

# 8

## A memorial destroyed: Loyola, Quinta Normal

This chapter sets in opposition not so much two women, nor even their two different ideologies, but their two differing conceptions of how life should be lived. The two conceptions encompassed conflicts in housing, family values, politics, memory and, above all, in memorialisation: who should be remembered, and why, and where – and if at all. The ideological as well as physical conflict occurred in 5 hectares of what, in the early 1970s, had been a primary school, then an Air Force maintenance depot, then a base for the state security service, the CNI.

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Josefina Roxana González Rodríguez grew up in the 1970s in the commune now known as Lo Prado.<sup>1</sup> Hers was a childhood of pitiless poverty, but it is not that which, in conversation, she emphasises. Rather, it was a childhood to be cherished. She is proud that her parents were married, not simply living together, and that they stayed together. She rejoices that she and her five brothers were raised in ‘strong moral values’: to know good from bad, to help the needy, work

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1 ‘Lo Prado’, Wikipedia. The information on Josefina Rodríguez is drawn from a number of discussions and interviews, principally 12 April 2015.

hard, earn a living. Rice and eggs was the staple dish. If a special guest came to dinner, her mother might buy a small bottle of coke from which everyone was served not much more than a thimbleful.

In the year of the coup into which she was born, the family was living in a new and radical *población*, or Cuban-style commune, of the type with which Lumi Videla Moya and other idealistic young MIRistas were so familiar – regular and uniform apartment blocks, 30 self-built dwellings in each.<sup>2</sup> Amongst the stable families lived several hundred *pobladores*, the poor and dispossessed shipped out from the *campamentos* of wealthier suburbs where they had been living rough in out-of-sight locations beside the city's canals. These newcomers formed a patrol of 25 rostered guards to protect the community, kept informed of daily events by loudspeakers. To at least one journalist, (the *población*) Che Guevara, despite its provocative name, was not marked by the drugs and violence such sites were often associated with. No beggars, drunks, vagrants or drop-outs here, but rather, a *población* marked by 'a dignity, a self-confidence, a certain fighting spirit and a sense of order never seen in the mushrooming *poblaciones* 10 years earlier'.<sup>3</sup>

Josefina Rodriguez's upbringing and her own sense of morality made her ambitious, upwardly mobile, distrustful of any extreme political party such as the MIR, yet deeply sympathetic to the oppressed. Her rules for life, in fact, were as close to practical Christianity as they were to moderate state socialism. Her mother was prepared to take in anybody in need of whom she approved. During the first and most violent year of the dictatorship, two cousins enrolled at the radical university USACH (Universidad de Santiago de Chile, formerly the UTE) sought shelter with her family. Josefina's mother took them in, shortly followed by DINA soldiers kicking in the door, but missing the cousins by searching everywhere except above the ceiling. Josefina

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2 A *campamento* was an illegal settlement formed by the unemployed or homeless moving to the city, generally carrying the reputation of lawlessness and political radicalism. In the 1960s, Chilean governments began a program to legitimise and provide basic services to the *campamentos*, called *poblaciones*. A *comuna*, by contrast, was (and is) a legal entity forming part of a municipality.

3 'Una dignidad, una seguridad en sí mismos, un cierto ambiente de combatividad y un orden que jamás vi en las poblaciones callampas de diez años atrás', journalist's comment in *La Prensa*, 3 January 1971, p. 2, quoted by Boris Cofre Schmeisser, 'El movimiento de pobladores en el Gran Santiago: Las tomas de sitios y organizaciones en los campamentos. 1970–1973' [The movement of the poor in Greater Santiago 1970–1973], *Revista Tiempo Histórico*, no. 2, September 2011, p. 18.

Rodriguez's account of her early life, and the journalist's report about Josefina's *población*, speak loudly of firm but conservative moral values both within the family and, at this time, the community.



Josefina Rodriguez in her home at Renacer, Loyola.

Source: Photograph by Peter Read, editing Con Boekel.

In about 2000 Josefina took her firm principles and her young family to a more central area of Santiago known to be poor but upwardly mobile, the municipality known as Quinta Normal. Here she took residence close to the junction of two streets, Loyola and Neptuno. Hard by stood a forbidding though abandoned Air Force maintenance facility, later CNI depot, occupying some five hectares of unused real estate in a district that held its share of small businesses, private property, the homeless and urban slums.

In 2002 Josefina, ever alert to changing priorities in national social programs, followed with interest the announcement of a slum-clearance program in remote towns in the Atacama Desert known as 'Renacer' (Rebirth), sponsored by the Department of Housing and a large mining company. The scheme provided existing residents with brand-new dwellings for which they could compete and which they might eventually own. The program was to be extended into urban areas for which expressions of interest were now invited. Should approval

to proceed on a particular site be granted to any group, they should then form a management committee, arrange building plans, draw up a list of potential local residents consistent with good character and existing humble circumstances.<sup>4</sup> Thus encouraged, Josefina Rodriguez gathered a team of four or five friends to see if such a housing scheme might be possible in Quinta Normal. Nobody in the mayoral administration raised any fatal objections. Her group researched possible sites to discover that the depot was no longer owned by the Air Force or the CNI, but by the municipality of Quinta Normal. Three years later, the housing department announced that the empty site, known for convenience here as Loyola, would be made over to Renacer to be managed by its own residents. During 2005 the Department of Housing and the municipality approved the construction of 72 new residences. They would be small, two storeys, two bedrooms, almost identical to each other, but clean, bright, strongly built, and a huge step away from the dark and decrepit dwellings in which the potential residents, including Josefina, were living. Here Josefina Rodriguez could continue her life's ambition to continually better the life of her family and the community, not through public welfare or armed rebellion, but through her own values of compassion and hard work.

These same values help to explain why she would shortly find herself in conflict with the first president of the Loyola Renacer, Julieta Kruskaya Varas Silva.<sup>5</sup> It was Varas, a member of a political cell even more dedicated to armed revolution through acts of urban terrorism than the MIR, who in 2007 declared Renacer a Site of Mourning and installed a memorial to those who had been allegedly tortured, disappeared and perhaps even buried within its menacing walls. For unknown to Josefina, except through an unspecific occasional rumour, the post-dictatorship research website Memoria Viva had listed Loyola as one of many hundreds of former torture, detention and disappearance sites throughout the country.<sup>6</sup>

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4 Vikas Vij, 'Barrick Gold Corp helps underprivileged Chilean families own new homes', Justmeans, 28 January 2013; 'Renacer program: Housing in Chile's Atacama Region', YouTube, 16 January 2013.

5 'Nadezhda Krupskaya was a Russian revolutionary, writer, educator and Secretary of the Bolshevik Faction of the Social Democratic Party. Wife and advisor to V.I. Lenin', 'Nadezhda K. Krupskaya: 1869–1939', Lenin Internet Archive.

6 Memoria Viva lists the site as formerly the property of the CNI, who presumably acquired it from the Air Force after 1984.

Investigating the sites that are the themes of this book, in 2006 the authors visited Loyola, where immediately upon alighting, a passer-by remarked, 'This is where they used to drag the truth out of the young people'. The outer wall was white plastered brick, 4 metres high, topped with barbed wire, covered in graffiti. One read, 'Hasta Siempre Victor Jara' ('Ever onwards Victor Jara'). An elevated guard post stood beside the iron gates marking the entrance and exit to the depot.

Paulo came across the road to introduce himself as a neighbour. As a boy in the 1980s he used to climb the trees close to the wall and call out to the guards. Sometimes they even used to let him in. Paulo had heard screams, hinting at dark secrets and rumours of what had happened inside. From his mother's house just across the road he had heard trucks coming and going all night. Mysterious steps, he remembered, led downwards into passages – could they have been the entrances to cells? On the CNI's departure in about 2002, he had somehow acquired a key to the main gate and installed himself in the guard house. As self-appointed commandant of the abandoned site, he proceeded to offer a guided tour to be undertaken by himself. He would permit the use of a video camera but, doubtless for good reasons, insisted on never appearing in shot.

## The tour, 2006

Paulo had arranged himself comfortably in his well-protected domain. He could watch for potential intruders from his lookout tower. In the former guard house he had placed an armchair and, on the wall behind, a girlie calendar. Behind him was the marked-up keyboard where the depot keys had hung: 'main gate', 'light truck', 'kitchen'. Beside that stood a 2-metre iron safe. Just outside he had built himself a little barbecue. His two dogs basked in the sun.

His journey began into what had once been the headquarters of the genuine depot commander and his senior officers, but the real tour began outside. Amidst the rubbish and knee-high grass everywhere lay a cement area the size of two tennis courts, intersected by a number of short channels, 1 metre wide, 3 metres long. In each case their descending steps were interrupted by piles of building rubbish. Were they the truck inspection pits that they logically seemed to be – or did they conceal a secondary and sinister purpose? Was there room

for a military helicopter to land on the cement space? At the far end stood the remains of a machinery shed: more inspection pits, more mysterious hooks, steel cables, electrical fittings. At the far left were the remains of classrooms, some still with child-size toilets, others fitted out in barracks style. On the outside wall of the classrooms was a very fair rendition, in chalk, of a helicopter. At the end of the long corridor, the official emblem of the Chilean Air Force. A large pile of rusty railway lines seemed to be the only large objects left behind by the CNI. In truth, anybody entering without suspicion of anything occurring here beside heavy vehicle maintenance would have nothing to suspect. Yet Paulo continued to hint at unspecified menace. No evening candlelight vigils had ever been held outside its walls, but a priest in the 1990s had led processions round the perimeter, singing hymns encouraging Christian valour, and was later found mysteriously dead in a nearby swimming pool! The circumstantial evidence seemed as slight as the physical. And yet Memoria Viva had named Loyola in its enormous master list of 'Centres of Detention Chile 1973–1990'.

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The first Renacer president, Julieta Varas, had a colourful and radical history in the Quinta Normal district well calculated to rouse the antipathy of Josefina Rodríguez. Her father, Juan Manuel Varas Silva, a MIR militant, was executed by the CNI in 1984.<sup>7</sup> In 2007 she took a prominent part in the *funa*, the public denunciation that denounced 'mad Dimter', the presumed assassin of Víctor Jara.<sup>8</sup> Between 2004 and 2013 she was arrested 13 times for robbery, fighting, affray and assaulting police.<sup>9</sup>

7 'Juan Manuel Varas Silva', Memoria Viva; 'Varas Silva, Juan Manuel', Archivo Chile.

8 See above, 'Funa al asesino de Víctor Jara "Edwin Dimter Bianchi" buena', YouTube; 'La Funa de Víctor Jara 1', YouTube.

9 For instance, on 12 July 2012, Varas was arrested for participating in an illegal march organised by radical political movement the Frente Rodriuguista, Francisco Águila, 'Detectan participación de rodriguistas en desórdenes ocurridos ayer en el Paseo Ahumada' [Participation of Rodriuguistas detected in disorders occurring yesterday in Paseo Ahumada], Emol, 12 July 2012; see also Fernando Duarte M., 'Informe de inteligencia dice que movimientos antisistémicos están infiltrando a estudiantes' [Intelligence report says subversive movements infiltrating students], *La Segunda* online, 21 June 2013.

Pinochet had justified his initial persecution of the left by the need to combat 'the intrusion of dogmatic and intolerant ideology inspired by the alien principles of Marxism-Leninism'. While the MIRistas had, in 1973, claimed to be the 'Marxist-Leninist vanguard of the working-class and the oppressed and exploited masses of Chile', by 1989 the party had virtually ceased to exist.<sup>10</sup> Yet that was not the end of leftist violence, for Julieta Varas's political convictions derived from an ideology as overtly combative as the MIR's but in reality much more bellicose. She was a militant of the Frente Patriótico Manuel Rodríguez (the Manuel Rodríguez Patriotic Front), the international urban terrorist cell also known as El Frente and its members Frentistas. While the MIR was decimated, the Frentistas, however, survived. Indeed, as dissatisfied and impatient members of the Chilean Communist Party, they had founded El Frente by breaking from the parent party after it seemed too quiescent in 1983. Despite intense persecution, the members of El Frente organised themselves with tight military discipline under six regional commanders.<sup>11</sup> Frentistas carried out a number of terrorist acts during and after the dictatorship, including arms smuggling, the assassination of the conservative professor of constitutional law, Jaime Guzmán, an attack on a helicopter base, blowing up McDonald's and Kentucky Fried Chicken restaurants, kidnappings and finally a failed assassination attempt, in 1986, on Pinochet himself.<sup>12</sup> On each occasion, enough of its members survived the dictatorship's savage retaliation to continue their violent campaigns. Like the MIR's adherence to the teachings of Che Guevara, a Frentista in 2012 quoted the words of Mao Tse Dong:

A Communist should have largeness of mind and he should be staunch and active, looking upon the interests of the revolution as his very life and subordinating his personal interests to those of the revolution ...<sup>13</sup>

10 'Manuel Rodríguez Patriotic Front', Wikipedia; 'Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria [MIR]', 26 June 2009.

11 Cristián Pérez, "'Operación Príncipe': Irrumpe el FPMR-A' [Operation Prince: The FPMR-A erupts]. Its commander was a member of an exiled family, radicalised in Cuba, calling himself Jose Miguel.

12 Rolando Alvarez Vallejos, 'Los "Hermanos Rodriguistas". La división del Frente Patriótico Manuel Rodríguez y el nacimiento de una nueva cultura política en la izquierda chilena. 1975–1987' [The 'brothers Rodriguista'. The division of the Manuel Rodríguez Patriotic Front and the birth of a new political culture in the Chilean left. 1975–1987], *Revista Izquierda* 2(3), 2009.

13 Andrés Figueroa Cornejo, 'Chile. Hablan ex combatientes: La causa del Frente Patriótico Manuel Rodríguez' [The combatants speak: The cause of the Manuel Rodríguez Patriotic Front], *Dazibao Rojo*: Blog marxista-leninista maoista, 19 September 2010.

If the Frentistas remained ideologically unreconstructed, they were not lacking in courage or conviction. To Varas, and all Frentistas, the ideological base of revolutionary action remained the same, in Chile, Santiago, Quinta Normal, even the humble Renacer in Loyola: to head a grand social movement in the struggle to transform the society that needed it urgently.<sup>14</sup>

Inside and outside the meetings of the management committee, Josefina Rodríguez objected strongly to the direction that the Loyola Renacer was taking under the leadership of Julieta Varas the Frentista. Not by accident did she find herself ejected from it by Varas in the early months of 2007. Shortly afterwards, she found herself also excluded from the list of several hundred people invited to enter Loyola, for the first time in their lives, for the grand opening of the site of their new homes. Had it not been for the well-known political views of their president, they might have been puzzled by the provocative title of the invitation sheet, a 'Grand Fiesta of Popular Justice'.<sup>15</sup> As had occurred just before the opening of Londres 38 and Villa Grimaldi, the invited state officials had caught wind of their likely denunciation during the event and boycotted the opening.

Varas was not about to let slip the opportunity for furthering the cause of the Frentistas. The public notice of the event:

This feeling [of loss] pierces the people of the *poblaciones*. For this reason they have decided to build on this site a memorial which remembers the victims of the dictatorship of the Quinta Normal. Not that alone. They are preparing a homage for them – this 14th of September to which President [Bachelet] herself will be invited. Memory must be rescued. If we do not tell the story of this place, the cloak of oblivion remains, to never know what occurred here, Julieta [Varas] asserts.<sup>16</sup>

Installing herself on the day as Master of Ceremonies, she explained that recognising Loyola's role as a site of torture and death was essential to its opening. She pointed to the presence of a survivor, Francisco Videla, whose testimony was inscribed on a placard propped against

14 Miguel Paz, 'El Frente en la encrucijada. Adiós a las armas?' [The Frente at the crossroads. Farewell to Arms?], Archivo Chile, 2002.

15 Marivic Wyndham and Peter Read, 'Those who have no memorial', *Encounters 5: Memories and Violence, Problems and Debates in a Global Perspective*, Fall 2012, 169–82.

16 'Renacer: La Villa de los Rieles' [Renacer: Villa of Railway Lines], *La Nación*, 31 August 2007.



the wall of the classrooms. One of the very few survivors of Loyola, he had been allegedly detained for 15 days, 'tortured almost to death', and finally had been liberated through error. A painting of a blood-red rose carried the description:

The Rose of Blood poster painted by the painter Jose Balmes who donated the work to the Renacer cultural area.<sup>17</sup>

Varas asserted that Loyola during the dictatorship was used to detain, torture, rape, and cause people to disappear. Here was a place of death now converted into a place of life for people in their own homes and apartments. Today, she continued, one could still hear the shouts of horror of Chileans suffering directly because of the cowardly actions of state officials. Here the people of the *poblaciones* of North Santiago had been detained. It was not easy to bring together the members of Renacer 'given the despair imposed by the neoliberal model ... Despite this, serious, participative, and transparent work by neighbours broke the ice and generated confidence and the necessary organization to win our rights'. The ponderous Marxist-Leninist phraseology doubtless perplexed, if not instantly alienated, some of her audience as she reminded them: 'The achievement was no gift of the state but a triumph of social organisation, of our intelligence, [of] the audacity of our organisation, and dedication to win.' She concluded that there was much to do – to put out a call to all the organisations of the settlements to construct a grand, popular settlement movement, and to face the task of accommodating more than 300 families who could not find space within Renacer Loyola.

The most solemn moment of the afternoon came as the well-known opponent of the Pinochet regime, Father José Aldunate, blessed the site and unveiled a memorial stone leaning against a classroom wall. Sixty centimetres high, in shape not unlike the way that the Ten Commandments are customarily represented, it was carved in two sections. On them were painted 16 names in black, with the dates of death, and five names in red without dates. Although unspecific as to the rationale for their inclusion, above the names was the inscription:

Nothing is Forgotten  
Nobody is Forgiven

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17 Ibid. The report stated that Videla had been held for seven days, and at the time of his release he had seen other detainees, but that he did not wish to discuss the subject further.

and below the names:

Justice and Punishment

The names in black were (for 1973) Simón Cirineo Allende Fuenzalido, Alamiro Segundo Gonzalez Saavedra, Manuel José Gonzalez Allende, Eduardo Cerda Angel, Madrid Galvez, Vasquez Escobar, Jorge Enrique; (1981) Arcadia Flores Perez; (1983) Fabián Onofre Cortes Pino, Gallego Saball, Norbeto Ratier Noguera, Salgado Troquian, Juan Elias Espinoza Parra; (1985) Marisol Varas Linares; (1989) Erick Rodriguez Hinojosa, Ivan Palacios Guarda.<sup>18</sup> They were followed by five names written boldly in red, without dates: Alejandro Pinochet Arenas, José Maltes, Gonzalo Ivan Fuenzalida Navarrete, Manuel Jesús Sepúlveda Sánchez and Julio Orlando Muñoz Otárola.

At a stroke Loyola had jumped from an unsourced entry among a list of many hundred detention sites throughout the nation, to a seemingly official House of Memory and Memorial to the 21 victims of Pinochet; each of whom, apparently, had a close and fatal association with the site in which their memorial stone now was propped unceremoniously against a classroom wall. How to accommodate that recognition would soon become a thorny problem for the management committee of Renacer, as well as the state architects of the 72 new houses soon to be crammed onto the site.

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Soon after the grand opening, rumours increased that the interests of Julieta Varas in the site went beyond rehousing the 72 families within it. First it concerned the relationship between Julieta Varas, El Frente and the radical leftist Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez.<sup>19</sup> From the somewhat obscure five hectares of Loyola Renacer, it was alleged that Varas was intent on providing a refuge for a sudden evacuation of 'Chavistas' from Venezuela, should it become urgently necessary, that is, Julieta's Frentistas would offer a safe haven for them in the cells

18 'Eduardo Elias Cerda Angel', Memoria Viva; Arcadia Patricia Flores Perez', Memoria Viva; 'Fabián Onofre Cortes Pino', Memoria Viva.

19 Brian A. Nelson, 'Hugo Chávez: The Chávez presidency', Encyclopaedia Britannica. Since 2002, when a coup against Chávez had been narrowly and violently defeated, his position seemed always a little insecure. He had won a six-year term in 2006 by a decreased margin, but a package of reform, including a proposal to allow his indefinite re-election, was narrowly defeated in December 2007. It was his first defeat.

still rumoured to lie somewhere below Loyola. Josefina learned that the management committee had been asked to sign an affirmation that such sanctuary would be offered; if it wasn't needed, then the Renacer would become the clandestine Santiago headquarters of the Frentistas!

Events moved swiftly. Suffice it to note here that neither Venezuelan refuge nor political asylum became necessary, Josefina Rodriguez led a community revolt against the plot, and Varas and her *compañera* Rebeca Videla were officially ejected from the committee, and from their recently occupied homes, for having used the Renacer for improper purposes.<sup>20</sup> Varas departed leaving the Renacer with a debt, in Josefina's calculation, of 2 million Chilean pesos. In 2009 Josefina became president of Renacer Loyola.

Such upheavals, and the 2011 earthquake, could only delay the project; but Josefina determined that the rumours of torture, executions, underground cells and burials must be settled. Her committee called in forensic experts, archaeologists, 'people in white coats'. Nothing whatever was found. The underground 'cells' were revealed to be just filled-in vehicle inspection pits no more than a couple of metres deep.

The Renacer began to take shape in the outline of streets, gardens and house foundations. Each year more piles of defence forces rubbish disappeared. The commandant's house went, then Paulo's guard house, even the flagpole. Only a few reminders of its dictatorship past remained: the guard houses perched on top of the wall, the painted emblem of the Air Force maintenance unit curiously allowed to stay, though now adorned by a hammer and sickle.

Why then did the rumours of torture and murder persist? Were the 22 named victims *actually* associated with Loyola, or, indeed, with the Quinta Normal? Were Varas's assertions justified, or, as Josefina Rodriguez suspected, had she hijacked the occasion – as the Family and Friends of the 119 were to do at the opening of Londres 38 in 2010 – solely to advance the cause of the Frentistas? Who were these 'never-to-be-forgotten' victims? Was it true that neighbours knew that behind these walls were no ordinary trucks undergoing routine

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20 'Atemorizadas las familias con la directiva "que contaba con la personalidad juridical"', Causa no. 1435/2011 (Proteccion). Resolución no. 255716, de Corte de Apelaciones de Santiago, de 5 de Octubre de 2011.

maintenance?<sup>21</sup> Why did Father Aldunate need to consecrate the site? Why did the ex-detainee Francisco Videla, only released in error, refuse to speak about his experiences? Why were the last five of the names on the memorial written so dramatically in red? Indeed, why did Memoria Viva list Loyola as a site of significance at all? Surely there must be records of the alleged victims in the extensive state and private archives of the repression.

Let us test Varas's claims, using the best known online research into the personal histories of Pinochet victims, Memoria Viva, specialising in research into and preservation of records of the detained-disappeared and politically executed, and the more left-orientated Archivo Chile.<sup>22</sup>

The first three victims, Alamiro Saavedra, Gonzalez Allende and Allende Fuenzalida, were gathered in the same house in Quinta Normal 10 days after the coup when drunken members of the security forces burst in at 8.45 pm and killed them. (The DINA was not yet formed.) All three bodies were thrown into the Mapocho River to become, perhaps, among those hauled out by Don Roberto Muñoz.<sup>23</sup> Gonzalez Allende was only 16.<sup>24</sup> Saavedra was a businessman, aged 41.<sup>25</sup> Cerda was a child of eight when, hearing shots outside his house on 12 October 1973 at 11.30 pm, he opened the front door, presumably to see what was happening, and received a bullet in the throat.<sup>26</sup> The solitary victim listed for the year 1981 was that of Arcadia Perez. A long web entry lists her as an active (military) member of MIR, a journalism student at the University of Chile, founder of the Group for the Families of the Detained Disappeared, editor of the journal *The Militiaman*. A leader of 'actions of armed propaganda', she insisted on the formation of a woman-only warrior group standing in the front line of any pitched battle. She was killed in a firefight in her house in Quinta Normal.<sup>27</sup>

21 'Renacer: La Villa de los Rieles', *La Nación*, 31 August 2007.

22 Memoria Viva, 'Quienes Somos' [Who We Are], ([memoriaviva.com](http://memoriaviva.com)) whose records in relation to the present study are drawn primarily from the Rettig Report; Archivo Chile's subtitle is 'Documentation of the social and political history and the contemporary popular movement in Chile and Latin America' ([archivochile.com](http://archivochile.com)).

23 'Simón Cireneo Allende Fuenzalida', Memoria Viva; see also 'Archivos de las etiquetas'.

24 'Manuel José González Allende', Memoria Viva.

25 'Alamiro Segundo Gonzalez Saavedra', Memoria Viva.

26 'Eduardo Elias Cerda Angel', Memoria Viva; see also 'Eduardo Elias Cerda Angel', Fotolog.

27 'Arcadia Patricia Flores Perez', Memoria Viva; 'Flores Perez, Arcadia Patricia', Archivo Chile.

Much contextual information exists on those whose names are recorded on the plaque as having perished during 1983 at a time of violent upheavals against the Pinochet regime. The global economic downturn in 1981 affected Chile badly. Unemployment rose, the GDP fell, the national debt doubled. In May 1983, united unionists and coppermine workers demanded a national strike. Some previous Pinochet supporters began to lose faith in the military government's ability to guarantee economic and social stability. A second huge protest was staged in June, and a third in August. The government responded with new legislation proscribing unauthorised demonstrations and newly defined criminal acts, such as spreading false information about terrorist activities. The police and the military adopted the new tactic of indiscriminate shooting into crowds. Brutal repression followed, including 29 deaths.<sup>28</sup> One of the 21 listed by Varas was Cortes Pino, a businessman who defied the curfew to help a wounded child and was shot by indiscriminate fire.<sup>29</sup> Gallego Saball, of Quinta Normal, was shot by one of the 18,000 soldiers rushed to the capital to repress the demonstrations.<sup>30</sup> The MIRista Norguera was killed in a firefight following the assassination of the Governor of Santiago, General Carol Urzúa.<sup>31</sup> Troquian was killed at the same time. Juan Espinoza Parra, another MIRista, having clandestinely returned from Germany in 1981, was taken prisoner by the CNI in December 1983, and executed in the street.<sup>32</sup> The solitary death listed in 1985 was that of Linares, shot by the security forces.<sup>33</sup> The last two names written in black were those of Hinojosa and Palacios, recently joined junior members of a radical group allied to the Frentistas, called Comando Resistencia. Eighteen at the time of their deaths, babies at the time of the coup, Archivo Chile claims they were betrayed by the informer who had recruited them before handing their names to the CNI.<sup>34</sup>

28 Rettig Report, pp. 116–17; Orlando Sepúlveda, 'Chile in the time of the Dictator', *International Socialist Review* 53, May–June 2007, 3–5.

29 'Fabían Onofre Cortes Pino', Memoria Viva.

30 'Benedicto Antonio Gallegos Saball', Memoria Viva.

31 'Hugo Norbeto Ratier Norguera', Memoria Viva.

32 'Juan Elías Espinosa Parra', Memoria Viva.

33 'Fabían Onofre Cortes Pino', Memoria Viva; 'Benedicto Antonio Gallegos Saball', Memoria Viva.

34 'Acciones armadas de extrema izquierda' [Armed actions of the extreme left], Wikipedia; 'Iván Gustavo Palacios Guarda', Memoria Viva; 'Erick Enrique Rodríguez Hinojosa', Memoria Viva.

Not one, therefore, of the 16 victims written in black by Varas had a physical connection with Loyola, but each was either a resident of Quinta Normal or a member of an organisation related to her own radical armed political group. That is, none had any known connection to the site at which the memorial to them had just been unveiled.

Research soon revealed that the names of the last five victims were painted in red because, like Varas, they were Frentistas. Alejandro Pinochet, José Peña Maltes, Gonzalo Fuenzalida, Manuel Sepúlveda and Julio Muñoz were members of an organisation that believed in, sponsored, or had taken part in acts of terrorism, and which, even after the demise of Pinochet, continued to propagate the notion of armed rebellion by the masses.<sup>35</sup>

The most notorious of the Frente Rodriguistas' acts was the attempted assassination in 1986 of Pinochet himself, some two hours drive from Loyola, in the year that the Rodriguistas had designated 'The Year of the Popular Rebellion of the Masses'. The daring and minutely planned raid, called by the Frentistas 'Operation Twentieth Century', occurred on a winding road passing through a precipitous valley in Cajón de Maipo. Pinochet frequently used the pass, two hours from Santiago, as he travelled in armed escort to his weekend mountain retreat. More than 20 urban guerillas, many trained in Cuba or Nicaragua, armed with automatic weapons and rocket launchers recently smuggled from Cuba, concealed themselves above the narrow pass. In the violent pitched battle lasting 15 minutes, several vehicles of the presidential motorcade were destroyed and five members of his party were killed. Pinochet's driver, with great skill, reversed the car out of danger after the vehicle was hit by automatic weapon fire. Although all the attackers escaped, Pinochet survived. Shaken but unbowed, he appeared on television to demand a brutal reprisal.<sup>36</sup>

The failed assassination attempt was greeted by the Chilean masses not with popular acclaim or a general uprising but with a hostility unanticipated by the Frentistas. By 1986, the country generally was unsympathetic to terrorist outrages. Real wages and employment prospects had steadily improved since 1982. Inflation seemed at last

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35 'Iván Gustavo Palacios Guarda', *Memoria Viva*.

36 For a detailed account of the attack and its aftermath, see Cristóbal Peña, *Los Fusileros*, Debate, Santiago, 2007.

to be declining. From 1985, some left and right moderate political parties had been involved in negotiations with the government in working towards a National Agreement for Full Democracy. Talk of a transitional government was in the air. Political parties were to be legalised, and free elections would eventually be held.<sup>37</sup> A demonstration, most unusually in favour of Pinochet, followed the Frentista attempt on his life. Local citizens erected a memorial to the five members of Pinochet's party who had been killed during the attack.<sup>38</sup> In reprisal, the Pinochetistas launched Operation Albania, a dragnet for known armed radicals, which yielded 12 Frentistas in the first month. Public reaction and the Frentistas' own awareness of their recent failures caused the leadership to reappraise its role as the revolutionary vanguard.<sup>39</sup>

Yet one of the six cells into which the Frentistas were organised, refusing to accept the directive, continued to plan a further public gesture. It was this action, a kidnapping, that would cost the five Frentista victims listed at Loyola their lives.

The renegade group, calling themselves FMPR-A (instead of FMPR) determined to kidnap a military officer, Colonel Carreño, particularly associated with the repression. On 1 September 1987 the kidnapping succeeded and Carreño was hidden in an underground cell in north Santiago. After three months, the Frentistas released Carreño in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

Immediately after the kidnapping the government, far from acceding to the ransom demands, launched another sweep of the capital. Carrying out Pinochet's threat of five citizens taken for every one officer kidnapped, troops seized, ostensibly as hostages, the five Loyola Frentistas within a fortnight of Carreño's capture. Gonzalo Fuenzalida Navarrete was last seen at a restaurant at Central Station on 7 September. Next, on the 9th, was José Maltes, 36, who had sought exile in France, returning secretly when the prohibition against

37 Rodrigo A. Cerda, 'Labor demand: Chile 1986–2001', *Cuadernos de Economía* 40(121), 2003, 478–84; Sepúlveda, 'Chile in the time of the Dictator'.

38 The freshly painted inscription read, in 2011, 'The community of Cajón de Maipo to the fallen in the fulfillment of their duty. 6 September 1986'.

39 Whelan, *Out of the Ashes*, p. 914, claims that the failures were that the Frentista disruption of the Pope's visit cost the organisation US\$700,000, the failed attempt to rescue four Frentistas held in connection with the attack on Pinochet, and the decrease in the ransom demand for Carreño from US\$2 million to US\$50,000.

him was listed in 1985. Julio Muñoz Otárola, 27, was arrested on 8 September. Manuel Jesús Sepúlveda Sánchez was grabbed and thrown into a utility on 9 September. Alejandro Pinochet Arenas was pulled from a bus next day.<sup>40</sup>

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It is generally held today that until November 1987 the five Frentista hostages were still being held alive, to be possibly exchanged in return for Carreño and that the decision to kill them was taken only then.<sup>41</sup> Memoria Viva surmises that to release these hideously tortured detainees into the community – and the press – would have reflected badly on the CNI, as well as on Pinochet's regime, with only a year to go before the plebiscite.<sup>42</sup>

What exactly happened to them following Carreño's release has emerged only after many years of investigation, inference and confession. It surely was no coincidence that Julieta Varas had arranged the grand opening of Loyola to match as nearly as possible the exact day of their disappearance 20 years before.

We have seen how the problem of how to dispose of the bodies of people murdered by the regime had emerged less than a day after the coup. Patio 29 served only for a couple of months. The commandants of Londres 38, the National Stadium, José Domingo Cañas, and Villa Grimaldi each had to find his own solution. By 1975 it was plain that neither cemeteries nor burial in remote regions were adequate, while a decade later the government's problems compounded through international investigations. Disposal at sea of the weighted body seemed the most secure method.

It is only at this point, after the execution of the five Frentistas, that Loyola was implicated in their disappearance. It appears that during the 1980s the CNI had requisitioned the site of the Air Force's maintenance depot at Loyola to maintain its own vehicles. Its high walls offered security from enquiry as to what the trucks were

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40 'Alejandro Alberto Pinochet Arenas', Memoria Viva.

41 Cristián Pérez, "'Operación Príncipe': Irrumpe el FPMR-A' [Operation Prince: The FPMR-A erupts]; see also 'La verdadera historia detrás del secuestro de Carreño' [The true history behind the kidnapping of Carreño], *La Nación*, 26 August 2007.

42 'Gonzalo Iván Fuenzalida Navarrete', Memoria Viva.



carrying. Since the depot had served heavy construction needs as well as light maintenance, long sections of railway lines were stored there, perfectly obvious as they lay in heaps during the authors' first, unofficial tour of Loyola in 2006. Sections of railway lines were ideal as weights. So in November 1987, all that remained was to arrange for the sections of rail to be cut up and brought from the nearest CNI depot to the place where the Frentistas were to be killed. In 2006 the national newspaper, *La Nación*, reported:

One of the confessions that confirmed this fact was that of an agent – whose identity *La Nación* withholds – who went, following a phone call to Cuartel Loyola, situated in Pudahuel, and spoke with the Despatch Officer, ordering lengths of iron which were to be used for constructing new rooms. The Despatcher refused to hand them over, but the agent returned next day and took them without authorisation. They were used to weigh down the bodies and it was these that were thrown into the sea, according to the source.<sup>43</sup>

Not for nothing is Loyola referred to on a website as 'The villa of the railway lines'.

No evidence has as yet been unearthed that Loyola actually functioned either as a detention centre or torture centre, but we can perhaps understand Varas's desire to have her comrades-in-arms be remembered somewhere. And in truth, there is a strong case that the Pinochet victims who lived or worked somewhere in Quinta Normal be remembered at a memorial in the regional centre. Surely they deserve it: fearless women fighting on the front line, a returning exile bent on continuing the armed struggle, a curious child accidentally shot dead, a man rescuing a child from danger after curfew, a man simply standing outside his house, two naïve and hot-headed young men jumping heedlessly into a new pocket of the almost defunct MIR, perhaps without thinking more about it than that it stood for rebellious adventure, and certainly unaware of the dangers of informers. None deserved to die, none

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43 'Una de las confesiones que confirma este hecho es la de un agente – cuya identidad La Nación se reserva – quien llegó hasta el llamado cuartel Loyola, ubicado en Pudahuel y habló con el oficial a cargo, pidiéndole pesados fierros, que eran empleados para estructurar nuevas dependencias. El encargado se negó a entregarlos, pero el agente llegó al día siguiente y se los llevó sin su autorización. Fueron usados para amarrar los cuerpos y que éstos se hundieran en el mar, dijo la fuente'; Jorge Molina Sanhueza, 'Agentes de La Dina vinculados con la desaparición de cinco Frentistas en 1987' [DINA agents linked to the disappearance of five Frentistas in 1987], *La Nación*, 3 February 2006; see also the paragraph 'Rieles de la muerte' [Rails of death] in 'Gonzalo Iván Fuenzalida Navarrete', *Memoria Viva*.

deserved torture. The five Frentista urban guerillas, too, perhaps deserve recognition, for they understood perfectly well that only a terrible death would await them if captured. It may be argued that even they deserve a memorial; but not in Quinta Normal, and not in Loyola. Josefina Rodriguez remains unimpressed. She states firmly that none of the names on Varas's memorial had or have any connection with the locality.

The 16 residents of Quinta Normal listed in black are buried and honoured in the tombs of their families. The tomb of the five Frentistas is marked only by a few pieces of rusty and dissolving iron rails somewhere at the bottom of the bay of St Antonio.

For a few months Varas's memorial stone continued in position leaning against its classroom wall. On her abrupt departure it was shifted casually to an abandoned flower garden, upside down, the paint peeling off, its original two sections at right angles to each other. Today it is nowhere to be seen. 'That list of names? Oh, we just threw it away.'



Little is left of the once-guarded exterior wall (right) of the Loyola CNI Depot.

Source: Photograph by Peter Read, editing Con Boekel.

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