

Editorial

Radical Americas editorialWilliam A. Booth,¹  Nicholas Grant^{2,*}¹ Department of History, UCL, UK² School of Art, Media and American Studies, University of East Anglia, UK

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'We had come to realise that our neighbours were feeling the same way.'¹ These are the words of Romina A. Green Rioja in her powerful reflection on the October 2019 uprisings in Santiago. Drawing on her own first-hand experiences of the protests, her 2021 article offers a powerful account of the way in which events in Chile were deeply entwined with the struggles of the past, as well as how they opened up political possibilities for the future. The sudden realisation of connection that Rioja's comment evokes, both with those who live near to you but who are all too often separated by walls or boundaries, and between the past, present and future, goes to the root of what drives *Radical Americas* as a journal.

Launched in 2016, and having published over 40 open-access, peer-reviewed research articles – alongside 7 review articles, 9 commentaries, and 17 book reviews – *Radical Americas* aims to spark trans-hemispheric conversations that help us to better understand the connections and radical solidarities that have shaped the politics of the region. At the same time, as Tanya Harmer notes in the pages of the journal, 'good global history requires local knowledge'.² Indeed, one of the privileges of editing *Radical Americas* has been the opportunity to reflect on how articles that focus on radicalism in very specific local contexts might compare, connect or contrast with other spaces and circumstances throughout the Americas. The journal is therefore always inevitably shaped by transnational concerns, even when the pieces we publish are focused on a single location.

It is hard to pick our highlights from *Radical Americas* over the last eight years – which began with George Kafka's (2016) wonderful photo essay 'Faces of the city'³ – but it has been particularly gratifying to have had the opportunity to engage with work that has fundamentally transformed our understanding of radical politics throughout the continent. For example, from a North American perspective, David Helps (2018)⁴ shows us how, during the early Cold War, a small group of Black radicals excavated

histories of racial violence and settler colonialism to accuse the United States government of presiding over the genocide of Black Americans. In the process the article made a valuable contribution to our understanding of the transnational dimensions of the Black freedom struggle in the United States, while also showing the way in which appeals to international law challenge the global politics of racial capitalism and connect the struggle against racism in the United States to the struggle against empire and colonialism overseas. Meanwhile, back in 2021 Bruno Bosteels⁵ used the intellectual journey of the Argentine philosopher Oscar del Barco – ‘from Marx to Heidegger’ – to draw broader conclusions about how thinkers responded to the crisis of Marxism, placing this individual story within the framework of ‘a much vaster, epochal or civilisational crisis of reason and technology in the West’. Also in 2021, Marian Schlotterbeck⁶ exposed the vast gulf between the Chilean people and the parties that claim to represent them, linking recent protests to historic popular assemblies, and outlining a Chilean tradition of grassroots radical democracy. In the same special issue⁷ – of which we are tremendously proud – we were delighted to be able to offer Gina Inostroza Retamal’s article in both English⁸ and Spanish,⁹ allowing a far wider readership access to a fascinating analysis of the roles played by militant left-wing women in broader popular movements.

We are incredibly lucky to have a home at UCL Press, where we can publish all of our work open-access and on a rolling basis. As such, as editors, we have a great deal of flexibility when it comes to format and we are really pleased that we have been able to publish photo essays, long form reviews and political commentaries alongside more traditional research articles. We are especially pleased with the fantastic special issues we have published over the last few years – on ‘Radical Periodicals’ (2020)¹⁰ edited by E. James West, Sue Currell and Victoria Bazin; ‘Revolution and Counter Revolution in Latin America’ (2021)¹¹ edited by Nicolas Allen and Óscar Ariel Cabezas; ‘Chile’s Popular Unity Experiment at 50’¹² (2021) edited by Joshua Frens-String, Tanya Harmer and Marian Schlotterbeck; and the ‘Life History and Cultures of Militancy in Latin America’s Cold War’ (2023)¹³ edited by Jacob Blanc and Timo Schaefer. We are always keen to hear proposals for potential thematic special issues, especially pitches that foreground the work of scholars from Latin America and the Caribbean.

As an editorial collective we are committed to working with UCL Press to enable the publication of work in both Spanish and Portuguese, as well as in English. Ultimately, we want to publish work that traces the complex history of radicalism in the Americas, while offering a systemic critique of the power structures that have shaped the region’s history. With our flexible formats and open access publication model, we are able to provide a platform for this work to reach as broad a readership as possible. Democratic access to scholarship should be a key part of any project of radical knowledge. As editors we will do all we can to make our authors feel welcome and empowered, and we commit to supporting and promoting their work when publishing in Radical Americas.

Notes

¹ Green Rioja, ‘Collective trauma’, 2.

² Harmer, ‘Towards a global history’, 10.

³ Kafka, ‘Faces of the city’.

⁴ Helps, ‘We charge genocide’.

⁵ Bosteels, ‘From Marx to Heidegger’.

⁶ Schlotterbeck, ‘A new power structure’.

⁷ Frens-String, Harmer and Schlotterbeck, ‘Chile’s Popular Unity’.

⁸ Inostroza Retamal, ‘The presence’.

⁹ Inostroza Retamal, ‘Presencia’.

¹⁰ West, Currell and Bazin, ‘Radical periodicals’.

¹¹ Allen and Cabezas, ‘Revolution and counterrevolution’.

¹² Frens-String, Harmer and Schlotterbeck, ‘Chile’s Popular Unity’.

¹³ Blanc and Schaefer, ‘Life history and cultures’.

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