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Feminism and masculinism

Loneliness, suicide, misogyny. Capitalism

- Features - Feminism -



Publication date: Saturday 14 March 2026

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As we plan for March 8 International Women's Day 2026, it's hard for women not to be fearful of the future. Particularly, to be fearful of men. But as revolutionary socialists, it's important to explore the ideas coming out of the modern masculinity ideology with curiosity, not to legitimize harmful ideas of gender and domesticity, but to ensure that we do not become victims of the enemy "feminism" that is also alive and well. A feminism based on gender essentialism, separatism and misandry.

The male loneliness epidemic

The term 'Male Loneliness Epidemic', having been coined in the 1990s, regained traction in the last few years but already feels out of date. The term refers to the rapid increase of heterosexual men who report feeling lonely due to a lack of friends or partners. Open misogyny and pronatalist discourse has been increasing in the UK, whether it's Reform MP Matthew Goodwin suggesting women without children should pay more tax or the horrifying stories coming out of the Jeffery Epstein scandal around Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor. The 'Male Loneliness Epidemic' is a thinly veiled attempt to legitimize a misogynist idea that women's independence is hurting men.

Looking at heterosexual relationships over the last 50 years, it's common to see women in charge of the social calendar. Capitalist society has always encouraged women to take on social engagements and this emotional labour makes up a big part of the invisible domestic labour foisted upon women from a very young age. For many mothers in modern society, male partners have become almost like another child.

With this, it is unsurprising that modern women are moving away from traditional forms of heterosexual relationship whether by not having children, living separately from partners or deciding to not date or marry, altogether. Additionally, a more open acceptance of queer relationships puts this option firmly in women's hands for the first time. So as women and queer people become more independent, so do straight men become more lonely.

It is not incorrect to highlight that there is an increase in male loneliness however, the term epidemic is a passive one implying that men have little to no control over their fate, and the 'cure' is for women to assimilate back into 'tradwifery'. But this isn't a passive epidemic thrust upon unassuming men, this is a skills shortage created by the patriarchal, capitalist system we live under.

Young straight men are lacking the necessary social skills to have meaningful, vulnerable relationships with other men and women, relationships that are not based around markers of capitalist patriarchy such as competition, hierarchical dominance and the ability to be a provider and make money. By co-opting progressive sounding, victimised language, the far right voices coming out of the Manosphere are able to push for a return to traditional, heteronormative gender roles under the guise of supporting young men.

Misogyny and capitalism: a symbiotic relationship

When a man's worth is derived purely from the accumulation of wealth, masculine identity feels at stake during times

of economic hardship. Previous generations of capitalists observed that when men cannot fulfill their role under capitalism, they will revolt. Therefore, by reinforcing strict gender roles and expectations, men are able to feel like the king of their own castle at home when success in the workplace feels unattainable.

As men are often taught to deny feelings of weakness and vulnerability, anger is the only emotion allowed to be expressed. Naturally, this leads to violence against women, and queer people, who take the physical and metaphorical punch that working class men should be giving to the owner class who control their wages. The role of misogyny under capitalism is not just a symptom but a deliberate system to police women, uphold this hierarchy of men and keep the capitalist machine ticking along nicely.

It would be wrong to not mention the more obvious role of misogyny as a way to ensure social reproduction continues. The counter to the role of the alpha male, is the female as a human giver; a giver of life and labour to ensure the reproduction of his blood line, providing the capitalist class with a never ending supply of young, working class men to exploit whether in the factory or on the battlefield.

The Men's Rights Movement

The 'Men's Rights Movement' started as a faction of the Men's Liberation Movement which arose during the early 1970s with the study of feminism. Whilst the Men's Liberation Movement focused on how patriarchy hurts both women and men, the men's rights movement focused on how feminism leads to the structural oppression of men. The movement is not clueless about injustices towards working class men, and often cite men's disposability, with regards to war and the high rates of male suicide, as legitimate reasons for their anti feminism. However, their analysis fails to examine the privileges and hierarchies of men in capitalist society, failing to liberate men from restrictive gender roles and suggest that men are actually the ones being oppressed by women.

They lack the understanding, or will, to see this issue as one based on class – the owner class versus the worker class, turning their frustrations into a toxic debate around gender. The men's rights movement regained popularity in the 2010s with the *r/redpill* subreddit and the internet. The term Red Pill originates from the 1999 movie *The Matrix* in which the main character is asked to take the red pill and 'wake up' back into his actual existence rather than the fake one the establishment has forced him to live under. Once fringe, this point of view is now common in the modern mansosphere.

When this movement picks up previous feminists, such as Erin Pizzey who started the women's refuge movement in the 1970s in the UK, the whole movement is lent legitimacy and points to how powerful capitalist education has been in dividing the working class along gender lines and teaching women that fighting for their liberation is the actual enemy. This 'doppelganger' feminism – a term coined by Naomi Klein to express the diagonal shift of liberal leftists to the far right – has replaced feminist class politics with one of gender essentialism. Without examining these capitalist systems, liberal feminism cannot effectively fight against women's oppression.

Male suicide

The subject of male suicide has become a gender wars talking point for the manosphere. Its discussion in media and culture marks a positive move towards mental health awareness for men who, as explored above, are discouraged from displaying emotions and behaviours that would be considered feminine; caring for others, talking about feelings, being vulnerable etc.

Whilst this awareness is not inherently bad, class and gender roles are not considered. Therefore, positive male role models are still expected to exhibit traditional masculine qualities. Take for example Dwayne 'The Rock' Johnson who is seen as friendly and caring but still has the ripped body, wealth and sex appeal of an ex Wrestler.

Additionally, the male suicide argument is often used to shut down the voices of women who have legitimate concerns about a world that is undeniably catered to men. The statistic cited most is that men take their own lives more than women therefore putting them more at risk. According to the Samaritans, the male suicide rate in 2024 was 17.1 per 100,000, compared to a female suicide rate of 5.6 per 100,000. Whilst this is not incorrect, it also doesn't tell the whole story. What is often omitted is the fact that women are less likely to die by suicide, often due to their caring responsibilities. Women statistically are 1.5 times more likely to suffer from depression than men and report more suicide attempts than men. Men on the other hand are more likely to die by suicide due to using more lethal methods.

This again highlights the differences in emotional labour and responsibilities between genders. It tells us that men without these responsibilities, and by default, these vital relationships are lonely and susceptible to suicide. However, bad faith actors with reactionary, misogynistic intentions, or equally liberal performative voices, refuse to acknowledge this important element in this discussion, enforcing gender hierarchies and anti-feminism.

Suicide as endemic of capitalism

If rates of male suicide are higher, and we socialise and encourage masculinity to be dependent on wealth accumulation and power, then it stands to reason that suicide is endemic of capitalism. Further research suggests this to be the case.

When looking at suicide epidemics within indigenous cultures, Helen Epstein, author of *Why Live: How Suicide Becomes an Epidemic*, discovered a consistent correlation between suicide epidemics and societies going through economic changes, from non capitalist economic systems to capitalist ones. This is not just the case for indigenous societies but was also prevalent in Soviet Russia during the overhaul from communism to capitalism, with heavy self destructive drinking killing many Russian men during that turbulent time.

Helen Epstein does not make this point to idealise life in the Soviet Union but to highlight the sense of belonging that was lost during the transition. Even in the struggle under Soviet rule, communities were still collective and depended on each other for food, resources and household goods. Capitalist society suddenly rendered these relationships useless, making transactions, and individuals, cold.

Even the term 'to commit' suicide speaks to the restrictive nature of capitalism and perhaps, to previous suicide epidemics. Under capitalism, it is a crime to kill yourself, to drop out of giving your life to wealth accumulation for a small group of people, on your own terms. Whilst socialist arguments should always be about preventing suicide and not encouraging it, it is hard to deny the lack of bodily autonomy that strongly underpins capitalist society.

Loneliness and the commodification of relationships

What does this research say about capitalist society? We know that those who kill themselves often feel an irreversible feeling of alienation, rejection and loss from those around them, believing their very being alive is a

burden.

Capitalist ideology boils all relationships that aren't familial for the purpose of social reproduction, down to a cold transaction. Capitalism is a cultural system as well as one of accumulation and as accumulation becomes harder, cultural capitalism over compensates. Chronic gamblers, along with those who end up in large amounts of debt, have been known to take their own life seeing no other way out of their situation. Under capitalism, the function of debt takes on a different form from debt within nontraditional societies. In societies dependent more on collectivism and mutual aid, debt is relational instead of a source of shame and exclusion.

For radicalised young men, books like *The Game*, the 2005 guide to picking up women with techniques from the pick up artist industry, along with gamified dating apps with high membership fees, have commodified modern relationships. The art of seduction is not an easy one with the majority of us stumbling through life, embarrassing ourselves in front of those we love, in an attempt to find a partner. The Manosphere does not encourage its followers to think critically about these concepts nor do they offer non-judgemental understanding and support to lost men; Manosphere figures like Andrew Tate actually profit further off this disenfranchisement charging extortionate fees for pick up artist style masculinity courses. The average young straight man is forced to conclude that their lack of success must be an inbuilt flaw with themselves – as incels do – or more worryingly, a biological flaw of women as a gender.

The socialist ethos – not just the opposite of capitalism

For all the flaws of the Soviet Union, Helen Epstein's book highlights how communism, even in the grips of an authoritarian dictatorship, forced its people to depend on each other. The Russian men rapidly drinking themselves to death spoke about the highs of drinking with friends. Hard drinking culture is prevalent with young men in the UK. If we see drinking as breaking down relational barriers, then both then and now, we must ask if young men are crying out for connection in a system that reinforces division and intense individualism.

If we are to ever tackle suicide, we must examine the capitalist world we live in that makes every interaction a transaction. When modern life continues to become more complex, and care continues to become more transactional, it is no wonder that we are lonelier than ever.

When collectivism fails, we become so individual that we have nothing but 'love' to remind us to cherish one another. That puts a lot of pressure on love and it becomes easy to see how expensive dating apps get so popular. The ability to feel empathy, or love someone, in order to care for them, is not enough and shouldn't be. 'Love conquers all' is empty and meaningless without collective dependence on one another.

We can do better. And we must if we are to increase the general happiness of the population globally and neutralize the threat of domestic, sexual and reproductive violence that affects women and queer people. The manosphere is only bringing to the forefront the transactional nature of relationships that women have felt for decades. We must work hard to defeat the far right if we are to save men from the grievance politics that has arisen due to limiting definitions of what it means to be a man. A capitalist system built on exploitation at all costs will ultimately take our lives, one way or another unless we say 'enough is enough'.

6 March 2026

Source: [Anti*Capitalist Resistance](#).

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