

Why Catalans want to be independent

Xenophobia is the concept that explains everything, because behind xenophobia is insult, lies, humiliation and discrimination. The Catalans' escape towards independence has many reasons, but the most important is the search for dignity. Only this explains why millions of people mobilise year after year, as no one has done before. But it also explains the need for foreign help, the only way out of a state in which it is a minority, and which has clearly demonstrated that it has no moral or democratic restraint. That's why this article is also a call to Europe and the world for help so that the Catalan people can flee Spanish nationalism.

Xenophobia contaminates a society to the point that those who are actively or passively part of it do not recognise it. In this sense, keeping one's distance, the defamatory mechanisms are like those of anti-Semitism experienced in Europe. Going against the Catalans and blaming the Catalans for everything is part of normality, a fact that brings together many self-interested people and groups but also many people simply contaminated by chronic and immoral misinformation. The only way to overcome harassment is to separate from that contaminated environment. From a new non-dependent situation, relationships can be restored in a positive way.

Although Spain's xenophobic attitude towards the Catalans comes from afar, in the last 25 years the Spanish right has found an effective tool of political power by fostering this feeling. But how can one foster hatred against a serene, welcoming and open people, who prefer non-violent dialogue and peace? The answer is simple: by lying, without scruples, dominating media insensitive to reality, to the point that they have managed to make it so the lie in Spain deserves no censure.

Examples of hatred

I will focus on a few examples. First, the campaign for signatures against the Statute deserves pride of place among campaigns to foster hatred against the Catalans. Secondly, the continued insults from rulers, from the media, insults of such brutality that in any other democratic country would cause widespread public indignation. Third is the boycott of Catalan products, especially food. Fourth, the response to defamation and the search for guilty people in the most tragic moments after the Barcelona terrorist attack. And finally, as a last example, the "Go get them!!!" enthusiastic cheering of the Spanish military police from different points of Spain when they were sent to repress peaceful people

who simply wanted to vote. With the silent complicity of people who define themselves as democrats, against brutal repression of the right to opinion, assembly and vote, rights that cannot be hidden behind a constitution that proclaims itself democratic.

Offending Catalans or being insensitive to the harassment they receive is assumed as normal in Spain. Fortunately, there are growing movements in different parts of Spain that oppose this apparent "normality". We are hearing new voices that speak the language of respect, democracy and solidarity among peoples.

The strategy of inciting xenophobia has brought about satisfactory results to those who encourage it. On the one hand, it allows them to win elections at the comfortable price of insulting and mistreating the Catalans (the newspaper archives are full of examples). On the other hand, it annuls their opponents since if they leave behind the Catalanophobic discourse, they lose votes. In turn, with this implicit anti-Catalan consensus, it is easy to design programmes that add complicities at the price of favouring investment or economic support in a discriminatory manner with respect to Catalonia.

RANDOM THOUGHTS

TERRY PARRIS Writer

Saluting the divinity in each of us

In Northwest India some years ago, I was entranced by Hindu greetings. With a slight downward inclination of the head, they would say 'Namaste'. This means 'The Divinity in me salutes the Divinity in you'. It meant mutual respect. Is that what is missing today?

Here we have had months of political uncertainty. President Carles Puigdemont patiently, pacifically yet persistently pushed for a referendum and then waited fruitlessly for an

answer from Spanish PM, Mariano Rajoy. Is this not a lack of respect? No 'Namaste' here. Nor was there in England in November 1605: "Remember, remember/ The 5th of November, / Gunpowder, Treason and Plot."

The plot by a group of Catholics aimed at blowing up Parliament and Protestant King James I. The Catholics felt they had no respect from a Protestant regime that was deaf to pleas for dialogue. Catholics did not get equal

rights until 1829 – some 214 years later! Now, in Britain, children make a stuffed effigy of Guy Fawkes, the group's leader, to burn during a display of fireworks – a happy social evening, with history forgotten.

Can we not return to showing respect for others, and not to the Franco-like behaviour of October 1? The olive branch is still on offer, but Catalans might need their own republic to get the fairer society and respect they seek.

VERBA DOCENT, EXEMPLA TRAHUNT NEIL STOKES nstokes@cataloniatoday.cat



"Article 155 was born out of a thirst for vengeance and humiliation against a whole country" Anna Gabriel, MP for the CUP party

Catalans are often accused of being a bit paranoid with a tendency to wallow in their victimhood, but the over-the-top actions of the Spanish authorities since the process reached a peak makes one think Gabriel has a point.