

CALL FOR PAPERS

Call for Proposals—A World in Motion: Eurasian Border Areas in Times of War and Postwar, from the Early Modern Period to the Present

An interdisciplinary conference sponsored by *Kritika*, the Institut Convergence migrations, Sorbonne, INED, the American University in Paris, EHESS, CNRS, Max Weber Network Eastern Europe, CERCEC, and Eur'ORBEM labs, to be held at Campus Condorcet in Paris on 12–13 December 2025.

Kritika editors and our colleagues at EHESS and CNRS, Juliette Cadiot and Irina Tcherneva, are soliciting analyses of the border regions of the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union in times of war and postwar. Building on several decades of “borderlands” scholarship that focuses on the tension between local diversity and fluidity, on the one hand, and state-driven campaigns for security, legibility, and homogeneity, on the other, *Kritika* editors seek to highlight the centrality of the borderland as a “shatter zone”: a site for violence, genocide, warfare, forced population transfer, and migration. We intend for the conference to be transnational and decolonial in orientation. For instance, how was the expansion of the Soviet Union in and after the Second World War experienced by displaced and replacement populations? Similarly, what was it like to travel as a pilgrim or refugee from Soviet Central Asia to Iran, Afghanistan, Turkey, and elsewhere?

Among other topics, contributions might focus on the following:

- The projection of state power into borderlands regions
- Migration trajectories
- The entanglement of different political regimes at local, national, and imperial levels
- Forced population transfers
- The history of cross-border groups and their mobility
- Transnational and trans-imperial individual and family trajectories
- Population exchanges at the end of a war
- War crimes and postwar repressions
- The presence of border zones in international diplomacy
- The role of border zones in domestic politics
- Identity and citizenship in border zones
- The specific contributions of borderland history to the broader history of postwar eras
- The role of nonstate actors (NGOs, churches, etc.) in border zones

We anticipate inviting a group of twelve scholars to the conference. Participation is open to specialists of various levels of experience, from advanced doctoral students to senior scholars. We are especially keen to include scholars from the former Soviet Union and surrounding countries. All papers will be circulated beforehand; select articles will be published in a conference volume and/or a special issue of *Kritika*. All papers must be submitted in English.

We invite interested participants to apply to the conference by submitting a brief abstract (250–300 words), along with a short CV (maximum two pages), combined into a single PDF by **1 May**

2025 to *Kritika*'s Special Topics Editor, Stephen Bittner (bittner@sonoma.edu). Conference participants will be required to circulate a draft version of their paper (5,000–6,000 words) by **15 November 2025**.

With support from the Institut Convergence migrations, Sorbonne, INED, the American University in Paris, EHESS, CNRS, Max Weber Network Eastern Europe, CERCEC, and Eur'ORBEM labs, conference organizers anticipate being able to cover travel costs and lodging for most participants. However, funds are limited. We ask participants to apply where possible for funding from their home institutions. Please indicate in your abstract whether you will need financial support if accepted.