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THE INTERNATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORY ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



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Association Internationale
d'Histoire des Chemins de fer

International Railway
History Association

Asociacion Internacional
de Historia Ferroviaria

EDITORIAL

by Fernanda de LIMA LOURENCETTI

Chief-Editor

In the month of May, IRHA's Newsletter n.30 is full of news!

First of all, **the International Railway History Association would like to thank** all those who have been helping to disseminate and to promote railway history, whether through our newsletter or through their publications and initiatives! **Our work is only possible due to the collaboration and work of the various members involved with our association.**

As you will see in this newsletter, the appreciation and preservation of railway history has been gaining ground in different countries and associations have been playing a great role in this growth. For this reason, **assuming its share of responsibility as an association, together with the University of Siena, IRHA announces its first conference in Italy!**

You can find more information about IRHA's 9th Conference and many others events in this issue, in addition to the great diversity of publications that have been launched in recent months.

We hope you enjoy reading this issue!

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

by Andrea GIUNTINI

President of IRHA

The relationship between railways and environmental sustainability seems crucial to try to understand general issues such as globalisation, economic development and the search for new mobility models. In such a context, is also relaunched the methodological debate between public and private transport, which has long been neglected due to the clear dominance of the latter over the former. **The inexorable decline in the use of the main mean of public transport, the train, which has suffered a seemingly irreparable defeat in the field of freight transport in particular, is evident in a large part of the world.**

Railway historians, prompted by the changes in their own job context, are also embarking on new scientific projects, looking at this new historiographic perspective with a fresh investigative eye.

The main objective of the Siena conference, which will be held next November, is to develop the environmental study of the multiple aspects of mobility, proposing a critical reading of modernity and the economic process. The conference intends to take a long-term view, in practice from the origins of the railways

in the world to the present day, following the gradual maturation of the subject and of the fields of study that have gradually developed in the railway sector within the context of the various transport networks. The conference will consider theoretical and methodological proposals as well as case studies, with preference given to the originality of the topics addressed. **Particular reference is made to environmental mobility studies, which aim to measure the environmental impact of transport, bringing transport and environmental history closer to all social sciences.**

The dynamic between the railways and the environment dates back to the early days of the railways. For a long time, individual artefacts, not coincidentally called "art works" in a 19th-century term, were widely appreciated: those extraordinary bridges, viaducts and tunnels that were considered to be impressive technical achievements, but also, in the long run, irreparable wounds inflicted on nature. Crossing rivers and valleys, piercing mountains and razing land, and gutting cities are actions that accompany the entire history of Western societies in their efforts to secure shorter distances and better communications. The infrastructural epic did not involve mediation. Where

railway development has proceeded intensively, the harmonisation of transport with the environment and its insertion into the landscape has largely been lacking, which was not considered as a design problem and as a topic of analysis, even though in many cases scenic routes have turned out to be well inserted into the territory, perhaps not

planned in advance. There is no doubt that transport, and therefore also the railways, represented one of the main agents of environmental change through deep and articulated modalities and interactions, but the terms of the environmental issue, whose real value was not grasped, were missing.

THE RAILWAY IN THE UKRAINE WAR

by Ihor ZHALOBA

Institute of the History of Ukraine of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine and
Member of the IRHA Board of Management

From February 25, 2022 to February 29, 2024, I was in the ranks of the Territorial Defense of Ukraine on a voluntary basis. As an infantry rifleman, I participated in the defense of Kyiv at the end of winter - in the spring of 2022. Due to health problems, I could not be with my comrades near Bakhmut in October-December 2022, where my platoon suffered its first losses - our commander, the only professional military man among us, Ihor Koval. After recovery, I returned to my platoon in January 2023.

My comrades, on their own initiative, mastered drones. As a result, from the spring of 2023, we were transferred to a separate battalion. That's how I became part of the "Gryphon" crew. After training, we were sent to the front (Zaporizhia direction, Robotyne).

Now my brothers are at the front since November 16, 2023. I was dismissed from the army in connection with reaching 60 years of age. Last year, I was also sent twice on informational tours in Europe to report on events in Ukraine.

During this period, **the first medical car was created and used**. As you can see in the [Ukrainska Pravda Journal](#), **"Ukrzaliznytsia (Ukrainian railways) has demonstrated a medical evacuation train for the first time**. Before that, the railway company used separate evacuation cars for the wounded."

This railway was a result of a project was implemented jointly with the Ministry of Communities, Territories and Infrastructure Development of Ukraine, the Ministry of Defence and the Medical Forces Command.

SIENA (ITALY)_9TH CONFERENCE, RAILWAYS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

by Stefano MAGGI

Member of the Organizing Committee

Siena, where IRHA will hold the next conference, is a medieval town of 53,000 inhabitants, the capital of its province in southern Tuscany. The city is universally known for its huge historical, artistic, and landscape heritage and for its substantial stylistic unity of medieval

streets and squares, as well as for the famous Palio, the horse race in the central square, Piazza del Campo. In 1995 its historic center was included in the World Heritage Site by UNESCO.

The city is in the heart of Tuscany. The railway station is connected to Florence, the capital of Tuscany, with a train every half hour and to the south (Chiusi and Grosseto) with a train approximately every hour. Three airports are located close to the city: Florence, Pisa and Rome. From its railway station, the historic trains (Treno Natura) depart for the Val d'Orcia Railway. It's the largest



concentration of steam trains in Italy.

Siena is home to one of the 10 oldest universities in the world, dating back to 1240, whose activity has never stopped. At the University, Department of Political and International Sciences, there is a chair of History of Transport and Tourism, held by prof. Stefano Maggi.

The Monte dei Paschi di Siena (MPS) Bank is based in the city, founded in 1472, and therefore the oldest active bank as well as the longest-running in the world. The MPS Foundation sponsors our conference.

DISCOVER THE CONTROVERSIAL BILLION-DOLLAR RAILWAY THAT CUTS THROUGH MEXICO AND TAKES TOURISTS TO 'MAGICAL' CITIES, CENOTES AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES.

The Mayan Train across Mexico has generated controversy since it was announced by President Andrés Manuel López Obrador. On the one hand, because of the ambition of the **project: more than 1,500 kilometres of railway that will cross the states of Tabasco, Chiapas, Campeche, Yucatán and Quintana Roo; more than 20 stations (and 14 smaller stops).** On the other hand, because of the expectations it generates in the residents due to the arrival of tourists from all over the world. Another issue raised about this mega-work is the environmental impact it would be generating.

The train started to operate between Cancún and Campeche last December. It is estimated that once all the sections are open, tourists will be able to visit more than 145 attractions including museums, cenotes, parks and aquariums, among others. Also included in the route are 6 UNESCO World Heritage sites, 50 archaeological zones and 12 magical cities.

Take a look at part of the experience that this train will provide [HERE](#).

Source: [Revista Ferroviária](#) (translated by Fernanda Lourencetti)

THE CONFERENCE "LES INAUGURATIONS DES LIGNES FERROVIAIRES TRANSFRONTALIÈRES EUROPÉENNES ET LEUR COMMÉMORATION (XIXE-XXE SIÈCLES)".

This conference showed the **impact and existence of a multitude of different welcomes for the new cross-border lines that have been built in recent centuries,** some crowned with success and acclaim, such as the recent inauguration of the Gotthard tunnel, and others much more 'cold', for example in Romania and Austria-Hungary in the 19th century.

Sometimes reflecting national geopolitical tensions, sometimes more local, railway inaugurations are a subject in their own right, as this symposium clearly demonstrated.

The event took place on 30 November and 1st December, 2023, and the videos are available. Just, subscribe to [Rails & histoire YouTube channel](#) to be kept informed of their publication.

THE BRAZILIAN SOROCABA RAILWAY ASSOCIATION IS PLANNING TO RESTORE A RAILWAY BRANCH TO EXTEND TRAIN RIDES.

The association "Sorocabana - Movimento de Preservação Ferroviária" (MPFS) has been receiving old trains since 2017. Some restoration work is being developed and, in order for some of these treasures to circulate, the association needs to restore a railway branch around 6.5 kilometres long.

In 2023, the association was authorised to raise around R\$970,000 through the [São Paulo Government's Cultural Action](#)

[Programme \(Proac\)](#), which promotes cultural projects. For this to happen, the association needs to raise donations from companies through the Tax on Transactions Relating to the Circulation of Goods (ICMS).

According to Eric Mantuan, head of the association since 2015, it is hoped to complete the restoration work within 120 days. "We want to finalise this project with the Natal train later this year, with the longest ride yet."

Source: [Revista Ferroviária](#) (Translated by: Fernanda Lourencetti).

EVENTS AND EXHIBITIONS ANNOUNCEMENT

3RD MEETING ON RAILWAY HISTORY TITLE: ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF THE RAILWAY STATUTE OF 1924 IN SPAIN

20 June, 2024 (10:30h-14:00h).

UNIVERSITY OF VALLADOLID. FACULTY OF ECONOMIC AND BUSINESS SCIENCES

Organized by the [Iberian Association of Railway History](#), after its inauguration, this meeting will present:

- **General overview of Primo de Rivera's Dictatorship** - Sofia Rodríguez.
- **Railway Problem: the Railway Statute** - Pedro Pablo Ortúñez.
- **Guadalhorce Plan** - Francisco Polo.
- **The railway material manufacturing sector** - Miguel Muñoz.

To close the meeting the book **History of RENFE workshops, 1941-2023**. Miguel Muñoz (ed.) will be presented.

IRHA 9TH CONFERENCE - “RAILWAYS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY. A LONG-TERM VIEW ON A GLOBAL SCALE FROM THE ORIGINS OF RAILWAYS TO THE PRESENT”

Siena (Italy), 7-10 November 2024

The International Railway History Association (IRHA) and the University of Siena will hold the first IRHA conference held in Italy since its foundation in 2002!

The conferece aims to emphasise maximum opening up to inclusiveness and interdisciplinarity, thus promoting exchanges and collaborations with all kinds of scholars even with different methodological opinions and tools, but interested in this field and eager to establish a scientific dialogue. **It will include three days of scientific work, a excursion on the [Treno Natura](#), a historic steam train, in the province of Siena, to look at sustainable railway tourism in practice, and a session in Italian, freely open to all participants, entitled Un treno per Siena. Passato, presente e sostenibilità delle ferrovie nella Toscana meridionale (A train to Siena. Past, present and sustainability of the railways in southern Tuscany).**

The main objective of the conference is to develop the environmental study of the multiple aspects of mobility, proposing a critical reading of modernity and the economic process. The conference intends to take a long-term view, in practice from the origins of the railways in the world to the present day, following the gradual maturation of the subject and of the fields of study that have gradually developed in the railway sector within the context of the various transport networks.

The conference will also look at urban transport - in the world's major cities today, railways and trams are often called upon to provide a solution to traffic congestionand - and in mass tourism - the enormous increase in the number of potential tourists has been accompanied by an exponential increase in the risks to the environment.

Paper proposals should be sent by **31 May 2024** to andrea.giuntini@unimore.it.

Scientific Committee's decisions will be announced by **30 June 2024**.

Presenters of **accepted papers must send a long abstract of 10,000 characters by 30 September 2024**.

Take a look [HERE](#) for more informationa and be part of this initiative!

XX CONGRESS OF AHILA 2024 - “BETWEEN AMERICA AND THE MEDITERRANEAN. ACTORS, IDEAS, CIRCULATION IN THE IBERIAN WORLDS”

Naples, 2-6 September, 2024

The [Congress of Ahila 2024](#) will be held in Naples at Palazzo del Mediterraneo, Palazzo Corigliano and Palazzo Giusso, to discuss about the current renewed societies and new forms of cultural hybridisation between America and Europe.

During section N°34 “**Transportation, services and direct investment flows in Latin American and Iberian**” (September 3rd, Palazzo Mediterraneo, Classroom 5.1) coordinated by:

Alcides Goularti Filho, (Universidade do Extremo Sul Catarinense)

Teresita M.C. Gómez Milo (University of Buenos Aires)

António Rafael Amaro (Universidade de Coimbra)



The railway will be one of the topics discussed.

Source: [Congress of Ahila 2024](#) (translated by Fernanda Lourencetti).

CITY, RAIL AND PORT - INTERKNOWLEDGE SEMINARS

January, 2024 - June, 2024



Seminários online



Sessão de 07 de fevereiro de 2024 às 18:00 (Pt)/19:00 (ES)
El Archivo del Puerto de Huelva: Gestión, Investigación y Difusión.
Ana María Mojarro Bayo (Archivo del Puerto de Huelva/Espanha)

Sessão de 13 de março de 2024 às 18:00 (Pt)/19:00 (ES)
El Ferrocarril y el Cambio Urbano en el Sector Suroeste de la Bahía de La Habana.
Isell María Guerrero Bermúdez; Camilo Ramón Darias Rodríguez
(CIDEHUS-Universidade de Evora/Portugal)

Sessão de 10 de abril de 2024 às 18:00 (Pt)/19:00 (ES)
Persistencias de la (des)industrialización: Rol, función e impacto del tejido patrimonial en la transformación urbana de frentes portuarios.
Francisco Herrera Muñoz (Universidad del Desarrollo/Chile)

Sessão de 08 de maio de 2024 às 18:00 (Pt)/19:00 (ES)
Desarrollo histórico-espacial de las redes ferroviarias en África Occidental.
Daniel Castillo (Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria/Espanha)

Sessão de 05 de junho de 2024 às 18:00 (Pt)/19:00 (ES)
Paranapiacaba: Um Patrimônio para a Humanidade
Ronaldo André Rodrigues (Pontifícia Universidade Católica de Minas Gerais/Brasil);
Vanessa Gayego Bello Figueiredo (Pontifícia Universidade Católica de Campinas/Brasil)

Instituições Organizadoras:



The [City, Railway and Port - InterKnowledge Platform](#) was created in 2023 to give support to a **network** of inter-university researchers, technicians, activists and institutions that focus on **studies about the relationship between cities, railroads and ports on different perspectives**. On 05th June will be **celebrated the last seminar of 2024**. Take a look to this and be aware of their next activities! **Registrations must be made by sending an e-mail to interknowledge@uevora.pt**.

RAILWAY READINGS

Les bouleversements de la carte ferroviaire de l'Europe orientale, danubienne et balkanique après la Première Guerre mondiale.

Henry JACOLIN



A hundred years after the the peace treaties of the First World War, a new series devoted to the consequences of the emergence of new borders on the rail networks from the Baltic Sea to the Balkans was released.

Henry Jacolin, IRHA's honorary president,

wrote: Les bouleversements de la carte ferroviaire de l'Europe orientale, danubienne et balkanique après la Première Guerre mondiale published in **Chemins de Fer, n.583, 2020/4, a journal of the Association Française des Amis des Chemins de Fer.**

As the 1st part of a series, Jacolin **presents the situation of the Baltic States before 1914 and after 1918.** Poland, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Yugoslavia, Northern Italy, Burgenland (between Austria and Hungary) and Eastern Thrace (between Greece, Bultaria and Turkey) are covered in this article.

The Qinghai-Tibet railway: The world's highest train line

Tomas BIRD

On 09 janyary 2024, Tomas Bird wrote to Rail Journal BBC about the world's highest railway.

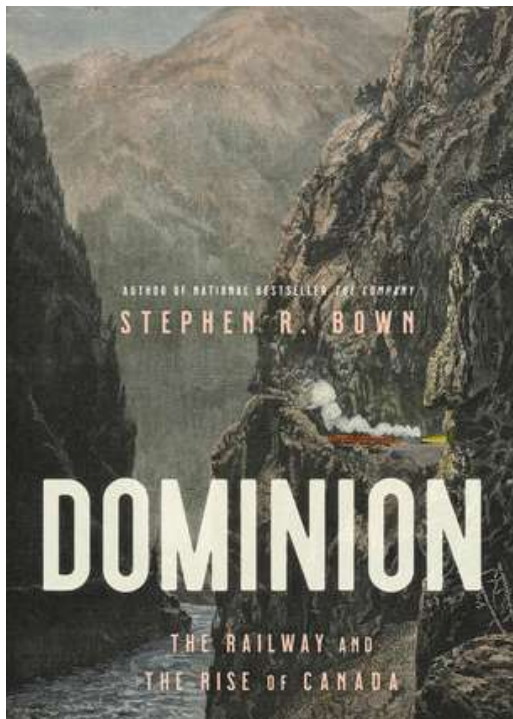
“Dubbed a "miracle" of engineering, the so-called Sky Train climbs to an elevation of 5,702m at the "roof of the world".”

In 1984, the first section of what would connect Beijing and its wayward mountain cousin was completed, linking Xining with Golmud – in the province of Qinghai. Finally, on 2006, almost 2,000km between Xining and Lhasad, the “Forbidden City”, was inaugurated.d Lhasad.

Tomas Bird describs his journey thinking about the first foreign adventurers who'd attempted to get to Lhasa. Its seems to be an astonishing experience! Take a look at [BBC - Travel](#).

Dominion: The Railway and the Rise of Canada

Stephen BOWN



Stephen Bown is an award-winning, national best-selling author and recently released the book: **Dominion: The Railway and the Rise of Canada.**

This book tells the gripping and eye-opening account of the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway - then the longest and most difficult railway built in the world, even more so than the

transcontinental railroads in the US that pre-dated it.

The author tells the stories of the “people on the ground” within the historical and technological context of the late 19th century. Bown describes how the coming of the railway changed the land and its peoples along its route.

Ultimately, **the Canadian Pacific Railway became the spine of the new nation of Canada**, which is ironic, since the senior management, surveyors and engineers of “the great nation-building enterprise” were mostly Americans.

A description of *_Dominion_* can be found at the publisher’s website: <https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/690690/dominion-by-stephen-r-bown/>

You can find out more about Stephen Bown and his work at www.stephenrbown.net

The Camera and the Railway: Framing the Portuguese Empire and Technological Landscapes in Angola and Mozambique, 1880s-1910s, in *Technology and Culture*, July 2023, Volume 64, No. 3

Hugo Silveira PEREIRA,

Hugo Pereira **analyzes photographs from various sources in Portugal**. According to his article, “to promote the perception that Portugal was an imperial nation, hundreds of photographs recorded the construction, inauguration, and operation **of new railways. to show how they helped create a novel technological landscape**”. Take a look at how photography could be used as a crucial tool of empire serving European colonialism and imperialism in Africa.

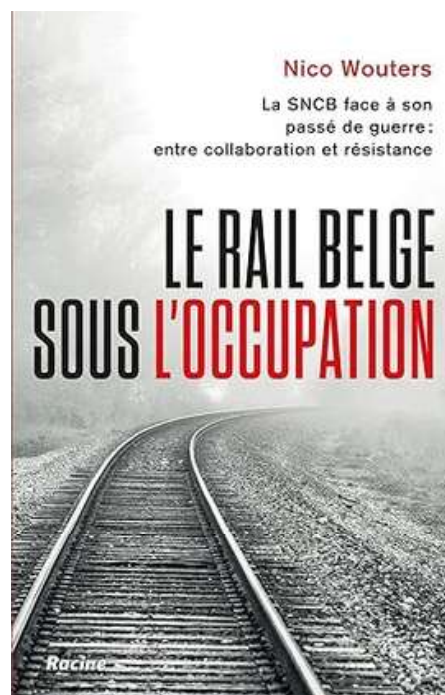
Le rail belge sous l'Occupation: La SNCB face à son passé de guerre

Nico WOUTERS

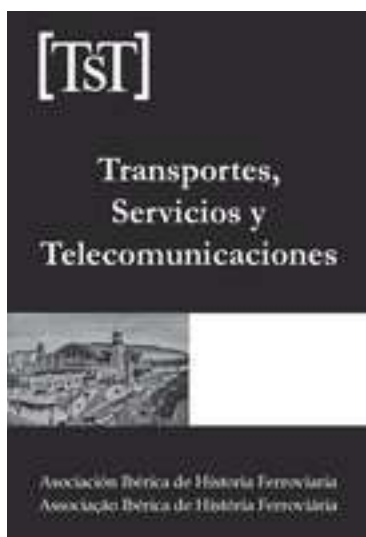
Nico Wouters, Director of CegeSoma (State Archives), was commissioned by the Belgian Senate and the Minister for Mobility to carry out an in-depth study of the role of the Belgian railways under the Occupation. This book presents the results of his research.

With its 97,000 employees, the Société nationale des chemins de fer belges (SNCB) was one of Belgium's leading companies during the Second World War. At the time, it represented a major strategic interest. On the one hand, supplies for all Belgians depended on the collaboration between the SNCB and the German occupying forces. On the other hand, the SNCB was also of crucial importance to the war machine of the Third Reich, particularly in organising deportations.

Did the SNCB opt for the lesser evil by collaborating with the German occupiers?



This choice facilitated the deportation of Jews, Gypsies, political prisoners and forced labourers. How far did this collaboration go and was there an alternative? What role did the Resistance play within the SNCB? And what lessons can we learn from this complex page in history?



Núm. 52 (2023): Las múltiples dimensiones del ferrocarril: paisaje, territorio, industria, reutilización

[TST] Transportes, Servicios y Telecomunicaciones

TST journal launches another issue dedicated to the railway sector - The multiple dimensions of railways: landscape, territory, industry, reuse.

Check the articles and reviews out at:

[Revistas UVA](#)

Issue 59 of the Revue d'Histoire des Chemins de Fer. In this issue you can find:

- French cinema in the early 1930s through the prism of railway sounds and representations and the accompanying advertising material;
- The rail service on the Livron-Briançon line in the second half of the twentieth century;
- A study of railway stations in France and Italy between the wars, held on 10 March 2023, provides a portrait of French stations inaugurated between 1918 and 1940 and listed as historic monuments.



The "Features" section includes: a brochure published by the SNCF in 1959 to promote industrial and rail tourism; an updated article originally published in *Les rails de l'histoire*, the journal that *Rails & histoire* reserved for its members; and a presentation of an association of British railway enthusiasts that has been restoring and maintaining a steam locomotive for over fifty years.



La Rotaia e il Treno. Due Secoli di Sviluppo.

Stefano MAGGI (ed.), 2023.

The train running on tracks is no longer the same as it was in 1825 (when the world's first Stockton-Darlington line in England was opened), but one thing unites history with the present: the 'rail' which, although changed and improved, still makes the system similar to its origins.

The railway-type guided system is still present everywhere, and has had filiations with trams and metros; the tracks have the same width as those of the 19th century, although today they allow speeds that in tests have exceeded 500 km/h, compared to around 30 km/h in the origins.

This book stems from the international conference, which was held in Pistoia at the Historic Rolling Stock Depot of the Fondazione Ferrovie dello Stato in November 2022. This conference proposed a comparison between scholars from various countries and disciplines, in order to obtain, through the analysis of some case studies, a comprehensive overview of the effects brought by rail and train in two centuries of presence in inland transport.

Shifting Lines, Entangled Borderlands: Mobilities and Migration along the Prussian Eastern Railroad

Bloomington: Indiana University Press 2024, USD 40.

<https://iupress.org/9780253068927/shifting-lines-entangled-borderlands/>

Jan MUSEKAMP

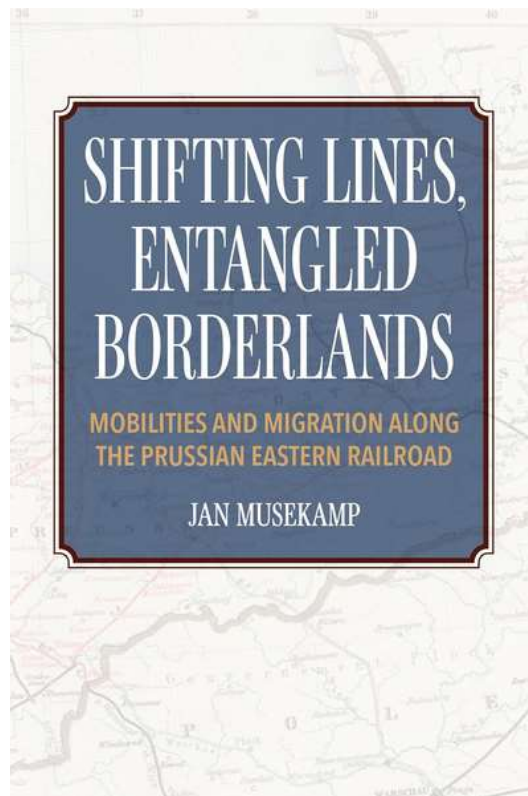
“It is my pleasure to announce the publication of my book. **In the early stages of this project, I received significant support from the IRHA. Merci à tous!**

Tracing multiple mobilities, entangled borderlands, microhistory and space, and human and non human actors, **this book demonstrates how an inner-Prussian railroad line turned into a transnational force, overcoming borders and connecting Europeans in a time of rising nationalism.**

Shifting Lines, Entangled Borderlands investigates the dichotomy between a globalizing world and tighter border control in nineteenth-century Central and Eastern Europe, focusing on the Royal Prussian Eastern Railroad (*Ostbahn*) between the 1830s and 1930s.

The line was initially planned as a major internal modernizing project to connect Prussia’s capital of Berlin to East Prussia’s provincial capital of Königsberg (today’s Kaliningrad). Soon, the *Ostbahn* connected to the growing Imperial Russian railroad network, thus becoming a backbone of European East-West transportation in trade, tourism, technological exchange, and migration. The First World War temporarily disrupted and reconfigured existing networks, adapting them to new political regimes and borders. However, World War II and its aftermath altered mobility patterns more permanently, dividing not only the *Ostbahn* tracks but the whole continent for decades.

From border towns and major cities to unique structures, such as stations or bridges, this volume analyzes the obvious and not-so-obvious nodes of the Central and Eastern European rail network—and the spaces in between.” (Jan MUSEKAMP)





Association Internationale
d'Histoire des Chemins de fer

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Asociacion Internacional
de Historia Ferroviaria

Do not forget to visit
our website!

[https://aihc-irha-
aihf.com/](https://aihc-irha-aihf.com/)

NEXT ISSUE

August 2024

Le Train Militaire Français de Berlin TMFB 1945-1994.

Jean-Michel FEFFER.

Co-authored by Michael Bayer, a Berliner from Reinickendorf, and Pierre Gernez, a former journalist, this book tells the story of the French Military Train from Berlin, which ran from

1945 to 1994 between West Berlin and Strasbourg, making three round trips a week, and which brought with it its share of international tensions...

It is a railway story at the heart of the Cold War: that of this military convoy on rails that crossed East Germany "under the eye of Moscow", controlled by the KGB and monitored by the Stasi, the GDR's political police, like the two other American and British military trains. It is also a human story: the story of this "train of the French", a veritable "umbilical cord" between the French sector of the former German capital and France, which transported its civilian and military passengers under the authority of the TMFB couriers.

Source: [Rails & History](#) (translated by Fernanda de Lima Lourencetti).



SEE YOU AROUND:

*"Faster than fairies, faster than witches,
Bridges and houses, hedges and ditches;
And charging along like troops in a battle,
All through the meadows the horses and cattle:
All of the sights of the hill and the plain
Fly as thick as driving rain;
And ever again, in the wink of an eye,
Painted stations whistle by."*

(Robert Louis Stevenson, From a Railway Carriage)