

**ON THE HORIZON**  
The future to be decided  
by the Catalan people.

**CATALONIA AND SPAIN**  
300 years of an impossible  
relationship.

**THE WAR OF SUCCESSION**  
1714: The conflict that ended with  
the loss of Catalonia's freedom.

**1000-YEAR OLD NATION**  
Contributions from the Catalan  
people throughout history.

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# CATALONIA CALLING

WHAT THE WORLD HAS TO  
**KNOW**

SAPIENS



**CATALONIA  
CALLING**  
WHAT THE WORLD HAS TO  
**KNOW**

**SÀPIENS**



# A NATION CALLED CATALONIA

More than 1,000 years have gone by between the birth of the nation and the last September 11 "Diada", or National Day of Catalonia, when more than 1,600,000 people took part in a human chain for freedom. During this period, Catalonia was a sovereign nation for 700 years, while for the last 300, the country has formed part of a State, Spain, that has repeatedly attempted to destroy its cultural and national identity.



## ...AND A CAPITAL CALLED BARCELONA

Reports by leading European and American consultants confirm that Barcelona is among the best-positioned cities in Europe in terms of technology, as well as one of the most attractive for business and with the highest quality of life.

### CATALONIA IN 10 FACTS AND FIGURES

- 1 Geographic location:** northeast corner of the Iberian Peninsula
- 2 Capital:** Barcelona
- 3 Population:** 7,565,603 (2012)
- 4 Area:** 32,107 km<sup>2</sup>
- 5 GDP:** 197.9 billion euros (2012)
- 6 GDP per capita:** 27,053 euros
- 7 Immigration rate:** 15.7% (2011)
- 8 Government:** Generalitat of Catalonia
- 9 Official languages:** Catalan and Spanish (and Aranese in Vall d'Aran)
- 10 Life expectancy:** 81 years



**T**owards the end of the 10th century, Count Borrell, a descendant of Wilfred the Hairy, founder of the House of Barcelona, led several Carolingian counties in the northeast of the Iberian Peninsula to break with the power of the Frankish kings and follow their own way. Although it is an impossible task to date the birth of a national community, this is the moment that, according to many experts, initiated the long march towards independence. And so it was that, during those troubled times of frontier skirmishes with the Saracens, a territory gradually grew up between the Pyrenees and the Mediterranean Sea, with its capital at the ancient Roman city of Barcino (Barcelona). Over the centuries, this land became a nation known as Catalonia.

#### THE FIRST UNITED NATIONS

"I am a Catalan. Catalonia has been the greatest nation in the world. I will tell you why. Catalonia had the first parliament, much before England. Catalonia had the beginning of the United Nations." That is what the cellist Pau Casals said in his acceptance speech for the UN Peace Medal awarded to him for his humanitarian work. It was October 24, 1971 and the renowned musician was addressing the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

Casals, who had lived in exile for decades due to the fascist regime and who had worked for peace and liberty, seized the chance while speaking from that eminent forum to try to tell the world about Catalonia. To do this, he went back to the 11th century, when clerics, nobles, and ordinary people met in Toulouges ("today France, but then Catalonia", as Casals put it) to discuss how to restrain feudal violence. That assembly for peace and truce laid the foundations for a pioneering European legal and political movement. And, although that institution was not a parliament, it did reflect the spirit of the future Catalan Courts, established in 1283—twelve years before the English Parliament was founded.



"I AM A CATALAN. CATALONIA HAS BEEN THE GREATEST NATION IN THE WORLD. I WILL TELL YOU WHY. CATALONIA HAD THE FIRST PARLIAMENT, MUCH BEFORE ENGLAND. CATALONIA HAD THE BEGINNING OF THE UNITED NATIONS."

Pau Casals

UN headquarters, New York. 1971.

**897** **The founder of Catalonia:** Considered the father of the nation, Wilfred the Hairy died in battle against the Saracens.

**1137** **Catalonia and Aragon:** Ramon Berenguer IV, Count of Barcelona, marries Peronella, daughter of the King of Aragon, paving the way for the future confederation of Catalonia and Aragon.

**1213** **The end of the Provençal dream:** Peter the Catholic, dies at the Battle of Muret, ending all hopes of creating a state that would straddle the Pyrenees.

**1229** **The legend of the conqueror:** King James I enters Majorca victoriously. Nine years later, he also conquers Valencia.

**1282** **Sicily is Catalan:** Peter the Great, disembarks at Palermo, and the island comes under the Crown of Catalonia and Aragon.

**1289** **The great medieval narrator:** Ramon Llull publishes, in Catalan, "The Book of Wonders", which contains all the knowledge of the day.

**1359** **The Generalitat is established:** Under Peter the Ceremonious, the institution that will later become the Government of Catalonia is founded.

**1412** **The Catholic Monarchs:** The marriage of Ferdinand, King of Catalonia and Aragon, to Isabella, Queen of Castile, unites the two realms in a single confederation.

**1469** **The Casp Agreement:** King Martin the Humane, dies heirless, and a crisis over the succession ensues. The issue is finally settled when Ferdinand of Castile becomes ruler of the Crown of Catalonia and Aragon.

**1490** **Joanot Martorell:** "Tirant Lo Blanc", one of the great chivalric romances, is published in Valencia.





## THE FOUNDER OF A NEW NATION

Wilfred the Hairy is a universal figure from two perspectives: the historic and the legendary. Historically, Wilfred was the count who managed to establish a territory between the Pyrenees and the sea, with its capital at Barcelona. Moreover, he is also a legendary character. It is said that, when Wilfred was dying in battle, the grateful Frankish king placed his fingers in the wound and drew four red bars over Wilfred's golden shield. That, according to legend, was the origin of the Catalan flag, with its four red stripes.



“DESPITE THEIR COURAGE AND EXTREME LOVE OF FREEDOM, THE CATALANS HAVE BEEN SUBJUGATED FOR ALL TIME.” Voltaire, 1751

The Catalan institutional system was characterized, until the defeat of 1714, by *pactisme*, that is to say, a formula by which the king and the representatives of the Courts (parliament) shared sovereignty. Unlike the situation in Castile, this system restricted the monarch's power, forcing him or her to negotiate the most important decisions. And this system—which was reproduced throughout all the territories of the Catalan-Aragonese Crown—strongly marked the development of Catalonia, the central and driving force behind the confederation, as it established trade links around the Mediterranean during the Middle Ages.

### A MODERN APPROACH TO ECONOMICS

“This is a small, beautiful city, lying upon the seacoast. Merchants come thither from all quarters with their wares, from Greece, from Pisa, Genoa, Sicily, Alexandria in Egypt, Palestine, Africa and all its coasts.” That is what the 12th century Jewish traveler Benjamin of Tudela wrote on reaching Barcelona. His description perfectly sums up the modern economic outlook of the Catalan people from the earliest times, both inwards (what we would call cosmopolitanism now) and outwards (globalization).

At the time when Benjamin of Tudela passed through Barcelona, the Catalans maintained not only hostilities and rivalries but also fluid trade relations with Genoa—the first commercial treaty dates to 1127. However, the *Llibre del Consolat de Mar* [Book of the Consulate of the Sea], which became the cornerstone for governing maritime commercial law for Catalonia and other powers of the time, had not yet been published. With this burgeoning trade activity, in addition to the military conquests of King Jaume II, it is no wonder that Catalonia was the main western sea power of the day, nor that the country should

have one of the best—and most-feared—infantries in the world, the *Almogavers*, who had conquered distant territories as far as Greece and Turkey.

### THE CULTURAL SPIRIT OF CATALONIA

However, besides helping to establish basic legal provisions in Europe and to regulate maritime relations in the Mediterranean, one of Catalonia's greatest contributions to the world has traditionally been in the field of culture. This is made possible, in part, by the country's geographic situation, open both to Europe and to the Mediterranean, enabling Catalonia to play a major role in all artistic movements (from Romanesque and Gothic to Art Nouveau, or *modernisme*) and philosophical currents.

During much of the medieval period, here and in the rest of Europe, culture was centered in the monasteries. The Monastery of Ripoll, one of the most important in Catalonia, possessed one of the first known libraries in the Middle Ages. It was here, towards the end of the 10th century, that the future Pope Sylvester II spent some years preparing his great treatise on mathematics.

Two other cultural centers of Catalan influence in these times were the city of Toulouse—the cradle of the troubadours—and the University of Montpellier. Arnau de Vilanova and Ramon Llull are just two of the major figures that this great center of learning produced. Arnau de Vilanova was a leading physician during the Middle Ages, who helped to lay the foundations for modern chemistry while Ramon Llull composed a philosophical and scientific body of work in the vernacular (rather than the customary Latin) that had considerable influence in Europe. In fact, it was, above all, thanks to this great writer that Catalan literature became one of the cornerstones of European culture.



**War of the Reapers:** Conflict pits Catalonia against the Spanish monarchy, lasting until 1659.

1492



1640

**Catalonia, with Charles of Austria:** Thanks to the Geneva Treaty with the English, the Catalans join the War of Succession.

1705



1714



**Invention of the submarine:** 'Ictineo I', the submarine invented by Narcís Monturiol, makes its first immersion in the port of Barcelona.

1778



**Dr. Clua and cholera:** The illustrious Catalan bacteriologist Ferran Clua discovers the vaccine against cholera.

1859



1882

**'Canigó':** The poet Jacint Verdaguer publishes one of the key poems of the Catalan Renaissance.

1885

**Habemus papam:** The Valencian Roderic de Borja is named Pope Alexander VI. He is the second Catalan-speaking Pope in history.



**Catalonia, divided up:** The Treaty of the Pyrenees between France and Spain results in the mutilation of Catalonia, which loses Roussillon and part of Cerdanya.

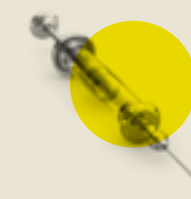


**The end of the Catalan State:** After 14 months of continuous bombardment, Barcelona capitulates to the Franco-Spanish army.

**Trade with the Americas:** After the liberalization of commerce with the Americas, Catalan exports (in particular, liquor and textiles) continue to expand.



**The Sagrada Família:** The first stone is laid in the construction of the expiatory temple of Antoni Gaudí, the principal exponent of Catalan modernist architecture.







**UNIQUE ROMANESQUE**

The Pantocrator of Sant Climent de Taüll is one of the symbols of the Catalan Romanesque style, born 1000 years ago in churches in the Pyrenees, and whose most emblematic examples can be found in the National Art Museum of Catalonia.



## THE END OF THE HOUSE OF BARCELONA

During the period when Vilanova and Lluïl were alive, Catalonia had grown to occupy a dominant position among the Mediterranean countries. In the 14th century, the Catalan-Aragonese flag, with its four red stripes, flew not only over the traditional territories (Catalonia, Balearic Islands, Valencia, and Aragon) but also over later conquests (Sicily, Sardinia, Naples, and Athens).

However, the crises of the 14th and 15th centuries (poor harvests, plague, wars, famines...) slowed down the country's economic activity. To this must be added an important event in the history of Catalonia. In 1410, Martin the Human, last king of the House of Barcelona, died without an heir, and the scepter passed into the hands of the Spanish House of Trastámara. Under this dynasty, with which the Catalan institutions frequently clashed due to the constant attempts to restrict their power, culture flourished, particularly in the kingdom of Valencia, which produced such outstanding writers as Ausiàs Marc and Joanot Martorell (author of *Tirant lo Blanc*).

Despite great tensions and even a civil war lasting ten years, neither Catalonia nor its institutions breathed their last under any of the Trastámara kings. Nor were they endangered by the marriage between Ferdinand, king of Catalonia and Aragon, and Isabella, queen of Castile, in 1469. For, although certain Spanish historiographic currents of thought date the birth of Spain from this union, the truth is that, under the Catholic Monarchs, the crowns were not united. Rather, they formed part of a compound monarchy organized over a confederate base. That is to say, there was no fiscal, legal, monetary, institutional, cultural, or legal integration of any kind; each territory continued to maintain its own sovereignty.

It was not until more than two centuries later that the Catalan nation received its deathblow, with the fall of Barcelona on September 11, 1714. You can read the details in the

## CATALONIA'S INTERNATIONAL LEANINGS

- 1 In 1986, the year that Spain entered the EU, Catalonia became the first European community to open a delegation in Brussels.
- 2 Catalonia was the first sub-state government to sign agreements with the UN (2005).
- 3 The Government of Catalonia has opened more than 30 offices devoted to internationalizing Catalan business around the world.
- 4 With around one hundred accredited foreign consulates, including the delegations of Quebec and Flanders, Barcelona is the third city in the world (excluding State capitals) with the most foreign consulates, after New York and Hong Kong.
- 5 Barcelona hosts the headquarters of the Union for the Mediterranean.



Palau de la Música Catalana

dossier below. It was then that the Catalan people learned the meaning of the expression "right of conquest" as the country fell under the rule of an absolutist king who abolished their institutions, which were at odds with the supposed divine origin of his rights.

## THE DESIRE FOR FREEDOM

Over the last three hundred years, the creative and enterprising spirit of the Catalan people as well as their democratic and international tendencies have manifested themselves on many occasions. In the 18th century—just decades after the terrible rout of 1714—Barcelona became one of the main centers of European manufacturing, and a major point for the production and worldwide distribution of wines and spirits. In the 19th century, the Catalans underwent a significant *Renaixença* (Renaissance), a powerful cultural reawakening that culminated in the Art Nouveau movement, known here as *modernisme*, at the turn of the 20th century. Modernisme in literature. Modernisme in music. And, above all, modernisme in architecture, with Antoni Gaudí as its most outstanding practitioner. Catalonia, unlike Spain, began to move once more at the rhythm of Europe, as it had centuries before, even taking the lead on occasion, as in the artistic avantgarde, embodied in such great painters as Salvador Dalí, Joan Miró, and Antoni Tàpies.

During World War I, hundreds of Catalan volunteers enlisted in the French army to defend the western democracies against the authoritarianism of the old Central European empires and, at the same time, to affirm the Catalan identity before the international community. In the Second World War, the Catalan spy Joan Pujol "Garbo" made a decisive contribution to the Allied landing in Normandy. This occurred just two months before a group of Catalan (and Spanish) republicans took part in the liberation of Paris from the Nazis. Finally, during the Balkans war in the 1990s, when the city of Sarajevo was subjected to a harsh siege by Serbian forces, the first humanitarian convoys to arrive originated in Barcelona.

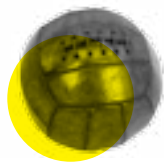
Catalonia and its citizens are no better or worse than those anywhere else in the world. Nor is its history a spotless model of virtue. Conquest, violence, cruelty, and betrayal have all been present in our long history, with all its ups and downs. However, we cannot fail to recognize a nation that has been denied the attributes of a State for three hundred years, whose capital, Barcelona, has been bombarded on several occasions and which has suffered two dictatorships in the last century, including the Franco regime which lasted nearly four decades and which actively attempted to destroy the cultural and national identity of the Catalans.

What we must recognize in this nation called Catalonia is its tenacious will to survive against all adversity. This tenacity is what we hope will lead us, three hundred years after the great disaster, to regain our liberty and build our own State within the Europe of the 21st century. ▶

**The origins of Barça:** Joan Gamper, a Swiss citizen living in Catalonia, founded the most universal of all sports clubs.



1899



1931

**The Catalan Republic:** The soldier and politician Francesc Macià proclaimed the short-lived Republic of Catalonia

1936



**Francoist uprising:** The military coup led by Franco was quelled in Catalonia, but not throughout the State. A civil war began which was to last nearly three years.



1940

**President Companys, executed:** Lluís Companys, president of the Catalan Government, was executed by firing squad at Montjuïc Castle by order of Franco.

**The death of Franco:** After a long illness, Francisco Franco died in bed after a dictatorship that lasted thirty-six years.

1975



**Airs of freedom:** The first democratic elections were held since the dictatorship, and the Government of Catalonia was reinstated.

1977



2013

**Solemn declaration:** The Catalan Parliament agrees to start on the path towards a democratic consultation enabling the people of Catalonia to decide their future.



DOSSIER

# 300 YEARS WITHIN SPAIN

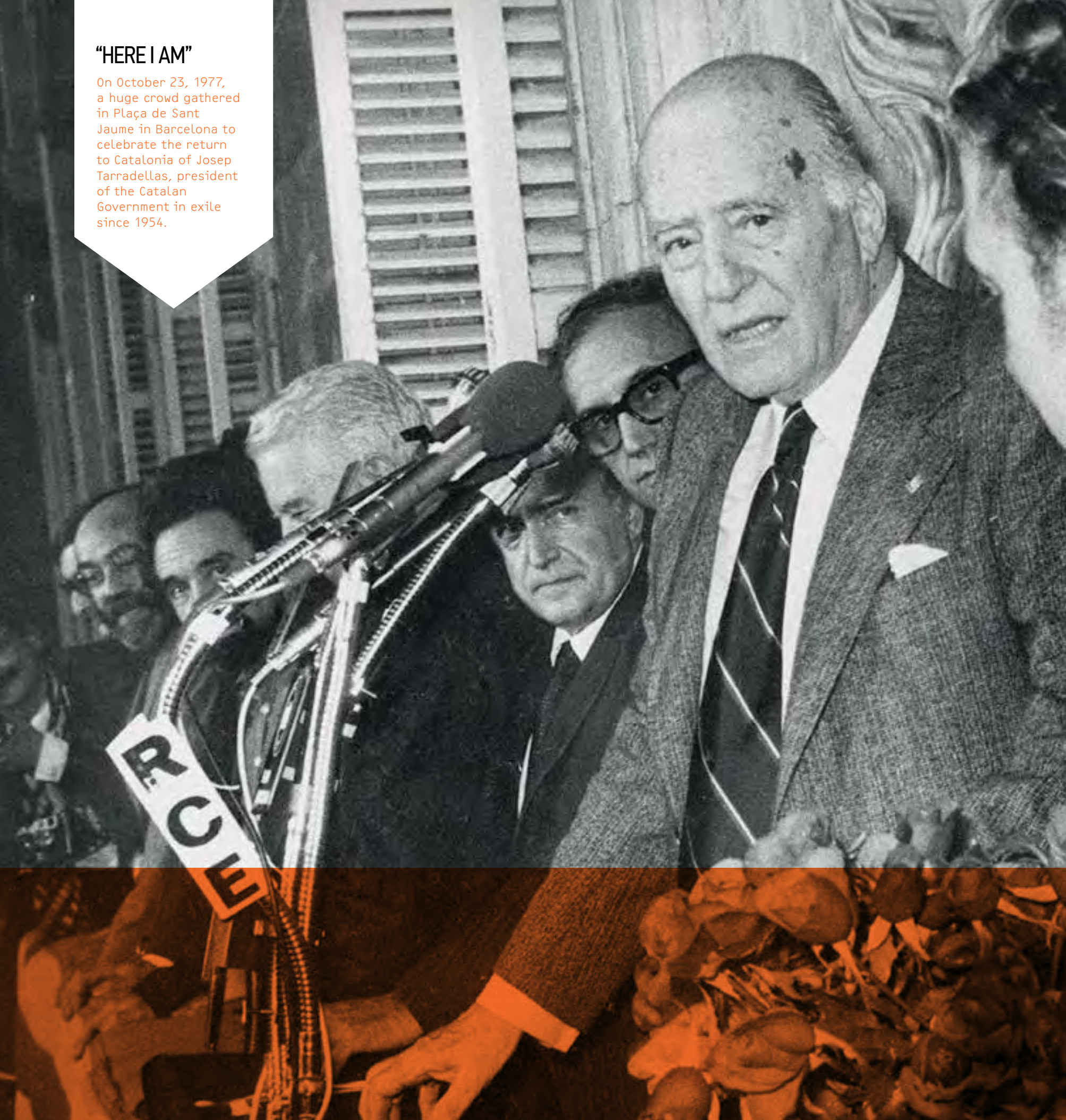
Relations between Catalonia and Spain have often been tense due to Catalonia's demands for the restoration and conservation of its institutions and language, a fair fiscal system, and reasonable levels of investment in infrastructure. At times, the Catalans' desire for greater self-government has even been quashed with violence. The five articles that follow contain the keys to understanding all these disputes.





## “HERE I AM”

On October 23, 1977, a huge crowd gathered in Plaça de Sant Jaume in Barcelona to celebrate the return to Catalonia of Josep Tarradellas, president of the Catalan Government in exile since 1954.



07

# THE STRUGGLE FOR AUTONOMY

Catalonia has two basic institutions: the Generalitat government and the Parliament. Both were first established in medieval times and operated with complete normality until they were abolished in 1716. From that point forward, the Catalan people have fought for the restoration of these institutions. This was briefly achieved in 1931 and, definitively, in 1977, after a civil war and a long dictatorship. More than thirty years later, this model of self-government is no longer sufficient for the present needs, but the Spanish State does not seem willing to accept the democratic mechanisms that would enable it to be reviewed.



## PLAÇA SANT JAUME

This square, the epicenter of Catalan political life, occupies the site of the old Roman forum and is lined by Gothic and Renaissance buildings such as the government headquarters, the Palau de la Generalitat de Catalunya.

The date is May 23, 1992. The place is Plaça de Sant Jaume, epicenter of Barcelona's administrative life. The square is packed. All heads are turned to the balcony of the Palau de la Generalitat, seat of the Catalan Government, where a youthful Pep Guardiola has just taken the microphone: "Citizens of Catalonia, here it is!" he called, referring to the first European Cup that FC Barcelona had ever won in its history. The square is a tumult of emotion. Guardiola's wording has just reminded everyone about a key moment in Catalan history: the triumphant return of Josep Tarradellas, the president-in-exile of the Catalan Government during most of the forty-year Franco dictatorship.

"Citizens of Catalonia, here I am!", Tarradellas had declared from the balcony of the Palau de la Generalitat in October 1977. Just four months earlier, Spain had held its first democratic elections since February 1936. The results from those elections had demonstrated, once more, the difference between Catalan society and the rest of Spain. The party that had won an overall majority in the State as a whole—Union of the Democratic Center, led by Adolfo Suárez—had finished in fourth place in Catalonia. More than 50% of Catalan voters had opted instead for two left-wing parties: the PSC (Socialist Party of Catalonia) and the PSUC (Communist Party of Catalonia).

This result set the alarm bells ringing in Madrid, fearful of a Catalan drift to the left, away from the moderation that marked the Transition, the name given to the political period between the death of Franco (1975) and the electoral victory of the PSOE, led by Felipe González (1982). In this context, Suárez's government decided to restore the Generalitat, or Catalan Government, which had been abolished, along with all other democratic institutions, after General Francisco Franco's victory in the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939).

### LONDON, PARIS, AND MEXICO: SEATS OF THE CATALAN GOVERNMENT IN EXILE

Among many other things, the installation of the Franco regime forced much of the political and intellectual classes linked to the defeated government, both at State level and in Catalonia, into exile. Although Catalan refugees were scattered all over Europe and America, they were determined to remain organized in the hope that, in a few years, the Allied powers would overturn Franco's dictatorship and restore democracy to Spain.

Accordingly, first London and then Paris were the seats of the so-called National Council of Catalonia, a transitional body that maintained contacts with the network of civic and cultural associations that communities of exiled Catalans had formed in several countries, from Argentina and Chile to Uruguay and Mexico. With few resources but plenty of enthusiasm, they managed to keep the institutions alive that, over four long decades, would give cohesion to the Catalan diaspora and enable a minimum amount of cultural production in Catalan to continue.

Josep Tarradellas returned to Catalonia in 1977 as the 125th president of the Generalitat—the Catalan Government is clearly



Plaça Sant Jaume, Barcelona: seat of the Catalan Government.

## GUILTY... THE 'AUTONOMIES'

One of the factors that has most contributed to Catalan discontent in recent years is the way the central government has saddled the autonomous governments (including the Generalitat) with debt, blaming the regions for high State public spending due to the duplication of institutions.

### ORIGIN OF THE STATUTE OF AUTONOMIES

The State structure of 17 autonomous communities (plus two autonomous cities, Ceuta and Melilla) was enshrined in the 1978 Spanish Constitution. This was the solution reached during the Transition as a way of accommodating the territories considered "historic nationalities"—Catalonia, the Basque Country and Galicia—within democratic Spain.

### SERVING 'COFFEE FOR EVERYONE'

Other regions, such as Andalusia, were envious of this "institutional asymmetry" and demanded the status of "autonomous community" for itself. Gradually the other communities took shape in a process that became popularly known as "coffee for everyone" and which led to the appearance of completely artificial communities such as Madrid, Murcia, and La Rioja, which had never previously existed as territorial units.



ACCORDING TO THOMAS N. BISSON, PROFESSOR OF HISTORY AT HARVARD AND BERKELEY, THE CATALAN COURTS THAT LEGISLATED IN CATALONIA FROM THE THIRTEENTH TO THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES WERE AN ARCHETYPAL MEDIEVAL PARLIAMENT.



A 15th-century illustration depicting a session of the Catalan Courts

## JUAN CARLOS IS THE TENTH BOURBON KING, WHILE ARTUR MAS IS THE ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-NINTH GENERALITAT PRESIDENT.

a very old institution. The Generalitat was first founded in 1289 for a very specific purpose. However, in order to understand this, we need to travel back in time, to the distant year of 987. This was when, as a rebuke to the Frankish king who had failed to come to his aid when besieged by Moorish forces from the Caliphate of Cordoba, Borrell II, the Count of Barcelona (the equivalent of the king in medieval times), broke off ties with the overlord. Borrell II's daring act is considered the landmark event that indicates when the County of Barcelona became emancipated from Frankish rule and thus when the Catalan nation was born.

### A POLITICAL SYSTEM BASED ON 'PACTISM'

For centuries, politics in the Catalan counties operated on the basis of 'pactism', a system by which the monarchy, the nobles or military *braç* (establishment), the ecclesiastical *braç* and the representatives of the cities negotiated agreements. It is due to this consensus-based model that in 1283 Catalonia constituted one of the first European parliaments, known as the *Corts Generals*, or General Courts. The main mission of the Courts or Parliament was to approve the monies that the king demanded for implementing his policies, particularly in the military sphere. However, before granting the money, the Courts set conditions and established agreements. It was in order to ensure compliance with these agreements that the *Diputació del General* or *Generalitat de Catalunya* was created.

In 1359, the Generalitat was made permanent, but it was not until the 16th century that the institution became the main governing body of Catalonia. Able to convene the country's political representatives without the monarch's approval, the Generalitat formally took on the status of a governing institution with broad-ranging executive, legislative, and representative powers.

When Catalonia was defeated in the War of the Spanish Succession in 1714, the Generalitat and many other institutions were abolished. This was the first time that this had happened, despite

accounts of certain sectors of contemporary Spanish historiography to the contrary. That these institutions not only existed but also wielded considerable power is made clear by such statements as the following, uttered by Philip V's intendant, Melchor de Macanaz, who was already quite clear on what should be done about the Catalan laws and institutions, even before 1714: *All its fueros and privileges are derogated, and there is no law, fuero or privilege besides the king's will.* The justification for this measure was that Catalonia should be treated as a vanquished enemy absorbed by the Kingdom of Castile. However, despite this desire for homogenization, institutions were not organized the same way throughout Spain, indeed, even weights, measures and currency varied. It was not until 1870 that Laureà Figuerola, a Catalan minister in the Madrid Government, created a single currency for the whole country: the peseta which comes from the Catalan word for 'small piece' (*pesseta*).

### NINETEENTH CENTURY: CONSTRUCTION OF THE SPANISH NATION

Something very important happened over the course of the 19th century: the political construction of the Spanish nation-state, based on the customs and usages in Castile, which were gradually imposed on the other kingdoms and principalities on the Peninsula, including Asturias, Navarre, Galicia, and Catalonia. The process began at the Courts (Parliament) of Cadiz, where the 1812 Constitution was ratified, and continued with the territorial division of the Spanish State into provinces, the establishment of the Spanish national flag and anthem, and the installation of provincial councils—new administrative bodies that formed part of local power but, in reality, merely transmitted the will of the central government.

It was, precisely, the four provincial councils into which Catalan territory was divided—Barcelona, Lleida, Girona, and Tarragona—that, in 1914, enabled Catalonia to establish its first, embryonic form of self-government since 1714: the *Mancomu-*



1359

**Berenguer de Cruïlles**, Bishop of Girona, first president of the Generalitat.



1400

**Alfons de Tous** converts the Palau de la Generalitat into the seat of the Catalan Government.



1640

**Pau Claris** president of the Generalitat during the Reapers' War.



1716

**The Decree of 'Nueva Planta'** abolishes the Generalitat and other institutions.



1931

**Francesc Macià** president of the restored Generalitat government.



1940

President **Lluís Companys** is executed. He is replaced by **Josep Irla**.



1977

**Josep Tarradellas** returns from exile. The Generalitat is restored.



1980

**Jordi Pujol**, of the center-right Catalan nationalist party CiU, becomes president.



2003

**Pasqual Maragall**, of the PSC socialist party, new Generalitat president.



2006

**José Montilla**, also PSC, succeeds Maragall as president of the Catalan Government.



2010

**Artur Mas** (CiU) is the current president of the Generalitat.



*nitat*, or association of municipalities. The principal mission of this institution was to construct a Catalonia more in line with Europe, that promoted industrialization, research, and science, improving infrastructure and spreading culture, as well as implementing other social policies. This project and the general progress being made in Catalonia aroused both admiration and misgivings, as was noted by such intellectuals as the Spanish philosopher José Ortega y Gasset.

**AN EARLY-TWENTIETH CENTURY PROJECT VALID IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY**

Although the central government in Madrid transferred only minimal powers to the *Mancomunitat*, this body left a surprisingly rich legacy that has survived even until today, and which embraces all spheres of activity: from the Meteorological Service of Catalonia to the Cartographic Institute, not forgetting the Library of Catalonia and the Ferrocarrils de la Generalitat railway service. All these and more form part of the heritage left by an institution that was led by a generation of visionaries. Their enthusiasm, which helped to make Catalonia one of the most prosperous regions in Europe in terms both of industry and cultural initiatives, contrasted with the general pessimism that reigned in Spain following military defeat against the US fleet in 1898 and the subsequent loss of the overseas colonies, including Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines.

Madrid was severely shaken by that defeat, the coup de grâce of an empire that had been languishing for two centuries. The resentment this rout generated could be seen in such famous phrases as *Let them invent!*, uttered by the intellectual Miguel de Unamuno who scorned European scientific advances, or the



**THE CUBAN ORIGIN OF THE CATALAN FLAG OF INDEPENDENCE**

In 1908, the Catalans looked on in admiration as the Cuban people fought a decades-long war to achieve independence from Spain. Inspired by the Cuban flag, a group of young people, led by Vicenç Albert Ballester, added a blue triangle and star to the Catalan flag or *senyera*. Since the independence rally of September 11, 2012, many people fly this flag, known as the *estelada*, from their balconies, to show their support for a referendum on self-determination.



**A PROJECT LED BY VISIONARIES**

2014 marks the centennial of the founding of a Catalan institution known as the *Mancomunitat*, which awoke misgivings and admiration in equal parts in the rest of the Spanish State. The object of those who founded this association of municipalities, like Enric Prat de la Riba (photo), was to establish an administrative system that was closer to the people and that would modernize Catalan infrastructure, promote scientific research, and enable the working classes to gain access to culture. Some of the social and cultural projects that this institution launched still exist to this day. The *Mancomunitat* is considered the first truly Catalan governing body to have been established since 1714.





## IN RECENT YEARS, THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT HAS LODGED AROUND A DOZEN LEGAL APPEALS TO RESTRICT OR ABOLISH CATALAN LAWS.

laments of the poet Antonio Machado: *Miserable Castile, who yesterday did reign, wrapped now in rags, what you know not, you disdain*. Faced by this panorama, Catalan society realized that the country could only escape that decline if it relied on itself. Although certain lucid voices were raised in Spain, including that of Captain General Camilo García de Polavieja, that warned of the desperate need to update State structures, in Madrid this will towards regeneration was defeated by immobilism. The Catalan people were frustrated by this Spain that withdrew into itself, isolating itself from the world so that it could dream of its glorious past. Even industrial sectors and the bourgeois elites in Catalonia—which had always been closer to the Spanish powers-that-be—realized the high political, economic, and social price of the impossibility of reaching agreement with Madrid. It was in this context that the Regionalist League—the first of several Catalan nationalist political parties born in the 20th century—was founded.

eralitat. The politician elected as the president of the Catalan government was an iconic personality in Catalonia: ERC leader Francesc Macià.

The restoration of self-government in Catalonia sat well with the winds of modernity, secularism, and freedom that ran through all social spheres during this brief period in the history of the Spanish State and which would be swept away by the coming military uprising and the civil war. This was also when the Statute of Catalonia was drafted. This was the document that was to regulate (and now once more regulates) the legal structure of the Generalitat, and which defines the powers that the Catalan Government exercises with regard to education, territorial planning, the judicial system, public works, civil law, public order...

There have been three Statutes of Catalonia: the first was approved in 1932; the second, in 1979 during the Transition; and the third, in 2006. All three were ratified by Catalan society in referendums and all three were later subjected to restrictions by the Spanish Parliament. Particularly notable was the

## THE STATUTE: THE CATALAN CONSTITUTION

In 2010, the discontent caused by the Constitutional Court ruling—which watered down the Statute of Autonomy approved by the Catalan Parliament and by popular referendum in 2006—was the tipping point that led the Catalan people to support the present independence movement. This is the third Catalan

Statute of Autonomy, after those of 1932 and 1979. By the early 21st-century, the 1979 Statute, negotiated during the Transition, was considered obsolete. For this reason, a process of drafting a new Statute, completed in 2006, was launched amidst a powerful wave of anti-Catalan feeling encouraged by Madrid.

### CATALAN POLITICS: NO PLACE FOR REDUCTIONISM

In order to understand Catalan politics since those times, it is essential to realize that, nowadays, the parties in Catalonia move along a double axis: in addition to the left-wing/right-wing political axis, there is also a second, national axis, which moves between Catalan and Spanish nationalism. This is a very important axis, one full of nuances and subtleties that are difficult to grasp unless one actually lives in Catalonia. That is why most foreign journalists who came to Barcelona to cover the November 2012 elections failed to realize the importance of the results and the hidden significance with regard to the road to sovereignty that Catalan society had embarked on. For the first time in history, the two main forces in the Catalan Parliament were both parties whose electoral manifestos supported the celebration of a referendum on the independence of Catalonia: CiU (Convergence and Union), center-right, and ERC (Republican Left of Catalonia), center-left.

### REMINISCENCES OF THE SECOND REPUBLIC

ERC had also been a party that played an important role in the municipal elections of April 14, 1931, which led to the proclamation of the Second Republic throughout the State. The new regime arrived after a period of dictatorship under General Primo de Rivera, which lasted from 1923 to 1930, in which many institutions were abolished, including the Mancomunitat. The proclamation, firstly, of the Second Republic, and secondly, of the Catalan Republic, led to the restoration of the historic Gen-

## BULLFIGHTS, BANNED IN CATALONIA

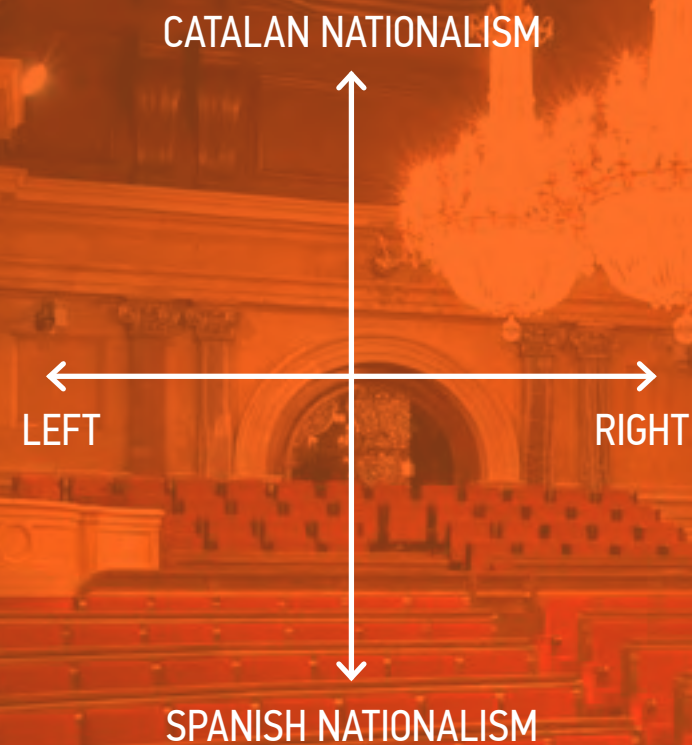
In 2010, the Catalan Parliament agreed, by an absolute majority, to ban bullfights involving the death of animals and the use of goads: *banderillas, picas, and estoques*. The law was passed thanks to a citizen's legislative initiative (ILP) promoted by civic associations that obtained hundreds of thousands of signatures in favor of animal rights. However, the approval of this law was strongly criticized in centralist media and political spheres, who considered the ban to be the result of anti-Spanish feeling.





## THE DOUBLE AXIS OF CATALAN POLITICS

One of the peculiarities of Catalan politics is the existence of a double axis along which the seven parties currently represented in Parliament are aligned: the political and the nationalist:



## THE CATALAN PARLIAMENT TODAY

The Catalan Parliament is the legislative body of Catalonia. It was formally legalized by the approval of the 1979 Statute of Autonomy. There are 135 deputies, from seven different political parties. Sessions take place in the Palau del Parlament (photo), in Barcelona's Ciutadella Park. In the last elections, on November 25, 2012, the center-right Catalan nationalist Party CiU won a simple majority. CiU governs alone. Its principal ally in the chamber is the party with the second-highest number of seats in Parliament, the left-wing Catalan nationalist party ERC.

SEVEN  
PARLIAMENTARY  
GROUPS  
**135**  
LEGISLATORS

The Catalan Parliament

opposition to the latest Statute, in 2006, an opposition which explains much of the discontent that Catalan society is currently expressing with regard to Catalonia's place within the State. The party that led the movement against the Statute was the conservative PP (People's Party), then in opposition. This was a time when the other major Spanish Party, the socialist PSOE, was in power, led then by José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero. During the 2003 election campaign, Zapatero had roundly proclaimed that he would "support the Statute approved by the Catalan people". At the moment of truth, however, when the Statute was approved, a dispute with the Spanish Parliament began that was only resolved after long negotiations in which Catalan politicians were forced to make concessions of all kinds.

### THE LAST STRAW

For its part, the opposition People's Party launched a media campaign, including a drive to obtain signatures, to support the lodging of several appeals against the new Catalan law before the Spanish Constitutional Court (TC). On June 28, 2010, the TC declared fourteen articles in the Statute unconstitutional (one completely and thirteen partially) and "reinterpreted" a further twenty-seven. The most notable rulings were that Catalan was no longer the preferential language in either the Administration or the education system, and that Catalonia was "not a nation"; there is only one nation, and that is the "Spanish nation".

On July 10, 2010, in response to this legal and political assault on the political will expressed by a majority of Catalans, the association Omnium Cultural organized a rally under the slogan: "We are a Nation. We Decide", which was attended by hundreds of thousands of people. The Spanish Government, then led by the socialist José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, was adamant that this mass response would not change attitudes in Madrid. Two years later, one and a half million people demonstrated in Barcelona against this immobilism on the part of central government. The banner at the head of that march read: "Catalonia, New State in Europe". The date was September 11, 2012. Mariano Rajoy, Spanish president and People's Party leader, was similarly unmoved by this latest peaceful and democratic protest.

### FROM THE STREET TO THE BALLOT-BOX

The size of that mobilization in support of the independence movement persuaded the Catalan Government to call early elections. Artur Mas, leader of pro-sovereignty coalition Convergence and Union (CiU) was re-elected as president. A few weeks later, in December 2012, Mas signed an agreement entitled the "Pact for Freedom" with the second-most voted party, (ERC), led by Oriol Junqueras. The purpose of this agreement is to ensure that the Catalan people can decide democratically whether Catalonia should become a new State. Catalan, Spanish, and international political and media commentators expect this referendum to be convened in 2014, exactly three hundred years after Catalonia lost its freedoms. ▶



## TWO OPPOSING MODELS

Catalan economic activity has always revolved around small and medium-sized enterprises. In Castile, on the other hand, the main economic players have always been large landowners and the public administration.



Saladrigas-Freixa factory

08

# 300 YEARS OF PLUNDER

Amid the worst recession in many decades, the debate about the economic discrimination that Catalonia suffers has become a major concern. Experts confirm that a large proportion of the taxes that Catalan citizens pay does not remain in the country, that the present system of financing is unfair, and that Spain prioritizes investment based on political criteria rather than performance or yield. This article explains why there are also economic reasons behind the powerful resurgence of the independence movement in Catalonia.

At the beginning of the 18th century, absolute monarchies set about reviewing fiscal systems with a view to introducing criteria of equity in order to cover the costs generated by war. Their aim was to increase resources efficiently without harming economic development. However, the difficulty facing these monarchies was that of achieving agreement among the ruling classes in order to implement reform. This, in the case of Castile, with its chaotic finances and huge deficits, was impossible. The advisors to King Philip V, on the throne since 1700, opposed any change that implied increasing fiscal pressure on Castilian taxpayers. Moreover, Catalonia had its own fiscal system under which the Generalitat government, and not the king, collected and administered taxes. This had given the Catalans sufficient freedom to decide whether to collaborate economically or not with the sovereign's foreign policy.

Nonetheless, Philip V's ministers lost no time in applying the planned reforms in Catalonia as a conquered and defeated territory which was also expected to maintain the army that occupied its land. To this end, on December 9, 1715, in order to exemplify fiscal reforms, the *cadastre* was introduced. The novelty of this tax measure was that it affected subjects in direct proportion to their economic resources. There were two types of cadastre, the royal and the personal. The former was applied to property, mainly houses and land, mortgages, and church income that



PHILIP V IMPOSED SUCH HIGH TAXES ON CATALONIA THAT EVEN STATE TAX COLLECTORS ADVISED LOWERING THEM.

## OTHER TAX 'DISCONTENTS'

### THE CREATION OF NORTHERN IRELAND

In the early 20th century, the Unionist movement, which favored stronger links with London, began to grow in Ireland. The unionists were opposed to nationalists, who wanted Ireland to become either an autonomous region within the United Kingdom or an independent republic. Unionists were usually from the upper classes, and their reasons for opposing a possible secession were partly economic, and often linked to fiscal policy. In wealthy Ulster, where most of the population were of English origin, there was a fear that a Dublin government would impose taxes that were harmful to industry. That was one of the reasons behind the final decision taken in Northern Ireland to continue under British rule in 1922.

### TEA AND TAXES

US independence has its origins in tax disputes. After the Seven Years' War, London decided to raise taxes on its American colonies. Tensions reached a height in 1773, when Parliament ruled that only the East India Company, based in London, could sell tea, eliminating local traders. In response, a group of colonists, disguised as Indians, boarded the Company's ships in Boston and threw 45 tons of tea into the sea. That action, known as the Boston Tea Party, led to harsh British repression which sparked off the colonists' armed uprising in 1775.

### THE REVOLT OF THE COMUNEROS IN AMERICA

Unfair fiscal policies were the reason behind revolt in the viceroyalty of New Granada. This uprising paved the way for the conflicts between Spain and its American colonies in the early 19th century, and which ended with their independence. In the Indies, Bourbon economic reforms took the shape of new taxes. This sparked a revolt against the Spanish authorities in 1781. The rebels formed an inclusive body known as El Común, without discrimination on ethnic, social, or economic grounds, and marched on Bogota. After Spain reneged on the agreements reached and imprisoned the leaders of the uprising, the American population were hard pressed to trust their Spanish governors again.

FISCAL PRESSURE IN CATALONIA RISES BY **150%** (1729-1779)



El Born market and the Ciutadella

had passed into lay hands. In principle, no one was exempt from this tax, but Church land and buildings were never made to pay. The personal cadastre was more complex, as it taxed work. Privileged estates, such as the nobility and ecclesiastical classes, were exempt, as were widows, those over sixty, those under fifteen, and students.

### THE CADASTRE: A WAR TAX IN CIVIL CLOTHING

Although it was explained that the new levy was aimed at achieving greater social justice in fiscal matters, the truth is that it was immediately seen as a punishment. The cadastre was established in order to cover the costs of an army of occupation and was, therefore, a war tax disguised as a civil levy. The coercive measures used to collect the new tax included requisition and imprisonment. Moreover, the annual amount stipulated to be collected was over-optimistic as it was calculated on the basis of Catalonia's prosperous image in the late 17th century, and did not take into account the devastating effects of the war. As a result, the cadastre was set disproportionately high in comparison with the real economic conditions in the territory. In addition, the fixed rate was not changed even when, for example, a poor harvest made it impossible to pay. Not only that, but the tax was added to those already in existence and those levied by the Catalan government, or Generalitat, and the Council of One Hundred, which had not been abolished but taken over by the monarchy, and new indirect taxes, such as those on salt and sealed paper. In short, this was nothing more nor less than a transfer of resources from Catalonia to the central State apparatus.

The period from 1726 to 1744 was marked by the consolidation of the cadastre, alongside the introduction of the new political regime. Over the course of fifty years (1729-1779), indirect taxation in Catalonia rose by 248% and total taxation, including the cadastre, rose by 150%.

### THE ORIGINS OF THE MYTH ABOUT CATALAN SOLIDARITY

From 1833 to 1840, Spain suffered a civil war between defenders of absolutism, on the one hand, and on the other, a liberal system that sought to unleash a revolutionary process which would speed up reforms and dismantle the Ancien Régime, including its tax provisions. Nevertheless, liberalism's ultimate victory did not endow the State with a more generous vision of the Principality.

In the mid-19th century, the issue of the relationship between Catalonia and Spain brought the cliché of Catalan lack of solidarity to the forefront once more. Certain sectors in the press attacked industrialists, mostly located in Catalonia, accusing them of being vultures and arguing that, since Spain was essentially an agricultural country, manufactured imports should be paid for by exports of farm produce. The Catalan industrialist and economist



### 1888

Tax figures for industry show that Catalans paid double their Spanish counterparts. According to foreign trade figures, they paid five times as much.

### 1900

Barcelona paid more than Old Castile, Aragon, and Valencia put together. The province contributed a total of 174 million pesetas to the State, while Madrid paid less than 143 million.

### 1956

State income from Barcelona was 5,551,154,212 pesetas, while spending in the province was 1,179,668,992. In other words, a fiscal deficit of 79%.



### RICH... BUT NOT SO RICH

In 2012, there were 592,192 enterprises in Catalonia, of which 335,836 (56.7%) had no salaried workers. The rest, with salaried workers, total 256,366 companies, of which 99.6% have fewer than 200 employees. Unlike other areas in the State, this enormous predominance of small and medium-sized enterprises is one of the reasons why the current recession is hitting Catalonia particularly hard. Below are some comparative figures.

Joan Güell spoke out against such opinions. In 1853 Güell refuted their argument by providing customs figures which showed that Catalonia's balance of trade with Spain was never favorable to the former.

Subsequently, in the 1890s, the Catalan industrial bourgeoisie began to criticize the centralized political and financial administration, fiscal inequalities, and deficient trade policy. It was possible to quantify the ill-feeling that divided the industrial bourgeoisie from the government. Figures on industrial and trade taxes for the 1888–1890 period show that each Catalan paid 4.78 pesetas, more than double the average for Spain, which stood at 2.08 pesetas per person. According to another statistic, devoted to foreign trade, the Catalans handed over five times more than the rest of the population in taxes to the State. In short, Catalonia paid over 8.8 million pesetas per year in taxes, while the rest of the State combined contributed 32.7 million. And this, at a time when the

### INTERTERRITORIAL SOLIDARITY?

In the early years of the 21st century, Catalonia has contributed between 8 to 11 percent of its GDP to the State's less well-off regions. Germany recommends that this figure should never exceed 4%, while in the United States this figure is 2.5%.

Principality had a population of 1.8 million compared to the 17.5 million inhabitants of Spain as a whole. Consequently, while accounting for 10% of total Spanish population, Catalonia contributed 27% of total taxes. The tax burden on Catalonia was disproportionate in the extreme.

The loss of Spain's last remaining colonies in 1898, following the war between Spain and the United States, and the government's refusal to reach an agreement on financing the province of Barcelona led to extreme tension between the bourgeoisie and the central administration. The military defeat in 1899 led the government to raise taxes in order to cover the generated deficit. The response from the guilds of Barcelona was to close commercial and industrial establishments so as to avoid paying taxes without breaking the law. This unusual strike became known as the *Tancament de Caixes* ["Closing the Registers", see inset on next page]. Although, in the end, business had no alternative but to pay, the initiative was a suc-

#### 2012 FIGURES

	CATALONIA	SPAIN
Population	7,565,603	47,565,984
GDP per capita	€27,053	€22,700
Child poverty	23.7%	26.59%
Homes with all members unemployed	225,000	1,728,400
Evictions	25.422*	101.034
Fiscal balance	-8% (between 1986 and 2009)	

\*In 2012, Catalonia was the community with the highest number of evictions in Spain



## CATALAN PROPOSALS TO CHANGE THE FISCAL ARRANGEMENT ARE SEEN AS BLACKMAIL OR AN ATTEMPT TO SECURE PRIVILEGES.

cess thanks to its capacity to mobilize society to protest against the abuses of central government.

The century ended in this rarefied atmosphere. According to the official figures for 1900, the province of Barcelona paid a tax bill as high as the whole of Andalusia, more than Old Castile, Aragon, and Valencia put together, and almost as much as New Castile (including Madrid), Galicia, León, Extremadura, and Murcia, combined. The Catalan province contributed a total of 174 million pesetas to the State, while Madrid paid less than 143 million pesetas. Barcelona paid even more than Cuba had as a Spanish colony, which had complained about being forced to pay 24 million pesos, even those these monies were then distributed on the island itself.

### MISTREATING "SPAIN'S POWERHOUSE"

At the turn of the 20th century, the following paradox could be observed: Catalonia was Spain's powerhouse, but did not possess even a minimum infrastructure proportionate to its contribution to the public purse. The Mancomunitat, or association of Catalan municipalities (1914–25), the first experiment in self-government body since the defeat of 1714, alleviated the deficit with the State by using resources from the provincial governments of Barcelona, Girona, Lleida, and Tarragona, since the Spanish government refused to devolve powers over tax collection. However, the State continued to religiously levy 250 million pesetas every year in Catalonia, returning just 19.1 million in investment in public works, education, health, and agriculture. When the dictatorship led by General Miguel Primo de Rivera abolished the Mancomunitat, this

tax deficit continued to exist. In fiscal year 1926, Catalonia, by no means the largest or most-populated region in the State, contributed nearly one-third (30%) of all the taxes paid in Spain.

### AUTARCHY, CLIENTELISM, AND FINANCIAL OPACITY

The fascist regime imposed by General Franco after the Spanish Civil War was based, economically speaking, on autarchy, a system without foreign exchanges in which the State has to produce all necessary goods. In consonance with this, fiscal pressure was kept as high as ever. In 1951, the State invested just 28% of the taxes it collected in Barcelona in the province itself; that is, it suffered a fiscal deficit of 72%. At the close of 1958, fiscal measures in effect included raising taxes and a fiscal amnesty for those who returned capital that they had unlawfully taken out of the country since 1939. However, in this area, everything remained the same or even worsened for Catalonia. In 1956, State income from the province of Barcelona was 5,551,154,212 pesetas, while spending was just 1,179,668,992 pesetas. In other words, the same old story with 21% of revenue returned, that is, a 79% deficit.

The population and economic growth which followed this period in Catalonia in the 1960s brought no improvements to the services that were provided in a region that acted as the driving force for an entire State. In 1975, the deficit in public education in the Barcelona metropolitan area was 58% with regard to places in basic and preschool education while, in health care, there were six hospital beds per thousand inhabitants in the capital, compared to the World Health Organization recommendation of ten beds per thousand.

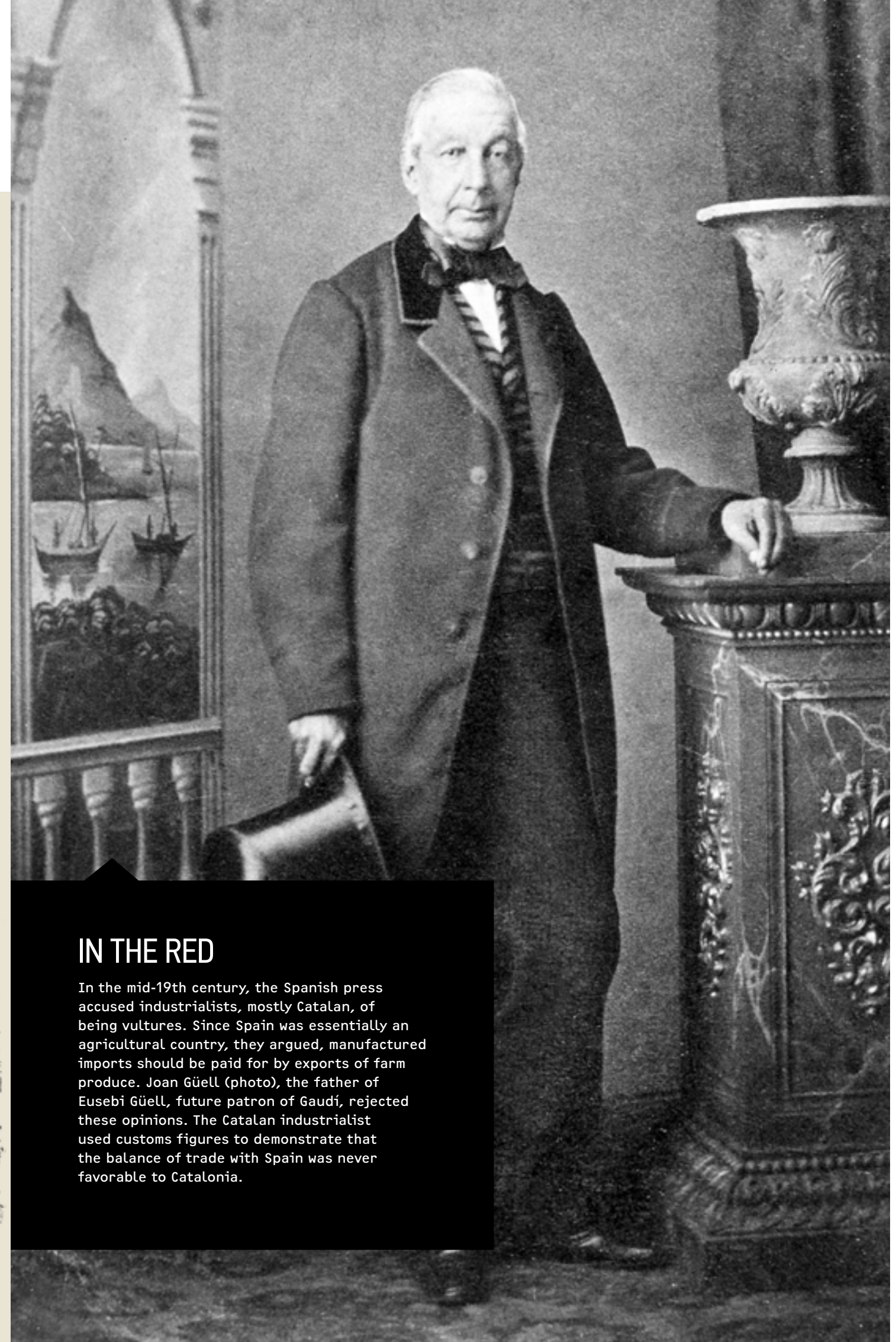
## 'CLOSING THE REGISTERS'

To palliate the deficit caused by military defeat in 1899, the central government raised taxes. In response, the guilds of Barcelona closed their businesses in order to stop paying taxes without breaking the law. This unusual strike led to the suspension of constitutional guarantees and, in order to prevent the protest from spreading to other parts of the State, the Spanish government claimed that a Catalan independence movement was behind the initiative.



## IN THE RED

In the mid-19th century, the Spanish press accused industrialists, mostly Catalan, of being vultures. Since Spain was essentially an agricultural country, they argued, manufactured imports should be paid for by exports of farm produce. Joan Güell (photo), the father of Eusebi Güell, future patron of Gaudí, rejected these opinions. The Catalan industrialist used customs figures to demonstrate that the balance of trade with Spain was never favorable to Catalonia.





IN 2010,  
CATALONIA CONTRIBUTED  
**19.4%**  
OF ITS INCOME TO  
THE STATE  
ADMINISTRATION

THAT YEAR,  
STATE SPENDING IN  
CATALONIA WAS  
**14.2%**



SEAT car factory



## ECONOMIC OBSCURANTISM DURING THE TRANSITION

After Spain ended the period of autarchy with the 1958 Stabilization Plan and allowed the entry of multinationals, an opaque mesh of private companies sprang up around General Franco. These firms became enriched thanks to influence trafficking, commissions, concessions, and abuses of power. The future King Juan Carlos I was informed by his advisers that elite Francoist businessmen would give him 'support' in exchange for continuing the economic status quo. Now, instead of orbiting around Franco, this murky business fabric revolved around the king. This was one of the prices of the Transition: there would be political change, but the old ways of making money would be retained.

### POLITICAL, BUT NOT ECONOMIC CHANGE

The dismantling of the dictatorship following the death of Franco, the restoration of democracy, and the re-establishment of the Generalitat presented an opportunity to correct old vices. During the process of drafting the Catalan Statute of Autonomy in 1978, the possibility was considered of establishing a financing system based not on what the central administration should transfer to the autonomous government but on what Catalonia should transfer to the central government. The idea was to give the country complete freedom to decide how to use much of its money while also ensuring solidarity with less developed areas of the State. The Spanish government, presided over by Adolfo Suárez, rejected this proposal, now known as the *fiscal pact*, and economic issues were relegated to a secondary position since, in those times, there was more interest in securing devolution of powers in such areas as language and education, considered vital in providing a firm structure for the country.

In 1994, Catalonia paid around 20% more than the Spanish average and received 17% less than that same average. Despite this, the country continues to be accused of a lack of solidarity, and these accusations are not contested outside Catalonia because conserving this image reaps political and economic ben-

efits for Spanish political parties and State structures. What is most ironic is that Catalonia leads the autonomic process: in a curious exercise of imitation, if Catalonia achieves powers in a particular area, the other autonomous communities also demand its devolution from the State. Perhaps this explains why Madrid refuses to talk about reforming the system under which Catalonia is financed: the task threatens to be long and arduous, and there is little desire to redress injustices.

### FROM ECONOMIC BOOM TO DEEP RECESSION

At the turn of the new century, Catalonia held the dubious honor of being the community that contributed most to the redistribution of regional income in the State. In fact, in recent years, Catalonia has contributed between 8 and 11 per cent of the country's GDP to the State as "solidarity", when the German model establishes a maximum of 4% for such a contribution.

It is also calculated that the current finance model has generated a historic debt of 1.2 billion pesetas as regards State public investment. The various attempts launched by the Catalan government to change this model have degenerated into a series of political battles. Outside Catalonia, any suggestion of modifying the tax collection model are habitually interpreted as ma-





## THE RAVAGES OF RECESSION

Súmate ([www.sumate.cat](http://www.sumate.cat)) is a group formed by Catalans whose mother tongue is Spanish, mostly the children of Spanish immigrant families who came to Catalonia in the 1950s and 60s. The group's manifesto supports self-determination for Catalonia based, above all, on economic arguments. The recession that is affecting the

country has generated protest movements all over the State, including 'Stop desnonaments' ('Stop Evictions'), led by the Catalan activist Ada Colau. In 2012, Catalonia was the Spanish autonomous community most affected by evictions. It is also the territory where the most companies have closed.



## “THE CATALAN FISCAL DEFICIT MAY DAMAGE THE REST OF SPAIN: STIFLING THE CATALAN ECONOMY IS LIKE KILLING THE GOOSE THAT LAYS THE GOLDEN EGGS.”

Xavier Sala i Martin. Professor of Economics at Columbia University

neuers to claim privileged positions, as measures that would increase inequalities between territories, or even as blackmail in cases where the central government needed support in Congress from the governing party in Catalonia.

There is no political battle without its corresponding media campaign. In this case, the old cliché about Catalan lack of solidarity always pops up when this issue is in the news. However, it has never been made clear whether State redistribution of Catalan money has brought progress to the poorer regions in Spain. Indeed, evidence seems to indicate that the wealth generated by such areas as Catalonia serves only to alleviate the cost of unproductive investment (see forthcoming report).

But this mystery about the use of funds collected in Catalonia is an issue that has long been well-known in other latitudes. In an article published on November 6, 1898, entitled “The Trouble in Catalonia”, The New York Times described the headaches caused by fiscal deficit in those days. The article states that: “Not only are the traditions and customs of Catalonia... different from those of Castile, but the economic interests of each of these units which compose the Spanish State are occasionally opposed to each other.” It goes on to argue that, “administrative centralization means economic centralization which in the case of Catalonia is tantamount to ruin.” The US newspaper also poses a question: “Millions upon millions are collected for the army and navy; but are they spent on these defenses?” In answer the article affirms that: “Politicians who came to Madrid with a carpetbag full of impediments a year or two ago possess palaces and country villas and extravagant mistresses today.” To add insult to injury, moreover: “Catalans pay more, far more, of that mal-administered money than any province of Spain.”

### MADRID REFUSES TO PUBLISH CERTAIN FIGURES

Needless to say, the consistent refusal of the central government to publish the fiscal accounts does not help to reduce tensions. Such figures would reveal the difference between what a given administration collects in its territory through taxes, and what returns to the same jurisdiction in the form of transfers, subsidies, and investment. In the final outcome, a fiscal balance serves a strictly informative function, and does not consider whether the distribution it describes is fair or not. Nonetheless, Madrid has avoided publishing these figures in the belief that the information would endanger inter-regional solidarity and cause hostilities to open up between autonomous communities. In 2008, however, an exception to this occurred. For the first and only time, the fiscal

balances between the autonomous communities and the State were published, though the figures did not reveal anything not already known: that Catalonia is burdened with a huge fiscal deficit. Some might argue that Catalonia has a trade surplus, but this surplus is generated by a tenacious private sector, and not by subsidies or support in the form of public investment. The paradox lies in the fact that the rest of Spain considers the results of this activity as evidence that Catalonia is by far the main beneficiary of the autonomous community system because, despite being stripped of its wealth, the country continues to generate high growth rates.

### A PRESTIGIOUS ECONOMIST LEADS DEMANDS

As a result of these deliberately-sown confusions and opacities, any initiatives or protests that come from Catalonia cause scorn or rejection. An illustrative case would be that of Endesa, a Spanish electricity, gas, and water company. Gas Natural, another company in the sector, with headquarters in Barcelona and Catalan financial backing, made a bid to buy Endesa. However, a purely financial operation turned into a long political and legal battle in which the Spanish authorities did everything in their power to prevent Catalonia's Gas Natural from taking over Endesa, which was finally purchased by an Italian company. Who can forget the words of a leading Madrid politician who called the fact that Endesa headquarters might move to Barcelona “bad news”, as this meant that the company would be “leaving national territory”.

The latest chapters in this long story are summarized in the 2006, 2007, 2008, and 2009 fiscal balances, which show that the Catalan deficit was around 16 billion euros per year on average. In 2010, Catalonia accounted for 19.4% of central administration income, receiving expenditures of 14.2% in return. All these figures demonstrate that, over the 1986–2010 period—a quarter of a century—Catalonia has suffered, on average, an annual fiscal deficit of 8.1% of Catalan GDP.

The person making these claims is not just anyone: these figures are reported by Andreu Mas-Colell, the Catalan Government's Minister of Economy and a professor of Economic Science at Harvard and Berkeley. Mas-Colell is, moreover, a leading microeconomist, and co-author of *Microeconomic Theory* (1995) with Michael Whinston and Jerry Green, a reference manual on microeconomics used at universities around the world. The figures speak for themselves, and one can only wonder how much longer the inhabitants of this part of the world will have to continue paying reparations for a war that ended—apparently—in 1714. ▀

THE SPANISH STATE OWES CATALUNYA 8.6 BILLION EUROS, ACCORDING TO CATALAN GOVERNMENT CALCULATIONS.



## ALMOST UNIQUE...

In Europe, only Romania has an airport system like Spain's, which forbids competition between airports and penalizes the more efficient ones, like Barcelona's (shown), by preventing them from investing resources in order to improve their services.



AIRPORT  
MANAGEMENT IS  
ANOTHER THORN  
OF CONTENTION  
BETWEEN CATALONIA  
AND SPAIN.

09

# ALL ROADS LEAD TO MADRID

"A magnificent high road cannot be made through a desert country where there is little or no commerce, or merely because it happens to lead to the country villa of the intendant of the province," wrote Adam Smith in 1776 in "The Wealth of Nations". But that is precisely what Spain has done through its infrastructure policy: build a radial transport network that begins and ends in Madrid.



“OUR INFRASTRUCTURE POLICY DOES NOT DEPEND ON THE ECONOMIC PROFITABILITY OF THE INVESTMENT.”

Magdalena Álvarez, Minister of Public Works, 2004–2009.



**KM 0**  
THE RADIAL SYSTEM  
IN MADRID'S  
PUERTA DEL SOL



When I heard and read that England, France, and Germany had made great efforts to cover their territories with railway networks, I repeated over and over again: what we need is not a network but a cross, and I believe that such a cross is destined to be no less than our economic salvation, just as the mystical cross of Calvary has brought about the regeneration of the human species.” The year was 1850. MP Andrés Borrego was describing before the railway committee of the Spanish Parliament the guidelines for a railway model that would help to modernize a Spain that, apart from Catalonia and the Basque Country, had missed out on the industrial revolution. But Borrego was not talking about anything new: the genesis of that cross went back to the reign of Philip V during the first third of the 18th century. No sooner had the War of Succession ended, than the king began to sow in Spain the seeds of French Bourbon absolutism with respect to territorial organization and the exercise of power, making Madrid the

political and administrative “Kilometer Zero” of his reign. Accordingly, in 1720, a regulation entered into force by which each road had to serve to send orders from the Court and to receive information in the capital. The towns continued to be responsible for building and maintaining roads. However, in 1747, for the first time in Spain’s history, the Crown began to finance the construction of royal roads. Local governments continued to pay for what were now considered secondary roads. Catalonia was not included in this first public investment initiative.

#### THE RADIAL SYSTEM: SIX SPOKES AND SIX ROADS

Two decades later, in 1761, the Crown approved a general plan for roads organized around six main spokes and six general roads, which coincided with Philip V’s radial roads. From the capital of the realm, roads would branch out towards La Coruña, Badajoz, Cadiz, Alicante, and the French border, via both Bayonne and Perpignan. Moreover, this radial system would ramify towards “sea ports and other main cities”. Catalonia,

## RIGHT OF WAY

A historic Catalan protest revolves around the difference between the large number of toll-free roads in the communities of Madrid, the two Castiles, Extremadura, and Murcia (some with very low traffic flow) compared to the very few free roads that exist in Catalonia. According to 2010 figures, of the 12,974 kilometers of toll-free roads in the State, just 703 are in Catalan territory, while out of 2,991 kilometers of toll roads managed by the State, 632 km are in Catalonia. This means that each Catalan has to deal with 32% more toll roads than the average Spaniard.

despite its important port and thriving economic and industrial activity, would not be included. The construction of these roads would be paid for by the Crown exchequer, but the door was left open for users to help pay their maintenance costs in the form of tolls.

By establishing this radial network, Bourbon legislators satisfied objectives related to administration (mail and information), military concerns, and public order (including supplying Madrid), however, they ignored such economic considerations as price and frequency. The efficiency of transport and its contribution to productivity were secondary concerns compared to the need to satisfy centralizing political interests. That first radial network did little to facilitate communications and progress in Spain, but it became an icon of Bourbon centralism, a legacy that all Spanish governments have conserved intact.

The Catalans attempted to combat their explicit marginalization by political means, but it was not until eight decades later that Catalonia was provided with a means with which



COMMUTER  
LINE INVESTMENT  
IN BARCELONA

1.3  
BILLION PESETAS

EARLY  
1990'S

COMMUTER  
LINE INVESTMENT  
IN MADRID

14.7  
BILLION PESETAS



## WAITING FOR THE 'CORRIDOR'

As they squandered resources on pharaonic, unproductive projects, successive State governments have also postponed investments that experts consider key for the Spanish economy, like the Mediterranean corridor. This corridor is a passenger and goods route that runs along the coast from Algeciras to the French border, including such cities as Málaga, Almería, Alicante, Valencia, Barcelona, and Girona. Madrid still insists in Brussels that a corridor must first be built through the center of Aragon, an operation that would entail drilling through the Pyrenees, a proposal that has no European support whatsoever.



## A GAUGE THAT ISOLATES

The 1855 Railway Bill prioritized connections between provincial capitals and Madrid over communications with Europe. This lack of interest is further illustrated by the unfortunate choice of a gauge different from that used in the other European countries.

to compensate its abandonment by the State. In September 1848, the General Board for Roads in Catalonia was established. This was a self-financed association of the four Catalan provinces that would have powers to build roads in Catalonia. Supported by the military establishment, an exceptional state of affairs in a political context characterized by centralism and liberal uniformity, the provincial councils remedied State ineffectiveness to the point of completing such major enterprises as the Tarragona–Lleida, Manresa–Vic, and Girona–Palamós roads.

### POORLY DISTRIBUTED KILOMETERS

This impulse was abruptly halted in 1857, when a Spanish law on public works again marginalized the distribution of State infrastructure in Catalonia. The Board members became frustrated on seeing, once more, that while State roads were paid for from the public purse (and thus partly financed from taxes paid by the Catalans), most roads in Catalonia had to be financed by trade and consumer taxes (particularly on meat and cod), a fiscal effort that particularly punished the province of Barcelona.

In 1868, the State abolished the Roads Board. By then, indicators on road systems in the historic Spanish regions showed the results of an absolutely Jacobin infrastructure policy: of the fifteen territories into which Spain was divided, Catalonia occupied tenth place in terms of kilometers of road per thousand inhabitants. Old Castile, the Basque Country, León, New Castile, Navarre, Aragon, Extremadura, Murcia and Asturias, in this order, had more kilometers than Catalonia, all subsidized, needless to say, by the State.

### TRAINS WITH THEIR BACKS TO EUROPE

Queen Isabella II continued the ideological project of ensuring the nation's cohesion through roads first launched by Philip V by signing the 1855 General Railway Bill. This law consecrated the radial nature of a network paid for with tax monies and marginalized from Europe by the unfortunate choice of a gauge that was different from that used in all other countries. In contrast with the rest of Europe, the Spanish railway system would prioritize links between all provincial capitals and Madrid rather than create a network connecting the country's busier areas. Once more, Catalonia was isolated from this railway system, despite having built the first railway on the Peninsula, the Barcelona–Mataró line, in 1848. The industrialists that established this major infrastructure had to do so without a penny in public subsidies or credit facilities. This discrimination was so flagrant that there was even explicit mention in the report drawn up by the then minister of public works.

With the law approved, by 1856 the State had authorized dozens of railway concessions, but not all received the same support. According to the records of the Directorate-General for Public Works, the following lines received no State subsidies:



## MADRID DOES NOT AGREE WITH BRUSSELS REGARDING TRANSEUROPEAN NETWORK PRIORITIES.

Pere Macias and Gemma Aguilera a 'La gran bacanal' ['The Big Orgy']. Editorial Deu i Onze

Barcelona–Mataró; Barcelona–Granollers; Barcelona–Martorell; Mataró–Arenys de Mar; Tarragona–Reus; and Seville–Cordoba. Remarkably, nearly all the lines not subsidized were Catalan.

### A CATALAN MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS

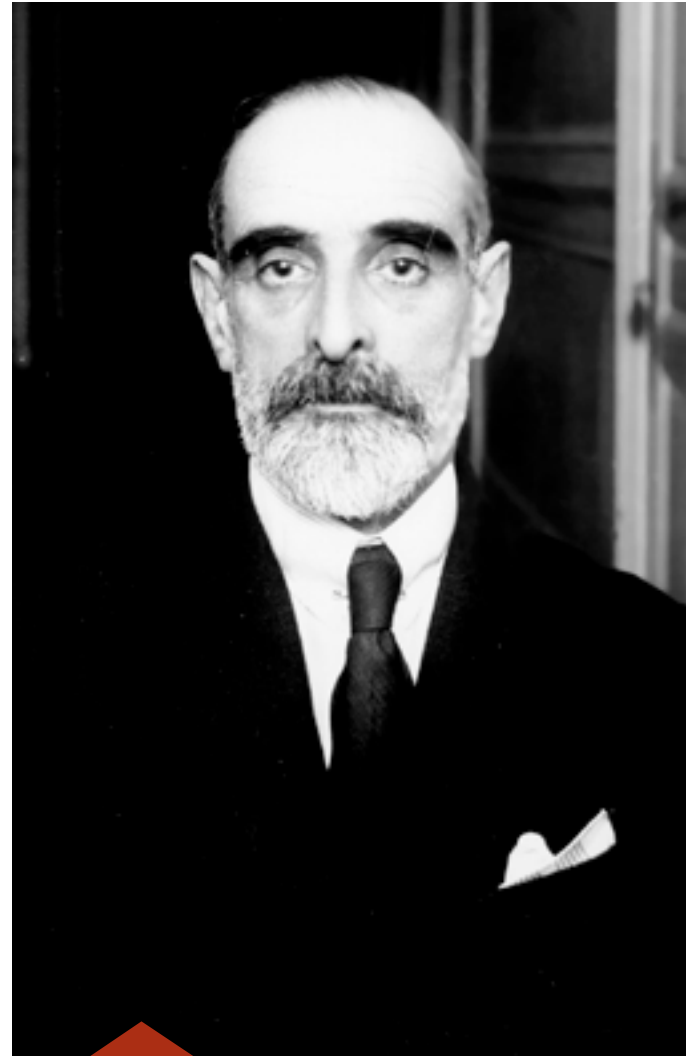
In 1914, the State approved the establishment of the *Mancomunitat*, an association of municipalities in Catalonia and the first embryo of self-government since 1714. This was a compromise solution that did not completely satisfy Catalan aspirations. Nevertheless, it was an opportunity for Catalonia once more to become a political force within the Spanish State. Thanks to the understanding and good feeling between the Mancomunitat, governed by the Regionalist League, and the Spanish conservatives led by Antonio Maura, in 1918 the Catalan politician Francesc Cambó was appointed as minister of public works. A Catalan, then, would be in charge of State infrastructure, the area that had most obsessed the powers-that-be in Madrid for two centuries.

Cambó proposed alleviating Catalonia's deficiencies in infrastructure, but stopped short of suggesting changing the radial communications system. His aspirations were modest: on September 19, 1918, just six months after taking office, he presented a white paper to the Council of Ministers that provided for a five-year plan of credits to boost public works. This would help to improve the efficiency of infrastructure without overly increasing expenditure. However, Madrid would have to transfer control of infrastructure to the mancomunitats. Under the plan, Catalonia would be able once more to repair poor roads, extend railway lines, and make decisions about how to structure its territory.

### A HARSH REALITY CHECK

The Catalan minister was convinced that a majority of Spanish politicians would support him. However, the refusal to decentralize powers was unequivocal. "I was surprised that only the military ministers, General Marina and Admiral Pidal, approved my proposal." Cambó was left "indignant" by this cold reception from his fellow ministers.

He had dared to cross the impregnable wall of infrastructure and had received a most disappointing response. "Nothing matters. Our efforts to save Spain are of no use [...] Have we the right to continue forming part of central government in order to resolve administrative problems in the certainty that, for the moment, none of Catalonia's aspirations will be satisfied? Or should we return home, convert today's agitation into a great patriotic movement and propose [...] an integrated plan for the autonomy of Catalonia?" a flabbergasted Cambó wondered. However, despite his confusion and feelings of rejection, he still accepted the post of Finance minister in the next Spanish Government.



## A CATALAN DEVELOPMENT MINISTER

The Catalan politician Francesc Cambó [photo] was appointed as Minister of Public Works in Antonio Maura's conservative government in 1918. Just six months later, Cambó's new model for investment in infrastructure, giving greater powers to local authorities, was vetoed. He concluded that there were just two options for Catalan politicians: form part of the central government and relinquish any hope of satisfying Catalan aspirations; or to promote a complete break from the State.

THE PORT OF  
BARCELONA IS  
**#1**  
IN STATE INCOME

## PORT SOLIDARITY

The Port of Barcelona [photo] is the port with the highest income in the State. In second place is Valencia, with 40% less income, while Algeciras is third, with half. The InterPort Compensation Fund requires the ports with the highest profits to transfer part of their income to Spanish ports that are experiencing difficulties. In the case of Barcelona, this figure is between 2 and 3 per cent, added to the 4 per cent transferred to the central port authority.





## 2001–2010: A 'PRODIGIOUS' DECADE

The early 21st century was marked by a race between the two main Spanish parties, PSOE and PP, to build major infrastructures in all the provinces in the State. This irrational investment drive had much to do with electoral promises, though factors such as the city of birth of certain politicians were also decisive.

### WAITING FOR THE ECONOMIC MIRACLE

All this led to the construction of airports where no plane has ever landed, empty high-speed trains, ports with huge docks but no cargo transport, and toll-free roads that lead to deserted areas. This is the result of a Spain convinced that squandering public resources on infrastructure would guarantee economic growth and equality among all regions, guided by the fiction of a supposed territorial cohesion.

### COMPARISONS THAT SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES

With 24 airports, France serves a population of 65 million, while Germany has 28 airports for 81 million people. In Spain, which has a population of 47 million, there are 52 airports, 47 of which are centrally managed by AENA with its "single till". This centralized management system is unusual in Europe, where it is common to see French and German airports, for example, competing against each other without "national unity" being questioned, as is the case in Spain.

### THE POLITICIZATION OF RESOURCES

By way of example, we can see how resources were politicized in 1996, when the PP needed the support of the Catalan party CiU in order to govern. One point in the negotiations was a new law that would make ports more autonomous. This new model enabled Barcelona to become a power in cargo container traffic and passenger cruises. In 2000, when the PP had an absolute majority and no longer needed Catalan support, this model was dismantled as the "quota of solidarity" for less active ports was increased.



THE  
MADRID–BARCELONA  
LINE TOOK  
**20 YEARS**  
TO BE BUILT

**AVE**  
THE  
MADRID–SEVILLE,  
LINE WAS COMPLETED  
IN JUST  
**6 YEARS**



## GHOST TRAINS

In 2011, according to RENFE, 806,716 passengers traveled between Valencia and Barcelona, two cities still not connected by high-speed rail. Stations that do have high-speed services include Guadalajara–Yebes (80,000 passengers per year), Puente Genil Herrera (120,000), and Antequera–Santa Ana (130,000). The same situation occurs with infrequently traveled roads in central Spain [left] while 150,000 vehicles per day circulate on the C-58 road near Barcelona.

During the Second Republic (1931–1936) the Spanish Government introduced an infrastructure plan to connect the railway networks between the south and north of Madrid, and in 1936, ordered work to be halted on the Barcelona–Puigcerdà European-gauge line in the Pyrenees, despite the fact that this infrastructure was considered vital to Catalonia.

After the Spanish Civil War, the Franco dictatorship neglected infrastructure throughout Spain for many years. Suffering a dramatic economic situation and international isolation on the one hand and with a radial map of roads and railways firmly established since the turn of the century on the other, Franco's ministers had no room for manoeuvre. This was the case until the 1960s, when Spain began to attract investment and thus to have money to invest in public works. This was when the National Motorway Plan was introduced. Although most toll roads were built in Catalonia and Valencia (the Ebre and Mediterra-



## SPANISH INFRASTRUCTURE POLICY HAS THE DUBIOUS HONOR OF BEING FIRST IN HIGH-SPEED RAIL LINES AND LAST IN EFFICIENCY.

nean “spokes”), at least this provided Catalonia, sooner rather than later, with improved road infrastructure. In contrast, all the new highways in Madrid bar one, along with the newly widened national roads, were toll-free.

### TOLLS IN DEMOCRATIC SPAIN

In 1984, the PSOE (socialist) government approved a new General Plan for Roads. Financed by the State budget, this plan prioritized toll-free highways in radial corridors that converged on Madrid. The Catalans had been paying tolls on the Mediterranean highway for nearly twenty years, and the new plan legally enshrined inequality between territories. This inequality, which the State called “equity”, has grown consistently, generating a situation which is difficult to find elsewhere in Europe. While in the two Castiles, Andalusia, Extremadura, and the Cantabrian regions nearly all the high-capacity roads are toll-free highways, in the Mediterranean arc, from Alicante to Girona and the Ebre Valley, from Tarragona to the Basque Country—that is, the most industrialized zones—toll roads make up a high percentage of the total. By way of example, while 52% of roads have tolls in Catalonia, not a single toll booth has been built in Extremadura. The origins of this discrimination, which is also shared by La Rioja, lie in an obsession that has been growing since the days of the Spanish Transition for territorial cohesion and development policy based on public investment in regions with the lowest GDP. A key figure to illustrate this point: over the last ten years, 6,141 kilometers of highways have been built in Spain, of which just 282 kilometers are in Catalonia, and much of these new roads were constructed under the Catalan Government’s own Highways and Roads Plan.

### AVE AND AENA, AT THE SERVICE OF THE ‘HOMELAND’

In 1992, while Barcelona hosted the Olympic Games, Seville, home of the World Expo, inaugurated the first high-speed rail (AVE) line in the state. The new line was a point of pride for the State and a way to show itself off the world, but it concerned itself with the Spanish nation’s ideological interests without taking economic or social profitability into account. This may indicate why the Madrid–Barcelona line took nearly twenty years to complete, while the AVE in Seville was built in just six. The expansionist policy behind Spain’s high-speed railways, based on a promise to ensure that at least one station in each province would be linked to the capital of the realm, has cost 45 billion euros to date. The results obtained from this investment are services with incalculable losses — the Toledo–Albacete AVE has been in operation for just six months, carrying an average of just 15 passengers daily while losing 18,000 euros every day — but which situate Spain in the lead in Europe and second only to China in terms of kilometers of high-speed railway line.

Spain is not only a leader in high-speed railway kilometers, but also in airports. With a population of 46 million, the country has 52 such facilities. Most of these are managed centrally by

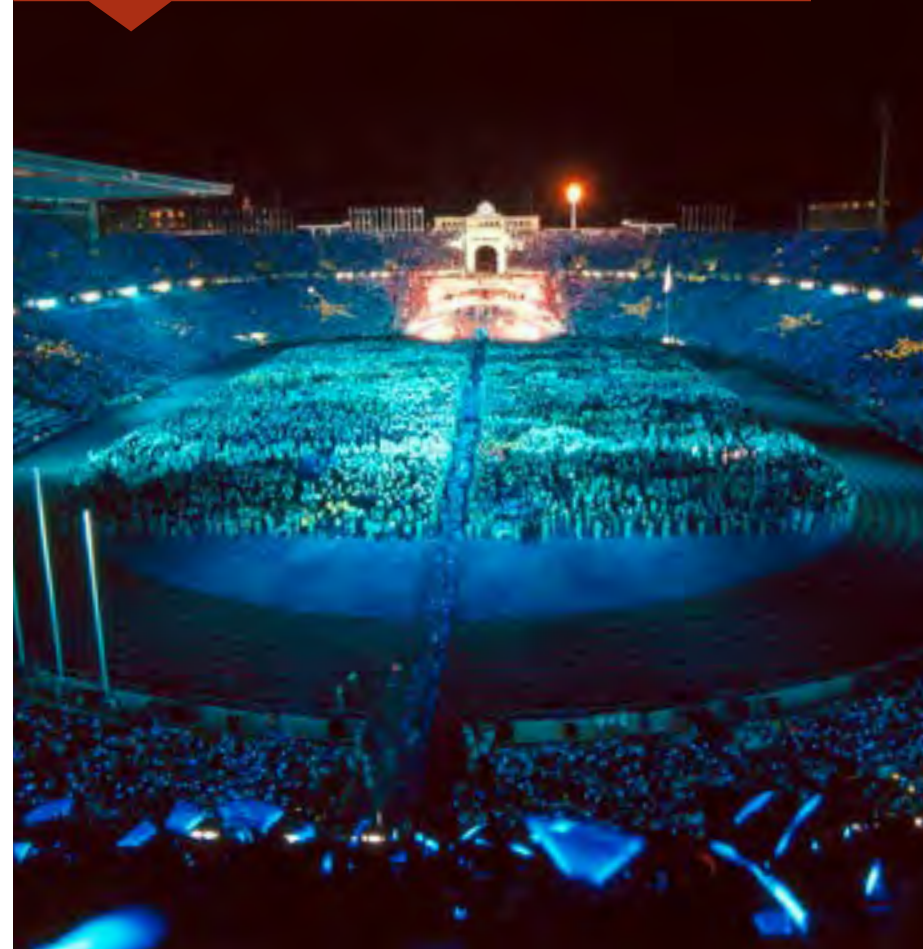
AENA, a public corporation that, in the name of solidarity, obliges profitable airports to pay for losses incurred by infrastructure not covered by demand. AENA’s “single till” system is used to pay the exorbitant cost of such airports as Huesca–Pyrenees, which generates a public loss of 1,607.91 euros for each passenger, as it does not cover operating costs. In Germany, which has a population of 81 million, 28 airports, all profitable and privately operated, are sufficient. In Europe, only Romania has an airport system like Spain’s, which forbids competition between airports and penalizes the more profitable, preventing them from investing in improved facilities. And, needless to say, Spain’s Kilometer Zero is Madrid–Barajas, the intercontinental hub that Barcelona is forced to maintain.

## THE GREAT TRANSFORMATION

The Barcelona’92 Olympics are considered an example for the subsequent good use of the infrastructure built, as an industrial city that lived “with its back to the sea” was transformed into a tourist destination and service sector center.



CASTELLÓN AIRPORT IS A SYMBOL OF SQUANDERED PUBLIC RESOURCES



## FLIGHTLESS AIRPORTS

The golfer Sergio García during an exhibition at Castellón Airport [photo]. Built at a cost of 170 million euros (123.88 million of which was paid by the Government of Valencia) and opened in 2011, this airport has been unable to find airlines interested in operating from it. An electoral promise by the PP, the airport entrance features a pharaonic statue commissioned by the former president of Castellón’s Provincial Council at a cost of 300,000 euros. The runways here are now available for car test drives.

In 2010, the State transferred management of RENFE commuter railway services to the Catalan Government. Catalonia was allowed to manage timetables, prices, and user information, but the State maintained its ownership of the infrastructure and, therefore, the power to invest—or not—in improving services. For years, Catalan users of RENFE services had been suffering the consequences of underinvestment, with constant delays, breakdowns, and price increases.

### RENFE, THE POISONED CHALICE

Meanwhile, Madrid and Seville still enjoyed the positive effects of enormous investment in commuter railways made in the early 1990s, when the then Spanish president, the socialist Felipe González, introduced a plan that clearly discriminated against Olympic Barcelona and grossly inflated State railway services in Seville and Madrid. The budget for Barcelona was 1.3 billion pesetas, while the Spanish capital received investment to the tune of 14.7 billion, and Seville, the president’s native city, got 7.5 billion. This is the clear evidence of deliberate neglect of commuter railway services in Catalonia, an abandonment that continues today. ▶



# 300 YEARS IN THE CROSSHAIRS

"For the good of Spain, Barcelona should be bombed at least once every fifty years," said General Baldomero Espartero, Regent of Spain from 1840 to 1843. And this is indeed what has happened, give or take ten years, over recent centuries. Even now, thirty years after democracy was restored, all too often voices are raised in Spain that call for armed intervention to end the independence movement. Fortunately, these voices are in the minority.

## BOMBS AGAINST CIVILIANS

During the Spanish Civil War (1936–39), Barcelona was bombed indiscriminately. During World War II, Churchill called on Londoners to stand up to Nazi bombardment "like the brave men of Barcelona".



## “THE CATALAN PRESIDENT LLUÍS COMPANYS WAS THE VICTIM OF ONE OF THE MOST MONSTROUS CRIMES IN THE HISTORY OF HUMANITY.”

Jawaharlal Nehru, first Primer Minister of India

On the morning of October 15, 1940, Lluís Companys, president of the Catalan Government since 1934, was executed at Montjuïc Castle in Barcelona. He died in his bare feet, defiantly proclaiming: “For Catalonia!” At the court martial he had been subjected to hours previously, his defense had been allowed to call no witnesses. Calm and aware of the fate that awaited him, despite the gravity of the moment, Companys reminded those present that: “history will judge us all for our intentions”.

Companys then became the only democratically elected president in contemporary history to be executed for political reasons. This was a crime of State. Unlike the assassination of US President John F. Kennedy in 1963 or the murder of the Chilean President Salvador Allende in 1973, Lluís Companys was executed by firing squad after a court-martial. In other words, he was sentenced under the military law of the dictatorship of General Francisco Franco, head of a fascist regime born of the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939).

### THE MADRID–BERLIN–ROME AXIS

Eight days after the assassination of President Companys, Franco and Adolf Hitler met at the Hendaya train station to ratify the good relations between the two regimes. Needless to say, Companys was not mentioned. Nor was he mentioned during SS chief Heinrich Himmler’s visit to Barcelona on that same day, October 23, 1940. Himmler was visiting the Spanish State in order to corroborate the cooperation between the German and Spanish police in the arrest and extradition of those considered common enemies. Companys was one of these “common enemies”, which is why the Nazi police had detained him in France, where the Catalan president was living as a political refugee after the Civil War. The Germans handed Companys over to the Spanish authorities, who physically tortured him in Madrid and legally humiliated him in Barcelona in a court martial with no judicial guarantees.

Six decades after the firing squad execution of the Catalan president, his legal council, the Francoist army officer Ramon de Colubí, declared that Companys was killed precisely because he was a Catalan nationalist, and not for inciting social disorder as charged by the public prosecutor. “The problem is that Lluís Companys was an enemy of the nationalist idea of Spain,” said Colubí. In 2015, it will be seventy-five years since Companys was executed, and both the Catalan civil society and the Generalitat (Government of Catalonia) continue to call on the Spanish State to declare the trial in which he was condemned to death null and void.

COMPANYS’  
SUMMARY  
EXECUTION HAS  
STILL NOT BEEN  
DECLARED NULL  
AND VOID

To date, this demand has been rejected by all Spanish governments, whether right- or left-wing. Although it has been a democratic State governed by the rule of law for more than three decades now, Spain has never apologized, even symbolically, for its repeated acts of repression against Catalonia and Catalan culture. In 2001, King Juan Carlos I added insult to injury when he claimed that: “Ours has never been a language of imposition, but of union. No one has ever been forced to speak Spanish.” There are a multitude of actions and situations that have been injurious to Catalonia, above and beyond the imposition of the Spanish language for much of the modern and contemporary historic period. The list of discriminations against Catalonia goes back a long way, as far as the 18th century when on January 16, 1716, after the War of the Spanish Succession, the Bourbon authorities passed the Decree of “Nueva Planta”.

For Catalonia, the 19th century began just as the 18th had ended; as a defeated country with no room for maneuver within a monolithic, centralist Spain determined to make no concessions. The Catalan people often expressed their unrest in the form of revolts, such as that which took place in Barcelona in November 1842, due to the ill-treatment of the local cotton industry. General Baldomero Espartero took control and ordered the indiscriminate bombardment of the city. One of the leading figures in 19th-century Spanish policy, Espartero once affirmed that, for the good of Spain, Barcelona should be bombed at least once every fifty years.

### THE TWENTIETH CENTURY: ONE DICTATORSHIP AFTER ANOTHER

In 1851, another soldier, the Catalan General Prim, addressed the Congress of Deputies in Madrid to ask the Minister of State, Bertran de Lis, when Spain might consider restoring constitutional guarantees to the Catalan people. The Spanish politician’s answer could hardly have been clearer: the state of siege in Catalonia “is an imperious necessity that, today, is absolutely indispensable”. Given such a reply, it is little wonder that general strikes broke out in Catalonia to demand the right of association, and it is even less surprising that Madrid’s refusal to negotiate with Catalonia should have led to the deployment of the army in order to quell the protesters.

Over the first quarter of the 20th century, demands for greater self-government came frequently out of Catalonia. Such demands came from the industrial classes, craftsmen, and workers. For it made no sense that the “factory of Spain”, as Catalonia was often called in recognition of its economic leadership in the Spanish State as a whole, should see none of its legal and political demands



## LLUÍS COMPANYS AND THE ‘EVENTS OF OCTOBER 1934’

On October 6, 1934, in response to the Spanish government’s conservative involution, Companys (third from the left) proclaimed the Catalan State within the Spanish Federal Republic (below, on the day the Republic was proclaimed). As a result, Companys and his government were imprisoned until

February 1936. In a speech made after his release, Companys expressed his fear that past sacrifices would not be the last and that they might not be greater than those that awaited in the future. Seen in the light of later events, his words turned out to be prophetic.





IN 1925, JOAN GAMPER, FOUNDER OF FC BARCELONA, WAS EXPELLED FROM SPAIN BECAUSE FANS HAD WHISTLED AT THE SPANISH ANTHEM AS IT PLAYED IN THE STADIUM.



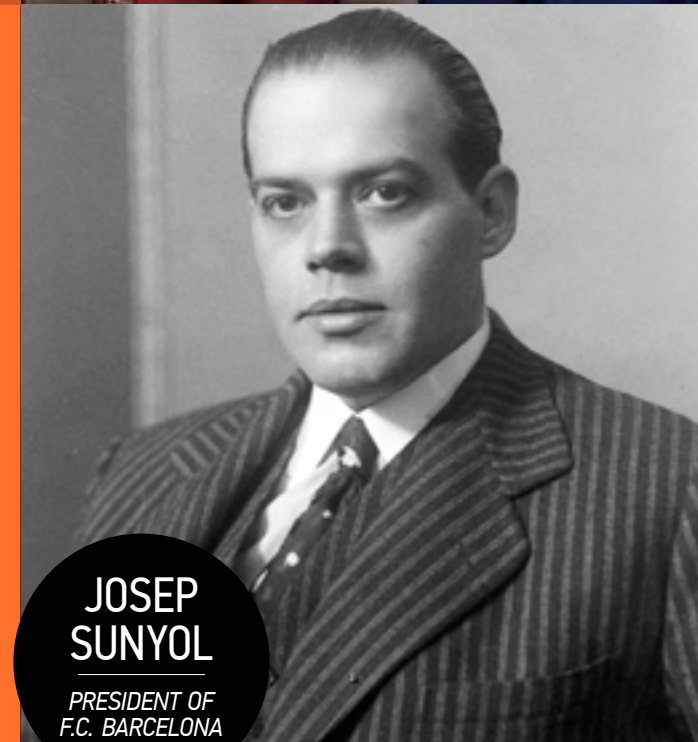
## BARÇA, MORE THAN A CLUB TO CATALONIA

Ever since it was founded in 1899, Futbol Club Barcelona, the leading sports club in Catalonia, has been involved in the country's social, political, and cultural life. This symbiosis is reflected in the popular expression "Barça is more than a club". Anti-democratic factions in Spain have often criticized this identification with Catalonia, and the club has suffered episodes of repression.

### THE OTHER EXECUTED PRESIDENT

Among the most dramatic of these was the assassination of the club's president, the ERC deputy Josep Sunyol i Garriga, in August 1936, by Francoist troops. Sunyol, a businessman and Catalan nationalist politician, was shot in the hills of Guadarrama, Spain, while visiting and supporting the Catalan soldiers fighting on the front. In September 1939, three years after his death, a Francoist court began proceedings against him as an opponent of the Franco regime.

Today, Barça continues to be a media ambassador for Catalonia, attracting enormous international coverage. Lately, when the clock shows 17 minutes and 14 seconds in each half during home games at the Camp Nou, many fans spontaneously begin chanting in favor of independence for Catalonia (commemorating the Catalan resistance against Spanish and French troops in 1714).



**JOSEP SUNYOL**

PRESIDENT OF F.C. BARCELONA

satisfied. The right of conquest established in 1714 continued in force. Although the Catalan economy benefited Spain in tax terms, the policy established in Madrid was to asphyxiate Catalonia financially. When, in 1899, the Spanish Parliament announced a rise in taxes, the Catalan middle classes declared it would "close its registers" (that is, temporarily close businesses) in order to avoid paying taxes to the State. Both industrial and working classes united in this action. The response to this Catalan tax rebellion was the declaration of a state of war in Barcelona. Once again, Catalan demands were quashed by the sword.

During the opening decades of the 20th century, political tensions between Catalonia and Spain grew at the same intensity as Catalan political nationalism. However, on September 13, 1923, with the approval of the Spanish King Alphonse XIII of Bourbon, Captain Miguel Primo de Rivera led a military uprising. It soon became clear that, although it

### EVERYONE TO CANALETES!

Before he became FC Barcelona president, Sunyol was director of a newspaper whose offices were on the Rambla de Canaletes. Since Barça match results were displayed on the balcony, fans would meet below to find out how their team had fared, and to celebrate their wins.

enjoyed support from certain sectors of the Catalan oligarchy, the new authoritarian dictatorship would not favor Catalonia's interests in the slightest. Indeed, the new military regime quickly began to persecute the resurging language, culture, and symbols of Catalonia, as well as forbid the organization of Catalan parties, associations, and institutions recently created in Catalonia, such as the Mancomunitat association of municipalities.

### FROM DICTATORSHIP TO REPUBLIC

The Primo de Rivera dictatorship ratified the united, centralist Spain, smothering any Catalan attempts at self-government. The repression was felt in all spheres, including sport. In 1925, the FC Barcelona football stadium was closed for six months after some spectators expressed their opposition to the dictatorship by whistling during the Spanish national anthem. Besides closing the stadium, the Spanish Government also imposed a harsh penalty



on both the club and its president and founder, the Swiss citizen, Joan Gamper, who was banned from holding office for life and expelled from Spain.

The proclamation of the Second Spanish Republic and the short-lived Catalan Republic in April 1931 launched a new age in which the Generalitat, or Catalan Government, was restored. The self-government that had been lost in 1714 was finally regained. However, despite showing a certain degree of permissiveness, particularly in the cultural sphere, Madrid countered all attempts to advance further with devolution.

Two years later, on October 6, 1934, the president of the Generalitat, Lluís Companys, proclaimed the Catalan State within the Spanish Federal Republic [see inset on page 125]. The reaction from Madrid was quick in coming, and the Catalan State lasted just ten hours, the time needed for the Spanish army to restore order. The conflict left a total of 74 dead and 252 wounded.

#### THE DRUMS OF WAR

The Spanish Government took advantage of this situation to unleash intense repression against Catalonia, taking 3,400 political prisoners, including Companys and his government, who were each sentenced to 30 years in prison. The Catalan Government's rebellion also gave Madrid an excuse to repeal Catalan self-government, imposing Spanish once more as the only language of government and banning the activities of parties, unions, and Catalan nationalist and left-wing associations. During this time, José Antonio Primo de Rivera, leader of the Spanish Falange, a political party that emulated Mussolini's fascist movement in Italy, said to the Spanish Parliament: "What the president should do is let us fight for once!" This declaration foreshadowed the civil war that would break out just eighteen months later.

On July 18, 1936, General Francisco Franco led yet another coup d'état, this time against the Republican Government. Catalan nationalism, at odds with the idea of a unified, centralized Spain, fueled much of the resentment felt by the army, much of the right, and the Spanish church. It was no surprise that, during the Civil War, the Francoist press even proposed the abolition of Catalonia. On August 25, 1936, *El Norte de Castilla*, a newspaper printed in Valladolid, published an article suggesting that Aragon, a region on the border with Catalonia, should annex Catalan territory: "And then let the Aragonese take care of any embers that may still smell of Catalan nationalism. Aragon will make Catalonia Spanish."

#### CATALONIA, VANQUISHED ONCE MORE

As the historians Josep M. Solé i Sabaté and Joan Villarroya make clear, over the three years of civil conflict and the subsequent postwar period, the repression brought to bear by the victors took "the most diverse forms: political, social, industrial, ideological and, in the case of Catalonia, was an attempt at cultural genocide that sought to destroy its specific national personality at the roots..."

## THE LONG NIGHT OF FRANCOISM

Communists and Christian democrats, unionists and business people, artists and students. To the Franco regime, all were suspects, especially if they were also Catalan nationalists. From the documentation compiled by Juan José del Águila, Doctor of Law and a judge at the Social Court in Madrid, we know that of the 8,943 people investigated by the TOP, or Court of Public Order, which was established to replace military courts in 1962, 1,697 were arrested in Catalonia or were Catalans who lived outside Catalonia. In 1969, the repression increased, and a second TOP was established.



Demonstration against censorship, 1976

THERE WERE AROUND  
**300,000**  
COURTS-MARTIAL DURING THE FRANCO DICTATORSHIP



Police brutality on the streets of Barcelona, 1976





## THE DAY THAT SHOOK DEMOCRACY

The attempted coup of February 23, 1981 was quashed after King Juan Carlos I broadcast a message calling on the soldiers to return to their barracks. The three ringleaders were tried and sentenced. The others either never went to trial or received light sentences or absolution. This was

the case of Joaquín Valencia Remón, a colonel at the time, who led the armed capture of the Spanish Television studios; and of the also colonel José Valdés Cavanna, who had been ready to order tanks onto the streets of Barcelona. Indeed, both were promoted soon after the affair.

## “WE HAVE CATALONIA ON THE ENDS OF OUR BAYONETS.”

Ramón Serrano Suñer, future Francoist minister, speaking to the Nazi newspaper “Völkischer Beobachter” in 1939.

Towards the end of the war, Franco made his intentions with regard to Catalonia crystal clear: “As for the future fate of Catalonia, we must say that this is, precisely, one of the fundamental causes of our uprising. If we abandoned Catalonia to its own devices, it would seriously endanger the integrity of the fatherland.”

After the Fascist victory in the Spanish Civil War, Catalonia was subjected once more to the right of conquest. Political prosecutions took place, goods were confiscated, and death penalties and prison sentences were meted out in summary trials with no legal guarantees. The thirst for vengeance wreaked havoc. At the Bota Camp alone (erected on a site that is now a popular beach), 1,734 people were executed during the dark postwar years.

Catalonia was thoroughly devastated, economically ruined, and morally routed. Thousands of Catalans fled the terror of revenge installed by Franco’s new regime, going into uncertain, but long-lasting exile. Meanwhile, in the country itself, the occupying forces took political, social, economic, and cultural control. More than 18,000 Generalitat functionaries were sacked, and the institution itself was abolished once more. The Catalan language and culture were deliberately eradicated. The goal was to annihilate all Catalan symbols, to the point that parents were forced to change their children’s names from Catalan to Spanish. It was also obligatory to give the stiff-arm salute to the Spanish flag and to sing Fascist songs, such as *Cara al Sol*. This was the beginning of a long period marked by the persecution of Catalan nationalism and a lack of freedom.

**1,734**  
EXECUTIONS AT  
THE BOTA CAMP  
IN BARCELONA

### FROM DARK DICTATORSHIP TO SHADOWY TRANSITION

During the so-called years of peace, the Franco dictatorship used the Law of Political Responsibilities to impose its terror through political and legal repression, accompanied by ferocious control and censorship of publications, plays, films, and teaching. Many were purged and banned from holding public office and exercising certain professions due to their political past or failure to support the military uprising of July 1936 that sparked the Civil War.

In 1963, although the war had ended nearly a quarter of a century before, the Francoist Government established the TOP, or Court of Public Order, to persecute union, student leaders and even freemasons, as well as any attempted Catalan nationalist demonstrations. Some incidents acquired great political importance, such as the so-called “events at the Palau”, which took place at the Palau de la Música Catalana, the beautiful Art Nouveau concert hall designed by the architect Lluís Domènech i Montaner, a contemporary of Gaudí. It was here that, on May 19, 1960,

an event was staged to commemorate the centennial of the birth of the poet Joan Maragall, grandfather of Pasqual Maragall, the future mayor of Barcelona and president of the Generalitat. During the recital itself, after the Orfeó Català choir had performed the Catalan anthem *El cant de la senyera*, eminent figures were arrested and later imprisoned. These included Jordi Pujol, future president of the Catalan Government from 1980 to 2003.

### DYING BLOWS OF THE FRANCO REGIME

Despite this constant persecution, the Catalan nationalist political movement became organized. In the 1970s, the Assembly of Catalonia was a galvanizing force for most political parties, unions, and social organizations that demanded “freedom, amnesty, and the Statute of Autonomy”. Paradoxically, as Franco became weaker, the dictatorship stepped up its repression, for instance with the execution of the Catalan anti-Francoist activist Salvador Puig Antich on March 2, 1974. Puig Antich was executed by garrote despite international protests, including from the Holy See. This was not even the last execution. In 1975, the year of the dictator’s death, five more took place.

In 1978, after the restoration of democracy, the Spanish Constitution was approved. This was a “agreement of minimums” in which the majority Catalan nationalist forces made major concessions in order to ensure the transition to democracy. For instance, although the Constitution guaranteed universal suffrage and freedom of association and the press, it did not recognize the right to self-determination, an inalienable right of all the world’s peoples and nations according to the UN resolution of December 14, 1960.

The argument of unconstitutionality is one frequently repeated by politicians when they refuse to permit changes to the current status quo as regards Spanish law. However, majority Catalan political forces counter this with the reminder that a Constitution drawn up in such difficult circumstances as the early 1980s (included attempted coups, such as that of February 23, 1981) should not be allowed to deny the desire of a large proportion of the population nearly three decades later.

Even more so when, in August 2011, the two main Spanish parties had no trouble amending the Constitution in order to introduce the concept of “budgetary stability” and to prioritize the payment of debt and interest. In fact, the Catalan question is not the only case awaiting constitutional change: reform of the Senate, gender equality over succession to the throne, the territorial model, and the electoral law are other subjects that have been forgotten, left to gather dust...▶



## CATALAN, A TOOL FOR INTEGRATION

Today, foreign residents account for 15% of all those living in Catalonia. Thanks to free courses and volunteer teachers, learning the Catalan language is one of the first steps towards integration.

## WHO WANTS TO LEARN CATALAN?

This year, 2013, some 6,000 people around the world are taking Catalan courses at 150 universities. Moreover, the universities of Stanford, New York, Paris, London, and Chicago all have chairs and study centers devoted to Catalan language and culture.



11

# CRUSADES AGAINST THE LANGUAGE

When travelling, Catalans are often taken for Italians as the two languages sound slightly similar. However, if the person listens closely, then doubts creep in. No, no, it can't be Italian, though it sounds a bit... what language can that be? When curiosity gets the better of them, they ask: *–Excuse me, what language are you speaking?* The reply always includes the magic word, Barcelona, and one that complicates everything: Spain. The person asking is often confused. *–So, this Catalan is a dialect of Spanish?* They usually ask immediately. *–No, it's a language, like French or Spanish, the thing is that...* Maybe they've told the story a hundred times, but the Catalan traveler tackles it as if it was the first. The historian Josep Benet did exactly the same thing during the Franco dictatorship. As he explains in an article published in the magazine *Serra d'Or* in the year 2002, his responsibilities as a member of the underground anti-Franco movement included welcoming foreign journalists interested in the Catalan situation under the dictatorship. Benet

met such personalities as Peter Benenson, future founder of Amnesty International, and the writer Indro Montanelli, among others. He tried to describe to them the cultural genocide against Catalonia initiated by the Franco regime in the year 1939, at the end of the Civil War, but it wasn't easy, since according to Benet, "they were unaware of the existence of an autonomous Catalonia before Franco's victory [...]. Many of them believed that Catalan was a dialect of Spanish, without its own literature". So the historian showed them newspapers and magazines from before the war or universal classics translated into Catalan, including the complete works of William Shakespeare, the only clandestine edition of his poems and plays in the world.

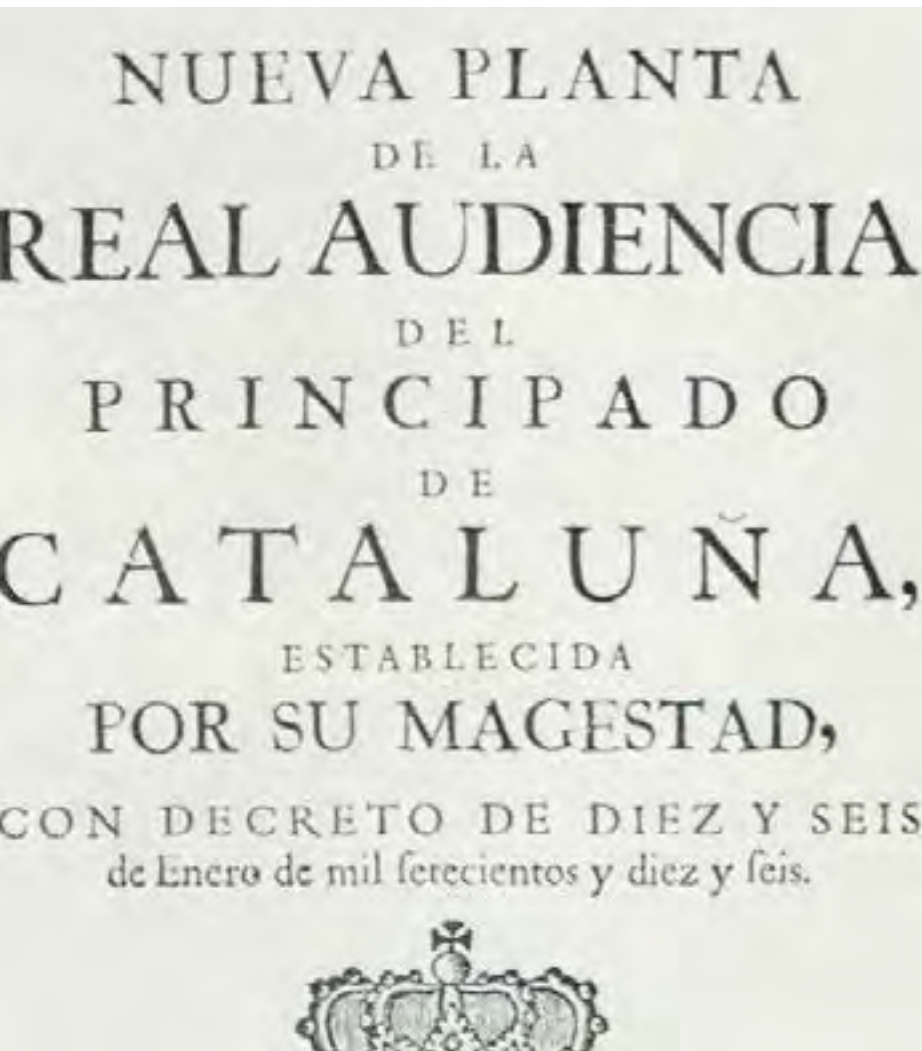
### LOUIS XIV, THE FIRST TO OFFICIALLY PERSECUTE CATALAN

The repression of Catalan language and culture during the Franco dictatorship was not an isolated event, but rather the culmination of an enduring persecution that actually was not begun by the Spanish State, but by the French. In the middle of the 17th



“THEY ARE PASSIONATE ABOUT THEIR HOMELAND [...] AND THEY SPEAK ONLY IN THEIR MOTHER TONGUE.”

José Patiño, informing his superiors in Madrid that Catalonia was a monolingual country in 1715



century, after the war against Philip IV, Portugal regained its independence, while Catalonia was cut in half. The regions of Conflent, Vallespir, Rosselló, and part of Cerdanya (today called Languedoc–Roussillon) fell into the hands of Louis XIV, who considered that “the use of Catalan was disgusting and contrary to the honor of the French nation”, according to the edict prohibiting Catalan signed by the Sun King in 1700.

#### A POLITICAL AND LANGUAGE MODEL IS IMPOSED

On the southern side of the Pyrenees, official persecution of Catalan began after the War of the Spanish Succession. “I have deemed it convenient [...] to subjugate all my Kingdoms in Spain to the uniformity of the same laws, uses, customs, and Tribunals, with all of them governed by the laws of Castile”, said Philip V in 1707, making it clear he planned to apply the right of conquest. Since the Renaissance, absolute monarchies were characterized by their imposition in conquered territories of the language of the victors. England did this in Wales (1535), Francis I in France (1539), Spain’s Philip IV in America (1636). When Catalonia was



JOSÉ PATIÑO  
BOURBON

defeated in 1714 and its institutions were abolished, the Spanish monarchy felt it had the right to impose its political and linguistic model.

But theory is one thing and practice is quite another, and the Bourbon king’s authorities found themselves with an unexpected obstacle: most of the population did not understand Spanish. And those who did did not use it in their everyday lives. A perplexed José Patiño, Philip V’s right-hand man in Catalonia, told his superiors in Madrid: “They are passionate about their homeland [...] and they speak only in their mother tongue.”

This monolingual reality revealed by Patiño was one of the reasons for the 1716 Decree of Nueva Planta, the first document officially persecuting the Catalan language in Spain. However, Patiño’s words are of great importance at the present time for another reason: because they prove that Catalans had not been bilingual since the Middle Ages, despite Spanish historians’ erroneous and persistent claims to the contrary.

#### COMPULSORY AT SCHOOL

Spanish attempts to weaken the teaching of Catalan in school date back to the 18th century, with contemporary examples that include the new Education Bill of 2013.

Indeed, there are two additional errors still circulated by some Spanish historians regarding the Catalan language: that it has never been prohibited and that the Spanish language has never been imposed on others, as the Bourbon King Juan Carlos had the gall to claim in a speech in 2002.

#### SCHOOL, THE FIRST BATTLEGROUND

As the years went by and the Bourbons settled into their political role, the imposition of Spanish headed towards ever more drastic measures, like the royal decree signed by Charles III, son of Philip V, which for the first time prohibited teaching Catalan in school. In order to enforce it the masters at schools in Majorca were given “a metal ring, which on Monday will be given to one of the students, warning the other students that inside the school no one will speak a word other than in Spanish”. The ring was placed on a child when he spoke Catalan, and at the end of the week the child wearing the ring was punished. Charles III’s prohibition was not limited



to school, and affected everything from the publishing of books through to registries of births, deaths, and marriages. All in all, seen from a wider perspective, its overall significance has to do with its final objective: the annihilation of the Catalan people while at the same time the new nation of Spain was being built. The current Spanish anthem was established in 1770; in 1771 it became compulsory to study the *Compendium of the History of the Nation*. In 1785, the Spanish flag was officially adopted.

#### DYING IN CATALAN IS FORBIDDEN

And so Catalonia entered the 19th century with its language prohibited in the public administration, the school system, the church and the courts, accounting records, and the publishing of books and songs. This was the moment when the idea of the *national language*, Spanish, was established, while Catalan was termed a *provincial language*, or a *dialect*. Spanish, on the other hand, was considered to be the language of prestige, science, and culture, and its imposition was justified to citizens with the simple argument that it facilitated access to higher education. All governments in the 19th century, whatever their political stripe, conservative or progressive, promoted new impositions, such as inscriptions in Spanish on gravestones in cemeteries (1838), signs on businesses and for street names (1860), or the prohibition of Catalan in notarial acts (1862), theatre plays (1867), and even on the telephone (1896).

#### THE CONTEXT THAT MADE MODERNISME POSSIBLE

Unlike the linguistic situation, the Catalan economy was booming, especially once free trade was permitted between America and Catalonia in 1778, when the Spanish veto in place since the time of Christopher Columbus was lifted. The wealth provided by trade combined with rapid industrialization turned Catalonia into a textiles powerhouse. A solid bourgeois class appeared which offered financial support to artists and architects. These developments, together with a powerful working class actively getting together in local cultural centers, contributed to the appearance of political Catalan nationalism and the demand to use Catalan as a literary language, in a movement known as the *Renaixença* (Renaissance). One of its greatest representatives was the poet Jacint Verdaguer, a good friend of Antoni Gaudí, and his patron, the industrialist Eusebi Güell.

Indeed, *modernisme*, which owes its renown above all to the work of the great architect, was the artistic incarnation of this literary effervescence in Catalan. Following the new artistic current which also appeared in France and Germany, architecture (Gaudí, Domènech i Montaner), painting (Casas, Rusiñol), and sculpture (Llimona) lived through a splendid stage only comparable to that of Catalan Romanesque in the middle ages.

One of the great Spanish intellectuals of the second half of the 19th century, Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo, summarized the secrets of this phoenix-like resurgence as follows: “*The fierce and abominable vengeance of the French dynasty’s first king could not*



Saint George by Pere Nicard



## A BOOK AND A ROSE ON APRIL 23

Saint George is the patron saint of Catalonia, and his day is one of the feasts most celebrated by the Catalan people. On this day, books and roses are given to relatives, friends, and even coworkers. The festivity, which dates back to the 15th century, has its origins in the “Lovers’ Fair”, a celebration introduced 200 years before by King James I, when roses were given as gifts on April 23.

In 1930, the Primo de Rivera dictatorship attempted to give a Spanish flavor to this Catalan patriotic event by introducing Book Day, since April 23 also marks the death of Miguel de Cervantes (and William Shakespeare). However, this idea backfired, as the unusual combination of books and roses served only to magnify this festive date. Nowadays, leading writers from around the world come to Catalonia to sign their books at stalls set up all over the city.



Sagrada Família, Barcelona

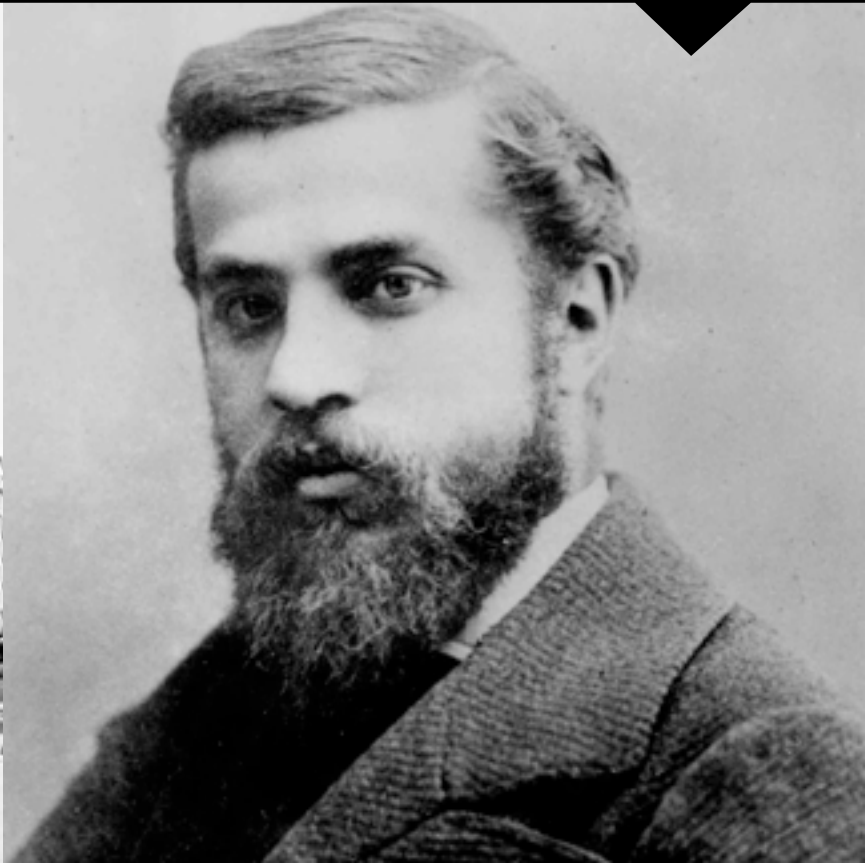


## GAUDÍ, IMPRISONED

In 1924, the architect Antoni Gaudí refused to speak to a police officer in Spanish. This was at the height of the Primo de Rivera dictatorship's anti-Catalan offensive, and Gaudí, then 72 years old, was arrested and imprisoned. His defense of Catalan was also in evidence whenever illustrious visitors came to inspect the work site at the Church of the Sagrada Família, since the architect always spoke to them in Catalan, even in the case of King Alphonse XIII.



La Pedrera, Barcelona



## THE 'EXCESSIVE USE OF CATALAN' WAS A REASON GIVEN FOR DEFENDING THE ATTEMPTED COUP OF FEBRUARY 23, 1981.

*harm the soul of Catalonia [...] After the destruction of its institutions, the great spirit which had fed them continued to float over the smoking rubble of heroic Barcelona [...] The most substantial part of civil rights survived [...] and Catalan never stopped being a written language used in both holy and secular works."*

Well acquainted with Catalan history and culture, Menéndez Pelayo was unusual among Spanish intellectuals. As many articles published in Madrid at the turn of the 19th century demonstrate, Catalan language and culture were generally not seen as an asset which contributed to make all of Spain greater, but rather as an offense and a threat. While Catalonia worked to help the Catalan language recover its official status, Madrid began to define a historical framework that would enable this official status to be refused, based on manipulations and misunderstandings which have been repeated since then by both politicians and the media until they have come to form part of Spanish public opinion. Thus, it has been declared that the Catalan Courts (the Catalan governing body until 1714) had never adopted Catalan as its official language (Menéndez Pidal, 1902), despite the fact that all its official documents remaining are written in Catalan, or that "no established nation ever opposed Catalan" (Tubiño, 1880), during the height of the era of prohibitions.

### SPANISH INTELLECTUALS DEFEND CATALAN

In the 20th century, the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera brought another wave of repression. On September 18, 1923, five days after taking power, the renegade general prohibited the raising of the Catalan flag and the use of Catalan in the documentation of public corporations and associations, and he also ordered the closure of 46 associations that he considered too patriotic. The level of repression was such that March of the following year saw the occurrence of something unprecedented: 116 Spanish writers signed a manifesto in defense of the Catalan language. Among those who signed were the poet who would later be shot during the Civil War, Federico García Lorca, José Ortega y Gasset, and Manuel Azaña, future president of the Republic of Spain in war time.

The manifesto had the desired impact and in 1927 Madrid held a book fair for books in Catalan. "These six thousand volumes brought to us by the Exposition are not, as some Catalan haters would wish, a display of a hatred of Spanish, but merely a linguistic necessity. [...] It is logical that Catalans should write in Catalan, because they express themselves in that language [...] and because there is a numerous reading public. 4,000 copies of a

book by Plato published in Catalan have been sold in two years," Luis Araquistáin told *La Voz*, and he added that a book by Plato in Spanish had never sold as many as 4,000 copies.

### CULTURAL GENOCIDE UNDER FRANCO

After the fall of Primo de Rivera in 1930, the proclamation of the Republic in 1931 saw the return of the official status of Catalan and the recuperation of some degree of political autonomy. But the negotiation of the Statute, which was to establish the basis for this self-government, and the fact that other regions of Spain, such as the Basque Country, Aragon, and Asturias, were also drawing up their own statutes, strained relations again and generated a heated debate in Madrid regarding the territorial organization of the republican state. Declarations in newspapers such as *El Imparcial* of the type "Better civil war than the Statute", not only foresaw the looming tragedy but also demonstrate that reducing the outbreak of the conflict to hatred between right and left wing politicians is reductionism of the highest order.

The truth is that for many people the fear that this whole series of statutes would break up Spain legitimized a military uprising which had as its main leitmotiv the exaltation of Spanish nationalism. "We shall transform Madrid into a garden, Bilbao into a huge factory, and Barcelona into an immense building site" was one of the statements uttered by Francoist general Queipo de Llano during the war in his incendiary radio broadcasts. But Catalonia was not only the target for all the anger in the Franco faction. In the Republican faction the sensation that self-government in Catalonia had precipitated the war generated great resentment, so when Franco abolished the Statute of Autonomy and the official status of Catalan in the year 1938, some Spanish Republicans had no objections.

Francoism was Catalonia's own Holocaust in terms of Catalan language and culture. First, Franco was convinced that if he made Catalan disappear completely from public life and suppressed all its cultural institutions, beginning with the universities, national sentiment would also disappear. And secondly, practically all Catalan intellectuals found themselves forced into exile. One of the reference points of this cultural exile was the home of the cellist Pau Casals in Prada de Conflent, on the French side of the Pyrenees. Casals abandoned music to dedicate himself to sending aid to Catalan refugees, among whom were such important figures in Catalan literature as Mercè Rodoreda, Pompeu Fabra, and Pere Calders. But no law or punishment could prevent parents from speaking to

**CATALAN IS THE 9th MOST SPOKEN LANGUAGE IN EUROPE AND THE 75th MOST SPOKEN IN THE WORLD.**





their children in Catalan as they had always done. Nor could it halt the clandestine publication of magazines and literary works in Catalan. Still, it was music that finally managed to break the silence imposed by Francoism. At the beginning of the 1960s and through a movement known as the *Nova Cançó* (New Song), a group of young singer-songwriters, among whom were Lluís Llach, Raimon, and Joan Manel Serrat, added a sound track to the sit-ins and demonstrations organized by the clandestine political networks which were demanding the recovery of Catalan institutions and a return to democracy.

#### RESISTANCE AND CLANDESTINITY

These clandestine networks linked the persecution of Catalan to the far-right regime only, implying that the relationship of left-leaning Spanish politicians towards the Catalan language had always been tolerant and respectful. But Francesc Ferrer i Gironès, a historian specializing in the political persecution of Catalan, history—from the Transition and everything that followed, through the consolidation of democracy—has demonstrated the opposite. Between the passing of the Constitution in 1978 and 2002, Ferrer i Gironès counted up to one hundred and fifty rulings making the use of Spanish obligatory and the use of Catalan optional in the legislative, judicial, and executive spheres. Moreover, it was under the constitutional regime that

## THINGS YOU MAY NOT KNOW ABOUT CATALAN

- 1 The *Viquipèdia*, or Catalan version of Wikipedia, was launched online just after the English version and is therefore the second oldest in the world. Today, although according to the relative demographic weight of the Catalan-speaking community, it should be fiftieth or sixtieth, it occupies fifteenth place by number of articles.
- 2 The 'Homilies of Organyà' is the oldest literary text in Catalan. Written at around the turn of the 13th century, it is an excerpt from a religious sermon.
- 3 The *Barça Hymn* is sung in Catalan. During the Francoist repression, since both the Catalan national anthem and flag were banned, raising the FC Barcelona flag and singing this anthem became symbols of Catalan identity.
- 4 Ramon Llull is the first important literary author in Catalan, and the first medieval writer to use a Romance language to transmit philosophical, theological, and mystical knowledge, which were previously always offered in Latin. Today, the Ramon Llull Institute promotes Catalan around the world.
- 5 The Catalan singer-songwriter Joan Manuel Serrat was chosen to perform 'La la la' at the 1968 Eurovision Song Contest Festival. However, when his request to sing partly in Catalan was turned down, he refused to perform and was replaced by Massiel, who subsequently won the competition.
- 6 'Tirant Lo Blanc', written by the Valencian author Joanot Martorell in the 15th century, is one of the finest chivalric novels in universal literature. In a scene from 'Don Quixote', it is the only book that Miguel de Cervantes saves from the fire.



### CAMP NOU AND CATALAN IDENTITY

Camp Nou, the FC Barcelona football stadium, is packed every time an event takes place there to defend the Catalan language, culture, and nation. Particularly remarkable events include the protest organized by La Crida a la Solidaritat in 1981, the performance by singer-songwriter Lluís Llach (left) in 1985 and the Concert for Freedom that took place this very year, 2013 (above). At this last concert, one hundred thousand spectators demanded the right of the Catalan people and indeed of all the world's peoples to freely and democratically decide their future.

the Catalan language definitively lost its former linguistic unity, which included Catalonia, Valencia, the Balearic Islands, and the Franja de Ponent, in Aragon.

#### UNDER DEMOCRACY, CATALAN IS AN ELECTORAL WEAPON

This is a process that began in Valencia in 1978 and entails pitting Valencian traditions and language against anything related to Catalonia and the Catalan language (but never against Spain and the Spanish language). In the 1980s and 90s, this "divide and conquer" strategy, also applied in the Balearic Islands, marginalized individuals and institutions who were working to promote

the traditional unity of the Catalan language and culture in the territories once ruled by the Crown of Aragon. The truth is that, at the turn of the 21st century, Catalan is under a constant state of siege. Take, for instance, the final period of Felipe González's government, which depended on key support from CiU (the Catalan national party with the most seats in the Spanish Parliament). In order to destabilize this pact, the main opposition party, led by José María Aznar, launched a media campaign against Catalonia, frequently focusing on the use of Catalan. However, after the subsequent elections, when Aznar needed CiU support to govern, he sweetened his discourse, claiming that he read and



THE VITALITY OF CATALAN ON THE WEB SHOWS HOW SOCIETY COMPENSATES FOR INSTITUTIONAL SHORTCOMINGS.

CATALAN IS THE  
**EIGHTH  
MOST-USED**  
LANGUAGE IN THE  
BLOGOSPHERE



Mishima



Mercè Rodoreda



Pa negre

spoke Catalan “in private”. It was during this period that Aznar was heard to utter something that illustrates this rather confused attitude. At a rally, Aznar said, “I am Spanish, and since I am Spanish, I am Catalan.” While PP militants applauded, this writer was left perplexed: since I am European, am I also German, or French?

A quick trawl through the archives is enough to throw up a whole gallery of such statements, some ridiculous, others Machiavellian, all blurted out by politicians, intellectuals, and academics and repeated and magnified by newspapers, radio, and television. The list is so long (indeed, it is still growing) that several anthologies have been published in Catalonia. At the same time, measures against Catalan are also approved, under the pretext that Spanish is an endangered language in Catalonia. The most recent is the new Education Bill, signed in 2013, which overturns the language model employed in Catalan schools, using the argument that children do not achieve a satisfactory level in Spanish, despite that fact that exam results contradict this claim. Or the

## 5 BOOKS WE THINK YOU'LL LIKE

- The Voices of Pamano**, Jaume Cabré (2008)
- Cold Skin**, Albert Sánchez Piñol (2002)
- The Time of the Doves**, **Mercè Rodoreda** (1962)
- Uncertain Glory**, Joan Sales (1956)
- Tirant lo Blanc**, Joanot Martorell (1490)

approval on the part of the Aragonese courts of a new name for the Catalan language in Franja de Ponent, which is administered by Aragon. From now on, Catalan in this area will be called the “Aragonese language particular to the Eastern region”, a ridiculous change scorned even in Spanish circles.

All this and particularly the sentence passed down by the Constitutional Court in 2010, undermining rights enshrined in

## 5 SONGS FROM YESTERDAY AND TODAY

- Alegria**, Antònia Font (2002)
- Paraules d'amor**, Joan Manuel Serrat (1967)
- L'Estaca**, Lluís Llach (1968)
- Veles e vents**, Raimon (1970)
- L'amor feliç**, **Mishima** (2012)

the Statute of Autonomy of 2006, has led to growing fatigue in Catalan public opinion. The feeling is that an impasse has been reached, and that additional explanation is useless. Frustration is also spreading, as we witness whole generations of Spaniards born in democracy who continue to be educated in ignorance of Catalonia's history and circumstances. Few realize (some deliberately turn a blind eye to the fact) that the language truly threat-

## 5 MOVIES YOU DON'T WANT TO MISS

- Pa negre**, Agustí Villaronga (2010)
- Salvador**, Manuel Huerga (2006)
- Els sense nom**, Jaume Balagueró (1999)
- Amic/Amat**, Ventura Pons (1998)
- Tres dies amb la família**, Mar Coll (2009)

ened by the lack of a state that can watch out for it is Catalan. Yet, despite everything, Catalan is the eighth-most important language in the blogosphere and the fourteenth on Google, which, like Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, offers a Catalan version of its software. This continuing vitality is due to the efforts of Catalan civil society, which has battled, largely alone and against all odds, to ensure the survival of the Catalan language. ▶



## TEAMWORK

'Castells', human towers 10–12 meters high, are a classic of Catalan popular culture. The 'pinya', or base, on which the castell is built (photo), is a good metaphor for the collective effort that moves Catalan society today.

Colla Joves Xiquets de Valls

# THE FUTURE WE WANT

Despite the economic crisis and huge fiscal deficit that affect Catalonia today, there are reasons for optimism. The country continues to be a leader in scientific and biomedical research, it is competitive in the field of exports, and it continues to be a magnet for tourism. Catalonia also maintains its traditional solidarity. We hope to further promote these positive characteristics as a new European State. This is the Catalonia we imagine in the immediate future.

Thanks to this book, which a Catalan citizen has sent you as a gift, you have been able to learn for yourself about the last few centuries of the history of Catalonia, one of the oldest nations in Europe, and one that has defended its freedoms most tenaciously over the centuries. Indeed, recent mobilizations to vindicate these freedoms are among the largest rallies that have taken place on our continent since the end of World War II. These demonstrations—always peaceful, festive and inclusive—are evidence that a clear majority of the country demands the democratic right for Catalonia to make its own way in the world, without interference or coercion.

Until now, this book has focused on our past, but we don't want to conclude without also talking about our future and, above all, what Catalans can bring to the international community. We want to become a fully democratic, independent State within the global union of fully-fledged states. We want this State to be a member of international bodies, a nation that takes its share of responsibility for resolving the challenges that face the world today, a country that compensates for its small size with its great capacity to take part in global forums.

We seek to fulfil these aspirations in a peculiar, one might say, Mediterranean approach. We want to win this game by having fun, by playing well, and by playing fair, keeping our values firmly in mind. Our goal is to promote, from southern



The Catalan people are wholeheartedly committed to the European project. Catalonia is willing to cede the necessary sovereignty in order to build a better Europe.

Europe, those policies that bring out the full meaning of the word 'democracy' and that ensure our citizens' well-being. Modestly but proudly, we hope to reconcile quality of life with the most advanced industrial competitiveness. We want to establish a serious but friendly State, in the image of our capital, Barcelona. And we want to achieve this the way we have always done things, with culture as the main driving force for development. Ours is a small country, it is true, but one that has been culturally powerful throughout its history. In fact, in the hardest times, during the years of darkness and repression against our people, culture has served as a highly effective weapon for defending and defining ourselves as a people.

#### A CROSSROADS

Since time immemorial, these lands have been a crossroads, a passing-through place where people with other languages and cultures put down roots and became Catalans. Ours has also always been a country that has sought union, of people who help each other and, in this way, open up to the outside world. We want the necessary autonomy to develop all of our potential. We know that, today, in the 21st century, absolute independence is not only a chimera, but an inadvisable chimera. We Catalans have always worked as a team, and we are not afraid of working with whom-ever is necessary in order to build a better world.

We have no desire of establishing a new State with all the nationalist vices associated with such entities in the 19th and 20th centuries, nor do we wish to revive the old concept of the nation-state. We merely wish to steer our own ship because that is what the majority of our people want. We are convinced that we can embark on this journey with our bags packed full with good intentions. We are aware that we cannot do all this alone. And we are also aware that we will have to cooperate with everyone, including what will soon be our former State, Spain. Our first steps will have to be aimed at rebuilding bridges for dialogue and good neighborly relations. Many citizens of Spanish origin (a large proportion of whom are also in favor of independence) will continue to live in Catalonia and embody a legacy that we want to conserve. Catalonia not only deserves independence, but needs it urgently. This is a vital, cultural, and economic need that can wait no longer.

#### A EUROPEAN COUNTRY

We want to form part of the European Union as a fully-fledged member. We Catalans have always considered ourselves European, and now this feeling is stronger than ever. We are wholeheartedly committed to the European project and are willing to

## COMMITMENT TO SCIENCE

The 2011 Biocat Report confirms Catalonia's leading position in sectors related to biology and medicine. In 2010, Catalonia was the autonomous community where the most new biomedical and biotechnology companies were established, and Catalonia accounts for 29.4% of the total turnover in the sector in Spain.

#### SCIENTIFIC EXCELLENCE

Catalonia holds the second place ranking for the granting of European funds per inhabitant, behind only the Netherlands in terms of scientific excellence.

OVER  
€ 10,000,000  
IN DONATIONS

## CHARITABLE DONATIONS

The first organ transplants in Spain took place in Catalonia in the early 1960s. Today, the Catalan organ donor rate (33.2 per million inhabitants) is double the European rate (18.2) and much higher even than the rate in the USA (26.3). Moreover, last year, the Marató telethon that Catalan television (TV3) has organized at Christmas for more than 20 years now, surpassed even France 2's popular Téléthon, collecting over 10,000,000 euros for cancer research, the chosen cause in 2013.

Sources: ONT, Bioeticanet, sctrsansplant.org and TV3

CATALAN  
UNIVERSITIES  
ACCOUNT FOR  
**60%**  
OF THE RESEARCH  
DONE IN SPAIN



## THE ALBA SYNCHROTRON

Just outside Barcelona is the Alba Science and Technology Park, an internationally recognized center of technology research where around one hundred and seventy national and foreign companies are established. The cornerstone of this Park is the synchrotron, which entered into service in March 2012. The light source that this particle accelerator emits enables the atomic structure of matter to be visualized and its properties studied, making this one of the most powerful scientific research laboratories in the world.







## THE AVANT-GARDE

In the 90s, the Catalan capital transformed itself from a familiar, industrial city into a cosmopolitan center where a variety of representatives of the avant-garde converge. The Raval neighborhood, home to Barcelona's Contemporary Art Museum, is a good example of this transformation.

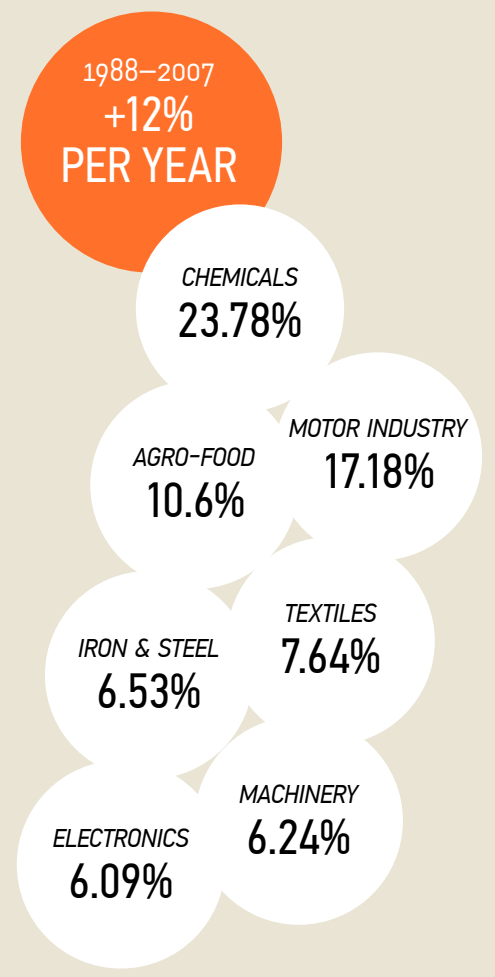
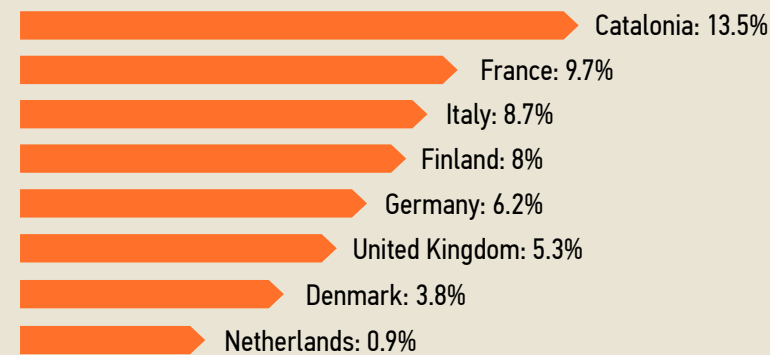


## A DYNAMIC ECONOMY

Catalonia receives nearly two tourists per inhabitant: fifteen and a half million in 2012. These figures make Catalonia the country that receives the most visitors as a proportion of population, ahead of France and the USA.

### LEADERS IN EXPORTS

Over the last twenty-five years and despite the onset of the recession and domestic market problems, Catalan exports have grown by 12% per year. This rate of increase is higher than that recorded in important exporting countries such as Germany, Italy, and France.



Source: EOI

## CONVENTIONS AND CONGRESSES

In 2013, the eighth **Mobile World Congress**, the world's most important mobile phone conference, took place in Barcelona. The Catalan capital will continue to host the event until at least 2018. This is just one of many congresses that take part at the city's convention center, and which also include the **Car Show**, **Construmat**, and **Smart City**. The site hosts some 70 conventions (annual, biennial, triennial, or quadrennial) and brings together 30,000 companies (including those directly attending and those represented), receiving around 2.5 million visitors per year.

BARCELONA HOSTS  
**70 CONVENTIONS**  
INCLUDING 15 MAJOR  
INTERNATIONAL  
EVENTS

MOBILE  
WORLD CAPITAL  
BARCELONA



**54**  
CATALAN  
RESTAURANTS  
HAVE MICHELIN  
STARS

## FROM FERRAN ADRIÀ TO THE ROCA BROTHERS

This year, 2013, there are fifty-four restaurants in Catalonia with at least one Michelin star. Of these, chef **Carme Ruscalleda's** Restaurant Sant Pau and **El Celler de Can Roca** in Girona, run by the Roca brothers, have the maximum three stars awarded by the prestigious French guide. El Celler de Can Roca is also considered the best restaurant in the world by the UK magazine "Restaurant", which had previously awarded this distinction to **Ferran Adrià's** **El Bulli**. All have helped to place Catalan cuisine among the most creative and innovative in the world.

forego any sovereignty necessary, as long as this serves to build a better, more democratic, cooperative, caring Europe, one that is more aware of its role in the world, in short, a Europe at the service of its peoples and of its individual citizens.

Nevertheless, we will not renounce our principles. We will not give up our language, which is the maximum expression of our culture. We will not give up the qualities and values that we have built up over the centuries: hard work, innovation, creativity, solidarity—both interior and exterior—culture, peace, and above all the steadfast desire to continue to exist as a people.

### THE MOST IMPORTANT STEP

We would invite everyone to discover Catalonia and support us in this process. Through the all-important final step of holding a referendum on independence, we Catalans can culminate an unfinished task that—through no fault of our own—was violently interrupted in 1714 with the fall of Barcelona, just at the time when the modern nation-states were beginning to form.

Over the last three hundred years, with everything against us, we Catalans have shown the world our determination to exist as a people. We have suffered wars and dictatorships, and our culture has been persecuted. However, despite all this, we have never lost the will to exist. For this reason, we are excited about the great step we are about to take. And we will take this step in an open attitude, seeking dialogue with all the peoples and cultures in the world. Thank you very much for your support! ▶



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