

## 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:* France (living in other EU countries is open to discussion)

*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 Successful applicants will be interviewed by 15 November 2026

The European Research Council Advanced Grant project “The Global War on Civilians, 1905-1945” seeks a Postdoctoral researcher on the Soviet Union’s home front and the war on Soviet civilians in the Second World War.

**Application deadline:** 15 September 2026 **Start date:** 1 January 2027

### Postdoctoral Research Fellowship on the Soviet Union’s home front and the war on Soviet civilians in the Second World War.

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, and international law and humanitarianism. We seek a Postdoctoral researcher on the Soviet Union’s home front and the war on Soviet civilians in the Second World War.

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:

- The Soviet Union’s construction of a “home front” during the interwar era and war years— involving the mobilization of civilian women and men for food provision, civil defense against aerial bombardment, war production, and maintaining “morale.”
- The role of “transnational learning” and foreign models in the making of the Soviet home front.
- Nazi Germany’s war on Soviet civilians, combining aerial bombardment, artillery attacks, and blockades of the civilian food supply. Notable were Germany’s Hunger Plan and campaigns to blockade and starve Soviet cities in Leningrad, Kiev, Kharkiv, and elsewhere.

- The mass organization of civil defense (passive defense) against aerial bombardment, including the activities of the air defense league Osoaviakhim (est. 1927). To what extent was Osoaviakhim influenced by similar air defense leagues in other nations, and to what extent did Osoaviakhim provide a model to others, including Poland and Nazi Germany?

## Tasks

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

- Research extensively in Soviet archives, libraries, and digital collections relating to the research topics above. These include accessible archives in the former Soviet republics, and possibly in Germany.
- Collaborate with the researcher on the German work package to understand Germany's Hunger Plan, other starvation campaigns, and the aerial bombardment of Soviet cities.
- 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 the Soviet Union in the 1930s and wartime. They must be able to visit accessible archives in Europe. And they should know Soviet archives well enough to be able to task research services in *inaccessible* archives to provide relevant documents. Depending on linguistic capabilities, the postdoc may also visit archives in Germany to research aspects of Nazi Germany's war on Soviet civilians.

The Postdoctoral researcher will be affiliated with Sciences Po in Paris, and it is preferred that the researcher live in Paris. The position is open to international recruitment.

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;
- an internationally 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.

Expertise in collecting and preparing historical data for datasets.

Excellent writing and communication skills.

Advanced level in English and in the languages of the former Soviet republics.

Knowledge of German is an advantage.

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 dissertation**;
5. Contact information (email addresses, number phones) for **two academic references**.

Applications to be sent to the ERC project manager: [alexandra.shubenkova@sciencespo.fr](mailto:alexandra.shubenkova@sciencespo.fr)