

## **Edgy states and boundary crossers: borders and borderlands in the 'Short Twentieth Century'**

MGA Lecture Room, St Hugh's College, Oxford.  
10.30am-4.30pm, 19 May 2017

From Brexit to Donald Trump's plans for a southern border wall, international boundaries, and the people and things that cross them, are high on political agendas. The French far-right presidential candidate, Marine Le Pen, has welcomed what she has called a return to the 'time of borders.'

The period that Eric Hobsbawm amongst others, famously termed the 'Short Twentieth Century', from 1914 to 1991, was bounded temporally by two major phases of border creation – coupled to the end of the First World War and the collapse of Soviet power – while decolonisation produced a third. Violence accompanied partitions in Ireland, South Asia, and the Middle East, hard ideological and systemic political borders were constructed, and new supra-national organisations and trading blocs came into being.

Supported by the University of Oxford History Faculty's Research Committee and Sanderson Fund, this workshop brings together historians, whose often-interdisciplinary work concerns diverse countries and regions of the world, but who share overlapping interests in the interpenetration of national and international history with local, small scale and everyday experience at the edges of the state. With the [re]bordering impulse again seemingly on the march in both Europe and north America, this timely event offers an opportunity to think again about this earlier 'time of borders' against the backdrop of contemporary developments.

This event is free to attend, please email Peter Leary ([peter.leary@history.ox.ac.uk](mailto:peter.leary@history.ox.ac.uk)) by 7 May 2017.

### **Agenda:**

**10.30 – Tea and coffee**

**10.45 – Welcome and introductory remarks**

**11.00 – Session 1: Border/land people**

Tim Wilson, 'Partition and its discontents: Loyalism and the Border, 1912-23.'

Christine Mathias, 'Trapped within States: Native Peoples and International Borders in the Americas.'

Andrew S. Tompkins, 'Fluid Boundaries? A Tandem History of the Rhine and Oder-Neisse Borderlands, 1949-1989.'

**12.30 - Lunch**

**1.30 – Session 2: Living on the edge**

Jason B. Johnson, 'The Divided Village: The Cold War in the German Borderlands.'

Peter Leary, 'Sitting in the "Six Counties" eating from "the table in the Twenty-six": living with partition in mid-twentieth century Ireland.'

**2.30 – Tea and coffee**

## 2.45 – Session 3: Defining state and nation from the outside in

Anna Bruzzone, 'Secessionism and state formation in the Kenya-Somalia borderland, c.1960-1963: popular mobilisation, alliances and conflicts.'

Frances O'Morchoe, 'Re-Thinking State Formation on Burma's Borders: A Transnational and Local History'

Sören Urbansky, 'Herdsman, shunters, customs officers and the making of the Sino-Russian border.'

## 4.15 – Closing remarks

## 4.30 – Close

### Speakers and chairs:

**Andrew S. Tompkins** is a Lecturer in History at the University of Sheffield. He is the author of *Better Active than Radioactive! Anti-Nuclear Protest in 1970s France and West Germany* (Oxford University Press, 2016), and is currently working on Germany's post-war borders with Poland and France.

**Anna Bruzzone** is a doctoral candidate and Chancellor's Scholar at the University of Warwick. She is researching power and state formation in the Somalia-Kenya borderlands from a transnational perspective.

**Christine Mathias** is a Lecturer in Modern Latin American History at Kings College, London. She is working on a book manuscript that will provide the first comprehensive history of efforts by Argentina, Bolivia, and Paraguay to conquer an isolated South American borderland known as the Gran Chaco.

**Frances O'Morchoe** is a DPhil candidate in History at the University of Oxford. Her research takes a local perspective on the history of Burma's borders with China and Thailand.

**Jason B. Johnson** is Assistant Professor of History at Trinity University, San Antonio. He works on the inner-German border and his new book on a German village of sixty people divided by the Iron Curtain will be released in June 2017.

**Peter Leary** is the Canon Murray Fellow in Irish History at St Hugh's College, Oxford. He is the author of *Unapproved Routes: histories of the Irish border, 1922-1972* (Oxford University Press, 2016), winner of the American Conference for Irish Studies' Donald Murphy Prize for Distinguished First Book.

**Sören Urbansky** a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Cambridge (Darwin College). He has published a number of articles on the on the China-Russia/USSR border, and is revising a book manuscript for publication on the same topic.

**Tim Wilson** is director of the Handa Centre for the Study of Terrorism and Political Violence at the University of St Andrews. Amongst other things, he is author of *Frontiers of Violence: Conflict and Identity in Ulster and Upper Silesia, 1918–1922* (Oxford University Press, 2010), a grassroots comparison of conflict in two post-First World War border regions.