

## CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

### MARXISM IN THE AGE OF THE TOTAL CRISIS

It is said that we live in an era of total crisis. Not only on a cultural, but social, economic, ecological level the term seems ubiquitously used with ever more urgency and on a global scale. In this respect the term crisis today seems to replace the concept of history as a concrete generality in a generic singular form of multi-temporalities. The anamnesis of crisis also pertains to the sciences and the ideal of science in exactly the general sense of a plural unity which encompasses all kinds of organized attempts of knowledge making. If the institutions of knowledge production and mediation are in a crisis the consequences of the deep ruptures in collective praxis become graspable. A Marxist approach cannot remain just negative as a mere critique in face of the commodification of knowledge and manipulation of feelings and consciousness. **Rather, the task is to seize the means of production even on the level of mental labour and iconic engineering.** In this way the possibilities of a common use and a social orientation of the sciences, technology and all kinds of collective praxis can be opened up beyond extractivist exploitation and for the common good.

In a wider sense, the term "crisis" signifies a situation that is simultaneously indeterminate as much as it is over-determinate. Looked at negatively, and in the light of the not-yet-over pandemic, local conflicts and confrontations, from the proxy war in Syria to the invasion of Ukraine by Russia, which carries the potential of transmuting into a full-scale global confrontation, food crisis, global economic stagnation, and environmental catastrophes, that crisis appears as a threat that may completely wipe out civilization and (human) life of the planet. However, true to the etymological roots of the term, a crisis also signifies possibilities of anticipating and building a radically different future from within the existing uncertainties.

That ongoing crisis seems to be a multifaceted totality; the multitude of crises humanity experiences are forms of existence of the crisis-ridden essence of capitalism. Capitalism seems to be a factor of the crisis on different levels.

The global economic stagnation, "negative economic growth", the rise of poverty and the widening of the gap between the rich and the poor on worldwide scale and high inflation, which allegedly has been caused by the pandemic evidence the fragility of the capitalist economy that follows its contradictory inner structure.

At the political sphere, we witness the erosion of the state and political institutions, which is manifest in the rise of ultra-right-wing movements, the undermining of the law and constitution by those in power, and the subordination of the will of the state to that of the so-called "leading elites" and "charismatic leaders". Hence, the transubstantiation of the state from the instrument of maintaining the order and suppressing the class struggle to a means of destabilizing the order and creating and deepening the perception of crisis.

At the social level, the rise of authoritarianism is accompanied by suspension and repression of the rights of citizens, particularly those of minorities and marginalized groups, and the attack on social securities and the gains of the working people, and the rise of racism, nationalism, ethnicism, sexism and patriarchy, and xenophobia. Furthermore, the prevalence of conspiracy theories as new forms of superstition and the distrust toward knowledge-producing institutes and institutionally produced knowledge point toward a "spiritual" crisis on a social scale.

At the ecological level, the insatiable urge of capital for valorization, the plunder of natural resources, and land grabbing, sea grabbing and forest grabbing for the sake of profit making and rent acquisition have amounted to an environmental crisis, the forms of manifestation of which are global warming, extreme weather conditions, loss of agricultural resources and the consequent food crisis. The response of the bourgeois technocratic institutions to the imminent total ecological catastrophe does not transcend the boundaries of a managerial approach and suggesting "fixes" to these problems taken in isolation from the totality of crisis while the capitalist state and bourgeois politicians refrain from taking serious action or even agreeing on the measures to be taken.

The aforementioned poses significant theoretical and political challenges and urgently **calls for a Marxist response** putting forth an encompassing view and methods to guide both theoretical analysis and political action. As stated above, the crisis does not only point to mere negativity, but it also signifies a positive ambivalence that bears the potential for realizing radical change. In order to forge a robust answer we need to critically revise as well as affirm of Marxist categories of analysis and methodological tools. Actualizing this positive potentiality requires a dialectical approach which takes different interrelations and perspectives seriously to cope with complexity and change on a global level. One important aspect of such an approach would be to consider the subject matter of analysis not as a finalized, static entity but as a developing process and seek for the dynamics of its radical change within the system itself through identifying the future in the present in the form of potentialities.

To that end we have to explicate the role of knowledge and the sciences as expression of the present societal context as well as tools for change. Not only do we have to analyze the mechanisms of how we reached the above-mentioned crises, but even more important is to try and define ways to break out of the current hegemony of capitalism. A Marxist approach to the sciences is the understanding how conscious collective human activity can foster a better future.

We invite contributions that facilitate approaching the crises holistically and analyzing them as forms of manifestation of the total capitalist crisis. Such an approach transcends the limitations of conventional, symptomatic representations and enhances the dialectical grasp of the crisis pointing toward prospects of its overcoming and building a better world.

The themes to be addressed are, but not limited to:

- The crisis and the capitalist state; the capitalist state in/as crisis
- The crisis in academia and its relation to capitalization of sciences and commodification of knowledge
- Environmental crisis and climate change
- Forms of class struggle in the face of total crisis
- The self-organization of people, including the decline of trade-unions and traditional political parties
- Gender-based oppression in late capitalism
- The straight jacked of formal logic and its final destination in binary digitalization leading to algorithmic approaches such as the so-called Artificial Intelligence. The need for exploring dialectics as a counter tool for human progress.
- The crisis of value
- The refugee crisis
- The crisis of radical left and the rise/fall of identity politics
- Alternative conceptions of the crisis and their critique, e.g., anthropocene, capitalocene, etc.
- (a critique of) non-Marxist responses to the crisis, e.g., new materialism, post-humanism, etc.
- The role of music, film, theater, and literature as expression of resistance.
- The rise of ultra-right-wing movements and its expression of fear, poverty, and 'the other'

Please submit your extended abstracts (400 to 500 words long with 5 to 7 bibliographic entries), prepared for blind reading, and a separate title page that includes the title of your submission, affiliation, and contact information to [marxismandsciences@gmail.com](mailto:marxismandsciences@gmail.com) (subject of the email should be 1st symposium of the M&S).

Selected papers from the symposium will be invited for evaluation to be published in *Marxism & Sciences* Volume 3 Issue 1, Summer 2024.

BİLİMLER KÖYÜ  
(Village of Sciences)  
Foça, İzmir, Turkey

DEADLINE  
15 MAY 2023