

03.12.2014 Alsace, Brittany, the Basque Country ... or Corsica: Hollande and Valls don't want to listen

The refusal to listen to Alsace, the dismissal of Bretons: Corsicans and Basques know what to expect from Hollande and Valls! With this Left in power, only regression and repression lie in store for regional identities.

The backward step suffered by the people of Alsace is simple to grasp: there was an Alsace region, and now it no longer exists! It would be hard to inflict more brutal treatment on a peaceful and instinctively pragmatic people who had no other ambition than to share a common destiny with the rest of the Rhine basin, retaining its own identity which has been historically embodied in a Germanic language since time immemorial.

Bretons, more vocal, have just about escaped the worst, the disappearance of the Brittany region carried out under the cover of a merger with the "Pays de Loire", following the *modus operandi* applied to the people of Alsace. The "Red Caps" movement has had this positive outcome, at least. But the request for a reform that would reunify Brittany, restoring Nantes to its historical role as capital and Brittany to its status as a major region in Europe, was not just rejected; it was described as sacrilege, an attack on the sacrosanct "indivisibility of the Republic".

However, Brittany played a large part in the return of the Left to power, and most Breton socialist leaders, ministers included, have been supporters of a unified Brittany in their time. But Jacobin totalitarianism has laid down the law: to reunify Brittany, to maintain the existence of Alsace (despite the Senate vote in favour of Alsatian elected representatives) would be to abandon the one, indivisible France!

Basque representatives did not even have a chance of a debate on the territorial recognition of the Basque Country, despite the commitment of a great majority of them, including the mayors of the largest towns. Paris refuses any discussion, officially "so as not to obstruct Spain in its fight against terrorism", but in reality in order to crush their identity. After all, it has been four years since there has been any political violence in Euskadi!

With this entrenched state of mind, we can imagine the enthusiasm with which the executive will greet the institutional reforms demanded by Corsican elected members! Pierre Chaubon hopes that the timetable could be met by delaying the cantonal elections and holding a general election for the new Single Authority in December 2015. This is what he will put to the vote at the Corsican Assembly before the end of the year, so that the deadlines can be respected.

But it is to be feared that his optimism will soon fade. We will soon know the score, because the postponement of next March's cantonal elections, which will appoint councillors until 2020, is necessary if we are to set up a Single Authority from December 2015. Apart from a nationalist landslide in the partial municipal election in Ajaccio, it's hard to see what could change the attitude of systematic rejection adopted by Paris, and lead Manuel Valls to accept a timetable more in line with the expectations of the Corsican Assembly.

But this anti-democratic government attitude has reached its limits. The pressure on Corsican society to prevent it from advancing will provoke a corresponding response which will be all the fiercer. It's up to us to encourage its magnitude by spreading an attitude of determined and conscious resistance throughout society. The tidal wave now facing Scottish and Catalan society should inspire us. Faced with the democratic mobilisation of an entire society, the powers will lose their authority and will be forced to compromise.

The challenge for 2015 is to create the conditions for a new surge in strength for Corsican claims, with a regional election in December whose results will be devastating for the powers that be. To achieve this, the first step awaits us next January in the Ajaccio region.

Forza! Sè no tiremu tutti in seme, forse ch'un ghjornu sciapperà!