



FEMINISTS VS. THE FAR RIGHT



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*Written and edited by the **Anti★Capitalist Resistance** women's and non-binary collective*

CAPITALISM KILLS WOMEN

From a young age, I was aware of normalised violence against women: my stepfather was abusive towards my mother at a time when the law allowed men to 'chastise' their wives (including physically) for disobedience. Later I discovered it was more widespread than I had realised.

In the UK, one woman dies every three days as a result of domestic abuse and a quarter of all women experience domestic abuse. Despite attempts to change the culture, there's been little change in the figures, and support for women survivors continues to dwindle as a result of austerity policies and a lack of funding. Support for black and disabled women is even worse. In some cases carers become abusers and many refuges are inaccessible for those who are disabled, as well as trans women whose need for safe refuge is ignored. Asylum seekers and migrants are at greater risk of exploitation, abuse and sexual violence from smugglers and traffickers.

For women from indigenous communities, the situation is equally horrific. UN statistics reveal that one in three indigenous women are likely to be raped during their lifetime; according to data from Canada, indigenous women and girls are six times more likely to be murdered. The USA's Board of Indian Affairs stated that in 2025

there were 4,200 missing and murdered, unsolved cases affecting indigenous people and in Brazil, female Land Defenders resisting exploitation of natural resources face danger including physical and sexual violence. Colonialism plays a large part in increasing the risk for women and indigenous people. This is why we must recognise intersecting oppressions if we are to effectively tackle the issue.

Healthcare for black and trans women continues to be inadequate both in this country and globally: a subtler form of patriarchal violence, but one just as threatening to life. Under the NHS, inequalities in the standard and provision of perinatal care, and in managing certain conditions such as diabetes, have a greater impact on black women. Reproductive healthcare continues to be criminalised in the USA and the UK. In many countries, healthcare provision for trans people is inadequate or non-existent. This denial of healthcare not only extends to a denial of gender transition, but also a lack of support and acknowledgement for the reproductive rights of trans people.

Access to reproductive healthcare, such as abortion and contraception, is only one side of the issue. Enforced sterilisation is legal in twelve European countries despite being contrary to the Istanbul Convention. It is also ►

legal to compulsorily sterilise women who are minors in Portugal, Czechia and Hungary. Despite the fact that the Istanbul Convention specifically prohibits compulsory sterilisation of transgender and intersex people, it still happens.

Coerced sterilisation still takes place among indigenous populations in the USA and Canada, Roma people in Eastern Europe, and Uyghur women in China even though this was meant to have stopped. In South Africa, Namibia and Kenya, HIV-positive women are given medical misinformation to persuade them to accede to sterilisation.

All this shows that the violence of patriarchal capitalism touches people of every race, class, nationality and gender identity. We need to work together across oppressions if we are to stand any chance of reversing the damage already

done. We reject any 'feminism' that tells us only white, cis feminism is valid. We must acknowledge the intersections that are so often ignored. This violence unites us all and we must come together as one, reject the far right's politics of division and liberate the lives of all women. ●



FEMINISTS AGAINST FASCISTS: WHY WE FIGHT

The far right poses a deadly threat to women's liberation. Fascists want to repeal equality laws and turn back the clock more than 50 years on the equal rights that women, men and queer people enjoy. We must stop their rise and refute any argument that represents oppressive gender roles as natural, wholesome or freeing.

The lie of the 'trad wife'

Fascists have always appealed to nostalgia, painting a romanticised image of bygone family life and promoting 'common sense' ideas about women and men's roles in society. These ideas can be superficially attractive when families are struggling with financial pressures, stressful work, long working hours and housing problems. In the absence of a strong trade union presence in many workplaces, the reassurance of a return to 'tradition' can slip in to fill the void.

But the rosy ideal of the "trad wife" lifestyle is pure fiction. A model forged by and for capitalist interests, the 'traditional' nuclear family with its rigid gender roles too often conceals coercive control and domestic violence. When men manage the finances while women are responsible for domestic labour and childcare, the working class is divided and women are made vulnerable by economic dependence.

Only two genders

'Traditional families' are championed by powerful and grotesquely misogynist men such

as Donald Trump, Vladimir Putin and Victor Orban. Not only do these men support the confining and denigration of women, but they deny the existence of intersex and non-binary people, and legislate to prevent trans people from accessing health care or being able to live as their authentic selves.

The far right has aligned itself against what it calls 'gender ideology', the term they use for any attempt to explain differences between the lives of women and men in terms of social rather than essential biological factors.

Maintaining a moral panic around feminism, queerness and trans rights is central to authoritarian conservative strategy. The pearl-clutching goes along with the implication that people's right to live as married heterosexuals is threatened by the existence of alternatives, revealing an insidious hostility to diversity.

Healthcare and race

Attacks on healthcare are part of the offensive on women's rights. Cuts to US and other nations' aid budgets are costing the lives of women in the Global South, as funding is pulled for contraception and safe maternity care. Since the 2022 repeal of Roe v Wade, safe, legal abortions are not available in many US states. As a consequence, women who have miscarried are being denied essential healthcare because doctors fear prosecution from the state.

While abortion in the UK is currently legal under the Abortion Act (1967), a far-right government may well seek to restrict it and cut funding for women's healthcare.

Racism presents a threat to all women's health and rights to bodily autonomy. Black women are disproportionately harmed by the current UK crisis in maternity care, as they suffer significantly worse health outcomes during pregnancy and childbirth.

The spurious white supremacist 'great replacement' theory holds that demographic changes are a threat to 'native' white people and culture. 'Remigration' of immigrant communities is just one of this toxic doctrine's natural conclusions; given the chance, proponents would force some women to have children by denying them access to birth control, while imposing sterilisation on others.

The Equality Act

Under the guise of 'restoring meritocracy', Reform UK have declared their intention to repeal the Equality Act 2010. The implication is that quotas and tokenism, rather than merit, explain the hiring of women, minority ethnic people and those of other oppressed minorities. The reality is entirely the opposite. Legislation introduced from the 1970s onward has made it possible for women and members of other oppressed groups to compete for jobs on the basis of merit. Before this legislation, women could be excluded from applying on the basis of their sex.

In 2010, the Equality Act incorporated:

- Equal Pay Act 1970
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- Race Relations Act 1976
- Sex Discrimination Act 1986
- Race Relations (Remedies) Act 1994
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995

... and parts of many other laws relating to equality.

Abolishing the Equality Act would destroy crucial protections against discrimination on the basis of age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage or civil partnership (in employment only); pregnancy and maternity; race; religion and belief; sex; and sexual orientation. It would give bigots licence to voice their prejudices openly, and people in the UK would have no legal recourse against discrimination in education, employment, or provision of goods and services. For example:

- You could be paid differently from someone of a different sex for doing the same job.
- You could be excluded from applying for a job on the basis of your age or sex.
- You could be sacked for becoming pregnant.

A UK like this is hard to imagine for anyone who has grown up in the era of legal equality. Yet this is what a general election vote for Reform UK could mean. Already, Reform-controlled councils have abolished jobs concerned with promoting equality and diversity.

Why we fight

The history of First Wave Feminism is a history of the struggle for the vote, for education, and for the right to work in spheres such as medicine and law, from which women were previously barred. It is a history of struggle for women's right to be citizens, to be political people eligible to stand for public office and take part in political debate.

Today's far right threatens women's place in the public realm. Far-right governments often have very few or no women ministers, unlike the much more gender-balanced cabinets of liberal democracies.

The experiences of women worldwide show that equal rights can never be taken for granted. Today, women and their supporters need to be active in defending equality laws, policies and reproductive rights. We must oppose moves to force a return to narrow, rigid gender roles and continue to advocate for the feminist vision of a fully human existence for women, men and non-binary people. The struggle against the far right needs to address its sexism and misogyny as well as its racism and authoritarianism.

There is no socialism without women's liberation; there is no women's liberation without socialism. ●



FAR RIGHT MISOGYNY: AN OLD STORY

In July 2025, the *Guardian* broke the news that 40% of those arrested for racist rioting in the summer of 2024 had previously been arrested for domestic abuse. These stats are shocking, but not surprising. For all its talk of 'protecting women and girls', the current far-right movement is intensely misogynistic. While the *Guardian* headline did not mention gender, the individuals named in the article are all men who have been credibly accused or convicted of attacking women. Domestic abuse is perpetrated against people of all genders, but it is disproportionately a crime committed by men against women and girls.

Far-right misogynist violence isn't a new phenomenon; it is foundational to far-right ideology. Far-right movements have always championed 'traditional', 'natural' gender roles, positioning men as leaders and organisers, and women as helpmeets. According to this ideology, women exist to manage the home, support the men in their lives, and produce as many healthy white children as possible. This ideology of gendered division of labour supports and is supported by that of racial or ethnic supremacy.

Historically, far-right movements have attacked women's rights, and harmed women directly, both covertly and overtly. And these ideologies and hierarchies are alive and well in far-right movements today.

Kinder, Küche, Kirche

While the phrase 'Kinder, Küche, Kirche' (*children, kitchen, church*) predates Nazi Germany, it was a major focus of the Nazi regime's plan for Aryan

women. While many women were enthusiastic participants in Nazism through organisations such as the National Socialist Women's League, Nazi leaders repeatedly stressed that the most important role of a woman in the Third Reich was to run a home and give birth to multiple children. Women who lived up to this ideology were lauded and rewarded with the Cross of Honour of the German Mother, which was issued to women who had at least four children. (The highest level was presented to mothers with more than eight.) Other fascist regimes cultivated similar attitudes. In Mussolini's Italy, women who worked, or did not have children, were denigrated as 'donna-crisi', *crisis women: a threat to the state*.

These regimes claimed to celebrate women; however, they did so in a highly bio-essentialist way, equating womanhood with domesticity, fertility, and the family. Women and girls were expected to eschew careers, or indeed any positions of power outside of the far-right women's movement, where they would be expected to encourage future generations of girls to follow the domestic path. Women's rights to freedom, agency and autonomy were deliberately undermined and weakened by the far right's emphasis on 'Kinder, Küche, Kirche'.

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