**Introduction to the issue:**

“In the Name of Hate: Homophobia as a Value”

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“Četnik”, a derogatory term for a Serb. Used by Croats, Bosnians and Kosovo Albanians.

“Ustaša”, a derogatory term for a Croat. Used by Serbs, Bosnians and Kosovo Albanians.

”Balija”, a derogatory term for a Bosnian. Used by Croats, Serbs and Kosovo Albanians.

“Šiptar”, a derogatory term for a Kosovo Albanian. Used by Bosnians, Croats and Serbs.

“Peder”, a derogatory term for a homosexual person. Used by everybody.
(Parada, a film by Šrdan Dragojević)

One of the latest topics widely discussed in texts, informed by queer theory, is “homonationalism” (cf. Puar 2007). The term refers to islamophobic, xenophobic, racist and similar stands against immigrants, which have been occurring within the mainstream gay and lesbian movement since the early 1990s. It also refers to the instrumentalisation and consequent abuse of gay and lesbian human rights discourse for the disqualification, marginalisation and social exclusion of other minorities, particularly (illegal) immigrants.

The notorious example of the Dutch right-wing and openly gay politician Pim Fortuyn is a good illustration of homonationalistic discourse. During the Dutch national election campaign in 2002 his political programme was based on social exclusion of immigrants, particularly Muslims, who became a symbol of human rights infringements and as such a symbol of reactionary, traditionalist and intolerant culture. During one TV debate a Muslim imam mocked Pim Fortuyn due to his homosexuality. Fortuyn turned to the camera and said to the audience that this was “the Trojan horse of intolerance,” which would walk into the Netherlands in the name
of multiculturalism. He believed that Muslims were a threat to the human rights of minorities, including gays and lesbians and women (Dreher 2002). In other words, the protection of the human rights of some minorities was used as a platform for the discrimination against and exclusion of other minorities.

Éric Fassin argues that gender equality and sexual liberation became “a litmus test for the selection and integration of immigrants” (Fassin 2007). Similarly, Judith Butler questions the new position into which gay European citizens are being placed: “Is this a liberal defense of my freedom[…] or is my freedom being used as an instrument of coercion, one that seeks to keep Europe white, pure, and ‘secular’ in ways that do not interrogate the violence that underwrites the very project?” (Butler 2008). Answering her own question, Butler rejected the Civil Courage Award from the Berlin Pride, a mainstream gay and lesbian organisation, claiming that she must distance herself from this “racist complicity.” She pointed out that the mainstream gay and lesbian movement often construes homophobia as the problem of immigrants.

Some evidence for such a construction can be found also in empirical studies. In the analysis of the factors that contribute to the level of a country’s homonegativity, Štulhofer and Rimac (2009) found that persisting immigration flow may limit the effect of modernisation, which is understood to have a central role in increasing social acceptance of homosexuality. However, they pointed out that their study “does not only suggest that immigrant subcultures could be more sexually restrictive than the host culture, but also that the existing national curricula in Europe may not be as efficient in promoting social tolerance as is commonly believed” (Štulhofer and Rimac 2009: 7-8).

Is homonationalism a pan-European project, or are there countries where homophobia remains a “family value” and gay and lesbian human rights cannot serve as a litmus test for the selection of immigrants? It seems that in Europe, where walls and borders are being notoriously erased, new walls are being built. These are the walls of homonationalism in the West and the walls of old-fashioned “heteronationalism” in the East. The violent reactions to the Gay Pride Parades in Belgrade, Split, Zagreb, Moscow, Budapest, Riga, Warsaw and elsewhere, the prohibition of such events in several Eastern European cities, and the public non-existence of the gay and lesbian minority in some other Eastern European countries represent heteronormative ideals that are central to the nation-state formation and national identity building – the two processes both heavily informed by heterosexual imagery. Unlike the situation in the West, where gay and