

Luxembourg Centre for Contemporary and Digital History (C²DH) Researches the Individual Destiny of the “Zwangsrekrutiert” in New Project

Esch-sur-Alzette, 11 February 2021 – As part of the project “WARLUX - Soldiers and their Communities in WWII: The Impact and Legacy of War Experiences in Luxembourg”, the C²DH of the University of Luxembourg is researching the personal side of the history of Luxembourgish youth born between 1920 and 1927 who were enrolled into German services under the Nazi occupation of Luxembourg during the Second World War. In order to uncover the individual experiences of these men, women and families, the Centre wants to engage the public and calls on them to come forward and share their family stories, letters, diaries, photographs and other personal documents.

New research approach: individual and family fates

To break with traditional historiography about the enrolment in which men were foremost at the centre of attention due to their large number and their recruitment into the Wehrmacht, the C²DH is taking a different approach towards the history of the *Zwangsrekrutierung* by including the destinies of women and the families of the enrolled boys and girls from Luxembourg. Conscription during the Second World War consisted not only of the obligatory military service in German military branches for young men introduced in 1942 by the Nazi occupant, but also of the obligatory *Reichsarbeitsdienst* (RAD) introduced for both sexes in 1941 and the obligatory *Kriegshilfsdienst* (KHD) introduced for young women in 1943.

To take it a step further, it is not the destiny of this generational cohort as a homogenous group that is treated as such, but the very personal experiences of different individuals concerned as well as the destiny of their families during the war period which are at the very centre of the research for this project. It is not only the historical chapter of the enrolments as such but above all the personal stories of different individuals that together make up this historical chapter which are paramount.

Crowdsourcing personal documents (diaries, letters, photographs,...)

While the historical context of the enrolments can be recreated with the help from documents in the national and communal archives as well as by secondary literature, to be able to tell the stories of individuals, unpublished ego-documents (testimonies, family stories, diaries, letters, postcards, photographs...) are key to the research for WARLUX. The C²DH, therefore, calls on the public for crowdsourcing and encourages people to come forward to share with the University of Luxembourg their stories and their ego-documents or respectively those of their family members.

For further questions or information, or to share stories and documents, interested persons can contact the researchers via:

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WARLUX is an FNR-funded project from the Luxembourg Centre for Contemporary and Digital History (C²DH) at the University of Luxembourg. It is directed by Prof. Dr. Denis Scuto with collaboration of Dr. Nina Janz, Michel R. Pauly and Sarah Maya Vercruysse.