

Democratic cleansing and a new majority

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Judges, lawyers, claims, charges, seizure of documentation from public offices, hearings, evidence of misconduct, evidence of corruption, abuse of power, embezzlement, political patronage and clientship ... The legal entanglements in politics and the widespread suspicion of corruption have taken over the political news. The debate is often not about ideas, proposals or policies, but rather about honor, honesty, and credibility of those in political office. The specific cases, their nature and severity, vary widely. But as the exemplary cases that demonstrate rigor in the assigned duties-- which are the vast majority-- don't attract any attention, the sensation that we are left with is that the reputation of institutional politics is severely compromised.

It is true that some episodes have involved, indiscriminately, people with clean and spotless records, as in the recent case of compensation of mayors in the Catalan Federation of Municipalities. It is true that there are complaints without any other basis than an exaggerated political rivalry. It is also true that often there is a certain undue haste by news outlets; that accusations have more impact than denials; that talk-show condemnations are often based more on hearsay and innuendo than on evidentiary facts. But it is clear that we have a serious problem with the functioning of the political system. In Catalonia as well. At present, as we wait for the electoral and consultation laws, and the 9-November consultation, confidence in the formal political system is very low. And no one is as responsible as the system itself and its leading actors.

The political system of the Transition is rotten, both in Spain and in Catalonia. There are too many open cases. There are causes and reasons that explain how we got here, but they have no mitigating value. The Catalan political system is rotten, and its repair by traditional methods will not guarantee the solidity necessary to face the challenges of the crisis, the change in economic and social models, or democratic regeneration. Especially now, a strong political system is needed to intervene with firmness and produce big changes. A system with a renewed legitimacy, an ambitious program, that sits on broad social support, capable of building around it a dense network of democratic citizen participation. This type of legitimacy and strength are characteristics of foundational processes, of the

beginnings of a cycle. In Catalonia we need to articulate a new political system, from top to bottom, with absolute credibility, open, that the majority of people can make and feel as theirs. A repair of the old apparatus would demand changing so many parts and modifying so many components that the best option is to create a completely new system. Start a constituent process with the momentum of a large democratic majority. This is, substantially, the meaning of 9 November.

In Catalonia, a new social majority is being created that is ready and willing to steer the construction of the country. It is not a fate written in stone that the hegemony and direction will be in the hands of a minority. In fact it has been the resignation, inaction, and lack of vision of the traditional directing minorities that has left the huge emptiness that, now, broad sectors of Catalan society have decided to fill on their own. The new ruling majority includes, in its broadest sense, the working classes: it is made up of qualified workers and liberal professionals, of entrepreneurs and functionaries, of the self-employed and business and institutional teams, of the retired and the unemployed, of artists and businessmen... They have come together in their discontent and basic aspirations. And they have dared to organize and become active, demanding more of a public presence, denouncing the unsustainable current situation and proposing the outlines of a new vision for the country. In their activism and the new social movements they are inspiring, there are three closely interrelated primary lines of transformation: recognition of full sovereignty; change towards an economic and social model that prioritizes collective interests, equality and justice; and the introduction of new mechanisms of political participation, administrative procedures, objectives and values. There is a widespread call in favor of a turn towards dignity, an urgent cleansing program for democracy that would restore confidence in politics and a spotless public administration --brand new. And the new social majority is only prepared to wait until November.