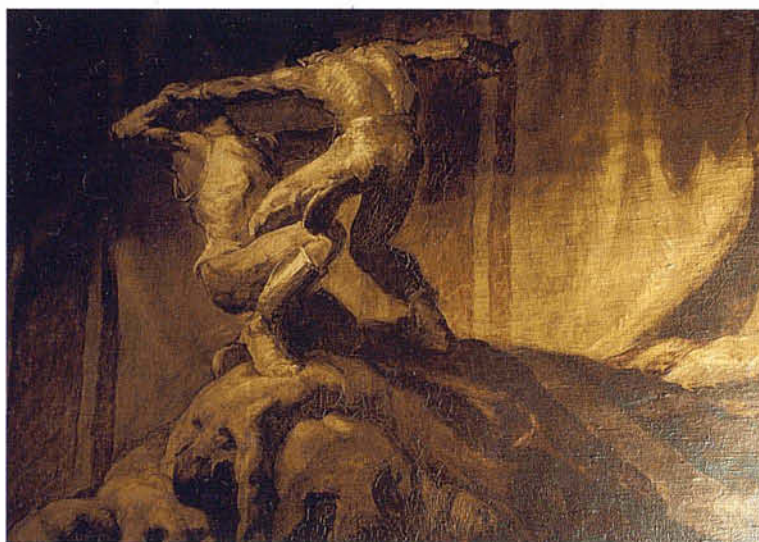


THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF HIV/AIDS CARRIERS



SERT. CATHEDRAL OF VIC (DETAIL).

IN CATALONIA, PUBLIC MOBILIZATION OVER AIDS STARTED IN 1985. SINCE THEN, VARIOUS GROUPS HAVE BEEN FORMED TO INCREASE PUBLIC AWARENESS AND FIGHT AGAINST THIS PANDEMIC. SINCE 1991, SEVEN ASSOCIATIONS HAVE FORMED THE CATALAN FEDERATION OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS FOR SERVICE IN AIDS (NGO/AIDS).

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According to the latest figures from the WHO, Spain is the country with the highest proportion of reported cases of AIDS. Catalonia has more cases than any other autonomous community.

The number of new cases of AIDS declared in Catalonia during 1992 went from 118 per million inhabitants to 162, an increase of 37%. From the start of the epidemic till the end of 1992, 4,307

cases of AIDS had been recorded in Catalonia. The accumulated proportion of new cases has doubled since 1990. During 1988, and in view of the discrimination suffered by HIV/AIDS carriers, the 41st Assembly of the World Health Organisation (WHO), meeting in Geneva, adopted a resolution on "Non-discrimination of people infected by HIV and AIDS illnesses".

Subsequently, the Non-Governmental

Organisations for Service in AIDS (NGO/AIDS), meeting in Montreal at the beginning of June 1989 on the occasion of the V International Conference on AIDS, held the First International Meeting of NGO/AIDS under the title "Occasions for Solidarity". For the first time, the central figures in the fight for attention to HIV and AIDS carriers and for the defence of their rights came together from all over the world. In view of the

repeated violation of human rights, the NGO/AIDS delegates approved at a plenary session the agreement and resolution on discrimination and individual rights.

Alongside the daily struggle being waged by HIV/AIDS sufferers and the unceasing work of Non-Governmental Organisations and government institutions for recognition everywhere of the human rights of HIV carriers and AIDS sufferers, emphasis has also been put on this subject at various meetings on an international level. For example, at the Second International Meeting of NGO/AIDS, held in Paris in November 1990 with the slogan "Policies of Solidarity", there was a seminar specifically devoted to the subject "Ethics and Human Rights". In addition, and from the very beginning of the epidemic, people with HIV/AIDS have played an active part in the citizens' solidarity movement which emerged as a result of the illness, and, aware of their responsibilities or duties, initiated actions in support of their rights. Their first international meeting was held in London in 1987.

In Catalonia, like anywhere else, we can speak of an "official response" and a "citizens' response" to AIDS. As regards the "official response", these are some of the steps taken:

On 20 February 1987, the Generalitat de Catalunya issued a decree (68/1987) establishing the "Programme for the prevention and control of AIDS", to be developed by the Department of Health and Social Security.

On 16 July 1987, the Councillor for Health and Social Security set up the "Advisory Commission" to the Programme for the Prevention and Control of AIDS in Catalonia as an Advisory Organ to the Programme's Management Commission. Later, the "AIDS Social Programme" was also founded.

On 9 December 1988, and in view of the increase of AIDS in Catalonia, all the parliamentary groups in the Catalan Parliament agreed to put into effect the Proposal for the Constitution of a "Study Commission on the problem of AIDS", which was presented before the house on 8 February 1989.

The work of the deputies on this commission materialized in the two resolutions by the Catalan Parliament: one (7 February 1990) guaranteeing confiden-



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tiality and respect for the individual in tests to diagnose AIDS; and the other (29 October 1990) to include representatives on the Advisory Commission to the Programme for the Prevention and Control of AIDS in Catalonia from the Non-Governmental Organisations specifically devoted to dealing with the problem of AIDS.

In Catalonia, awareness and mobilization against AIDS amongst the general public began in 1985. A series of groups and associations gradually began to get together to promote awareness, collaboration and the fight against this pandemic.

Since 1991, seven associations have made up the Catalan Federation of Non-Governmental Organisations for Service in AIDS (NGO/AIDS). The Fede-

ration respects and promotes all the member associations and their aims and activities. It also co-ordinates their work and complements it with joint activities. Another of the Federation's aims is to improve attention to people living with HIV/AIDS and to defend their rights, as well as greater efficiency in information and education directed at young people and adults in the interest of healthier and more solidary attitudes.

The Federation aims to encourage information and awareness in the society, defend the rights of people living with HIV/AIDS, co-ordinate citizens' participation and act as an organ of dialogue with the administration.

SIDA-STUDI Information and Documentation Centre

On 7 October 1987 the Associació SIDA-STUDI was created in Barcelona. One of its tasks was to found an Information and Documentation Centre on HIV/AIDS to promote and facilitate an extensive programme of prevention and education in this field, and at the same time to provide support for people living with HIV/AIDS and collaborate in the diffusion and defence of their rights as human beings.

Today, this centre forms part of the "network" of HIV/AIDS Information and Documentation Centres promoted and co-ordinated by the European Community Commission, and was one of the three European centres invited to Hamburg in October 1991 to study how best to approach and co-ordinate their activities.

Amongst other things, SIDA-STUDI offers a computerized data bank connected to the "Centre Régional d'Information et de Prévention du SIDA" (CRIPS) in Paris, and indexed and properly classified bibliographic and documentary material.

The Association publishes a regular dossier of monographic themes on AIDS and has taken part in the preparation and publication of several works, such as, for example, Ignasi Pujades's book *La recerca secreta de Josep M. Mercader* (The secret search of Josep M. Mercader), the story of a young Catalan facing the challenge of AIDS. This is the first work in Catalan to tackle AIDS not from the point of view of health or politics, but from a human perspective. ●