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France

Corsica - the stone in Macron's shoe

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This interview with Desideriu Ramelet-Stuart, member of the executive of A Manca, a Corsican anti-capitalist and anti-colonialist organization was conducted shortly before a visit by the NPA presidential candidate Philippe Poutou to Corsica on Wednesday 23 March. In the context of mobilization, in particular of Corsican youth, for new political rights and social demands, he met trade unionists (CGT, STC) and political leaders (A Manca, Core in Fronte, Inseme a Manca).

The NPA stated “In a framework of exchange with these activists who will talk to us about the situation on the island and the current struggle, this will be an opportunity for Philippe Poutou and the NPA to bring the solidarity of our organization and to highlight a struggle that is undergoing a virtual media and political boycott.” [1]

How can we understand, in a few words, the revolt that is being expressed in Corsica?

It's a movement that comes from way back. For seven years, in Corsica, the territorial majority, which manages the Corsican Assembly, has been part of the nationalist movement. Not in the sense in which it can be understood in France, of course, but in the nationalist sense, in the sense of the right to self-determination of the Corsican people. There were new elections, last December, where this majority obtained 70% of the votes. This is out of the ordinary, and shows that the Corsican people have an out of the ordinary support for this desire for self-determination. And in the face of this, the [French] state's response is the same, that is to say a denial of democracy, whatever the demand expressed, whether it be linguistic, cultural, the basic rights of political prisoners, etc. So it's a situation which is very heavy, including for activists who are rather reformist, and who are, in a way, the most damaged in the affair, because they played the game of dialogue, of democracy, and finally they were humiliated.

All this is no longer acceptable to young people. And this provocation of too much, that is to say the categorical refusal to lift the DPS status [detainee under special surveillance] for Yvan Colonna, and to expose him to risks and finally to an assassination attempt [2], was the straw that broke the camel's back. It was the trigger, but afterwards there are obviously deeper roots.

You are one of those who explain that the revolt in Corsica is not only due to the fatal attack on Yvan Colonna [3] and therefore to the Corsican national question, but also to the social situation and in particular to the very precarious situation of young people, the absence of prospects. Can you tell us more?

The democratic question and the social questions are two sides of the same struggle. The Corsican people cannot influence their own destiny and decisions. I'll take a very simple example: when the Corsican Assembly votes to put an end to the creation of very large supermarkets, the regional prefect cancels this vote. In reality, European capitalism assigns Corsica to be a vast consumer zone, with an extraordinary rate of large surfaces per square kilometre. Corsica is a country that has a nourishing land, that has always had a fairly strong self-sufficient culture, but that today depends 93% on imports from outside. And that, obviously, at the economic and social level, creates very strong disparities. The wealth gap is currently at the same level as in the 19th century, there is mass impoverishment, particularly among young people, women are even more affected, it is impossible to find housing because of speculation, etc. All of this is a burden on the economy.

All this is a daily burden. So when you combine democratic oppression, colonial oppression and capitalist oppression, at the end of the day there's too much, young people are fed up and today they're making it known, and

very violently.

This interview can be found in full on video on the NPA [website](#).

PS:

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[1] NPA communiqué, 21 March 2022 "[Philippe Poutou en Corse ce 23 mars](#)".

[2] This interview took place before the death of Yvan Colonna.

[3] *The Guardian*, 22 March 2022 "[Macron calls for calm after death of jailed Corsican nationalist](#)".