

JOSEF BOSCH / www.josefbosch.net

Evening Standard, London Thursday, January 26, 1939

Barcelona has fallen. General Franco's troops marched into the city today and met with no resistance. Most of the Republican troops had gone. Shortly after noon armoured cars began to move into the city by seven different routes. Then, when it was found that resistance was ended, the insurgents began a triumphal march".

This is how London's press reported the fall of Barcelona the day it happened on a cold January morning of 1939. The Franco-controlled newspapers had called Barcelona the seat of communism, trade-unionism, anarchism and separatism and that's why with the conquest of the city, Franco had won, as the Evening Standard put it, "his biggest prize since

the war started on July 18, 1936".

After the decisive Battle of the river Ebro, a few months before, the fate of the city and that of the whole of Catalonia, was left in little doubt. Only a couple of days earlier, the newspapers had declared the city to be in great danger and were still calling on the population to mobilize and defend it with fortifications and barricades as they had done on July 19, 1936. That mobilization was crucial for defeating the insurgents at the start of the war. But now, after so many months of suffering and difficulties and after so much political infighting, few had any stomach to resist the unstoppable advance of the insurgents, the so called 'nationalists'.

All over the world, no least in fascist Italy, the fall of Barcelona was one of the

biggest news stories of the war. The end looked now in sight. In Catalonia itself, the event started a rush to the French border. Thousands of refugees were trying to escape the feared brutal repression of the conquering troops. If Barcelona was "guilty" of all the sins that the Franco newspapers were accusing it of committing, then a harsh lesson had to be taught. And it was taught, without mercy, without pity, without remorse.

One month later, Manuel Azaña, the president of the battered Spanish Republic, would resign, declaring that victory was impossible. It was now only for Madrid to put up some resistance, but that also ended in late March.

A dark, miserable, bloody, long dictatorship lay ahead.

LATE NIGHT FINAL

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Allegation Against P.C.s Withdrawn

Allegation against P.C.s, which was made by the Government, has been withdrawn. The Government has stated that it has no further to say on the subject.

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