

AIHC – IRHA – AIHF

THE INTERNATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORY ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



Association Internationale
d'Histoire des Chemins de fer

International Railway
History Association

Asociacion Internacional
de Historia Ferroviaria

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EDITORIAL

by Fernanda de LIMA LOURENCETTI

Chief-Editor

Following two centuries of railway development across the globe, it is imperative to underscore the significance of this transportation modality, which extends beyond its own infrastructure.

The demolition of Euston Railway Station in London in the 1960s had a significant impact on the field of industrial archaeology, leading to a growing recognition of the value of industrial heritage.

In 1998, the 41 km Austrian Semmering Railway was declared a World Heritage Site, the first railway in the world to receive this classification, recognised as a work of engineering that has been in continuous operation since 1854.

As you can follow in this newsletter, the history and appreciation of the railway continues to grow, and it is with a sense of responsibility to collaborate in this journey that the IRHA continues to develop events and publications about the railway world.

We hope that in 2026 the spirit of valuing railway history will continue.

We wish everyone a happy new year!

We hope you enjoy reading this issue!

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

by Andrea GIUNTINI

President of IRHA

The date **27 September 1825** represents a seminal moment for railway and historians. On that day, the first section operated with mechanical traction was inaugurated. The few kilometres **between Stockton and Darlington**, in many ways **the gateway to modernity, ushered humanity into the railway age and changed history forever.**

The line started at the Darlington mines and ran to the port of Stockton in the north of England. In all **it was 32 km long and was designed primarily for the transport of coal**, but from the beginning it was also conceived for passenger transport.

After many years of experimentation, a steam locomotive was used for the first time. Four years later **the ingenious Stephenson would create his famous Rocket**, which was a highly sophisticated machine at the time, used on the **Liverpool-Manchester line**. Thousands of kilometres would then follow, first in Europe and then on other continents.

The railway between the British cities of Stockton and Darlington has been viewed with a mixture of fear, admiration and hope. It was seen as a means of creating wealth while mobilising considerable investment. Initially, its effects on economic growth, industry and innovation prevailed in people's minds

and historiography over the revolution it brought about in the mobility of goods and people, food and lifestyles, education, and the circulation of ideas and the perception of space. All of these changed in scale.

The International Railway History Association could not miss such an important event. That is why **IRHA organised a one-day conference on 21 November in Paris - The Birth and Evolution of European Railways: Historical Issues and Lessons for Today - at the Gare de Montparnasse**, in a room kindly provided by SNCF, which has supported the entire conference.

As an association specialized in this field, we feel that such an event, in which outstanding scholars from several European countries participated, was scientifically mandatory. The event was naturally be open to anyone who was interested, according to IRHA traditional spirit, and there was no registration fee.

The conference was organised in partnership with another key player in the field of railway history, the French association RAILS & HISTOIRE, which at the end of the day presented the international award named after François Caron for the best thesis on railway history, handed over by Michèle Merger.

The Paris conference, opened by the current president, by the past president Henry Jacolin and by Florence Brachet Champsaur, director of SNCF Patrimoine, culture et politiques mémorielles, is the tenth in the history of IRHA and follows last year's conference in Siena. Some of Europe's leading railway historians attended, including several young scholars. The day was divided into six sections, each with a chairperson and two speakers. IRHA aims to stimulate ongoing debate, placing the railway at the heart of contemporary discussions, as it was two centuries ago.

During the morning's **first session - How the railway was born in the UK and continental Europe: a comparison - chaired by Marie-Noëlle Polino (SNCF and IRHA), David Turner (Aston University, Birmingham, UK)** gave a presentation entitled Early railway development in the United Kingdom: exploring the legacies of slavery; and Giulio Pappa (IMT School for Advanced Studies Lucca, Italy) with a presentation entitled The Development of Railways in the Kingdom of Sardinia: A Transnational Ambition in a Fragmented Italy?



The second session was entitled The dissemination of railways in Europe: how continental European countries embraced railway innovation and was chaired by Michèle Merger (CNRS, France and IRHA) with two speakers, Csaba Sandor Horvath (Széchenyi Istvan University, Győr, Hungary), The first plans and buildings for the railway in the Habsburg Empire, particularly in the Kingdom of Hungary; and Leandro Stacchini (University of Siena, Italy), A complementary network: the origins of secondary railways in Italy and Spain between political debates, technical solutions and early developments (1860-1915).

The third session - Building railways, trains and stations: a European affair and its networks - chaired by Ana Cardoso de Matos (Universidade de Évora-Cidehus, Portugal) featured presentations by Ralf Roth (Goethe Frankfurt University, Germany), How to create a national railway network? Some European experiences from the past; and Bertrand Lemoine (France), XIX century railway stations: a comparison between England, France and Germany.

Three further sessions took place during the afternoon. **The fourth session - The economic impact of the railways. An ongoing debate - chaired by Jordi Martí Henneberg (University of Leiden, Spain)** - featured Federico Meneghini Sassoli (University of Pavia, Italy), Early Railways

(and Internal Markets: Between Risks and Opportunities, and Georges Ribeill (Rails & Histoire, France), 1823-1833, une décennie cruciale en France. De premiers rails au service de houillères et forges sans débouchés.

Stefano Maggi (University of Siena, Italy) chaired the fifth session, The train in everyday life, with Paul Van Heesveelde (Belgium), To what extent railway fiction can be used as a source for history and Jean-Pierre Williot (Sorbonne University Paris, France), The station buffet in Europe: a key player in the railway sector. The first of the two speakers was unable to attend in person for health reasons, but provided the text of his speech, which was read out.



The day ended with Michèle Merger presenting the international award named after François Caron, offered by the Rails & Histoire association for the best thesis in the field of railway history.



CHINA HAS 70% OF THE WORLD'S HIGH-SPEED RAILWAYS

The Asian giant, **with 8,000 km of high-speed rail network** at the beginning of the 21st century, **is expected to reach 50,000 km by the end of this year.** **By the end of October,** the Chinese government is expected to release its **15th Five-Year Plan, setting out guidelines for the country's development from 2026 to 2030.**

Considering not only high-speed trains, **China now has the second largest railway network in the world, with 162,000 km of track,** behind only the United States, with an impressive 200,000 km. According to China Railway, a Chinese state-owned company, **in 2024 China set a record by carrying 4.08 billion passenger rail journeys.** The estimate is that by the end of this year there will be 4.28 billion.

THE LONGEST TRAIN IN HISTORY WAS BORN IN 2001.

It was in the heart of **Western Australia** that BHP Iron Ore made history by becoming the longest train in the world. It is **over seven kilometres long, a record that has yet to be matched.**

One of Australia's most powerful industries is mining, to the point that there are even influencers who attract workers from any country. **In the late 1990s, mining companies faced a challenge: more and more ore needed to be transported from the mine to the export ports.**

The [BHP Iron Ore Train](#) was extraordinary in size: a train consisting of 682 wagons, 5,648 wheels, a loaded weight of almost 100,000 tonnes and a length of 7,353 kilometres. Imagine 22 Eiffel Towers lying down and lined up in a row. To pull such a monster, eight GE AC6000CW locomotives (each with 6,000 HP) with 16-cylinder engines were distributed along the train.

With the exception of the front locomotive, the others were one kilometre apart and managed to complete the 275-kilometre journey from the Newman mine to Port Hedland in just ten hours, transporting ore from the Newman mines. This was proof of the existence of a technology called Distributed Power.

This technology is based on distributing

the locomotives along the train instead of concentrating them at the front, so that the traction and braking force is greater, more uniform and also more efficient.

Controlled by a single driver in the front system, the lead locomotive communicated with the remote locomotives via a radio frequency system that synchronously coordinated all acceleration and braking operations. This made it possible to drastically reduce lateral forces and friction on curves, which reduced tyre wear and the risk of derailment and, as a result, fuel consumption was estimated to be reduced by between 4 and 6%.

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

ETHANOL-POWERED TRAIN TESTED IN BRAZIL

From 2028 onwards, Vale's freight and passenger trains in Minas Gerais and Espírito Santo are **expected to start using dual-field technology.**

The technology is considered unprecedented in the global railway sector. The initial phase of testing is being conducted in laboratories in the United States, Austria, and Brazil. Current studies indicate that, initially, up to 50% of diesel can be replaced by ethanol. **The ultimate goal is to achieve an engine powered entirely by ethanol.**

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

DR JOHN NORTON WESTWOOD (1931-2025)

John Westwood was the foremost authority outside Russia about the railways of Imperial Russia, the Soviet Union and post-Soviet Russia. A gifted professional author with a lifelong interest in railways, he found Russian studies through learning the language as part of his National Service. By 1958 he had earned a Master's Degree at McGill University, Montreal with a thesis entitled 'Soviet Railway Development'. In the following year, he joined the early trickle of western visitors to Khrushchev's USSR, and he returned in 1961. Remarkably for that time, he reached not just Moscow and Leningrad but also Kiev, the Black Sea port city of Odessa and the Crimea. Travelling by rail, he contrived to take numerous railway photographs until eventually, perhaps inevitably, he was arrested as a possible spy and expelled. Ironically, when he was again expelled several decades later, the arresting officer was the son of the officer who arrested him the first time.

Some of the images from his 1959 trip were published in *Russian Locomotive Types* (Norman, 1960), a spiral-bound paperback that was probably his first book. More appeared in the two important books that quickly followed, both published by Ian Allan: *Soviet Railways Today* (1963) and *A History of Russian Railways* (1964). The latter is still the only English-language history of the

railways of the Russian empire and USSR. Two academic monographs on the Soviet and post-Soviet railways would come later, both with Palgrave. *Soviet Locomotive Technology during Industrialization, 1928-1952* (1982) provided a remarkably detailed and insightful analysis of Stalinist society at a time when, as sadly today is the case again, access to the Russian archives was effectively impossible for western historians. Similarly, *Soviet Railways to Russian Railways* (2002) is a fine case study of the turbulent Russian economy during the Yeltsin years. Additionally, he published a variety of shorter items, included several academic journal articles and chapters in edited books, and he contributed to *Jane's World Railways* for a good number of years.

John's railway expertise was by no means limited to just Russia. He produced such notable and varied works as *Railways of India* (1975, a major history of the sub-continent's network), *Locomotive Designers in the Age of Steam* (1977), *Railways at War* (1980) and *The Railway Data Book* (1983), together with perhaps ten or a dozen 'coffee-table' books about British and world railways. John downplayed these large-format pictorial books, but helping him with images for some of them made me appreciate the huge amount of effort needed for each one, not to mention the breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding that his writing always displayed.

His bibliography also encompasses a very wide range of non-railway subjects: modern warfare, naval ships, two major textbooks on Russian history that were required reading for several generations of students, and such titles as *The Red Army Man in Soviet Fiction* (1961) and *An Illustrated History of Britain* (1983). Many of these books reappeared in multiple

editions and foreign translations. In his later years he even wrote several novels. A kind and helpful colleague, John had the rare ability to write beautifully and accessibly for academic and popular audiences alike, invariably with a delightful sprinkling of his dry humour. He leaves a very significant printed legacy.

BY TONY HEYWOOD

EVENTS AND EXHIBITIONS

MOISSON EXPRESS

Le Compa, the Eure-et-Loir Departmental Council's agricultural museum, 12 March 2026 to 4 January 2027

The exhibition 'Moisson express' (Express Harvest), organised from 12 March 2026 to 4 January 2027, will **highlight steam as a driving force for transformation: a decisive industrial energy source when it first appeared**, it profoundly changed production methods, rail transport and agricultural practices. It left a lasting material, social and landscape imprint, of which the Compa roundhouse is a significant example.

During the exhibition, **on Thursday 28 May 2026, will happen an interdisciplinary event**, which aims to bring together heritage professionals, researchers, students, members of associations and tourism stakeholders.

Proposals for papers (title and 200-word abstract) should be sent to marielle.guingueno@eurelien.fr by 23 January 2026.

Each proposal must include: the surname(s) and first name(s) of the speakers, their email addresses, the organisation they are affiliated with, a list of five keywords, and a short bio-bibliographical note.

You will find the poster for the call for applications in PDF format, available for download [HERE](#).

(Source: [Rail&Histoire](#) (translated by Fernanda Lourencetti))



AN EXHIBITION ON ITALIAN RAILWAYS IN ROME

Le ferrovie d'Italia. 1861-2025. Dall'unità nazionale alle sfide del futuro. In occasione dei 120 anni di Ferrovie dello Stato Italiane, Vittoriano, Sala Zanardelli, Piazza Venezia, Roma, until February 28th, 2026.

The Italian State Railways were established in Italy in 1905 during the Giolitti era following the nationalisation of the railway networks, which until then had been managed by private companies that had been operating for decades since the mid-19th century. The decision by the government of the time to take direct control of the entire system represented a turning point in the life of the country: it was not only an administrative change, but a genuine national project that recognised the strategic role of the railways in the economic, territorial and cultural construction of a united Italy.

The exhibition celebrating Italian railways is held in Rome in one of the most symbolic places in national memory: the Vittoriano, a monument dedicated to the first king of Italy, Vittorio Emanuele II, and home to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, which commemorates the sacrifice of Italian soldiers during the Great War. In this context of strong civic and patriotic value, the history of the railway takes on an even more evocative dimension, as if the dialogue between technology, society and memory found a natural synthesis in the heart of the capital.

In Italy, the history of the country is reflected in that of the railways, which offer a privileged vantage point from which to read and interpret the events of the nation from various perspectives. It is precisely this close relationship between railway history and national history that the exhibition aims to highlight, accompanying visitors - **welcomed in the garden of Palazzo Venezia by two scale reproductions of the Settebello and Arlecchino, masterpieces of post-war Italian railway design** - on a journey spanning over 160 years through different eras marked by technological progress, wars, economic transformations and social changes, which also highlights how railways occupy a permanent place in the collective memory of Italians.

The exhibition, which offers an interdisciplinary itinerary intertwining political history, art and innovation, begins with Cavour's intuition that, as early as the 1840s, he saw the railway as a decisive element for the independence and modernisation of the country, which was then fragmented into numerous regional states and finally united in 1861 in the Kingdom of Italy.

The first phase shown in the exhibition, spanning from 1861 to 1904, sees the transformation of regional networks into a coherent national system through a process that promoted economic and cultural exchanges, reduced distances and helped shape a new collective identity. The first lines on the peninsula connecting Naples to Portici, Turin to Genoa, Milan to Venice and Florence to Pisa represented not only technical innovations, but also models of political and administrative modernisation. The railway immediately became synonymous with progress, openness towards Europe, and an Italy that was being built both materially and symbolically.

The second phase, from 1905 to the end of the Second World War, saw the consolidation of the network and its widespread expansion. During these decades, the Italian railways became key players in the movement of people and goods, as well as in the most dramatic events in the country's history. The two world wars had a profound impact on infrastructure and traffic, but at the same time stimulated the adoption of cutting-edge technologies, such as electrification, which placed Italy among the most innovative countries on the continent.

The third phase covers the years from 1945 to 1985. After the devastation of war, it was necessary to quickly rebuild what had been destroyed: stations, bridges, tunnels



and lines that were essential for the country's economic recovery. This marked the beginning of a period of profound change, accompanied by growth in passenger traffic, industrial development and a new way of thinking about mobility. The 1960s and 1970s were marked by major technological innovations and a growing focus on service quality. 1985 was the year that ushered in a period of reform and the start of the privatisation process, a prelude to the birth of the contemporary railway system.

The fourth phase covers the last forty years, during which the railway has taken on a new role in an Italy that is increasingly connected to Europe. The creation of high-speed rail, the expansion of international services, and

the modernisation of infrastructure and rolling stock testify to the railway system's ability to meet the challenges of globalisation by focusing on safety, speed, sustainability, and technological innovation.

Great attention is paid to rolling stock, which has always been a source of deep fascination. **Steam locomotives, which played a leading role from the 19th century until the 1950s, constitute the first major chapter: the Gr. 640 and Gr. 685, famous for their reliability and brilliant performance, and the robust Gr. 740, widely used in mixed traffic, represent models of technology and engineering that have accompanied generations of travellers.**

Electrification, which began in the 1920s, marked a period of exceptional innovation. Three-phase locomotives, such as the E.432 and E.554, introduced technology that was surprisingly advanced for the time, albeit complex to manage. With the switch to direct current, the network saw the arrival of locomotives that were to become familiar to millions of Italians: the E.626, E.424, E.646 and E.645, all characterised by reliability, high performance and versatility. Two electric locomotives stand out: the E.656, nicknamed "Caimano" (Caiman), the undisputed star of passenger transport for decades, and the E.444 "Tartaruga" (Turtle), the first Italian locomotive to reach 200 km/h, a symbol of modernity in the 1970s. The story continues with the **electric trains that have marked**

the history of Italian railway design. The ETR 200, created in the 1930s, became a symbol of elegance and speed, while in the post-war period, the Settebello (ETR 300) and its 'little brother' Arlecchino (ETR 250) brought a new concept of travel to the Italian railway world, based on comfort, quality interiors and a modern image of Italy rising from the rubble.

In the 1970s, technological research led to the development of the Pendolino, a revolutionary train equipped with a tilting body. This solution made it possible to take curves at higher speeds, making travel on traditional lines faster and more comfortable and anticipating the logic of high speed. High-speed rail has been at the centre of the last few decades: from the ETR 500 to the current Frecciarossa 1000, Italy has established itself as one of the leading countries in the sector, focusing on high speeds, safety, European interoperability and environmental sustainability.

The cultural and artistic imagery associated with trains, seen as a symbol of modernity since their inception, occupies a significant space in the exhibition. Nineteenth-century artists immortalised them as machines bursting onto the landscape, enveloped in light and steam. Realist and Impressionist painters depicted stations bridges and industrial landscapes as new icons of

urban life. In the 20th century, the Futurists celebrated the speed and energy of the train. Contemporary artists also continue to find in the train an image of transformation, movement and the relationship between man and territory.

Walking through the exhibition rooms gives visitors a complete picture of the history of Italian railways, aptly described as the backbone of the country, highlighting its identity, territorial governance, economic system and the role of institutions, together with the impact of railways on daily life, the social and anthropological sphere connected to them and the fruitful intertwining with all forms of artistic expression. Exhibition panels, historical photographs, technical objects, paintings, period videos and multimedia materials create a continuous dialogue between past and present, between memory and innovation. **The aim is not to present a simple sequence of events, but to evoke the complexity of the railway world,** an infrastructure that has shaped territories, connected communities, stimulated economic exchanges and profoundly changed the daily experience of Italians.

The exhibition itinerary, which is rich, in-depth and accessible at the same time, **is divided into the four chronological sections reminded above, accompanying visitors on a journey spanning from 1861 to the present day.** All the key stages of this fascinating journey are reconstructed

with meticulous attention and presented with care: from the birth of the Ferrovie dello Stato (Italian State Railways) in 1905 to the post-war reconstruction, the economic boom, high-speed trains and the most recent challenges related to sustainability and digitalisation. **The strength of the exhibition lies in its interpretative structure, divided into four themes that run through each section: technical and infrastructural history, the evolution of the network, engineering expertise, management methods and the current construction sites financed by the PNRR (National Recovery and Resilience Plan).**

The railway has been an instrument of unification, modernisation and governance of the territory, but also an indicator of the contradictions between territories, cities and the countryside, North and South. From a social and anthropological point of view, it has encouraged the emergence of new professions, commuting and changes in the pace of life. It has also inspired artists of all kinds to reproduce the train, a powerful and ambivalent symbol of modernity, in painting, photography, cinema and literature. Without ever compromising on scientific rigour, but using clear and accessible language to broaden its appeal to as wide an audience as possible, the exhibition offers experiences that bring the public closer to the emotional dimension of

travel: an immersive section allows visitors to journey through railway history using digital technologies that combine images, sounds and multisensory experiences.

The variety of materials used and languages presented reflect the complexity of the theme and bring it to life. The train is presented as a cultural device, a prism reflecting the historical events that surround it, and not just as a means of transport. Historical data is intertwined with perceptual and sensory experience, provoking emotions and engaging visitors, so that it is not just a flat and passive absorption but rather an active and convinced participation.

The project is completed by a catalogue published by Silvana Editoriale, with texts that explore the contents, documents and iconographic material of the exhibition in depth. The exhibition catalogue, rich in documents and images, accompanies visitors, offering a clear and comprehensive overview of Italy's long railway adventure, a history made up not only of technical innovations and technological challenges, but also of people, landscapes and visions that continue to influence our idea of modernity and progress today.

By **Andrea GIUNTINI,**
and **Stefano MAGGI**

PUBLIC POLICIES, SERVICES, AND TRANSPORTATION. ARGENTINA AND LATIN AMERICA IN THE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURIES

Córdoba, Argentina, September 23-26, 2026

The History Department of the Faculty of Humanities at the National University of Río Cuarto is organizing the **20th Inter-School/History Department Conference, which will be held in the city of Río Cuarto, Province of Córdoba, Argentina, from September 23 to 26, 2026.**

The publication of the sections and the call for **abstract submissions remains open until February 9, 2026.**

For further details, please read the attached document.

RAILWAY READINGS



During 2025, the journal [Journal of Transport History \(JTH\)](#) published the volume n.46, issues 1 and 2, where you can find some interests information about the railway world:

Book Review: The Saga of Dakota Territory's First Railroad
by Patrick M. Garry

Albert Churella

Book Review: La ciudad futura. Viajes por la Europa burguesa by Justo Serna and Anaclet Pons

Domingo Cuéllar

The Northwestern Railway of Brazil as a prelude to the anthropocene: A critical look at a photographic exhibition in Santarém, Portugal.

André Rocha

Book Review: A Fiumei Villamos, Riječki Tramway, I Tram di Fiume [The Fiume Tramway] by Gábor Zsigmond.

Csaba Sándor Horváth

Book Review: Pietrarsa. Da Officina a Museo Ferroviario [Pietrarsa. From Workshop to Railway Museum] by Stefano Maggi (ed.)

Leandro Stacchini

Book Review: The Diesel That Did It: General Motors' FT Locomotive by Wallace W. Abbey, Kevin P. Keefe, Martha A. Miller and Greg McDonnell
Diesel-Electric Locomotives – How They Work, Use Energy, and Can Become More Efficient and Environmentally Sustainable by Walter Simpson
The Steam Locomotive Energy Story. How They Used Energy and What Was Done to Make Them More Efficient by Walter Simpson

Thomas C. Cornillie

TEE ANAND HOMONYMOUS TRAINS FORMATIONS "LES COMPOSITIONS DES TEE ET DES TRAINS HOMONYMES")

by Jean-Pierre MALASPINA (with technical joint authorship of Martin BAIER, Daniel HENTSCHEL, Jürgen HOFFMANN, Ivan ZOLTAN, Marc LE GAD, Manfred MEYER, Martin MEYER, Juan Carlos ALONSO MOSTAZA, Giorgio STAGNI, Claudio VIANINI)

From the launch of the first Trans Europ Express (TEE) trains, on the 2nd of June 1957, to the last run of the "Watteau" TEE on the 26th of May 1995, thirty eight years passed, which is a notable period in the history of European railways. It is important to underline that these first TEE's were born in the same year as the European Coal and Steel Community, the first step in construction of the present European Union.

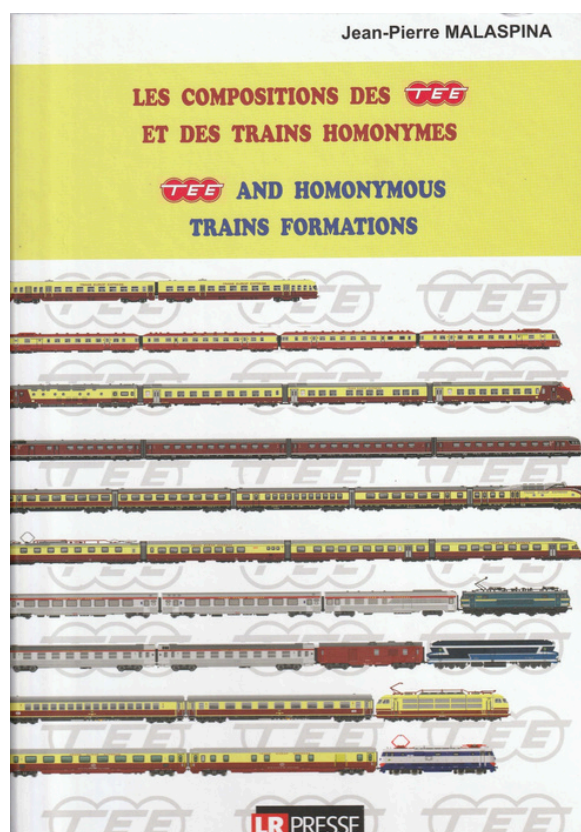
During this period almost the same number of TEE services (36 exactly) connected the large cities of ten countries in western Europe: France, Germany, Belgium, The Netherlands, Switzerland, Austria, Italy, Spain, Luxembourg and Denmark. The geopolitical situation of that time excluded them from eastern Europe.

As the author Jean-Pierre MALASPINA reminded in the Foreword, he already dedicated in 2007 a book to the luxury trains, "TEE - La Légende des Trans Europ Express" - co-written with Maurice Mertens (+) - which is no longer available. Therefore he suggested to LR Presse editions to publish a new revised and corrected edition, taking into account the developments since 2007. It was agreed with the editor to make available to

railway fans a work dealing with not only TEE trains compositions, but also those of their homonymous predecessors and successors, whatever their grading, Express, InterCity, EuroCity, TGV or other.

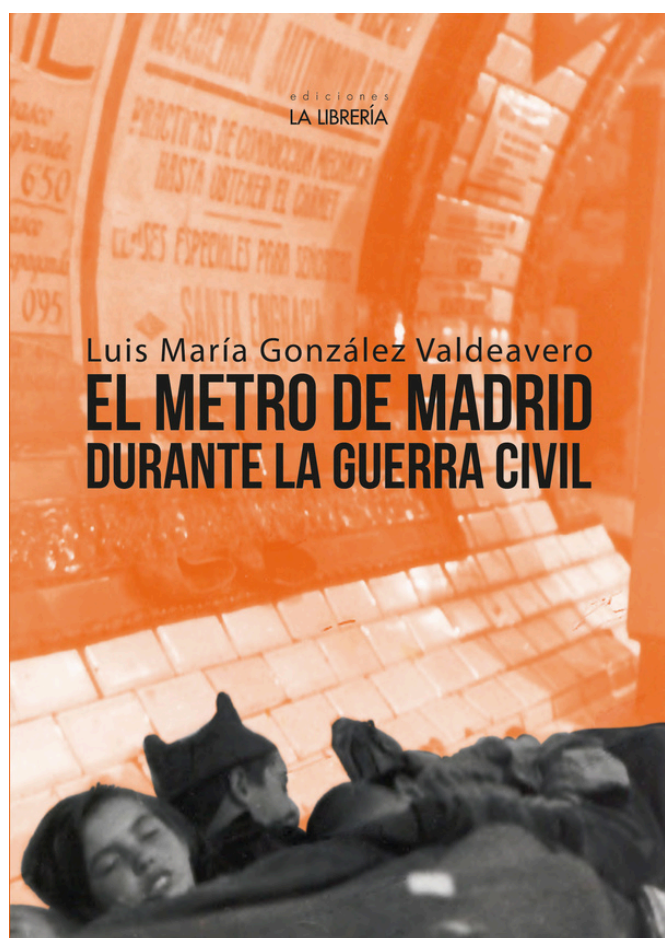
The book, illustrated with a large number of attractive pictures, maps, advertising posters, details the train composition of all high-quality trains that have been running on European main lines under the commercial brands TEE, IC, EuroCity, international TGVs,...

By Paul VERON



EL METRO DE MADRID DURANTE LA GUERRA CIVIL

Luis María González Valdeavero, Madrid, Ediciones La Librería, 2025, 352 pages.



On 3 December 2025, Luis María González Valdeavero's latest work, entitled *El Metro de Madrid durante la Guerra Civil* (The Madrid Metro during the Civil War), was presented at the Railway Museum in Madrid. **González Valdeavero's work aims to show the role played by this mode of transport, inaugurated in 1919, during the siege of the city during the Civil War. A siege carried out by General Franco's rebel army, which would last for practically the entire three years of the armed conflict.**

The author **presents the political, social and economic context in which the capital found itself** during the three

years of war and **how the Madrid Metro played a vital role in ensuring the movement of citizens, providing shelter from rebel air raids, facilitating the supply of food to the population and transporting troops and weapons to the war fronts located on the outskirts of the city.**

The book focuses on the organisation and operation of the company by the Workers' Council, once it was seized by the Republican Government during the summer of 1936, providing many details on the role played by female workers, mainly as drivers and ticket sellers, and on the social improvements that were introduced for staff during that period.

It also develops several biographical profiles of workers who were involved in the labour purges carried out during the Civil War and the post-war period, or who were court-martialled for their role in defending republican legality.

Finally, it analyses the details of various tragic accidents that occurred on the Metro network during the war, such as the explosion at Lista station on 10 January 1938, which caused a large number of deaths and injuries.

By Francisco POLO



Association Internationale
d'Histoire des Chemins de fer

International Railway
History Association

Asociacion Internacional
de Historia Ferroviaria

SEE YOU AROUND:

"I have no more notion than you how long it is to last," Holmes answered with some asperity. "If criminals would always schedule their movements like railway trains, it would certainly be more convenient for all of us."

(Arthur Conan Doyle)

Do not forget to visit
our website!

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

NEXT ISSUE

MAY 2026