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Spanish State

After Scotland, Catalonia

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Scotland has already voted, will Catalonia? On Friday, September 19, 2014 the Catalan parliament approved the law on consultations that allows it to do so. And 78.5 per cent of the chamber gave its support. And, what is more important, 1,800,000 people demanded it on September 11, 2014 in a massive mobilization in the Catalan capital.

However, the United Kingdom is not Spain, and David Cameron is not Mariano Rajoy. I say this not because I have a special sympathy for the “British Empire” or its prime minister, on the contrary, let us not forget the oppressive and colonial past of this empire and the policy of cuts of the Conservatives. But in recent days we have seen that in some countries there is a first division democracy while others are in the second division. And Spanish democracy, with hindsight, is light years from playing in the Champions League.

Meanwhile, the same president and party that does not allow for the right of the Catalans to vote does not want demonstrations at the Congress of Deputies. Some are very afraid of the right to decide, either of peoples or persons, in line with the nervousness felt against those who occupy streets and squares, as we saw with Zapatero and the 15M movement.

They appeal to the legality of the Constitution, but what Constitution? That which guarantees the right to housing, but forcibly evicts thousands of families while bowing before the banks? That which was approved in a Transition overseen by the military? They talk of legality, but what legality? That which allows thousands of people to be defrauded with total impunity? If the movement of the indignant taught us anything, it is that the “legality” of the few cannot prevail over the legitimacy of the many.

That a people could vote might be illegal, say Mr. Rajoy and his henchmen, who have left everything neatly tied up to outlaw the Consultation, but a people has the right freely to decide its future. To defend the right of the Catalan people to vote and defend the Consultation is not to defend the Government of the CiU or those who claim that Madrid robs us. In Catalonia, as has been demonstrated well in the Pujol case, we have thieves at home. And this, despite what some may say, reinforces the pro-sovereignty process because it is clearly the antithesis of the country we want. More than ever, the social aspirations are joined with and inseparable from the national ones, and it is essential to strengthen this link.

We want to vote because it is our right as a people and we want to vote to try to build a better country. Achieving this will not be easy. But, the debate on the right to decide and independence opens the door to trying again. Do not forget that the crisis of the regime occurs in a context of political, economic and social crisis. If Rajoy loses on November 9 and the Consultation succeeds, the Catalan people will not be the only winners; all the citizens of the Spanish State will win against an authoritarian government and its policy of cuts.

After Scotland, will it be the turn of Catalonia? Yes, many hope. And we look forward to the support of “sisters and brothers” from the rest of the state, with those from beyond the Ebro who also want another country and democracy. Solidarity from below against authoritarianism from above.

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