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What’s up with Catalonia?

With a prologue by Artur Mas, President of Catalonia

Edited by Liz Castro

www.cataloniapress.com
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Editor’s note

Liz Castro

Ever since I started studying the Catalan language at the University of California at Berkeley in 1985, I have felt a unusual kinship with the Catalan people and an undeniable connectedness with Catalonia. And so, I was pleased with the increased media coverage after Catalonia’s massive pro-independence march of September 11, 2012, but at the same time frustrated with its relatively shallow depth. On November 29, 2012, shortly after Catalonia’s snap elections, it occurred to me that with the contribution of Catalan experts, the help of new technologies, the power of social networks, and some good translating, I might be able to edit a comprehensive collection of articles so that people outside of Catalonia could get a much clearer idea of just what’s going on there. The product of that effort is the book you have before you.

All of the articles were written in December 2012 and January 2013 in an attempt to capture the current situation in Catalonia. There is one particularly significant event that happened just after the book was completed: on January 23rd, the Parliament of Catalonia voted in favor of a Declaration of Sovereignty. The process continues to move forward.

The book’s subtitle “…the causes which impel them to the separation…” is a direct quote from the United States Declaration of Independence, which is also featured on the cover.
I knew some of the writers who contributed articles for this book, but others put their trust in me sight unseen. I am indebted to both groups for their confidence, their collaboration, and their insights. I hope I have captured the spirit of their articles with my translations.

A few notes: many Catalans prefer to refer to Spain as the Spanish State, since they consider it an administrative, and not national, construct. I have followed their example here. I give place names in English if there is an existing translation (that is not simply Spanish), and Catalan when there isn’t. The concept of Catalonia and the Catalan Countries is so complex that there is an entire article about it (Vicent Sanchis).

For ongoing coverage of Catalonia’s path toward independence, you can follow me on Twitter (@lizcastro) or read my blog, News Catalonia (http://www.newscatalonia.com). I published two other excellent books in English on Catalonia: Toni Strubell and Lluís Brunet’s beautifully photographed collection of interviews of leading Catalan personalities, What Catalans Want: Could Catalonia be Europe’s Next New State?, and Matthew Tree’s collection of essays on life in Barcelona, Barcelona, Catalonia: The View from the Inside. Both are available in print and electronic editions. I also highly recommend following the Col·lectiu Emma (Emma Network: http://www.collectuemma.cat/) and the Wilson Initiative (http://www.wilson.cat/en/), both of which offer excellent English-language stories and articles about Catalonia’s independence movement.

Thanks to Andreu Cabré for a fabulous cover, and to Margaret Trejo for proofreading and corrections. Thanks also to the kind folks who already follow me on Twitter who helped with translations and clarifications, sent me information and encouragement, and listened as I told them, in 140 characters at a time, what was happening in Catalonia.

Finally, I would especially like to thank all of the people who supported this book through our crowdsourcing campaign (http://www.verkami.com/projects/4146-what-x27-s-up-with-catalonia), and whose names can be found on Catalonia Press’ website: http://www.cataloniapress.com). Many of them sponsored sharing a copy of this book with a friend, library, journalist, newspaper, or politician outside of Catalonia, in order to send around the world a more precise picture of just what’s up with Catalonia. Catalans are not waiting for anyone to rescue them, but they’ll be happy if you know what’s going on there. Next time you visit lovely Barcelona, take a long look around, and realize what country you’re in.
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