

ACCOUNT of Table 5,

The construction of a European network for Democratic Memory and Antifascism. From Nüremberg to La Desbandá. A comparative vision of public policies on memory in the EU.

The event was held on Saturday at 15:30 with the participation of:

- Ángel del Río Sánchez, professor of anthropology at the Antropología Pablo de Olavide University in Seville and representative in Andalusia for Amicale de Mauthausen. He has numerous publications of books, articles, documentaries and educational guides on slave labour during Francoism and Andalusians in Nazi concentration camps.

- Stefanie Schuler-Springorum, senior lecturer in Contemporary History at the Technical University of Berlin, director of a Centre of Research into Antisemitism and European Jewish History. Amongst her numerous publications on the Jewish communist resistance and on the history of gender, she has also written a book on the Condor Legion. *War as adventure. The Condor Legion in the Spanish Civil War.*

- Olga Arcos, representative of the Argelès-sur-Mer Camp Memorial. Granddaughter and daughter of exiles is interested for family reasons in the history of the republican exile and in topics related to the recovery of the democratic memory. She is aware of the importance of the involvement of public institutions and policies in the subject of the recovery of memory, the reason for working since 2017 on the integration and management of the Argelès-sur-Mer Camp Memorial. Her work consists in divulging its history, gathering and recovering the oral memory of the Camp inmates and their descendants, organising tributes and exhibitions, promoting and developing collaboration with other institutions.

- Antoine Parra, mayor of Argelès-sur-Mer since 2016; born in Capmany, Catalonia. He made his career in public education, as a primary school teacher. Convinced of the importance at individual and collective level of the recovery and transfer of the memory linked to the Spanish republican exile and the Argelès-sur-Mer Camp, he develops actions carried out on this story, which has left its mark on the territory. He has created a true circuit of memory, with the widening of the Memorial from the town centre to the memory locations present in Argelès-sur-Mer. His ambition for the municipality is to extend this work in the future, opening a larger memorial that will also integrate a document and resource centre, as well as educational spaces, increasing collaborations with other memorialist entities.

María Dolores Cabra Loredó excused her attendance for her health problems, having sent her talk for publication in the Minutes of the Congress. Specialist archivist in subjects related to the recovery of historical memory, she is General Secretary of the Archive, War and Exile Association. She addresses the following points in her presentation: 1. Antifascist memory policies in the international sphere. 2. Archival science as an essential support in obtaining justice. 3. *Archi-activism* as a creation of networks and its influence in the application of the international path of human rights. 4. Conclusions.

It began with the presentation by Ángel del Río, who explained how he has carried out his work with the survivors from Andalusia and Spain in general of the Mauthausen concentration camp, where 7,000 republican prisoners ended up, of which 5,000 died. The story is not complete without the testimony of those men who were victims of the brutal repression of the fascist regimes that dominated Europe almost a century ago. It is essential to

underline the importance of the experience transmitted orally, given that among the difficulties that may be encountered finding a true reconstruction of history, there is firstly the devaluation of the testimony of victims by some historians. Secondly, the difficulties the prisoners had in communicating their painful experience, and the sense of guilt suffered by the victims for having survived extermination, even accused of being collaborators by the communists, antifascist victors of the Second World War. Ángel also explained the history of Amical, the association of concentration camp prisoners, and its role in the recovery of the historical memory.

Stefanie Schuler-Springorum explained the situation of the historical memory in Germany, with all of the difficulties for constituting it as an important feature in German culture and in the collective conscience. She quoted the testimony of Hannah Arendt to show the indifference of the German people towards the crimes of the Nazis after the end of the war, which showed that the Hitler dictatorship enjoyed wide support among the masses. The historical memory policy in Germany is due to the allies in the East and West, thanks to the trials for crimes against humanity they carried out. But the denazification process ended when the Federal Republic was established in 1949. Nevertheless, in the generation that followed, young people rebelled against the conformism of their parents and organised the revolutionary movement of 68 in Germany, which showed a lack of interest in the Holocaust. It was the American television series *Holocaust* in 1979 that changed the perception of it in German culture, awakening interest in the genocide and creating an avalanche of publications on the subject 50 years after the events. A second wave of recovery of memory occurred in the 1990s, focusing attention on the criminals of the Nazi regime, estimated at 200,000, only a small number of whom were executed. It was also demonstrated how the army had waged a genocidal war in the Soviet Union. And it was shown how the state covered up the crimes of Nazism, given that the whole German society was involved in the dictatorship. The presentation of the crimes, according to how the problem is explained, can even serve to cover up the causes, interests and processes which led to them. Without discovering the social mechanisms, social, economic and political history that led to these events it is not possible to combat these criminal processes in a consistent manner. The recovery of the historical memory is a slow process that does not depend on who won the war and it is important to do it now that there is a strong far right current.

Following this Olga Arcos presented the memorialist work being carried out in Argelès-sur-Mer for the purpose of the republican prisoner camp that was in operation there, due to their entry into France from Catalonia fleeing from the fascist troops. Almost half a million people crossed the border through the Eastern Pyrenees in a very short time. A dual system was installed for them: women, children, the elderly and the wounded were taken to places of refuge, but the men were driven to the concentration camps. 110,000 were imprisoned there, with the one in Argelès being the biggest, where they survived on the beach surrounded by barbed wire and the extreme cold of winter. It was the occupying German troops that definitively dismantled the camp at the end of '42 and beginning of '43. Since then emptiness and silence superimposed themselves on this story, until Argelès Council decided to take the matter on as a result of a political decision. Monuments have been erected, the limits of the camp have been marked, exhibitions and commemorations are held, which receive visits from associations and schools, and a Memorial has been installed in centre of the town. There is also memory tourism, as Argelès is home to an important spa. It receives 15,000 visitors every year. Among them are people seeking information on disappeared relatives and offering testimony about the events. Conventions have been signed and contacts with other

memorialist associations established. But the Spanish republican memory is in reality at the periphery of the institutional network of support.

Antoine Parra, of Andalusian origin and born in Catalonia, explains the work being done in Argelès-sur-Mer and the reasons for it. He quotes Rilke: *the homeland of a man is his infancy*, to say that his homeland is Catalonia on the two sides of the border. He defends identity as an important aspect of personality. It is necessary to confront the embarrassment of having experienced those events: the people of Argelès behaved badly, but it was difficult to behave well, it wasn't possible to take in everyone who arrived. The citizens of Argelès tried to help the prisoners by taking food to them. Therefore, the Memorial was transferred to the centre of the town because it's our history. You have to recognise history and we help to discover the facts. Antoine's family was cruelly punished by fascism with relatives killed and disappeared. Franco destroyed his family, therefore if he can Antoine helps other families also destroyed by fascism.