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The French "Colonial Party" still hasn't come to terms with the loss of its Empire

Contrary to popular belief, the French have never been in favour of colonization, but a pressure group, self-proclaimed "Colonial Party", did manage to use its army to conquer economic opportunities. This pressure group, revived by presidents Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, François Hollande, Nicolas Sarkozy and Emmanuel Macron, laid the foundations for the current crisis in Mayotte and New Caledonia. If the policies they have imposed continue, the populations of these territories will be forced to wage war to regain their dignity, as was the case in Indochina and Algeria.

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The Kanak revolt in New Caledonia and growing insecurity in Mayotte highlight France's difficulties with its former Empire.

THE TWO FRANCE'S AND COLONIZATION

To understand what's going on, we need to bear in mind that French colonization bears no relation to the forms of colonization practiced by the United Kingdom, Portugal, Spain or the Netherlands. The republican ideal, which has been France's since the 17th century (Henri IV was the first monarch to declare himself a republican), forbade it to colonize exclusively to enrich itself. The French champions of colonialism all claimed to be "doing the work of civilization". By republic, I mean governing in the general interest, not that of a caste or social class.

From the 16th to the 19th century, most colonized peoples had neither the education nor the technology of Europeans. Some wanted to bridge the gap, while others wanted to exploit it.

Throughout the colonial epic, two currents fought it out in France: one for emancipation, the other for colonization. This internal battle found its expression in the parliamentary debate between the socialist Jules Ferry and the radical republican Georges Clemenceau on July 31, 1885 in the National Assembly.

Let's listen for a moment to Georges Clemenceau's speech:

"The superior races have a right over the inferior races which they exercise, and this right, by a particular transformation, is at the same time a duty of civilization". These are the very terms of Monsieur Jules Ferry's thesis, and we see the French government exercising its right over the inferior races by going to war against them and forcibly converting them to the benefits of civilization. Superior races! Inferior races, that's all! Personally, I've been having a hard time of it ever since I saw German scientists scientifically demonstrating that France should be defeated in the Franco-German War [1870] because the French are of an inferior race to the Germans. Since then, I confess, I've looked twice before turning to a man or a civilization, and pronouncing: inferior man or civilizations (...) Inferior race, the Chinese! With this civilization whose origins are unknown and which seems to have been pushed to its extreme limits at first. Inferior Confucius! In truth [...] we can see documents, which certainly prove that the yellow race [...] is in no way inferior [to the Europeans]."

From an economic point of view, French colonization was aimed at finding outlets for the export of industrial production, while British colonization was aimed, on the contrary, at finding raw materials and putting them at the service of British industry.

From a philosophical point of view, French colonization was justified by the theory of races and their hierarchy. But it was clear from the start that no Frenchman could believe it. This argument was exclusively a matter of political communication. Moreover, unlike other colonial peoples, the French always tried to understand the civilization of the countries where they settled, and to mix with other peoples. In contrast, the British created exclusive clubs for them in their colonies, while the Germans banned "inter-racial marriages" (1905).

After the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, nationalists dreamed of liberating Alsace-Moselle, whose statue on the Place de la Concorde had been covered in black crepe for 48 years. On the contrary, supporters of colonization intended to divert armies from their mission of defending the nation, and turn them into "projection forces" capable of conquering distant horizons.

This is why it is unfair today to judge French colonization as a whole, which would be good or bad in itself, because everywhere, both currents have left their mark. I remember with emotion the president of the Syrian People's Assembly, who showed me around the buildings

of his institution. He began by explaining that twice the French “Colonial Party” had bombed them. The first, in 1920, to impose the mandate of the League of Nations, the second in 1945, when Syria had been independent for four years and had taken part in the creation of the United Nations. After bowing our heads before the parliamentary war memorial, the president told me the story of the trial of a revolutionary leader who had called for the French occupiers to be ousted. Before the military tribunal, his lawyer pleaded that this Syrian had done nothing other than his patriotic duty, in full conformity with the ideals of the French Republic. The jurors, chosen at random from among the French soldiers, unanimously decided to release him. The generals responded by transferring them to other colonies and placing them in the front line, in the hope that they would fall on the field of honour. The President of the Assembly then shared his thoughts with me: in the end, many of us died, victims of the "Colonial Party", but you too, in France, paid the price for the same ideal that drives us both. In many ways, French colonization is a horror, but it was not the will of France, since not one, but all of the jurors he had named had made common cause with the Syrian revolutionaries, and the 1945 bombing was an initiative of General Oliva-Roget, unbeknownst to Charles De Gaulle’s provisional government, which immediately dismissed him.

Yet when decolonization arrived, French soldiers who had just liberated their country from Nazi occupation decided to prolong the imperial dream. The bombing of Damascus heralded the massacres of Haïphong (Indochina) and Sétif (Algeria). So they waged atrocious wars for the Empire’s grandeur. These men were convinced that they should not abandon the peoples they had conquered and partially integrated into the Republic. Their commitment had nothing to do with political parties - some were right wing, others left wing. They were just incapable of thinking from the point of view of the colonized peoples.



This nickel medal, issued by SLN in the 1960s, features on the reverse the sower of French coinage, the 25-centime coin of the Netherlands, and Greek coinage. On the obverse, the company logo. At the time, the Rothschilds controlled the company. Today, the law guarantees the anonymity of the owners.

NEW CALEDONIA

This intellectual blockage is still evident today in the case of New Caledonia and Mayotte. Many French people are incapable of thinking through the merits of independence. The "Colonial Party" - which has never been a political party, but a cross-party lobby - is still at work. To convince the undecided, all it has to do is hide certain pieces of the puzzle. But, generally speaking, when informed, the French take a stand in favour of independence and apologize for not having supported it up to that point.

The French have a vague recollection of the 1988 national referendum approving the Matignon Accords. They know that a process of decolonization had begun in New Caledonia and that, within thirty years, the decolonized Kanaks could decide either to remain within the Republic or to become independent. The idea that, once educated, colonized peoples could integrate into the Republic on an equal footing was still present in the text of the Constitution until 1995, under the name of "Communauté française" (Title XII).

The French don't understand why a sudden outbreak of violence has cost the lives of a dozen people and caused a billion euros in damage.

Here again, the press plays a propagandist role, concealing a great deal of information. It's true that New Caledonians have rejected independence in three successive local referendums. The last one (2021) even rejected it by an overwhelming majority of 96.5%. It's true that the independentistes massively boycotted this consultation, but that, we're told, was because they were sure of losing. Not at all! They asked for the ballot to be postponed, first by a year, then, in a spirit of compromise, by just two months. The archipelago had been hit by the Covid-19 pandemic. Many elderly people had died. In Kanak culture, a year's mourning is required after each death. It was therefore impossible for the independentistes to conduct an election campaign during this period, just as it was impossible for their people, during this period of mourning, to decide on their independence within or outside the Republic. In the end, they proposed to reduce the postponement of the vote by two months, so that they could carry out their funeral rites. President Emmanuel Macron's refusal to compromise was seen as a rejection of their culture. Not only did the independentistes boycott the referendum, but so did almost all Kanaks. This was not a political issue, but a cultural one. The respect and trust that had been built up over thirty years were swept away in three.

As if that weren't enough, the Matignon Accord provided for the irreversible transfer of certain powers from Paris to Nouméa. In addition, at the end of the decolonization process and the three local referendums, the New Caledonian electorate would be enlarged to include people who had settled in the territory after 1988. Supporters of attachment to the Republic, or to put it more clearly, supporters of colonization, pushed for this readjustment to be carried out as quickly as possible. Demographically, the Kanaks had become a minority in their own country. The "loyalists" (sic) organized various demonstrations, to which the Kanaks responded with counter-demonstrations attended by twice as many people. President Emmanuel Macron then put on the agenda of the National Assembly and Senate the convening of a Congress of the two assemblies to enshrine the New Caledonian electorate in the Constitution. This is what ignited the fuse.

The "loyalists" and President Emmanuel Macron are therefore solely responsible for halting the decolonization process and the riots that followed. President Macron's whirlwind trip to New Caledonia brought nothing new. On the contrary, his lack of proposals confirmed that he would continue to ignore the Kanaks and despise their culture. It is therefore certain that the situation will only worsen over the next three years. It is unlikely that Emmanuel Macron's successor will be able to repair the damage. The neighbouring states all believe that New Caledonia will gain its independence by force. So, to protect their nationals from the violence of the revolution that has just begun, they have repatriated them.

New Caledonia's main source of wealth is nickel mining. This is divided between two companies, SLN and Prony Ressources. These two companies are organized in an English-style structure, which makes it possible to conceal the identity of their shareholders. Before the Matignon agreement (1988), the sector was entirely controlled by the Rothschilds, former employers of Emmanuel Macron.



It's impossible to find a more precise photograph of the Badamiers interception base in Mayotte. There is a similar base in Tontouta, New Caledonia. These two stations are indispensable to the electromagnetic interception system of France in particular and the West in general.

MAYOTTE

The case of Mayotte is very different insofar as there is no independence movement, but rather a desire on the part of the Comoros to rebuild their unity in the same way that France rebuilt its own by recovering Alsace and Moselle. As I said earlier, the supporters of colonization did not want this.

In 1973, France had negotiated an agreement with the President of the Territory's Government, Ahmed Abdallah Abderamane. The Minister for Overseas France, the centrist Bernard Stasi, signed it. Paris undertook to organize an independence referendum throughout the archipelago, and not to divide it.

The Comoros voted overwhelmingly for independence, with the exception of the island of Mayotte. Supporters of colonization argued that Article 53 of the 1958 Constitution states: "No cession, exchange or addition of territory is valid without the consent of the populations concerned". However, France bought Mayotte before the rest of the archipelago, and the referendum law specified that Paris would apply the will of "the populations", not "the people". President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, a former supporter of French Algeria, decided to separate Mayotte from the archipelago. The Union of the Comoros joined the United Nations, without Mayotte. At the time, almost all UN member states were outraged by France's failure to honour its written commitment of 1973.

Subsequently, the "Colonial Party", which had not digested this independence any more than the others, attempted to regain control of the rest of the archipelago. The two currents that had clashed over colonization fought again. But since the end of Algerian independence, the "Colonial Party" could no longer rely on the army. So it relied on a former soldier who had gone into the private sector, the "mercenary" Bob Denard. Finally, in 2009, President Nicolas Sarkozy transformed Mayotte into a department, as had been the case of Algeria before its independence.

Today, the influx of Comorians to Mayotte is causing widespread violence, whereas there is no violence in the Union of the Comoros. From a French point of view, these migrants are illegal, but from a Comorian point of view, it's the French on the spot who are illegal. In 2023, Interior Minister Gérard Darmanin deployed 1,800 police officers as part of Operation Wuambushu (taking back control). That's slightly more than today in New Caledonia.

Meanwhile, large demonstrations in Moroni chanted "No to France" and "No to the French presence in Mayotte".

The French army needs Mayotte. It has a Foreign Legion unit stationed there, which controls the Glorieuses islands (themselves a territory of Madagascar illegally occupied by France). Above all, it has an electromagnetic interception center connected to the Echelon network of the "Five Eyes" (Australia, Canada, the United States, New Zealand and the United Kingdom).

This is why states that suffer from Western espionage are already supporting Mayotte's incorporation into the Union of the Comoros. This is particularly true of Russia and China.

CONCLUSION

Some of the French overseas territories and departments were not colonized: Reunion Island, for example, was deserted before it became French property. Others, such as Guadeloupe and Martinique, were colonized and then decolonized. France can therefore retain them by right, as long as the indigenous populations agree. However, it must bear in mind that any abandonment by the local populations will lead them to demand independence. This is what happened in New Caledonia.

In other cases, such as Mayotte, France has broken its word by dividing the Comoros. Whatever happens next, France is no longer at home here and will one day have to return the island to the archipelago of which it was deprived.

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