

GZ.I Galiza International



50th anniversary of “Galizan National Day”

Joining together for Galiza

“One simple idea: Joining together for Galiza” was the phrase chosen by the Galizan Nationalist Bloc (BNG) for this year’s Galizan National Day celebrations on 25 July, with even more people talking part in the demonstration than in previous years, with over 20,000 people answering the call of the Patriotic Front and taking to the streets of the capital, Santiago de Compostela, demanding the right of the Galizan people to build a future of freedom for itself.

This year’s demonstration was especially important, marking the 50th anniversary of the restoration of the commemoration by Galizan nationalism. Galiza Nationalism was relaunched as we know it today on 25 July 1968 in the midst of Franco’s dictatorship by the Galizan People’s Union (UPG), one of the parties within the BNG, founded four years



earlier in 1964. The UPG called upon the Galizans to converge on the main Obradoiro Square in Santiago, although finally this was not possible as the city was literally overrun by the Spanish military. Undaunted, the nationalists militants present decided to relocate to the main park where they hung a banner over the entrance emblazoned with the words “Long live Free Socialist Galiza!” which remained in place for several hours.

That action in 1968 followed in the footsteps of the nationalism of the pre-war period which had been celebrating 25 July since 1920 demanding national rights for Galiza, established at the 2nd Nationalist Assembly held by the Language Brotherhoods in 1919. The commemoration was expressly forbidden by the Primo de Rivera dictatorship, but went on to

gain popularity during the Spanish Republic thanks to the mass line adopted by the Galizanist Party, with the public speeches and rally and the patriotic demonstrations held in 1933 and 1934. The regime of Fascist terror which followed the military coup of 1936, with the ruthless persecution of nationalism, led to a break in the celebration.

Coinciding with the 50th anniversary of that first reinstated Galizan National Day, this year the BNG commemorated this landmark by hanging an exact replica of the original banner across the main entrance to the park together with a publication containing images from this half a century with key political information to contextualise each year.





Sovereignty for Galiza and social justice: the main demands on a massive Galizan National Day

Galizan National Day is the culmination of a long year of unflagging political activity of the part of the BNG, demonstrating that ours is the only organisation in Galiza capable of mobilising society in defence of the right of the Galizan people to exercise its sovereignty and upholding the rights of the working classes by being permanently involved in social conflicts to defend the interests of our people in the institutions and in the streets. The BNG is firmly convinced that national sovereignty is the only way forwards to building a Galiza based on social justice.

In her address at the final rally in the main Obradoiro Square, the National Spokesperson for the BNG, Ana Pontón, stressed that our country needs a radical change in order to reverse the process of abandonment and discrimination

it continues to suffer at the hands of the Spanish State, it left and right alike. This change will only be come about if it is led by the BNG: "Galiza is in urgent need of a change of direction which will only come about through the BNG because it alone has its head and its heart firmly rooted in this country. That is the challenge before us. That change must begin with the local elections in 2019. By incorporating more people and ideas, we must offer all of the boroughs a nationalist project which takes full advantage of our own true potential, enabling us to push onwards to a better future. [...] A better future for Galiza will never be forthcoming if we look to the [Spanish] People's Party (PP), nor indeed do any of the other Spanish parties have a project for this country, including those who are ready to waste vast amounts of energy in-fighting

here, yet do not have the strength to raise their voices in their HQs in Madrid, nor those who defend one thing in Madrid and the preach the opposite in Galiza".

The National Spokesperson emphasised the need to join forces to lead a better country: "Joining forces for Galiza means defending decent jobs and wages, equality and the right to live and work in Galiza. A bright future awaits us if we place our trust in our own forces [...]. We have a united BNG with clear ideas which represents the only real, viable alternative to the untoward Peoples' Party, which is why a large sector of Galiza society is looking to us with hope. We stand well placed to take a great stride forwards, so let us do it."



Festigal 2018

For several years now, the youth wing of the BNG, Galiza Nova, and the BNG's Galiza Sempre foundation, have jointly organised the Festigal festival as part of the National Day celebrations, with concerts, sports events, craft stalls, books, food, etc., as well as a wide range of talks and debates, especially a round-table on international politics focusing on the right of peoples to self-determination, democracy and social justice within the framework of the EU, with Ana Miranda (BNG), Josu Juaristi (EH-Bildu), Jordi Solé (ERC) and Megan Fearon (Sinn Féin), and another round-table where Roger Castellanos (Poble Lluire), David Minoves (CIEMEN) and Ramón Grosfoguel discussed the current political situation in Catalonia, coinciding with the presentation of the latest issue of the review Terra e Tempo entitled "Catalonia and Galiza: analysis for progress".

International Delegations

We were accompanied throughout the National Day celebrations by several international delegations from the rest of the State and around the world, namely Sinn Féin (Ireland), Plaid Cymru (Wales), Republican Left of Catalonia, Poble Lliure (Catalonia), Valencian Nationalist Bloc (BNV), Basque Nationalist Party (EAJ/PNV), EH-Bildu, Sortu and Eusko Alkartasuna (Basque Country), Més per Mallorca, Més per Menorca, European Free Alliance (EFA), Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), Canarian Nationalist Alternative (ANC), People's Unity (Canary Isles), Castilian Left (IZCA), Left Bloc (Portugal), Portuguese Communist Party (PCP) as well as CIEMEN, the Consul for Venezuela and the intellectual from Puerto, Ramón Grosfoguel.



30th Anniversary of Galiza Nova



On 24 July, Galiza Nova, the youth wing of the BNG, commemorated its 30th anniversary with a political act bringing together many historical members of the organisation, together with several international delegations and nearly 400 members. The speeches and concert were followed by a tribute to Castelao and Rosalía de Castro, two key figures for Galiza and Galizan young people, buried in the Parthenon of Illustrious Galizans. The event culminated with a March for Independence, organised for the second time through the streets of the old town of Santiago de Compostela.

Galiza with Catalonia

Over the last few months, the Galizan Nationalist Bloc has carried out a series of political acts on its own and in conjunction with other political and grassroots organisations as part of the Galiza with Catalonia Platform in support of the political and social forces in Catalonia who defend the right of their people to decide its future freely for itself.

These have included institutional declarations and motions in local and provincial councils and the Galizan Parliament, rallies and a wide range of symbolic acts and talks and debates involving the participation of leaders of the Republican Left of Catalonia (ERC) and the Popular Unity Candidacy (CUP).

The BNG has unwaveringly adopted a clear position condemning the violent conduct of the Spanish security forces in Catalonia, the manipulation of the justice system and the sewers of the deep State, the persecution and imprisonment of political dissidents, the application

of Art. 155 of the Spanish Constitution which suspended the Autonomous Government in Catalonia and the role played by the Spanish Crown.

Anyone who calls themselves a democrat, be they nationalist or not and regardless of where they stand on the question of Catalonia independence, now has more than reasons to be deeply worried about the democratic backsliding we are undergoing. The repression unleashed last year against the pro-independence movement in Catalonia is now being turned on anyone, organisation or political proposal for transforming society which inconveniences the powers that be.

As usual, the response on the part of the Spanish left (including all of its offshoots) has been to keep its distance, failing to speak out in an apparent show of even-handedness which only falls short practice, placing them clearly on the side of the oppressor.



The BNG will continue to support the Catalan cause, in an exercise of true international solidarity and also because we as a nation also have much at stake in what takes place on the streets of Catalonia.



The Meirás 19: Fascism never again!

Defending democracy, freedom, justice and dignity is not only a right, it is a duty. That is precisely what a group of democratic Galizans made up of left-wing nationalist militants, trade-unionists, grassroots and cultural activists and people working to restore the memory of what happened during the Francoist dictatorship did on 30 August 2017 in a peaceful and symbolic act which involved unfurling two banners from the Meirás Manor house calling upon the public bodies to intervene and reclaim all of the property plundered by the Franco following the military coup which remains in the hands of the dictator's family and return it to the Galizian people.

As a result of this action, the National Francisco Franco Foundation, together with Franco's daughter, Carmen Franco y Polo, and the dictator's grandson, José Cristóbal Martínez-Bordiú, lodged a complaint against 19 people liable for at least 3 years and 6 months imprisonment which could rise to 13 years imprisonment for each of the accused, as well as an indeterminate fine. In other words, they could be facing a total of up of 247 years imprisonment and half a million euros in fines.

For the BNG, this is both politically and legally unfounded, once again seeking to criminalise the exercise of the democratic right to the freedom of speech which we see as extremely serious and wholly unacceptable. The case is all the more worrying given that the litigants are the dictator's own family who still continues to enjoy the spoils of war and a Foundation whose stated aims



include an apology of Fascism and the Francoist dictatorship which should not even exist, much less receive State funding.

We share the demand of the accused (many of whom are members of the BNG) that all of the properties and items wrongly seized by Franco in Galiza (including the Casa de Cornide in A Coruña and the sculptures of Abraham and Isaac taken from the Portal of Glory of Santiago Cathedral) be returned to the Galizian people as a democratic act, finally delivering justice to those who suffered this pillage and all of the victims of the dictatorship and as an excellent means of restoring the democratic memory and collective dignity of the Galizian people.

The BNG will continue to put pressure on the Spanish government to repeal all of the legislation which restricts public rights and freedoms and to restore the rights of all of those who have been unfairly persecuted as a basic demand for dignity and democracy.

We are convinced that the motives behind our action are shared by a vast majority of Galizian society who believe that it is unfair that this property and others like it

such as the Casa de Cornide in A Coruña and the sculptures of Abraham and Isaac taken from the Portal of Glory of Santiago Cathedral, remain in the hands of one single family, namely that of the dictator, Francisco Franco, who acquired them unlawfully through an abuse of power and his illegal coup and by the terror wielded against the population in order to hold on to power.

We believe that the fact that these properties remain in the clutches of the Franco family is a perfect example of the way the true power structures of the dictatorship go on unchanged, be it at economic, the judicial, media and many other levels of politics, handed down to the regime ushered in in 1978 which remains in place to this day, giving rise to a very efficient democracy whereby, forty years later, the Spanish State continues to persecute the freedom of speech, imprisoning people for their opinions and their political convictions.

The words emblazoned on the banners which we unfurled at Meirás continue to run as true as ever: "The manor belongs to the Galizian people", "Return what you have stolen!" and "Francoism, Never Again!"



Refugees

The BNG considers the EU policy of looking the other way while the Mediterranean becomes a mass grave as inhumane and disgraceful. Saving lives is not a crime and it is neither realistic nor ethical to pretend that people are not risking their lives at sea to escape war and economic hardship at home which is why the BNG denounces this on-going criminalisation and passivity in order to finally put an end to the dire social and economic situations in the countries of origin. We do this through the pertinent institutions with a range of actions, including our MEP, Ana Miranda, boarding the lifesaving vessel together with other MEPs to help with the rescue of 59 people carried out of the NGO Proactive Open Arms.

Assembly of the European Free Alliance (EFA)

Our National Spokesperson, Ana Pontón, and our MEP, Ana Miranda, headed the BNG delegation at the General Assembly of the European Free Alliance (EFA) held in Landshut (Germany). The BNG has been a member of the EFA since it was first founded in 1981, an organisation made up of 43 political parties that uphold the right to self-determination for the peoples of Europe.

The Assembly covered topics ranging from Brexit, the on-going repression and the restriction of rights and freedoms in the Spanish State and the EU electoral reform. The BNG tabled a proposal covering issues relating to Galiza such as the Atlantic rail corridor and the fishing agreement with Morocco as well as others affecting nations such as Kurdistan and the Sahara.



Free Lula!

The BNG organised several acts in support of the President of Brazil, Lula da Silva, and joined the international campaign demanding his release from prison and in favour of his democratic right to stand as President in the forthcoming elections. The BNG firmly believes that he was the victim of a mock trial as part of the wider political and media persecution which extends to other countries of South and Central America.

EU Electoral reform

The BNG is deeply critical of the electoral reform recently passed by the EU which we see as an attack on respect for national, political and cultural pluralism.

The aim of the Council of the EU to return to the electoral law of 1978 takes place in the run-up to the European elections set for the end of May 2019. This reform will hit the single constituencies such as Spain and Germany with over 35 seats hardest, imposing a minimum threshold of 2%-5% which would effectively mean that millions of European citizens would no longer be represented in the European Parliament, thereby failing to reflect the true will of the electorate in a clear attempt on the part of the major parties to restrict the presence of smaller parties.

International

São Paulo Forum

The São Paulo Forum is a meeting first began in Brazil in 1990, when the Brazilian Workers' Party (PT) invited parties from South and Central America to meet to discuss a democratic alternative to Neoliberalism, paving the way for a wide-scale application around the world.



The MEP for the BNG, Ana Miranda, took part in the 24th Forum organised in La Habana in July by the Communist Party of Cuba (PCC) together with 625 delegates from 51 countries belonging to 168 organisations, ranging from political parties to social and intellectual movements, providing the BNG with an opportunity to strengthen its ties with left-wing forces in Latin America and around the world and to reaffirm the BNG's political commitment to internationalism.

ERC National Conference

The BNG attended the ERC National Conference held on 30 June to 1 July in Hospitalet de Llobregat with the title "Building the Republic" and where the Republican Left of Catalonia renewed its roadmap.

As well attending the Assembly itself, the BNG, represented by the member of its National Executive and Head of International Relations for the Spanish State and Portugal, Rubén Cela, also took part in a round-table debate on the situation of stateless nations in the EU.

Més per Mallorca Congress

The BNG attended the 3rd Assembly of Més per Mallorca held in Lloseta in March where the organisation elected a new Executive headed by Bel Busquets and Guillem Balboa as head of the Guarantee Commission.

Castilian National Day

The BNG also once again attended the Castilian National Day celebrations organised by The Castilian Left (IZCA) held on 23 April in Villalar de los Comuneros with the title: "For a Republican, Feminist, Communist Spring".

Sinn Féin Annual Congress

Given the relations that exist between the BNG and Sinn Féin, it was only natural that we attended the annual Ard Fheis held in Béal Feirste (Belfast) where we met with its President, Mary Lou McDonald, and its Vice-president, Michelle O'Neill. During the Congress, Sinn Féin discussed questions such as the reunification of Ireland and social, environmental and employment policies, etc. in a year marked by Brexit and its consequences for the North of Ireland.

Participation in the Avante! Festival

Every year the BNG and Galiza Nova take part in the Avante! Festival held on 7-9 September by the Portuguese Communist Party (PCP) with a stand in the international area, enabling us to strengthen our ties with the Portuguese people in general and the Portuguese Communist Party in particular through bilateral meetings with them and other political and social organisations which attend the event.

Farewell to the Cuban Consul in Galiza and the 50th Anniversary of CHE GUEVARA

The BNG attended the farewell dinner for the out-going Consul for Cuba, José Antonio Solana, who after five years in office in Galiza NOW returns to Cuba where he will continue to work for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs pending a new appointment. The BNG will continue to work closely with the Consulate and the Galizan solidarity movement led by the Francisco Villamil Galiza-Cuba Friendship Association, working with them and other organisations on Cuban issues, including the events held to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the murder of Che Guevara, including a series of lectures by the Cuban writer and economist, Carlos Tablada Pérez, author of "The Economic Thought of Ernesto Che Guevara", and a national tribute to Che Guevara in the main theatre in Santiago de Compostela.





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