



*CHRONICLE OF THREE
YEARS OF STRUGGLE OF
THE SOCIALIST DEPUTIES*

TO RESTART A FAILED STATE

BY VALÉRIE RABAULT, ON 18 .06 .2019
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CHRONICLE OF THREE YEARS OF STRUGGLE OF THE SOCIALIST DEPUTIES: TO RESTART A FAILED STATE

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Valérie RABAULT on June 18, 2019 in session

On the occasion of the second "Spring of Evaluation", members of the Socialist and Related Group chose to address the question of the place and role of the state in public policy - particularly those policies that the majority has implemented over the past two years.

Placing this question at the heart of our debate is not an ideological approach that would oppose the sphere of public power to the private sphere. Let us be clear: both are necessary. Placing this issue at the heart of our debate answers many of the questions raised during the great debate, as well as the need for a solid architecture to ensure the cohesion of our country, that is, a strong State. A strong State is a protective State that fully exercises its regalian missions. A strong state is a state of solidarity that ensures redistribution among all its citizens and among all its territories. A strong State is a strategic State that gives itself the means to meet the challenges of the present and anticipates future changes. Finally, a strong state is a decentralized state that guarantees democratic expression and local initiatives.

And yet, Mr. Secretary of State for Digital, we believe that the policies implemented over the past two years are weakening this strong state. To illustrate this analysis, I will cite a few examples.

A strong state cares about all its territories and, on closer inspection, the bills you have introduced over the past two years tend to forget the overseas territories. We denounce this, and you may feel that this is a partisan approach, but the Court of Auditors, which is more used to asking for cuts in public spending, is also concerned about this, which should alert you. Thus, in 2018, your government cut 177 million euros from what was voted for the overseas territories: the Court of Auditors calls this budgetary underconsumption "unprecedented". The elimination of aid

personalized housing - APL - accession has contributed to the "brutal halt", to quote the Court, still, of overseas housing production, which has gone from 476 homes in 2017 to 94 in 2018. The abolition of this aid has also led to a collapse of aid for the improvement of private housing in Guadeloupe and Reunion Island.

Second example: a strong State is a State capable of defending its interests - François Ruffin has just emphasized this - because they are those of all French people. Here again, however, 2018 was marked by a setback. For lack of sufficient legal expertise in corporate tax matters, the State had to let slip - forgive the expression - 2.5 billion euros in 2018, which still represents a third of the budget of the Ministry of Justice. Here too, the mention of this amount in the Finance Committee has caused a certain amount of excitement among our colleagues, including those of the majority.

A strong state, the third example, is one that has an ambition for culture. I would like to quote François Mitterrand, who said, at the inauguration of the Louvre pyramid: "I am one of those who deeply believe [...] that a cultural policy is the basis of any other policy, that the French must find their place in their history, in their art, in their past, so that they know better how to be ambitious for their future." Here again, we can make a number of observations about 2018 based on the budget documents you have given us. Do museums, especially those managed by the State, have a sufficient number of openings? In 2018, according to indicator 2.1 of Program 175, it will continue to decline. For the performing arts, which take place in state-subsidized venues, there were 500,000 fewer spectators than in 2017 and 500,000 fewer than the target set in the budget law. Last observation: for the plastic arts, the share of acquisition and commission credits paid directly to artists in the budgets of the regional contemporary art funds - FRAC - and the national center for the plastic arts - CNAP -, has decreased compared to 2016 and 2017. It was 6% in 2018 against 9% in 2012.

Fourth example: a strong state is one that leaves no one by the wayside when it comes to employment, whether or not the person has a qualification. I know we have a difference of opinion with you on supported employment. The number of assisted job creations has increased from 460,000 in 2016 to 128,000 job-skills pathways - PECs - in 2018 and 100,000 expected in 2019. Still, you will agree that the decline is staggering. Moreover, the new version of assisted jobs, the PECs, which are supposed to revolutionize assisted jobs, have not revolutionized anything at all, since you had set a target of 200,000 creations for 2018; however, this figure was only 128,000, simply because the system is too complicated. By abolishing these subsidized contracts on the pretext that they are false jobs, the government has made real unemployed.

Fifth and last example: a State that remains too much of a spectator in the face of the emergency situation. I have heard some of our colleagues say that these difficulties are not new - no one will deny that. In twenty-five years, the number of emergency room visits has tripled, from 7 million in 1990 to 21 million in 2016, according to the

latest figures from the Court of Audit communicated in Volume II of its 2019 public report. We will all agree that this evolution cannot be explained by the increase in the French population alone, which has grown by 15%.

% over the same period, nor by its aging. Other phenomena intervene, "too little analyzed" as the Court of Auditors noted in a report on the application of social security financing laws.

While the Court notes that a definite effort has been made over the last five years to better analyze the reasons that led to an explosion in the number of passages, and that efforts have been made to have a better organization, while it advocates a decrease in public spending, it writes that the number of emergency physicians should be increased by 20% in full-time equivalents. This type of recommendation is rare enough: it should be followed up immediately. This is a new phenomenon and should be taken very seriously by the Government, which, when translated into hard currency, leads to a 500 million euro increase in the credits granted to emergency departments.

Finally, I will mention this State that has been forced to reduce the missions of its administrations, and I will take an example that is close to my heart, that of customs, which I visited two months ago in Saint-Malo - which is not in my riding. Customs has some 17,000 agents who carry out a very large number of missions, more than 400 today, in a variety of areas such as supporting the economic competitiveness of businesses, protecting and fighting fraud, and collecting customs taxes. These are essential missions. More than any other administration, French customs and its customs officers must and know how to adapt to the economic situation: in the event of terrorist risks, disruptions in trade, health crises or the upcoming Brexit.

The results show that the French customs has been able to modernize itself. In 2004, in the context of customs clearance, if the average time of immobilization of goods was thirteen minutes, it is now a little more than two minutes. The user satisfaction rate is 85%. Finally, for every 100 euros of customs duties collected, the cost of collection is only 39 cents - one of the lowest in the world. According to the annual performance report for 2018, the customs administration has met and exceeded eight of its twelve objectives. However, some Customs missions are regularly called into question, either because the resources allocated to them are reduced or because they are outsourced. In some regions, missions relating to border crossing points have taken precedence over other missions that form the core of the customs profession, due to a lack of sufficient staff.

These restrictions of means, combined with competition between customs, end up threatening the competitiveness of our companies.

I won't go back to Brexit, which is the subject of job creation, but in smaller numbers, for example, than that envisaged by the Netherlands.

In his second policy statement, the Prime Minister stated that "The State, which should be thinking strategically for the long term, has too often become mired in the short term. On this point, Mr. Secretary of State, I agree with him; but in my view, this means correcting the policy you have been pursuing for the past two years.