OPEN LETTER

To

Mister Nicolas Sarkozy,
Président de la République
Palais de l’Élysée
55, rue du faubourg Saint Honoré
75008 PARIS

Mr President,

The letter that you sent to the Justice Minister has come to my notice. I am contacting you again after having already sent you our communiqué dated Wednesday 26 January 2011 via your press officer. As you, I am both shocked and horrified, Mr President!

Firstly, I am appalled by the populist use that you wish to make of this terrible drama, ... the tragic death of a young girl in circumstances still unclear but presumably shocking!

Secondly, I am very surprised that you should finally take interest whether it is to credit or discredit the judicial institution: « It therefore seems to me indispensable to bring to light all the dysfunctions which bring the judicial system into disrepute. »

What a surprise, for you yourself have often treated the judicial institution with irony. Your declarations have often challenged the professionalism of its magistrates and civil servants.

Thirdly, I am shocked by the determination that you have shown to find a guilty party: « You have indicated to me that you have ordered an internal administrative enquiry in order to determine with precision the conditions in which the sentencing procedure was carried out and the possible errors which might be brought to light. » There is no guilty party amongst the professional judicial civil servants. The rushed administrative enquiry concerning the penitentiary rehabilitation and probation services (SPIP) and the Nantes law courts must not put the blame on personnel who are in no way responsible ... What you seem to want, Mr. President, is someone to blame at any cost !

You can not however ignore, Mr. President, that for years, the policy of ransacking public services which you have enforced, and in particular in relation to the judicial services, which concern us here, is the real culprit. The General Inspection Committee of penitentiary services came to the SPIP in Nantes some months ago. The lack of resources leading to the shelving of case files that the services could no longer follow, a system put into place in consultation with the relevant authorities, was known! This situation, which exists in numerous services, has been denounced on a number of occasions.

In November 2010, the penitentiary section of the CGT, in protest, demanded amongst other things, the recruitment of 1000 social workers, in conformity with a study of the impact of new penitentiary legislation! Mrs. Michèle Alliot-Marie, Justice Minister, told us, as if we were children, that we were privileged to work in the Justice Department and the penitentiary services: otherwise no extra manpower other than the recruitment of 40 penitentiary social workers for 2011!

On your invitation, the General Inspection Committee of penitentiary services interviewed, on several occasions, our colleagues. Rather than demanding that penitentiary civil servants should give account of themselves, go and interrogate those responsible for the policies which are suffocating the service!
I can understand your concern, when in a cabinet meeting you say: « What can I say to Laëtitia’s family? » ... What can you say to them?

Firstly, tell them how you have laid to waste public services with your policy of civil servant cut-backs.

Then, explain to them that the crime policies implemented by your ministers under your orders, have caused an explosion in the jail population, without the recruitment of additional civil servants whether they be prison guards, penitentiary administrators or the Judiciary in general. Explain how judges are inundated by the number of cases ....

Enlighten the family on the state of the judicial protection of minors where the number of civil servants continues to fall. You can also tell them that judges for young offenders and for the protection of minors are overwhelmed, sometimes without a court registrar, and that the State does not adequately subvention local councils to recruit educators to accompany children and adolescents in danger or difficulty!

There will be no scapegoat!

So, after an analysis of responsibility, you will be able to say sorry to the victim’s family who will understand that the errors of justice are not attributable to any one SPIP civil servant or any civil servant, nor to a magistrate, but to a failing system, that of the State, which has washed its hands of its obligations for a number of years, especially since your election!

As Head of this failing State, you can assure them that you are entirely to blame for the failures and dysfunctions!

With the penitentiary section of the CGT, I will not accept that the Judiciary pay for the errors of the powers that be, and in consequence for the system!

Acknowledge, Mr President, the expression of my support of all public services, the foundations stones and bastions of democracy and therefore of the French Republic!

Céline Verzeletti, General Secretary of the CGT penitentiary section

Montreuil, 31 January 2011

Translated by Dave Neve (CGT)