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France

Success of 10 November march in Paris against Islamophobia

- IV Online magazine - 2019 - IV538 - November 2019 -

Publication date: Saturday 16 November 2019

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The march against Islamophobia on 10 November 2019 in France, was undeniably a success. First in terms of participation, with estimates of between 13,500 and 40,000 people marching through the streets of Paris, with other gatherings and events in the regions. A political success also, with for the first time a mobilization against Islamophobia bringing together Muslim associations, organizations from the popular neighbourhoods and left wing social and political groupings.

As the organizers of the march (including the Nouveau Parti Anticapitaliste – NPA) pointed out in a statement, the success of 10 November is all the more remarkable as “the march was, throughout the week that preceded it, the target of a real campaign of defamation, even hatred, intended to sabotage the initiative, to delegitimize and dissuade people from going to it. The initiators have also suffered numerous attacks, some of them receiving explicit death threats.”

The political and media reactions to the demonstration are in continuity with these weeks of denigration, with miserable polemics that have no other function than to try to hide the success of the mobilization of 10 November and continue to smear the organizers and the protesters. This is the case with the pseudo-scandal of the “yellow star”: while we can legitimately disagree with an equivalence between the fate of Jews living in the 1930s and 1940s and the situation of Muslims today, you have to be stupid and/or dishonest to think that those who wore this sticker did so to minimize the barbarity of Nazi policies. On the contrary, it was an awkward expression of the recognition of Jewish suffering and a warning cry about the violence, stigmatization and discrimination faced by Muslims.

Attempts – more or less successful – at diversion are also made to mask what was the subject of the demonstration: Islamophobia, which is very real, and the increasingly degraded situation of Muslims. The march of 10 November comes in effect in reaction and in opposition to the wave of Islamophobia that has been current for several weeks, driven by the highest peaks of the state, Macron, Castaner and Blanquer in the lead. We have not forgotten Macron’s speech during the tribute to the police murdered at the Paris Prefecture, during which he affirmed the need to build a “society of vigilance” in which everyone is invited to identify “the lapses, deviations, small gestures that signal a departure from the laws and values of the Republic”. In other words, a society of suspicion against Muslims and widespread denunciation.

We wrote at the end of October: “The silence of certain sectors of the social and political left are disturbing. It is not yet too late to react, but there is no doubt that without the widest possible support for Muslim victims of stigmatization and violence, and without the support and strong involvement of parties, unions, collectives and associations in the mobilizations which are starting to organize, we will not be able to put a stop to the surge underway”. The least we can say, and we can only rejoice, is that some clarifications have been made, or are being made, and that the call for the march (see below) on 10 November, as well as the success of the latter, have largely contributed to this. The social and political left ranging from the CGT trade union confederation to the France Insoumise parliamentary group, including also EÉLV (French Greens), the trade union federations FSU and Solidaires, the libertarians of the UCL, the PCF (Communist Party), Génération.s or Lutte ouvrière, demonstrated on Sunday against Islamophobia, in support of those most affected by it and alongside various Muslim organizations. [\[1\]](#)

A success that calls for others. As pointed out, again, by the organizers in their press release: “We will not stop here because, unfortunately, the success this march is also due to a particularly worrying context for Muslim citizens. The NPA will continue to lead the fight, and the debates, to build solidarity with Muslim people who are stigmatized and assaulted, and to refuse to be dragged into the realm of hatred and divisions facing a government. whose policies target all employees, the popular classes and young people.”

On 10 November, in Paris we will say STOP to Islamophobia

For far too long, Muslim women and men in France have been the target of speeches sometimes from "political leaders", invective and polemics relayed by certain media, thus contributing to their growing stigmatization.

For years, the dignity of Muslim women and men has been thrown into the graveyard, pointed to the most racist groups that now occupy the French political and media space, without any measure of the seriousness of the situation being taken.

For years, the acts against them have intensified: discrimination, freedom bills or laws, physical attacks on women wearing headscarves, attacks on mosques or imams, even attempted murder.

The attack on the Bayonne mosque on 28 October was the most recent manifestation of this attack, and the State services are aware that the terrorist threat against Muslim places of worship is high.

It was necessary for this violence to emerge in the eyes of all, through the humiliation of a mother and her child by an RN elected representative at the Burgundy-Franche-Comté General Council, for everyone to realize what associations, academics, personalities, trade unions, activists and inhabitants, have rightly denounced for years: Islamophobia in France is a reality. Whatever we call it, this is no longer a debate of ideas or criticism of religions, but an explicit form of racism that targets people because of their faith. We must now unite and give ourselves the means to fight it, so that Muslims can never again be subjected to such treatment.

Since speeches and declarations of intent are no longer enough, because this is a serious time: on 10 November in Paris we will march to say:

- STOP to the racist speeches that are being broadcast all day long on our screens, in the general indifference and complicit silence of the state institutions responsible for combating racism.
- STOP discrimination against women wearing headscarves, leading to their progressive exclusion from all spheres of society.
- STOP violence and aggression against Muslims, who are gradually becoming dehumanized and stigmatized, making them potential terrorists or enemies from within.
- STOP abusive denunciations up to the highest level of the State against Muslims whose only crime is their real or supposed belonging to a religion.
- STOP to these mass surveillance devices that lead to the outright criminalization of religious practice.

The consequences, particularly for dismissed employees and destabilised families, are disastrous and can no longer be tolerated. This criminalization is at the expense of fundamental freedoms and the most basic principles of equality that should guide our country.

We, Muslims or not, say STOP to Islamophobia and we will be many to say it together on 10 November in Paris.

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We call on all organizations, associations, collectives, parent federations, political parties, personalities, the media and people in solidarity to join this solemn appeal and to respond to the march on 10 November.

The same applies to the fundamental freedoms of all. The dignity and integrity of millions of fellow citizens are at stake. It is about the unity of all of us, against racism in all its forms, which today once again threatens France.

Appeal initiated by Madjid Messaoudene (local councillor Saint-Denis), la Plateforme L.e.s. Musulmans; Le Nouveau Parti anticapitaliste (NPA); le Comité Adama; le Collectif contre l'islamophobie en France (CCIF); l'Union communiste libertaire (UCL); l'Union nationale des étudiants de France (Unef), Taha Bouhafs (journaliste).

First signatories : Action Antifasciste Paris Banlieue (AFA) ; Arié Alimi, avocat ; Pouria Amirshahi , directeur de publication de Politis ; Manon Aubry, eurodéputée ; Etienne Balibar, universitaire ; Ludivine Bantigny, historienne ; Yassine, Belattar, humoriste ; Esther Benbassa, sénatrice EE-LV de Paris ; Olivier Besancenot, NPA ; Saïd Bouamama, sociologue ; Leïla Chaïbi, eurodéputée LFI ; André Chassaigne, député, président du groupe GDR ; David Cormand, secrétaire national d'EE-LV ; Laurence De Cock, enseignante ; Vikash Dhorasoo, ancien de joueur de foot, parrain d'Oxfam et président de Tatane ; Rokhaya Diallo, journaliste et réalisatrice ; Pierre Jacquemain, rédacteur en chef de Regards ; Eric Fassin, sociologue ; Elsa Faucillon, députée PCF ; Fédération syndicale unitaire (FSU) ; Fianso, artiste ; Front uni des immigrations et des quartiers populaires (FUIQP) ; Geneviève Garrigos, féministe, militante des Droits humains ; Vincent Geisser, politologue ; Alain Gresh, journaliste ; Nora Hamadi, journaliste ; Benoît Hamon, Génération.s ; Yannick Jadot (eurodéputé EE-LV) ; Mathilde Larrère, historienne ; Mathieu Longatte (Bonjour Tristesse) ; Philippe Martinez, secrétaire général de la CGT ; Jean-Luc Mélenchon et l'ensemble du groupe parlementaire La France insoumise ; Marwan Muhammad, auteur et statisticien ; Younous Omarjee, eurodéputé ; Stéphane Peu, député PCF ; Edwy Plenel, journaliste ; Maryam Pougetoux et Mélanie Luce, Unef ; Jérôme Rodrigues, gilet jaune ; Julien Salingue, docteur en science politique ; Pierre Serne (porte-parole de Génération.s) ; Michèle Sibony et l'Union juive française pour la paix (UJFP) ; Laura Slimani, élue de Rouen, direction nationale de Génération.s ; Azzédine Taïbi, maire PCF de Stains ; Sylvie Tissot, sociologue ; Aida Touihri, journaliste ; Assa Traoré, comité Adama ; Aurélie Trouvé, porte-parole d'Attac ; Union syndicale Solidaires ; Dominique Vidal, journaliste et historien.

List of signatories as published on 1 November 019 in [**Libération**-
https://www.liberation.fr/debats/2019/11/01/le-10-novembre-a-paris-nous-dirons-stop-a-l-islamophobie_1760768].

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[1] Génération.s is a new party created by Benoît Hamon, Socialist party candidate at the last presidential elections. The Socialist Party did not participate. *Lutte Ouvrière* did not sign the call for the demo and refuses the use of the term "Islamophobia" so the presence of a 200 strong contingent wearing LO badges was unusual for such a demonstration. **IVP**