

UNIT 9.- THE QUESTION OF NATIONALISM



Political map of Spain, 1854

<http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/3/30/1850espanya.jpg>

The new Europe after 1945 was ethnically more homogenous than before, as a result of redrawing borders and of population relocation. However, given Europe's history, homogeneity was neither possible nor desirable. Some states were composed of more than one nation, such as Belgium, Yugoslavia, Switzerland or Spain, but in the two decades after World War II, in all those nations without state in Europe, nationalism did not play any significant or major political role. Yet, this would change in the 1970s and 1980s.

Until then, nationalism was not part of any main political agenda for different reasons. One of the more relevant was that after the horrors of nazism and the war, the thought prevailed that ethnic ties and national ideas were obsolete and were associated with the discredited racist ideas of the nazis and other far-right associations. For many the nationalist revival in the 1970s was a surprise. In some could be seen the influence of liberation movements led by Mao Tse Tung, Frantz Fanon and Ernesto Che Guevara.

In Spain, as in other countries, nationalist aspirations have been in the background for a long time, although it reached one of its peak points in the 1970s, with an acute phase of rebellion in which two issues stood out: the Basque terrorist organisation ETA and political demands for autonomy in Catalonia. The democratisation of the country eased the public expression of nationalist aspirations.

Nationalism in Catalonia and the Basque Country aims for the conservation of institutional particularities, deeply rooted in the reality of some non-Castilian societies.

Many times, supported by the rural population, it goes against the centralist tendency of the liberal state. Nationalism receives doctrinal and ideological support from romantic history.

In the 19th century there was a renaissance of regional cultures, rediscovering national identities. A dispirited, decadent and powerless Spain could hardly manage to hold together its constituent entities anymore. Profound economic, social and cultural gaps separated centre from periphery, making it very difficult to keep the fold together. A choir of centrifugal voices was spreading, especially in the North and North-East of the Spanish peninsula.

An important distinction between nationalism in Spain and in other areas in Europe is that, in other parts of Europe poverty and underdevelopment played an important role for these areas to claim their particular national identity. This is the case of Northern Ireland, where the religious factor is important, confronting Catholics and Protestants. Spain is a rare example of a western European state whose core, Castile, was less economically developed than some of its culturally distinct regions.

Due to this fact, and despite the fact that Catalonia and the Basque Country have not had a continuous autonomous government such as Scotland, for example, has had, they have managed to monopolise certain **bourgeois** occupations within their regions, the same kind of ethnic specialisations of valued occupation that are also seen in other areas, such as again, Scotland.

Catalan Nationalism



Ramon Casas's poster for the Floral Games

http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/8/85/Rc_cart17.jpg/62px-Rc_cart17.jpg

Catalan nationalism started off as a reaction to the incapacity of the Spanish state and the growing gap between the social and economic structure of Catalonia and the rest of the Spanish state –excepting the Basque Country. Catalan nationalism was promoted by the bourgeoisie, who, being unable to hold any important role in state politics and modernise the state following the industrialists' interest, preferred to contest that state from a nationalist perspective.

Catalonia was the centre and capital of the Aragon Crown until the end of the 15th century and had had their own constitutions and laws until 1716, when they were abolished by the Decree of *Nueva Planta*. With this history in the background, Catalan nationalism set off in the 19th century as a movement of literary renovation and language recovery –the Catalan language had been marginalized. This movement was called *La Renaixença*. Important landmarks were 1833, when the poet Aribau wrote his *Oda a la Pàtria* (Ode to the Homeland), and 1859, when the Floral Games, a literary competition well-known in the Medieval Ages, were restored. Literary and historical activity was supported by the press, Catalan intellectuals, and the bourgeoisie. There was a emphasis on the Catalan language as one of the main distinctive factors of Catalan nationalism and of cultural difference.

Castilians and Catalans represented two different realities, two different ideologies that were more and more confronted. Until the agrarian crisis at the end of the 19th century, the battle field was between Castilian free-traders –whose posture materialised in 1869 Figuerola's tariff- and Catalan protectionists, supported by Catalan industrialists.

Catalan nationalism developed from intellectual regionalism to autonomous territory. In 1892 the Catalanist Union wrote the first project for an autonomous Catalonia in the *Bases de Manresa* (Bases of Manresa), with a strongly conservative character. After the 1898 disaster in Cuba against US troops, Catalonia was seen as a nation in its own right. 1901 saw the birth of a Catalan conservative political party, the *Lliga Catalanista* (Catalanist League), also *Lliga Regionalista de Catalunya* or *La Lliga*, which would be important in politics until the Spanish Civil War.

The politically turbulent years of the turn of the century witnessed hopeful political developments in Catalonia regarding nationalist aims. Nationalist ideas developed, one of the main works in this regard being *The Catalan Nationality* by Enric Prat de la Riba. This politician considered Catalonia as a nation and differentiated between homeland and state, while advocating for a federation of different nation-states within Spain. Other ideologists endorsed the federalist stream.

An important episode was the establishment of the *Mancomunitat de Catalunya* (1914-1925) under Prat de la Riba's presidency. This was the first experiment in political self-management since 1714. It was limited but it did not last long. It implied a merging of the four provincial councils in Catalonia, and had purely administrative and cultural functions. The four provincial councils continued to exist but the unfulfilled plan was that in 1920 the *Mancomunitat* would become the only county council in Catalonia, therefore abolishing the administrative division in provinces, that was alien to Catalonia. Through this institution there was an attempt to draw up a Catalan Statute, that although it had limited powers, was never approved by the central government. The *Mancomunitat* was dissolved by dictator Primo de Rivera in 1925.

¡ESPAÑOL!

¡Guerra al Estatuto catalán!

En tanto que el intelectual, el obrero y el profesional castellanos, no podrán ejercer cargos en Cataluña, los catalanes podrán hacerlo en toda España.

¡¡ESO ES EL ESTATUTO CATALAN!!

Mientras las contribuciones e impuestos, graven hasta el límite a los demás españoles, los catalanes, sonreirán magníficos, ante nuestra muerte económica.

¡¡ESO ES EL ESTATUTO CATALAN!!

¡COMERCIANTES! ¡PUEBLO!

Hasta no saber a qué ateneros, no compreis productos catalanes.

Mientras para Cataluña, salieron millones y millones de pesetas y para esa Región, se dictaron leyes proteccionistas, Castilla sucumbía, por falta de toda protección y auxilio.

En este comercio, no admitimos visita de viajantes catalanes o que representen casas catalanas, interin no sepamos el resultado de la discusión del ESTATUTO.

Imp. RAMIRO GÓMEZ-Talavera

Spanish right wing campaign against the Catalan Statute
http://www.histocat.cat/img/menuaux/art_estatut1932.gif

From 1918 the nationalist party *La Lliga* realised that the Catalan bourgeoisie was unlikely to achieve one of its main aims, to be part of, and have a relevant role in the central government in Madrid, despite being the richest region of Spain. It was at that point that these Catalan politicians decided to play hard the card for Catalan autonomy. Other parties that appeared on the scene with nationalist aspirations, such as *Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya* (Republican Left of Catalonia), founded in 1931 after the unification of different nationalist organisations, aimed for an independent state for Catalonia and had charismatic leaders such as Francesc Macià and Lluís Companys.

During the Second Republic (1931-1936) and the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), Francesc Macià proclaimed in Barcelona the Catalan Republic within the Iberian Federation on the 14th April 1931, although he had to retract later. *Esquerra*

Republicana became the most important party in Catalonia. A Catalan Statute was approved in 1932 and Francesc Macià became the first president of the restored *Generalitat*, the autonomous Catalan government, being replaced at his death in 1933 by Lluís Companys. Parallel to the 1934 failed workers' revolt in Asturias, Companys declared the Catalan State within the Spanish Federal Republic, and for this reason, the right-wing government in Madrid suspended the *Generalitat* and jailed its president. In 1936 *Esquerra Republicana*, ERC, was part of the Popular Front that won the elections that year. Then, and until the end of the war, the Catalan government and its president was restored. Franco's victory in the war implied that Catalan and Basques autonomies were suppressed and their language prohibited. Lluís Companys was exiled until being arrested by the Gestapo in 1940, and sent back to Spain, where he was executed in Montjuïc.

After Franco's death, in the process of transition to democracy, most political parties in Catalonia claimed for autonomy. There was a popular mass demonstration claiming for autonomy on the 11th September 1977, on the national day of Catalonia. The reformist government in Madrid, acknowledged the Catalan government in exile and its president, Josep Tarradellas, was restored with the *Generalitat*. The Constitution of 1978 defines Spain as a unitary state, non centralist and divided into autonomous communities, acknowledging all the different languages within the Spanish state. The Catalan Statute was approved on 1979 and the first elected president after that was Jordi Pujol, from the conservative nationalist party *Convergència i Unió*, CIU. Since then, conflicts have arisen over whether to extend autonomy, or what powers the Catalan government does or does not have. ERC still claims independence and intervenes as part of the three-party government that won the election in 2003, in the writing of a new Statute, which they later disclaimed and which was approved in 2006 .

Basque Nationalism

Basque nationalism developed for the most part in the 20th century, maturing first in Bilbao, an industrial city, as a reaction of an advanced economy towards the stagnation of the centre. Conversely, it has its roots in the Carlists and in the thoughts, doings and writings of Sabino de Arana. In fact, Arana's father was a Carlist as he was himself in his youth. This is why Basque nationalism had particular characteristics during this period, linked to the old "fueros"* and the last Carlist War. When Sabino de Arana started developing his nationalist thinking, he limited it to Vizcaya, and claimed for independence. In 1894 he founded the first nationalist organisation in the Basque Country. He wrote a declaration of principles: confessional –defending the Catholic religion, racist –the Basque race as a base for his nationalism, the desire to restore the traditional legal order –fueros, and the idea of a confederation of Basque territories. Arana also created, during the same year, 1894, the Basque flag, and in 1895 founded the Basque Nationalist Party, which is now one of the oldest parties in the Spanish state, although it has changed part of its original ideology.

The Basque Nationalist party was to play an important role in Spanish politics from the Second Republic. In 1936, after several setbacks, the Basque Statute of autonomy was approved and José Antonio Aguirre, from the Basque Nationalist Party,

* A document with a set of laws conferring rights and privileges to a territory, community or institution. Similar to the English *charter*.

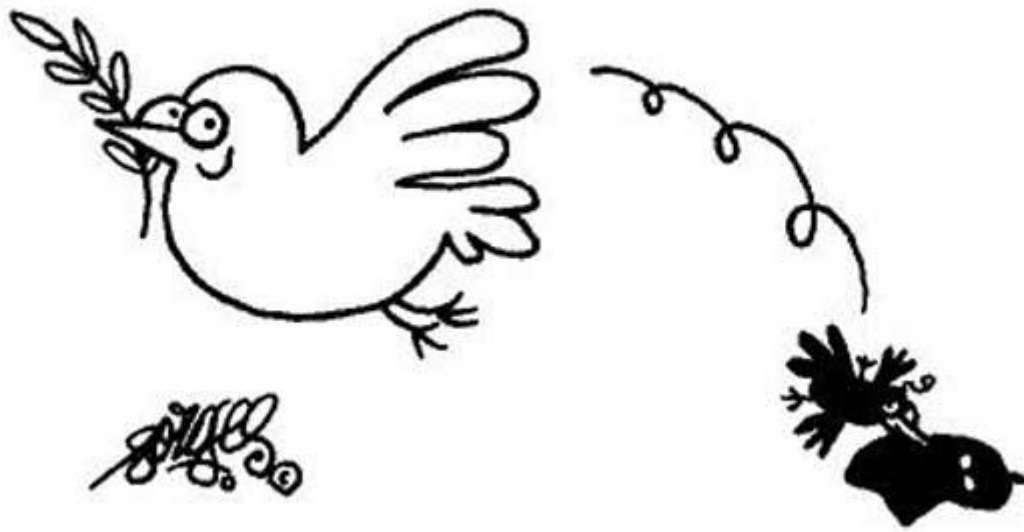
was appointed president of the autonomous government. The Basque Country was on the side of the Republic during the Spanish Civil War, and discredited the Nationalist side's justification of the crusade, defending Catholic religion, given that the Basques and particularly its government were clearly Catholic.

As in the case of Catalonia, with the end of the war and the arrival of Franco's brutal dictatorship, the Basque autonomy was revoked and their supporters persecuted. After Franco's death, when Adolfo Suárez, the Spanish prime minister, was leading the reform for the transition to democracy, following the steps in Catalonia up to a point, the General Basque Council was constituted in 1978. However, Suárez's government made a mistake when they did not invite the Basque Nationalist Party to conversations about autonomy as it did with Catalan parties and other regions. As a result, The Basque Nationalist party adopted a position of abstention in the referendum on the 1978 Constitution. Abstention was the winning option in the Basque Country, with only 27,7% of the census voting in favour of the Constitution. These results allowed Basque nationalists to say the Constitution was never approved in the Basque Country, something that terrorist organisation ETA used in its favour. The so called Statute of Guernica was approved in 1979. A proposal for a new Statute, also called the Ibarretxe Plan was approved by the Basque parliament in 2004 but was rejected by the Spanish parliament. José Ibarretxe is the current president –lehendakari- of the Basque government.

ETA

ETA means Euzkadi and liberty -Euzkadi ta Azkatasuna. During the 1950s, conditions in the Basque Country were favourable for the development of a nationalist alternative different to the Basque Nationalist Party. Several new initiatives came to light almost at the same time, such as the movement for the *ikastolas* or schools in Euskera -the Basque language, the attempts to unify rules for this language, and a letter signed by 339 priests about the situation in the Basque Country.

In 1959 a group of young people, mostly university students, who were dissidents from the Basque Nationalist Party and a nationalist group initiated in the university called EGIN, created ETA. ETA responds to the obsession of Basque inter-class people about the loss of their national identity and the feeling of being an occupied country. The loss of national identity was accentuated by the economic industrial transformations in the territory and the subsequent migration waves from other parts of Spain –migrants that were contemptuously called *maketos*.



Cartoon on ETA ceasefire in 2006 by Forges, published in El País, 22 March 2006

ETA vindicated the armed struggle as a means for the independence of the Basque Country, claiming as well to be anti-capitalist and anti-monopolist. They are influenced by the anti-colonial struggle in Asia and Africa, and the revolutions in Algeria and Cuba. They did not have much credit among the Basque population, but indiscriminate repression against the Basque people attracted sympathies and awoke the national consciousness of the Basque population.

Gradually, during the 1960s, they identified more and more with the Basque working class, as shown by the popular protest for the killing of one of its members, Txabi Etxebarrieta. ETA vindicated then not only Euzkadi's independence but also the socialist revolution, although this led to divisions regarding their ideological definition. From 1966, there were two ways for ETA members to see their national struggle: 1) purely nationalist, 2) nationalist with Marxist orientation. Nevertheless, ETA's ideological character was later slowly losing strength. All social or Marxist orientation was lost leaving the basic demand for the right of self-determination for the Basque Country, which ETA equates to independence. After Spain's democratic reforms the loss of an ideological stand has become clearer, caught in the vicious circle of terrorism.

Chronology and other points in Catalan and Basque Nationalism

CATALAN NATIONALISM

"La Renaixença".

1833: Aribau "Oda a la pàtria"

1859: Jocs Florals (Floral Games)

1892: *Bases de Manresa* by “Unió Catalanista”

1898: Catalonia as a nation

1901: Lliga Regionalista de Catalunya

Turn of the century: Prat de la Riba “La nacionalitat catalana” (The Catalan nation)

1914: Mancomunitat de Catalunya. President Prat de la Riba

During the Republic and civil war, main points :

- **In Barcelona, Macià proclaimed the Catalan republic within the Iberian federation, although he had to retract later (14-4-1931). ERC becomes an important nationalist party, more radical than *La Lliga*.**
- **Catalan Statute, 1932.**
- **The proclamation of the Catalan State by the then president of the Catalan government, Companys (October 1934). Companys jailed later.**
- **In 1940 Companys is executed by Franco's troops and the Catalan government goes into exile.**

After Franco:

- **Demonstration for autonomy 11 September 1977.**
- **Recognition of the Catalan government in exile (Tarradellas).**
- **Constitution 1978: unitary state, non centralist, divided into autonomous communities (the fourth power), following art. 2, title 8. Art. & Preamble: recognition of different languages.**
- **Catalan Statute. 1978.**
- **CiU (Convergència i Unió)**
- **1981 UCD and PSOE signed the "Law for the Harmonisation and Ordering of the Autonomy Process", LOAPA.**

BASQUE NATIONALISM

1894 : Sabino de Arana creates first nationalist party of the Basque country.

1895: Basque flag. Partido Nacionalista Vasco (PNV) Basque Nationalist Party .

1880s Unión Vasco-Navarra

Remember: Basque autonomy statute project: October 1936.

After Franco:

- **In the Basque country the General Basque Council was also constituted.**
- **Guernica statute 1979**

- **Elections 25-10-98**

ETA

- **Conditions of the 50s: ikastolas, Euskera language, priests' letter.**
- **1959: ETA starts. Split from PNV and EKIN.**
- **Ideology of ETA. Evolution**

Main attacks:

1968. Eta killed Melitón Manzanás.

1970. Trial of Burgos

1973. Eta killed General Carrero Blanco

After Franco:

Threat to the process of transition to democracy.

1978 Herri Batasuna is founded as political wing of ETA.

1980 was ETA's bloodiest year: 118 people died in different incidents.

1987 the worse outrage: 21 people killed after a bomb exploded in a supermarket in Barcelona.

1988 HB refused to sign a pact rejecting violence that had been signed by all other political parties.

1989 ETA announced unilateral cease-fire.

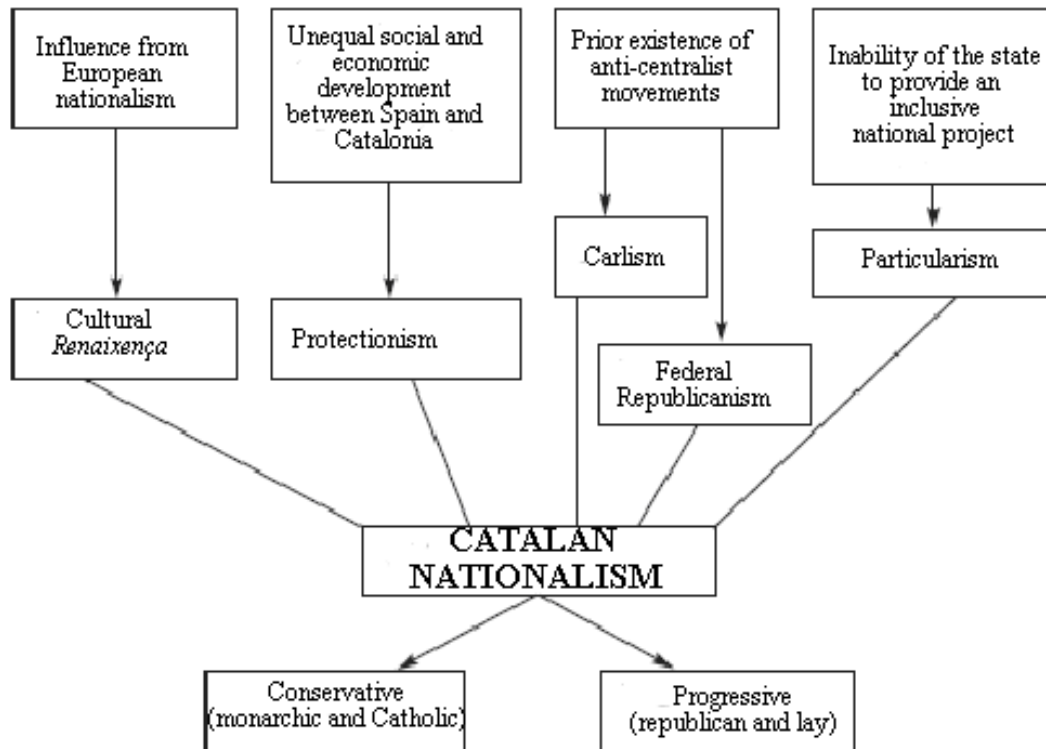
1998: cease-fire, which lasted until 1999

2006: new cease-fire, which lasted until 2007.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CATALAN AND BASQUE NATIONALISM

- 1. Language is a key element in Catalan nationalism while in Basque it is more a question of race. In the beginning the PNV discouraged marriage to non-Basque people (maketos).**
- 2. Catalan nationalism has been led by the Catalan bourgeoisie while Basque has more popular roots (Basque bourgeoisie allied to central power).**
- 3. Catalans aim to govern in Madrid while Basques are more separatist.**
- 4. The terrorist element is not important in the Catalan case, Catalans prefer political means to achieve their nationalist aims.**

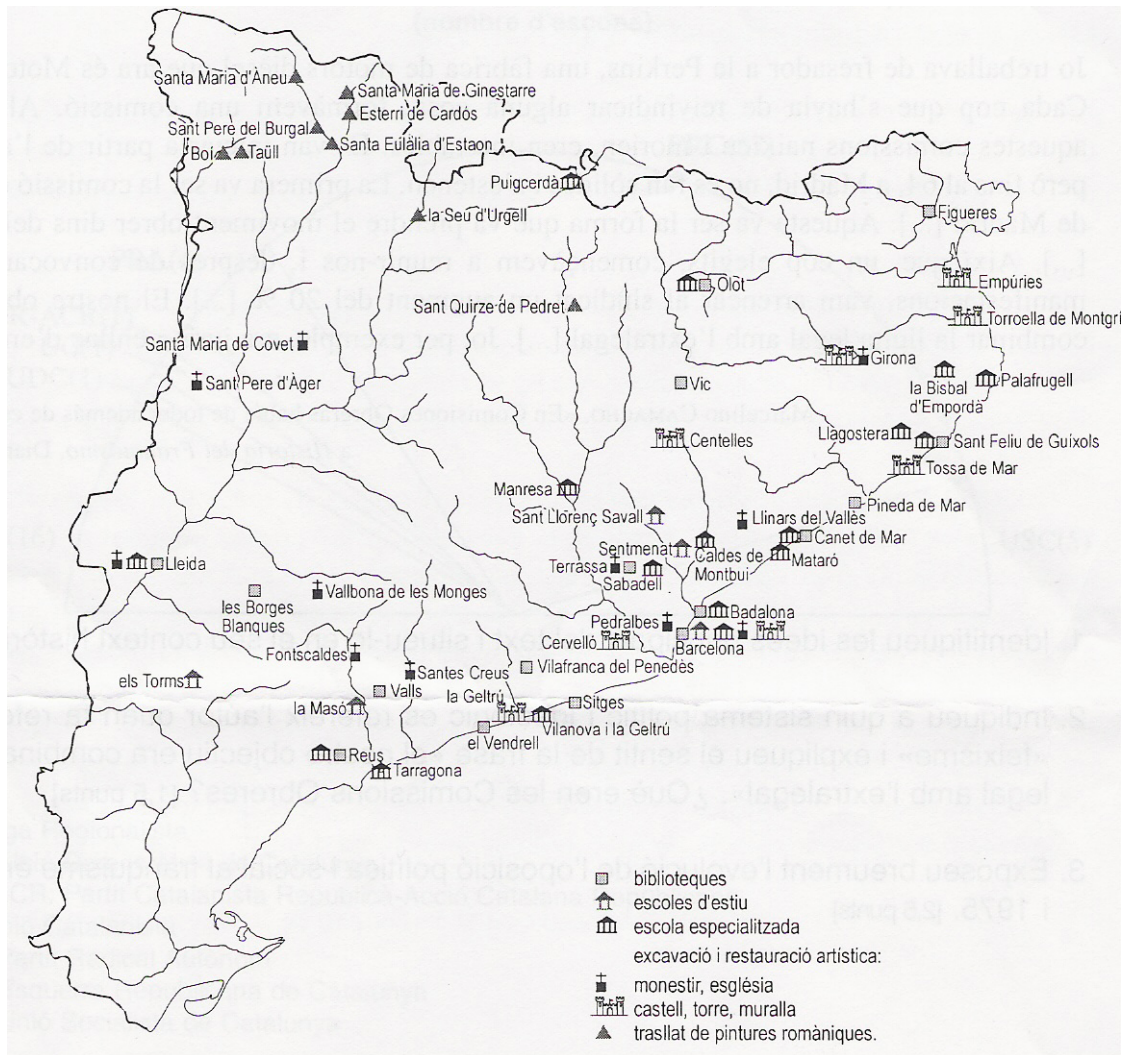
SOURCES AND ACTIVITIES



Source: Dursi

Activities:

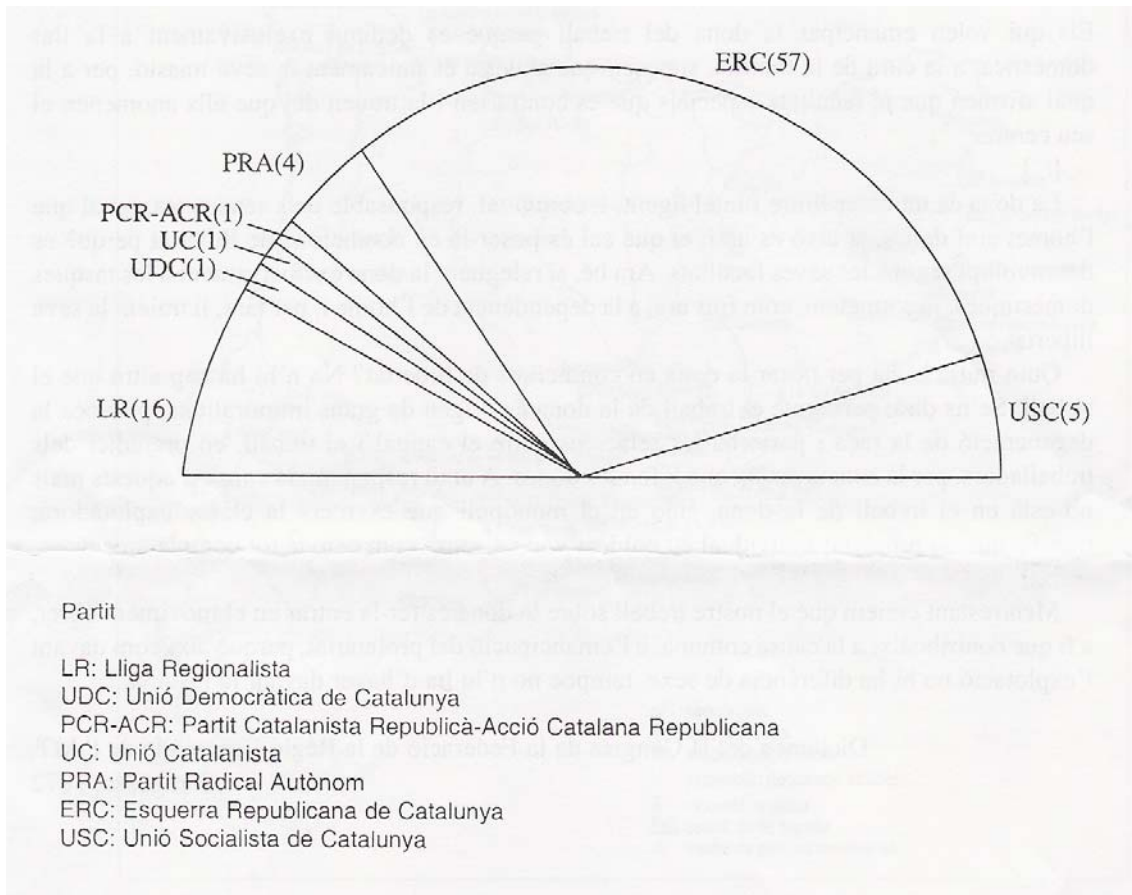
1. What is the distinction between nationalism and the nation-state?
2. Why is Spain a plurinational state?
3. Which four aspects had an influence in shaping Catalan nationalism?
4. How did Carlism and Republican federalism have an impact on Catalan nationalism or how did it not?
5. Explain the graph and how it relates to the history of Catalan nationalism.
6. Why have the CiU and the PNV embraced Europe?
7. Look for information about the European Union “Europe of the Regions” concept?
8. What is the Catalan strategy within the Spanish state? And the Basque?



The Mancomunitat de Catalunya works. Source: Dursi from *Atles d'Història de Catalunya*

Activities:

1. Outline the history of Catalan nationalism during the 19th century to the Second Republic.
2. Explain the *Bases de Manresa*. What kind of ideology does it reflect?
3. Describe the information given by the map and put it in its historical context.
4. What was the *Mancomunitat*? What were its main achievements?



Results in the elections to the Catalan Parliament from November, 20, 1932

Activities:

1. Which were the main nationalist parties in Catalonia before the Spanish Civil War?
And from the transition until now?
2. Explain the main characteristics of these parties.
3. Name the main leaders of these parties. Look for biographical information on two of them.
4. Which one is still functioning? How was it similar or different before Francoism?
5. Explain the political evolution of Catalonia during the Second Republic.



The Tree of Guernica, a symbol of Basque nationalism

http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/ac/Arbre_de_Guernica_2006.jpg

Activities:

1. Outline the history of Basque nationalism.
2. How did Carlism and Republican federalism influence Basque nationalism or how did it not?
3. Who was Sabino Arana? Outline the main traits of his nationalist ideology.
4. What does the PNV want? What do other Basque nationalists want?
5. How does the PNV position differ from the CiU's with regards to Spain and to Europe?

6. What steps has the PNV taken to achieve its objectives?