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Pride in Belgium

Pride 2022: and for a brief moment, we are immortal

- IV Online magazine - 2022 - IV569 - June 2022 -

Publication date: Wednesday 1 June 2022

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Last Saturday, in Brussels, it was Pride. And we were there, en masse: to affirm our identities and our pride, to celebrate, and to carry our messages. For us, the LGBT+ movement is not just a party, a “celebration of diversity” or other more or less hollow formulas, it is a struggle, which we still have to fight with strength and rage.

The first Pride was a riot, in reaction to police violence against queer and racialized people. Today, it has turned into a simple parade, where cops and right-wing parties can strut around with impunity. So how do we bring some fight back into it? On Saturday, we applied a tried and tested method: all you need is a good group of tightly-knit and organized activists, a megaphone, a few well-felt slogans, a leaflet that clarifies your positions, a bit of breath and warmed-up vocal cords. And in no time, you find yourself with a block of a hundred or so young people who are overjoyed, who take up your slogans and propose their own.

The next day, you don't have much voice left, but it's worth it: you've talked about the oppression queer people face, but also, through it, about capitalism, the police, the class struggle, the revolution; and at the same time, you've created a crazy atmosphere. And let's face it, without all that, moving at 2 km/h only to get in the mood with the speakers we passed every 500 metres, we would have been really bored.

Towards a re-politicized Pride?

The rage is there. The thousands of young and not so young people who come to march, dance and shout at Pride want to celebrate who they are, with their heads held high, but also, for many, to go further by expressing their anger, by leading a struggle. Today's Pride is what it is, but the wish to fight is not absent, far from it. So where are we heading? Towards a repoliticized Pride, next year?

Why not: the Paris Pride, for example, made a clear turn last year, under pressure from the most combative collectives, by choosing for the same event to start in a working-class suburb, to refuse the floats of commercial brands looking for pinkwashing, and to make it clear to FLAG, the gay police collective (which commemorated the Stonewall riots by shooting at people with water pistols...), that it was no longer welcome. We can go towards that, or towards a mass LGBT+ movement, which would no longer wait for Pride to organize and make its demands. This history has yet to be written.

But we need it, and we have the strength. There's no point in lying to ourselves: it's a bit hard, after a Saturday like that one (and the few extra days which, let's face it, took the young anti-capitalists into the wee small hours of the morning), to go back to normal life, the one where you hide your sexual orientation in your place of study and avoid holding hands in the street. Because for a brief moment, we were immortal.

Pride is also the moment when there are thousands of us in the street and we are no longer afraid of being stared at or hit. It is the moment when we know that neither the cops nor the fascists will attack us, because we are more numerous than them, and stronger. We can even shout provocative slogans as we walk past a suit and a few uniformed policemen, just as we can kiss each other in the middle of the street. At the end of the day, it's all about the balance of power: and when you put several thousand people on the street, even in the most depoliticised march, the street is ours. So when we feel this, when we discover the power to impose our wills and to be who we are, everything becomes possible. I can't wait for this power to be felt every other day of the year.

25 May 2022

Translated by **International Viewpoint** from [Gauche Anticapitaliste](#).

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