

**Historical Materialism London 2022
10-13 November 2022 @ Central London**

Marxist feminist stream 2022

Deadline for abstracts: 1 August 2022

<https://conference.historicalmaterialism.org/>

The 21st century witnessed a revival of feminist struggles in transnational and yet critically situated terms. Built from below, fought in the streets, courts of law, workplaces and through theory-led investigations and debates, these struggles prioritised questions of labour and violence, in particular while facing the force of capitalism as permanent counter-revolution, extractivism and imperialism. Marxist feminism took seriously the reality of capital waging a class war from above in the global terrain since the defeat of working-class movements at the end of the 20th century. It responded by expanding the idea of a global working class through gendered labour by linking social reproduction to production, by thinking about feminism's own relationship to capitalist hegemony and by deepening the understanding of capitalism as multiple crises: climate destruction, the Covid 19 pandemic, the formidable pauperisation and displacement of populations through war and conflict, police violence against racialised and transgendered people, and the continual undermining of democracy (for those who enjoyed it) in the constitution of a status quo that stands resolutely against emancipatory politics.

Across these multiple, intersecting urgencies, Marxist and, more broadly, materialist feminism played a key role, crafting an interdisciplinary framework of militant political engagement on all fronts. In the co-articulation of biopolitics and geopolitics, mapping the global terrain has been a central preoccupation - precisely because divisions within the feminist project have continued to emerge with the renewal of inter-imperialist terror. The Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 generated new urgencies with regard to the critical interpretation of the context in which feminism overall will have to carry on its struggle. But the stakes are higher for anti-capitalist and decolonial feminism. In March 2022, the first open letter signed by left feminists from over twenty countries acknowledged the hideous violence of the Russian invasion while placing it in a historical context that included western imperialism. Yet this interpretation is contested: the Eastern European left has stressed the autonomy of Russian expansionism and called out the perils of 'westplaining' and 'USplaining'. At the same time, western imperialism has certainly informed the critical feminist perspectives of the Global South.

Feminist anti-capitalist politics is threatened by new tensions and divides. In addition, the militarisation of national budgets (and bloc budgets, e.g. of the EU) and the adoption of a militarised social agenda by many governments are certain to shrink social spending to an unprecedented degree. In the slow, intersecting battles for democratic social reproduction arrangements, for greater expenditure in health care and education, and against the deadly securitisation of borders and city streets, the stakes are high and mounting higher. Meanwhile, patriotism and nationalism have been subject to rapid normalisation and glorification, exerting their power on women too while possibly undermining feminist antifascism. Add the revived prospect of a nuclear catastrophe to the above, and we have the juncture in which feminism now has to work, somehow carrying on its cross-generational vision for an end to exploitation and oppression.

The general question of how feminism will not lose sight of its broader vision, in light of the acceleration of capitalism into a militarised mentality and social reality, is at the core of

this call for papers. How do the Marxist feminist interpretations of history inform our understanding of the developing status quo? How do we enhance the tools of social reproduction theory against the war dogma and its devastating consequences as the dominant terror of social reality? What is 'care labour' during peace and what is it in times of war? How do we connect interpersonal violence against transgendered and feminised bodies with the institutional violence of the carceral, imperialist state? Do we need new critical concepts to ensure the survival, relevance, and even centrality of feminism in a world defined overwhelmingly by the idea of the 'enemy'? How do we protect feminist gains and fight against the new sacralisation of blood-thirsty masculinism? These are some of the questions we invite reflections on.

We stress that the conference will be in person and that contributors should make appropriate preparations for travel and accommodation. We hope that the Marxist feminist stream will provide an opportunity for connecting and planning ahead, and for generating shared knowledge about our feminist struggles wherever they are realised.

We welcome submissions for panels and individual papers. Abstracts should be under 250 words and be sent to the Historical Materialism call for papers (<https://conference.historicalmaterialism.org/>), indicating that it is a submission to the "Marxist Feminist Stream". We stress that the conference will be in person. Panel chairs should be clearly indicated where appropriate.

Deadline for abstracts: 25 July 2022

For further information, any questions, or support with taking part, please email historicalmaterialism@soas.ac.uk
Please feel free to share this call with others you think might be interested in participating.

*****This year, the conference will be taking place in a particularly onerous financial context, due to an unprecedented 20,000 pound room rental rate. Thus, for this not to sink the journal and imperil any possibility of another conference in London in the future, we are calling on all comrades to be generous and to suggest any possible grant possibilities.*****