Pacifism and protest: anti-war sentiment in IWM collections

AHRC PhD Studentship in collaboration with Imperial War Museums (IWM) and the University of Leeds

Applications are invited for an AHRC-funded PhD at the University of Leeds, on the presence of anti-war sentiment in IWM collections. This is offered under the AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Partnership programme. The partner institutions are the University of Leeds and IWM.

The studentship will be supervised by Ingrid Sharp of the School of Modern Languages, University of Leeds and Graham Boxer, Director of IWM North. The studentship, which is funded for three years full-time equivalent at standard AHRC rates, will begin on 1 October 2014.

The Studentship

IWM collections include spoken and written testimony relating directly to the experiences of conscientious objectors, pacifists and anti-war protestors, but also offer scope to explore reactions to such sentiments among those who did not share them and the possibility of reading anti-war interpretations into works produced for other purposes.

The major focus on existing work on Conscientious Objectors (COs) has been on the wartime period itself, COs’ motivations, their representation in public discourse and the conduct and outcomes of the tribunals. There has been little work on the position and representation of anti-war activists in the immediate post-war period. Although women’s role at national organisational level has been documented, there has been little work on the role of women in sustaining the COs at an emotional, local or family level. A comparative study of the public discourse surrounding anti-war activism in the UK and internationally, specifically the response to the UK Conscience Clause in allied and enemy nations has yet to be written. Using materials held by the IWM, this project will focus on one or more of these under-researched aspects.

Use of the IWM collections will be complemented by a substantial collection of published and unpublished documents on this topic held at the Liddle Collection at the University of Leeds as well as other local archives.

The award pays fees up to the value of the full time home/EU rate for PhD degrees as well as maintenance (the latter is available to UK citizens and residents only, for more information visit: http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/SiteCollectionDocuments/Student-Funding-Guide.pdf). In addition, the student is eligible to receive up to £1,000 a year from IWM towards research expenses.

How to Apply

Applicants should have a good undergraduate degree in history, modern languages, cultural studies or another relevant discipline, and will need to satisfy AHRC eligibility requirements including Masters-level advanced research training or equivalent. Applicants should submit via email a curriculum vitae (no more than 2 pages), a sample of writing, a brief letter outlining their qualification for the studentship, and the names and contact details of two academic referees to Emily Peirson-Webber, Research Manager, IWM (research@iwm.org.uk) no later than 5pm on Thursday 10 April 2014. All documents should be submitted in either a MS Word or PDF format. Please ensure the subject line of your email appears as ‘surname, first name – IWM/Leeds studentship.’

Interviews are scheduled to be held at IWM North on Friday 25 April 2014. For further information please contact Emily Peirson-Webber (EPeirson-Webber@iwm.org.uk | 020 7416 5461). The successful candidate will be invited to apply online for a place on the PhD Modern Languages programme at the University of Leeds.