of the route between Caldera and Copiapó, preferably for mining use. Its greatest splendor lasted until the first half of the 20th century, when it had 7,658 kilometers of roads, distributed from Arica to the island of Chiloé.*

8 *The Manuel Rodríguez Patriotic Front (known by its Spanish acronym FPMR) was a guerrilla organization created with the support of the Communist Party and Cuba, mainly. Its first action took place on December 14, 1983.*



Photograph 3. Alejandro Villablanca with his mother Vilma Rojas, Tamara Vidaurrázaga with her mother María Soledad Aránguiz and her sister Katia (Coronel Prison).

«And at the beginning of the 80's as well, there were many needs, there was a lot of poverty, we had a hard time, I imagine most Chileans at that time. And well, that's it.»

It's in this socioeconomic context that Alejandro begins to notice the problems of repression affecting his family, when he is in his first years of schooling.

«I still have those memories, of that time, which was very, very special, it was very hard, as I was saying, the time, when one is a child, we don't have, we do not have much awareness of the things that are happening in the country, but obviously, we felt that something serious was happening, because the family was disunited, there were problems, they raided the

house, well I at least witnessed, I experienced two raids in the house, and the second time I experienced that, they took my mother away.

But also, as one does not have much awareness of things, one still goes on with one's childhood life, one still has one's little friends, still plays, still has one's friendships, but, as I said, we felt that something very serious was happening. At that time there were blackouts, there were barricades, there was a lot of protest. Later on, as time went by, one realized that the situation was very serious at that time.»

The raid and detention of his mother occurred in 1986, the year of the largest protests against the civil-military dictatorship. Initially, Alejandro does not realize what has happened.

«That morning I wake up, I don't know at 9-10 in the morning, I remember my grandmother crying in the kitchen, when I see her crying and I ask her what is going on, I didn't realize what was happening at that time, but I look... I start to look at the house and the house is all destroyed. I start to look at the house and the house is all destroyed, I go to the dining room and there is a library that is all dismantled, the furniture is broken, as if a hurricane had passed through the house, and between tears my mother, my grandmother, tells me that they had detained my mother away, that memory is still with me, I don't know how long she was incommunicado, later they found her whereabouts and later it was known that she was in the Coronel prison.»

The visits to the prison and the separation from his mother are for Alejandro a moment of sadness, tinged by family affection, which is also framed in the militant trajectory of uncles and grandparents.

«I was about ten or eleven at the time, 86' 80' and... 86' it was. So, I started, we began to visit her, she was with other comrades, some from the

Movement of the Revolutionary Left (known by its Spanish acronym MIR)⁹, others from the Party. And I started going on weekends, sometimes weekdays. But mostly during the week. On Sunday I shared with her. That was also a very, very sad stage because being without one's mother is also complicated.

But luckily, I always had a large family and we were always very close, never lacked affection and they tried to make me understand that the things that happened were due to the problems that were happening in the country.»

The support of the extended family, not always present in other cases, coincides with the articulation of a strategy of emotional containment on the part of the political prisoners themselves.

«So, at that time, it was very hard, because we were waiting for the visit, sometimes they did not let us in, the gendarmes always made problems at that time, but it was always nice to meet the mother.

And then, of course, there were other prisoners as well, who also had their children detained, I mean, they had their children as well, who went to see them. And at that time, of course, we were like a family, the prisoners, my mother was a good friend of the... they were all friends, they had like a family, it was like a house, they had their salamander stove, they had their bunks neatly there and it was very cozy, I remember that they received us very well. To me and the other girls, at that time, well Tamara, Katia, who is no longer with us, Germán, Cristina's son, I don't remember, there was another boy who was in Cuba at that time, who was the son of Mrs. Linda, who was not there at that time, but they talked a lot about him, so yes, very strong, very strong, but it was nice to share the whole weekend with your

9 Movement of the Revolutionary Left, a group founded in 1965 by Miguel Enriquez Espinosa (1944-1974), which advocated an armed conquest of power in the 60's, 70's and 80's. Enriquez died on October 5, 1974 in a confrontation with agents of the National Intelligence Directorate (DINA), the dictatorship's secret police.



Photograph 4. *María Soledad Aránguiz and Vilma Rojas with other political prisoners in Coronel prison.*

mother, Well, on Sunday, we spent the whole day hugging, we talked a lot, we talked a lot of things, very hard anyway, sometimes I felt that she talked to me too much about adult things sometimes, of course at that time, as a result of all this situation, one matures a little bit, matures a little more, maybe, because I was not living a normal childhood, I was not living a childhood like any other child.»

The situation, despite the effort of emotional containment on the part of the adults, gradually worsens as several members of the family are detained, leaving several children without their parents.

«No, my grandmother stayed, sorry, my grandmother stayed in charge of me and several, all my cousins actually. Besides that, at that time when I lived in Concepción, I grew up with four cousins, five cousins, so we were like, I mean we are still siblings, so there was not that loneliness perhaps, I would

have been alone maybe it would have been worse, but as I say the family was always united and my aunts and my cousins, there was always a warmth of family despite the difficult times, there was always that love and that feeling of home, which is important for a child at that time.»

However, Alejandro notes that the repression against his family was complex and repeated for years, with scenes of profound violence.

«My aunt Angélica Rojas, she was also detained, she was imprisoned in the San Miguel prison, in the 80's, I am not very clear about the years, but I do know that she was released around there, a little before the return of democracy.

My aunt ended up in prison in Santo Domingo, she was detained for about five years, she was also an active militant at that time in the Party.

And another political uncle who was married to an aunt, Luis Belmar, who was also there for approximately five years. He was a frontist and was in jail, in the former Public Prison.

So, there was still a strong persecution of our family. In 89'-88', a little before Pinochet left power, they made the last raid on the house, that day they surrounded the whole block, I remember, with tanks, with tanks, with tanks, sorry, with soldiers, and they destroyed the house. There I have those memories of the house already... they got in through the attic, they detained my grandfather, my aunt, my aunt Zaida, my cousins.... well, I mean, at that time, no, I don't know, you kind of take it all as normal, because we had already gone through everything before, my mother in jail, my uncles in jail, so it was something that is happening now, like you see it, well, just once more, but yes, now that you remember it was very strong, strong with the militia there in the house, beating my grandfather, I remember they hit

him with a buttstroke, some cousins were crying because they were being interrogated, so it was a very complicated time, very sad.»

With the recovery of democracy and the gradual release of his relatives, Alejandro's life returned to normal and, in his words, the dreams of a life together with his mother began to crystallize.

«It was nice, it was very nice, as I said, to have her and my uncles free, that the family was united was nice, she left with the hope of... I can study and so she did, she studied a secretarial course, she started working, we went to live alone, the two of us, in a little house in Concepción and so my mother began to emerge, little by little.

Then we went to live in Hualqui for a year, a friend of hers had gone to see her children in Germany and left her, left her the house so she could rent it, then it was like they began to purge all these, these sadnesses and all the ugly times of the dictatorship and the fact that she was imprisoned, they began to forget little by little, not to forget, but to leave the bad things behind.

And it was nice, because we lived in a house in Hualqui, very nice, with a big yard, a country house, and then my mommy had to come to Santiago due to a work-related issue, she came to Santiago, looking for better job opportunities as well. And no, well because we bonded a lot more when she came out, we bonded more, we got to know each other more. Well, as you all know it's very difficult the relationship with the parents and the mother, but in spite of everything at that time it was very nice, very nice relationship, obviously there are differences with the mother and everything, but at that time it was... it was very nice until, until I later left.»

Along the way, Alejandro notes that it has not been easy to talk with his mother about persecution, imprisonment and sadness, a common situation among those who have suffered human rights violations.



Photograph 5. Tamara Vidaurrázaga, Alejandro Villablanca and Katia Vidaurrázaga (Coronel Prison).

«Yes, little by little we have been, little by little we have perhaps been overcoming or opening up a little more about the subject, because I imagine that for her it's painful and sad to open her heart or her stories, with something that can hurt me, but, yes, little by little, I know that she suffered torture, that there was very strong mistreatment, not only for her, as we know, many people suffered this humiliation at that time.»

As a family, probably due to the common militant trajectory, there are no ruptures or distances, as occurred in other nuclei. On the contrary, the premature death in 2007 of an aunt, who was also a political prisoner, motivates them to persevere in the reconstruction of family memories and specifically in the poems written in captivity by that deceased relative.

«(To) be able to say that this happened, as a clear process of the country, to be able, as you say, to heal, to be able to say look, this happened, but no, but I hope it will never happen again.»

The memories of Carolina Tapia Caris

Carolina Tapia Caris¹⁰ (48) is a social worker and mother of two children. She has been working for some twenty years with people in extreme poverty, especially women with addictions. Her father, Germán Tapia Hermosilla, controller of a textile company during the government of Salvador Allende, was a political prisoner in 1973, in the Estadio Nacional¹¹.

«I know, for several weeks, how my dad didn't know where I was. My father at that time was a factory controller. He had been detained in the factory along with other co-workers and I know that my mother, with some of my father's sisters, some of my aunts, had to look for him in various detention centers, until after two or three weeks they managed to find him in the stadium. Well, and my mom would go out with my sister and me to look for it.»

10 Interview available both in the Audiovisual Archive of the Fundación de Protección a la Infancia Dañada por los Estados de Emergencia (PIDEE), and in the catalog of the Museum of Memory and Human Rights of Santiago of Chile.

11 The Estadio Nacional, the country's main stadium, was used since the military coup and until 1974 as a place of imprisonment and torture. Reports from the International Red Cross indicate that at least twenty thousand prisoners from thirty-eight countries passed through its facilities, including children. Currently, there is a memorial site inside, which is administered by the Corporación Estadio Nacional Memoria Nacional. The walls of the hatches, the dressing rooms and the swimming pool area still bear tangible testimony to these events.



Photograph 6. Carolina Tapia with her father Germán Tapia and her mother Gloria Caris.

The encounter and subsequent release of her father, however, did not imply a normalization of everyday life, but the aftermath of torture and fear remained, in a framework of silence.

«How long was he detained? I think he was released at the end of November, about three months, yes. He never talks much about it, or what happened. He always talks about it like, he has a very special character, so he is very funny, he throws like everything as a joke, so the parts he tells are like funny anecdotes, of that situation. Well after that, he became unemployed for many years.»

Indeed, the dictatorship deployed a surveillance system that sought to exclude from the labor market, especially in the State, people who were considered dangerous by the regime, as revealed by the secret documents found in 2013, in the Estadio Nacional.

It consisted of a mechanism of permanent and institutionalized exclusion and denial, which, for example, is widely documented in the case of teachers and civil servants (Weibel; 2016).

The family situation, —according to Carolina's story— has since been marked by precariousness and fear.

«Since my father arrived, after that, and for several years, I would say, he was, as if in the shadows, as if always silent, as if emotionally and psychically affected. (...)

And my mother had to continue working in a factory that was under military intervention. So, also, I never knew if I was going to return or not, obviously there was a very important impoverishment of our family. My sister was also very affected, she was about 12 years old, and we were always kind of scared. I think we grew up always knowing that the world was not a safe place.»

In this journey, fear and the mechanisms of protection were installed as a daily action, which was present in daily gestures.

«I think I always knew; I don't know you grow up with that, knowing that obviously your family has a tendency and a political position, also knowing how what had happened to them, in terms of political repression. It's kind of weird, but you always knew there were things you shouldn't talk about.

There were things that did not need to be said. That it was always necessary to take care of oneself. That the gate always had to be padlocked, for example, but since always, you grow up with that, and always with the ghost that it could come. Of course, when I was a child, that they could come, it was like a specter, one didn't know who it was, but well, later on, one manages to understand that it has to do with the agents of the police, the CNI, etc.»

Like others son and daughters of victims of human rights violations, Carolina faces childhood relationships in a framework of asymmetry and distance from her peers.

«As I was telling you, I remember being very young, being in elementary school, for example, and talking to my classmates about this, about the dictatorship, and all my classmates looked at me with a strange look on their faces. One seems to be living in a parallel reality. Of course, when you were in school you could be like a child. You would go back home, and the fear would return.»

The alert situation persists throughout the dictatorship, due to the fact that her father and mother maintain their militancy in the Communist Party. Carolina and her sister also begin to participate politically. However, it's an ungraspable fear, where silence about torture continues to this day.

«He has never talked much about what happened to him in the Stadium, but one presumed that clearly, he had not gone through it because he talked about the tortures or the very complicated situations that had happened to others, but he never talked about himself.

About the year 1980 and so on, some Dutch journalists came and did a report on the Estadio Nacional and interviewed him. I know that there he kind of related what his experience was, and I think it was super healing for him. The same as participating in these reparation reports, because I also believe that recognizing oneself as a victim or that the State recognizes you as a victim was also a form of reparation.

—Do you know that interview?

No.

—You never saw it afterwards?

No, because it was for Dutch television. It's not something that happened here and I don't know, I think it was his private life, so you have to respect that.»



Photograph 7. Carolina Tapia with her father Germán Tapia and her mother Gloria Caris.

In Carolina's words, her family took on the civil-military dictatorship as a moral struggle, as a battle against death. For this reason, they never accepted the idea of leaving Chile.

«I think we were super idealistic people, super idealistic, we thought that, I believe, we dreamed that, somehow with the recovery of democracy, we would also recover social and political rights, quality of life for the people, freedoms.

It wasn't quite like that, clearly this is better, but it was not, I think, what we thought. We thought that we were going to recover above all that, that many social and political rights that the social movement had won in all those years were going to be recovered, but in reality, it was 'everything as far as possible'. And at some point, you felt like cannon fodder, right?

Because later one realized that in reality power was distributed by the same people as always and it was not more democracy, it was not more freedom, and it was not more rights, as I believe one aspired.»

However, this social struggle and the PIDE, where her mother later worked, were the extra-familial spaces where Carolina remembers finding and building emotional support.

«Many of my friends that I met there, or that I met in the militancy, had lived through much harsher and more painful experiences of political repression than mine or that of my family.

Somehow, one tended to minimize one's own pain or one's own experience because there were others a thousand times more excruciating. So, somehow one thought that, well it was not so much, it could have been worse, and in reality, 'everything' was so much, and another was much more horrifying, but it was good to be in a space where you were not really a stranger, you could communicate, there was the possibility of being able to share with others, with similar experiences, talk with other children about those difficulties.

It was like a lair to get to. So that was kind of good, it was like when you went to the Vicarage¹², you felt that 'they could still come', but it was more difficult than alone at home. Being with others, feeling more accompanied, gave you more protection, I think. Arriving at a place where you were much more welcomed, where everyone greeted you, how were you. Knowing that, quote unquote, you thought that 'everyone there was trustworthy' and that was what you didn't have, this basic trust in the world.»

12 The Vicariate of Solidarity was an organism of the Catholic Church, created in January 1976 by Pope Paul VI at the request of Cardinal Raúl Silva Henríquez. It replaced the Pro Peace Committee in assisting victims of human rights violations during the civil-military dictatorship. Its first vicar was priest Cristián Precht Bañados. He ceased to serve on December 31, 1992. On August 18, 1992, the Documentation and Archive Foundation of the Vicariate of Solidarity was created, which preserves the valuable material produced during all those years of functioning.

However, Carolina admits that the aftermath of these fears persists in her daily life, in small gestures.

«The permanent fear, I believe that the feeling of fear is something very complex to explain. It's like walking and you have to know if someone is following you, to always be attentive, not to make the same routes. It's like such an everyday thing, so it's complex.

It's difficult because one feels, what I am telling you, that one is born knowing that the world is not a safe place and that is not normal for the emotional development, I believe, of any child.

Afterwards, I believe that one elaborates it, or manages it, actually manages it better. I think even one has symptoms, almost post-traumatic stress.

Sometimes I'm driving and I'm stopped by the carabineros (Chilean police) for normal documentation control, and I sweat, even if I don't have any difficulties, have all my papers up to date, haven't made any infraction, but the presence is like a little tachycardia. My daughter tells me, 'but mom, calm down', and I tell her yes, yes, I'm fine now, but it's inevitable.

I don't know if one sees the police forces as a safeguard, I feel that they are not.»

In this intergenerational dialogue, Carolina believes that the most difficult thing is to be able to transmit the feeling of permanent fear that suffocated daily life.

«My daughter told me, when we were talking about this, I told them about the interview, what we were going to do, then my daughter told me that she thought we were so brave, that how could we have survived all this?

I was telling her that I believe that one is not brave, one survives that, I believe that one draws strength from, one gives oneself strength, you don't think if you are brave or a coward, no nothing, one simply gives it to oneself, and from there I believe that we can all develop that.

There one also understands the strength of human beings, the resilience that people can have and the capacity they can have to repair or repair themselves and rebuild trusting relationships with friends, with partners, with children, with co-workers. Some people I think have a harder time than others.»

In this sense, Carolina raises the need to strengthen reparation policies and, above all, laws that sanction denialism, which is a way to exclude and stigmatize victims once again.

«At the State level, it's tremendously urgent that there be laws against denialism, but uhm. I don't understand how there are people who fail to understand that it also has to do with the mental health of a people. It has nothing to do with those of us who were victims of the repression, it's that one cannot install perversion, like institutionalism, like playing that this did not happen, that it was no big deal. When the State, the society defines that this is so, it installs a perverse society and this is for the whole mental health of a people and it's harmful, it's harmful. (...)

But today is shocking. How so many voices are raised by people who feel that they should have killed all of us, and suddenly one feels the difference between quotation marks 'us' and 'them', because I don't know if we think that "they" should be killed, I don't think, or at least it's not our feeling, nor I think that of our family, to look for, shoot people, or persecute them politically, or make a political police against people who think differently from us, it does not have to do with that. But we cannot forget, we cannot forget.

So today a senator appears with a T-shirt that says, 'Pinochet's tour, throwing bodies into the sea' and the most complex thing that happens to him is the rejection by social networks, it's like, as if there is no weight of what is being done, it has no weight. How can you tolerate that, how can it be tolerated, I don't understand.»

The memories of Claudia Troncoso Sazo

Journalist Claudia Troncoso Sazo¹³ (46) is the daughter of former communist leader Sergio Troncoso Cisternas, of the National Confederation of Construction Workers, and a textile worker. His family faced several episodes of detention and relegation during the civil-military dictatorship (1973-1990), from the first days of the coup.

«Well, my dad is a communist militant. In fact, he proudly says that his ID card was given to him by Pablo Neruda¹⁴.

He is from the city of Angol and in the decade of 73' at the time of the coup d'état I was 10 months old. When my dad hears right, that the workers

¹³ Interview available both in the Audiovisual Archive of the Fundación de Protección a la Infancia Dañada por los Estados de Emergencia (PIDEE), and in the catalog of the Museum of Memory and Human Rights of Santiago of Chile.

¹⁴ Pablo Neruda was a Chilean poet, winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1970. Communist militant, he died on September 23, 1973, under conditions that are being investigated by Justice, on suspicion of murder. General Song, printed for the first time in hiding, is his most recognized work.

have to go to their place of... work and he worked at the UNTAC¹⁵ in the casino area and goes to the UNTAC that day, following orders, right, indications to defend in the government of Salvador Allende.

Well, in that context he was detained and taken to the Estadio Nacional, where he was there for about a month, I think, from what I have talked about because uhm... I know he was there in prison, but I did not have much detail about this, to talk and remember some of these things or that he told me about them. There he was detained for about a month.

And well, seeing all the things that happened there, the atrocities, he later said that he was released and left with a lot of insecurity, because there was, I think, a curfew. So a lot of security, a lot of insecurity if he could get to the house.»

Due to age, the reconstruction of this first detention was carried out in family dialogues, however, the aftermath of this event remained and motivated the first family transfer.

«Well, my brother was one year old, so we were... we were just babies, so we were small, we didn't really know anything and we have known all this, right, from my dad's and my mom's stories, that she often had to leave us in charge with neighbors, with family, to go and find out about my dad, about my dad's whereabouts, in what condition he was and all that, it was a period that I lived like that and indirectly, being very young, uhm...

After that, uhm... my dad, well, he relates that he was very insecure, because he felt the helicopter passing by and all that and then we went to the south, I think, to his family's place for a while, maybe a month, two months, I am not sure, we stayed there, until, to calm down a bit and for my dad to

15 It refers to the UNCTAD building, which was inaugurated on December 3, 1972, to host the Third session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development in the Third World in Santiago.

recover a bit of security, from the fact of having gone through the stadium, of having seen so many atrocities.»

In Claudia's memory, the repressive and family events are clearer, starting in 1983, with the advent of the first national protests, originally led by copper workers and later joined by other productive sectors, including construction.

«Growing up, in what I had to live the hardest, it was the year 83', June 18, 83'. I was ten years old, and my father participated as a union leader in the Confederation. At that time, there was also the National Union Coordinator, it had formed, uhm... participated in the first demonstrations against the Pinochet dictatorship. In this context, after the demonstrations and all that, the repression began.

My parents live in Lo Prado, in Villa Cañada Norte, they live there in Lo Prado and that is where they went, my father was the victim of a kidnapping, it was in the early morning of June 18 when they went to pick him up, I remember that it had rained, therefore, what attracted my attention, I did not hear anything, I was sleeping with my brother, we shared the same bedroom, because the house was very small. So I didn't, no, I didn't hear anything, but later I woke up, let's say, because of the voices of the people, because the moment when the CNI went to look for my father had already passed.»

This second detention was followed by a period in which, as usual, the security services denied knowing the detainee's fate.

«My father was detained and disappeared for five days, because no one claimed to have him, no police, my mother had to take time off work to carry out the search process, go to the Vicariate and we, in parenthesis, to continue with an almost normal life, because as a child you don't understand what is happening, you understand, you knew that we were going through a difficult period, that the protests were coming and that our

father was a union leader and all that, but you never knew what could happen.»

The situation, by the way, as it used to happen, was part of mass detentions of opponents, within the framework of the repression of the monthly and national protests that shook the country that year, leaving dozens dead and thousands detained.

«Well, at that time there were about fourteen union leaders who were detained, gastronomic workers, peasants, my father from the construction industry...

And well, the women get together and go on hunger strike to get an answer, let's say, to know where their husbands and fathers are. And this hunger strike, well that's what I remember, it was in the Cathedral, in the Church of Lourdes and then ended with a mass, I remember that as a daughter I spoke and said the only thing I want is to know about my father.

Well, and I started to cry, I remember the and after that uhm... I have the memories of my dad being relegated to Maullín, seventy kilometers from Puerto Montt. Also at that time uhm... there was no, there was no awareness of what the dad had gone through.»

After her father's relegation, Claudia remembers that several solidarity mechanisms were activated that helped them to face the humanitarian situation they were experiencing.

«So, my mother traveled, with help, of course, with the solidarity that I know was provided on those occasions, right, by organizations, the same Vicariate, the same union leaders, she traveled to see my father and my father stayed at the house of the village priest Jaime Ringueling, at the parsonage in that village.»



Photograph 8. Sergio Troncoso, in black vest with a group of fishermen working in Maullín during his relegation.

After an initial silence and unlike other family stories, the subject of torture was talked about in the family environment, which has various consequences, according to Claudia's story.

«So my mother, she says that my father received her, she could see with the naked eye that my father was fine, my father did not tell her details, and when she returned to Santiago and met again with the lawyer at the Vicariate, there she was asked what tortures my father had suffered.

And my mom says that she felt very bad, because she didn't, she never knew, I mean, my dad never told her what he had gone through, he kept it to himself, and she says that she felt silly, in a certain way she felt silly that my dad had protected her in such a way, because she was asked how he was not going to tell you, he was not going to tell you what happened.

And there my mother found out, because my father had already been interviewed by lawyers and human rights people, about the atrocities that

my father had suffered... about the current and all the things that the CNI subjected so that people would talk.

So, it was strong and one as a child uhm... as a product of those processes that parents go through, right, uhm.... that's when we came, that's when I came to know that my father had been tortured, right, he had been tortured, just as hard because you can't imagine torture, maybe you can imagine it as a blow, but never a current in the genitals, in the anus, blows, in fact, as a result of, no, right, of this refreshment of remembering things, we talked with, with my father and he told me that they even showed him pictures of us, that they knew where we studied and all that, and that was also a lot of psychological threat, but these are things that one as a child did not, did not internalize until one was older, I have done, uhm... once I found out that my father had been tortured, I wanted to tell a classmate about it at school, oh! my dad was... he is in prison and he was tortured and my dad was already relegated.

And the classmates laughed, "Ah! your dad is a superhero, he can stand the current, because he had heard something about the current. And it was a teacher who said to me, she asked me how is your dad? I said: nooo, it's fine, now it's fine, it's relegated, yes, but it was unusual that you could not tell anyone, because no one believed, or the children too, in their innocence, could imagine that a person could receive current.

That is a process, as well as that as a child you start to understand the things that happen and to think differently, because you knew that your father had a different position to what was coming as dictatorship, even though we were children we were aware of the process that the country is going through. But we never thought it would come through so hard to us and through dad.

So that was hard, it was hard, I went to see my dad, I mean we went as a family to see my dad in August 83', in fact I have some letters there, two

that I sent him in July '83, where I tell my father, who also did not remember those things, I remembered that I told my father that I had joined the pioneers, and that I wanted to follow his same path of struggle, I mean, I also began to commit myself as a child, I was 10 years old, in October I had just turned 11, in this that my father had already been assuming a whole life, because a whole communist life.

So, uhm... I start to assume it and, I start to assume it also maybe to make him feel proud that we are still on his way, we are still going forward, and well and missing him.»

In this context, in addition to the help in Santiago, another element of containment was the support of the locals.

«We also, as children, were still happy, because we went to see my father, uhm, knowing a little about the things that had happened, but we were still the children of the relegated.

Then, as children they bought us clothes, they bought us boots, we were happy, we wanted to wear the clothes, I remember, immediately, that they had bought us for the occasion, because it was very cold.

And we go to that place, across the street, on the street, to see the boats and I remember that a fisherman there tells us who we are, and I remember proudly telling him the daughter of the relegated. So, Ah! I want to get to know the relegatee and we went to look for my dad so he could get to know him. Well, it was an instance that, of course, as children we knew part of it, but we didn't realize that my father wanted to be known by all the people there and that made us happy.

Well, these instances, which we took my father to meet the fishermen, allowed my father, in quotation marks, to kill his detention time in the town, because he began to work there, spinning seaweed, I don't remember

the name of the seaweed, and he began to work there, and the fishermen and the people were very affectionate, they brought him seafood and gifts and the priest, behaved very well.

So these are things, within the pain, the sorrow, there is still a nice memory of the people, of how people welcomed you, how they showed solidarity with you, that was nice and one liked it, you know what I mean?»

However, the pain later expressed itself in various forms, as well as the psychological aftermath of the separation and torture, both in Claudia and her father.

«Well, that was the only time we were able to go see my dad, then when we came back, I remember that I got sick with grief, (smiles with tears) I, I started crying on the way, I had a fever, because I was very sad to leave my dad (cries)... Knowing that I was going to be there for a while and that I would not be able to see him, but I would write him letters, so I managed, but it was a process, like, not wanting to go, not wanting to leave that weekend and leaving your dad there was painful.

And I remember and it makes me sad again, it's like I'm living it all over again (cries), but those 3 months passed and after that, as a result of the torture, my dad was invited by labor unions to travel abroad, he traveled to Germany and Holland to take medication and have medical examinations, because as a result of the current they put in his anus, my father used to defecate on himself and I found that out later, I didn't know it at the time.»

After her father's return, he continues with his political and union activities, at which time Claudia develops the belief that if she was with him, nothing would happen to him. For this reason, he even accompanies him to the safe houses where he was hiding.

A third detention will occur in 1985, which will now be witnessed by Claudia and her brother.



Photograph 9. Claudia Troncoso, with her mother Rita Sazo and brother Yuri in Maullín visiting her father while he was in reclusion.

«Later, also in the 85', my father was detained that time too, I remember that it was a Sunday, the police also arrived, I thought it was the CNI, but they say it was the Investigaciones (Investigations Police of Chile), who went to look for my father, it was a very special Sunday because my mother was working and my mother was preparing everything for the week, so we thought... I mean, my parents had planned to participate in a union activity, I don't know if it was a walk or not.

And very early in the morning they start screaming: Hello! And my parents thought it was the Jehovah's Witnesses who were coming early and since their room was next to the garden, my mother answered and they told her it was the police and all the police were outside the house, I woke up because it was maybe 8 o'clock in the morning of that Sunday in the 85' and I saw the house full of police, my father trying to dress very nervous, because they were pressuring him, he wanted to go to the bathroom, they followed him to the bathroom, I remember my mother very emboldened, trying to defend, right, her husband, she reproached the police that they were not taking a delinquent, but they were in the house of a union leader, that my mother was very careful with my father's watch, that they were not going to steal it, because we had, she had heard things that the policemen stole things many times and a woman entered, I remember, a woman with a gun, she entered and went into the bedroom to search our chest of drawers. And there my mother also confronts her and tells her that, no, she has no right to go through things, because she had worked all night to leave the clothes tidy, then she says 'I am also a worker', the police tell her and my mother says 'yes, but you are a worker of death'.

Then I cried, I cried, uhm... because of the anguish.

Uhm... my brother who has always been not very expressive, uhm... he was there looking at the situation and the police said to me 'now girl, don't cry anymore' and there and then I also answered her with anger, impotence and even insulted his mother, I even insulted the police's mother, I told her 'you are taking my father away, old lady...' I said the insult.

Uhm... and a policeman told my mother that if she continued to put obstacles in the way of the detention, because my mother talked, talked, reproached them for everything they said, the policeman told my mother that if she continued like that, he was going to take her detained.

Then, my mom answered: 'he's not the first innocent person they're going to detainee' and they took my mom, took my dad, sorry, my dad and

we stayed there too uhm, with that anguish, it was during the day, the neighbors also noticed, in fact, neighbors wanted to go out to see and the police made them enter the house, so that they could not participate in the situation.»

After the detention, his father is again relegated, this time to Melinka, with about fifteen other people. The separation lasted about a month, in a context of many technical communication difficulties, according to Claudia's memories.

«And well, sad as a child, because they still separate you from your father, eh, they don't let you see him.

At that time, we did not have a telephone, so the means of communication were letters or the telephone, I remember that we depended on the neighbors, right, that my father would go out to a public telephone there and could call us at such and such an hour and be able to talk to him and it was like a short time: "Hello, how are you? How do you feel? Fine", and just hearing the voice made one happy, but no, there was no greater, let's say, communication, just hearing the voice or sending a letter, which was much more difficult.»

From then on, and in the context of the rise of the mobilizations, the detentions of his father became more recurrent and affected other members of the extended family.

«I remember, then my dad also, in the 85' then he moved on to this issue of the beheaded. My father also sent a letter to the Supreme Court, accusing them of having left the perpetrators, knowing who the perpetrators were, and he was also detained, he was also imprisoned for a time in the Penitentiary, and for another time he was in Capuchinos for other reasons.

So, it was difficult for one as a child to live this situation of not knowing if tomorrow you will see your father, because it was hard to go see him, to go see him in prison.

I remember that time he was in the Penitentiary, I don't remember if it was in the 86', my father was in the Penitentiary, he was there for a short time and it was also for having alleged something against the Supreme Court, that the whole, let's say, as he was the president, then he fell with the whole board of the Confederation.

He was there for a time in the penitentiary, a time he also shared with his brother, because my uncle was also a political prisoner, he was a population leader and as far as I remember the CNI was also very strong with them, because the guys even defecated in their house and cleaned themselves with their clothes.»

Unlike relegation, prison keeps the father closer, but subjects the family to further harassment.

«We were victims of groping and all that to see if we were carrying hidden things. As a child you lived through that, it was hard for you, to be touched and to be groped, that's the word, to look for things, so it was also a terrible world for you, and I remember that I also heard when we went to see my uncle that he had also been subjected to torture.»

In prison, at the same time, the bonds of solidarity in which his father's political work is embedded are expressed, which, in a way, is a form of pride and containment.

«Many people went to see him, or people who went to see the political prisoners took the opportunity to greet everyone, all the comrades who were there.

Therefore, the time to share, so share with your dad was little. It was 'Hello' to be hugging him while talking to other people, the same with the uncle.

Right, it was a very strange feeling... I mean, to be there with your dad,

but you were not really there, because he had to talk to other people, they greeted him, they visited him.

So, it was like a strange time, like I don't know, like having a water drop of your dad in a second, that's the feeling I have, let's say. (...)

For you as a child, it was something that you would never have imagined that you were going to live, to see that and between that to know how long your dad was going to be there, you understand, because everything depended on judicial matters and as a child you have no idea of that, of time, how long anything lasts, if all you want is to see your dad later at home, which in the period of dictatorship was difficult to see him at home, because my dad was, he was good and still not a union leader.»

Over time, the family remained in La Cañada Norte, district of Lo Prado, where they had their territorial history. And over the years she talked about her experiences, which for Claudia are not healed.

«The roles have changed, from having parents and a very apprehensive mother, now I am a very apprehensive daughter with my parents, I live worried about them.

My mother, as a result of, I think, of all the containment she had during those difficult years of the dictatorship, my mother, later in her time of rest, all her illnesses appeared.

Today she has many associated diseases, the most complicated of which is rheumatoid arthritis, which is not allowing her to walk well. And nowadays I have a father who, yes, is active, still participates in the Human Rights issue, still goes to his union as a member, no longer as a leader, but he is still committed to taking care of his wife, because he was with her all the years, all the years she was with him, supporting him, but today the roles have turned around and it is my mother who will need the support due to a health issue.

Well, as an apprehensive daughter I am still with them today, worrying, well they continue to help me because they receive Pablo after school, we have a very close and helpful relationship and that allows us to be united, my brother still goes to visit them, my brother already has three children, my parents are great grandparents, they are happy there with their great granddaughter and we have moved forward, a little, a little I would say, not healed, when talking about these issues one realizes that they are not healed.»

For Claudia, in short, the family came out of the dictatorship alive, but still carries the weight of the pain experienced during those years. She also persists with the practices of social, union and political work, especially her father, who works on the writing of his memories, as another exercise of individual and family healing.

For her, however, healing is necessarily linked to the recognition of human rights violations.

«A recognition of everything that took place, but more than forty years have passed since the dictatorship and all that it meant, and there has been no recognition. In other words, if you tell me if I believe in Justice? I do not believe in Justice.»

The memories of Eduardo Martínez Santos

Eduardo Martínez Santos¹⁶ (37) is an architect, works in the subway, is married and has two children. He lives in Ñuñoa in the same house with his parents, his father is Jorge Martínez Muñoz, a former MIR militant. He narrates that, due to his young age, he gradually became involved in his father's political activities.

«I had to live, let's say, my daddy's process and when I got older I learned about how he entered, how he participated, I have been learning about pieces of the story in different conversations, etcetera, so yes, I know more or less well.»

Eduardo recognizes his family as a leftist family, which generally participated in what he defines as «the resistance» to the civil-military dictatorship.

«Yes, my father belonged to the MIR and was politically formed from a

16 Interview available both in the Audiovisual Archive of the Fundación de Protección a la Infancia Dañada por los Estados de Emergencia (PIDEE), and in the catalog of the Museum of Memory and Human Rights of Santiago of Chile.

very young age in the MIR, he participated in all that was the Popular Unity¹⁷ and then participated in the resistance, he had military training in Cuba, he left the country expelled, then returned and well, he was imprisoned for about eight years and after his release we went to live in Belgium.»

He explains that he was born in 1982 when his father was already incarcerated, so the initial memories are, in fact, elaborate reconstructions, based on the stories collected from his mother.

«This was, well, in 82' I was born and from that moment my father was already in prison, so from 82' until 89', that is, the whole period of that early childhood, my father was in prison and therefore there was a routine of going to see him and there was a series of actions, of activities that we did a little around that too.

And as I told you, the visits to the prison for me were outings, I was waiting for that day, visiting my dad was very nice, it was the day when... I was on top of my dad all day, he bought me a peach nectar at the kiosk, my other brother played ball with him, we played ball in the yard, with my dad's other buddies.

It was also a day when I felt that my mother was happy. I was also telling you that there are questions of memory, that I have more sensory and I really liked the smell of my father, who always wore some shirts, he was sometimes bothered because he was a bit gentrified, that he wore some shirts and put some lavender seeds in his pocket.

So, I have pleasant memories of that time, now I am very conscious that I was younger, so there was a whole world that I could not perceive, but I am

17 The Popular Unity (PU) was the electoral alliance that brought President Salvador Allende to power in 1970, after winning the elections with a relative majority and being ratified by Congress, as established in the 1925 Constitution.

also super convinced that it's because of my mom's decision as well. My mother made a decision that these things were not going to... that she was going to do a deliberate job so that this would not be a traumatic experience that would punish us for life, so she was very convinced of that and we have even talked to her personally, and she says so, that deep down at some point she told herself that if what they wanted was to ruin her and her children's lives, she was not going to be available for that.»

On the same subject, he insists that he always knew about the social and political context, but that this did not prevent her mother from giving them emotional and affective protection, even during political activities and/or meetings in the Corporation for the Promotion and Defense of the Rights of the People (known by its Spanish acronym CODEPU)¹⁸ or other human rights organizations that fought for the freedom of political prisoners.

«My mom always had a lot of toys for us, I had a giant bag with cars. So, it was also, it was a lot of walking around with her everywhere and suddenly we would park, and we would start playing and then we would go to something else but, just like in a more usual day, we would get up, sometimes my mother had gone out to do these errands, we would stay with my grandmother who also took care of us.

I remember that I used to ask my grandmother for bread with oil and salt and from there my mother would also come and from there on weekends we would go to the prison, that's more or less how we moved. »

Eduardo, understanding his young age, admits that in the end he did not realize what was happening.

.....
18 The Corporation for the Promotion and Defense of the Rights of the People (CODEPU) is a non-governmental organization dedicated to the defense of human rights during the civil-military dictatorship. Among its founders were lawyer Fabiola Letelier (president), social worker María Elena López, priest Rafael Maroto, architect Fernando Castillo and former congresswoman María Maluenda. In 1990, after the return to democracy, the organization focused its work on achieving justice for victims of human rights violations.

«Of course, I was aware that we were in a dictatorship and that was what caused me not to be able to be with my father, but deep down it didn't... it didn't stop me from enjoying the moments when I could go to see him in prison and the fact that the trip to prison was something very entertaining, even though it was something that didn't correspond, you can see that.

But I do remember that, for the plebiscite, when the 'No' vote won, which was before my dad got out of prison those were moments of happiness.

I mean, it was something that had been worked for and it was something that corresponded and from there when my daddy was going to get out it was also like well, the end of a process that had been going on and that, if it was not appropriate that my daddy was not in prison, it was the way things should be.»

His father's freedom, unlike other cases, was not a traumatic experience for Eduardo. On the contrary, it was a period of reunion and transition to his stay in Belgium.

«As I was saying, I feel that my mom did an admirable job, in the sense of creating this kind of bubble that I believe, for us, for me, in particular.

But also in having always had my father well installed, regardless of the fact that he was in prison, I felt that he was a character that was there, not that he was absent, he was there because there were conversations and Saturday was the day I had to go to see him, he was there as if he was more present body, but the rest of the time he was there too.

So, now when he comes out, I think there is a mixture of things that I can't remember that there has been a kind of rupture of a certain routine by having this new character installed and what I think is because, of course, when he comes out, one of the memories I have is that we went to the beach and the four of us were alone, let's say, my brother, my mom and my dad.

I remember that there was a place where there were people who made boats, so that moment for me was like, I remember it as the milestone in which we started to live all together and it was in a routine that was not routine, it was a vacation, it was like a retreat and there was like, I think, the moment to soak a lot of my dad, I remember that we played a lot, I remember playing a lot with my daddy on that trip, in the mornings, in the afternoons, it was like the moment to incorporate him and then, when we came back from that trip, I think, we spent some time living at my grandmother's house, also all together, but I have the feeling that at the end all that period was like a transition and that the really usual life started when we left for Belgium.»

His father's freedom, however, is overshadowed by the fear of assassination attempts, despite the fact that the country is now in a democracy. For that reason, the family decides to move to Belgium, where his father intends to study.

«For me it was a painful family (decision), as I said, in my family we were very close, the family, as well as the hard core, my cousin and so on, so it was hard to leave, like leaving the family.

And then the first year there I also remember it hard, in the sense of missing, but from then on, we spent about six years in Belgium, so I was there until I was thirteen years old.

I have good memories, like we managed to build a quiet life, all of us in the family have very fond memories of Belgium, like another world.»

In that European country, after some initial adaptation problems, Eduardo feels that once again it was the family dynamics that made a difference in the face of adversity.

«We built very strong bonds with my comrades, with my Belgian comrades,

so I think that speaks about what we were able to build there and the kind of bonds we created, which were very strong bonds.

We, now I remember that we, as a family, were a special family, but special not because of the political issue and the history, which made a difference, but special above all because it was like a family in a Latin way in a Belgian context, in Alesmberg, which was also a Flemish town, let's say. So, this thing, you know, that the children could come to the house and stay with me at my house and spend a lot of time with me and that my mother was kind of working for us and had lunch ready and then prepared delicious things, that level of attention in the Belgian education is not usual, they are colder about that, so we made these friends who really liked to come to our house and they really liked to spend time in our house, in our domestic life. So we were kind of special in that sense, in the type of upbringing we had, like the vacations we planned, so we built these friends or these relationships with friends that were relationships where they became a bit like my mommy's and my daddy's children as well.»

Upon deciding to return, the family reiterates routines and gradually the children begin to make new friends, in a context in which family history is always present in conversations.

«Well, the subject of my daddy and my mommy and the period he was imprisoned, I feel they are the organizing axes of our family, organizing in the sense that, as they build a certain history, they build a certain history and therefore a certain position regarding the social processes as well, as they install a certain political dimension that is more leftist, you see?

So, I feel that the subject has always been there, and it is constantly coming up in different types of conversations that we have, either directly with my dad or in more general conversations, so in the end, so in the background of my daddy's period in prison is a period that is as if it is archi recognized,

it is very open and clear to the point that we can even have a good time, even with the family, this more extended hard core that we continue to vacation all together, we go like 20 on vacation.»

Eduardo, however, warns that his view of this experience is not necessarily the same as that of his siblings. The older one, he explains, is more aware of the fears and traumas of prison visits, for example. The youngest, who was born in Belgium, has devoted part of his life to researching memory issues.

For him, what is really important is to be able to draw positive elements from the whole process.

«I think that this last point is probably the most important thing for me, as if something good has to come out of horror and if something good doesn't come out, we have to keep trying to make something good come out and therefore, I feel, for me in my life today, that's my stop in general, my stop is to want to build, even in my domestic life, a life that is worthwhile, that is pleasant to live (...)

I feel that this is a gift that my dad and mom have given me as well.»

The Memories of Isabel Plaza Lizama

Isabel Plaza Lizama¹⁹, professor of dance, coordinates the Observatory of Human Rights Education at the Faculty where she works, at the time of this interview. She also participates in the Gender and Sexuality Unit of her house of studies. She is the mother of two children.

Her family history is linked to the rise of the MIR in Concepción.

Her mother, Rosa Lizama, was detained when she was seven months pregnant. Isabel is born in captivity. Her father, Francisco Plaza is also imprisoned in Villa Grimaldi.

«My parents were MIR members, my mother joined the MIR first, very young, younger than my father, my mother joined the MIR when she arrived at the University of Concepción, in the 60's.

She came from, she is a native of Santiago but there she came from studying in Angol and the first day of classes, the first day she arrived at the

19 Interview available both in the Audiovisual Archive of the Fundación de Protección a la Infancia Dañada por los Estados de Emergencia (PIDEE), and in the catalog of the Museum of Memory and Human Rights of Santiago of Chile.

University, if I remember correctly, she goes, I imagine that.... I don't know if it was a hemicycle or an auditorium and she listened to a speech, at this minute I don't remember which leader of the MIR and that speech was key for her, because it was the speech that made her understand, understand her origins and how those origins were lived by that environment, no, by her family, which was a very poor origin and it was like that day a new window was opened for her. She then quickly became part of the MIR.

And my father, on the other hand, my father was fifteen years older than my mother and was born in Concepción, he lived in Concepción, at that time he worked in the theater, I think he also drove a cab.»

In her family history, especially on her mother's side, she tells of a situation of precariousness and poverty that spans several generations.

«What happens is that my mother comes from a, as I was saying, a family, not only, a very humble family, very poor, but also, uh, well, my grandmother, my grandmother came from the countryside. She arrived in Santiago like many people to work and became pregnant at one point and was welcomed by a co-worker into her family.

And her family bosom was not only her own family, let's say husband and children, but her mother and father.

And then my grandmother arrives, she has my uncle and some time later she gets pregnant again, she was a single mother twice and has my mother.

And in that environment my mother grew up, which is very particular, for me it is very interesting, she never realized that, until, as I said, until later, when she was at the University and already reading, not studying, because they were very poor people and at the same time people who felt that children had to study, children had to study, they had to be happy and they had to study, it was not a poor working childhood, it was a very dear, very spoiled and very cared for poor childhood, and I think that made a huge difference

in my mother, in my uncle and in those other boys and girls who were there.»

The repression against her family began on the very day of the military-civilian coup, when her mother was detained for the first time.

«My mother was imprisoned on September 11; I don't know if it was between 8:00 and 8:30 in the morning. She was working, had already graduated and was working at Sigdo Koppers. And she arrived at work and in the morning, she was in prison, first thing in the morning. I know that before 8:30 a.m. she was in prison and if I remember correctly, she was in the Quiriquina, on Quiriquina Island²⁰.

My father was not imprisoned on that occasion. My mother was imprisoned for a few months. Finally, it is released, and they pass on, continue to militate and go hiding.

And in this context, they come to Santiago.»

In this context of hiding, her mother decides to become pregnant with Isabel, unaware that she will soon have to face another imprisonment in torture camps.

«And when my mother became pregnant, that's when I think the moment came... Not to take away the impact of what it meant to be a prisoner, a prisoner in '73, on September 11, '73, but the big difference was that when she was taken prisoner again, she was already seven months pregnant.

My mother was kidnapped in the street, in Santa Elena with... Santa Elena about half a block from Matta Avenue, Santa Elena, of course Santa Elena to the north and in broad daylight.

²⁰ Quiriquina Island, located in Concepción Bay, north of Talcahuano, was used as a concentration camp for political prisoners from the Biobío Region. It operated for these purposes between September 1973 and April 1975. About 1,000 people were confined inside. The men, in the Gymnasium of the Escuela de Grumetes and the women, in a pavilion of the same school.

I had a point, the order they always followed was to walk around the block and if the point did not appear they would continue. And my mother walked down the block and went back and when she went back, then, she saw a car and people came out and took her away, they hooded her and took her prisoner, of course... and I don't think it made much difference if she had gone back, because they had already seen her, the car was already there waiting for her.

And there she was taken to Villa Grimaldi²¹ and I understand that my father was also taken prisoner that same day. And the two of them arrive at Villa Grimaldi.»

There, her mother is taken for interrogation and then left in a room with other women, subjected to floggings.

«When my mother arrives, she arrives and they immediately put her in the women's room, so, of course, I have asked my mother what happened to her, the truth is that during the kidnapping she thought she was going to lose the baby, that was her only concern, she thought she was going to lose the baby. I imagine that she entered, she must have panicked and when she got to the women's room, a friend of my mother's told me once, this was not so many years ago, the way they were there, no, because they were in that room where suddenly there were women, like coming back from torture or... I imagine that my mother was taken there, after having been interrogated and that friend said: 'Your mother's wadding was moving like crazy', I mean her wadding was... which is crazy anyway, because that wadding was me, because what was moving was me, so it is strange to hear that, no.

And all my mother said was, or at one point she said something like this: "this is impossible, how can this be happening? how can they be doing this?"

21 Villa Grimaldi (Cuartel Terranova) was the main secret torture and extermination center of the DINA. The Metropolitan Intelligence Brigade operated there. Detainees who were not killed were usually transferred to Tres Alamos and Cuatro Alamos. An estimated 4,500 people were tortured at Villa Grimaldi. Of these, 241 were executed or are missing.

But in a way, not in a hysterical way, which there would have been a right to be hysterical or with an attack of crying or anguish, but my mother's friend told me that she was making a kind of political analysis of how it was possible that this was happening in the way it was happening.»

Her parents, like most of the prisoners, were transferred from Villa Grimaldi to Tres Alamos²² and Cuatro Alamos²³, a process in which they witnessed the murder of many detainees.

«She tells me that her feeling was that they were treated like death row inmates, because all of a sudden they would throw food at them, no, but, no, there was no rhythm, it's like people already forget, it's just there, a little bit.

And she took refuge in her pregnancy, she took refuge in that, she doesn't remember being hungry, she was just taking refuge in her pregnancy. »

Isabel was born in captivity, when her mother was in Tres Alamos, where there were other women in the same situation.

«We were in Tres Alamos and my mother was taken to Sótero del Río (Hospital), she was taken to Sótero del Río, she had me for a cesarean section and for a... they say infection from the cesarean section, today it sounds strange to me, because I don't know, an infection is not triggered from one day to the next, but what she always said was that she had had a problem, because it was a cesarean section, they had left her for more days and finally she ended up staying a month, in other words, if there was an infection from the cesarean section, she ended up staying a month there.

.....
 22 Tres Alamos was a concentration camp that operated between 1974 and 1976. The compound was divided into four wards, one of which was a solitary confinement compound called Cuatro Alamos. In Annexes, a secret document is attached referring to the establishment of this prison.

23 Cuatro Alamos was a detention and torture center operated by the DINA. It operated between 1974 and 1978. The prisoners were held incommunicado and their detention was not publicly acknowledged.

And that, there were people guarding her, when, after that month we were returned to Tres Alamos and after that, they sent us to a large lot in Pirque, in Pirque there was another small concentration camp that was a Young Men's Christian Association (known by its Spanish acronym YMCA) vacation camp and there they took us and there we were in a room with other pregnant women and with babies, I think there were, the other time I thought there were nine of us, but it seems to me that there were between six and fifteen girls who passed through there, but let's put nine because it is terrible not to be precise with the numbers.

That, we were there and I was a month old finally when we got out of the hospital, then we were transferred there.

The truth is that I was five months old and my mother was expelled from Chile and it was the French government that received her, so from Pirque to the airport and from the airport to Paris.»

Isabel and her mother settled in Bordeaux, where her mother completed her studies as a social worker. It is a period of intercultural adaptation, not always easy.

«First uhm... (silence) it was me and my mom, first it was just me and my mom... And my mom, well, she did everything she had to do to settle in France, we settled in a city towards the southeast, which is called Bordeaux and my mom well... she finished her studies as a social worker, and she went to work for the municipality.

And I was still militating, so, if I think about myself at that time, it's... a lot of meetings at home, a lot of cigarette smoke, uhm... a lot of uncles and aunts, uhm...

I was different at school, but nobody told you that, you simply realized that you were different, you wore different clothes, your mother spoke to you in another language and I never liked that, I never liked being different, I wanted to be... to be cool, to be like everybody else.

And my dad arrived a year later, so he interrupted that close mother-daughter relationship and things happened, I don't know... if my dad came to pick me up from school, I asked him to be quiet, because I didn't want them to hear his accent.»

The 1976 reunion, in Isabel's words, is complex. There is a lot of pain and crying. Also affection and fantasy.

Finally, his father decided to go to work in the reconstruction of Nicaragua²⁴, in the early 80's, in what would be the first of several separations in those years.

«My father left the MIR in between, he stopped... I imagine he stopped agreeing with some of the MIR's proposals and decided to follow his own path in some kind of commitment in Latin America.

My father could enter Chile, he had no prohibition to enter, my father left, he left in 76' to join us in France and he wanted to, well, in that... that time, around the 80's, early 80's, it was a time when many Europeans went to work, I don't know, for the reconstruction in Nicaragua, they went to Salvador, they went to Cuba.

So, he flew that way, through contacts, what do I know, and ended up working in Nicaragua in the mountains, in the construction of schools, but my mother always needed to get closer to Chile. So, it was very different, it was a very different way of living the exile of the two of them and at some point then my mother, who was still in the MIR, when Operation Return²⁵ came, my mother was of course there at the foot of the cannon.»

24 In Nicaragua, the Sandinista Revolution had just triumphed in 1979 and was intended to establish a socialist government.

25 Operation Return, launched in 1978, was intended to create a guerrilla focus in southern Chile, which in the end did not happen.

Her mother's decision to participate in Operation Return meant another separation for Isabel, who for the first time had to live with what in the MIR culture were called «social parents. » That is, people who took care of other militants' children while they were doing party work.

«In 80's I went to live with social parents, that's what they are called, social parents, people close to the MIR, a family that ended up being my second mom and dad in another city in France, with two older children, a son older than me, a son younger than me.

They took me in when I was five years old, yes, when I was five years old I came to live there and my mother explained to me that... she explained to me that children in Chile had the right to live just like me, that I should remember what was happening in Chile, that there were very bad people, doing a lot of harm and that she was going to fight with her comrades to free the country so that everyone would be happy children.

That is something that, well, I told you the other time and I have always said it, that this is a story that is repeated a lot among those of us who lived that situation, not only the speech that mom and dad gave you, but also how you received it, I am very surprised that there was no tantrum, I am very surprised that there were no tears of separation, no, not so small, I mean, there were separations of babies, but there were also separations of boys and girls of my age, even a little older that we could have imposed in some way, trying to impose, it would not have meant anything and we were not all very understanding.

So, this, precisely, proves that we had very particular childhoods, with a lot of information.

Also, childhoods in which we had to go through some moments also for being part of a certain international hiding, no, there were parents, mom and dad who were preparing to return to Chile, everyone went into hiding, then,

I say it in things like changing the name, things like that, making up stories.

So, well, that was... I am impacted by that, I am impacted by not having done anything, not having a traumatic memory of that time, of having arrived at this new house, of having stayed in that house, I remember the last time I saw my mother in that house and.... and that's it and the only time I cried was because my mom sent me a letter telling me that, among all the things she told me, she tells me that when she thinks of me she feels sorry and that sometimes she hides to cry, thinking of me and that if I want to do the same, that I can do it, I felt like I was given permission.

Then, one day Monica, who was my mother, the other one, was there, so she looked for me, and suddenly she opened the door and I was behind the door and she said to me "what are you doing here?", not that my mother told me that if I was sad I could cry, I could hide and cry thinking about her, shocking anyway (laughs), like they gave you permission, I mean it was not the intention, but I think you felt that way.»

Isabel's mother traveled to Cuba for political and military training, to return later to join the resistance to the dictatorship in Chile. In this process, after a year, she was asked to stay in Cuba, supporting the political training of the other participants of Operation Return. She accepts but asks to get her daughter back.

«She told me that she had said, well I'll stay, but if I stay I'll bring my daughter, that's like you're negotiating, isn't it?

So, I imagine that just because she didn't want to, deep down she wanted to be part of the group that came to Chile uhm... so she said that I agree to do political training, but I get my daughter back.

Then, I recovered a year later, I made a long trip, because I lived in La Rochelle and from there we had to go to Nantes, another city, we had to go to Paris, from Paris, we were not leaving Paris, we were leaving Luxembourg, so it was like, I remember that the trip to get to Cuba with

my mother was long, it was long, it was summer in France, but the arrival in Cuba was unforgettable, I mean I never in my life felt the heat that I felt getting off that plane and... my mother was waiting for me on the steps of the plane, they had managed to get through and she was waiting for me, and I remember that I was coming down the steps and all I could see was a woman who looked like Nana Mouskori, a Greek singer (laughs) and the mother, where is Isabelita, and I looked at her and I didn't recognize her, it took me a while to recognize her.

That was... sad, that was sad, it was, being with her again was close, but distant at the same time, it was close because she was my mom and nobody could deny that, but it was distant, because in one year many things had happened.

My mother had received some photos of me, from when I was in La Rochelle and she found me very changed and I looked at the photo and in fact it was as if I started to look like the children of my other parents, something happens with that, no, like with the babies that are adopted, no, little ones and they start to look like their adoptive parents, if something happened there, it was an important year, I was very happy with those parents, very, very happy.

Well, the first impact was not recognizing my mother, the second impact was... we arrived to live in the apartment of a Chilean woman who lived with her children, lovely people, very, very important, but I arrived in Havana on a Sunday at dawn and Monday was the first day of classes of the year, so on Sunday my mother tried on my uniform and on Monday she sent me to school (laughs)...»

Havana is a completely different world for Isabel. The smells, the colors, the temperature, the school uniform. Other language.

In total, Isabel will be in Cuba for four years, but the last year, once again, she will be separated from her mother and will have what was called a «internship scholarship.»

«We would leave for internship on Sunday afternoon, afternoon-evening, and return on Friday afternoon. Where we were with moms or dads. Or we were with social parents, who didn't live with their father or mother, we were there for two days, but half a night, that is, half afternoon—night, the whole day and half day, half a day in the afternoon, yes... but we supported each other a lot, we supported each other a lot, yes... but we were quite lonely too.

Now I also think, comparing it to other people I know, it was a time when childhood was more... Premature, wasn't it? Free.»

At the end of this period, her mother decides to leave for Nicaragua, where they are reunited with his father. The change implied a series of disorders, once again, for Isabel, who left the Cuban school to join a much more precarious high school than the ones she had known in Havana or France.

«It was before I was ten, I think, and... we arrived in Nicaragua and there we went back, my mom was looking for a job, my mom always found a job, that was something that I always found admirable in her, she always found work in her profession, yes, it was something in her relationships, good working relationships. And my dad was working there, he had had to come down from the mountain, but he had already gotten a job in Managua.

And I come then to... to the school around the corner, because, of course, my mom refused... in Nicaragua there were already private schools, schools that were little more exclusive, it wasn't a big deal, but of course my mom, very coherent with our way of thinking, looked for Isabel and said she was going to go to the neighborhood school like all the children here.

And I found it very logical, and I tell you my opinion, because in my house the three of us always talked. So, apparently the decisions were made by the three of us, but of course going to the neighborhood school meant being in a school where there was a tremendous teacher crisis at that time and...

maybe still, but at that time I remember there was a big crisis, there were no teachers, there were many strikes in fact, and I was, I don't know, one year I was with... three, four different teachers and many months without classes...

I arrived very early because there were not enough seats for all the students in the hall, so I arrived very early to have a seat, actually I arrived earlier than anyone else, I could have arrived later, but for some reason I imposed myself to arrive very early, I arrived when the school was empty, through a gate that was broken and I entered the hall that was always open...

There were many different things, education in Cuba was like something sacred and in Nicaragua my impression is that they had not yet realized that it was something sacred, more or less like that, no...

I was... I was in a class where there were young people from seventeen, eighteen-year old who were in the same class as me.»

The stay in Managua lasts only a year and a half, until her parents decide to try to return to Chile, in a trip full of loneliness for Isabel.

«My mom decides that why don't they try to uh... that I... in the end that my dad and I go back to Chile, that we are the only ones who could get in and we fight so that she can get in.

And there she could no longer live in exile... my mother could not take it anymore, they were both very ill, that's why... they were both very desperate. I think they felt they were in no man's land.

And... and then, well from there, that was the icing on the cake (laughs) the icing on the cake... they sent me to Chile alone, I was eleven years old and it was a very long trip, very long, very long, because I didn't arrive in the time I should have arrived, I was in Buenos Aires for about five days,

lost quote unquote, UNHCR was supposed to know that they had me there in sight, but in Chile, my mother's brother who went to the airport every day had no idea where I was, so my mother never knew that I did not arrive in Chile, I arrived more than a week after Nicaragua.»

Isabel had traveled alone with a sign, unaccompanied by anyone. In Buenos Aires, the trip ran into a strike that paralyzed flights, leaving them without support or resources.

«A strange thing happened to me and that is that, well, I had no money, so I had to... I met another Chilean who was young, but he was twenty-three years old, I was eleven years old (she laughs), but well he became..., we became like allies (she smiles and joins her hands together).

And then what we did was that we had breakfast at the hotel and then we went out to kick, the whole day to kick, to kick, because we had no money, no, that is, we could not do anything.

Finally, Isabel arrives in Chile. Her father lands a month later, but has no way to take care of her, so Isabel lives with her mother's sister-in-law and her daughters. It is a period in which Isabel begins to externalize more her discomfort.

«I started to do something, I started to... not go to school, but I didn't tell anyone (smiles), I went out in the morning to take the bus and came back later (laughs). I had a hard time.

Raimapu was a school, it is an incredible school, but I was having a very bad time, very bad, very bad (she emphasizes, shaking her head).

It was like the... the procession goes inside, that was it, the procession went inside. And I, the truth is that I couldn't figure out what was going on. And I didn't figure it out either while I was living it, the crisis I went into. I figured it out many years later, after a lot of work and therapy.»

After six months, in which his father was not able to integrate and it became impossible for his mother to return, a new transfer took place. This time to Montevideo, Uruguay, where his mother was living.

«So again, we packed our bags and left for Montevideo. That was, of course, at the end of eighty-six more or less... and I spent a year in Uruguay, a whole year in Uruguay.

There... I feel that on the one hand I had the ability to have very good relationships in the school I attended, which was a wonderful school, I had a teacher (smiles), I will never forget María Isabel Del Prete, who was... she was unique for me, she kind of marked my life, there is always a teacher who marks you, she marked my life.

Uhm, but it started something like... I don't know, I was eleven years old, I was about to turn twelve and I started to enter a, a kind of story... between, between I don't know, between eh... introspective and half fatalistic, and it also helped everything around me, I was still a lonely girl surrounded by adults, and... uhm, I don't know... something started to happen there.

Uh...I kind of started to get sick uhm, I started to get sick, yeah and...and for the first time I started to wonder if there was much point in living.»

At the end of 1987, his mother was finally authorized to return to Chile, which led to her return to Santiago. The new situation, however, does not resolve Isabel's affective process.

«For me there it was like this thing of... the, the no sense of belonging, not knowing where you are from, not feeling identified with what surrounds you, uh... a lot of insecurities, uh... like being, a feeling of being well lost.

(...)

What happened to me in particular was that suddenly it became difficult to live... besides, there was this story that always accompanied me... "you survived, you are a survivor, you..."»

Isabel has discussed all these experiences with her mother today, but she understands that there are situations that she cannot transmit.

«I mean, I will never be able to transmit, and we will never be able to transmit, unless I start telling you here crying, of course, there will be a syntony, of how I felt, but I will never be able to transmit... the emptiness that I discovered I had at some point...»

I don't know how you explain that emptiness, like you don't have a floor, you don't have a floor (looks down at the ground), you don't have any stability, no.

The people who, the people who, who loved you, who loved you the most... didn't give you that stability and that is something you have to take care of. I mean, in those years I would have been very militant too, but I think that beyond the decisions that were made, I think that we have to take responsibility, we have to take responsibility.

Because... because I think that my, my, my generation, the one that lived through this, that, that there were people that, that, that, that also, that well, they lived through it, from my point of view, worse than me, because they never, they never had their father or their mother close to them like I had, back and forth, right?

But eh... I mean, imagine the tremendous challenge of becoming a mother, for us it is a challenge, I think that is why we do it with a lot of care and dedication and with a lot of love, and with no less love than our mothers and fathers (smiles), but we are very present, we are very, very present.»

LAST WITNESSES / Voices of Daughters and Sons of people who survived political imprisonment.

The memories of Ivonne Zúñiga Escalona

Ivonne Zúñiga Escalona²⁶ (35) is a teacher and mother of two children. His family history concatenates two traumatic events. First, his father, Luis Zúñiga Acevedo, had to face the detention of his grandfather, Neftalí Zúñiga Contreras, at the dawn of the civil-military dictatorship. Later, she had to face the same situation in the 1980s. It is, therefore, a process that is repeated between generations, in the same political period and that is present in the family memory.

«What he (my father) tells us with my sister, I have a sister too, he tells us that he was very young, he worked in the party youth and worked, he always talks about going to help in the settlements, he always worked for that and when he was fourteen years old, there was the military coup here in Chile and its impact was great, because my grandfather was arrested, therefore, he had to leave school to be able to help in the work. In other words, to work in order to feed the family.

²⁶ Interview available both in the Audiovisual Archive of the Fundación para la Protección a la Infancia Dañada por los Estados de Emergencia (PIDEE), and in the catalog of the Museum of Memory and Human Rights of Santiago of Chile.

So, for him it was something that moved his whole life, from being a young student who actively participated in something that involved him, something he loved, he became a person who had to start working and maturing from that point of view.»

The detention of her grandfather, although not experienced by Ivonne, is included in the family and personal pain, due to the extent and cruelty of that captivity, according to her story.

«My grandfather was detained and even his whereabouts were not known, where he was detained, he was not in contact for a couple of months, the family was not notified, he was Allende's intervener in the Chilean textiles, and obviously he was not visible to the family, no, it was not known where he was.

Therefore, of that disappearance it was obviously not known whether he would return or not, it was an uncertainty for the family, for my grandmother it was a big blow, having to be alone with seven children, not knowing what was going to happen. »

—And tell us, does he show up? what happens?

Yes, my grandfather, it seems to me that he was, from the stories that his grandchildren also tell us, he was a couple of months without contact with the family, he was detained in the National Stadium and then he was in the north, where apparently the torture was intense, they do not tell much about that part, obviously, for a matter of pain that can cause us who are a very close family, but what they tell us from daily conversations, is that he was a couple of months and when he returned home it was a surprise for everyone, nobody expected him to return.»

Ivonne, born in 1984, has no first-person memories of the journey her father had to face, but she does know that her grandfather's arrest was a break in the family's history.

The marriage of his parents, meanwhile, is interpreted as an atypical act, due to the political situation in the country. His father's family was mainly a Communist Party militant and his mother's family was a member of the Independent Democratic Union, the social support of the dictatorship.

Her father's arrest took place in 1989, close to the recovery of democracy, when she was attending pre-school.

«My father had a confrontation on March 8, 1989 and... because of an execution he called it, where he was going to open the doors of a brothel where there were girls, teenagers, and the owners were high-ranking military officers.

So, that was the intention of all this, but obviously they were carrying weapons, so when they fell, they were detained as common prisoners.

My dad jumped from the fourth floor and broke his leg and was missing for two days.

I remember that they raided our house, I don't know what, I don't know how, I don't know when, but I know it happened and I have super clear



Photograph 10. *Luis Zúñiga at the Public Prison with his daughters Ivonne and Victoria during a visit.*

images of having seen people pointing machine guns at us, entering through the house, through the sides, through the neighbors, a revolution, a, a mother who despairs, who screams, who confronts, yes, the images, obviously, I was five years old, are images that come more than words, to have come to feel, when you feel that you are always protected in a home and you get to feel that they are invading that home, that something that you have been told that, I don't know, using weapons or having weapons was something bad and seeing people threatening you with that, obviously is something that opposes you, something that complicates you, that you don't know how to get rid of it.

A neighbor came looking for me to get me out of there and I remember holding on to the door because I wanted to be with my mom, they are like the images I have, mostly of a desperate mom screaming and wanting to be with her because I didn't understand what was happening.»

After the arrest, however, Ivonne is unable to see her father immediately, due to the aftermath of torture.

«I couldn't see my dad for a long time, because he was obviously beaten, bruised, he was in no condition to see me, but I remember that the first time they took us to the ex-Penitentiary, my dad was there, I didn't see him when he was there, because he was still there with aftermath of the torture, therefore, I arrived and stayed outside with relatives while my mother could see him, when I was able to see my father was when he was in the Public Prison, there I could enter to see him, there I remember that the visits were on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, constantly, in the afternoon, and there I could see him.»

As in other cases of sons and daughters of people who suffered political imprisonment, a key role was played by the mother, who defined telling the truth to the children about what happened as a strategy of containment.

However, the process of prison visits is remembered with pain, due to the harassment endured.

«To see your mother's panties being searched to be able to enter the prison to see your father, and you know he is a good person, it is painful even though I always saw my mother's face with a smile, it is painful, it is something that marks you, marks you with fire, but it makes you the person you are, to be strong, to know how to face things.

Yes, it is an episode that obviously marks us as a family, all of us, even though my sister is younger, it marks us in different ways. For me it was painful, it was something that marked my childhood in the sense that, from being a very extroverted child, I became a very introverted child, with learning problems at school, without knowing why, how to help, how to get ahead.

But obviously that are memories that are marked as images, more than as words or as a story so narrated, so... they are images that remain in your mind.»

In this context, one of the difficulties that Ivonne faced, in addition to the economic precariousness and the long working hours of her mother, which forced her to be alone with her sister, was her school experience, a coexistence marked by distance and coldness, especially from adults.

«Uhm, it was always complex, especially in elementary school. I don't remember having a teacher nearby, even though they knew the history, my mother always took care of telling it, because she thought it was important for teachers to know, for any issue that arose.

I never felt any closeness from any of the teachers I had in elementary school, nor empathy, knowing what had happened, I never received support from friends, I never had friends, I don't remember having childhood friends, little ones, I was always a very lonely girl, I considered at that time that maybe no one was going through what I was going through.»

The situation, however, began to change with the recovery of democracy and the arrival of adolescence. Again, as in other cases, an important factor was being able to learn about other similar experiences.

«Obviously, when you are older and in your adolescence, you start to expand with your stories and you realize that there are people who go through the same things, that there are people who suffer more or worse than what you went through and you are able to tell them, you see that you are not the only one, but that you can also get ahead.

In my childhood, as I said, no, I could never tell, I was not ashamed, I felt it was not something bad, but I felt that no one understood me, that no one could understand what I lived, what I felt, what I had to live every day. Therefore, when you reach adolescence and you can tell and express what is happening, you can realize that this is just a story, which is shaping you, which is helping you to form your personality.»

The release of his father, however, didn't mean overcoming the difficulties. On the contrary, it installed new problems in the family dynamics.

«No, very difficult, for us he was a stranger, even though as I said, we never missed seeing him when he was in the Public Prison, we always went three times a week, it was sacred, eh, but for us he was a stranger, he was a person who was entering the house again, even though it was only two years, two important years of our formation, of going from not being in a school to being in a school, for example, things he missed. It was hard to see him lying with my mom, we wondered why? He's my dad, but why does he have to be lying with my mom?

So, it was difficult, in fact, I recently told them, that is, I told them recently, in the adolescence, and it was like 'well, you never told us that it bothered you, that it was something hard'.

His integration into working life, he also spent a long time without a job, and he also suffered when he tried to integrate with us, who already had a family dynamic.»

In this process of integration, the father finally manages to join a food service company, which gives him economic stability. He also completed his schooling and entered university, although he was unable to finish her degree due to work demands, according to Ivonne.

«Yes, that's a nice story because he finished high school with me. Yes, when he decided to finish high school, I don't know what his motivation was, but when he told us he was already enrolled. "I'm going to start this year; I'm going to finish a two-for-one." "Where? How? Why?"

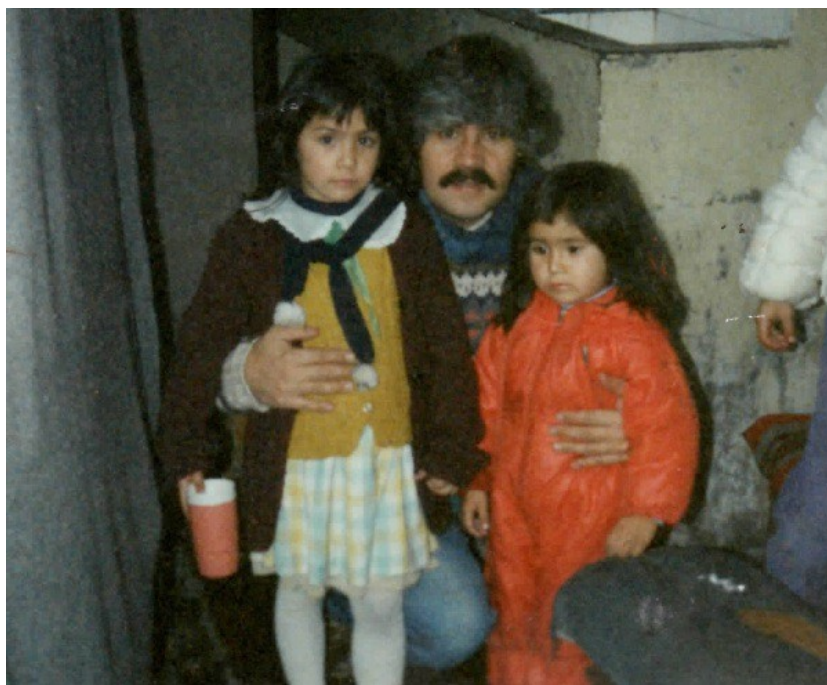
With my sister we were already older, so, I don't know, we joked about it. "Oh! You want to get into college, what are you going to study?" But he super determined: "No, I'm going to finish high school, because it's something I have to finish, a process I have to close."»

In this process, another key factor was to instigate dialogue about torture, despite the father's resistance.

«The truth is that he doesn't (talk) much, uh, because of a psychiatric treatment issue that my dad had to go through, he never treated himself after he got out of prison, he tried to face things on his own.

Many years later, around the year 2000, he was declared a major depression which was treated with a psychiatrist, and part of the therapy is that he tells us things, things that hurt him, things that bother him, and as a result of that he started telling us a little more, but he doesn't like it very much.

Is so much that he appears in the Valech Report and each person who appears in that Report was given an edition, my dad gave it as a gift and



Photography 11. Luis Zúñiga at the Public Prison with his daughters Ivonne and Victoria during a visit.

asked us not to read the testimonies, because it was painful for him, appears he, my two uncles and my grandfather, so he didn't want us to see any of them and gave this edition, which was given as a gift to all of us.

And out of respect for him we have not done it, my sister, my mom, nor me, because it is painful.

He only expresses it that way, which is a part of his torture that he obviously doesn't want to remember (...)

Obviously, there are things that we learn about little by little, it is hard to learn about beatings, psychological torture, part of what he told us is that they made him hear girls' voices and they told him that we had been beaten, we had been raped, his daughters, his wife too.

Obviously, it is something that nobody would have wanted to live, I put myself in his place now that I am a mother, and I don't know to what extent a human being can withstand pain like that, it is hard for me to think about it.»

Despite the pain, Ivonne highlights the example of her family and the way in which social commitment is transmitted in her family.

«But I think they are brave, my father, my uncles, my grandfather, they are brave to follow something that they truly believe in, that is so, they are consistent, they have always been consistent and in that way they show us that they are, despite what they have lived, they continue to fight for their consequence, for their ideals, for what they believe is right, therefore, yes it gives me a lot of pain to think about what they may have lived, but if it gives me pain to me, what do I expect for them? that they lived it. I think that more than that, for me it is a learning experience, it is to take their example and to be able to be more and to be able to work on it.»

A closeness that is also present in his daughter's relationship with her family history.

«Yes, in fact, she is much more... she gets more into it, because she is already a teenager who is about to turn eighteen, and she is much closer to my dad, she is like his third daughter, I was a teenage mom.

And she asks directly, directly things, many times things that we with my sister have not asked for not causing pain, she asks it openly, they have no problem, in fact it is so much that the conversations at our table are always very long, and she is involved in the subject, uh, many times she comes out with things that I don't know. "Who told you?" "My grandpa"

Because there is a very good closeness between the two of them, as granddaughter, grandfather, but at the same time because she also feels the need to know.»

Lastly, Ivonne raises the need for this dialogue dynamic to be a challenge for the country.

«It was not only the pain of the military coup, but it dragged that pain to this day, and it is a reality that must be repaired, it is an obligation to repair those damages.»

The memories of Lorena Hermosilla Rivera

Lorena Hermosilla Rivera²⁷ is the eldest of four siblings. She is married and have three children. In his family history, the clandestine activity of his father, Ricardo Hermosilla Díaz, was always handled with discretion, almost in silence.

«Well, I have always known that my father was more of a leftist, but he never told anything, the only thing I knew was that he went out every night and then came home, but he was all secret until the moment of everything that happened to him, the moment when he was arrested, when the first confrontation took place, then we knew the truth. In fact, I think my mom always knew, but she always kept us away from the situation, always kept us normal, always kept us out of it.

—Didn't you know about your father's militancy?

No, no

²⁷ Interview available both in the Audiovisual Archive of the Fundación para la Protección a la Infancia Dañada por los Estados de Emergencia (PIDEE), and in the catalog of the Museum of Memory and Human Rights of Santiago of Chile.

—Or your mom's.

No, nothing. I realized after the whole thing happened.»

The change Lorena describes took place in 1984, when she was seven years old, when her father was shot and arrested, altering the entire family routine.

«Yes, no, afterwards, afterwards, everything that happened, that my father had been shot, that there were six bullets in the stomach and that his friend died, but they told us about it as the days went by, because they didn't tell us the news at the moment, quickly, but as the days went by, because of how everything went, they still had to tell us, because many people gathered, they got together, worried about my mother, about us and about everything.

And that's when they took us out of where we were, we went to my grandmother's house, we stayed there for a while and there we stayed there.»



Photograph 12. Ricardo, Paulina and Lorena Hermosilla

The situation, which even led to the exile of an aunt, forced Lorena to remain without her mother, who was trying to find out where her father was being arrested.

«Well, it was hard. I was seven years old. We had to grow up fast, because I don't remember having a... well, my mother dealt with all the moments of my childhood, but in the end, as I was the older sister, I had more responsibility.

Since we were alone, we were at my grandmother's house, but it is not your home, even though they still give you affection and everything you need, but it was very hard, because in the end my dad was not there either, and it was like my mom was not at home either, because she was always behind my dad, fighting for him, to know how he was, what situation he was in, because it wasn't easy either, because he had to have his whole stomach reconstructed.

I don't know how he's alive. Is like, I don't know if it's a miracle, the good luck, for the way it turned out.»

After passing through a hospital, Lorena's father is transferred to the penitentiary. And from there to the Public Prison, where she can finally see him, a situation that makes a deep impression on her, in her words.

«Ah! The first time I saw him. Yes, through a gate at the prison. I don't know, a tiny window was just opened, where the gendarmes are. And I just lean over and look and see my dad.

It was very shocking, because I saw him coming down and he was accompanied by gendarmes, it was the first time I saw him, it was... it was very hard. Because my mom hadn't realized I had seen it either. And it was a coincidence that they opened, and he was just coming down. It was the first time I saw him after the visits.

— *What was the shocking thing?*

Uhm... I think not seeing him, because in fact when he was arrested, after he was hospitalized, since he left the house, I hadn't seen him again.

In fact, not so much shocking, but it was sadness to see my dad in the situation he was in and not be able to hug him, to see him pass by and not be able to... aaaah! Touching him, that was.»

Lorena states that they were able to face family and personal difficulties adequately, thanks to the support of the extended family, which also facilitated the mother's efforts on behalf of her father.

«We, at the end, were with my grandmother and my grandfather, who at that time was still alive. And my aunt Rita, who was the biggest support of the family, in the end she took on the role of mom and dad, because my mom arrived very late.

So, my mother, as I was saying, my mother was never around, because she was in meetings or I don't know what she was doing, because she didn't talk to us much either, because at that time we were kids, we were still in elementary school. So, the one who took care of us in the end was my grandmother, my grandfather and my aunt.»

Lorena recalls that the family situation remained the same for almost six years, until her father participated in the escape from the Public Prison in 1990, an event that disrupted the family dynamics.

«My dad, after the escape, my dad had to leave, because he had to have surgery, so he was in France for a while, then to come back, because he still had problems, my mom had to go to Argentina to look for him and at that time I was fourteen years old... and at that time I had to take care of my siblings, we were alone, and that time I really felt that we were being watched and that I had never gone through it before and it was... it was... it was... it was terrible because... not... alone, with my brothers and sisters,



Photograph 13. Lorena her parents Ricardo Hermosilla and Ludovina Rivera.

We said, they are watching us, that nothing would happen, then my uncle arrived, then a friend of my dad's came, she stayed with us for a while, but that's when I learned what it's like to be watched, that you can't walk around without knowing what could happen to you, that you can't be at ease without knowing what could happen.»

The father's subsequent reincorporation into the family dynamic posed a number of challenges, as also related in other interviews, especially due to roles.

«When he arrived... uh... for me, it was hard, not for my siblings, because they were still younger, so they didn't realize it, but for me it was hard, because so many years without a father present, I felt like he was invading my world.

So, it was hard for me, even though I was the spoiled one and everything. It was hard, to give me orders, to do this or that. So, we were always with my mom. Then, my mom was working, so I was in charge taking care of my siblings, so I felt like an invasion.

So, I say, I have a feeling of guilt with my dad, I treated him very badly at that moment, without realizing it, because it was like a rejection, but little by little we went back to the relationship we had before.

It was so many years, from the age of seven to fourteen, it was a lot.»

After normalization, the challenge of articulating the family memory overcame. As in other cases, the way to deal with such a conversation is difficult.

—Did you ever talk to your siblings about all this?

Yes, yes, but with time they kind of avoided it, they avoid it, especially my dad now too, so as not to remember so much, because maybe what he lived through too, to erase it from their minds.»

This silence also extends to the way Lorena approaches her social relationships today, as she herself states.

«In fact, up to now not many people know my situation, because not everybody takes it as one wants, as I explained to you the other time, because it is like religion.

So, I avoid talking about that, because not everyone has the same thinking, it may be that I am not, let's say, a leftist, that I am a militant, but one has another ideal than the other person, but no, that is why you are not going to respect, because they may move away from you.

But, besides, I find that it is so much mine that I don't know if it was so necessary to tell it, I think that if someone I really trust, I have told it, but to very few people who are not members of my family, in fact, my whole family knows, on both sides.»

The memories of Lorena Oñate Salinas

Lorena Oñate Salinas²⁸ is a social worker, has five children and belongs to a family of historical communist roots, affected by various human rights violations during the civil-military dictatorship. Daughter of Baltazar Acosta Galaz, political prisoner and granddaughter of Alfredo Salinas Vázquez, detainee disappeared.

«I came to this world because of my grandfather who is a detainee disappeared, he disappeared in 1975. It was taken out of the house on November 5, sorry, in 1976. I am the granddaughter, well, of a disappeared person and I am the daughter of a political prisoner. I am one of three siblings of three siblings, the oldest is me.

I have five children, I have a degree in social work, I studied that career, that's the main thing.»

Her family's connection with social, feminist and workers' struggles come from the time of the saltpeter mines, initiated through her Bolivian great-grandmother.

²⁸ Interview available both in the Audiovisual Archive of the Fundación de Protección a la Infancia Dañada por los Estados de Emergencia (PIDEE), and in the catalog of the Museum of Memory and Human Rights of Santiago de Chile.

«My family's political history comes, as well as from the times of the saltpeter mines, because my great-grandmother was a communist. I think she was promoting a feminist group within the saltpeter works, my grandmother is Bolivian, my great-grandmother, excuse me, my grandfather's mother, and from there my grandfather was a communist, and from then on, the whole family was communist. And the partner my mom had at that time, who is not my dad, who is the political prisoner, uhm, he was also a communist.

So, on that side we are all linked to communism and also to the issue of the struggle of the revolution that existed at that time with the issue of the militant dictatorship.»

In fact, the times prior to the triumph of the Popular Unity, the government of President Salvador Allende (1970-1973) and the first years of resistance to the dictatorship found his extended family immersed in a long-standing community work, with a strong territorial axis in the northern part of Santiago, in the La Palmilla settlement of Conchalí.

«Uhm well, in 1973 it was very raw because of what I... I was born in 1977, so I practically lived the experience, the experience, in fact, super consummate regarding the issue after 1973, because my grandfather was already disappeared and that political history was tremendously emergent regarding my family, because my family was always a tremendously communitarian family, in fact, my grandfather was one of the founders of the settlement where we lived.

He was a leader of the Communist Party, that is why he was disappeared. And he, together with other fellows of that time, set up some land seizures, which ended up being the settlement where we lived.

My grandmother, in this community accompaniment took care of the grandchildren. We took care of the children of the neighbors and the whole family revolved around the social issue and we made common pots, we took care of the children of the other mothers so they could go to work.

I remember being a little girl taking care of other children, picking lice off children, washing their faces, playing with them. I was making movie theater at home, when I think that by chance a television came to the house, and we watched movies of all kinds. Generally, political communication classes were held.

So, from 1973 onwards, all this work began, uhm... all this work that I have an idea or I don't know, ideas of how the political work was carried to my house, and well and that has never stopped, the truth is, because my family continues to participate constantly in the Group and, obviously, we all participate in any of the instances that try to vindicate this social issue a little bit. Uh, where the rights of any person are not violated.»

It is within this framework of political work, and when Lorena is still a child, that her father's arrest occurs, which is initially hidden from minors, despite the visibility of the family's political commitment.

«Well, the detention, the truth is that this subject was never discussed much, because in my house they tried to hide it a little bit from the children.

Well, I was the only child, I was the only girl until I was eleven years old, things were not good for having more children either, so I was the only child until I was eleven years old, and the situation was difficult, because there was a lot of work, a lot of political work in the house, where many people arrived.»

The consequences of her father's apprehension, which occurred at the dawn of the national protests, will crystallize as the situation spreads and prison visits, a traumatic event, take place in Lorena's memory, increasingly aware of what was happening.

«Uh, well, the truth is that I was very sad as a child, because from the same experience of political work I felt many times that I saw how the image

of a prisoner pigeon, what that freedom meant, and also not having my father, whom I loved very much.

So, from not seeing him at home, doing his artisan work, because he works as a painter, but he also always worked as an artisan, even though in prison he... he became a little more involved in the crafts he worked on, making bone, everything else.

I also saw the sadness of the other children, the obviously sad faces of the other classmates, it was quite nostalgic. Besides, it is very heartbreaking for a child to have to... be groped as a child, to be searched down to your underwear as a child, so that experience marks you, isn't it? it's raw.»

In this context of aggression and repression, one element that Lorena recalls is her time at the Hueñicito school, which had been founded by a group of exiled teachers. It was for her a zone of safety and containment.

«So, it was like a well contained space, regarding the situation, what affected me a little was having to change schools, for example, because when my father was arrested, then he came out with, what's his name, with... he could sign, in this case he had to go once a month or weekly it seems, he had to sign in.

Then, at that time, we had to go hiding and that meant traveling many worlds, many cities, we were like gypsies and I had to change a lot from school, I had to change my identity, I had to change my name and not talk about who my father was, nor my grandfather, or anything like that because obviously we were in a dictatorship and that meant, and I seriously understood, that this was a horrendous thing, that someone might have a record of my father because he was going to be arrested, in fact we slept with a gun under our pillow.



Photograph 14. Lorena's uncle and her father Baltazar Acosta Galaz.

I mean, it was like that, so when I would leave and come back and my father would travel, and he would leave us settled in one place and he would go out to do his political work, because he was still doing politics and that was like the situation in the school.»

Like other sons and daughters of people who suffered human rights violations, Lorena evaluates her childhood as a period in which she had to grow up, in a hurried manner, where she dreamed of being happy and that her mother would heal from her pain.

«Obviously, not to live as a child, because the children I met during the dictatorship, in political work, were children who were tremendously developed, as well as practically adults.

So, they never saw us as a... children, in a conversation they were, I think, they could have had the same problems as me, in the schools they didn't approach the other children.



Photograph 15. Burlap made by Lorena's mother

The conversations always revolved around adults, because we knew that the conversations were always serious, everything was serious and, suddenly, of course we played and... but we also lived in a very isolated space, where, as I said, you couldn't recognize things as a child, like saying your name, your father's activity, and so on.»

For Lorena, this early maturity was also expressed in having to assume, on some occasions, adult tasks in the family nucleus, especially during the times of clandestine life in Temuco.

«The doctor told her that she had to give birth that day and that she couldn't leave, and, in the end, I had to take care of everything at the age of eleven, living alone with her. I had to take her to the hospital, receive my brother, buy her clothes, I had to go and ask for help from the social workers I knew from FASIC in Temuco and there I sort of stayed with them, but I did all that work.

So, anyway, I can't imagine my eleven-year-old daughter sending her to buy clothes for her brother, or taking care of, I don't know, the pregnancy situation, no, taking care of her.

And then, well, we went back to Santiago after about two months and then my dad showed up, after six months, and he met my brother, like he just met my brother.»

The situations experienced —Lorena explains— have consequences to this day, both in terms of resilience strategies, memories, and longings.

«Every day, every day it is present and, for me, in a way that is always... well, I present a state of pure resilience, so this has also served me as a tool for me, for my growth, for my formation, for the consequence in the life of the struggle, which continues, in my work as a social worker, in the life in my family with my children, as I was also born in a transitory period between the dictatorship and the... and democracy, quote unquote here, as I have also been able to transit in situations in my family that are still, that keep them numb, my mother is still configured to the idea that my grandfather is going to get to the house that he built at one time, and that this house we never have to get rid of it because my grandfather is going to get there. My grandmother died waiting for my grandfather, she never had

another man, she waited for him and did her political work in the settlement where we lived until the last day of her life.

So, for me it has been the same, a learning, because I am thankful that I was also able to grow up in that environment, which also gave me a world of possibilities to grow culturally, to understand life in a different way.»

However, Lorena maintains, there is no space in which, as a family, they can talk about the pain they have experienced. «We've tried not to be like this, like always thinking about it» she says.

Another complex situation was the separation of her parents, which led to her estrangement from her father, who rebuilt his life with another partner.

«Well, I think the things that marked me the most, as I said, were the deaths of the fellows who were no longer in prison. And the other thing, having been a child and having been discriminated against, very discriminated against by children in general, for having felt very different, for not having developed that childish area, which was not their fault, in fact, it was not their responsibility either, it was the way I had ended up... the way I had been brought up, that's all.

Then, loneliness, always loneliness, when I went to other schools, loneliness, that deep loneliness where I had nothing to share with anyone (...)

What did I lose in those years? Well, I believe that sharing other experiences, as I said before, especially childhood. I grew up very fast and that's why I say I live now... as I'm in my adolescence, maybe in my pre-adolescence, in fact, I think my daughter is more mature than I am.»

Despite the pain, Lorena points out that remembering again is healing, despite the rawness of these memories, which are often collective.

«I like it anyway, I like it because I remember people I love, people who will always be in my life, important people, my father, my father himself, because he was my father for many years, from the time I was three years old until I was thirteen, I think, or fourteen.

Of classmates who hugged me, who loved me, who said affectionate things to me, to whom I asked questions that I found interesting.

So, I still like it and it also hurts me, as I said, noy, not to have them. .The other time I told you, in the other interview we had, that for me it was a very painful thing to have gone to the public prison, of course to look for Víctor Zúñiga, I remember that he was a very good friend of my mother and my father in prison and to have been told that he had been transferred to the Penitentiary, and to have gone to the Penitentiary and to have been told that he had been killed, Actually they had killed him, that he had died, because they didn't tell you 'hey, we killed him', and we went to his funeral and then it was combined with the death of Jecar Neghme, and we also went to that wake and many deaths happened during those days, during those months, many deaths in my memory.

And obviously terrible, because I also saw that this person had a family, he had a mother and children that we met in prison, where we talked and ended up eating something, sharing a meal, sometimes not even a meal, it was an egg, a raw egg, which was the food for the day.»

Lorena, however, is aware that her way of interpreting the past is different from that of her children, who were born in democracy.

«The truth is that they don't talk about it, my children are from another generation, and I don't want to say the shoemaker's son always goes barefoot

But I also see them watching us. And not only to us, because as our family is linked to politics, with a political world, then generally my mom's friends



Photograph 16. Salinas family at the launching of the book "Entre el cielo y el infierno", by Max Salinas.

are all those friends of pain, where the pain is visible on their faces, the sadness. That even with makeup you can't get rid of it. My mother you look at her too and she is a woman that you see as sad. She is a sad woman, with a sad face, so I think that, for the same reason, they don't talk or want to listen either, because they have already heard it so much, they look at those faces and obviously want to run away.»

The memories of Mariana Dastres Quezada

Mariana Dastres Quezada²⁹ (42) is a nutritionist. She was five years old in 1983 when her father, Hernando Dastres González, was arrested. Her mother was six months pregnant. Today she lives with her daughter and mother. Her father passed away from leukemia, at the age of fifty-nine, in 2017.

«I was born in December 1977. My parents met very young, and my mother knew at that time that my father was in the Jota (chilean slang for Juventudes Comunistas de Chile), but when they were sixteen, seventeen years old. And in 1974, my mom got pregnant with my older sister Karin and then I was born in 1977.

My mother did not know at the time my father was arrested that my father was an active militant in the Jota. And well, she found out about the militancy and that he had been arrested, with six months pregnant and on television, the television in those extras that were on at that time.

And the family was the four of us, which was my sister and me, the dad, the mom, my mom who was pregnant with my brother and we had a dog too.»

29 Interview available both in the Audiovisual Archive of the Fundación de Protección a la Infancia Dañada por los Estados de Emergencia (PIDEE), and in the catalog of the Museum of Memory and Human Rights of Santiago de Chile.

In these circumstances, Mariana explains, her father's arrest and the immediate repressive events brought about a change in their lives.

«My uncle Sergio, who now lives in Australia, goes to my house to tell my mom to be calm, to be calm and my mom didn't understand anything, only my uncle Sergio told her to be calm, you must be calm...»

And then the CNI³⁰ arrived at my house, and, at that moment, my mother told me that she was already very fat from her pregnancy. And suddenly she looks out the window and sees a lot of police officers and people in civilian clothes walking inside, but, just like that, in blocks and enters the house... And the guy who came in told her 'calm down, ma'am, we are not going to do anything to you, but you know about your husband, you know what he is involved in, you know that there are weapons here in the house', and my mother had no idea of anything.

My mom at that time was also super young, twenty-six, twenty-six years old and she was rather dedicated to her upbringing and her advanced pregnancy, and not to the political things that were happening at that time in the country.

But it was, I remember that the minute the CNI arrived at my house, there were many people, and the house was disarranged, disarranged, the beds with the mattresses, the mattress was like disassembled. I remember.

I remember the guy opens a closet and takes out a drawer and turns it over, probably looking for weapons that were not there, but it was chaos and all the people searching the house with my sister on one side and me on the other side. My mom wouldn't let us go and what I don't remember is when

30 *The Central Nacional de Informaciones (CNI) was the name of the secret police of the civil-military dictatorship between 1977 and 1990. It was responsible for kidnappings, torture, assassinations and disappearances of opponents of the Pinochet regime.*

they took my uncle arrested, and my sister remembers, she remembers that with the same clothes they covered his head and took him to a... they put him on a bus, in a car, I don't know what.»

After the arrest of her father, who disappeared for two weeks, Mariana spent several months without seeing him, until she began to attend the prison in Talca, where visits were intermittent, due to the economic effort involved in traveling to that city.

«So, I think we traveled every two or three months, but I remember going to spend like one or two summers, we would go there, and we stayed in a... like in a union of the free fairs in Talca, where they gave us lodging, probably for a month, and we stayed there.»

Later, his father was transferred to the Public Prison in Santiago, where there were moments of violence at the entrance.

«When you are a child, I was five years old, then you don't have much awareness of what you are doing, of why you are going to see your dad somewhere.

But I do remember that they searched me when I entered, they made me take off my shoes in the Public Prison, they made me take off my shoes and they sort of pulled the sole of my shoe, to see if I was carrying things between my shoe and the sole of my shoe.

I was a little girl, I was five years old, and I visited the prison until I was thirteen. And it was, I think, going to see your father, but without being aware that he was detained and what had happened, what was happening in this country. At that time, I had no conscience at all, my sister does, my sister remembers the curfews, the repression, she does have memories of the period when my father was arrested, because she was also older.»

The arrest of her father, in her memories, meant a change in the family routine and an overload of work, especially for her mother.

«My mother... uhm... always... dedicated herself to taking care of us, until my father was arrested and then my mother had to go out to work, and she always worked, but I remember my mother being really overwhelmed at that time, because of the work, the tiredness.

My mom remembered that at one time she had my brother in school, he was a boy, he must have been a boy. And he taken by the school bus. So, my mother had to walk about four blocks to get home and she had to run, because if she walked, she would not be able to get my brother home from school. And since he was a little boy, you couldn't pass keys to it either, or anything like that.

But she was, yes, overwhelmed, because she had to work and take care of three children and a baby and in between doing the things my dad needed in prison.

So, she says that when she was working, she would go to the prison on her lunch break, drop things off and then go back to work.

So, running a lot, the tiredness, it was a time of a lot of sacrifice from my mom, to take care of the three of us, to have us together too and not... and that we would be well, safe.»

Her father's imprisonment also implied silences and distrust, even in the relationship with other children, as it happened with most of the sons and daughters of people who suffered human rights violations.

«It wasn't a subject I talked about. I also had, I believe, academic instability in elementary school, but I didn't tell that my father was... that he was a political prisoner, besides that there has always been that whoever is in prison is bad.

So, I knew that my father was not a bad person, but how do you also explain to your peer, that he is detained, that he is detained, that he is a political prisoner, no... it is difficult to explain that, and that the other person understands it and that neither...

felt discriminated against for having my father detained, but I didn't tell them, some teachers, I remember, did know about it.

And then I was in seventh grade and studied at the Liceo Experimental Artístico. And since it was a leftist school, I don't think I was the only one. Then later, as the days went by, I remembered that there were also people who had their uncle or grandfather detained, who were also going through the same thing.

So, there I received a little more empathy. But it was not a subject that was freely discussed, not at all, not at all, no.»

Likewise, once democracy was restored and his father was released, the process of readapting his family was not easy either. It was, in her opinion, a period marked by silences.

«No, not my dad, I remember he had a mark on his back, and it was very big and once I asked him how he had gotten that. And he said: 'It was because of the torture.' And what did they do to you? 'I don't like to talk about it.'

And he never, ever told. In fact, when he went to the Rettig Report to give his statement, he didn't want to go, because he said that everything he had done, he had done out of conviction and that making this statement was... not to have a social medal.

And in the end, they convinced him, and he went, so it was still difficult to tell, because if he didn't want to tell his inner circle... Also, to begin to tell everything you suffered. Everything they did to you, the atrocities you were subjected to, it's not easy and the truth is that either... It would be very painful to know.»

Mariana considers that, in her case, the experiences lived during the civil-military dictatorship made her take on paths of struggle, not without fear for her own family, especially her mother.

«Yes, I was a leader... I work... I am a civil servant and I work at the Félix Bulnes Hospital, and I was a leader of the professional association for seven years and I became a leader. (...)

It was a nice experience, it was a nice experience, but also... no... when... uhm... I was elected, which I didn't expect either, it also triggered in me, as what I was doing was the same thing my father had done years ago with a different scenario.

And I remember that, when I was elected, I told my mother and my mother was afraid that something would happen to me, because, of course, I was dragging... I was dragging the fact that, during the dictatorship, it was impossible to be a trade union leader and whoever was, was disappeared. So, I was afraid that something would happen to me.

And, fortunately, nothing happened to me.»

The memories of Tamara Vidaurrázaga Aránguiz

Tamara Vidaurrázaga Aránguiz³¹ (42), married to her partner of 20 years and has a 15-year-old daughter. Professionally, she is dedicated to teaching and university research on human rights and memory issues. She is Ignacio Vidaurrázaga and María Soledad Aránguiz's daughter, both of whom were members of the MIR and were arrested in Operation Alfa Carbón in southern Chile.

«Now I am working on a FONDECYT that is investigating precisely what happened to the sons and daughters of these women who were mothers in these very strict, very rigorous, and very demanding militances, and then what part of that militancy was to define whether or not they had children and, later, whether they stayed to raise those children or continued militating full time.

And then, what interests me now is to know what happened to the sons, with the daughters in those cases, what I am studying are the sons and daughters of these organizations in the New Revolutionary Left in Chile

³¹ Interview available both in the Audiovisual Archive of the Fundación de Protección a la Infancia Dañada por los Estados de Emergencia (PIDEE), and in the catalog of the Museum of Memory and Human Rights of Santiago of Chile.

with the MIR, in Uruguay with the MLN Tupamaros and in Argentina with Montoneros and the PRT-ERP.»

She has managed to reconstruct in detail what happened to her family, even before she was born, especially the human and militant journey of her parents.

«Well, my parents met in the 70's during the Popular Unity, when they joined the Frente de Estudiantes Revolucionarios, which was the Frente Estudiantil Secundario of the MIR.

They meet and start dating, let's say, in some volunteer work, uh... they pair up, they are united not only by love and physical attraction, but also by this common cause of transforming the world and achieving a revolution that makes the world be fairer for the great majority and their option is through this organization, which not only believes in the political struggle, but also vindicates the political-military struggle and therefore the use of political violence and the idea of a necessary violence to overcome inequality.

And then they became a couple and when the coup came... my father had to leave his high school, the Liceo de Aplicación, my mother was expelled from Liceo 3 and went to Darío Salas.

My father, well, they both got married at a very young age, I think just after finishing school, because they had to go hiding, the Party's order was to go hiding and for the family it was easier to do it by get married, to go live alone and get married and my mother was arrested in 1974 and well, she was one of the people who went to Villa Grimaldi, who later went to Tres Alamos and Cuatro Alamos, Pirque and then were expelled. In the end, they exchange prison for expulsion to Belgium.»

In Belgium, her parents continue militating and decide to have Tamara, then her younger sister. However, the family history was interrupted by the fact that his parents chose to enlist in the MIR's Operation Return, which meant a stay in Cuba to receive guerrilla training.

That choice, in the end, meant leaving Belgium and separating from the daughters.

«My paternal grandmother, with my aunt Verónica who was the youngest aunt, Vivi, who lived with her. And they go to look for us, they give us an early birthday, I know that from photos, but I also have a memory of that birthday, I was going to be three years old, but this is in February, so I still won't be able to turn three, my sister was going to be one year old, and the memory that I have, of course, is very childish, because I remember a little purse that I liked a lot, that they gave me as a present, that was made of sewn beads, and that's the only thing I remember from that farewell.»

During the following year, Tamara's parents manage to enter Chile and settle clandestinely in southern Chile. The grandmother, who cares for the girls in Santiago, takes extreme security measures, despite her social status as a judge, which the granddaughters notice.

«My grandmother in general didn't let us leave the house, not even in the front yard, she was always afraid that something would happen to us.

...So, she took us to this park, and I never really imagined what it was, so she took us to a kind of dark corner of the park and she says: 'There are the little clowns' and there was my dad and my mom, and it was like a very nice memory, very happy, to see them, and also the two of them together.

And my sister, what I remember, is that she didn't understand anything, she didn't recognize them, she didn't know who they were... and what they say is that I was the one who told her: 'Katia says hello, it's your mom, Katia is your dad, you have to say hello, they are our parents', but she didn't understand much, she didn't pay attention, and I remember that day very well.

And then they decided to take us to live in hiding with them, which is in Temuco.»



Photograph 17. Katia her sister, Ignacio Vidaurrázaga her father and Tamara. (Chacabuco's Prison)

From 1981 to 1982, Tamara and her sister returned to live with their parents in the south of Chile. They move house three times.

Later, they move into a house where they stay longer and at the same time, Tamara gradually begins to understand the social situation, after finding a gun in the house where they lived with a school friend of her mother's, «the skinny aunt.»

«And then, I remember, one early day, which also in this house were not days like... I didn't go to school yet, so they were not days that had such a clear routine, we were with them a lot and since they were not people who had an office job, for me it was like it was a Sunday, but in reality, it was probably a Monday.

And I remember that day when my mother was taking a bath with my sister and he told me, look, I am going to explain to you what is happening, why we had that gun.

And then he tells me that uh... that there was a government, that it was a government... I don't know if he mentions Allende, I think so, that it was a very good government, that wanted to help all the poor people, that Pinochet arrived, who is a dictator, and that he overthrew that government and he began to kill all the people who were against the dictatorship, that a dictatorship was when there was one governing who did not... well, who did not want to listen to anybody and killed all those who opposed him.

That they were working to put an end to this dictatorship and that this implied that they were being hunted down to be killed.

And that, then, if I said their name or I talked about the weapon or I talked about the room, because they had a room, which we couldn't enter, but we looked at it when they opened the door, where they reproduced material, I think it was material, I don't know if it was El Rebelde or some kind of propaganda.

I don't know, but they had like a blue jelly, so they would pass the sheets around and I remember looking and they had a lot of papers hanging with clothespins, like you hang your clothes, always a lot of papers.

Well, and then he told me that I couldn't say his name, nor that they were fighting against the dictatorship, nor talk about that room, nor the weapon, because they were being chased to kill them and so we didn't have to talk about it with anyone, right! and he told me that story there.»

Despite the hiding, that is a period that Tamara remembers as a period of great family life, which is interrupted by the decision for the girls to return to Santiago, which happens two years before the arrest of their parents.

«Then, of course, they began to realize that it was already very untenable to continue living with us (in hiding), and that the repression was also becoming harsher, so they sent us back to my grandmother's house.

And then what they do, I remember that well, I remember that separation, and they take us to.... It's like they do a transfer in a Seminary, which now I know, now when I grow up, it's there in Gran Avenida and then they take us, Ida brings us, according to my mother she also came, I'm not sure about that, but Ida is the one who leaves us in that place, with our bags, she leaves and they leave us there with a seminarian.»

In Santiago, and especially after the arrest of their parents, the grandmother is very strict about security, which ends up affecting Tamara and her sister's childhood routines.

«Because later, when we went back to my grandmother's, uh... especially after they were arrested, but even before, my grandmother never let us go out, it was a passageway in her house and she never let us go out, neither to the passageway nor to the front yard, she didn't let us talk to the children, she always said that there was like a CNI car outside, spying, I don't know if it was always like that or it was her fear, but we couldn't go out.»

The moment of her parents' arrest is very clear to Tamara, who always had a latent fear that they would be murdered, according to her story.

«Then, when everyone was playing, I was kind of close to the adults. And, suddenly, the adults all go into my grandmother's room, where the TV is, and close the door and then I felt everything very strange, and I get closer, and I feel that they turn up the volume very loud and they say: - María Soledad Aránguiz Ruz.

And I say my mom was killed, so I open the door and say: - What happened to my mom? And there I must have been, this is 1984, uh, seven years old. Then they told me: - no, no, no, no, it's not your mother, nothing happened! I say: - yes, yes, that's my mom! - No, it's not your mom, it's just that she has the same name. - No, because there are people who can match that have the same first name or the same last name and I told them: - Yes! someone can have the same first and last name, but no one can have... - that was my

defense - both first and last names the same as my mother's! What happened to my mother? And there they told us that they were in prison.»

The fact that her parents were in prison was, in a way, positive news, according to Tamara, for whom the death of her parents was a very present issue, even in her relationship with her sister.

«I don't remember the moment when they told us... eh, I remember when they took us to see my mom and dad, and then my feeling, which is what you asked me before and I hadn't thought about it, was not of something terrible, because I always thought they were going to kill them, in fact, we talked about it with my sister, not like 'oh, they are going to kill them, we are afraid', but how it will be when they kill them, what are we going to do, what are we going to do when we are orphans, but there are also things as a child, so, for example, (laughs) what I thought was that when they announced that someone had been killed, I had to go to the table and do something like that, like in the movies, when they served me food - "no thanks, I have no appetite" and put my head down as if in sorrow and I was kind of rehearsing that.»

With their parents incarcerated in Concepción, Tamara and her sister must travel to south of Chile to see them. There, they discover that they are separated and have new partners.

«And my father is in Concepción, the first visit is already in Concepción, in Chacabuco, they called it the old prison, a very, very old prison. I think walls were even collapsed for the 1985 earthquake.

And I remember my dad's first visit, because one of the things he tells us is: - well, since we are prisoners... and I don't know what, but he kind of informs us that he separated with my mom, they separated.

That really made me feel sad, much more than the prison, Ouch! We were very sorry to hear that they had split up because our idea was, like our plan,

our conversations with my sister, was that when it was all over, we were going to live the four of us together, but deep down it was that, well, we were no longer going to live the four of us together, and I remember that it made me terribly sad.

And he also informs me that they both have new couples... uh, and I remember that we didn't even know his girlfriend, but he gave her some gifts and told us: - Can you take this to Mey, please?- and we used to tear the wrapping paper, it made us angry, and I also remember that there was, like one... these little fences next to the gardens, that were like metal, that we used to balance and my dad took us around and what he did, is that he talked for a while with my sister and for a while with me alone.

So, this separation thing I'm not sure if he told both of us, or just me. And what he said to me is, look he said to me: - It will happen to you later when you are older and have a boyfriend, she used to tell me. I was very romantic, I wanted to have a boyfriend when I was seven years old. You will fall in love with someone and then your love will disappear, he continued, but you will continue to be fond of that person, so I will always be fond of your mother, we will always be a family and what happens is that I am no longer in love with her, I am not in love with her as a girlfriend.— And it sounded like an explanation to me, but I had my misgivings.

And when I visited my mother, one of the first times I remember that was also the topic of conversation, the topic was that they had separated, and then I told her: of course, you also have another boyfriend, so it's another person that adds up and takes away our space.

Then my mom tells us 'Look, the heart is not really like you imagine it in the drawings, as you draw a picture of a heart and it is divided between you and your dad, the heart is different.' She tells me: it's like a mass and when you love someone, the pieces of the others always remain the same, what happens is that a new piece is added and then it starts to grow.»



Photograph 18. Katia her sister, María Soledad Anánguiz her mother and Tamara Vidaurrázaga (Coronel's Prison)

The new situation was silenced by Tamara at her school, Universitario Salvador, where there were most right-wing families.

Meanwhile, visits to the prison, especially where her father was, had a special status, thanks to the efforts of her grandmother-judge.

«That time while we were at the nuns' school, moreover, was not a school where we could tell that we had spent the weekend visiting prisoners, so we didn't talk about it at school and the visits were very different, because my dad's jail was an office... uh... which was very... I remember because the furniture had like a plastic leather, it must be, but it was green, it was the color of the gendarmerie, all, all the furniture was green, it was very ugly.

But it was good because we had the office to ourselves, since he couldn't cook there in that office, my grandmother brought food, lots of food, because my grandmother's obsession was also that my father was always very skinny, it was true, because he did a lot of hunger strikes and part of what my grandmother made us do, was to go to my dad and ask him to please not do any more hunger strikes for us, and my dad told us: - "all the fellows are on hunger strike, I cannot not go on hunger strike, I have to be with my comrades."

And yes, he was absolutely right, but I still told him what my grandmother used to say.»

During visits to her father's house, Tamara feels that her father prepares them to withstand torture while they play, something that makes her sister uncomfortable.

«Then he played games with us that were like torture, really. It was like preparing us for torture, but he didn't say like that, it said we were going to go on a mission to the moon or something very important and then we had to prepare, we had to show that we were ready, we had to put our arms behind our backs, like we were tied up and we couldn't move and he made us do heavy things, he bothered us, tickled us, ran his tongue over our faces and the idea was to resist, and I resisted, because what I imagined was that deep down I was preparing myself for the revolution, so I had to be prepared. I resisted and my sister didn't, my sister said: "no, I don't want that, I don't like the game, and I found that I was doing well.»

The visits to the mother's prison, in Coronel, were in a more relaxed atmosphere. In particular, because it was a collective activity, where the prisoners did joint activities.

«Then on Sunday it was a fantastic visit, the Coronel prison was very entertaining, the prisoners had a room that was just for the political

prisoners, among the common prisoners, they all treated us well, the common prisoners were close to them, I remember them, and they played with us.

I also remember that when we arrived there were many political prisoners who later left, I remember that there was María Candelaria who was the daughter of Sebastián Acevedo, a prisoner and she was very funny, because she was very good at playing physically with us, running, making rounds, she was like those people who do not make an effort to play with the children, but who are having a good time, she was very funny.

And, well, there were a lot of other fellows who were in the same group as my mother, from the south, several had had their husbands killed and several had their children either in Santiago or in Cuba.»

The family history suffers a new repressive event in the context of the attack on General Augusto Pinochet in September 1986, which leaves a deep impression on Tamara.

«And I see my grandmother come in, my grandmother was always a very short woman, but she was also a very strong woman, and she was incredible, she had like a metallic thing from the Judicial Power, and I remember that there were, I don't know, police officers, and she said: - Let's see, Judicial Power! She was super nosy - oh, excuse me, magistrate, she said, and I don't know what, but they let her pass, I don't know if it was because she was a magistrate or because she was very nosy. But she was doing the same thing with the barricades, I remember, just like people doing barricades: - Let's see, Judicial Power! and the people: Oh! Excuse me, and they let her pass.

Then I felt that she was invincible, until that day, when she came through the door and I looked out, she walked through the door and "ssssht" she fainted, she was lying on the floor.

And I said: Oh! Something bad happened. Then I try to go in and my aunt stops me, my aunt Vivi, and I say: - What happened? And she says: - Uncle

Waty was killed, go to entertain the girls, so they don't realize what's going on. And I said "chucha" (Chilean rudeness) they killed him, it was what I always thought that was going to happen to my parents, but I didn't think it was going to happen to him too.

I lived with him, besides, we lived with him when we just arrived from Belgium, we lived with them, and I remember him very well, because there was a little house in the back, like a room where he painted, because my uncle was a painter, he was not just a revolutionary.»

In this context, Tamara and her sister are matriculated in the Colegio Latinoamericano de Integración, which allowed them to be in a more protected and, above all, more open environment.

«But what I felt when I arrived at the Latin American Integration School was like being in a place with strange people, like me, therefore, I was no longer strange, we were all like that, with leftist parents, everybody was talking about it and besides, it was 1987, then the idea of the plebiscite was starting, that the dictatorship was ending, it was a very politicized space and all the children knew about politics, like me, it was not strange, the teachers also knew about my situation, that we went to prison. (...)

And of course, at that time most of the parents of my classmates had come from exile or had been repressed, but a long time before, we were still daughters of political prisoners, so it was important, it was important, and it was very respected.

But, in addition, the whole school respected that, so, for example, our parents sent cassettes to the class and during class, the class was stopped, and they played the cassettes of my father talking to my class. So, it was weird, because it's like.... you can imagine, me hiding everything for so long, and my parents were like... ohhhh! everybody looked up to my dad and my mom.

My classmates wrote letters to my mother and my mother wrote back to my classmates, they wrote letters to each other and to their teachers. Well,

I liked it, I loved it, I thought it was the best, but my sister didn't like it.»

With the advent of democracy and the release of her parents, a new stage begins, in which Tamara feels she has an extended family, which happens to live nearby, in Ñuñoa. A period that is also a challenge for their parents.

«And that's where the issue of finding a life for my parents also begins, because they are someone who never made it, mom was in the first year of French when she was arrested, my dad I think he took a photography course, but they had never studied, they had never... they had never worked formally, they didn't have a résumé. Then they started to look for a living, there were some scholarships, the WUS³² scholarships, that put them as... scholarships for some work to insert them, but I remember that they didn't have a job, then they were looking for work and the jobs were very low paying. And what they did, it was a good idea I think now, is that we rented in Juan Moya and Pachi's house where my dad arrived was half a block away, so it was all, like... close.»

During that period, Tamara notes that there was a distance between what she expected life with her parents to be and what it finally turned out to be. Her sister, moreover, begins to somatize the pains and loses her hair.

Today, in her relationship with her daughter, Tamara says she tries to prevent her from taking on responsibilities before her time.

«So, motherhood is also a moment that I waited a lot, to which I have put all my energies, I think it is by far the most desired project of my day and in which I have put more effort to do well, surely I have done, I am sure I have done a lot of bad things but I have really put a lot of effort into it...

32 World University Service Scholarships for study in the United Kingdom, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council

uh... but motherhood also implied all that, looking at myself when I was a child, uh... and realizing things that were not there or things that were very hard for such a little girl and that also made me very sad at a time, and now I'm better, that's why I can give the interview, I'm in a much more reconciled moment with that too, like assuming that pain I lived through and at the same time rescuing nice things from this story that had a lot too, uh... above all, being grateful that my parents are alive, and that finally I was not an orphan, which is what I prepared myself for all my childhood.

And then, well, it's like one can also criticize a lot to dads and moms, especially moms, but what I am clear about now at my 42, is that whatever they are and whatever they have done wrong, and no matter what they have done, I still prefer them alive than as I thought it would be, finally I have them alive to get angry, that's more than many people can do.

And well, I tell my daughter a lot of these stories and when I'm telling them to her and my husband, Lucho, I tell them as a joke, and they suddenly look at me and say: "your stories always end very badly, it's very sad"- No, I tell them, it's funny.

- "No" they tell me, "Only you can tell stories in a funny way, but it's not funny because you were a little girl." And there I also fall into the fact of seeing from afar the history of my process, because that has also cost me, so I think that motherhood has been a hard time, because it means looking at myself and see what I missed, what hurts me, seeing myself as a little girl and comparing myself with my daughter and seeing her as a little girl and me as an adult since I was very young, but it also allowed me to reconcile myself with that story, and well I think that for many people, motherhood and children are also processes of reparation of your own history, because one tries to make good what one feels was not done so well with oneself.»

The visit is over

*The doorbell rings
The visit is over!
(repeats the jailer)
I see hugs and passionate kisses
restrained caresses,
suspended glances
– Be well, I'll be back. Be patient.
– Yes, I will say hello. Don't worry.
– What's wrong that didn't get to see me?
– It's the same as always. Stay calm,
This
will come to an
end
Twice a week
almost always
the same words
mark the retreat
thousands of questions
are lost on the lips
thousands of answers
are postponed
to give way
to the interminable wait.*

*Angélica Rojas Toledo³³, March 1988,
Santo Domingo Prison, Santiago*

33 *Angelica Rojas is the aunt of one of our interviewees, Alejandro Villablanca Rojas, and her mother Vilma, after the death of her sister, decided to edit this book, compiling poems and texts written during her time in detention.*

Lessons learned from Resistance to PSG

THE IMPACT OF DETENTION

This memory exercise, for which we interviewed 10 sons and daughters of former political prisoners in our country, allows us to get to know those children who were silent protagonists in the midst of the civil-military dictatorship, who witnessed or had to learn about the arrests of their fathers and/or mothers and who are considered in the analysis as a «second generation. »

From a psychological perspective, we can see that they experienced massive and severe trauma in first person, this abrupt separation from the care of their parents, thinking specifically of social actors who were political prisoners, that evolve differently from the cases of children of disappeared or executed detainees, appreciating that it's very therapeutic for them to be able to recognize themselves as directly affected subjects, elaborating their own story of the experience and their particular evaluation of it.

According to psychiatrist José Luis Tejada, from CINTRAS³⁴, the changes provoked by trauma are related to being witnesses or even being part of those who receive this repression in the family due to the imprisonment of their father, mother or both. Being separated from these important primary figures, where there is a reaction to that, but also to the actions of their parents, to the hiding and political work.

This identity of revolutionary, of clandestine, where some have to start very early, sometimes understanding and sometimes without understanding much, to be part of these actions of resistance to repression and imprisonment.

There are some distinctions between the types of families that belong to this resistance, one of them is the case in which both parents are social actors and are acting politically, as opposed to the cases in which only one of them is, mostly the father, and that, in general, the children learn of their father's level of militant commitment when the arrest occurs.

However, there are several cases in which it's the mother who decides to take political action to fight against the dictatorship and ends up being imprisoned.

This is a topic that has a special tension, especially in Chilean culture, when this "revolutionary mother" arises. We must take into account that between the 60's and 70's the gender revolution began, where politics was an activity in which women could participate. However, in our society it generates a lot of resistance within the parties themselves and in the judgments made by society in general.

For the female social actress, it was doubly difficult, because they also had to resist all the macho pressure of «a woman participating in politics and leaving her traditional

.....

³⁴ CINTRAS is a non-profit NGO whose objective is to provide medical-psychological care to people who were victims of human rights violations during the civil-military dictatorship, especially survivors of torture, as well as relatives of detainee disappeared and those who were politically executed.

role as caregiver, not to change the world, but to take care of tradition and care for others in the family nucleus» says psychiatrist José Luis Tejada.

These same cultural aspects and machismo have a greater impact, since when the mother is the one affected, the impact on her children is usually greater, especially at an early age, because the role of the mother is not always filled by the father. The Chilean family is able to adapt more to the absence of a father than of a mother, that happens in general, but under these circumstances it becomes relevant.

This figure of the active woman political prisoner is constructed, who no longer has only the traditional role of caregiver; it's different if both participate politically, or if both are imprisoned or tortured, then if only one of them is, especially if that is the father. Here the mother assumes a more protagonist role in the face of her partner's arrest.

When the mother is left to care for the children and must take on activities related to the struggle for the human rights of her husband or fellow, she must ask for help and that is where other female characters emerge, such as grandmothers or aunts, who substitute for the mothers while the latter move between organizations that try to watch over the integrity of those who are imprisoned.

«In the end we were with my granny and my grandpa, who at that time was still alive, and my aunt Rita, who was the biggest support of the family, in the end she took on the role of mom and dad because my mom sometimes arrived very late.»

Lorena Hermosilla

When the militant mother is imprisoned and the children are left in the care of family members, the children's ability to cope with these absences requires a greater capacity for adaptation.

“The age at which they have to live this experience is also important, someone who was born during the dictatorship or who is very young, to those who are older and can already understand and elaborate in some way what is happening to their parents” adds Tejada.

Most of the interviewees were between five and eight years old at the time of their parents' detention, except for one of them who was born when his father was incarcerated.

«I was born when my dad was already in prison and, therefore, if you ask me the first stories that come to my mind is how my mom tells me, what it meant to take me to prison and introduce me and how we were received with applause and how it was a moment like... super emotional for all the people in the prison.»

Eduardo Martínez

Generally, we have memories from the age of four, between the ages of four and six we can say that memories are our own, before that they are constructed with family stories and different memories arise in the case of those who had their parents in prison for a long time, because prison also becomes part of everyday life, visits are an experience that have their own merit, they have a particular impact on childhood, they grow up with this image of that place and of their father or mother being imprisoned, as Mariana Dastres tells us:

«I was five years old, so you don't have much awareness of what you are doing, of why you are going to see your father somewhere, but I do remember that when I entered the public prison they made me take off my shoes, they made me take off my shoes and they kind of pulled the sole of my shoe to see if I was carrying things between the shoe and the sole. I was little, little, I was five years old and I visited prison until I was thirteen.»

Ivonne Zúñiga also relates:

«Going to see my dad was a joy, it was a joy just to arrive and to remember, to see those black, cold corridors, the check-ups before admission, they are part of the episode that brings pain, even though it was only two years, it was two years 3 times a week always, we never stopped going to see him despite the young age.»

It's also something that happens when from childhood you share an open revolutionary identity and try to change those mentalities of your sons and daughters with respect to who their parents were, to a revolutionary mentality of a new person. This is where the imprint of being «Daughters and Sons of...» is installed.

«I remember when we were taken to see my mom and dad, and then my feeling, which is what you asked me before and I hadn't thought about it, was not something terrible, because I always thought they were going to kill them.»

Tamara Vidaurrázaga

It's different in the case of those who had a notion of «being of the left» in the family, that there was some militancy, but who didn't have a clear idea of what was happening, of the level of political commitment that the father had assumed, so the impact of knowing that he is imprisoned is something unexpected.

«I have always known that my father was more of a leftist, but he never said anything, the only thing I knew was that he went out every night and then he came home, but he was all secret, until the moment of everything that happened to him, the moment when he was arrested, when the first confrontation took place, and then we knew the truth.»

Lorena Hermosilla

In relation to this, José Luis Tejada argues that these resignifications «have to do with family styles, a scholar of transgenerationality who talks about the adaptations of families in the face of trauma, and she talks about these struggling families, one can read in these families that they are always valuing resistance and are very active, however there are families that don't involve the children, families with parents who

are very strong and who are active figures that involve the whole family, that it's not an activity such as work, but that their life is going, and there are similar things that happen in these children is that generally they displace those weaknesses that are not allowed, they have to look strong, because "we are doing something for you too" and they have difficulties to handle those fragilities later on when adults, adults who were children in those contexts, have to deal with them. »

In the absence of this daily routine when the father and/or mother return home, a new process of adaptation is generated, because both the person who returns and those who are waiting for him/her have changed. Some return having to remain in hiding, so in reality they don't return completely or sometimes they are dragged into hiding or exile.

"It seems to me that there are different subjectivities" says Tejada, since the process of readjusting to family life is as diverse as there are types of families. In some cases, this process becomes complex due to the time and changes in the daily activities of the former prisoner and the family that adapts to routines in the absence, a father arrives looking to "occupy his place in the house" and doesn't find clearly what it's, the children for, their part, seek to adapt to these new dynamics that imply the return, periods that don't make this coexistence easy.

«It was complicated, because now we had two authorities in the house, I was 13 years old and suddenly having the father in the house, as we are a patriarchal society, now it was also saying "well now the father is in charge", but my mother was already used to it, she had already fought for 7 years with her children (...) she learned to be strong, not submissive. And he came out with several habits from the 7 years he was detained, one of them was that we had to get up before 10 o'clock in the morning to be able to take a hot shower (...) But we had to get used to it. I don't think it was easy to get used to this rhythm again, as time went by, it was... we had a family dynamic, there were 5 of us, and then we were totally used to it.»

Mariana Dastres

What happens when they come back? Someone different comes back and it happens that when that person was away for a long time, they come to a family system adapted to that absence. The family dynamic is already established, somehow time stopped for this father when he was arrested and when he gets out, he wants to get back in touch with his family as before the arrest, his son or daughter who has grown up, who had to get used to this separation, to adapt to his mother's pain, to changes of school, to less money, to living with other people, and where this father doesn't work on a daily basis, is a father who visits but doesn't know well, it's not possible to know him in all his facets and it must be taken into account that he is emotionally affected and that it's difficult for him to exercise his fatherhood in a healthier way, realizing the situations that the family is going through.

There are cases in which the expectations aren't fulfilled, because the parents' life as a couple doesn't continue, so after the imprisonment comes the process of adapting to a new type of family with separation, new couple relationships, with all that this implies for these children who must assume a new context of life.

«And well, that's when life with them began, which obviously had nothing to do with the expectations we had, from the beginning each one of them had a new partner and that was a priority in their lives, so what changed a lot is that I had a lot of freedom, I went out a lot, and at thirteen years old I felt like a giant, that I was already a big girl. »

Tamara Vidaurrázaga

They are children who are thrown into adulthood where they cannot express their fragility like any other child, in front of those parents who are under threat of death. Some of them evidently raise that feeling of having lost their childhood.

«Obviously not to live like a child, because practically the children I met during the dictatorship in political work were children who were tremendously developed, as well as practically adults, so we were never seen as children.»

Lorena Oñate

THE NEED TO ASSUME THE MISSING ROLE

“Children become containers for those parents who emotionally don’t give them support, so there may be different trajectories depending on the style of each family, the impact of the traumatic event on the parents, because it’s also an understandable adaptation at a time of such intense family threat, it’s not possible to be a child, you have to be strong, you don’t have to be crying for your own parents, because your weakness also threatens the family.” explains José Luis Tejada

These hidings appear in children where they are forced to change their identities, to remain silent, many couldn't tell at school what was happening at home. Finally, they have the feeling of being burdened with the security of their parents: “If you say something, if you do something wrong, your parents can die” is very strong, it's not something from childhood. It's an adaptation to an obvious family threat, it's not an invention of the parents, it has to do with what they were experiencing.

«In fact, the conversation with the uncle (cab driver, former Black Beret, half-brother of his mother), was only to know if my parents were in a political party, what my parents did, what people went to the house, well, and growing up in this environment, there was a lot of insecurity and you couldn't trust anyone, I told my uncle that my father worked in construction, my mother works at the blue jeans factory, so my brother and this little friend didn't realize anything about the interrogation, quote unquote, they were making me (...) it was difficult to talk knowing the situation that one was already living as a family because your father was a trade union leader, it was difficult to talk.»

Claudia Troncoso

This role of care and emotional containment is also key to the development of the emotional skills of these children, they are traumatized, they are born or are very young in dictatorship and have to live this situation in their family and environment, family networks are affected, they generally share the risks, threats and it's not uncommon to

see in a family at least a couple of people detained, political prisoners, a deceased or disappeared person or close friends.

Although the trauma was massive, a large part of society was affected, there are specific groups, the most politically committed, who were generally quite young as well.

«Part of my family, some uncles took that path, others followed the path of the party, and my mother was arrested in those cells, she fell with another aunt, Angélica Rojas, who was also arrested for five years, she was also an active militant.»

Alejandro Villablanca

THE IMPACT OF THE RAIDS

We see that the raids are generally, when there is memory, moments filled with a great sense of vital threat, they are left with the fantasy of guilt or that they could have done something to avoid the arrest of their father or mother, they are left with the need to protect them.

«That it was the feeling of knowing that your father was well, that as a child, it's to feel that, because afterwards, I felt that if my father was with me, nothing would happen to him.»

Claudia Troncoso

The raids were not peaceful, military and/or CNI agents beat, threatened, they could do atrocious things using force, sometimes even the home itself became a place of torture for these people and their families.

«So in front of these children, we see an act of torture inside the raided houses, they are very difficult experiences» says psychiatrist José Luis Tejada.

Also the children who were like "militants" assume protective attitudes in the raids, answer certain things and act in a more adult manner. These records within the home have an impact on the memory and are not lived as a personal experience, not easily appears the possibility of associating it to fears in adulthood, many times those who were very young, arrive with psychoemotional effects that they don't understand very well and when they speak, they manage to make associations to these experiences, they are memories that are sometimes blocked, they lose the feeling of having a safe place before the threat in the raids.

A SILENT GRIEVING PROCESS

In psychology, grief has more to do with loss than with death, losses can be very diverse and when someone realizes that they have lost not only an important figure, but also a possibility of a healthy childhood, a grieving process often begins. Psychologists speak of a process where something is happening, where they have to adapt to a reality of what is happening to them, something that doesn't allow them to develop that "normal childhood" where mom and dad are taking care of them and giving them affection and security.

So, it's correct to speak of grief in these cases, it's difficult to identify a particular grief, to put a value on them, they are different moments in which feelings of loss are produced.

There are also no spaces to talk about what happened, the space of torture or what they experienced during their detentions is something that is not talked about.

«I think he was released around the end of November (...) He never talks much about it, nor about what happened. He always talks about it like... he has a very special character, so he is very funny, he tells everything as a joke, so the parts he tells are like funny anecdotes of that situation.»

Carolina Tapia

It's what in theory has been developed as the "conspiracy of silence"³⁵, which refers to this silence that occurs in families, it's one of the engines by which trauma is transferred to other generations, it is maintained and it's easy to understand, silence is also a form of protection, a person who has a very intense trauma doesn't want to think about it.

In order to speak, it's first necessary to think, therefore, people keep silent because they cannot put words to what they have experienced, because when they think about it they become anguished, so it's also a way of defending themselves and because they assume that there are few people willing to listen to the things that happened and there is the feeling that others will not be able to understand.

This leads people to keep silent, another source is that those who have been victims of torture don't want to harm those around them, as Tejada describes: "he thinks that if he speaks and if he tells these things the other person will suffer, so these are some of the reasons why traumatized people sometimes keep silent for a long time."

On the other hand, their loved ones don't dare to ask questions, they have suspicions, they intuit, and many have fantasies that can be outrageous as well: - «I knew that this is how they tortured, so I wonder if they did that to you too?» when they cannot put a name to what happened, they don't ask questions in order not to provoke more suffering, in order to avoid doing harm again. This is what Yael Danieli calls "conspiracies of silence"³⁶. They establish it without saying it tacitly, they don't need to agree. However, they make an undeclared pact in which it's better not to speak. In spite of this, these situations emerge, although they are never normally talked about, they emerge in an abrupt and very emotionally intense way, with a lot of emotional charge, which is also usually quite harmful.

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35 Yael Danieli, a leading researcher on the transgenerationality of harm. See: *International Handbook of Multigenerational Legacies of Trauma*.

36 *Op. Cit pg. 4*

Silencing is different, which is an oppressive and active silence, which seeks not to speak in order to distort reality or deny the facts, and to favor it because it leaves the perpetrators in a bad position, for fear of condemnation and exposure to public judgment.

On the other hand, in the case of those who were victims, there is silence whose source is the search for protection, trying to protect themselves from the anguish of what they have experienced and the need to protect their loved ones so as not to harm them. Something harmful is produced there, because it avoids elaborating the traumatic event within the family and that is a job that the adult will have to do later, that boy or girl who is now an adult, will have to elaborate something that he or she doesn't know well.

«He never treated himself after he got out of prison, he tried to face things on his own, many years later, around the year 2000, he was diagnosed with a major depression, which was treated with a psychiatrist, and part of the therapy is that he tells us things, things that hurt him, things that bother him, and after that he started telling us a little more, but he doesn't like it very much. It's so much that he appears in the Valech Report and each person who appears in that commission was given an edition, my father gave it away and asked us not to read the testimonies, because it's painful for him, he, my two uncles and my grandfather appear in it.»

Ivonne Zúñiga

Some manage to speak in an anecdotal tone, making certain allusions through jokes, humor can be an evolved way of approaching, of handling things that are difficult to talk about, when there is some level of elaboration, when a certain level of storytelling has been reached, it's different if there is no such development, it can be a way in which people handle trauma, once they have achieved a certain capacity to assume and process what happened, if in addition, the others know what is being talked about, it can become a way of approaching it in a different way, but one does not start talking like that, because otherwise nobody understands, it's contextualized.

«Also tell him these kind of jokes of when he gets really radical, something like he's already going to take up arms again, even the more black humor of, what do I know, the brother's hair is falling out and he's not, and it's like yes, if you didn't get sun 8 years, then so anybody.»

Eduardo Martínez

Thinking about this so-called "second generation", about these children who are now adults and who didn't always know well what their parents' lives were like, when they come to therapy they have already begun to discover who those men and women were, what lives they had, they know they have a void regarding how they were outside the intimate family relationship, and very often they look for fellows, Today, through social networks, they find them and begin to know what their role was and what their way of being was like, to get to know that compartmentalized, hidden space, which finally had to do with security. Those adults, who were children, have to reconstruct these stories and go back to talk to these parents when they are alive, to know who they were, in order to understand.

There are styles in families, some, where political life is shared and others, where those things aren't talked about, how it's organized or what they do outside the house, it's not only of those who are resisting, but also of the paternities and/or maternities, some don't share, the children don't know them outside the family environment and most of the life of the parents occurs outside the house, it's more compartmentalized when knowing involves a risk.

Many people today continue to hide what happened to them, out of anguish and shame, because it's something very important as it exposes and reveals this human being who needs to elaborate his pain.

DIALOGUE AND MEMORY BETWEEN GENERATIONS

Today there is a later generation of grandchildren, who ask questions and inquire about family histories, it's not possible to have a unique way of being able to transmit

What can be said is that motherhood and fatherhood usually open a moment that leads people to seek help or where anguish emerges, a challenge arises, they begin to worry more about their psychological well-being, now you are a parent and you have to be well enough to fulfill that role, from the own needs that have never been elaborated before and that it makes sense to put in order.

Sometimes, when the children reach the age at which the parents had the traumatic experiences, anxieties emerge, and they go to consult a specialist. Depending on their age and the conversations that adults have around them, children become curious about the history of their parents and grandparents.

«Perhaps unlike the way my mother told it to me, is that they don't... they don't handle the... the lurid details... but they know, yes of course, I mean they know in broad strokes that the grandmother was in prison, that the grandfather was also in prison, that the grandmother was in prison while pregnant and that this is clearly very wrong (smiles) and that it's wrong for anyone to be in prison under these circumstances.»

Isabel Plaza

«The integration of trauma into the current life span, so that it becomes a significant part of the identity, value hierarchy and life orientation of the survivors' descendants» «are potentially liberating and allow for processing that will inhibit the transmission of the harm to successive generations.»³⁷

The process of parenthood leads people to ask, “how am I doing as a father and mother”, in these contexts it becomes relevant to be able to elaborate and have their own narrative to be shared with their sons and daughters, to be able to integrate these experiences in the family.

37 *Op. Cit extracted from the presentation of the psychiatrist José Luis Tejada at the Seminar “La Revolución como Herencia: Voces intergeneracionales”*

to transmit them, the healthy thing will be to be able to look for those things that allow us to be more authentic, to put emotions in what we say and to speak from who we are.

THE ROLE OF PIDEE FOUNDATION

In 1985, the Foundation decided to create the “Casa Hogar”, due to the need to protect children in situations such as persecution and/or detention of their parents, since there were those who did not have relatives who could take care of them, also for fear of kidnapping or other risks for children and adolescents of the time, while their parents remained in prison or in transit to exile.

The PIDEE Foundation took charge while the parents' situation was being resolved. At that time, it had a team of professionals who were in charge of the physical and mental health, learning and care of each child who required it.

Alfonso Hinojosa tells us: «I arrived because I had worked before in a kindergarten, they saw that I had skills with children, they interviewed me with my wife and daughter, to see if we were fit to take charge and keep the children in a space as close as possible to a family, sometimes there were problems, but they were minor, we worked with a big team, some in the kitchen, the toilet, there were pediatricians, psychologists and pedagogues.

There were people who were arrested, so they decided that I had to take the children to prison to see their fathers and mothers, so I went with a group of kids on the bus, we arrived at the prison and I was with them there during visiting hours, the children were with their parents, so I didn't interact much there, I was a little on the sidelines and took the opportunity to talk with other people, until the hour was over and I returned home with the children, I also did the same in the women's prison. I left them with their mom, I didn't interfere much in their relationship.

The detachment was not too screwed up, on the way out, the children understood that their parents had to be there.

We were very fond of them and when they left it was a bit painful, they were detachments, they were almost like one's children. During the day there were the tías, the psychologist, the pediatrician. We stayed until '87-88' and then another family came to take over, Noemí with her husband, and they finished until '89-90 when democracy arrived.

The Foundation shelters them and provides them with care so that they remain in a safe environment, sometimes with as many as fifteen children from two months to fifteen years of age. They were usually there for a while, a couple of days, a week or a month; the ones that lasted the longest were there for about two years, because their parents were in prison.

The institution was protected by international Human Rights organizations, so there were no problems of harassment, there were Swedish organizations that supported with resources and ensured the protection of children.

“For me, it was one of the greatest experiences I have had, to have contributed with a little bit of love and friendship towards the children and the parents were very grateful for that, they greet me around, some of them have come here, they are all adults, I am surprised that they are all grown up”, Alfonso says.

Noemí Baeza and her husband Enrique Espinoza describe their experience in the second stage of the «Casa Hogar», where they took on the role of caretakers.

They regularly went to the prisons where their fathers or mothers were, Noemi said that it was shocking to see how the children allowed themselves to be broken into at the entrance of the prisons: «They would open their little arms to be broken in» says.

He also tells us that on one occasion it was possible to have a day of celebration in the Public Prison to share between parents, sons and daughters.

TESTIMONIO

MI NOMBRE ES HERNANDO DASTRES, LLEVO ALGO MÁS DE 6 AÑOS RECLUIDO Y SE ME HA PEDIDO UN TESTIMONIO DE LA VISITA DE LOS P.P. CON SUS HIJOS Y CREO QUE EL 25 DE SEPT. DEL 89 SERA UNA FECHA INOLVIDABLE PARA MUCHOS P.P. COMO TAMBIÉN PARA MUCHOS HIJOS, PORQUE EL ESTAR ENCARCELADO ES UN IMPACTO MUY FUERTE QUE RESIENTE A TODA LA FAMILIA. UNO DE CUALQUIER FORMA QUIERE MARCAR SU PRESENCIA EN EL HOGAR Y ESTAR EN CADA OPORTUNIDAD MUY CERCA DE TODA LA FAMILIA, GENERALMENTE EN LAS VISITAS REGULARES CADA P.P. NO LE DEDICA TODO EL TIEMPO QUE CADA HIJO REQUIERE, ESTO SE PRODUCE EN FORMA INVOLUNTARIA LA MAYORIA DE LAS VECES, PORQUE AL INICIO DE LA CONVERSACIÓN NO FALTA LA PERSONA O FAMILIAR QUE HAY QUE SALUDAR Y SE INTERRUMPE TODO DIALOGO. ESTA VISITA PADRE-HIJO ERA UN ANTIGUO ANHELO DE LOS P.P. PADRES. ESE LUNES 25 FUE DIFERENTE, GENERALMENTE LOS DIAS DE CÁRCEL SON FRÍOS, PERO ESE DIA FUE MULTICOLOR, HABIA ESPERACIÓN Y NERVIOSISMO PARA ESPERAR "LA VISITA", EN CÁRCEL PÚBLICA SOMOS APROXIMADAMENTE 200 P.P., LA MAYORIA DE LOS PAPÁS FUIMOS VISITADOS, CREEMOS QUE ES IMPORTANTE DESTACAR LA PRESENCIA DE LAS TÍAS DEL PIDEE, PORQUE ESTANDO ELLAS A LA ENTRADA A NUESTROS HIJOS SE LES AMINDRA EL TEMOR DE INGRESAR, TEMOR QUE SE PRODUCE POR EL PERSONAL UNIFORMADO Y POR EL ALLANAMIENTO, ES IMPORTANTE RESALTAR LO NECESARIO DE ESTE TIPO DE VISITAS PORQUE MUCHOS HIJOS NO HAN VIVIDO LA EXPERIENCIA DE SENTIR AL PAPA EN CASA CON ELLOS, CREEMOS QUE ESTE IMPACTO CON UNA MAYOR PRESENCIA Y RELACIÓN SE ATENÚA. LA VISITA EN SÍ, MAYORMENTE SE TRADUJO A MUCHO JUEGO CON SUS PAPÁ, QUE ES UNA FORMA DIRECTA DE RELACIONARSE Y COMPARTIR, CREEMOS QUE LAS ONCES PREPARADAS PASARON A 2do PLANO, TALVEZ FALTARON ALGUNOS JUGUETES, PERO LA EXPERIENCIA FUE BONITA, LA ALEGRIA DEL ENCUENTRO SE REFLEJO EN LOS ROSTROS DE TODOS LOS HIJOS Y TAMBIEN DE LOS PADRES, QUE PESA AL MOMENTO DE ALEGRIA ... HACE AUMENTAR LA NOSTALGIA DEL HOGAR.

2-10-89

H. D. G.

«That day was special, when we arrived there were balloons, there was children's music and there were many children, they were playing games, handing out candy, it was a children's party, a community party, like the ones we saw in the settlements, with candy, games, songs.

And they came up to me and said -alright tía- fellow, you come and play too. Several of us were invited, I am an elementary school teacher and I have always been with children, I followed my impulse and played with them, we sang, I was there for a long time, they were going to have lunch, they also had like a dinner and we saw a long party coming. I felt an emotion of being able to feel that in that instant, in those moments there was a small space of freedom, of freedom in our hearts, for being with the children. And there was laughter, there was joy. »

Among other physical and psychological assistance, PIDEE provided this hosted place for several years to those who were in special situations, who needed greater protection and care, the scope of the Foundation allowed it to take charge and thus mitigate in some way the pain that these families were going through.

One of our interviewees, Lorena Oñate, sums it up as a place where there was no need to hide. A space of identity.

«PIDEE for me was like a safe space, where I was given medical attention, where I could connect with other children who were similar to me, with whom I didn't have to hide from anything and where we played freely and we didn't have to be looked at as misfits, where we had space to make music, to dance, where we also shared with the children who were in the children's home, where I liked, I loved the babies, going to see the babies and taking care of them and helping them. Please, that a Tía give me a space to get in to see them...»

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