Corbyn's New Party Risks Labour's Fatal Mistake – Why "Your Party" Needs Independent Wings, Not Branch Offices

Jeremy Corbyn and Zarah Sultana's newly announced "Your Party" is already raising concerns among Scottish left activists who warn the venture could collapse before it starts if it continues ignoring the national question. The harsh reality? Scotland's left has watched this movie before – and it always ends in failure.

Bella Caledonia sums it up: "Limited consideration of Scotland has taken place in this attempt to get a left of Labour electoral challenge up and running," observes Democratic Left Scotland, while Richie Venton of the Scottish Socialist Party warns that "any new party that seeks to operate in Scotland must respect the right of the Scottish people to self-determination and must not be a mere branch office of a London-centric project.

This isn't just Scottish sensitivity – it's strategic necessity. The historical record is unforgiving: centralized left parties that ignore national questions don't just fail in Scotland, they fragment entirely. Spain's catastrophic left retreat in the 1990s offers a perfect case study of what happens when socialists dismiss plurinational realities.

The Spanish Warning: How Centralism Destroyed the Left

The Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) once dominated the left. The left magazine Viento Sur describes its failures. By the 1990s, it had become a "neoliberal force with progressive

trappings," transforming into what critics called a "party-cartel" that monopolized politics through state financing while abandoning its working-class identity. But PSOE's fatal error wasn't just embracing neoliberalism – it was promoting a divisive "theory of two national communities" that alienated Catalonia, the Basque Country, and Galicia.

In the Basque Country, PSOE manufactured a false division between communities, casting Basques as "bourgeois and racist" nationalists opposed to "working-class, socialist, and universalist" speakers of Castilian Spanish. This strategy poisoned dialogue and drove communities apart. This wasn't just bad politics – it was organizational suicide.

Izquierda Unida (IU), formed as a left alternative to PSOE, repeated the same mistakes. Despite its anti-capitalist rhetoric, IU struggled with a chronic inability to accept the plurinational reality of the Spanish state. Strong centralist currents within IU viewed national demands as "sectarian" or "right-wing," fatally undermining the party's ability to build genuine grassroots support in the Basque Country, Catalonia and Galicia.

The results were devastating. In Galicia, the rise of the Bloque Nacionalista Galego (BNG) captured the "vote of discontent" while IU's components struggled to reach even 3% of the vote. The lesson couldn't be clearer: Spain's alternative left faces a binary choice: **either** genuinely champion the distinct national identities and self-determination rights of its regions, **or** accept political marginalization and eventual collapse.

Scotland's Clear Message: Autonomy Works, Branch Offices Don't

Scottish left parties have learned this lesson the hard way. The most successful examples – the Scottish Socialist Party and Scottish Greens – operate as genuinely independent entities, not subordinate branches of UK-wide organizations.

The Scottish Greens emerged in 1990 when the former UK Green Party deliberately separated into two independent parties. Today, they're completely separate and unique with their own leaders, membership, and policies. Their strong support for Scottish independence isn't incidental – it's integral to their identity and success.

Similarly, the Scottish Socialist Party formed in 1998 from the Scottish Socialist Alliance, explicitly as a distinct Scottish entity. The SSP unequivocally supports independence, framing it through "internationalist rather than nationalist concerns" and advocating for a "Scottish socialist republic."

Contrast this with parties that maintained centralized structures. The Respect Party, "established in London" with no distinct Scottish presence, made virtually no impact north of the border and even lost supporters in England who opposed its organising north of the border. The pattern is clear: Scottish voters reject "branch office" politics.

Ross Greer, the Scottish Green MSP, put it bluntly: "The idea of a new London-based party trying to establish a 'branch office' in Scotland without a clear understanding of our distinct political context is deeply concerning."

Why "Your Party" Risks Disaster

Troubling early indicators suggest "Your Party" risks repeating these historical errors. Scottish commentators describe the initial launch as "badly bungled and incoherent," with conflicting reports about organizational structure and minimal Scottish input.

Helena from 'No Justice' captures the frustration: Rolling out "Jeremy Corbyn as a 'left-leader' and harking back (uncritically) to how wonderful he was" isn't "serious politics." The party risks being dismissed as nostalgic English leftism that ignores Scottish political realities.

Most critically, “Your Party” has yet to clarify its position on Scottish self-determination—a silence that Scottish activists are already interpreting as indifference.. This isn’t a minor oversight – it’s a deal-breaker for many. As Ross Greer notes, “Scotland needs a strong, independent voice on the left, not another Westminster-controlled outfit.”

The electoral arithmetic is brutal. Connor Beaton warns that attempting to contest Holyrood elections without broad engagement could “end up like RISE in 2016, winning a derisory share of the vote which then contributes to the whole project’s collapse.”

The Platform for Socialism and Independence

The good news is that Scottish socialists are already organizing to prevent this disaster. The recently launched Platform for Socialism and Independence brings together Aberdeen Marxist Caucus, the Republican Socialist Platform, Scottish Socialist Youth, and Socialists for Independence. It represents exactly the kind of proactive intervention needed. Rather than waiting for “Your Party” to impose a structure from London, these groups are engaging strategically while maintaining core principles around independence and Scottish autonomy.

The Path Forward: Embrace Plurinationalism

Jamie Driscoll, involved in “Your Party’s” formation, seems to understand the stakes, emphasizing “significant autonomy in the nations and regions” and rejecting a “top-down London-run party.” But good intentions aren’t enough – organizational structure matters.

Based on successful precedents, “Your Party” needs to:

- **Unequivocally support Scottish self-determination**– not as a tactical position, but as a foundational principle. The Spanish experience shows that half-measures create

"artificial barriers of incommunication."

- **Foster genuine autonomy**– Scottish and Welsh wings must have their own leadership, decision-making structures, and tailored political programmes. The Scottish Greens' model of formal separation or the SSP's autonomous development offer proven templates.
- **Build grassroots power first**– Instead of immediate Holyrood campaigns, focus on local organizing and council elections in 2027. This allows time to develop genuine Scottish leadership and avoid the "excessive politicismo" that doomed Spain's IU.
- **Engage existing Scottish movements**– Work with independence campaigns, climate justice groups, Palestine solidarity, and other progressive forces rather than competing with them.

Learning from Failure in the Spanish State

The Spanish left's 1990s retreat wasn't inevitable – it resulted from strategic choices that prioritized institutional power over grassroots organizing and centralized control over plurinational democracy. These same pressures exist today.

"Your Party" can succeed, but only if it learns from these failures. The choice is stark: embrace genuine autonomy for Scotland and Wales, or watch another promising left initiative fragment on the rocks of unresolved national questions.

The Scottish left has been clear about what it needs. The question is whether Corbyn and Sultana are listening – or whether they're destined to repeat the mistakes that have buried left parties across Europe.

As Richie Venton warns: "We've seen countless attempts to build left-wing unity in Scotland only to see them fail because of a lack of understanding of the Scottish political landscape and the need for a genuinely independent Scottish socialist movement."

This is “Your Party’s” moment of truth. The early warning signs are flashing red, but the fatal mistakes haven’t been locked in yet. Corbyn and Sultana can still demonstrate they understand what every successful Scottish left party has learned: revolutionary democracy means unequivocally supporting self-determination. The choice is stark—act now to embrace genuine Scottish autonomy, or watch another promising left initiative fragment on familiar rocks.

Reposted from Red Mole Substack

Radical Independence Campaign announces conference on impasse in independence movement

The Radical Independence Campaign invites supporters to join a conference aimed at finding a way through the movement’s current impasse.

Break the Impasse: Towards Independence

Saturday, 21 October 2023 11:00 – 16:00

Location: The Renfield Training and Conference Centre Glasgow

260 Bath Street Glasgow G2 4JP (Journey Planner here)

The movement for Scottish self-determination is at an impasse – we are stuck. The Radical Independence Campaign invites independence supporters and the wider Scottish left to join us at a conference in Glasgow on Saturday 21st October to help find a way to break the impasse.

This grassroots-focused event is the first in-person RIC conference since the pandemic and follows an online conference in 2021 which attracted hundreds of participants.

Programme

The conference will begin with speakers from a range of invited organisations, including the Scottish Greens and SNP Socialists, offering their views on the way forward, followed by breakout discussions in which participants can discuss their response to the speakers.

After lunch, there will be a series of participatory workshops on issues including climate justice, trade unions and independence, and how we get organised at a local level.

The day will conclude with a plenary session aimed at establishing concrete next steps.

More information about the programme, including speakers and workshops, will follow.

Get involved

We wish to create a friendly forum to contribute to a discussion on where Scottish politics and the independence movement finds itself now, and to explore the options and strategic implications of the proposals coming from different parts of the movement.

We want to have a good conference with lively discussions that produce clear decisions and commitments – in other words, a well thought-out strategy and plan of action to take forward RIC and the movement for Scottish self-determination.

For more information or to help us organise the conference, please email contact@ric.scot.



Radical Independence Campaign on the march at COP26 in Glasgow, November 2021

Scottish and Irish solidarity against the UK state

Republican Socialist Platform (RSP) members from Edinburgh, Glasgow and Dundee this year joined the annual Bloody Sunday march in Derry. Below we reproduce the text of a leaflet they distributed from the RSP website.

The anniversary of Bloody Sunday in Derry reminds us of the depths to which the British ruling class will sink to preserve their UK state. One major difference between 1972 and 2023, though, is that they now face a far wider challenge.

By 1998, in the face of various national democratic challenges with Irish republicans at the fore, the British ruling class had to fall-back on 'devolution all round' in their attempt to

hold the UK together.

Today, the unionist/loyalist bloc created by the Good Friday Agreement has lost its majority in the bi-sectarian Stormont Assembly; Scottish unionists are a minority at Holyrood and Westminster; and in Wales, support for independence is growing rapidly.

What has not changed is the British ruling class's contempt for democratic change, including the right of national self-determination. To get around their shrinking support, they turn to the most reactionary political forces and the anti-democratic Crown Powers of the UK state.

Brexit has paved the way for Westminster's assault on trade union, consumer and environmental rights and draconian new laws attacking migrants and asylum seekers. To appease reactionary unionists, the Tories are undermining their own NI Protocol.

In December 2022, the UK Supreme Court overruled plans for a new Scottish independence referendum, despite this receiving majority support in the 2021 Holyrood election. The very next month, the Tories blocked Scotland's progressive Gender Recognition Reform Bill, passed by a cross-party super-majority of MSPs.

It is clear is that British ruling class not only have no intention of conceding greater self-determination, they are now attempting to roll-back even the limited democratic concessions of 1998. The British Labour Party will do nothing to stop them.

The British monarchy plays a crucial role in fronting the UK state's Crown Powers. We are witnessing a media offensive, led by the BBC, to reinforce the UK state around Charlie and his dysfunctional family. The planned coronation in May is the centrepiece of this anti-democratic offensive.

The Republican Socialist Platform, as part of the Radical Independence Campaign in Scotland, is working with Our Republic and others to hold a major republican demonstration on Edinburgh's Calton Hill on May 6th, the same day as the coronation.

There is already a formidable campaign in Wales against the humiliating investiture of a new Prince of Wales. We encourage and want to support more protests across these islands against the coronation in May.

RSP members are here in Derry and Belfast to seek support in developing an alliance, based on internationalism from below, to break up the deeply reactionary UK state.

Originally published on the RSP website 30 January 2023: https://republicansocialists.scot/2023/01/scottish-and-irish-solidarity-against-the-uk-state/

To join the Republican Socialist Platform, go to this link. https://join.republicansocialists.scot/

Radical Independence Campaign statement on UK Supreme Court ruling against a Scottish Independence referendum

This is a dark day for democracy

and signals clearly the rotten, undemocratic nature of our broken, union state.

The unelected judges of the UK Supreme Court are saying that the Scottish Parliament is permanently vassalled to Westminster and its undemocratic parliament, government and state – that the democratic rights of the Scottish people do not matter and can be ignored.

The court is saying that a parish or district council in England has the right to call a referendum on any issue, but what was claimed to be the "most powerful devolved parliament in the world" cannot.

The collaboration of both the UK government and the official opposition in thwarting democracy needs to be answered with a rising tide of protest by the Scottish people, starting at the 15 rallies called in Scotland today.

If the UK government refuses to now give the referendum a legal basis and continues to try to thwart the Parliament, we call for massive and escalating protests across Scotland against this denial of democracy.

Let the People Decide – not the judges!

The UK now has a prime minister and a head of state who are not prepared to subject themselves to a democratic vote, yet deny the people of Scotland their democratic rights.

The UK government's refusal to countenance democracy also has a profound impact on rights not just in Scotland but across all parts of the UK state – especially for the people of Cymru/Wales and of Ireland in determining their own future.

When governments reject democracy, it is time for the people to rise up and say: enough is enough!

The UK government is not only denying democracy by the Scottish people, but for all the citizens of the UK state in refusing to put its austerity plans and wage restraint to a vote in an election.

We therefore also call for full support for the battles of the people to win decent pay awards through strike action over the coming months and call for defence of public services against all cuts.

Make the rich companies and individuals who have benefited from profiteering from the crisis pay for it, not force ordinary people to choose between eating and heating over this winter!

RIC will support a campaign of mass direct action – strikes, protests, rallies, civil disobedience – against this rotten undemocratic Tory government.

We call on the Scottish Government and the Westminster opposition to support such protests.

We welcome the SNP's backing for protest rallies in Scotland this evening over the Supreme Court, but also call on them to support the massive strikes voted for by workers that are due in Scotland over the coming weeks and months and to secure the resources to pay workers the inflation-related pay award they deserve.



Furthermore, following the dreadful rolling back at COP27 of international commitments on climate change and 1.5 degrees from the Glasgow COP last year, we call for an end to all new exploration licenses for fossil fuels in the North Sea, and for massive public investment in renewables, funding for a just transition for workers and for a massive publicly-funded programme of home insulation and other reduction measures on energy instead. We support direct action to achieve these goals.

Calls for the Scottish Government to press on with a non-sanctioned referendum in light of today's ruling are inarguably complicated by the necessary role of local authorities in organising the voting process, which could not be guaranteed in those circumstances.

Similarly, the SNP's suggestion that the next UK general election could be used as a proxy referendum may falter in a cost of living crisis and would certainly undermine the broad, non-partisan coalition of the grassroots independence movement – as well as putting us up against the troubling introduction

of voter ID for Westminster elections.

It is now time for a mass independence movement to mount the most effective challenge possible to the present Conservative UK government, not just on its undemocratic blocking of an independence referendum but also on its right-wing economic policies and their devastating impact on Scotland's people, which need to be opposed in the here and now not just in the future.

Reprinted from the Radical Independence Campaign: https://ric.scot/2022/11/ric-statement-on-supreme-court-ruling/

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23 November: Rallies called across Scotland and Europe over UK Supreme Court decision

Rallies in support of Scottish Independence and self-determination have been called across Scotland and Europe for **Wednesday 23 November**, the day of the decision by the UK Supreme Court on whether to allow the Scottish Parliament the right to hold a second independence referendum.

The Scottish rallies have been called by an ad hoc group Time for Scotland in conjunction with local independence groups and will feature speakers from the independence movement reacting to the decision of the UK Supreme Court. A pro-EU campaign, Europe for Scotland will also hold meetings/rallies in five cities across the EU.

ecosocialist.scot will have a representative inside the UK Supreme Court in the morning (the judgement starts at 9.45am UK time) and you can follow our coverage on Twitter and Mastodon. A full analysis of the implications of the verdict will follow on this website.

Rally locations

The rallies are in the following locations (as at Monday 21 November 14:00) and full details can be found at the Time for Scotland website.

Edinburgh (main rally) – Holyrood Parliament 5:30pm – 7:30pm

Aberdeen – St Nicholas Square 5:30pm

Borders – Selkirk Square and on to Kirk o Forest 6.30pm

Dumfries – Midsteeple area in the town centre. Beside the Planestanes 5:30pm

Dundee – City Square, in front of the Caird Hall 5:30pm

Glasgow – Concert Hall steps Buchanan Street 5:30pm

Greenock – Lyle fountain in Cathcart Square 5:15pm for 5:30pm

Inverness – Inverness Townhouse Starts 6:30pm

Inverurie – Inverurie Town Hall 5:30pm

Lochgilphead – Front Green Lochgilphead 12noon

Orkney – St Magnus Cathedral, Kirk Green 5:15pm

Perth – Concert Hall Plaza (outside Horsecross) 5:30pm

Skye – Portree Sheriff Court, Portree Square (plus street stall in square depending on weather conditions) 5:30pm

The rallies/protests in Europe will be in the following

cities, full details from https://twitter.com/ScotlandEurope and on the Europe for Scotland Facebook page

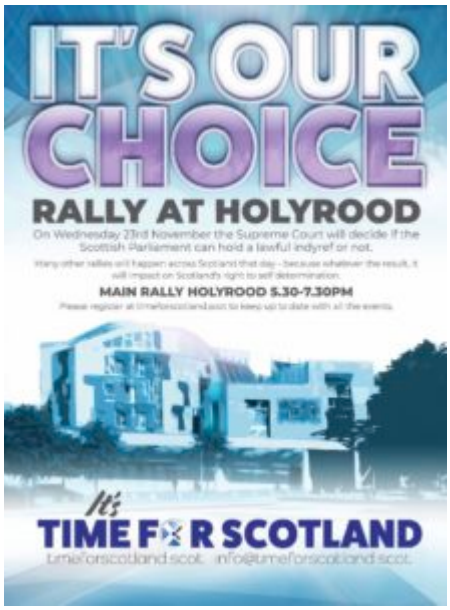
Berlin – Sinti-und-Roma-Denkmal, Simsonweg, 10117 Berlin, Germany 17:30 UTC+01

Brussels/Bruxelles – Coté Schuman, Parc Du Cinquantenaire 19:45 UTC+01

Munich/München – Café am Glockenspiel Marienplatz 28 5.5tock 18:30 UTC+01

Paris – The Auld Alliance 80 Rue francois Miron 19:00 UTC+01

Rome/Roma – Metro Colosseo Via dei Fori Imperiali 19:30 UTC+01



Radical Independence Campaigners to protest at UK Supreme Court in London

The Radical Independence Campaign (RIC) is calling on supporters of Scottish and Welsh Independence and for Irish reunification to make a protest at the UK Supreme Court in London on Tuesday 11 October at 10am, *writes Mike Picken,* when the Court will begin hearing evidence on whether the Scottish government has the legal powers to call a second independence referendum in October 2023.

RIC has called for Scottish independence supporters and allies to gather outside the court from 10am on Tuesday morning to peacefully assert our right to hold a referendum.

There is a Facebook event page here:

Let The People Decide! | Facebook

The hearing will consider a reference from Scotland's most senior legal officer, Lord Advocate Dorothy Bain, under the provisions of the devolution legislation (the Scotland Act 1998) allowing her to refer a matter to the UK Supreme Court for determination. The Court will be asked to decide whether a proposed consultative referendum on Scottish Independence is within the current legal powers of the Scottish Parliament. The UK government of the new Conservative Prime Minister, Liz Truss, will oppose the proposed referendum through the offices of its legal officer, the Advocate General. There will also be a formal intervention heard in favour of the rights of the Scottish Parliament and people for self determination, submitted by the Scottish National Party (SNP)

This legal battle follows the May 2021 election to the Scottish Parliament when a majority of members (MSPs) elected for the Scottish National Party (SNP) and the Scottish Green Party had a manifesto commitment to hold such a referendum in the first half of the parliamentary session (ie before the end of 2023). The UK Tory government now headed by Liz Truss and her band of right wing Brexit supporters, and supported by the Labour Party official opposition of Keir Starmer, is totally opposed to holding such a referendum and is trying to block it by any means available, even though a majority of the Scottish Parliament have been elected on that basis. The UK Supreme Court is now being asked to determine who has the power to call a referendum.

The Radical Independence Campaign (RIC) is saying that the people of Scotland must be allowed to decide, not the Westminster Parliament and

not the courts.

The UK Supreme Court is based in London, but is the only court that covers the whole of the UK – which is divided into separate legal systems: that of **Scotland**, whose legal systems and institutions are more closely related to the 'Civil Law' systems of Europe and were preserved as independent under the 1707 union of England and Scotland; that of the largely 'Common Law' system of **England**, which historically also included **Wales** though there is now a small separate body of Welsh law since legal powers of Senedd Cymru were changed in 2007; and that of the part of the **north of Ireland** under UK state control, a direct legacy of the colonial partition ('Northern Ireland'). The eleven Judges in the UK Supreme Court are drawn from all of the legal systems; although the majority are from England, the current President of the Court is a Scottish Judge. Five of the Judges will hear the case and a decision is expected in two to three months, possibly sooner.

RIC is pointing out that the decision of the Court will also have significant implications for the increasing numbers supporting independence for Wales and the reunification of Ireland, and it is calling on supporters of those causes to join them at the Court and build links across the UK state for the right of the nations within the UK state to self determination.

ecosocialist.scot hopes to provide further coverage of the protest and the Supreme Court hearing so please return here for more updates.

Radical Independence Campaign

Another Scotland Is Possible

The Radical Independence Campaign works for an independent Scottish republic. We see independence as a means to achieve the radical change that Scotland urgently needs. We stand for a Scotland that is:

- *For a democratic, secular, socially just and environmentally sustainable Scottish republic.*
- *Action based on the sovereignty of the people not the UK Crown, leading to the setting up of a Constituent Assembly.*
- *Action to establish universal health care, education, housing, income, pensions and trade union rights; and to win land reform and challenge environmental degradation.*
- *Equality and opposition to discrimination on grounds of sex, gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, religion/belief, disability or age*
- *Solidarity with the struggles for workers' rights, democracy and self-determination, based on internationalism from below*
- *Support for Scotland's artistic and cultural revival in all its languages*

Power to the People! Scottish Socialist Energy Summit – Glasgow 21 May 2022

POWER TO THE PEOPLE! SOCIALIST ENERGY SUMMIT: SATURDAY 21ST MAY – GET YOUR TICKETS BOOKED NOW!

12noon-5pm The Renfield Centre, 260 Bath Street, Glasgow G2 4JP (Directions)

This important event is being held by Socialists For Independence (SFI) in conjunction with European Left and Democratic Left Scotland.

It will be an opportunity to talk and most importantly, organise around how we can fight back against the huge energy prices rises that increases fuel poverty and the next stage for the COP26 demands to fight climate change. The recent ScotWind sale by the Scottish Government has provoked important debate about what sort of energy system we need in Scotland, both before and after independence, and how it can benefit the entire population especially the poorest.

We can't go on like this. Global warming is threatening the planet and energy prices are going into the stratosphere.

We need a drastic root and branch change. To do that we have to understand how we create energy in Scotland and who owns our energy. This summit is the first step in developing an energy plan where the people in Scotland own and control energy production and consumption for the benefit of the people who live here.

Speakers include:
- Maggie Chapman – Scottish Green Party MSP
- Stephen Smellie – UNISON Scotland Depute Convenor
- Roland Kulke – Transform, European Left
- Stuart Fairweather – Dundee Trades Council & Democratic Left Scotland
- Alan McCombes

The event is open to anyone who has an interest in environmental issues and is concerned about how we in Scotland can effect positive change for both people and planet.

Tickets for the event are free and can be booked via Eventbrite – see link below: https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/socialist-summit-on-energy-tickets-318976165297

The Facebook event is here: https://www.facebook.com/events/379869394006488?ref=newsfeed

Come along and have your say!

You can follow **Socialists for Independence** on social media: Twitter: @socialists4indy Facebook Web: https://socialistsforindependence.scot/ (Members also have a Slack channel for discussion and regular fortnightly meetings)

Glasgow COP26: Independence bloc on the 6 Nov March for Climate Justice

The Independence bloc on Glasgow's March for Climate Justice on Saturday 6 November will be marching for Climate Justice and for a Scottish Independence that takes effective action on climate, ends Scotland's role in fossil fuels and a new Scotland in solidarity with the Global South.

The slogan of the bloc is

It's Scotland's Oil – Keep It In The Soil

and the immediate demand will be for the Cambo oil field off the coast of Shetland to be stopped.

The slogan combines the demand popularised by the Scottish National Party in the 1970s with the demands of the climate movement and the COP26 Coalition calling the march for no new extraction of fossil fuels and a phasing out of existing extractions with a just transition for workers.

The bloc has been convened by the Radical Independence Campaign and will assemble at the Lord Roberts Statue in Kelvingrove Park from 11.30am. Lord Roberts was a British imperialist military figure who was integral to the suppression of India, Afghanistan, South Africa and Ireland during the British Empire. Campaigners will also call for recognition of Britain and Scotland's role in the imperialist domination of so many countries, a domination that has underdeveloped them economically. Financial reparations and the cancellation of debts are essential if these countries are to survive.

The bloc has been built by a Crowdfunder that can still be donated to.

Other Blocs on the march

The Independence bloc is one of around twenty on the demonstration. Full details of all the blocs and their assembly points are here:

You can find an overview of all the blocs and lead contacts here.

Facebook event page here: https://tinyurl.com/cud3j5be

List of blocs:

Indigenous bloc

Anti-Racist / Migrant Justice bloc (FB event – https://tinyurl.com/857k7bmd)

Youth bloc

Trade Unions bloc (FB event – https://tinyurl.com/jcbx5pup)

Communities bloc (FB event – https://tinyurl.com/jvj5hvk8)

Extinction Rebellion bloc (FB event – https://tinyurl.com/kf8mk8wv)

Faith and belief bloc

Independence bloc (FB event – https://tinyurl.com/4jp2u5dr)

Climate Justice bloc (FB event – https://tinyurl.com/487htbxs)

Health bloc

Farmers and Land Workers bloc (FB event – https://tinyurl.com/ddh78hc)

Biodiversity & Nature bloc

Housing bloc

Cycling Bloc & Sustainable Transport bloc (FB event – https://tinyurl.com/fbvxzjz4)

See here for site maps of Kelvingrove Park and Glasgow Green, and the full Action Plan here.
There will also be a Southside feeder march which will assemble at 12noon at Queen's Park and join the main demo at George Square. Please see FB event: https://tinyurl.com/2au7djjz



Radical Independence Campaign on the march for Scottish Independence January 2020 (photo C Beaton)

All out for Faslane on Sunday 26 September!

To coincide with the **International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons** on **Sunday 26 September**, the Scottish Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament is calling for a major demonstration from across Scotland at Faslane on the Clyde, *writes Mike Picken for ecosocialist.scot.*

Faslane is the home for the UK state's Trident submarines and nuclear weapons. The theme of the demonstration will be "**Disarm for Our Planet for peace and climate**", because it is also the run up to the COP26 gathering of world leaders in Glasgow in November. COP26 takes place less than 50 kilometres from the Faslane nuclear weapons base. The demonstration also marks the culmination of a week long

‘Climate Fringe‘ to help build protest events around the COP26 taking place across Scotland (and in the rest of the UK where it is known as “Great Big Green Week“).

Die-in Protest

Demonstrators will stage a mock “die-in” on marine/wildlife themes at the Faslane base to highlight the destructive effect of nuclear weapons production on our planet and oceans. In towns and villages where people cannot make the transport to Faslane (possibly due to the ongoing Covid crisis), activists will be encouraged to organise parallel “die-in” events. The idea of the “die-in” is to give the protest an ecological theme that links nuclear weapons production and potential use with the enormous death toll that pursuit of such weapons does to the natural life of the planet.

The **26 September** demonstration starts at **2pm (14.00)** at the North Gate and the die-in will take place at 3pm. You can register and find the details for the demonstration here: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/disarm-for-our-planet-tickets-164178902517 and transport will be arranged from around the country by local peace, CND and COP26 coalition groups. See the Scottish CND website for up-to-date information: https://www.banthebomb.org/index.php/news/2147-cop26

Nuclear Weapons and COP26

Scottish CND rightly argue that nuclear weapons should be an important issue at the COP26:

> ***Why does it matter?***
>
> *Conflict and militarism are among the biggest contributors to climate change.*

Any nuclear conflict would cause climate catastrophe overnight: changing weather patterns, plunging billions into famine, and devastating the Earth's ecosystems. No climate justice is possible until all nuclear weapons are disarmed.

But the catastrophe isn't just waiting to happen sometime in the future. The military is one of the biggest contributors to carbon emissions, in the UK and in other countries. Government promises on climate change – for whatever they're worth – barely even acknowledge the military problem.

And every stage in the lifecycle of nuclear weapons, from mining uranium for warheads, to the impossibility of safely disposing of nuclear waste, is seriously damaging to humankind, to our natural world and to the survival of our planet as a whole – and that's before we account for the impact of accidents, nuclear 'tests' and attacks. We are already paying an enormous and unacceptable price – which, once more, falls largely on the shoulders of the world's poorest and most disenfranchised communities. It's time for change. (Source: Scottish CND)

Increase in warheads

Earlier in 2021, the UK government announced a massive increase in the number of warheads within the UK's Trident nuclear arsenal. You can read more about this appalling development here. Far from focussing on the priority of economic recovery from the Covid pandemic, as the Scottish Tories claim should happen, the UK Tory government are spending billions of pounds of taxpayers' money on a major and possibly illegal escalation of the arms race. Meanwhile, opposition to nuclear weapons is growing and more and more countries are signing up to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

Independence

Many advocates of Scottish independence are also against nuclear weapons. Faslane in Scotland is now the sole base of the British nuclear weapons fleet, though there are manufacturing and storage facilities elsewhere in the UK state. The Scottish National Party (SNP) has been the ruling government in the Scottish Parliament for 14 years and have proclaimed their opposition to nuclear weapons for decades before that; however in 2012 they changed their policy to one of supporting the UK and a future independent Scotland remaining in the NATO nuclear alliance. The leader of the newly formed Alba Party, Alex Salmond, was among the strongest supporters of NATO membership when he was SNP First Minister of Scotland.

The pro-independence All Under One Banner organisation supported by the NOW Scotland independence campaign called for the independence movement to hold a demonstration against British nuclear weapons at Faslane on **28 August.** But there was a relatively poor turnout and an eclectic programme of speakers . Independence is certainly a route to eliminating nuclear weapons from Scotland (and hence it is supported by Scottish CND). Campaigning for independence does not absolve us from fighting against the current UK government or guarantee that a future independent Scotland will not hide under the NATO nuclear umbrella. The Scottish Labour Party Conference voted against Trident in 2015. But in the Scottish Labour manifesto for the UK General Election it advocated support for the UK Labour Party policy of keeping Trident and spending 200 billion pounds on its renewal. Thousands of Labour members and voters reject the party policy of support for nuclear weapons.

While we should support all broad-based protests against nuclear weapons, the priority for environmental and independence activists should be to build the widest possible

basis for opposition to all nuclear weapons and the NATO nuclear alliance. Both environmental and independence activists should support CND, the organisation leading the mass campaign against nuclear weapons in Scotland and across Britain for over 60 years.

Put COP26 and opposition to nuclear weapons centre stage

This autumn we need to link the campaign against nuclear weapons with the forthcoming COP26, that puts Glasgow at the centre of the world stage, and that means mobilising as many people as possible for the Scottish CND demonstration on peace and climate at Faslane on **Sunday 26 September**.

E-conference charts new beginning for Radical Indy

The Radical independence campaign held its first ever online conference on Saturday 12 June. The event marks a new beginning for the campaign, which is aiming to ramp up activism on the pro-independence left.

by Jack Ferguson

(Photo by Connor Beaton; RIC contingent on Scottish Independence demonstration, Glasgow January 2020)

E-conference charts new beginning for Radical Indy

Reproduced from Scottish Socialist Voice No 561

by Jack Ferguson

The Radical independence campaign held its first ever online conference on Saturday 12 June. The event marks a new beginning for the campaign, which is aiming to ramp up activism on the proindependence left.

High on the agenda was a discussion about targeted non violent direct action and civil disobedience, demanding Scotland's right to self determination. This drew on Scotland's rich history of direct action, and involved veterans of the anti-nuclear and climate movements sharing their expertise.

Among those addressing the conference were Brenda Eadie of the NHS Workers for Fair Pay campaign, Extinction Rebellion activist Annie Lane and Janet Fenton, Scottish representative to the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons.

A strong theme running throughout the event was the need for internationalism, and for Scotland to play a more positive role in the world than it has historically. Opening the conference, Katie Gallogly Swan, global trade and environmental policy expert, said:

"One of the outcomes of Scottish independence would be a new position for Scotland in global politics. As it stands, global governance is not advancing the rights and interests of the majority of the world– whether working class communities in Scotland or the citizens of the Global South.

'Institutions built on rigged rules'

"The economic institutions are built on rigged rules, which prioritise profit-making for big firms, while leaving workers and poor people everywhere to grapple with increasing precarity, austerity, and shredded social safety

nets—socialism for the rich, and exploitation for everyone else. We can't let an independent foreign policy mean ingratiating ourselves with powerful countries and entering the race-to-the-bottom on worker's rights and taxation.

"We can't jump on the bandwagon of using the massive industrial transformation the world needs to tackle climate change to just be a means to reassert global dominance of economies like our own—it hasn't served the majority of people here, and it won't in the future."

Continuing the international theme, Welsh and Irish comrades joined a session on co-operating across these islands to break the British state. Following this, a discussion on global solidarity was opened by Raed Debiy, a political activist in the West Bank, Aratz Estonba of the Basque internationalist organisation Askapena, Sarah Glynn from Scottish Solidarity with Kurdistan, and Paul Figueroa of the Puerto Rican Independence Party, who said ahead of the day:

"This weekend as I share with Scottish comrades about Puerto Rico's struggle for independence from the United States, Joe Biden will also be meeting with Queen Elizabeth. There is no better time than now for us to come together and reaffirm that the struggles of Scotland and Puerto Rico are connected as we look to forge radical paths towards independence that will defend our national interests, our environment and resources, grow our working class, and unite us with the rest of the world."

As well as discussion and ideas, the conference had a strong focus on organising.

Throughout the day, participants were invited to use online tools to give their answers to a series of questions about how the campaign should go forward. Training sessions aimed to equip those attending with knowledge about organising locally and communicating a message through social and traditional

media.

This process will now continue through RIC's local groups, where members will be actively seeking to engage with their communities and everyone across the pro-indy left.

RIC currently has active local groups in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee as well as Angus and Mearns.

Earlier this year, it was prematurely announced by some former members that RIC had dissolved as a national body, following a controversial meeting convened over Zoom. However, RIC's local groups were not part of this process, and have taken the decision to relaunch the national campaign together.

Hope in RIC's revival

Those involved in organising the conference come from a wide range of backgrounds, including climate activists, peace campaigners, SNP, socialists, Greens and republicans. They include new activists and those who have been part of RIC since its foundation in 2012. Feedback from the event emphasised again and again that RIC's revival had given them hope again, and that many have been waiting for the signal to begin campaigning again.

Since 2014, the independence movement has splintered around a number of key fractures, often contributing to an atmosphere that can become insular and unwelcoming to wider society. This is in a context where the SNP continues to fail to articulate a clear vision for the post-neoliberal era, and of rampantly growing social conservatism within sections of the indy movement.

The need for unity among the left that standsfor a radical vision of independence, and against all forms of discrimination and inequality, has never been greater.

As a key part of the historic 2014 movement, RIC today can

play a key role. Following the Scottish Parliament elections, there is once again clearly a democratic mandate to hold an independence referendum.

Yet Boris Johnson and the Tories look set to continue to defy the will of the people, ignoring polls in the last year showing a narrow pro-indy majority. Grassroots pressure must now be ratcheted up if we are to have any hope of escaping the impasse of democracy denied.

To sign up for the RIC mailing list, visit http://bit.ly/RICNewsSignUp · To join your local group or get one started, email contact@ric.scot

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Catalan elections closely watched in Scotland

Catalonia goes to the polls on Sunday 14 February (14-F) in elections for the devolved parliament and government ("Generalitat"), The elections will be closely watched in Scotland, particularly by the independence movement looking to learn from the struggle. Glasgow Radical Independence Campaign and Dundee Radical Independence Campaign will shortly hold a joint public discussion meeting on the elections.

Below we republish an article by *Lorena Serantes*, first published on the site of the Scottish Republican Socialist Platform (RSP), analysing the political parties contesting the Catalan elections.

Catalan Fourth Internationalists in *Anticapitalistes* (part of the confederal Anticapitalistas organisation across the Spanish state) have also published a statement on the elections, available in Catalan here and in English here.

Anticapitalistes support the Catalan independence movement but warn of the need for a social response to neoliberal policies in Catalonia and the Spanish state, one that defends working class living standards and state services from cuts. In recent years sections of the radical left within both Catalonia and the Spanish state, including Podemos, the municipal movement around Barcelona Mayor Ada Colau, and the Republican Left (ERC) party that is aligned with the SNP in Scotland, have attached themselves to neo-liberal coalitions with social democrats and right wing nationalists. *Anticapitalistes* call for a break (or "rupture") from this.

They are not standing in the elections themselves, but give support to the candidates of the *CUP* ("Popular Unity

Candidacies"), the pro-independence, anticapitalist, ecosocialist and feminist grouping contesting the elections and described below. *CUP* currently have four seats in the Catalan Parliament and are looking to increase their influence.

Anticapitalistes also draw attention to the rise of the far right, openly fascist, Vox party winning seats in the new parliament for the first time.

Political party shifts ahead of the Catalan elections

RSP member *Lorena Serantes* explores ideological shifts within the Catalan political parties ahead of next week's crucial election.

Since the 1 October (1-O) independence referendum took place nearly four years ago, the political situation in Catalonia has gone through many relevant changes that can be vital for the next election and its wider context.

First, we need to understand the fundamentally imperialistic nature of the Spanish State, shown by the tactic of judicialisation of the whole Catalan independence process (especially their most recent move against Generalitat president Quim Torra). Secondly, the Catalan independence movement needs to be understood as a popular uprising for democracy and the right of self-determination within a strongly centralised state. We shouldn't refer to it as an electoral movement, nor as a civil disobedience tactic to change the nature of Spain into a federal republic. The Catalans have been able to respond to the inaction of pro-independence parties and groups (both on the right and left-wing spectrum) by strengthening the street-focused level of

activity and putting pressure on the parties to advance on building the new Catalan state.

There's a lot of work which analyses the Catalan process, the incarceration of the ANC and Òmnium leaders and the strategies of the Catalan politicians and the national government (I must clarify when I'm talking about "national" I mean the Catalan executive, as I deny the character of 'nation' to Spain, a state composed of nations and regions). My intention in this article, however, is to define and explain the political party shifts that will have an impact on the behaviour of the Catalan electorate. I will propose at first the main factors that accelerated these transformations within the parties and the party system. Following that, I will focus on developing the main topic of the article.

The main political formations from the pro-independence and the unionist blocs have increased the existing uncertainty around the issue of independence

Background

Before I begin, there are some points I need to make clear. My use of the term 'political party shifting' doesn't strictly align with the concept as utilised by political scientists. In political science we refer to it as: (1) membership changes within political parties and (2) redefined voting patterns (i.e. when the electorate switches its traditional behaviour towards parties, giving way to realignments in the political system). In contrast, I will combine both conceptual definitions and add the ideological changes the Catalan parties have gone through during these last few years. Keeping this in mind, my intention is not to write a scientific article but one that helps to understand the situation of party politics in the northeastern nation.

Both Spanish general and regional elections (i.e. elections taking place in the autonomous communities) use the

proportional representation method known as the D'Hondt formula, also used for the Scottish Parliament's regional lists. Each constituency is presented with a closed list of candidates from every party or coalition and elects a number of representatives in accordance with its population. Catalonia elects to its parliament 135 members from its four provinces (85 from Barcelona, 18 from Tarragona, 17 from Girona and 15 from Lleida). The threshold which parties need to reach to win representation is 3% of the vote.

Catalonia has changed since 2017 and the events following the 1st of October referendum. Attention has been drawn to the courts of justice, the incarceration of politicians and activists and the exile of the Catalan president Carles Puigdemont, but nobody has focused on explaining how the main political formations from the pro-independence and the unionist blocs have increased the existing uncertainty around the issue of independence.

I will not use the term "constitutionalist" or "constitutional" to define the parties that oppose independence because I don't think it's accurate and correct. A constitutionalist party is by definition a political formation that respects the constitution and legality of some territory. Spanish parties refer to themselves this way to take the powerful concept of "the law", which is incredible given how many times they have conveniently forgotten to follow it. Instead, they are profoundly unionist parties that agree on rejecting Catalan independence (or even more autonomy).

Changes

It's clear to me that there have been many factors producing changes in Catalan politics. I will therefore develop some of them.

In the pro-independence bloc – made up of the catch-all Junts

per Catalunya (Together for Catalonia), the centre-left to left-wing Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya (Republican Left of Catalonia/ERC), and the far-left Candidatura d'Unitat Popular (Popular Unity Candidacy/CUP) – the exile of Puigdemont (Junts) and other leaders from ERC and the CUP (Marta Rovira and Anna Gabriel) have pushed a renewal of leadership and new strategic plans for the future.

Leadership changes often produce positive effects (parties with a bad image can rise and recover) but also can create negative ones (voters attached to the candidate will no longer identify with the party if the new proposed faces don't represent a form of continuity). Fights to elect party leaders with a certain ideological background take place within the liberal and social democratic-oriented parties, which may result in party fragmentation or splits. Left-wing projects with a democratic structure have to decide their future too, but instead of promoting internal competition amongst different traditions, they might debate, discuss and respect all the options, establishing other ways and methods to elect a new leadership from their membership. I'm not an expert on structural changes within parties, however I understand how these can make a big impact on electoral performance.

Unionists

The unionist bloc is formed of the classic right-wing Partido Popular (People's Party/PP), the liberal right-wing Ciudadanos (Citizens/C's), the social democrat centre-right Partit Socialista de Catalunya (Socialists' Party of Catalonia/PSC) and the new extreme ultranationalist right-wing Vox. The Spanish nationalist nature of these formations has taken them to focus on the politics of the state rather than on Catalan issues, content to blame the independentist forces for the rise of extreme right groupings on the streets of Barcelona (and also other territories of Spain like Valencia) rather than address the societal problems that gave rise to them.

It’s important to clarify the PSC is not the same as PSOE in the other Spanish regions and nations, although they set up an agreement a long time ago to stand together in Catalan elections. The Catalan PSOE branch disappeared in the 1970s, since then the PSC has become the electoralist brand of the social democrats in the northeast.

PP and PSOE, the major parties in Spain, agreed on attacking the Catalan independence movement the same way, which has distanced them from Catalan civil society. Looking at Spanish politics as a whole, they have preferred to appeal to the anti-Catalan middle and high class of Madrid and the South (Andalusia, Murcia, Extremadura). PSOE’s tactic has been to feed the extreme right (specially on the PP/PSOE-controlled media) to divide the Spanish right-wing parties and make Vox the political scarecrow which can provide a reason to vote for the “left alternative” they propose. This obviously has opened a channel for Vox to promote hate speech and extremist ideologies which were previously hidden within the PP. C’s (Citizens), a free-market liberal-oriented formation, has been trying to occupy each space left out by the two major parties, from the right to the moderate left, always with a nationalistic narrative that tries to exclude everyone that doesn’t want to feel Spanish. Polarisation has settled in Catalonia because of the trajectory of Spanish nationalism.

Political parties in Catalonia have changed since 2017 from an ideological point of view and also in the electorate they want to appeal to

Therefore, we have two polarised blocs, one that leans to the centre-left civic nationalist tradition and another spanning the right-wing ultranationalist spectrum. But having said that, we cannot end our analysis with this simplistic explanation because political parties in Catalonia have changed from an ideological point of view and also in the electorate they want to appeal to. I will not analyse Podemos and the Comuns (Commons) coalition here, since they should be

regarded as a distinct phenomenon and will require a separate article to comprehend their position, fragmentations and internal instability. First, I will analyse the pro-independence bloc shifts, which are significant due to a fragmentation pattern in the traditional conservative nationalist groups.

Why an election

This election has been called not only because of the suspension of Quim Torra (again using the Spanish supposedly democratic law), but also due to the conflict between government partners Junts and Esquerra. Both of the parties had interest in holding the presidency, which caused a rupture of the coalition during the Catalan budget negotiations. As of today, Esquerra has 32 seats in Parliament, whilst Junts (Torra's party) has 20 representatives. With the break-up of the government coalition, it's obvious that talks of forming an electoral coalition like Junts pel Sí (2015-2017) won't occur, and both parties will run separately.

Junts is an alliance of little Catalan nationalist and Catalanist right-wing and centre-right liberal parties that emerged from the rupture of Convergencia i Unió (CiU) in 2014-15. CiU was formed in 1978 as a coalition of Convergencia Democrática de Catalunya (CDC), with Catalan nationalist ideas, and Uniò Democrática de Catalunya (UDC), a Catalanist non-independentist party. This alliance governed Catalonia for long periods of time (Jordi Pujol's executives) with a liberal program of deregulating basic public services and joining with Spanish nationalist parties at a state level, specially with the PP.

After the alliance was disbanded, UDC followed a long way of talks with the PSC, finally joining the social democratic party, arguing that independence is not the solution for Catalonia's problems. However, CDC changed its name to Catalan European Democratic Party (PDeCAT) to (1) avoid comparisons

with the old CiU coalition, which had been criticised for a tremendous history of corruption and fraud and (2) give the party a more centrist and pro-independence image. The party campaigned for the 2017 referendum, and the events that occurred after the vote made a big impact on the leadership of the party.

Many PDeCAT leaders were tied to the right-wing tradition of CDC, something that bothered Puigdemont's pretensions of giving the party a 'left-wing' renewal. He founded Junts per Catalunya in July 2018, accompanied by civil society well-known leaders such as the Jordis (Jordi Sánchez and Jordi Cuixart), and managed to unite dissident members from Esquerra, the PSC and even the CUP. PDeCAT's leadership, although reluctant at first, merged into Puigdemont's centrist movement, as well as other minor political parties (Action for the Republic, The Greens, Independence Rally, Democrats, etc.). Junts has been defined as a populist, centrist and Catalan nationalist party. I will challenge the concepts of populism and centrism by using a term from political science instead: the catch-all party (in Spanish, partido atrápalo-todo).

These types of parties appeal to transversalism across the political spectrum, escaping a left-right conceptualisation. Junts is a pro-independence ruling party in a typically constituted Western liberal democratic state, which will never push for a working class republic based on a socialist economic model. However, the CDC right-wingers are now trying to claw back the political space from CiU by standing alone in this next election, something that breaks Puigdemont's plans as the confluence between right-wing and left-wing groups is now impossible. Hence, with the most reactionary sector gone (PDeCAT, Convergents and other liberal-conservative soft-nationalist minor groups), Junts has become a radical centre-left party who are very critical of the Spanish state and the conservative ideology the Spanish parties share, but less so

with the disastrous handling of the public services at a Catalan level. Junts is becoming the new PSC in the pro-independence bloc, which implies the whole independence movement is going to move to the left, electorally speaking. Nevertheless, the party shift doesn't mean a change in voting patterns and behaviour, so it's very likely the Catalan bourgeoisie will still trust Junts to form a government in the nation.

ERC can become the new PSC in next week's election

The two left-wing parties in the pro-independence bloc certainly have more disagreements than points of unity. Esquerra, or ERC by its initials in Catalan, is a social democratic party with a progressivist tendency, and a relevant republican discourse, refusing to accept the terms of the Spanish monarchy and the two-party oligarchic system around PP and PSOE (which has now been broken by the birth of Podemos, C's and Vox). However, its language on self-determination evokes an individualistic conception of the rights of the people to decide their future, a liberal nationalist view they share with Junts. In actuality, ERC's nationalism is just a means to an end – their ultimate aim is to create a Catalan Republic based on the principles of Spanish republicanism.

It's now clearer than ever that a Spanish Republic is impracticable due to the resistance of the major powers to simply hold a referendum on that matter and the absence of a single Spanish nationalist party campaigning for the abolition of the aristocracy. The traditional republicans were Izquierda Unida (United Left), which is now almost dead and subjugated to Podemos' leadership. ERC always comprised people from different ideological backgrounds within the Catalanist left, until the 1980s when they started to recognise the necessity of winning an independent state in Catalonia, rather than pursuing federalism. This shift to an openly nationalist

position moved away from the party those who didn't want independence to happen, joining either PSC or Esquerra Unida (the Catalan branch of United Left). Since the referendum, with the exile of ERC's leader, Marta Rovira, the vice president of the Catalan government Pere Aragonés has gained the control of the party, and, in contrast with Torra's radical independence continuity policy, he has tried to calm down the nationalists with a new turn to the federalist response. The Spanish central administration has offered the Catalan executive a seat at the negotiating table, which ERC has accepted.

The problem is the agreement between PSOE's government and ERC ties the republican party to Pedro Sánchez and his policies, as the Catalan party supported him as prime minister after the November 2019 general election. Junts and the CUP have abstained from this dialogue instead. The current strategic decision coming from the elite of the party is focused on "expanding the party's base" to a larger membership that not only includes nationalists and independentists, but the Catalanist wing of the PSC, communists, ecologists and Podemos ex-affiliates. We could see this as an attempt to build a broader Catalanist front composed of social democrats, liberal socialists, ecologists and eurocommunists to get votes from the traditionally PSC-oriented electorate. ERC can become the new PSC in next week's election.

The CUP is the left-wing alternative formation that seeks to challenge the old social democracy. The "cupaires", as they are known in Catalan, are anticapitalists, feminists, ecosocialists, and independentists. There are different caucuses within the membership (anarchists, Trotskyists, Marxist-Leninists, etc.), and their structural organisation is quite democratic. The CUP is now under a process of leadership changes since the exile of Anna Gabriel, CUP's leader during the time of the referendum, who was charged for "sedition" by the Spanish Supreme Court, the same as Puigdemont and other

Catalan politicians. They have been experiencing tough times trying to rebuild trust with left-wing voters after the leadership of sociologist Carles Riera, under whom their electoral performance suffered big losses in 2017 and left them forced to share a parliamentary group with the PP as a result of not being large enough to create one of their own (requiring six representatives).

The unionist bloc

In the unionist bloc, the PSC is the major political formation with a strong Spanish nationalist campaign, especially after PSOE, its partners at a state level, won the 2019 general election under Pedro Sánchez, who belongs to the rebel caucus of the traditional social democratic party. The Catalan socialists moved from a Catalanist and federalist ideology at first towards a more right-wing approach following the 2017 referendum, which explains the removal of the federalist sector, which joined ERC. The PSC has two different types of electorate: Barcelona and Tarragona's anti-independence middle class, and Girona and Lleida's working class. In short, they appeal to the oligarchies in two provinces whilst keeping a progressive rhetoric. This switch from left to right is applicable only to the national question, i.e., it's still a social democratic party in economic terms, but no longer Catalanist, as it has incorporated a strong anti-independence policy and a Spanish nationalist ideology. Shifting this way, the PSC will attempt to gain back its electorate lost to C's (Citizens) in 2017. The liberal current is now more relevant and has more capacity than ever within the formation.

Ciudadanos-C's is a liberal centre-right party that came into Catalan politics to campaign against Catalan-only-speaking schools and Catalan nationalist ideals (paradoxically, with a Spanish ultranationalist approach). Its desire to celebrate Spanish identity above Catalan identity has convinced the anti-nationalist PSC supporters and the ultra right-wing

groups to give their votes to Albert Rivera's (now Inés Arrimadas') party instead of the declining Catalan PP. Consequently, C's was the winner in 2017 elections, managing to achieve a combination of the anti-nationalist vote with that of the working class (mostly in Barcelona). C's got 36 representatives (25.4% of total vote), but from 2018 onwards its constant opportunistic turns to the right or left according to whatever would suit best at the time rendered the party incapable of maintaining a good position in Spanish politics. In last year's general election, C's suffered a huge loss of seats (from 57 to 10), and, after their leader's resignation, the liberals are experiencing a precipitous decline that will definitely bring joy to the PP and PSC.
Neo-fascist and neo-Nazi groupings that previously tended to operate on the margins of politics now have an electoral vehicle to bring their hate speech to parliament

The classic right-wing People's Party (PP) isn't quite as popular in Catalonia, as they are associated with the past and Francoist ideologies. Despite the overwhelming majority of Catalans rejecting the party, the PP has been capable of retaining some votes thanks to its anti-Catalan nationalism message and good relations with CiU. The rise of C's during the Catalan independence process and the recent appearance of Vox have prevented the PP from becoming the first option for Spanish nationalist voters. Also, the bad choices of the leadership, with the ex-candidate Xavier García Albiol being openly racist against Roma people and the lack of new charismatic leaders in Catalonia to replace him, have left the party with no chance of ruling the Generalitat. They would prefer to run Catalonia from the central administration in Madrid, despite not having more than four representatives in the Northeastern nation.

As for the extreme right-wing, represented by the Spanish ultras of Vox, it is too soon to analyse the situation of Santiago Abascal's group in the northeast. We know that, since

the referendum, the Spanish right-wing has become far more extreme and exclusionary and, even though Vox has no representation or electoral base in Catalonia, neo-fascist and neo-Nazi groupings that previously tended to operate on the margins of politics now have an electoral vehicle to bring their hate speech to parliament. It's concerning how Vox's participation in the Catalan institutions could turn into another excuse for the Spanish state to pass legislation that impedes self-determination rights, and it is, of course, a threat to the human, collective and individual rights of the Catalan people.

Conclusions

The polls show a strong decline of C's, which would obtain 13-15 seats, down from the 36 they have held since 2017. Polls also show a disputed and narrow victory for either PSC or ERC, with 30-35 seats for each party. Junts would fall consequently to ERC's rise. Podemos-EU-Equo and PP would remain in between seven and 12 seats. We will probably see a recovery from the CUP; the left-wing party would obtain eight to 14 seats (they have had four since 2017). Vox would obtain anywhere from six to 10 representatives, making a big breakthrough in Catalonia.

There will be a huge difficulty in forming alliances and there is the possibility that the pro-independence and unionist blocs will break themselves apart because of the complexity of the situation and the narrow outcome expected. If the PSC wins the election, the obligation to develop agreements with the extreme right to get a majority might challenge the unionist bloc's possibilities (primarily due to PSOE's strategy at the state level opposing Vox, which makes this coalition incoherent in Catalonia, rather than democratic obligation). In the same way, ERC and Junts will require an agreement (including the CUP) to regain the parliamentary majority. Both parties are currently in a dispute and taking opposite directions ideologically and strategically. This means the

idea of a PSC-ERC coalition is quite possible. We still don't know the political implications that could have, but what we can anticipate is the end of the independence process started in 2014-15.

Glossary

Catalanism: Ideology pointing to the defence of Catalan's autonomy within the Spanish state, it was developed around the first period of the 20st century by early nationalists who didn't support self-determination but thought Spain should be a decentralised country.
Catalan nationalism: Ideology that identifies Catalonia as a nation with inalienable rights such as self-determination within the Spanish state.
Catalan independence: Ideology that defends Catalonia should be an independent state outside Spain.
Transversalism: Political strategy that, in opposition to identity politics, intends to represent every group of society regardless of class, ideology, nationality, race or gender.
Regionalism: Ideology that defends regional autonomy and decentralisation policies within a state.

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