

Pau Casals: Music and commitment in the journalism of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939)

Josep M. Figueres*

Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

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Translated from Catalan by Mary Black

Abstract

In this paper, we present the public programme of action carried out by Pau Casals during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), especially through the study of the daily press, as well as archival sources, in order to clarify his public behaviour. We should bear in mind that Pau Casals was linked to the political action of the Generalitat and the Second Republic, and that he held three concerts in Barcelona (as well as engaging in international tours and recordings) during the war.

Key words: music, press, journalism, Pau Casals, Spanish Civil War, Barcelona, Catalonia, Spain.

1. 1936: War and social revolution

The Spanish Civil War signalled a turning point in Casals' life. Even though he was both at his peak musically – the recording of the famous Bach *Suites* – and at his nadir – during the war he only performed three concerts in Barcelona and held a few tours – it was a crucial stage in shaping his thinking which would determine his future until his death.

The first news of the conflict came on Friday the 18th of July, and the next day there were skirmishes in Barcelona. Casals was in the midst of rehearsing Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* at the Palau de la Música Catalana. The conductor and orchestra were preparing for the opening of the People's Olympics – a leftist version of the Olympics being held in Berlin – on Sunday, when they were going to perform the symphony at the Grec Theatre on Montjuïc. In the official programme of the People's Olympics (Santacana i Pujadas, 1990: 235), the concert was scheduled for Sunday the 19th at 10 pm at the Palau Nacional. As Josep M. Corredor (1974) reported, the concert was interrupted just as the choir intoned "Be embraced, ye millions!"

* Contact address: Josep M. Figueres. [Departament de Periodisme i de Ciències de la Comunicació](#), Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. Campus de la UAB. 08193 Bellaterra, EU. E-mail: joosepmaria.figuere@uab.cat.

The episode signalled not only the beginning of the war in Catalonia but also a shift in Casals' career. We have numerous in-person witnesses. Casals told Albert Khan about the episode with a precision that only comes with key episodes in one's life. The rehearsal was important, it had been planned, and now it was finally being held, five years after the great concert to celebrate the proclamation of the Republic. He conducted Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* at the Fine Arts Palace on Montjuic. And now he was doing it again for the worldwide celebration. Casals said that he would never forget that day, which played out in his memory time and time again (Khan, 2011: 222-223).

The scene, which is imbued with emotion, illustrates the steadfastness of a musician, as well as a people, rising to the defence of their beliefs and ideals. He subsequently recalled it, and it became a key scene in his life:

“What a thrilling moment! And what a contrast! We were singing the immortal anthem to brotherhood, while on the streets on Barcelona and many other cities a fratricidal struggle was taking shape which would lead to so much bloodshed. A resident of Sant Salvador, a Barcelona businessman, Francesc Renom, was detained by the roving gangs. In the search of the Casals house by two armed militiamen, they did not find him but after a while, they returned with the arrested man. Casals prevailed over the group and phoned the leader of the local Anti-Fascist Committee, known as ‘El Maño’, who received the order to set him free, and the neighbour threatened that he may flee Barcelona the next day...”

His brother Lluís lived at the beach house. Casals told him that he could destroy anything that he believed might compromise them in the new situation. He burned the letters from Queen Maria Cristina and Count Morphy, and portraits of monarchs and aristocrats and those who had had to flee the chaos. He sacrificed them for the safety of his loved ones. Casals took a clear stance of engagement with the Republic, while he obviously also condemned and fought against disorder and chaos. He stated:

“To me – and let everyone judge me according to their own conscience – there was one main issue: my adhesion to the institutions endorsed by the vote. With regard to regimes and institutions, I will always respect the people's will, regardless of what it expresses.” (Corredor, 1974: 376)

Casals tried to assist in that complex moment. He made two major donations to the victims of the siege of Madrid and to the needy of Catalonia. According to *La Batalla*, on the 19th of August 1936 he gave the Antifascist Committee of El Vendrell two checks for ten thousand pesetas each for the victims of Madrid and Barcelona.¹ This was a huge sum at the time, and the

¹ “El músico Pablo Casals hace donación de 20.000 pesetas para las víctimas de la sublevación”, *La Batalla*, 19-VIII-1936. The same day in *La Publicitat*: “Donatius per a les

militiamen of El Vendrell, a village in the Baix Penedès region, gave the check to the mayor of Barcelona, Pi i Sunyer, to be used for those with war injuries in the hospitals of Barcelona. Casals was one of the first to offer economic support to the city's Revolutionary Committee (Vidiella, 2002: 17-18).

This donation, which we explain in detail in the biography, yet another display of Casals' customary generosity, stemmed from motivations which were unknown until now and would have repercussions. The news appeared in the press,² as Casals wished, as a defence mechanism against a threat which at that time was not only an opinion but could be dangerous given the fact that in August terrorist persecution against prominent conservatives or Catholics reached its peak. Just a few days before, a direct threat against Casals had been published. On the 14th of August, the official newspaper of the PSUC published an article by the music critic of *Meridià* and the chief theoretician of what was considered revolutionary music, Otto Mayer, the delegate to the Propaganda Committee of the Generalitat, the author of an international songbook and a music critic. In the article, the Marxist commentator criticised Casals' passivity towards the revolution and called for mobilisation. The music journalist, famous for his articles in *Mirador*, where he wrote several on Casals about the homages that Barcelona paid to Pau Casals and Fernández Arbós, praised both of them.³

He mentioned how Madrid had joined the anti-fascist struggle, while Catalonia had not, and the barb was targeted at Casals. Soli was not the only one to "finger" those considered dissidents or traitors; so did *Treball*.⁴ Mayer bared his sharp claws and thought that Catalan musicians:

"...so far have shown no signs of life, as if they were truly repelled at the thought of standing by the public's side at these times. Among them, there are half a dozen who have amassed fabulous fortunes in a triumphal race around the world."

The coincidence of the dates between the accusation by this orthodox Marxist newspaper, faithful to Moscow and politically dangerous, a newspaper that represented the unified powerful of the Socialist and Communist parties, namely *Treball*, on the 14th, and the publication of Casals' donation on the 19th, reveals that the donation was made during this interval. There is no doubt about it. Pau Casals made the donation motivated by the public outcry, not because of his generosity, as other times; there is a cause-effect relationship. Obviously he was pleased to do it, but the coincidence of the dates between the outcry (with its implicit threat) and the donation, just three days, speaks volumes. Given this public threat, he had to make a move and he did so with a donation of a significant sum, which he made public.

víctimes de l'alçament feixista. El mestre Pau Casals dóna 10.000 pessetes per als Hospitals de la ciutat. En dóna 10.000 més per a la ciutat de Madrid"; and in *La Veu de Catalunya*: "L'eminent mestre Pau Casals fa un donatiu de 10.000 pessetes", etc.

² *Las Noticias*, 19-VIII-1936

³ MAYER, O.: "La vida musical a Barcelona. Dos homenatges: Arbós i Casals", *Mirador*, 281 (21-VI-1934).

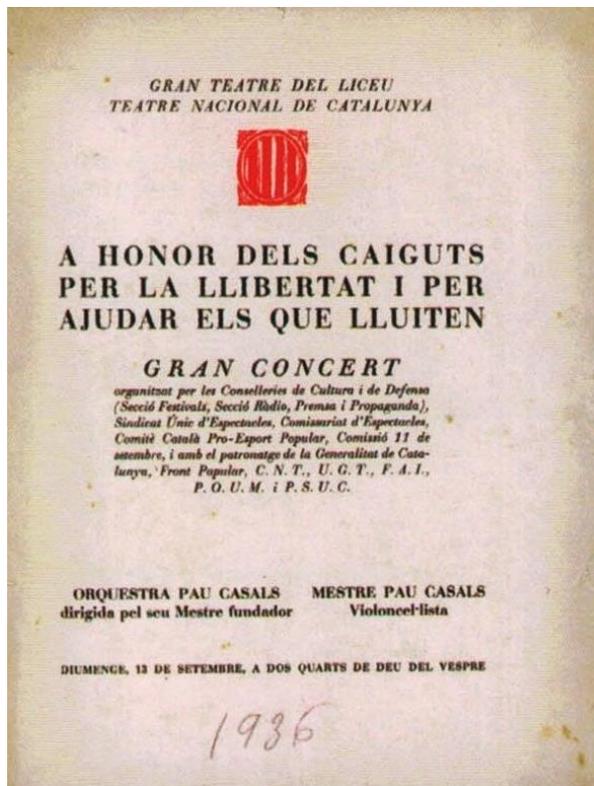
⁴ For an overview of journalism during that period: Figueres (2010b).

Casals did not want to go abroad. We should also notice that even Mayer noted the target of the donations – those with war injuries, widows and orphans – and that detail is not gratuitous. Casals donated the checks for the victims of the uprising, as the newspapers reported, even though he primarily earmarked the donations he made during the war to children.

Throughout the 30 months of the war, Casals held three major charitable concerts in Barcelona, one per year, to benefit the victims of the bombardments, with whom he sympathised and wanted to help in any way he could. The three concerts were held at the Liceu opera house, and all were for charitable causes. They were on the 13th of September 1936 for those injured in the uprising and its victims, the 12th of July 1937 for the International Writers' Congress in Defence of Culture (AIDC), and the 19th of October 1938 for children who were war victims. The first two were organised by the Generalitat de Catalunya and the third by the central government.

From the very beginning, Casals expressed his support for the Republic, and during the war he kept expressing it. He repeated it in the concert held in homage to the 5th anniversary of the Republic. This homage, held on the 13th of April 1936, the eve of the mythical 14th, when the new regime was proclaimed, was held at what was then then Gran Teatre del Liceu opera house, today the Teatre Nacional de Catalunya, as the gala festival organised by the Barcelona Town Hall and the Generalitat de Catalunya with the government of both institutions in attendance. The Orfeó Català participated in the first half.

Figure 1. Handbill of the concert in Barcelona (1936)



When Companys arrived, Millet started *Els Segadors*, which he had harmonised, and immediately thereafter *El Cant de la Senyera*, which also received a warm applause. They also played popular Catalan songs like *El Cant dels Ocells* and *La Sardana de les Monges* by the master Morera, who was in the concert hall. The first half of the concert ended with another rendition of *Els Segadors*. The second half featured Casals and the Pau Casals Orchestra, conducted by his brother Enric. They performed Haydn's Concert in D Major. The magazine put out by the Orfeó Català reported the following:⁵ "At the end of the lovely concert, Pau Casals listened to endless ovations which propelled him back onstage several times". The session closed with Beethoven's *Ninth* featuring numerous soloists, including Emili Vendrell and Conxita Badia with the Orfeó Gracienc, leaving Casals with a fond memory of this moving event.

Figure 2. Illustration by Francesc Fontanals, Soka, in *La Publicitat* (15-IX-1936)



The first of the concerts in which he participated during the war was on the 13th of September 1936. It was the concert for the victims – the wounded, orphans, etc. – of the fighting in Barcelona on the 19th and 20th of July. Regarding this concert, *Catalunya* reported: "There is no one as prestigious as him to bring class to an official event". Casals' name was fully associated with an evening brimming with profound resonances in the art of music, with the historical moment of the defence of a society under attack.

The concert was organised by the Catalan public institutions, but the initiative seemed to have come from Casals.

The slogan of the concert says it all: "In honour of the fallen, for freedom and to help those fighting". It was organised by the parties in charge: POUM, PSUC and the government of the Generalitat, with the ERC and the UGT and

⁵ M. P.: "Concert al Gran Teatre del Liceu", *Revista Musical Catalana*, 389 (May 1936), pp. 209-210.

CNT-FAI unions also playing a prominent role. It started with the funeral march from the *Götterdämmerung* and ended with Beethoven's *Eroica* symphony conducted, according to *La Publicitat* on the 15th,⁶ with "fitting character and passionate expression". Companys, Ventura Gassol, Espanya, Rouret, Pi i Sunyer, General Aranguren and others were all in attendance. It was the Haydn concert.

In the vibrant prose of times of war, the concert sought the following: to value culture as harmony and an act of awareness in unity against the desire to destroy shared democratic values – and civilisation. It also confirmed Casals as the standard-bearer of the country.

The concert programme was appropriate for the audience and the time: the first half featured Wagner's *Funeral March* from the *Götterdämmerung* and the overture from Beethoven's *Egmont*, an emblematic piece in tribute to the count who was decapitated by the Duke of Alba's regiment, which was very appropriate for that moment because of its vibrant tone. The second half, which was reserved for Casals' cello with the orchestra and conducted by his brother Enric, included the soloist part of Bacherini's *Concert in B-Flat Major*, the adagio from Bach's *Toccatà in F Major* and the middle of Granados' *Goyescas*, which garnered an encore. The concert closed with Beethoven's *Third Symphony* and the magnificent *Eroica* which, B. Samper wrote in *La Publicitat*, "Master Casals conducted with perfectly befitting character and passionate expressions". The journalist and musician waxed enthusiastic about this masterful concert with his referents to Casals: Bach's *Suites*, Beethoven with his exemplary *Eroica* and the stirring *Goyescas* by Granados, which had premiered in Barcelona in 1911 and been composed by the friend who had died 20 years earlier. In this critique, Samper wrote:

"It is unnecessary to ponder the supreme quality of these performances, which one can imagine just by mentioning the name of Pau Casals".

In his memoirs (Miravittles, 1982: 238) and an article,⁷ the journalist and politician Jaume Miravittles i Navarra, the director of the Propaganda Commission of the Generalitat de Catalunya, sketched the episode of this concert. Casals returned to his Barcelona in this epic climate. He was able to travel wherever he wanted, and he did. But he returned to his homeland to comfort it with his baton.

In 1936, he took inspiration from a text by Ventura i Gassol to compose the *Balada de la Nova Solveig*, which he dedicated to the soprano Conxita Badia i Casals, in which he tells her (Albet, 1985: 33):

"Thank you for your words, which the amiable Miss Davis has conveyed to me. She sang *La Nova Solveig* and I immediately

⁶ The news item was report thus in El Vendrell in *El Baix Penedès* on 13 September, etc.

⁷ Jaume MIRAVILLES commented on "Gent que he conegut. Pau Casals", *La Vanguardia*, 15-III-1983.

felt your presence...! Everything I have written for the soprano voice, I have done thinking of you. Therefore, everything belongs to you, and if one day they record it for gramophone, no one other than you should sing it.”

The second piece he composed during the war is *La Cançó dels Elefants* in 1938 based on a text by Palmira Jaquetti.⁸

In November, he made his usual concert tour, this time to replenish his coffers, which had been depleted by the losses in European bank accounts affected by World War II. He stressed his opinion with an emphatic conclusion:

“...my people are innocently suffering, because no one in Catalonia wanted to wage a civil war.

In this interview, he does not mention what was surely the most important musical activity of his lifetime, which took place during wartime. The famous Bach *Suites* which he had discovered in a music shop on Barcelona's Carrer Ample early in the century were now being immortalised in recordings he made throughout the war. He recorded the six suites out of sequence. The first session was in London on the 25th of November in the famous Abbey Road Studios (second and third suites).⁹ Later the second and sixth suites were recorded in Paris on the 2nd and 3rd of June 1938, respectively. The last two were also recorded in Paris, the fourth on the 13th and 16th of June 1939 and the fifth on the 14th and 15th of June in the year of the defeat. These suites had an incredible discographic projection and even today, remastered, they have been reissued a total of 20 times.

The moral position of refusing to perform in states he considered unjust or unworthy, which he drew attention to, appeared notably during these years when European totalitarianism was gaining notoriety for its ways. Hitler had been issuing discriminatory regulations for three years, and Germany was therefore the target of Casals' moral condemnation via declarations and by refusing to go there to play. When *L'Oeuvre* asked him if he would visit this country on his European tour, he said no, and the Barcelona-based *La Rambla* reported on this refusal.¹⁰

This interview, published in *L'Oeuvre* and *Le Peuple*, was one of the more popular ones that Barcelona's *La Noche* and other papers reproduced,¹¹ but let us consider the first one in *La Publicitat*, published in early November, before

⁸ Ossa Martínez (2011: 59) mentioned that he composed these two pieces as well as *Roda de Nadal* for piano (1939).

⁹ Although Baldock cites the 26th and 27th of November for the recording of Beethoven's Sonata no. 4 (opus 102 no. 1). He also insists on these dates for the recording of Bach's *Suites*.

¹⁰ V. G., A.: “Homes de la nostra terra. Pau Casals parla de la seva fidelitat al poble Espanyol”, *La Rambla*, 10-XII-1936.

¹¹ “Pablo Casals, ejemplo de patriotismo”, *La Noche*, 12-I-1937.

the tour, the most reliable one. Casals held a large number of interviews. Without aiming to be exhaustive, we have examined many of them.

The journalistic interviews during the Civil War of which we are aware are:

1936: 3

La Publicitat: “El mestre Pau Casals comença la seva tournée annual”. 12-XI-1936

La Rambla: “Homes de la nostra terra. Pau Casals”. [Rep. *Le Peuple* (Paris)]. 10-XII-1936

El Baix Penedès: “Homes de la nostra terra. Pau Casals”. [Rep. *Le Peuple* (Paris)]. 12-XII-1936

1937: 8

La Noche: “Pablo Casals, ejemplo de patriotism”. [Rep. *L'Oeuvre* (Paris)]. 12-I-1937

La Rambla: “Pau Casals, al costat del poble català”. [Rep. *L'Oeuvre* (Paris)]. 6-II-1937

La Humanitat: “Pau Casals, gran artista i patriota exemplar” [Rep. *L'Oeuvre* (Paris)] 7-II-1937

Catalunya: “Diu Pau Casals: No aniré mai més a Alemanya” [Rep. *Moment* (Bucharest)] 23-VII-1937

Claridad (Madrid): Declaracions [Rep. *Moment* (Bucharest) via Febus agency]. 24-VII-1937

Mi revista: “Pablo Casals. Embajadores de España en el mundo”. 1-VIII-1937

Caras y Caretas (Buenos Aires): “Pablo Casals: propago por el mundo la bella religión de la música”. 21-VIII-1937

Ressorgiment: “Artistes de casa nostra: Pau Casals”. 1937

1938: 4

El Día Gráfico: “Pablo Casals en Barcelona”. 14-X-1938

La Vanguardia: “Pablo Casals, ha vuelto. Breve charla con el ilustre artista”. 14-X-1938

La Publicitat: “Pau Casals home de cor”. 16-X-1938

Front (Girona): “L'ambaixada artística de Pau Casals”. 19-X-1938

Figure 3. Cover of *La Vanguardia* on Casals' pro-Republican stance



We have located around a dozen interviews during the war period, three from 1936, five from 1937 and four from 1938, reproduced in 14 media outlets. These statements were projected near and far, and some of the local press reproduced them while magnifying his loyalty to the Republican cause. In his hometown, it was claimed¹² that “One of Pau Casals’ best accomplishments in his career is being the son of the village and identifying with the noble cause”. However, this interview did not say that it came from Paris, from *Le Peuple*, when it was copied from there.

Let us view this episode as representative of the work of journalism in the 1930s, that is, copying without citing. It was an interview that made an impact. The author, in a Barcelona newspaper, was F. Oliver-Brachefeld: “El mestre Pau Casals comença la seva tournée anual” (Master Pau Casals commences his annual tour) in *La Publicitat* (12-XI-1936), and from there it was reproduced in *Le Peuple* in Paris, and from this newspaper it was once again published in Barcelona¹³ and elsewhere.¹⁴ The newspapers at the time reproduced whatever they wanted without asking for permission or citing sources. Its author explains this in “Trajectòria curiosa d’un article de *La Publicitat*” (Curious trajectory of an article from *La Publicitat*) (16-II-1937). The interview was signed by A.V.G. in *Le Peuple* and reproduced in Barcelona newspapers such as *La Rambla* (10-XII-1936) and the regional newspapers *Diari de Tarragona* (17-XII-1936) and

¹² EDITORIAL: “Pau Casals. Un nom, un home: tot un home”, *El Baix Penedès*, 1,605 (23-I-1937).

¹³ *La Rambla*, 10-XII-1936.

¹⁴ “Homes de la nostra terra. Pau Casals”, *Baix Penedès*, 1,600 (El Vendrell, 17-XII-1936).

El Baix Penedés (El Vendrell, 17-XII-1936) (Figueres, 2007: 323-348). Oliver-Brachefeld explained it in the mess that comes with so many reproductions.

2. 1937: The effort to defend the Republic

On the 16th of January 1937, Casals was in Paris. He wrote to Pena from Porte de Champerret at Galvani 68-18. They spoke about the translation of *Egmont* which they were preparing to offer to the musician, conducted by Casals. On the 23rd of the same month, he was in Prada, writes to his agent in London, Ibbs and Tillet (Baldock, 1994: 186) telling him that he was resting in the Pyrenees for a few days. He stayed with La Frasuquita in the Grand Hotel and went to Perpignan to see Doctor René Puig. Eisenberg wrote to them inviting them to Paris after the concert in Prague in April, and they stayed there until the 13th of May and then returned to Prada. From there they went to the Liceu on the 12th of July, and on the 17th they embarked on the tour through the Americas, two months in South America, the first time there since 1904. After the tour around Europe, the tour around North Africa and after it through Rabat, Casablanca, Tunis... he repaired to Prada. His association with Prada was constant, more than Perpignan, a major city. In Prada, he was close to the traditional Catalan world, the underlying *Canigó* and a landscape that was clearly similar, along with a peace and quiet that was more difficult to find in Perpignan, the capital of Roussillon.

That year, he took two major tours, at the beginning and end of the year, and he recorded records. He told Gerhard this when he returned to Barcelona, where he was interviewed¹⁵ for *El Día Gráfico*. In addition to the Suites, it mentioned several recordings of Antonin Dvorák's *Concert for Cello and Orchestra in B Minor, Opus 104*, for the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by George Szell in Prague on the 28th of April 1937.

In another letter dated the 30th of April 1937, Pena told him that a joint assembly of the AOC and OPC was held in his home. The president, secretary and treasurer of both entities were there, and even though the Union forbade holding concerts, he said, the mistrust between them was dispelled. We know that on the 25th of May, Casals was at the Grand Hotel, where he sent a letter to Pena and expressed his joy that the misunderstandings with the AOC were dissolved because of their susceptibility.

On the 12th of July 1937, a concert was held in honour of the intellectuals who expressed solidarity with Spain in the struggle. Then back to the Liceu. The Pau Casals Orchestra performed, made up of the teachers of the Single Entertainment Union and conducted by Casals himself. He offered a concert for the Alliance of Intellectuals for the Defence of Culture, the popular AIDC, as part of the Second International Writers' Conference. It was organised by the Propaganda Committee and the Entertainment Committee of the Generalitat with the involvement of the Barcelona Town Hall. The programme of this second concert sought to be an overview of Catalan music. Participants included composers and directors of their own works: Eduard Toldrà (*Scherzo* from *La*

¹⁵ GÓNGORA, L.: "Pau Casals ha cumplido sesenta años", *El Día Gráfico*, 23-I-1937. The clipping was included in the brief filed against him. Archive of the Higher Court of Justice of Catalonia. Tarragona collection. TRRP, File *Causa 2.443 contra Pablo Casals*, pp. 82-83.

Filla del Marxant), Jaume Pahissa (*A les Costes Mediterrànies*), Enric Morera (*Tassarba*), Baltasar Samper (*Suite Mallorquina*) and Joan Lamote de Grignon (*Scherzo sobre un Tema Popular*). Casals conducted the *Eroica*. In the intermission, *Goyescas* and the *sardana* by Juli Garreta entitled *A en Pau Casals* were played. On the 21st of this month, *Catalunya*, put out by the CNT, published a news item on the cover with a photograph and comment reporting on the association. *La Humanitat*, which was put out by the ERC, showed photographs of Companys, who was in attendance, and Casals enjoying an ovation. From this concert, there is a comment on the artist's suffering written by the journalist Aguirre in *El Día Gráfico* which discusses the incredible heat inside the Liceu and how Casals took pains to ensure that the sweat falling on the strings did not make him out of tune. He changed his underwear on the break, but as soon as the concert began again he was soaked... It also recounts how in Prague the Nazis were preparing a demonstration hostile to Casals, but Jiménez de Asúa, a diplomat and military officer, was able to stop it. But let us get back to the concert. The press covered it and *La Vanguardia* devoted an entire page to it with photographs by Agustí Centelles:

Figure 4. *La Vanguardia* (15-VII-1937)



After this concert, he went to Paris again, to the house of his friends Maurice and Paula Eisenberg, and to Prada. This visit was very important in setting his proximity, after the war ended in Catalonia, and to establish his permanent residence in this village. He returned to Barcelona in October. The concert was widely reported in the Barcelona press and even in the newspapers of the Franco regime.¹⁶

¹⁶ "Homenaje a los escritores marxistas", *Imperio* (Toledo, 15-VII-1937).

In an interview¹⁷ in the Romanian magazine *Moment*, he explained that he was withdrawing money from the Bank of Madrid and giving it to the Republic. In *Catalunya*, he stated that he was staying put and had not moved:

“As you must know, the government of Catalonia has asked me to make my art available to its propaganda services. I think that before the war, without anyone inviting me to, I made outstanding material and moral propaganda for my country. I made this propaganda through honest artistic work. It is important to remember that I am an artist, not a propagandist.”

Casals composed no piece – besides the two compositions mentioned above – and in steadfast, striking, profound words he repeated: “I want to be faithful to my people right now, just as I was in the good times”.¹⁸ Alavedra reported on his cool reception in Switzerland and the half-empty concert halls in other parts of Europe. As an example of his consistent stance, the biographers (Alavedra, 1975; Vives de Fàbregas, 1966) state that when travelling around turbulent Europe, he did not want to get off the ship in Lisbon so he would not have to greet the dictator Salazar.

He was interviewed and portrayed with great fanfare on the 1st of August 1937 in the anarchist monthly *Mi Revista*, with writer Leopoldo Cardona illustrating a far-ranging conversation on two pages. We can find this interview in 1940 in the brief of the Regional Tribunal of Political Responsibilities (TRRP),¹⁹ where it became yet further documentary evidence of the musician’s stance against a law which had all the legal faults possible, not moral or civic, rather strictly incorrect regulations, the main law issued to judge past deeds...

The appearances of interviews in the anarchist press were a safe-conduct, and the death threats alluded to by his biographer Baldock seem unfounded, although they were not entirely groundless. The writer from the important illustrated publication said that Casals soon left for America and wrote “he is our ambassador to the world”. Furthermore, he repeated that Casals was one of the most prominent glories of Spain who would not die, and that Casals considered himself a friend of the new Spain that was being shaped. The title of the interview is illustrative: “Embajadores de España en el mundo” (Spain’s ambassadors in the world).²⁰ In mid-July, the Barcelona newspaper *Las Noticias*, put out by the socialist union UGT, announced²¹ his departure abroad to hold 14 concerts, and his return in October. This interview would be used in

¹⁷ Figueres (2007: 331 and forward.). We have reproduced it in its entirety. The interview was also published widely, so excerpts appeared in *El Luchador* (Alicante, 24-VII-1937), *Justicia Social*, 367 (Mahon, 18-VII- 1937), etc. It appeared the most extensively in *La Humanitat* (23-VII-1937) with the title “Pau Casals i la guerra. ‘Neutral en aquesta lluita? Impossible!’”.

¹⁸ “Diu Pau Casals: completament del poble que m’estima. Mai no el trairé. No aniré mai més a Alemanya”, *Catalunya*, 23-VII-1937.

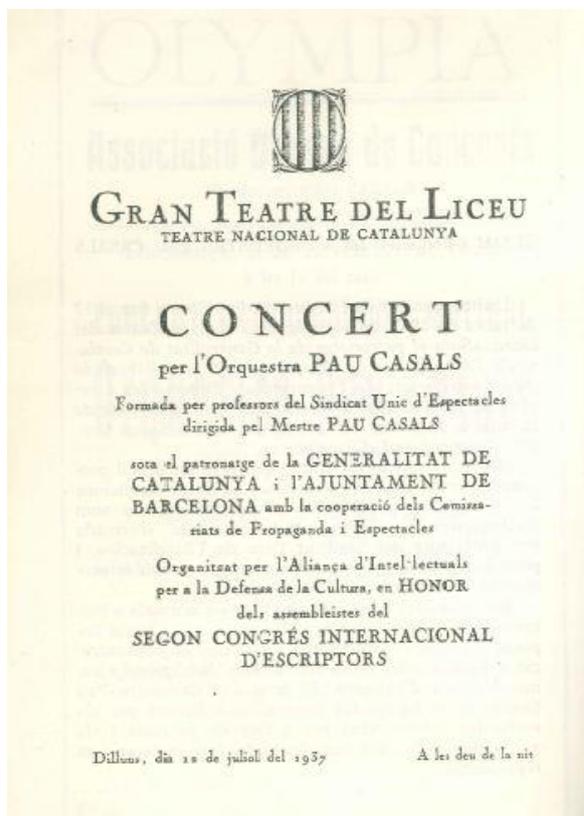
¹⁹ It can be read in Figueres (2007: 336-338).

²⁰ CARDONA, L.: “Embajadores de España en el mundo: Pablo Casals”, *Mi Revista*, 20 (1-VIII-1937).

²¹ REDACCIÓ: [Nota informativa], *Las Noticias*, 17-VII-1937.

his defence, albeit with little success because he was condemned by the TRRP anyway. It was alleged that Casals only spoke about art. It should be said that the title was devised by the magazine, not Casals.

Figure 5. Programme of the concert on the 12th of July 1937 at the Liceu organised by the AIDC



These concerts had been scheduled in advance. Casals requested permission to be absent. During the war, Casals went abroad several times without any problems. We only have one file authorising departures. It is the file of the Generalitat processed by Pompeu Fabra as the president of the Board of Cultural Relations, which on the 25th of June unanimously requested its chief, the Minister of Culture, to authorise the departure. The regional minister, Carles Pi i Sunyer, immediately authorised it on the 2nd of July, and informed the Ministries of Governance and the Interior.²² No state body appears; the Generalitat acted as a veritable state in some matters, even though the central government was subordinating its autonomy by imposing recentralisation to “restore” the public order, justice and the war industries.

In August 1937, he returned from Argentina, where he performed at the Teatre Colón in Buenos Aires. In 1904, he had gone to the Prince George Hall. Now he performed two concerts in this theatre with its symphony orchestra conducted by Juan José Castro. He would become familiar with the theatre and return there in 1973 with *El Pessebre*. As was customary, the press reported it

²² Pau Casals file no. 218 (crossed out), 18, (Barcelona, 1937). Folder 86. Q-279. Archive of the Barcelona Provincial Council.

avidly. Leandro R. Reynés from the popular *Carasiy Caretas* asked him about music. Casals answered that he viewed himself as a priest of propaganda from the religion of music.²³ The journalist did not ask him about the conflict, but he clearly showed his sympathy with the popular yearnings. He delivered a beautiful response in a general tone. Wherever he went, the impact of good feelings and social and cultural values reached audiences via the media. Casals always, always welcomed them and intensely poured himself into it. Hence the importance of his word.

The Catalan entities in Buenos Aires paid tribute to Casals with a banquet. The photographs show a room presided over by a Catalan flag with a picture of the maestro in the centre. The concert had been advertised since July²⁴ and the ground was laid to ensure that the visit was a major social event, not just a musical one:

“The arrival of the eminent concert cellist is unquestionably the most important event in the current music season in Buenos Aires.”

In September 1937, *Ressorgiment*, a Catalan magazine published in Argentina, with the same title as the working-class newsletter published in Barcelona which also reported on Casals, published an entire page with an illustration by Ramon Subirats, who visited him at the hotel and captured the rigour of Casals’ work ethic.

On the 7th a delegation of Catalan Argentines who sought and accompanied him arrived in Buenos Aires from Montevideo. The same day as their arrival, he held a concert in the Teatre Colón, and the Argentine newspapers proclaimed him the best cellist in the world. One of the newspapers in Catalan for the Catalans of Buenos Aires, *Ressorgiment*, shared²⁵ an anthology which culled from *La Prensa* and *Crítica*. The correspondent from *Última Hora*, Riera i Puntí, reported on it²⁶ and wrote that the entire press corps of Buenos Aires was prolific in its biographical articles, praise and positive comments.

On Saturday, Casals visited the headquarters of the Casal Català, signed the book of honour, attended a rehearsal of its choir and held a meeting with the Board of Directors. Many members and their families attended. On Sunday with 29th there was a meal in his honour, according to the report²⁷ in *Ressorgiment*, the Catalan magazine from Argentina, with more than 200 diners at the centre including the following Catalan entities: the magazine *Catalunya*; the weekly radio programme in Catalan broadcast in Argentina, Uruguay, Chile and Cuba; *L’Hora Catalana*; and the Freedom Committee, even though the bulk of the

²³ REYNÉS, L. R.: “Propago por el mundo la bella religión de la música, dice el maestro Pablo Casals”, *Caras y Caretas* (Buenos Aires, 21-VIII-1937).

²⁴ “Pau Casals a Buenos Aires”, *Ressorgiment*, 252 (Buenos Aires, July 1937).

²⁵ “Pau Casals a Buenos Aires”, *Ressorgiment*, 253 (Buenos Aires, August 1937).

²⁶ RIERA PUNTI, J.: “Els catalans d’Amèrica”, *Última Hora*, 16-X-1937.

²⁷ “Homenatge de la col·lectivitat a Pau Casals”, *Ressorgiment*, 254 (September 1937).

organisation was from the Casal Català. The concerts in Colón which caused a sensation were praised. He was given an homage plaque as a memento of the event. Casals, moved by the speeches by Ramon de Fortuny, president of the Casal Català, and by Ramon Escarrà, on behalf of the Homage Committee, said that he would be the messenger of their manifestations to the fatherland and that “he should trust that with the assistance of its good sons, Catalonia will overcome all adversities”.

The socialist and Marxist *Treball* announced: “After 33 years of Pau Casals’ absence, he has once again triumphed in Buenos Aires”, and it reproduced a Catalan translation²⁸ of the article from *Crítica* by the prestigious music and theatre commentator Edmundo Guibourg, from which we have gotten visions about two key factors in Casals’ personality which are extraordinarily descriptive when viewed by a foreigner.

He then flew to Brazil, where he starred in the 54th Artistic Culture Concert at the Teatre Municipal on the 19th of September. On the 9th of October, he set sail for Barcelona. The reverberations of his trip lasted until the following year when the magazine *Nosotros* published a long article that *Ressorgiment* reproduced after translating it into Catalan, and the illustrator Subirats reproduced from memory an atmospheric interview recalling two days he spent with Casals in 1937 at the hotel as he was making the charcoal portrait we have discussed.

He returned to Barcelona and the news appeared in the media. *La Humanitat* published several reports²⁹ which repeated Casals’ commitment to the Republican cause. On the 2nd of October, the first one appeared, which noted his honorary presidency of the new committee of musicians from the United States to help the Republic. The next day there came a second one, in which we can read:

“Pau Casals’ work abroad, naturally, has not solely been limited to his artistic work. The great cellist is the most effective ambassador of Catalonia and the Republic.”

On the 16th, a third article³⁰ appeared with a photograph and a simple but effective caption underneath: “Our Pau Casals”.

The journalists showed their support of Casals’ positions. In the language of the era, it was significant. Camil Oliveras, who was a close acquaintance of the musician and major fan, had created and conducted a musical revue in the early 1930s. On the 2nd of October, he wrote in the newspaper *La Humanitat*:³¹

²⁸ “Després de 33 anys d’absència. Pau Casals ha triomfat novament a Buenos Aires”, *Treball*, 5-X-1937.

²⁹ “Pau Casals torna”, *La Humanitat*, 3-X-1937, “Pablo Casals. Triunfador en sus conciertos por la América del Sud (sic), regresa a Barcelona”, *El Día Gráfico* (2-X-1937).

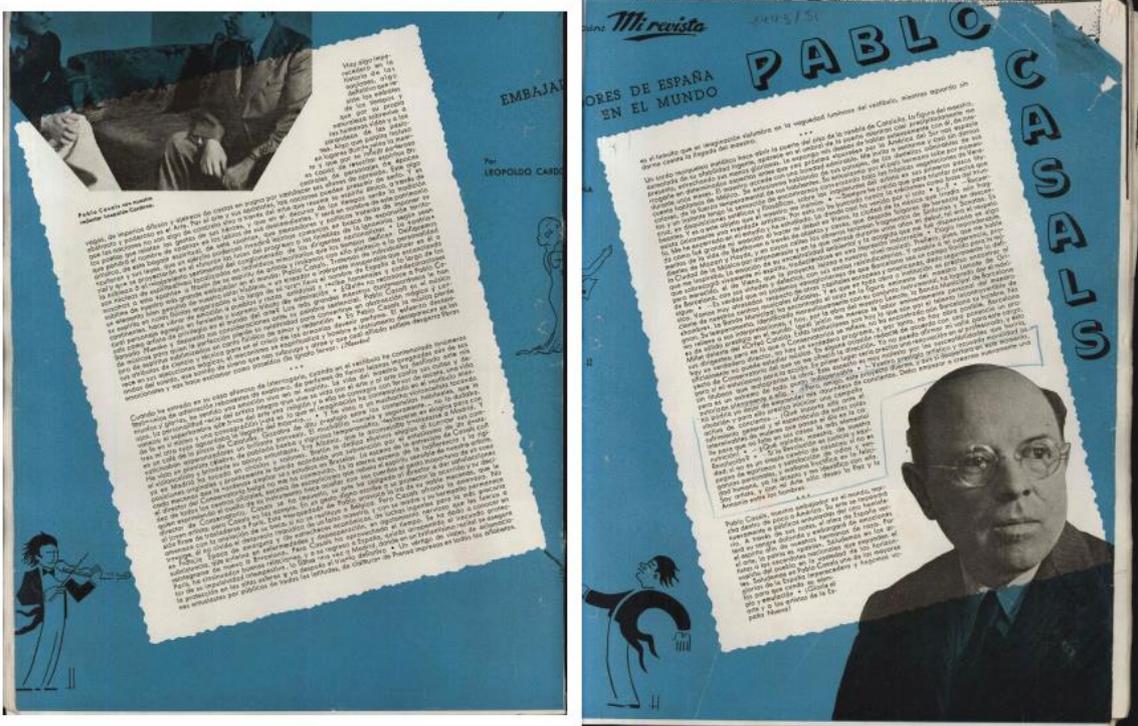
³⁰ “El nostre Pau Casals”, *La Humanitat*, 16-X-1937.

³¹ OLIVERAS, C.: “La Musica. Els nostres artistes a l’estranger. El mestre Pau Casals, president honorari del nou Comitè de Músics de Nord-amèrica, pro ajut a la Democràcia Espanyola”, *La Humanitat*, 2-X-1937.

“It is truly encouraging to see the brilliant job that our musical artists have been doing abroad for a while now by showcasing the high artistic quality of anti-fascist Europe.”

On the 16th, *Última Hora*, the evening newspaper of the ERC, reproduced journalist Navarro Costabella’s text which appeared in the magazine *Ràdio Barcelona* where he covered the musician’s ties. Navarro, who wrote a long interview which is actually his first biography, projects an image of Casals as a revolutionary at a time when nuances were important.

Figure 6. Interview in *Mi Revista*, an anarchist publication with an innovative design and large readership in wartime Barcelona and Spain



The impact of the success of the tour, the fact that he returned even though he was able to remain abroad undisturbed and with the perfect excuse, his social commitment... led the Barcelona Town Hall to adopt an agreement to pay tribute to him in a big way. On behalf of the radical nationalists in the newspaper *Diari de Catalunya*, Joaquim Casamitjana suggested that it become a grassroots homage, not just a mere act of protocol, and that it should be a municipal homage all over Catalonia.³² *Agence Espagne*, the agency specialising

³² CASAMITJANA, J.: Pau Casals, ambaixador de Catalunya al món, *Diari de Catalunya*, 7-X-1937).

in breaking news only reported by telephone and telegraph, spread the word³³ on his return.

Pena saw him and on the 4th of September said that they were going to see each other on the 6th in El Vendrell, where Casals was. They spoke about Forns, Dini and current affairs, now that the payments of the rehearsals complicated by the military coup were resolved. Ventura Gassol told Pena that they would be resolved, and they apparently were.

This return from America was reported in the anarchist newspaper *Catalunya* on the 21st of October with extreme overstatement in its title: "Pau Casals is back. Our great musician, after a brilliant tour abroad, has come back to his place of struggle". Casals also appeared in the newsletter *Comunicat de Premsa*, published by the Propaganda Committee of the Generalitat de Catalunya which supplied dispatches on the developments in the war for journalists that were in the Barcelona information centre. He appeared as a positive reference of moral victory: intellectuals and artists stand by the Republic. When people loyal to the rebels started to trickle out of Spain, albeit in small numbers given the fact that the majority of Catalan intellectuals were Republican, Casals always went back on his tours. The Catalan government's newsletter for journalists reported on it.

The Propaganda Committee of the Generalitat de Catalunya worked actively. It added Casals to the cover of the *Comunicat*³⁴ dated October 1937 about the musician's return to Barcelona with an image that is quite unique: "Pau Casals is the best propagandist of Catalonia".

On the 17th of November, he recorded Donald Francis Tovey's *Concert for Cello and Orchestra in D Major Opus 40* with the Symphony Orchestra of the BBC in London. The letters that the two musicians exchanged still survive, including three letters from Casals, two from 1936 and one from 1937. During the war, Casals was a strong presence on the Catalan collectivist scene, as illustrated by two examples. First, Rafael Moragas, a contributor to *El Día Gráfico*, devoted a lecture to him³⁵ in the unique association called Practical Idealists, and the newspaper published the summary. Secondly, the Committee organised an exhibition of caricatures by Andreu Dameson of at the Galeria Syra on Barcelona's Passeig de Gràcia on the 17th of December of 1937. The event took on a political tone because of the nature of the portraits exhibited, caricatures of Catalan and Spanish political leaders, around 20 of which were published in a portfolio of postcards. They included Artemi Aiguader, J. A. Aguirre, Álvarez del Vayo, M. Azaña, Joan Comorera, Lluís Companys, Durruti, J. Garcia Oliver, Dolores Ibárruri, Largo Caballero, Francesc Macià, José Miaja, Jaume Miravittles, Juan Negrín, Ángel Ossorio, Carles Pi i Suñer, A. M. Sbert, Josep Tarradellas and Casals, the only non-political figure. Dameson used a new

³³ "Le violoncelliste Pablo Casals a refusé de donner des concerts au Japon", *Agence Espagne*, 273 (16-X-1937). Service 24 h. (12).

³⁴ EDITORIAL: "Pau Casals", *Comunicat de Premsa*, Comissariat de Propaganda, 5 (30-X-1937).

³⁵ "En los Idealistas prácticos. Rafael Moragas disertó ayer sobre 'La vida de Pablo Casals, el artista que tiene el mundo en la mano'", *El Día Gráfico*, 25-XII-1937. In 1938, he went back to the Ateneu Barcelonès in the culture lecture series organised by the Committee of Recruitment Centres and Military Instruction (CRIM).

drawing technique, a geometric one which was astonishing for its originality. The 20 effigies rendered in rectilinear geometric strokes over a black background are a unique artefact. Casals was the only one who was not a politician. The portrait is highly angular, perhaps like a metal sculpture. However, Casals' face was rounded and little given to Dameson's dry, angular style.³⁶

Figure 7. Meal in honour of Pau Casals at the headquarters of the Casal Català in Buenos Aires in 1937



In December 1937, Casals found himself in Paris several times with Robert Gerhard. He had just turned sixty. The musician was there as a jury member for the International Society of Contemporary Music in its working sessions to choose the pieces that would appear in the programmes of the festival held in Paris in June. The event was particularly important because it dovetailed with the World Fair, a major gathering in which states strove to display their power via large stands. The Republic sent the best it had: Picasso, Sert, Gerhard, with two successful works by Catalan authors, Josep Valls and Joaquim Homs. Casals spent a few restful days in Paris after the recordings in London and the tours.³⁷

Casals' exhaustion after world travels all year round is obvious. He worked tirelessly, and he and Horzowski, also in London, finished Beethoven's *Sonatas for Cello* series and recorded the first, second and fifth. With the *Suites* ready, Casals was at a peak, in emotional turmoil, and thought about Baldolck because of the war, and his activity was intense. The opportunities to perform declined because of the war: only the three charitable concerts in Barcelona. Yet the tours were still active, although Italy and Germany were impossible as they were led by dictators and Casals opposed them with deeds: by refusing to perform.

That December, he performed a concert in the Salle Pleyel in Paris whose proceeds were earmarked to the public subscription for the winter campaign "for the brave soldiers", said *La Humanitat*, "who are fighting against the invaders of our country on all fronts". The concert, organised by the Spanish Embassy in France and the World Fair Committee in Paris, welcomed a select audience.

³⁶ They can be seen in Solà i Capdevila (2011).

³⁷ Statements to Luis Góngora in *El Día Gráfico* (23-I-1937).

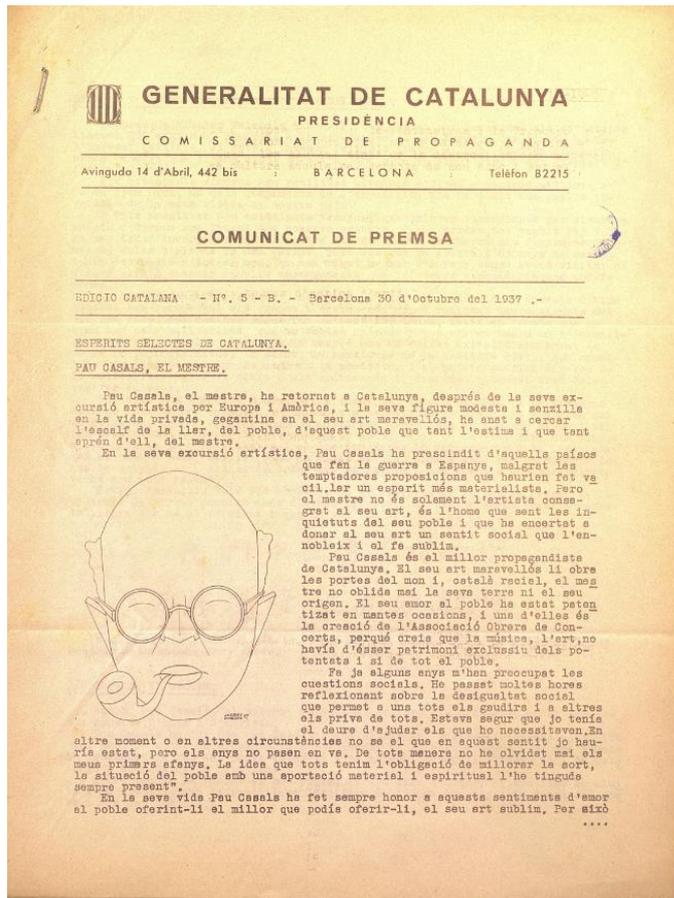
Casals had not performed in the capital of France for ten years. The programme, which featured Bocherini, Schumann and Haydn, was splendid and earned warm applause from the audience, including the eminences in the presidential boxes with the secretaries of foreign affairs Henry Laugier and Rochart. Other audience members were French ministers such as Pierre Cot, Jean Zay and Leo Lagrange, the presidents of the Senate and of the Chamber of Deputies, the Minister of State Violette, ambassadors from a dozen European and American powers like Mexico and the United States, along with a considerable retinue of intellectuals and artists (Cocteau, Tzara, Le Courbousier, Nyzan, Aragon, etc.), lawyers like Henry Torres, etc. From Catalonia, the audience included Antoni M. Sbert as the president of the Catalan Committee for the World Fair and the poet Josep Carner, in his diplomat capacity as the minister councillor. Other Barcelona newspapers also reported on it. G. Sánchez-Boxa in *El Día Gráfico*³⁸ described Casals' performance as a "proper statement, calmly launching the Republican cause in bloody Spain to the countries in attendance".

3. 1938: The defeat of the Ebro River, the eve of the end

We know that in January 1938, he was in Prada in the Grand Hotel. He sent a letter to Pena on the 29th in which he mentioned the difficulties he was having purchasing the supplies Pena had requested and then getting them to him. He suggested that Pena get in touch with the offices of the Generalitat in Paris and said that "they will have a direct way to make these shipments". We should highlight from the letter the comment on the bombardments, although the terrible ones that led to huge numbers of mortalities were yet to come. In this letter on the 29th of January, he wrote an extraordinary paragraph, as honest as a private letter can be, where he expressed his personal suffering and sense of political responsibility for the attacks since Hilari Raguier exhumed a telegram from Mussolini. He also stated that the acts were meant to terrorise the people.

³⁸ SÁNCHEZ- BOXA: "Pablo Casals", *El Día Gráfico*, (24-XII-1937).

Figure 8. Press release. It was published in Catalan, Swedish, German, Spanish, French, English...



He made another tour, this time around North Africa – Rabat, Casablanca, Oran, Algiers – with great enthusiasm. In Rabat, he held a concert on the 17th of February organised by the Friends of Music of Rabat. In Tunisia, he held a concert organised by the Society of Friends of music on the 28th of February at the Teatre Municipal. He enjoyed the journey, the colours, the people. In a letter (Dalmau, Mora & Cortés, 2012: 165-166) to his good friend Joaquim Pena, he wrote:

“For me it was a revelation of beauty and authenticity across the centuries. The artistic movement is at its inception, but thanks to the French it is interesting. I would really love to return to these countries, and if I never return I’ll think about them forevermore.”

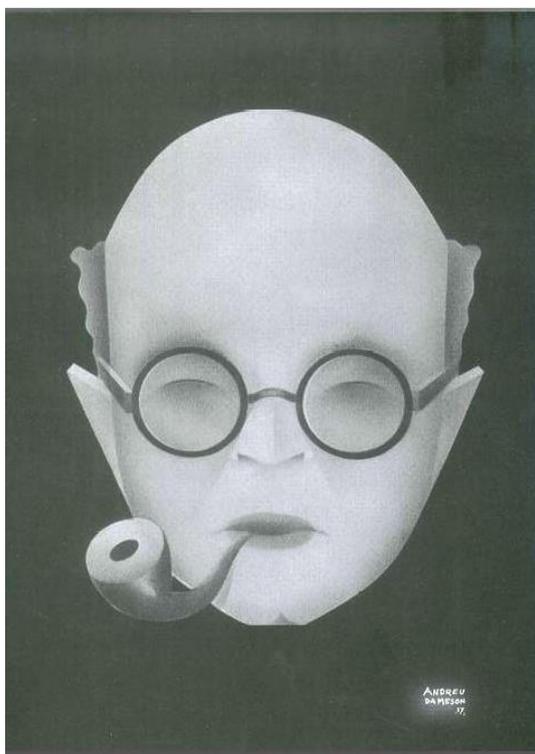
The Franco radio reported the news that Casals had fled from the Republic. Even though he did not go to Franco’s Spain, the mere act of putting distance between him and the Republic was good news in the propaganda war. Casals denied it and told the Spanish Consulate in Perpignan that his departures

from the state were authorised by the authorities. The newspaper *La Libertad*, with close ties to the Republican authorities, reported this.³⁹

Casals returned. In this atmosphere of fighting, silence and courage, Casals returned to Catalonia. In *La Vanguardia* on the 19th of March, there was an extensive article entitled “El regreso de Pablo Casals” (The Return of Pau Casals) which stressed his social concerns with the Concert Workers’ Association, which was revealed as a new development at a complex time:

“From a very young age, I have been concerned with social issues. I have spent many hours reflecting on social inequality, which gives some people all the rewards and deprives others of any.”

Figure 9. Pau Casals in a caricature by Dameson (1937)



Other newspapers also reported on his arrival. We can highlight the laudatory article in the newspaper *Treball* from the influential PSUC, by S. Roca i Roca, a minor storyteller and staunch defender of the working-class cause, where he expressed a position quite distant from Otto Mayer’s reservations, as we have seen, and therefore Casals was fully “rehabilitated”. Roca⁴⁰ offered a

³⁹ “Pablo Casals desmiente una insidia de las radios facciosas”, *La Libertad* (Madrid, 6-II-1938). The news item appears in the press: “Pablo Casals huye de los rojos” in *Diario de Córdoba* (Córdoba, 30- I-1938). The disinformation and intoxication were obvious, as is clear given that the concerts lasted until late February.

⁴⁰ ROCA i ROCA, S: “Tot un ciutadà. La fidelitat de Pau Casals”, *Treball* (22-III-1938).

spectacular headline: “Tot un ciutadà. La fidelitat de Pau Casals” (A real citizen. The loyalty of Pau Casals). Meantime, the harsh bombardments besieging the city of Barcelona were crushing spirits:

“At this time, precisely this time of scathing dramatics and the utmost tragedy, Pau Casals, by returning among his fighting people, provides a fine example of fortitude, honesty and loyalty to this heroic people who today is writing one of the most beautiful, most admirable and most thrilling pages in modern history. And especially, before the entire world, he provides an example of trust in the working masses and the triumph of popular arms, and with his attitude he affirms how his glory as a citizen runs parallel to what he enjoys as an artist who is proudly admired in all civilised peoples.”

On the 23rd of March, *Justicia Social*⁴¹ published the news that a major instrumental concert was being planned in Madrid. It said that of the twelve instruments conserved, seven were at the National Palace of Madrid and would be played in this concert. The other information provided by the socialist newspaper was that Pau Casals would participate in the concert.

Anarchist or socialist, nationalist or Marxist mouthpieces: Casals appeared in all of them.⁴² In early September, he donated a thousand jugs of milk to the children of El Vendrell and 30 more boxes of milk for the ill and the children of Tarragona.⁴³ On the 10th of September 1938, the mayor of Tarragona showed journalists a letter written to him by Casals in which he announced the shipment of 30 boxes of jugs of milk for the ill and the children. The mayor reminded journalists that an avenue was about to open in Tarragona which would bear the musician’s name.⁴⁴

On the 12th of October, he went back to Barcelona on tour. News appeared of his arrival there. Zanni, a journalist with *La Vanguardia* whom he knew well after going with him to El Vendrell in the homage from 1927, interviewed him, and Casals repeated his stance.⁴⁵

U. F. Zanni, the public name of Urbano Fernández Zanni, a music critic for *La Vanguardia*, who joined the newspaper in 1926 and would stay there for many years, reported in the *Revista Musical Hispano* in 1915: “In this regard, Casals expresses his satisfaction with the better understanding of the Republican cause which he has recently found in foreign nations”.

⁴¹ “Un gran concierto”, *Justicia Social*, 511 (23-III-1938).

⁴² MORI, A.: “Arte leal. El violoncello de Casals”, *La Noche*, 6-IX-1938.

⁴³ “Un gest de Pau Casals”, *La Publicitat*. 3-IX-1938.

⁴⁴ “Pablo Casals envia 30 cajas de botes de leche a los niños y enfermos de Tarragona”, *La Vanguardia*, 11-IX-1938.

⁴⁵ ZANNI: “Pablo Casals ha vuelto. Breve charla con el ilustre artista”, *La Vanguardia*, 14-X-1938.

He welcomed other journalists as well. Thus, a unique interview appeared in the working-class newspaper *Front*, the organ of the PSUC in Girona and the mouthpiece of the UGT.⁴⁶ The newspaper published it on the front page. The journalist visited Casals in his flat on Rambla de Catalunya where he usually welcomed journalists; for example, he welcomed Irene Polo and others there prior to 1936.

The questionnaire he was administered offered a very sincere picture. Vallespinós was not a conventional journalist but instead a kind of regular citizen who loved music, and the conversation flowed quite naturally, with Casals sharing his honest opinions on Republican propaganda which he could make and on the conflict. These opinions, just like the other statements from the period, were not known or mentioned in the brief of the lawsuit filed against him in 1940, and nor were they mentioned (Figueres, 2007) in previous biographies.

The question arises of the propaganda that he and his music could make on his tours, which the journalist considered propaganda on the content and spiritual essence of the Catalan people, on which Vallespinós wrote: “The fervent audiences have been able to appreciate Catalonia’s degree of culture and civilisation, on behalf of which the most successful men spoke the language of cordiality and peace”. Casals responded to this question and discussed the presence of Republican propaganda internationally:

“Without leaving my orbit, I have glorified Catalonia and our democratic institutions. I have propagated the postulates of free people and have accomplished with my music what could not be accomplished by oral or written propaganda.”

Casals was about to leave Barcelona. The interview was published on the 19th of October. He announced the concert at the Liceu and said that he would leave Barcelona for his tour around Greece, Turkey, Egypt and Angora. We have a very illustrative report⁴⁷ on the concert in Cairo which tells about the type of international concerts he scheduled. It appeared in the Barcelona press:

“The Egyptian press is all aflutter about the artistic journey taken around this country by the eminent cellist Pablo Casals. The journalists are devoting extensive, complimentary articles to the Catalan maestro’s incomparable art.”

Regarding the concert planned for the Liceu, he stated: “It will be a small yet sincere homage to my compatriots who are handling the privations of war with such courage”.

⁴⁶ VALLESPINÓS, J.: “L’ambaixada artística de Pau Casals”, *Front*, 19-X-1938.

⁴⁷ “El viaje artístico de Pablo Casals, exponente de la cultura española”, 226 *Nostra Paraula* (Mahon, 3-I-1939).

Casals' position was unequivocally on the side of the Generalitat, the Republic and the values they upheld. As the conflict advanced, his position solidified and he fearlessly shared it in public. He was thanked not only in the nationalist newspapers *La Humanitat*, *Diari de Catalunya* and *Última Hora*, as we shall see, but also in the Marxist papers like *Treball*, anarchist ones like *Solidaridad Obrera* and *Catalunya* and socialist ones like *El Día Gráfico* and *El Diluvio*.⁴⁸

The Republican press spoiled him with praise and a long commentary, as in *La Noche*, a caricature by Bagaria, who also illustrated for *La Vanguardia*.

On the 23rd of October 1938, *La Vanguardia* published an entire page with images of the concert and a horribly explicit headline which joins the constant expressions of Casals' support for the cause. Even in late 1938, he publicly said:

“I want nothing to do with fascist countries – the same ones that murder from the air and carry out their war of extermination and barbarism’, maestro Casals uttered these last words with an energy that is not customary in him.”⁴⁹

On the 11th of October, the press reported that on his return from his tour he met with the Minister of Governance and Social Assistance, Antoni M. Sbert. It was most likely to plan a new concert to assist children on the 19th of October of that year.⁵⁰

Casals told Khan that he received the request from the Minister of Culture, Gassol (although the minister then was actually Pi i Sunyer) but the poet from La Selva del Camp was the musician's friend, hence the lapse. Regardless, the concert, which was held at the Liceu, was to benefit children who were war victims. The National Concert Orchestra was conducted by B. Pérez Casas. It was the last concert on Catalan and Spanish soil before he went into exile. In statements⁵¹ to his friend the journalist Moragas, now in *El Día Gráfico*, he said:

“I'm going back to Barcelona, to the loyal Catalonia and the heroic Republican Spain. I am here, and you can count on me as long as I can.”

It was attended by members of the government of the Republic, the Generalitat de Catalunya and the Barcelona Town Hall, such as M. Azaña, Negrín, Josep Moix, Álvarez del Vayo, Paulino Gómez, González Peña, Tomás

⁴⁸ AGUIRRE (Francisco?): “Pablo Casals”, *EL Día Gráfico*, 19-X-1938, etc.

⁴⁹ VALLESPINÓS, op. cit.

⁵⁰ “De regreso del extranjero, el maestro Pablo Casals, visita el señor Sbert”, *La Vanguardia*, 12-X-1938.

⁵¹ MORAGAS, R.: “Pablo Casals en Barcelona”, *El Día Gráfico*, 14-X-1938.

Bilbao, Segundo Blanco, as well as authorities from the government of the Generalitat and the Barcelona Town Hall: J. Tarradellas, A. M. Sbert, R. Vidiella, J. Bosch Gimpera, M. Santaló, Hilari Salvadó, J. Irla, J. Lluhí Vallescà, Martí Rouret and others, a variety of personalities from La Pasionària to Margarita Nelken, as well as General Rojo, along with a fervent, faithful audience.⁵² The military committee from the Society of Nations was also there, presided over by General Jalander, and Casals' performance sparked a passionate editorial⁵³ in *El Diluvio*.

This concert also had a heavy symbolic value because of the atmosphere caused by the famous fracas of the battle of the Ebro River in October and its overall repercussions. The war was lost, and because of the consequences of that same concert, there was a desire to morally resist. One critic who followed him closely over time, Zanni from *La Vanguardia*, described the atmosphere, which is fascinating because of the concert's consequences on the subsequent action of the TRRP; during the intermission in the middle of the concert, or according to other newspapers at the end of it, Casals offered a message to the peoples of America in English, Spanish and Catalan which was broadcast by radio:

“I am permitting myself to ask for your cooperation, your assistance in the task I have undertaken in order to supply food, clothing and medicine to children and the elderly, as well as to evacuate the children who run such dire risks because of the war and the bombardments...”⁵⁴

He explicitly asked for cheques and mentioned the name of Midland Bank, Charing Cross Branch, in London. The speech was followed by the anthem *Himne de Riego*, not *Els Segadors*, the official Catalan anthem. The programme was only in Spanish, and the musician's name was printed as Pablo. It is clear that the Spanish government organised it, after turning Barcelona into the capital of the Republic by officially residing there since the 31st of October 1937 after the then-predicted imminent fall of Madrid. The presence of Spanish music in Barcelona was so strong that it virtually nullified Catalan music. Only because of the “energetic insistence of the public”⁵⁵ did the orchestra perform *Els Segadors*, which was not programmed by the central authority. If we pay attention to the reports in the Barcelona newspapers – *Treball*, *La Vanguardia* – the event was a consummate social and patriotic affair, in addition to a musical one, of course. *El Socialista*, then published in Barcelona, devoted an entire page to a long laudatory article by Subirà; it reproduced Casals' message and different notes on the meeting he held with Negrín after the concert. He performed Haydn, whose music became even more grandiose when performed by Casals, says *La Humanitat*.

⁵² ZANNI, U. F.: “Éxito del gran Pablo Casals y de la Orquesta Nacional de Conciertos. Asisten el jefe del Estado y el presidente del Gobierno”, *La Vanguardia*, 20-X-1938.

⁵³ “Reflejos. Jalander y Casals”, *El Diluvio*, 20-X-1938.

⁵⁴ PADILLA, R. M.: “Un concert que esdevindrà historic”, *La Rambla*, 20-X-1938. Reproduced in FIGUERES: *Entrevista a la guerra*, p. 325.

⁵⁵ WRITING STAFF: “Pau Casals rep l'homenatge del poble català”, *La Humanitat*, 20-X-1938.

After the concert, Negrín and General Rojo, among others, welcomed him in a small private event in the Cercle del Liceu where they praised his efforts. Negrín asked him if he would stay in Barcelona for a while and Casals told him only a few days since he had committed to concerts abroad.⁵⁶ And he gave him a donation.⁵⁷

The concert had a huge impact in the media. The Marxist weekly *Meridià*, “Tribunal of the Intellectual Anti-Fascist Front”, reported on Casals’ return and after the concert in Catalonia.⁵⁸

The cover of the CNT newspaper reported that Casals was offering his glory to serve the Republic, and that his concerts had a noteworthy mission given that with his work “he mitigated the troubles and hunger of children and the elderly”.⁵⁹ The working class’s reaction was important. Just two examples: on the 21st the National Committee of Anti-Fascist Women of Spain publicised a message in which they showed their adhesion to the musician and thanked him for his actions. They said:⁶⁰

“We know that you have voluntarily refused to hold concerts in the countries where you would have garnered many laurels and profits, but where your presence would have seemed like tacit approval of the conduct of the leaders of these countries, which runs counter to all the postulates of progress and culture.”

A few days after the concert, the Entertainment Industry Union of the CNT, which encompassed authors, composers and orchestra conductors, sent him a message, the press reported, “of adhesion and warm praise for the work undertaken by the illustrious cellist, in both artistic terms and in social and charitable terms.”⁶¹ In his home on Diagonal, he gave an interview to the workers’ magazine *Ressorgiment*, from the collectivised company Vilardell, where he stated that the very next day he was leaving for a tour of Brussels and Liege, Prague, Budapest, Bucharest, Athens, Istanbul, Cairo and Alexandria. *La Vanguardia* also reported on it⁶² and said “today” – it was published on the 21st. Casals’ calendar was full to brimming.

⁵⁶ “El presidente del Consejo felicita a Pablo Casals”, *La Vanguardia*, 20-X-1938; “En el Liceo. Pablo Casals, junto con la Orquesta Nacional de Conciertos, obtiene uno de sus más resonantes triunfos”, *El Diluvio*, 20-X-1938.

⁵⁷ “Contestant al requeriment de Pau Casals. Un donatiu del president de la República”, *La Humanitat*, 21-X-1938.

⁵⁸ L. G.: “L’alta exemplaritat de Pau Casals”, *Meridià*, 43 (28-X-1938).

⁵⁹ “Gesto Casals”, *CNT*, 20-X-1938.

⁶⁰ “Las Mujeres Antifascistas a Pablo Casals”, *La Vanguardia*, 21-X-1938.

⁶¹ “El Sindicato de la Industria del Espectáculo a Pablo Casals”, *La Vanguardia*, 23-X-1938.

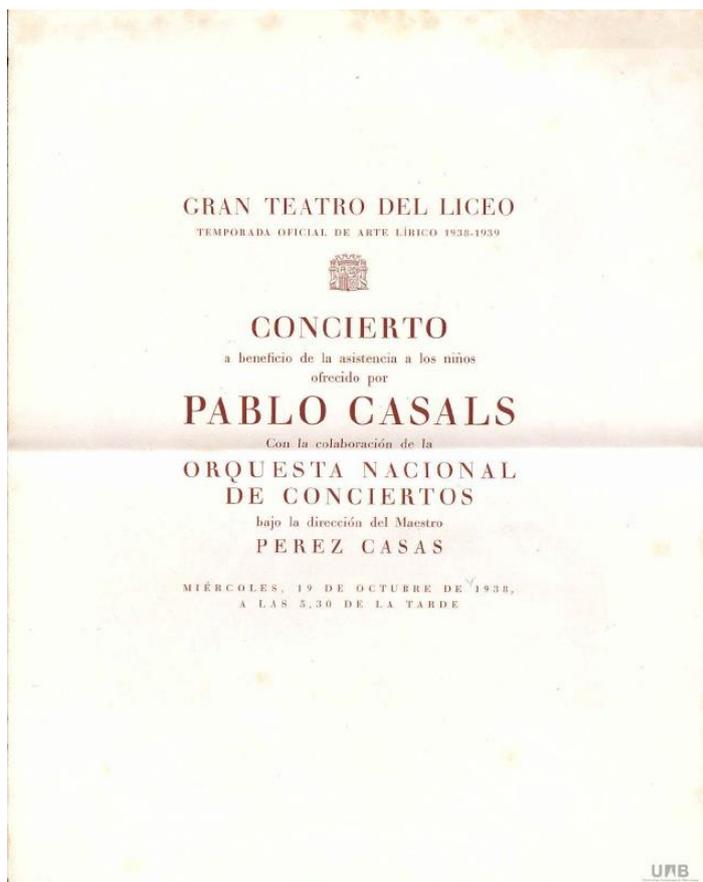
⁶² “La jira [sic]de Pablo Casals. Antes de salir de Barcelona un americano le ofrece 200 toneladas de trigo para los niños y los viejos”, *La Vanguardia*, 21-X-1938.

In late December, a news item was published reporting on his concert in Bucharest, where he was given a parchment signed by the most prominent intellectuals, led by maestro Georgescu, professor Radulescu, the president of the Romanian Academy, and the conductor of the Bucharest Symphony, which stated, among other words of praise:⁶³

“For the entire art world, for everyone who appreciates Beauty and the artistic Truth, the presence of the great musician becomes a veritable feast for the spirit.”

Casals went back to France. In Perpignan, he offered packages with gifts for children now that the holidays were drawing near; it was euphemistically called Children’s Week in the forced secularisation of the names, if not the events... and a cheque, which he gave to the Spanish consul. And on the 1st of January 1939, he sent 10,000 jugs of milk to the mayor of Barcelona meant for the weakest.

Figure 11. Concert programme



⁶³ “La estancia del maestro Casals en Bucarest”, *La Vanguardia*, 24-XII-1938.

He goes went to Barcelona in January and was given an honorary degree from the University of Barcelona. There is no time to print it. He was given it handwritten; a doctor *honoris causa* signed by the rector, Pere Bosch Gimpera, a quickly scrawled document with the official seal. He explained his excitement: “Can a man find the right words to express his gratitude for an honour like this?” He went back to Sant Salvador a few days later to bid his family farewell and begin a long exile, an international pilgrimage, first in France, later in Puerto Rico, lasting more than 30 years, packed with occasional journeys all over the world in the ensuing decades. Many exiles did not want to return until Franco’s death as an act of protest. Casals didn’t either. He was yet another exile who did not want to return to the person who was sullied with innocent blood and kept his grip on a fierce dictatorship for four decades.

The idea had been floating around the social milieu. Two years before, a journalist from the prestigious *Mirador*, Oliver Brachfeld, published a long, sensible article⁶⁴ where he called on the new Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona to bestow this award on Casals.

Figure 12. Cover of *La Humanitat* (20-X-1938)



⁶⁴ BRACHFELD, O: “En homenatge a Pau Casals. Doctor ‘honoris causa’”. *Mirador*, (8-II-1934).

Figure 13. Cover of *La Vanguardia* (23-X-1938)

We know the backstory. First came a request from the Professional Athenaeum of Journalists to the Spanish Minister of Public Instruction, then in Barcelona, who determined the appointments and deemed it pertinent. *La Vanguardia* published a note⁶⁵ which was reproduced the next day in Madrid's *La Libertad*,⁶⁶ but it was not until near the end that the award would come to fruition. We have seen no news reports other than a brief note⁶⁷ in the Madrid newspaper *La Libertad* which indicated that the award was also being given to four other foreign personalities at the proposal of the university faculties,

⁶⁵ "Homenaje a Pablo Casals. Se pide que sea nombrado Doctor 'honoris causa' de la Universidad de Barcelona y el Ministro de Instrucción Pública apoya la petición", *La Vanguardia*, 26-XI-1938.

⁶⁶ "En honor del gran artista Pablo Casals", *La Libertad* (Madrid, 27-XI-1938).

⁶⁷ "Pablo Casals y otros personajes, doctores 'honoris causa' de la Universidad barcelonesa"; *La Libertad*, (Madrid, 21-I-1939).

including the North American physiologist Walter Brandon Cannon. The news items appeared on the 20th, which gives us some sense as to the date when Casals left Barcelona, which was on the verge of falling.

4. 1939. Finale. Exile

The war was over and he appeared in Prada, in exile, but during the conflict. In May 1937, he was with Joaquim Pena in the Grand Hotel of Prada, as we know from the date on a letter.⁶⁸ He was there for a week, returning from Paris, and he hoped to get back to regular life. His health had its ups and downs. He lived there at least from January to September 1938, as we know from several letters. The somewhat imprecise vision of what he experienced there comes from his friend Lluís Guarro. Guarro and his children took refuge there, as they explained to Baldock, but Casals was very familiar with the village from his previous sojourns. The reality is that Casals was a traveller used to going around Europe and being in two, three or four cities within one week... In his last letter to Pena, dated 9 January 1939 – there are still some publicists who say that Casals left with the withdrawal in late January and early February – he wrote (Dalmau, Mora and Cortés, 2012: 168):

“I thought I might be able to make it to Barcelona, but I have so much unexpected work here that there’s nothing to do but wait. I am with you heart and soul, with my people, with my friends, with all Catalans. I feel inside me the suffering of all and the idea that I can do something for them helps me survive.”

Musically, during the conflict Robert Baldock (1994: 184) reported that this was the most active period of Casals’ recordings. Between November 1936 and June 1939, the English biographer says that the main cello works recorded, beyond Bach’s unaccompanied *Suites*, were four of the five sonatas for cello by Beethoven, Dvorák’s *Concert for Cello in B Minor*, Boccherini’s *Concert in B-Flat Major*, Bruch’s *Kol Nidrei* and Tovey’s *Concert*. Fred Gaisberg, who oversaw the policy of the very important recording label EMI, once again invited him; he had previously promoted the trio of Cortot-Thibaud-Casals in 1926-28 and the OPC in 1932. He did so in London on the 26th and 27th of November 1936 in the Abbey Road Studios of HMV (which had merged with EMI), and he repeated it in Prague in April 1937 with the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra the day after the concert. Gaisberg, reports Baldock, had flown from Barcelona and was exhausted from the effort. In 1938, he recorded two more Bach *Suites* and completed the set on the 13th of June 1939.

From Prada, he watched as Catalonia fell. The French radio and newspaper reports were up in arms. He took refuge in Paris, where he remained until the spring, when he returned to Prada to stay for 17 years. His reflection on the tragedy magnified his desire to change the unfair reality of the world which he saw in the general situation prior to the war. His commitment, as indicated,

⁶⁸ There are letters from Casals to Prada on 29 January, 7 March, 11 May, 22 June and 1 September 1938 and 9 January 1939.

to refuse to play in Germany was not just an empty gesture. Wilhelm Furtwängler enthusiastically invited him, but Casals told him that despite his explanation of the differences between art and politics, he did not share this perspective and therefore would not perform in Germany. Casals' commitment was unwavering, and he shared it internationally. His vision of the war, bombardments, hunger and penury, which were particularly grave for children and the elderly, gave him a sense of pain that he unabashedly expressed to Khan when he told him about the suffering he felt being outside Catalonia as it was being bombarded.

“I would read in the newspapers about the struggle that was besieging my land, about burned cities, about hunger among the children in the places under siege. As I played, I knew that the bombs were falling, and in the evenings, I couldn't sleep. Often, when I spoke with people, I had the impression that someone else was speaking and I wasn't there. After the concerts, I walked through the streets alone, tormented.”

5. The defeat of the Republic reinforces his decision

His house by the sea was respected by the occupying army; General Yagüe, a lover of music and admirer of Casals, protected it. However, it was sealed off and embargoed as a guarantee of the fine it was charged. The Franco regime was instated all over Catalonia, and with it lawsuits, the defamation campaign against Casals and his family, and repression.

In conclusion, during the Civil War, Casals upheld a steadfast, individual position in support of the Republic. There was no need to find fault with his initial occasional errors, despite their terrible human consequences, and instead he generally supported the popular cause. He confirmed this to Khan in 1970 (2011: 227-228), saying that his only weapons were his cello and baton:

“In the course of the Civil War, I used them as well as I knew how to in support of the cause in which I believed: the cause of freedom and democracy”.

Enric, his younger brother, stated that Casals would never return to Spain (Casals, 1979: 93).

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