

Nothing has ever suggested a nation can be successfully...

Published: January 13, 2026, 10:00 am

Ben Wray has an [excellent editorial](#) in Source Direct this morning, the daily newsletter from Common Weal, which I think the best think tank in Scotland, if not wider afield as well. In it he says that we have to 'get ready for a nastier British nationalism'. He makes these comments:

Ruth Davidson, who is apparently now acting as an unofficial advisor to Boris Johnson on Scotland, wrote in The Sunday Times that the big mistake made by unionists was "not sticking the boot in after the 2014 referendum".

"That was, morally, the right thing to do, but tactically it was a mistake," she said. "A huge strategic error in fact."

Davidson indicates where Johnson's strategy towards Scotland is going - towards ratcheting up hostilities with the SNP, knowing that in any conflict they hold the trump card of a constitutional veto.

And pulling together his previous arguments in the piece, which note the unholy alliances now assembling against independence, he adds:

Putting together Galloway, Blair and Davidson's interventions, the collective impression is of a British nationalism that is consolidating around an anti-democratic, right-wing and demagogic politics of confrontation. There's nothing here that would make you think that there's attractive new devolution packages coming down the road to Holyrood, and definitely not a Section 30 order. As Davidson indicates, lessons have been learnt. Forget a pretence about respect and conciliation - the best route to defending the Union is to get nasty. The independence movement will have to work out how to deal with a British nationalism which is closer to the standard politics of the Spanish state than what we have been used to.

Nothing has ever suggested a nation can be successfully oppressed against its will when that will has become apparent. It is becoming apparent that Scottish sentiment is changing, which is hardly surprising in view of Scottish opinion on Brexit. I am sure

some will want to "stick the boot in". But if they do a sorry road lies ahead, which will end in more than tears. I sincerely hope that wiser heads prevail and that Scotland achieves what it wishes for without the oppression that many see to want to impose on it, which will backfire.