

Material

Organised pro feminist men

The bully on the schoolyard - or: about our struggle

from "Spaghetti der Erkenntnis" - Pamphlet autonomer Männerzusammenhänge - "Spaghetti of Insight" 1991 - <http://www.archivtiger.de/downloads/broschueren/spaghetti.pdf>

We are unhappy about the state of discussion in men groups. The analysis is disjointed mix of contemporary feminist thought, which is then modulated a little bit and transferred on the subject "men". The utopic discussions about "how do we want to be male?" is also very closely to the models in feminism by women. Own models are yet to be seen. Models that would be grounded in an own desire and outrage that comes from our normative roles. We have no own view of the material and ideological conditions, in which young men grow up and have to live in the GDR. We have no own analysis about the structure of oppression that is the "capitalist patriarchy" and its structural violence.

Patriarch means positioning men and women to- and above each other in a hierarchy. But to every hierarchy are more than one side: in this case, the side of women, and the side of men. Although it has seldom been done, that these structures were reflected by the oppressing gender, is no reason not to try it.

This lack of anti-patriarchal mens politics has the effect, that differences with contemporary feminist positions can not even be discovered. The slogans written and shouted by feminist men are seldom any more - if they are done at all - a mild echo of the women's movement.

We want to see the situation of men in the patriarchy with our own eyes, and speak about it in our own tongue. We propose, that we analyze the social world, which makes kids become men, and men become jocks, with our experience as men: let us tell our own story.

How was it back then? With the leaders of our sport teams, the bully on the school yard, the PE teacher, the peers that we had erotic experience with, our mothers, fathers, brothers? What role did women play in our "training" to be male? How we feel today, at work, university, on holiday, in bed or in public transport? Where are the cracks? What did we want, what did they want - in which direction was the influence? Were there times where something that we were, was incompatible with something that we should be? Or is it like that, that these norms were and are still compatible and very welcome for us in our place in the reign of men? What are the possibilities for us to sit down and get together with other men?

We would find it useful to gather and discuss answers to these and other questions from many groups. Maybe then it will be possible to see similarities, similarities and overlaps, but also differences - such as along the other hierarchies like "class". We are not satisfied with the examinations, which are mainly from the alternative and university spectrum. They tend to reduce the social violence to interpersonal relationships, to perceive the structural violence only on their surface, as toddler problems and family psychology. We would also like to raise more questions: is the male social character a construct that, without much change, is overarching a millennium-long history, faithfully transmitted to its sons by countless generations of men? Does it directly and necessarily result from male complicity and the daily necessities of oppression and exploitation of women? How does this social character change in post-Fordism of the nineties? How did he look like before industrialization?

In the long term, we hope that these discussions will reveal structures and people whom we consider to be the main focus of the male dominance. Who runs the drill, who mediates, who benefits from it, who supplies the ideology and who pays the costs for it? We want a discussion on how these agencies and people - such as school, military - are to be disturbed and attacked in their work. Maybe with small poster campaigns in the schools with conversations with students, disruptions in the military, in the mass media. How about if there were not only protests in sexist portrayals, but also, when we are shown again, what a real man is? (The mocking laughter recently in the cinema at the Camel advertising was certainly in the right direction.)

Is it possible to intervene in the much more covert structures, in the everyday education, in the instructions for the hard and cool "dog eats dog" guys and in the common incidents in the subway? Does our approach also meet the modernized form of the postmodern Yuppie-Jock with multicultural children's love - if they do not disturb the career - and with the always open ear for the needs of the stressed female management colleague?

These are just a few preliminary action ideas. For now, we miss less greasy attacks on sex shops and military barracks, but rather an honest and accurate analysis of how the patriarchal man is made and formed. And where this costume fits like a glove - and where it does not. Furthermore, we find the question important, where we really want to change ourselves? What structures should exist among us for these changes to have a chance?

In practice, we imagine that this paper runs around the male context nationwide and can be discussed. If other men can do something about it, in the longer term it would make sense to have a certain exchange between each other, which goes beyond mixed bodies such as RADIKAL and INTERIM. Perhaps in the form of a brochure or an irregular magazine, in which even very half-baked and provocative papers can be printed and discussed. With a discussion in this direction, perhaps something can be done about the oppressive paralysis that has come to many men's groups. We hope quite bluntly that eventually comes out of these disputes an approach that allows a men's policy that really has our own dissatisfaction as the starting point - and eventually leads to a viable independent male policy.