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Feminism in France

All to the borders! A successful feminist and internationalist demonstration despite indifference and repression

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About 5,000 people came to Nice on Saturday 5 June to demonstrate for a Europe without walls. [1] The aim was to make demands specifically concerning women, lesbians and trans people who suffer unbearable violence on their way into exile: for freedom of movement, for a dignified welcome, against all borders...

This mobilization was the work of activists organised in local collectives: transport, accommodation, choirs, batucada... Self-organisation was the order of the day at all stages. Buses came from Bordeaux, Toulouse, Grenoble... Speeches by exiles and performances by artists punctuated the demonstration and kites carried our message of freedom. Readings and concerts took place in the wake of the march, but unfortunately the number of participants was very limited due to the health situation.

Strength, inventiveness, subversion

This mobilization shows the vitality of a plural feminist movement, capable of coming together to defend the most vulnerable among us, the exiles fleeing wars and persecution. The presence of migrant women's or solidarity groups and associations should be noted in particular. However, although supported by a large number of associations, trade unions and political movements, the event would have gained in strength with a greater investment from traditional organisations. The internationalist dimension, initially at the heart of the construction of the event, was undermined by the health situation and the repressive politics. In particular, Italian comrades were illegally and violently turned back at the border.

On the spot, the repression was also consequent since, from the morning, five activists carrying out a collage were arrested and held in custody all day, thus preventing them from participating in the demonstration. Then one person was arrested halfway through the march for damaging street furniture and four more were arrested on the terrace after the march. All of them were finally released, some of them risk fines and are summoned to appear at the beginning of the school year. In addition, the march was twice subjected to provocations and attacks by identity activists. These obstacles to the right to demonstrate are part of a local situation that is particularly repressive and violent towards political activists and migrant aid networks.

The day was a demonstration of the strength, inventiveness and subversiveness of the feminist movement. The end of gender oppression is not yet in sight, but this international dynamic is a fundamental movement that moves us forward on the road to the emancipation of women and gender minorities. This demonstration is a precious step in the creation of more spaces of solidarity, resistance and European convergence in feminist and anti-racist struggles, combining demands for unconditional mass regularizations, open borders and struggles against all oppressions.

10 June 2021

PS:

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[1] Call for "[Feminist Action against European borders](#)".