

Boletín 121 by olliemfl

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Spain has been rocked by over a week of protests. At the heart of it all is a proposed deal by the Prime Minister which some say undermines the Spanish Constitution of 1978. Those who are to benefit from the deal will find themselves out from the cold.

👋 **Welcome to Boletín**, an English-language newsletter covering historical, cultural and topical stories related to the A Level Spanish course. This week:

1. Issue 121 of Boletín (download the student worksheet, for free, [here](#)).
2. Who is protesting, why and what's the context?
3. Tier 2 & 3 vocabulary.

📌 **Edition 121.**

This issue may age like milk, but I had to make it as it seems like something big is happening in Spain.

This week's issue we're going to explore the protests which are happening around the country. This links quite nicely to the *movimientos populares* theme on the AQA specification but also hits themes like *regional identity* as well. For the A Level students out there this would make a very interesting and topical IRP research area!



The colours associated with VOX who this week have been very active in denouncing PSOE and Pedro Sánchez.

🔥 What is happening?

The touch paper has been lit and widespread outrage across the country has led to protests. It's now day 10 (as of Sunday 11/11). Anger and violence is being directed towards Pedro Sánchez (the prime minister) and the PSOE (Partido Socialista Obrero Español) party. In an attempt to control the situation riot police are using rubber bullets, batons and tear gas.

The protests have been going on for well over a week now with no end in sight. The VOX leader, Santiago Abascal, [has called for](#) a permanent mobilisation. Countless people have been arrested or injured. A former politician was shot in the face (he's stable in hospital). Chants of "Pedro Sánchez traidor" [can be heard](#) as well as "Viva Franco" and "Arriba España". In Seville, people have [brandished the Falange flag](#), accused Sánchez of being the instigator of a coup, and have been chanting *Cara al Sol*. Shamefully, [some](#) have been throwing the nazi salute and shouting racist and homophobic slogans.

In short, it's total carnage.

The fire is being stoked by [alt-right](#) influencers and the VOX leader who has said:

This is a new black period in the history of Spain, today a coup against the nation began.

👉 What has Pedro Sánchez done?

There was a [General Election](#) in Spain in July 2023 but neither of the two main parties (PSOE or Partido Popular) could outright form a government. In order to do so, both parties would have to strike deals with smaller regional parties in exchange for their support in *las cortes*. The more likely to do so, it was thought, would be the PSOE led by Pedro Sánchez given the Partido Popular's municipal alliances with the controversial VOX party putting off more moderate parties from dealing with them. So, the onus is on PSOE and Sánchez in particular to strike some deals for a majority.

Following so far?

The kicker, and the reason for all this trouble, is that Sánchez is agreeing deals with regional pro-independence Catalan [parties](#). However, they want something in return.

So, what do they want that's aggrieved so many people?

An amnesty.

📁 What's the context?

In 2017, [Carlos Puigdemont](#) led a failed attempt to declare, on behalf of Catalonia, independence from Spain contravening the [Spanish Constitution of 1978](#). There's way too much to cover here but the nuts and bolts are that the central Government in Madrid were able to enforce Article 155 of the Constitution, which states that:

If a Self-governing Community does not fulfil the obligations imposed upon it by the Constitution or other laws, or acts in a way that is seriously prejudicial to the general interest of Spain, the Government, after having lodged a complaint with the President of the Self-governing Community and failed to receive satisfaction therefore, may, following approval granted by the overall majority of the Senate, take all measures necessary to compel the Community to meet said obligations, or to protect the above-mentioned general interest.

In attempting to secede from Spain and undermining Spanish national unity the article was enacted and heavy force was used to prevent the illegal Catalan referendum from taking place.

Images of police brutality and general chaos were beamed around the world. Doors were kicked in, people were beaten, pensioners were thrown down stair wells. All of this to stop people voting.

When the dust had finally settled, the main players involved in organising the referendum went into self-exile to avoid arrest in Spain.

Now, back to 2023.

People are incandescent as, in an attempt to secure another term as prime minister, Pedro Sánchez is granting an amnesty to those responsible for the 2017 referendum (and any citizen who has suffered a judicial consequence as a result of it) in exchange for the support of the man who organised it. There's also an agreement between the two parties for "*the celebration of a referendum for Catalan self-determination*" (though I'm not so sure what that means). An amnesty would also mean that those involved would be able to return to Spain and hold office.

Some Spaniards see this as a betrayal and claim that Sánchez, in clinging onto power, is putting himself before the country.

It's a huge risk by Pedro Sánchez, why?

Public disorder this week has already been dreadful. Sánchez's risky play has galvanised Conservative Spaniards and played into the hands of those on the extreme/alt-right. Spanish politics has been rocked. If the deal is ratified, there will be untold disturbances for a very long time and the next General Election is in 2027. Things will get very ugly.

However, if Sánchez, seeing the public backlash, backs out of the deal he is trying to table, he will surely lose power with the position of the traditional right strengthening based on his alleged undermining of the Spanish Constitution.

There are interesting times ahead.

The three texts.

Un periodo negro.1

El presidente de Vox, Santiago Abascal, ha pronosticado este jueves que España vivirá “un periodo negro en su historia” como consecuencia del acuerdo alcanzado entre el PSOE y Junts para investir a Pedro Sánchez, por lo que ha pedido persistir en una “resistencia civil firme y pacífica” para oponerse. Abascal ha pedido a la población “defender la convivencia y la unión” de España en las calles, y hacerlo además trascendiendo partidos e ideologías. “No es el momento de los partidos, es el momento de que los españoles aparquen sus diferencias partidistas para defender lo más importante”.

Felipe VI.2

El presidente del gobierno catalán, Carles Puigdemont, proclamó la victoria del “sí” en el referéndum de independencia que los tribunales declararon inconstitucional y el gobierno español intentó impedir con un fuerte dispositivo policial. Puigdemont dijo que el “sí” a la independencia es mayoritario” y anunció que trasladará ahora los resultados al Parlamento de Cataluña “para que se implementen”. Según cifras, cerca del 2,3 millones de ciudadanos de esa región (en torno al 30% de la población catalana) votaron este domingo en el referéndum. De ellos, el 90% se inclinó por la independencia de la Cataluña.

Leonor I.3

España está inmerso en un caos político en medio de un acuerdo que busca investir al nuevo presidente del Gobierno, un proceso que ha desencadenado protestas en varias ciudades del país, principalmente en la capital, Madrid. Tras intensas negociaciones, el Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE) llegó esta semana a un acuerdo con Junts per Catalunya. A cambio del apoyo de Junts, los socialistas aceptaron introducir una controvertida ley de amnistía para los independentistas catalanes procesados por su participación en un intento fallido de independizar a Cataluña del resto de España.

Tier 2/3 vocabulary.

- La investidura (nfs) - *the inauguration or investiture (in a political context).*
- La convivencia (nfs) - *the coexistence.*
- Inconstitucional (adj) - *unconstitutional.*
- Desencadenar (vb) - *to unleash or trigger.*
- Implementar (vb) - *to implement.*
- La amnistía (nms) - *the amnesty.*
- Independentista (adj) - *pro-independence, separatist*
- Proclamar (vb) - *to proclaim or declare*
- Convulsionar (vb) - *to convulse, to shake violently (used metaphorically in political or social contexts).*
- Controvertido/a (adj) - *controversial.*
- Partidista (adj) - *partisan, related to political parties.*

- El pacto (nms) - *the pact or agreement*.
- La manifestación (nfs) - *demonstration or protest*.

I'm going to take a two week break from Boletín now but will return with a late November issue which will be a 1975 time capsule!


Thanks for reading and thanks for the support,


Ollie




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[1](#)

<https://www.heraldo.es/noticias/nacional/2023/11/09/vox-augura-un-periodo-negro-en-espana-por-el-pacto-del-psoe-y-junts-y-llama-a-una-resistencia-civil-firme-y-pacifica-1689992.html>

[2](#)

<https://as.com/actualidad/politica/que-paso-el-1-de-octubre-de-2017-en-cataluna-y-cual-fue-la-sentencia-del-proces-n/>

[3](#)

<https://estamosaqui.mx/2023/11/10/que-esta-pasando-con-las-protestas-en-madrid-espana-por-la-investigacion-del-nuevo-presidente/>