

Dear Sirs,

I am writing as a call for responsibility and objectivity.

I have been reading your news for the last two weeks and am appalled by your coverage of what is happening in Spain.

As a reputed news network, it has come as a shock that you would offer such a one-sided point of view.

I also didn't know you were historians.

My name is Beatriz Gamboa, I am not a civil servant or politician, I am not even a journalist. I am half-Spanish, half-American and was brought up in London. I studied Politics and History at the University of Nottingham and the School of Oriental and African Studies. I hope that what I can tell you helps you to rethink your stance on what is slowly becoming a greater conflict and in which you have become leaders in creating confusion among the international community.

#### On History:

No non-Catalan historian agrees with your (and Catalan) claims that:

- 1) The Spanish Civil War 1936-1939 started as a conflict of independence.
- 2) That Cataluña has historical claims to a nation-state of their own. These are unfounded
- 3) That this is in any way comparable to Yugoslavia: as a matter of fact, I think you need to have another look at your facts on Serbian history

Imagine for a moment that Massachusetts decided to be their own country.

#### On Current Politics:

Having said this, yes, Cataluña, as well as the Basque Country and anyone who disagreed with Franco, suffered tremendously at the hands of the dictatorship. Few Western countries share much of this kind of recent political past.

But the whole of Spain has been a democracy since 1977, and new generations do not have any real notions of that suffering.

#### Cataluña is not a repressed community:

The Spanish people, and the Spanish government respect their language, cultural background, traditions, which is why they are an Autonomous Community with their own education, taxation, regional government, official language.

Spain, again unlike most Western countries, and far more than any Western country today (including the US, the UK, France, Netherlands etc etc), is a multi-cultural country which accepts and respects everyone despite language, colour, and religion. Perhaps precisely because of our experience under Franco, today Spaniards are open people who know that differences of language and culture are not enough to cause harm and separation.

Are Catalans, in fact, Catalan?

The County of Barcelona became a part of the Kingdom of Aragón in 1150, which in 1496 united with the Kingdom of Castille to form the Kingdom of Spain.

There has been a natural movement of people, especially from Andalucia and Extremadura, to Cataluña for hundreds of years. We are all brothers and sisters and this is the way any Spaniard on the street thinks. There isn't a Catalan "nationality" as such, with their own religion and physical attributes. Other people in other regions of Spain in the north have maintained much more homogeneity.

### The Referendum:

"90% of Catalans voted independence". What an irresponsible fallacy. You know very well that this is not true. As the BBC always add, turn-out was 43% with many irregularities in polling stations and ballot boxes. There are videos of people voting more than once. But even if we give them the benefit of the doubt: what of the other 57%?!

I would love to tell you about the mass indoctrination in the education system for the last 20 years and which continues today in blatant misrepresentations of history in history school books. I would love to tell you about non-independence voters being harassed on the streets. About children of police who are being bullied at schools. About the national police's cry for help. About non-independence students who were forced out of schools and universities on the day they called a strike. And about the fear of expressing Spanish identity in offices, schools, the streets.

I wanted to keep this short, but as you can see I have many more issues with your articles and your depiction of the Spanish Government and the King of Spain. This letter is just a call for RESPONSIBILITY.

I am not proud of the violence, of the Spanish government's latest decisions or how it is handling solutions. But right now, the whole of Spain is covered in red and yellow. Before it is covered only in red, let's cover it in white.

Please CNN, help us the Spaniards.