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France - anti-racist mobilization

Paris: A historic day against police violence and state racism

- IV Online magazine - 2020 - IV545 - June 2020 -

Publication date: Sunday 7 June 2020

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Fifty thousand people took to the streets in Paris on Tuesday 2 June, only two days after 10,000 undocumented migrants had protested against the immigration system.

In recent days, the French media have seemed almost moved by the revolt in the United States against police violence, state racism and white supremacy embodied in the figure of Donald Trump. Meanwhile, in France, while the machinery of production and consumption cheerfully resumes its activities, the 'state of health emergency' continues to have uneven effects, with the ban on collective demonstrations and the intensification of the dynamics of exploitation and police violence.

Last Saturday, ten thousand undocumented migrants (sans-papiers) took to the streets in the centre of Paris, between Opéra and République: in doing so they had already smashed the ban on demonstrations with the material and symbolic power of their presence. But yesterday, the rally called by the Adama Committee exceeded all expectations. Its social composition was unprecedented – young, very young – and it literally surrounded the Tribunal de Paris and occupied the 17th arrondissement and its surroundings throughout the evening.

The indignation against structural racism and the demand for the 'right to breathe', the watchword chanted by thousands of demonstrators, summed up the spirit of the evening, which was directly linked to the uprising in the United States. Prefect Lallement's pressure on the Traoré family to cancel the initiative only resulted in the radicalisation of the rage and the broadening of the mobilisation.

On the placards there were messages such as 'I can't breathe', the last words spoken by George Floyd, the African-American man who died in Minneapolis after his brutal arrest by the police, but also 'Our lives matter', 'Racism is suffocating us', 'No justice, no peace'.

Four years after Adama Traoré's death, a new medical report, commissioned by his family, attributes his death to having been held down on his front, a widely discussed and criticised arrest technique. At 9pm, thousands of people converged in the area, while major clashes broke out following several police provocations. Barricades were set up, fires were lit, the ring road was invaded and wild demonstrations carried on across the north of Paris during the night.

It is a day that breathes life into, and gives the material strength needed to relaunch the struggle in France a few weeks after the end of the lockdown measures taken in response to the health crisis. Another demonstration is scheduled for Saturday [6 June]: Paris takes its place in the anti-racist uprising.

#BlackLivesMatter

#JusticePourAdama (Justice for Adama)

#NiOubliNiPardon (No forgetting, no forgiveness)

3 June 2020

Report by [Plateforme d'Enquêtes Militantes](#), translated by [RS 21](#).

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