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Caring for justice

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“Care’ in these times looks like respect for everyone’s fear, anxiety, anger, and frustration. It looks like humility in the face of the unknown and uncontrollable, and openness to new imaginative possibilities.” (Ticktin, 2020)

After nearly a year and a half operating in pandemic crisis mode, we can only express how exhausted we still are, and commiserate with those directly affected by loss, illness, increased precarity. Working as thousands were taken by COVID-19 and millions of families struggled has seemed at times relentless and soul-crushing. As countries of the Global North vaccinate massively, the injustice for inhabitants of the Global South for whom the protection of a vaccine remains elusive is striking—as is, within countries, the unequal access to care, embedded with other forms of inequalities. Among our academic community precarious workers and students have paid the heaviest price for this (long-lasting) “crisis” which only dramatically exacerbates structural inequalities.

In addition to the pandemic, an increasingly toxic political climate, targeting critical social sciences in particular, is threatening to gag all research that illuminates oppression, systemic violence, marginalization and exploitation, be it “critical race theory”, intersectional or decolonial approaches or, in France the very use of the term “islamophobia”. Several of our colleagues have been targeted and received death threats for merely doing their work as critical and feminist scholars, to the point that international expressions of support have poured in.¹ This international solidarity is crucial and fully appreciated. It encourages us to keep working because if these critical theories are under attack, it is because they are gaining space and visibility in the academic field and beyond.

In her discussion of “feminist commons in times of COVID-19”, Miriam Ticktin points to the free “community fridges” set up by anarchists in New York boroughs

1. See for instance [the page created by Italian colleagues which gathers letters of support from a large number of international professional organizations](#).

in 2020 as an instance of mutual aid, based on trust. From the emergency, in urgency, but fueled by past struggles, collectives have sought to counter the failures of government responses. "Community", as this issue demonstrates, is probably a key to "building commons" but should also be critically scrutinized and contextualized. Gerald Taylor Aiken and Cyria Emelianoff do just that in the next two issues of JSSJ on "The (In)Justice of Community Initiatives". They contribute to questioning taken-for-granted assumptions about "community" in politics, policy-making and academic debate, thanks to the careful examination and in-depth analysis of different initiatives in different contexts.

What do "commons" and "care" mean in our academic world rife with violent inequality and subject to growing pressure to "compete"? At JSSJ we believe part of the answer is a steadfast commitment to fully open access publishing, rather than the merchandized version profit-making publishers are selling via Article Processing Charges (APC). The alternative that we spend time nurturing is this journal run on a volunteer basis by teachers and researchers, some of whom are precarious, but also (and this is far from being the case for all journals) with the support of French institutions.² We are very happy to welcome Nina Koulikoff who joined us in January as a part-time editor. We thank her for her invaluable work as well as the journal's translators and reviewers without whom this issue would not have been possible.

Exhausting as the work has been, we continue because we believe in the necessity to foster dialogue between French and Anglo research on space, in the need to welcome the work of early-career researchers and make it accessible in two languages, and keep the concern for justice on the agenda.

Our next issues will consider "Violence and the production of space in and beyond the urban" ([see call](#)) and "Territories of struggle and spatial justice" and we look forward to submissions related to these themes, that will contribute to shaping the "imaginative possibilities" our troubled times call for.

Reference

Ticktin Miriam, "Building a Feminist Commons in Times of COVID-19", *Feminists Theorize COVID-19' symposium*, *Signs*, 2020 (<http://signsjournal.org/covid/ticktin/>, accessed on July 29, 2021).

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