

Advertisement for a postdoctoral fellowship funded by the European Research Council at Sciences Po, France.

General information

Position Definition: Post-doctoral researcher

Place of work: Paris, France

Type of contract: Temporary contract

Contract duration: 24 months

Expected hiring date: 1 January 2027

Work time: full-time

Required level of study: PhD and post-doctorate.

The European Research Council Advanced Grant project “The Global War on Civilians, 1905-1945” seeks a Postdoctoral researcher on the transnational dimensions of the French home front in the *longue durée*.

Application deadline: 1 October 2026

Successful applicants will be interviewed by 1 December 2026

Start date: 1 January 2027

Postdoctoral Research Fellowship on the transnational dimensions of the French home front in the *longue durée*

Funded by the European Research Council, the Advanced Grant “The Global War on Civilians, 1905-1945” aims at exploring the evolution of types of warfare that targeted the enemy's civil population, focusing on (1) aerial bombardment, and civil defense (2) food blockades, and home front campaigns to ration food, and (3) efforts to “demoralize” enemy civilians, while boosting “morale” at home. We investigate how the transnational circulation of knowledge and practices culminated by World War II in systematic attacks on civilians *and* the creation of home fronts that mobilized civilians. The Principal Investigator (PI) is Prof. Sheldon Garon, a global historian and specialist in Japanese history. The project is hosted by the Centre d'Histoire of Sciences Po in Paris, France, an international research institution with strengths in history and the social sciences.

The current team members are researching Italy, Germany, Britain, Japan, the Second Sino-Japanese War, Spanish Civil War, United States, and international law and humanitarianism. We seek a Postdoctoral researcher on the French home front, who thinks transnationally and also can connect developments in France from World War I to World War II, including relevant developments in the interwar decades.

The Postdoctoral Researcher will work under the direct supervision of the PI and in collaboration with the other team members. He/she would research the following topics:

- Did France enter World War II in 1939 with a genuine home front that included programs of civil defense (passive defense), food provision, and morale-boosting?
- What lessons had it drawn from World War I, when the French state and society organized an elaborate home front that encompassed morale surveys, food distribution, mobilization of workers and women, savings campaigns, and cooperation with non-state associations?
- Throughout the 1930s, French officials and the public anxiously anticipated air raids on their cities, and the state embarked on serious civil defense projects before the German invasion in

1940. France, too, was both a transnational learner and a model for others. What was the role of France in the transnational circulation of ideas and practices in the global war on civilians?

- To what extent did the specter of the destruction of Paris and other cities—plus the strafing of civilians— factor into the French government’s request for an armistice in 1940?
- From 1940 to 1944, how did civilians in occupied France react to Allied bombing?
- Following World War I, the French air force was perhaps the most powerful in the world. In what ways did it contribute to new strategies and tactics focused on attacking cities and civilians? In the interwar era, did French bombing in its colonies and mandates shape strategies for an aerial war against European powers—or vice versa?

Tasks

Reporting to the Principal Investigator, the main tasks are (but are not limited to) the following:

- Research extensively in French archives, libraries, and digital collections relating to the research topics above. Notable archives: National Archives, Defence Historical Service, and Diplomatic Archives, Paris.
- Publish at least two papers in English related to the project, one of which will appear in the collective volume edited by the PI.
- Participate in the project’s workshops and conferences over the five-year span of the project
- Actively collaborate with other team members to excavate transnational connections among the national cases.
- Assist the PI with research for his book, “When Home Fronts Became Battlegrounds: The Global War on Civilians”.
- Contribute to the project’s Dataset and Glossary.

Preference will be given to candidates who have done historical and archival research on aspects of war and society in France from 1914 until the end of the Second World War. He / she must be able to develop and carry out a research program in relevant archives across France and Europe.

The Postdoctoral researcher will be affiliated with Sciences Po, Paris. The selected candidate must ensure he / she has legal permission to work in the European Union.

Sciences Po is an equal opportunities employer and is committed to ensuring a balanced representation of genders, geographical areas and minorities. Applications from women are particularly welcome.

Funding

For this position, we offer:

- a contract for two years of full-time employment as a Postdoctoral Researcher;
- a competitive salary that includes social benefits;
- an allowance for travel and research expenses.

Profile description

Ph.D. defense must be completed before the start date.

Excellent skills in archival research in France.

Expertise in collecting and preparing historical data for datasets.

Excellent writing and communication skills.

Advanced level in English.

Sense of teamwork.

Application

1. A **letter of application** (no more than 2 pages) explaining your qualifications and motivation for the project and the added value that you are expected to bring;
2. A **curriculum vitae** with a list of education, positions, teaching experience, administrative experience, other qualifying activities and a list of publications;
3. Scanned copies of relevant diplomas and certificates;
4. A final **report on your PhD dissertation** (“Rapport final de soutenance”);
5. Contact information (email addresses, number phones) for **two academic references**.

Applications to be sent to the ERC project manager: alexandra.shubenkova@sciencespo.fr