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France-Algeria

Macron between raï music and gas

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Macron had a good time in Algeria. In Oran, he discovered DJ Snake, Disco Maghreb and the famous Boualem, one of the promoters of raï singers. He set out to seduce Algerian youth by making them the main actor in the new configuration of Algerian-French relations where memory, culture, sport and cinema are privileged. That was for the public relations.

Serious matters were discussed with the real decision-makers during his three-day visit in late August. Those who repressed the *hirak*, who arrested more than 10,000 people, imprisoned more than 300 prisoners of conscience, criminalized any activity linked to the *hirak* or in opposition to the government and its policies. Moreover, when asked about the serious violations of human rights in Algeria, Macron dodged, saying that it was a problem of Algerian sovereignty and that he could not interfere, but nevertheless that he trusted President Tebboune. Indirectly, he was responding to the associations of the diaspora that had presented him with a petition. It is obvious that economic interests come before human rights, which is in the nature of imperialisms that impose their power on the world.

Imperialist geopolitics

Macron spoke mainly about gas, security in the Sahel and a mutual appeasement in relations so necessary for France's imperialist geopolitics. Although reducing Algerian gas supplies to France to 9%, Macron knows that the war in Ukraine is changing the situation and that Algeria is becoming a very coveted country for its gas and hydrocarbons in these times of crisis. Securing his back and putting Algeria back into an energy supply system that secures Europe is his goal with the Algerian government. The question of democracy will be dealt with later. A "renewed partnership" was signed where, behind the classic language, there is an increase in gas supplies for France in order to guarantee energy security for the winter in the face of the uncertainties of the war in Ukraine. There is no question for Macron of letting Italy supplant France in this strategic trade.

It is obvious that France does not want to lose its geostrategic influence in the region. Aware that the old continent is losing its power in the face of US imperialism, Chinese hegemonic ambitions and the imperialist awakening of Russia, Macron and his imperialist technocracy are refocusing on the old colonial empire by seeking efficiency of interests and the emergence of new elites, especially among the youth. Islamism is complicating things in the Sahel despite French military interventionism, which has clearly failed. Macron's meeting with Algerian generals, deciders in the regime, is indicative of his desire to involve them in the security management of the Sahel region, not only to counter the Islamists and their arms supplies, but above all to seek stabilizing political solutions to the crisis in Mali and the Sahel as a whole. Macron noted the usefulness of the agreements between Malians signed in Algiers following an Algerian conciliation initiative and phagocyted by the Islamist fractions. France does not want to let go of the Sahel, a vast and strategic territory for the mineral wealth it contains, and Areva knows something about this, as it has almost exclusive exploitation rights for uranium in Niger.

A give and take relationship

In this old colonial empire, Macron talks about the future and thinks in generational terms, but French imperialist interests cannot be satisfied with abstract elucubrations. Total (electricity), Bouygues (telecommunications) or Areva (nuclear power and renewable energy) need concrete political geostrategy to amplify their superprofits in the African continent and in Algeria. Today, African despots are seeking to empower themselves and are demanding a share of

the plundering of mineral resources for themselves and their children. The liberal IMF reforms that commodify all their mineral and agricultural resources have impoverished their populations to an unprecedented level, driving them into mass migration, while at the same time enriching the African bourgeois political and social elites who aspire to control these resources in order to better “privatize” them. Class relations are coming back to the surface in an even more violent way and this creates political instability where putschist logics and social explosions are combined.

Algeria has not escaped this scenario despite the singularity of its history with France. The Algerian generals, a journalistic term for the military-bureaucratic bourgeoisie that is organically embedded in the state apparatus and exercises a monopoly of rare violence over power, freedoms and economic and social life, participate in this France-Africa in their own way. It integrates the capitalist interests of France by offering high market shares to French companies, but demands a return both through sufficiently identified forms of corruption and through an international legitimacy that it hopes will be reinforced by France due to the divorce of the Algerian power from its population. Tebboune seemed quite satisfied with Macron's satisfaction, whose pro-Tebbounian language did not seem to be without ulterior motives.

Macron returned home with President Tebboune's assurance of a guaranteed supply for the winter (there is talk of a 50% increase). He was assured of the “interventionist” pledges of the Algerian power in the Sahel crisis and France's tensions with Mali during his meeting with Algerian generals (the opacity is total for the moment) and he hopes for a psychological unblocking so essential to an “appeased” relationship with Algeria. The memorial section and a few more visas will suffice. The detainees of opinion, Article 87bis, the continued trampling of freedoms, the programmed extradition of undocumented migrants to Algeria, etc., all this does not fit into the rubrics of Macron' soft power. The generals will be able to continue to repress and to... get rich under the French umbrella.

*Translated by **International Viewpoint** from [l'Anticapitaliste](#).*

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