

Beat: Politics

“JUSTICE FOR QUENTIN” 32,000 PEOPLE MARCH TESTS FRANCE’S POLITICAL TEMPERATURE

NATIONALIST RALLY UNDER HEAVY GUARD

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USPA NEWS - For several days now, France has been living under tension after the ultra violent lynching and death of Quentin Deranque in Lyon. In our previous article, we described how the public prosecutor reclassified the case as intentional homicide and how the far left antifascist group Jeune Garde, close to the far left party La France insoumise (LFI), came under suspicion. Since then, the political climate has hardened further, with each camp accusing the other and trying to impose its own reading of this tragedy. Against this backdrop, a major march was organised today, Saturday 21 February, in Lyon in memory of Quentin. The organisers presented it as a peaceful tribute, but the authorities feared it could become the stage for confrontation between radical far right militants, some coming from other European countries, and far left groups determined to denounce what they see as an attempted instrumentalisation of the crime. This is an editorial, not on the ground reporting. It reflects the independent analysis of our handy journalist and relies on officially available French information sources and major reliable and verified public statements

A TENSE MARCH FOR QUENTIN IN LYON: 3,200 NATIONALIST SUPPORTERS RALLY UNDER HEAVY POLICE GUARD AS FRANCE’S POLITICAL CLIMATE EDGES TOWARDS CONFRONTATION

For several days now, France has been living under tension after the ultra violent lynching and death of Quentin Deranque in Lyon. In our previous article, we described how the public prosecutor reclassified the case as intentional homicide and how the far left antifascist group Jeune Garde, close to the far left party La France insoumise (LFI), came under suspicion. Since then, the political climate has hardened further, with each camp accusing the other and trying to impose its own reading of this tragedy. Against this backdrop, a major march was organised today, Saturday 21 February, in Lyon in memory of Quentin. The organisers presented it as a peaceful tribute, but the authorities feared it could become the stage for confrontation between radical far right militants, some coming from other European countries, and far left groups determined to denounce what they see as an attempted instrumentalisation of the crime.

Well before the demonstration, Jordan Bardella, president of the far right party Rassemblement national (RN) founded by Marine Le Pen, announced to the media that he would not take part in the march. By asking RN officials to stay away, he chose a cautious line: sending a message of support to Quentin’s family and to nationalist voters while at the same time taking his distance from the most extreme neo Nazi and ultra violent groupuscules expected to be present. In a fragile municipal election campaign, any confusion between RN and openly neo Nazi banners could prove disastrous.

On the same day, President Emmanuel Macron was inaugurating the annual Salon de l’agriculture in Paris (Annual Farmer’s fair) . Questioned by journalists about the ultra violence that led to Quentin’s death and about the march in Lyon, he was forced once again to react to this case. The head of state called on “everyone to be responsible” and insisted that “no one should add fuel to the fire”, announcing that a meeting would soon be held at the Elysée on “violent action groups” of all stripes. He repeated that “no cause and no ideology can justify political militias taking justice into their own hands” and that the only legitimate response must come from the courts and the State (Source Le Figaro) .

Fearing clashes, the Interior Ministry deployed a very large security operation. According to the prefecture, around 3,200 people took part in the march, supervised by some 550 police officers and gendarmes, including CRS riot units, mobile forces and drone surveillance over the route. Far right and far left militants were kept apart as much as possible, in an attempt to prevent any direct confrontation from turning the streets of Lyon into a battlefield. (Source Le Progres) .

Many marchers wore hoods, caps or surgical masks to hide their faces from the cameras. In the dense crowd, a large banner bearing the words “ADIEU CAMARADE” , “Farewell, comrade” was carried by demonstrators paying tribute to Quentin as one of their own. Slogans demanding “Justice pour Quentin” mingled with nationalist chants and religious references to his Catholic faith, underlining

how much certain factions now see him as a symbol and a potential martyr.

According to the prefecture and the Lyon authorities, the march, although tense, did not lead to large scale physical clashes. One person was arrested for carrying a weapon in the procession, but the feared scenes of street fighting between far left and far right militants did not materialise, largely thanks to the size of the police deployment and the strict management of the route. For the moment, the demonstration remains above all a show of force and a test of mobilisation for nationalist networks rather than the starting point of an open guerrilla war. (Source Le Dauphine).

This third episode in the Quentin Deranque affair shows how a local lynching, then a judicial case for intentional homicide, has now spilled into the streets and into France's electoral calendar. Between a far right leadership that is trying to keep its distance from neo Nazi fringes, far left militants denouncing "ultra left killers" or "far right groupuscules", and a president who multiplies calls for calm, the country is walking on a ridge line. If the anger of some nationalist groups, who already present Quentin as a young Catholic "martyr" of a right wing nationalist ideology, were to turn into repeated confrontations with far left factions, France could quickly slide into a form of low intensity street guerrilla.

As the investigation advances and official information continues to emerge, we will keep following this case closely and return to it in future articles, both to reflect the facts as they are established and to analyse what they reveal about France's political climate in the run up to the March 2026 municipal elections and the April 2027 presidential race.

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