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# **Alternate Routes: A Journal of Critical Social Research Volume 25, 2014**

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## **JOURNAL MANDATE**

Established in 1977 at the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Carleton University, Alternate Routes is committed to creating outlets for critical social research and interdisciplinary inquiry. Although Alternate Routes is now an independent peer-reviewed annual, the journal continues to work closely with labour and social justice researchers to promote the publication of non-traditional, provocative and progressive analyses that may not find a forum in conventional academic venues. AR seeks to be a public academic journal and encourages submissions that advance or challenge theoretical, historical and contemporary socio-political, economic and cultural issues. In addition to full-length articles, we welcome review essays sparked by previously published material, interviews, short commentaries, as well as poetry, drawings and photographic essays. AR publishes primarily special-themed issues and therefore requests that submissions be related to the current call for papers. Submissions must be free of racist or sexist language, have limited technical or specialized terms and be written in a style that is accessible to our diverse readership."



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Editorial Introduction

## **Climate Change and Its Discontents**

*Carlo Fanelli<sup>1</sup> and Bryan Evans<sup>2</sup>*

In “Capitalism, the Climate Crisis and Canada’s ‘Relations of Mobility’”, Ryan Katz-Rosene explains how the material and subjective systems governing transport infrastructure are ecologically unsustainable and largely undemocratic. Rather than challenging market forces, the Canadian state has played a central role in deepening and extending these practices. In his view, confronting these challenges requires a genuinely democratic, anti-capitalist politics aimed at transforming state power across all scales of public administration. Next, Marjorie Griffin Cohen shows why counting “Gendered Emissions” matters. While many of the gendered analyses exploring climate change focus on the implications for women and their work in the Global South, less attention has been devoted to exploring how climate change differentially effects women in the North. Cohen’s analysis breaks new ground in understanding how paid and unpaid labour as well as consumption issues vary by gender in the developed world, and explains why knowing the gendered distinctions in GHG emissions can inform radical ways to think about public policy and its relation to climate change.

Moving forward, in “Overcoming Systemic Barriers to ‘Greening’ the Construction Industry” John Calvert argues that reducing GHG emissions and energy consumption of the built environment is central to mitigating climate change. He explores how building trades workers can adopt low carbon construction policies. To do this, he argues, means challenging the pervasive use of sub-contracting and precarious employment, as well as largely unregulated construction markets. A ‘green’ construction culture, boosted by enhanced training and apprenticeship programs and improved job security through unionization, could go a long way in implementing climate objectives at the workplace. The following article by Antonio Augusto Rosotto Ioris, “Approaches and Responses to Climate Change: Challenges for the Pantanal and the Upper Paraguay River Basin”, draws on original empirical research that explores a range

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2 Bryan Evans is Associate Professor in the Department of Politics and Public Administration at Ryerson University and a member of the Yeates School of Graduate Studies.

of responses that are being developed in order to cope with the negative impacts of climate change. Loris shows how the influence of the agribusiness sector, coupled with few national and trilateral environmental policies, have focused on principles of systematic adaptation, climate skepticism and/or marketization.

In “Brazilian Dystopia: Development and Climate Change Mitigation”, Potter et al., stress the ecological importance of the Amazonian Rainforest to the rest of the world. They argue that deforestation, rather than the carbonized energy and transport sectors, disproportionately accounts for Brazil’s GHG emissions. They explore the “dystopia thesis” concretizing their arguments through an examination of the complex relationships between the Brazilian economy and practices aimed at mitigating climate change. Kading and Bass ask “Can you Build an Open-Pit Mine in an Urban Centre?” They explore how residents of the city of Kamloops found themselves at the centre of a controversial debate over a foreign-domestic investment proposal: the establishment of an open-pit copper and gold mine in a B.C. interior community. They argue that environmental and community concerns have been overshadowed by the rhetoric of job creation, low taxes, balanced budgets and economic growth at all costs. Should this proposal go unchallenged, they argue, it could set a Canada-wide precedent with dire implications for the livability, economic future and democracy for residents of Kamloops and beyond. The final article by Jeffrey Carey and Steven Tufts, “‘Greening Work’ in Lean Times: The Amalgamated Transit Union and Public Transit”, explores the trialectic relationship between capital, labour and nature in Canada’s public transit unions. They review union documents and Canadian newspapers finding that the state uses the environment as a wedge issue in its ‘war of position’ with unions: workers’ strike actions are characterized as harmful to the environment and community. Their article concludes with an examination of a recent campaign strategy by Toronto’s ATU Local 113 wherein they call for more community based approaches to resistance.

Our Interventions section brings together leading thinkers and community organizers in the pursuit of ecological, political, economic and social justice. Starting us off, Jordy Cummings interviews Greg Sharzer, author of *No Local*, on the issue of localism. Their discussion explores the limitations of ethical shopping, community initiatives like gardens and farmers’ markets and local economic development. Sharzer suggests that these initiatives will not change the world, but that challenging market priorities will. Next, Aaron Henry and Matthew Gandy discuss

new critical methodological tools with which scholars and activists can get a handle on the conjuncture, encompassing a range of issues connected with Gandy's theory of 'partial modernity'. Following this up, Megan Kinch delves into conversation with Indigenous Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee land defenders, exploring land occupation, cultural revitalization, and their perspectives on both Marxism and environmentalism

In what follows, Christina Rousseau discusses the impact of climate change on labour markets with Carla Lipsig-Mumme, incorporating a discussion of her most recent work titled *Work in a Warming World*. The following interview with *Empire's Ally* editors Greg Albo and Jerome Klassen discusses a range of issues surrounding Canadian Imperialism in general and the war in Afghanistan in particular. In their discussion with Jordy Cummings, Albo and Klassen challenge the humanitarian aspects of the Afghanistan war, drawing attention to the ecological, social and political consequences of war without end. The section is capped with an interview between John Bellamy Foster, editor of *Monthly Review*, and Steve da Silva. They discuss the frightening prospects that we face as a species, incorporating discussions of recent IPCC reports as well as Foster's highly original reading of Marx and Engels' writings on nature and the metabolic rift.

Concluding *Alternate Routes'* thirty-seventh year of publication and twenty-fifth issue are eleven reviews examining everything from climate change to progressive taxation, healthcare, revolutionary social and political thought and cross-border solidarity. We would like to thank all contributors for working under extremely tight publishing deadlines, carefully addressing reviewers' concerns and contributing their time and energy to put together this volume. Special thanks are also due to our editorial advisory board, as well as a number of external reviewers, who graciously volunteered their time and expertise to see this project through. This collection would not have been possible without your steadfast support.

The concerns raised in this issue cross-cut racial, ethnic, gender and class lines; the actions or inactions taken to mitigate and adapt to climate change will effect all living systems on earth now and well into the future. In 2000, Perry Anderson remarked: "The only starting-point for a realistic Left today is a lucid registration of historical defeat. Capital has comprehensively beaten back all threats to its rule, the bases of whose power – above all, the pressures of competition – were persistently under-estimated by the socialist movement...For the Left, the lesson of

the past century is one taught by Marx. Its first task is to attend to the actual development of capitalism as a complex machinery of production and profit, in constant motion.”<sup>3</sup> Fourteen years later Anderson’s words are perhaps more revealing now than when they were first written. We hope that the contributions in this volume, along with those of socialists, feminists, anti-racists, indigenous communities and ecologically-inspired authors and activists from around the world, assist readers in interpreting the consequences of climate change and inspire them to do something about it.

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3 Anderson, P. (2000). Renewals. *New Left Review*, <http://newleftreview.org/II/1/perry-anderson-renewals>