



Arts & Humanities
Research Council



CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

RESEARCH ASSOCIATE FOR THE AHRC (Arts & Humanities Research Council) PROJECT: "THE IMPACT OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL WRITERS' ORGANISATIONS ON FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION"

The Post

Following the award of a research grant from the AHRC, the CNRS Research Center [THALIM](#) (UMR 7172), invites applications for the post of Research Assistant to contribute to the "Writers and Free Expression" project. The post will be fixed term for 12 months, and it is anticipated that the appointee will start on 1 January, 2018. This is a collaborative project with the University of East Anglia and the University of Oxford. Under the direction of Laetitia Zecchini (CNRS/THALIM), the Research Associate will be responsible for the following: extensive archival work at the former PEN offices in Theosophy Hall, Mumbai and other documentation centers in India; liaising with International PEN, PEN All-India Center and new Indian centers (Delhi, Bangalore), helping with the coordination of the project partners and the running of the project; contributing an essay to one of the key project outputs and shorter pieces to the website. The precise duties will be agreed in discussion with all members of the research team.

The Project

The project seeks to understand the role of non-governmental writers' organisations in the history of international debates about literature, censorship and the freedom of expression. It will focus on International PEN (1921-present day) as well as the global national PEN centres it founded (many during the years 1923-1936). PEN's internationalism is central, but, to keep the scope of the project manageable, we will give special prominence to its activities in Britain, South Africa, and India. In each case we will consider PEN's relationship to other associated groups: Index on Censorship (1972-present day) and Article 19 (1987-present day) in Britain, the African Writer's Association (1981-1992), the Congress of South African Writers (1987-1993), and the Freedom of Expression Institute (1994-present) in South Africa, the Progressive Writers' Association (1935-mid 50s), the Sahitya Akademi (1954-present), the SAHMAT Collective (1989-present) or the newly founded Indian Writers' Forum in India.

International PEN, South African and Indian PEN are project partners and we will be liaising with these organisations for the duration of the project. Three post-doctoral Research Associates will be employed on this project; one for 4 years and housed at UEA and 2 further Research Associates housed at Oxford University and CNRS, Paris, and employed for 1 year. While the South African PEN research will be under the direction of Professor Peter McDonald (Oxford University) and the Indian PEN under the direction of Laetitia Zecchini, (CNRS, Paris), the Senior Research Associate housed at UEA will work under the direction of Rachel Potter and focus on International and English PEN, both located in London.

The project aims to address the following questions: how have nongovernmental organisations worked to define legal, political and cultural understandings of free expression? What tensions, if any, were there, and are there between the national writers' centres and the universalist values informing international charters on free speech? What kind of internationalism did and

do writers' organisations constitute and how have they intervened in governmental decisions about censorship and the freedom of expression? Has this internationalism been linked to a claim that literature can act as a shared ground of human experience and judgement? Through new research on the history and current structure of PEN, and associated groups, the project aims to produce a wide-ranging account of the political and intellectual agency of writers' organisations and the role they have played in shaping internationalism since the 1920s.

Project website: <https://writersandfreeexpression.com>

Responsibilities

- Carry out extensive archival work in libraries and documentation centers in India (including the as yet unexplored PEN archives in Theosophy Hall, Mumbai) and identify other possible sources of evidence
- Conduct interviews with key figures of free expression writers' and artists' organisations in India
- Manage own academic research and administrative activities, and help with the running of the project, including with the organisation of three international conferences in India, South Africa and UK
- Help with the coordination of the project partners, in particular, liaise with International Pen, All-India Pen Centre, the Delhi Centre and the newly founded South India centre in Bangalore
- Contribute an essay to one of the key project outputs, shorter pieces for the project website and develop ideas for other publications or public presentations
- Collaborate in the cataloguing of the research with the project team and in the preparation of research publications and book chapters
- Act as a source of information and advice to other members of the group on methodologies and procedures
- Conduct other project-related work as agreed in discussion with all members of the research team

Selection criteria

- Proven academic excellence, including outstanding BA and MA degrees
- Submitted PhD in a relevant academic area
- Experience of working with archival materials
- Experience of conducting research in India
- Experience of writing academic prose for publication
- Demonstrable communication skills in English in both written and spoken forms
- A high level of organisation skills and an ability to meet deadlines
- Collegial, able to work flexibly and independently, able to work in a team

Desirable selection criteria

- Publication record in the relevant area
- Knowledge of the cultural, political and literary history of the twentieth century with an emphasis on India
- Experience of cataloguing archival material and of working in South Asian archives
- Proficiency in at least one Indian language other than English
- Proficiency with using digital media and platforms (e.g. Wordpress)
- Experience of conducting interviews and working with oral evidence

Documents to submit:

- a detailed cv
- a list of publications
- a cover letter

Please send your full application to: laetitia.zecchini@cnrs.fr

End of application: August 29th

GENERAL

Salary: up to 68292 euros per annum

Contract type: Fixed term (12 months)

Starting date: The post is available from 1 January 2018

Location:

The research associate will be based at the CNRS research center THALIM (UMR 7172), 2 rue Vivienne, 75002 in Paris.

Project Team:

Professor Rachel Potter (University of East Anglia)

Professor Peter D. McDonald (Oxford)

Dr. Laetitia Zecchini (CNRS, Paris)

Dr. Katherine Cooper (University of East Anglia)

Interviews

It is anticipated that interviews will take place on September 22nd in Oxford (UK) and candidates who have not heard by this date should assume their application has been unsuccessful.

Successful shortlisted candidates may be notified of their interview times by telephone and/or email and it is therefore essential you include both of these in your application.

Candidates should note that travel and incidental expenses incurred in attending the interview will not be reimbursed and that it is possible to arrange for the interview to be conducted by Skype.