

THE RESEARCH UNIT 'SOCIAL HISTORY SINCE 1750' (GHENT UNIVERSITY, HISTORY DEPARTMENT) CURRENTLY HAS ONE POSITION AVAILABLE FOR:

SCIENTIFIC RESEARCHER (PHD STUDENT):

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: MAYORS AND LEGITIMACY IN WWI. THE MAYOR AS FEEDER, PROTECTOR AND REPRESENTATIVE IN OCCUPIED AND LIBERATED BELGIUM AND FRANCE (1914-1921)

This research project focuses on the role of mayors in occupied and liberated Belgium and France (1914-1921), a topic largely ignored by historiography. As a mediator between different social groups and other powerbrokers (notably the occupier) the mayor is a highly suitable figure to research the changing relationships of power caused by the occupation during WWI. This is even more relevant, because the importance of the local governmental level grew considerably during the partial disintegration of state authority in the occupied territories. By researching – for two national cases – how local administrators positioned themselves during a (temporary) disintegration of the modern national state (a phenomenon that took on considerable proportions during the great European wars of the 20th century, but has never been systematically investigated) this project has international relevance.

The concept of legitimacy will provide us with the central angle to make the methodology and questions concrete. How could Belgian and French mayors maintain their legitimacy during an occupation? What changing and often conflicting expectations and demands did different social groups, the occupier and other powerbrokers have towards the mayor? The central question is how the mayor's legitimacy was redefined and whether this shift had a lasting practical and ideological impact on local political life.

This PhD-project is funded by FWO-Vlaanderen. The researcher will be affiliated to the research group Social History since 1750/Ghent University (<http://www.socialhistory.ugent.be/>), where Antoon Vrints will act as supervisor of the PhD. The PhD-project is jointly carried out with two other scientific partners who will assist in the supervision of the research: the dep. of History of the University of Antwerp (Nico Wouters) and CEGESOMA (Rudi Van Doorslaer).

QUALIFICATIONS

- The successful candidate has a Master's degree in History or a Master's degree with demonstrable interest in historical research;
- The candidate has experience with qualitative and quantitative research. Research experience (on Master or Bachelor level) directly related to the project's subject matter is a plus;
- The candidate masters Dutch, French and English, or is willing to learn these languages;
- The candidate has passive knowledge of German;
- The candidate is an enthusiastic and inventive team player and is willing to travel abroad.

OFFER

- A 4-year contract as a full time scientific staff member of Ghent University;
- Contact with national and international research groups;
- Opportunity to follow an individualized PhD-programme at the UGent Doctoral School of Arts, Humanities and Law or the Doctoral School of Social and Behavioural Sciences, including language courses;
- Extra benefits: free public transport between home and work place, biking fee, access to university sports facilities and university restaurants.

The successful candidate is expected to start on October 1st, 2013

HOW TO APPLY

If you are interested in joining us, please send your CV and a short research plan (maximum 2500 words) describing your vision on this project or how you would conduct the research (in Dutch, French, German or English), before July 15th, 2013 to: prof. dr. Antoon Vrints (antoon.vrints@ugent.be)