

FEDEF – Fédération des Enrôlés de Force Victimes du Nazisme

Her Excellency
Mrs Alice WALPOLE
Her Britannic Majesty's Ambassador to Luxembourg
16, boulevard Franklin D. Roosevelt
L-2450 Luxembourg

Luxembourg, 28th June 2014

Your Excellency,

With all due respect to the freedom of the press and without intending to interfere with the political discussion about the appointment of the new President of the European Commission, the "Fédération des Enrôlés de Force Victimes du Nazisme" (Fédef) feels compelled to react with all clearness and determination to the recent campaign launched by a certain British newspaper around the forced enrolment of young Luxembourgers of the 1920-1927 age groups decreed by the Nazi-occupants of Luxembourg during World War II.

We protest firmly against the general misrepresentation that the Luxembourgers enrolled in the "Wehrmacht" fought for Hitler and thus endorsed the abominable Nazi ideology. What is true, on the contrary, is the fact that they sacrificed themselves for their families who would have been deported to Silesia (in today's Poland) if they hadn't complied with the call-up order, according to the principle of penal liability of their entire families. Thus they were definitely no Nazi-supporters! Moreover many of them obeyed, beyond the call of their Luxembourg heart, to an appeal of the Luxembourg government-in-exile via the BBC and deserted in order to commit themselves in the Allied forces against the Hitler-regime or in the Resistance; many others, at the risk of their lives, went into hiding until the end of the war.

In the interest of historical truth, the following historical facts should help to better understand the circumstances of the forced conscription:

From the point of view of international law, on May 10th 1940, Hitler-Germany invaded the neutral country of Luxembourg in order to occupy it and incorporate it as the "Gau Moselland" into the Third Reich. After the invasion on August 2nd 1914 of Luxembourg, whose perpetual neutrality had been guaranteed by the European powers, - including Prussia -, in the Treaty of London of 1867, this was the second German violation of Luxembourg neutrality within the 20th century.

Following this grievous offence against international law and after the inhabitants of the Grand-Duchy had bravely and openly declared that they were Luxembourgers on the occasion of a so-called "Volkstumsbefragung" (census) organized by the Nazi-occupant on October 10th 1941, "Gauleiter" (chief executive officer of the "Gau") Gustav Simon, as local governor of the infuriated dictator Hitler, imposed on August 30th 1942 the compulsory military service for young Luxembourgers. They were thus forced to enroll in the German "Wehrmacht" in the same way as the German-speaking Belgians of the Eastern counties of the equally occupied kingdom of Belgium. The same violation was perpetrated by the Nazis on the young men from reannexed Alsace-Lorraine, in France, and from parts of Silesia in Poland.

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On August 31st 1942 a strike broke out all over Luxembourg as an spontaneous reaction to this decree of the "Gauleiter". This Luxembourg strike was avenged with executions by order of a court-martial and was echoed widely in the international press. This general strike could not prevent alas that the 1920-1924 age groups were enrolled right away. As to the further age groups, forced enrolment was carried out by the occupant in the following way: the 1925 age group was called to arms on March 25th in 1943, the 1926 one on December 8th 1943 and the 1927 one on July 14th 1944.

The outcome of this forced enrolment, which affected nearly every Luxembourg family, is startling and represents an unprecedented crime against Luxembourg's youth.

About 11,200 young Luxembourgers of the 1920-1927 age groups were forcefully conscripted, forced to wear the abhorred uniform of the "Wehrmacht" and sent preferably to the Russian front as cannon fodder. 3,100 enrolled young Luxembourgers perished, some 1,600 returned home with serious injuries or psychological problems and died prematurely. In addition, many of them had suffered in prisoner-of-war camps, including at the hands of the British, after the end of the war (assembly camp number 188 near Tambow in Russia for example was especially terrible).

Moreover, about 3,600 Luxembourg girls, 58 of whom died, had to join the National Labour Service (RAD) or the war service (KHD) in Germany.

To sum up, one may say that Luxembourg, which numbered 290,230 inhabitants in 1941, had to suffer most heavily, as far as forced conscription goes, in comparison with East-Belgium, Alsace-Lorraine or Polish Silesia.

Your Excellency, we urgently appeal to you to take this sad and stirring chapter of Luxembourg's war history into complete consideration and to bring appropriately to the attention of a wide public in the United Kingdom the suffering of an entire generation as well as the patriotic attitude of the whole country of Luxembourg.

This concerns the younger as well as the middle generation of your Foreign Office, in the Government as well as in Parliament and, above all, in the UK media. This is highly necessary in order to avoid further calumny of forced enrolment and falsification of war history.

We trust that you will have full understanding for this our written open protest which is meant as an unambiguous statement and that you will take the necessary steps in the interest of truth. In this sense we remain

Yours sincerely,

Erny LAMBORELLE
Chairman

Joseph LORENT
Vice-President

FEDEF – Fédération des Enrôlés de Force Victimes du Nazisme

The Editor in chief,
The Sun newspaper
3 Thomas More Square,
London,
E98 1XY

Luxembourg, 28th June 2014

Sir,

This is to inform you that the article authored by "Daniel Sanderson in Luxembourg", titled "EURO menace Jean-Claude Juncker's dad fought for Hitler in World War Two" which was published in the edition of The Sun on 8th June 2014 contains a gross misrepresentation, nay, a falsification of the historically well established facts concerning the forced enrollment of some 11.500 young Luxembourgers conscripted against their will into the Wehrmacht, the army of Nazi Germany during World War II. Complex thinking appears evidently not to be a major capacity in some British media. The Federation of the Forcefully Conscripted of the Grand-Duchy of Luxembourg, Victims of the Nazi Regime ("Fédération des Enrolés de Force Victimes du Nazisme") has just addressed the annexed open letter to Her Britannic Majesty's Ambassador to Luxembourg and has publicised it widely at the same time. The proclaimed intention of this open letter is to inform objectively the younger as well as the middle generation in the Foreign Office, in the British Government as well as in Parliament and, above all, in the UK media.

That is why we trust that you will not keep your readership ignorant about these elementary facts of Luxembourg, Belgian, French and Polish World War II history.

Sincerely yours

Erny LAMBORELLE
Chairman

Joseph LORENT
Vice-President