

THE HIDDEN RACISM OF BORDEAUX

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Summary

Racism and discrimination are all over the world and they do exist in Bordeaux. The city owes its wealth and beauty to the slave trade in the past, when over one million slaves were shipped to the French Caribbean colonies. Now a lot of foreigners live in Bordeaux and are confronting the discrimination. For the local young people who don't know the history and the present of the town such problem doesn't exist.

Article

Bordeaux, one of the richest and most beautiful cities in France, has a secret in the past to hide. The town owes its wealth and glory to the slavery and the slave trade. Since the 16th century from the port of Bordeaux departed hundred of ships that took slaves from Africa to the French Caribbean colonies. The known numbers about the slaves are approximately, but the history says that France turned four times as many Africans into slaves as America. Now the city of Bordeaux lives a new life and is confronting new problems connected with the past – racism and discrimination.



“There is racism in Bordeaux and the situation is getting worse, maybe because of the crisis”, says the 34 years old Larissa from Gabon who lives in Bordeaux for three years. Because of the crisis people are getting suspicious and are afraid of the unknown. The right parties are getting extreme right. France changes. Last year there was a demonstration here organized from the Catholic Church. It was against the black people. And this church has a school and is working with children. This is very dangerous because the values are shifted. But the problem exists in whole Europe.”

It turns out that other young people are on the opposite opinion. “There is not such a problem in Bordeaux”, insists the 32 old Biard Nagali. “We are a tourist region and a lot of different people are coming here.” Does Biard know something about the slave trade in the past? “We have learned something about it in school, but I can't remember anything in detail.”

The fact is that in the past British North America transported 300 000 slaves, and France 1 250 000. British North America organized 1500 slaver voyages, and France 4200. British North America delivered 500 000 slaves and France 1 600 000. The French used the slaves far more brutally than the Americans and the slave trade was legal until 1830, long after the rest of Europe had given it up.

“I haven't heard about slave trade in Bordeaux”, says the 26 years old Arnaud Morechevalier. “We don't have a problem with racism, neither in sports. May be there are some conflicts in northern France, but not here.”

“There is a hidden racism in Bordeaux”, considers the 23 years old Sylla Khabin. “People doesn't admit it but it is a fact. It exists in the families. They are talking about the ‚blacks‘ and how bad they are. When you try to find a job they would prefer the white candidate, no matter the education and the expertise.”

Is there a connection between the past and the current situation? "The city has a history in discrimination and made significant efforts to clear things out. Today in Bordeaux they are a lot of people from the former French colonies", says Mr. Khabin. "They are helping for the economy, for the whole country, but there still is racism." What about sports? "In sports there isn't such much racism, because in football for example, people coming from Africa are playing good and aren't considered as foreigners. They are just French."

Bordeaux, like other cities in Europe, is facing the problem of not knowing its past. Young people haven't learned the lessons of the history. For them the racism in the city doesn't exist, like the slave trade hundred years ago. But not knowing the past and not admitting a problem doesn't solve it. And it's better to realize that racism and discrimination exist and to make it really disappear than to pretend it's a problem from another country.

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St. Kliment Ohridski. After that I graduated as master of Media and Intercultural Relations from University of Viadrina, Frankfurt-on-Oder, Germany. I finished my studies with a Ph.d. in politology.

During all my study I worked for different newspapers and magazines - Vecherni Novini, Standart Daily, Galeria newspaper, Bulgaria for you magazine, Champions magazine. I worked nine years for the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee -

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Although I was studying Civil Engineering, and became a Civil engineer, I could not resist the love inside me towards media, and even during my university years, I started my career in Media and since 1990i I have been

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