

For an End to All Forms of Interpersonal Violence

In the first 4 months of this year alone, over 30 women have been murdered in Australia, mostly in episodes of gendered violence, including the 5 women who were killed at Bondi Junction in Sydney by a man named Joel Cauchi, whose stabbing spree at a shopping complex maimed or killed 17 people. A 9-month-old baby girl whose mother was killed in the attack is among those injured. One man also died from his injuries before the perpetrator was shot dead by police.

Intimate partner violence (IPV) and sexual assault are both major health risk factors for women. In Australia, nearly a quarter (23%) of women have experienced violence from an intimate partner and roughly a fifth (20%) have been sexually assaulted since age 15. Indigenous women are disproportionately victims and survivors of IPV and sexual violence, as compared with non-Indigenous women. Oftentimes, women stay in abusive situations because they do not have the resources, whether economic or social-emotional support, to leave these harmful relationships. When these women do flee, they often risk losing income and housing, and must start afresh.

Although victims and survivors of IPV and sexual violence are disproportionately female, as living conditions for working people everywhere have worsened, working men in heterosexual and homosexual relationships have increasingly found themselves in overtly hostile or even violent home environments, forcing many of them out of their homes and into the streets. Today, one-fourteenth (7.3%) of men have experienced IPV and one-sixteenth (6.1%) have been sexually assaulted since age 15. Men are also disproportionately likely to be victims of violence by other men outside of the domestic setting, accounting for more than two-thirds of homicide victims.

The impact of IPV on children is often overlooked, as many wrongly believe a person can be a good parent whilst committing violence against their romantic partner. Emotional abuse is the most common form of violence that children experience, and this, of course, includes witnessing the different kinds of abuse meted out by one parent against another. It should therefore surprise nobody that children who grow up in abusive homes are much more likely to go on to be victims or perpetrators of IPV themselves. Relatedly, childhood sexual abuse is usually committed by a close relative and has a lifelong impact on one-tenth (11%) of women and 1 in 27 (3.6%) men.

As communist workers, our interests are wholly enjoined with those of our class as an inseparable whole. Communism, to be clear here, has nothing to do with any of the totalitarian state-capitalist nightmares of the 20th century such as the former Soviet Union, China, North Korea, or Cuba—societies in which a ruling minority brutally exploits the working class in the name of “socialism”—but is rather a classless, moneyless, and stateless society in which all land, resources, and instruments of work are held in common. It is an entirely new mode of living and organising human activity where everyone contributes what they can and is insured decent living conditions, while the gendered division of labour that divides human activity into productive and reproductive spheres will be reabsorbed, so to speak, and taken up by society as a common endeavour.

We do not labour under a misguided belief that women belonging to the ruling class, whose opposition to IPV and gendered oppression more broadly goes so far as their social positioning as capitalists allows, share our material interests or that they are our “sisters”, though they, of course, are also subject to the violence engendered by the very system that benefits them. As such, they cannot be counted among our allies in this fight, even less the fight against the source of gendered oppression. On the contrary, as beneficiaries of capitalism, ruling-class women, first and foremost, defend their own class interests, which are tied to the continuation of the system.

In sum, what is urgently needed is not to build solidarity with women of the exploiting class, a union which would be consummated under false premises, but rather for our working-class brothers to fight alongside us in the same class struggle, rejecting instead of overlooking, or worse, indulging, misogynistic and otherwise harmful ideas and behaviours that only serve to further divide up our class, to our detriment and to the exclusive benefit of our capitalist masters.

To this end, working people everywhere must organise themselves on a class basis and create their own independent organisations of struggle, in the workplace and elsewhere, to tear down the inhuman system that makes all of us miserable. Only the historic movement that sweeps away the current order of things, i.e., the world proletarian revolution for communism, will be able to stamp out interpersonal violence, along with all the other vestiges of class society, definitively.



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