Cornell University
ILR School

The CGT Campaign supporting the "Sans-Papiers"

This case study was written as a research contribution for the book ***Mobilizing against Inequality: Unions, Immigrant Workers, and the Crisis of Capitalism***, Lee Adler, Maite Tapia and Lowell Turner (eds.), Ithaca: ILR Press, 2014.

Author: Marion Quintin

Advisor: Prof. Lowell Turner

Submission Date: Summer 2009

The CGT Campaign supporting the "Sans-Papiers"

Introduction 3
Key elements of the context 4
Beginnings of the movement 5
First step into a legal breach 6
Case Law: La Grande Armée takes up arms 7
The CGT and San-Papiers campaign 8
Successes of the campaign 10
CGT face to face with the San-papiers 11
Future Challenges 13
Conclusion 14
Bibliography 16

Introduction

Early in the morning on April 15th 2008, more than about ten firms are taken over by hundreds of immigrant workers "Sans Papiers"[1] in five different departments of Ile de France (IDF) province. Paris, 10th District: twenty undocumented cooks working for a popular French restaurant chain ("Chez Papa") decided to sit-in at their workplace. Paris, 9th District: eight others occupy an Italian restaurant ("Pizza Marzano"). Paris 13th District, a building site is taken over by more than twenty employees. Right at the same time, outside of Paris in the suburbs a cleaning company, "Faf Propreté" is flooded over as well by a hundred undocumented workers. About forty other employees at "Millenium", another corporate cleaning company, organize a sit-in in the building while fifteen employees at a "Veolia Propreté" branch without any work permit held a demonstration at their workplace. The catering, building, and cleaning industries are the three main targets of this exceptional social movement. For the first time, "sans-papiers" workers has decided to come out of the shadows and to demand publicly their regularization in launching an unlimited large-scale strike, an unprecedented social movement led and coordinated by one of the main French unions, the General Confederation of Labor (Confédération Générale du Travail or CGT) and supported by the association Droits Devant![2] CGT leaders such as Raymond Chauveau and Francine Blanche have secretly prepared the movement for several months. Not one word has been pronounced over a cell phone in case of spying; just a few undocumented workers were allowed to attend the preparatory meetings. Nothing had been disclosed until the night before when a collective text message was sent, mentioning time and meeting point.[3] The main goal of the operation: to obtain a large-scale regularization for all undocumented workers.

---

[1] « Sans-papiers », literally "without papers", is a common periphrasis used by the French media to designate undocumented immigrants. In the context of this paper "Sans-papiers" refers mostly to undocumented workers. The CGT-sans-papiers campaign related here is based on interviews with a number of participants and observers including Francine Blanche, who played a leading role in the campaign.

[2] Droits Devant! is an association that is fighting to defend the unemployed people, undocumented immigrants, refugees and all these who are living in precariousness. www.droitsdevant.org

[3] Kessous, Mustapha. 2008. « Grève simultanée de plusieurs centaines de salariés sans papiers. » *Le Monde*, April 16.

200,000 to 400,000 undocumented immigrants are thought to live in France but no one can exactly estimate how many of them have a formal job - thanks to fake work permits.[4] For the most part they came from Africa and arrived in France many years ago. They work and live in the fear to be laid-off overnight, caught by the authorities, expelled and send back to their country, to lose the life they have built here. On the one hand some are poorly considered, exploited, work sometimes in quite lamentable conditions for guaranteed minimum wages (SMIC)[5], their overtime is not declared and as a consequence not paid. They are often isolated and their bargaining power is obviously non-existent. On the other hand they pay taxes and thereby contribute as any other regular worker to the well–being of the French society while they don't benefit from it (health care, pension plan, unemployment benefit). According to associations such as Survie, Droits Devant! or ATTAC, which qualify this situation of "institutional racketeering"; the valuation of gains for the French government rises up at least to 2 billions Euros each year ($2.8 billions).[6]

Key elements of the context

In the big picture, the campaign led in tandem by CGT & sans-papiers is a first line movement because of its importance for both parties and because of its political implications. Immigration and integration issues are very sensitive political themes to the French public opinion.

For the *sans-papiers* it is obviously their chance to settle their situation once and for all and to create a precedent for future actions. It is nonetheless a huge risk for them to get caught by police forces and be deported.

As regards the CGT, it is worth to explain that French unionism has been facing an ambiguous and paradoxical crisis[7]. On one hand French unions remain quite powerful and very much involved in the bargain of collective agreements. They still have a great influence on a social and political level. On the other hand union density has drastically dropped to less than 10% and membership has become a challenging issue for most of the unions, especially considering the complete overhaul of the law addressing union representation that was enforced in August 2008. These rules had not been changed for forty years and the new legislation put an end to the

---

[4] Kessous, Mustapha. 2008. " Les sans-papiers et l'arme de la grève. " *Le Monde*, July 4.

[5] SMIC : Salaire Minimum Interprofessionnel de Croissance. On June 26th 2008 the gross SMIC amounted for 1,321.02 € per month (on a 35 hours a week basis) or 8.71 € per hour. Source: INSEE.

[6] Rive, Emile. 2009. « Les sans papiers victimes d'un racket institutionnel. » *L'Humanité*, January 9.

[7] Bouneaud, Helene. 2007, Winter. "Small numbers, Big Power. The Paradox of The French Labor Movement." *The French Exception.* New Labor Forum, pp. 68-77

"présomption irréfragable de représentativité" or *conclusive presumption of union representation* for the five main unions. They are not "automatically" representing the employees of a firm anymore but have to go through an election process that establishes the threshold of representation at 10% at the company level and at 8% at the industry level. The CGT is not yet endangered by the introduction of this new system but it remains a threatening shadow over its head that encourages it to find new ways of reaching more closely employees' needs. The social movement of undocumented workers took place in this challenging context.

Nevertheless the undocumented workers issue is not new in France and has been latent for many years. So how do we explain the triggering factors that led these workers to take, at this precise moment, the huge risk demonstrating?

Beginnings of the movement

The build-up of this mobilization probably took its roots in previous social movements such as the fight of immigrants for asylum in the mid-1980's and a church occupation (Eglise Saint Bernard) during the late 1990's.[8] This brought the issue of undocumented immigrants into the public eye but was not workplace-based and thus did not involve direct union participation. The movement has included a broad range of social actors and immigrant groups (Droits Devant! and Secours Catholique for instance), and has aimed for the defense and support of immigrants without papers. Nevertheless we can clearly identify more recent causes both on a social and on a political level.

It started with a few sporadic actions. The very beginning of the story took place in October 2006, when about twenty employees at Modeluxe, a laundry service company based in Massy (Essonne, Ile de France province), went on strike after their layoff. The common reason for their discharge: they presented fake work permits to obtain an employment contract. Hypocrisy! protested the workers. The management knew exactly their situation and took lavishly advantage of it. They found themselves isolated and did not know how to defend themselves. That's why they decided to contact Raymond Chauveau, Secretary General of Massy's CGT office (the local union is called CGT 91), who persuaded them to go on strike with the support of CGT itself. Apparently they came to the right place, three months later in January 2007, the prefecture recognized their claim was justified and delivered the striking employees legal documents. Following the Modeluxe case, about twenty cooks first occupied the chain restaurant Buffalo

[8] Piot, Olivier. 2008. "Mobilisation syndicale des sans-papiers en France; Délocalisés de l'intérieur." *Le Monde Diplomatique*. June 1.

Grill in Essonne once again. A week later they were more than fifty to sit-in and to fight for their regularization, with the support of CGT 91 as well. Once more the prefecture capitulated in admitting the legitimacy of their demand and in regularizing the 51 employees. It was a new victory for the sans papiers movement.

First step into a legal breach

Parallel to this trend, the evolution of the legislation has also contributed to the birth of this new social activism, notably with the change in French immigration policy under Sarkozy's presidency. On one hand his policy of "chosen immigration" has become a lot more restrictive with the introduction of higher deportation quotas (up to 26,000 in 2008[9]). Indeed Sarkozy's presidential campaign strategy was partially based on the promise to fight against undocumented immigration in order to compete with extreme right-wing ideas and hence to gain new votes. Moreover in July 2007, a governmental decree compels employers to verify the validity of their new employees' work permits and to report their undocumented workers. The maximal incurred penalty is a 15,000-Euro fine and a five-year prison sentence. This new legislation sparked off a panic movement among employers, especially among small entrepreneurs, afraid to lose a substantial part of their workforce. On the other hand, in the Hortefeux Law of November 2007 (named after the former Minister of "Immigration, Integration, National Identity and Development in solidarity"), the 40th article opens the way to regularization for work purpose and defines a list of 150 acceptable occupations, in which workforce is needed.

Less than a month later on December 12th 2007 a new turnaround occurs. A ministerial circular (memorandum) narrows down to only thirty the number of these acceptable occupations opened to immigrants from non-EU members' countries and simply blows by every slight possibility to use wisely the 40th article of Hortefeux Law.
Finally on January 7th 2008, a new ministerial memo states in two lines of the last paragraph another opportunity for the sans-papiers movement in the workplace for regularization beyond the specified occupational groups, on condition that the sans-papiers worker demand is backed up by his employer, that he can provide pay stubs and a binding employment contract of at least one year. Did the government expect that these two lines would stay unnoticed by SP workers because they were isolated and not very much informed of their rights? Did it expect that roles would be reversed after the July 2007 decree and that the selection of demands would be executed by employers rather than by prefectures? What the government certainly did not expect

[9] Piot, Olivier. 2008. "Mobilisation syndicale des sans-papiers en France; Délocalisés de l'intérieur." *Le Monde Diplomatique*. June 1.

is that unions lead by the CGT step into the breach and take advantage of this new legal breakthrough to launch a large-scale operation.

Case Law: La Grande Armée takes up arms

The last lacking element for the movement to be ready to kick off was a case study regarding the new legislation. It occurred on February 13th 2008 when nine sans-papiers cooks at the restaurant *La Grande Armée* took up arms in occupying the venue in protest against some layoffs. The strike began at 11:00 am when about fifty CGT activists arrived with flags and banners to demonstrate in front of the restaurant, localized near the Champs-Elysées, a very in-sight place. *La Grande Armée* was not just any restaurant, it is owned by the Costes Brothers, a prosperous empire composed of 28, more or less, fancy venues.

Mamadou, 31 years old, was one of the strikers. Coming from Mali he had been working for more than nine years in this restaurant. He earned 1,500 Euros a month (about $2,000), of which 500 Euros was sent to the "Bled"[10] and explained that the situation had become unbearable.[11] They were working ten hours a day; lunch-breaks were quasi-inexistent; sick leaves almost never respected; overtime hours not paid and if by any means one of them was requesting vacations they were gently asked to quit. In others words their situation was close to modern slavery. All of the sans-papiers were hired with fake documents and management knew about it. Some of them would have even been requested by the direction to change their identity.

The union's strategy was to draw public attention on the gap between profitable companies and their underpaid sans-papiers workforce. To prevent from a possible escalation or any form of repression, workers kept one half of the restaurant opened instead of closing the whole place. That was the first reason why the police were not in a position to expel the strikers. Second reason was publicity and public support. The last reason was that this event was partially considered as a strike against layoffs and thus fell into a labor dispute at the workplace category – it means the police could not intervene without a court order.

Within two days, seven out of nine sans-papiers workers had been regularized by the prefecture with the support of their employer, pressured by this high-profile strike. Within six days, the remaining two sans-papiers received papers as well. All workers joined the CGT and maintained after that a union presence within the workplace.

This important success was raised as a model for the following events and has been referred as a

---

[10] The "Bled" designates a Northern African inland town and in a broader sense homeland.

[11] Neveux, Camille. 2008. "Sans-papiers - Mamadou, soutier d'un resto de luxe." *Le Parisien*, February 15.

case law. It proved sans-papiers employees, even occupying unqualified positions in the eyes of the law, could be regularized if they could gain their employer's support. But it also had much larger consequences from a broader point of view. First, because of the media coverage thought television and newspapers more and more undocumented workers became aware of their rights. It has encouraged other sans-papiers workers all over France to step forward and to seek union support. Second of all, they discovered the power of striking that has helped them to access to a significant recognition from both employers and the public opinion. Indeed it increased public awareness on the issue in a large proportion, and a surge of solidarity. At that point of the story they were not only considered as "undocumented" or "sans papiers" anymore but also as full-fledged workers defending their rights. Finally, the role played by the CGT has been very innovative and fundamental. The union, through its activists, had always supported the sans-papiers immigrant's movement since its beginning, participating in demonstrations, signing petitions etc. but only as "citizens". Indeed its initial position was that since these events occurred outside the workplace it could not play any official role. That is why CGT changed its approach in that case in becoming counselor and spokesman, as well as safeguard. On the other side of the coin, CGT's interest included signing up new members, joining a social movement in progress, making coalitions, building new constituencies for the union, and putting the union in a positive public light.

The CGT and Sans-Papiers campaign

This set of events brings us to this Tuesday, April 15th 2008, a day marked as the official beginning of the sans-papiers - CGT campaign, when the "first wave" was launched and that about 200 workers went on strike at 17 different locations in Paris. From that day on, there was a continuous stream of strikes and occupations at other locations in the city and in the suburbs. A second wave was launched on May 20th with a new series of coordinated actions.

Several movements have successively accentuated the campaign. One strike was particularly important, launched at the restaurant *La Tour d'Argent* on September 17th 2008.[12] The strike brought publicity to the fact that most of the employees at this expensive, high-prestige restaurant were all low-wage and sans-papiers workers. The stark contrast made a significant impression on the public and helped mobilizing support for the campaign. Two months earlier the very renowned tea house-patisserie *Ladurée*, on the Champs Elysées, was occupied as well. This strategy of focusing the attention of media and public on famous, high-class restaurants was an important element of the campaign's success, explained Francine Blanche, National Secretary

[12] Van Eeckhout, Laetitia. 2008. "Des travailleurs sans-papiers ont investi le restaurant parisien La Tour D'Argent." *Le Monde*. September 19.

of CGT. As a result of many successes, Francine Blanche reports that there is hardly any trouble now for this kind of strike at restaurants. Employers usually start negotiations with the union and local government as soon as workers are going on strike and that CGT arrives. A good example of this situation was this recent high-profile strike that was launched by 33 workers on March 23rd at the restaurant Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC), localized in Châtelet at the very center of Paris. The strike quickly spread to other restaurants of the chain in Paris and in the outskirts. The movement was coordinated by the CGT and supported by three out of the four unions representing KFC employees (CFDT, CFTC and CFE-CGC). Overhaul the action concerned at least 38 sans-papiers. A new element this time included the active support of workers with papers who joined the strikes. KFC began negotiations the same day. Shortly afterwards management decided to put pressure so that all the applications would be examined as a whole at the Prefecture of Paris and not disseminated at different prefectures.[13]

More than one year after the beginning of the movement, about 2,400 sans-papiers workers have applied for regularization in the course of the campaign, most of them in the context of strikes regarding over 100 firms. It is true that the biggest actions of the movement occurred mainly in the Paris area. But early June 2008, it spread over other departments, expanding to major cities such as Nantes or Lyon. Overall sans-papiers strikes have taken place in at least 10 departments outside Paris making this a national movement. So far about 1500 sans-papiers workers have received papers, via regularization resulting from pressure on employers and local prefects. In addition, CGT has helped about 600 individual isolated workers at non-striking firms get papers.

In some cases, the battle has been lengthy. The message sent to employers and local governments was that strikes would last, even up to 6 months, until workers' demands are met. Indeed once sans-papiers workers make the risky decision to step forward with public demands, their only option is to win – or face deportation, or go back underground. The union as well has also shown that despite lengthy confrontation its support will not fade in.

The CGT action in the campaign can be divided into two different phases. During the first phase CGT began a fight mainly oriented towards the government in order to make it change its policy. One of the main claims was to define clearer criteria for regularization, which would enable a harmonization among prefectures' behavior. Indeed so far the enforcement of the law was not limpid enough so that the result of an application for regularization would not only depend on the content of the documents provided but sometimes also on the good will of préfets, or on the amount of applications received in the prefecture etc. One of the most significant progresses of

[13] AFP. 2009. « Sans-papiers : KFC va soutenir des régularisations » *Leparisien.fr.* March 26.

the campaign was the ministerial note that was given to prefectures on November 2008. This note specifies the criteria for regularization that have to be equally enforced by all prefectures. From now on any undocumented worker can expect for papers as soon as he or she can prove that he or she has been living on the French territory for at least five years and has been occupying a paid position, temporary or not, for at least one year. Even though these criteria remain quite vague and incomplete, it was nevertheless an official recognition of regularization for work purpose as a "common procedure" and constituted a first step to a class action. Mid-December 2008, a new telegram transmitted to all prefectures allowed sans-papiers workers, who were applying for papers, to continue to work until they received the results of their application. This additional protection marked the entry into the second phase of the CGT support in opening a new field of action oriented against employers that refused to pay the 900 Euros tax and to fill up the documents necessary for any application.

Successes of the campaign

After 15 months of campaigning the successes were clearly measurable. 1500 regularizations remain quite a small number in comparison with 200,000 or 300,000 undocumented immigrants but it should be seen as a breakthrough for the sans-papiers movement and in particular for sans-papiers workers. Precedents have been set that essentially give non-EU immigrant workers the same rights to regularize their work status as workers from EU member countries. Thanks to the campaign a process has been established that could make it possible for tens of thousands of sans-papiers workers in all occupations to gain regularization, even without high-profile strikes, if they can show they have been in France for 5 years.

One innovative aspect of this movement lies in the fact that sans-papiers workers have come to a union (CGT in that case) to ask for support. CGT was first in the battle field but other unions, as CFDT, joined the cause. In CGT opinion, the union could not have started such a strike movement by itself, simply because it carries so many risks for the workers. It has been able to act only because workers made the first move to ask the union for help. The future development of the movement now depends on the willingness of sans-papiers workers to step forward, go public and engage in strikes.

Another meaningful aspect of this success is the gain of the public's support. A large majority of the French public is now in favor of this movement. As proof the money that has been donated by anonymous or elected officials from different political orientation to help the strikers. An opinion poll conducted in April 2008 showed that 68% of the French were in favor of the

regularization of striking workers.[14] Moreover the fact that most of the sans-papiers workers have acquired a legal status because of fake documents and pay social security and other payroll taxes has been very valuable for the campaign. Indeed this undercuts the extreme right's argument that these workers are living off the system, exploiting the welfare state, and gaining social benefits without paying taxes, unlike to the situation in Belgium for example, where most sans-papiers workers are in the informal sector, working "under the table," paying no taxes. On the contrary here they are in a way played by the system.

This movement has also a major significance for CGT itself. According to Francine Blanche the battle for sans papiers workers is now at the heart of CGT activity. It offers great organizing potential for the union because the target industries are non-mobile and cannot be outsourced or moved out of France. The targeted occupations, where so many sans-papiers workers are employed, are located mainly in restaurants, hotels, laundry and janitorial services, and construction. These are also jobs that many French-born workers are not willing to take. This campaign has also another important goal, blocking the spread of workers unprotected and without rights. Organizing and raising the standards of sans-papiers workers is part of this struggle. It is not only about obtaining regularizations but also about preventing "social dumping". Moreover from the left wing's point of view, the current government's deportation policies are inefficient insofar as the number of coming undocumented immigrants is not reducing. It shows that deportations do not have a sufficient chilling effect to overcome, even partially, undocumented immigration. The hidden side of Sarkozy's policy is to prevent undocumented workers from standing up for their rights.

For CGT this campaign is about gaining members as well. The union now has a new and strong presence in many firms; it has gained up to 2,000 new members so far thanks to the sans-papiers campaign and this number is continuously growing. Nonetheless, all undocumented workers do not see CGT support positively.

CGT face to face with the Sans-papiers

The role CGT has been playing so far sounds very much like a "sans-papiers rescuer," although, the union has been facing **a lot of criticism** almost since the beginning of the campaign. In May 2008, more than 300 sans-papiers decided to start an unlimited occupation movement in front of

[14] Stive, Dany. 2008. « Régularisons ! » *L'Humanité.* August 13.

the "Bourse du Travail" of Paris[15] to protest against CGT's strategy, a complete spontaneous action. They blamed CGT for having "taken the sans-papiers movement hostage".

First of all, the situation of sans-papiers is not new and has been going on for a long time. Associations such as Gisi (Groupe d'information de soutien aux immigrés) created in 1972 or Coordination 75 (CSP 75), created in 1996, which federates four various groups supporting sans-papiers and mostly composed of sans-papiers workers in the city, have fought quite alone for years while trying to draw the undocumented workers issue to unions' attention. However, unions and CGT in the first place got involved quite late.[16]

These associations that have been mainly working in the field have been warned lately by CGT, sometimes at the last minute, about striking actions even though the union has been closely in touch with them all along the preparatory phase. CGT decided to take the lead alone and to implement its own strategy while ignoring the fact that for many stakeholders this strategy was questionable. Some have contested the fact that CGT was taking into account only sans-papiers workers and not the sans-papiers issue as a whole. But the biggest criticism made to CGT was that it did not take the opportunity of the sans-papiers' combative impulse to launch a national-scale movement that could have reached thousands of people. Indeed some of CGT's detractors considered that the issue was mature enough so that thousands of sans-papiers were ready to go on strike and to fight for a mass regularization. They would have wanted to show that the problem did concern hundreds of thousands immigrants. Instead CGT has supported over a year a couple thousand applications transmitted more or less on an individual case basis to the prefectures, most of these cases said to be "the easiest ones".

Finally, CGT would have negotiated on the sly with M. Hortefeux and the government. That is why other associations felt manipulated and betrayed. Did the CGT get involved because it could not ignore any longer an issue that was starting to be too apparent? Was it a good opportunity to get a significant media coverage while the sans-papiers issue was getting more and more popular in the public opinion? Or did both parties have been misunderstanding each other whereas sans-papiers wanted too much too fast? Would not CSP 75[17] and its supporters have barked up at the wrong tree, taking the risk to put the whole movement in jeopardy?

In any case, the consequence was that CGT has been put in a very awkward situation and that the government and the Prefecture made the best of it. The occupation Bourse du Travail lasted

---

[15] In the majority of the French big cities, « La Bourse du Travail » is the headquarters of all the different unions.

[16] Leprince, Chloé. 2008. « La CGT prend-elle les sans-papiers pour des pantins ? ». *Rue89*, May 6.

[17] CSP 75 : Sans Papiers Coordination of Paris.

14 months overall. Having been thrown out a first time by police forces on June 24th 2009, the squatters capitulated definitively early July in exchange for a reexamination of 300 applications.

Future challenges

As things stand today, the campaign is still going on but has lost some vitality as shown by the decrease in media coverage dedicated to this matter nowadays. Nevertheless the movement has still lots of challenges to face, the first concern, as we said previously, being the risk of fading and the "banalisation"[18] of the movement.

Moreover, although in theory local governments (prefectures) now have specific instructions as for criteria of regularization, the final decision about bestowing or not work documents is in practice usually left to the discretion of the préfet's willingness. For example, Francine Blanche as a CGT representative had to travel to Nice to help pressure the local government that had so far refused to regularize any sans-papiers workers. The procedures of applications review still need improvement and harmonization among all prefectures.

Also undocumented workers are not all on the same boat regarding legislation. Workers coming from Algeria and Tunisia fall into a different category, according to the terms of agreements negotiated as long ago as 1968. These terms provide restrictions for such workers – and they are therefore excluded from the legal openings that have underpinned the campaign. The union is working with partner unions in those countries and hopes to get this barrier removed.

Another fundamental issue is to expand the movement to the informal market, that is to say to jobs that are not reported, based on undocumented practices by employers who thereby evades taxes, minimum work standards and other work regulations. They are taking advantage of the fear that constrains sans-papiers workers to accept such work conditions. Among informal market, there is also another noticeable category of workers: women that are often employed in "human services" by private individuals such as cleaning women. The problem is they still need legal means to complain. The union hopes the movement will make it possible to bring such jobs and workers into the light, into the legal labor market.

---

[18] Becoming a commonplace.

Intermediate employer agencies for temporary workers present another challenge. Typically, sans-papiers workers can gain their employer's support for regularization only after they have been working for at least 12 months for the firm. Temporary workers, many of them without papers, come and go from workplace to workplace. That is why a new campaign aimed at temporary employment agencies is underway although this is a very difficult task insofar as the workforce is often volatile and dispersed. Strikes and occupations at agencies such as Manpower or Adecco have been led since several months now and in some cases the sans-papiers workers obtained the support of their employer to put pressure on local government. The remaining problem is that prefectures are still blocking the process.

Conclusion

Nowadays more than 2,000 sans-papiers workers have been regularized out of more than about (supposedly) 3,500 demands. Through the movement led by CGT to support these workers, regularizations are gained regularly, as shown by the last victory of striking employees at the cleaning company "Clean multiservices", last August. Ten employees obtained a long-term contract and work permits while others did not get this chance yet but gained financial compensation for all their unpaid overtime. A routine seems to have been implemented in the way actions are driven. First, strike and building occupation with the support of unions and in some cases other sans-papiers workers to put pressure on the employer. Secondly, negotiation and preparation of application documentation with the employer and thirdly, deposit oh these applications to the prefecture. In the end the local government stays the final decision-maker. Nevertheless and as a matter of facts, work permits are issued sparingly. What are 2,000 regularizations in comparison with 200,000 to 400,000 undocumented workers on the French territory? A drop in the ocean… So what is the real significance of this movement in the long run? The Sarkozy's Administration does not seem to be willing to make another step neither in softening the legislation nor in authorizing mass regularizations. In that context what are the chances of the movement to expand in number of regularizations? Could it be possible to find a more satisfying compromise, for example in accelerating procedure with clearly defined criteria for permits issuing and thereby in getting rid of a prefet's good will? For the CGT it is definitely a good move in terms of popularity. As far as concern its membership it is difficult to find relevant figures to measure the real impact of the campaign for the union. Anyway, it seems that CGT has so much taken over the issue that it might be difficult for sans-papiers workers to deal and to launch actions without it. In that sense CGT gained a real control power.

Another way to develop the movement would be to reach the European level. Recent events are

quite encouraging. At the end of July 2009, the Italian government decided for economic reasons to allow 350,000 to 400,000 immigrant workers, all employed in "human services", to get out of their undocumented situation. At the same time the Belgium government found an agreement to soften regularization procedures, even if it remains on an individual case basis. In the long run, the very final goal of unions would be to push the sans-papiers campaign led in France on the European scene in order to harmonize policies and strategies so that workers in one country do not get played off against workers in another country (social dumping, etc.). This is especially true for eastern European countries such as Romania and Bulgaria. For example, workers come illegally from Africa or the Middle East to those countries and then can move freely to other EU countries. Concerted cross-national union policies have become more and more necessary with the European enlargement. All these events demonstrate that the problem of work immigration has been continuously growing and needs urgently to find concrete solutions.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

CGT Handouts

Blaire, Cyrielle. 2007. "Immigration, chance ou bouche-trou?" *La CGT ensemble!* December.

Blanche, Francine. 2008. "Mouvement des travailleurs sans papiers : au Coeur des valeurs et des revendications portées par la CGT". April.

CGT. 2009. "Point sur le mouvement des travailleurs (euses) sans papiers". February 24.

CGT. 2009. "KFC La Grève s'étend". March 25.

Articles and Research Papers

AFP (Agence France Presse). 2008. "Sans-papiers: brève occupation par la CGT de Ladurée sur les Champs Elysées." August 4.

AFP (Agence France Presse). 2009. "Sans-papiers: 33 grevistes occupent un restaurant KFC de Paris." March 23.

AFP (Agence France Presse). 2009. "Sans-papiers : KFC va soutenir des régularisations." *Leparisien.fr*, March 26.

Aloïse, Salvatore. 2009. "L'Italie découvre l'utilité sociale de ses sans-papiers." *Le Monde*, August 2.

Ané, Claire. 2008. "Sans-papiers: plus de 700 régularisations en deux mois." *Le Monde*, July 16.

Barbier, Marie. 2009. "Le combat gagnant des sans-papiers." *L'Humanité*, January 28.

Blanche, Francine. 2009. "Travailleurs sans papiers: Ils revendiquent, ils obtiennent leurs droits". *Le peuple*, April 8.

Bouneaud, Helene. 2007, Winter. "Small numbers, Big Power. The Paradox of The French Labor Movement." *The French Exception.* New Labor Forum, pp. 68-77

Brillu, Aline. 2009. "Saint-Prix - La victoire des sans-papiers." *Le Parisien*, August 7.

Hiault, Richard. 2009. "Régularisation de sans-papiers en Belgique." *Les Echos*, July 20.

Kessous, Mustapha. 2008. « Grève simultanée de plusieurs centaines de salariés sans papiers. » *Le Monde*, April 16.

Kessous, Mustapha. 2008. " Les sans-papiers et l'arme de la grève. " *Le Monde*, July 4.

Lazard, Violette. 2008. "Precarite – Sortie de crise pour les sans-papiers". *Le Parisien*, December 13.

Leprince, Chloé 2008. "La CGT prend-elle les sans-papiers pour des pantins ?" *Rue89*, May 6.

Leprince, Chloé. 2009. "Bourse du travail : la CGT évacue de force les sans-papiers." *Rue89*, June 24.

Neveux, Camille. 2008. "Sans-papiers - Mamadou, soutier d'un resto de luxe." *Le Parisien*, February 15.

Piot, Olivier. 2008. "Mobilisation syndicale des sans-papiers en France; Délocalisés de l'intérieur." *Le Monde Diplomatique*. June 1.

Rive, Emile. 2009. "Les sans papiers victimes d'un racket institutionnel." *L'Humanité*, January 9.

Rive Emile. 2009. " « Une brèche a été ouverte, il faut l'agrandir » ." *L'Humanité*, January 9.

Stive, Dany. 2008. "Régularisons ! " *L'Humanité.* August 13.

Thomas, Ludovic. 2008. "La révolte des salariés sans papiers". *L'Humanité.* April 16.

Van Eeckhout, Laetitia. 2008. "La politique migratoire à la peine." *Le Monde*. Aug 1.

Van Eeckhout, Laetitia. 2008. "Des travailleurs sans-papiers ont investi le restaurant parisien La Tour D'Argent." *Le Monde*. September 19.

Weil, Patrick. 2009. "Politique d'immigration : le dessous des chiffres." *Le Monde*. January 15.

Legal Documents

July 2007. Governmental Decree → quelles references??

Ministerial circular, December 12th 2007

Amendement No 184 from the National Assembly. September 17th 2007.

Loi no 2007-1631 du 20 novembre 2007 relative à la maîtrise de l'immigration, à l'intégration et à l'asile. Art. 40th & 43rd .

Circular No NOR: IMI/N/08/00012/C from the Ministry of "immigration, integration, national identity and development in solidarity". January 7th 2008

Telegram from the Ministry of "immigration, integration, national identity and development in solidarity". November 10th 2008.