

[The Political Lives of Infrastructure: A Call for Proposals from the Radical History Review](#)

Announcement published by Thomas Harbison on Wednesday, May 19, 2021

Type:

Call for Papers

Date:

February 1, 2022

Location:

New Jersey, United States

Subject Fields:

Environmental History / Studies, Government and Public Service, Labor History / Studies, Social History / Studies, Urban Design and Planning

The Political Lives of Infrastructure

A Call for Proposals from the Radical History Review

Issue number 147

Abstract Deadline: February 1, 2022

Co-Edited by Wesley Attewell, New York University; Monica Kim, University of Wisconsin-Madison; Emily Mitchell-Eaton, Bennington College; Richard Nisa, Fairleigh Dickinson University

From the blockades against settler constructions at Mauna Kea and Wet'suwet'en to resistance along China's New Silk Road or on the streets of hyper-policed cities across the North America, radical movements are exposing how infrastructures have historically underpinned various intersecting forms of imperial, settler colonial, and racial capitalist power. Across these sites, Indigenous land defenders, Black Lives Matter activists, abolitionists, labour organizers, and others have challenged these projects with a militant praxis of struggle, committed to constructing the alternative infrastructures needed to sustain decolonial modes of collective action and solidarity-building.

If infrastructures are understood as the systems that build, sustain, and govern everyday life, what types of questions might historically-oriented scholarship foreground about radical politics organized through and around infrastructure? The archival record is replete with examples of how infrastructures have brought subjected peoples into uneven yet frictional relationships with transnational configurations of power and violence. As many scholars have shown, infrastructures organized the logistics of slavery and indenture. And yet the enslaved and indentured invariably captured and transformed such infrastructures—or even created new ones—for practices of marronage and abolition. What, then, can a focus on infrastructure teach us about the ways in which projects of rule and resistance are not only inherited through time, but also, as Michelle Murphy argues, sedimented into the spaces of everyday life?

We welcome submissions that broach these questions from different historical periods and geographical sites. Whether we are talking about the spectacular building projects that have long been the hallmark of (post)colonialism and imperialism or the architectures of containment and control that have come to define how states and societies have responded to pandemics and plagues

since premodern times, infrastructures invite what some historians have recently named as transcalar, comparative, or relational modes of analysis. Given the current interest amongst historians in moving beyond the constraints of methodological nationalism—in both the realms of scholarship and activism—what kinds of new or alternative historiographies does a radical focus on infrastructure make possible? Taking our cues from activists and revolutionary movements, past and present, we hope to contribute to the urgent political project of reclaiming infrastructure from militaries, markets, and empires, and repurposing it towards socially just, anti-imperial, and decolonial ends. To that end, we welcome contributions from activists working on the contemporary praxis of radical history, and encourage the submission of interactive and visual work for *RHR*'s digital venue, *The Abusable Past*.

Potential topics include (but are not limited to) infrastructures of:

- Pre- or proto-capitalist circulations
- Labour recruitment and exploitation
- Development and humanitarian intervention
- Logistics and supply chain management
- Care chains and social reproductive work
- The infrastructures that enable intimate, social, and sexual relations
- Mass incarceration, immigrant detention, and carceral power
- War, violence work, and the military-industrial complex
- Militarized refuge or diasporic community building
- Indigenous refusal, abolition, and other forms of radical protest
- Settler colonialism and settler militarism

The *RHR* publishes material in a variety of forms. Potential contributors are encouraged to look at recent issues for examples of both conventional and non-conventional forms of scholarship. We are especially interested in submissions that use images as well as texts and encourage materials with strong visual content. In addition to monographic articles based on archival research, we encourage submissions to our various departments, including:

- Historians at Work (reflective essays by practitioners in academic and non-academic settings that engage with questions of professional practice)
- Teaching Radical History (syllabi and commentary on teaching)
- Public History (essays on historical commemoration and the politics of the past)
- Interviews (proposals for interviews with scholars, activists, and others)
- (Re)Views (review essays on history in all media—print, film, and digital)
- Reflections (Short critical commentaries)
- Forums (debates and discussions)

Procedures for submission of articles:

By February 1, 2022, please submit a 1-2 page abstract summarizing the article you wish as an attachment to contactrhr@gmail.com with “Issue 147 Abstract Submission” in the subject line. Please send any images as low-resolution digital files embedded in a Word document along with the text. If chosen for publication, you will need to send high-resolution image files and secure permission to

reprint all images.

By March 15, 2022, authors will be notified whether they should submit a full version of their article for peer review. The due date for completed articles is expected to be July 2022. Those articles selected for publication after the peer review process will be included in issue 147 of the *Radical History Review*, scheduled to appear in October 2023.

Abstract Deadline: February 1, 2022

Contact: contactrhr@gmail.com

Contact Info:

contactrhr@gmail.com

Contact Email:

contactrhr@gmail.com

URL:

<https://www.radicalhistoryreview.org/2021/05/12/the-political-lives-of-infrastructure/>