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Remembrance of the 1976 military coup in Argentina

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Mothers of Plaza de Mayo protest at the presidential palace demanding accountability for their sons and daughters. Photo: Bill Hackwell

March 24, 2021, marks the 45th anniversary of the bloody military coup in Argentina that killed tens of thousands, particularly young people. The coup was a response to people rising up demanding a better world, nothing different from what we are witnessing today. Right before and after the coup I lost some of my best and closest friends. I was studying journalism at the time in the School of Information Science, in Cordoba. They were the years with change in the air, full of effervescence, optimism, joy, and what felt like a real possibility that the dreams my generation was sharing could materialize into reality. It was this growing movement that posed a threat to the power establishment and they responded with a deadly military coup

and in a very short time, everything changed to a period of terror. I still remember to this day those moments of sadness and pain.

People were taken in the middle of the night and were never heard from again. Cars with no license plates would drive slowly around and stop people in the street or in buses, snatching them away into torture and disappearance. It suddenly became a time of generalized fear where nobody felt safe.

In Cordoba, there was a big catholic church in the downtown area right next to a police station where people were tortured before being taken to concentration camps. We always wondered how the catholic authorities were capable of remaining silent with such atrocities taking place right under their noses.

At the Journalism school, I was part of a student group with 4 other people, made up of two sisters, Maria Ester and Mabel, Jose Alberto who was also Maria Ester boyfriend, and another woman who was afraid and left the group. We became an inseparable group of friends, who shared a common political view but also we had a good time in the process playing guitars, singing songs, going camping, etc. We were far from imagining what was about to come.

On May 11, 1976, Mabel and Jose Alberto were kidnaped in the middle of the night by a police gang and gone forever without a trace. Along with them were 30,000 people.

Then came the exile for many of us, the loss of family connection and cultural norms, the uprooting, and the guilt I felt for what I was leaving behind.

Time went by but what happened was never erased. My three children carry in their middle names the memory of the closest; Mabel, Jose Alberto, and Emma, who was not from the same school but affiliated with a revolutionary organization.

I was one of the lucky ones who managed to stay alive to tell the story. What

happened during the military dictatorship was nothing more than a barbaric crime against humanity, and changed our lives forever, but the memory of these young people and their example is always with me. To them, I dedicated my life and all the struggles I have been a part of from the moment I left my homeland.

Living in the United States I joined different struggles for peace and justice. I learned that no matter where one lives the important thing is to be active and engaged in the process of change to feel helpful and useful.

In the early nineties, I had the good fortune of traveling to Cuba on a Pastors for Peace Caravan to challenge the inhumane US blockade of Cuba. The visionary leader of the group, Rev. Lucius Walker, became an extraordinary example to me of how one could be involved in something worth fighting for with commitment and determination while never losing your love and belief in humanity. That initial trip helped me visualize what solidarity was about and revolutionary Cuba was clearly something to stand up for.

Then came the struggle for the return of Elian Gonzalez to Cuba, a young boy who was rescued at sea after his mother and others died trying to get to the US in a raft. I saw for the first time Fidel and the entire Cuban people in action demanding the return of Elian. He did return, and it was without a doubt because of the determination of Cuba and the people of the US who agreed that Elian should not be a political pawn but rather be home with his father.

From 2001 to 2014 I was involved in the struggle to free the Cuban Five political prisoners in the US. These were five unarmed agents of the Cuban government who infiltrated and monitored dangerous anti-Cuba organizations to protect the island against terrorist attacks. Despite being told over and over that they would never be free I became involved as an organizer in the struggle for their freedom that happened on December 17, 2014 thanks to the leadership of Fidel, the strength of the Cuban people, and a worldwide movement that relentlessly demonstrated in

front of the White House and every US consulate and embassy around the world demanding their freedom.

From that initial experience of fleeing my homeland I was set on a path and today in particular I remember all those who gave their lives during that bloody coup. They will accompany me forever and I am indebted to them and their memory because I now know that nothing is gained without struggle and that includes loss.

Today along with all the people who are having to flee their homeland, because of oppression, poverty, and terror we declare together Never Again, We Will Never Forget and We Will Never Go Backwards! We Continue Forward in Their Honor!

Source: [Resumen](#)

