

Democratic memory, an ethical and political requirement

The recent rejection by the Huesca City Council of the request to change the names of several streets in the city with Francoist affiliations, as well as to promote the removal of the plaque against democratic memory located in the municipal courtyard, is not only due to the conservative ideology of the socialist mayor and his government team, but also to a favourable environment, a lax Aragonese administration in matters of memory and impunity in the face of non-compliance with the mandate of the law.

The political and sociological Francoism housed in institutions such as the City Council of Huesca, Zaragoza, or Calatayud and even others that refuse to remove the symbols of the dictatorship, is fed by a context of suspicious permissiveness favoured by the Government of Aragon through the Ministry of Culture. The Aragonese Law of Democratic Memory, Law 14/2018, of 8 November, has been abandoned to its fate, before it has even been given the slightest chance to develop.

All the deadlines contained in the legal document, foreseen to flesh out the articles and make their purposes a reality, have been missed. Memory has ceased to be a right and has become an uncomfortable statement of an administrative nature with which to fill public commemorative spheres and adorn itself in the fate of speeches of commitment, albeit empty ones.

In August 2019, the Technical Commission for Democratic Memory, the body responsible for drafting the Action Plan containing the projects to be promoted during the current institutional mandate, should have been constituted, but neither the one nor the other has materialised. The deadline for drafting the regulatory process for the Law, unheard of to date, expired in February 2020.

It will be difficult to address the principles of truth, justice, reparation and guarantee of non-repetition set out in the Law without the support of the Centre for Research into Democratic Memory, which must draw up the census of memory, a catalogue containing all the information on the disappeared and victims of the Civil War and Franco's regime. Not even the map of graves has been updated.

Nor has a census of symbols contrary to democratic memory been systematised, the General Directorate of Heritage acting in this respect with erratic character, random will and very unequal fortune, as is abundantly clear in the case of the street map naming mayors of the dictatorship in Huesca. In this context, the sanctioning regime established by the legal norm remains unexplored, favouring the insubmissive attitude of the non-compliant authorities.

Thus, Aragonese memorialist and cultural organisations, together with private citizens, have promoted the presentation before the courts of an administrative appeal against the denialist decision of the Huesca City Council. We consider that the development and expansion of the Law of Democratic Memory must occupy a central place in the construction of social policies and in the exercise of democratic rights in the face of reactionary discourses and the advance of ultra-right postulates that are not a sign of the times, but a real threat of a fascism that permeates an uninformed, uncritical and contemplative society.

Democratic historical memory is an ethical and political requirement, an inalienable formulation, an undeniable exercise of freedom and dignity.

Huesca, March 2021

They promote:

Asociación Cultural Colectivo Ciudadano de Huesca, Asociación por la Recuperación de la Memoria Histórica de Aragón, ARMHA and Asociación de Acción Pública para la Defensa del Patrimonio Aragonés, Apudepa. Modesto Arjona Ortiz; José M^a Azpíroz Pascual, historian; Juan Mainer Baqué, historian and members of the Association Terres de Mémoire et de Luttés, ATML; Marién Martín Valdunciel, member of ATML and Pedro Sáinz Terrado, victim of Francoism.

THE FRANCOIST STREET MAP OF HUESCA, IN COURT

Dear colleagues:

We would appreciate your solidarity with the purpose of the document we present to you. We ask for your support by subscribing to it with the intention of publicising it in the media and social networks. You can send the corresponding individual or collective endorsements to the address:

armhamemoria@gmail.com

Likewise, given the nature of the contentious administrative appeal and the costs involved in bringing it through a lawyer and solicitor, we would be grateful for financial assistance in the amount you consider appropriate. The account number:

Cultural Association Colectivo Ciudadano de Huesca (Huesca Citizens' Collective)
IBAN: ES77 0081 0380 4800 0160 5062

We will provide timely and detailed information on all of the above.
<https://www.armharagon.com/> Thank you.