



CALL FOR PAPERS
SMAIAS-ASN SUMMER SCHOOL 2022
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Pathways to a Just Transition: Ecology and Popular Movements in the South

In the current stage of systemic crisis, the harnessing of non-human nature in the global peripheries by monopoly capital has become a central concern. The free appropriation of nature from the peripheries is not new, yet its manifestations and character have been altered with the reemergence of finance capital and its hyper-speculative force. There has been an intensified penetration of corporate foreign investments in the peripheries, especially in nature-based industries such as forest produce and wood-based products, fishing, mineral extraction, and land and food systems, while the climate debate has also shifted the onus for preserving the ecological balance of the planet onto the countries of the South. Moreover, the very preservation of nature is being increasingly turned into an enterprise for profit, as in the rapid development of carbon markets.

These systemic tendencies have unleashed new rounds of primitive accumulation and new forms of rent-seeking which have intensified exploitation and oppression in the peripheries, resulting in direct conflict between nature-dependent people and the corporate monopolies. Ecological conflict, local and global, is intrinsic to the current systemic crisis. Competing perspectives on nature and its place in society are now yielding conflicting political strategies on a wide range of issues, from the commons and sustainable cities to climate engineering and 'green' humanitarian intervention. And there is, indeed, a powerful counter-movement aiming to reinvent monopoly capitalism as 'green capitalism'.

Environmental scenarios remain catastrophic for the majority of the world's population, located in the world's peripheries. A global transition can only be just if it entails redistribution of resources in the interest of working and oppressed peoples. The notion of a just transition is itself being widely disputed, by popular movements, non-governmental organizations, trade unions, think tanks, big business, and governments. Although it originates in a critique of dominant discourses on sustainable development, now corporate monopolies, multilateral organizations, and Northern governments are appropriating the idea to promote their own versions of clean energy and its prudent use, particularly in the South. We must therefore advance our own understanding of the relationship between ecological crisis, patterns of accumulation, and alternatives.

Recent research and debate have thrown light on the role of nature in the *longue durée* of primary production and social reproduction in the peripheries. The expansion of capitalism from its North Atlantic birthplace decimated or remolded pre-capitalist social systems and ecologies with either stable social metabolisms or only regionalized propensities for metabolic rifts. The long-term effects of capitalist expansion, including its industrial transformation under monopoly control, have established global patterns of uneven development and put in question no less than survival on this planet for the bulk of humanity, the peasantries, working classes, indigenous and traditional peoples constituting the system's global relative surplus population.

The historical expansion of capitalism has been based on various resource control regimes in the peripheries whose legacies persist to the present. Under colonialism, resource control was achieved by the establishment of extensive private property in the settler colonies, or the subordination of social norms and customs to capitalist exploitation and the trusteeship of colonial authorities. Such resource control regimes persisted after decolonization and accelerated under neoliberalism, as the global neocolonial order was consolidated. To this day, they are deployed against local systems of production and social reproduction, facilitating encroachment against fertile lands, forests, and water resources. Long after political decolonization, they continue to expel peasantries and traditional peoples from the countryside and into the world's burgeoning labour reserves, in overcrowded cities and across international boundaries under desperate and often lethal conditions. Meanwhile, Northern centers continue to consume the labour and raw materials of the peripheries through environmentally-mediated unequal exchange, using less of their own physical-natural environment and drawing on the use values of natural resources of the South.

New agricultural frontiers are being pried open by corporate agriculture, mining, and finance by means of new land grabs for extractive and processing industries, or monocrops and tree plantations, including for carbon credits, 'green' energy, and biofuels. Global value systems in agriculture, mining, and industry have been advancing at an accelerated pace against peasant producers and indigenous, quilombola, and traditional peoples. Customary control over resources has been receding under capitalist advance, often succumbing to cooptation through its own internal social cleavages. State-controlled resource regimes themselves, in the *dirigiste* or current neoliberal period, have moved against historically oppressed social groups, especially women, the racially oppressed, and lower castes. The metropolitan centres have also pushed the peripheries into new roles as reservoirs for the waste products of industrial capitalist development in the course of export-oriented industrialization, while extending capitalist markets under their monopoly control to global atmospheric commons and CO2 absorption capacities. These are today new obstacles to the development of the South, which set the stage for the uneven impact of environmental change and climactic instability.

The neoliberal escalation of unequal exchange under the aegis of monopoly-finance capital poses existential threats. New genocides are clearly on the agenda of the twenty-first century. The commons continue to be crucial to the social reproduction of working and oppressed peoples, across the rural-urban divide, even while buttressing labor reserves and super-exploitation. New alternatives must now be sought in the interest of working people and historically oppressed groups for the exercise of sovereign control over resources. At a basic level, the reclaiming of land and territories from settler and corporate monopolies is necessary for the advancement of sovereign and popular control over the commons, for the South's own industrial and sustainable development. At a planning level, this requires experimenting with a mix of resource control systems to assess and enhance their egalitarian and sustainable potential, including traditional and modern agro-ecological systems, pastoral ecology, climate-proofed and urban agriculture, and forms of communing in pooled resources, whether living, such as fisheries, or semi-living, like aquifers and shared hydraulic systems. On another level, it requires a new scientific endeavor for the advancement of popular knowledge, the establishment of sovereign industrial linkages, a resurrection of people's and appropriate technology, all within an egalitarian and sustainable perspective.

It also requires social mobilization embedded in a larger strategy to achieve a non-capitalist alternative, seeking rural-urban unity among working people and oppressed groups, and thinking strategically on the vexing issues of state power and North-South solidarity. Popular responses to the ecological crisis have generally been led by rural-based movements for land and agrarian reform, women's movements, traditional, quilombola and indigenous people's movements, and certain broader political forces spanning the rural-urban divide and struggling for racial, social, economic, and environmental justice. This diversity also spans a broad operational and ideological spectrum, from diffused, localized, low-profile struggles, to radical land movements and armed struggles with an autonomist or national liberation perspective, to social justice movements employing constitutional means in defense of alternative

modes of living, social organization, production, and consumption. The historic questions concerning the social base, leadership, strategy, tactics, ideology, and international alliances of such movements remain on the table and are key to understanding the challenges and possibilities ahead.

The 2022 Summer School seeks to contribute to these varied debates and deepen our collective knowledge about pathways to a just global transition. The Summer School will focus generally on the issues raised above and more specifically on the themes below:

1. Unequal exchange and the politics of climate change in the international division of labour;
2. Global agricultural value systems and their impacts on the environment;
3. Extractivism and the evolution of global mineral value systems;
4. Evolution of natural resource regimes and impacts on gender relations and social reproduction;
5. Dispossession and encroachment against peasants, pastoralists, indigenous, quilombola and traditional peoples;
6. The expansion of labour reserves and rural-urban linkages;
7. Race and caste in rural and urban land questions;
8. Sustainable cities and urban reform;
9. Patriarchy, ecology and women's movements;
10. Agro-ecological systems and conservation;
11. Politics of struggles for the commons;
12. Ecological industrialization alternatives for the South;
13. Popular movements, strategies and international solidarity.

The SMAIAS/ASN Summer School values diversity and promotes dialogue between academia and civil society. It brings together young and veteran scholars and civil society activists from all continents, especially from Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and provides for collective reflection and learning. Interested scholars and activists are invited to submit paper proposals (abstracts) of up to 300 words, in English, no later than 31 August 2021. Proposals should be submitted to agrariansouth@gmail.com, with copy to Dr. Walter Chambati at walter@aiatrust.org. Women are especially encouraged to participate. The selection of proposals will be made public by the end of September via our social media, [@AIAS trust](https://twitter.com/AIAS_trust), [@Agrarian South](https://twitter.com/Agrarian_South), www.facebook.com/agrariansouthnetwork, and websites, <http://aiatrust.org/> and <http://www.agrariansouth.org/news/>. The results will not be communicated individually. Authors of selected proposals will be requested to develop their full papers by 30 November 2021, and will be invited to participate in the panels of the Summer School. The Summer School will be held remotely in virtual format, in the week of 17–21 January. Due to the ongoing pandemic situation, a physical meeting is not currently being planned. The papers presented at the Summer School may eventually be selected for publication in *Agrarian South: Journal of Political Economy*, subject to normal peer review process.