

2.12.2015 Local elections- Femu a Corsica leading!

19% in the polls, and streets ahead of the following pack of Giacobbi/Rocca Serra/Rossi, at around 14%: that's the scenario in the latest opinion survey. A week before the first round, Femu a Corsica are now favourites. We need to be strong to thwart the 'anyone but the nationalists' coalitions that could emerge in the second or third round. Victory is within reach, but nothing can be taken for granted. Forza!!

The fact that Femu a Corsica are now favourites in the election in itself represents a revolution in Corsican political life. What emerges on Sunday evening could well be something completely new. Faced with the options of continuity, represented by Paul Giacobbi on the left, or the acrimoniously divided duo of Camille de Rocca Serra and José Rossi on the right, the option of change offered by the list headed by Gilles Simeoni is gaining in credibility on a daily basis, and is currently attracting 19% of voting intentions. Discussions with Corsica Libera, quoted at 9%, have been launched and agreements could be reached between the two rounds. With the aim of achieving the majority premium of nine seats, which would bring us seriously close to an absolute majority.

Nothing is settled, but anything is possible. And a week ahead of the first round, the campaign is being reinvigorated.

In a second, three-way round pitting right, left and nationalists against each other, anything can happen. Between the two polls the nationalists have gained ground, 1% in both cases, and their dynamic is not weakening. They will be there in the second round, and can even hope for a fresh impetus between the two rounds if there is an alliance. The right needs to aggregate the votes for its two lists, both on 14%, in order to reach the same level, while internal rivalries will increase as the crucial day approaches. Paul Giacobbi has sterilised the reservoir of votes that could take him to the second round. The other left lists are below 5%, apart from the list headed by Dominique Bucchini, and Zuccarelli would even turn to the right rather than see the nationalists at the head of this three-way battle. But this rallying point could prove counterproductive and trouble a part of the electorate on the right that is unenthusiastic about a return to a 'republican front' that would definitively disarm Corsica in its essential claims: the Corsican language, the Miot decrees, the *riacquistu ecunòmicu*, progress towards autonomy, etc. Nationalists therefore have excellent reasons to believe, and the electorate holds the keys to a different future for Corsica.

In practice, even with a relative majority, the nationalist total could be higher than the opposition total, and the arrival of the extreme right in the Corsican Assembly would make the third round very close. So the scenario in which a nationalist was at the head of the Executive of the Corsican Assembly seems more credible with every passing day, and although it's tight, this success would be potentially revolutionary.

There is a precedent in Europe in the form of the Scots, where the SNP, for many years playing second fiddle to a Labour party which was historically very powerful in Scotland, succeeded in taking the position of the First Minister of the Scottish Parliament in 2007 with a lead of a single seat. At the following elections, in 2011, they obtained an absolute majority, and at the forthcoming elections in May 2016, bolstered by their stunning success in last May's parliamentary elections (56 SNP MPs out of 59 Scottish MPs at Westminster) they could once more consolidate their progress over all the other political parties and strengthen yet again. The election of a Scottish nationalist to the highest office in Scotland, albeit after a close vote and by a single seat, changed the way Europe looked at Scotland. And nothing since has checked the onward march of the Scottish people.

In Corsica, despite a subdued campaign disrupted by the tragic events in Paris, the December 2015 elections for the Corsican Assembly could mark the point of departure for a comparable trajectory for Corsican nationalism. Let's seize our chance!

