



**A New Model
In the Struggle
For Human Rights:**

The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo

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Who Are They?

- The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo is a group of Argentine mothers whose children *disappeared* under the military dictatorship from 1976-1983 (The Dirty War).
- The group was founded by fourteen mothers who banded together while trying to find out what happened to their *disappeared* children.
- The women are backed by a younger generation of people, mostly college-age students, who are referred to as the Juventud, or youth.



What is the point of this video?

“We are like links in a chain. Every Thursday we attach a new link, a link that makes us an indestructible chain that connects us to our children. With them, we create a chain of love, hope and feeling”.

- Every Thursday, the Mothers would gather for a 30 minute march around the Plaza de Mayo in honor of their *disappeared* children.
- The last march was held on January 26, 2006 because the Mothers felt the current Argentine government was not in support of the regime that robbed them of their children.

[Video: The March of the Mothers](#)





**The White Scarves of the
Mothers Symbolize
the Diapers of
Their "Disappeared" Children**

- Many of the Mothers work daily to prepare press releases or reports or to talk to reporters and interested individuals.
- Commissions meet every Tuesday to discuss upcoming marches or decisions that need to be made.
- Many chapters have declining membership of original Mothers, but are being refilled by younger supporters.
- “Since most members are at the Mothers’ office much of the week, a gathering can assemble at a moment’s notice”.

“The Mothers’ House opens at 10:00 am and frequently remains open until 1:00 am.”



Helping a n d s



- The Juventud, or youth of Argentina help the Mothers and participated in marches. They would make banners, masks, or signs for the marches.
- Doctors who supported the Mothers would examine them and give them vitamins to help them get ready for their yearly, 24 hour marches.
- Artists would act or make costumes depicting the Mothers' plight and participate in demonstrations.

Their Children

The children of the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo were usually college-aged and were opponents of the Argentine government. They were abducted from their homes or from the street. Sometimes they were placed in concentration camps, but they were usually never heard from again. Nobody truly knows what has become of them.



Their Husbands

“The men suffered more because they didn’t take to the streets”

- The Mothers were not trying to gain independence from men.
- “They wanted to establish their distinctive voices and perceptions and mistakenly believed they would be safer than their husbands in a society that revered women even while it marginalized them”.
- “They were also concerned that men would spend all of their time establishing a formal structure and writing reports while they were anxious for immediate action”.
- Some men would watch the meetings or would forbid their wives to attend meetings because they felt they were dangerous.
- Many more fathers than mothers of the *disappeared* died because they “kept the pain inside”



The Politics: Anarchists?

FOR LIFE WITHOUT A TRADE UNION'S BUREAUCRACY, ASSASINS AT LIBERTY AND A TRAITOROUS GOVERNMENT

- “What characterizes the mothers as anarchists is their rebelliousness and their aim of a complete transformation of Argentine society”.
- The Mothers criticize the social and economic structures of their country, as well as the government’s lack of treating people equally.
- They also do not support rigid institutions imposed by the government.

“In a certain way, we are anarchists because we don’t accept the established norm.”



“If God is everywhere, why do we need to go to church? We can pray at home”.

Disappeared?

**WHAT WAS SPECIAL ABOUT
THE WORD “DISAPPEARED”
IN THE TEXT?**



The word “disappeared” was written in italics in the text to make a statement. The word, when associated with the children of the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, is almost always italicized or put into quotation marks to symbolize their belief that their children did not just “disappear” as the government says. By writing “disappeared” this way, it is almost like mocking the deceitful regime.

They Try To Make You Invisible

This poem depicts many of the hardships the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo face on a daily basis.

“At the height of the repression, the newspapers were afraid to carry the ad listing your missing children”.



“They abducted your leader and tried to silence you, but you placed the ad anyway”.



“...the good citizens move indoors. The television crews are from abroad. But you have 10,000 followers marching behind you. You have shown again and again that you can fill the streets, and nothing can make you invisible”.

Praise for the Mothers

“We are not ordinary mothers or ordinary women because we are very strong and that is why we are in this organization. We have special courage”

The Mothers are honored in a small Holland town, where a statue of them was erected along with statues of Martin Luther King Jr., Gandhi, Steve Biko and Jerzy Popeiluszko.

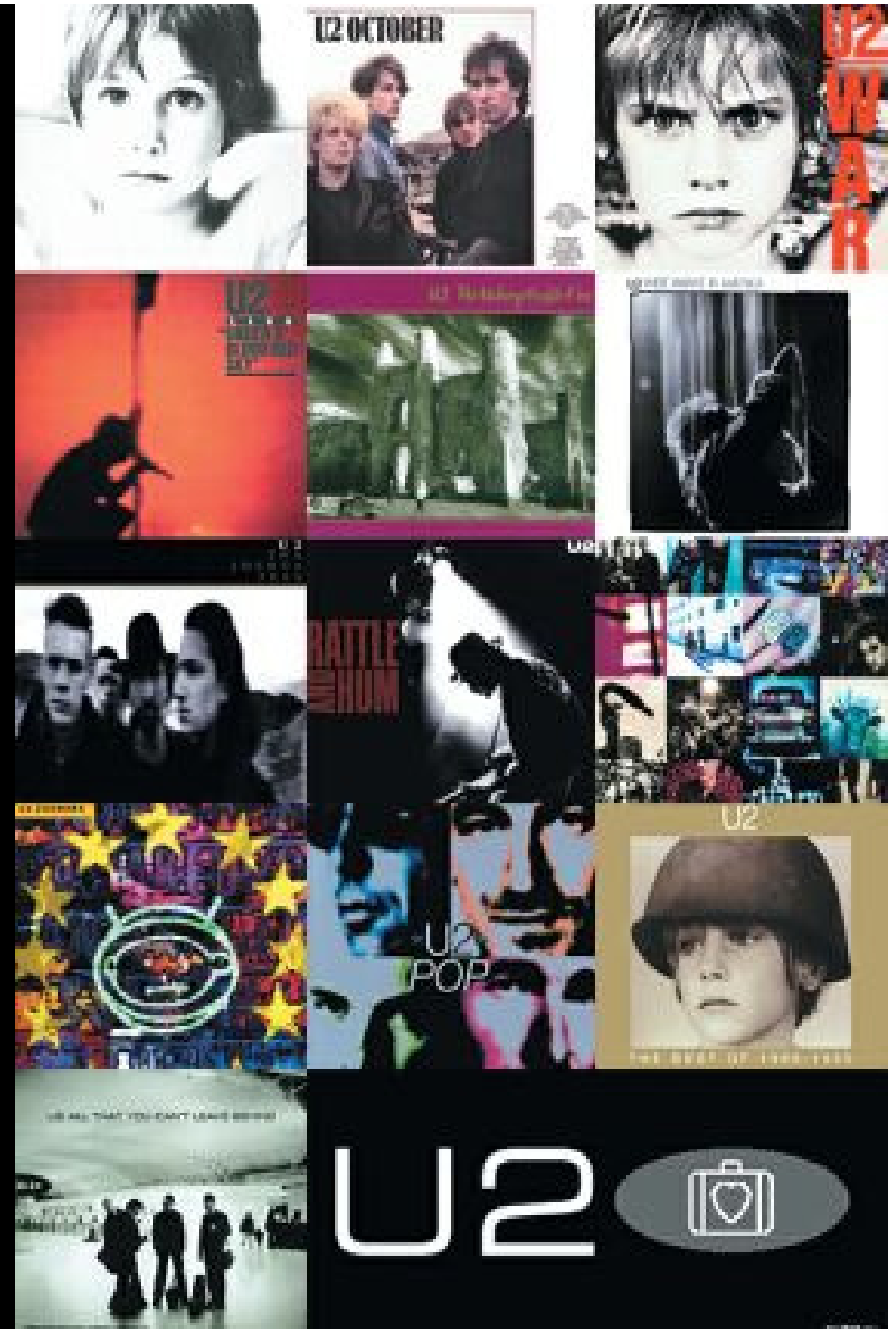
People around the world send their good wishes to the Mothers. A nine year old boy wrote to them, “I don’t know you. I know you are somewhere, but wherever you are, I want you to know we will keep fighting for you.



U2 Gets Involved

U2 organized a performance of their song “Mothers of the Disappeared” in Chile. On stage were several of the mothers who were allowed to read the names of their children on stage during the performance.

[U2 Video: Mothers of the Disappeared](#)





The End

In Honor of the Missing