

## 19.11.2015 R&PS at the regional elections In Alsace, Unser Land sounds a call to arms!

The reform of the regions by Manuel Valls has just scrubbed the region of Alsace off the map. A little as though they were to recreate the former "CAPAC" region (Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur-Corsica), summarily dissolving the Corsican Assembly. The Corsican revolt of the 1970s blew Paris's technocratic structure to pieces. With Unserland, the Alsatian party which is resolutely climbing the polls, Alsace could do likewise to oblige the State to restore its territorial identity.

By obliging them to stand for the regional elections in the new ACAL region (Alsace-Champagne-Ardenne-Lorraine), the authorities certainly hoped that the case would be heard and that the voices of Alsace, overwhelmed in this formless mass, would go unheard. Unser Land is in the process of proving the opposite, and one of the challenges of the elections next December may be the score of the Alsatian organisation, a member of R&PS and the EFA\*.

The Alsatian independence movement has had half a century of difficulties. However, the story of Alsatian separatism has a rich legacy from its glorious past, when, between the two wars where Alsace was under German control (between 1870 and 1914), Bismarck established full and complete autonomy for the territory, created the first European social security system from which Alsace and German Lorraine still benefit, along with other valuable "local rights" measures that the Alsatians have retained while we in Corsica lost the benefits of the Miot decisions.

However, after the Second World War the powerfully Germanic sentiments of Alsatian society were tucked away in the deepest corners of conscience. Politically, the slightest inclination towards independence was accused at best of pan-Germanism, and more often than not of neo-Nazism. Separatist movements were all but snuffed out, but the flame was still kept alive, and the solidarity of RPS played a major part in that. We took stock of the situation in 2006, when our Summer University was held in Mulhouse, and it is once again at the head of the unanimous protests by Alsatians against the Valls reform.

In the departmental elections, despite an organisation that was in its infancy, in the half of the districts where they managed to stand, hampered by a shortage of volunteers to cover the whole territory, they polled 15% of the votes. Their list at the regional elections followed the same pattern: the number of activists had quadrupled in a year, new volunteers were flocking in, the meetings are packed, the Alsatian flag, banned half a century ago, was flying everywhere at demonstrations and out in the countryside, and there was even a group of young women activists who, after the fashion of Femen, took a distinctly provocative approach to the wearing of the traditional headdress.

Alsace is standing up, and will make itself heard!

### In Brittany

The Troadec list is changing the picture

For the UDB it has been a painful debate and a difficult decision. After a traditional partnership with the PS, then taken up by the Greens until the breakdown at the last European elections where the UDB list vote slumped to a low water mark (2%), the party split on how to proceed. A minority wanted to re-establish the alliance with a Socialist party whose Breton structures stood as an island of resistance to the Jacobin current which currently dominates the left in France, while a majority led by the youngest took the decision to join up with the "Bretonising" trend embodied by Christian Troadec, the mayor of Carhaix in inland Finistère, a town which has for two decades been a symbol of the Brittany that resists and the Brittany that builds. At Carhaix, under his leadership, the first Diwan high school was set up, the local hospital that the ARS wanted to close was saved, jobs in agriculture and food were saved by going in search of investors and of markets in China, and what was to become the biggest music festival in France, the Vieilles Charrues, was set up as a counterweight to all those held in the coastal resorts.

This alliance is a first for the Union Démocratique Bretonne which has been anchored to the left by the ADN, since, even though Christian Troadec is considered as centre-left, his Bonnets Rouges movement is in fact a transversal and cross-party affair, a sort of melting pot of Breton resistance. But that is where Brittany's voice lies, so that was the place of the UDB.

In the polls the Troadec list stands at 9%. It needs 10% to pass onto the second round and force an entry into the Breton Parliament. It's possible, and it's certainly desirable!

*\* I had the pleasure of taking part in a meeting in Mulhouse, led by Thierry Kranzer, UN official brought in specially from New York for the campaign, in support to the list headed by Jean-Georges Trouillet, Andrée Munchenbach and Nadia Hoog.*