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# La Otra Cara Del Punk: Punk Rock and Resistance at the End of the Argentine Guerra Sucia, 1981-1982.

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UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

*LA OTRA CARA DEL PUNK: PUNK ROCK AND RESISTANCE AT THE END OF  
THE ARGENTINE GUERRA SUCIA 1981-1982*

By

Alexander S. Javizian

A THESIS

Submitted to the Faculty  
of the University of Miami  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for  
the degree of Master of Musicology

Coral Gables, Florida

August 2017

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*La Otra Cara del Punk: Punk Rock and  
Resistance at the End of the Argentine Guerra  
Sucia, 1981-1982.*

Abstract of a thesis at the University of Miami.

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The origins of punk music in Argentina grew out of a distinctive socio-political context that was unlike its British and American counterparts. The country's final military dictatorship (1976-1983) was marked by a period of constant violence. After the 1976 coup d'état, a military dictatorship established power, vowing to fix many of the issues in the country, including the rampant violence and economic crisis that the government had inherited from the previous administration of Isabel Perón. Although the military dictatorship intended to address the country's problems, it soon arose as one of the most oppressive regimes in the late 20th century that initiated a repressive movement known as the Guerra Sucia (Dirty War). Numerous individuals were abducted off the streets or from their homes, regardless of their political affiliations. Despite the tight grip the *junta* imposed on the media, creative artists used their work to protest against the government and decry the human rights violations that occurred within the country. While many popular Argentine musicians hid their anti-junta messages through the use of metaphors and ambiguous lyrics, punk groups conveyed their resistance more overtly.

This thesis explores the early punk rock scene in Argentina as a form of social protest during the Guerra Sucia. It focuses on two of the most notable bands, Los

Violadores and Alerta Roja, who wrote songs that resisted the military dictatorship. Even though they opposed the junta directly, they managed to avoid abduction or arrest. This project explores the use of music as a tool of resistance and offers ideas about how these groups managed to avoid persecution by the military government.

In addition, this study reflects a scholarly interest in bringing together ideas and perspectives from the fields of historical musicology and ethnomusicology. It focuses on the punk scene as a whole through multiple perspectives, giving voice to the bottom-up ideas and social practices of punk fans, as well as the top-down creative activity of Argentine musicians. Although limitations of time and resources made it impossible to conduct fieldwork in Argentina, I endeavored whenever possible to collect oral accounts of the punk scene through both interviews and documentary sources. Through this analysis, I examined how the genre conveyed popular opposition to the dictatorship during an era of massive human rights violations and harsh censorship in Argentina. Because both Los Violadores and Alerta Roja continued their careers after the Guerra Sucia ended, I also aim to examine the elements of their music that changed after the 1983 restoration of democracy.

This thesis is dedicated to Dr. Deborah Schwartz-Kates whose guidance and support over the past two years helped me in more ways than I can express with words.

I wish her all the best during her retirement.

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There are many people I would like to thank for assisting me in one way or another during the writing of this thesis. First and foremost, I cannot thank Dr. Deborah Schwartz-Kates enough for the help and mentoring she has given me over the past two years. The idea for this study originated in one of our weekly meetings. With her guidance I was able to research this topic and transform the idea into this thesis. Words cannot express how grateful I am to have studied with her and for all the knowledge she has imparted upon me.

I also want to thank the other members of my thesis committee, Dr. Melvin Butler and Dr. Eduardo Elena. During the course of my research, both have provided great insight into this topic. It was an absolute pleasure to work with them during the past year and their comments regarding my work helped take this study in new directions. In addition, I want to thank the other members of the musicology department who provided me with ways to improve this study. I particularly want to thank Dr. David Ake for his recommendations for literature on punk.

Another individual I cannot thank enough is Emily Simpson. When researching this topic, I was surprised to find that she had written an undergraduate thesis entitled "'¡Represión!': Punk Resistance and the Culture of Silence in the Southern Cone, 1978-1990" which focused on punk in both Argentina and Chile and their socio-political contexts. I was able to get in contact with her and discuss her research on this subject. Not only did Emily provide me with a great amount of information but she also was kind enough to send numerous scans of Latin American fanzines (including the copy of *Quién*



*sirve a la causa del kaos?* discussed in Chapter III). Emily has helped me throughout this process and I greatly appreciate the assistance and resources she offered me.

While I sent interview requests to many individuals associated with the early Argentine punk scene, only one person responded. Robert "El Polaco" Zelazek became the bassist for Los Violadores in 1983 but had known the members of the band prior to the group's inception. After emailing Zelazek, I was able to obtain more information about the early punk scene in Argentina and the commentary he provided was extremely helpful to this study.

I want to thank all my friends who have been there for me during this process including Matt, Cory, Roxana, Igor, Pat, Jess, Darien, Nate, Chris, Rafael, Jake, Hanako, and Jonathan among countless others. I also want to give a special acknowledgement to my close friend, Justin Kane. Justin, who recently completed MFA in creative writing, assisted me with developing my writing style since I was an undergraduate. His input and help over the years have been greatly appreciated and I am extremely fortunate to call him my friend.

Finally, I want to thank my parents who have always been supportive of my studies. Without them, I would not be where I am today.

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## Introduction

The idea for this thesis began in spring 2016 during a course at the University of Miami on the music of Argentina and Brazil. In particular, one topic we discussed stood out to me: the Argentine national rock tradition known as *rock nacional* and its relationship to the last military dictatorship in Argentina referred to as the Guerra Sucia (Dirty War). I had always been fascinated by musicians and bands who infused their music with politics, and I was interested to discover that a punk scene in Argentina had emerged during the Guerra Sucia. My thoughts raced to images I knew from my own experiences—of Johnny Rotten grabbing a microphone and shouting the lyrics to "Anarchy in the U.K." as a large crowd of kids danced wildly, of The Ramones performing in their trademark leather jackets, and of the iconic photograph of Paul Simonon of The Clash seconds away from smashing his bass guitar on the cover of *London Calling*. In contrast to these images of internationally recognized punk artists, I wondered how the music of Argentine punks would communicate against the backdrop of one of the most brutal dictatorships of the late 20th century.

### I. Review of the Literature

Despite the significance of this topic, few have studied it in depth. Only two substantive studies can be identified that provide detailed information on punk music in Argentina. The first is a book edited by Daniel Flores entitled, *Derrumbando la Casa Rosada: Mitos y leyendas de los primeros punks en Argentina, 1978-1988* (Overthrowing

the Pink House: Myths and Legends of the First Punks in Argentina 1978-1988).<sup>1</sup> This book focuses on creating a narrative of the early punk scene in Argentina through interviews and other firsthand accounts of the movement. While the book provides a valuable perspective into the early years of the Argentine punk scene, it includes scant information about music.

The second source is an undergraduate thesis by Emily Simpson entitled, “ ¡Represión!: Punk Resistance and the Culture of Silence in the Southern Cone, 1978-1990.” Simpson's thesis focuses on the punk community from an historical standpoint and also extends her discussion to include significant reference to punk after the fall of the military dictatorship, as well as offering a comparison of the political repercussions in the neighboring country of Chile. While Simpson's paper serves as one of the first studies of this topic in the English language, it also reflects the author's background as a history student. Although she mentions the music and lyrics of the punk groups she studies, fundamental aspects of the style such as timbre are not included in this study.<sup>2</sup>

Two other authors who have contributed to our knowledge of the Argentine punk scene are Esteban M. Cavanna and Federico Gómez Levitanas. In 2001, Cavanna wrote a book entitled, *El nacimiento del punk en Argentina y la historia de Los Violadores* (The Birth of Punk in Argentina and the History of Los Violadores), which served as a

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<sup>1</sup> Daniel Florez, *Derrumbando la Casa Rosada: Mitos y leyendas de los primeros punks en Argentina, 1978-1988* (Buenos Aires: Piloto de Tormenta, 2011).

<sup>2</sup> Emily Simpson, “¡Represión!: Punk Resistance and the Culture of Silence in the Southern Cone, 1978-1990” (Undergraduate honor's thesis, Temple University, 2013). I would like to express my gratitude to Emily Simpson for the help and resources she offered during my research. I cannot thank her enough for her advice and for the collection of scans of fanzines from Latin America that she sent to me.

biography of this prominent Argentine punk band.<sup>3</sup> While his book appears to offer useful information— and is cited in the sources— it is out of print and I was unable to obtain a copy in time to consult for my thesis. Some of Cavanna's information, however, appears in the work of the second author, Federico Gómez Levitanas, who wrote two articles for a music website, both of which relate to Los Violadores. The purpose of this website (or "online magazine," as it is called on the home page) is to provide "in-depth coverage on underground, primitive, raw, marginal, politically radical, and esoteric music, with a focus on DIY, punk, hardcore, and metal."<sup>4</sup> Gómez Levitanas' first article, "When Punk Came out to Confront the Idiots in Power," is what he refers to as a "selective summary" of Cavanna's book. He begins his article with the following call for further research on the topic:

I think I speak for many punk aficionados when I say that, due to the socio-political context in which Argentina's Los Violadores existed, they deserve a book of their own, as well as a leading role in one of the chapters of a comprehensive book on punk in Latin America which is still waiting to be written.<sup>5</sup>

In his introduction, Gómez Levitanas states that the purpose of this article is to inform the reader about the early years of Los Violadores and the early Argentine punk scene in general, since little information on this topic has been written in English.<sup>6</sup> The

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<sup>3</sup> Esteban M. Cavanna, *El nacimiento del punk en Argentina y la historia de Los Violadores* (Buenos Aires: Interpress Ediciones, 2001).

<sup>4</sup> "Shit-Fi: The Political Economy of Bad Music" *Shit-Fi*, accessed March 29, 2017, [www.shit-fi.com/](http://www.shit-fi.com/).

<sup>5</sup> Federico Gómez Levitanas, "When Punk came out to Confront the Idiots in Power." *Shit-fi.com*. 2009. Accessed September 15, 2016. <http://www.shit-fi.com/articles/LosVioladores>.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

most beneficial aspect of this article is that it provides the reader with valuable information from Cavanna's book which is otherwise unavailable. Yet, because the book was originally 144 pages long, and Gómez Levitanas' detailed summary is roughly four pages, it does not cover all the material in the biography.

Other sources that shed light on Argentine punk music come from studies of rock in Argentina. One notable scholar who has authored many articles and books on this topic is Pablo Vila, a sociologist and professor at Temple University. Many of Vila's articles, such as "Argentina's 'Rock Nacional': The Struggle for Meaning,"<sup>7</sup> and "Rock Nacional" and Dictatorship in Argentina"<sup>8</sup> focus on iconic artists and bands such as Serú Girán and Pablo y Pedro. Surprisingly, given Vila's focus on the theme of Argentine rock music and political resistance, he devotes little attention to the punk scene. However, he does include a small amount of information about Los Violadores, and he contributes many valuable insights into the way that rock interacted within the socio-political context of Argentina during the dictatorship. In addition to Vila's influential research on Argentine National Rock it is important to mention the classic study, *Entre Gatos y Los Violadores: El rock nacional en la cultura Argentina*.<sup>9</sup> Authored by Pablo Alabarces, this work

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<sup>7</sup> Pablo Vila, "Rock Nacional: The Struggle for Meaning," *Latin American Music Review* 10, no.1 (Spring-Summer1989): 1-28, accessed March 21, 2016, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/780380>.

<sup>8</sup> Pablo Vila, "Rock Nacional and Dictatorship in Argentina," *Popular Music* 6, no 2. (May 1987): 129-148.

<sup>9</sup> Pablo Alabarces, *Entre Gatos y Violadores: El rock nacional en la cultura Argentina*, (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Colihue S.R.L., 1993).

examines the Argentine rock scene from the author's perspective as a sociology professor who focuses on Argentine popular culture.<sup>10</sup>

While in-depth treatment of Argentine punk is limited, extensive studies of the genre from an international perspective contribute valuable insights. One notable work on this topic is *Please Kill Me: The Uncensored Oral History of Punk* by Legs McNeil and Gillian McCain.<sup>11</sup> This book provides an in-depth oral history through the narratives of many individuals who were active during the early years of the genre, both in the United States and the United Kingdom. One the authors, McNeil, was a participant in the early punk scene and was even known for coining the term "punk."<sup>12</sup>

While McNeil and McCain's book provides an historical background of the early bands and scene, it does not place an emphasis on the sociological elements of the genre. This facet of punk music is critical to consider in order to situate the genre contextually. One of the most notable books on the subject is Dick Hebdige's groundbreaking work *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*.<sup>13</sup> This book presents information on different subcultures tied to music including punks, skinheads, and teddy boys and the ways in which sociological factors influenced the members of these groups.

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<sup>10</sup> "Seminario de cultura popular y cultura masiva," 2016, Web.Archive.org, accessed March 10, 2017, <http://web.archive.org/web/20100820041101/http://www.catedras.fsoc.uba.ar/alabarces/P>.

<sup>11</sup> Legs McNeil and Gillian McCain, *Please Kill Me: The Uncensored Oral History of Punk* (New York: Grove Press, 2016).

<sup>12</sup> Jacob McMurray, *Taking Punk to the Masses: From Nowhere to Nevermind* (Seattle: Fantagraphics Books, 2011) 9.

<sup>13</sup> Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (London: Routledge, 1997).

An important theoretical body of work that allows for an understanding of the way that Argentine punk music conveyed themes of youth rebellion and resistance comes from the field of communication. Stuart Hall's classic concepts of encoding and decoding allow us to examine how band members and fans perceived and responded to the Argentine punk bands' messages. As Simon During wrote about Hall's theory: "Before this message can have an 'effect' (however defined), satisfy a 'need' or be put to 'use,' it must first be appropriated as a meaningful discourse and be meaningfully decoded."<sup>14</sup> The bands' messages in their songs fulfilled Hall's idea of a "meaningful discourse." One notable example occurred during a concert of Los Violadores'.<sup>15</sup> During the show, the band performed a song targeting negative aspects of life in Argentina. The punk fans, decoded the message in a different way, which is one of the potential outcomes of the decoding process that Hall describes in his study. In the case of the Argentine *punkeros*, their actions went beyond the original intentions of the song and they reacted from a position of empowerment, as they began throwing chairs and creating a small riot.<sup>16</sup> In this way, Hall's ideas can be used to interpret communicative forms from multiple perspectives that take into account the social positions of the participants.

In addition to Hall's concept of encoding and decoding, another study that plays a significant role in this paper is James C. Scott's *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*:

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<sup>14</sup> Stuart Hall, "Encoding, Decoding," in *The Cultural Studies Reader*, ed. Simon During (London: Routledge, 1999), 509.

<sup>15</sup> This event is discussed in full detail in Chapter 2.

<sup>16</sup> Alfredo Sainz, "Arde Belgrano: Los Violadores en la UB, 17 de Julio de 1981," in *Derrumbando la Casa Rosada: Mitos y leyendas de los primeros punks en la Argentina, 1978-1988*, ed. Daniel Flores (Buenos Aires: Pioloto de Tormenta, 2011), 49.



*Hidden Transcripts*.<sup>17</sup> In his book, Scott discusses the concept of public and hidden transcripts found within communities containing hegemonic structures. According to Scott, the public transcript is the discourse that is publically presented during a performance, whereas the hidden transcript is the one that remains hidden "behind the scenes."<sup>18</sup> While the theory of hidden and public transcript can be applied to bands in Argentina during the Guerra Sucia (such as Sirú Girán and Pablo y Pedro), the bands in the punk community seem to contradict this theory. Many of their songs contain overt messages in defiance of the junta and their actions. In this paper, I discuss the concept of hidden transcripts and how and why they fail to provide insight into the Argentine punk scene.

During the course of this study, I was not able to conduct fieldwork in Argentina due to time constraints. However, I was fortunate to conduct one interview with a member of the Argentine punk scene. After asking numerous band members if they would participate as collaborators in this study, I received a response from Robert "Polaco" Zalazek, a bassist from Los Violadores, who provided me with information about the early punk rock scene and his role in the band. Zalazek—who played with the group from 1982 to 1992 but knew the musicians from the beginning—shared information about their early careers and the demographics of their fans.

Another important source is periodicals. This paper makes use of two different types of publications. The first comes from publically edited magazines such as *El Expreso Imaginario* (The Imaginary Express) that focus primarily on music. The second

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<sup>17</sup> James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990).

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*, 4.

derives from sources known as "fanzines"—publications that get their name from the portmanteau of "fan" and "magazine." Fanzines are self-published periodicals distributed by music fans that include information on politics, literature, and art, in addition to music. These sources not only shed light on the Argentine punk scene from their followers' perspective, but they also show how young fans reacted to the socio-political circumstances that affected their daily lives. All of these materials help orient and situate the study of punk music in Argentina.

## **II. Defining "Punk"**

What is punk? Is it a style, a genre, a subculture, or a phenomenon that incorporates all of these ideas? While many listen to bands that are considered punk or may be familiar with the aesthetics of the genre, only a few have attempted to define it. On a sonic level, one strong identifying marker is the timbre of the music. The instrumentation of punk bands consistently employs a vocalist, a guitarist, a bassist, and a drummer. The groups often utilize distortion, giving their music a "rough" sound in contrast to other rock genres. Tempo also differentiates this genre from others due to the faster speeds at which these songs were played. These groups tend to perform as quartets, but sometimes function as trios (with one member playing an instrument while singing), or as quintets (with one band member serving as a dedicated vocalist). These bands have a sound similar to rock music due to the fact that they utilize the same instrumentation. Yet, the music has a distinctive punk sound because it is generally performed in a faster tempo and relies extensively on 12-bar blues progressions, as in "Anarchy in the U.K." by the Sex Pistols and "Blitzkreig Bop," by The Ramones. This progression is not exclusive to punk since it had characterized early rock music in songs such as, "I Put a

"Spell on You" by Screaming Jay Hawkins and "School Days," by Chuck Berry, and it continued to play a significant role in later rock music. Nonetheless, its pervasive presence in punk remains a strongly identifying feature.

The lyrics of international punk music also share similar characteristics. The words of many punk songs focus on youth rebellion, anxiety, politics, and freedom. They are often filled with controversy as in the punk anthem, "God Save the Queen" by The Sex Pistols that begins with the infamous lines, "God save the Queen/The fascist regime." Other bands, such as the Ramones, focus on youth, partying, and having fun. Still others delve into youth crisis, such as Black Flag, whose song, "Nervous Breakdown," had lyrics that focused on the apprehension and confusion often associated with adolescence.

While both these characteristics can describe punk from a musicological standpoint, issues can still arise when attempting to define such a complex musical and social phenomenon. In his book, *Punk Sociology*, David Beer attests to the difficulty of defining punk—a label he believes is too prescriptive and limits the broader application of what he terms a "punk ethos."<sup>19</sup> Another author who addresses the sociological dimensions of punk is Hebdige in his classic study of youth subcultures. In this book, Hebdige notes how a subculture normally begins with the opposition to an existing style or social norm. Yet, eventually as this subculture gains acceptance, it becomes a style in itself.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> David Beer, *Punk Sociology*, (New York: Palgrave, 2014), 21.

<sup>20</sup> Hebdige, 3.

In his book, Hebdige describes how punk exposed the contradictions within the glam rock genre from a working-class standpoint.<sup>21</sup> The visual aesthetics of the punk performers responded to the ornate costumes of glam rock icons, such as David Bowie. Hebdige indicates how this response underscored the working-class perspective and anarchistic aesthetics of punk music.<sup>22</sup> The clothing of the punk musicians and their fans had holes, chains, and spikes, which exemplified this aesthetic orientation.

Another type of common visual aesthetic relates to the typography found in punk publications. Hebdige notes that two common forms of graphics and typography are used within the punk scene and can be traced back to the preference for anarchic and subterranean aesthetics.<sup>23</sup> The first style of typeface is graffiti—a style that uses a medium such as paint to write messages or artworks or on private or public property.<sup>24</sup> The second evokes the idea of a "ransom letter".<sup>25</sup> This style involves cutting the words or letters from previously published materials to create new words or sentences. It recalls the stereotypical ransom notes in movies and television shows. One of the most recognizable uses of this medium appeared on the cover of The Sex Pistol's single, "God Save the Queen." The artwork depicts Queen Elizabeth II; however, her eyes and mouth have black bars over them to conceal her identity, as if she were accused of a crime or

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid, 63.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, 112.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

scandal.<sup>26</sup> Over her eyes are positioned the words, "God Save the Queen"—all in different fonts. The phrase "Sex Pistols" is placed over her mouth, with each letter using a distinctive font, size, and typography—as if the text came from different periodicals. Fanzines utilized this element as well, cutting and repositioning words, pictures, and even entire newspapers articles to reinterpret these events and create their own narrative.

As Hebdige points out, these aesthetics factor into the definition of punk. Graffiti and "ransom" style typography relate to the idea of punk as an element identified with the working-class, youth, and anarchy. While some graffiti artists today have their work revered within the art community, during the origins of punk, it was a medium associated with vandalism and rebellion. The idea of utilizing a "ransom" aesthetic also evoked a sense of villainy due to its criminal associations. Hebdige notes how punks used these elements as forms of "ironic self-abasement."<sup>27</sup> These notions played into ideas of hypermasculinity, especially when set against the more feminine elements of glam rock.

Even the bands' names were meant to shock non-punk audiences and generate publicity through controversy. Los Violadores was one Argentine band that exemplified this trend. Although the limited scope of this study does not allow for an in-depth treatment of the significance of punk and gender, it is important to point out that the name of the group, Los Violadores, represents an intersection of these two topics. Linguistically, the word "violador" has two meanings in Spanish. While the literal translation of the term is "violate," the figurative (and more commonly used definition) means "rapist." Members of punk bands often used such stage names to intensify the

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

concept of self-abasement, such as John Lydon and John Beverly of The Sex Pistols, who used the names "Johnny Rotten" and "Sid Vicious," respectively.

This idea of a working-class orientation within the punk scene also corresponds to a related notion of a DIY (do it yourself) ethic. This concept arose out of necessity for bands during the early phases of their careers. In the prologue of his book, *Global Punk: Resistance and Rebellion in Everyday Life*, Kevin Dunn interviewed Ian MacKaye, the lead singer of the bands, Minor Threat and Fugazi. When asked about his thoughts on a DIY ethic and the way it impacted his career, MacKaye noted how it originally evolved from necessity:

When I got involved in punk, of course it was DIY, because who else was going to do it? It's the art of necessity. It wasn't as if I went to a store, looked at a shelf, and thought: "Well, I can do it the 'major label' way or I can do it the 'DIY way.'" There was no choice in the matter. If we wanted to be in a band, we had to write our own songs. If we were going to play, we had to set up our own shows. If we wanted records, we had to make our own. These were necessities.<sup>28</sup>

This concept of a DIY ethic pervades many facets of the subculture. Not only do some punks view this ethic as a necessity to advance their own careers and spread their music, but they see it as a way of rejecting capitalism. These bands self-published their own albums and their fans created fanzines, as a way of resisting corporate culture and rejecting consumerism. Those punks who embraced a DIY ethic performed for the love of music rather than for commercial gain, which they perceived as alien to their disposition. One punk musician from Indonesia noted the differences between DIY punk and mainstream punk in an interview by stating:

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<sup>28</sup> Kevin Dunn, *Global Punk: Resistance and Rebellion in Everyday Life* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2015) 1.

The difference between the mainstream and DIY-punk is [that] mainstream is commercial, and it's complicated. The mainstream is looking for profit. It's just about getting famous it's not what punk is about. When we have shows, there are no sponsors. If there are no sponsors, I will play, but with sponsors I won't play.<sup>29</sup>

It should be noted that elements of the DIY ethic mean different things to different individuals within punk communities. Some utilize this concept in order to protest or rebel against ideas of capitalism and consumer culture and to free their music from those influences. Others use it as a necessity due to financial limitations. Regardless of how or why a member of the punk community adopts this ethic, it is an element found frequently within punk scenes.

A related idea that pervades the punk community is freedom. This concept manifests itself in different ways. Bands like the Sex Pistols had songs that portrayed the British monarchy as a hindrance to freedom for the working class. The Ramones viewed freedom as a form of youth rebellion, with topics such as partying, dating, and having fun. Other bands, like Dead Kennedys imagined a world without corrupt politicians, fascism, and police brutality. The punk genre at its core desires freedom, not just for the individual but for the entire community. Many extend the idea to include freedom from labels, even the notion of "punk" itself. One notable example is Johnny Lydon who viewed the term as a hindrance to individuality when he proclaimed:

It's meaningless! Once you accept a title like that you are a slave to the system. The very thing you think you are rebelling against you are replacing. You're just a different structure with the same moronic mentality. I have to go for being an individual, and I'm sorry but a category like punk is not about individuals.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Erik Hannerz, *Performing Punk* (New York: Palgrave-MacMillan, 2015), 126.

<sup>30</sup> Beer, 21.

While many punk musicians and fans like Lydon resisted labels, I believe that it is possible to identify major characteristics of punk. Based on the ideas of Hebdige and Beer, in addition to my own synthesis, I believe that punk is a phenomenon that incorporates notions of style, genre, and subculture. Punk is a genre that was and continues to be identified and consumed by fans and musicians throughout the world, utilizing similar musical characteristics. It is also a subculture, due to its shared elements within the punk community such as dress and aesthetics. As Hebdige notes, punk also becomes a style, once it gains a broader acceptance. Together these terms describe punk from a musical and sociological standpoint. Punk scenes around the world share these ideas and beliefs and retain a common aesthetic, cultivating similar tastes in dance, dress, and music. As we shall see, these trends also resonated within the Argentine punk scene.

### **III. Beyond Punk**

Not long after the inception of punk music, many sub-genres evolved. One discussed later in the paper is post-punk. International bands associated with this movement included: The Cure, Joy Division, and Siouxsie and the Banshees. They had a different sound and style from iconic punk groups such as the Sex Pistols and The Ramones. These post-punk bands incorporated elements of rock, gothic rock, and punk. The instrumentation remained similar, utilizing a guitarist, bassist, drummer, and vocalist, yet the timbre changed. The vocalists of many bands no longer shouted their lyrics, and the music had a less combative and more ethereal sound. They achieved this effect in two ways. The first was through editing, as many bands chose to include echo effects in their music. The second was through changes in compositional style. These



bands incorporated more diverse melodies and harmonies than early punk bands, and many chose to abandon the 12-bar blues formula completely. As we shall see, these changes would impact the development of a post-punk movement in Argentina.

#### **IV. British-Argentine Relations**

Although the Argentine punks adapted the genre from the British, the relationship between the two countries has been characterized by extreme conflict. Much of this contention stems from the disputed territorial possession of the Falkland Islands (known in Argentina as Las Islas Malvinas). Argentina had claimed the islands in the early 1800s, yet the territory was captured by Britain in 1833.<sup>31</sup> Although both England and Argentina viewed these islands as rightfully theirs, England controlled the territory. Historically, Argentina had claimed the nearby islands during the early 19th century, but lost them to Britain in 1833.<sup>32</sup> Nationalist sentiment about the Argentine territorial rights to ownership of the Falklands played a major role in the Guerra Sucia. Near the end of the dictatorship, the junta had lost favor with many Argentine citizens due to human rights violations and deteriorating economic conditions. Fearing a coup, the government attempted to capture the Falklands to reignite a sense of patriotism and loyalty among the country's citizens. The plan backfired when Argentine forces were unable to regain control the islands. What had originally begun as a way for the dictatorship to regain favor with its citizens resulted in a devastating blow and a loss of credibility.

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<sup>31</sup> "Falkland Islands War," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 2014, accessed December 23, 2016, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Falkland-Islands-War>.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

Years after the end of the Falklands War, this conflict has remained a sore subject for Argentines and the British. In 2012, Argentina aired an advertisement for the London Olympics that angered the British government. The commercial featured an Argentine athlete exercising and training on the Falkland Islands. The commercial was devoid of any dialogue but included a phrase at the end which, when translated, read: "In order to compete on English soil, we train on Argentine soil."<sup>33</sup>

Because of its associations with the UK, one might have expected punk to have ended in Argentina during or after the Falklands War. Surprisingly, this was not the case. If anything, the punk scene after the Falklands grew stronger. The reasons are complicated and difficult to understand, but one possibility is that Argentine bands aimed to separate punk music from British politics, removing the nationality of a genre they embraced, and substituting a common, human element. In their manifesto "Ser Punk" (Being Punk), Los Violadores made the following observation: "Buenos Aires is not different than London: there is the same violence, crisis, corruption, the same madness and the same old people ruling."<sup>34</sup> Quotes such as these show how Argentine punk musicians articulated their relationship to the British, drawing comparisons between inequitable political situations in both countries.

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<sup>33</sup>"Para competir en suelo inglés, entrenamos en suelo argentino." "UK Criticizes 'Tasteless' Falklands Olympic Ad," *BBC*, accessed May 3, 2017, <http://bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-17946838>.

<sup>34</sup> Federico Gómez Levitanas, "Los Violadores 'Ser Punk.'" *Shit-Fi*, 2011, accessed September 15, 2016, <http://www.shit-fi.com/fromthearchives/LosVioladores>.

## **V. Putting the Ideas into Play**

The research in this study comes from three different types of sources: published books, periodicals (including both published periodicals and fanzines), and interviews. Although this thesis includes some conceptual ideas and approaches that are associated with the field of ethnomusicology, I was not able to conduct fieldwork in Argentina due to the narrow time limits and restricted financial resources available during the two-year period of my master's degree. In focusing on the two main groups that served as the point of orientation for this study (Los Violadores and Alerta Roja), several key factors guided my selection. The first is that both bands were prominent artists during the early Argentine punk scene. The second relates to the trajectory of the groups' careers. Both bands formed during the Guerra Sucia, however, they also released material after the restoration of Argentine democracy in 1983. This time frame allows for a comparison of their music both during and after the military dictatorship. The case studies of these groups therefore not only include a discussion of the history of both bands, but also explore the relationship of their work to Argentine politics.

To explore the complexity of the punk movement in Argentina and its relationship to Argentine and international politics, this study is divided into four chapters. The first chapter provides background information on Argentine history during the Guerra Sucia, the origins of punk in Argentina, and a brief history of punk music in the United States and the United Kingdom. This chapter provides relevant background information in order to help the reader understand important themes presented later in this study. The second chapter provides case studies of two prominent Argentine punk bands: Los Violadores and Alerta Roja. Each case study addresses two separate topics. The first details the

history of each group, exploring its formation as well as the backgrounds of its members. The second analyzes a selection of each bands' songs. This analysis will focus on the messages and contents of the lyrics before and after the Guerra Sucia and examine the factors that changed during the Argentine transition to democracy.

The third chapter explores the national punk scene through the lens of two different types of periodicals. The first consists of published magazines, as exemplified by *El Expreso Imaginario* (The Imaginary Express), whose topics include music, literature, current events, and art. The second encompasses underground fanzines, specifically the publication, *Quién sirve a la causa del kaos?* These different types of periodicals illustrate alternative views of the Argentine punk scene from the perspective of the media and the fans. They illustrate how, since the fanzines were free of censorship and restrictions, Argentine punk audiences communicated more freely through this medium.. The fourth and final chapter of this thesis offers conclusions to this study, including comments about directions for further research.

# Chapter I: The Guerra Sucia, Los Punkeros, and the Birth of Punk

The purpose of this chapter is to give a brief history of Argentina during the Guerra Sucia and put the national punk scene into perspective by providing background information about the earlier punk movements in England and the United States. Based on this brief overview, later chapters of the thesis will focus on the social and musical aspects of the Argentine punk movement in depth.

## I. The Guerra Sucia in Context

In order to understand the relationship between Argentine punk music and the Guerra Sucia, it is important to contextualize this moment of Argentine history. While the beginning of the Guerra Sucia was marked by the 1976 coup d'état, one must look at the prior history of the country to fully understand its political climate.<sup>35</sup> These circumstances can be traced back to the leadership of Juan Perón, who was first elected to office in 1946, and focused on a concept he called *justicialismo* (literally "social justice"), which resonated with many Argentine citizens. He called for measures to aid the workers and lower-middle-class Argentines, gaining the favor of both left-wing and right-wing ends of the political spectrum, along with such diverse sectors as the Catholic Church, organized labor, Argentine military, and urban industrialists.<sup>36</sup> Perón was democratically

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<sup>35</sup> Luis Alberto Romero, *A History of Argentina in the Twentieth Century*, trans. James P. Brennan (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2013), 215.

<sup>36</sup> *Britannica Academic*, s.v. "Peronist," accessed May 23, 2017, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Peronist>.

elected to two presidencies; however, in 1952, after the death of Eva Perón and his conflicts with the Catholic Church, his popularity began to decline.<sup>37</sup> Overthrown in 1955, he fled the country and eventually settled in Madrid.<sup>38</sup> It was there that he met his third wife, María Estela (“Isabel”), who would later serve as his Vice President upon the couple’s return to Argentina.<sup>39</sup> During Peron's exile, the political climate of Argentina was marked by instability with numerous military coups, and many citizens longed for his return. Upon returning to Argentina in 1973, Perón became president, although he passed away the following year, leaving his unpopular and inexperienced wife, Isabel to serve as the country's leader.<sup>40</sup> Shortly after Isabel Perón succeeded her husband, the military removed her from power in a coup d'état.

The ruling Argentine *junta* inherited numerous challenges, such as an economic crisis, that had caused rampant inflation and the rise of guerilla groups such as the Montoneros which had carried out attacks on civilians and government organizations prior to the coup.<sup>41</sup> General Jorge Rafael Videla, the leader of the junta, addressed the country’s citizens on April 24, 1976, stating:

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

The country is passing through one of the most difficult periods in its history. With the country on the point of national disintegration, the intervention of the armed forces was the only possible alternative in the face of the deterioration provoked by misgovernment, corruption, and complacency.<sup>42</sup>

Despite the promise of the junta to end the financial problems and the violence within the country, the period soon developed into one of Argentina's most traumatic times, as well as one of the most brutal dictatorships of the late 20th century. Known as the Guerra Sucia (Dirty War) or El Proceso (The Process), this period left Argentine citizens in a state of constant fear as many individuals were abducted, tortured, and killed, even those who lacked any overt political affiliations. The abductions were widespread, and an estimated 11,000 to 30,000<sup>43</sup> individuals seized by the junta collectively became known as *los desaparecidos* (the ones who disappeared).<sup>44</sup>

Many Argentine citizens criticized the country's leaders and their actions. Those who openly disagreed with the government's policies, however, often found themselves targets of retaliation. One notable instance involved the arrest of Adolfo Pérez Esquivel. Esquivel was originally an architect and sculptor who served as the Secretary-General of Peace and Justice (Paz y Justicia), an NGO that fought against human rights violations in

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<sup>42</sup> Antonius C.G. M. Robben, *Political Violence and Trauma in Argentina* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), 172.

<sup>43</sup> The estimated number of individuals who were abducted during the Guerra Sucia is a topic that is widely disputed. While reports published by the Argentine government use more conservative numbers, other reports by NGOs and human rights organizations have recorded higher numbers.

<sup>44</sup> Marcela Valente, "Argentina: Remains of the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo Identified," *Inter Press Service*, July 8, 2005, accessed January 20, 2015, <http://www.ipsnews.net/2005/07/argentina-remains-of-mothers-of-plaza-de-mayo-identified/>.

South America.<sup>45</sup> In 1977, Esquivel was arrested, detained, and tortured for 14 months before his eventual release.<sup>46</sup> After he was freed, he gained international recognition for his work with the organization and was awarded the 1980 Nobel Peace Prize.<sup>47</sup>

Although Esquivel was eventually released, others who spoke out against the junta were not as fortunate. Another organization known for its criticism of the military was the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo. This group took its name from the Plaza de Mayo in Buenos Aires, where its members staged their protests. Led by Azucena Villaflor, whose son Néstor was abducted, this group of mothers and grandmothers begged the government to release their children who were taken away from them.<sup>48</sup> Their public protests provided them with the visibility that furthered their cause, but they mistakenly held the belief that the junta would not take action against them in public.<sup>49</sup> The junta, however, viewed the women as a threat, and they decided to silence them. On December 10, 1977, Villaflor along with other members of the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo was arrested.<sup>50</sup> After her abduction, Villaflor was one of the victims of the numerous *Vuelos de la Muerte*, or death flights, in which individuals were taken by plane or helicopter and

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<sup>45</sup> *Britannica Academic*, s.v. "Adolfo Pérez Esquivel," accessed January 1, 2017, <http://academic.eb.com.access.library.miami.edu/levels/collegiate/article/59227#>.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> *Britannica Academic*, s.v. "Dirty War," accessed January 13, 2017, <http://academic.eb.com.access.library.miami.edu/levels/collegiate/article/476797#>.

<sup>49</sup> Valente.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*



dropped over the Atlantic Ocean or the Rio de la Plata.<sup>51</sup> Events such as these formed a critical part of the contextual environment in which the punk rock movement in Argentina emerged as a form of social protest.

As the Guerra Sucia wore on, support for the government declined, and protests became more common. The situation reached a peak when the junta invaded the Falkland Islands on April 2, 1982. At first, General Leopoldo Galtieri was greeted by cheering citizens, many of whom had protested the senseless violence committed by the junta only days before.<sup>52</sup> Yet, as the war continued, the tide turned, when Argentina's ill-prepared forces became overwhelmed by the British navy. British forces captured roughly 11,400 Argentine prisoners and claimed the lives of about 650 soldiers, as opposed to the Argentine troops, who claimed only 255 British lives.<sup>53</sup> Many historians have also noted that technology emerged as an important factor in the war because Britain had nuclear-powered submarines, which were far superior to the older Argentine models of ships.<sup>54</sup> These factors eventually led Argentina to surrender on June 14, 1982, which further discredited the junta in the eyes of the country's citizens.<sup>55</sup> On June 17, three days after the loss of the Falkland Islands, the leaders of the military dictatorship were removed

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Amy Oakes, *Diversionary War: Domestic Unrest and International Conflict* (Redwood City, CA: Stanford Security Studies, 2012), 75.

<sup>53</sup> Britannica Academic, s.v. "*Falkland Islands War*", 2014, accessed December 23, 2016, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Falkland-Islands-War>.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

from power and General Reynaldo Bignone was installed as the country's president.<sup>56</sup>

After taking office, Bignone allowed political parties to resume activities and announced a general election in 1983, in which center-leftist Raúl Alfonsín of the Radical Civic Union became president.<sup>57</sup>

After he was elected, Alfonsín immediately began to enact policies that held the previous administration accountable for their actions. He repealed policies created by Bignone that granted amnesty to individuals accused of human rights violations and also began the process of prosecuting members of the previous administration, including Videla and Galtieri.<sup>58</sup> Alfonsín also created the National Commission on the Disappearance of Persons (Comisión Nacional sobre la Desaparación de Personas, often abbreviated as CONADEP) to investigate the human rights violations committed by the government.<sup>59</sup> This comprehensive investigation aimed to document the events, serve as evidence for human rights violations, and help ensure that an atrocity like the Guerra Sucia would never happen again. The detailed and comprehensive report of the commission, titled *Nunca Más* (Never Again) compiled statistics as well as testimony from individuals who had survived the era to document life in Argentina during the war. The contents of the report provided a detailed portrait of life under the junta. While the statistics gathered by the committee paint one of the most distressing portraits of this

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<sup>56</sup> *Britannica Academic*, s.v. "Dirty War."

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> Romero, 216.

traumatic time, some of the most moving documentation comes from the accounts of the living witnesses who were able to survive.

## **II. Punk in Argentina**

During the reign of the junta, a punk revolution began in Buenos Aires. Inspired by bands like The Sex Pistols, The Ramones, and The Clash, a new scene began to flourish within the harsh socio-political climate of Argentina. The origins of punk in Argentina began when a young student by the name of Pedro Braun experienced the genre firsthand after visiting London in 1976.<sup>60</sup> Upon returning to Argentina, he decided that he wanted to create his own band. After his group went through numerous lineup changes and Braun adopted the stage name "Hari-B," the band emerged as Los Violadores, one of the most prominent punk bands in the country.<sup>61</sup> Their name, literally translated as "The Violators," referred to breaking the law during a time in which numerous harsh human rights violations were in place in Argentina.<sup>62</sup> Despite these severe socio-political conditions, the band chose to perform during the Guerra Sucia.

The inspiration for the sound of the band drew from Braun's experiences in London. But the idea for their lyrics emerged from the events that surrounded them in Argentina. One notable example involved the song, "Represión" (Repression). The lyrics focused on the citizens who repressed the numerous abductions and human rights

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<sup>60</sup> Federico Gómez Levitanas, "When Punk Came Out To Confront The Idiots In Power," *Shit-fi.com*, 2009, accessed September 15, 2016, <http://www.shit-fi.com/articles/LosVioladores>.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> As noted previously, the term "violadores" is often translated figuratively as "rapists." This name may have been influenced by other punk bands such as The Sex Pistols who also had controversial names with hyper-masculine and sexually provocative themes.

violations that occurred throughout the country. The first chorus of the song contained the following lyrics:

Represión a la vuelta de tu casa	Repression around your house
Represión en el quiosco de la esquina	Repression at the corner kiosk
Represión en la panadería	Repression in the bakery
Represión 24 horas al día	Repression 24 hours a day <sup>63</sup>

The idea of repression was a powerful theme during the Guerra Sucia. The junta controlled the media, censoring reports of state-sponsored terrorism, although these attacks were widespread.<sup>64</sup> These bands used punk music and aesthetics to provide a voice and an outlet for youth who were caught in the middle of a traumatic time. Many who were young adults during the war spoke about how the concerts provided more than entertainment, giving them a safe and secure space. One individual, Ricardo, reminisced about the necessity of attending concerts during the Guerra Sucia. According to him, going to a concert was "like a need ... There was a tremendous need to be together. You felt sure that being together nothing was going to happen to you, but if you went out onto the streets something bad would happen for sure."<sup>65</sup> These fears were well-founded since, according to the statistics in *Nunca Más*, abductions from the street occurred frequently and were only outnumbered by abductions from an individual's home.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Note: All translations are by the author, unless otherwise noted.

<sup>64</sup> Romero and Brennan, 219.

<sup>65</sup> Vila, 133.

<sup>66</sup> "Report Of CONADEP (National Commission on The Disappearance Of Persons), 1984", *Desaparecidos.Org*, accessed December 20, 2016, [http://www.desaparecidos.org/nuncamas/web/english/library/nevagain/nevagain\\_000.htm](http://www.desaparecidos.org/nuncamas/web/english/library/nevagain/nevagain_000.htm).

In 1983, toward the end of the Guerra Sucia, Los Violadores penned an article in the Argentine magazine, *El Porteño*, entitled "Ser Punk" (Being Punk). This article is a manifesto that shows how the band utilized punk rock within the context of the Guerra Sucia. Given the increasingly open political climate of Argentina, the members of the band may have felt emboldened to critique the leaders of the country knowing that they faced little chance of reprisal. In this article, the band members noted how some critics viewed them as "violent," yet they reminded the reader that they lived in an extremely violent time, implying that the government was responsible for the immense number of murders, kidnapping, and abductions.<sup>67</sup> They also commented that they shared a bond with the British punk scene, noting how both countries faced challenges of political corruption, violence, and related social issues.<sup>68</sup>

### III. The British and North American Scenes

While Braun's firsthand experience in London led him to create an Argentine punk band, New York also had a famous punk scene. In fact, the origins of the genre were rooted in both London and New York. When it comes to the question of whether the US or the UK was responsible for the birth of punk, both countries have claimed the credit.<sup>69</sup> Bands that emerged from the British scene include The Sex Pistols, The Clash,

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<sup>67</sup> Federico Gómez Levitanas, "Los Violadores 'Ser Punk'," *Shit-Fi*, 2016, <http://www.shit-fi.com/fromthearchives/LosVioladores>.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Kevin Dunn, *Global Punk: Resistance and Rebellion in Everyday Life* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2015) 97. Although these two scenes are considered the main focus of this debate, other narratives challenge the punk canon. Los Saicos (The Psychos), for example, were a Peruvian band founded in the 1960s whose music had similar timbres to punk. The 1970 band Death, founded in Detroit, was the subject of a 2012 documentary, *A Band Called Death*, which explores the issue of whether or not their proto-punk sound

and The Damned, while some North American bands included The Ramones, Bad Brains, Misfits, and Dead Kennedys. Although the sounds of both musical communities resembled each other during the inception of the genre, they each had distinct attributes. In the UK, punk connected to ideas of class and social reform. In the United States however, punk embraced youth, partying, and freedom. Based on these models, the bands in Argentina created their own form of punk music which, as we shall see, came under the influence of these movements abroad.

The most notable punk band in the British scene was The Sex Pistols. Ironically, for a scene and a genre that would later abhor commercialism, the career of The Sex Pistols was created as a way to market fashion. The band was the innovation of Malcolm McLaren, the owner of a London-based boutique known as "Sex." The boutique sold clothes in an "anti-fashion" trend, and McLaren decided to create a musical group to market his clothing, which incorporated elements of S&M fashion, biker culture, and Scottish designs.<sup>70</sup> Eventually, this style of dress grew synonymous with punk subculture and many bands and artists associated with the genre adopted these elements.<sup>71</sup> Thus, what originally began as McLaren's manner of selling clothing soon led to one of the most iconic musical genres and subcultures of the 1970s and 1980s.

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gave them the status of the world's first punk band. This documentary challenged the punk canon, and some individuals argue that Death was the first "true" punk band.

<sup>70</sup> "The Sex Pistols Biography," 2017, *Rolling Stone*, accessed February 12, 2017, <http://www.rollingstone.com/music/artists/the-sex-pistols/biography>.

<sup>71</sup> Jacob McMurray, *Taking Punk to the Masses: From Nowhere to Nevermind* (Seattle: Fantagraphics Books, 2011) 9.

The name of the punk genre emerged from the New York scene, and was coined by a writer named Roderick "Legs" McNeil.<sup>72</sup> Near the end of 1975, McNeil decided to refer to the new genre as "punk" — a term derived from a fanzine he co-authored.<sup>73</sup> According to McNeil, the name fit the sound of the music, which he called: "drunk, obnoxious, smart but not pretentious, absurd, funny," and "ironic."<sup>74</sup> The name also held a deeper meaning, one connected to the idea of youth rebellion, and the feelings of freedom that young listeners felt for the first time. McNeil described the young fans of this new genre as: "Kids who grew up only believing in the Three Stooges. Kids that had parties when their parents were away and destroyed the house. You know, kids that stole cars and had fun."<sup>75</sup> The US scene began in New York and was closely associated with the venue CBGB. This club, originally created as a venue for country, bluegrass, and blues, evolved into one of the premier locations for New York punks in the 1970s and 1980s. While many bands emerged from this area at the time, one of the most notable, and one of the earliest, was the Ramones. It was with this band and this scene that the term "punk" originated. The Ramones were known for their iconic style (comprised of long hair and leather jackets), their tough, "streetwise" attitudes, and their performances at CBGB which eventually led to a deal with Sire Records.<sup>76</sup> At this time, the music of

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<sup>72</sup> Legs McNeil and Gillian McCain, *Please Kill Me: The Uncensored Oral History of Punk* (New York: Grove Press, 2016).

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> McNeil and McCain, 226.

<sup>76</sup> Ryan Moore, *Smells Like Teen Spirit: Youth Culture, and Social Crisis* (New York: New York University Press, 2009) 1.

The Ramones was beginning to gain traction. Their record deal introduced the band to more fans and critics, even though their music was somewhat unfamiliar because it did not have a place within other known musical genres at that time. However, as the exposure of the band grew, so did its influences. The music of The Ramones shaped other punk groups in the United States and abroad, exposing a new audience to this genre.

Both in the US and the UK, punk musicians and their fans took an interest in political issues. As one fan noted: "We can make our own movement, we can do it ourselves. We don't have leaders, no gods, no masters. Politics and social politics are important."<sup>77</sup> A US band known for its politically-driven songs was Dead Kennedys. Formed in 1978, this band called on music to critique political and social topics such as police brutality ("Police Truck"), the Cold War and Reagan era politics ("We've Got a Bigger Problem Now"), and anti-fascism ("Holiday in Cambodia"). In Britain, The Sex Pistols' "God Save the Queen" irreverently critiqued the imperial domination of the British working classes with its lyrics: "God save the queen / The fascist regime." These words shocked the public and caused some British politicians to demand the band's execution.<sup>78</sup> As we shall see later in this study, Argentine punk musicians who appropriated the genre drew on these political connotations to convey their resistance.

International punk bands not only communicated political messages through their song lyrics, but also through their aesthetics. Hebdige notes the particular significance of anarchic sounds and messages in influencing the visual aesthetics of the punk scene.

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<sup>77</sup> Erik Hannerz, *Performing Punk* (New York: Palgrave-MacMillan, 2015), 115.

<sup>78</sup> "Sex Pistols Vinyl Reissues 2007," *Johnlyndon.com*, accessed April 12, 2016, <http://www.johnlyndon.com/press/pistols.html>.



"Anarchy," however defined, is a common trend in punk music, as in The Sex Pistols song "Anarchy in the U.K." in which Johnny Rotten shouts the lines: "I am an antichrist/I am an anarchist." Not only was this aesthetic apparent in punk's fashion trends, but also in punk fanzines and on album covers, as in the black bars over Queen Elizabeth II's eyes and mouth in the single of "God Save the Queen." By masking the identity of a revered member of the British royal family, the band conveyed these notions of anarchy.

Just as the idea of concealing an individual's identity creates a sense of scandal or controversy, these bands produced their own critiques and scandals in order to further their music and promote their anti-hierarchical messages. These aesthetics came to influence Argentine punk bands as well, especially given the deeper roots that anarchism had in Argentina as a movement that dated back to the late nineteenth century.<sup>79</sup> Alerta Roja, for example, used a logo that incorporated the anarchy symbol consisting of a capital A within a red circle that was used by punk bands in the United States and England. Los Violadores also incorporated trends from international punk scenes. The band often dressed in leather outfits similar to bands like The Ramones.

Based on these parallels, it is possible to conclude Argentine punk bands appropriated the music and aesthetics of the British and US punk scenes to express their opposition to the struggles that youth in the country faced daily. The stylistic origins of the genre trace back to Braun's visit to London where factors such as the rebellious nature of the genre and its youth-oriented sound influenced the creation of this scene in Argentina. The US punk movement also affected Argentines in its style of music and

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<sup>79</sup> For additional discussion of the history of the anarchist movement in Argentina, see: Juan Suriano, *Paradoxes of Utopia: Anarchist Culture and Politics in Buenos Aires, 1890-1910*, trans. Chuck Morse (Oakland: AK Press, 2010), 16.

dress. As a whole, Argentine groups came under the influence of both British and North American models when they introduced punk music to Argentina, although they performed in their native language and adopted the lyrics to their own particular situation and needs.

Certain key identifying factors distinguished the Argentine punk movement from its counterparts in the United States and Great Britain. While the North American and British scenes operated under conditions of freedom, the Argentine punks lived in a society that was infused with government-sponsored kidnappings, censorship, and murder. Although Argentine punk musicians knew perfectly well what could happen to them if they spoke critically of the junta, they deliberately wrote songs that critiqued the direction of their country and the harsh realities that its citizens faced daily. This striking juxtaposition of a genre that promoted freedom in a country where numerous human rights were violated created one of the most intriguing punk scenes in the world.

## **Chapter II: Case Studies of Argentine Punk During the Guerra Sucia**

This chapter presents two case studies of Los Violadores and Alerta Roja, two notable punk bands in Argentina during the Guerra Sucia. These two bands came into prominence during the early years of the scene and served as two of the most significant examples of punk music in Argentina. They differed in their approaches and represented two distinct career paths—a large successful band in the case of Los Violadores and a small lesser-known group in the case of Alerta Roja. Their musical paths thus provide contrasting insights into the punk community. In addition to tracing the formation of each group, this chapter explores the ways in which these musicians used their work to protest the actions of the junta and the ways in which their lyrics reflected life in the country, particularly for Argentine youth. In this chapter, I also show how themes of anti-fascism, anti-totalitarianism, freedom, and anarchy that were common in the lyrics of international bands such as The Sex Pistols, The Clash, Dead Kennedys, and Black Flag were also found in the lyrics of Argentine punk groups.

### **I. Los Violadores**

Los Violadores are arguably one of the best-known punk groups in Argentina. Though the band originated during the final Argentine military dictatorship, the members of the group continued to have successful careers after the restoration of democracy. The origins of this group began with a student by the name of Pedro Braun. He came from a middle-class family; his father was an engineer and his mother was a forensic

odontologist.<sup>80</sup> He lived close to the University of Belgrano, where he studied business administration.<sup>81</sup> Near the end of 1976, Braun traveled to Europe to visit family members in Poland, but the trip also included a brief visit to London.<sup>82</sup> While there, Braun met with some members of the punk scene and decided that he wanted to start his own punk band in Argentina.<sup>83</sup> He gave himself a new identity, cutting his hair and adopting the stage-name "Hari-B."<sup>84</sup> The next thing he did was recruit other musicians to join his band.<sup>85</sup> One of the first musicians was Sergio Gramática. He was born in San Justo, a city in Buenos Aires Province, but raised in Bernal, a city in Quilmes Province.<sup>86</sup> He came from a working-class background. His father had a job in a factory that produced electrical transformers.<sup>87</sup> Gramática originally did not enjoy punk music, noting how he traded a copy of The Clash's first album for one by the band Yes.<sup>88</sup> However, when

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<sup>80</sup> Alfredo Sainz, "Arde Belgrano: Los Violadores in la UB, 17 de Julio de 1981," in *Derrumbando la Casa Rosada: Mitos y leyendas de los primeros punks en Argentina, 1978-1988*, ed. Daniel Sainz (Buenos Aires: Pioloto de Tormenta, 2011), 41.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> According to Sainz (42), Braun created this name as a homage to George Harrison. Harrison used the pseudonym, "Hari Georgeson" when working with Ravi Shankar. The "B" comes from Braun's last name. The name may call to mind notions of the Hare Krishna movement, associated with the Hindu religion.

<sup>85</sup> Sainz, 41.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

Braun introduced him to the music of The Ramones, it fascinated him.<sup>89</sup> The group also recruited two acquaintances of Braun's to join the group. The first was Néstor Podrido,<sup>90</sup> a vocalist, and the second was Mauricio Conterno, a neighborhood friend who joined the group as a guitarist.<sup>91</sup> Braun called his group "Los Testículos" (The Testicles), a name that provoked controversy in a manner similar to other punk bands in England and the United States (such as The Sex Pistols and Dead Kennedys).

Los Testiculos had their first show in December 1978 at a music festival at the Colegio Cuba de Belgrano.<sup>92</sup> Many of the songs they performed that night such as "Sucio poder" (Dirty Power), "Viejos patéticos" (Pathetic Elders), and "Cambio violento" (Violent Change) would later be included on the group's 1983 self-titled album, *Los Violadores*.<sup>93</sup> When recalling the concert, Gramática noted that it was a relatively calm night, which he described as "neither good nor bad," possibly due to the connotation of punk shows as rowdier and full of energy.<sup>94</sup>

The end of the Los Testículos era occurred in the middle of 1979 when Braun needed to report for mandatory military service. During this hiatus, Gramática decided to change the name of the band to "Los Violadores," which referred to breaking the law

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 42.

<sup>90</sup> Saíenz does not indicate Néstor's surname, however, his name translates to "Néstor Rotten;" possibly as an homage to The Sex Pistols' vocalist Johnny Rotten (John Lydon).

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 41.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 42

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

during the current dictatorship. The group became a trio once Braun returned from his military service because Podrido and Conterno left for unspecified reasons. Braun then recruited the bassist Alberto "Beto" Villaverde, who worked at a local discotheque and knew Hari from the neighborhood. While the details remain unclear, it was during this time that the group had its first issues with the police, which, as Sainz notes, eventually becomes "constant."<sup>95</sup> This unwanted police attention caused Villaverde to leave, and the group that was now a duo needed to recruit again. In the process, Villaverde left the band and Gustavo "Stuka" Fossa, a bassist who had attended one of the band's live shows, filled in for him. The group still needed a vocalist, and Fossa's girlfriend Trixy convinced the group to audition her friend, Enrique Chalar, known by the stage name "Emerson" (after Keith Emerson of the UK progressive rock group, "Emerson, Lake & Palmer,"). Chalar joined the group as its vocalist, but instead of keeping the name "Emerson," he changed his stage name to "Pil Trafa" in homage of Public Image Ltd (abbreviated as PiL), which was John Lydon's band after the breakup of The Sex Pistols.<sup>96</sup>

Censorship and government surveillance were widespread during the Guerra Sucia. The government even gave the postal service the power to intercept and read any private correspondence.<sup>97</sup> During this time, intellectuals and artists were the subjects of government monitoring, ensuring that the junta would hold a tight grip on the information

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Jean Graham-Jones, "Broken Pencils and Crouching Dictators: Issues of Censorship in Contemporary Argentine Theatre," *Theatre Journal* 53, no. 4 (2001): 597, <http://www.jstor.org.access.library.miami.edu/stable/25068988>.

that spread throughout the media.<sup>98</sup> Television stations and newspapers were subjected to comply with requests of the junta. In 1977, Rob Drinan, a Massachusetts congressman visited the country and noted how *La Prensa*, an internationally respected newspaper, "prints what it is told to."<sup>99</sup> Others, however, chose to defy the junta. This was the case for Robert Cox, an editor of the English-Language newspaper, the *Buenos Aires Herald*. In 1979, the junta arrested and jailed Cox for refusing to censor his own articles.<sup>100</sup> Even after his release from prison, he and his family received death threats for refusing to comply with gag orders and eventually fled the country.<sup>101</sup> Many artists and intellectuals responded by censoring themselves, a practice they called *autocensura* (literally self-censorship).<sup>102</sup>

Although the practice of *autocensura* existed during the creation of punk in Argentina, the songs of Los Violadores communicated more directly than other Argentine bands who opposed the regime. One of the iconic rock bands in Argentina, Sirú Girán, was also highly critical of the government. However, Los Violadores and Sirú Girán had different ways of critiquing the junta through their music. According to Vila, many famous rock bands in Argentina at the time drew a large audience that favored anti-military themes and music opposed to the junta, especially near the end of the Guerra Sucia. In an interview in the 1981 issue of *Expreso Imaginario* (an Argentine magazine

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<sup>98</sup> Romero and Brennan, 219.

<sup>99</sup> R. Dwight Wilhelm, "Censorship in Argentina," *International Social Science Review* 66, no. 1 (1991): 22, Accessed March 5, 2017, <http://www.jstor.org.access.library.miami.edu/stable/41881969>.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Graham-Jones, 595.

primarily focused on popular music), Charly García was asked about the role of the band's music during this era.<sup>103</sup> He responded by saying: "The people are expecting a kind of message. They need strength, vitality, and in the lyrics we denounce things and do all we can so that people go turned upside down, and we don't need a message which says: 'you must do this!'"<sup>104</sup> When the reporter, confused by this response, asked: "So there isn't a clear message?", García simply replied: "No, what is happening is the message."<sup>105</sup>

Sirú Girán used abstract imagery in their lyrics and music during the Guerra Sucia to emphasize their messages.<sup>106</sup> One of the group's songs, "Los sobrevivientes" (The Survivors), had the following lyrics:

We are blind from seeing  
We are tired of walking  
We are tired of running away  
In the city

Estamos ciegos de ver  
Cansados de tanto andar  
Estamos hartos de huir  
En la ciudad

We'll never have roots  
We'll never have a home  
And yet, as you can see  
We are from here

Nunca tendremos raíz  
Nunca tendremos hogar  
Y sin embargo ya ves  
Somos de acá<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> García was the only lead singer of Sirú Girán throughout the group's career. He also had a successful solo career.

<sup>104</sup> Quotation translated and cited in Pablo Vila, "Rock Nacional and Dictatorship in Argentina," *Popular Music* 6, no.2, (1987): 140, accessed March 21, 2016. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/853417>.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Deborah Schwartz-Kates, "Argentina and the Rioplatense Region," in *Musics of Latin America*, ed. Robin Moore and Walter Aaron Clark (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2012) 308-309.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.



Even though the words do not specifically refer to any individuals or groups, the song can be interpreted as an ode to the youth who survived the Guerra Sucia day to day.<sup>108</sup> The piece uses imagery such as "wandering" and "not having roots" to highlight this theme.<sup>109</sup> Not only is the message of "Los sobrevivientes" reinforced by the lyrics, but it is exemplified by the melody. The song begins with an extended instrumental passage. This section is comprised of short musical ideas in free meter. García continues this sense of freedom throughout the vocal sections. This piece has two stanzas that contains lyrics, while the rest of the song is instrumental. The stanzas, like the introduction, are in free meter, with minimal accompaniment. After the lyrics end, the piece transforms itself into a triumphant instrumental fanfare adding to the message of hope and resilience of those who survived the Guerra Sucia.<sup>110</sup> Although this song contains themes of solidarity with political undertones, it is embroidered within the complexity of the composition.

Los Violadores had more overt messages in their music, openly attacking the junta and life in Argentina. One of the band's most notable songs, "Represión" (Repression) focused on citizens who carried out their daily lives while ignoring the numerous human rights violations occurring within their country.<sup>111</sup> This track was included on the band's first album in 1983, but had been performed prior to its release. The song begins with a heavy guitar introduction, creating a timbre similar to the music

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 307.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Schwartz-Kates, 308-309

<sup>111</sup> For full lyrics in Spanish and English, see appendix 1.A.

of other punk bands. The lyrics focus on taking a stance against repression, which is the central theme of the song. The first verse of “Represión” contains the following lyrics:

Beautiful land of peace and love	Hermosa tierra de amor y paz
Beautiful, cordial people	Hermosa gente cordialidad
Soccer, barbeque, and wine	Fútbol, asado y vino
Are the tastes of the Argentine people	Son los gustos del pueblo Argentino

This part of the song conveys nationalistic sentiments towards the country and its citizens. Listening to this section alone, someone might think that the song is a nationalistic anthem, which heralds a high standard of living during the Guerra Sucia and highlights the key symbols that constitute a source of national pride. However, the lyrics take a more negative turn during the second stanza, which calls attention to some of the adverse elements of life at that time, including censorship, unfair labor compensation, and, most importantly, the concept of "repression," which the text reiterates numerous times:

Old and outdated censorship	Censura vieja y obsoleta
In films, in magazines, and in comic strips	En films, en revistas y en historietas.
Parties that are boring and lavish	Fiestas conchetas y aburridas
Where the fun is lost	En donde está la diversión perdida.

The concept of repression in the song was a powerful one. It referenced two separate but interrelated ideas: first, a government that repressed its citizens through abduction, torture, and murder, and second, the citizens’ own repression of the atrocities that surrounded them while carrying out their daily lives. Significantly, Part I of *Nunca más* bore the title, “La represión” (Repression).

While the members of Los Violadores were neither abducted nor served prison sentences, the band drew attention from local authorities. One incident occurred during the first Argentine performance of the US band, The Police. Los Violadores attempted to

serve as the opening act for the group, but because they were relatively unknown and had a controversial name, they could not perform that evening.<sup>112</sup> Nonetheless, they made a lasting impression on the Argentine rock scene. To publicize the group, Fossa threw a large amount of fliers into the air, prompting police officers to knock him onto the ground and beat him savagely.<sup>113</sup> The assault ended when the guitarist of The Police, Andy Summers, kicked the officers who were beating up Fossa.<sup>114</sup> The incident gave both Los Violadores and Summers a sudden uptick in local popularity due to the high profile of this incident.<sup>115</sup>

The most notable incident, however, occurred during a performance at the University of Belgrano in 1981. One of the most detailed accounts of the evening survives in the form of a letter to the magazine, *Expreso Imaginario* from Eduardo "Rosanroll" Camilli, who was a relatively famous figure in the world of Argentine *rock nacional* and the force behind the "Rosanroll Band."<sup>116</sup> According to Camilli's account, he sent his letter to document the events surrounding the incident that night.<sup>117</sup> The show had three bands: The Rosanroll Band was the headliner, along with Los Violadores and Trixy y Los Maniáticos, which opened for them.<sup>118</sup> Trixy y los Maniáticos was a female-

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<sup>112</sup> Gómez Levitanas.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> Sainz, 48.

<sup>117</sup> *Expreso Imaginario*, October 1981, 46.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

fronted band whose music had an upbeat pop-rock sound in comparison to well-known punk artists. During the Trixy y Los Maniáticos set, a group of punks in the audience led by the guitarist of another band, Los Laxantes, started to insult the women in the crowd—burning papers and kicking some of the rockers, who, according to Camilli, had not done anything to provoke them.<sup>119</sup> Although it is unclear why the guitarist took the actions he did, the groups' stylistic differences may have played a role. Los Laxantes had a more traditional punk sound and may have viewed themselves as "superior" to Trixy and the group's fans. Gender may have also played a role in this incident, as Trixy was a woman. Although feminist movements became prominent later in punk's history, at that time, it was a male-dominated genre in Argentina and throughout the world.

After Trixy y los Maniáticos, Los Violadores took to the stage, performing their song "Represión."<sup>120</sup> The lyrics targeted the hippie movement, as well as the youth who were killed by the government. Not only were the hippies older and of an earlier generation, but their passive approach to the political conflicts that unfolded around them contrasted with the punk musicians' tendency to protest directly against the government. While the full lyrics of the 1981 version of "Represión" are not known, Sainz notes that the song included the following lyrics:

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<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> Note: This version of the song (1981) contained different lyrics than the later version (1983), which is mentioned in Chapter I.

Repression in the UB <sup>121</sup>	Represión en la UB
The Belgrano rockers are lying in the street	Los rockeros de Belgrano están tirados en la calle
Without a fucking thing to do	Sin un carajo que hacer
Shitty hippies, dirty rockers	Hippies de mierda, rockeras sucias. <sup>122</sup>

The reference to the University of Belgrano in the lyrics holds a special significance here. Not only was it appropriate, since it signified the site of the band's performance, but it may also have referred to Braun, who studied at the institution and commented on the repressed youth he observed.

According to Camilli, the audience was not pleased. They began to throw chairs and chaos ensued.<sup>123</sup> The University of Belgrano employees immediately called the police, who came within minutes and began a raid on the audience and musicians.<sup>124</sup> This disruption caused the police to detain all three bands despite the fact most of the witnesses testified against Los Violadores.<sup>125</sup> After the police brought the latter group to the local station, guitarist Hari-B and drummer Stuka were released into their parent's custody, while vocalist Tafa and bassist Gramática spent the night in prison.<sup>126</sup> Sainz does not explain why the police kept two members of the band overnight, but there are some factors that might explain their motivation. The first was the age of the group members. The ones who were minors were released to their parents. The other possible

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<sup>121</sup> Universidad de Belgrano.

<sup>122</sup> Sainz does not clarify where in the song these lyrics occurred, but he cites them on p. 48 of his chapter.

<sup>123</sup> *Expreso Imaginario*, October, 1981.

<sup>124</sup> Sainz, 50.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

factor may have involved social class. Although we have no information about Stuka's background, we know that Braun came from an upper-middle class family, which may have influenced the police's decision. In contrast, one of the detainees, Trafa, was from a working-class background, and the police may have been more likely to detain a working-class youth during the period.

Trafa recalled the night he and Gramática spent in the station and their encounters with the police:

Once inside, they interrogated us first. I remember them asking me if I liked Silvio Rodríguez [a leftist Cuban musician known for composing music in the *nueva trova* style], and I did not even know who he was. ... And then (Sergio) Gramática began to laugh and they start to beat us. We stayed in the courtyard of the police station all night.<sup>127</sup>

While it is not clear if their arrest stemmed from the messages in their music, the riot, or both, it seems that political factors came into play. The mere mention of Rodríguez, who composed overtly political music, suggested that the police may have thought the band was aligned with left-wing forces who opposed the dictatorship. One important factor Trafa did not mention was the tone in which his interrogators asked the question about Rodríguez. There are two possible ways that this question could be interpreted. The first involves the guards' attempt to gain more information about the band's motivations and beliefs. By questioning Los Violadores about a Cuban left-wing musician, they may have tried to learn if the group had connections to other leftist movements in Latin America. An alternate interpretation is that the officers were being sarcastic and asked the question to mock the band. Regardless of how this question is

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<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

interpreted, the reference to Rodríguez suggested that the junta may have suspected the group was aligned with leftist forces and conspired with dissidents outside of Argentina

While this event might have prevented some musicians from performing, Los Violadores continued to play their music. Shortly after the incident, local authorities fined the band for the incident, leading Trafa to add the following verses to "Represión":

Long sacrificial weeks	Semanas largas, sacrificadas
Hard work, very little pay	Trabajo duro, muy poco paga
Unemployed, nothing happens	Desocupados, no pasa nada
Where are you, thugs? Equality is desired	Adónde está, bestias, la igualdad deseada. <sup>128</sup>

The sources give no indication of about what this early version of "Represión" sounded like. Nonetheless, it is likely that the 1983 recording released on the group's album, *Los Violadores*, had a timbre that resembled that of other global punk bands. The song begins with a guitar-heavy introduction, although the dynamics of the instruments decrease during the verses, emphasizing Trafa's lyrics. The second major shift in the song occurs during the bridge. Here the lyrics emphasize a stance against repression which is the central theme. While Trafa sings, the accompaniment becomes quieter, allowing the vocals to become the predominant feature.

By this time, Los Violadores had gained popularity in Argentina. Yet, as their influence grew, so did their critics. One of the most notorious of them was Gloria Guerrero, an Argentine journalist who wrote the infamous article, "Punks go Home."<sup>129</sup> In this article, she described the Argentine punk scene, along with Los Violadores and their fans as "degenerates," who wore boots and "insulted the Woodstock generation with

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<sup>128</sup> Sainz, 51.

<sup>129</sup> This article appeared in an undated 1981 issue of the magazine *Humor*, cited by Sainz, page 51.

hurtful words and phrases."<sup>130</sup> These comments highlight the band's opposition to the hippie movement, as seen in the original lyrics of "Represión." Although Guerrero portrayed the punk group and its fans in a negative light, the appearance of her article in the magazine, *Humor*, which was associated with resistance to the junta, enhanced the defiant image of Los Violadores and furthered the band's career.<sup>131</sup>

After the Guerra Sucia, Los Violadores continued to perform, and they published some of their first LPs. The band's first album, entitled, *Los Violadores*, was released in 1983 and included a version of "Represión" that had new lyrics. This piece became one of the band's iconic songs. The group continued to draw its inspiration from other punk scenes around the world. One notable example involved the group's song, "Uno Dos Ultraviolento" (One, Two, Ultraviolence).<sup>132</sup> The song has numerous references to the book and film, *A Clockwork Orange*, written and directed by Anthony Burgess and Stanley Kubrick respectively. The story, set in a dystopian version of London, centers around the narrator—a young gang member imprisoned for murder. While in prison, he is told he can commute his sentence by taking part in an experimental therapy that could potentially "cure" him of his violent tendencies. He eventually discovers that not only does the technique quell his destructive behavior, but it also gives him adverse reactions when listening to the music of Beethoven—one of his favorite composers.

"Uno, Dos, Ultraviolento" is likely influenced by the British punk group, The Addicts who incorporated visual aspects and the lyrics of the film into their music and

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<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

<sup>132</sup> For full lyrics in Spanish and English, see Appendix 1.B.



performances. The piece by Los Violaadores contains song texts in both Spanish and "Nadsat," a fictional language Burgess created that was a hybrid of Russian and English slang. Just as the punks in Argentina favored anarchy and freedom from corrupt governments, *A Clockwork Orange* conveyed similar themes of resistance to social control and anti-totalitarianism. Los Violaadores continued to compose songs that incorporated anti-government and anarchistic elements, such as "Zona Roja" (Red Zone) and "Mercado Indio" (Indian Market), which critiqued the Argentine government, and even "Petróleo y Sangre" (Oil and Blood) whose lyrics denounced the US Gulf War (1990-1991).

Los Violaadores later wrote songs that provided a voice of pro-Argentine nationalism during the Falklands War. The song, "Comunicado 166" (Communiqué 166) from the 1985 album, *Y ahora qué pasa, eh? (And Now What's Up, Eh?)* focuses on anti-British sentiment. While many Argentine citizens opposed the Guerra Sucia, many supported the junta's initiative to take back the Falkland Islands due to the strong nationalist belief that the islands belonged to them. At that time, Argentines tended to view the Falklands War and the Guerra Sucia as separate conflicts. Thus, it was possible for Los Violaadores to oppose the right-wing military government, but endorse the invasion of the Falklands on patriotic grounds.

The title of their piece is derived from the communiqué used by Argentine forces to announce their surrender to Britain.<sup>133</sup> Despite the group's prior songs that criticized the junta, "Comunicado 166" takes the side of the military by condemning the British

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<sup>133</sup> Gómez Levitanas.

forces during the Falklands War.<sup>134</sup> Ironically, this piece has a musically more upbeat sound than the rest of the group's songs. The melody is in a major key, and the guitar and drums utilize a swung eighth-note pattern throughout the piece. The lyrics blame Britain for the conflict, rather than the Argentine forces that initiated the attack. One section of the song uses the following lyrics:

The battle has ended	La batalla ha terminado
They left us several casualties	Nos dejaron varios muertos
And hundreds of mutilated [soldiers]	Y cientos de mutilados
And they kept them [for themselves]	Y se las quedaron ellos
The battle was finished	La batalla se acabó
The battle ended	La batalla se terminó
The battle was lost	La batalla se perdió <sup>135</sup>

This song provides insights into how Los Violadores may have perceived the Falklands War. Like many Argentine citizens who expressed concerns about the state of their country, the band stood behind the government's initiative to re-capture the islands despite its opposition to the military regime and repudiation of its human rights abuses. Although the band composed many songs that critiqued the junta, "Comunicado 166" had a nationalistic element that highlighted the complexities of Argentine patriotism during the Falklands War.

## II. Alerta Roja

Alerta Roja (Red Alert) is another punk group that emerged during the Guerra Sucia. This group was originally called Estado de Sitio (State of Siege) and was

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<sup>134</sup> For full lyrics in Spanish and English, see Appendix 1.C.

<sup>135</sup> "Letra 'Comunicado #166,' " *musica.com*, accessed March 9 2017. <http://www.musica.com/letras.asp?letra=1047125>.

comprised of Daniel "Pato" García (vocals and bass), Pablo "Strangler" Stella (guitar), and Fernán Contreras (drums). The musicians came together through a formation notice in the magazine *Segundamo*, even though they had met each other a few months earlier.<sup>136</sup> Stella was in a smaller punk group, DGI, but after the group broke up, he decided to continue playing with Contreras who was a neighborhood friend.<sup>137</sup> After García joined the band as the drummer, the group adopted the name, Estados de Sitio.

By June 1982, Estados de Sitio had played two shows (including one with Los Violadores), but they had a problem: they needed a vocalist to match their image.<sup>138</sup> Following a suggestion from a fan of the band, they decided to ask Sergio "Mongo" Spatavecchia to be their vocalist.<sup>139</sup> According to García, Spatavecchia was not only a good singer, but he visually embodied punk. When reminiscing about the first time he met Spatavecchia, García recalled:

When we saw [Spatavecchia], we were convinced. Tall, lanky, he was ideal for a punk band. He was holding his hand in the pocket of a long pilot [jacket]. It was like seeing Joey Ramone. ...When Luca Prodan [the lead singer of the popular Argentine band Sumo] saw him, he told me that he looked like Ian Curtis [the lead singer of the English post-punk band Joy Division].<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> Alfredo Sainz, "Punks en posición adelantada: Alerta Roja en el Teatro del Plata, 17 de Julio de 1982," in *Derrumbando la Casa Rosada: Mitos y leyendas de los primeros punks en Argentina, 1978-1988*, ed. Daniel Sainz (Buenos Aires: Píoloto de Tormenta, 2011), 57.

<sup>137</sup> Sainz, 58.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, 59.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*

After Spatavecchia became the vocalist, the original members had one other issue to address; the name of their group. The members had a tepid reception to the name, Estados de Sitio. Sainz even notes that, on one occasion, the band had to change its name to Estado de Lugar (State of the Place) when performing in a bowling alley.<sup>141</sup> After that, the group settled on Alerta Roja (Red Alert), a name with connotations of combativeness that reflected the messages in their songs. One of the band's notable shows occurred on July 17, 1982 at the Teatro del Plata, celebrating the end of the Falklands War three days earlier. Alerta Roja performed with Dr. Insobornable y los Monstruos de Plastilina (Dr. Insobornable and the Plasticine Monsters).<sup>142</sup> Alerta Roja invited the group to play with them in order to split the cost of the theater. They knew that they did not have many options and decided that Dr. Insobornable would be well-received at a punk show.<sup>143</sup> The members of the other band thought that this concert would be like any other, but they were not prepared for what happened that night. Ricardo Streiff (the vocalist, bassist, and founding member of the group) recalled the first sign that this concert would not be a usual one:

We came up with a bag full of beer cans and we started to give them away [to the audience]. The problem is that they were taken and thrown onto the stage, until I caught one that was aimed at, and missed, my younger sister. I told him that if he threw one more I would kill him and he calmed down.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> According to Sainz, this event was a single occurrence, yet he does not elaborate on this incident.

<sup>142</sup> Sainz (61) notes that in a review of the group's demo in *Expreso Imaginario*, the music of Dr. Insobornable y los Monstruos de Plastilina was compared to bands such as The B-52s and Siniestro Total (A Spanish punk band).

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

<sup>144</sup> Sainz, 62.

Streiff had incorporated two of his sisters into the band, who dressed like schoolgirls when performing.<sup>145</sup> He anticipated that the crowd would be rowdy, and he brought the beer as a way to "calm the beasts," according to the members of Alerta Roja.<sup>146</sup> Even in their dressing room, Alerta Roja began to feel the tensions rise but went on to perform a show in a chaotic atmosphere.<sup>147</sup> García remembers the punks throwing whatever they could get their hands on— beer cans, construction material, bathroom tiles, and even a toilet seat became impromptu projectiles that night, but the band continued to play despite the chaos.<sup>148</sup> This anecdote exemplifies the idea of audience participation that was found within the Argentine punk scene. Punk tends to be more of a participatory genre in comparison to other forms of popular music. It tends to be performed in smaller venues, providing little to no barriers between the band and the audience.

Alerta Roja's career was not as well received as that of Los Violadores. Of the two albums the group released, the first, dating from 1981, was lost and even the band did not have a copy. However, it was later circulated online under the name, *Derrumbando la Casa Rosada*.<sup>149</sup> The group's second album, *El llanto interior* (Inner Weeping) was released in 1986. There is little information on the initial reception of this album within the Argentine punk community. In 2013, Pinhead Records released an

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<sup>145</sup> Ibid.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., 63.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid.

<sup>149</sup> Sainz, 65.

Alerta Roja compilation album entitled, *Historiko*<sup>150</sup> 81-87: *La Otra Cara del Punk* (Historic 81-87: The Other Face of Punk). This album contains the band's entire discography. Not only does this album include both the contents of *Derrumbando la Casa Rosada* and *El llanto interior* in their entirety, but it also includes three live performances from 1987.<sup>151</sup>

Alerta Roja's career can be divided into two periods based on both the release of the group's albums and the socio-political context of Argentina. When looking at these two albums from an historical perspective, one can note how the band released its first album during the end of the Guerra Sucia whereas the second was released after the restoration of democracy in Argentina. The first creative phase, which I will refer to as the "*Derrumbando* period" begins at the band's inception and lasts until 1983. During this period, the band not only released its first album, but also performed during the Guerra Sucia. The second creative phase, which I will refer to as the "*El llanto* period" begins in 1984 and lasts until the band's dissolution in 1987. This period encompasses the group's second album after the restoration of democracy in Argentina.

During the *Derrumbando* period Alerta Roja incorporated lyrics that were overtly political and contained anti-junta sentiments. One notable song from the album is "Revolución en la Evolución," which critiqued the leaders of Argentina's government.<sup>152</sup> The first verse contains the following lyrics:

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<sup>150</sup> The word "histórico" in Spanish means "historical" or "historic" While there is no indication as to why the album has this misspelling, it may be a way to preserve a form of punk aesthetic.

<sup>151</sup> Sainz, 65.

<sup>152</sup> For full lyrics in Spanish and English, see appendix 2.A.

In the crypt inside your head	En la cripta de tu cabeza
There is no longer purity	Ya no se encuentra pureza
What is your revolution supporting?	¿En que se apoya tu revolución?
Slowing total evolution	Lenta total evolución
Exceptional advanced inventions	Excepcional inventos de avanzadas,
Missiles, neutron [bombs]	Los misiles, los neutrones
The future of mice for the modern world	El futuro de ratones para el mundo
moderno <sup>153</sup>	

The song begins with a solo guitar introduction using four chords (G, B, A, G), followed by a three-note response in the bass and drums echoing the G chord. This pattern repeats twice more before going into the verses. For the rest of the song, the timbre becomes consistent with other punk songs, utilizing the four chords in the introduction, not straying from this progression. This song critiques the integrity of the country's leaders by questioning their integrity and displaying the lack of purity within their minds. The band's choice of words, comparing the leaders' minds to a crypt, also intensifies the group's message by associating the leaders of the country with symbols of death and morbidity. The sarcastic tone of the lyrics, which refers to powerful military weapons such as missiles and neutron bombs, brings out the idea of anti-war sentiment. The final line of the first verse has enigmatic lyrics: "The future of mice for the modern world." The use of "mice" could refer to the country's leaders, due to the association of mice with filth and disease. The notion of "mice" could also be used to represent the citizens of Argentina as "lab rats" that are caged within the confines of the country and subjected to the whims of the junta. These lyrics may even reference Douglas Adams' book, *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, in which mice secretly run the world.

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<sup>153</sup> "Letra De Revolución En La Evolución," *Coveralia*, accessed February 28 2017, <http://www.coveralia.com/letras/revolucion-en-la-evolucion-alerta-roja.php>.

Regardless of how the lyrics are interpreted, there is a clear political implication behind them.

The second verse continues to attack the actions of the dictatorship. The lyrics use historical evidence and explore other countries that had similar political issues to Argentina. The first line contains the lyrics: Your fears are in Cuba / Nicaragua, El Salvador.<sup>154</sup> The three countries mentioned all had revolutions that overthrew previous right-wing governments. The music of *Alerta Roja* not only serves as a means for the band to express its thoughts on the political climate, but also acts as a warning to the junta about the dangers of their actions. Lyrics such as these, paired with the combativeness of both the genre and the image of the band helped the members secure their spot in the early Argentine punk scene.

The title track of the band's first album, *Derrumbando la Casa Rosada* (Overthrowing the Pink House)<sup>155</sup> exemplifies the critique that *Alerta Roja* leveled against the junta during their *Derrumbado*” period.<sup>156</sup> This song is slower than typical songs in the punk genre. It begins with an ostinato drum fill played like a military drum cadence. Alongside this figure, the guitar presents a slow, distorted melody. After the introduction, the group breaks into a riff with a more traditional punk sound, with lyrics that firmly criticize the government. A powerful line from the text reads: "There is no

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<sup>154</sup> Está en Cuba, tu terror/ Nicaragua, El Salvador.

<sup>155</sup> The home and office of the Argentine president located in Buenos Aires. It functions similarly to the White House.

<sup>156</sup> For full lyrics in Spanish and English, see appendix 2.B.



way out, no salvation for your regime of repression,"<sup>157</sup> a phrase that echoes the themes of Los Violadores. The lines "Derrumbando la Casa Rosada" appear numerous times in a slow and deliberate tone, as if to allow those not familiar with the piece to memorize the words and possibly sing along with ease. This song is another example of the way Alerta Roja uses music as an active force of youth resistance during the Guerra Sucia. The message is not only overt, but is strengthened by the rebellious and defiant spirit of the punk music genre.

Like Los Violadores, Alerta Roja hated the hippy movement in Argentina with a passion. The group even had a song called "Hippy Japa" which began with the lyrics: "When I see you (hippies) walking down the street, you disgust me." However, despite the connotations between the protest song movement and the hippie movement, Alerta Roja chose to incorporate elements of it within their music. Alerta Roja also used their music as a way to channel youth frustration during one of Argentina's most brutal dictatorships. One song that exemplifies this concept is "Juventud Perdida" (Lost Youth).<sup>158</sup> The title brings to mind the abductions that occurred in the country during the Guerra Sucia. According to the statistics in *Nunca Más*, 43.23% of the Argentines who disappeared were between the ages of 16 and 25.<sup>159</sup> During the Guerra Sucia, the country's youth lived with the constant fear of being abducted. The first and second verses of this song refers to the sense of despondency that young people might feel when

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<sup>157</sup> "No hay salida, no hay salvación para tu régimen de represión."

<sup>158</sup> For full lyrics in Spanish and English, see appendix 2.C.

<sup>159</sup> "Part II. The Victims. The Disappeared By Age Group," 2017, *Desaparecidos.Org*. Accessed February 27 2017, [http://www.desaparecidos.org/nuncamas/web/english/library/nevagain/nevagain\\_210.htm](http://www.desaparecidos.org/nuncamas/web/english/library/nevagain/nevagain_210.htm).

faced with these conditions, and encourages them not to give up hope in this bleak and harrowing era:

You cannot live without high school	No se puede vivir, sin la escuela secundaria
You cannot live by playing guitar	No se puede vivir, tocando la guitarra
You cannot live without doing anything	No se puede vivir, sin nunca haciendo nada
You cannot live lying in bed	No se puede vivir, tirado en la cama
You have to live	Tenés que vivir
You have to suffer	Tenés que sufrir
You have to fight	Tenés que pelear
You will have to die	Tendrás que morir. <sup>160</sup>

While some individuals were not targeted by the junta, many knew of at least one abducted individual, creating an aura of fear and terror throughout the country. The final verse contains the phrase: "Looking for an explanation to live,"<sup>161</sup> followed by the word "vivir" (to live) multiple times. This song exemplifies the idea of resilience, even in times when death and murder were widespread.

After the restoration of democracy in Argentina, Alerta Roja began to experiment with new styles of music on their 1985 album, *El llanto interior*. When listening to the music from this album, in comparison to *Derrumbando la Casa Rosada*, one of the first notable changes is the style. Alerta Roja departed from the traditional punk sound, favoring post-punk musical aesthetics. This subgenre of punk differed greatly from the approach of notable punk bands, such as The Ramones and The Sex Pistols. In post-punk music, the vocals are often sung rather than shouted, the compositions are more melodic,

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<sup>160</sup> "Letra De Juventud Perdida," *Coveralia*, accessed March 2, 2017, <http://www.coveralia.com/letras/juventud-perdida-alerta-roja.php>.

<sup>161</sup> "Buscando explicación para vivir."

and the sound has less energy. It appears that the members of Alerta Roja were influenced by popular post-punk bands at this time. In a 1985 interview, a journalist asked García what bands Alerta Roja listened to. Most of the groups he mentioned were popular post-punk bands, such as Joy Division, Siouxsie and the Banshees, and The Cure.<sup>162</sup> One notable song that exemplifies this trend is "Desata las manos de tú conciencia" (Unleash the Hands of Your Conscience).<sup>163</sup> Like Alerta Roja's earlier music, it begins with an extended solo before the vocals enter. Yet, when Spatavecchia begins, his lyrics are no longer shouted but sung in a somewhat monotone voice, utilizing an echo effect throughout the piece.

The second important way that *El llanto interior* distinguished itself from *Derrumbando la Casa Rosada* was the socio-political context. By this time, the Guerra Sucia had ended and free elections had restored democracy to Argentina. Yet, while the group's sound had changed, many aspects of their political views remained the same. The lyrics of "Desata las manos de tú conciencia" expressed similar anti-war and anarchistic views that had characterized Alerta Roja's earlier music. However, the song also included new elements of government mistrust and cynicism, perhaps because the group now felt free to express their views without fear of reprisal.

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<sup>162</sup>*Quién sirve a la causa del kaos?* [1985?].

<sup>163</sup> For full lyrics in Spanish and English, see appendix 2.D.

This song has two verses. The first contains the following lyrics:

We are threatened by nuclear war	Estamos amenazados por un guerra nuclear
Here they did not realize	Aun aquí no se dieron cuenta
They were not aware of the real danger	No tomaron conciencia del peligro real
We are under government unconsciousness	Estamos bajo la inconsciencia gubernamental
That forces us not to think	Que nos obliga a no pensar
In my country they die of hunger	En mi país se mueren de hambre
In my country they drown	En mi país se mueren de ahogados
We are all in a deep sleep	Estamos todos muy dormidos
And it will be late when we wake up	Y será tarde al despertar. <sup>164</sup>

The first line refers to the height of the Cold War and conveys anti-nuclear sentiments that had also appeared in "Revolución en la evolución." Other central themes are government mistrust and neglect of its citizens, which appears in verses such as "In my country they die of hunger" and "In my country they drown." Just as Alerta Roja used "Revolución en la evolución" to "warn" the junta about the consequences of their actions, this song puts individuals on notice about government misdeeds. The second verse exemplifies this idea when it commands listeners to "untie the hands of their consciousness":

Untie the hands of your consciousness	Desata las manos de tú conciencia
Governments do not exist	Los gobiernos no existen
Religions fight	Las religiones pelean
Corruption is widespread	La corrupción es generalizada
And leads us to the end	Y nos lleva al final
Untie the hands of your consciousness	Desata las manos de tú conciencia <sup>165</sup>

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<sup>164</sup> "Letra de Desata las Manos de tú Conciencia," *Coveralia*, accessed March 16 2017. <http://www.coveralia.com/letras/desata-las-manos-de-tu-conciencia-alerta-roja.php>.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid.

This song informs listeners that the world is not how they see it and that they must lose a part of their consciousness in order to view it for what it really is. One of the most powerful lines in the song are the title lyrics: "Untie the hands of your consciousness." The idea of hands tied or bound together brings to mind images of slavery or imprisonment. The lyrics represent these metaphorical hands as restrained by government and religion, which hinders the individual's view of reality and leads to his or her demise. This song also incorporates the notion of mistrust. Although it was released during better times after the restoration of democracy, it reflects the scepticism of the band toward governments of Argentina and other countries. Because Alerta Roja's music reveals a profound mistrust of the government, this song functions as a warning to individuals who were not aware of any possible misconduct and trusted post-dictatorship leaders.

In short, the career of Alerta Roja was not as prolific as that of Los Violadores. Yet, the band maintained many of its initial group members and continued to perform regularly until 1987—the same year in which the three live songs included on *La Otra Cara del Punk* were recorded.<sup>166</sup> The two periods of the group show how the messages of Alerta Roja's songs functioned during the transition to democracy. While their early songs provided an aggressive and overt stance against the junta, the music after the transition to democracy no longer promoted an active state of resistance. Yet, the music of Alerta Roja's second period still showed strong ties to its earlier position in that it continued to convey messages of anarchy. While the band members no longer had to fear

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<sup>166</sup> Shortly after the death of the group's close friend, Luca Prodan, its members disbanded. According to Sainz (67), the group then went dormant for years until 2011 when Spatavecchia and Contreras decided to reunite under the name Alerta Roja once more with a new guitarist and bassist. Sainz does not specify the reason they decided to continue playing.

for their safety and their lives, their music still revealed a mistrust of the government—an attitude rooted in their experience during the Guerra Sucia.

### **III. Conclusions**

Los Violadores and Alerta Roja provide two different but interrelated views of the Argentine punk scene during the Guerra Sucia. By examining the music of both bands, one can note how the changing socio-political context influenced their music. Both groups originated during the military dictatorship—an event that had a profound influence on their music. Songs such as "Represión" and "Revolución en la evolución," served as ways for musicians to speak out about the negative aspects of life in Argentina at that time. Other songs, such as "Juventud perdida" allowed groups to sing about the challenges that Argentine youth faced daily. The messages they encoded into their music provide insight into the struggles that young Argentines faced during this brutal period. Although these bands knew of the possible consequences they might face by openly speaking out against the government, they used their music and the Argentine punk scene to protest the violation of human rights around them. In the next chapter, I expand on these views by showing how not only the bands themselves but Argentine punk fans helped solidify this musical community.

## Chapter III: Exploring the Argentine Punk Scene through Periodicals

This chapter presents two case studies of the Argentine punk subculture through different types of periodicals: magazines and fanzines. These publications show how the genre functioned in Argentina from contrasting perspectives: official media outlets and that of punk fans who created their own periodicals in order to promote a genre they embraced. These case studies show that not only did the themes of youth rebellion and resistance permeate the songs and lyrics of Argentine punk bands, but they reflected the subculture of those who participated in the genre. Moreover, because the periodicals themselves extend both before and after the Guerra Sucia, these writings show how the punk scene adopted itself to changing conditions as the country transitioned from dictatorship to democracy.

### I: Punk in *Expreso Imaginario*

While punk was not the main focus of many Argentine magazines, some periodicals chose to cover this genre. *Expreso Imaginario* (sometimes simply referred to as *Expreso*) was one such magazine. This publication was selected as a subject for further study for numerous reasons. The first relates to the limited access I had to periodicals outside of Argentina, but in the case of *Expreso*, I was able to locate selected copies of the magazine online.<sup>167</sup> The second involved the magazine's coverage. Even though *Expreso Imaginario* was a general publication that included music of all types, punk received significant treatment within the pages of the periodical. Specifically, one article

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<sup>167</sup> During this study, I was able to obtain scans of issues no. 1-78 (August, 1976-January, 1983) of *Expreso Imaginario* at <http://laexpresoimaginario.blogspot.com>.

by Marcelo Gasió on Los Violadores contained interviews with the band and provided valuable insights into the relationship the group had with Argentine politics during the period. Although the readership of the magazine has not yet been discussed in the scholarly sources, the topics explored and their appeal to certain types of readers provides clues into their ages, class, and social orientation. Finally, the magazine sets up a contrast with the fanzines explored later in the chapter in several important respects, including the broad nature of the public readership and the way that this would have influenced the presentation of popular musicians and bands.

While punk was not the main focus of *Expreso Imaginario*, some specific issues of the magazine focused on the genre. For the June 1978 edition, punk was the main topic. The cover had a cartoon drawing of a stereotypical punk rocker with a razor blade slicing into the palm of his hand next to the words: "Punk: A Violent Cut in Popular Music."<sup>168</sup> The article, written by Alfredo Rosso, details the punk rock scenes in the United States and England as if to give the reader who may know little about the genre, a basic orientation.<sup>169</sup> Not only does Rosso provide information regarding many of the bands, but he even included a selected discography for those who were curious about the genre. His scope is broad, and he mentions bands such as The Sex Pistols, The Clash, The Damned, and The Ramones.

As the punk scene in Argentina grew, *Expreso Imaginario* included more sections dedicated to punk from Argentina and abroad. Los Violadores had an article dedicated to them in an issue published in December 1981. Marcelo Gasió interviewed

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<sup>168</sup> "Punk, un tajo violento en la música popular." *Expreso Imaginario*, June 1978.

<sup>169</sup> Alfredo Rosso, "La nota de punk," *Expreso Imaginario*, June 1987, 27-35.



the members of the band while they visited the *Expreso Imaginario* office. The article focused on the group's emerging career, and some of the controversies they encountered.<sup>170</sup> Gasió seemed curious about the group's background during the interview, wanting to learn more about the band and what punk meant to them.

Two topics that Gasió immediately addressed concerned controversies about the band. He first asked about the incident at the University of Belgrano, described in detail in Chapter 2. Gasió specifically brought up the letter that Eduardo “Rosanroll Camilli sent to the *Expreso Imaginario* offices recalling what happened during the riot provoked by a performance of “Represión” that ultimately led to the arrest and detention of the band.<sup>171</sup>

In the interview, Los Violadores talked about the incident from their perspective. Naturally concerned about issues of safety and security, the group said nothing that overtly critiqued the government. Yet, the satirical tone of their statement revealed their views more directly. One member of the band noted that: "After the concert, they took us to a beautiful hotel where we spent the next 24 hours—unforgettable journey. They told us to be good kids, like Charly García."<sup>172</sup> This quote contradicts a later account of the incident that the vocalist Chalar gave to Alfredo Sainz in an interview appearing in the book, *Derrumbando la Casa Rosada: Mitos y leyendas de los primeros punks en*

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<sup>170</sup> Note: Gasió's article does not indicate which member or members of the band responded to the questions.

<sup>171</sup> The university, the incident, and the letter in reference are described in detail in Chapter II.

<sup>172</sup>“Después del concierto, nos llevaron a un hotel muy lindo, donde estuvimos unas 24 horas: una jornada inolvidable. Nos dijeron que teníamos que ser buenos chicos, hacer como Charly García.” Marcelo Gasió, "Los Violadores," *Expreso Imaginario*, December, 1981, 30.

*Argentina, 1978-1988*, published 27 years after the return to democracy in Argentina.<sup>173</sup>

According to Chalar, the "beautiful hotel" was the police station where he and Fossa were beaten and interrogated for 24 hours.

The contradiction between the two accounts is fascinating. Surely, in 1981, the musicians of the band would have offered the original story for their own protection. Yet, beyond the repressive policies of the junta, the group may also have responded glibly to the question to maintain a "tough" public image to validate their punk authenticity. By downplaying a serious event, they fortified their defiant anti-junta image. The band also noted that the police accused Chalar and Fossa of being Nazis due to their controversial lyrics and performance. In response, Gasió asked the group: "You're not [Nazis]?" to which they countered: "We respect the machine of fascism. ... Nothing to see here."<sup>174</sup> Again, their responses are satirical, and contradict the political messages within their songs.

One of the other controversies was the Gloria Guerrero article entitled, "Punks Go Home." As noted earlier, this article was a negative piece that criticized both punk groups and their fans. Although Guerrero had gained infamy within the punk scene, she emerged as a recognized figure as the first Argentine woman music journalist.<sup>175</sup> According to

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<sup>173</sup> Alfredo Sainz, "Arde Belgrano: Los Violadores in la UB, 17 de Julio de 1981," in *Derrumbando la Casa Rosada: Mitos y leyendas de los primeros punks en Argentina, 1978-1988*, ed. Daniel Sainz (Buenos Aires: Pioloto de Tormenta, 2011), 50.

<sup>174</sup> "¿No lo son [nazis]? Respetamos la maquinaria del fascismo. ... Acá nada que ver." Gasió, 30.

<sup>175</sup> Cristian Vitale, "Gloria Guerrero y su libro estadio obras, el templo del rock," *Página 12*, December 22, 2010, accessed March 30, 2017, <https://www.pagina12.com.ar/diario/suplementos/espectaculos/3-20316-2010-12-22.html>.

Gasió, Los Violadores did not take her criticism too seriously and even praised her. The group responded to her comments with humor, thanking her for her article and noting that she attended the infamous show. Despite her negative tone and harsh choice of words, the band responded to the questions about the article by saying: "It seems perfect to us, because, thanks to your note, everyone in the world knows about us." <sup>176</sup>

It is fascinating to look at the group's responses to two completely different controversies during the Guerra Sucia. The first came from an oppressive military dictatorship, and the second came from a prominent music critic. However, the group chose not to back down on its beliefs and presented itself in a defiant yet humorous manner. One member of the group even noted: "The worst that can happen to punk is to accept it."<sup>177</sup> This interview added to the band's defiant image as exemplified by its lyrics and the punk genre itself.

Even Gasió mimicked the satirical remarks from the band, helping to ease the tensions. A notable instance came when he talked about the background of the band members. When describing Braun, noting his background as a business administration student at the University of Belgrano, Gasió wrote: "Hari 'B' studies business administration at ... the [University of Belgrano] (!!?)",<sup>178</sup> poking fun of the incident that occurred there by adding the additional exclamation points and question mark. Throughout the interview, Los Violadores, like the group's English and US counterparts, projected an anti-authoritarian stance. Yet, the one aspect that distinguished this group

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<sup>176</sup> "Nos parece perfecto, porque gracias a su nota todo el mundo nos conoce." Gasió, 30.

<sup>177</sup> "Lo peor que le puede pasar al punk es que lo acepten." Gasió, 30.

<sup>178</sup> ...Hari "B" estudia administración de empresas en...la UB (!!?). Ibid.

from other punk bands was the context in which its members lived. Performing music in a country with an oppressive dictatorship carried extreme risks. Sainz notes that the band experienced these issues firsthand. During the early years, the musicians had constant encounters with the police in incidents such as the one at the University of Belgrano.<sup>179</sup> When Gasió brought up this topic, the band continued to project a "tough" persona by replying: "It is risky, yes, but life is a risk."<sup>180</sup>

After putting such controversies aside, Gasió turned his attention to the punk scene in Argentina. He expressed curiosity about this new genre, wondering what function it served within the country. In this article, he cited an unidentified source that noted there were between 200-300 punks in the country at that time. After hearing these statistics, the band presented a divergent view, noting that its fan base was much bigger, claiming: "There are 25 million, but here they are 'bad' punks."<sup>181</sup> Joking, they explained that the fans included: "The bus driver, the paper boy, the employees ... everybody."<sup>182</sup>

In researching this response, I received valuable information from the bassist of Los Violadores, Robert "El Polacio"<sup>183</sup> Zelazek, who played with the band from 1983-1997. As early as 1980, during the military dictatorship, he became friends with the

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<sup>179</sup> Sainz, 43.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid.

<sup>183</sup> Zelazek's nickname "El Polacio" literally translates to "The Pole," referring to his Polish background.

band's members.<sup>184</sup> When I asked Zelazek about the backgrounds of group's fans, he gave the following response:

The fans did not exist in the beginning. They were rockers who came, astonished to see us because there was nothing like it. ... [The backgrounds of the fans] included everything, from guys from marginal areas to good families that had their own car ... there was never discrimination in [the Argentine punk scene]."<sup>185</sup>

When asked about the appropriation of punk elements from other international scenes, Los Violadores replied that transferring the music from one country to another made it something unique. Rather than wanting to be labeled as just another punk band, the members of the group focused on the way that life in Argentina had shaped their music. They stated that: "We sing about things that affect us as Argentines. We sing our problems. We live here and our music comes from that. ... We sing the Argentine reality."<sup>186</sup> It is clear that the "Argentine reality" the group referred to included the harsh conditions that they and their fans faced during the Guerra Sucia. Tellingly, at the bottom of the article, Gasió included the lyrics to "Represión" — a song whose central theme focuses on issues pertaining to life in Argentina during the Guerra Sucia.

One of the most insightful moments of the article occurred when Gasió asked the band members what punk meant to them. They responded by saying that punk signified

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<sup>184</sup> Taken from an e-mail correspondence from March 16, 2017. The emails were sent in Spanish, but the translated responses are included in this chapter.

<sup>185</sup> "Los fans en un principio no existían, era gente rockera que venía asombrada a vernos porque no había nada igual... había de todo, desde chicos de zonas marginales hasta de buena familia que tenían su propio auto pero... nunca en el punk hubo discriminación." E-mail correspondence with the author, March 16, 2017.

<sup>186</sup> "Nosotros cantamos cosas que no afectan como argentinos, cantamos nuestros problemas. Vivimos acá y a partir de eso sale la música. ...cantamos la realidad Argentina." Gasió, 30.

"the return of rock and roll," but a rock and roll in which the audience participated. They noted how people who attended simple rock concerts attended the show, applauded, and left. However, they noted that with punk it was different. According to Los Violadores, the punk scene had more dancing, more audience participation, and more rebellion. For example, while many famous rock bands performed in larger stadiums or venues, many punk bands performed at smaller venues, such as CBGB, a New York club associated with The Ramones. These smaller areas provided a more intimate atmosphere for both the bands and the audience. Although Los Violadores would later pen the article, "Ser Punk" in the magazine *El Porteño* in 1983, this is one of the first times that its members spoke about the genre and what it meant to be a punk musician in Argentina. In the later article, which resulted from the collaborative efforts of the entire group rather than any single member, they echoed many of the same sentiments.

This point can be used to illustrate important trends of Argentine punk concerts in the early years of the national scene. One theme is the topic of audience participation and behavior. The band criticized what rock in Argentina had become in both interviews, elaborating in detail in "Ser Punk":

Rock became bourgeois— [it] transformed itself into “concert rock,” with the people sitting nicely and applauding, everything under control, with people gently moving their feet and humming, at most. The rock of Obras [an indoor venue which held numerous rock concerts] is boring, not different than tango or bolero. We bent the rules. No chairs, no stillness. Jump, dance, spit on us, and bring the idol down. Rock follows the same line of melodic music, in which there are idols that you are supposed to worship, just because they understand music a bit and go up on stage. That is crazy. In Obras, things can happen, but it depends on who is playing. If Van Halen, Riff, or V8 play, something may happen. But if Alejandro Lerner [a popular Argentine singer-songwriter] plays, I fall asleep.<sup>187</sup>

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<sup>187</sup> Levitanas, "Los Violadores 'Ser Punk'."

In other punk scenes around the world, dance and movement during a concert were common. One of the most popular forms of dancing at a punk show was called "pogo dancing." The move was invented by The Sex Pistols' bassist Sid Vicious (John Simon Ritchie), and involved dancers jumping up and down if they were on a pogo stick.<sup>188</sup> Los Violadores and other Argentine bands admired the musical influences of this and other international groups, which helped influence the punk scenes within their own country.

Gasió's article provides a critical lens to examine the early Argentine punk scene. This 1981 article not only offers information on Los Violadores, but it also illustrates the ways in which the members of the group presented themselves to their fans and the media during the Guerra Sucia. The nature of this interview contrasts starkly with the more transparent information provided by Sainz in his 2011 chapter on Los Violadores. In contrast, the band members' responses to Gasió highlighted their defiant personas and showed how their sarcastic responses to political events changed after the dictatorship had ended.

## II. Argentine Punk Ethos through Fanzines

In his book, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*, Hebdige defines fanzines as: "journals edited by an individual or a group consisting of reviews, editorials, and interviews with prominent punks, produced on a small scale as cheaply as possible, stapled together and distributed through a small number of sympathetic retail outlets."<sup>189</sup> As Hebdige's statement attests, fanzines are synonymous with punk culture. Not only are

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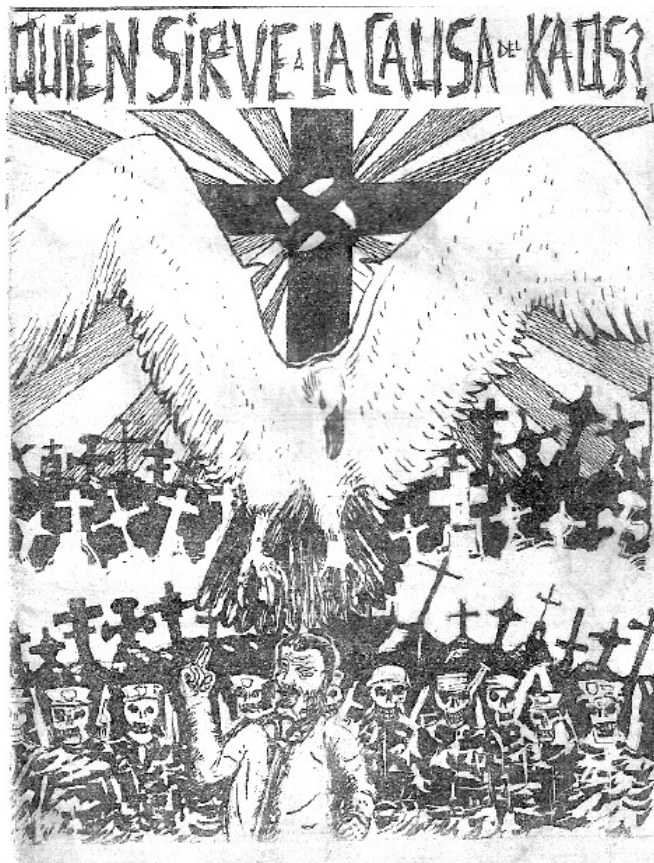
<sup>188</sup> Charles M. Young, "A Report on the Sex Pistols," *Rollingstone.com*, accessed March 14, 2017, <http://www.rollingstone.com/music/news/a-report-on-the-sex-pistols-19771020>.

<sup>189</sup> Hebdige, 111.

they used to promote music, but their creation encourages a DIY ethic and a sense of self-expression within punk communities. These fanzines also have a similar style, as notably revealed in their texts. These texts can be divided into three different types. The first is handwritten, the second is created with a typewriter or word processor, and the third is constructed out of excerpts cut from newspapers or magazines. The format of the text is usually inconsistent throughout the periodical, and many fanzines include all three styles within a single issue. After the items are arranged, they are placed onto a photocopier in order to create the pages. Images are common too; many are hand-drawn or xeroxed photographs. The names of both authors and artists whose work appear within the fanzine are generally not published. In this thesis, the fanzine selected for study was *Quién sirve a la causa del kaos?*, released in 1985. Although my research could yield no fanzines from prior years, this issue dates from a time when punk maintained a strong presence in Argentina after the Guerra Sucia ended. The articles in this fanzine focus on the punk scene during the restoration of democracy in Argentina and include commentary on social issues such as police brutality. Interestingly enough, this publication also includes information on the Mexican punk scene.

The first detail of this fanzine worth analyzing is the cover, which displays the title of the publication and a hand-drawn image (Figure 1). The artwork has overt political themes, depicting a man (possibly Raúl Alfonsín) speaking into a microphone. Behind him are numerous skeletons dressed in military or police uniforms wielding firearms. In the background are numerous crosses, indicating graves, and a large bird hovers overhead.





(Figure 1: Cover artwork of *Quién sirve a la causa del kaos?*<sup>190</sup>)

My interpretation of this image has to do with police mistrust, and issues of police brutality from within the punk community. The reasoning behind this argument involves the first article in this publication. This page does not contain any information on music, a band, or even a table of contents, but an article on police brutality in Argentina. "No to police abuse!"<sup>191</sup> is scrawled above the text as a large headline. Underneath, it asks the reader: "Can you live peacefully knowing that these laws control your life?"<sup>192</sup> The article talks about a violation of the rights of minors by the police. To the left of the text

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<sup>190</sup> *Quién sirve a la causa del kaos?* [1985?]

<sup>191</sup> "¡No al abuso policial!". *Quién sirve a la causa del kaos?* [1985?]

<sup>192</sup> "¿Podes vivir tranquilo sabiendo que estas leyes controlan tu vida?". *Quién sirve a la causa del kaos?* [1985?].

is a grainy photograph of two individuals—the first seems to be a man (possibly a police officer) crouching behind a car with his pistol drawn. Next to him, a second man has both arms on the car as if he is about to be detained. Illegible handwritten text surrounds the photograph. This trend continues throughout the entire issue. Another article is about demonstrations against police abuse that took place outside the Argentine Congress, accompanied by grainy photographs of protesters marching while holding signs.

From the context of this article, it appears that the police did not necessarily target members of the punk community, due to the fact that the author did not cite any instances of the police assaulting punk musicians or fans. This idea of anti-police sentiment appears to have stemmed from the concepts of government mistrust transitioning from the Guerra Sucia. It should also be noted that the idea of anarchy was long rooted in Argentine history before the inception of the punk scene. The concept was first introduced during the 1870s and 1880s when millions of Europeans began immigrating to Argentina and the social disruptions that developed were blamed on immigrants from Italy, where the notion of anarchy began.<sup>193</sup> However, it appears that the members of the contemporary punk community adopted their views on anarchy from international punk bands during both the dictatorship and the restoration of democracy.

One of the main articles about Argentine punk music is a two-page interview with Daniel "Pato" García, the bassist of Alerta Roja. While the article provides a brief biography of the band, some of the most interesting points come from García's responses to the questions the unidentified author poses to him. After discussing the history of the band, the author asks about the band's ideology. García responds by noting that the group

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<sup>193</sup> Juan Suriano, *Paradoxes of Utopia: Anarchist Culture and Politics in Buenos Aires, 1890-1910*, trans. Chuck Morse (Oakland: AK Press, 2010), 16.

follows the ideology of "anarchy."<sup>194</sup> As noted earlier, the concept of anarchy prevails throughout numerous punk scenes. According to Hebdige, the anarchy symbol, and more importantly, the concept itself, was a way for punks to accomplish a "symbolic act of treason," which enhanced the aspects of youth rebellion associated with the genre.<sup>195</sup>

But this idea of anarchy takes on new connotations in Argentina. Even though the fanzine article was published during a more politically stable time after the Guerra Sucia had ended, the Argentine punk scene still took issue with the police brutality that continued after the Dirty War period, and it expressed profound mistrust of the country's leaders. For them, anarchy emerged as a more attractive option than the constant kidnappings and murders they had been forced to endure under the military dictatorship. The fans' negative perception of government and politics combined with punk ideology likely influenced their views on anarchy during both the military dictatorship and the restoration of democracy in the years that followed.

One notable highlight from the interview occurred when the author asked García what he thought about the current situation in the country. He gave a large response, taking up half the page, in which he focused on the government's ineffectiveness, police brutality, and the context of the punk scene within Argentina. García noted that a young person he spoke to believed that punk was a way of creating a democracy in a country. Yet, he challenged such a simplistic reduction by posing the question: "Do you think

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<sup>194</sup> Note: In the interview, the word "anarchy" is not spelled out. Instead, the author has printed a capital "A" surrounded by a circle, in order to display the symbol for anarchy within the text of article.

<sup>195</sup> Hebdige, 64.

punk just exists in [countries with] military governments and [nowhere else]?"<sup>196</sup>

Nonetheless, his response seems to indicate that he and other members of Alerta Roja were aware of the role their music played in Argentina during the dictatorship in contrast to other punk communities throughout the world.

One of the most fascinating concepts about this issue of *Quién sirve a la causa de kaos?* is the fact that the fanzine focuses on social topics as much as it focuses on music. It contains articles on a few bands, the correspondence from a Mexican fanzine writer, as well as a brief review of a local concert, at the same time that it includes articles on police brutality and protests. The punk scene in Argentina, like other scenes around the world, had strong political implications. It was the basis of many of the bands' songs. Music and politics went hand in hand in the Argentine punk scene, and the fanzine shows just how important these topics were to the people who listened to Argentine punk music.

### III. Conclusions

The periodicals examined in this chapter provide two different views of punk music in Argentina. The first approach comes from a magazine that does not have a punk-oriented scope. While punk was included in some issues, it was not the main focus. The article I chose to include portrayed the punk band Los Violadores through the eyes of a journalist who wanted to discover more about the genre. Even though Gasió explored the controversies that surrounded the band, his interest seemed genuine, and he did not attack the band or the subculture in the manner that Guerro did in her article, "Punks Go Home." His publication provided a look into the lives and beliefs of some of the first Argentine punks and the ways that they viewed both their music and the world.

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<sup>196</sup> "¿pensás que el punk existe en los militares nada más?". *Quién sirve a la causa del kaos?* [1985?].

In contrast, the second source was a publication that shed light on the perspectives of the fans after the restoration of democracy in Argentina. These fanzines championed and paid tribute to the music that did not receive the attention of major media outlets. They also provided a look into musicians' lives and the sociopolitical conditions of the time. Censorship is also a predominant topic when discussing these two publications. *Expreso Imaginario* was a magazine that was published and sold, and editors needed to conform to censorship practices during the Guerra Sucia. The opposite was the case for authors of fanzines. Due to the fact they self published their periodicals and rarely sold them, the fans had more freedom than commercial publications. Not only were they free to speak their minds, but they often broke copyright laws by taking images and entire news articles and inserting them into their publications.

As opposed to the historical view of the bands provided in Chapter 2, these two case studies provide an alternative framework to understand the Argentine punk scene. While the content in the previous chapter comes from interviews with band members, the information presented here complements the focus on Argentine punk bands by exploring the perceptions of this music by the popular media and their fans. Not only do these sources provide an insight into the Argentine punk scene, but they allow the reader to understand the musical community that continued this scene after the Guerra Sucia. By examining these two contrasting sources, it is possible to view the Argentine punk scene through a new lens.

## Chapter IV: Conclusions

### I. Why Punk?

What is the significance of punk in Argentina? This question has many answers. The first involves the history of the country and the socio-political climate during the Guerra Sucia. It is a known fact that music is tied to many aspects of cultural life, and political protest is no exception. Even outside Argentina and Latin America, many artists such as Joan Baez and Bob Dylan have made their careers composing songs that promote political messages. Rock groups such as Rage Against the Machine and rap groups such as Public Enemy have also done the same. Unlike these international artists, however, Argentine punk bands differed in that they appropriated a form of music that developed outside their country to create their own musical scene. In order for this scene to grow, they needed to find ways to incorporate international punk music into their local environment.

Another hurdle these bands faced involved the egregious living conditions and human rights violations imposed by the junta. These factors not only formed the contextual environment in which musicians worked and lived, but they added an element rarely found in punk scenes throughout the world. When Argentine musicians performed their music in public, they ran a number of risks, including harassment, arrest, torture, and abduction. In his book, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*, James C. Scott discusses the concept of a public transcript versus a hidden transcript. He notes that the public transcript is a public performance that involves a "self-portrait of

dominant elites as they would have themselves seen."<sup>197</sup> In contrast the hidden transcript is what occurs "behind the scenes."<sup>198</sup> Scott's work illustrates the way that many groups who are dominated or oppressed use public performance to display a different message than the hidden transcript. However, I believe that the punk scene in Argentina is an exception to this precept. These bands performed in public spaces, denouncing the actions of the junta while putting their lives at risk. Their music served as a form of protest in which the public transcript was nearly identical to the hidden one.

This anomaly to Scott's theory is unexpected. In a country with a socio-political context similar to Argentina's, the public transcript would normally serve as a way to protect the participants from reprisal by a dominant group. It is difficult to explain why the case of Argentine punk groups during the Guerra Sucia fails to support Scott's idea of the hidden transcript, but several possibilities could serve as answers. The first involves the size of the punk community in Argentina during the Guerra Sucia. Many of the bands did not play at large venues and were more likely able to avoid scrutiny from the dictatorship. While some bands were targeted, punk was a brand new genre in Argentina, and the dictatorship may have not viewed it as a threat. Second, by the early 1980s, when the punk scene gained a popular following in Argentina, the dictatorship had fallen out of favor and attempted to regain loyalty by scaling back on the number of abductions. The second possibility involves the junta scaling back abductions during the end of the Guerra Sucia. In the few years prior to the Falklands War, the dictatorship fell out of favor with its citizens and desperately attempted to regain their favor. A third possibility is that punk

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<sup>197</sup> James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 17.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid.

bands chose to perform while openly taking these risks to add credibility to their defiant personas. These three explanations may provide insight into why these bands failed to conform to Scott's concept of hidden transcripts.

A number of factors explain why punk music resonated in the country at this time. The first is the audience. In Argentina, punk was a youth-oriented genre that cuts across social class. This genre was associated with rebellion — both in the lyrics of the music and the aesthetics embraced by the musicians and their fans. Because the majority of Argentines whom the military abducted were between the ages of 16 to 25, punk music had the potential to express their fears and convey their opposition to the extreme political conditions at that time. For all these reasons, the punk movement emerged as a powerful voice of youth resistance during the Guerra Sucia.

## **II. Implications for Further Research**

In future work, I plan to continue exploring some of the other Argentine punk bands and artists whose study extends beyond the scope of this research. Some of these groups include Trixy y los Maniáticos, a punk band with pop influences, and Los Laxantes, a lesser-known band that interacted with key players in the Argentine punk scene. Another group whose origins began during the Guerra Sucia was the alternative rock band Sumo whose music had a unique sound, combining elements of post-punk and reggae. Fronted by the Italian-Scottish singer, Luca Prodan, this group was extremely popular in Argentina. Members of the group had close ties to artists in the Argentine punk scene, particularly the members of Alerta Roja. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the musicians in both bands were so close that Prodan's death in 1987 is cited as one of the main factors that contributed Alerta Roja's hiatus in 1988.



The association between Argentine punk musicians and related international scenes remains an important topic of research. One example occurs in the issue of *Quién sirve a la causa del kaos?* studied in Chapter 3. Although the publication was created by Argentine fans, this issue of the fanzine includes a report from an author named "Boonz," who discusses topics relevant to punks in the Mexican scene, including bands, venues, and the public reaction of moral panic leveled against them. This interaction between the members of the Argentine and Mexican punk scene provides an opportunity to explore the relationship between punk scenes throughout Latin America, thus responding to Gómez Levitanas' call for a comprehensive book on punk music in Latin America that is waiting to be written. Beyond Mexico, the Chilean punk scene, first explored in some detail by Emily Simpson, forms an important point of comparison because it also took place within the context of a military dictatorship—in this case, the Pinochet regime. A related site of further study is the Cuban punk scene. The punk fans there are known as "Los Frikis" and the genre was introduced to the country during the end of the Cold War. While politics played a role in the music, the scene gained notoriety when musicians and fans would inject themselves with HIV positive blood in order to protect themselves from police harassment.<sup>199</sup> This scene became synonymous with HIV/AIDS, and many punk communities formed within sanitariums for AIDS patients.<sup>200</sup> In addition to doing research on these topics, I plan to conduct fieldwork on local music scenes in Latin America, to interact with members of the punk community and enhance my perspectives.

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<sup>199</sup> Abdullah Saeed, "Why a Community of Punks Chose to Infect Themselves with HIV in Castro's Cuba," *Vice*, February 1, 2017, [https://www.vice.com/en\\_ca/article/why-a-community-of-punks-chose-to-infect-themselves-with-hiv-in-castros-cuba](https://www.vice.com/en_ca/article/why-a-community-of-punks-chose-to-infect-themselves-with-hiv-in-castros-cuba).

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*

Many other punk scenes await investigation, and I hope that this study can help those who want to continue research on punk in Latin America. Other topics to which this thesis can contribute include music and politics, global punk, and the appropriation of popular music.

## Appendix

Lyrics

### Los Violadores

#### 1.A "Represión" from the album *Los Violadores* (1983)

Hermosa tierra de amor y paz	Beautiful land of love and peace
Hermosa gente cordialidad	Beautiful cordial people
Fútbol, asado y vino	Soccer, barbeque wine,
Son los gustos del pueblo Argentino.	These are the likes of the Argentine people
Censura vieja y obsoleta	Old and outdated censorship
En films, en revistas y en historietas.	In films, magazines, and comic strips
Fiestas conchetas y aburridas	Parties that are boring and lavish
En donde está la diversión perdida.	Where the fun is lost
Represión a la vuelta de tu casa	Repression around your house
Represión en el quiosco de la esquina	Repression at the corner kiosk
Represión en la panadería	Repression at the bakery
Represión veinticuatro horas al día.	Repression twenty four hours a day
Semanas largas sacrificadas	Long weeks sacrificed
Trabajo duro, muy poca paga	Hard work, very little pay
Desocupados, no pasa nada	Unemployed people, nothing happens
¿En dónde está la igualdad total?	Where is total equality?
Represión que te aniquila	Repression that annihilates you
Represión que no se olvida	Repression that is not forgotten
Represión en nuestras vidas	Repression in our lives
Represión	Repression
Yo no quiero represión	I do not want repression
Detestamos a la represión	We hate repression
Nos burlamos de la represión	We mock repression
Nos cagamos en la represión	We defecate on repression
Represión...	Repression

**1.B "Uno, Dos, Ultraviolento" from the album *¿Y ahora que pasa, eh?* (1985) Note: underlined words have been translated from Nadsat — A fictional language from *A Clockwork Orange* by Anthony Burgess**

Uno dos ultraviolento	One, two ultraviolence
Uno dos ultraviolento	One, two ultraviolence
Uno dos ultraviolento	One, two ultraviolence
Uno dos ultraviolento	One, two ultraviolence
Varias <u>debotchas</u>	Several <u>girls</u>
Caminan por ahi	They walk there
Mueven sus <u>scahrros</u>	They move their <u>buttocks</u>
Con frenesi	Frantically
Los mal chicos de cuero	The bad guys in leather
Nos queremos divertir	We want to have fun
Con mis <u>drugos</u>	With my <u>friends</u>
Al ataque vamos a ir	Let's go to attack
¿Y ahora que pasa, eh?	What's it going to be then, eh? <sup>201</sup>
¿Y ahora que pasa, eh?	What's it going to be then, eh?
Y ahora que pasa, pasa:	And now it happens, happens
Uno dos ultraviolento.	One, two, ultraviolence.
Sin <u>militscos</u> en la esquina	No <u>police officers</u> on the corner
Es mas fácil para mi	It's more easy for me
El <u>dremcom</u> en la <u>goloba</u>	The <u>drug</u> in the <u>head</u>
Me hace decidir	Makes me decide
La de <u>grudos</u> mas <u>bolches</u>	The one with the <u>larger breasts</u>
La quiero para mi	I want her for me
<u>Crobo</u> rojo entre sus capas	The red <u>blood</u> between their coats
Les haremos salir	We will let them out.
Nos quieren transformar	They want to transform us
No lo lograrán	They will not
No lo lograrán	They will not
No, no lo lograrán	No, they will not
No... no, no, no	No... no, no, no

<sup>201</sup> "¿Y ahora qué pasa eh?" is the first line of the Spanish translation of *A Clockwork Orange*. The English version begins with the phrase: "What's it going to be then, eh?"

**1.C Comunicado 166 from the album *¿Y ahora que pasa, eh?* (1985)**

La gran batalla ha terminado	The great battle is over
El pueblo convocado	The people summoned
A la plaza ha llegado	To the town square have arrived
Quiere saber la situación	They want to know the situation
Pero ese día al balcón nadie se asomó.	But that day, nobody looked out from the balcony
Miles de prisioneros	Thousands of prisoners
Esperaban la decisión	Waited for the decision
Que se firmara el pacto	The pact was to be signed
Para su liberación	For their release
Pero los informes	But the reports
Del Estado Mayor	Of the General Staff
Nos decían que la guerra	They told us the war
Continuaba aún hoy	Was still continuing today

Comunicado 166

Communiqué 166

Comunicado 166

Communiqué 166

Comunicado 166

Communiqué 166

Se ha perdido la batalla	The battle is lost
Por falta de armamentos.	By a lack of weapons
La C.E.E. junto a la N.A.T.O.	The C.E.E. <sup>202</sup> . together with N.A.T.O. <sup>203</sup>
Nos hicieron el bloqueo.	Made the blockade
América unida, gritó el pueblo entero.	"America United" the whole town cried
El T.I.A.R. fue la mentira	The T.I.A.R. <sup>204</sup> was a lie
Pue muchos se creyeron.	That many believed

Comunicado 166

Communiqué 166

Comunicado 166

Communiqué 166

Comunicado 166 .

Communiqué 166

¿De que sirvió esta unión?	What was the purpose of this union?
Si no logró la fuerza	If it did not achieve the strength
Y no hay fuerza cuando no hay inteligencia	And there is no force when there is no intelligence

<sup>202</sup> Comunidad Económica Europea.

<sup>203</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

<sup>204</sup> Known in English as the "Inter-American treaty of Reciprocal Assistance" or "The Rio Pact."

Porque Estados Unidos ha demostrado  
 Que occidente está en sus manos.  
 Recién nos dimos cuenta  
 Cuando fuimos pisoteados,  
 Vapuleados  
 Azotados.

Reina la confusión  
 En las calles y en el gobierno  
 Los Sea Harriers ya se han ido  
 La batalla ha terminado  
 Nos dejaron varios muertos  
 Y cientos de mutilados.  
 Y se las quedaron ellos.  
 La batalla se acabó,  
 La batalla se terminó,  
 La batalla se perdió

Fuck yourself, Maggie

Because the United States has shown  
 What is in your hands  
 We just noticed  
 When we were trampled  
 Beaten  
 Whipped

Confusion reigns  
 On the streets and in the government  
 The sea harriers are already gone  
 The battle is over  
 They left several of us dead  
 And hundreds mutilated  
 And they got them  
 The battle was over  
 The battle ended  
 The battle was lost

Fuck yourself, Maggie.<sup>205</sup>

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<sup>205</sup> "Maggie" was most likely Margret Thatcher.

**Alerta Roja****2.1 "Revolución en la evolución from the album *Derrumbando la Casa Rosada* (1981)**

En la cripta de tu cabeza	In the crypt inside your head
Ya no se encuentra pureza	There is no longer purity
¿En que se apoya tu revolución?	What is your revolution supporting?
Lenta total evolución	Slowing total evolution
Excepcional inventos de avanzadas,	Exceptional advanced inventions
Los misiles, los neutrones	Missiles, Neutron [bombs]
El futuro de ratones para el mundo moderno	The future of mice for the modern world
Esta en Cuba tu terror	Your fears are in Cuba
Nicaragua, El Salvador	Nicaragua, El Salvador
Esta en America tu ambición,	It is in America, your ambition
Heroes de television	Heroes of television
En la cripta de tu cabeza	In the crypt inside your head
Ya no se encuentra pureza	There is no longer purity
¿En que se apoya tu revolución?,	What is your revolution supporting?
Solamente la intervención	Only intervention
Revolución en la Evolución	Revolution in evolution.

**2.B "Derrumbando la Casa Rosada" from the album *Derrumbando la Casa Rosada* (1981)**

Que lejos que están llegando  
 Con este Proceso inflacionario  
 Que bajo que están cayendo  
 Con esta junta de perversión  
 No hay salida no hay salvación  
 Para tu régimen de represión

How far they are coming  
 With this process of inflation  
 How low they are falling  
 With this junta of perversion  
 There is no exit, there is no salvation  
 For your regime of repression.

Derrumbando la casa rosada  
 Derrumbando la casa rosada  
 Derrumbando la casa rosada  
 ¡Hoy!

Dismantling la Casa Rosada,  
 Dismantling la Casa Rosada  
 Dismantling la Casa Rosada  
 Today!

Trincheras callejeras, barricadas  
 urbanas,  
 Caos elección, bomba revolución  
 Están entrando están quemando  
 Y a tu guarida la están derrumbando  
 No hay salida no hay salvación  
 Para tu régimen de represión

Trenches in the street, urban barricades,  
 Chaos election, bomb revolution  
 What's happening? You are burning,  
 And your guards are collapsing.  
 There is no exit, there is no salvation  
 For your regime of repression.<sup>206</sup>

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<sup>206</sup> This translation comes from Emily Simpson's honor's thesis " "¡Represión!": Punk Resistance and the Culture of Silence in the Southern Cone, 1978-1990.



**2.C "Juventud perdida" from the album *Derrumbando la Casa Rosada***

**(1981)**

No se puede vivir, sin la escuela  
secundaria

You cannot live without high school

No se puede vivir, tocando la guitarra  
No se puede vivir, sin nunca haciendo  
nada

You cannot live by playing the guitar  
You cannot live without doing anything

No se puede vivir, tirado en la cama

You cannot live lying in bed

Tenes que vivir  
Tenes que sufrir  
Tenes que pelear  
Tendrás que morir

You have to live  
You have to suffer  
You have to fight  
You have to die

Nosotros que pensamos, estamos  
perdidos

We who think we are lost

Nosotros que pensamos, estamos  
acabados

We who think we are finished

Somos basura, somos corrupción,  
Somos juventud perdida

We are trash, we are corruption  
We are the lost youth

Buscando explicación para vivir  
Buscando explicación para vivir  
Vivr, vivir, vivir, vivir!

Looking for an explanation to live  
Looking for an explanation to live  
To live, to live, to live, to live!

## 2.D "Desata las manos de tu conciencia" from the album "El llanto interior" (1986)

Estamos amenazados por una guerra nuclear	We are threatened by nuclear war
Aun aquí no se dieron cuenta	Even here they did not realize
No tomaron conciencia del peligro real	They were not aware of the real danger
Estamos bajo la inconsciencia gubernamental	We are under government unconsciousness
Que nos obliga a no pensar	That forces us not to think
En mi país se mueren de hambre	In my country they starve
En mi país se mueren ahogados	In my country they drown
Estamos todos muy dormidos	We are all very sleepy
Y será tarde al despertar	And it will be too late to wake up
Desata las manos de tu conciencia	Untie the hands of your consciousness
Los gobiernos no existen	The governments do not exist
Los medios nos mienten	The media lies to us
Las religiones pelean	The religions fight
La corrupción es generalizada	Corruption is widespread
Y nos lleva al final	And leads us to the end
Desata las manos de tu conciencia	Untie the hands of your consciousness

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