

## INVITATION

Radical critique of masculinities international discussion and networking  
weekend  
1 and 2 April 2006, Gent, Belgium

### History of the initiative:

At a meeting in the wake of a discussion event on "Men and feminism" at the Feminist Cafe Poppesnor in Antwerp, Belgium (see [www.feminisme.be/fcpoppesnor](http://www.feminisme.be/fcpoppesnor)) in September 2005 we decided to organize a "critique of masculinities weekend" in the spring of 2006 where all those present at the meeting would meet again to continue the discussions begun, speak more about what everyone does locally and see what activities we might want to coordinate, and if it is possible to intervene collectively in certain political fields or running campaigns... We said we were going to invite people we know that might be interested in this kind of debate from Germany, France, Belgium and the Netherlands, and maybe also from further abroad.

### Who is behind the initiative?

The people who met in Antwerp were from Belgium, France and the Netherlands, mostly men who are active in (among other structures) radical left queer groups and/or (mostly straight) radical left profeminist men's groups. A lot of the discussion circled about how our attempt at antisexist politics could take account of the intersections of gender and sexuality with ethnicity, race and class, although this was by no means the only thing we talked about. Several of the people present are active in antiracist projects and/or doing academic work in this direction (critical anthropology, postcolonial studies).

### General introduction:

Despite worldwide struggles of the movements of women, gays, lesbians, queers, transgendered people, intersexuals..., their oppression remains. Ideologies that legitimise the exploitation and oppression of women abound. For too many people, the oppression and marginalisation of all those who don't conform to dominant norms of gender and sexuality is invisible, or appears natural. The forms of consciousness that enable this blindness are unchallenged in their global effectiveness. And in many radical and emancipatory movements the way gender and sexuality are dealt with is completely insufficient. Worldwide, only very few men are active against gender-specific violence, oppression and exploitation; for most men in emancipatory movements, the different kinds of oppression suffered by people who deviate from the norms of gender and sexuality in force in their society are only rarely an issue.

This is the background for our initiative. We want more men to become active against patriarchal gender relations in radical movements (and elsewhere). We want more heterosexual men to challenge the heterosexism of our societies.

### Who is invited?

What we want is a practical and theoretical critique of masculinities. This is

the responsibility of men. But the issue of masculinities and their critique does not "belong" to men. We invite everyone to the process of debate, learning and hopefully organizing which we envisage "whether they define themselves as men, as women, transgendered persons or whatever.

Some of our questions:

What is the role of race, ethnicity and class in the constitution of masculinities? Can white and non-white men work together against sexism and heterosexism, and if so, under which conditions? Can heterosexual and non-heterosexual men work together against sexism and heterosexism, and if so, under which conditions? What would it mean to abolish masculinity? Is the attempt to reform masculinity worthwhile? Is that possible at all? What is subversive appropriation of masculinity by women? Is masculinity a resource that can be redistributed?

Provisional Program:

Saturday 1 April 2006

10h Startup meeting, introductions

11h-13h Workshop I: "Race, class and the contradictions of masculinity" (Daniel Mang)

13h-15h Workshop II: "Men and Violence" (Jens Vantricht)

15h-17h Workshop III: "Masculinity and Whiteness" (Bob Wester, Daniel Mang, Jaason van Bannisseht?)

17h-19h Break

19h-21h Synthesis

21h- Performance? (Queer Collective) / Intro to Contact Improvisation? (Daniel) / Massage and Relaxation Space? / Partytime?

Sunday 2 April 2006

11h-13h Workshop IV "Men and Spirituality" (Hein Kuipers)

13h-15h Workshop V "Representations of non-white masculinities" (Jaason van Bannisseht)

15h-17h Synthesis

Technicalities:

We will meet at the Jeugddienst, Kammerstraat 10, 9000 Gent, Belgium ([www.gent.be/jeugd](http://www.gent.be/jeugd)). Communication will be in English and French. Since we have no funding from anywhere we can offer only very limited travel cost support. We will be able to provide places to sleep with people in Gent free of charge, though. We would like to ask everyone to contribute between 10 and 25 Euros for the weekend so we have something to redistribute to those people who come from farther away and have higher travel costs.

Registration:

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