

INVENTING A POLICY OF HOSPITALITY

Two and a half millennia ago the Book of Leviticus issued this admirable commandment, which it attributed to God speaking to Moses : « But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.” Since the human species first appeared, groups of people have ceaselessly moved across the surface of the earth, making it entirely their own. Everyone comes from “elsewhere”, everyone goes “elsewhere”, and that is why the foreigner of today, just like the foreigner of yesterday or the day before, is also at home.

As in echo to this, Cimade has placed its action under the banner of the symbolic proclamation that “there are no foreigners on the earth”! This slogan is in diametric opposition to the laws of inhospitality currently in force. We must call unremittingly for a new way of looking, which will lead to a genuine reversal of policies, based on the reality of the facts, on the lessons drawn from our practice and from the affirmation of our values.

The reality of the facts is the reality of the migrations which are no longer what they were twenty years ago...The profiles of the migrants, their itineraries, their projects and their desires have changed. The migrants’ constantly evolving practices of mobility, of outward and return journeys, have transformed the migratory phenomenon. The reality of the facts is also the recognition that French society has itself been transformed, and that there is no going back.

The lessons drawn from our practice teach us that it is the precariousness of people’s status, the situations of legal limbo and the restrictive and repressive practices of the authorities which manufacture “clandestinity”. Apart from creating unhappiness, insecurity and vulnerability in foreigners, they have a disastrous effect on the social fabric as a whole.

The affirmation of our values leads us to invoke the fundamental principles of political ethics, namely the obligation of hospitality, the welcome extended to others, solidarity with the vulnerable, the opening of the “*Cité*” to the excluded, and the call for equal rights.

The tension between utopia and reform

Our approach deliberately assumes a dynamic tension between utopia – that which is desirable – and reform – that which is possible. To take but one example: no, we do not advocate freedom of movement and settlement for all, immediately; and no, neither do we give legitimacy to the currently prevailing approach to controlling migratory flows.

Our text lies outside this antagonistic, heated, pointless and futile debate; on the contrary it seeks to tend towards a universal right to freedom of movement and settlement **while taking into account** the necessity of proceeding step by step. This includes rules at the level of States, whose sovereignty will have to be respected for as long as world democratic governance of our planet has not been established. We know that this particular Human Right will not become effective for a long time yet, but this will be possible one day because it will have been explicitly asserted now in the broad light of day. As Max Weber has written: “People would never have achieved that which is possible in this world if they had not obstinately and continually addressed themselves to that which is impossible.”

Cimade has moved within this dynamic tension throughout its history, from its inception and its work in the internment camps: it continues to do so just as resolutely today.

Ethics of conviction and ethics of responsibility

Ever since 1939 Cimade has been involved in action on a daily basis, alongside foreigners. Its commitment is inspired by the affirmation that the ethics of conviction are compatible with the ethics of responsibility: its action is deployed precisely in the space at the intersection between these two types of ethics. Its goal is further to translate into concrete proposals not only the reality of the facts and the lessons from its practice, but also the affirmation of its values.

A context of crisis and fear

This text is situated in a historical and political context which is chiefly characterised by three aspects:

An international context marked by globalisation in crisis: economic and financial crisis, demographic crisis, political crises of corrupt regimes, generating migratory flows with complex origins.

A European context affected by multiple crises where the founding values of the European Union are adversely affected by policies of withdrawal and mistrust that reject foreigners coming from other continents, cultures and religions.

And finally the national context, where the immigration question is constantly exploited for political ends and where certain tendencies of public opinion, worried for their own future, are influenced by security-related discourses which stigmatise foreigners, and are susceptible to islamophobia. But an immigration policy cannot be isolated from national economic and social policies and, more specifically, from policies to combat inequalities which concern all social categories, be it employment, education, housing, urban issues, etc. We must constantly go further in rejecting the fantasy of the danger of invasion, in rejecting a so-called nationality of blood, in rejecting national egoism, in rejecting mistrust of foreigners and fear of others. But we must not forget that these fears, which are everywhere and eternal, have been genuinely present in France for some thirty years now and that they feed on the worries born of the economic crisis and its social effects (unemployment, insecurity, desocialisation), the crisis of the Nation-State and the crisis of political representation.

Three fundamentals: Mobility, Hospitality, Citizenship

The international **mobility** of a limited number of men and women has always existed (it concerns today only 3% of the world population). It is nowadays a perfectly banal aspect of globalisation. It is an ordinary and unavoidable social fact, and the right to mobility, encompassing the right to movement and settlement, must be claimed for all.

Hospitality is not synonymous with aid or charity: it means extending a welcome to others. Others, foreigners considered not as “disembarking”, assigned to the margins of society, who can be and are exploited, but as human beings whose itinerary is intelligible, who take their place here in the life of the *Cité*. People who have rights and who must be guaranteed a status and a stability of existence in accordance with the fundamental principles of living together.

Citizenship, like integration, is to be constructed day by day. Constructing the process of living together based on the principles of equal rights and duties, the recognition of diversities, of

solidarity, of the fight against discriminations and racism and *laïcité* (French Republican secularism): these are the conditions for active citizenship and healthy democracy.

Inventing a policy of hospitality is not utopian!

Let us build the era of hosts, of hospitality, not as philanthropy but as a right. “The right for the foreigner”, as Kant wrote, “on arrival in someone else’s country, not to be treated by him as an enemy...by virtue of the right to common possession of the surface of the earth on which, as it is spherical, [people] cannot disperse infinitely, but ultimately have to get on with one another.”

IMMEDIATE PROPOSALS

I. FOR A RIGHT TO MOBILITY FOR ALL

The mobility of human beings is a normal, ordinary social fact, as necessary as it is irreducible.

1. Bringing an end to blackmail, by denouncing the “management agreements of migratory flows” which condition the co-operation and development policy for readmission clauses.

These conditions include in particular undertakings for controlling and sending back migrants wishing to enter Europe, or who are simply “suspected” thereof.

II. FOR A DUTY TO PROTECT ASYLUM-SEEKERS

9. Setting up a single procedure including the right to work

III. FOR A PRINCIPLE AND PRACTICES OF HOSPITALITY

III.1. ON ENTERING FRANCE

12. Grant a visa with full rights for all the family members of French persons or foreigners settled in France, such as exists today only for the spouses of French people or of refugees

III.2. FOR RESIDENCE

16. Stabilise residence by the delivery of residence permits with full entitlement on first renewal on all the grounds related to respect for private and family life

IV. AGAINST THE POLICY OF INTERNMENT AND FORCED REMOVAL

24. Placing in administrative detention must become an exception

V. CONSTRUCTING THE PROCESS OF LIVING TOGETHER AS CITIZENS

35. Grant access to voting rights and eligibility for local and regional elections for foreigners holding a stable residence permit, in the context of a “citizenship of residence”.