

EUROPEAN RACE BULLETIN

INSTITUTE OF
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France inflamed: riots and reactions

By Tim Cleary

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Preface

At both the level of policy and of popular discourse, the riots in the deprived French *banlieues* in October and November 2005 have had reverberations across the EU. And, once again, questions of integration and segregation are being discussed in ways that place security rather than justice at the centre of that debate.

Not only this, but theories that explain urban unrest in terms of cultural deficit, or youth delinquency, have proved popular with media commentators and politicians. Culturalist explanations for urban unrest include ideas that the riots were caused by: self-segregating Islamic communities living parallel lives; the cultural propensity of Black Africans to violence; urban guerrilla warfare, fuelled by drugs and gangsta rap. But while 'explanations' based on such crude cultural arguments may be on the ascendancy in France today, alternative, less shrill and less-heeded, voices in civil society are calling for policies based on 'justice, respect and equality'. Another positive development has been the formation of new grassroots organisations, such as the Banlieue 69 collective, and the Conseil Représentatif des Associations Noires, to mobilise against repression and exclusion.

In the months, and perhaps even in the years to come, the French riots will be seen as a watershed in the struggle to shape a more just agenda for young people of Arab or African descent right across Europe. We hope that this factual, chronological report on the riots and related responses, will be an aid in that discussion.

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Introduction – an overview of the riots and their aftermath

The recent uprisings across France in October and November 2005 saw anger on unprecedented levels among the residents of the deprived *banlieues* (suburban ghettos) on the outskirts of towns and cities, where many of France's ethnic minorities live. The anger was ignited after two teenagers of African origin – Zyed Benna and Bouna Traoré – were electrocuted and died while taking refuge in an electricity substation in Clichy-sous-Bois (Seine-Saint-Denis) on 27 October. Their friend, Muhittin Altun, was severely injured. The boys were allegedly being pursued by police officers who wanted to carry out an identity check.

The riots began in Clichy-sous-Bois, but then spread to neighbouring towns, followed by unrest across France which lasted for approximately three weeks. Incidents similar to those in France were also reported in neighbouring countries Belgium and Germany, and also in Greece.

In dealing with the rioting in France, a 1955 state-of-emergency law was invoked, allowing local officials to impose curfews and other measures in order to control the activities of residents. Critics pointed to the colonial overtones of this law, which had been used previously to quell unrest during the Algerian War of Independence and against an independence movement in the French overseas territory of New Caledonia in 1984. One incident of police brutality during the riots was filmed and shown on television, leading to action being taken against the officers responsible.

Interior minister Nicolas Sarkozy also called for foreigners to be expelled from France if it was found that they were involved in the riots and stated that some deportations were under way. In addition to this, noticeable moves have been made by the French government to further restrict immigration and to clamp down on Islamic extremist groups, showing that 'riots', 'immigration' and 'Islamic extremism' have, by some people, been seen as intimately related.

Various politicians on the Right and far Right have made statements in relation to the uprisings, showing a definite shift to the right in terms of French political discourse. Most prominent in the media has been interior minister Nicolas Sarkozy, who – even before the rioting – had referred to elements of the disadvantaged suburbs as *racaille*, which has been translated variously as 'scum', 'rabble' and 'riff-raff'. Other members of the ruling UMP party and Philippe de Villiers of Mouvement pour la France tried to look for a cause of the riots in polygamy, which provoked indignation among anti-racist groups such as MRAP, SOS Racisme and the Ligue des Droits de l'Homme. The last of these organisations stated that it was 'nauseating and irresponsible to turn foreigners into the cause of the situation our country is experiencing'. Furthermore, several French rap artists were accused of playing a part in provoking the riots and were threatened with legal action.

The Front National also seized the opportunity to promote its racist anti-immigrant policy, with leader Jean-Marie Le Pen stating that 'if their parents and grandparents came to France thinking that it was an Eldorado and if their grandchildren believe there aren't any opportunities, they can always return to their country of origin'. He also addressed around 300 Front National supporters and declared that France was now 'paying the bill' for its 'mad and criminal immigration from the Third World'.

During the uprisings and in their aftermath, a national debate – to which residents, politicians, anti-racist and human rights groups, intellectuals and celebrities all contributed – forced the French government to think about ways in which it could tackle the failure of its integration policy, wherein unemployment, disadvantage and racial discrimination have continued to blight many French communities, particularly ethnic minorities of north and west African origin. The interior minister said that France 'must break with a political, social and economic system that has for 30 years produced mainly unemployment, debt and opposition to change', suggesting that positive discrimination might be one solution.

Human rights groups and other non-governmental organisations have also been vocal in their critique of the French Republican integration model, where everyone is purportedly equal – pointing out that this model, in reality, glosses over the fact that racism and discrimination are endemic in France. One umbrella group, CRAN, was formed to represent Black people in France.

The uprisings have also prompted the questioning of a recent educational law, whereby textbooks would be required to show the 'positive role' that France played in its former colonies. In many ways, reactions from ethnic minorities in France have mirrored protests in former colonies and current French overseas territories, which object to the way in which the French authorities have tried to gloss over slavery and atrocities in colonial history. As such, France is being forced to re-examine its colonial past and its postcolonial present by a vocal, multicultural population.

By extension, the uprisings have forced other European states to look at their own integration models, with commentators asking if riots would take place in their countries next, or otherwise asserting that their countries would be immune from such rioting because racism was somehow less of a problem there.

The events and responses

Chronology of the riots

Political responses and initiatives to the riots

20.6.05	nouvelobs.com if source not given. Interior minister Nicolas Sarkozy (UMP party) announces his wish to 'clean with a power hose' the estate named the 'cité des 4,000' in La Courneuve (Seine-Saint-Denis , north east Paris), after the death of a boy, Sidi Ahmed, who was shot during a clash between rival gangs. (nouvelobs.com 20.6.05)
25.10.05	Nicolas Sarkozy visits Argenteuil (Val-d'Oise, northern Paris) to look at the implementation of a new plan of action against urban violence. After being greeted with hostility, he states the next day that 'since my visit pleased people so much, I'll return there'. (<i>Liberation</i> 26.10.05)
27.10.05	Three youths scale a fence surrounding an electricity substation in Clichy-sous-Bois (Seine-Saint-Denis). It is thought they were trying to escape from police on suspicion of burglary. Zyed Benna (17 years old and of Tunisian origin) and Bouna Traoré (15 years old and of Malian origin) die as a result of being electrocuted. Their companion, Muhittin Altun (17 years old and of Turkish origin) is seriously injured. That night, dozens of youths attack firemen, police officers and public buildings. Twenty-three cars are burned in Clichy-sous-Bois. 300 police officers are deployed until 2am. (<i>Liberation</i> 28.10.05) ■ Earlier the same day, a man had been killed in Epinay-sur-Seine (Seine-Saint-Denis). He was attacked after taking pictures of a street light as part of his job. (<i>Liberation</i> 31.10.05)
28.10.05	That night, over a period of two hours, 400 youths confront the police in Clichy-sous-Bois and in the neighbouring town of Montfermeil . A riot squad (CRS) officer is shot, twenty-three police officers are injured and twenty-nine vehicles are burned. Fourteen arrests are made.
29.10.05	500 people take part in a silent march in Clichy-sous-Bois in memory of the two boys who died. ■ The state prosecutor at Bobigny, François Molins, declares that 'the three teenagers fled an identity check in Livry-Gargan. They believed they were being pursued, but they weren't'. That night, twenty vehicles are burned in Clichy .
30.10.05	At night, there are confrontations on the border between Clichy and Montfermeil and eight vehicles are burned. A teargas grenade is used by the CRS riot squad on a mosque in Clichy , with some accounts (see <i>Le Monde</i> 1.12.05) indicating that gas enters the prayer room.
31.10.05	Three youths are sentenced to eight months' prison for throwing missiles at police. ■ That night, there are clashes in Clichy-sous-Bois and six other towns in the Seine-Saint-Denis

nouvelobs.com if source not given.

Interior minister **Nicolas Sarkozy** declares that 'the police were not physically pursuing the two teenagers' who died in Clichy-sous-Bois on 27 October.

Equal opportunities minister, **Azouz Begag**, denounces the 'inaccurate, warlike semantics' of Sarkozy, who stated that suburban youths are 'yobs' and 'scum'. (*Liberation* 31.10.05) [much is

département, and also in **Chelles** (Seine-et-Marne), which borders Montfermeil. Sixty-eight vehicles are burned.

1.11.05 There are more clashes in the **Seine-Saint-Denis département**, but also in **Seine-et-Marne**, **Yvelines** and **Val-d'Oise**. 228 vehicles are burned.

2.11.05 Two youths are given prison sentences of ten and six months. ■ On the seventh night of violence, four shots are fired at police officers and the fire brigade. A police station is taken over in **Aulnay-sous-Bois**; several buildings are set alight, 177 vehicles are burned and much of the public transport system is halted in the **Seine-Saint-Denis département**. ■ A disabled woman is seriously burned when a bus is set alight in Sevrans, **Seine-Saint-Denis**. (*Libération* 5.11.05; *Le Monde* 1.12.05)

3.11.05 The families of the electrocuted teenagers lodge a complaint against X for failing to help a person in danger, and a judicial inquiry is opened. Sarkozy receives them in order to present to them the developments of the inquiry being led by the *Inspection générale des services* (IGS). ■ That night, 420 cars are burned and 1,300 police officers are deployed in **Seine-Saint-Denis**. Twenty-three buses are set alight in a depot in **Trappes** (Yvelines) and warehouses are set alight around Paris. (*Libération* 5.11.05)

4.11.05 900 vehicles are set alight throughout France and schools and public buildings are attacked. ■ 250 arrests are made, including a 10-year-old boy. ■ A molotov cocktail is thrown at a synagogue in **Garges-lès-Gonnesses** (Val d'Oise). (*Libération* 5.11.05)

5.11.05 200 people in **Epinay-sur-Seine** observe a minute's silence for Jean-Claude Irvoas, who was killed on 27 October while he took a photograph of a street light. The far-Right **Bloc Identitaire** disrupts the ceremony, shouting that those responsible 'don't like France and French people'. (*Libération* 5.11.05) ■ On the tenth night of violence, 1,295 vehicles are burned and 312 arrests are made.

6.11.05 Gunmen attack police in **Grigny**; a bus is seized and torched in **Saint-Etienne**; a burning car is pushed against a police building in **Rouen**; police in **Evry** find a petrol-bomb factory. (*Libération* 7.11.05; *Guardian* 7.11.05)

7.11.05 Twelfth night of violence: 1,173 cars are set alight and 330 arrests are made. In Toulouse, a 21-year-old man loses his hand when he tries to throw a teargas grenade back at the police. (*Le Monde* 1.12.05) ■ Riots touch the historic heart of Paris for the first time. (*Guardian* 7.11.05) ■ Jean-Jacques Le Chenadec, 61, from **Strains (Seine-Saint-Denis)**, dies of injuries sustained while he tried to extinguish a burning rubbish bin. (*Guardian Unlimited* 7.11.05) ■ The violence is lessening in the **Ile-de-France** region, but is still strong in other regions of France.

made about the use of the word *racaille*, which in the English-language media has been variously translated as 'scum', 'rabble' and 'riff raff'.]

Prime Minister **Dominique de Villepin**, with Sarkozy also present, receives the families of two of the electrocuted teenagers at Matignon, and assures them that 'full light will be shed on the circumstances surrounding this incident'.

Sarkozy cancels a trip to Pakistan and Afghanistan. ■ **Villepin** postpones a trip to Canada and announces that a 'plan of action' will be made before the end of November, whilst declaring that there is 'no miracle solution to deal with the situation'. ■ President **Jacques Chirac** calls for calm and says the authorities will use a firm hand to curtail what may become a 'dangerous situation'. 'The law must be applied firmly and in a spirit of dialogue and respect.' (*AP* 2.11.05)

Minister for Employment and Social Cohesion, **Jean-Louis Borloo**, considers that 'a firm line [fermeté] must remain in place', but 'also a helping hand [*la main tendue*]':

After an internal security council meeting at the Elysée, **Chirac** states that the 'priority' is to 're-establish security and public order'. ■ **Villepin** announces 'a reinforcement of our security operations throughout the territory where it is necessary' and 1,500 extra police officers are to be deployed. (*Libération* 7.11.05; *Guardian* 7.11.05)

8.11.05 617 vehicles are set alight in France, which the interior minister refers to as a 'large decrease'.

9.11.05 Fourteenth night of violence: 482 vehicles are set alight according to initial estimates. 203 arrests are made (now 2,033 in total). A nursery school is partly burned down in the Reynerie district of **Toulouse**. A school is destroyed by fire in **Belfort**. The police record a marked decrease in rioting, especially in the **Paris region**. The **Rhône département** (Lyons) remains sensitive, with more than sixty cars burned and an electricity substation set on fire, which causes a two-hour power cut in the east of the Lyons conurbation. Public transport in Lyons is stopped in the evenings until Sunday. (*Liberation* 10.11.05; *nouvelobs.com* 10.11.05) ■ Two teenage bloggers have been detained on suspicion of encouraging people to riot by using websites. (*Guardian* 9.11.05) ■ A police inquiry shows that the Bilal mosque in **Clichy-sous-Bois** was not targeted directly by a teargas grenade on 30 October. This is supported by a photograph. (*Le Monde* 9.11.05)

A **ministerial council** issues a decree allowing the imposition of a curfew 'in areas that will be defined' in the framework of the 1955 law on a state of emergency (*état d'urgence*), which authorises curfews and searches without a judge's orders and empowers police to place rioters under house arrest, to ban or limit the movement of people and vehicles, to confiscate weapons and close public spaces where gangs gather. (The state of emergency law was used initially during the Algerian War of Independence between 1954 and 1962 and during unrest in the French overseas territory of New Caledonia in 1984.) (*Guardian* / *AP* 8.11.05). ■ The security measures are to begin on 9 November and will be valid for twelve days. **Villepin** says that France must prioritise working against the discrimination that feeds the frustration of youths in France: 'The effectiveness of our integration model is in question', the prime minister told parliament. He called the riots 'a warning' and 'an appeal'. 'Despite his conciliatory tone, Villepin said riot police faced 'determined individuals, structured gangs, organized criminality', and that restoring order 'will take time'. Rioters have been using mobile phone text messages and the Internet to organise arson attacks, said police, who arrested two teenage bloggers accused of inciting other youths to riot. 'We must be lucid: The Republic is at a moment of truth', Villepin said. (*Guardian* 8.11.05)

Publication of the decree on the state of emergency in the government's *Journal officiel*. The curfew is in place for minors in only five *départements*: in parts of **Alpes-Maritimes**, in the **Somme** (in Amiens), **Seine-Maritime** (Rouen, Elbeuf and Le Havre) and **Loiret** (six districts including Orléans). In the Madeleine area of **Evreux** (Eure), the curfew – also for adults – is in place from 10pm. Mayors in many districts in France doubt the effectiveness of the curfew, others see it as a 'provocation' that may encourage more riots. (*Liberation* 9 and 10.11.05; *nouvelobs.com* 10.11.05) ■ **Villepin** and education minister **Gilles de Robien** state that the government wants to lower the minimum age for apprenticeships to fourteen. This is aimed at pupils who are failing at school. **Teachers' unions** and the **FCPE** (a federation of parents) see it as a challenge to compulsory schooling until sixteen. (*Liberation* 9.11.05; *nouvelobs.com* 9.11.05) ■ **Villepin** receives mothers of families living in 'sensitive areas' (*quartiers sensibles*) at Matignon, who criticise the use of the curfew, but state that they are in favour of the measures that had been announced in favour of young people. (*nouvelobs.com* 10.11.05) ■ **Sarkozy** states during a meeting with representatives of the police, *gendarmerie* and fire brigade in Toulouse that he is proud of his police force. He says that 'There are many countries that have seen urban riots: England, the United States and many others. Contrary to what I hear, this is not a specificity reserved to us alone. In many of these countries, there have been deaths, and confrontations of unprecedented violence.' (*nouvelobs.com* 09.11.05) ■ **Sarkozy** asks prefects to deport all foreigners who are sentenced for involvement in the violence, including those with residence permits, in all instances where the law allows it. Associations defending human rights (Mouvement contre le Racisme et pour l'Amitié entre les Peuples, Ligue des Droits de l'Homme, France Terre d'Asile, Réseau Education Sans Frontières) protest that this is a form of 'double punishment' (*double peine*). At present, 120 people would be sub-

ject to this measure. (nouvelobs.com 10.11.05; *Expatica News* 9.11.05) ■ UMP deputy for Gironde, **Jean-Paul Garraud**, and Front National leader **Jean-Marie Le Pen** support French-naturalised foreign rioters being stripped of their nationality. Garraud states that 'the delinquents currently participating in urban guerilla warfare are, with precise objectives, trying to destroy the French nation. Through this violence they are expressing their rejection of France.' Later, he says that they are targeting 'symbols of our culture, the foundations of the French nation. This behaviour resembles cultural fascism.' Le Pen states, in an interview with the BBC, that 'We are going to take away their nationality, from them, and not from their grandparents.' He also states that 'if their parents and grandparents came to France thinking that it was an Eldorado and if their grandchildren believe there aren't any opportunities, they can always return to their country of origin,' then that 'they are "French on paper"'. (nouvelobs.com 10.11.05)

Sarkozy reiterates on France 2 television that the rioters are 'scum' and 'yobs'. (nouvelobs.com 12.11.05) ■ President **Jacques Chirac** says that ending France's unrest is still his priority, but also acknowledges the 'undeniable' problems faced by the suburbs where the rioting began. (*Guardian* / AP 10.11.05) ■ He also defends his use of emergency measures, but also says that the government needs to do more to ensure all French citizens are treated equally. (*Guardian* 11.11.05) ■ The *Guardian* writes that: 'The government [has] released details of a package of measures to improve conditions in the suburbs of major cities, aimed mainly at ensuring the education system served north African and black youths better and improved their chances of getting a job. All unemployed people under 25 and living in one of the 750 sensitive suburbs will be assessed by job centres and given guidance and work placements. Benefit claimants will get a one-off €1,000 payment to return to work as well as €150 a month for twelve months. Companies will be given tax breaks if they set up on or near the estates. Some 5,000 extra teachers and educational assistants are to be recruited in schools serving the estates concerned, 10,000 scholarships will be awarded from next year to encourage academic achievers to stay at school and ten boarding schools created for those who want to study away from their suburb. The school leaving age will be lowered to 14 for underachieving pupils eager to take up an apprenticeship. A national agency for "social cohesion and equality of opportunity" is to be set up, and an extra €100m allocated to community organisations active in youth and social work'. (*Guardian* 10.11.05) ■ Minister of Justice, **Pascal Clément**, asks judges 'not to hesitate' in requesting places for 13- to 16-year-olds in 'closed educational centres' [Centres éducatifs fermés]. Twelve minors have already been placed in such centres. (*Libération* 10.11.05)

10.11.05 400 vehicles are set on fire, 168 arrests are made. A Polish chapel is vandalised in **Houdain** (Pas-de-Calais). (nouvelobs.com 12.11.05)

11.11.05 Eight police officers are suspended after a young man was beaten up during an arrest in **La Courmeuve** on 7 November. Footage of the attack was shown on France 2 television. (nouvelobs.com 12.11.05) ■ There is unrest in **Paris, Lyons** and **Toulouse**. A primary school is attacked in Paris. 500 cars are set on fire, two police officers are wounded and 206 people are detained across France. A police station in **Maisons-Alfort** (Val-de-Marne) attacked. (nouvelobs.com 12.11.05) ■ In **Carpentras** (Vaucluse), petrol bombs are thrown at a mosque during Friday prayers. (*BBC News* 12.11.05)

12.11.05 Paris police prefect, **Pierre Mutz**, bans all public gatherings likely to cause disorder between the hours of 10am on Saturday and 8am on Sunday (in accordance with the law of 3 April 1955 in relation to a state of emergency). The official police press release states that messages sent over the internet and via text message had called for 'violent actions' in central Paris during the long weekend covering Armistice Day on Friday. The police prefect has already banned the sale of fuel and the transport of cans of petrol. (*Liberation* 12.11.05; *Guardian* 11.11.05) ■ The Alliance 93 union calls for police officers in Seine-Saint-Denis to reduce their service in order to protest at the detention of their colleague, accused of attacking a young man in La Courneuve. (*nouvelobs.com* 12.11.05) ■ The prefecture in **Lyons** imposes a curfew for minors between the hours of 10pm and 6am. (*nouvelobs.com* 12.11.05) ■ Riots erupt on Place Bellecour in the centre of **Lyons**, where riot police were on duty as a preventative measure. Around fifty youths attack stalls and damage vehicles. Police fire teargas to break up groups of youths. Two arrests are made. A curfew is imposed in Lyons and ten towns to the east of the city. (*BBC News* 12.11.05) ■ Muhittin Altun, whose two friends died as a result of being electrocuted on 27 October, states that they were being chased by the police. (*nouvelobs.com* 12.11.05) ■ Sarkozy is booed while visiting security forces on the Champs-Élysées in Paris. (*Guardian* 14.11.05) ■ 374 vehicles are set alight. (*Guardian* / AP 14.11.05)

13.11.05 The unrest decreases. 284 vehicles are set alight. A vehicle is smashed into a primary school in **Toulouse**, then the school is set on fire. Burning cars are rammed into a retirement home and a school in **Carpentras**. 115 people are taken into custody (a total of 2,767 arrests to date). (*Guardian Unlimited* / AP 14.11.05)

14.11.05 The French Federation of Insurance Companies yesterday gave a preliminary estimate of the bill for the damage at €200 million (£134 million). (*Guardian* 15.11.05) ■ The number of vehicles set on fire has decreased again, with 215 compared to 284 and 374 on previous nights. Seventy-one arrests are made, compared to 115 and 212 on previous nights. (*Liberation* 15.11.05) ■ One police officer is wounded and three firebombs are thrown at a mosque near **Lyons**. (*BBC News* 15.11.05) ■ A police officer, who was being investigated for allegedly hitting a 19-year-old in La Courneuve, is released. He is still the subject of a legal enquiry. His victim was arrested on 13 November at his home in Bourget (Seine-Saint-Denis). (*nouvelobs.com* 15.11.05)

Sarkozy states that deportation proceedings are under way, in accordance with article L521 of a code for entry and asylum rights in France. (*nouvelobs.com* 13.11.05)

In *Le Parisien-Aujourd'hui en France*, equal opportunities minister, **Azouz Begag**, states that 'the security response is not enough... Young people are more in need of social mobility than a CRS riot squad van.' (*nouvelobs.com* 13.11.05)

The curfew has so far been used in forty towns and suburbs. ■ The mayor of the Paris suburb Draveil, **Georges Tron**, says that he will stop council aid for canteens and crèches for the families of youths convicted of rioting or arson. (*Guardian* 15.11.05) ■ **Chirac** acknowledges that the riots in France had revealed a 'profound malaise' in French society and launched an appeal to combat the 'poison' of racial discrimination. He pledges to crack down on illegal immigration, defends the rule of law and says that parents who do not 'accept their responsibilities' will be punished. He also announces measures for the training of 50,000 youths in 2007, making sure France's minorities become more visible on French television and creating a civil volunteer force for unemployed youngsters. (*Guardian* 15.11.05; *Independent* 15.11.05; *BBC News* 15.11.05) ■ Foreign Minister **Philippe Douste-Blazy** says he agrees that illegal immigrants could be sent home, but not foreigners with permission to live in France. (*Guardian Unlimited* / AP 14.11.05) ■ **Jean-Marc Ayrault**, leader of the Socialist Party, calls for members of the party to vote against the government's proposal to prolong the length of the curfew to three months. (*Liberation* 15.11.05) ■ **Le Pen** addresses a crowd of around 300 Front National supporters, saying 'We let in 10 million foreigners over 30 years – it's wild insanity. No country can handle that invasion' and that France was now 'paying the bill' for its 'mad and criminal immigration from the Third World'.

15.11.05 A poll conducted by the CSA and others reveals that 47 per cent of French people think that education should be the priority for solving the problems in the *banlieues*. 45 per cent said that a better social mix and 40 per cent that the development of a local police force are two other preferred solutions. (*Associated Press* 15.11.05) ■ A fire destroys part of the Saint-Jean-d'Ars church **Romans-sur-Isère** (Drôme). Chirac calls it an 'unacceptable act'. Dalil Boubakeur of the Grand Mosque of Paris and Mohamed Bechari of the Fédération Nationale des Musulmans de France condemn the act 'very vigorously', stating that it was unfavourable to the 'calm and fraternal relations that bind together indissolubly believers from the Christian and Muslim faiths'. (*Nouvel Observateur* 16.11.05) ■ A 20-year-old man is given a four-year prison sentence by the Arras correctional court (Pas-de-Calais) for setting fire to two shops on 8 November. He explains that it was 'to do what the others were doing, that's all'. (*Nouvel Observateur* 17.11.05)

16.11.05 Two minors, aged 15 and 16, who were arrested on Tuesday in **Evry** (Essonne) on suspicion of being involved in the preparation of molotov cocktails found in the Parc aux Lievres area, appear before a judge. (*Nouvel Observateur* 17.11.05) ■ The **Rhône prefecture** justifies the presence of the CRS riot squad and *gendarmes* in the centre of Lyons. The prefecture states that it had received information about violence being planned for Place Bellecour on Saturday 12 November. (*Nouvel Observateur* 16.11.05)

17.11.05 The Direction Générale de la Police Nationale (DGPN) states that levels of violence in France have returned to normal. Ninety-eight vehicles are burned on Wednesday night, which was the nightly average before the events of 27 October. Thirty-three arrests are made. 8,973 vehicles have been set ablaze, 2,888 people have been arrested and 126 police officers have been injured since the start of the riots. (*BBC News* 17.11.05; *Nouvel Observateur* 17.11.05; AP 17.11.05) ■ In opposition to what has been stated by Sarkozy, judges reveal that most of those arrested are first-time offenders. The youngest person to be arrested is 10 years old. At

The lower house of the French parliament is to debate plans to extend the **state of emergency** for three months. (*BBC News* 15.11.05) ■ Finance minister, **Thierry Breton**, invites a group of Paris-based foreign correspondents to lunch to try to put the 'riots in perspective', especially considering the fact that only one death had been attributed directly to the riots as opposed to the 200 people that died in Los Angeles in 1992. (*Independent* 15.11.05) ■ **Sarkozy** states that ten expulsion orders are under way for the perpetrators of the urban violence. Those who arrived before the age of 13 and those with strong family ties in France would be protected. (*nouvelobs.com* 16.11.05) ■ The **French Communist Party** (PCF) says that Chirac has 'brought no response to the serious questions posed by the very profound crisis our country is experiencing'. (*nouvelobs.com* 15.11.05)

The **extension of the state of emergency to three months** is approved by the Senate. The votes were 202 for and 125 against, which were mostly from the Socialist Party, the Communist Party and Left radicals. The law will be valid for three months from 21 November. (*nouvelobs.com* 17.11.05) ■ Junior employment minister, **Gérard Larcher**, says that polygamy, illegal in France since 1993, is one of the causes of the rioting in France. 'Since part of society displays this antisocial behaviour, it is not surprising that some of them have difficulties finding work... Efforts must be made by both sides. If people are not employable, they will not be employed,' he said. Politicians estimate that there are 10,000 to 20,000 polygamous families in France. (*Financial Times* 16.11.05; *Telegraph* 17.11.05) ■ **Bernard Accoyer**, leader of the UMP in the lower house of the National Assembly, tells French radio that 'polygamy... prevents people being educated as they should be in an organised society. Tens of people cannot live in a single flat.' (*BBC News* 16.11.05) ■ **Philippe de Villiers**, leader of the Mouvement pour la France, states that 80,000 polygamous families have entered France since 1981, and that the government should 'take firm and definitive measures to outlaw polygamy in France'. (*Liberation* 16.11.05) ■ In a challenge to Chirac over race policy, **Sarkozy** states that 'special measures' are needed to help youths of north and black African origin find jobs. He tells the National Assembly that 'the troubled suburbs... are not another France, but France as we have built and managed it for the past 30 years.' **Chirac** had already ruled out such an approach, suggesting that positive discrimination was contrary to Republican values. ■ An **ipsos survey** shows that Sarkozy's popularity has grown significantly since the riots began, especially among far-Right voters, but also among Socialist voters. Villepin's popularity has also grown, but not Chirac's. (*Guardian* 16/17.11.05; *Independent* 16.11.05)

Chirac holds a meeting with his ministers at the Elysée to present his plans for **voluntary civil service** for around 50,000 young people by 2007. (*nouvelobs.com* 17.11.05) ■ Sarkozy announces that officers who fought against the urban violence 'would receive a bonus' as a reward for their 'exceptional behaviour'. (*nouvelobs.com* 17.11.05)

least 375 adults have been given fixed-term prison sentences. (*Nouvel Observateur* 17.11.05)

■ In an interview with Israeli newspaper *Haaretz*, Alain Finkelkraut criticises the press's identification with 'the rebels'. 'The problem is that most of these youths are blacks or Arabs, with a Muslim identity. Look, in France there are also other immigrants whose situation is difficult – Chinese, Vietnamese, Portuguese – and they're not taking part in the riots. Therefore, it is clear that this is a revolt with an ethno-religious character.' Later, he says that 'People say the French national team is admired by all because it is black-blanc-beur [Black-White-Arab]. Actually, the national team today is black-black-black, which arouses ridicule throughout Europe'. He also criticises French rap artists, such as Monsieur R, who uses lyrics such as 'I piss on France, I piss on De Gaulle'. He later goes on to say that it is the stage of the 'anti-Republican pogrom': 'We don't teach anymore that the colonial project also sought to educate, to bring civilisation to the savages. We only talk about it as an attempt at exploitation, domination and plunder... There was a single person killed in the riots. Actually, there were two [more], but it was an accident. They weren't being chased, but they fled to an electrical transformer even though the warning signs on it were huge.' (*Haaretz* 17.11.05; see also *Jerusalem Post* 1.12.05)

18.11.05 More than thirty people are injured in clashes between students and police during the Beaujolais Nouveau wine celebrations in **Grenoble**. Riot police use teargas to restore order and more than twenty people are held for questioning. (*Guardian* 19.11.05)

20.11.05 Youths in **Colmar** throw stones at firefighters who were called to extinguish burning scooters. ■ Muslim leaders fear that attacks on mosques are an anti-immigrant backlash from the rioting. Racist and extremist slogans (e.g. 'defend yourself, France') are found spray-painted on a mosque being built in **Saint-Etienne**. Molotov cocktails damage a mosque in **Fougères**. (*Guardian* / *AP* 21.11.05)

21.11.05 A poll shows that a large majority of French voters back the government's tough stance on

In Saint-Denis, where around 25 per cent of the population are foreigners, a referendum is to be organised for 26 March 2006 on voting rights for foreign residents. The mayor, **Didier Paillard** (Communist Party), says: 'How can you ask certain young people to respect the laws of the Republic when their parents are not allowed to vote?' (*nouvelobs.com* 19.11.05) ■ In an interview with *Le Figaro*, **Azouz Begag**, minister for equal opportunities, proposes 'measuring the presence of children of immigration' in the civil service and the private sector in order to 'see the true face of France'. He also calls for political parties to put forward candidates of ethnic minorities, without 'fixing quotas.' (*nouvelobs.com* 18.11.05; *Agence France Presse* 18.11.05; *BBC News* 18.11.05)

19.11.05 **Sarkozy** states that the French system is 'out of steam', and that the country is at a 'moment of truth', where it is necessary to 'rebuild it and propose an alternative.' 'We must change our country profoundly. We must break with a political, social and economic system that has for thirty years produced mainly unemployment, debt and opposition to change.' He also states that the 'primary cause of unemployment, a lack of hope and violence in the suburbs is not discrimination or school failure', but instead 'drug trafficking, gang law, the rule of fear and withdrawal from the Republic.' (*nouvelobs.com* 20.11.05; *Le Monde* 21.11.05)

An additional €9181 million are expected to be allocated to education, employment, health and the prevention of delinquency in the **2006 budget**. (*nouvelobs.com* 20.11.05)

Mayor of Marseilles, **Jean-Claude Gaudin**, calls for calm during a visit to Marseilles' Capelle Mosque. This 'may help to explain why this volatile city, unlike many other urban areas in France, did not go up in flames... Marseilles has shown a willingness to bend the rules.' (*Wall*

law and order. (*Guardian* 21.11.2005) ■ A high school guard dies from a heart attack while trying to extinguish cars set alight in the town of **Trappes**. (*Guardian* / AP 21.11.05) ■ A fire started at a mosque in **Grand-Chamond** (Doubs). (nouvelobs.com 21.11.05)

22.11.05 A CSA telephone survey shows that 48 per cent of French people believe Sarkozy demonstrated necessary firmness during the crisis in the *banlieues*. (nouvelobs.com 22.11.05) ■ The prefect for **Alpes-Maritimes** announces that the curfew imposed on fourteen communes on 9 November will be lifted on Sunday. (nouvelobs.com 22.11.05)

23.11.05 The online travel agent Expedia states that the events in France have led to a decrease in the number of hotel reservations. (nouvelobs.com 24.11.05)

24.11.05 The head of the French Renseignements Généraux intelligence service states that radical Islamists had nothing to do with the violence in France, and congratulated the role of the Muslim community in the return to calm. (nouvelobs.com 24.11.05) ■ French rapper Monsieur R (Richard Makela) may be jailed for calling France a 'slut' in one of his songs. This comes after a conservative MP, Daniel Mach, claimed that he had the support of 150 MPs against this 'real attack on the dignity of France and of the state'. In the song *FranSse*, from the album *Politikim Inkorrekt*, the artist raps that 'France is a bitch, don't forget to fuck her till she's exhausted/You have to treat her like a slut, man' and 'I piss on Napoleon and General de Gaulle'. If convicted, the rapper could face up to three years in prison and a fine of €75,000. (*Guardian* 24.11.05; *Le Monde* 25.11.05; nouvelobs.com 23.11.05) ■ The Institut National d'Etudes Démographiques (INED) publishes a working document, which points to the fact that the 'second generation' of immigrant parentage is one-and-a-half to two times more at risk of finding itself unemployed. (nouvelobs.com 25.11.05)

25.11.05 The head of the French national police force, Michel Gaudin, is to offer a bonus of €300 to 22,000 police officers who played a role in controlling the 'urban violence'. (nouvelobs.com 25.11.05) ■ The author of a website called 'SOS France', Gérard Sallenave, is sentenced in a Paris criminal court for 'insult to persons on account of their religious belonging'. He was given a three-month suspended prison sentence and was ordered to pay €1,000 in damages to the Ligue des Droits de l'Homme. Sallenave had likened Muslims to '*racaille*' [scum]. One article was entitled 'L'Islam ou la haine de l'autre' [Islam or the hatred of the other] and on another page, from 31 January 2004, there was a banner showing a photo of two veiled women alongside two slogans: 'Stop. Islam will not get through' and 'Enough scum / Resistance'. (nouvelobs.com 28.11.05)

Street Journal 21.11.05)

Sarkozy responds to **Mathieu Kassovitz** on the film director's weblog, after Kassovitz called Sarkozy a starlet off *Star Academy*, suggesting that he was somebody who would appear on the French equivalent of *Pop Idol* or *X-Factor*. He also stated that Sarkozy was a 'little Napoleon in the making'. Sarkozy replies that Kassovitz attributed the crisis to him 'in a reductive and Manichean way' and that 'to limit the crisis to the facts and gestures of the interior minister is, in a way, once again, to sidestep the real problems'. (nouvelobs.com 23.11.05)

Seven French **rap artists** could face legal action after a complaint is lodged by 200 MPs and senators, accusing the rappers of helping to provoke the recent riots. **François Grosdidier** of the ruling centre-Right UMP is behind the initiative. (*Times* 24 & 25.11.05; *Independent* 25.11.05)

A report drawn up for the French government rejects calls for positive discrimination in employment, which has dealt a blow to interior minister **Sarkozy**, who had favoured the measure. (*Guardian* 25.11.05) ■ **Villepin** dismisses claims by some of his UMP colleagues that rap music was one of the causes of the riots, but says that the courts should deal with lyrics that overstepped the mark. (*BBC News* 25.11.05)

27.11.05 Chairman of the French Socialist Party, **François Hollande**, calls for the lifting of the state of emergency, stating that it is a 'bad symbol' and is 'useless for security'. (nouvelobs.com 28.11.05)

28.11.05

A poll shows that 72 per cent believe Chirac has lost authority. (*Guardian* 28.11.05) ■
The UN Committee against Torture (CAT) expresses concern about Sarkozy's request that all people found guilty of rioting be expelled and warns that expulsion should not be used as a punitive measure. Where expulsion takes place in accordance with the law, the CAT says the authorities should ensure a fair trial and that no one be sent to a country where a person risks being exposed to torture. (*Migration News Sheet*, December 2005)

Sarkozy reasserts that 70 to 80 per cent of the 4,500 arrested during or after the riots have criminal records. (nouvelobs.com 28.11.05) ■ Sarkozy relaunches the anti-drugs debate in the wake of the crisis in the *banlieues*, proposing new penalties for using drugs. (nouvelobs.com 29.11.05) ■ Sarkozy blames the riots on France's failure to integrate its immigrant communities: 'The reality is that we have allowed urban ghettos to develop in which French people, often joined by origin, do not feel in any way part of French society.' (*Financial Times* 29.11.05)

29.11.05 Villepin explains the cause of the 'serious social troubles' to CNN as a 'crisis of identity' among young people in the *banlieues*. He goes on to say that 'There is no ethnic or religious basis to this movement, like what we have seen in other parts of the world.' (nouvelobs.com 30.11.05; *Agence France Presse* 30.11.05) ■ At an Inter-ministerial Committee for Immigration Control (CICI), Villepin announces the tightening of controls on immigration. The proposals include: A longer period for married couples to live together before a foreign spouse can apply for French nationality (four years for a couple living in France, five years otherwise). A longer period (two years instead of the present one year) of residence in France before an application for family reunification is possible; ensuring that the law is respected in relation to the illegality of polygamy in France; the selection of 'high potential' foreign students to come to study in France. ■ Villepin also states in an interview with *20 Minutes* that he favours a previously created 'Contract for Reception and Integration' (CAI) and anonymous CVs in order to promote the integration of foreigners and to fight against discrimination. Human rights associations react to the proposals, with the Ligue des Droits de l'Homme stating that 'to designate immigration and family reunification as scapegoats is to plan for the 2007 presidential election as a new 21 April 2002' (where Front National leader Jean-Marie Le Pen reached the second round of the elections). Mouloud Aounit of the Mouvement contre le Racisme et pour l'Amitié entre les Peuples claims that the government is chasing the votes of Front National supporters. SOS Racisme releases a statement saying that the government is increasingly 'stigmatising the immigrant population and making them carry the blame for the insecurity and violence.' (*Associated Press* 29.11.05; *nouvelobs.com* 29.11.05; *Independent* 30.11.05; *Financial Times* 30.11.05) ■ French MPs back a **new anti-terrorism bill** which will enable greater use of video surveillance on public transport, in places of worship and in shops, and police to hold suspects for up to six days (increased from four days). The law was passed with 373 votes against twenty-seven, with the UMP and UDF parties in favour, the Communist Party and Greens against, and the Socialist Party abstaining. The measures have yet to be passed by the Senate. (*BBC News* 29.11.05; *nouvelobs.com* 29.11.05) ■ The majority UMP party votes against the Socialist Party's proposals to remove article four of the **February 2005 law**, which promotes the recognition in education of the 'positive role of the French presence overseas, particularly in North Africa'. In total, there were 183 votes against 94, meaning that the article will remain in place. (*nouvelobs.com* 29.11.05)

30.11.05 Alfred Marie-Jeanne, deputy and president of the overseas **Martinique** Regional Council, denounces the UMP's rejection of the proposed removal of article four from the February 2005 law. He states that it is necessary 'to fight even more against the desire to

1.12.05 *Le Monde* publishes an overview of the damage caused by the uprisings: the French Federation of Insurance Companies (FFSA) estimates that the total cost amounts to €200 million, twenty-three million euros of which relates to the 10,000 vehicles that were set on fire. The Ministry of the Interior states that 233 public buildings and seventy-four private buildings were damaged or set on fire in 300 towns. Schools have been a particular target of the attacks, as have gymnasiums, buses, trains and libraries. Eighteen places of worship (churches, mosques and synagogues) have been damaged. 4,770 arrests have been made, half of which were after the end of the unrest. 4,402 people have been placed in custody and 763 sent to prison (including over 100 minors). (*Le Monde* 1.12.05) ■ Richard Descouings, head of the Sciences-Po faculty in Paris, proposes that an élite high school be created for the Parisian suburbs to combat educational failure. (*Le Monde* 1.12.05)

5.12.05 Around thirty organisations call for people to demonstrate against Nicolas Sarkozy's visit to the French Caribbean *département Martinique*, scheduled for Thursday 8 December. A rally is planned for Wednesday afternoon in the Martiniquan capital, Fort-de-France. The

falsify and rewrite our history'. ■ The mayor of the Martiniquan capital Fort-de-France, **Serge Letchimy**, says that 'colonisation and slavery are inextricably linked' and that a 'democracy which tries insidiously to deny their existence and find in them some sort of positive impact is not worthy of respect'. (nouvelobs.com 30.11.05)

At a press conference, **Villepin** announces the creation of an 'agency for social cohesion and equal opportunities', stating that 2006 should be 'the year of equal opportunities, as a great national cause'. The proposed agency will work in close cooperation with local elected representatives. **Catherine Vautrin**, junior minister for social cohesion and equality, has been asked to prepare an inter-ministerial committee for urban affairs. Junior minister for the promotion of equal opportunities, **Azouz Begag**, is to make suggestions towards the end of December. (*Le Monde* 1.12.05) ■ Villepin also notes that school absenteeism will be tackled, with the **requirement that parents sign a 'contract of responsibility'**, which, if broken, would result in a fine or the withdrawal of family benefits. He also suggests that: finances be allocated to the most difficult 'priority educational zones' (ZEP); the Henri IV high school in Paris start welcoming around 30 pupils from these ZEP in 2006-2007; there be an evaluation of children's reading and writing skills in middle schools; 'young persons business contracts' be extended to all young people in 'sensitive urban zones', irrelevant of their qualifications; the High Authority for the Fight against Discrimination and for Equality (HALDE) be allowed to impose fines of up to €25,000 on individuals or businesses found guilty of discrimination; 'testing' be legalised in order to fight against the discrimination suffered by many young people, particularly on entry to discotheques; the practice of experimental use of anonymous CVs be looked into. (nouvelobs.com 1 & 2.12.05)

4.12.05 **Sarkozy** announces that seven foreigners are likely to be expelled from France for participation in the riots. Eighty-three foreigners have been arrested, but forty cannot be deported because of their age, refugee status or the length of time they have spent in France. Those who arrived in France before they were 13 years old and those with strong family ties in France are protected. (nouvelobs.com 5.12.05; *BBC News/AP* 5.12.05) ■ **Insurance companies** contest France's refusal to pay the costs of material damage caused by the recent uprisings. A 1983 law states that 'under civil law, the State is responsible for damage (...) resulting from crimes and offences committed (...) by gatherings and rallies (...) either against persons or against property', which the State denies was the case for the riots. (*Le Monde* 24.12.05) ■ **Sarkozy** states that he is in favour of punishments for rap groups who call for hatred in their songs. He also defends recent controversial comments made by **Alain Finkielkraut** (see Chronology 17.11.05), who in his opinion is an 'honour to French intelligence'. (nouvelobs.com 4.12.05) ■ During a trip to a France-Africa summit in Bamako, Mali, **Chirac** affirms that there is no link between the crisis in the *banlieues* and polygamy. (*Le Figaro* 4.12.05)

The **Front National** (FN) and the **Mouvement pour la France** (MPF) boast that they have had thousands of new members joining them since the violence began in the *banlieues*. The MPF states that it has had 3,200 new members, and the FN claims 12,000 new members. Eric Iorio,

organisations have called for people to demonstrate against Sarkozy's comments on the 'racaille' [scum] in the *banlieues* and also to show their indignation at the ruling UMP party's refusal to repeal article four of the 23 February 2005 law on the 'positive role of the French presence overseas'. (Article four requires that 'school syllabuses recognise . . . the positive role of the French presence overseas'.) ■ The deputy mayor of **Fort-de-France**, Aimé Césaire has decided not to receive the interior minister during his visit, for 'personal reasons' and because 'I remain faithful to my doctrine and remain resolutely anticolonialist'. (Sarkozy was due to meet Aimé Césaire before inaugurating the platform of the Central Office for the Suppression of Illegal Drug Trafficking in Fort Saint-Louis.) (nouvelobs.com 6.12.05)

6.12.05 The family of Muhittin Altun, the 17-year-old who was electrocuted alongside his two friends (Zyed Benna and Bouna Traoré) who died in the electricity substation in Clichy-sous-Bois, allege that Muhittin Altun was questioned without the presence of his parents and his health was not taken into account. He was interrogated for at least three hours as opposed to the one hour and forty-five minutes recorded by the police. The family's lawyers release a statement saying that 'these facts are likely to constitute an offence of deliberately putting the life of another in danger'. Muhittin Altun is currently in hospital. (nouvelobs.com 7.12.05)

7.12.05 In a leaked report which appears in *Le Parisien*, the Renseignements Généraux intelligence agency warns that the urban unrest could re-ignite at the slightest provocation. The agency states that the violence was neither organised nor manipulated, but was 'urban insurrection' and a 'popular revolt in the housing projects', with the rioters' main motivation being 'their social condition, excluded from French society'. The report mentions that some suburbs had become 'veritable urban ghettos of an ethnic nature' and France had become more concerned with Islamic radicalism and religious terror than these problems. The report also mentions that 'They [the young people] feel penalised by their poverty, the colour of their skin and their names'. The cost of the urban violence amounts to €250 million, with the Seine-Saint-Denis *département* having a bill of fifty million euros to pay. The French postal service has damage totalling €250,000, and Renault, at whose garage in Aulnay 250 vehicles were burned, has a bill of ten million euros to pay. (*Guardian* 8.12.05; *Times* 8.12.05; nouvelobs.com 7.12.05) ■ A 21-year-old Mauritanian man, who has lived legally in France since he was three years old, and was the target of an expulsion order by the **Val-d'Oise** prefecture in relation to the recent riots, appears before three judges in Pontoise. The judges offer their consultative opinion, stating that they are against the expulsion of the man and that there was no case to show that he was involved in the riots. A final judgement will be made by the prefecture. The man, who had been accused of assaulting a police officer, denies involvement in the riots and described the expulsion proceedings as 'unjust'. (nouvelobs.com 8.12.05)

8.12.05 Stéphane Friatacci, a senior ministry official, states that between forty and sixty cars are still being burned each night. He mentions these figures in opposition to jurists who have said the state of emergency law was no longer needed. He warns that outbursts of violence could take place during the end-of-year holidays. (*Agence France Presse* 9.12.05)

national membership secretary for the FN, states that on one day they counted 1,596 emails. (*Le Monde* 5.12.05)

In an interview that is to appear in *France Antilles*, **Sarkozy** announces that he has postponed his trip to Martinique and Guadeloupe because of protests against his trip, where he was to visit the two overseas *départements* to discuss the fight against drug trafficking and illegal immigration. On France 3, Sarkozy offers to receive Martiniquean representatives to resolve problems in Martinique. (nouvelobs.com 7 & 8.12.05)

After demonstrations in Martinique about the law promoting the 'positive role' of French colonisation, prime minister **Dominique de Villepin** states on France Inter radio that 'it is not for politicians, it is not for parliament to write history'. (*Le Monde* 8.12.05)

9.12.05 Sarkozy states that he has presented his plans for preventing delinquency, including measures to tackle group violence, young offenders, school absenteeism and drug taking. He also criticises the lack of 'social mixing' in the education system, where pupils attend schools according to their postcode. (*Le Monde* 9.12.05) ■ Two petitions are launched by socialist politicians **Dominique Strauss-Kahn** and **Jack Lang**, aiming for the repeal of the February 2005 law on the 'positive role' of colonisation. (nouvelobs.com 10.12.05) ■ **Chirac** announces the creation of a 'pluralist mission to evaluate the action of parliament in the areas of memory and history' in order to 'calm the mood' following the controversy surrounding the February 2005 law. The mission is to be led by the chairman of the National Assembly, Jean-Louis Debré. After consultation with historians, the first conclusions should be presented in three months' time. (*Le Monde* 9.12.05)

11.12.05 Sarkozy states that 'parliament does not have to write history', but has 'the obligation to know it and to look at it as it is, if only to avoid repeating harm done'. He also pledges his support for Chirac's proposal of a mission for history and memory. (see 9 December) He also criticises people for dwelling on 'systematic repentance', saying that a nation that doesn't like itself risks not being able to resolve integration problems. (nouvelobs.com 12.12.05)

Minister for equal opportunities, **Azouz Begag**, calls for the repeal of the law on the 'positive role' of colonisation, stating that France can only move forward 'if, with courage and complexity, she deals with her memory'. (nouvelobs.com 12.12.05)

13.12.05 Chirac says that the foreign media gave distorted coverage of the recent riots: 'Some foreign media often presented the events in a biased and excessive way.' 'The French media did their job: they showed the reality and the scenes at which our fellow citizens were present were sometimes of great violence. Generally, they showed great responsibility.' (Agence France Presse 13.12.05) ■ In an interview in *Le Parisien /Aujourd'hui*, **Chirac** states that he is in favour of the implementation of a remembrance day for the descendants of slaves. (nouvelobs.com 13.12.05) ■ Minister for education, **Gilles de Robien**, announces 'fifteen concrete measures' for 'Priority Educational Zones' (ZEPs) in deprived areas, including better training so that teachers understand their pupils. The day before, the SNES-FSU union published 'seventeen proposals for a real relaunch of the ZEPs', including 'greater social mixing' in establishments and a 'more equal school map'. (nouvelobs.com 13.12.05)

Sarkozy receives 234 *gendarmes*, police officers and members of the fire brigade who were

10.12.05 A poll to be published in the 11 December edition of *Journal du Dimanche* shows that only 1 per cent of UMP supporters back Jacques Chirac as UMP candidate for the 2007 presidential election. 36 per cent support Sarkozy, 19 per cent Villepin and 3 per cent Michèle Alliot-Marie. (nouvelobs.com 10.12.05) ■ Around thirty arrests are made after violence breaks out in the centre of **Rennes** (Ille-et-Vilaine) during protests against the banning of a rave at the 'Transmusicales' festival. Two police officers are slightly wounded during clashes between young people and the police. Bottles and stones are thrown at police and the windows of around ten shops near the prefecture are broken. (*Libération* 11.12.05)

12.12.05 The wife of the president, Bernadette Chirac, visits two people in hospital: Muhittin Altun, the teenager whose two friends died from electrocution shocks on 27 October and a passenger who received serious burns after a bus was set alight in Sevrans during the riots. (nouvelobs.com 15.12.05)

15.12.05 Muhittin Altun, who received 10 per cent burns on 27 October, leaves the Rothschild hospital

in Paris, accompanied by his father and cousin, and members of the association Au-delà des mots (ADM) [Beyond Words]. In Clichy-sous-Bois, around forty young people and many journalists wait to greet him outside his block of flats in the Chêne-Pointu area of the town. In an interview in *Le Parisien / Aujourd'hui* en France, Muhittin Altun maintains that he was chased by the police. His version of the events of 27 October is that he went to play football with his friends Zyed and Bouna in Livry-Gargan. He says that on his way home: 'I saw Bouna running and shouting out behind us. He said: Run, run, the police are chasing us! Zyed asked him: What's going on? Bouna replied: They've caught David, and they're chasing us. Then we all started to run. Before starting to run, I turned around and saw the police car from which one of the officers got out with a flash-ball. We could still hear sirens, so we went to hide in a high voltage substation. We stayed there for almost thirty minutes. I wanted to get out, to go home – after all, we hadn't done anything! But we heard voices and dogs barking. And then we were struck by the electricity. My mates were thrown to the left and I was thrown to the right. I saw that my clothes were burning – it was as if I was dreaming. Then there was a second flash.' (nouvelobs.com 15.12.05) ■ Explosives, detonators and guns are found in a garage in **Clichy-sous-Bois**. (Twenty-seven suspected Islamist militants were arrested in raids around Paris on 12 December, on suspicion of involvement in armed robberies.) (BBC News 16.12.05; *Le Monde* 16.12.05)

16.12.05

A 19-year-old Moroccan man, Amaloua H, appears before the Pontoise correctional court (Val-d'Oise) on suspicion of burning four cars in **Magny-en-Vexin** on 8 November. Amaloua is given a ten-month prison sentence and a €150,000 fine, but avoids deportation to Morocco. (nouvelobs.com 16.12.05)

19.12.05

An 18-year-old pupil, Kevani Wansale, is detained on suspicion of 'attempted murder' after allegedly attacking his teacher, Karen Montet-Toutain, with a knife at the Louis-Blériot high school in **Etampes** (Essonne) on 16 December. (nouvelobs.com 20.12.05)

injured during the recent riots. Seventy-five are honoured with a silver medal for acts of courage and devotion. He states that 5,200 people were arrested for alleged involvement in the urban violence, and that 800 have been imprisoned. **Villepin** comes later and explains that 'I wanted to be here with you for this Republican meeting'. He declares that the 'urban violence' was 'an ordeal from which the Republic has come out with increased stature' and expresses his 'gratitude' from the government and from the President. (nouvelobs.com 15.12.05) ■ The UMP deputy mayor of Raincy (Seine-Saint-Denis), **Eric Raoult**, criticises the management of the commune in the wake of the riots after a cache of arms was found in a car park. With the support of **Ludovic Toro**, councillor for Clichy-sous-Bois / Le Raincy, he calls for the town of Clichy-sous-Bois to be 'placed under supervision' and for a sub-prefect to be nominated to 'second' Claude Dilain, the Socialist Party mayor of the town. **Claude Dilain** counters by stating that it would be better for Raoult to 'help our town to obtain a fully practising police station, which it does not have'. (nouvelobs.com 16.12.05)

Chirac writes to French rapper, **Axiom**, who recently denounced the government's policy of 'repression without prevention' which uses 'archaic methods' and called for the formation of a Sixth Republic which has 'just been born in the streets'. In his response, Chirac states that 'all citizens are sons and daughters of the Republic'. (nouvelobs.com 23.12.05) ■ According to French far-Left party **Lutte Ouvrière** (Workers' Struggle), the riots were 'sterile' and 'blind violence is in no way a sign of radicalisation. It is a sign of profound disorientation.' (Libération 16.12.05)

17.12.05 **Sarkozy** criticises **Chirac** for focusing 'on words' in order to forget the 'true evils' in French society. This comes after Chirac seemingly questioned Sarkozy's use of language during the riots. (nouvelobs.com 17.12.05; *Le Monde* 13.12.05)

18.12.05 In an interview with the Arab TV station Al-Jazeera, **Sarkozy** states that he has fought the most for the rights of the country's Muslims, and that the recent riots had nothing to do with Islam. He also defends the country's new anti-terror measures. (*Agence France Presse* 19.12.05)

20.12.05 During an interview with RTL, **Sarkozy** suggests it 'would be a very good idea' to experiment with the presence of a police officer in the most violent high schools. On 19 December, education minister **Gilles de Robien** proposed that video surveillance should be used in schools. This follows the knife attack on a teacher in Etampes (Essonne). (nouvelobs.com 21.12.05)

- 21.12.05** Three 18-year-old men are detained and placed under investigation for their alleged involvement in a fire in **Roubaix** (Nord) in which four people were killed on 9 November. It is thought that the fire was linked to the recent urban violence. (nouvelobs.com 22.12.05)
- 23.12.05** Prefects in four *départements* (Seine-et-Marne, Essonne, Bouches-du-Rhône, Alpes-Maritimes) ban the sale of fuel in cans during the festive period. (nouvelobs.com 23.12.05)
- 24.12.05** 110 cars are burned across France on Christmas Eve, far fewer than on Christmas Eve 2004. (nouvelobs.com 25.12.05)
- 30.12.05** Fearing more urban riots, the General Directorate of the National Police Force (DGPN) states that 25,000 police officers and *gendarmes*, including seventy mobile CRS riot squad units, are to be deployed on the night of 31 December. (This makes up around 10 per cent of France's security forces.) The police prefecture advises police to be firm in order to 'dissuade and repress all acts of violence'. In particular, the Ile-de-France region, and especially the Champs-Élysées in Paris, where 500,000 are expected to gather, will be under surveillance, as will public transport. 4,500 police officers are to be deployed in Paris. (nouvelobs.com 30.12.05)
- 31.12.05** Michel Gaudin, the head of France's national police force, states that incidents across France have shown a relative calm, with 425 cars burned compared with 333 on the previous New Year's Eve. The incidents, however, were spread more widely across France: 267 communes are affected in fifty-three *départements*, as opposed to last year's 132 communes in forty-one *départements*. In **Seine-Saint-Denis**, around fifty-nine cars are burned. 362 arrests are made in total, as opposed to 272 last New Year's Eve. In **Toulouse**, there is an attempted arson of a school in the Reynerie district. In **Orléans** (Loiret), thirty-four parents are employed by the mayor to prevent tensions in two districts, Argonne and La Source. ■ Nicolas Sarkozy visits a security post near the Eiffel Tower, a police station in the fourth *arrondissement* and a fire station in the seventh *arrondissement*. (nouvelobs.com 1 & 2.1.06)
- 1.1.06** Between thirty and forty young people – North African, Black and White – hold up a Nice-Lyons train carrying 600 passengers in **Les Arcs sur Argens** (Var). Some passengers are sexually assaulted and others robbed. *Gendarmes* make nine arrests. (nouvelobs.com 4.1.06; *Independent* 5.1.06; *Le Monde* 6.1.06)

In the far-Right weekly *Minute*, UMP deputy mayor of Raincy (Seine-Saint-Denis), **Eric Raoult**, states that 'Clichy-sous-Bois [where the riots started] is a shame to our country' and 'it is the town in France that has received the most money from the state for twenty years'. (nouvelobs.com 22.12.05)

22.12.05 UMP deputy **Jean-Paul Garraud** presents a proposal for a law to strip rioters of their French nationality. (nouvelobs.com 28.12.05)

Leader of the Mouvement pour la France (MPF), **Philippe de Villiers**, praises the 'courage' of **Eric Raoult** to speak about Clichy-sous-Bois being the shame of France. In support of comments made by philosopher **Alain Finkielkraut** in Israeli newspaper *Haaretz*, he also states that there was 'an ethnic and religious revolt in our suburbs, and not simply a social revolt'. (nouvelobs.com 23.12.05)

Arno Klarsfeld, a lawyer who has been given the task by Sarkozy of leading a study on 'the law, history and the duty to remember', says – unlike Villepin and Chirac – that it is down to the legislature to fix 'moral boundaries'. He states that article four of the February 2005 law could be modified to indicate that 'school syllabuses recognise the damaging effects of colonisation as well as its positive aspects'. (nouvelobs.com 25.12.05)

In his New Year's speech, **Chirac** stresses French Republican ideals: a refusal of *communautarisme*, respect for all, respect for state secularism, the fight against discrimination, racism and anti-Semitism. (nouvelobs.com 1.1.06)

The Socialist Party contests the government's assertion that New Year's Eve was relatively calm. **Delphine Batho**, the party's national secretary for security states that 'Never has the number of cars burned, as in the communes and *départements* where the incidents took place, been so high on a New Year's Eve'. She specifies that 'in relation to 2004, the number of vehicles set on fire has risen by almost 30 per cent', whilst 'the number of communes affected has multiplied by two'. (nouvelobs.com 2.1.06)

2.1.06 Chirac decides to lift the state of emergency that was declared on 8 November and extended for three months on 21 November. (Le Monde 3.1.06; nouvelobs.com 3.1.06)

3.1.06 The **Council of Ministers** adopts a decree to lift the state of emergency. (nouvelobs.com 3.1.06) ■ **Chirac** announces that he attaches 'the greatest importance to the reinforcement of the fight against illegal immigration (...), particularly in relation to family reunification. This is essential for our integration model.' (Le Monde 3.1.06)

4.1.06 Chirac announces that he is in favour of article four of the 23 February 2005 law on the 'positive role' of French overseas colonisation being rewritten. He says: 'The present text is dividing French people.' He also says: 'It is not for the law to rewrite history' and that 'the issue of slavery' is a wound for a great number of our fellow citizens, particularly in our overseas territories'. He also takes the opportunity to say: 'The fight against racism, the struggle against anti-Semitism, the struggle against discrimination: these have always been my own. What makes France great is its tolerance, its respect for each individual.' (Le Monde 4.1.06) ■ **Sarkozy** states that the violence on the Nice-Lyons train on 1 January and the recent urban violence raise 'the issue of delinquency among minors' and their punishment. After discussing the incidents with the SNCF railway officials, Sarkozy proposes the extension of a national railway police force to more areas of France, with between 1,000 and 1,500 officers to be deployed. (nouvelobs.com 5.1.06)

5.1.06 Sarkozy states that the proposed railway police force would be attached to the Central Directorate of Border Police (DCPAF). (Le Monde 6.1.06)

6.1.06 Chirac, Villepin, Sarkozy and other ministers attend a ceremony in Metz to pay homage to police officers who were 'exemplary' during the November riots. Chirac says that he hopes the police force can open its doors to more 'French people of immigrant origin.' (nouvelobs.com 6.1.06; Le Monde 6.1.06)

Community, NGO and union responses to the riots and government reactions

5.11.05 The **Brigade Activiste des Clown** [Clown Activist Brigade, BAC] 'karcherises' the town hall of Neuilly-sur-Seine to protest against the municipality's lack of respect for the Solidarité et Renouvellement Urbain (Urban Renewal Solidarity) law, which is aimed in part at providing social housing in the suburbs. (nouvelobs.com 17.12.05)

6.11.05 The **Union des Organisations Islamiques de France** (UOIF) releases a fatwa to call for calm in France and says that the events 'seem to reveal the serious failures of the French integration model which clearly plunges dozens of youngsters in difficult areas into despair and poverty.' (nouvelobs.com 6.11.05)

8.11.05 **Algerian immigrants** slam the 1955 French state of emergency law as a 'provocation' since it was originally used to quell insurrection in France and Algeria during the 1954-1962 war in Algeria. 'France has not only not given up its colonial past, but it's now brought it back to centre-stage. It's disgraceful', said Boualem Yahia. Echoing the indignation over the law, France's respected centre-left newspaper, *Le Monde*, said that 'exhuming a 1955 law sends to the youth of the suburbs a message of astonishing brutality: that after 50 years France intends to treat them exactly as it did their grandparents... The prime minister should recall that at that time the combination of misunderstanding, warlike posturing and powerlessness brought the republic to its worst ever moment.' (*Middle East Online* 8.11.05)

A number of French associations and NGOs, including the **Syndicat de la Magistrature**, the lawyers' union the **Syndicat des Avocats** de France, the Green and Communist parties, and the **Ligue des Droits de l'Homme** (LDH) issue a statement criticising the calling of a state of emergency. They call it 'emergency legislation inherited from the colonial period', following 'the well known cycle that concatenates provocations and repression'. 'The suburbs do not need a state of exception: they desperately need justice, respect and equality.' (*Statewatch* 8.11.05)

9.11.05 The **Banlieues Respects collective** calls for a 'march for peace' to take place on Friday along the Champs-Élysées. The Paris police prefect, Michel Gaudin, has already stated that the tradition is not to march on the Champs-Élysées. (*Libération* 10.11.05)

11.11.05 President of **SOS Racisme**, Dominique Sopo, says Sarkozy's plans to strip naturalised citizens of their citizenship is illegal and amounts to mass deportation. **MRAP** says that it is horrified by the 'dangerous proposition'. And **France Terre d'Asile** said the measure was 'certain to add fuel to the flames'. (*Guardian* 11.11.05)

12.11.05 300 people gather on **Paris's Place Saint-Michel** in a protest organised by MRAP against repression and exclusion. In **Stains**, 350 people march in silence against the violence. 350 people march against discrimination in **Toulouse**. In **Auby**, several hundred march in silence around a municipal multimedia library that was burned down three days before. (nouvelobs.com 12.11.05; *Le Monde* 12.11.05)

16.11.05 Over 2,000 representatives from over fifty associations, unions, political parties and sans papiers collectives march between **Saint-Michel square** and **Palais de Luxembourg** to protest against a 'regime of exception' and for a 'state of social emergency'. (nouvelobs.com 17.11.05)

A number of organisations respond to the assertion that polygamy was a cause of the riots: **MRAP** states that 'blaming such a complex problem on polygamy among a minority of African

families is blatant racism. We will consider whether to bring legal actions against these people'. (*Independent* 17.11.05)

SOS Racisme states that the linking together of polygamy and the riots shows a 'crude desire to turn public opinion away from the real problems'.

The **Ligue des droits de l'Homme** states that it is 'nauseating and irresponsible in this way to turn foreigners into the cause of the situation our country is experiencing'.

Cimade sends an open letter to Jacques Chirac, stating that the comments were 'unacceptable' and 'irresponsible'. (*nouvelobs.com* 17.11.05)

17.11.05 Over 150 people demonstrate outside the **prefecture in Lyons** against the extension of the state of emergency to three months. Representatives of eight organisations were received by the prefect. The demonstrators included members of the unions CGT, FSU, the LCR, the Green party, the Communist party and the LDH. Rosario Elia of the FSU stated that 'the extended state of emergency is not a solution for the *quartiers*'. (*nouvelobs.com* 18.11.05)

In an open letter, **300 university social science researchers and lecturers** call for the French government to end the state of emergency and the deportation of foreign rioters. 'Political and police firmness in response to the violence must not mean discrimination, caricature and contempt'. (*nouvelobs.com* 17.11.05)

MRAP calls for websites displaying racist texts to be closed down. People, they say, 'are making use of the events, the political context and the free space that the web provides to turn out their anti-immigrant hatred'. (*nouvelobs.com* 18.11.05)

18.11.05 Around one hundred people gather in **Dijon** to denounce the government's security policy, which is labelled 'liberticide'. (*nouvelobs.com* 19.11.05)

19.11.05 The **Conseil Français du Culte Musulman** (CFCM) is criticised for its silence in response to the riots. (*Libération* 19.11.05)

20.11.05 **Muslim leaders of Saint Denis**, where the riots first started, join government officials, clerics and party leaders to discuss how to avoid future unrest. (*Islam Online* 20.11.05)

21.11.05 The **Banlieue 69** collective forms in Lyons to create a political force that is capable of presenting candidates at the next municipal elections in the French *banlieues*. The member associations call for a 'radical solution' since their projects had been hampered in the past. Pierre Didier Tché-Tché Apéa stated that 'we want to exist, to be recognised in our country, France. Why isn't this possible? Because the colonial heritage has etched a representation of non-European populations into the collective imaginary'. (*Le Monde* 21.11.05)

23.11.05 **MRAP** decides to lodge a complaint against philosopher **Alain Finkielkraut**, asking the CSA to remove him from the France Culture station, and accuses him of incitement to racial hatred. (*nouvelobs.com* 24.11.05)

24.11.05 **Rapper Monsieur R** denounces the censorship and racism of the court action brought against him, stating that rap did not cause the riots of May 1968 and singer Georges Brassens used to be applauded when he criticised the state. (*nouvelobs.com* 25.11.05)

25.11.05 **MRAP withdraws a complaint against Alain Finkielkraut** for comments he made about the riots, after Finkielkraut expressed his 'apologies' on the Europe 1 radio station for the interview he gave in *Haaretz*. He also criticised the way in which he was presented in the interview,

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- especially in the French translation which appeared in *Le Monde*. (nouvelobs.com 25.11.05)
- 26.11.05** The **Brigade Activiste des Clown** proclaims a 'state of insanity' in front of the Paris police prefecture to protest against the prolongation of the state of emergency. (nouvelobs.com 17.12.05)
- 27.11.05** Forty-five Black associations join forces under the name of the **Conseil Représentatif des Associations Noires** (CRAN). One of their aims is to 'create the necessary mass effect to lead institutional figures to position themselves in relation to claims on the Black issue in France'. Spokespeople for member organisations rejected criticisms of their *communautarisme* and called for people to no longer hide behind Republican principles, which leads to inaction. (nouvelobs.com 27.11.05; *Reuters* 26.11.05; *Times* 28.11.05; *Libération* 28.11.05)
- 29.11.05** **SOS Racisme** and **Mouloud Aounit** of MRAP show their support for the use of anonymous CVs in job applications. (nouvelobs.com 29.11.05)
- In response to attacks from the Right, **French rappers** have made available online a reggae track ('Sarko Skankin') that turns Sarkozy's speeches around. The **Wump collective** states that it is in 'resistance to state violence'. (nouvelobs.com 29.11.05)
- 30.11.05** Around **fifty organisations and parties** call for an end to the state of emergency, reaffirming that the 'real emergency is not one of security, but is social' and that it is an exceptional measure inherited from the colonial period. (nouvelobs.com 30.11.05)
- 2.12.05** **Seventy-four academics** in the fields of law, political science and political studies call for the Council of State to suspend the state of emergency law that was implemented on 8.11.05, stating that it 'is no longer justified'. (*Libération* 6.12.05)
- 3.12.05** People, estimated at 400 to 2,000, and from around twenty unions, political parties and associations, demonstrate in **Bobigny** (Seine-Saint-Denis, the *département* where the uprising originally began) against discrimination in the area. They call for funding in the areas of employment, education and associations. (nouvelobs.com 3.12.05)
- Members of the **Antillais-Guyanais-Réunionnais collective** from French overseas territories demonstrate in Paris, with banners reading 'Napoleon = slave trader = criminal. No to his glorification. No to the falsification of history'. Their leader, Patrick Karam, distances the group from the recently established 'Representative Council for Black Associations' (CRAN), stating that 'the overseas territories are a melting pot and not a skin colour' and that 'One should not fall into *communautarisme* and racism. CRAN is likely to help the progress of the far Right'. (*Le Monde* 6.12.05)
- 4.12.05** In a nouvelobs.com web forum, **Monsieur R** defends himself against the accusation that he is an 'anti-White' racist, stating that in his song 'La FranSSe' he never referred to a race, but to a policy. In the song, he raps that 'France is a bitch, don't forget to fuck her till she's exhausted, You've got to treat her like a slut, man.' He repeated that he begins and ends the piece with 'when I talk about France, I'm not talking about the French people but about the leaders of the French state.' (nouvelobs.com 5.12.05)
- 5.12.05** Around forty writers, journalists, musicians and cultural leaders launch a **petition** ('We are all rappers from the *banlieues*') against the threat of legal action being taken against rap groups. This comes after 152 deputies and forty-nine senators, mostly belonging to the UMP party, asked whether the minister for justice would take legal action against seven rap groups and artists who, in their opinion, had incited racial hatred. The text accompanying the petition says

that 'A proportion of young people do not trust the rest of society. Sometimes they go too far. Are we going to renew dialogue by putting songs in prison? It's absurd. And it's dangerous as this would mark a new and serious attack on freedom of expression.' (nouvelobs.com 5.12.05)

The '**Racailles de France**' [Scum of France] sign a number of commemorative plaques that have been placed on the walls of Paris. These include: 'To the memory of the grandparents of the scum who came to defend France each time she was at war... In April 1917, there were 170,000 who came to fight on the side of the French. Their children and grandchildren deserve their country... Homage to the hundreds of thousands of immigrants who came to build and rebuild a France that has always ostracised their children and grandchildren from society. When will we have a law on the positive role of immigration?' In a press release, the group announces that it has placed '300 commemorative plaques around Paris in honour of their parents and grandparents, who all gave to a France that has next to no consideration for their grandchildren.' The plaques were placed on the walls of the offices of *Agence France Presse*, *Le Figaro*, *Libération*, *Le Monde* and the UMP party, on bus shelters, and at the Nation, Bastille and République underground stations. (*Le Monde* 10.12.05)

6.12.05 According to a **poll published** in *Lyon Mag*, and based on a sample of 800 people over the age of 15 and mostly of Maghrebi origin, immigrants and their children in the *banlieues* of Lyons ask that they be given 'respect' (21 per cent), whilst unreservedly condemning last month's violence (90 per cent) and affirming their confidence in the future (63 per cent). Only 3 per cent of those surveyed supported the young people who burned cars in November. 47 per cent said they understood these young people. Their main fear was unemployment (16 per cent). Another fear was falling victim to a police blunder (15 per cent) or an attack at the hands of racists (13 per cent). (nouvelobs.com 6.12.05)

7.12.05 Almost one thousand Caribbeans (*Antillais*) demonstrate to call for France to repeal part of the law related to the 'positive role' of colonisation. Demonstrators belonging to the '**Martiniquan Collective for the Repeal of the Law of Shame**' and around thirty organisations marched, calling out slogans in French and Creole such as 'down with the law of shame' and 'colonisation no good'. Among the demonstrators were elected representatives, the mayor of the capital Fort-de-France, trade unionists, teachers and high school students, on whose banners one could read 'colonisation = crime against humanity' and 'no to doctored history'. (nouvelobs.com 7 & 8.12.05)

Around 300 people from thirteen organisations attend a meeting in Pointe-à-Pitre (**Guadeloupe**) to call for the repeal of the February 2005 law. (*Le Monde* 8.12.05)

8.12.05 The **Devoirs de Mémoires** collective, including several celebrities (Jamel Debbouze, Mathieu Kassovitz, Joey Starr, Jean-Pierre Bacri and Lilian Thuram, among others), calls for the public to enrol en masse on electoral registers so that 'Liberté, Egalité and Fraternité become a real part of our everyday lives'. (nouvelobs.com 8.12.05; *Libération* 12.12.05)

9.12.05 A collective ('**Place aux droits**' [Make Way for Rights]) of around seventy left-wing associations and unions – including the Cimade, the Syndicat de la Magistrature, the Syndicat des Avocats de France, Sud-Education and MRAP – is due to present a 'symbolic' petition before France's Constitutional Council in which it demands the abrogation of the state of emergency law. The collective's request for the state of emergency to be re-examined was rejected by the Council of State. (*Agence France Presse* 9.12.05; nouvelobs.com 9.12.05)

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- 12.12.05** Nineteen historians call for '**Freedom for history**', by calling for the abrogation of several articles in various laws related to past events (the laws of 13 July 1990, 29 January 2001, 21 May 2001 and 23 February 2005), which are 'unworthy of a democratic regime': 'in a free State, it is not for parliament nor for judicial authority to define historical truth. State policy, even if motivated by the best intentions, is not the politics of history.' (nouvelobs.com 13.12.05)
- 15.12.05** Around 40 activists from the **Ninth Collective of Sans-papiers** and **Act Up-Paris** stage a 'die-in' in front of the Ministry of the Interior (Place Beauvau) in order to 'make visible the deaths in the war led by Nicolas Sarkozy against foreigners'. The demonstrators were taken away by police. The associations are demanding an end to 'the politics of figures in relation to immigration', the 'unconditional regularisation of all sans-papiers' and an 'immediate end to expulsions and raids'. They denounced the 'racist discourse' and 'murderous politics of the interior minister'. (nouvelobs.com 16.12.05)
- 17.12.05** A dozen members of the **Brigade Activiste des Clown** 'karcherise' and 'place under supervision' the town hall of Eric Raoult, the UMP deputy mayor of Raincy, who asked the prime minister to place Clichy-sous-Bois 'under supervision' after a cache of arms was found in the town. During their operation, they squirt water at the front of and inside the building, and also at vehicles belonging to police who had come to ask demonstrators to leave the building. (nouvelobs.com 17.12.05)
- 20.12.05** Members of the **Devoirs de Mémoires** collective, including celebrities such as actor Jamel Debbouze, singer Joey Starr and footballer Lilian Thuram, visit Clichy-sous-Bois for a discussion with associations and young people to try to encourage them to register to vote. The move is said to be in order to 'not reproduce 21 April 2002', where far-Right Jean-Marie Le Pen reached the second round of the presidential elections. (nouvelobs.com 20.12.05; *Le Monde* 21.12.05)
- The **Act Up** association and the **Ninth Collective of Sans-papiers** put up posters around Paris with the words 'Vote Le Pen' alongside a picture of Nicolas Sarkozy, to protest against 'the war waged against foreigners' and the interior minister's 'racist politics'. (nouvelobs.com 20.12.05)
- Forty-two historians forming the '**Vigilance Committee Against the Public Use of History**' (CVUH) denounce article four of the February 2005 law on the 'positive role' of French colonisation. They say that it 'constitutes a totally unacceptable violation of the principle of the autonomy of teaching and historical research'. (nouvelobs.com 20.12.05)
- 23.12.05** The **Act Up** association is forced, because of threatened legal action by a photographer, to remove from its website the poster of interior minister Nicolas Sarkozy alongside the words 'Vote Le Pen'. Nicolas Sarkozy accuses the association of 'extremism', stating that the poster is 'directly inspired by the methods of the Front National'. (nouvelobs.com 28.12.05)
- 26.12.05** **MRAP** contests 'the abilities and legitimacy' of lawyer Arno Klarsfeld, who has been asked to lead the government's panel on 'the law, history and the duty to remember'. Referring to Klarsfeld's Israeli military service, the leader of MRAP, Mouloud Aounit, calls him an 'active campaigner for colonisation' and says that he is a 'staunch defender of the colonial war against Iraq'. (nouvelobs.com 26.12.05)
- 30.12.05** A **petition**, with 42,122 signatures, for the repeal of article four of the law of 23 February 2005 on the 'positive role' of colonisation is handed to President Chirac. (nouvelobs.com 31.12.05)

Viewing the riots from other countries

Here we present a selection of reactions to the uprisings from outside France.

- Africa** The French-language press in Africa criticises France's integration model and the policies of Nicolas Sarkozy. (*Libération* 12.11.2005)
- On 2 December, during an 'alternative summit' to the one planned between African heads of state and President Chirac the following day, the 'Coalition of African Alternatives Debt and Development' (CAD-Mali) castigates 'French neo-colonialism' in Africa and denounces the 'policies of repression and stigmatisation of immigrant populations and those of immigrant origin' in France. (nouvelobs.com 3.12.05)
- African bi-weekly the *Gri-Gri International* reports on comments made by Sarkozy at the end of November. The interior minister is supposed to have said that 'curiously, it is the Blacks rather than the Arabs who are violent,' and in particular 'Ivoriens and Congolese'. He is also reported as saying that violence is 'cultural' in these African countries. (nouvelobs.com 1.12.05)
- Algeria** The *Nouvelle République* writes that it is only by looking at the repressed and aborted rebellions of immigrants and their children in post-colonial history that we can understand the current void in working class areas: 'The repression of all these political dynamics has played a leading role in rendering precarious the situation of immigrant activism.' (*La Nouvelle République* 1.12.05)
- In reaction to the February 2005 law, former liberation fighters and political parties in Algeria call for the suspension of negotiations for a 'treaty of friendship' between Algeria and France. The secretary general of the Algerian National Liberation Front (FLN), Abdelaziz Belkhadem, bemoans the fact that 'the deputies in the majority in France have sanctioned a law which falsifies history.' (nouvelobs.com 30.11.05)
- Belgium** There were four successive nights of cars being burned in Belgium between 6 and 10 November. This took place in Brussels, Antwerp, Lokeren, Mechelen and Ledeborg. On 10 November, the interior minister, Patrick Dewael, said these were 'isolated incidents' and that there were 'no city guerillas or organised uprisings'. Dewael mentioned that there were benefits of having street and neighbourhood workers and community policing. The leader of Vlaams Belang, Filip Dewinter, stated that, 'In the case of foreigners, they have to be expelled. In the case of "allochtonen" (people of foreign origin) who hold Belgian nationality, they need to be stripped of their nationality.' (*Migration News Sheet*, December 2005)
- There is unrest in Brussels, Sint-Niklaas, Anderlecht, Sint-Gillis, Liège and Brugge. (*Expatica News* 8.11.05)
- Denmark** Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen brushes away the Danish People's Party's description of street riots in France and earlier riots in Århus, Denmark as terrorism. (*Copenhagen Post* 8.11.05)
- Egypt** The Egyptian daily *Al-Massaie* refers to the riots as 'the intefadeh of the poor'. Arabic satellite networks have given precedence to the uprisings, with live coverage. Newspapers have followed the story on their inside pages, calling it a 'nightmare' and a 'war of the suburbs'. (*Guardian* 8.11.05)

Europe (EU, European Commission and NGOs)

The European Network Against Racism states the 'Urgent need to combat social exclusion and discrimination in Europe' is needed. (European Network Against Racism – press release 11.11.05)

European Commission President José Manuel Barroso proposes that the European Union give fifty million euros to France and says it could make up to one billion euros available in longer-term support for jobs and social cohesion. (*BBC News* 14.11.05)

A series of articles ('Euro-ghettos, state of emergency?') treats the subject of unemployment, exclusion and violence in France and the rest of Europe. (*Café Babel* 21.11.05)

A report published by political scientists in Venice states that France is much less worried and mistrustful than her neighbours of foreigners, in particular immigrants. The report looked at Italy, France, Germany, Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary. (*Le Monde* 21.11.05)

Germany

On the night of 8/9 November, vehicles are set alight in Cologne, Berlin and Bremen. Incidents had already been reported in Berlin a few days earlier. Wolfgang Schäuble, minister of the interior, said 'We do not have these gigantic high-rise building projects that they have on the edges of French cities', but that integration was still necessary, meaning that 'above all they must master the German language'. (*Migration News Sheet*, December 2005)

'Will Germany see the same type of unrest as has happened in France?': Klaus J Bade of the Institute of Migration Research and Intercultural Studies at Osnabrück University says that Germans have to realise that they will have to shoulder major costs in the long run if they do not improve existing integration programmes. (*Deutsche Welle* 4.11.05)

In light of the French riots, the incoming coalition of the Christian Democrats and Social Democrats want to place more emphasis on the integration of immigrants. (*Deutsche Welle* 8.11.05)

Greece

Education Minister Marietta Giannakou states that 'we have to understand that prevention is the best way to deal with phenomena such as the ones in France and other European countries.' (*Vradini/Chora* 11.11.05)

A commentary in *Kathimerini* tries to explore the connection between what sparked rage in French cities and what happens in migrant communities in Greece. However, most migrants are Christians who are 'not religious fanatics'. (*Kathimerini* 14.11.05)

The Greek authorities are concerned that the violence in France could lead to trouble after some thirty youths on scooters hurl petrol bombs and stones at a police station in the Zographou area of Athens. (*Guardian* 14.11.05)

Molotov cocktails are thrown at an office of the car manufacturer Renault and a Greek-French supermarket in Salonika after a similar attack in Athens the weekend before. (*nouvelobs.com / Ana press agency* 15.11.05)

India

In two articles ('France Explodes the Uniformity Myth' and 'Why Integration Can't Work'), Praful Bidwai writes of the 'horrific exclusion and alienation among ethnic minorities bred by the smothering of ethnic-cultural diversity', and states that this should 'open a global debate on citizenship and multiculturalism'. He also states that 'European societies must integrate immigrants by transforming themselves and evolving a pluralist self-identity'. (*Frontline* 5.11.05; *Khaleej Times* 13.11.05)

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- Italy** Opposition leader Romano Prodi calls for urgent steps to improve the quality of life in immigrant neighbourhoods to keep the trouble from spreading to Italy. (*Washington Post* 8.11.05)
- Netherlands** The Dutch embassy in Paris warns its citizens to avoid the Seine-Saint-Denis and Val-d'Oise districts in the evening and at night. (The embassies of the US, UK, Japan, Poland and Russia have issued similar warnings.)
- Urban sociologist Leon Deben believes that the riots will not spread to the Netherlands and says that 'The Netherlands does not have the type of suburbs there are in France.' (*Expatica News* 7.11.05)
- Russia** A senior Russian lawmaker, Mikhail Margelov, blames the riots on the failure of Europe to implement measures for the social integration of migrants. (*Moscow News* 7.11.05)
- The Russian media is shocked about what is happening in France. One magazine, *Ekspert*, stated that the rioters in France were 'for the most part young Islamists'. The media coverage of the French riots has given a voice to racist fears among Russians and right-wing French commentators to criticise France's political correctness towards minority communities. (*Le Monde* 16.11.05)
- 'A Return of the Proletariat': Boris Kagarlitsky reacts against the clichéd Russian commentaries in which the unrest in France has been put down to the 'Muslim factor' and 'ethnic conflicts'. Instead, he suggests the unrest is that of a modern, disaffected proletariat. (*Moscow Times* 10.11.05)
- Saudi Arabia** Prince Alwaleed bin Talal bin Abdul aziz Al-Saud of Saudi Arabia reportedly telephoned Rupert Murdoch to complain about news reports of 'Muslim riots' in France. Subsequently, Fox News, whose parent company is News Corporation, changed the title of the coverage to 'civil riots'. (*Guardian* 12.12.05)
- Spain** *El País* offers an analysis of different European integration models, especially those of France, the United Kingdom and Germany. There is also an article suggesting the threat of urban riots in Spain is low. (*El País* 14.11.05)
- Switzerland** Interior minister, Pascal Couchepin, calls for improved schooling and integration policies to ensure Switzerland is spared the unrest seen in France. (*Swiss Info* 12.11.05)
- Thomas Kessler, a Swiss integration expert, states that 'the sort of suburbs that exist in the French suburbs don't exist here', and also that 'things are different in Switzerland, which since the moment it was founded has been a multicultural place... there is no single Swiss language and no Swiss religion. It is only in political terms that Switzerland can be defined as a single entity...Our integration policy for [people from the Balkans and Turkey] has not been without its problems, but we are working on putting these right.' (*Swiss Info* 13.11.05)
- United Kingdom** Referring to the French riots, Trevor Phillips of the Commission for Racial Equality warns that a mix of 'inequality, race and powerlessness' can be 'incendiary'. The comments were made at an event marking the fortieth anniversary of the UK's first anti-discrimination laws. (*BBC News* 9.11.05)
- Jeff Jarvis writes about how the French riots have exposed how both sides can use the World Wide Web for their own ends. The riots have prompted new debates about blogs being used to coordinate attacks. (*Guardian* 14.11.05)

Alana Lentin talks of the ineffectual (Republican) nature of French anti-racist and human rights organisations and other intellectuals who cannot see beyond the myths of universalism and meritocracy in France. She sees secularism in France as rooted in a Catholic culture that discriminates against Islam, and declares that France must address its institutionalisation of racist discrimination. (*Open Democracy* 17.11.05)

'Work in progress: one professor was not surprised to see Paris suburbs aflame': A Sheffield-based geographer is not surprised by the riots in France and refers to urban planning to explain this. (*Guardian* 22.11.05)

Lee Jasper writes about the events in France, stating that they 'stand out as a powerful statement that only by recognising the reality of racism can inclusive societies be fully developed'. (*Blink* 22.11.05)

'A ghettoised, post-colonial France is upon us': Naima Bouteldja writes that the riots are 'ultimately not about two deaths or government arrogance; they are instead about decades of racist segregation, impoverishment, police brutality and disrespect, all now melding together into a fatal poison.' What is needed is a 'deep political and ideological transformation with nothing short of the full recognition of these eternal "immigrants" as full and equal citizens of the Republic.' (*Zmag* 22.11.05)

Muslim News devotes four articles to the French riots, focusing on the elements of intifada and jihad present in the rioting, and issues of citizenship, multiculturalism and integration. Articles are written by Salma Yaqoob, Bashir Khan, Abdelwahab El-Affendi and Myriam Blin. (*Muslim News* 25.11.05)

**United
States**

'Urban Violence in France': Paul Silverstein and Chantal Tetreault offer an account of the causes of the uprisings in France, looking at the 'colonial logic' of the state of emergency law, the policing and economic policies that have engendered the unrest, and the exclusion that has brought about a self-fulfilling prophecy in some young French citizens. (*Middle East Report Online*, November 2005)

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