

***The Revolutionary Way of No-Yes
Manifesto for a stateless independence in Catalonia***

Preamble

Since the Statute of Autonomy of Catalonia was cut by the Spanish Constitutional Court in June 2010, a large independence movement has risen among Catalonia's citizens. The hegemonic media and the majority of political parties have increasingly focused attention on this issue and a growing number of people have taken the streets to demand self-determination of the people of Catalonia. Thus, within a few years, the intensification of re-centralizing Spanish nationalism on the one hand and the rise of Catalan secessionist nationalism on the other have become sociopolitical phenomena of our time lining undoubtedly a historical significance.

All the people who truly love freedom believe that any group of people inhabiting a certain territory has a legitimate right to self-determination, both in the sense of determining their overall living conditions and in the narrow sense of defining their borders. However, this does not necessarily imply that the predominant way of understanding self-determination today, that is, that one that calls for the creation of nation-states, is a truly plausible way to exercise this fundamental right. In this sense, it seems appropriate to ask ourselves: is there a political way that would meet the positive motivations of the Catalan independence cause but do it in a substantially better manner than the hegemonic national-statist proposal?

The huge journalistic, parliamentary and platformist campaign that has accompanied and spurred the catalan independence rise has tackled countless details of the so called "sovereignty process," but, instead, has shirk a cardinal question: namely, the fact that there is a genuine "third way" for the people of Catalonia, a way that doesn't consist neither in maintaining the subjugation of the people to the Spanish State, nor in creating a new nation-state for Catalonia. This way is attuned with the libertarian tradition and with the integral revolutionary approaches and consists in carrying out a gradual abolition of all state entity in favor of a new truly democratic institutionalization of society.

The purpose of this manifesto and of the related campaign, is precisely to put on the table the fact that the path of No-Yes (No to the State, Yes to Independence), although inconceivable within the framework of the dominant cultural paradigm, despite being ignored by parliamentary parties and pro-independence platforms, may constitute the best way to solve economic, cultural and political issues underlying nationalisms and feeding territorial disputes as well as other problematiques of the contemporary world .

STATEMENT

The undersigned individuals and groups act with the overall goal of regenerating humanity and remaking society in favor of the principles of autonomy, community, ecological harmony and cooperation among similar others. Given the rise of catalan pro-independence national-statism, a phenomenon that has been strongly stimulated by the power elites and their "comunication" media but a phenomenon that at the same time expresses and channels a positive and popular desire for social change and for the recovery of the sovereignty over our lives, it seems appropriate to us to encourage deep reflection and social dialogue about the values and institutions that govern the contemporary world and to show that there are alternative forms to the national-statism in order to solve the issue of borders, institutions and national cultures of the so called Catalonia and Spain territories. In this regard, we declare that:

- I. We believe that to knowingly respond to the first question of the referendum scheduled for 9N ("Do you want Catalonia to be a State?") it is necessary that the citizens of Catalonia have in mind wich is the nature of the state institution. Since its establishment in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the modern state has adopted, depending on the circumstances, parliamentary or dictatorial forms, governments of the left or right, but its essence remanined always the same: an oligarchic and bureaucratic structure, separated from the citizens and above them. The modern state is a causative agent of primary importance in the general crisis of today; as many different authors has shown, its nature is destructive, oppressive, violent and fallacious. There is not a single state in the world that is not in one way or another bloodstained, stuffed with injustice, erected under the basis of deception and exploitation of human beings and nature. Therefore, we don't think that the most desirable option is to jump out of the frying pan (get rid of Spanish State) into the fire (submit ourselves to a new Catalan state). There are better ways of organizing society and we invite the citizens of Catalonia to think seriously about them in order to be able to decide with full knowledge wich structures we want for our society.

- II. We ask: Do we really want Catalonia to be a "normal country"? That's what *Omnium Cultural* massive propaganda campaign advocates for, but ... What does "normality" implies today? One in five children is starving while tons of food are thrown in the trash every day due to the laws of "normal" countries and the interests of "normal" corporations. The animal and plant species are disappearing at an unprecedented rate due to the "normal" actions of "normal" countries. Leaving people homeless and homes without people also happens to be the most "normal" thing in a "normal"country. We could write thousands of examples that illustrate how the "normality" of the modern countries happens to be frankly undesirable. Only if we decidely get out of the "normality" we can remedy the cruelty and misery in today's world because, as Einstein said, "insanity is doing the same thing and expecting different results." The establishment of a Catalan state comes fully within normal contemporary

world and hence we can not expect it to produce substantially different results from the ones which prevail in the contemporary world. If we want different results, we need to explore new forms of political, social and economic organization adopting innovative and progressive, creative and lucid, courageous and magnanimous, charitable and liberating, exciting and wise choices, leaving aside the deplorable "normality" of our times.

III. We challenge the oppression that Spanish State's nationalism has historically inflicted to the Catalan nationhood, but we don't believe that the right way to defend ourselves from it is incurring in another statist nationalism of catalanist type; the truly positive overcoming of the national oppressions consists in the creation of a new integral and global revolutionary movement that challenges and overcomes the state body, the causative agent of countless problems, along with other harmful and oppressive structures (capitalism, patriarchy, etc.) Only in this way we will overcome the contemporary general crisis and at the same time, develop local and regional cultures which are really free, alive, authentic, popular, synergistic and respectful.

IV. We believe that the moment of contemporary history in which the Catalan people became more genuinely free and positively independent was during the 1936 revolution. This is a historical event known worldwide because, despite the shortcomings and mistakes of the revolutionaries, despite the adverse circumstances caused by the fascist military uprising in Catalonia and Aragon, a radical and widespread transformation of human existence was undertaken, a transformation in which workers and people assemblies replaced many of the oligarchic structures. Thus, during the summer of 1936 and until the events of May 1937, the people of Catalonia really advanced towards a real freedom and positive independence, as revealed in George Orwell's "Homage to Catalonia", among other analysts and witnesses; however, the "free and independent Catalonia" that today's Catalan political elite promote is a mirage, and the supposed "right to decide" they proclaim, such a demagogic substitute.

V. We denounce that the referendum scheduled for 9N does not meet the minimum conditions of democratic procedures. First, the question posed excludes the option of No-Yes, thus violating the democratic right of freedom of expression of a position that reflects the libertarian approach, which, as it is known, has a remarkable tradition in Catalonia. Second, the formulation of the question and other important aspects of the referendum have not been decided through a truly democratic process, i.e. with a popular participation which is free, direct and equal. If a process of this kind had taken place, of course, the supporters of No-Yes, with the support of all the people who respects freedom of speech, would have proposed the option of "No to the State and Yes to

Independence" to be present among the possible answers to the referendum. Ultimately, all this only reveals the true nature of this referendum: namely, it is a pseudo-democratic spectacle orchestrated from an oligarchic institution such as the Parliament and staged by the hegemonic mass-media in the hands of statist and commercial elites.

VI: We disagree with the catalan pro-independence Left organisations in the belief that the establishment of a Catalan state is an inherently desirable step in the way of "changing everything." It is appropriate to recall, in this regard, the hopes and dreams that many on the left had pinned on the new Asian, African and Latin American countries during the second half of the twentieth century and how they were depleted and deflated in ministerial corridors. The creation of a Catalan state does not offer, equally, a guarantee of being a truly liberating step in global terms. Moreover, this step contains some distinctly negative potentialities: it may cause that the State apparatus achieves a greater acceptance and social support in Catalonia, which would involve a strengthening of this fundamental oligarchic institution. On the other hand, we also disagree with the pro-independence Left and other parties of the catalan social democracy (Procés Constituent) in the belief that it is necessary and /or desirable to use the structures of state power to transform the society. The trajectory of social democratic parties around the world over the last century has shown that radical social democracy, as defined as the strategy designed to perform an "anticapitalist revolution" through the state apparatus is, for various reasons, naturally destined to fail in their attempt to radically and gradually transform the established order towards a truly democratic socialism. At best, this strategy can provide partial improvements, often ephemeral and superficial; in the worst case, it may play a reactionary role in co-opting, absorbing, neutralizing and confusing popular wills of radical transformation leading them to the strengthening of the constituent elements of the State (parties, parliament, centralization, etc.) instead of advancing towards autonomy, decentralization, assemblearism and global emancipation.

VII. We propose the construction of Confederate Popular Assemblies as a structure of political organization to replace the modern State. The People's Assembly is the deliberative, decisive and executive institution in which all the citizens of a given geographic area such as a town or a neighborhood are invited to participate, with freedom of expression, with equal conditions and with a communitarian and brotherly spirit. This is the fundamental political body of a truly democratic society. To coordinate with each other and make joint decisions, popular assemblies can form confederations, i.e., assemblies of revocable and mandates delegates, elected by popular assemblies. This form of political organization has been historically developed in many parts of the world in order to achieve an effective and operational democracy with large population and large regional extensions. However, to move towards full popular sovereignty, the building and empowerment of the Confederate

Popular Assemblies is not enough. To succeed, the process must be accompanied by the construction of a communitarian and self managed economic sector, in a way that not only political democracy grows but also economic democracy and democracy in the workplace. This process should be accompanied, of course, of a substantial change in all spheres of human culture.

VIII. We advocate that every city, town and county of Catalonia, as well as of other parts of the world, becomes independent of the domination of any state. In this sense, we don't ignore an important lesson that history teaches us: namely, that the hypocrisy of the partitocratic class makes it able of blatant contradictions between words and deeds, between today and tomorrow. Thus, the parliamentary parties presented today as champions of the "right to choose" and "self-determination", if they ever get to manage a new State apparatus, they most likely will preclude the exercise of the right to revolutionary self-determination. In other words, when a county or a region of Catalonia wants to emancipate from the hypothetical Catalan State, establishing the sovereignty of a Confederation of Popular Assemblies accompanied by a network of communitarian and self-managed economy, it is expected that the Catalan State, like any State, vehemently opposes to it, because the perpetuation of domination is the backbone of statism and in front of this axis, the "right to self-determination" and "right to decide" turn out to be dead letters, mere rhetoric, like many other clauses of modern constitutions.

IX. We understand independence as a fundamental human value, which to perform genuinely, must be associated with another equally important complementary value: interdependence. Thus, we advocate that every person, every community, every town and city, each region and each country is independent and at the same time, in different degrees and in different ways, interdependent with others. However, the values of independence and interdependence can only be fully realized through the creation of a real integral democracy, a new form of social organization in which everyone can participate equally and directly in the formulation of policies and decision making that affect them. In a system that consists in "representative" State with capitalist market economy, independence and interdependence are steadily undermined in many ways, as the dynamics of the whole system are based on the generation of dependence on established structures and respect towards the interests of oligarchic power.

X. We believe that a substantial and powerful change, that is, a truly revolution, is the only way to effectively overcome the multi-dimensional crisis (economic, political, social, ecological, etc.) in which we have been operating as humanity for centuries. We do not ignore the great difficulties involved in making a change of this nature and of this depth, but we note that any approach which is less deep and less wide is, at best, inadequate and, at worst, counterproductive.

Given the critical situation of the contemporary world, we are placed to make the best of ourselves in the way of a transforming huge feat, that, to succeed, must become global, intergenerational and cross-sectoral. To describe and think this feat, some groups and individuals have recently begun using the concept of "Integral Revolution", i.e. a "revolution that has to change both the inside of the human beings and the exterior conditions that oppress them, that it has to project a different and open future, but also be present today, here and now, breaking the chains that alienate us." (Felix Garcia, 2008). In other words, it is "a historic process of transformation in all areas of society, a process that is not oriented to take the power but to build a new society." (Enric Duran, 2013). For the case of Catalonia, the Integral Revolution Project unites tradition and revolutionary change, integrating past and future, merging the truth in the history with the drive to create a new Catalonia, without Spanish and French domination, without large capital without State entity, without professional politicians or political parties, with freedom of conscience, political and civil freedom, with the language, history and national culture restored and developed" (Felix Rodrigo, 2013). It is argued that this revolution is both urgent and important because "the current regime has reached a level of self-destructiveness that, in addition to irrationally preventing the human coexistence, threatens the survival of our species as well as that of the whole species that populate the Earth" (Anton Dk , 2013). Unlike the transformative conceptions which were dominant in the last century, it is increasingly evident that "the main driving force of the Integral Revolution will not be the immediate and material particular interests of people, but rather the moral quality and inside richness of them" (Blai Dalmau, 2013). To get organized, it is said that "the Integral Revolution must be performed in the basis of local groups, betting for decentralization and local action, but with global thinking and regard". (Integra Revolucio Call, 2013).

ACTION

If the referendum of 9N comes to realize, the supporters of the No-Yes have several possibilities of action:

- **Active abstention as a way to challenge the referendum.** Active abstention has historically been a way of challenging "democratic" frauds and a way to express the conscious non-cooperation with the pernicious existing power structures. As its name suggests, this option implies that we abstain from voting and at the same time we do some political action, collectively or individually, related to the matter of the votation or with the involved voting procedure. So, if we choose to actively abstain, during the 9N and days around will be appropriate to carry out some political actions that can have far more positive significance and emancipatory effectiveness than any form of voting; here are some suggestions: convene a meeting of research and collective reflection on these matters with our friends, colleagues and / or family; disseminate this manifesto and other related texts on paper and / or digitally; create a study group

to learn about socio-political alternative forms to the State; make a donation to an organization or initiative that is operating on behalf of the revolutionary path for the emancipation of the people; etc. Naturally, all these actions are not only appropriate in the context of active abstention, but can also be done, and it is desirable to be that way, by people who choose to adopt any of the other options listed below.

- **No-Yes vote even if it is not validated.** We can write a clear No-Yes in the ballot, even if considered null vote. This is a way to participate in the referendum, thus showing our involvement in the political affairs of Catalonia, but expressing that we not wafer with any of the given options. It is voting in line with what we consider ideal even if the established oligarchic system set up to tell us that this option has no place.

- **Yes-Yes vote as a lesser evil.** We can opt to vote Yes-Yes but with a radically different attitude and sense from that promoted by the Catalan pro- independence elites and the media at their service. It's a Yes-Yes vote to express that within the options elites have made available to us in this referendum, all negative, we believe that the establishment of a Catalan State may be less negative than the maintenance of Catalonia under the auspices of Spanish State. Voting Yes-Yes as a lesser evil implies that in reality we do advocate for No-Yes -and, therefore, it is this one the option that we want to defend whenever we can, it is this one the political way we want to devote our political energy; we are not illusionated with a Catalan State and we do not think that any State deserves an enthusiastic support by the people, but still, given the circumstances, we vote in a feasible way to avoid the greater evil that seems to us to maintain the status quo of the Spanish State.

If the banning by the Spanish State of the carrying out of the referendum results in it being organized through self-disobedience, we urge all local groups that put the polls to include for themselves the option of No-Yes in the ballots and to give this option a proper visibility. We also suggest that, to a possible extent, the polls become a meeting point and a point for political deliberation which considers the progressive construction of Popular Assemblies as a form of exercising the right to decide on all that concerns us in a genuine, full and effective form.

CLOSING

Fortunately, the seeds of another possible world infinitely more desirable than the current "normality" are appearing and germinating everywhere. Catalonia is probably one of the places in the world where the creative effervescence to change the world with its range of regenerative initiatives, has flourished with greater impetus in the last five years. Tens of thousands of Catalans are participating in projects such as sharing networks, multi-referendums, struggles in defense of territory, integral cooperatives, communitarian living projects, political action groups, agro-ecological regeneration networks, cultural associations and squatted social centers, self-managed study groups, libertarian unions, local assemblies, free schools, consumer groups, etc.

These and other similar initiatives, though still a minority, are already a healthy counterweight against the dynamics of the capitalist market and statist bureaucracy.

But surely, we can go further. With the appropriate ideas and tools, we can advance towards establishing the foundations of a substantially different, radically better, completely new, society. To achieve this, we need to put everything in question, relearn to live, exercise ourselves into self-criticism and self-improvement. It's time to talk politely, to think deeply, to study autonomously and to openly discuss in order to find plausible answers to the many and various issues we have on the table. And the fundamental and vital political issue that is just appropriate that we consider is precisely the one that the established system instances conceal and sneak more: "It is possible and desirable to live without a State?" It's time to make a people's and for the people policy, a policy rooted in the squares, such as in the mobilization of 15M 2011, but now asking ourselves such questions seriously. It's time to think deeply about what kind of humanity we want and to work honestly to make it possible from here and from now!

*Promoters of the No-Yes Platform**

Catalonia,

September 11, 2014

**We have made this translation as well as we know but we apologize for possible grammatical and linguistic mistakes. If you want to help improving the translation please write to plataforma@no-si.cat. Thanks!*

NOTE. The signing of this manifesto is open to all individuals, groups and organizations who feel an affinity with their basic ideas and want to show it. By signing it, you must fill out the membership form available at www.no-si.cat. You can still sign even if you have reservations, comments, contributions, suggestions. If you want to comment you can do it in the comments section which is under the manifesto. If you also want to express some reflection, proposal, feeling, reservation or information regarding the contents of the manifesto you can send a document with pertinent reflections to plataforma@no-si.cat. These reflections will be published in a collection that will come out before 9-N.