

france: roma expulsions (2010)



Bulldozing a Roma camp

English version of a leaflet I wrote in September 2010:

“Nomad life is no longer compatible with modern life in Europe”

- Francois Fillon, 30/8/10.

There is no “*specifically Roma problem*” and the attacks on them are not “*specific attacks*”, as the specialists in manipulation (UMP, etc.) and the false opposition (the left, the liberal humanists, etc.) would have us believe they are, but a means of dividing so as to better rule.

Those who, actively or passively, follow and accept the discourse of either side in this pseudo-debate, are ultimately as complicitous in their own misery as those most in the forefront of this “debate”.

Let's first consider the dominant manipulations of the State in the hands of the ultra-right (Sarkozy, Hortefeux, Besson, etc.). The Roma are charged with an increase in 250% in specifically Roma criminal activity. The statistics change from day to day , and only upwards, but even if the latest ones are true - let's look at what might be causing this.

Firstly, if people from Romania (and Bulgaria) don't have visible means of support, they lose all entitlement to social benefits after 3 months of living here, which is not at all applied to those from other EU countries, who have the same entitlements as the French. In order to get work, their employers must pay 900€ to the French Office of Immigration for the *carte de séjours* [the equivalent of the American Green Card], again, something not applied to those from other EU countries. If they get a job (difficult in

areas of officially 23% unemployment) they are always the first to be fired when the crisis-provoked redundancies are sent out. And now the majority of banks (just 2 months ago) have decided (secretly and probably illegally) to refuse to open up bank accounts to Romanians who are not living in accommodation directly in their name (housed by charities, or living under the roofs of friends or family). In order to have accommodation they need a bank account... It's not hard to see the vicious circle imposed on those who've come here because they were under the illusion that they'd have a less difficult life. Meanwhile, the French capitalist class is buying up all the best land in Romania, particularly the coast, and covering it in concrete, hiring and firing those at the bottom of the pile who are forced by monetarism/money terrorism to sell their bodies to these scum.

So, it's not hard to see why they might be forced to steal more than usual. It's true, often Roma (like too many other sections of the poor) don't care whether they steal from shops, businesses and the State, or from other proletarians a bit higher on the ladder of misery - but forced to beg and/or steal, they certainly are.

It's not for nothing that Hortefeux, in November 2008, at a large European conference on immigration, proposed that the next large meeting of the EU about immigration controls should take place in Vichy - a town well-known for having voted for all the scary xenophobic laws of 1940. Yet a majority of the spectatorship of the proletariat probably think the Aryan Hortefeux, ex-member of the fascist organisation Groupe Union de Droit at the Faculté d'Assas in the late 70s and early 80s, is an ok guy despite being the godfather of Jean Sarkozy [Sharko's son], detested generally everywhere. Remember Hortefeux was overheard saying about an Arab UMP supporter (who's since resigned from the party) "When there is only one, it's okay. It's when there are many that problems begin." And for his class, it's not just when there are many Arabs that problems begin: it's when there are many proletarians getting together to overcome our problems and our separations that the problems really begin for them. Hence the intensification of the divide and rule tactics: hit those at the bottom, all the better to hit those further up later. A month ago in Nissan-lez-Ensérune (Hérault) a 73 year-old guy shot 2 young and obviously unarmed women, who were trying to burgle his house, in the stomach; he almost killed them. This led to an internet petition, initiated by a fascist group "The Midi [South of France] League" being signed by over 7,500 people, amongst whom were

almost everyone from his village (one hopes that, if someone shot the thieves Bettencourt and Woerth [see, for example, this] and was put in the nick, that an internet petition for his liberation would receive more than 7,500,000 signatures). He said something like “We must annihilate this filthy race”. The roads around the village were covered with the logo of this fascist group, with slogans like: “A whole village angry” and “Free our friend René”.

There are some poor, but resigned, spectators who say, when speaking of the Romas, that “it'd be better they were sent to Auschwitz than these Romas lived and worked here”. Generous - they would have found work in Auschwitz, that's for sure - the kind of “work that makes you free”. These same poor people will sooner or later be the victims of the brutal austerity attacks of the State intended to master the crisis induced by finance/ “fictive” capital. The future they face will be as brutal as that faced by those who supported Hitler when he sent the gypsies and other “work-shy” to the camps as early as 1933-4. 10-12 years later, where were these resigned pro-fascists? Scrabbling for scraps amongst the ruins, if not dead. Let there be no mistake, if there 's no development of a revolutionary anti-State anti-commodity movement throughout the world, the horror of “Third World” misery (at least 20,000 kids per day dying because of the totalitarian global economy) will, bit by brutal bit, come to countries such as France over the next 20 years, and, with environmental disasters looming, disasters induced by the logic of the world market, the real possibility of a third world war, and the viciousness of State control, much of this misery will arrive even sooner.

But what of the false opposition (League for Human Rights, the Greens, the New Anti-capitalist Party [not exclusively Trotskyist, but Trot dominated], the French Communist Party, the Catholic Church, the CGT, the CFDT, the Confédération Paysanne etc. etc.)? Regardless of the genuine good intentions of much of their supporters at the base of these organisations, these groups are worse than useless in the fight against the ultra-right in power. The fact that they feel no shame in choosing September 4th for this demonstration, to celebrate the 140th anniversary of the Third Republic under Thiers (the liberal bourgeois responsible for the massacres, imprisonment and exiling of tens of thousands of Communards), is indicative of their “citoyenniste” [citizen ideology] approach. Having clearly-defined hierararchical positions

in this shitty society, the leaders of these organisations clearly cannot support independent, autonomous, attacks on the State, and cannot conceive of a movement against the different separations apart from one submissive to their leadership, submissive to this alien world, submissive to the exigencies of money, left-liberal bosses and the “correct” police. Hence, their perspective is totally legalistic.

Besson [ex-Socialist Party, now Minister of Immigration in Sarkozy's government - a recent demo banner said, "Besson - take the plane!"] wants to pass a law permitting the expulsion of Romas and Bulgarians accused of “aggressive begging”; compared with those people who are forced by companies and by their need for money to corner people with opinion polls whose aim is to sell rubbish, it's fairly rare to see beggars directly harassing people. But clearly, a free hand is going to be given to the cops to harass beggars, above all Roma beggars. In response, there are lots of liberal-humanists who encourage Romas to supply documents saying how much they ve earned by begging: the logic is to show that they have a source of income and so can stay in this crappy country (as crappy as all countries). One can imagine the enormous intensification of social control needed to verify these accounts.

And look at this, from a leaflet signed by the aforementioned liberal/Leftist organisations:
Quote:

“Us, diverse associated, union and political organisations who have a common attachment to the fundamental principles of the secular, democratic and social Republic, forcefully recall that the 1st article of the Constitution “assures equality before the law of all citizens without distinction of origin, race or religion”. We therefore appeal to all citizens to publicly demonstrate their opposition to these strategies of stigmatisation and of discrimination and to the logic of “war” which threatens us living together, to declare together our attachment to freedom, to equality and to fraternity which are and remain our common well-being”

....blah blah blah. They think they can develop a movement united behind platitudes which disarm our true consciousness of reality which is not at all free, equal or fraternal. War is, was, and will be (if there's no successful revolution) the true experience of the

majority of people forced to sell their lives to survive, a war launched every day by the organisers of this rotten world of the commodity. Like de Villepin, Raffarin and Fadela Amara [Secretary of State for Urban Policies, another Minister who was originally in the Socialist Party] (who remains in the government despite apparently opposing the expulsions), with whom they have no fundamental difference, they are frightened that Sarkozy's policies might explode in their ugly faces, might catalyse a more general explosion - like in '68 - but this time against and without the leftist parties and the unions who endlessly manipulate and sell out their members.

Amongst travellers, there are lots of contradictions which must be confronted if a movement against this global bullshit can develop. Amongst the Romas, there are those who work and who send their kids to school (for their miseducation) who look down on those who beg (to do this they need their kids). The travellers at Bordeaux insisted that they weren't Roma; on the 15th August they blocked the bridge, on the day of the "rentrée" [day when up to half of those who work return from their holidays to go to work the next day] and confronted the CRS [riot cops] whilst carrying the French flag (what a contradiction!). There are those who live on private property with the permission of the owner, who think that they are safe. But the law doesn't give permission to park wherever you want; and anyway, the cops can threaten them with the expropriation of their vehicles because of all sorts of small contraventions of the law (tyres, insurance, etc.).

There are people who think that because they are neither Roma nor travellers, that they won't be concerned (it's like the quote about the Nazi epoch, "They came for the communists, but I wasn't a communist, so I said nothing..."). But the sans papiers [undocumented], the homeless, single parents, French whose origin is foreign, the unemployed, those threatened by unemployment, all those who are precarious - that is, the great majority of people are concerned - not as "citizens" - but as proletarians, as those who cannot determine their lives without a revolution.

A demo isn't enough. It's too easy, and superficial, to only show a moralistic and indignant attitude. To just be a number, a quantitative statistic, a figure so it can be said, "There were 100,000 demonstrators in the streets" - even if there were a million in the streets, if nothing happens, nothing changes. We must change the whole of the alien environment, everywhere where people are gathered en masse (stadiums, shopping

centres, theatres, stations, etc. etc.), into centres of dialogue, to develop a discourse that could be a prelude to a physical transformation, an attack against the stupid life they impose on us.

The fires next time will either be those of the super-poor, the poor and the future poor, no longer accepting their resignation, burning with anger against our mad social situation, or those of the speculators setting fire to the world through climate change or through war (the recent fires in the Hérault [county in the South-West of France, where something like 2,500 hectares of land were burnt on 30th-31st August in several different parts of the county; land speculators were suspected] will be nothing compared with a future dominated by the loonies in power). A great revolutionary said 3 years before WWII,

Quote:

“We are not in the least afraid of ruins...The bourgeoisie might blast and ruin this world before it leaves the stage of history. We carry a new world here in our hearts”.

But this was before the nuclear bomb, GMOs and ecological collapse; we have good reasons to be afraid confronted by the ruins that these scum impose - but we have more to fear by submitting to this fear.

“It's not so much the sound of boots that we must fear today but the silence of the slippers”

Romas, unemployed, homeless, the undocumented, pensioners, wage slaves - we are all precarious - we are all insecure travellers in this putrid world - we won't accept our hierarchy of misery...

**WE ARE NOT WEAK BECAUSE WE ARE NOT UNITED
WE ARE NOT UNITED BECAUSE WE ARE WEAK**

