8 March of struggle for women’s lives and for equality in the production of life!

Each year, **International Women’s Da**y is an important moment in giving visibility to feminist struggles against patriarchal capitalism, in its attempt to engender new ways to oppress and exploit us. With the health crisis provoked by the pandemic of COVID-19, added to the economic crisis and the attacks of conservative governments against women’s rights, international mobilization on 8 March gains even more importance and urgency

The pandemic has unleashed a crisis in various dimensions of human life, and, when measures of physical isolation have been brought in to protect health, has shown that the jobs necessary for survival are the really essential ones. Many women were confined to the domestic space of the home and were deprived of jobs that, although precarious, brought them monetary income.

The burden of care work done for the family increased considerably, and came hand in hand with an increase in cases of violence and feminicide, as a way of imposing the burden of this on women. The pandemic crisis has therefore shown that social reproduction work is at the centre of the alternatives for managing such crises and finding solutions, but it also poses the risk of deepening and crystallizing women’s role in carrying it out.

As a counterpoint to this, women around the world have been forging and strengthening networks of solidarity and reciprocity, creating forms of protection and denunciation against this type of violence, and also building forms of

resistance against hunger, poverty and worsening loss of rights during the pandemic. The cultivation, production and distribution of food, and the exchange of food and health protection materials, the replacement of face-to-face meetings with virtual ones, the creation of self-protection mechanisms, among other initiatives, were carried out in local areas under the leadership of women.

In addition, the active struggles that women have continued during the pandemic have achieved important victories, such as the legalization of abortion this year in Colombia and previously in Argentina and in some Mexican states and women as essential workers (health workers, teachers, etc.) who have not hesitated to engage in strikes to defend their working conditions.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine has hit women particularly hard. Women and their children are the overwhelming majority of the more than a million who have already fled the country as refugees. At the same time, younger women in particular are taking an active part in the armed and unarmed defence of their country. Women are also playing a key role in mobilising diaspora communities elsewhere and are prominent in the anti-war movement in Russia.

On this 8 March, we must rescue the alternatives created during these years of deprivation, highlighting the role that the women’s strike has played in giving visibility to social reproduction work in this context.

We will occupy the streets, the internet networks and all the areas where our struggles can take space. We want to live, without machismo, without violence, with recognition of our work and with equality!

Long live International Women's Day!

Motion adopted by the International Committee of the Fourth International.

5 March 2022

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Glasgow City Council unions vote for strike action over equal pay

Workers at Glasgow City Council have voted overwhelmingly for legal strike action over equal pay measures *writes Mike Picken*.

The trade union Unison's ballot ended on 1 March and the results were announced on 2 March (see below). Nearly 9,000 Unison members employed directly by the Council voted in a postal ballot, 96% in favour of strike action on a turnout of 52.5%.

Under the reactionary anti-trade union laws of the Conservative UK Government, postal ballots for strike action have to exceed a legal threshold of a 50% turnout. Given the difficulties of postal ballots sent to home addresses having to be returned through the post in an era of electronic communication in the workplace, this is an extremely difficult challenge and the fact that this threshold was exceeded and an

overwhelming vote for a strike carried shows the huge strength of feeling among rank and file workers. Unfortunately the 50% threshold was not quite exceeded in the subsidiary employer "Glasgow Life", an 'Arms Length Management Organisation" (ALMO) notionally a charity, used by the Council to deliver cultural, leisure and recreation services such as sports centres, arts venues, museums, libraries and community centres across the City. Nevertheless the 91% vote for strike action on a 48% turnout indicates the strength of feeling in that part of the Council's services.

The GMB union also balloted its Glasgow City Council members affected by the dispute and achieved a 97.8% vote for strike action on a more than 50% turnout from its members in social care, cleaning and catering services.

GMB Scotland Organiser Sean Baillie told the Glasgow Times:

> *"Our members need equal pay justice and an end to the discriminatory pay and grading system that remains in place.*
>
> *"That's the clear message this ballot result sends to the council officials who should be negotiating properly with our claimant groups and to every councillor seeking election in May.*
>
> *"The council's liabilities are growing every working hour of every working day and the cost will likely run into the hundreds of million yet again, so the situation is critical for our members, the services they deliver, and the city's finances.*
>
> *"That's why we need an urgent negotiation process to be conducted in good faith between the council and the claimant groups, if strike action is to be avoided." Sean Baillie GMB Scotland Organiser*
>
> *https://www.glasgowtimes.co.uk/news/19964224.equal-pay-strikes-hit-glasgow-end-month-unions-back-action/*



GMB members demanding equal pay

Unite, the third union involved in the equal pay dispute, is balloting members currently, with a closing date of 14 March.

The pressure is now on the SNP-led Council to come up with a resolution by introducing new proposals for compensation and equal pay grading. The SNP leadership inherited the crisis in Glasgow City Council in 2017 when it took over from a Labour Council found guilty of pay discrimination against women workers over decades but promised to settle the issue and introduce both compensation and a new pay and grading system that they have failed to do.

In the run-up to the local Council elections on 5 May, resolving this dispute is major challenge for the SNP Council leadership and also raises the question of whether the SNP-led Scottish government and their Scottish Green partners have the wherewithal to come up with financial support for the cash-strapped Council that can enable resolution. If they fail in this, then strikes will almost certainly go ahead against the backdrop of the Council elections. Solidarity and support from workers and residents across Glasgow and beyond will be vital in the event of strikes to ensure a victory in this long-running battle for equal pay. A separate Scotland-wide pay award campaign for council workers from 1 April is also ongoing by the unions.

3 March 2022

UNISON Glasgow media release:

UNISON members in Glasgow City Council have voted overwhelmingly for strike action in the dispute over equal pay compensation payments.
96% of members voted for strike action, on a turnout of 52.5%.
Just under 9,000 workers were balloted.
Lyn Marie O'Hara, UNISON Branch Depute Chair, said:
"This is a huge vote for action and a clear message to the council to resolve the dispute.
The UNISON branch will now request authorisation for strike action from our NEC and be liaising with our sister trade unions on the next steps in the industrial dispute.
The trade unions will also continue to receive regular updates from the claimants joint legal team on the current negotiations with the council lawyers. The council should now listen."

To Unison Glasgow members:

UNISON Strike Ballot Results – Equal Pay Compensation Payments Dispute
UNISON members in Glasgow City Council have voted overwhelmingly for strike action in the dispute over equal pay compensation payments.
96% of members voted for strike action, on a turnout of 52.5%.
This is a huge vote for action and a clear message to the council to resolve the dispute. The UNISON branch will now request authorisation for strike action from our NEC and be

liaising with our sister trade unions on the next steps in the industrial dispute. The trade unions will also continue to receive regular updates from the claimants joint legal team on the current negotiations with the council lawyers. The council should now listen.
The vote in Glasgow Life was also for strike action however the turnout in the ballot was just short of the 50% threshold required under the current UK anti-trade union laws. Nevertheless, this is still a very clear message from UNISON members in Glasgow Life on the need for equal pay justice. 91% of members in Glasgow Life voted for strike action, on a turnout of 48%.
Further communications will be issued in due course.
Well done to all who voted in the two strike ballots.
UNISON Glasgow Branch
https://www.facebook.com/UnisonGlasgowCity/

Defend Ukraine, defend the planet

Red-Green Labour Editorial Board response to the war in *Ukraine*.

We stand with the Ukrainian people in their remarkable resistance to Putin's brutal invasion of their country driven by Great Russian chauvinism and imperialist ambition. They are facing tanks, artillery, cruise missiles launched from ships in the Black Sea and aerial assaults by Russian paratroopers. Cluster bombs have been used against civilian districts of Kharkiv, Ukraine's second city. A 24 mile column of Russian

armour is heading towards Ukraine's capital city with the aim (we can assume) of blasting the Ukrainian government out of office and instituting regime change by force.

We strongly support Ukraine's right of self-determination: i.e. its right to determine its own future free from interference or intimidation from East or West.

We also support Ukrainian demands for arms and military assistance from the international community and for economic measures to be taken against Putin's regime and its billionaire backers. Demands that are echoed by sections of the socialist and progressive opposition within Russia.

We are in awe at the mobilisation of popular resistance which appears to have slowed down the Russian advance. Weapons have been distributed on the streets and volunteers are joining the resistance in large numbers. The government website is not only urging people to join the resistance but is giving instructions on how to make petrol bombs for use in street fighting. New recruits are going straight to the front lines with no military equipment other than a rifle a machine gun or a grenade launcher in their hands.

We welcome the decision of the EU countries to open their borders and to provide safe haven for refugees and we demand that the racist Johnson government in Britain follows suit – which it is still refusing to do. Also that it drops its racist *Immigration and Nationalities Bill*, which would impose further and draconian restriction on refugees trying to enter the UK.

We stand in solidarity with the remarkable demonstrations that have been taking place around the world – not least in Russia itself where thousands have been thrown into jail – in support of the Ukrainian resistance. A victory for Putin in this war would not only strengthen right-wing forces globally, but would strengthen imperialism both East and West.

The driving force behind Putin's invasion of Ukraine, we should be clear, has little to do with NATO's ambitions, which he hides behind, but his long-held ambition to promote Great Russian chauvinism with its own spheres of influence – including Ukraine.

We demand the withdrawal of all Russian and Byelorussian troops all the regions of Ukraine including from the Donbass region and Crimea.

The ecological dimension

The Russian invasion of Ukraine took place a few days before the publication of the IPCC's *Sixth Assessment on Climate Change* which has issued its starkest warning yet on the future of the planet. Catastrophic climate change, it says, is now "widespread, rapid, and intensifying".

This reminds us that a Putin victory against Ukraine would not just have a reactionary impact on world politics, but would dislocate the struggle against global warming and climate change making the future of life on the planet even more precarious.

The struggle against Russian aggression and the struggle to save the planet from catastrophic climate change are now indivisible. The dangers posed by the petrochemical industry are not 'just' about carbon emissions – catastrophic as they are. They are also about the role of the petrochemical industry in geo-politics, and the drive it generates towards resource conflict and wars. Many of the wars that have taken place since WW2 have had this behind them.

In fact Putin sees Russian oil and gas reserves, and the vast profits that they generate for him, as his trump card in his invasion of Ukraine and his ongoing imperialist ambitions. The reliance of much of Europe, Germany in particular, on Putins oil and gas, has meant that the most effective measure against

him, which would be to close down his oil and gas market, is very difficult to take.

The rapid transition to renewable energy that we need, therefore, is not 'just' to reduce carbon emissions and curb global warming, but to protect life on the planet by breaking the strangle-hold of the petrochemical industry and the conflicts and wars it generates. Renewables on the other hand can be developed anywhere in the world and offer a more equitable access to energy resources than the lottery of oil and gas deposits.

Nuclear power should also be rejected since it also locks us into the military industrial war machine since the existence of a nuclear power industry is an integral part of the manufacture of nuclear weapons. In Ukraine we have the nightmare of 15 soviet-era nuclear reactors in all (as well as the Chernobyl disaster site) now being contested in a war zone where anything could happen to them, either by accident or design.

Our immediate task, however, is to stop Putin destroying the fragile gains made in Glasgow in November and to start the fight for better outcomes from COP27 to be held in Sharm el-Sheikh in Egypt later this year. To do that we have to stand in solidarity with the people of Ukraine.

3 March 2022

Republished from Red Green Labour website: https://redgreenlabour.org/2022/03/03/defend-ukraine-defend-the-planet/

No to Putin’s invasion of Ukraine! Support to the Ukrainian resistance! Solidarity with the Russian opposition to the war!

Statement of the Executive Bureau of the Fourth International

1. Before dawn on 24 February 2022 the Russian army began its invasion of Ukraine, bombing the interior of the country and crossing the northern, eastern and southern borders of the country, heading for the capital Kiev. This aggression has already resulted in many deaths, both civilian and military. The Ukrainian army and population are defending themselves, several cities are holding out against the aggressor. Hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians have gone into exile, but the resistance continues. The Ukrainan people are resisting, with and without arms.

The Kremlin’s recognition three days earlier of the “independence” of the so-called “people’s republics” of Donetsk and Lugansk and the official entry of the Russian army into their territory was only the prelude to the invasion aimed at the total submission of the neighbouring country.

It is a military invasion of the territory of a former oppressed nation by a capitalist oligarchic, autocratic and imperialist regime whose aim is the reconstruction of the Russian empire.

2. Putin has made no secret of his Great Russian nationalism and since 2014 he has taken concrete steps to attack Ukraine's sovereignty. His chauvinistic pseudo-historical narrative, blaming the October 1917 Revolution for having constituted "three distinct Slavic peoples: Russian, Ukrainian and Belorussian, instead of the great Russian nation" is not a recent invention.

The invasion of Ukraine follows a Great Russian chauvinist and imperialist policy that began in different contexts and phases since the break-up of the USSR: from the use of an "energy war" (playing on prices and alternative pipelines), up to the instrumentalization of national minority conflicts such as in Moldova (with the formation of the "Republic of Transnistria" with the support of the Russian army in 1990-91) and in Georgia (with the formation of the "Republic of Abkhazia" in 1992), and later the war with Georgia for control of South Ossetia (2008); but also direct oppressive wars like the war of occupation of Chechnya (1994-1996 and 1999-2009). Each time it is a question of preserving the interests of the Kremlin or seizing territory. But globally, the Putin decades (2000s) corresponded to the (re)building of a strong state (controlling its oligarchs) modernizing its military apparatus, establishing a Euroasiatic economic union – with its military dimensions. A new phase started in 2014 with the Ukrainian crisis and the fall of Yanukovitch (described as a "fascist coup" under NATO's umbrella) followed by the annexation of Crimea and establishment of separatist "republics" in Ukraine's Donbas controlled by pro-Russian mercenaries. The military support for Lukashenko in Belarus against the popular uprising in 2020 and the military intervention (through the OTCS – Organization of the Treaty for Collective Security under Russian hegemony) to "normalize" Kazakhstan in January this year made Putin feel stronger in the context of US defeat in Afghanistan and open divisions within NATO's members on energy (gas pipeline) issues.

Ukraine is an independent country which has preserved a regime of formal democracy. Russia has an authoritarian, repressive parliamentary system with far-right members in the Duma. In Ukraine far-right and fascist forces were very visibly present during the Maidan protests in 2014. The Russian invasion risks strengthening existing far right forces in both Russia and Ukraine. Leading figures of far-right and neo-fascist forces internationally openly support Putin.

The invasion of Ukraine is clearly aimed at imposing a puppet regime, subservient to the Kremlin and Vladimir Putin.

3. Putin’s propaganda tried to justify the aggression by saying that NATO’s expansion to the east would endanger Russia’s existence. NATO (which we opposed from its foundation) is a tool for US imperialism and its allies, initially built against Soviet Union and Communist China. Logically it should have been dissolved with the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact in July 1991, but successive US governments have not only kept it going, but they have also continued to expand it. We reject the competitive logic of capitalist power-states leading to the accumulation of ever more powerful weapons. This is what motivates the opposition to NATO of large parts of the population in the world – and this is not Putin’s preoccupation! However, in some countries, which had been colonized by tsarism or subjugated by the USSR, joining NATO was supported by their populations in the hope that it would protect their independence. We stand instead for the eradication of inequalities, and the necessary social, environmental and democratic development as the means to defend peace.

The fight against the extension of NATO to the East passes today through the uncompromising defence of the national and democratic rights of the peoples threatened by Russian imperialism.

We demand the dissolution of NATO, however this is not the question posed by the attempted annexation of Ukraine by Russian imperialism, which denies the very existence of this nation – Putin claims that it is a pure invention of Lenin and the Bolsheviks. US imperialism is only taking advantage of the headlong rush of the new Kremlin tsar.

We support the right to self-determination of the Ukrainian people and the protection of the rights of the country's national minorities. Neither Russia nor NATO will defend these rights. We demand the dismantling of all military bases outside their home countries, the liquidation of the US-led NATO and the Russian-led CSTO. The threat of the use of nuclear weapons must be firmly rejected at every level.

At a time when the absolute urgency at the global level should be the fight against accelerated climate change, the development of military adventures and ever more sophisticated weapons systems by the imperialists shows the need for the peoples to dismiss their irresponsible leaders and change the functioning of society: against the generalized competition that capitalism carries, let us impose the logic of solidarity and peace!

4. Whereas in 1968, when Czechoslovakia was invaded, the courageous Russian opponents of the invasion were counted on the fingers of one hand, on the same day that Ukraine was invaded, thousands of people took to the streets of some 50 Russian cities, braving the authorities to protest against Vladimir Putin's attack on Ukraine. "No to war!" the demonstrators, mostly young people, chanted in the afternoon and early evening in the streets and central squares of Moscow, St. Petersburg, Novosibirsk, Yekaterinburg, Krasnodar and Murmansk.

In 2014, there was widespread support for the annexation of

Crimea among the Russian population, today there is contestation even within the establishment, this could lead to Putin's downfall.

One hundred and seventy Russian journalists and foreign policy experts have written an open letter condemning the Russian Federation's military operation in Ukraine. "War has never been and will never be a method of conflict resolution and there is no justification for it," they wrote.

Since the first day of the protests, the regime has made thousands of arrests and the police has brutalized the arrested protesters. It has also ordered the limitation of access to social networks, accused of "violating human rights and fundamental freedoms as well as the rights and freedoms of Russian citizens"!

Despite the repression, an anti-war movement is continuing to develop in Russia! It merits the solidarity of the world labour movement.

5. In the face of the war in Ukraine, it is the responsibility of all activists in the labour and social movements, of those who have mobilized against the war, to support the resistance of the oppressed Ukrainian nation. To stop this war, Putin's regime must be sanctioned and Ukraine supported in resisting the aggression.

• Immediate withdrawal of Russian armed forces from all Ukrainian territory, including areas occupied since 2014.

• Solidarity and support for the armed and unarmed resistance of the Ukrainian people. Delivery of weapons on the request of the Ukrainian people to fight the Russian invasion of their territory. This is basic solidarity with the victims of aggression by a much more powerful opponent.

• Support to all forms of self-organization for mutual aid and resistance of the Ukrainian population.

• Support for sanctions against Russia, as called for by the Ukrainian resistance, that limit Putin’s ability to continue the ongoing invasion and his warmongering policy in general. Rejection of any sanctions that hit the Russian people more than the government and its oligarchs.

• Open the borders and welcome the populations who have to flee the war by providing the practical short and longer-term aid necessary, especially taking into account the fact that the vast majority are women and children.

• Cancellation of the Ukrainian debt, direct humanitarian aid to civil, trade union and popular organizations in Ukraine!

Internationalist solidarity

We affirm our full solidarity with those who are mobilizing against the war in Russia and those who are fighting to defend the independence of Ukraine.

The interests of the peoples, their right to peace and security are not defended by US imperialism or NATO or by Russian and Chinese imperialism. These extremely serious events remind us more than ever of the need to build an internationalist mobilization to give the peoples a voice different from that of the states, and in solidarity with the Ukrainian people against all the policies that attack and oppress them. Governments will not initiate this march towards peace. We must organize it ourselves.

• No to the repression of the anti-war movement in Russia. Build active and visible solidarity with this movement. Call on Russian soldiers to refuse to participate in the invasion and organise solidarity with them, including political asylum if they request it.

• Support the progressive forces fighting for democracy and social justice in Ukraine. Build all the links possible to develop a dialogue with them on the way forward to a just peace.

• For international solidarity with our own social camp! Build links between working peoples' and popular movements fighting for democracy and social justice in Russia, Ukraine and other countries in the region as well as internationally.

• Only the international working class, fighting together with all oppressed and exploited people, for peace and against imperialism, capitalism and war, can create a better world.

1 March 2022

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