

Seminar series “Energy: Past & Present”. Online. Starting 28 Sept 18 h. (CET)

Discussion published by José Ramón Bertomeu-Sánchez on Tuesday, September 27, 2022

Dear friends and colleagues,

We would like to share the four sessions of the seminar series [“Energy: Past & Present”](#) organized by the [Catalan Society for the History of Science](#) (SCHCT) and the [Interuniversity Institute López Piñero](#) (IILP) of the Universitat de València (Spain). The four seminars will be in English, and all the online sessions are programmed the last Wednesday of the next four months at 18:00 (local time).

- [¿Is nuclear energy green and equitable? Radioactive waste policies and controversies in historical perspective](#) by **Tatiana Kasperski** (September 28).

- [Desiring Energy: Toxic Fantasies of Fuel, Freedom, and Work](#) by **Cara Dagget** (October 26).

- [Power from wastes as a solution to the oil and garbage crises. Techno-politics of energy in a urban context \(Montréal, 1980'-1990'\)](#), by **Annaël Marrec** (November 30).

- [The political economy of energy extraction: uncontested past, controversial present](#) by **Roberto Cantoni** (December 21).

All the best (and apologies for cross-posting)

Ignacio Suay-Matallana (IILP-UV) & José Ramón Bertomeu (IILP-UV)

Col·loquis SCHCT-IILP (2022-2023)

“Energy: Past & Present”

“Is nuclear energy green and equitable?”

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Radioactive waste policies and controversies in historical perspective”

Tatiana Kasperski

(Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona)

Wednesday 28 Sept 2022, 18h. (CET)

Hybrid:

Conference Room: IILP-UV, Plaça Cisneros, 4, València)

Online: ([link](#))

In this time of climate emergency, nuclear energy has been increasingly touted as a clean and green technology able to produce ever more needed amounts of electricity. At the same, toxic residues from that nuclear industry that have accumulated since the dawn of the nuclear age remain a serious, controversial and largely unsolved problem.

To understand this contradiction, I will give an overview of the history, politics and technical controversies surrounding radioactive waste (RW), its production, disposition, and the challenges in managing it safely based on the examples from major nuclear powers.

First, I will analyze the shift in the treatment of RW from a technical one that could be addressed at some future point to public controversies that arose over it; efforts to determine how and where to site it in the 1970s and 1980s; to the end of the Cold War in the 1990s that led to openness about its extent; and ongoing efforts to manage RW. I will then explore the ways in which technical definitions and classifications of waste – and the national and international institutions that helped to develop them – have evolved, enabling the producers of RW to keep the largest quantities and most dangerous waste away from public discussions about environmental and health risks of the nuclear technology. For example, nuclear institutions in some countries do not consider spent nuclear fuel, or leftovers from uranium mining and reprocessing, as RW. They have framed nuclear accidents as problems of reactor safety and not a large source of

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RW, and suggested forcefully that peaceful and civilian waste can be and must be treated separately. This has left significant part of the world's RW without proper disposal and storage. In the last part of my talk I will focus on one of the examples of such inadequately managed waste, the so-called "legacy waste" produced in the world's weapons establishment, and that either remains in temporary storage, or was simply dumped without adequate safety and environmental measures.

The series "Energy: Past & Present" is jointly organised by the Catalan Society for the History of Science and Technology (SCHCT) and the López Piñero Interuniversity Institute. It is coordinated by José Ramón Bertomeu Sánchez (bertomeu@uv.es) and Ignacio Suay Matallana (Ignacio.Suay@uv.es). The seminars will take place at 6 p.m. Wednesday during the Fall 2022 in either online or hybrid format. The Zoom link will be communicated each week at www.uv.es/ihmc. All seminars are free and people interested in the topics are welcome to contact the organisers for further information or to suggest related activities or readings.

Futher details: www.uv.es/ihmc