

LIENS

documents from the current french revolt against austerity. #1, November 2010.

SUPPLEMENT: FRANCE FALL 2010

The following is a bulletin issued at the height of the French events of October, which were framed by a strong, widespread and tenacious movement to suppress the Sarkozy government's attempted pension reform. An attempt to begin to clarify its nature has been made in the journal to which this edition is a supplement, LIENS. Suffice to say here that the movement, which lasted for three weeks and is still holding on in some places, was in several respects decisively new, even for France, and deserves to be looked at closely by everyone in Europe (perhaps the world) confronting state austerity measures.

The backbone of the highly successful effort by the movement to impose petrol shortages and generalised economic shutdown, the CGT strikes in the oil refineries and ports, ended in a timely way just a little into the school holidays, taking the wind out of the movement. The following comment, from the excellent report on the situation in France in the main journal, page 2, gives a good idea of that ending and what it left. It's from October 30th.

"This morning we read of the end of the refinery strikes, the return to normality. And who knows whether this might actually work after three weeks on strike and the consequent exhaustion and economic hardship. At the same time, though, while some unions try to go home holding onto a few crumbs, organizing the withdrawal and already starting to talk about winning support, perhaps something has broken in the routine of contestation of reforms, consisting of big national marches and counting strike percentages. Numerous 'inter-professional' assemblies have formed at local level, and networks of solidarity and co-ordination, strike funds and struggle assemblies are growing. An attempt to respond to the ever more violent atomization in the world of work through re-composition from below. It can't be denied that these are still minority phenomena, but it is certainly a significant new development."

The text that follows was written by a French comrade in English, in a rush to circulate information. So errors should be overlooked for the sake of a radical content. Other material at liensjournal.wordpress.com.



Saturday 17th

...at the end of the demonstration in Paris, around 2-300 'autonoms' (black bloc – more or less) run down from Nation (end of the demo) back to Bastille, smashing things up....various sources say they had *carte blanche* from cops who were always around...

There's a guy who more or less takes the lead, gets pictures taken of him threatening journalists, shouts to get people to the Opera (Opera National De Paris on Place De La Bastille) and attacks a police vehicle. Apparently not known by anyone there, most people later believe he was a cop. A man trying to stop an 'autonom' smashing a bank window gets beaten up by (what's quite obvious from video footage) civilian cops dressed as autonomes!

At Bastille, they enter the Opera (a TV show was being made there). As soon as they enter, 30 to 40 out of them turn out to be undercover cops! Plus all the other regular cops were parked in the streets around.

A video of the whole thing, with nice images and close-ups of the people, was put up online after a couple of days signed Reuters, though likely shot by the police. The video is shot in a very composed way and some shots seem to show that the cameras were waiting before the throng arrived in the Opera.

40-60 arrests were made.

Also on the 17th was a short occupation of a shopping mall in Rennes after the demonstration...and another mall was shut down in the mobilisations last week in Evry after being attacked.

Monday 18th

Lots of confrontations with cops in front of high-schools reported in various Parisian suburbs. General level of violence being pretty high... tons of cell phone videos online in a matter of hours...and also in Rouen and Lyon.

Police claims 196 arrests were made during the day. In the evening, it becomes 290 *casseurs* arrested, with 231 still under arrest. they claim 4 cops injured against 22 on friday.

As has been the case all along, in the small provincial towns confrontations are surprizingly intense and violent, with many demonstrations all over the country ending up with tear gas and flash-balls (a weapon firing rubber bullets that the french police have deployed in recent years for crowd contro / riot situations. It can be used at close range and has been much discussed recently for causing serious injury...young people losing eyes etc), burnt and smashed cars, smashed bus shelters and stuff thrown at the cops.

It becomes more and more common to read about actions organised jointly by high schools students and workers from the unions (mainly the CGT).

The government is less and less clear by the days concerning what sort of stocks of gasoline they have, most of the main refineries being partially or totally blocked. One had already been unblocked by the CRS (riot cops) last week. 3 more oil ports blocked this morning (tuesday).

5% of the oil depots are still blocked by monday night. By last friday all the refineries in the country were on strike.

...tons of people on the web and in the papers testifying to the pumps running dry in their local area, (12% of petrol stations is the official number, but some areas are more heavily hit than others).

The main refinery around Paris, Grandpuits, was blocked Tuesday, workers being helped out by teachers, truckers and railway workers. The CRS tried to evacuate it but eventually left.

"I wont let the French economy be suffocated by the blocking of the oil supply" PM Fillion said Sunday night on telly, adding he was ready to use force.

Sarko declared tonight "it is normal and natural that in a democratic country, in a parliamentary democracy, we makes sure that drivers can find gasoline".

...there are more and more rumours from officials saying airports are in danger of running out of fuel. The transport mininster said during the week-end that the problem was solved with the re-opening of the pipelines. So far, there is no indications of fights being cancelled because of oil shortages, rather than by strikes by Air France and airport employees.

Truckers have joined the movement to help in the blocking of refineries and oil depots, and also engage in 'caterpillar' actions slowing motorway traffic.

Not that many strikes in transports, SNCF being the biggest so far (12 to 28% tuesday), though there have been some limited, city-specific transport strikes here and there.

In Marseilles, rubbish collectors have been on strike for two weeks, the city is overflowing with stinking, uncollected rubbish.

There is a double mouvement in the port of Marseilles: against the reform concerning the new status of ports (v quickly – privatization of ports but under state administration), and of the dockers concerning the pensions reform. Analysts already put the losses from those strikes at

600 millions euros.

Generally, there are more and more conflicting messages coming out of the unions. The leadership stops short of calls to block the economy while more and more local sections say the contrary (flyers on the web by local sections of the CGT calling for "social war" and the complete blockage of the economy).

A minor union (CGE-CGC, union for engineers, managers...) declared tonight it won't participate in the movement anymore after tuesday's demonstration.

On monday, a national poll says 71% are in favour of tuesday's upcoming demonstration.

Tuesday 19th

During the night, a fire completely burnt down a high-school in a suburb of Le Mans. The firebrigade claim it was a arson...

Riot scenes from a few cities are everywhere in the media. The biggest one was in Lyon. Violent confrontations for hours, the city covered in tear gas, 20 cars upturned and 7 burnt. 9 shops in a city center street got looted and others attacked.

There are complaints in local medias that the latter was done with the cops watching on and not interveening, video footage supports this.

Cars are burnt during high-school demos all around the Paris suburbs and there are violent confrontations in Dijon.

...in Lyon, 8 people were hospitalised for serious injury. Two were shot in the face with flash-balls, the others suffured baton charges.

The use of flash-balls has been widespread form the off. Last week in Montreuil (Paris suburb), on the first morning of the high-school mouvement, a student was shot in the eye whilst moving a bin more than 10 meters away from the cops (the scene was shot on video).

The *casseurs* question is all over the papers...

Le Figaro, the main right wing paper, has its main article claiming '*casseurs* are more hooligans than students' (*voyou* in French, clearly meaning youth from the suburbs), but then explains in the same article that most *casseurs* arrested by the cops in the last few days were high-school or middle-school students!

..the mall that got shut down last week in Every, was shut down again after being targeted anew.

In Argenteuil 500 youths set up barricades and faced the cops the whole morning.

A bus was torched, and a police car smashed-up during confrontations in Essonne.

(All three Paris suburbs)

There's constant argument about numbers taking part in demos and strikes. For the big nationwide demos of Tuesday, the gouvernement announced triumphantly at the midday point that it was the smallest since the beginning of the movement. At the end of the day the numbers were put at 1.1 millions by the government, and 3.5. million by the unions. Most agree it was at least as big as Tuesday the 12th (as the media would recognize by the evening).

there is a "war over figures", endlessly discussed in the media, with the gouvernement doing its

best to keep the figures down. It said today only 12% of civil servants were on strike, (compared to 20% last tuesday). This reached ridiculous proportions when the ministry of interior was giving out figures lower even than the police!

For Tuesday officially 1 petrol station out of 3 was closed or partially closed...with 2 out of 5 petrol stations for truckers.

Across the media there is blather about the population being 'held hostage' by lack of fuel. The government said Monday night it was going to centralise and coordinate the oil supply to get it to the pumps and things would be back to normal in 4 days.

There were also demonstrations on Tuesday in La Reunion and in French Guyana, the first of France's overseas departments to join the movement.

...same again with the unions...a rank-and-file CGT member was talking today on TV news about "blocking the economy", when Bernard Thibault, CGT general secretary, was saying the contrary on Monday night.

...pictures were out of CGT stewards (*service d'ordre*), trying to get rid of the *sans-papier* demonstrating in front of them on Saturday in Paris and then beating people on the demo who had come to their rescue!

Today again, about 20 of them used tear gas and truncheons against some high-school kids from a Paris suburb, who were described even by journalists as being little more than 'noisy'. Other demonstrators started isoalting the *service d'ordre*, chucking cans at them, and they also reportedly suffered the abuse of other CGT members...they had to beat a retreat throwing tear gas at their attackers!

people also report cops in civies helping them all along...

Many arrest cases are going immediately to trial, (there is a procedure called "comparution immédiate" in France which means you'll get a 5 minutes trial within a couple of days and end up generally with a worse sentence, but saying no and asking for a full trial will put you - with the charges for the sort of offences concerned here - into custody until your trial). Most sentences handed out are prison terms of 1 to 3 months, and less often a 1 to 3 months suspended sentence with a fine.

Last week a guy got 3 months suspended sentence for 'emptying a bag of dead leaves on police' plus a fine. The state prosecutor estimated it was too lenient, appealed - in which case the accused can only receive harsher sentencing at a further hearing...which is what transpired!

Also Tuesday, a fuel depot near Bordeaux was occupied. Only 6 out of the 250 people on the action were employees on strike, the rest of the crowd was completely mixed!

Flying pickets in Brest blocked the port during the day, as well as a mall and fuel depots. Same in Rennes, occupying a bus warehouse, the airport, train lines and a fuel depot.



Wednesday 20th of october

A Customs building (the archives section) near Rennes suffered an arson attack in the morning. 70% was burnt down. Not widely diffused in the media. There were also arson attacks against a bank and a jobcenter in Paris. This also went pretty much unreported.

Highway access to Orly airport was blocked for part of the day. Same for Nantes, Clermont-Ferrand and Toulouse, but Toulouse was reopened pretty quickly. Also, by midday, there were 1000 demonstrators in front of Lyon airport. 1 flight out of 4 was cancelled there because of the Air France strike.

In the morning in Lyon, youths set fire to a truck in the center of town during new confrontations with police. Public transport was completely shut down in order to isolate the center of town.

The minister of interior came down in the day for a photo op, which turned into a fiasco as he is insulted whilst walking the looted streets, and the Socialist mayor stormed out of a meeting which was clearly a UMP (Gaulist governing party) propaganda exercise.

He declared 1423 *casseurs* had been arrested since last week (with 263 Tuesday), and 1000 were still in custody.

60 arrests further arrests for that morning in Lyon alone.

'La casse' continued in other parts of central Lyon during the minister's visit.

Yesterday (Tuesday), in Lyon, the GIPN was present from the beginning of the riots, and was still there today. This unit is the highest of special commandos in the French police, originally set-up to deal with terrorist actions, (of the Munich hostage type). There are pictures of them

brandishing assault rifles during some of the clashes.

Videos from yesterday show the CGT *service d'ordre* protecting civilian cops arresting people in Lyon.

3 oil depots (Donges, Le Mans, La Rochelle) were taken over by police during the night. The one in Donges had been occupied by 300 persons (not only employees from the depot, but also from a nearby refinery, teachers etc) The unions forbid confrontations in case of police intervention to unblock.

Also blockage of a few hours of an oil depot in Brives-La-Gaillarde.

One military oil depot was blocked in the morning by the CGT. They decided to leave it in the afternoon with no interventions by the cops.

In the morning the President had called for the opening of all depots - 3 were still blocked in the evening. A lot have been blocked and reopened and reblocked and so on during the day.

All 12 refineries are still on strike.

Granpuit, the refinery outside Paris, has been blocked by strikers for a week now.

3 employees were forced to go to work today by the police, 'requisitioning' them at their homes under threat of 5 years in jail (has to be added that those under this requisitioning order were not active strikers and there is not much they can do anyway before the strikers are evicted from the site and the refinery reactivated. Beyond that there's not much the 3 can do on their own anyway...looks a bit like a publicity stunt!)

The law says that this can be done only under a state of siege or a state of war.

What 'blockage' means in this situation is stopping production. Employees say it would take two weeks to start it up again. They say there are only two days left in stock, and anything left beyond that is stock meant for 'strategic emergencies' (the refinery mainly purifies oil for planes).

Strickers decided to keep on giving oil to 2 factories for 'political reasons' (saying not doing so would threaten these two particular factories with bankruptcy and would condemn workers to unemployment).

They claim in their tracts that the 'mediatised issue of fuel importation was symbolic, it cannot compensate for the lack of production in any way'.

The Minister of Environnement declared importations of oil have been increased to a 'previously unseen level', and that government was resolved to 'reestablish the normal distribution of oil'.

In total almost 30% of petrol stations are closed and about 12% are partially closed.

In Amiens, access to the industrial zone has been blocked all day by strikers.

At mid-day, we could count 15 blockages on Motorways or A roads. Police is now taking down the number plates of truckers involved and some have already been summoned. All risk the withdrawal of their driving license (i.e. unemployment).

In Rennes, non striking bus drivers joined the movement this morning. Students were blocking the depot (with 2-300 bus drivers inside) in the early morning. No confrontations - drivers and students seemed to get on well. The CRS turned up, shot tear gas and charged the crowd with truncheons, beating people wildly...the drivers intervened to calm them down. In

the end lot of the injured were bus drivers and as a result most of them went on strike.

In Lille, there was a complete shut down of all public transports after a bus drivers was shot at with a riffle in a suburb and two ticket inspectors were attacked on Tuesday night.

Electricity plants (nuclear and other) went on strike. The CGT is the majority union in the sector. They decreased the production of energy by 5 000 MW (the equivalent of 6 nuclear plants for a day). France is increasing the import of electricity.

Gas employees covering the supply for the whole of the south of France have been on strike for ten days. They had so far only shut down gas pipelines for an hour a day. Today they disrupted distribution for most of the day.

Threats of curtailing access to gas for companies - this is a new thing in the movement...

Refuse collectors went on strike in Pau, Toulouse, Lunel. In St Etienne they've been striking for a week.

In Marseilles, refuse collectors are still on strike. Local authorities said they will use 150 'civil security' employees (vague...could be the firebrigade or the military) to restart collection. Further they will do so under the protection of the Foreign Legion!

The depot of the Banque de France in Lyon was blocked by assorted demonstrators, who stopped trucks coming in and out.

Lille and Mulhouse, saw the occupation (or shutting down by police decision) of shopping malls for the day.

9 out of 83 universities were blocked or partially blocked by students, or shut down by the administration today (this later is a preemptive move by uni authorities that stops political activity, general assemblies etc, developing on campus). However, it doesn't look like students will take over in the mobilisations from the high-school kids, (who are on holiday from friday on), as has been hoped...

SNCF claims only 10% of freight trains have been on service for the last 2 weeks.

Some UMP deputies, proposed a new law threatening with imprisonment any 'public call for the blockading of private or public buildings'.

In a debate in Parliament, the gouvernement said it had already made concessions on the reform for the handicaped and asbestos victims!

'Soon, there won't be middle classe anymore' despaired a Force Ouvriere trade unionist recently made redundant...

Thursday 21st of october

On Wednesday 245 people were arrested. Which makes it 1901 since the beggining of this phase if the movement (counted as Thursday of last week when street trouble started).

In Toulouse, refuse collectors intensified their movement by blocking the access to waste depots. All unions are participating.
More towns are seeing strikes from refuse collectors (today Aurillac).

Marseille and Toulon airports were blocked this morning (in Toulon, being partially a military airport, military personnel were not prevented from entering). Demonstrators left Marseilles airport when the cops arrived.

A transport platform for a wholesale food market in Lille was completely blocked. On strike for two months in a separate dispute, it's the first time they decide to completely block access. In Bordeaux, a platform access for the warehouses of a supermarket is blocked...between 150 to 250 protestors inside. The crowd is mixed even if the decision was taken by various union sections.

The cargo port at Bayonne was disrupted by protestors also attempting to block it.

The oil depot in Brest was blocked very early. Cops arrived at 10, people left...the train station was occupied immediately afterwards, for the whole day, by a crowd of high school students and the CGT branch of the port.

In the Feyzin refinery near Lyon, strikers explain - 'there are two possible forms of struggle: stopping the expeditions of fuel or shutting down the installations. We chose the second, because it's the best in the long run. Installations take way more time to start up again'. They claim that if the government tries to 'requisition' some of them (as was done in Grandpuits), it won't work because they organised an *interpro* (group comprising of different union sections), and other strikers are ready to help them.

A Hydroelectric plant is blocked in Mulhouse.

Buses are still blocked in Rennes by the drivers who suffered the police attack of the previous day, and also in Poitiers.

312 high schools are disrupted, with 178 yesterday, 379 on Tuesday and 261 on Monday (these are the government figures, the high-school union FIDL claims more than 4 times that). The UNEF student union claims 14 universities blocked or partially blocked. Ministry claims 5.

12 A-roads and motorways blocked in the morning.

In most cities, train stations get occupied on and off. Train traffic is slightly better says management, referring to the number of strikers, but is constantly disrupted by actions.

In Fos-sur-mer, a port 50km from Marseilles also involved in the movement against the reform, 60 ships are forced to stay in harbour, whilst 25 are in Marseilles.

The depot of the Central Bank in Lyon is still blocked - no trucks getting out. Another Central Bank depot has been blocked for the morning in Rennes.

12 refineries are still on strike and 2 depots are blocked. All officials claim the situation will go back to normal soon and that depots have enough stocks for a few weeks. This morning

40% of petrol stations are closed or partially closed.

In Paris, the 3 main student unions have organised a security service composed of 'old militants' to deter *casseurs*...

In Lyon, a state of siege seems to be the rule. GIPN patrol with guns, helicopters hover constantly over the demonstration. There are pictures of CRS pointing flash-balls at close range to student demonstrators. Water canons were also deployed.

In the morning some cars were smashed during the demonstration.

Later, the CRS blocked a crowd of about 300 youths on the main square (Place Bellecour – scene of Tuesday's riots, and the largest city square in Europe) at noon, forbidding them to leave whilst the rest of the demonstration was leaving. They were kept there for the whole afternoon whilst the cops toyed with them, shooting tear gas constantly, ordering the crowd north, then south etc. At 5pm, they started using water canons and baton charged them.

They were allowed to leave at 6 but about 100 were taken into custody.

The govt got its cut price pictures of 'riot' and 'a state of guerilla war' for the evening news, with the city centre covered in tear gas...

In total, for Thursday, 266 arrests. 2257 since the beginning.

72 injured cops for the week..

In the Parisian *banlieu* 50 people were arrested Thursday in Seine Saint Denis including 32 in Pantin (during the looting of a perfumerie), 4 in Blanc-Mesnil.... Scarce news in the media in the last two days concerning these areas.

During the afternoon, the *Sénat* (the second house of the French parliament, the first, L'Assemblée Nationale, adopted the reform in mid-sept.), was examining the law, various Socialist deputies had been employing delaying tactics...Gouvernement made use of a special procedure to cut short the reading and force a vote on all outstanding amendments.

When news of this came to the Paris demonstration a large number broke off to go to the *Sénat*, chanting they want to go 'défoncer' (beat up) the senators!

...you hear about undercover cops all the time. They're great in number, wear union/party stickers, or sometimes dress as *banlieu* kids, and seem to be one of the main tactics of the police at the moment.

Today (thur) the crowd isolated and shouted at a bunch of them at the end of the main demonstration in Paris.

The media right now is all about giving some anthropological explanations for what sort of animal the *casseur* is. Sociologists are called. The funny bit is always when they're trying to describe how they are not students because they are *casseurs*, but then they are still students because... because they are still going to school! The traditional myth of a terror squad of delinquents on the dole doesn't work right now, all their statistics show that the majority of those arrested are all still in high-school, therefore technically ... 'students'.



Friday, 22nd of october

CRS « requisitionned » the refinery of Grandpuits (the one nearby Paris) at 9AM. After resistance from strikers and 80 neighbours joined them.

Note that « requisitionned » mean here that all workers will be too, under the threat of years of jail if they refuse.

President made a declaration saying that citizens had a « right to find oil ». François Chérèque, secretary of CFDT (one of the 3 main unions – note, strikers in Grandpuits were all CGT) was calling for, under words, requisitioning the refineries and depot saying it was in the interest of the movement to be « popular ».

Minster of energy said it was going to help bringing back situation to normal within two days (complete nonse, just starting back a refinery takes 2 weeks, cf #2)

On the legal side, ministry of interior is basing his decision on a law that was passed in 2003 by... Nicolas Sarkozy when he was minister of interior. When « order, tranquillity and salubrity » are under threat, the *préfet* (sort of mininster of interior of each region) can « requisite » means and men « untill order comes back ».

This law was voted for hospitals (tho', no need to say, there wasnt at the time, mass murders by doctors on strike letting patients died) and its application in such a case is quite vague. It's the first time such a decision was taken.

Refinery of Gargenville, blocked since the 12th, has been under threat of « requisition ». general assemby from the city nearby have organised to come and help.

Refinery of Feyzin (near Lyon) voted to maintain the strike. Rumours say police will intervene soon.

In Brest, the oil depot that was debocked by police yesterday ,was blocked again this morning by demonstrators. The commercial port and buses depot are as well completely blocked.

Groups of demonstrators from CGT trying during the night to occupy an oil depot in Toulouse. CRS called, tear gas and assault.

Note : if refineries are clearly blocked (because technically it needs a complete shut down of the activity), the large picture is hard to understand, and government is playing with it. Apart from refineries, you have ports and stocks (and some refineries' stocks are considered as stocks, some not). Those two are blocked on and off more and more and not only by workers from those places. Furthermore, new techniques of blockage are appearing. e.g. : in Donges refinery, police came to evacuate in the middle of Thursday's night. But soon after, the demonstrators were blocking a roundabout that was the only way to get to the depot and dockers were blocking access to the port in coordination with them.

After the « war on figures » over demonstrations, there is one over oil supply. Yesterday 3200 out of 12000 petrol stations were shut down and 1700 partially. Today they have much better figures but they sound quite odd –even for medias-. Government promised yesterday situation will be solved in a couple of days but seems hard to believe.

Furthermore, government and medias are advocating the fact that firebrigades, hospitals and state services (i.e. cops and military) are a major case, but CGT declared already for a long time they were ready to provide them gasoline but government never tried to accept it. As well, one of the first complains is about doctor and nurses running out of gasoline –which is particularly true in countryside-, but nothing was organised in the administration to make priority lists.

A logistic depot for many supermarkets was blocked by 500 people with all kind of backgrounds nearby Bordeaux. Fires were burnt outside the entrance. During the night another one was blocked for 5 hours (until cops intervene) in the same area.

In Bordeaux those actions have been going on for a few days now and shelves of fresh commodities in supermarkets starts being scattered.

In Lisieux (Normandie), 7 hours blockage for another one of the same type (on which depends 30 supermarkets) and the demonstrators left without intervention of police.

2nd national biggest market of fruits and veg (located near Lille) was blocked by employees from transport, energy, banks and railway from both CGT and CFDT.

All over France, but particularly in Rennes, the technique of *piquets volants* (small groups scattered over city blocking activity, circulation, transports,...and changing targets constantly) is more and more frequent. Those ones, in Rennes, proved to be useful and all reports on them are about the mixture of the crowd (unionist with non-unionists with students with unemployed with...) and the level of friendship between people involved -in such groups, you clearly act as a group but because the confrontations with police are not constantly high, there is enough space for talks and people getting to know each other-.

In Belfort, actions from CGT reject collectors (with others) to block the bus depot of the whole town on Friday morning. After confrontation with the local union (professional and not political union, therefore « syndicate » and not union) secretary, decision was taken to let the buses run on condition they would be free of charge all day.

For the last days, government was saying they had figures that proved that french population was more and more against the movement.

Official figures came out. 74% approve the mouvement, 69% agree with strikes and demonstrations. 46% approve blockage of refineries. Gouvernement also declared they had enough oil for « weeks, months » to avoid a shortage.

Concerning the Saturday « black block attack » in Paris, the person that was « beaten up » by « anarchists » (after trying to stop someone smashing the window of a bank) recognised in an interview that it would be hard to admit the persons who assaulted him were not cops. Even some cops admitted in papers that it was probably so.

In Caen, high-school and uni students demonstrators confronted with police. Bins burnt, tramway station smashed, and rocks thrown at cops.

Reports of CRS shooting tear gas as projectiles. Reports about that keep coming for those last days. Legally obviously forbidden.

Amount of high-schools on strike falling down by two (reminder, today is the last day before hollidays for high-school). Amount of uni on strike stable.

Groups of far-right hooligans more and more reported in Lyon around the demonstrations and in Paris around uni on strike. The funny but worth noticing fact is that, in Lyon, they had their own demonstration this morning, 150 persons, but were blocked by the cops quite quickly. Then they went all afternoon in town trying to attack students with truncheons and bike chains but the cops ended up blocking them on a square and arresting almost all (125) of them. Seen the degree of violence cops have proved in this town, it's a bit odd. The only way to look at it probably is that State wants to make sure it maintains its monopoly over violence and right-wing over far-right electorate.

Tons of reports about the parking of youngsters in main square on Thursday in Lyon. Many reports cops clearly saying or just putting into practice, in the end, « whites can leave arabs will be taken in custody ». Reports of cops shooting flaballs and tear gas at people and letting them unconscious in the middle of the square, reports of cops laughing constantly and making signs of decapitation to youngsters.

Saturday 23rd of october

Without any surprise, *Sénat* voted the reform on Friday night.

Sabotage and direct actions appear more and more. Those sorts of news takes longer to come up in medias (when they do), therefore we'll make a (clearly non exhaustive) lists of the last days here.

On Thursday morning a crowd was blocking the access to an oil depot. Some people « in balaclava » (says the communique from the company) slashed tires of 3 tankers during that time.

On Friday morning, employees of electricity company shut down electricity in a neighbourhood after police refused to let the demonstration follow in Périgueux (Languedoc). A senator, in Béziers, got electricity and gas shut down by strikers from those companies. The action was revendicated by the local section of CGT (!) in a flyer threatening to bring back

electricity to all those that had shut down for non-payment. Even the secretary of the local section of CGT justified the action.

On Thursday, it was the siege of MEDEF (union of bosses) in Montpellier that went through the same (not revendicated, tho').

In Bar-le-duc, local section of UMP was walled up on Friday.

On Friday, local office of MEDEF was sacked in Narbonne following a demonstration in front of them organised by the CGT. Local secretary of the union didn't admitted responsibility, but didn't negate it either, declaring that if something was sacked, it was conditions of work.

There are rumour that similar actions have been done against local sections of MEDEF but not publicised.

In Alès, a hundred demonstrators were blocking the entrance to a commercial zone (zone with malls, shops,...) from a highway. They immobilised a truck containing oil by slashing the tires. Confrontations between 10 employees of that company (what were ten employees of that company doing here isnt clear... maybe other truckers behind) and the demonstrators, 2 demonstrators ending up badly beaten up and getting evacuated by ambulance.

In Rougemont, one bus got its whole petrol tank siphoned off during the night. This was reported as criminal act in local papers, but the bus was the bus driving workers of Peugeot to their factory...

Friday afternoon, a court decided that the « requisition » of Grandpuits' refinery wasnt legally valid because the way it had been done was a complete denial of « right of strike ». As soon as news came out, strikers occupied again. Police intervened again on staurday and tho' strikers are still in front, tank trucks are getting oil from the depot.

Granpuits, by its situation (refinery of Paris) and its mediatised conflict and « requisition » has become the symbol of all refineries on strike.

During this week, 200 youngsters sacked a petrol station during a high school demonstration in Essonne. In the same department, a mall was attacked and looted and in Ullis, a public bus was arsonned and 4 others attacked. In Every, a truck containing household electrical was looted as well as a BMW seller. -all those places are in the *banlieue* of Paris-.

News from *banlieue* are non existant in medias (the latters being found only in one local paper), tho' police declared still 50 arrests in Seine St Denis on Thursday.

More and more news of demonstration in little towns this week, with decent demonstrations in towns as little as pop. 1500 (and this isn't just a one case story, but highly frequent).

During Saturday night, 10 employees of Donges refinery (that has been « requisitionned » last week) had been requisitionned in emergency (last week, they only « requisitionned » 3 of them) because a tanker of oil was arriving in the port of St Nazaire to supply the refinery. In support of the strikers, 300 people organised themselves to prevent the tanker to arrive in the port on Sunday noon. The action was improvised and police was caught by surprise and couldnt prevent it. Tanker had to stay in the harbour, outside of the port. Decision was taken by the authorities to send 4 small cargo to get the oil from the tankers but all of them were stopped by the semonstrators once again.

Doing so needde a great coordination between the demonstrators and the dockers from the port, obviously.

Strikers of Donges voted the extension of the strike for one more week.

A court appeal was done meanwhile against the « requisitionning » of new employees.

To give an example of the mixture of crowd that participate to interpro general assembly, here the constitution of one in Rennes, on last Friday : workers in education (mainly leftist unions), city worker from CGT, train worker from FO, peasant from the Confédération Paysanne (José Bové union), students, unemployed and precarious workers.

They then went to help people of the Confédération Paysanne to block a milk depot in the north of town.

Video shot in Perpignan on Friday during the demonstration. It was reaching its end point (the main square), when two high school students decided to shout in the microphone « let's go to block the bridge ! ». CGT guy (clearly acting as local authority) try to stop them with banal excuses. Students dont listen to him and run and even the CGT part of the demonstration follow them. Same guy explains later on the camera, deploring the action, that it's good that youngsters are active, but they should listen to their parents also.

Rebellions against unions coming more. Some union flags were burnt during a demonstration on Friday in Besançon, UNEF (sort of uni CGT, i.e. linked with communist party) was expelled from a general assembly in Montpellier.

There are rumours that the main unions will abandon the mouvement after Sénat voted the reform, i.e. after tuesday's main demonstration since they have called for it themselves last week. It is hard to think how they will manage to convince their own sections to do so, seen the radicality of the mouvement.

In Rouen a night demonstration was organised by unions on Friday night but refused by police. Unions went beyond refusal and demonstration took place.

This week end, for the first time, mouvement has gone off the main title (apart from the oil consequences for citizens going on well-deserved holidays).

Gouvernement has done its best for supplying oil to highway petrol station (this week-end is the beginning of holidays), tho' 7 departments have still half of their stations shut down and no priority lists.

On Saturday night, a arson attack burnt down a mall of 3000 square meters near Rouen.

Despite the fact that such type of things are happening more and more everyday, it is only found in local medias with doubts that it could be due to « technical problems ».

Strike's funds (*caisses de grève*) are appearing everywhere. This is a very important fact since it hasn't been common at all in France for decades. Instead of making a report, the translation of an article written in *Rebetiko* follows. The only thing that needs to be added is that since the time it was written, it has become almost the rule in every cities (other fact is that workers of all categories are supporting those funds, probably more broadly than students):

« Here and there, from Montpellier to St Nazaire or Paris, blossom embryos of creative strike's fund (*caisse de grève*). They are not delimited anymore to corporation engaged in the strike and their use surrendered to unions structures, whose speciality is to maintain an opacity on their use. A new horizon is emerging : that one being reinforcing the practical means of blockage. Strike's fund for all town, supported by assemblies of students, unemployed, and all those who are defending the strike, which purpose would be to compensate for financial loss of employed strikers on key sectors (trains, refineries,...), or to take care of judiciary costs in case of arrests. With the promise within itself that the mouvement goes beyond the question of pensions. It is necessary to find means to make the strike lasts. So that the strike, on its duration and its form, becomes then the affair of people

who are participating in. From that can arise and get invented new communal practices, relation to time and world, more desirable than the individual confort we are asked to run after.

A space is opening up, let's dwell in it. »

REBETIKO, 18th of october 2010



Monday 25th of october

Main unions called for two days of action on the 28th of october and the 6th of november. 10 days gap between the two and the second one being on a Saturday.

« Rumours » say they are trying to stop the mouvement...

On Saturday night, the town council was arsonned in Tarnos, near Bordeaux (pop. 11000).

In Albertville, on Friday night, 15 people locked the council hall with 300 people inside invited by mayor UMP, shut down lights and threw rotten veg and rocks at the crowd.

On Sunday, MEDEF (bosses only union), released a communiqué saying impact on economy was serious, train fret was almost inexistant anymore, truck fret was very delayed that were provoking grave disruption in industrial production and construction. Added there was a high loss of contracts for cancelling meeting, and big losses in congres and tourism. It said that defense of small and very small companies (less than 40 employees) was « national priority » because those two were already fragilised by the crisis. It ask for tolerance for head of big companies towards small ones and called for « solidarity between companies ».

Bear in mind that MEDEF is always in France the one that call gouvernement to withdraw reforms when a mouvement goes too far, which exactly what happened during « anti-CPE » mouvement. That first declaration of concern by MEDEF as been seen as good news by many, but can also be seen as the bell ring for gouvernement to do all it can now to end up things soon (bear in mind too that this reform is seen as -and is- the president's and not a miister's one and therefore its failure couldnt be cleaned up by sacking PM as happened after CPE withdraw).

In Lorient, the peacefull demonstration of unions on Friday ended up in a riot-like atmosphere when demonstrators quietly changed directions. CRS shooting tear gases, flasballs and

explosive grenade (so far weren't heard of though they were frequently used in Guadeloupe in 2009)

On Monday morning, CFDT union announced that 2 refineries (Fos-sur mer and Port-Jérôme) voted the end of the strike. The first one, though, relies mainly on the supplying of oil through the port of Fos-Lavera, now on strike for 29 days.

The 3 main unions announced that refinery of Reischett voted the end of the strike. « We want to show the public our good will and we want to supply the region with oil » declared CFDT. That one was on strike for different reason, threat of shutting down. Not even a compromise on that matter have been obtained by the unions.

The depot of Fos was blocked by 600 dockers and port workers on Monday morning.

The depot of St-Pierre-des-corps was deblocked by 300 CRS at 4AM on Monday morning. 30 strikers were blocking it.

Granpuits is still on strike and the mediated requisition was just to empty the stocks (evaluated by workers as enough for two days). Starting back of refinery would take between 2 and 4 weeks before going back to normal production. CGT and CFDT head unionists declared the possibility to end the strike after Thursday would be discussed because they didn't want to damage economically the country.

Argument was made those last days by unions about government emptying as fast as they could depot that got deblocked for the holidays but still not making priority lists. Each time this comes back in declaration, it's about the « moral responsibility » of the strikers to maintain the strikes.

Le Figaro (main right wing paper complains that the strike have « cost » so far 1.6 to 3.2 billion euros.

Socialist union of Feulis refinery (owned by french company Total) in Belgium threaten to start a complete shut down if french government was still getting 50 extra tanks of oil every day to counter the blocus.

Same union threaten to stop activity on the two rivers that lead to France if french government was using those ones to dispatch oil.

A lot of blockages around Brest on the highways and roads mainly targeting oil tankers. Police intervening generally quickly but blockages moving to other roads.

In Nantes, the bus depot was blocked by train workers strikers. Also, during the night, one of the main food supply company platform (for shops and supermarkets) was blocked by a mixed crowd of 100 people setting fire barricades in front of the accesses. When workers arrived, they start talking with demonstrators about working conditions, complained about their boss, and ended up improvising a general assembly and voting the strike.

In Rouen moving blockages (*piquets volants*) organised during the morning moved from one place to the other, staying approximately in each two hours. Main food supply market, a bridge, the bus depot,... reports of non-strikers being generally very friendly with them. police following them constantly but never really intervening.

In Marseille, reject collectors are still on strike (going on since 11th of october). 18 workers on strike received today notification of their « requisition ».

Toulouse reject collectors are still for a large part of them on strike. Strikes in this sector have developed during last days in main cities.

Ministry of transport claim 7% strikers on train employees, CGT, 15%. Fact is train are circulating more and more. Fret is still bad but passenger trains are almost functioning as normal.

In Lyon, railway strikers of the depot of Oullins were called by CGT to end up strike. Most obeyed and strike is over now.

In le Mans, strikers have blocked the access of industrial zone for all transport of commodities. There, as in many places, police is now staying 24 hours a day in front of oil depot to prevent any occupation.

In Lens, one of the biggest car factory in France (3000 employees) was completely paralysed for the whole morning by 200 strikers for hours just applying their knowledge of just-in-time distribution.

In Dodorgne, this week-end, electricity employees shut down electricity on targeted companies.

Every day, reports of *comparutions immédiates* (direct trial after arrest) are coming up for all late arrests. Groups are organised through general assemblies to provide help. Jail sentences are still more than frequent. One defendant was trialed in Lyon for throwing a rock at police during last week « riots » (read : youngsters parked in a square for 6 hours on tuesday) and got 3 months jail with only proof that he was recognised from afar later by police description as wearing « a tracksuit, a kefieh and 3-striped sneakers ». When following defendant asked for a normal procedure trial, he was asked by the judge if he wasn't gonna « run away to Comors ».

Tuesday 26th of october

FGTB union (socialist, whose solgan is « negotiate when possible, struggle when necessary »), blocked in the morning all access to Feulis refinery, but quickly then install blockages letting all trucks that were not supplying France enter the refinery. They say 50 extra tankers from France have been coming every day to counter the blocus. Another refinery, in Tertre, did the same, tho' that one belonged to another company.

On Monday night, secretary of CFDT said during television show he was ready to start negotiations with MEDEF on « employment of young and old people » (whatever that means). Secretary of MEDEF at the sma show, directly replied she agreed with it, was ready to talk about these subjects and thought it was a good way to « move to something else ». Minister of economy and minister of labour both said they were happy with that decision and that « conflict reached a real turning point ».

Some officials inside the CFDT said for them movement was not over but talking about those subjects was a good thing.

PM answered in the afternoon that after reform was applied, gouvernement would start a dialogue with unions over employment of the young and old people.

Secretary of CGT declared that for him movement was not over yet, but it will take « new forms ».

UNEF, student union (linked to communist party), with others student unions called for a day of boredom and demonstrations. Former worked better than latter.

Between 4 to 7 uni out of 83 were blocked (partially or totally), shut down by administration. Mouvement is still not growing up in universities at all.

High-school and uni student movement is getting bigger in La Réunion where the holidays finished yesterday.

LKP and K5F called for general strike on Tuesday in Guadeloupe, Martinique and Guyana. Those 2 were behind the movement in Guadeloupe in 2009.

7 out of 12 refineries are still blocked and so are oil port of Fos-Lavera and Le Havre. Those two are still indirectly blocking two refineries that were deblocked, say medias.

On 5 refinery, it's now only 3 that were willingly ending up the strike (the 2 others being « requisitionned ». Interview with other strikers present a different picture : all those who ended up the strike were completely relying on pipelines from the 2 blocked ports and, even if « deblocked », couldn't work at all. Furthermore, one of the 3 refinery, who was striking also for the non-closure of the place (project was to transform refinery in depot and suppress 253 out of 255 employees), got direction accepting not to shut down the place. The 2 others voted the end of the strike when direction proposed to pay all days of strike.

The two « requisitionned » have still their employees on strike. more and more talks over the web about calling sick for those who want to maintain the strike in refineries that voted deblocking.

Most medias start declaring « victory » of president, tho' it's still far from being it.

Gouvernement claimed 80% petrol stations will be normally supplied today.

59% of population find blockage of refineries are « unacceptable », says a poll.

In Marseille, reject collectors start back working for « sanitary reasons » said unions. In Agen, they accepted after negotiating local demands.

Reject collectors' strikes in main cities is stable apart from those two facts.

Begging of arson in Montluel (nearby Lyon), against a supermarket during the week end.

Oil depot were blocked during the day in Brive-la-gaillarde, Longvic and Dijon, bus depot around Paris, Lille.

Blockades are reported all over the country. Generally targeted are roads, access to industrial areas and commodities platforms. General tendency is they are done by mixed crowd and generally leave the place after a few hours when police intervene (police is generally there soon but don't intervene right away).



Wednesday, 27th of october

At 5AM, a mixed crowd of 300p. tried to block oil depot of Grand-Quevilly. CRS were waiting for them, shot tear gas and attacked before they would reach the place.

For a few hours, CGT strikers block access to Reicshattat refinery (one that voted end of strike) in the morning. They, then, move to center of city to block traffic.

A mixed crowd of 30p. blocked post depot in Fléac, planing to do so for all day. Same in sassenage where 150p. refsed to left untill all mailman abandoned their job for the day. Police didnt intervene.

Reported in #4, blockings of the frozen food transport near Nantes on Monday led to, after discussions between blockers (not belonging to the company) and workers, a strike from truck drivers of the company on Monday night and Tuesday. After tensions with bosses (they lodge a complain after them and even went to engage in physical fights with some employees), strikers ended the strike on Wednesday morning when bosses accepted to withdraw complains and pay unpaid extra hours.

In la Réunion, high schools are pretty active and in St André, there was already a riotish atmosphere. Roadblocks, police car attacked, bins burnt,... a high school that closed its gate to prevent students from outside to convince students from inside to join the crowd had it down. Note that in St andré, riots already happened early september between two neighbourhoods,

where « drunk and stoned » youngsters (as described by media back then) had seen GIPN (them again... remember, unit patrolling in Lyon) bring back order.

In Elbeuf, near Rouen, CGT strikers blocked the 2 main bridges of town between 6AM and 9AM.

In Marseille's port, strike as been going on for 31 days now. On Tuesday 57 oil ship tankers were blocked in the harbour (+ 20 other ship tankers). Fos-Lavera port, much in need of supplying oil in the pipelines to deblocked refineries, depends on this port.

Port of le Havre is still on strike.

Pipeline started to supply Granpuits' refinery. Coordinations are trying to block all access for tankers.

One of the two swiss refineries, Cressier, had to shut down activity since Tuesday because pipelines were connected to Fos-sur-mer and have been empty for 3 weeks now.

All in all, it's only one refinery producing oil now, at low flow, and only by being supplied by « strategical stocks », belonging to government (government has 90 of « strategical stocks »).

Tho' reject collectors have started back work, incinerator of Fos-sur-mer (terating Marseille's rejects) has been blocked by demonstration, called by CGT.

Bus depot totaly blocked in Grenoble.

In Hainault, supermarket supply have been blocked by inter-union crowd.

Near Vienne, the Paris-Bordeaux fast-train line was greatly delayed on Monday evening after train hit blocks of rails put on the railway line. The line was highly damaged.

SNCF communiqué talked off « malevillance ».

As well, reports of problems over lines dued to rail signals going constanlty red after use of alluminum and copper wires between tracks.

Last Friday, Beranard Thibault got his car tires slashed in front of his house. Comments say all family's car had been slashed during the week. He declared there was no element that could link that with his union responsibilities.

More and more reports of cars (but mainly trucks) tanks being siphoned off at night.

On Tuesday, the mall and town council's electricity system of Villeneuve d'Ascq were under « malevollant acts of cutting off ».

Rumours spread by employees of Gargenville refinery that the company (Total) fully agreed with complete shutting down of activity in the beggining because it helped the company rising up prices of oil in gasoline stations (which they did last week).

Thursday 28th of october

Unions had called for demonstrations.

François Chérèque, secretary of CFDT, went back on what he declared on television on Sunday night and said talks were not yet possible because of « loss of trust in the gouvernement ».

FO secretary said he didn't expect « records » of figure of demonstrators.

Figures don't make much sense, difference between unions and police being sometimes by ten times. All reports from different cities say that crowd was smaller than earlier, with sometimes dominant CGT procession.

Poll says 65% of population are supporting that day of demonstration.

Prefect of Rhone-Alpes made an very odd declaration on Monday in an interview with Le Monde. Declared infiltrating movement by undercover cops was a « long police tradition ». But, when showed images of 4 undercover cops in Lyon having CGT stickers (vid has been seen a lot on internet), declared that 2 of them had « saved hostages » in the past. Hostages situations are only left to high sections of police. That would mean that some undercover cops don't belong to BAC (Brigade anti Criminalité- as they usually do), but to GIPN-types sections of police.

In Belfort, demonstrators deblocked a depot in the morning under condition bus would be free of charge for all day.

Peugeot factory's access in Vesoul are blocked by 200 demonstrators.

Police gates and MEDEf building trashed in Grenoble during demonstration.

Presence more and more of right wing anti-strike assemblies in unis. Paris get the most important number of them, but still in other cities as Montpellier.

In Saintes, 7 arsons were started during Monday night, targetting train station, boulevard, abbey,... Main supermarket got in bi part burnt down.

22 casseurs arrested on Thursday, tho' « none had been arrested since the 23rd of October » said minister of interior, trying to be convincing with meaningless figures (8 arrests in St Nazaire, and 7 in Caen, would leave 7 for the whole country... as for the « none... »...).

In Caen, 150p. blocked all entrance of a mall for all afternoon. Inter-union had block an industrial zone for all day on Wednesday.

Only airport had 50% of flights cancelled. Government said all airports would have figures around 30% but other airports have same figures (Nantes, Toulouse,...). The one in Lille is completely shut down for all day.

Road-blocks all over the country during the day. In majority of places, police seems not to intervene (tho' they obviously do sometimes).

Highway was blocked by main demonstration (3000p.) in Roannes this afternoon.

Electricity was shut down in ministry of economy for an hour . « Malevolence » is blamed once again.

In Dunkerque, « malevolent » acts against optic fibres. 20000 deprived of telly for all day.

Electricity workers have started to lower production (of 6MW) since Tuesday night.

1 out of 5 petrol stations is still shut down. Government has maintained this figure with high importations.

11 youngsters have been arrested on Monday in Nanterre after identifications by police on pictures and videos (police has used intensely both cameras since the beginning).

« Preventive arrests » in the morning, targeting radicals under imaginary excuses, are reported on the web. Some say it has gone as far as 100 arrests on mornings of main demonstrations.

Police pretend it arrested one of the main persons seen on the video of Bastille events. Fact is one « autonom » is now in custody and will probably get spectacular sentence for all that. -concerning that, see Note on last page-

After demonstration, 3-400p. attempted to attack prefecture in St Nazaire. Clash with police around. 8 arrests.

In Charleville-Mézière, cobblestones were thrown at cops and UMP office, smashing all windows down.

On Wednesday night, building was squatted and opened as « Strike Hall » in Rennes. Still opened, organising meeting, coordination of actions, discussions,...

Strikers of refinery of Berre, voted to deblocked stock depots (but not refinery). In Grandpuits, employees were « requisitionned » to deliver gasoline.

Figures of strikers lower in civil servants (eg, 5% in mail compared with 15% on previous days of demonstration, as for trains, direction says 16%, unions 26%, both lower compared with before), but those don't obviously take account at all of people calling sick on the day or taking holiday because of fear of strike. Furthermore, it's classic for government to make figures on all workers (including those not working on that day or on that shift).

5 to 6 units out of 83 shut down or partially. UNEF union was asking to vote against blockings of units in general assemblies.

Ports activity are slowed down in the ones that are not on strike, by having 59mn strike on each shift. The 59mn strike (officially, then not a strike), not being at the same time for each professional section, is then blocking the other sections. This way, rate of work is lowered of about a third.

Lots of cargos waiting for days and days in harbours of ports « not on strike » are reported in local papers.

NOTE :

Lots of people felt unhappy with 1st page of #1 about Bastille « autonomes » demonstration on 16th of October. At the time this was written, it was using what seemed most believable information on the web (internet testimonies from people pretending to be inside). Report was not precisising that this was relying on talks and that it couldn't certify in any ways what the « real truth » was, when it should have because of « sensibility » of the subject. The fact #1 was written quickly in order to be sent quickly wasn't probably the best way to avoid such a thing.

If some felt insulted by this way of putting things, apologies are done. Felt at the time it was a meaningful thing to report since it was showing new tendencies of police apparatuses (and therefore, in negative, reflect of news tendencies of confrontation to capital).

Still maintain facts that how video was shot and how it was then used are very questionable. Talks have appeared a lot on that event for the reason that undercover cops have been inside demonstrations constantly, and that's a fact, using different wardrobes everyday and arresting and attacking (i.e. not just « rumours about infiltrations »). Pictures and videos of that have been late hits on leftist and then mainstream web and then even turned to be on first pages of papers. Unions and all the rest of boring crowds have been using that in those last days denouncing any cops as *casseurs* and therefore (« logically ») any *casseurs* as only undercover cop. That latter mythology is being used now constantly since Friday.

Considering that, and considering « remarks » that had been made over what had been written here, it seemed important to clarify things.

If that part in #1 was letting some people think such a « logic » was behind it, hope the reading of more than this part proved them wrong. At the time, this seemed quite « new » and report wasn't obviously done with such a framework (and wasn't thinking, tho' some would say it should have, such a framework could come later on).

Because of police apparatuses previously described proving quite active lately, hope people won't mind if, instead of spreading news about that, subject is dropped after apologies have been presented.