

Fascist mobilisation after Quentin Deranque's death

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Responding to the call of the neo-fascist group Lyon Populaire, several thousand people paid homage Saturday in Lyon and at other rallies in France, to the young fascist Quentin Deranque. Deranque died following a clash after a conference given at Lyon University by France Unbowed (LFI) Euro-Deputy, Rima Hassan, who is of Palestinian origin.

As was the case in the United States after the death of fascist Charlie Kirk, the death of Deranque is today exploited by President Emmanuel Macron and the French political establishment and throughout Europe to mobilise the fascists against LFI and criminalise workers and youths' left-wing aspirations.

A political front, embracing fascist groups, the Socialist Party, the extreme right National Rally (RN), all the way up to Macron and his government, seeks to carry out an offensive against democratic rights and a mounting opposition to the installation of a police-state dictatorship. The objective is to clear the way for either of RN's candidates, Marine Le Pen or Jordan Bardella, to assume power after the current local elections and presidential elections next year.

The government did not ban the demonstration of support for Deranque, insisting on the need for order and respect for the right of assembly. This decision comes in the context of political polarisation between the extreme right and left-wing movements. Rather, at the opening of the Agricultural Fair, Macron gave his blessing to the demonstration: "It is a moment of remembrance and respect for the death of our young compatriot."

On RTL radio the Minister of the Interior explained that "the police will fan out on the periphery of the march to ensure no threats to public order. There will be an extremely strong police presence, drawn from local forces and anti-riot police."

Concerned about the spillover of violence after the call to pay homage to Deranque launched by Lyon Populaire, the Mayor of Lyon, Grégory Doucet and Mayor Fanny Dubot of the 7th precinct, had requested the local police chief ban the demonstration: "A march is legitimate when one has lost a loved one. This is not the case here. What worries me is this call has gone out to an international network. We fear that this march may spillover putting local security in danger".

A petition calling for the march to be banned launched by the media outlet Lyon Insurrection gathered more than 36,000 signatures in 48 hours. Demonstrations were organised in Nantes by the Némesis collective involving a few hundred people as well as in Rennes, Strasbourg and Paris.

In Lyon, the prefecture announced 3,000 participants on the march, mostly in the 7th precinct. One person was arrested for carrying a knife or hammer at the tail end of the march. Far-right participants, mostly wearing masks, made Nazi salutes. The slogans, "We are going to take back this country" and "This is our land" were chanted. Some of the slogans targeted Jean-Luc Mélenchon's party saying: "Antifa murderers" and "LFI accomplices."

Political specialist and professor Philippe Marlière commented: "This is an absolute unprecedented turnaround. A sanitary cordon placed around a left-wing party would have been unthought of a few years ago."

The ruling classes seem to have made their choice for the RN. The millions of voters who aspired to a left government and voted LFI are now considered a problem for the potential victory of the RN. The state's immediate role is to repress the opposition of youth and workers to the installation of an authoritarian regime in France.

The death of Deranque also serves as an international catalyst. The British far-right figure Stephen Yaxley-Lennon, better known as Tommy Robinson, gave homage to Deranque on social networks, sharing several videos showing French right-wing extremists vandalising LFI offices. In Belgium, the Flemish group Voorpost called for a march in Brussels but then cancelled it. Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni has criticized what she described as an ideological hate climate, characterizing Deranque's death as "an injury to all of Europe"

The Trump administration, which stated in its latest national security document that it would intervene in the internal politics of the European Union to promote a racist policy of "remigration" relying on European fascist parties, responded through the US State Department's Office of Counterterrorism. In a message posted on social media, it stated: "Violent radical leftism is on the rise, and its role in the death of Quentin Deranque demonstrates the threat it poses to public safety."

French Foreign Minister Jean-Noël Barrot said he would summon US ambassador Charles Kushner to a meeting Monday, in response to the counterterrorism bureau's message being posted on X by the US embassy in Paris. He accused foreign actors of exploiting the killing "for political ends" and said France needed "no lessons" from the "international reactionary movement."

Just as Trump did after Kirk's death to advance his authoritarian agenda, his administration is now using Deranque's death to legitimize a security crackdown and strengthen far-right forces in Europe. And despite official protests at outside interference, Macron's government shares the Trump administration's agenda.

Several LFI offices have been attacked following Deranque's death. At Saint-Nazaire, a deputy's office was vandalised with "Justice for Quentin" daubed in red paint. In Lille, Metz, Castres, Bordeaux and Rouen deputies' offices were ransacked. In Paris, LFI's head office was evacuated after a bomb alert.

After decades of making the RN socially acceptable, there is a turn towards leading this party into a process of "normalisation" that should benefit it in the upcoming municipal and presidential elections. With that in mind, the RN did not officially participate in the Lyon demonstration for fear of being associated with

extreme right-wing groups. Bardella declared that "the National Rally is not participating in the marches with which we have no direct links to the organisers".

However, the Rhône Senator of the Republican Party, Etienne Blanc, was present in Lyon.

As *Mediapart* revealed, "Vincent", a friend of Quentin Deranque omnipresent in the media for a week, is Vincent Claudin, the parliamentary attaché for the RN deputy of the Drôme, Lisette Pollet. Claudin was a member of the fascist Lyon Populaire until 2024. He issued the call, under his first name, to demonstrate in memory of his friend in a video posted online Thursday on the official platform of the organization.

Deranque was active in the extreme right-wing identity organisation, Audace Lyon, and a member of the neo-fascist organization, Allobroges Bourgoin, after having campaigned for the royalist group Action Française. He practiced martial arts with members of his far-right group. Attending the Rima Hassan conference, Deranque took charge of the security for the group Némésis, where ultra-nationalists were armed and masked, as indicated in the video published by the anti-fascist online site, Contre-Attaque.

As underlined by Tristan Boursier, associated researcher at the Center for Political Research at Science-Po University: "Lyon has been a hotbed of confrontation between the extreme right and anti-fascists since 2010, in part because the extreme right tried to build a 'territorial' presence, which in turn produced an escalating counter-mobilization."

As the figures show for the mobilisation in Lyon, there is not a mass fascist movement in France. On the contrary, it is the state that is trying to impose an authoritarian regime to carry out class war and a NATO war against Russia and China. The struggle against fascism therefore demands a conscious political mobilisation of the working class, not a reliance on the organisations of the pseudo-left, the Socialist Party and the Stalinist Communist party, among which the LFI and Mélenchon has functioned for decades.



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