

Radical Review 2: Justice in Global Transition (working title) **Call for Submissions**

Background:

We are seeking written submissions of up to 2,500 words to compile the second edition of **Radical Review** on the themes of economic justice and global transition.

Submissions may be essays, interviews, written discussions, or any other form in which the contributor feels capable of tackling the theme. Refer to the bottom of this document for submission instructions, and contact details for any further enquiries and questions.

About Radical Review:

Radical Review is an annual publication aimed at normalizing and encouraging radical thinking and radical change in social and political spheres. Contributors interrogate a given theme with each edition, presenting a range of different proposals in order to demonstrate the context-sensitivity of the 'radical' designation and show that far from being extreme and implausible, radical ideas are necessary and achievable.

Find the first edition online here: <https://www.collaborativesocialchange.org/radical-review>

Second Edition Thematic Context:

Calls for radical change to an unequal, violent, or otherwise unsustainable status quo can be heard seemingly from all angles, all over the world. The Occupy movement and the Arab Spring in 2010-11, both in different ways responses to systemic corruption and inequality, ushered in an era of protest that has only gathered steam in the last couple of years. Waves of support for populist politicians (both genuine and self-styled) around the world echo similar discomfort. Discrete local grievances often stitch together across borders, through rallying cries that centre the '99%' against the '1%'; the 'many' against 'the few'. These grievances are not just similar though, but fundamentally interrelated.

Despite increasing multipolarity, much of the world still operates according to an economic system established during the period of European colonial dominance and championed at least since WW2 by the United States. Those who benefit at the global level, largely in the Global North, often do so by exploiting wage arbitrage (even going as far as soliciting slave labour in some cases) and maintaining control over natural resources, stifling autonomous development in the Global South. This system embodies structural violence, within and across borders. It produces myriad atrocities including violations of economic, social, and cultural rights, as well as civil and political rights, particularly in former colonies across the Global South but also along racial and class-based lines across domestic settings in the Global North. Nevertheless, the existing world order expresses emergent qualities that cannot simply be reduced to a particular colonial past; it is not just former colonial powers in Europe or the United States that benefit from the structure of the global economy. Business and political elites around the world are able to take advantage of structural relations at the

local and global level to further their own interests at the expense of others. Proposed solutions and responses to the myriad grievances raised must therefore artfully balance breadth and specificity, as well as look backward into history without being constrained by it.

Filling an economy-shaped hole in transitional justice...

Transitional Justice (TJ) has established itself as the dominant paradigm for addressing past and ongoing mass atrocities and mass violence. However, as mainstream and critical commentators readily admit, there are major weaknesses in TJ's ability to effectively address violations of economic rights and economic violence, both in terms of the scope of harms addressed, and in terms of the impact of proposed solutions. To address economic violence and social inequalities, TJ practice has to date primarily consisted of material and/or symbolic reparations administered through the courts of law or through broader compensation-as-development schemes that often reconstruct conflict affected areas in ways that link local communities to the free market economy that produced inequalities fuelling atrocity violence.

We contend that these kinds of responses at best fundamentally misrepresent the scale and nature of the problems at hand. TJ's constraints relate to its history and position firmly within the geopolitical mainstream, and specifically with respect to the liberal peace and therefore capitalism. To prioritize TJ response for violations of economic rights would necessarily include moving liberal states that pride themselves on spearheading the international criminal justice, human rights, and atrocity prevention movements into the spotlight as complicit in atrocity violence. Moreover, any measures proposed must take seriously the possibility of systemic change *away* from the liberal capitalist mainstream.

Given the successful spread of capitalist globalization, and the history upon which the current global political economy was built, properly eradicating systematic and widespread violations of economic rights in one domestic setting *requires* something on the way to a global transformation. Thus, this edition of Radical Review calls on commentators with diverse backgrounds to propose approaches to facilitate a necessarily global TJ process where communities (i.e. the 99%) across borders seek justice for the economic violence that continues to deplete their quality of life. Proposals needn't be global in scope, but should address local issues in a sufficiently radical way as to impact or call into question the spread of a global system.

...and a justice-shaped hole in theories of economic transition

There is an awareness of the need for coordination at the global level to address crises related to the climate and the international economy (although both are typically narrowly construed). Business and political leaders meet at international conferences like last year's COP26 or the World Economic Forum summit at Davos to discuss the issues of the day, from climate change to automation, expressing an increasingly urgent sense that 'something must be done'. Coordination here may merely amount to major economies charting similar courses, often future-oriented ('invest in tech'). Where there is a stronger sense of intra-state cooperation, it is often along avowedly capitalist lines – the objection among key

members of the World Trade Organization to the lifting of patent restrictions to allow for freer production of COVID vaccines is a case in point.

Theories of economic transition abound at the domestic level as well. Calls to ‘build back better’ from British and American leaders express a need to re-orient national economies in light of vaguely defined changing circumstances.

But, frequently missing in all of this future planning is the backward glance of *justice*. Is it not enough to simply *adapt* the world economy to new conditions (e.g. resource scarcity, climate change, and mass displacement). Rather, present and historic violence that existing global structures depend on and perpetuate must be addressed to facilitate anything like effective equity between peoples in the future as that adaptation occurs. It is only through applying this lens to the idea of a *global economic transition* that those worst affected by the current order can be appropriately redressed, and that the accompanying ongoing systemic violence can truly be eradicated. We should take cues from activists in the Global South, like the authors of the 2010 People’s Agreement of Cochabamba who foregrounded climate *justice* among their proposals to deal with the civilizational crisis facing the natural world.

We call on contributors to put forward proposals that address these twin lacunae in any way they feel is appropriate. More concretely, we ask contributors to explain how to address historic economic injustices in such a way that prevents the recurrence of similar harms. Some questions that might help shape proposals include:

- What does a more just global economy look like?
- What values should underpin a more just global economy?
- Who should participate in the design of a more just global economy?
- What does a *just economic transition* look like? How should we measure the success of a just economic transition, if at all?
- How do exclusive or restrictive accounts of ‘the economy’ (e.g. as GDP, as financial health) limit the ability to achieve economic justice, if at all?
- How should we conceptualize ‘the global economy’ in order to think productively about solutions to systemic problems at national and local levels?
- If we are to consider the violence wrought in the global expansion of capitalism as an atrocity (or as atrocities (or as causing atrocities...)), how do we apportion blame or accountability?

Sample Background Reading:

<https://academic.oup.com/ijtj/article-abstract/2/3/266/2356955>

https://www.climateemergencyinstitute.com/uploads/Peoples_climate_agreement.pdf

<http://www.plutobooks.com/9780745341750/a-peoples-green-new-deal/>

<https://www.sup.org/books/title/?id=25356>

<https://www.dukeupress.edu/the-beneficiary>

<https://www.hup.harvard.edu/catalog.php?isbn=9780674072343>



Submission Instructions

Abstracts of no more than 500 words should be submitted by **30 June, 2022** to co-editors Danny Lord and Dr. Saghar Sara Birjandian. Please send submissions and any enquiries to research@collaborativesocialchange.org.