

2005-2006: Three Moments of the French Revolt

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In quick succession in May and October–November 2005 and in April 2006, French society experienced three moments of what is clearly a major revolt against neoliberalism. To understand these new class struggles in France and where they might lead it is necessary to view these three moments of revolt together as part of a single dialectical movement—full of contradictions and hidden potentials.

First Moment: The Impact of the No Vote, May 2005

With a vote of 55 percent, the French electorate decisively rejected the proposed European Constitution in the May 29, 2005, referendum. [1] This proposal aimed to write into constitutional law the policy of economic neoliberalism or no-holds-barred globalized capitalism. The neoliberal dream was to equip Europe with a constitution that, by installing flexible supranational institutions, would deprive nation states of the most essential part of their sovereignty, and in turn reinforce the rule of big capital.

This project was heavily promoted by transnational monopolies and the French management, which invited the public to vote “Yes for a prosperous Europe.” Major proponents included the petroleum concern Total with its \$10.9 billion profits in 2004 (the highest ever recorded by a French firm, one which is reducing its employment within France)—and the cosmetics firm L’Oréal (whose CEO is the highest-paid person in France at \$7.9 million per year and its owner “the richest woman of France” with a fortune of \$13.7 billion). Such wealth contrasts starkly with the conditions of French workers with one out of every six paid only the minimum wage and 7 million living in poverty. Other advocates of the European Constitution included Schneider (machine tools), whose shareholders’ have recently experienced the biggest increase (64 percent) in their stock dividends, and the armaments firm Dassault, which just bought part of the media. The media, not surprisingly, bombarded the public with Yes slogans, attempting to manipulate them and bludgeoning them with lies.

The vote was sharply divided along class lines—a reminder to the elites that the people still exist, popular classes still resist, and the world of labor can be mobilized. The No rallied the votes of 80 percent of production workers, 70 percent of small farmers, 67 percent of white-collar workers, 64 percent of civil servants, and more than 50 percent of craft workers, small shopkeepers, and intermediate professions. It got the vote of 66 percent of households with monthly incomes less than \$1,800, 75 percent of those without degrees, and 71 percent of the unemployed. This result was the

product of the consciousness, resistance, and unity of the popular classes. It was their first huge victory in a confrontation with neoliberalism since the big strikes of 1995.

This No was a rejection of those, whether from the rightist parties or from the neoliberalized “left,” who over the last twenty years have handed the country over to speculators for plunder. The French people know how much they lost through the destruction of social services carried to the extreme by the right-wing parties in power (for example, pension “reform” under the government of Premier Jean-Pierre Raffarin). But they also have not forgotten that neoliberalism was definitively established in France in 1984 by the “socialist” President Francois Mitterrand and Premier Laurent Fabius, among others. Indeed, it would be more accurate to call Mitterrand and Fabius members of the Socialist Party (PS) than genuine socialists. With the government alternating between the PS and the rightists, each managing the neoliberal program, the people were provided no real alternatives but only shades of difference in rhetoric. It was essential to the ruling class that the social-democratic forces adopt neoliberalism and carry out the destruction of workers’ social gains, because imposing this helped politically to paralyze trade unions.

More and more the French people have become aware that there is a close connection between neoliberalism, which can be defined as the power of finance, and U.S. hegemony. Most owners of capital dominant on a worldwide scale are based in the United States. “Globalization” was imposed, starting from the United States, especially after the U.S. Federal Reserve unilaterally increased interest rates in October 1979. The Europe which is now under construction, without the consent of its citizens, is designed to serve the interests of big West European capital—which, since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, has been turning the East European economies into subservient subsidiaries. Oriented to the United States from the beginning, these dominant European forces limited their ambitions, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, to a prudent defense of their interests, subordinating these both to U.S. financial capital with its neoliberal war-like strategy and to the instruments used to enforce its military and economic hegemony: NATO, the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and World Trade Organization.

Europeans did not put up any significant resistance—aside from some speeches at the UN Security Council—to the crimes and plunder perpetrated by financial capital, whose tool is the Bush administration. In France, it was the consensus among the PS and the rightists that ensured that the Maastricht Treaty, a model of neoliberal regionalization, was adopted for the Common Market in 1992. The consensus at the top of the French state, representing the common interests of the ruling class, decided to enter the war against Yugoslavia in 1999, another submission to U.S. strategy or Atlanticism. This alliance between the dominant classes of Europe and those of the United States/Canada and Japan—the three elements of the triad—is directed not only against their own working classes, but also (and by even more violent methods) against the people of the South (including China). It is justified in ruling-class ideology, with no trace of irony, by the democratic values that Western nations claim to embody.

As their post-referendum activity shows, however, bourgeois democracy, as it functions in France, is fictitious. Almost the entire collection of France’s traditional politicians supported the European Constitution. They were all beaten. Yet they all remain in power: Jacques Chirac remained president, with only a 24 percent favorable rating in June 2005 opinion polls; Nicolas Sarkozy continued as head of the leading right-wing party, the Union for a Popular Movement (UMP); François Hollande stayed as head of the PS (with a popularity rating of 35 percent in mid-2005, lower than that of the leaders of the Communist and Trotskyist parties). [2] If, for the large majority of the French people, democracy is reduced to a small walk in silence to the polling booth, one Sunday every eighteen months, to get in line (in silence), to nod one’s head (in silence) when one’s name is called, to slip an envelope into the ballot box (in silence), and to go back home (in silence), with nothing changed, then this democracy is much ado about nothing. The bourgeoisie is in power and has no intention of

giving it up.

A reader who is not a specialist in French politics might think that the appointment of Dominique de Villepin to the post of prime minister on May 31, 2005, after the victory of No in the referendum, meant a change of course in the relations between Paris and Washington. Isn't this the political leader who, just some months ago in the UN Security Council, stood up against the Bush administration and opposed the war on Iraq? Didn't he make his first priority the fight against unemployment? [3] Villepin simply reused the old untrue promise of Jacques Chirac's campaign, of which he was a faithful supporter: to reduce the social inequalities and divisions (the fracture sociale in French, or social split). But it is by attacking labor laws and social security that he plans to create jobs and to reinforce social cohesion, that is, by the same neoliberal policies at the root of the problems he claims he is solving.

This government's prescription is not only more neoliberalism, but also, in spite of appearances, more Atlanticism. Initially, the French people learned, with surprise, that a joint French-U.S. military base has been in action for almost four years in Paris, where the French secret service and the CIA work together. One can imagine these colleagues watching the famous confrontation between France and the United States at the UN on television.

Further, the strong man of the current Villepin government, Chirac rival Nicolas Sarkozy, minister of interior and leader of the UMP, supported by the members of Parliament of the majority, is pro-United States. [4] It is almost unnecessary to add that he too is in favor of a hard neoliberal line—just like his brother who was until recently the number two of the French bosses. Finally, the friendship between French and U.S. capitalists was reinforced by the appointment of pro-U.S. ministers of finance, budget, and foreign trade.

The arrival of the Villepin-Sarkozy duo was thus a little more of the same thing. In anticipation of the presidential race in 2007, Villepin hoped to attract votes from the left by promising more jobs, while Sarkozy reached out to the right using the issues of safety and the fight against immigration, priorities of Jean-Marie Le Pen's extreme-right. [5] In July 2005 Villepin announced new privatizations, and Sarkozy declared new deportations of undocumented workers.

What lessons should the genuine left draw from the victory of the No vote? First, that the vigilance of the rank and file of the trade-union and pro-working-class parties is essential to impose a democratic policy on their leadership, who are influenced by neoliberal pressures emanating from the bourgeoisie. This is what happened in the case of the militants of the General Confederation of Labor (CGT), the leading union of the French workers, which is close to the Communists. Their mobilization reversed the line of their leadership from Yes to No on the referendum. The second lesson is that when the leadership of a trade union or workers' party becomes again what it should never have stopped being, the militant leadership of a working-class organization, it can quickly regain the confidence and the support of its rank and file. Resuming their positions defending working-class interests and opposing the rightist drift of the social democracy, the leaders of the French Communist Party (PCF) made the good choice of supporting the No vote. As a result, they were followed by 98 percent of their membership in the referendum vote: the strongest proportion of all the parties.

In France, the PCF was the decisive organizational center of the left-wing No vote during the campaign. Without the local and material logistics the PCF brought to the other progressive components of the No vote, the victory undoubtedly would not have been possible. For perhaps the first time in France, a historical opportunity for a popularly supported union of the left has been opened. It is vital not to waste this opportunity, in particular by excessive criticisms or by regressive alliances. There is no certainty that the left forces will avoid these pitfalls in the 2007 presidential

election.

Second Moment: The Uprising in the Cités of the Suburbs, October-November 2005

Many things have been written, in France and abroad, that misrepresent the events that the media called the “insurrection of the suburbs” or “urban guerrilla warfare,” which took place from the end of October (following the death under suspicious conditions of two young people pursued by the police force in Clichy-sous-Bois, near Paris) to the end of November 2005 (after the extension of the state of emergency for three months by the government). [6] Exaggeration of the disorders reached a ridiculous level when the embassies of several foreign countries published safety instructions for their nationals residing in French territory. France was not in flames.

The disorders took place only in or near the cités or districts of the suburbs where large numbers of the very poorest families are confined in towers and walls of concrete. [7] The young people who revolted against the established order focused their attack on property, setting fire to cars by the thousands, police stations, shopping centers, banks, and so on, but not against people—except for the police force. Without condoning the forms of gratuitous violence against property that sometimes occurred—particularly when public property (schools and public transportation) were affected—much of France recognized this revolt as justified and, indeed, considered the explosion as absolutely inevitable.

We all know the capitalist society that we are part of offers nothing to these youths: neither decent housing, education leading to stable employment, hope of social advancement—nor social recognition. Plus it does not listen to them. The most tangible connection that these young people maintain with the state consists of being stopped, questioned, and searched by the police—in ways that are sometimes brutal and always intimidating and humiliating.

Many observers spoke out, and rightly so, against the repression directed at the youths, but they generally concentrated their criticisms on Minister of the Interior Sarkozy, a candidate in the 2007 presidential election. His resignation, and it alone, would have obviously not resolved the difficulties of the suburbs. Provocations from Sarkozy, who expressed his desire to use a high-pressure hose to “clean” the *cités* of the “rabble” who “pollute” them, were received by the inhabitants of these districts as the insults they were intended to be, but also as a demonstration of hatred against the poor in general. The working class as a whole, all those who undergo and resist the destructive offensive of neoliberalism, felt they were his targets.

The observers who interpret the revolt solely through the framework of race and religion forget that this rebellion was at root a problem of class. It was a rebellion of the children of the common people, whose conditions of life are insecure and who are learning about the class struggle from the blows that a repressive state strikes against them. The state meted out (in)justice so expeditiously that sentences were handed down at the first court appearance, sometimes on the night of the arrest. The courts freely dispensed disproportionate punishments, including one year of prison for setting fire to garbage cans, the deportation of holders of residence permits who were picked up during the riot, and the double penalty of prison followed by deportation.

On and after November 8, 2005, the rebels faced a state of emergency in the “sensitive zones” (i.e., the poorest districts of the suburbs). This declaration freed the administrative authorities from the principles of legality usually governing their actions. It extended their powers to prohibit the movement of people; place people under house arrest; close performance spaces; prohibit meetings;

search homes at any time of the day or night; impose controls on the press, publications, radios, and cinemas; and allow military tribunals to seize people for crimes and offenses covered under civil law. [8] The French government had previously resorted to these civil laws only against the Algerians (1955) and the Kanaks (1985) —but it did not use them in metropolitan territory, even in 1968. [9]

The repression that came down on these young people is class repression, directed against this underprivileged urban class, whether they are descended from French parents, immigrants, or foreigners. That a number of them are of foreign origin (North African and sub-Saharan especially) does nothing to diminish the fact that the common experience of those who revolted is one of poverty and oppression. Class repression, aggravated by race hatred imposed by the narrow, coupon-clipping French elite, is a fact that is often hidden, but ever present.

Through their struggles, even in the very fury of these events, these young people—who are also included among the French people and in the vast majority are “ordinary people”—are the bearers of an alternative to the current society. This alternative is neither theoretical nor conceptual, nor is it even clear, but it is practiced in the hard reality of the cités—where they share failures at school, discrimination, unemployment, noisy and deteriorated housing, being badly served by too-expensive public transportation, and living with a lack of social and cultural infrastructures. Their revolt under these circumstances is the antithesis of the urban racial and social apartheid preached through the xenophobic and reactionary right-wing project of the French elites, which requires keeping entire sectors of the people in unemployment and poverty, along with the imperialist plundering of the South. [10] The alternative that is being built in the struggle today in these poor suburbs, and for which these young people fight in the very first line of the struggle, is that of an ethnically mixed France, open to the world—especially to the third world. The goal is a France strong and proud of its diversity, while it grows even more diverse. The great majority of the young people who rose up are French and have no need to be “integrated.” They need to be recognized for what they are and what they do: they are French, and they are building the France of tomorrow, a society of mutual acceptance and cosmopolitanism.

We are far from the stereotype of a racist French people presented by the dominant media and proposed by the National Front. In the poor districts, the huge majority among the ordinary people made their choice: with courage, tolerance, and mutual respect, they accept each other and they build a life together. It is these people of the suburbs, suffering the bulk of the social disasters caused by neoliberal policies, who confront Le Pen—and his “moderate” right-wing substitutes through whom he exerts his influence. Le Pen built on the nauseating history of the French bourgeoisie—that of slavery, colonization, collaboration with Nazism, and current imperialism. He corrupted those whom neoliberalism had impoverished. His present political weight is due, not to the so-called racism of the people of France, but to the reaction of the extremist factions of the French bourgeoisie who are opposed to those who adopted the anti-apartheid choice already practiced by the young people of the suburbs. And the victories gained against him in 2002, in which this multicolored youth also took part—the same ones who knew enough to mobilize to say No to the European Constitution—are decisive for the defense of the values of the republic.

Many young people are today completely cut off from the struggles for emancipation of the French labor movement. The schools do not teach them about the history of these struggles, and they learn even less about those of the peoples of the South. Furthermore, the workers’ parties and unions do not educate them. But what is more serious is that many progressive militants are unaware of the history of resistance in the suburbs and by the immigrants in France since the unleashing of the crisis of the 1970s. These effervescent, disturbing, dispersed movements are a self-organized expression of the populations, mixed French and foreign-born poor, advancing side-by-side for social transformations.

This is not to suggest that these young people are organized agents of change—the inheritors of a short-winded proletariat in the capitalist centers, or the reflection of intense agitation in the peripheries of the South. It is not a question of denying that many of these young people simply aspire to gain a place in the consumer society, hoping to raise their social standing under capitalism. It is not a question of hiding the fact that some of them have no other aim than destruction—to return blow-for-blow to this iniquitous and repressive society that pushes them back or excludes them. It is not a question of idealizing the demands of these rebellious youth—when they have had some—or even less to justify all forms of violence. Yet even if these young people in revolt do not form parties, and cause much mistrust and insecurity in the remainder of the country, the left must see them as allies for the necessary radical, social, and democratic transformation of France—and not just a voting bloc in the next elections.

It is time that the French left expressed its solidarity with regard to this overexploited sub-proletariat. The disadvantaged youth of the suburbs certainly do not constitute the whole of the left's social base, but without them, the left will never be truly popular—that is, of the people. What is at issue in this need for solidarity is the linking of the traditional struggles of the workers in France with those of the other sectors of the popular classes: the economically disadvantaged, unemployed, homeless, undocumented, and those without rights. For the genuine French left, this is undoubtedly a historical opportunity to rebuild clear, modern, class positions, with an internationalist and a revolutionary spirit.

Emerging unceasingly from the cités, fed by the burdens of their living conditions and (lack of) work, exploding after each police excess, these disadvantaged youth ache to be organized and to be linked to the struggles of working people in general. Until now they have had their energies diverted, or were weakened by the offensives of neoliberal “recovery” programs, often orchestrated from the armchairs of the PS, which has also sought to co-opt young people of the cités into a *beurgeoisie* [11] that would feed into the PS electoral machine. Yet the inchoate youth movements of the cités are still active and struggling with many challenges and questions. How can they foster autonomy and encourage the participation of the people? How can they resist capitalist alienation and emancipate youth from their hatred and their desires for a consumer society? How do we unite those of the cités in struggle against discrimination, racist attacks, police violence, and evictions of foreigners? How do we ensure housing, employment, freedom of religion, and the power of the people themselves to control their future? How do we formulate a strategy of action and political representation for such a diverse population? [12] Such proposals must be formulated in a sufficiently broad way to permit their articulation with the demands of other movements that appeared in the 1990s. [13] To get the demands of these various movements to converge will not be easy, but the material points of convergence are plentiful: such is the case, for example, with employment.

Third Moment: The Mobilization Against the CPE, February-April 2006

After the No vote of May 2005 and the uprising in the cités of the suburbs in October and November 2005, the third moment of the revolt was the mobilization against the attack on the employment security of the youngest workers, which concretely took the form of the CPE contracts. The CPE (*contrat première embauche* or first hiring contract) constitutes one of the “reforms” of the labor market recently adopted by the right-wing, neoliberal government in France. Reserved for the youth and applying to large firms of more than twenty persons, it aims at substituting contracts with unlimited, permanent duration (CDI or *contrats à durée indéterminée*) with precarious jobs. The enterprises resorting to this type of contract are freed from employers' social security contributions.

Its next of kin, the CNE (*contrat nouvelle embauche* or new hiring contract), concerns all the

workers in small and medium-sized firms of less than twenty persons, regardless of age. Since last August, more than 300,000 CNE have been signed. Granted to the owners under the dogma of “cutting labor costs,” these gifts have proved their inefficiency in creating stable jobs. They resulted only in expanding public deficits and in reducing demand, thus in exerting new unemployment pressures—since unemployment, contrary to neoliberal ideology, is not due to excessive labor costs, but to the submission of firms to constraints of financial profitability imposed by their shareholders.

The more recent CPE would have allowed owners of larger firms to lay off young people during their first two years of employment without any of the procedure, justification, and legal recourse that are still the norm for French workers. This contract of precarious employment with dubious duration is in fact worse than a contract with limited, temporary duration (CDD, or *contrat à durée déterminée*). The young worker, under the CPE contract, would be trapped day-after-day in an arbitrary state of uncertainty, prohibited from building of a stable and worthwhile existence: unable to start a family, be secure from want, seek decent housing, and obtain credit to purchase durable consumer goods.

One understands the main objective of the CPE: to exacerbate competition between workers, to make precarious the employment of the youngest while using them to dismantle the whole wage-earner permanent job statute, and to launch the attack against the great victories of French workers embodied in the relatively progressive labor laws of France: limits imposed on the logic of capital especially in the forms of protections against arbitrary dismissals. The CPE is a device to make the French labor market “flexible” (by suppressing the minimum wage, creating a single flexible work contract, etc.) as recommended by the advocates of neoliberalism—who have been dreaming for a long time of putting an end to the “French exception.”

How did the young people of France, joined by workers united in an inter-syndicale (or trade-unions’ front) react? They mobilized themselves, organized general assemblies, took the floor when the dominant classes attempted to gag them, and informed and trained themselves about the current reforms, as they did during the campaign against the EU Constitution. They then blocked universities and colleges (in addition to roads, stations, and airports) and took to the street to demonstrate massively their resistance to this social war: 500,000 on February 7; 1,000,000 on March 7; 1,500,000 on March 18; 2–3,000,000 on March 28; and more than 3,000,000 on April 4.

Contrary to all appearances, the tandem Villepin-Sarkozy functions rather “well”: the first one undertakes to destroy the labor laws, while the second one aims at breaking the resistance by intimidating the youth. After the hard repression of the rioters in November, thousands of anti-CPE demonstrators (perhaps 4,350) were arrested nationwide. Judgments were passed by the hundreds (probably more than 630, including around 270 at the first court appearance), against young people having taken part in the confrontations with the police forces in the streets. At the end of April, 71 prison sentences were decreed—up to eight months—as well as 167 trial verdicts of imprisonment with possible remission of sentence. Is the government offering French youth a choice: increasingly precarious employment—or prison?

Let’s imagine the buildings of the Sorbonne in the Latin district of Paris surrounded for weeks by two lines of police-vans, the Sorbonne square itself surrounded by anti-riot steel-plate movable barriers, through which one could distinguish a multitude of police vehicles and a significant number of Republican Security Companies (CRS)—in battle dress. [14] However, this deployment of force did not make the students lose their sense of humor. On these anti-riot barriers around the Sorbonne, one could read “Do Not Feed the CRS, Please” or “Because of the risks of contagion due to avian flu, containment of chickens” (in French slang, a “chicken” is a policeman).

After almost three months of crisis, two general strikes, and a series of demonstrations gathering

nearly 10 million persons, President Chirac and Premier Villepin announced, on Monday April 10, one day before the announcement of a new massive demonstration, the “replacement” of the article of the law creating the CPE with a plan for the employment of young people—with public funds of 150 million euros in 2006. (Compare this to the 23 billion granted to the employers in the previous CPE scheme.) Villepin declared: “I wanted to propose a strong solution. This was not understood by all, and I regret it.”

The anti-CPE organizations applauded this decision, but were waiting to know the contents of the newly proposed laws. The leading student organization, the Union Nationale des Étudiants de France (UNEF), maintained a new day of action on April 11, while recognizing that the suppression of the CPE constituted a first decisive victory. The CGT declared the withdrawal of the CPE as a “success of the convergent action of the workers, students and high-school pupils as well as of the trade-union unity.” On April 13, sixteen universities were seriously disrupted by the strikers; three others blocked, in Toulouse, Montpellier, and Aix-Marseille; and that of Rennes, a spearhead of the anti-CPE mobilization, was closed again. On April 18, after a last occupation of the Sorbonne by young activists and their expulsion by the police forces, many students finally voted in favor of a “reorganization and remobilization of the movement” until the following demands could be realized: (1) the complete withdrawal of the CNE; already in force, (2) the cancellation of the government’s so-called “law on equality of opportunities” (which promotes apprenticeship contracts from the age of fourteen and restores night work from the age of fifteen); (3) the satisfaction of demands to raise salaries and relief payments; (4) the lifting of anti-immigrant laws; and (5) the ending of repression. But on April 19, the return to work was voted everywhere.

Three moments of what has to be seen as a great French upsurge against neoliberalism, and then a period of quiet. But not a single individual in France now thinks the struggle is over. A whole new generation of economically oppressed and socially marginalized workers has shown that it is prepared to join the class struggle against neoliberal capitalism. The questions today are vastly different than they were only two years ago. Now it is no longer whether fierce class resistance to neoliberal capitalism will arise, but how organized it will be, how much solidarity will develop at the bottom of society, and what new alternatives will be posed.

P.S.

* From Venceremos:

<http://venceremosonline.org/Franceremyherrera.htm>

* Rémy Herrera (herrera1 univ-paris1.fr) is a researcher at the National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS) and teaches at the University of Paris 1 Pantheon-Sorbonne.

Footnotes

[1] Rémy Herrera, “Impact of the French ‘no’ in the US,” *Workers World Newspaper* (June 2005); and “No Way! French Workers Reject EU Constitution,” *Political Affairs* 84, no. 9 (2005).

[2] In the PS, the simulation of democratic procedures and the manipulation of the militants led to a failure: the party voted Yes at 55 percent in an internal vote under the pressure of its executives and No at 59 percent at the referendum when the votes were free.

[3] There has been around 10 percent unemployment in France for twenty years. Today, 7.5

million persons are affected by unemployment or underemployment: 3 million unemployed, all categories included; 1 million unemployed not registered; 1.5 million with interim or CDD contracts; and 2 million with part-time jobs. The unemployment rate is 22.8 percent in 2005 for people aged 15-24.

[4] It is said he would receive Washington's support.

[5] Jean-Marie Le Pen is leader of the extreme-wing National Front. In 2002, he was in a run-off election for president against Jacques Chirac, who finally won with 82 percent of the vote.

[6] Samir Amin & Rémy Herrera, "A Próposito de las revueltas de los barrios periféricos en Francia," *Revista del Observatorio social de América Latina* 8, no. 18 (2005).

[7] The *cités* are large-scale subsidized housing projects. The banlieues are the working-class suburbs surrounding the cities in France. Their rough U.S. equivalent might be housing projects in rust-belt inner cities.

[8] Except for some PS's officials declaring themselves satisfied with the state of emergency, the left as a whole condemned this step-up of repression. But the reactions of the PS were at the very least measured: its first secretary, Hollande, said that "the application of the law of 1955 must be limited in time and in space" and that its extension was "a bad symbol." In 2001, his wife, Ségolène Royal, then minister in the Lionel Jospin government, declared: "the word 'curfew' is inadmissible, warlike." The president of the PS group in the National Assembly proclaimed: "Under such circumstances, the democratic formations must know to conclude a non-aggression pact." Thus, the reality of an "inadmissible word" can become admissible.

[9] Algerians won a long war of liberation in 1962. The struggle for self-determination in Kanaky (New Caledonia), a French territory in the South Pacific, slowed down after 1985.

[10] A paradox of this rebellion is that these young people are completely permeated by the U.S. consumerist way of life (clothing, food, games, slang, and cultural references); but, with their antiracism, they reject the U.S. violence of internal segregation and external war. Even if the majority of these young rioters are not politicized, their action is political.

[11] *Beurs* is a slang name for those with North African roots. *Beurgeoisie* is a pun.

[12] Example: Movement of Immigration and Suburbs (MIB, Mouvement de l'Immigration et des Banlieues).

[13] Such as: Right to Housing (DAL, an association formed in 1990 when evicted families occupied buildings in the 20th district of Paris); Committee of the Homeless (CDSL, created in 1993 to help older people in difficulties and poor people without friends or family); Rights First! (DD!, created in 1994); Act against Unemployment! (AC!); the Group to Intervene in Support of Immigrants (GISTI); Call of the "Without" (launched December 20, 1995, during the big strikes of workers); and Association for Employment, Insertion and Solidarity (APEIS).

[14] The CRS (*Compagnie républicaine de sécurité*) are parts of the official forces responsible for order.