

NI UNA MENOS: THE FEMINIST MOVEMENT IN ARGENTINA

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Within the history of Argentina, the women and girls beneath the country's rule have been subjected to various inequalities and exposed to extreme violence, often resulting in death. "From 1976 to 1983, Argentina was governed by a military dictatorship that committed horrendous human rights crimes, including torture, extrajudicial executions, and the imprisonment of thousands without trial." (Human Rights Watch, 2019). These horrible acts were towards all genders in Argentina, but the violence towards women and children was astronomical under the dictatorial rule of General Jorge Rafael Videla. In 1992, a movement of fourteen apolitical housewives and mothers called "the Mothers of May Plaza" resulted from the dictatorship. The movement began as these women hoped to find their children who were lost during the dictatorial period. Most of the women involved with this movement were beaten and detained for their peaceful protests, as it gained international attention.

In recent years, violence has still been prevalent throughout Argentina. In May 2015, for example, Chiara Páez (a 14-year-old Argentine girl) became pregnant and was later forced to take medication to terminate her pregnancy. Afterward, she was killed by the fetus' biological father, also known as her boyfriend at the time. He was 16 years old and was believed to have had help from his mother in burying Chiara Páez's body in his family's yard to cover up what he had done. He committed this crime so he would not have to become a father to a baby that he did not want and the crime was committed with help as it was believed that the pregnancy and birth of the child "would've ruined his life."

The death of Chiara Páez, alongside the deaths of many other women and girls in Argentina's history, enraged not only the citizens of this Latin American country but other people worldwide as well. On June 3, 2015, following the death of Chiara Páez, Argentine feminist journalists came together to create the Ni Una Menos movement.

One of the Argentine journalists who founded the Ni Una Menos movement is María Florencia Alcaraz. Florencia is also one of the founders and directors of LATFEM, a feminist media outlet. “It provides a free-access information service, mainly focused on Latin America and the Caribbean since its launch on March 8, 2017.” (LATFEM, n.d.) Florencia’s work within and outside the LATFEM media outlet aligns with the Ni Una Menos movement. When asked about her work and the Ni Una Menos movement specifically, (in an interview with Women Across Frontiers) she says “What happened in 2015 is that mass feminism is achieved that manages to challenge the society as a whole and goes beyond the traditional activism that we have been used to... Without a doubt, the existence of the campaign for free and legal abortion made it possible for us to have this law.” (Alcaraz, 2021)

A second Argentine journalist who helped found the Ni Una Menos movement and worked alongside María Florencia Alcaraz is Verónica Gago. Verónica Gago is known as “a prominent political theorist and activist working on issues of feminism and the global political economy.” (Georgetown University, 2021) She is a social sciences professor at multiple institutions in Buenos Aires, Argentina, including the University of Buenos Aires, the Institute of High States, and the National University of San Martín. Outside of her educational occupation, Verónica Gago writes and conducts research (primarily regarding feminism), which she applies to global campaigns, including Ni Una Menos.

Another Argentine journalist who helped found the Ni Una Menos movement is Vanina Escalas. She (and other experts) most recently wrote “The Triumph of the Outsider—Lessons and Learning from the Argentine Presidential Elections in 2023” to share her experience of the extreme rule and election of Argentina’s current president, Javier Milei. Since writing this piece and co-founding the Ni Una Menos campaign with other feminist journalists in Argentina,

Vanina Escalas has continued fighting against gender-based violence. She is a speaker at All American Entertainment speakers, where she can be booked to speak about feminism and social activism.

Marta Dillon is another Argentine journalist who helped found the Ni Una Menos movement. During her time as an activist, she wrote several books, such as “Apparition” and “Living with Viruses.” Marta Dillon has also spoken at universities in Buenos Aires, Argentina. One of her most famous lectures happened at New York University’s Buenos Aires campus in the fall of 2018. She spoke about the disappearance of her mother during Argentina’s dictatorship period and human rights movements throughout Argentina, such as Ni Una Menos.

These Argentine feminist journalists, alongside many others, promoted the Ni Una Menos campaign for women to get the rights they deserve - their human rights. To this day, the Ni Una Menos movement march is held in Buenos Aires, Argentina on June 3rd outside of the Argentine Congress building each year. Although the campaign started by addressing the deaths of women through violence throughout history and modern-day, the movement now addresses a multitude of other issues impacting people across the country as well. The movement combats gender-based violence, promotes gender equality, demands socio-economic rights for women and transgender individuals, and has worked to legalize abortion in the country of Argentina. The Ni Una Menos movement even sparked other movements across many countries in Latin America, such as Bolivia, Chile, and Mexico. Without the work and dedication of the Argentine feminists and the Ni Una Menos movement, it is said that most (if not all) of these issues would not have been addressed, let alone given the people of Argentina and other Latin American countries the rights they now have. The Argentine feminists not only created the Ni Una Menos movement itself, but they fought to change the country’s legislation to make a difference in the

lives of Argentine women and transgender individuals today, which later created movements in other parts of the world resulting in the same thing.

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