



MUSEO
SITIO DE MEMORIA
ESMA



HISTORIAS SIN OLVIDO

In the Officers' quarters where the Clandestine Detention Center of Torture and Extermination set up in the Naval Mechanics School operated. There were more than 700 places of illegal detention during the last dictatorship from 1976 to 1983.

Here, in the ESMA approximately 5000 men and women were detained or missing. They were members of political parties or social activists, revolutionary organizations either armed or unarmed, workers, trade union members, students, professionals, artists and members of religious orders. Most of them were dropped alive into the ocean.

Here, in the ESMA the Navy planned abductions and systematically carried out murders. Here, prisoners were kept in hoods and shackled. Here, they were tortured. Here, the Navy made them disappear.

Here, in the ESMA children were born in captivity and were separated from their mothers. Most of them were illegally adopted or robbed. We are still looking for many of them.

Here, in the ESM a crime against humanity was perpetrated.

**memory,
truth &
justice**

ESMA MUSEUM AND SITE OF MEMORY Former Clandestine Centre for Detention, Torture and Extermination

The ESMA Museum and Site of Memory will remain closed until further notice as a preemptive measure against the spread of Coronavirus in our country.

Contents not suitable for children under 12.

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Argentina **unida**

Secretaría de
Derechos Humanos



Ministerio de Justicia
y Derechos Humanos
Argentina

Franca Jarach

SOCIAL COMMITMENT AND STUDENT ACTIVISM: THE VALUES OF A GENERATION



Franca Jarach was born on December 19th, 1957. She lived in a joyous home in the Belgrano neighborhood in Buenos Aires with her parents Giorgio Jarach and Vera Vigevani, two Italians who had come to Argentina escaping European nazism after Franca's great-grandfather was killed in the Auschwitz concentration camp. Giorgio was an engineer with a taste for architecture, and Vera Vigevani worked as a journalist for ANSA news agency. Franca used to go mountain climbing with them. She enjoyed classical music and rock, listened to Almendra and The Beatles. She felt an inclination towards the arts. She played both the transverse flute and the recorder, wrote

poems and, just like her father, drew and painted since she was a little kid.

She got in the National Buenos Aires School, where she was a gold-medal valedictorian. She started militating at the High School Students Union (UES). She participated in school occupations and was a delegate of the students union. Her mother usually recalls one of her report cards where she had all As, yet bad behavior. In 1974 the School was intervened. School rector Raúl Aragón had taken office the year before, and on that night he said. "I came with the boys, I'll leave with them". Students decided to support him by occupying the school. Franca told her parents that

she would sleep at the school. Giorgio said it was very dangerous.

– Do you remember when you guys took over the university demanding autonomy?, she answered.

The occupation extended for three days. The authorities sanctioned 14 students, including Franca. All of them lost their regular student condition, but thanks to one parent's involvement the school reinstated them. Franca didn't want to return. She passed exams at the #9 School in the Belgrano neighborhood while preparing to study Education Sciences in college. After finishing high school she attended a print shop where she got involved with a small union group of the Peronist Workers Youth (JTP). Franca was a friend of other UES members, like Betina Tarnopolsky.

On June 25th, 1976, Franca was kidnapped in a pizzeria on Palacios avenue in the La Boca neighborhood. She was with 21 year-old Hernán Daniel Fernández, whom they called Cassius Clay because he looked like the boxer. Hernán studied History, worked for Codex publishing house and was an activist in the Print Workers branch of the JTP.

Several ESMA survivors remember seeing Franca in the basement of the clandestine center of detention, torture



and extermination. Marta Álvarez saw her there two or three times. She had met her before as an activist. She saw her well, optimistic. Franca told her they would leave the clandestine center much thinner, but they were going to be ok. A month and a half later she didn't see her anymore.

On July 11th, the ESMA Task Force made her call home and try to prevent her family from going forward with the negotiations to secure her freedom. A friend had advised Vera and Giorgi to put a recorder on the phone in case someone called about Franca. This way, they were able to record a last and short conversation with their daughter.

"For us it meant that she was alive", said her mother during the ESMA Trial III in August 2013. "We can hear the voices of Franca and my husband who answered the phone. It's chilling for me to listen to those voices again, but I know it's an important piece of evidence because of its content, so I'm willing to listen to it again".

She played the recording. Vera stayed on her chair. And Franca's fast, young and hurried voice sounded from the other side of time. She asked about everyone: "How are you? How is mom?" She told them: "I am detained". Her father asked, a bit in Italian and a bit in Spanish: "Where are you? How are you? When will you come back?" Franca answered and said:

- I don't know, truly, I don't know. She said
- OK, bye...
- God bless you -said her father.
- Bye, Daddy, bye.

Franca was kidnapped on a Friday. Vera expected her the next day in Tigre. She searched for her in hospitals, the morgue, submitted habeas corpus, and for



years didn't know anything about her. "She was 18 years old. My husband and I tried to find her -said Vera- save her, and unfortunately it was all in vain. Many years went by, more than twenty, before I got to know the truth, and that truth is the place where Franca was taken after being kidnapped."

On March 8th, 2018, the Federal Court #5 established the kidnapping and killing via death flights of thirteen people between June 25th and July 30th, 1976. The victims were members of the press area of Montoneros and the union commissions of print media, Franca Jarach among them.

Today, 44 years after the kidnaping and disappearing of Franca Jarach, her words echo with the same urgency as the day she wrote them.



PLACE

In the morning I walk
near a place surrounded by walls
high gray sad dirty
with posters of vote the blue list
one day I look inside
it is a shantytown.
People
more people.
dressed in cheap cloth
naked of happiness.
A girl offers me lemons
"hundred a dozen, buy me".
She is thirteen years old, give or take
my age.
A rundown store,
with rats, with filth
with sinister microbes.
It's a place surrounded by walls
dirty with human crimes
that are ours alone.

(By Franca Jarach)

Vera Vigeani de Jarach, her mother, was born on March 5th, 1928 in the Italian city of Milano. She is a journalist, writer and activist. She belongs to a Jewish family that took refuge in Argentina in 1939 in order to escape Fascist racial laws. When her daughter Franca disappeared, she joined Mothers of Plaza de Mayo - Founders. Her grandfather was deported and killed in Auschwitz.

At the ESMA III Trial, in August 2013, Vera stated: "History teaches us that what happened once can happen again, and in fact this has proven to be true for my personal history. In 1943 my grandfather on my mother side was deported to Auschwitz; later my daughter Franca was kidnapped and taken to ESMA; two stories, no tombs, they are in the gas chamber and the death fights."