

Joint Communiqué

No to the state of exception

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Paris,

Confronted to a revolt born from the accumulation of inequalities and discrimination in the “banlieues” (suburbs of Paris) and the poor areas, the government has just passed a new threshold, of extreme gravity, in the escalade of security. Even in May 1968, when the situation was a lot more dramatic, the public authorities had not utilised the extreme measure of declaring a state of emergency. The proclamation of the state of emergency is the answer to a revolt, whose causes are profound and well known even at the level of state repression.

Beyond the disastrous symbolical message that is nourished by the reference to the war in Algeria, it is not only a case of “state of emergency” which in itself is in the neighbourhood of adopting a war logic. In fact, the government has consciously obscured the range of its powers. The law of April 3, 1955 authorises interdictions of stay for “all persons, trying to hinder, in any conceivable way, the action of the public authorities”, and the confinement to residence of “all persons (...) whose activity turns out to be dangerous to security and public order”, the closing of “places of reunion of all kind” and the prohibition of “gatherings apt to provoke or to foster disorder.” The government even envisages police searches of homes at night. It can, moreover, “take any kind of measures for assuring the control of the press and of publications of any kind”, and transfer competence from the ordinary judges to competing military courts.

Stopping the violence and re-establishing the solidarities in the “banlieues” is a necessity. Does this imply to submit them to an exceptional legislation inherited from the colonial period? One knows too well, where the well-known cycle leads that ties provocation to repression, and what results it has and which ones it makes impossible to achieve. The suburbs do not need a state of exception: they desperately need justice, respect, and equality.

Signatories:

Citizens' Alternative, ATMF, CEDETIM, Committee of the homeless, CRLDHT, Fédération syndicale unitaire (FSU), Ligue communiste révolutionnaire (LCR), Ligue des droits de l'Homme, MRAP, Parti communiste français (PCF), Trade union of lawyers in France, Trade union of judges, Trade union Solidaires, the Greens.

P.S.

* Translated by Carla Krüger, November 8, 2005.