

Athenaeums in Catalonia. Culture and sociability in the 19th and 20th centuries

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ABSTRACT

This article presents an overview of the history of athenaeums in Catalonia during the 19th and 20th centuries until the transition to democracy in the 1980s. This article outlines the essential role played by athenaeums as the backbone of the country, particularly from the cultural standpoint, while also noting that in Catalonia athenaeums have clearly gone beyond their initial cultural mission to play a key role in the political development of contemporary Catalonia as well.

KEYWORDS: athenaeums, sociability, associationism, popular culture, civil society

INTRODUCTION

If we search in the *Gran Enciclopèdia Catalana* for the meaning of “atheneum”, we find this definition: “Scientific and literary association devoted to elevating the intellectual level of its members through discussions, lectures, classes and readings”. If our source is the *Diccionari d'Història de Catalunya*, we can read: “Institution created on private initiative to disseminate modern science and culture among its members and the populace in general”.¹ Likewise, Pere Solà, one of the top experts on the topic, defines an athenaeum as “an institution, a centre that creates and welcomes culture, that disseminates and compares cultural alternatives, the outcome of the work of human reason, which can be scientific or literary in nature”.² And we have yet a fourth definition, the one from the Federació d'Ateneus de Catalunya (Federation of Athenaeums of Catalonia): “An association whose mission is to foster culture and improve the quality of life of its members through sociocultural activities like talks, lectures, exhibitions, workshops, sports, etc.”³ In any event, “atheneum” is a generic term since we can find numerous names for very similar kinds of organisations: workers' societies, recreational societies (*casinos*), promoters, centres, choral groups, recreational associations, Catholic patronages, circles, *casals*, etc. The name of the entity often reveals what ideological or political tendency lies behind the founding of the organisation and the main reason why it was created.⁴

Beyond the different definitions we can assign to athenaeums, in Catalonia these entities have been more than what is captured in these descriptions. Catalonia has historically been a land of athenaeums, which began to emerge in the second third of the 19th century within a liberal Catalonia which was in the process of industrialisation, although this process was causing major social and cultural inequalities. This is why athenaeums emerged from the ground up, from the middle and working classes, “to palliate inequalities, guarantee a decent life and contribute to the training and cultivation of the people”.⁵ In consequence, athenaeums and other similar grassroots institutions became key factors in the modernisation of Catalan society and fostered greater cohesion, albeit not without conflicts. From the time they appeared, Catalan athenaeums gained momentum throughout the 19th century and the first third of the 20th century, becoming key players in Catalan civil society and its web of associations.

Catalonia is a national community, and one of its hallmarks “has been and is the power of what we call civil society, which is expressed through an autonomous network of associations, independent of the family, political power and economic wherewithal, which generates a civic culture. Thus, one of the features of Catalan society throughout its history has been its capacity to organise itself and form associations. This associationism has varied in form over time and circumstances, but it has remained a constant backdrop.”⁶ Catalan associationism has been and is present in such a variety of fields as politics, economics, religion, culture, society, education, the workplace, sports, recreation and cooperatives, and it has

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shaped a dense web of associations that have contributed to the cohesion of Catalan society. They have played such a prominent role that in many periods in our history, civil society and the web of associations have been the foundations supporting the country's political and cultural continuity, even when it did not have institutions of its own. Furthermore, they have been active in the struggle against attempts to annihilate it.

Athenaeums have played a crucial role in this entire process because they were the predominant form of cultural and recreational association in Catalonia in the 19th and 20th centuries. During this long period, civil society, sociability, associationism and membership in athenaeums have often gone hand-in-hand and have merged in an almost perfect communion.

So where does the name athenaeum come from? It comes from the temple dedicated to Athena, the Greek goddess of wisdom and the arts, from which the word *athenaion*, the temple of Athena, comes, and from there the Latin *athenaeum*, the great Roman school and the name given to the first public educational institution in Rome. Towards the end of the Roman Empire, the Athenaeum was closed. In fact, the mission and spaces of athenaeums virtually disappeared with the fall of the classical world and did not reappear until the start of the Modern Age, as part of the Renaissance.

The veritable surge in athenaeums took place in the 19th and first third of the 20th century, when all over Europe citizens were spearheading a kind of civic associationism with the name of athenaeums. The most immediate origin of these institutions can be found in the 18th-century scientific and literary societies which were founded as part of the Enlightenment. In the latter years of this century, the Athénée de Paris (1785) and the Athénée des Arts (1792) were founded in the capital of France, which served as an engine driving their spread around the rest of Europe.

THE ORIGINS OF CONTEMPORARY ASSOCIATIONISM IN CATALONIA

In Catalonia, athenaeums took over from the mediaeval brotherhoods, the artisan guilds, and they became much more social in nature, a reflection of the shortcomings of an industrial society with major social inequalities and a very high illiteracy rate. Therefore, the Industrial Revolution signalled a turning point in associationism in Catalonia. When industrialisation began, culture and education were viewed as factors of social progress, and as long as the bourgeoisie did not want to provide them, the workers themselves did.

Thus, associationism in Catalonia originally emerged with a clear mission to serve the community. Many of the social shortcomings that were not covered by the State – a state which, however, Catalonia did not have – were resolved through collective action and volunteerism. In Catalonia, which had glaring deficits in its cultural struc-

ture, the world of athenaeums went far to palliate many of these shortcomings. In fact, the athenaeums' contribution to Catalan associationism was essential, and they played a crucial role in the organisation of the country's social and cultural life, in the social cohesion of many Catalan towns, in the survival of the Catalan language and culture, and in the efforts to propagate culture and politics among the working classes in the 19th and 20th centuries.

In a stateless nation like Catalonia, culture is one of the key factors in behind cohesion and collective identity. There are reasons to claim that associationism is strong in Catalonia precisely because it has no state. In some specific historical periods, the dynamism of its social actors has yielded brilliant results, comparable to those of small countries with weak political power. However, we must remember that Catalonia's cultural history has had its ups and downs: with the exception of the brief yet extraordinary periods brought about by the cultural policies of the Mancomunitat and the Republican Generalitat, and more recently by the restoration of democracy, until the past century Catalonia had not had its own public cultural structures that could offset or act upon the difficulties or failures which civil society was subjected to during periods of crisis.

Only by bearing this reality in mind can we gain awareness of the importance of athenaeums and all kinds of cultural associations in encouraging popular mobilisation and consolidating the coalescence of the region; we should not lose sight of the fact that in smaller towns, the athenaeum, the *casal* or the recreational society is often the only cultural facility. Furthermore, in many cases, these entities also serve an educational purpose as schools of democracy, citizenship, tolerance and teamwork. Hence, athenaeums and other associations have been vitally important in the contemporary history of Catalonia. "It has often been said that Catalonia is one of the countries in the world which has had the largest association movement quantitatively, and the most plural one qualitatively in the contemporary era. We Catalans, as a people that has been mistreated by history, have a tendency to overvalue our positive traits. Although that is not exactly true, among other reasons because no one is ever the first or the best, we must nonetheless acknowledge that associationism has reached exceptional dimensions in Catalonia."⁷⁷ To illustrate this, we can cite the following figures. Based on the Register of Associations of the Civil Government of Catalonia, an institution which depends on the central government and is in charge of controlling the legalisation of associations, Pere Solà has tallied almost 22,000 associations in the province of Barcelona over a period that spans from prior to 1880 until 1966.⁸ This is an extraordinary figure, even more so if we bear in mind that it does not include the association movement in the provinces of Girona, Lleida and Tarragona, and that it does not encompass the past 40 years, when the phenomenon of associationism has only kept growing since the end of the dictatorship in 1975.

Society gradually started to equip itself with intellectual spaces where critical education and knowledge could be generated in the midst of the country's economic development via industrialisation. This is the context, with the liberal revolution as the backdrop, in which schools, royal academies, recreational societies and choral societies started to crop up among the wealthier classes. Yet the working and middle classes also spearheaded their own spaces of sociability and interaction: athenaeums, whose mission was to bring literacy to the underclasses. This was the embryo of the athenaeum movement.

Athenaeums appeared in Catalonia out of need and with the desire to organise – especially in the lower classes – without any more connections and support than what could be forged among some of them.⁹ In Catalonia, athenaeums are therefore magnificent proof of Catalans' ability to organise structures from the ground up: "The country was built in fits and starts. And athenaeums, from the most sophisticated ones to the most precarious ones, were always on the front lines. The founding of the Ateneu de Mataró marked the beginning of a history in Catalonia that is much more than just a few cultural entities: it is the history of our organised civil society."¹⁰

During the 19th century, associations of all sorts began to appear (economic, musical, mutual aid, athenaeums, schools, cooperatives) in Catalonia, and later unions and large grassroots institutions. Many of the grassroots federations and cultural associations, as well as other federations, date back to the 19th century. One of the most paradigmatic ones, the Federació de Cors de Clavé (Clavé Choir Federation), strove to import a musical culture which was spreading around Europe, without losing sight of its main objective: the choirs promoted by Josep Anselm Clavé sought to implement a model of society in Catalonia that aimed to liberate the working classes by promoting a series of initiatives aimed at social welfare, such as the struggle against illiteracy through public instruction and the development of the social economy by creating cooperatives and mutual aid and mutual benefit societies, and by fostering savings as a guarantee of dignity in retirement.

On the other hand, when Clavé founded his first choir, he primarily did it to provide a morally decent alternative to the most common free-time activities among the working classes, which were considered immoral and a far cry from "decent practices". Apart from this, the ultimate objective of the choirs was not just to entertain the workers in a socially acceptable way but something more ambitious: they were a means to organise the workers and raise their political awareness.¹¹

Since their appearance in Catalonia, athenaeums were free places for debates, with libraries and stages for holding plays or musical events, and where a variety of courses were taught. The main area was usually the café where the members met to talk, chiefly about politics. During the 19th century, athenaeums were places of both entertainment and education.

Because of the glimpse of freedom that they provided, the universalisation of education, the first libraries, the first savings and loans – often resistance banks – were started, and the practice of sport became more widespread. The role that athenaeums were often forced to play as resistance banks has a logical explanation if we bear in mind that the repressive policies that affected the workers' movement and the dramatic living and working conditions of these lower classes in Catalonia in the 19th century required many athenaeums to go beyond their eminently cultural and educational missions to shoulder the burden of providing assistance and charity through mutual aid societies, and resistance banks opened to economically sustain the families of the members who had no regular income because of strikes or other labour contingencies. One of the most paradigmatic examples is the Ateneu de Mataró, which opened up a savings and loan meant for the entire population that became the embryo of the future Caixa Laietana.

THE CREATION OF THE FIRST ATHENAEUMS

The model of the first Catalan athenaeums was the Ateneo Español (Spanish Athenaeum, 1820), which took the side of the liberals in the struggle against absolutism. Just fifteen years later, in 1835, these same liberals, waving the banner of freedom and following the example of the French athenaeums, founded the Ateneo Científico y Literario (Scientific and Literary Athenaeum) of Madrid. Its most prominent founders include Ángel de Saavedra (Duke of Rivas), Salustiano Olózaga, Ramón de Mesonero Romanos, Antonio Alcalá Galiano, Juan Miguel de los Ríos, Francisco Fabra and Francisco López Olavarrieta, all of whom were imbued with the purest romantic-liberal spirit.¹²

During the early years, the process of creating these entities in Catalonia was quite slow: in 1828, the Casino (Recreational Society) of La Pobla de Segur was founded, and in 1848 the Casino of Vic, the oldest association in Vic which played an extraordinarily noteworthy role in the history of the city. The expression "casino dels senyors" (gentlemen's recreational society) quite aptly defined the Casino of Vic's historical role as the centre where the gentlemen of the city gathered to while away their free time. Since its founding, the Casino became a recreational, apolitical society without any other purpose than the leisure and entertainment of its members.¹³

Among these pioneering associations we can also find Catholic organisations such as the Pía Unión de Jóvenes Devotos de San Luis Gonzaga (Pious Union of Devout Youth of Saint Louis de Gonzague), which was founded in Gràcia in 1851 and promoted other societies such as the Lluïsos (followers of Louis de Gonzague) of Gràcia and the Lluïsos of Horta.¹⁴ We should also highlight the role played by the Catholic workers' movement, started by Catholic workers' circles, with institutions like the At-



FIGURE 1. Façade of the Athenaeum of Vic, formerly Casa Comella. It is an Art Nouveau construction built in 1896 with mediaeval influence. In 1899, the Athenaeum moved its headquarters to the Art Nouveau-style Casa Comella located next to Plaça del Mercadal.

eneu de San Luis Gonzaga (Athenaeum of Saint Louis de Gonzague, 1866) of Sant Andreu.

After 1850, athenaeums with all kinds of political leanings started cropping up everywhere. The initiative quite often came from elements in the enlightened bourgeoisie driven by philanthropic reasons who wanted to contribute to the progress of society by offering educational resources to the least disadvantaged swaths of society. In some cases, the initial responsibility was shared with workers with cultural yearnings. Some of the more prominent athenaeums created during this period are the Societat d'Amics de la Instrucció (Society of Friends of Education) of Mataró, which was founded in 1854. One year later, its name changed to Ateneu Mataroní (Athenaeum of Mataró). It was the first entity founded in Catalonia bearing the name of athenaeum. Its objectives were to disseminate culture by educating the working classes, as well as training its members. Initially, they mirrored the scientific and artistic societies which had emerged in recent decades in several cities around Europe, especially France. However, soon the Ateneu Mataroní and the majority of its counterparts that had emerged thereafter began to distance themselves from these elitist cultural formulas, which were already served by the handful of erudite Catalan entities, and started to seek more grassroots formulas.¹⁵ In short, the in-

statement of the athenaeum model in Catalonia had its own unique features that make it different to the rest of Europe: its facet of grassroots sociability and its educational and instructional mission geared at improving the training and education of the most disadvantaged classes.

The athenaeums' endeavour to bring literacy to the lower classes required high levels of volunteerism by both the teachers, who at first tended to be members of the organisation with no specific training, and the students, who would steal hours of sleep to attend the classes after work. However, the athenaeums' schools gradually became more professional and expanded the range of classes they offered. Even though one of their priorities had been to offer training for adult workers, some athenaeums also responded to the lack of schools for children by opening elementary education classes during the day for boys – and less often for girls.¹⁶ The goal was not only to educate the children but also to care for them while their parents were at the factory. In some cases, they only served as nursery schools, but in others they pursued innovative pedagogical programmes.

Generally speaking, the athenaeums were more or less sensitive to the new trends in education and encouraged understanding, analysis and direct experimentation, which were complemented by gym or music classes. Lat-

er, some adopted the Montessori method, and others even more revolutionary approaches, such as the one advocated by Francesc Ferrer i Guàrdia's Modern School.

The 1850s and 1860s were crucial to the creation of some of the most emblematic entities in Catalonia's associationism. Three of them particularly stand out: the Casino Menestral Figuerenc (Tradesmen's Recreational Society of Figueres), the Centre de Lectura (Reading Centre) of Reus and the Cercle Literari (Literary Circle) of Vic.

The emblematic Casino Menestral Figuerenc (1856) is essential for understanding associative life in Figueres and the entire Empordà region.¹⁷ From its very start, the objectives it pursued were extremely clear: to foster culture in all its facets and to serve its members' leisure pursuits. Today it is one of the oldest athenaeums in Catalonia that is still fully operating with the mission of serving culture and art in the city and its region.

No less emblematic is the Centre de Lectura of Reus, a progressive, democratic, Catalanist entity which seeks to foster and disseminate culture in all its facets. It is also es-

sential to understanding associationism in Catalonia, the city of Reus and the region of Tarragona.¹⁸ The Centre de Lectura of Reus was founded in 1859 by a group of young artisans who met periodically in the Cafè de la Música to talk about politics, local issues and culture. It was founded with the intention of teaching the working-class and most disadvantaged sectors of the population how to read. The Centre de Lectura was originally a philanthropic centre with the mission of using education as a means of social regeneration.

Right at the turn of the decade, in 1860, the Cercle Literari of Vic was founded, a cultural association created with one chief goal: to link the individual initiatives of writers from Vic to the *Renaixença* movement.¹⁹ Its participants included Jacint Verdaguer, Jaume Collell and Martí Genís i Aguilar. The entity's dynamism was extraordinary: it was behind the founding of several newspapers, assembled a library with more than 8,000 volumes, instituted literary prizes, and held several exhibitions, in addition to holding Catalan classes.



FIGURE 2. Building that houses the headquarters of the Casino Menestral Figuerenc (Tradesmen's Recreational Society of Figueres), designed by the architect Josep Bori i Gensana (1904). It is listed in the Inventory of Architectural Heritage of Catalonia.



FIGURE 3. Library of the Centre de Lectura (Reading Centre) of Reus. This library, which was created in 1859, currently has a collection of approximately 200,000 volumes, including 20 incunables within its Reserve section, and books from the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries.

Only a few years after these three institutions were founded, another entity that also became emblematic was founded: in 1868 the Casino L'Aliança (L'Aliança Recreational Society) of Poblenou (which at that time was within the township of Sant Martí de Provençals) was founded, a recreational, cultural, social and mutualist entity.²⁰ Its original name was the Societat L'Aliança (L'Aliança Society), and this name remained until 1928, when it was reopened after it had been forcibly closed by Primo de Rivera's dictatorial regime, at which point it was reinstated with the name Casino L'Aliança del Poblenou.

In Barcelona, there had been a desire to found an athenaeum for a while, and the future opening of the Ateneo Catalán (Catalan Athenaeum) was even announced in the *Diario de Barcelona* in April 1836. However, the emblematic Ateneu Barcelonès (Athenaeum of Barcelona) was not created until the 13th of April 1872 as the merger of the Ateneo Catalán (1860) and the Casino Mercantil Barcelonés (Mercantile Recreational Society of Barcelona, 1869), which represented the more dynamic sectors of the conservative Catalan bourgeoisie associated with the *Reinaixença*.²¹ The first president of the new entity was Manuel Duran i Bas, and its first sections were the moral, economic, physical, agricultural and industrial sciences and literature and the fine arts. The Ateneu Barcelonès exerted the strongest influence on Catalonia's public and

cultural life during this initial period until 1895: it promoted important lectures, held training courses, sponsored several prizes, such as the Jocs Florals, published its *Butlletí* (Newsletter) for a period, and hosted prominent artistic and literary groups. What is more, it contributed to boosting the prestige of the Catalan language by starting to use it at all its institutional events after the president of the entity, Àngel Guimerà, delivered the keynote lecture of the academic year in Catalan for the first time on the 30th of November 1895, in an initiative that caused quite a stir both inside and outside the athenaeum. The entry of Catalan into the life of the athenaeum was the best proof that the Catalanist movements which had begun to emerge late in the past century were beginning to gain ground in the athenaeums as well.

Over time, the Ateneu Barcelonès assembled an extensive, rich library (5,900 titles in 1877, 13,500 in 1887, 19,000 in 1892, 50,000 in 1921, 175,000 in 1969 and by 2007 it held around 300,000 titles), becoming one of the most important in Catalonia – and the first private library in the country – with important collections of magazines and newspapers.²² Another entity known for having a magnificent library is the Centre de Lectura of Reus. Its library, assembled with great effort by its earliest members, had become one of the leading libraries in Catalonia, primarily thanks to the donations it had received over its

lifetime.²³ The growth in the number of volumes and subscriptions to periodicals from Catalonia and abroad was one of the athenaeums' points of pride, particularly given that public libraries were virtually non-existent at that time. For example, in 1870 the Centre de Lectura subscribed to more than 70 periodicals. If classrooms were an essential element in the lives of athenaeums, so were their libraries. People went to these reading rooms to read the newspaper, peruse books or simply meet up with fellow members.

All of this associative vitality which was so characteristic of the central years of the 19th century reveals that during the Restoration, the athenaeums in Catalan society served as the vehicles through which culture and politics were organised and disseminated. Yet additionally, ever since the first athenaeums had appeared in Catalonia mid-century, their history has been associated with the most important socio-political movements that the country has experienced. And even though they were founded within a context of harsh repression, which severely lim-

ited their explicit political action, these entities attracted people from all walks of life – especially progressives – who were always able to use them as platforms for their propaganda.²⁴ Many intellectuals had supervisory responsibilities in an athenaeum, without counting those who only participated more occasionally through lectures or courses. Manel Milà i Fontanals, Lluís Domènech i Montaner, Narcís Oller, Àngel Guimerà and many others were notable athenaeum members. And precisely because of their background in athenaeums, some of them were able to take the leap to politics later on.

Despite the harsh persecution of the anarchists throughout the 19th century, they were able to seize upon the periods of relative tolerance to create their own athenaeums, such as the Ateneu Racionalista (Rationalist Athenaeum) of Sants (1914). On the other end of the spectrum is the Ateneu Democràtic Regionalista (Democratic Regionalist Athenaeum) of Poble Nou, which was created in 1902 under the aegis of the conservative Lliga Regionalista (Regionalist League).



FIGURE 4. Library of the Ateneu Barcelonès (Athenaeum of Barcelona), an Art Nouveau-style space which is characterised by the architectural intervention and decoration by Josep Maria Jujol.
Photo: C. Esteve, AB Archiv

And in between were entities with all kinds of party affiliations and tendencies. There were even Carlist entities, such as the *Ateneu Tradicionalista* (Traditionalist Athenaeum) of Barcelona (1912). Non-political organisations, such as the Masons, also founded their own athenaeums to propagate their ideals, and even though their affiliation was not openly discussed, it is often easy to identify, such as the *Casino Menestral Figuerenc*, whose logo shows two hands representing friendship, a clear Masonic symbol. Nor did the Church remain on the sidelines in the efforts to control popular spaces which were usually secular, if not openly anti-clerical. In some cases, the entities they created were called athenaeums, but they often had other names as well, such as Catholic circle, parish circle or moral centre.

THE WORLD OF ASSOCIATIONISM DURING THE LAST THIRD OF THE 19TH CENTURY

Under normal conditions, associationism expands as capitalist social relations are being implemented, alongside increasing industrialisation and urbanisation. However, in states like Spain, it followed an irregular process, in fits and starts, since there were drastic restrictions on collective freedoms. The right to association in Spain was not recognised until the 1869 Constitution (articles 17-19) and lasted only a brief time (1869-1873).²⁵ Despite these impediments, associationism became deeply rooted in Catalonia, “in accordance with a society with a communitarian, associative tradition since the Middle Ages, and reinforced by political institutions – the mediaeval Catalan state, the *Diputació del General* – and the push to modernise Catalan society in the 19th and 20th centuries”.²⁶

The associative movement in Spain and Catalonia experienced a turning point with the enactment of the Law on Associations on the 30th of June 1887; even though it was in and out of force and temporarily suspended, it did remain in place until the end of the Spanish Civil War. Its first article reads: “The right to association recognised by article 13 of the Constitution may be freely exercised in conformance with the precepts of this Law. In consequence, associations for religious, political, scientific, artistic, charitable and recreational purposes, and for any other licit purposes, whose sole and exclusive objective is not profit or earnings, are subjected to the provisions of this Law. This Law also regulates mutual aid societies, corporate welfare societies and manufacturing, credit or consumer cooperatives.”²⁷

The Law on Associations brought a new impetus and diversification to the associative movement: choral societies, choirs, sports and excursionist entities, women’s entities, youth entities and more permutations all sprang up quickly. In the last 30 years of the 19th century, more than 20 athenaeums were founded in Catalonia, a figure which rose considerably in the ensuing years: around 40 more athenaeums were created until the Great War (1914), while 60 more were created until the Civil War (1936).

Excursionist entities deserve mention of their own, as they played a key role in the sphere of popular Catalan culture. Nineteenth-century excursionism spearheaded the compilation of folklore, which sparked the blossoming of the choral societies and dance troupes that subsequently cropped up all around Catalonia. Excursionism also served to democratise cultural activity and encourage research into and knowledge of popular culture. Most of the activities of the first excursionist entities were dedicated to discovering the country and to gathering songs, folk tales and traditions. And if we are discussing excursionist entities we obviously have to mention the *Centre Excursionista de Catalunya* (Excursionist Centre of Catalonia, 1876), which was created “with the goal of investigating everything worthy of it in our welcoming land, with preferential attention to scientific, literary and artistic concepts”.²⁸ The entity was founded under the name of the *Associació Catalanista d’Excursions Científiques* (Catalanist Association of Scientific Excursions). In 1878, the *Associació d’Excursions Catalana* (Catalan Excursion Association) split off, but in 1891 the presidents of the two associations, Francesc Ubach (*Associació Catalanista d’Excursions Científiques*) and Francesc Maspons (*Associació d’Excursions Catalana*), agreed to merge them back into a single entity – which adopted its current name – stating that the *Centre Excursionista de Catalunya* was a continuation of the association originally created in 1876.

Therefore, between the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and through the Law on Associations, free-time spaces became common (recreational societies, choral societies, lyceums and cultural institutions). Among the choral societies, we can highlight the *Orfeó Gracienc* (Choral Society of Gràcia), which was founded in 1904 by maestro Joan Balcells. Regarding recreational societies, we should spotlight the *Casino de Manresa* (Recreational Society of Manresa), which was founded in 1892 and became the social hub of the city’s bourgeoisie. One year later, in 1893, another recreational society was opened which was destined to play a key role in the associative and cultural life of the Cerdagne, the *Casino Ceretà* (Cerdagne Recreational Society) of Puigcerdà.

The cultural richness of Catalan society, the weak intervention of the public authorities in the sphere of culture, and the social fragmentation in the villages and cities meant that a set of cultural entities emerged all around Catalonia, driven by the possibilities offered by the Law. These entities had important potential in terms of their social cachet, number of members and sheer volume of cultural, educational, sports and entertainment activities they held.²⁹

The Catalan athenaeums, unlike their French counterparts which were inspired by the revolutionary ideas of 1789, or those in the rest of Spain, which were framed as enlightened circles, not only concentrated on disseminating high culture but also promoted popular culture in its social, sports or leisure facets.

On the other hand, the social polarisation and political and cultural vitality experienced in many villages and cit-

ies around Catalonia in the late 19th century meant that there were different kinds of cultural associations. These entities were promoted by widely divergent sectors within Catalan society. On the one hand were the athenaeums, entities associated with workers, tradesmen, small landholders and artisans which reflected the desire to foster Catalan culture and ideas of social progress.³⁰ On the other were the recreational societies, which were usually associated with the landowning families, industrial companies and other wealthier sectors of society.³¹

In any case, social differences aside, these entities had a strong presence in citizens' lives, often participated in local politics, and offered a wide range of activities to their members – including plays, concerts, dances, films or choral singing – although they were also places of gathering, interaction and exchange.³² Some of them also offered social, work and culture classes or political, social or religious lecture series, thus contributing to their social and educational mission. Their goal was also to keep the working classes away from the taverns, which were regarded as the source of many social evils. In fact, offering “healthy” leisure activities was another important mission of these entities, and one of their biggest calling cards.

THE WORKING-CLASS ATHENAEUMS

After the second half of the 19th century, a phenomenon arose in Catalonia which was closely tied to the appearance of many of the popular athenaeums: the consolidation of a working-class, grassroots culture. At first, they had to coexist with the institutions created out of bourgeoisie interests, but they gradually carved out their own niche among Catalonia's athenaeums and associations. They sought and ultimately secured this space via grassroots athenaeums. In this way, athenaeums and other grassroots associations turned into a refuge for the voices of protest in society and into a mechanism linking cultural and intellectual activists with the people. The Catalan working class became literate thanks to this web of grassroots athenaeums.

For all the progressive forces, athenaeums were the response to the calls to democratise knowledge and culture, given the conviction that the education and training of the underclasses would enable them to emerge from their secular misery. The people were claiming their place in the sun with increasing vehemence. Culture could not be a thing of the elites, so its reconversion and spread were being imposed: “I would daresay that the experience of the athenaeums is a stimulant first, in general, to reveal culture not as a means of individual promotion and social climbing but primarily as a project of collective emancipation (“the working class could emancipate itself only through its own effort...”), and secondly, because of the very fact of their spontaneity and bottom-up organisation”.³³

The main grassroots organisations include the Ateneu Català de la Classe Obrera (Catalan Working-Class Athe-

naeum), founded in the former Sant Felip Neri convent in Barcelona in 1861 with a clear, steadfast purpose: to culturally serve workers. Until 1868, it was dominated by progressive liberals, but after the September Revolution of that year it was overtaken by Bakunists such as Rafael Farga i Pellicer, Jaume Balasch and Josep Lluñas i Pujals. It was in operation until 1874, when it was shuttered after the coup d'état waged by General Manuel Pavía.³⁴ Before its closure, it developed an educational system that had major repercussions on subsequent athenaeums thanks to pedagogues like Ot Fonoll and Esteve Paluzie.

This model of institution took root in other places around Catalonia as well. The creation of the Ateneu Igualadí de la Classe Obrera (Working-Class Athenaeum of Igualada, 1863) dates from around the same time; its main goal was to promote the education of workers.³⁵ That same year, the Ateneu Tarraconense de la Classe Obrera (Working-Class Athenaeum of Tarragona) was founded, the embryo of the future Ateneu de Tarragona.³⁶ Also from the same period are the Foment Martinenc (Promotional Society of Sant Martí, 1877), the Ateneu Lliure (Free Athenaeum) of Terrassa (1879), the Ateneu Obrer Manresa (Workers' Athenaeum of Manresa, 1887) and the Ateneu Obrer (Workers' Athenaeum) of Sant Martí de Provençals. All of these entities, which had very active social lives, played an essential educational – and charitable – role, even providing vocational training to the members of the working class. The successor in Barcelona to the pioneering Ateneu Català de la Classe Obrera was the Ateneu Obrer of Barcelona, which had been operating since 1882 and encompassed different societies of workers, such as the Societat de Teixidors de Seda (Silk Weavers' Society) and Les Tres Classes de Vapor, whose members could send their children to school for free.

The turning point in this entire movement came at the same time as the general strike in Barcelona in 1902, which unleashed in workers the need to create their own educational institutions. Generally speaking, from then on the working-class societies became training centres which were heavily influenced by Francesc Ferrer i Guàrdia's Modern School and certain secular educational trends.³⁷ The most immediate response to the 1902 strike was the founding the following year of the Ateneu Enciclopèdic Popular (People's Encyclopaedic Athenaeum) —promoted by Josep Tubau, Eladi Gardó and the young Francesc Layret— which was the proletarian counterpart to the Ateneu Barcelonès.³⁸ Its founders strove to achieve worker emancipation and avoided any kind of political or ideological affiliation. The athenaeum encompassed the democratic, secular left, with members like Salvador Seguí, Lluís Companys, Joan Amades and Joan Salvat-Papasseit. It had 25,000 members at its peak.

At the beginning of the 20th century, there was a blossoming of grassroots athenaeums, especially in El Penedès, Maresme and Garraf, and in almost all the neighbourhoods in Barcelona. One of the key milestones in this entire outbreak of grassroots athenaeums was the 1903 crea-

tion of the Centre Autonomista de Dependents del Comerç i de la Indústria (Autonomous Centre of Retail and Industry Clerks, CADCI) on Rambla de Santa Mònica. It sponsored the Escoles Mercantils Catalanes (Catalan Mercantile Schools), which taught classes in bookkeeping, languages and typing.³⁹ The entity was founded by a group of retail and office clerks (who were disparagingly called “saltataulells”) with Catalanist political leanings, and it was registered as a charity in order to avoid paying taxes. According to its bylaws, the centre’s mission was to become a “new force that, alongside the others that exist in our country, struggles with faith and ardour for the sacred cause of the Catalan claims” through “propaganda of the pro-autonomy doctrines, exercised as broadly as the laws and our forces allow us to”. It also sought to disseminate “instruction and culture among mercantile and industrial clerks” as a means of attaining “the moral and material betterment which our class so direly needs”.⁴⁰

So many entities of this kind were formed that there were even doubts as to the quality of the education they provided, which led to the 1905 creation of the Federació d’Ateneus Obrers (Federation of Workers’ Athenaeums), which organised the conferences in Reus in 1911 and Vilanova i la Geltrú in 1912. These two conferences were held to achieve the goal of unified action among all Catalan athenaeums. However, unfortunately, the two gatherings did not bear fruit given that ideological disputes and social conflicts put an end to the attempt to bring together the more than 138 entities that had participated in them.

THE FIRST THIRD OF THE 20TH CENTURY: PEAK YEARS OF ASSOCIATIONISM

As Europe was embroiled in the horrors of the Great War (1914-1918), all sorts of entities were popping up in Catalonia, from recreational and sports societies to clubs organised around Esperanto or folklore, which helped to consolidate the legend of Catalan associationism. One special example was the Ateneu Empordanès (Empordà Athenaeum) of Barcelona, which was founded in 1916 at the headquarters of the Foment del Treball Nacional (Employment Development Agency) in Barcelona.⁴¹ As stated in the first article of its bylaws, “The ‘Ateneu Empordanès’ is a society whose mission is to conserve, improve and expand the spirit and manner of the people who were born, raised or are part of the region of the Empordà, to defend their interests on all fronts – rejecting any open or veiled tendency that may harm them – and to work for their glorification”.⁴² Its headquarters hosted assemblies of the Unió Catalanista (Catalanist Union), Futbol Club Barcelona and the Sindicat de Metges (Physicians’ Union), and it even remained open until the end of the Civil War, when it was confiscated by the Spanish Falange.

During the hiatus of the Primo de Rivera dictatorship (1923-1931), Catalonia’s associations had to deal with the prohibitions and persecutions that affected many of the en-

tities that were part of its web of associations. The end of the dictatorship ushered in a new historical era, the Second Republic (1931-1936), which became one of the glorious periods of associations in Catalonia. Recreational societies, athenaeums and all sorts of free-time and leisure associations resumed their activities with euphoria and drive. Those years also witnessed the outbreak of polarised societies, a tendency which could be seen in the division of townsfolk into membership in one or the other. Between 1931 and 1936, the growth in the number of entities turned Catalonia into the engine of associative modernisation compared to the rest of Spain. In a population of two million inhabitants, a total of 30,000 associations were registered. This translated into the gradual spread of literacy through the association movement, which also became a platform for disseminating political Catalanism. This strengthening of the culture was later dealt a harsh blow by the Franco-era repression.

Therefore, the true peak of athenaeums in Catalonia dovetailed with the Second Republic. At that time, there were around 200 athenaeums in Catalonia. One of the most popular ones was the Ateneu Polytechnicum (Polytechnic Athenaeum) on Carrer de Sant Pere Més Alt in Barcelona, which housed the Associació Obrera de Concerts (Workers’ Concert Association) led by Pau Casals. The Polytechnicum had been founded in 1924 by some of the professors from the Escola Industrial de Barcelona (Barcelona Industrial School) who had been stripped of their posts during the Primo de Rivera dictatorship, the first to repress the associative movement in its obsession with stopping the democratic and Catalanist influence over the working classes.⁴³ The engineers Josep Serrat i Bonastre, Rafael Campalans and Estanislau Ruiz Ponsetí, among others, were in charge of the Polytechnicum’s education programme. Some academic years, it hosted the Estudis Universitaris Catalans (Catalan University Studies), with classes by Pompeu Fabra, Francesc Martorell and Jordi Rubió i Balaguer. It also held free courses and lectures of general interest.

Dovetailing with the final crisis of the Primo de Rivera dictatorship and the start of the new Republican regime, the Agrupació Cultural Faros (Faros Cultural Group) opened its doors on Barcelona’s Carrer de Sant Gil (1930), along with the Federació Obrera Cultural (Cultural Workers’ Federation, 1931) and the Ateneu Llibertari (Libertarian Athenaeum) of El Clot, which housed the Escola Natura (Nature School) led by Joan Puig Elias. The Ateneu Popular (People’s Athenaeum) of Poblenou and the Institució Cultural Pedagogium (Pedagogium Cultural Institution) on Carrer de Balma also opened, the latter primarily known for the lectures it held. Other groups launched during this period include the Ateneu de Cultura Popular (Popular Culture Athenaeum) in L’Hospitalet de Llobregat (1932), the Ateneu Enciclopèdic Sempre Avant (Semper Avanti Encyclopaedic Athenaeum) of Sants, which opened in 1933 and was later confiscated by the Falangists from the Female Section, and the Ateneu Popular (People’s Athenaeum) of Gràcia (1934).

This vitality in the world of athenaeums and the blossoming of so many new entities during the Republican period justifies the assertion that much of the groundwork of the postulates of the associative movement that still exist today was laid in the period prior to the Franco dictatorship.

Female athenaeums were a new development in the Second Republic, along with women being granted the right to vote. In 1928, the Club Femení d'Esports (Female Sports Club) had been created, which focused on sport but also engaged in significant cultural activities.⁴⁴ In 1931, the Lyceum Club appeared in Barcelona, which reflected the English model from 1904, which had been copied in Madrid in 1926. The first president of Lyceum Club was the writer Aurora Bertrana.

THE CIVIL WAR AND THE FRANCO REGIME: REPRESSION AND DISMEMBERMENT OF ASSOCIATIONS

All of this vitality suddenly ground to a halt with the Franco regime's occupation in the wake of the Spanish Civil War. On the afternoon of the 26th of January 1939, shortly after Franco's troops entered Barcelona, a large bonfire was held on the Rambla to burn the books and files of the Ateneu Enciclopèdic Popular.⁴⁵ The Franco regime was equally implacable with the local associations in the provinces. For example, the Centre de Lectura in Reus was closed down after the war and occupied by the Confederación Nacional de Sindicatos (National Confederation of Unions) and the archives of the Falange. When they left, because the building had been bombarded during the war and was unfit for inhabitation, the pro-Franco Town Hall tried to confiscate the site and the library, although it did not manage to do so. However, in around 1943, it did open a popular library on the site with the Centre's library collection, and imposed a fee on readers just as the members of the Centre de Lectura had had to pay before the war. In 1948, it reopened after a great deal of effort by its former members under the mayorship of Pere Miralles, who made official arrangements as the "Local Head of the Movement".⁴⁶

The Franco era was particularly violent towards freedom of association: the entities which stood against the regime were monitored and illegalised, and they were stripped of both their movable assets and their real estate, which were confiscated. The Franco regime's repression affected Catalan associationism to an extraordinary degree, bringing it to the brink of disappearance.⁴⁷ Many entities vanished because of the Franco dictatorship, which repressed all expressions of worker and grassroots organisation, including many of the athenaeums. Requisitions, repression against leaders or simply closures put an end to many of these organisations.

The political repression exercised by the State dismembered Catalan associationism through the new Law on

Associations. The terms of this law, dated the 24th of December 1964, were quite clear. Its first article states:

Freedom of Association. One. The freedom of association recognised in the first paragraph of article sixteen of the Fuero de los Españoles shall be exercised in accordance with the provisions of this Law for specific and licit purposes.

Two. The purposes of the association shall be understood as determined when there is no doubt regarding the activities which it effectively seeks to perform, as deduced from the bylaws and the clauses in the founding document.

Three. Illicit purposes are those that run counter to the Fundamental Principles of the Movement and the other fundamental laws, those sanctioned by criminal laws, those that attack the morale and public order, and any others that entail a danger for the political and social unity of Spain.⁴⁸

According to this law, groups no longer had to depend on the National Movement in order to gather legally. We should recall that this was the technocratic period of the Franco regime, one of whose main features was its attempt to consolidate Spain's economic structure, which implied a minimal liberalisation of social behaviours.⁴⁹ Alongside these legal structures, other underground ones appeared which were tolerated to a greater or lesser degree and triggered the attempt to dissolve the narrow legal and political framework of the Franco regime.

Despite this limited permissiveness, the Law on Associations banned meetings of more than three people without the compulsory authorisation, which allowed searches of entities' headquarters and required the minutes of board meetings to be submitted to the corresponding section of the civil governments. These sections, in turn, had the power to authorise scheduled events and decide on the members of the boards of directors, vetoing those who were not regarded as sympathetic to the regime. This law remained in force until the advent of democracy abolished it upon approval of the 1978 Constitution.

Despite the regime's harshness against Catalonia's associations, in addition to the struggle against the dictatorship, there was a web of associations that strove to resist; although first under the control of the repressive Franco apparatus, they soon resumed their activity by pragmatically accepting the limitations imposed by the new political regime. We cannot forget that in addition to the role of the post-war cultural activists, there was an entire network of cultural associations which strove to survive during the dictatorship. The dictatorships – including Primo de Rivera's – put a damper on the modernising force of Catalan associationism, but neither Primo de Rivera nor Franco was able to prevent the appearance of new associations, some as if in a process of self-regeneration in order to fill the void of those that had disappeared, the victims of persecution and prohibitions.

There are several examples to explain this pragmatic, adaptive attitude towards the new political reality. Parish life, with the Church as one of the cornerstones of the new era, in theory served as the aegis for a great deal of activity classified as cultural and religious. What stands out in this vein is the Catalan-language performances of the *Pastorets* Christmas story and the Passion play held in some towns during Easter Week. Nor can we forget amateur theatre, thanks to which the classic Catalan authors were not forgotten throughout the long Franco era.

Even though the Franco dictatorship dealt a heavy blow to the world of athenaeums and associations in general, the network and activity of associations were not entirely dismembered, and some entities which avoided the Catalanist label even avoided this fate, even though they had to operate under wraps. After the mid-1950s and during the 1960s, leisure activities are precisely what gradually revived the association movement in Catalonia. However, it didn't fully come back to life until the 1970s.

If the Franco era was rendered any less harsh, it was partly because of the stubborn activity of the world of associations during the darkest years of the regime. Chats in the cafés of the athenaeums became forums of lively, intense debates; plays performed in Catalan, whose widespread popularity made them essential for the dictatorship to tolerate from the very beginning, also played a key role; the people involved in traditional dance groups also played a crucial role in their drive to conserve the traditional dances by fostering a re-encounter with Catalan folklore. So did the libraries or chess rooms of countless associations, where Catalan language began to be taught undercover again. After the upheaval of 1936-1939, associationism was the only way many people had to take refuge from the oppression of the Franco regime.

THE TRANSITION: THE NEW CHALLENGES FACING THE ASSOCIATIVE WORLD DURING THE RECOVERY OF DEMOCRACY

Until General Franco's death in November 1975, it had been impossible to re-assert a network of grassroots athenaeums, whose utmost expression was the re-founding of the Ateneu Enciclopèdic Popular and the Ateneu Enciclopèdic Sempre Avant in 1977, as well as the 1978 creation of the La Farinera del Clot and the La Flor de Maig in Poblenou (the latter adopted the name of a famous cooperative which had been operating since the early post-war years).

Of the new athenaeums founded through neighbourhood activism, the Ateneu Popular de Nou Barris (Nou Barris People's Athenaeum, 1977) is particularly well-known. It was a public sociocultural centre which operated according to the community management model which established its headquarters in an asphalt plant built between the neighbourhoods of Roquetes and Trinitat Nova. Reviving the idea of culture, intervention and

association with the region, the athenaeum steadfastly determined to be a project that would contribute to social transformation.⁵⁰

Another example of entities that were founded in the early post-Franco years, the outcome of grassroots claims, are the libertarian athenaeums which dovetailed with movements like punk and squatters and became social centres with anarchist or pro-independence ideologies.

In short, between 1976 and 1979, Catalonia recovered its lively associative movement with the appearance of new cultural centres until it counted 3,000 new associations. This entire web of centres and associations played an important "political" role during the initial stages of the Transition, at a time when the different parties had either not been legalised or were still in the process. In other words, the associations had to take on a "political" role to replace the parties which had not yet regained all their functions and which were therefore not poised to fully steer the change process. Under these circumstances, associations were partly in charge of determining the political debate. It was one way to conduct politics from democratic neutrality.

Therefore, on this slow pathway to democratic recovery, the web of associations had to consider its role and work to foster cooperation with the new democratic institutions. And all of this had to be done without falling into the danger of institutionalisation, in the sense that participation in shared projects with public authorities could entail the dissolution of the association within the state apparatus or its taking on an "institutional" role that did not benefit it, even though it seemed logical that the new associative project had clear points of connection with institutional activity.

And we say new because it seems clear that new forms of association appeared in Catalonia as part of the political transformation process from the Franco regime to democracy, which served as the point of reference for the development of subsequent associations in the 1980s, once democracy was fully instated.

Another problem which associations had to deal with after the return to democracy in the 1980s is that a large number of entities had reached that stage quite depleted, economically weakened, lacking sufficient societal recognition and struggling to adapt to the needs and demands of the new Catalan society.

Despite this, generally speaking, associations still had considerable social power as they witnessed the return of democracy, a power which was grounded on public structures and facilities which were totally non-existent in the other communities in Spain, with the exception of the other Catalan-speaking lands, where the phenomenon of resistance had paralleled the one in Catalonia.

At the beginning of the 1980s, the public administration launched a series of platforms to revitalise the web of associations. One prominent move in this direction was the 1981 creation of the Servei de Promoció Cultural (Cultural Promotion Service) of the Generalitat. Another

essential milestone for all athenaeums at the beginning of that decade was the founding of the Federació d'Ateneus de Catalunya (Federation of Athenaeums of Catalonia, FAC), which emerged from the Third Congress of Athenaeums held in the Centre de Lectura in Reus in 1983 after the call for its creation by the Department of Culture of the Generalitat de Catalunya through its Cultural Promotion Service.⁵¹ Since it was founded, the FAC has worked to foster, facilitate and enhance the role of the different sociocultural entities all around Catalonia. In parallel, it serves as a bridge between the entities and the administration, and it programmes educational and free-time activities to boost the networking among all the cultural associations around the country.

Despite the existence of the Federació d'Ateneus de Catalunya, fewer than half (172) of the 400 athenaeums still active today are affiliated with it, which highlights the broad range of projects and initiatives that shape the still-living phenomenon of Catalan athenaeums, key actors in the transformation of Catalan society over the past 150 years.

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- [4] An attempt to define the different forms of formal sociability in Catalonia (athenaeums, recreational societies, other societies, centres, circles, *casals*, *foments*) in Ramon ARNABAT and Xavier FERRÉ. *Ateneus. Cultura i llibertat. Associacionisme a la Catalunya contemporània*. Federació d'Ateneus de Catalunya, Barcelona 2015, p. 20. All of these forms of association have comprised and continue to comprise the majority of the mix of cultural, educational and recreational associations in Catalonia.
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- [10] Agnès ROTGER and Albert TESTART. "El naixement dels Ateneus". *Sàpiens*, no. 97 (November 2010), p. 74. For a definition of "civil society", see Ramon ARNABAT and Xavier FERRÉ. *Ateneus...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 14-15.
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- [13] See <http://www.casinodevic.cat/>
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- [15] Agnès ROTGER and Albert TESTART. "El naixement...", *op. cit.*, p. 68.
- [16] We should recall that during the early decades of athenaeums, women could only attend them as family members accompanied by members in open events, such as dances and plays. The athenaeums gradually opened up to women thanks to the creation of several female committees, but the men resisted giving them space and a prominent role.
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- [25] http://www.congreso.es/docu/constituciones/1869/1869_cd.pdf
- [26] Ramon ARNABAT and Xavier FERRÉ. *Ateneus...*, op. cit., p. 16.
- [27] <http://www.ub.edu/ciudadania/hipertexto/evolucion/textos/reunion/1887.htm>. The Constitution mentioned in this law is the one from 1876; available at http://www.congreso.es/docu/constituciones/1876/1876_cd.pdf
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- [30] Amàlia BOSCH. *Els ateneus...*, op. cit., p. 34.
- [31] Recreational societies (*casinos*) reached Catalonia in the 19th century. Despite their elitist origin, throughout this century the *casino* model spread among the middle classes, artisans, tradesmen, professionals and workers. In many cases, beyond the name, it is difficult to establish clear differences between *casinos* and athenaeums, although the term "*casino*" seems to prioritise fun over education.
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- [33] Pere SOLÀ. *Els ateneus obrers...*, op. cit., p. 194.
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- [41] See Marta GALLART. "Un tros d'Empordà al cor de Barcelona". *Revista de Girona*, no. 295 (2016), pp. 54-57; available at http://www.revistadegirona.cat/recursos/2016/0295_054.pdf. See too Marià BAIG and Josep PLAYÀ. "Empordanesos a Barcelona: crònica del Centre Empordanès Gracienc (1884), del Centre Empordanès de Barcelona (1891) i de l'Ateneu Empordanès de Barcelona (1916)". *Annals de l'Institut d'Estudis Empordanesos*, no. 42 (2011), pp. 329-382; available at <http://www.raco.cat/index.php/AnnalsEmpordanesos/article/viewFile/247554/331895>
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- [43] Josep Maria ROIG ROSICH. *La dictadura de Primo de Rivera a Catalunya. Un assaig de repressió cultural*. Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat, Barcelona 1992.
- [44] Neus REAL. *El Club Femení i d'Esports de Barcelona, plataforma d'acció cultural*. Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat, Barcelona 2006.
- [45] A good synthesis of the situation in Barcelona in 1939 can be found in Manuel RISQUES, Francesc VILANOVA and Ricard VINYES (cur.). *1939. Barcelona any zero. Història gràfica de l'ocupació de la ciutat*. Proa, Institut de Cultura and Museu d'Història de la Ciutat, Barcelona 1999. A more general overview of the Franco regime's repression is in Josep BENET. *L'intent franquista de genocidi cultural contra Catalunya*. Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat and Parlament de Catalunya, Barcelona 2009.
- [46] Pere ANGUERA. *El Centre de Lectura de Reus...*, op. cit., pp. 199-204.
- [47] Pere SOLÀ. *L'esclafament de l'associacionisme lliure a Catalunya en temps del general Franco*. Rafael Dalmau, Barcelona 1996.
- [48] <https://www.boe.es/buscar/doc.php?id=BOE-A-1964-21491>
- [49] Borja de RIQUER. *La dictadura de Franco*. Crítica and Marcial Pons, Barcelona and Madrid 2010, volume 9 of the *Historia de España* overseen by Josep Fontana and Ramón Villares.
- [50] See <http://www.ateneu9b.net/qui-som>
- [51] <http://www.ateneus.cat/>

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