

Jorge Patricio Dillon (1953-c.1977), student activist and social worker

By Edmundo Murray



Jorge Patricio Dillon (1953-ca.1977)
(photographer unknown, 1971)

Dillon, Jorge Patricio (*Patricio*) (1953-c.1977), student activist and social worker, was born on 13 October 1953 in General Roca, Río Negro Province, Argentina, the only child of Juan Antonio Guillermo Dillon (1926-1957) and his wife, Sara Gigena (b.1930). The Dillon family descended from David Dillon (1816-1866) of Limerick, who emigrated to Argentina to work in the British railways and settled in Monte, Buenos Aires Province. David Dillon's youngest son, Bernardo José Dillon (1859-1931), born in Monte, studied at the school of medicine in London and practiced in Ireland. He returned to Argentina and worked at the British Hospital of Buenos Aires and the Southern Railway Company. His son, Juan Carlos Dillon - Patricio's grandfather - was one of the first colonists in Chinchinales, near General Roca in the Patagonian province of Río Negro, 1,120 kilometres from Buenos Aires.

Patricio Dillon was sent to study at San Miguel primary school in General Roca, and then to Don Bosco secondary school, both founded and managed by the Roman Catholic Society of St. Francis de Sales (Salesian Fathers). At twelve he was already engaged in political activities, and supported the return of Juan D. Perón from exile in Spain. His engagement would be intensified during the rebellion of the people of General Roca in June 1972 against the *de facto* military governor Roberto Requeijo (a revolt known as 'El Rocazo').

After completing secondary school, Dillon went to Buenos Aires in 1972 to study literature at the University of Buenos Aires. He also worked at the Azcuénaga branch of the Provincial Bank of Buenos Aires. Patricio Dillon joined the Peronist Youth movement and was appointed trade union delegate at his branch of the bank. Additionally, he worked for a programme on Radio Mitre of Buenos Aires, a continuation of his recreational radio show at his school in Río Negro (which he introduced as 'Radio Cachivache'). In 1973 Dillon was one of the thousands of people who went to Ezeiza Airport in the city of Buenos Aires to welcome Perón when he arrived in Argentina. He lived in a house at 1400 Cangallo Street, and was a member of a Montoneros support group.

Dillon was a natural leader, and had an acute understanding of, and sensitivity for, the problems of contemporary Argentine society. He was a self-made idealist and a courageous radical who chose to stay in the country amidst increasing threats to student activists and militant members of political movements.

On 20 January 1977, Patricio Dillon was kidnapped, together with other students, and interned in the secret detention camp 'Club Atlético' at Paseo Colón and Juan de Garay Streets of Buenos Aires. His detention may have been the responsibility of Major Arias Duval, *muy buen tipo a pesar de ser militar* ('a very good chap in spite of being a soldier', Dillon to Dillon, 13 April 1974, p. 2), for whom Patricio worked as secretary during his military service in Junín de los Andes. Patricio became one of the 20-25,000 so-called *desaparecidos* ('disappeared') - political prisoners illegally abducted, tortured and killed by the armed forces in Argentina from 1974 to 1983.

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References

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