

RECONCILE AND COMMEMORATE: YOUTH FACING THE DUTY OF MEMORY

Thursday 26 september, 2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m., Azur room



Salomé Hénon-Cohin, Théo Burgevin, Léandra Vièl, Hervé Moritz and Nathanaël Tinard

Hervé Moritz, President of the European Movement France, prefaced his remarks with two anecdotes that have fuelled his European commitment. Firstly, the particular history of his native region, Alsace, which does not always resonate with the national narrative that emerged after the Second World War. Then, the proximity to the German border, located two kilometres from his home, which gave him the desire to follow the Erasmus course during his studies a little further east of the country. 'I realised that we didn't share the same memory. In Leipzig, for many people, Europe didn't begin until the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989,' he explained. This difference in memory leads us to question European construction. But with 2024 marking the 80th anniversary of the Normandy landings, are young people taking a keen interest in this shared memory, in which personal histories collide at cross-purposes?

Nathanaël Tinard, a student lawyer, is a winner of the National Resistance and Deportation Competition. 'Before this competition, my only connection with Germany was a traumatic one,' he admitted. His great-grandfather was sent

to a Stalag, a prison camp in Germany. According to him, when the Franco-German relationship is mentioned in the media, it is mainly for economic issues, such as the sale of F35 military aircraft. Subjects that he considers 'remote'. 'The best way to take an interest in this link is perhaps to learn German, but also to twin. Because going to someone else's house helps us understand that they're not so different.' The way in which we carry out this duty of remembrance could be corrected to encourage young people to take part.

ANIMATION

Théo Burgevin, Executive Director for Franco-German Affairs at DenkFabrik

Léandra Vièl, President of DenkFabrik

INTERVENANTS

Salomé Hénon-Cohin, Journalist for French-speaking and German media

Hervé Moritz, President of the European Movement France

Nathanaël Tinard, Winner of the Concours national de la résistance et de la déportation, student lawyer



Going to someone else's house helps us understand that they're not so different

Nathanaël Tinard

Salomé Hénon-Cohin, a journalist for German and French-speaking media, said that it was a German teacher who first gave her a taste for this country, as well as the variety of Franco-German study programmes. If this duty of remembrance serves to help us 'understand our ancestors, it's also useful to find answers for ourselves,' she declared. In this respect, the interdependent relationship between France and Germany, which arose after the Second World War, is a unique case. Arte, the only binational media in the world, in which editorial conferences are held in both languages, is the perfect example. These links, born of a strong political will, also enable us to take an interest in the collective memory of our neighbours, whose stories are inevitably different from our own. The journalist, who knows the country well, notes the desire

for total objectivity on the German side regarding Nazism. 'There is a form of responsibility among them, which is felt in their daily lives. For example, German television spent a monumental amount of money covering the commemorations of the 80th anniversary of the D-Day landings. It's also a way for Germany to gain access to a common European memory.'

Do these ties that unite these two countries today make it possible to avoid resentment? Hervé Moritz distinguished between the story of History, the fruit of academic work and the duty of remembrance, which is more sentimental and specific to each individual. And this also involves teaching. Nathanaël Tinard looked at an extract from a French school textbook from a third-year class, dating from 1922. Germany is spoken of in eloquent terms. He quoted from it: 'Intoxicated by its military and economic successes, Germany had, more than any other people, an imperialist and belligerent mentality, this German mentality made of greed, pride and an immense appetite for domination.' How can we avoid repeating history when school education is rooted in resentment? 'That's why wars have been repeated, this idea of the hereditary enemy,' he explained. The Franco-German relationship of today has managed to overcome this. Hervé Moritz also cited the example of how Spain and other neighbouring countries study Napoleonic conquests: 'They see Napoleon as a bloodthirsty dictator and a despot. We must accept this critical view when it concerns us.

This allows us to question our own memory,' he concluded. The duty of remembrance is above all the study of different points of view on a common history. Understanding History means valuing the memory of others as much as our own.



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