

# THE SOLUTION IS

# DEMOCRACY,

# NOT SPAIN

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**T**he Spanish state, despite having ratified the United Nations Charter that recognises a people's right to self-determination, declared Catalonia's self-determination referendum on October 1, 2017 illegal and attempted to prevent it with repressive force. However, it failed and 90% of the votes were in favour of independence. As a result, the Catalan Republic was proclaimed on October 27.

The Spanish Popular Party (PP) government, which only obtained 8% of the vote in the last Catalan parliament elections in 2015, reacted by suppressing the autonomy of Catalonia and ruling it from Madrid, treating it like a colony. After that, it called elections to the Parliament of Catalonia in an attempt to clean up its international image, as it hoped to win them in a controlled environment, with leaders of the Catalan government and civil society incarcerated, half of the elected ministers of the Catalan government in exile, and a strong hold over the mainstream media, among other factors.

The Spanish state refused to authorise the referendum because it knew that it would lose, and instead trusted that the Spanish nationalist parties would win the elections on December 21, 2017 and thus end the independence process. In addition, it also threatened voters that if they did not "vote correctly", that is, for pro-Spanish parties, the repression would be intensified. And above all, it planned an enormous political marketing operation, probably funded by Spanish banks.

Indeed, the three Spanish nationalist

failed, with the pro-independence political parties holding on to the absolute majority in the Parliament of Catalonia, obtaining 70 MPs against the 57 of the Spanish nationalist bloc.

At the same time, two myths were dispelled. One was that if the pro-independence bloc won the elections to the Parliament of Catalonia it was because the turnout would be low and the silent majority had not expressed itself. This time, turnout rose to a his-

toric 79% and the pro-independence parties won, as acknowledged on an international level. Moreover, the independence movement was said to have reached its ceiling in voter numbers, but the vote

in favour of the independence parties continued its upward progression. So what failed in the political marketing operation? Did communication flounder despite the enormous budgetary advantage? This does not seem to be the reason judging by the proliferation of banners throughout the country and multiple appearances in most of the media. We must conclude that the price-quality ratio was not good for most voters. An undemocratic, arbitrary and corrupt Spanish state, which can only offer a future of repression and economic and cultural decadence, is not attractive. In addition, the price of dependency on the central state is very high: the fiscal deficit with Spain is 8% of the Catalan GDP per year. While the PP's slogan in the election campaign was: "Spain is the solution", it ended up coming last among the seven parliamentary parties in



Demonstrators in Girona / QUIMPUG

parties - Cs, the PP and the PSC - confirmed a budget of €5.6 million for the 21-D elections, 55% higher than that of the three pro-independence parties; and that without taking into account Cs being known for its questionable financing. However, the political marketing operation

terms of votes, with only 4%. It is clear that voters did not believe in this. The solution can be nothing other than respect for international law, which supports the recognition of the democratic will of the Catalan people. And that was clearly in favour of a Catalan Republic.