



Report on the situation of the Jewish detainees-disappeared during the genocide perpetrated in Argentina

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Introduction

On March 24, 1976 the institutional Argentinean order is interrupted by a military coup d' etat headed by the Armed Forces, which overthrow Isabel Peron' s constitutional government. The military dictatorship headed by Videla, Massera and Agosti carried out a campaign of annihilation against many social Argentinean groups. The systematic character of this campaign, the institutionalization of abduction, detention, torture and murder of thousands of citizens turned these actions into a genocide social practice.

A genocide can be described as such, both in relation to the nature of the social practice adopted by those who participate of it, as perpetrators of this social process, and centered on the annihilation objectives of the whole process. Therefore, it is a defined succession of social practices related to the control and isolation of a part of the people with the implicit or, generally, explicit aim of its extermination.

In the Argentinean case, there is a register of many violent actions during 1974 and 1975. In many occasions they were carried out by para-estatales: non-official forces, but the coming in power of the 'Junta' centralized and systematized the operations. This was possible by means of a secret net of task forces and concentration camps, apart from the setting of the machinery of the State (the Judiciary, diverse

security forces and bureaucratic machinery) in the service of these practices, through which it fulfilled both requirements: to classify as a genocide process for the type of action and the type of objectives

There have been a number of discussions regarding the conditions through which a series of murders can fall in the category of genocide. Some researchers have stated, based on a very restrictive interpretation of the United Nations Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, that this social practice can be distinguished by the annihilation of an ethnic, religious or national group. However, this restrictive interpretation would violate essential principles, both at the sociological and at the legal level.

On the one hand, a social practice cannot define itself as of a peculiar characteristic of its victim. A discriminatory practice, for example, continues to be discriminatory even if it is practiced against blond people, against overweight people or against those who have certain sexual preferences, instead of practicing discrimination against a specific cultural or religious group. Essentially, it is the same thing. What defines a discriminatory practice is the type of operations that are used to segregate any social group, regardless of the reasons for carrying it out.

The same happens with the genocide social practice. A genocide is defined by the systematic and planned level with which a centralized organization, generally in control of part of the State machinery, decides to eliminate a particular portion of the inhabitants, despite the characteristics used to define the victims of this kind of activity.

But, and simultaneously with these principles that sociologically define a social practice and that are highlighted, e.g. in the Congress of the Latin American Sociology Association (ALAS 99, Concepción, Chile, to be held in October, 1999) devoting a round-table conference to 'Genocide in the Southern Cone' or in the papers of the 'Symposium against Impunity and in Defense of Human Rights' (Barcelona, 1997) adhere to the legal principle of 'definition', in which the State defines all and every 'criminal' behavior.

In trying to typify the genocide crime, we found that if we characterize the crime as of the victimized population, instead of the practice involved in the genocide action, we would be violating an essen-

tial legal principle of all the existing legal systems, which is the principle of 'equality before the law'. It could, therefore, occur that certain groups, only for being such, would make a crime fall or not in the category of genocide.

This statement would lead to the absurd of stating that, for example, of the approximately eleven million victims that Nazism condemned to extermination camps, the category of genocide crime would only be applicable to the almost six million Jews and to one million Gypsies, leaving aside the non-Jewish Polish and Russians condemned for their political thought, for their sexual preferences, for their ethical humanism or for any other reason for which Nazism would have decided their extermination. We would therefore produce an absurd 'categorization' of the victims that would only reproduce the system, which is intended to oppose. If along with the Nuremberg Laws, Nazism intended to establish different levels of citizenship which led to the existence of first, second, third or fourth category citizens, we would find that this restrictive interpretation of crime and genocide social practice would lead to a categorization of victims of first, second or third category, which would not be very consistent with the universal and anti-discriminatory criteria that the Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide intends to enforce.

It would therefore be good to suggest to lay the stress not only on the group which could potentially become a victim, but also on the social and systematic practice that makes genocide crime possible, i.e., the actions of the repressors. This would allow for and would also make necessary a substantial modification of Article II of the above mentioned Convention broadening the enumeration of the potential victimized groups, without excluding any condition. Therefore, not only should 'all those actions perpetrated be included with the intention to destroy, total or partially a national, ethnic, racial or religious group', but also groups of a certain sexual preference, political ideas, philosophical viewpoints, etc.; because to make the victim category selective would generate a new unequal treatment, which would distort the basic grounds of the referred institution.

Consequently, genocide must be defined according to a type of prac-

tice, that proceeds to define a social subject as a 'negative other', to its harassment and isolation within the social structure and to the setting of a whole group of actions destined to abduct him from the natural environment of his social existence and to annihilate him. Abduction and extermination actions, both in the case of Nazism and in the case of the Argentinean military régime tended to be secret, performing a double process of unofficial concealment and diffusion, destined to sow terror among the population. This was the mechanism used by Nazism with 'transfers', which simulated collective work migrations, and with the extermination camps, hidden and disguised as "work camps" where the only real job was to get rid of millions of bodies that concretely testified to annihilation. In the same way, the genocide carried out in Argentina clandestinely abducted thousands of citizens, carrying them to buildings that supposedly had another function or which did not officially exist, publicly denying detention or abduction and subsequently, getting rid of the bodies in the most different ways (throwing them to the Rio de la Plata, burying them in collective pits), in order to wipe off any concrete proof of the action.

The action of the dictatorship established during the 1976-1983 period affected the whole Argentinean social structure, destroying social webs and solidarity ties and acting over the most diverse social, professional and generational groups.

However, in this Report the D.A.I.A., as a representative organization of the Argentinean Jewish community, intends to provide a description as detailed as possible regarding the different ways in which this genocide affected the members of the Argentinean Jewish community. This does not imply that the diverse and tremendous consequences endured by the whole Argentinean social body are ignored, but it rather intends to be a contribution, from the special role the D.A.I.A. has within the Argentinean social and political structure.

Although the genocide carried out in Argentina was not a genocide strictly planned against the Jewish community, it affected the Argentinean Jewish community in many aspects. Firstly, the Jewish community was affected as a part of the whole Argentinean society: being members of diverse social groups, they were affected as Argentinean citizens. But, beyond this, the Argentinean Jewish com-

munity particularly endured, both during the abduction and 'disappearance' of Jewish people and during their stay in the detention centers, the 'special treatment' (reported in many testimonies) to which the Jewish victims were subjected to. Finally, the over-measuring of our community has had over the total number of genocide victims has to be highlighted: it ranges between five and twelve times (according to estimates) the general representation that our community had among the Argentinean population during those times.

As part of its work, the Social Research Center (CES) of DAIA is developing a research project regarding the situation of the Jewish detainees-disappeared. The present report is a summary of its main points and it has a number of Documentary Annexes, which are daily updated through new sources of information or new testimonies offered by survivors or by the victims' relatives.

Annex II, to which a first preliminary list has been incorporated, with the progress of the investigation up to now, includes the list of 'disappeared' Jewish citizens, carefully reconstructed as of the available sources (consult the *Introduction to Annex II* regarding specifications of the research).

The treatment of the Jewish detainees-disappeared in the concentration camps

Part of the objectives of the genocide established in Argentina was aimed at breaking down the victims as human beings. Many of the testimonies provided by the survivors describe this. The systematic role of torture in the clandestine detention centers aimed to the destruction of the personality of the abducted individuals.

Eduardo Saiegh, who was abducted for seven days with the purpose to seize his assets and oblige him to liquidate the Banco Latinoamericano / Latinamerican Bank, states in his testimony presented to the Social Research Center of DAIA during 1999 that, "I had the evidence that everything was used to break me down. There was no improvisation in anything they did or in what they told me. They didn't know exactly why I was there, but the methodology was one and it had started off. They were 'professionals' (See Document 2, Annex I).

In this sense, the genocide carried out by the Argentinean military régime applied techniques characteristic of every genocide process, learnt from experiences such as the Nazi concentration camps where it was tried to turn human beings in what it was said they were: a subspecies, a sub-human race that did not deserve the essential right to life. This type of procedures guaranteed an increase of the criminals obedience, as it confirmed a discourse which degraded victims as human beings.

Some of the Nazi techniques were related to the denial of the name, which constituted a way of denying the person. In the Nazi concentration camps, men lost their individuality as human beings, which was replaced by a tattooed number on their arms and a number of triangles that identified them as belonging to a group of abducted. In the testimony provided to CES-DAIA by a survivor of the detention camp 'El Atlético', who preferred not to disclose his identity, this operation is clear, "When they tell me to take everything off: the belt, the shoelaces of my shoes, I start to think that I am not going to leave quickly. They take me to another place and they put me chains on my feet and they tell me, 'You no longer have a name, be careful, never pronounce your name. You are Z-65'".

This was not the only thing in common between the Nazi and the Argentinean genocide forms of operation: it can also be compared to the destructive and degrading forms of detention and transfer, to the existence of clandestine detention centers distributed along the whole territory, to the mental and physical destruction provoked by torture and humiliation, to the secret slaughter and the concealment of the victims' bodies.

The processes of destruction of the personality were developed, as well as during Nazism, through two types of simultaneous processes:

- On the one hand, a physical deterioration related to actions on the body (shouts, looting and ill-treatment during the detention; beatings during transfers; tortures and controls during the destruction 'sessions'; malnutrition and overcrowding in everyday conditions of survival);
- On the other hand, it overlapped the above mentioned a psychological deterioration, which sought the humiliation, the

denigration of the victim, the 'collaboration' by accusing acquaintances, the disloyalty towards relatives, friends or any fellow human being.

This double process tended to destroy the body and the psyche of the detainees, it also tended to destroy and break down the conditions which structured their humanity.

Owing to the resemblance in the operation and the reproduction of the Nazi methodology in the Argentinean genocide, it is not surprising that the Jewish detainees-disappeared would particularly endure this destruction of personality, being victims of what was referred to as 'special treatment'. They were considered doubly responsible because they added their Jew origin to the identities chased by the Argentinean armed forces (political, social, district, student or community militancy, accidental presence at the wrong place or other reasons difficult to determine). Their deterioration should also be more complete and thorough, in the view of those responsible for enforcing the genocide. In some cases, if there was any doubt, the mere act of discovering the Jewish identity of a suspect made them materialize the detention or deny the possibility of release.

Dozens of testimonies illustrate this 'extra' suffering. Among the cases consulted for this Report, we can mention, for example, those of Santiago Bruschtein, Angel Bursztejn, Pablo Díaz, Ester Gerber, Eduardo Grutzky, Alejandra Jaimovich, Pedro Kreplak, Alejandra Lapacó, Osvaldo Levin, Víctor Noé, Alberto Pargament, Alicia Portnoy, Ernesto Scerszewicz, José Siderman, Sergio Starlik, Jacobo Timerman, among many others who have preferred not to disclose their identity. We daily analyze new testimonies which only confirm this situation.

This 'special treatment' involved very different procedures: from specific humiliations to usage of Nazi terminology, from degradation to the search for information about the running of Jewish entities, about their ideological characteristics or inquisitive interrogations regarding local personalities of the Jewish culture or about Jewish world-famous personalities.

We have divided this 'special treatment' into its different categories so as to illustrate more clearly the sort of practices involved:

- a) Anti-Semitic actions at the moment of abduction or detention;
- b) Specific types of torture and humiliation inflicted on Jews during their stay in the concentration camps;
- c) Usage of Nazi language, terminology or symbols;
- d) 'Special' interrogations for the Jews;
- e) Illegal appropriation of assets: extortion

In order to illustrate each of these situations, we have selected some paragraphs of the testimonies of survivors' of these practices that describe each of the forms of this 'special treatment'.

a) Anti-Semitic actions at the moment of abduction or detention

In the reports representing Gregorio Lerner presented in different human rights organizations, it is asserted that on March 17, 1977 Mario Lerner, son of the plaintiff, was murdered during an 'operation of the joint forces'. The report makes clear that 'the apartment was broken into, where they stayed for an hour drinking whisky and entertained themselves throwing the books from the bookcase to the floor riddling them with a number of bullets. And that 'by chance' the books were all in Yiddish.' (See Document 4, Annex I).

In the testimony of Juana Meller de Pargament, it is asserted that on November 10, 1976, ten heavily armed and casually dressed men broke into her home. The plaintiff states that these individuals 'looted every valuable thing they found' and that 'when they found two passports of somebody who had gone to Israel, they asked if someone was a Jew and as they received an affirmative answer, they stroke severe blows on my son saying that there were Jews there; and this is the way they took him away.' (See Document 5, Annex I).

In the testimony provided by Carmen Elina Aguiar de Lapacó, it is asserted that 'on March 16, 1977 at about 11.30 pm a group of twelve heavily armed men turned up at my domicile.' She states that 'in reference to my bookcase, they emphasized that there were too many Jewish authors among our books and that there were Jewish last names in my telephone index. From that moment onwards, we

were treated even worse, especially my daughter, who they called 'Jewish', adding insults.' (See Document 6, Annex I).

In one of the interviews carried out in the Social Research Center of DAIA, it is described that "it is then when one of the guys starts looking at the bookcase and says, 'Look, look, the history of the Jews by Scholem Asch', making a stressed mockery on the pronunciation and then, addressing another guy 'Imagine, What if we burn the house away? What do you think? Two Jews less to fight against...".

b) Specific types of torture and humiliation inflicted on Jews during their stay in the concentration camps

To the particular detention conditions, a special cruelty was added to the torture sessions, which has already been reported in detail in the edition of NUNCA MAS carried out by the CONADEP (National Commission on the Disappeared), in the Report of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights of the Organization of American States (OAS) and in many other reports presented by national and international organizations.

For example, in page 74 of NUNCA MAS, Daniel Eduardo Fernández (File N°1131) declares, "every type of torture was applied against the Jews, especially one extremely sadistic and cruel: the 'rectoscope', which consisted of a tube that was introduced in the victims' anus or in the women's vagina, and inside the tube, a rat was released. The rodent looked for a way out and tried to go forward biting the victim's internal organs." (See Document 1, Annex I).

In page 75, Pedro Miguel Vanrell (File N° 1132) declares, "the repressors laughed while they took out the prisoners' clothes and painted swastikas on their backs with spray paint. Then, the rest of the detainees would see them at the showers, when the guards, identifying them, would start beating and ill-treating them again." (See Document 1, Annex I).

Cristina Navarro also testifies regarding the situation of Ernesto Scerszewicz, saying that the guard carried out by a repressor known as "El Zorro", "who was clearly prone to beat all the detainees with a Hebrew last name. A clear case is one of a man, Ernesto Scerszewicz,

whom the guard continuously harassed for pure pleasure calling him, “Jewish sh....” and beating him”

Another victim of this type of treatment was José Siderman. In a Report of the ADL (Anti-Defamation League), it is stated, “during the torture sessions, he was constantly called ‘Jewish bastard’ and ‘Jewish shit’ “, and that he was told that they were going to kill him for being a Jew.” (See Document 7, Annex I). Siderman was also a victim of extortion practices. Once he was set free, he flew to the U.S.A., though his assets, as well as the ones of hundreds of victims, were illegally appropriated by officers of the military dictatorship. In 1996, legal actions taken in the U.S.A. allowed the Argentinean government to come to an extrajudicial agreement in order to compensate him for the damages with almost six million dollars.

Many other testimonies, among them Jacobo Timerman’s and Pedro Vanrell’s, explain the repressors’ dehumanizing aim: their insistence in making the Jewish prisoners imitate the behavior of a dog, obliging them to move on four legs, making them imitate the barking of the animal, etc. It is interesting to highlight the similitude of these practices and the permanent violations performed by Nazism on the bodies of the Jews and the Gypsies, in a maddening obsession to demonstrate a supposed sub-human category of their victims.

c) Usage of Nazi language, terminology or symbols

Another of the elements present in the testimonies is the usage, both in the detention operations and in the concentration camps, of Nazi terminology and symbols. The publications of Amnesty International clearly report the presence of swastikas as an identification symbol of the repressive forces, both during the detention operations and in the concentration camps, the presence of pictures of Hitler in some torture rooms or spray painted swastikas on the detainees’ bodies. Alejandra Ungaro describes at the CONADEP that after being beaten, “they painted my body with swastikas with a very strong pen marker.”

In the testimonies of Alicia Portnoy and Pedro Kreplak before the ADL, it also appears an explicit usage of Nazi terminology regarding the fate of the Jews during World War II. (See Document 7, Annex I).

Barrera’s and Ferrando’s testimony before the CONADEP,

clearly states that in the detention center 'El Atlético' the prisoners were forced to shout 'Heil Hitler' and that recordings of speeches of the Nazi leaders' were played during the night. (See Document 1, Annex I).

In the testimony of Perla Wainstein, it is stated that "they tried to tattoo a swastika on her husband's bald head," but that they "could only partially do it because of the wrestling."

In the abduction of Mario Sergio Clar and his son, Sergio Andrés Clar, which occurred on May 24, 1978 at the home of the latter, the security forces broke into the house saying that "they were Nazis."

Jacobo Timerman describes in his book, "When a Jew was imprisoned, they played jokes on the gas chamber, Auschwitz, 'we will show the Nazis how things must be done'." (See Annex I, Document 3).

In Graciela Trotta's testimony before the CONADEP, it is stated the particular cruelty of the repressors at the detention center El Olimpo (in this case, one nicknamed "El Turco Julián", who was later identified as Héctor Julio Simón) with the Jewish detainees and his use of a "chain with a swastika." This was also ratified in other testimonies by survivors of the "El Olimpo" concentration camp.

In Peregrino Fernández's testimony provided at the CONADEP, who was an officer of the Federal Police and member of the group collaborating with Harguindeguy, Minister of Interior, it is summarized part of the institutionalization of this activity when the plaintiff states that "Villar and Veyra, officers of the Federal Police, were the ideologists: they indicated literature and commented books about Adolf Hitler and other Nazi and Fascist authors." (See Document 1, Annex I).

It is clear, then, that it was not a particular "excess" of some repressors, but rather an institutionalized conception and practice within the security forces in power during those years.

d) 'Special' interrogations for the Jews

Finally, it is also reported in many testimonies an institutional operation which consisted in special interrogations for the Jews, trying to obtain information about supposed Jewish 'campaigns', such as 'Plan Andinia' (an invention of Walter Beveraggi Allende, who imagined the existence of a Jewish plan to occupy the Argentinean Patagonia). But

they not only referred to 'imaginary plans', but also, during the interrogations, it was gathered information regarding the movements of the Jewish communities, characteristics of their buildings, personnel who worked at them, timetables, ideological trends of each institution. The victims say that the torturers proved to have a surprisingly precise knowledge of some of these issues, and some of them even spoke Hebrew or Yiddish.

Sergio Starlik, for example, says, "during the torture session they not only interrogated them in relation to their political ideas, but also in relation to the Jewish community in Argentina. With the information obtained, they made out files where they included names and addresses of citizens of that origin, plans of synagogues, sports clubs, etc." It is also stated that they were quite precise regarding the movements of some Jewish organizations.

Jacobo Timerman, in his book *"Preso sin nombre, celda sin número"* (Prisoner with no name, cell with no number) points out his captors' obsession to know "Zionism's" characteristics, its ideological discussions and the characteristics of the Jewish institutions in Argentina. He says, for example, "But at the time of my detention, in 1977, the subject obsessed them. Sometimes, out of the formal interrogatory context, they talked to me through the bars of the cell about the antecedents of Zionism and Israel, in order to accumulate information and taking down notes. I suggested them to consult the Jewish Agency where they would obtain more information than what I could provide them by heart and in the physical conditions I were in. But they told me that it would be very compromising for them. I thought that I had only been kidding, but in their opinion, the question was too serious and they were truly obsessed with it." (See Document 3, Annex I)

Nora Strejilevich, in her testimony before the CONADEP, states, "they asked me for the names of the people who were going to travel to Israel with me (...) they focused the interrogation on Jewish questions. One of them knew Hebrew, or at least some words which he used properly within the sentence. He wanted to know if there was military training at the kibbutzim, they required the physical description of the organizers of such syllabuses (...) the description of the

building of the Jewish Agency, which they knew perfectly well, etc.” (Nunca Mas, page 73)

In the case of Miriam Lewin de Garcia, she states, “Once, they asked me if I understood Yiddish, my answer was no, that I only knew a few words. However, they made me listen to a cassette obtained from a tapped telephone conversation (...) They used the information gathered to make out files where they included the names and addresses of citizens of that origin, plans of synagogues, sports clubs, shops, etc.”

This information, repeated in many testimonies, makes clear the existence of a systematic plan aimed to carry out intelligence tasks on Jewish communities and on people of that origin.

e) Illegal appropriation of assets: extortion

In the case of the majority of the Jews, the ‘special treatment’ was generally concerned with the way in which they were particularly violated during the torture sessions or with the continuous reference to practices developed by Nazism. And they drew a parallel between this situation and the other. Conversely, in the case of Jewish businessmen a practice linked to extortive kidnapping started. The Jewish businessmen were included in the abduction operations with the aim of obliging them to liquidate their assets. These were handed over to officers related to the military dictatorship. In some cases, the victims were “liberated” after these officers had taken possession of their assets. The cases of José Siderman and Eduardo Saiegh were just like this.

The case of Eduardo Saiegh illustrates the style of the operation. Saiegh was detained on October 31, 1980. He was kept kidnapped for a week, having no contact with any judge. During that week, while he was tortured, they demanded him to confess economic crimes that would justify the liquidation of the Banco Latinoamericano/Latinamerican Bank, being himself a member of its board of directors. He was set free a week later. The board of directors of the bank was forced to ‘voluntarily’ request the liquidation of the bank, but Saiegh’s assets were held as a counter-guarantee.

The case of José Siderman was similar. He was kidnapped on March 24, 1976 and set free a week later in the outskirts of San Miguel

de Tucumán, capital city of an Argentinean province, with a note in his pocket suggesting him to leave the country. After he left, his properties were confiscated and divided by the State.

It calls our attention the ideological similitude of these operations with the 'Aryan' practices against property carried out by Nazism, where Jewish proprietors were stripped of their assets because, in Nazi terms, they should 'pay for the expenditure of the transfers of their fellows to the work camps', and in fact, they were obliged to pay for their own extermination.

These diverse and complementary anti-Semitic ramifications of the genocide process established in Argentina, then, ratify the level of institutionalization to which the anti-Jew discriminatory practices were rooted and the general idea of thinking of the Jews as 'enemies', and therefore, as 'special victims'. On the other hand, it reveals that among most of the operation officers and leaders of the security forces operating in this genocide process anti-Semitism and pro-Nazism were developed as a substantial and relevant part of their ideological view of the world and of their concrete social practices. Therefore, the similitude between both social operations.

It is clear, then, that although the Jews were not the main characters chased at that time by the repressors, there is no doubt that they constituted a 'special victim' particularly exposed to the repressive operations.

CHAPTER 2: The selectivity of the Jewish victims

A second aspect points to analyze the number of Jewish victims. Up to now, many reports have counted a total of approximately 1300 Jewish victims. At present, the Social Research Center is preparing a Documentary Annex that intends to build up a list as comprehensive and strict as possible of the Jewish victims of the Argentinean genocide. A preliminary issue of it is attached to this Report as Annex I. It is important to take into account that, to the cases reported in the testimonies provided to public and international organizations, it should be added an indefinite number of cases related to those situations in which, for different reasons, nobody has reported the 'disappearance'

or murder of the victim. There is an increasing number of families who are reporting the above mentioned facts. Though the existence of many cases that were not timely submitted to the CONADEP, may allow to suppose that there still exist other cases that have not been reported yet.

Many estimates and academic researches estimate the Jewish population in Argentina in the middle of the 70s ranging from 230.000 to 290.000 people. This variation depends on the source, as the last census data of the Argentinean Jewish population are from 1960. These diverse estimates allow to infer that the Argentinean Jews at that time constituted a percentage varying between 0.8% and 1.2% (in the case of the broader estimates) of the total population of Argentina. However, estimates of the Jewish detainees-disappeared in relation to the total victims of the genocide are proportionally near to the 5 (five) per cent of the total number of victims. It could even be two or three percentage points higher and even double this number, as it is difficult to calculate the number of Jewish victims (figures vary between 800 and 1600 people), as well as the number of general victims of the genocide repression, calculated between 10 000 and 30 000 people.

Anyway, and even based on the most conservative estimates, during this genocide process the Jewish population was over-measured within the number of victims: proportionally, it was five times its proportion among the general population.

Based on this information, it is possible to conclude that the Jewish population was particularly exposed to the repressive operations. On the other hand, those in charge of the detentions were generally the same ones that acted as torturers in the clandestine detention centers. We have already developed in the first chapter of this Report the characteristics of the operations and the ideology of this people. It would not be illogical to suppose, then, that it might have played a role at the time of selecting the victims.

Moreover, many testimonies point out that, in the middle of an operation, the decision of taking one or many members of the family was influenced by the fact of being Jew (see in previous paragraphs the statements related to the cases of Alejandra Lapacó and Alberto Pargament). It is queer that the extortion on businessmen was carried out, in many occasions, against members of the Jewish community.

Nora Strejilevich's testimony is one of those which summarizes better the repressor's vision regarding the 'place' the Jews occupied within the general plan of the genocide: "They assured me that the 'problem of subversion' was the one with which they were more concerned, but the 'Jewish problem' followed it in order of importance and that they were filing information." (NUNCA MAS, page 73)

Edy Kaufman, researcher of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, has analyzed this aspect in his paper "The Jewish dimension in the repression during the military government in Argentina (1976-1983)." The mentioned research puts forward some hypotheses regarding the over-measuring of the Jewish victims. On the other hand, it supports that "It cannot be denied that the Jews are over-measured within the professional sector, as well as among the university students who have been indirect targets of the repression." However, the author thinks this fact does not seem to be reasonable enough to be regarded as the unique hypothesis explaining such an excessive presence of Jews among the victims. Kaufman says, for example, "After having been established the discriminatory treatment towards the Jewish detainees, it seems reasonable to ask if the same attitudes were possible within the process of selection of the victims and the detention operation (...) No one would believe that Anti-Semitic attitudes during the detention operations were not used, but rather left aside to use them only at the detention centers that received Jewish victims and that their detention had not been influenced by the ethnic origin of the victims (...) Secondly, (...) it can be established, at this point there is no doubt about it, regarding the elimination of the victims, the ethnic origin had contributed to decision-making."

This latter element not only refers to the particular conditions of the detention, but also to the final fate of the victims. It is possible to suppose that, at the time of choosing a certain number of victims to liberate, generally, those Jewish victims might have been excluded from that possibility. The case of the 'Jewish doctors' explicitly shows this: in July, 1979, the military régime acknowledged the detention of ten doctors who had "disappeared" through a ruling that ordered to dismiss the detainees. Only five of them were effectively set free, the other five were kept imprisoned and available for the National Executive Power, which turned their situation legal. Owing to many efforts, the

Jewish doctors were finally liberated, but this event, which was among the régime's acknowledged detentions may lead to draw a parallel with the cases of the illegal ones.

Briefly, according to what has been stated, it is clear that the Jewish over-measuring among the victims was not a tangential fact, but that it rather had a close link with the ideology and the objectives of the genocide process.

CONCLUSIONS

According to all the facts exposed, then, some conclusions can be inferred. The military dictatorship established in the country between 1976 and 1983 carried out a genocide which affected many groups of the Argentinean population. Beyond the general impact of this action, it can be pointed out, undoubtedly, that it had strong anti-Semitic connotations that cannot be attributed to the action of a specific number of repressors, but that it was rather an institutional action, present in the majority of the detention centers and of the abduction operations, and with particular characteristics (for example, the gathering of information regarding the way Jewish organizations worked), revealing a systematic and planned level unimaginable as a result of individual actions and only understandable, as a part of an institutional decision.

These anti-Semitic connotations of the genocide process were expressed in the different ways of 'special treatment' the Jews received (during detention, in the torture sessions, in the interrogations), in the high number of Jewish victims and in the appropriation, by the repressive organizations, of practices, symbols and emblems of National-Socialism.

It is worth making a further commentary on this latter theme. It is quite surprising to contrast the methodology applied by Nazism with the methodology of the genocide in Argentina: in both cases, it was sought the concealment of the bodies, the denial of the victims' name, the depersonalization during the time of detention, the intention to dehumanize and degrade the victims, the attempt to 'break' the victim's last physical, psychological and moral resistance, as a requisite for their destruction. But this appropriation of Nazi prac-

tices is not only present in the implicit characteristics of the actions, but also in its verbal or symbolic explicitness. Many testimonies which refer to the presence of swastikas in some torture rooms or detention centers, the self-appointed 'Nazi' identity of many repressors, the constant reference to the Nazi concentration camps by those who reproduced their practices, only reconfirm that this appropriation was absolutely intentional and explicit.

Finally, DAIA convenes through this Report all those people and/or institutions that may have information which might enlarge the research on this subject, or all those who have not reported to any other instances yet, to hand in to the Social Research Center of our institution, or to come in person to meet our researchers.

Josej Yerushalmi, an Israeli researcher, says in reference to the transmission of memory,

“ (...) when we say that a community remembers, in fact, we are saying, firstly, that a past has been actively transmitted to the contemporary generations through what is known as 'the channels and receptacles of memory' and that Pierre Nora skillfully regards as "the places of memory" and that once such transmitted past was received as if it were loaded with a personal sense. Consequently, a community 'forgets' when the generation owner of the past does not transmit it to the forthcoming one, or when the latter rejects what it has received or stops transmitting it, which is almost the same.”

We request all those that may have information regarding what happened in Argentina during those years to exercise their responsibility to transmit it, as the essential tool to avoid and struggle its repetition.

Sources

In order to produce the present Report, the following documents have been taken into account:

- Nunca Más, Report of the CONADEP (National Commission on the Disappeared)
- Information present in the files of the CELS (Legal and Social Research Center);
- Information present in the files of the IWO (Scientific Jewish Institute);
- Report of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights of the Organization of American States (OAS);
- Special Report of the DAIA on Jewish Detainees-Disappeared (1976-1983), January, 1984;
- “Reply to the Special Report on Jewish Detainees-Disappeared (1976-1983), published by DAIA”, by the relatives of the Jewish detainees-disappeared;
- Testimonies of relatives of Jewish detainees-disappeared offered at the Social Research Center of DAIA, along 1999.
- We thank all those relatives who have accepted to give their testimonies at the Social Research Center and, especially, Matilde Saidler de Mellibovsky and Santiago Mellibovsky, who carried out the hard task of compiling the reports handed to many different government offices by the relatives of Jewish disappeared. They sent this documentary material to the Embassy of Israel, to the Knesset (Israel’s Parliament) and, subsequently, to the CELS (Legal and Social Research Center), from where we have extracted many of the reports used for the preparation of the present Report.
- Documentary sources used for the preparation of Annex I sent to Judge Garzón in Madrid, Spain
- **Document 1:** Nunca Mas, “Informe de la Comisión Nacional sobre la Desaparición de Personas” /Report carried out by the National Commission on the Disappeared, EUDEBA, Buenos Aires, 1984, page 69 to 75.
- **Document 2:** Eduardo Saiegh; edition sent to CES-DAIA, together with its respective conclusive evidence, March (1999), Chapter 2.
- **Document 3:** Jacobo Timerman; “Preso sin nombre, celda sin número”; El Cid Editor, Buenos Aires, 1982.
- **Document 4:** The letter from Gregorio Lerner, included in the documents at the Legal and Social Research Center (CELS) at present.
- **Document 5:** The statement of Juana Meller de Pargament, at the Legal and Social Research Center (CELS) at present
- **Document 6:** The statement of Carmen Elina Aguiar de Lapacó, at the Legal and Social Research Center (CELS) at present
- **Document 7:** “Petition of Amicus Curiae from the Anti-Difamation League from

- B' Nai B' Rith supporting a ruling for lack of appearance: Susana Siderman de Blake and others against the Argentinean Republic and others”, presented at the District Court of the United States, Central District of California, Chapter 2
- **Document 8:** The testimony of Ana María Careaga (in English), at the Legal and Social Research Center (CELS) at present

ANNEX II: Partial List of The Jewish Victims

Introduction

The aim of Annex N°2 is to compile a list as careful as possible in reference to the Jewish detainees-disappeared. This first issue constitutes a partial approximation, to which, surely, many other names coming from unrevealed information sources will be added.

At present, the information originated in different sources has been collated, for example the Annexes of the National Commission on the Disappeared (CONADEP), the files and lists of the Anti-Defamation League and the material present at the Legal and Social Research Center (CELS).

There are records that still have to be controlled, such as the documents of the National Human Rights Undersecretary's Office, where many of the cases reported after the CONADEP finished its work are, proceedings regarding the final fate of the disappeared, carried out by the Federal Court of Appeal of La Plata in charge of the judges Schiffrin, Noguiera and Pacilio, and the processing of the interviews held within the research on this subject carried out by the Social Research Center (CES) of DAIA.

How the lists were made up

There are many academic and political discussions in reference to the essence of being Jew. DAIA as a representative institution of the Jewish community in Argentina and in reference to this presentation has chosen a broad (non-restrictive) definition of being Jew. The researcher Sergio Della Pergola characterizes as "broad Jewish community" the one made up of all those people with some sort of Jewish root among his ancestors.

This definition is extremely useful because of the difficulty to determine the way in which each victimized family understood its Judaism. On the other hand, neither for the repressive forces in charge of executing the genocide in Argentina was too relevant the type of victims' relation with the Judaic view of the world, when establishing the

modalities of 'special treatment' described in the central part of this Report.

The non-Jewish spouses of Jewish families have also been included in the list, essentially for two reasons: on the one hand, the fact that one of the members of the family was a Jew may indicate the existence in that family of a 'Jewish home' or of a 'Jewish culture', beyond the special way that this issue might have been dealt with. On the other hand, to exclude them from our lists would have implied originating a new split in the victimized families, segregating or excising one or various of their members. We believe that there has been enough loss to add a new rip.

It is set forth, then this first partial list of Jewish disappeared as a preliminary report of a broader research that will be handed as soon as it is finished.

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