



Research Associate in Modern European History (Germany and Austria): Centre for Collective Violence, Holocaust and Genocide Studies

Job Description

Department:	UCL Institute of Advanced Studies
Reports to:	Professor Mary Fulbrook
Grade:	7
Hours:	36.5 hours per week (1.00 FTE)

The post is funded for 29 months, in the first instance.

Start date: Interviews will be carried out on 23 August 2018 and the person appointed will start on 1 October 2018, or as soon as possible thereafter.

The post will be located in the Centre for Collective Violence, Holocaust and Genocide Studies, which is based in the UCL Institute of Advanced Studies.

Main Purpose:

The Postdoctoral Research Associate (PDRA) will work closely with Professor Mary Fulbrook, Professor Stephanie Bird, and Dr Stefanie Rauch on an AHRC-funded three-year collaborative research project entitled 'Compromised Identities? Reflections on Perpetration and Complicity under Nazism' (see AHRC Project Summary in Appendix).

Widespread involvement in state-sponsored violence raises questions about justice, identity, and the legacies of a violent past. This project examines the ambiguous roles and changing representations of those who were entangled in the Nazi regime. It focuses both on people explicitly designated as 'perpetrators' – whether by victims or others, in testimonies, trials, the media, or cultural representations – and on the many more who facilitated, collaborated with, or through their everyday behaviours helped to sustain state-sponsored practices of persecution, exploitation and murder. It combines analysis of changing social relations under Nazi rule with later reflections and self-representations in a variety of contexts. There are several interrelated research objectives, including: to develop a structural and interpretive approach to understanding the formation of a 'bystander society' in which widespread complicity and involvement in perpetration is possible; to examine strategies of self-representation by individuals involved, at the time and later; to understand the intersections between subjective identity and wider political contexts, legal interventions, and public representations; and to explore the links between personal narratives and cultural engagement with questions of violence, morality and justice.

The PDRA will analyse selected trials and Nazi 'crime scenes' in relation to prevalent social, political and cultural discourses and wider historical contexts, in order to shed new light on the contingent, situational and changing understandings of complicity, perpetration, responsibility, and justice in the three Third Reich successor states. The person appointed may wish to investigate legal and political processes and moral claims in the context of generational shifts and changing domestic and international contexts. Focussing on the dynamics of bringing former Nazis to justice in the courtroom, the research might explore the relative significance of the respective political and legal systems, the characteristics of the judges, lawyers, juries and others involved in court cases, public support for witnesses and defendants, and contested constructions of 'perpetrators' in the national and local media. Selecting cases where Nazis were brought to trial, and also examining materials relating to those who were not, the research will undertake a comparative study of the varying dynamics of justice in one or more of the Third Reich successor states since 1945 – Austria, East and West Germany, and united Germany. It may furthermore explore local discourses and wider media representations and interventions, looking at newspaper and radio coverage, as well as, increasingly, television debates and their refractions. In discussion with the person appointed, specific cases and localities will be selected for in-depth analysis and comparison. These could include, for example, not only trials concerning major locations and crimes in the east, but also sites involved in the Nazi 'euthanasia' programme, and concentration camp sub-camps where slave labour was exploited. The person appointed will write academic articles on this research, will collaborate on an edited volume, and will work towards a monograph.

Furthermore, the project will contextualise and develop for wider public, educational and scholarly use collections of materials relating to perpetrators. Research findings will be further communicated in a mobile exhibition and related activities. The PDRA will help to develop these and related impact activities.

The person appointed will also participate in and pro-actively contribute to the activities of the Institute of Advanced Studies, and may be offered teaching opportunities. The UCL Institute of Advanced Studies provides an environment organized by issues of global significance and themes of cross-disciplinary interest, and houses existing and new Research Centres and postgraduate taught programmes. See: <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/institute-of-advanced-studies>.

Main Duties:

- To undertake his/her own research into an aspect of the collaborative research project, as outlined above, with a defined research plan
- To write academic articles on the research undertaken as part of the project
- To work towards a monograph on the research
- To collaborate with team members in the production of an edited volume
- To prepare and present the findings of research activities to colleagues and other audiences as relevant
- To participate pro-actively in regular team meetings, and in the planning, organisation and implementation of seminars, workshops, conferences, public events, a mobile exhibition, and other relevant activities related to the project
- To take a lead in developing and running the activities of the UCL Centre for Collective Violence, Holocaust and Genocide Studies, based in the IAS

Person Specification:

Essential

- PhD in a relevant subject area (NB the thesis must have been successfully passed and confirmed by no later than 31 July 2018)
- Expertise in 20th-century German and European history during and/or following the Nazi era
- Theoretical expertise and knowledge relevant to analysis of material concerning perpetrators
- Experience in the analysis of relevant source materials produced in varying historical contexts
- Proven ability to analyse and write about complex historical material
- Demonstrable potential for publishing academic work of high quality
- Effective written and verbal communication skills
- Fluency (written and spoken) in German and English
- Experience of working in a research environment
- Ability and willingness to travel within the UK and overseas on an occasional basis

Desirable

- Experience in organising conferences, public events, exhibitions, websites, and/or social media

How to apply

To apply for this vacancy please click on the 'Apply Now' button below. Please upload the following materials:

- (1) a document which includes a covering letter demonstrating how you meet the criteria for the post, a CV with list of publications, the names of three referees, and a research proposal of no more than 750 words outlining a specific topic and plan for research falling within the scope of the PDRA part of the project, indicating how this fits within the wider project (see Appendix); and
- (2) one sole-authored article or chapter-length sample of your academic work.

Please note that applications will not be considered unless all of the above are included.

References will only be required for shortlisted candidates. Please ensure that your referees are aware and will be able to provide references at short notice in August if requested.

Closing date for applications: 31 July 2018

Latest time for submission of applications: 23:59

Interview date: 23 August 2018. Please note that if you have not heard anything by this date, your application has been unsuccessful on this occasion.

Appendix: AHRC Project Summary

Compromised Identities? Reflections on Perpetration and Complicity under Nazism

Under Nazi rule, millions were involved in the machinery of persecution. In 2015, the UK's Holocaust Commission noted that, while the Holocaust could only be carried out 'with widespread complicity', there is 'a great deal of education on perpetrators' roles, but not enough on the role of society and bystanders' ('Britain's Promise to Remember', p.49). This statement reflects both the character of public education and the current state of research. Yet the category of 'bystanders' is too broad to encapsulate the ambiguities of a wide range of behaviours variously motivated by conviction and careerism, conformity and passivity, partial enthusiasm or self-distancing, as well as capitulation rooted in fear and powerlessness.

This interdisciplinary project analyses how people became entangled in Nazi systems and practices, and how they responded to what later, under different circumstances, came to be seen as a 'compromised' past. Exploring perpetration and complicity in state-sponsored violence and questions of justice in its aftermath, it focuses on representations by and of people 'on the perpetrator side' from the Third Reich to the present. We explore patterns of involvement on the side of the perpetrators in a multi-faceted manner, contextualising and interpreting the 'voices' of the perpetrators and raising awareness of the complexities of representation.

The project examines ways in which people who were involved in or witnesses to Nazi crimes talked about, silenced, or variously negotiated accounts of their roles, often constructing retrospective accounts of having been merely an 'innocent bystander'. It analyses how individual identities come under pressure when circumstances and value systems change, and how self-representations develop over time. It explores how public discourses - political, cultural, journalistic and judicial - address state-sponsored violence and interrogate or contribute to exculpatory strategies at a personal level. Public images often helped to demonise 'excess perpetrators' as unlike 'ordinary people', while others suggested the significance of 'just following orders'; private self-understandings and exculpatory strategies were affected by such images. We develop a concept of 'compromised identities' in relation to collective violence and its legacies.

Four interrelated research strands examine the interplay between wider social, cultural and political contexts, and people's self-representations over time. The first analyses the emergence of a 'bystander society', as people accommodated themselves to changing roles under the Nazi regime. Using ego-documents (letters, diaries, memoirs) it explores behavioural shifts and social relations while people often retained an inner distance from new demands. A second strand analyses oral history interviews from the 1960s to the present to explore ways in which changing public images affected private discourses and self-representations among those who had been complicit in sustaining the system and assisting the crimes of the Third Reich. The third strand (PDRA to be appointed) will analyse aspects of postwar trials and justice in shaping constructions of 'perpetrators', which may include: the significance of postwar political and legal systems, the character of professionals and others involved in trials, and how specific crime complexes are refracted through the media and local settings in selected cases. The fourth strand explores intriguing twists in the ways in which questions of agency, identity and morality have been engaged with in works of creative literature and films that specifically thematise issues of justice. These strands are brought together in a wider comparative context.

The project will have an impact on academic debates on perpetration and complicity. It will also develop for research and educational purposes a unique collection of filmed interviews with some 250 former perpetrators and witnesses of Third Reich crimes. A website, public events and a mobile exhibition will engage wider audiences.