

LET'S GET MOVING!*

*The original title in French is "**Emeutons-nous**" which is a wordplay and literally means "Let's riot ourselves".

June 29, 2023

A young man of 17, Nahel, was shot dead by a cop the day before yesterday, June 27, in Nanterre, a summary execution for something that has come to be called "a hit-and-run" or "refusal to comply", for something that appears to be trying to escape so as not to remain at the mercy of two cops ready to kill. We don't have the words - we're still looking for them - to express our anger and total solidarity, unconditionally and even before we know more details about what happened the press has been spewing out rumors straight from the police precinct. Here are just a few thoughts, since we feel it's necessary to express ourselves.

17 years old, damn it.

The government tried to play down the drama to avoid direct confrontation, to protect its cops, itself and the world of shit and misery it keeps in place. In an attempt to protect themselves from the wrath of everyone, they used a disgusting technique: that of mitigation and pacification, by not skimping on the use of lies. Using the media and press statements from the various parties on the left and right, they claimed that the teenager had a criminal record (which turned out to be untrue), that the police officer was in danger (which turned out to be untrue as well), and invoked the role of mediation by the justice system and national mourning to resolve the problem. All these techniques are well tried and tested, but were ineffective yesterday and today: everyone knows that this execution is not a private dispute between a policeman and the family, nor is it an extraordinary blunder. What the press and the state are defending by smearing those they execute is the ability to maintain order at all costs, the ability to hold us at gunpoint and shoot, the right to "self-defense" of their own existence at the cost of our lives. It's us against them. And no one cares whether they have a criminal record or not, just as no one cares whether the people the cops are targeting are on the S list¹, or whether they are unfavorably known to the CAF², Pôle Emploi³ or the police. Everyone knows they have to fight, and no one seems to want to mourn in silence. While the fire department, the government, the left and all the peacemakers call for calm, Nahel's mother courageously called for "a revolt for her son".

Attempts to quell the anger have so far failed: the very same day, riots broke out in Nanterre, and the revolt has spread throughout the 92, part of the 93⁴, and to other cities, including Bordeaux, Lille, Nantes and Roubaix. In some places, the police were overwhelmed and wounded, and in others they fled or gave up. The second night of rioting was even more ferocious, and spread to other cities: Toulouse, Lyon, Strasbourg, Clermont-Ferrand, some parts of Paris, in the Xème, Belleville, La Chapelle, the south of the XIIIème..., and above all to many towns in the Île-de-France region. This morning, the cleaning services are struggling to hide the traces of the revolt. Cars, buses, streetcar lines, town halls, barricades, schools and police stations are all ablaze. Stores, trucks and supermarkets have been looted. This breadth of vision to effectively target what maintains order and the relevance of the attacks, which the movement against pensions has struggled to achieve despite its scale, seems to have been envisaged after only two nights of rioting. One of the entrances of the Fresnes prison was bravely stormed on the second night of rioting, to free the prisoners, to free us all. A breach is opening up, a breach to shake up what yesterday seemed invincible. But yesterday was November 2005. Yesterday, it was the yellow vests. Yesterday, it was May 68. Yesterday, too, we shook the State, its maintenance of order, and so we understand that this order is far from unassailable, since it is shaking.

We need to step into this breach, and we can see some of the means available to all of us, here and now. Ideally, we'd like to be able to go beyond these "few means within everyone's reach", and to do so we need, like the Nanterre rioters, to find new ways to be effective against our enemies, the police of the state, of capitalism, of democracy, and even more so against apathy, resignation, daily suicide and collective disinterest. All this is not normal, and must be fought, for Nahel, for M. killed in the CRA⁵ in Vincennes, for the thousands of people who die on Europe's borders, for Serge and the wounded from policing in Sainte-Soline and everywhere, and for all the others of yesterday and tomorrow, for all of us, to put an end to pity, paternalism and condescension, and with all our rage to put an end to this world and with our desire for freedom, intact.

In this battle that many of us will be fighting, let's always remember that the enemy facing us, the one waging open war on us, is not the only one. Let's not forget the one who is on our side, the one who recuperates and destroys from within, who suffocates and vampirizes: the left, its moralizing big brothers and its armchair sociologists, the negotiators of social peace who will very quickly try to contain and eradicate our hatred for the court of justice which, above all, is our enemy. It is this court of justice itself that prolongs the arrests. Solidarity with the 180 people arrested last night.

From Nanterre to the whole of France and the rest of the world

RIOTS! REVOLUTIONS!

Translation notes:

- 1 - fiché S : a list of people considered a threat to state security
- 2 - Caisse des Allocation Familiales : French state welfare agency
- 3 - Government agency that deals with unemployment
- 4 - 2 of the poorest working class suburbs of Paris that are known as banlieues
- 5 - Administrative Detention Centers that are run by the border police

