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European Languages

زبانهای اروپایی

By Alex Lantier
06.06.2020

Protests erupt in France against police violence and Trump's coup d'état

At least 20,000 people demonstrated on Tuesday night in Paris, defying a police prefecture ban, as protests spread across Europe against Trump's unconstitutional threat to mobilize the military against US protests over the police murder of George Floyd.

On Monday, thousands of people demonstrated in London, Berlin, Munich, Dublin and Bordeaux. On Tuesday, it was the turn of more cities in France and the Netherlands. Hundreds or thousands demonstrated in The Hague, Groningen, and in France, in Lille, Marseille and Lyon.

The demonstration in Paris was called by the committee for Adama Traoré, a French youth of African origin who was killed, like George Floyd, after he was beaten and asphyxiated to death during a police stop. An expert report prepared at the request of his family in 2016 in Beaumont-sur-Oise stated that the cause of death was blows to the chest.



Demonstrations against the murder of George Floyd in Paris, France
(Twitter/@KenzaHadjMoussa)

Yesterday, 5,000 people marched in Montpellier in homage to Traoré and Floyd, and several hundred demonstrated in Toulouse at a “Toulouse-Minneapolis-Beaumont” rally.

Since Traoré’s murder, which police covered up with a series of contradictory claims, the Adama Traoré Committee has organized numerous demonstrations in Paris, defying police threats. Now that protests against police violence are shaking America, and Trump is openly threatening to illegally suppress them by force, their latest appeal met with overwhelming support.

Tens of thousands of people (20,000 according to the police) of various ethnic or racial backgrounds mobilized, quickly spilling over from the square in front of the Paris court where the demonstration organized. The demonstrators defied a ban by the police prefect, Didier Lallement, whose brutality and personal hostility towards the “yellow vests” is well known. Lallement had declared that “the tone of the call to protest, shared on social media, gave rise to fears that excesses may occur in a sensitive location.”

Assa Traoré, Adama’s elder sister and spokesperson for the Adama Traoré Committee, addressed the crowd: “This is to express our revolt. Today it is no longer the fight of the Traoré family. It is the fight of all of you! We are fighting for George Floyd who is in the United States and who is our brother.”

She added, “All of you who are here today, you have made history. You will be able to say that you have participated in an overthrow... This is just the beginning!”

Highlighting the historical and international significance of the uprising of young people and workers of all origins in the United States, she said, “What’s happening in the United States highlights what is happening today in France.”



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She went on to mention several victims of police violence in France over the past decade: “Today, when we fight for George Floyd, we fight for Adama, we fight for Ibrahima Bah [killed 2019], we fight for Gaye Camara [killed 2018], we fight for Babacar Guèye [killed 2015], we fight for Angelo Garand [killed 2017]; the list is too long.”

Referring to the impact in France and Europe of the eruption of social struggles in the US, she said: “Today the police act with total impunity. We have a police force that considers itself a mafia in France. They do what they want. But there is no impunity. Today there is a new balance of power being established.”

Reprising the methods used against the “yellow jackets,” the police, deployed in large numbers, fired tear gas and attacked the peaceful demonstrators. They blocked the Paris ring road at Porte de Clichy, near the Paris court, and clashes and burning of rubbish bins broke out in the surrounding area. There were 18 arrests. In the course of the evening, *Television France* reported that the police had “regained control of the Paris courthouse district,” but “the situation nevertheless remains tense.”

In Lyon, 2,000 people demonstrated in front of the courthouse. As police fired tear gas at them to prevent them from entering Old Lyon, they chanted George Floyd’s last words: “I can’t breathe!”

In Marseille, 500 people demonstrated with the slogans “Police murderers” and “We don’t forget Zineb, we don’t forgive,” evoking the death of 80-year-old Zineb Redouane, who was hit in the face by a police tear gas grenade in her home, on the outskirts of a “yellow vest” protest.

A “yellow vest” protester who spoke to the *World Socialist Web Site* in response to Trump’s coup d’état said: “We’re in a very dangerous situation everywhere. There are dangerous people in the US military... We are always in solidarity with the struggle against social and racial injustice. It’s a shame we’re so far away!”

She emphasized the international significance of Trump’s suspension of constitutional and democratic rights. “This suspension is not just in the United States, it’s all over the world. In almost every country where there is a constitution, it is being flouted. This is not a new development, but it is becoming more and more flagrant.”

The mass movement among American youth and workers, and Trump’s reaction in launching a coup d’état in defiance of the American constitution, has cut the ground from under the feet of the political establishment. Anger against austerity, social inequality and police violence has already exploded in numerous strikes and struggles in France and

across Europe. Trump's illegal campaign exposes the fact that all the ruling classes are moving towards a military-police dictatorship to impose the dictates of the capitalist elite on a working class in revolt.

The political establishment built up the police forces to use against "yellow vests" protests. As was demonstrated by Macron's declaration that the head of the Vichy regime, Marshall Pétain, was a "great soldier," the French ruling class is in line with Trump's strategy of mass repression.

In response to the protests, Interior Minister Christophe Castaner hysterically denounced "unjustifiable excesses" and declared that "public street rallies are forbidden."

Other sections of the government, shocked by a mobilization they did not expect, are trying to stall the anger of workers and young people. Agriculture Minister Didier Guillaume hailed the rally as "incredible," which he said he "understood." Secretary of State for Youth Gabriel Attal said, "The fact that there are 15,000 young people in this demonstration and that the overwhelming majority are nonviolent says something about the relations of sections of the youth with the police and their feeling of not being protected."

The Unsubmissive France (LFI) party of Jean-Luc Mélenchon and the far-right National Rally (RN) of Marine Le Pen have engaged in a demagogic public exchange. Mélenchon hailed the "impressive demonstrations of calm and quiet determination ... a direct echo of the encouragement that came" from the United States. Marine Le Pen denounced Mélenchon, claiming that he applauded "these scenes of civil war, lynchings, looting" and that he wanted to "import these racial wars into the national soil" from the United States.

In reality, LFI is applauding the police and trying to disarm the demonstrators while RN is inciting the police. On the France Inter radio channel, LFI deputy François Ruffin insisted that his goal was to reconcile the population with the police despite the violence: "My goal is to avoid a war, a pitched battle between the police and the population. The breach of trust [between them] is clear from the statistics. How do we restore it?"

In fact, the financial aristocracy's direct assault on American democracy is a warning that the entire capitalist system is in an advanced stage of breakdown.

French intelligence itself says it fears a widespread conflagration in France that would unite workers of different origins in a common struggle against the ruling elite and police repression. The financial magazine *L'Opinion*, which reviewed a report by the domestic intelligence services on the Paris demonstration, reports, "While minorities had been kept

out of the ‘Yellow Vests,’ domestic intelligence is concerned about a ‘convergence of struggles between the social crisis and the racial crisis’.”

Faced with the danger of military dictatorship and police repression, the task is to build a movement within the working class, across national borders and across ethnic and gender lines, in an international struggle to overthrow capitalism and build socialism.

World Socialist 05.06.2020