

DOSSIER

FROM MUNICH TO PARIS (1938–1940).
FROM THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR TO THE GERMAN NEW EUROPE

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DE LA GUERRA CIVIL ESPANYOLA A LA NOVA EUROPA ALEMANYA

Presentation

I felt [...] the drama of Barcelona and Guernica intensely, and I knew that after Munich the Republican defeat would soon come, and that after the Spanish Republican defeat would come, in turn, the entrance of Germans into Prague and Italians into Tirana. Two sentences were forever engraved on my spirit. One of them was said by a Spanish Republican officer on the Portús border, in full withdrawal, in response to a French officer who had treated him with pride and contempt: “I wish you will endure as much as us”. During the French disarray of May-June 1940, this phrase never left my mind. As a result of this same disarray, in a town on fire, a Spaniard from one of the pick-and-shovel battalions told me with simplicity: “Now it is your turn”.

Pierre Vilar, *L'historiador i les guerres* (Vic: Eumo, 1991), 11–12.

Between September 1938 and June 1940, Europe imploded in a new continental war stirred by fascisms and Nazism and facilitated by the mistakes and fears of Western democracies. While Spain was living through the criminal war that the big counterrevolutionary coalition, led by General Francisco Franco, had imposed in July 1936 against the constitutional power, represented by the Second Republic, in Europe Italian Fascism and Nazism carried out, step by step, their expansionist and aggressive plans. Meanwhile France and Great Britain went from the appeasement of these fascisms and the “Better Hitler than Stalin” to the urgency of trying to close an alliance with the Soviet Union to put an end to German and Italian aggressions.

It was all useless. Fascism in its Spanish version, consisting of Catholic integrimism, radical nationalism and Falangism, won the war in March 1939. A double process of brutal repression and mass exile began immediately; Catalonia suffered unusual consequences for it. In the spring of 1939 Prague and Tirana fell into the hands of European fascists. The Soviet Union opted for its survival. The United States watched from afar. Nothing or no one could, or wanted to, stop the new European war. On September 3 the conflict was already official.

On June 20, 1940, the Third French Republic disappeared from the continental map. Eighty years after the beginning of the conflict, we invite you to revisit, reread and remember this part of European history.

Eighty years after the start of the conflict, on May 30 and 31, 2018, at the Museu Memorial de l'Exili (MUME, la Jonquera), hosted the international symposium "From Munich to Paris (1938–1940). From the Spanish Civil War to the German New Europe", co-organised by the MUME, the Arts and Humanities Studies of the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (UOC), the Fundació Carles Pi i Sunyer, the Memorial Democràtic, the European Observatory of Memories (EUROM – UB) and the *Dictatorships & Democracies* journal; with the collaboration of the Càtedra Walter Benjamin of the Universitat de Girona, the Grup de Recerca sobre l'Època Franquista (GREF – UAB) and the Centre d'Estudis sobre Dictadures i Democràcies (CEDID – UAB), and with the support of the Diputació de Girona. The dossier below presents the result of this meeting, in which professors Walther L. Bernecker, Michael Seidman, Daniel Kowalsky, Phryné Pigenet, Michel Pigenet, Marco Fincardi, Joan Maria Thomàs and Francesc Vilanova provide new perspectives on the analysis of this crucial moment in European history.