

## **STATE IN/AND CRISIS**

### **Theory and Movement in a Dangerous World**

#### **Historical Materialism Athens Conference 2023 Call for abstracts**

**20-23 April 2023 Panteion University, Athens**

**\*Deadline Extended\***

**Deadline for abstracts: 31 December 2022**

<https://conference.historicalmaterialism.org/event/4/>

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We live in a dangerous world. With the pandemic not yet over, climate disaster impending and the war in Ukraine seeming like the first stage of a global conflict, a sense of impasse and imminent danger is in the air.

We are in a period of multiple crises. Inflation combined with the absence of growth point to the fact that the pandemic recession was not conjunctural but reflected deeper contradictions of capitalist accumulation. In 'liberal democracies', the elements of a crisis in hegemony are evident in the increased disillusionment with the political system, accentuated by a lack of alternatives and the new rise of the far-right, enhanced by the political mainstream's endorsement of racism and authoritarianism. The state is right at the centre of this crisis-ridden and dangerous world. The much advertised 'return of the State' during the pandemic also brought forward the very crisis of the state-form, despite the authoritarian expansion of disciplinary measures. Capitalist states have been instrumental in bailing out contemporary financialized capitalism, in enhancing the commodification and privatization of vital services and goods, in institutionalizing racism, in reproducing patriarchy and sexism, in aggressively disaggregating the subaltern classes and in promoting war and aggression. At the same time, contemporary capitalist states are themselves in crisis. Unable to reverse the crisis dynamics, to deal with emergencies (exemplified in the lack of any real plan to tackle climate change) or to find ways to gain positive and active consent from large segments of societies, they rely increasingly on mechanisms of state repression against social turmoil. A new form of 'State of exception' is emerging, time and again, as the way to cope with these crises - first and foremost, by suspending civil rights, attacking political freedoms, and increasing the rate of exploitation of the working classes.

All the above pose important theoretical and political challenges – besides their existential edge. Discussing the changes that are underway in contemporary capitalism – the new phase of both accumulation and class antagonism, the restructuring of the state, the new polarized architecture of the international system but also the dynamics of contestation and resistance emerging – is not a theoretical luxury but an exigency, if we want to engage in transformative politics based on knowledge and understanding of the terrain we are standing on. From the dynamics of capitalist crisis to the modern forms of imperialism, from the linkage between accumulation and climate change to the transformation of the state and the deepening erosion of democracy, and from overcoming patriarchal relations to devising a new internationalism from below, there are many questions that we need to deal with. And in 2022, we must face the fact that despite the resources of hope offered by struggles against austerity, patriarchy, racism, anti-immigrant sentiment, climate disaster, so

far these struggles have not transformed into effective strategy – as exemplified by the defeat, failure or containment of attempts towards ‘left governance’. Critical Marxist theory, in its multiple traditions and schools, is still the necessary starting point for raising and engaging with such difficult yet urgent questions.

We want this conference to be something more than an academic exchange. We want it to be a meeting point for, and a step towards, creating communities of research but also practical action. That is why we insist on a strictly egalitarian ethos, which means that everyone is invited to contribute in a comradely spirit. The conference is open to all currents of critical Marxist theory, and we expect all presenters to attend the entire conference, not just their own session. The conference is an important part of the broader Historical Materialism project - including the journal, the book series, and the global network of HM conferences – and we wish to encourage all conference participants to get involved with these different aspects of the work we do.

We invite contributions on the following themes (although this is *\*not\** an exhaustive or exclusive list, and abstracts on all subjects of critical Marxist theory are welcome):

- The current forms of imperialism, inter-imperialist rivalry, and war
- The forms of capitalist crisis and responses to it
- The transformation of the State in a period of intensified, intersecting crises
- The challenge of an anticapitalist strategy against the impending climate catastrophe
- The possible interconnections between class, race and gender in contemporary struggles
- The open questions facing Marxist philosophy

**Special Calls for Papers will be issued on**

- Climate change and spatial transformations
- Migration and refugees
- Feminism, gender and sexuality
- Class composition and technology

**The Conference is organized in cooperation with the Department of Social Policy, Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences, Athens**

**Deadline for submissions 31 December 2022**

**To submit a paper or panel proposal visit**

<https://conference.historicalmaterialism.org/event/4/>

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