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Miramonte student spreads awareness on Catalan Independence Movement

By Casey Scheiner



Inesi (left) talks to former Catalan president Quim Torra (right). Photo provided

Most high school students focus on a mixture of academics, athletics, and social activities. However, one local teenager has an even higher priority: promoting awareness for a major independence movement in Spain.

Ardal Inesi, a junior at Miramonte, recently completed work on his documentary "A Case for Catalan Independence," which he filmed, narrated and edited.

Inesi was passionate about independence for Catalonia, a region in Northern Spain containing the city of Barcelona, from a young age. His Catalan mother brought him into an extended family passionate about lifting Catalonia from Spanish rule. Consequently, Inesi is also fluent in Catalan, the primary language of the region.

"A lot of my family lives in Barcelona and its surrounding area, so they all speak Catalan around me," Inesi said. "My maternal grandfather is a major advocate for Catalan independence."

Last summer, Inesi followed his grandfather's connections in this sphere and traveled to Barcelona to speak with many prominent Catalan independence figures. In less than a month, he interviewed three Catalan presidents and three other separatist leaders.

"It was really cool to be in Barcelona talking to people who are so influential in resistance to Spanish control of Catalunya," Inesi said. "I also got to go to Belgium to interview an exiled former Catalan president. All of these interviews really put the project in perspective."

It's impossible to condense Inesi's 72-minute documentary into a few sentences, but the crux of his argument revolves around Catalonia's history and culture being largely independent of those of Spain. Additionally, he defended the ideal of national self-determination and applied this principle to argue for independence, citing mass support for autonomy from Catalan citizens.

"For much of its history, Catalunya has been separate from Spanish affairs," Inesi said. "Today, Catalans believe it should return to such a system."

Along with the desire to promote Catalan independence, Inesi recognized the fact that many people are unfamiliar with the unique culture of the region. He sought to change that with this film.

"Most people have no idea how distinct Catalonia's history and culture are from those of Spain," Inesi said during the documentary.

The documentary, though a labor of love, was a time-consuming endeavor for Inesi, as turning his interview and narration footage into a compact film was a demanding task.

"I spent what felt like weeks at my computer in my basement grinding my project," Inesi laughed. "The toughest part was making subtitles for all of the parts where Catalan was spoken."

Though his documentary was the culmination of his efforts surrounding Catalan independence, many in the community already recognized Inesi as a vocal proponent of the cause.

"Ardal would mention Catalonia and its independence movement on an almost daily basis. He would talk about his summer in Catalonia and his talks with the leader of Catalonia," Miramonte senior Ricky Davis, a captain for Inesi's favorite sport of cross-country, said. "At practice he would educate people about its independence movement and would frequently engage in educational debates over the legitimacy of Catalonia."

Though Inesi's documentary is now finished, his efforts to raise awareness about the Catalan people's struggle for independence are anything but over. In addition to future projects, this fall he began working on an Original Oratory speech for his public speaking class to inform his classmates about Catalan independence. He hopes to take the speech to tournaments in 2023.

"I'm excited to continue discussing Catalonia and its right to self-determination. Until we get independence, it's a topic I want to keep bringing people's attention to," Inesi concluded. The documentary can be viewed at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kEvd2Z_08LI

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