

# Abstract

## 5

### The last six months

Freedom of information during the Gulf War prompted a wide international debate during the first half of 1991. The topic is dealt with explicitly in this issue of "Annals de Periodisme Català". Professionals from different areas of the media relate the experiences and problems they lived through during the conflict.

However, other events also occurred in the same period of this year. The liberalisation of the press in Eastern Europe, which has yet to be evaluated, coincided with the appearance of new media in Spain. The sensationalist daily "Claro", of German inspiration and capital, and with the collaboration of the company which published the recently disappeared ABC, made its appearance.

"Annals" would also like to mention the complete catalanisation of the "Diari de Girona" and the publication of the "Regió 7" magazine, published in Manresa, which is now daily.

"Annals would also like to remember a series of anniversaries which take place in 1991: 350 years since the first publications in Catalan, 25 since the Press and Printing Law, and the fortieth anniversary of the "El Ciervo" magazine.

## 8

### Those of us who didn't get to Baghdad

89

TOMÀS ALCOVERRO

A witness of the ups and downs of the war in Amman, the author of this article regrets not having been able to get to Baghdad on time. His experiences are gathered together mainly from a hotel in the capital: The Intercontinental, "one of those hotels which were destined to become a base for the press correspondents, and not by coincidence".

Later, the writer "took refuge" in another small hotel, the "Shepherd", places which were frequented by diplomats from the nearby Iraq Embassy. From the restaurant of the ground floor of the Shepherd, the journalist contemplated the comings and goings of those who were looking to obtain visas to get into the country of Sadamm Hussein, which in the case of female journalists has sexist connotations.

The writer observes the countries of the Near and Middle East as "a world full of frontiers, more often than not uncrossable". That is why, and even in the event of war, there were very few correspondents from Arab newspapers and only a dozen Iranis. Not because their press is weak, economically speaking, but because to travel from one country to another is difficult. In spite of this physical proximity to the Arab diplomats, Alcoverro ("That's the way it goes") was one of those who didn't manage to get to Baghdad.

# 12 Account from the Trenches

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ANTONI ARBONÈS PETIT

The author arrives in Cairo when there are two days left until the "deadline" declared by the United Nations Security Council, after which time force would be used against Iraq if it did not abandon Kuwait.

He follows the development of the war from different hotels in cities of the Middle East, among these, the Hotel Al Rasheed, one of the few official buildings in Baghdad which survived the bombs of the allies. The night of the first bombing, the author realizes that fast action must be taken and asks himself the question, "is it necessary to venture to the battlefield?" His response is immediate: "No. We must only worry about sitting in the chair which is closest to the television set, to CNN".

In this war of images, the trenches were in luxury hotels which were conditioned so that the intrepid journalists would have everything they needed during the most critical moments of combat, which one could witness without having to fear dying in combat.