



Soledad Fox, Round Trip: The Life of Jorge Semprún



Soledad Fox presents her new biography of Jorge Semprún, in conversation with Juan José Herrera de la Muela, Consul of Spain for Cultural Affairs.

Soledad Fox, a professor of Spanish and comparative literature at Williams College, recently published a biography of writer, politician and Buchenwald survivor Jorge Semprún (1923-2011), entitled *Round Trip: The Life of Jorge Semprún*. As the book is about to be published in English, she discusses her approach of 20th-century Europe through the biographical genre with Juan José Herrera de la Muela, Consul of Spain for Cultural Affairs.

ABOUT SOLEDAD FOX

Soledad Fox is professor of Spanish and comparative literature at Williams College in Williamstown, Massachusetts. She holds a BA from Sarah Lawrence College, and an MPhil and PhD in comparative literature from the City University of New York. She has been a Fulbright senior research scholar and a visiting fellow in contemporary history at the Instituto de Historia of the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas in Madrid.

She has written two biographies, and her work focuses on the intersections between literature, memoir, and history in the contexts of the Spanish Civil War, World War II, and the post-war eras. She has spoken about her research at the London School of Economics, Trinity College Dublin, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, New York University, Harvard University, the University of Salamanca, the Complutense and Autónoma universities in Madrid, and the Instituto Cervantes in Paris.

Her third and most recent book is the biography of writer, politician, and

LITERATURE
NEW YORK

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Buchenwald survivor Jorge Semprún, which was published in 2016 by Penguin Random House (Spain & Latin America), Flammarion – Grandes Biographies (France), and Sussex Academic Press (UK). A U.S. trade edition will be published in 2017.

She has been interviewed by the *BBC*, *The New Yorker*, *Insula*, *El País*, *El Mundo*, *La Razón*, *Radio Nacional de España*, *France Inter*, *Radio France International*, and has written for the *Revista de Libros*, the *Times Literary Supplement*, and many academic journals. Her work has been reviewed by major newspapers and media in France and Spain, and by the TLS.

ABOUT JORGE SEMPRÚN

Jorge Semprún (b. December 10, 1923, Madrid, Spain – d. June 7, 2011, Paris, France) was a Spanish writer, activist, and government official who embarked on a remarkable literary career after having survived 16 months (1943–45) in the Buchenwald Nazi concentration camp and labored for the Spanish Communist Party.

The grandson of five-time Spanish prime minister Antonio Maura, Semprún fled with his family to the Netherlands in 1936, during the Spanish Civil War. He enrolled at the Sorbonne in 1941, but the next year he joined the French Resistance and the Spanish Communist Party, for which he was arrested, tortured, and sent to Buchenwald.

After the war, he led a double life, serving as an interpreter in Paris while secretly working under the pseudonym Federico Sánchez to reorganize the banned Communist Party in Madrid. These events colored his life and much of his writing, notably *Le Grand Voyage* (1963) and *L'Écriture ou la Vie* (1994). He was later expelled from the party for his changing political views.

Semprún served as Spain's minister of culture (1988–91), an experience he described in *Federico Sánchez se despide de ustedes* (1993). He continued to live and write primarily in France, however, and in 1996 he was the first non-French writer elected to the Académie Goncourt. Semprún's honors included the Prix Femina for his French-language novel *La Deuxième Mort de Ramón Mercader* (1969), the Planeta Prize for his Spanish-language *Autobiografía de Federico Sánchez* (1977), and Academy Award nominations for two of his screenplays, director Alain Resnais's *La Guerre Est Finie* (1966, *The War Is Over*) and *Z* (1969), directed and co-written by Costa-Gavras.

This event will take place in English.