

Denis Scuto

# National Socialist Ethnicity and Citizenship Policy under Growing Military Pressure in Occupied Luxembourg (1940–1944)

## Introduction

This paper attempts to analyse some aspects of the Nazi ethnicity and citizenship policy using the case study of Luxembourg occupied by Nazi Germany, as well as the underlying practices of exclusion and inclusion. These are studied in connection with the heterogeneity of the population of a country like Luxembourg that has both emigration and immigration, along with the changes of the course of war from 1942 onwards. This is the first scientific paper where the focus is placed specifically on ethnicity and citizenship policy for Luxembourg during the Second World War.

These questions are complicated by the fact that Luxembourg, with a small population of about 290,000 in 1940, was at the same time a country of emigration prior to 1940, with tens of thousands of Luxembourgers living abroad, mainly in France and the United States, but also in Belgium, Germany. It was also a country of immigration, with a heterogeneous population in terms of nationalities. Among these foreigners, a majority were German (17,000 German residents in 1935, 11,000 in 1940) or Italian (10,000 residents in 1935, 7,000 in 1940), many of whom were naturalized or opted for Luxembourg nationality before 1940. Their potential military recruitment by the Wehrmacht or the Italian Army during the war is also closely related to questions of citizenship and naturalization.

Ethnicity and citizenship policy became increasingly important during the war as a result of the National Socialist's race policies. In the words of Dieter Gosewinkel: "Racial concepts determined the content of citizenship in the National Socialist colonial empire in Europe in an extreme and radical way."<sup>1</sup>

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1 "Rassekonzeptionen determinierten also in extremer und radikaler Weise den Gehalt der Staatsbürgerschaft im nationalsozialistischen Kolonialimperium in Europa." (Gosewinkel, Dieter, *Schutz und Freiheit? Staatsbürgerschaft in Europa im 20. Und 21. Jahrhundert*, (Berlin, Suhrkamp, 2016), 276). Like other historians, sociologists, philosophers and researchers in legal studies (including Manuela Boatca, James Tully and Dimitri Kochenov), Gosewinkel insists on the fact that racial and colonial concepts of citizenship characterized not only the German sphere of power, but were also widespread within the European-Atlantic area during the first half of 20<sup>th</sup> century, highlighting the racist concepts in US-American citizenship that excluded Americans of Afro-

In October 1939, Hitler had already transferred responsibility for all matters “for the consolidation of German race” to the Reichsführer SS Heinrich Himmler, who was now also the “Reichskommissar zur Festigung deutschen Volkstums” (RKF), and to the Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle (VoMi) working under his command. After the brutal defeat of Poland, on October 1, 1939, Hitler commissioned the Reichsführer-SS and Chief of the German Police Himmler with three tasks, by decree of the Führer and Reich Chancellor, to consolidate German national identity: “1. the repatriation of *Reichs- und Volksdeutsche* abroad who are eligible for final return to the Reich; 2. The elimination of the damaging influence of those parts of the population alien to the Reich that represent a danger to the Reich and the German *Volksgemeinschaft*; 3. The creation of new German settlement areas through resettlement, in particular by settling the *Reichs- und Volksdeutsche* returning from abroad.”<sup>2</sup> This decree initially applied to the “incorporated eastern territories”, but Himmler and his office of up to 20,000 employees – above all the VoMi – also succeeded in co-determining the Germanization and settlement policy in the western territories, which were de facto annexed although not de jure.<sup>3</sup>

Himmler’s “völkische Politik” led to a gradation using the three main criteria of the “Volkstumsnachweis”: the “commitment to German ethnicity (Volkstum)”, the “ancestry”, and the “racial aptitude” decided individuals’ inclusion within or exclusion from the “Volksgemeinschaft”. Commitment was no longer the only decisive factor; the “deutsches Blut” and the “Abstammung” became more and more central. However, the definition and weight of these criteria were not clear, as Dieter Gosewinkel states: “In their conceptual vagueness, the criteria left a great deal of room for manoeuvre as far as the significance of both ‘race’ and the ‘commit-

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American or Asian origin from citizenship, concepts that in turn influenced Nazi racial concepts (see James Whitman’s 2017 study on “Hitler’s American Model: The United States and the Making of Nazi Race Law”). During the Second World War, Americans of Japanese origin were interned. Racist and colonial concepts also influenced French and British citizenship.

2 “1. die Zurückführung der für die endgültige Heimkehr in das Reich in Betracht kommenden Reichs- und Volksdeutschen im Ausland, 2. die Ausschaltung des schädigenden Einflusses von solchen volksfremden Bevölkerungsteilen, die eine Gefahr für das Reich und die deutsche Volksgemeinschaft bedeuten, 3. die Gestaltung neuer deutscher Siedlungsgebiete durch Umsiedlung, im besonderen durch Sesshaftmachung der aus dem Ausland heimkehrenden Reichs- und Volksdeutschen.”

3 Stiller, Alexa, *Völkische Politik. Praktiken der Exklusion und Inklusion in polnischen, französischen und slowenischen Annexionsgebieten 1939–1945*, 2 Bände (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2022).

ment to Germanness' were concerned."<sup>4</sup> In the same vein, Alexa Stiller insists that despite being highly ideologically charged, the Nazi racial citizenship adapted to different contexts and evolving situations (political, economic, and military): "Rather than being determined by a 'racialist' vision of ethnical homogeneity in a uniquely defined and limited space, National Socialist policy in this and other fields was characterized by an astonishing degree of pragmatism and a quite flexible response to arising difficulties or needs."<sup>5</sup>

Due to differences of competence and opinion between institutions such as the Reich Ministry of the Interior (RMdI), the Reichsführer SS and RKF, the OKW, and the Gauleiters, a new codification of citizenship law in the German Reich according to these racial criteria was never achieved, although one main objective was nevertheless reached. To again quote Dieter Gosewinkel:

The polycratic character of National Socialist rule during the Second World War thus finds a counterpart in the conceptual dissolution of citizenship policy. Although the juridic terms had no graspable clarity, they did not lack a rational function. In their entirety, they represented a state of multiple disparities held together by one objective: the establishment of a hierarchical system of rule. It was not the final legal fixation of the ruling classes, but their mere existence that was decisive, in that they symbolically established a ruling gradient and decided on life chances. Citizenship served in this context decisively as an instrument of "Volkstumspolitik".<sup>6</sup>

In areas in the West such as Alsace-Lorraine and Luxembourg, which were not de jure annexed, even if a majority of the population was defined by Nazis as Volks-deutsche, no German citizenship was granted to Luxembourgers at the beginning of the occupation. With the shift of the war and growing pressure from the Wehrmacht to recruit more soldiers, the naturalization of selected groups of people was discussed at length before finally being decided in the summer of 1942. The aim was to simultaneously safeguard foreign policy considerations and to allow the instrumentalization of citizenship for recruitment purposes, as well as for the "Germanization" of the population of these western territories. According to the German civil authorities, the selective granting of German citizenship as a privi-

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4 Gosewinkel, Dieter, *Einbürgern und ausschließen. Die Nationalisierung der Staatsangehörigkeit vom Deutschen Bund bis zur Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2001), 409.

5 Stiller, Alexa, "On the margins of *Volks-gemeinschaft*: Criteria for belonging to the *Volk* within the Nazi Germanization policy in annexed territories, 1939–1945," in: *Heimat, Region and Empire: New Approaches to Spatial Identities in National Socialist Germany*, ed. Claus-Christian W. Szejnmann and Maiken Umbach (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 239–255.

6 Ibid., 411–412.

lege served as an educational tool in the (re-)Germanization of the population of Alsace-Lorraine and Luxembourg.

These Western lands were transformed into: Gau Moselland (Luxembourg along with the regions of Koblenz and Trier, under Gauleiter Gustav Simon); Gau Westmark (Lorraine with the Sarre, under Gauleiter Josef Bürckel); and Gau Baden-Elsass (Alsace and Baden, under Gauleiter Robert Wagner). With the military developments in the East after autumn 1941, currents of resistance to the German occupation and Germanization policies were clearly emerging and thus influenced Nazi citizenship policies.

Let us take a closer look at this evolution in the case of Luxembourg.

## “Urdeutsch Muselfranken”: The Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle Arrives in the Wake of the Wehrmacht

In the 1930s, the *Westdeutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft*, part of the *Volksdeutsche Forschungsgemeinschaften*, founded in 1931, developed research aimed at legitimizing the contours of a Greater Germany in Western Europe, based on historical, linguistic, geographical and ethnic (“völkisch”) criteria. The aim was not only to legitimize the return of the territories ceded following the Treaty of Versailles. The anti-French construction, created by conservative and nationalist researchers, of a “Westraum” encompassing territories in Belgium, the Netherlands, France, Switzerland and even an entire country such as Luxembourg was, above all, intended to justify their expansionist policy. Historians, linguists, geographers and ethnologists provided a rational basis for the Nazi regime’s expansionist policy.<sup>7</sup>

Bernard Thomas describes well this “völkisch” propaganda : “First, Volksgeschichte sees the nation as a community of the same ethnic and linguistic origin; second, the rural population becomes the main bearer of the tradition that produces cohesion, while the urban population and industrial workers are seen as elements that dissolve community ties; and finally, third, the question of the geographical foundations of the settlement area becomes the catalyst for the research dynamic.”<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Schöttler, Peter (ed.), *Geschichte als Legitimationswissenschaft 1918–1945* (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1997).

<sup>8</sup> Thomas, Bernard, *Le Luxembourg dans la ligne de mire de la Westforschung (1931–1940)*, (Luxembourg: Fondation Robert Krieps, 2011), 83: “Primo, la Volksgeschichte considère la nation comme une communauté d’une même origine ethnique et linguistique ; secundo, la population rurale devient le porteur principal de la tradition productrice de cohésion tandis que la population urbaine et les travailleurs industriels sont vus comme éléments dissolvant les liens commu-

The themes put forward by the WFG were rooted in people's experience: the community ancestry of a peasant population; the Luxembourgish language being presented as a mere dialect, within which an ancient form of German survives; the historical links with Germany through the emperors of the House of Luxembourg, etc. This endeavor to convince Luxembourg conservative intellectuals of these theories failed, however, because it constituted a thinly veiled attack on the country's independence. However, Bernard Thomas shows how the concept of *Deutschtum* was inverted to give rise to the new discursive figure of *Luxemburgertum*, many elements of which structured the national discourse in Luxembourg from the 1930s onwards.

The Westdeutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, like the Volksdeutsche Forschungsgemeinschaften (VFG) and the Verein für das Deutschtum im Ausland (VDA) were gradually absorbed by the Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle (VoMi), one of the Hauptämter of the SS, alongside the Reichssicherheitshauptamt, the Reichswirtschafts- und verwaltungshauptamt and the Waffen-SS. A month after the invasion of Luxembourg, Josef Schmithüsen, Privatdozent in Geography at Bonn University and head of the Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle Bonn, arrived in Luxembourg. In 1939, he had obtained his habilitation in geography with a thesis on Luxembourg, published in 1940: "Das Luxemburger Land. Landesnatur, Volkstum und bäuerliche Wirtschaft".<sup>9</sup> According to historian Henri Wehenkel, who contradicts earlier work on this point, following the invasion of Luxembourg by the Wehrmacht on May 10 1940 and during the first months of Nazi occupation, Schmithüsen was both the main driving force and mentor of the Volksdeutsche Bewegung, a pro-German movement founded in Luxembourg a few days after the invasion.<sup>10</sup> On 6 July 1940, according to the Sicherheitsdienst (SD), he launched the first propaganda campaign, displaying the slogan "Mir wölle bleiwen wat mer sin, urdeitsch Muselfranken" ("We want to stay what we are, original German Franks from the Moselle").<sup>11</sup>

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nautaires ; et enfin, tertio, la question des fondements géographiques, de l'espace de peuplement devient le catalyseur de la dynamique de recherche".

9 Müller, Wolfgang, Schmithüsen, Josef, in: *Neue Deutsche Biographie* 23 (2007), p. 232–233 [Online-Version], <https://www.deutsche-biographie.de/pnd118609211.html>. The Deutsche Biographie euphemistically describes him as "Berater bei der deutschen Besetzung Luxemburgs". Josef Schmithüsen (1909–1984), according to this uncritical biography, finished his career during the Second World War as a "wissenschaftlicher Verbindungsoffizier zur Koordinierung der Fernerkundung und der Luftbilderkennung" in the Wehrmacht. He was arrested by the Americans and liberated in May 1947. In 1948, he took up his academic career at the Technische Hochschule Karlsruhe and in 1962 he became professor for economic and cultural geography at the Universität des Saarlandes.

10 Wehenkel, Henri, *Entre chien et loup* (Luxembourg, 2017), 106–126.

11 Ibid., 112.

He prepared the field for the main proponent of the Germanization of Luxembourg, the Gauleiter Gustav Simon, who arrived in August 1940 to make the lands German and to ‘purify’ and ‘clear’ the land from all *Volksfremde*.

## The Appointment of Gauleiter Gustav Simon as Head of the German Civil Administration and his Role in Germanization

The first speech given on 6 August 1940 at the Place d’Armes in Luxembourg City by Gauleiter Gustav Simon, who had been appointed head of the German civil administration (Chef der Zivilverwaltung, CdZ) at the end of July 1940 by Hitler, took up the ideological elements of Schmithüsen and his VoMi colleagues:

The country of Luxembourg is an old German settlement area. The population of this country is of German origin, it is Moselle-Franconian, just like the population of Trier and our beautiful Moselle region. So don’t be fooled by the outwardly French varnish, which is only artificially applied. (Strong applause). I can promise you that this French varnish, this miserable whitewash, will have disappeared without a trace in a few weeks. (Applause) The people of this country cannot be expected to allow their German character, their German distinctiveness, to be artificially concealed under French inscriptions and designations of all kinds. [. . .] Here in this beautiful and well-kept city, here in this country, where every house and every farm bears witness to the fact that a racially valuable, decent and capable population has settled and worked in the German way.<sup>12</sup>

Even if, under international law, Luxembourgers had remained foreigners after the invasion, according to the Gauleiter Gustav Simon, Luxembourgers were “of German origin” (“deutschstämmig”).

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<sup>12</sup> “Das Land Luxemburg ist altes deutsches Siedlungsgebiet. Die Bevölkerung dieses Landes ist deutschstämmig, sie ist moselfränkisch, genau wie die Bevölkerung von Trier und unserem schönen Moselland. Lassen Sie sich daher nicht täuschen von dem äusseren französischen Firnis, der nur künstlich aufgetragen ist. (Starker Beifall). Ich kann Ihnen das versprechen, dieser französische Firnis, diese jämmerliche Tünche, wird in wenigen Wochen spurlos verschwunden sein. (Bravorufe) Es kann der Bevölkerung dieses Landes nicht zugemutet werden, dass ihr deutscher Charakter, dass ihre deutsche Eigenart künstlich verborgen wird unter französischen Inschriften und Bezeichnungen aller Art. [. . .] Hier in dieser schönen und gepflegten Stadt, hier in diesem Lande, wo jedes Haus und jeder Bauernhof davon zeugt, dass eine rassisch wertvolle, anständige und tüchtige Bevölkerung nach deutscher Art gesiedelt und gearbeitet hat.” (Luxemburger Wort, 7.8.1940, 1, quoted by Wehenkel, 121–122)

As stated by Blandine Landau, “one of the Gauleiter’s primary concerns was to ensure the promotion of the *Volksgemeinschaft*, and therefore to avert any threat to the Germanization of Luxembourg. The three main sources of threat are clearly identified: people attached to the Luxembourg identity and regulations, supporters of French cultural influence, and Jews”.<sup>13</sup> In her doctoral thesis, Blandine Landau shows how the expulsion of Luxembourg Jews to the West from May 1940 to October 1941 and, from October 1941 to July 1943, the deportation of all remaining Luxembourg Jews to the East, including their dispossession, helped to finance the Gauleiter’s Germanization policy. After July 1943, the expulsion of the entire Jewish population of Luxembourg, approximately 5,000 people, was completed. More than 1,200 of the Jews living in Luxembourg before May 1940 were deported by the Nazis to ghettos and camps and murdered. After 1943, only ‘Jews’ in ‘mixed marriages’ remained in Luxembourg. By the end of 1943, the process of expropriation and robbery of the Jewish population in Luxembourg was complete.<sup>14</sup>

However, the Gauleiter’s administration was not the only institutional player in the Germanization of Luxembourg. On 11 August 1940, Reichsminister des Innern Wilhelm Frick visited Luxembourg with half a dozen senior civil servants. This was the first stage, before Metz and Strasbourg, of a tour of the new territories under civilian administration in the west of the Reich.<sup>15</sup> He was accompanied by Wilhelm Stuckart, chairman of the *Reichsausschuss zum Schutze des deutschen Blutes* and co-author with Hans Globke of *Kommentar zur deutschen Rassengesetzgebung*. Stuckart had just been appointed by Frick as head of the Zentralstelle for Elsass, Lothringen and Luxembourg within the RMdI. He also co-authored the Denkschrift of 14 June 1940, described by Peter Schöttler<sup>16</sup> as “Generalplan West”, which provided for the annexation of the whole of eastern France, in addition to the de facto

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13 “l’une des premières préoccupations du Gauleiter est de veiller à la promotion de la *Volksgemeinschaft*, et donc d’écarter toute menace à la germanisation du Luxembourg. Les trois principales sources de menace sont clairement identifiées : les personnes attachées à l’identité et aux réglementations luxembourgeoises, les soutiens de l’influence culturelle française, et les Juifs” (Landau, Blandine, “À la recherche des Juifs spoliés : Pillages et « aryianisation » au Luxembourg pendant la Seconde Guerre mondiale”, (Doctorate thesis, C<sup>2</sup>DH/Université du Luxembourg & EHESS, 2024), 222.

14 Moyse, Laurent (dir.), *Between shade and darkness: le sort des juifs du Luxembourg de 1940 à 1945*. Catalogue d’exposition, Esch/Sauer, Musée national de la Résistance/Op der Lay, 2016; Wagener, Renée, *Emanzipation und Antisemitismus. Die jüdische Minderheit in Luxemburg vom 19. bis zum beginnenden 21. Jahrhundert*, (Dissertation, Uni Hagen, Berlin, Metropol Verlag, 2022).

15 BAArch, R 1501/5224, *Reichsministerium des Innern, Dienstreisen nach Luxemburg, Elsass, Lothringen 1940*.

16 Schöttler, Peter, Eine Art „Generalplan West“: Die Stuckart-Denkschrift vom 14. Juni 1940, in: *Sozial. Geschichte*, 18, 3, 2003, 83–131.



annexation of Alsace, Lorraine and Luxembourg. As Georges Buchler points out, Frick and his colleagues Globke, Stuckart and Pfundtner were involved in drawing up the *Judenverordnung* for Luxembourg on 5 September 1940.<sup>17</sup> On 8 September 1940, the day after the publication of this first *Judenverordnung*, Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler paid a visit to Luxembourg City, with the aim of recruiting Luxembourg volunteers for the *Waffen-SS*.

A month later, Hitler, in the *Zweiter Erlass des Führers über die vorläufige Verwaltung in Luxemburg*, promulgated on 18 October 1940, granted the dominant role in the Germanization process to the Gauleiter and Chef der Zivilverwaltung Simon, while asking him to do so in close collaboration with, in particular, the RMDI and Stuckart's Zentralstelle:

Luxembourg is to be regained to the German people in the shortest possible time. In order to achieve this goal quickly and smoothly, the initiative for every administrative measure in Luxembourg must always come from the Chief of the Civil Administration, who reports directly to me. The Head of the Civil Administration is solely responsible to me for the administration in Luxembourg. He therefore receives instructions exclusively from me. In order to be able to coordinate the measures he takes in Luxembourg with the fundamental planning for the entire German living and economic area, the Chief of the Civil Administration must maintain close contact with the Supreme Reich Authorities with the participation of the Central Office for Luxembourg. In the event of differences of opinion that cannot be resolved by direct negotiations, my decision is to be obtained by the Reich Minister and Chief of the Reich Chancellery.<sup>18</sup>

On 20 December 1940, Himmler appointed Gustav Simon as “Beauftragten für die Aufgaben des Reichskommissars für die Festigung deutschen Volkstums im Gau

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17 Buchler, Georges, 1940: *Deux photographies. Regards sur une journée en août*, unpublished typescript.

18 “Luxembourg soll in kürzester Zeit dem deutschen Volkstum wieder zurückgewonnen werden. Um dieses Ziel schnell und reibungslos zu erreichen, muss grundsätzlich die Initiative für jede Massnahmen der Verwaltung in Luxemburg von dem mir unmittelbar unterstellten Chef der Zivilverwaltung ausgehen. Der Chef der Zivilverwaltung ist mir für die Verwaltung in Luxemburg allein verantwortlich. Er erhält daher Weisungen ausschliesslich von mir. Um die Massnahme, die er in Luxemburg trifft, auf die grundsätzliche Planung für den gesamtdeutschen Lebens- und Wirtschaftsraum abstimmen zu können, hat der Chef der Zivilverwaltung mit den Obersten Reichsbehörden unter Beteiligung der Zentralstelle für Luxemburg enge Fühlung zu halten. Bei Meinungsverschiedenheiten, die durch unmittelbare Verhandlungen nicht auszuräumen sind, ist meine Entscheidung durch den Reichsminister und Chef der Reichskanzlei einzuholen.” (quoted by: Artuso, Vincent, La “Question juive” au Luxembourg (1933–1941). *L’Etat luxembourgeois face aux persécutions antisémites nazies*, Rapport final, <https://gouvernement.lu/dam-assets/fr/actua-lites/articles/2015/02-fevrier/10-bettel-artuso/rapport.pdf>, 121).



Koblenz-Trier und in Luxemburg”.<sup>19</sup> Simon was also on Himmler’s list in terms of citizenship, for whom the “deutsches und artverwandtes Blut” was of prime importance, while “commitment to Germanness” also remained a crucial concern.<sup>20</sup>

## The End of German and Luxembourg Naturalizations

However, the first questions to be dealt with by the civil administration concerned not Volkszugehörigkeit but Staatsangehörigkeit in the classical sense. The question of citizenship and naturalization thus arose for citizens of German origin who had lost their nationality before the war. As early as 15 September 1940, i.e., a few weeks after the establishment of Gauleiter Simon and the civil administration, the CdZ approached the Reichsminister des Innern to ask how to deal with the many applications for naturalization from former Germans who had been living in Luxembourg for years and had lost their German nationality by dismissal (“Entlassung aus der Reichsangehörigkeit”), which they now wished to recover. Before the war, they had acquired Luxembourg nationality, or some other nationality, or had become stateless. According to the CdZ, these former Germans had lost their nationality in their situation as immigrants, “under the economic pressure that has been exerted so far” (“unter dem hier bisher ausgeübten wirtschaftlichen Druck”) or “under the constraints of circumstances” (“unter dem Zwang der Verhältnisse”).<sup>21</sup> But on 25 September 1939, a circular by RMdI had ordered a ban on German naturalizations.<sup>22</sup> On 24 October 1940, the RMdI replied to the CdZ that, as long as “Luxembourg’s constitutional status” (“staatsrechtliche Stellung Luxemburgs”) had not been clarified, these people could only be naturalized as Germans under paragraph 13 of the Reichs- und Staatsangehörigkeitsgesetz of 1913, i.e., if they returned to live in the Altreich or if they fulfilled the conditions of the circular of 11 January 1940 (e.g., if they or their son could join the Wehrmacht, if they were a foreign member of the NSDAP, SS,

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19 Dostert, Paul, *Luxemburg zwischen Selbstbehauptung und nationaler Selbstaufgabe. Die deutsche Besatzungspolitik und die Volksdeutsche Bewegung 1940–1945*, (Luxembourg, 1985), 152.

20 Ibid, 153.

21 ANLux, CdZ-A-4256, *Einbürgerung staatenloser deutscher Volkszugehöriger mit zuletzt deutscher Staatsangehörigkeit sowie Feststellung der deutschen Staatsangehörigkeit von in Luxemburg wohnhaften Personen*, 7.

22 Ibid., 12.

SA, etc.).<sup>23</sup> However, exceptions could be made for “flawless people in every respect” (“in jeder Beziehung einwandfreie Personen”).<sup>24</sup>

As already stated, no German citizenship was granted to Luxembourgers at the beginning of the occupation. Moreover, in a decree issued by the CdZ on 5 October 1940, all acquisitions of Luxembourg nationality were halted until further notice.<sup>25</sup>

## The Italians’ Headache in Luxembourg from the Perspective of Volkstum

From 1941 onwards, Germanization policy shifted in the sense that belonging to the Volksgemeinschaft was not only defined by German descent, culture, language or consciousness but was also progressively defined by the RKF with the help of the VoMi, the RMdI and the CdZ.

After his appointment as “Beauftragten für die Aufgaben des Reichskommissars für die Festigung deutschen Volkstums” in December 1940 by Himmler, the Gauleiter and GdZ Gustav Simon and his administration immediately set to work. As part of his endeavor to clearly delimit the “Volkstumsgrenze” in Luxembourg, the Gauleiter was first concerned with the treatment, in terms of *Staatsangehörigkeit* and *Volkstum*, not of people of Luxembourg nationality but of Italians, who were the second largest immigrant community after the Germans. Luxembourgers, on the other hand, were to be considered and treated as people of German Volkszugehörigkeit, as he wrote to Himmler: “in principle, all Luxembourg nationals, unless they are of foreign blood, are considered and treated as German Volkszugehörige”.<sup>26</sup>

On 31 May 1941, in this letter to Himmler, the Gauleiter reported on Italian immigration to the Grand Duchy in the wake of the establishment of heavy industry at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>27</sup> At the time of the 1935 national

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>25</sup> Letter by Luxembourg government councilor Emile Brisbois to Josef Jungers, 15.11.1940, ANLux, CdZ-G-09408.

<sup>26</sup> “grundsätzlich werden insoweit alle luxemburgischen Staatsangehörige, soweit sie nicht fremdblütig sind, als deutsche Volkszugehörige betrachtet und behandelt” (*Der Chef der Zivilverwaltung an Reichsführer SS und Chef der deutschen Polizei Herrn Staatsrat Parteigenosse Himmler*, 31. Mai 1941, BArch, NS 19/1163, Persönlicher Stab Reichsführer SS, Allgemeine Besatzungs- und Volkstumsfragen).

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

census, 9,248 Italians (men, women and children) were living in Luxembourg. Simon added to these Italians (“italienische Volkszugehörige”), the 620 young people born in Luxembourg to Italian parents who had opted for Luxembourg nationality.<sup>28</sup> Of these 620, the 364 who opted for Luxembourg nationality before the age of 21 also retained their Italian nationality, according to the report. Simon estimates that in addition to these dual nationals, there were around 4–5,000 Italians who had become Luxembourg nationals by virtue of double *ius soli*. The latter also held dual Luxembourg and Italian nationality. As Simon defined them all as “Italienische Volkszugehörige”, he recommended reducing their numbers so that they could no longer constitute small colonies, mainly in the industrial south of Luxembourg, which he described as “Fremdkörper im luxemburgischen Siedlungsraum”.<sup>29</sup> They should be gradually replaced by “anzusiedelnde Volksdeutsche”. One option would be to send them back to Italy, another to move them to other (industrial) regions of the Reich, or to exchange them with Volksdeutsche from Yugoslavia.

At the end of this letter/report, the Gauleiter also asked Himmler to send him some general criteria to be applied in terms of “Volkstumszugehörigkeit” in the western parts of the Reich, in particular within the Luxembourg border area, in order to help him in his efforts: “I ask you, dear Reichsführer SS, for your support in my endeavors to create clear Volkstumsverhältnisse in the Luxembourg border region and to inform me of the measures you consider possible in connection with this.”<sup>30</sup>

Himmler replied in two parts. Regarding the specific case of the Italians, he agreed with Simon in principle. For both Himmler and Simon, the “deutsches Blut”, the “Abstammung” was central. Himmler disagreed with Simon on two of

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<sup>28</sup> For the young men who were sons of Italian immigrants born in Luxembourg, the majority of whom opted for Luxembourg citizenship (as they were listed by CdZ), their dual nationality made them recruitable for the Italian army. On 19.4.1941, in the newspaper Tageblatt, the Fascio Abele Tiapago advertises: “Die in Luxemburg geborenen Italiener, welche zwischen 18 und 21 Jahren für die Luxemburger Staatsangehörigkeit optiert haben und also noch minderjährig waren, werden jetzt nach italienischem Recht als Italiener durch Abstammung betrachtet.” The numerous circulars during the following months underline that these young men refused to declare themselves to the Italian Consulate to be enrolled. Their mothers even wrote to the CdZ to prove that they had kept their Luxembourg nationality after marrying an Italian (ANLux, CdZ-A-4304, *Aufenthaltserlaubnis von italienischen Staatsangehörigen welche die luxemburgische Staatsangehörigkeit durch Erklärung erworben haben oder diese von rechts wegen besitzen*).

<sup>29</sup> *Der Chef der Zivilverwaltung an Reichsführer SS*. . . , ocit., BArch, NS 19/1163.

<sup>30</sup> “Ich bitte Sie, lieber Reichsführer SS, um Unterstützung bei meinen Bemühungen um Schaffung klarer Volkstumsverhältnisse im luxemburgischen Grenzraum und um Mitteilung der nach ihrer Auffassung in diesem Zusammenhang möglichen Massnahmen.” (Ibid).

his four points, however, as they were not feasible either economically (during wartime) or in terms of foreign policy. He agreed that the Germanization (“Eindeutschung”) of these Italians had to be made impossible. He also agreed that this applied both to people of Italian nationality and to those of Italian origin who had taken Luxembourg nationality, or had acquired it through dual citizenship. However, the necessary repatriation of these people to Italy could, according to Himmler, only take place after the end of the war due to economic (Italians represented a crucial workforce in steel industry and construction sector), political and transportation reasons. Himmler was also against resettling Italians to other regions of the Reich, particularly as it could lead to disagreements with Mussolini’s Italy.<sup>31</sup>

We can see here how citizenship during the Second World War became a function of National Socialist race policies: even in the case of nationals of a political ally, Mussolini’s Italy, a racial interpretation of citizenship led Gauleiter Simon to propose mass expulsion to Himmler. However, a pragmatic approach integrating political imperatives is also visible: Himmler, agreeing in principle, invokes political and economic constraints to postpone this “repatriation”.

## Delimit the “Volkstumsgrenzen” in Luxembourg: New Questions for a Census

On the general question of the limits of “Volkszugehörigkeit” in the Luxembourg border region and the general criteria to be applied, i.e., how to define ethnic boundaries, Himmler instructed the Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle in Berlin to provide him with answers.<sup>32</sup> SS-Obergruppenführer Werner Lorenz, head of the VoMi, instructed SS-Obersturmbannführer Heinz Brückner to draw up a report on the question, after consulting the Gauleiter’s close collaborators Heinrich Siekmeyer, Regierungspräsident in Trier, Friedrich Münzel, Deputy Gauleiter, and Referent Alfons Trossen of the CdZ. This report was delivered on 1 September 1941.<sup>33</sup>

The report confirmed the complex relationship between Staatsangehörigkeit and Volkszugehörigkeit for the population of a country with immigration such as Luxembourg, for several reasons.<sup>34</sup> First, many people of foreign nationality were,

31 Letter by Himmler to Gustav Simon, 21 July 1941, BArch, NS 19/1163.

32 Notice from Brandt (Persönlicher Stab Reichsführer-SS) to the Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle Berlin, 26 June 1941, BArch, NS 19/1163.

33 Letter from Lorenz to Himmler, 1st September 1941, BArch, NS 19/1163.

34 Bericht über die Besprechung der volkspolitischen Lage beim Chef der Zivilverwaltung in Luxemburg am 27./28.8.1941 von SS-Obersturmführer Brückner, Sachbearbeiter der VoMi, BArch,

according to the report, of German “Volkszugehörigkeit”: many women of Luxembourg origin had married foreigners, thus losing their Luxembourg nationality. Second, many people of Luxembourg nationality were of “fremder Volkszugehörigkeit”, since they acquired it by naturalization, by declaration, or by double *ius soli*. These people were considered by Nazis as ethnically Italian, Polish, French or Belgian. Lastly, there was a great deal of ‘mixing’ between Germans and Luxembourgers (“Deutschen luxemburgischer Staatsangehörigkeit”) and “fremdvölkisch” foreigners, given the high number of marriages between Luxembourgers and Italians, French, Belgians, Poles, etc.

In Nazi terminology, this report confirms the statistics produced by the Luxembourg government in the 1930s on the distribution of Luxembourgers according to the mode they had acquired Luxembourg nationality, from the population census of 31 December 1935 (see table).<sup>35</sup> These statistics show that almost 9,000 foreign women (originally of German or Italian nationality) became Luxembourgers through marriage to a Luxembourgish man. Almost 3,500 young people (again mainly of German and Italian origin) became Luxembourgers by declaration or option, while almost 4,400 people acquired Luxembourg nationality through double *ius soli* on their mother’s side. In other words, they were born in Luxembourg to a mother of Luxembourgish origin who had lost her nationality through marriage to a foreigner. This last figure, as well as the 3,018 cases of recovering nationality by women of Luxembourg origin married to foreigners, highlights the large number of Luxembourg women who married foreigners, again mainly of German or Italian nationality.

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NS 19/1163. Heinz Brückner (1900–1968) headed Büro 6 (“Sicherung deutschen Volkstums im Reich”) of the VoMi.

35 Scuto, Denis, *La nationalité luxembourgeoise. Histoire d’un alliage européen*, (Bruxelles, 2012), 200f.

Population census of 31 December 1935: Breakdown of Luxembourg nationals by nationality acquisition method.

<b>Mode of acquisition of Luxembourg nationality</b>	<b>Male.</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
<i>By descent (born in the Grand Duchy or abroad: art. 10 C. c.; law of 23 April 1934, art. 1 n° 1; art. 1 n° 2; art. 2; art. 3)</i>	236.051	113.838	236.051
<i>By double ius soli</i>	102	64	166
<i>a) father's side: law of 1878: law of 1934, art. 1 n° 3 al. 1</i>			
<i>b) mother's side: law of 1890; law of 1934, art. 1 n° 3 al. 2</i>	2.364	2.011	4.375
<i>By declaration or option by the persons: a) born in the Grand-Duchy: art. 9 C. c., law of 1934, art. 6 n° 1 or art. 6 n° 1 and art. 32</i>	2.690	776	3.466
<i>b) born abroad or in the Grand-Duchy of parents one of whom was a Luxembourger: art. 10 C. c.; born abroad: law of 1934, art. 6 n° 2 or art. 6 n° 2 and art. 32</i>	835	148	983
<i>By declaration: from people whose fathers have been naturalised: art. 10 Constitution</i>	63	7	70
<i>By option: from a foreigner married to a Luxembourg woman: law of 1934, art. 10</i>	284	–	284
<i>By concomitance: from unemancipated minor children who have become Luxembourg nationals at the same time as their parents: law of 1934, art. 10</i>	277	250	527
<i>By marriage: of a foreign woman to a Luxembourg man: art. 12 C. c.; law of 1934, art. 4; or by married women whose husband has become a Luxembourger by option: law of 1934, art. 4</i>	–	8.728	8.728
<i>By recovery: a) a) by entering the Grand Duchy with authorisation: art. 18 C. c.; law of 1934, art. 25 al. 1</i>	33	42	75
<i>b) from widows or divorced women: art. 19 C. c.; law of 1934, art. 25 al. 2</i>	–	445	445
<i>c) on behalf of children who have lost their status as Luxembourg nationals with their author: law of 1934, art. 25 al. 4</i>	–	–	–
<i>d) of women married to foreigners: law of 1934, art. 24 n° 3 al. 2 and art. 32</i>	–	3.018	3.018
<i>By conservation: of women married to foreigners: law of 1934, art. 24 n° 3 al. 2; the Department of Justice circular n° 76 of 2 July 1934</i>	–	116	116
<i>By naturalisation</i>	222	18	240
<b>Luxembourg population with usual residence</b>	<b>129.083</b>	<b>129.461</b>	<b>258.544</b>

Source: Tableau constitué par la section centrale de la Chambre des Députés sur la base des données fournies par l'Office de statistique (Compte-rendu de la Chambre des Députés Luxembourg, CRCD, Annexes, 1938–1939, 345).

Brückner sums up the problem in the report: “There are no documents about the treatment of fremdes Volkstum in Luxembourg. All surveys in the past have only been based on nationality. . . . Staatsangehörigkeit cannot simply be used to determine Volkszugehörigkeit.”<sup>36</sup> This is why the report recommends clarifying the extent of “fremdes Volkstum” in Luxembourg by four additional questions within the framework of the foreseen fiscal census of 1941, the Personenstandsaufnahme planned for October 10, 1941:

- a) current nationality?
- b) previous nationality? until when and which ones?
- c) native language?
- d) *Volkszugehörigkeit*?<sup>37</sup>

The answers to these questions in the census would form the basis of a “Kartei des fremden Volkstums”. Based on the information in this Kartei, the necessary political measures could then be taken. According to an analysis of the results of the census carried out by the CdZ on December 15 1940, which in particular provided information on the “in Luxemburg ansässigen Ausländer”, these 15,744 persons were chosen purely on the basis of Staatsangehörigkeit, and the following picture appears according to the report from 1 September 1941:<sup>38</sup> the 7,479 Italians and people of Italian origin, although undesirable, were essential to the smooth running of the steel industry and the war industry, and could thus only be expelled after the war. The 1,957 French people were in fact primarily Lorraine and Alsatian, and should therefore be considered “deutschstämmig”. Only a minority of around 200 “pure French” were to be repatriated. The 2,660 Belgians would primarily come from the Arlon region, which was part of Luxembourg before 1839. It was considered appropriate to repatriate only the minority who were “pure Walloons”. The report raises in passing the question of whether the Arlon region should be given back to Luxembourg. As for the 1,023 Poles, they would be registered through the Deutsche Volksliste defined by the Verordnung of 4 March 1941. If they proved to be of non-German origin (“nichtdeutsche Volkszugehörigkeit”), they would lose

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36 “Unterlagen über den Umgang des fremden Volkstums in Luxemburg liegen nicht vor. Alle Erhebungen der Vergangenheit sind lediglich auf die Staatsangehörigkeit abgestellt. ( . . . ) Von der Staatsangehörigkeit kann gerade nicht ohne weiteres auf die Volkszugehörigkeit geschlossen werden.” (Bericht über die Besprechung der volkspolitischen Lage . . . , ocit.)

37 “a) jetzige Staatsangehörigkeit ?

b) frühere Staatsangehörigkeit ? bis wann und welche?

c) Muttersprache?

d) Volkszugehörigkeit?” (Id.)

38 Ibid.



their nationality, become “Schutzangehörige”, and be repatriated to Poland. On 19 September 1941, Himmler confirmed to the head of the VoMi, Werner Lorenz, that the question of the Italians must remain unresolved, and that the French who were not necessary for production could immediately be repatriated, along with the “nicht eindeutschungsfähigen Polen”.<sup>39</sup>

In the report from 1 September 1941, the criteria for the future treatment of the “Volkstumsverhältnisse” were thus formulated.<sup>40</sup> All this “German territory” should in the future only be inhabited by “Menschen deutscher Volkszugehörigkeit”: “The *fremdes Volkstum* must be eliminated as soon as the political and economic conditions allow this.”<sup>41</sup>

Through these discussions, it appears clear that two motives became predominant in the forging of National Socialist German citizenship, and that this policy was also applied in the occupied territories in the West: first, to make German citizenship an ethnically pure reserve for “deutsche Volkszugehörige”, and second to privilege these citizens over “völkisch Fremde” and “Schutzangehörige”.<sup>42</sup> The term “Schutzangehörige” was ostensibly just a legal figure to indicate a “lesser form of belonging to the German Reich” (Stuckart).<sup>43</sup> In reality, it was an ad hoc bureaucratic construction for the selection, economic exploitation, and deprivation of rights of “fremdvölkischer Minderwertiger” like Poles. In this cynical hierarchy of (non-)rights, only Jews, Sinti and Roma were ranked beneath the “Schutzangehörige”, who became collectively stateless through the Zwölfte Verordnung vom Reichsbürgergesetz of 25 April 1943.

## “Erstens kommt es anders und zweitens als man denkt”: The Failure of the Personenstandsaufnahme of 10 October 1941

The Personenstandsaufnahme of 10 October 1941 perfectly illustrates the following adage: “Erstens kommt es anders und zweitens als man denkt”.

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39 *Der Reichsführer SS (persönlicher Stab) an den Leiter der Volksdeutschen Mittelstelle, SS-Obergruppenführer Lorenz, 19. September 1941*, BArch, NS 19/1163.

40 *Richtlinien für die Behandlung der Volkstumsverhältnisse in Luxemburg, 1. September 1941*, BArch, NS 19/1163.

41 “Das fremde Volkstum ist, sobald die politischen und wirtschaftlichen Verhältnisse dies zulassen, auszuschalten.” (Ibid.)

42 Gosewinkel, *ocit.*, 407.

43 Gosewinkel, *ocit.*, 414.

As Paul Dostert, André Hohengarten and later Olivier Worré have shown,<sup>44</sup> the Personenstandsaufnahme of 10 October 1940 was a tax census of a racial nature, with additional questions on current and former nationality, mother tongue, and ethnicity as well as on parents and grandparents, asking whether they were “Jewish” or not.<sup>45</sup> We have just seen that, at the suggestion of the VoMI, in order to clarify the “Volkstumsverhältnisse”, namely distinguish the members of “fremdes Volkstum” (mainly the Italians, French and Belgians) from the “deutsches Volkstum” (mainly the Luxembourgers and Germans), several questions were added to the census relating to current and past nationality (Staatsangehörigkeit), ethnic affiliation according to Nazi definitions (Volkszugehörigkeit), and mother tongue (Muttersprache). The answers that primarily interested the German civil administration, the VoMi, and the Reichskommissar SS were those where the answer was neither Luxembourgish nor German: “Questionnaires in which information other than German and Luxembourgish is included on questions a-d (regarding current and previous nationality, mother tongue and ethnicity, D.S.) serve as a basis for the accelerated creation of the ‘Kartei des fremden Volkstums’”.<sup>46</sup>

From the moment when the first practical information and the first forms were sent to municipalities at the end of September / beginning of October, several Luxembourg resistance movements launched a campaign of leafleting against the census. The Luxembourg resistance movement only partially understood the intentions behind the questions about mother tongue and ethnicity. In their view, the National Socialist regime was pursuing geopolitical and military objectives, namely to annex Luxembourg to the German Reich, to turn the people of Luxembourg into citizens of

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44 Hohengarten, André, Die Personenstandsaufnahme vom 10.10.41 im Lichte neuer Dokumente, in: *Hémecht. Zeitschrift für Luxemburger Geschichte*, (1976, 129–157); Dostert, Paul, Vor 50 Jahren. Die Personenstandsaufnahme vom 10. Oktober 1941 und ihre Folgen für die deutsche Zivilverwaltung, in: *Luxemburger Wort*, 10.10. 1991, 13–14, 16; Worré, Olivier, *Le recensement du 10 octobre 1941, Travail de fin d'études présenté en vue de l'obtention du diplôme*, (Université Catholique de Louvain, 2010–2011).

45 On the Personenstandsaufnahme, see also this recent series of articles: Blasen, Philippe/Scuto, Denis, *Die Personenstandsaufnahme vom 10. Oktober 1941. Teil 1: Seit über 80 Jahren incognita im Archiv; “98 Prozent dreimal ‘luxemburgisch’” bei der Personenstandsaufnahme 1941? Teil 2: Ein Erfolg der Resistenz und seine Verklärung; Von der Personenstandsaufnahme zur Erhebung des Volkstums. Teil 3: Drohungen, Strafgelder, Schläge und Tote einer Kartei wegen; Die Personenstandsaufnahme und das Vetorecht der Quellen. Teil 4: Überlegungen zur völkischen NS-Politik*, in: *Tageblatt*, 11/12 May 2024, 10–11; 25/26 May 2024, 9–11; 22/23 June 2024, 13–15; 6/7 July 2024, 10–11.

46 “Fragebogen in denen zu den Fragen a-d (betr. jetzige und frühere Staatsangehörigkeit, Muttersprache und Volkszugehörigkeit, D. S.) andere Angaben als Deutsch und Luxemburgisch enthalten sind, dienen als Unterlage für die beschleunigte Erstellung der « Kartei des fremden Volkstums »”. (*Bericht über die Besprechung der volkspolitischen Lage . . .*, op. cit., Barch, NS 19/1163)

the Reich, and to conscript them into the Wehrmacht. As evidence of this and as an incentive to resist, the LPL (Luxembourg Patriotic League) and other resistance groups circulated a (fictional) letter from the *Reichsminister für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda* Joseph Goebbels to Gauleiter Gustav Simon.<sup>47</sup> As the footnotes of the census forms specified that Luxembourgers should answer the question on Staatsgehörigkeit with “Luxemburger” but that they were forbidden to answer the other two questions on the Volkszugehörigkeit and the Muttersprache with “Luxemburger” (as Luxembourgers were being assimilated within the category of German), these leaflets by the resistance movements first called for the population not to answer these questions and not to sign the forms, fearing that it would become a camouflaged referendum for Germany, used afterwards by the occupier to annex Luxembourg or to enroll young Luxembourgers in the Wehrmacht.

The civil administration responded by publishing an article in the press, “Zählkarten gewissenhaft ausfüllen”, urging the population to read the instructions carefully and to fill out the census forms accurately, threatening them with fines and imprisonment if they did not do so.<sup>48</sup> Through new leaflets, the resistance movements then called on Luxembourgers to answer the two questions on Volkszugehörigkeit and Muttersprache with “Letzeburger” (“Luxemburger”). Explanatory articles followed from the CdZ, but also articles threatening those who didn’t accurately fill in the forms with deportation to concentration camps. On October 8, the first Luxembourger was sentenced to death by the Sondergericht, Joseph Barthelmy, for having put a bomb in the home of a Luxembourg Nazi Ortsgruppenleiter in Bettembourg.<sup>49</sup>

The call of the resistance movements was widely followed. Many Luxembourgers responded to the census questions not with German but “Letzeburger”, as revealed by samples taken by the Gauleiter in several districts. The Personenstandsaufnahme was thus transformed by the action of the resistance movements into a profession of faith for Luxembourg, which forced the CdZ to cancel the census by a decree from 11/12 October 1941. After the war, in 1946, the date of 10 October was chosen as an official day of national commemoration. A tax census that was initially supposed to ascertain who was not German or Luxembourgish, serving as a basis for the exclusion of the “fremdes Volkstum” from the country, is thus now commemorated as part of the creation of a narrative about Luxembourg’s resistance, and as a “referendum” against the Nazi occupiers. Alongside

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47 Blasen, Philippe/Scuto, Denis, “98 Prozent dreimal ‘luxemburgisch’” bei der Personenstandsaufnahme 1941? Teil 2: Ein Erfolg der Resistenz und seine Verklärung, in: Tageblatt, 25/26 May 2024, 9–11.

48 “Zählkarten gewissenhaft ausfüllen”, in: *Luxemburger Wort*, 4/5 October 1941, 4.

49 “Ein politischer Verbrecher zum Tode verurteilt”, in: *Nationalblatt*, 9 October 1941, 1.

the 31 August 1942 strike against enlisting young Luxembourg men into the Wehrmacht, 10 October 1941 is intended to symbolize the resistance of an entire people against the Nazi occupier.<sup>50</sup>

A fiscal census with questions on race and mother tongue was thus reversed, to say it in the words of Regierungspräsident Sieckmeyer, “because through unprecedented incitement of the population, this statistical measure was stamped into a referendum”<sup>51</sup> – a commitment to Luxembourg by many Luxembourgers who responded to the two questions of “Volkszugehörigkeit” and “Muttersprache” with “Letzeburger”. This transformed the Personenstandsaufnahme into a manifestation of opposition to the German occupation. Consequently, the approach of the Gauleiter changed completely. A few days later, on 13 October 1941, the “Verordnung über die Anlegung einer Volkstumskartei in Luxemburg” was published in the press. The Luxembourg population now learned that from 10 May 1940 “there (is) no longer any Luxembourg nationality”. During the Referentenbesprechung of 14 October 1941, Sieckmeyer concluded that more coercive measures would be necessary from now on: “There is therefore no reason to hang your head. After all, the experiences were instructive, and the lessons will be learned. It is now important to take the reins tightly everywhere and to take action, and not to allow any more leniency until a change of attitude has occurred among the people of Luxembourg.”<sup>52</sup>

As a policy based on “commitment to Germanness” failed in this context, a repressive phase began, culminating in November 1941 with the first big razzia of the Gestapo against Luxembourg resistance movements and the deportation of more than 100 resisters to the SS-Sonderlager Hinzert near Trier.<sup>53</sup>

In December 1941, according to the RMdI, “all Luxembourgers had become stateless on 10 May 1940”. However, this term was in fact used in a propagandistic manner, and the legal concept of statelessness did not apply to the Luxembourgers – not even according to the National Socialist views on citizenship. In practice, Luxem-

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50 Scuto, Denis, *Mémoire et histoire de la Seconde Guerre mondiale au Luxembourg. Réflexions sur une cohabitation difficile*, in: *Hémecht. Revue d'histoire luxembourgeoise*, 58/4 (2006), 499–513; Majerus, Benoît, *Besetzte Vergangenheiten. Erinnerungskulturen an den Zweiten Weltkrieg in Luxemburg – Eine historiografische Baustelle*, in: *Hémecht. Revue d'histoire luxembourgeoise et transnationale*, 64 (2012), 23–43.

51 “da durch beispiellose Verhetzung der Bevölkerung diese statistische Maßnahme zu einer Volksabstimmung gestempelt”, see Dostert, *ocit.*, notes 168.

52 “Es besteht daher kein Grund, den Kopf hängen zu lassen; immerhin waren die Erfahrungen lehrreich, und die Forderungen werden gezogen werden. Es gilt nun die Zügel überall straff in die Hand zu nehmen und durchzugreifen, keine Milde mehr walten zu lassen, bevor nicht der Gesinnungswandel bei den Luxemburgern eingetreten ist.” Quoted by Dostert, *ocit.*, 155.

53 Engel, Marcel/Hohengarten, André, Hinzert. *Das SS-Sonderlager im Hunsrück 1939–1945*, (Luxembourg, 1983), 86.

bourgers nonetheless continued to be defined ambiguously as “deutscher Volkszugehöriger (Luxemburger)” on their identity cards and passports from October 1941 onwards.

Contrary to what Paul Dostert writes in his chapter on the question of nationality in his 1984 doctoral thesis, the Luxembourgers thus did not become stateless. This citizenship status would have deprived them of any state protection, and this was not the intention for a population defined by the Nazis as “deutschstämmig”. Nevertheless, the citizenship status of several thousand Luxembourgers would remain unclear until the end of war, as we will see later. On 4 January 1945, Ministerialrat Hans Globke repeated – in the name of the Reichsminister des Innern, and for the attention of the Reichskommissar für die Festigung des deutschen Volkstums and the Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle – that Luxembourgers who do not possess German citizenship or German citizenship “upon revocation” (“auf Widerruf”) are theoretically stateless but that “for political reasons, however, they should not be described and treated as foreigners.”<sup>54</sup> Globke asks them to enter “unclear” (“ungeklärt”) in their workbooks (“Arbeitsbuch”) in the section concerning citizenship, with the origin “Luxembourg”.<sup>55</sup>

This underlines once more, as Gosewinkel states, that juridic terms had no intelligible clarity and were based on vague criteria, instead primarily serving to establish hierarchical relations between different groups within the population.

## The Establishment of the “Kartei des deutschen Volkstums”

After the failure of the Personenstandsaufnahme, the investigation that would serve as a basis for the constitution of a “Kartei des deutschen Volkstums” was attributed to an expert from the Reichskommissar SS Himmler, namely SS-Brigadenführer Erwin Rösener.<sup>56</sup> In the “Schlußbericht über die Erhebungen zur Anlegung einer Volkskartei in Luxemburg” of September 1942, the failure of the census of October 10 was first recorded, referring only to the “very strong resistance of the Luxembourg population” but failing to mention the actions of resistance movements, or the inadequacies in their own organization:

<sup>54</sup> BArch, R 59/61, *Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle, Staatsrechtliche Stellung der Absiedler aus Elsaß, Lothringen und Luxemburg*, 5.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>56</sup> Blasen, Philippe/Scuto, Denis, “98 Prozent dreimal ‘luxemburgisch’” . . . , *ocit.*

Initially, it was planned to carry out a survey of the Volkszugehörigkeit of the Luxembourg population on special forms for the occasion of the Personenstandsaufnahme of 10 October 1941. The plan was to have the population fill out the forms themselves and then have police officers collect them with the counting papers from the Personenstandsaufnahme. These plans failed due to the very strong resistance of the Luxembourg population.<sup>57</sup>

Now it would not be the residents who would fill out and sign the census forms, but rather the investigators appointed and trained by the VoMi who would question the residents, who were summoned to their municipality of residence rather than being interviewed in their homes; the investigators would then note down their responses, without the residents having to write or sign the documents themselves. The persistent resistance of the Luxembourg population during this new round of questioning, especially concerning the question of their mother tongue, is noted in the report, but at the same time downplayed. The report concedes that approximately 80% of the surveyed population insisted on the inclusion of Luxembourgish as their mother tongue, and that a certain number of Luxembourgish official investigators even encouraged this. Interestingly, unlike the results on the Volkstumszugehörigkeit, the report does not provide statistics concerning residents' mother tongue.<sup>58</sup>

According to the "Schlußbericht über die Erhebungen zur Anlegung einer Volkskartei in Luxemburg" of September 1942, the population of the country consisted of 287,246 people: 231,554 "Volksdeutsche" (the name given by the VoMi to Luxembourgers), 11,123 "Reichsdeutsche" – these two categories being grouped under the category of 242,677 "Deutsche" (Germans) – 7,777 Italians, 2,378 Belgians, 841 French, 779 Poles, 1,440 Others ("Sonstige Fremdvölkische"), and 31,354 "Mischvölkische".<sup>59</sup>

A "Zusatzbericht betr. die Erhebungen zur Anlegung einer Volkstumskartei in Luxemburg" describes the next steps used to create the final file. Doubtful cases from the point of view of "blood" would once again have to be examined by commissions comprising representatives of the CdZ, the VoMi, the municipality, and the VdB. These people would then be classified into four categories:

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57 "Zunächst war vorgesehen, anlässlich der Personenstandsaufnahme vom 10.10.41 auf besonderem Bogen Erhebungen über die Volkszugehörigkeit der luxemburgischen Bevölkerung vorzunehmen. Dabei war in Aussicht genommen, die Bogen von der Bevölkerung selbst ausfüllen und sie dann mit den Zählpapieren der Personenstandsaufnahme von den Polizeibeamten einsammeln zu lassen. An dem sehr starken Widerstand der luxemburgischen Bevölkerung scheiterten diese Pläne." (BArch, NS 19/1163).

58 See: Blasen, Philippe/Scuto, Denis, "98 Prozent dreimal 'luxemburgisch'" . . ., *ocit.*

59 BArch, R59/58, *Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle, Volkstumsmäßige Erfassung der Bevölkerung in Luxemburg*, 5.

- a) recognized as ethnic Germans,
- b) Germanized to the extent that they could live within the border area (Luxembourg)
- c) still so strongly influenced by foreign ethnicity that final Germanization is only possible in the Altreich
- d) foreign ethnic influence so strong that Germanization is not desirable<sup>60</sup>

It does not appear that the ethnic file could be finalized. The objective of the complete Germanization of Luxembourg was in any case gradually thwarted by military developments on the Eastern Front and by constraints, in terms of both conscription and the war industry. From 1942 onwards, when the ethnic file was implemented in Luxembourg, the ethnicity and citizenship policies linked to expulsion and resettlement projects increasingly depended upon the development of war events. As Alexa Stiller writes, “they were based on the requirements of the war economy, in particular food and labor market policy, and served to deter ‘Kriegs- und Arbeitsdienstverweigerer’ or to combat insurgency”.<sup>61</sup>

We have already seen this with regard to the Italians who the German authorities wished to repatriate, but ultimately were not: the 7,777 Italians residing in the country, as well as the young Italians who became Luxembourgers by choice before the war, or even the “Mischvölkische”, resulting from marriages between Luxembourgers and Italians – all were considered “fremdes Volkstum”, but were essential at the economic level as most worked in steel industry and construction sector. For this reason, and due to diplomatic conflicts with Mussolini, their expulsion to Italy was not planned during the war but postponed until the post-war period, “sobald die Verhältnisse es zulassen”.

The end of German occupation occurred before the exact delimitation of “Volkstumsgrenze” could be completed, as is the case with the expulsion or repatriation of “Fremdvölkische”.

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60 “a) als Volksdeutsche anerkannt,  
 b) soweit eingedeutscht, dass sie im Grenzraum (Luxemburg) wohnen können,  
 c) noch so stark vom fremden Volkstum beeinflusst, dass endgültige Eindeutschung nur im Altreich möglich ist,  
 d) fremdvölkischer Einschlag so stark, dass Eindeutschung nicht erwünscht.” (*Zusatzbericht betr. die Erhebungen zur Anlegung einer Volkstumskartei in Luxemburg*, op. cit., 2)

61 Stiller, Alexa, *Völkische Politik* . . . , op. cit., 1312.



## Citizenship to Serve Introduction of Compulsory Military Service

The inquiries to define the boundaries of ‘Germanness’ were implemented in 1942, at the same time as a shift in the war caused the Wehrmacht forces to exert pressure on the CdZ to grant full citizenship to only a minority of Luxembourgers, on the basis of their “German descent” and their “commitment to the German cause”.

From October 1941, with the Führer’s order to introduce compulsory military service in Alsace and the failure of the Blitzkrieg in the east, another process began in Luxembourg, through which a graduated naturalization of selected groups of people would finally be put in place, to primarily serve not the Germanization of Luxembourg but the planned introduction of compulsory military service. The Wehrmacht had not only called for the recruitment of young people of Alsace, Lorraine and Luxembourg, but also wanted clarification concerning their legal citizenship.

The “Verordnung zur Regelung von Staatsangehörigkeitsfragen” of 20 January 1942 states that, even without the annexation of territories, in the territories “unter deutscher Hoheit” (like Luxembourg), for political reasons, certain groups of foreigners can be granted German citizenship by “general order” (“allgemeine Anordnung”), i.e., through administrative channels.<sup>62</sup> This granting of German citizenship could be revoked within ten years on a case-by-case basis (“deutsche Staatsangehörigkeit auf Widerruf”).

For Luxembourg, this led to lengthy discussions and differences of opinion between Gauleiters Simon, Wagner and Bürckel, as well as the Reich ministries and the Reichsführer SS under Hitler’s arbitration.

Gauleiter Simon seemed to be the most selective of the three Gauleiters concerning granting citizenship, and even reluctant concerning conscription. Again, he believed in the attraction of “commitment to Germanness” within the Luxembourg population, in this case the success of his campaign for volunteering in the Wehrmacht or the SS and entering the NSDAP. Citizenship, according to Gauleiter Simon, was only to be granted to volunteers and those who were already “champions of the German cause” before 10 May 1940 (those with the red membership card of the NSDAP), along with their families.<sup>63</sup> He had repeatedly asked for accelerated naturalization for volunteers in 1941. Beyond that, a selective introduction of citizenship “upon revocation” (“auf Widerruf”) was planned, albeit only for certain categories of the population, since “in Luxembourg, in contrast to Alsace

<sup>62</sup> Gosewinkel, *Einbürgern und ausschließen* . . . , ocit., 404f.

<sup>63</sup> Dostert, ocit., 156.

and Lorraine, due to the lack of a homeland state, there was no deportation of undesirable elements among the ethnic Germans, so that even among the members of the Volksdeutsche Bewegung there were elements unworthy of granting citizenship on revocation". In May 1942, Simon still advocated that "the citizenship regulation can only take place after the final constitutional (staatsrechtliche) integration (of Luxembourg)".<sup>64</sup>

At the beginning of June 1942, according to Deputy Gauleiter Münzel's notes on the meetings held in Berlin from 5 to 6 June 1942, Hitler decided, concerning Luxembourg, "that in accordance with the position of the head of the civil administration in Luxembourg, Gauleiter Staatsrat Simon, the introduction of compulsory military service in Luxembourg should be abandoned for the time being".<sup>65</sup> Continuing, it states "that (the CdZ) has rather preferred, and with great success, the recruitment of volunteers for the Wehrmacht to compulsory conscription, that there are already 1500 voluntary registrations for the Wehrmacht and that, in view of the size of the population and its extraordinarily strong commitment in the war-decisive armaments industry as well as in agriculture, this represents an extraordinarily large percentage of the people who would be eligible for conscription even if general conscription was introduced in Luxembourg".<sup>66</sup>

Nevertheless, after this meeting, the position of the Gauleiter evolved, at the suggestion of Münzel following his meeting in Berlin. Luxembourgers who had done the Reichsarbeitsdienst and Luxembourg policemen who took the oath to the Führer should also be granted German citizenship.<sup>67</sup> In further discussions with the RMdI, Gauleiters Wagner, Bürckel and – after a meeting of the three Gauleiters with Hitler, Himmler, Ribbentrop and Frick in the Führerhauptquartier in Winniza – Simon, accepted to grant German citizenship on revocation to the "deutschstämmigen" Luxembourgier who had joined the Volksdeutsche Bewegung with their families.

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<sup>64</sup> Quoted by Dostert, *ocit.*, 185.

<sup>65</sup> "dass entsprechend dem Standpunkt des Chefs der Zivilverwaltung in Luxemburg, Gauleiter Staatsrat Simon, von der Einführung der allgemeinen Wehrpflicht in Luxemburg bis auf Weiteres abzusehen ist" (*Dr. Münzel, Vermerk über die in der Zeit vom 5. bis 6. Juni 1942 in Berlin durchgeführten Besprechungen*, ANLux, CdZ-A-4352, *Staatsangehörigkeit für Luxemburger sowie die Einführung der allgemeinen Wehrpflicht in Luxemburg*, 33–34).

<sup>66</sup> "dass (der CdZ) vielmehr, und zwar mit grossem Erfolg, die Werbung von Freiwilligen für die Wehrmacht der pflichtweisen Einberufung vorgezogen habe, dass bereits jetzt 1500 freiwillige Meldungen zur Wehrmacht vorliegen und dass dies mit Rücksicht auf die Bevölkerungszahl und deren ausserordentlich starken Einsatz in der kriegsentscheidenden Rüstungsindustrie sowie in der Landwirtschaft einen ausserordentlich starken Prozentsatz der auch bei der Einführung der allgemeinen Wehrpflicht in Luxemburg für die Einberufung infrage kommenden Volksgenossen darstelle" (*Ibid.*)

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

All these discussions ultimately led to the “Verordnung über die Staatsangehörigkeit im Elsaß, in Lothringen und in Luxemburg” of 23 August 1942. On 30 August 1942, Gauleiter Simon promulgated these ordinances for his Luxembourg area, at the same time as the ordinance on compulsory military service of the same date for those born between 1920 and 1924. Here, too, Simon was initially against the conscription of those born in 1920, only accepting after Alsace and Lorraine had conscripted those born in 1920. According to the Gauleiter, miners, skilled workers in the iron and steel works, many in agriculture, prisoners of war and foreign civilian workers were also not to be conscripted. The day after, on August 31, the publication of the Verordnung caused several strike movements in Luxembourg, and a subsequent severe repression through the introduction of a Standgericht, sentencing 21 people to death. The Verordnung provided for the following graduated naturalization of selected groups of people:

- I. The members of the following groups of German origin acquire German citizenship:
  - 1) Volunteers of the German Wehrmacht and the Waffen-SS
  - 2) Members of the Volksdeutsche Bewegung who are accepted into the NSDAP
  - 3) Members of the German Wehrmacht and the Waffen-SS who are called up due to compulsory military service
  - 4) Members of the Reichsarbeitsdienst who are part of the permanent staff
  - 5) Members of the police who take the oath to the Führer
  - 6) Persons whom the head of the civil administration recognizes as proven Germans because of special merit to the German cause

The deutschstämmige members of the Volksdeutsche Bewegung acquire German citizenship upon revocation.
- II. The acquisition of nationality generally extends to the wife and minor children, unless this is excluded in individual cases.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> “I. Die deutschstämmigen Angehörigen folgender Gruppen erwerben die deutsche Staatsangehörigkeit:

- 1) Freiwillige der deutschen Wehrmacht und der Waffen-SS;
- 2) Mitglieder der Volksdeutschen Bewegung, die in die NSDAP aufgenommen werden;
- 3) Angehörige der deutschen Wehrmacht und der Waffen-SS, die auf Grund der Wehrpflicht einberufen werden;
- 4) Angehörige des Reichsarbeitsdienstes, die zum Stammpersonal gehören
- 5) Angehörige der Polizei, die den Eid auf den Führer leisten;
- 6) Solche Personen, die der Chef der Zivilverwaltung wegen besonderer Verdienste um die deutsche Sache als bewährte Deutsche anerkennt.

Die deutschstämmigen Angehörigen der Volksdeutschen Bewegung erwerben die deutsche Staatsangehörigkeit auf Widerruf.

A RMdI circular of 26 August 1942 specifies, in paragraph 7, that in principle one can be considered to be of German descent if one has at least two German grandparents; all those who were born in Luxembourg, Lorraine, Alsace or the German Empire were considered German.<sup>69</sup>

Nonetheless, paragraph 1.6 and the conceptual vagueness of “deutschstämmig” still left Gauleiter Simon a wide latitude when it came to the importance of both race and commitment to Germanness.

## The Nationality/Ties of Luxembourgers after August 1942

According to a report of 28 August 1942, following the decree of 30 August 1942, the vast majority of Luxembourgers, estimated at about 200,000, thus became – by political and administrative decision of the CdZ – German citizens upon revocation (the 80,000 members of the VdB along with their family members). 2,200 members of the NSDAP and around 1,500 volunteers of the Wehrmacht and Waffen-SS, an unknown number of RAD-“Stammpersonal”, Luxembourg policemen and proven Germans acquired German citizenship without restrictions. About 10,000 recruits, “who are called up on the basis of compulsory military service” were to follow in the next few years. That made a total of around 215,000 people, out of a population of approximately 290,000.

The nationality of the roughly 20,000 remaining former Luxembourgers considered as “Volksdeutsche” who fell into neither category now had, as was stated in some identity cards/foreign passports, an undetermined nationality, “Staatsangehörigkeit ungeklärt, früher Luxemburg”. They still had to be treated as “deutsche Volkszugehörige”, people of German descent with the right to legal protection. They thus had a kind of intermediate status, clearly differentiated from the “fremdvölkische inhabitants” of Italy, Belgium and France, as well as of those of “Schutzzugehörige” originating from the eastern territories. On 29 August 1942 the Reich Ministry of the Interior wrote to the CdZ of Luxembourg that this intermediate status was a “Schwebezustand”: “Schutzzugehörige are not regularly created in the western territories, since the inhabitants of the western territories are all of German origin. Only persons of non-German origin who cannot be expected to remain

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II. Der Erwerb der Staatsangehörigkeit erstreckt sich, soweit dies nicht im Einzelfall ausgeschlossen wird, grundsätzlich auf die Ehefrau und die minderjährigen Kinder.”

<sup>69</sup> *Der CdZ an das Gericht der Kommandantur der Befestigungen Eifel und Saarpfalz, Zweigstelle Trier*, 1. August 1944, ANLux, CdZ-A-4620, *Luxemburger in der Wehrmacht*.

in the Reich territory in the long term are regularly declared to be Schutzangehörige. I consider it right to allow the state of suspense (Schwebezustand) to continue for the time being with regard to the Luxembourgers, who will become neither citizens nor citizens upon revocation, but for this very reason I would like to refrain from making special mention of their legal status in the implementing decree.”<sup>70</sup> As specified in the same correspondence, the Gauleiter emphasized that “the entire group of people (the stateless people of German origin in Luxembourg) will ultimately receive German citizenship because of their German origin”.<sup>71</sup>

On 18 November 1942, the head of the Reichsinnenministerium des Innern, Ministerialrat Hans Globke, Referent für Staatsangehörigkeitsfragen, and the Oberregierungsrat Günther of the CdZ agreed with the interpretation that the decree of 23 August 1942, namely that “in principle, all Luxembourgers living in the Reich should be regarded as Staatsangehörige auf Widerruf, unless there are concerns about their German origin in individual cases”.<sup>72</sup> However, a clear distinction had to be made between the mass of these “Staatsangehörige auf Widerruf” and the “bewährte Deutsche” who demonstrated an exemplary political attitude.

At the same time, the RMdI and the CdZ also agreed to grant German citizenship on revocation to Luxembourgers who had emigrated or resettled in France (21,286 people in July 1942), Belgium (11,407 people in July 1942) or in the Altreich, or from April 1943 throughout the Reich, but always “with examination of the individual case with regard to German origin and appraisal”.<sup>73</sup> The Oberkommando der Wehrmacht (OKW) in particular had raised reservations for military reasons

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70 “Schutzangehörige werden regelmäßig in den westlichen Gebieten nicht geschaffen, da die Bewohner der Westgebiete durchweg deutschstämmig sind. Zu Schutzangehörigen werden aber regelmäßig nur nicht deutschstämmige Personen erklärt, mit deren Verbleiben im Reichsgebiet auf die Dauer nicht zu rechnen ist. Ich halte es für richtig, hinsichtlich der Luxemburger, die weder Staatsangehörige noch Staatsangehörige auf Widerruf werden, den Schwebezustand vorläufig fortbestehen zu lassen, möchte aber gerade deswegen davon absehen, ihre Rechtsstellung in dem Durchführungserlaß besonders zu erwähnen.” (*Abschrift von Auszug aus dem Fernschreiben des Reichsministerium des Innern vom 29. August 1942 an den Chef der Zivilverwaltung in Luxemburg*, ANLux, CdZ-A-4256, 2)

71 “der gesamte Personenkreis (der deutschstämmigen Staatenlosen in Luxemburg) wegen seiner Deutschstämmigkeit letzten Endes die deutsche Staatsangehörigkeit erhalten wird”.

72 “grundsätzlich alle im Reichsgebiet wohnenden Luxemburger als Staatsangehörige auf Widerruf angesehen werden sollen, soweit nicht im Einzelfall Bedenken gegen ihre Deutschstämmigkeit bestehen” (Vermerk betr.: Staatsangehörigkeitsverordnung, 23 August 1942, 18 November 1942, ANLux, CdZ-A-4256, 24.)

73 Ibid.

(“abwehrmäßige Gründe”) against a general granting of citizenship to the Luxembourgers, Lorraines and Alsatians residing abroad.<sup>74</sup>

Likewise, the “deutschstämmige” Luxembourgers – just like the Lorraine and Alsatians – who were resettled in the Altreich and known as “Absiedler”, received the “deutsche Staatsangehörigkeit auf Widerruf” from 1 August 1943 by Runderlass of 9 July 1943, provided that they were assessed for racial suitability by the SS Race and Resettlement Main Office (RuSHA, Rasse- und Siedlungshauptamt der SS).<sup>75</sup> This decision again points out the contradictions in the codification of citizenship legislation by National Socialist administrations on different levels. These “Absiedler”, consisting of approximately 4,000 Luxembourgers, were in fact resettled in Lower-Silesia, Sudetenland and in the Hunsrück because they were considered to be politically unreliable in Luxembourg, Lorraine and Alsace: the family members of strikers, resisters, deserters and “Kriegsdienstverweigerern”. They were replaced in Luxembourg by ethnic German resettlers (“Ansiedler”), mainly from South Tyrol, Bosnia, Croatia, Bukovina and Transylvania. As Sarah Maya Vercruysse shows,<sup>76</sup> granting the Luxembourg “Absiedler” “German citizenship on revocation” was seen as contradictory even by the Reich Chancellery. She quotes from a memorandum by the Reichskanzlei from 12 April 1943 to Himmler: “it is in itself paradoxical that people who are resettled here because of political unreliability are granted German citizenship, while this is otherwise precisely a reason for not granting it to them.”

The importance of “blood” considerations is again illustrated by this example. According to Gosewinkel, this was Himmler’s concern; but Gosewinkel also states that it represented a possibility for the RMdI, who were traditionally in charge of questions of citizenship, to regain normative power. He illustrates this with a quote from RMdI concerning the Deutsche Volksliste:

“For entry in the Deutsche Volksliste, it is essential that no German blood is lost and can be made available to foreign people. Active engagement for Germanness is therefore not a prerequisite for entry in the Deutsche Volksliste. Even an indifferent or bad German remains a German, and it must be prevented – if not for his sake, then for his children’s sake – from pushing him against his will into

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> BArch, R 59/61, 6.

<sup>76</sup> See the article “*Desertion leads to resettlement*” – *The consequences of desertion and draft evasion on the families of Luxembourgish soldiers (1942–1945)* by Sarah Maya Vercruysse (p. 241–278).

the non-German camp and thereby feeding it with German blood. In the Eastern regions no German may be denied access to the German Volksgemeinschaft.”<sup>77</sup>

On the other side, as “Abgesiedelte” were only granted German citizenship upon revocation, their citizenship could be taken away from them within ten years in cases where their Germanization in the Altreich did not succeed and they proved themselves unworthy of acquiring full citizenship. The German ‘citizens upon revocation’ remained a “discriminatory status on probation” (Gosewinkel), a “second-class-citizenship” (Stiller).

As military constraints grew stronger following the setbacks of the Wehrmacht on the Eastern and Western Fronts, other new groups would be granted German citizenship. The Führererlass of 15 May 1943 granted German citizenship to the “deutschstämmigen Ausländern” who belonged to the Wehrmacht, the Waffen-SS, the German police or the Organisation Todt. During 1943 and 1944 in Luxembourg, this led to a search for “deutschstämmige” Fremdenlegionäre and “deutschstämmige” stateless persons who could be recruited for the Wehrmacht.<sup>78</sup> From 1943 onwards, the archives contain entire lists of stateless persons, but under the denomination of “ehemalige Angehörige anderer Staatsangehörigkeit”. The aim of these lists, created by the CdZ, was to recruit for the Wehrmacht the stateless who were formerly German, but also Russians, Lithuanians, Poles, and Yugoslavs, as long as they could also be racially considered as Volksdeutsche, giving them the possibility of a double nationality.

This evolution must be viewed in the broader context of the plans for a “großgermanischen Europa”, as Gosewinkel states: “In the Rassenkrieg, it was no longer nationality but racial affiliation that was decisive for the recruitment of the German Reich’s European armies. At the peak of resource mobilisation in the last phase of the war, 13 percent of the German army consisted of foreigners.”<sup>79</sup>

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77 “Für die Eintragung in die Deutsche Volksliste ist wesentlich, daß kein deutsches Blut verloren geht und fremdem Volkstum nutzbar gemacht werden darf. Aktive Betätigung für das Deutschtum ist daher nicht Voraussetzung für die Eintragung in die Deutsche Volksliste. Auch ein gleichgültiger oder gar ein schlechter Deutscher bleibt Deutscher, und es muß – wenn schon nicht seinetwegen, so doch seiner Kinder wegen, verhütet werden, ihn gegen seinen Willen in das nichtdeutsche Lager abzu drängen und diesem dadurch deutsches Blut zuzuführen. In den Ostgebieten darf keinem Deutschen der Zugang zur deutschen Volksgemeinschaft verwehrt werden.” (Gosewinkel, 408).

78 See ANLux, CdZ-E-0351, *Wehrbezirkskommando Luxemburg – Bestimmungen und Schriftwechsel betreffend Einberufung ehemaliger französischer Fremdenlegionäre sowie Klärung ihrer Staatsangehörigkeit*; CdZ-A-4304; CdZ-A-4274, *Erfassung der Staatenlosen der Geburtsjahrgänge 1884– 1927 – Kreis Grevenmacher und Esch*.

79 “Im Rassekrieg war nicht mehr die Staatsangehörigkeit, sondern die rassische Zugehörigkeit ausschlaggebend für die Rekrutierung der europäischen Armeen des Deutschen Reiches. Auf



## Conclusion

Gauleiter Simon had planned to solemnly hand over a certificate that he would personally sign to the 3–4,000 people who were granted the deutsche Staatsangehörigkeit by the Verordnung of 30 August 1942, namely the members of the NSDAP, volunteers of the Waffen-SS and the Wehrmacht – the so-called “bewährten Deutschen”. When Gauleiter fled from Luxembourg in September 1944, those certificates had still not been signed or handed over.

This perfectly symbolizes the changes, contradictions and failures of the National socialist ethnicity and citizenship policy in occupied Luxembourg from 1940 to 1944. In 1940, the propaganda and legal regulations had initially concentrated on historical and cultural criteria like German descent, language and consciousness. Then, in 1941, defining ‘Germanness’ ethnically and racially made it to the top of the National socialist agenda. However, the National Socialist ethnic policy failed due to three main reasons: the Luxembourg counter-model of an ethnically mixed immigration and emigration country stood in opposition to the idea of an ethnically homogeneous population; the opposition of resistance groups and large parts of the population to this “völkische Politik”; and the power shift in the war, to the detriment of Nazi Germany.

After a fiscal census in December 1940 questioning Staatsangehörigkeit, the census of October 1941 intended to obtain information not only on Staatsangehörigkeit but also on Volkszugehörigkeit and Muttersprache. The failure of this “Personenstandsaufnahme”, and its reversal by resistance movements and the Luxembourg population into a “Volksabstimmung” for Luxemburgertum and against Deutschtum, opened a coercive phase in which a Kartei des fremden Volkstums was established. This endeavor was organized in 1942–1943 by the RKF, VoMi officials, and CdZ in Luxembourg; however, this would never be completed.

At the same time, as the balance of power in the war shifted, military imperatives led to the granting of full German citizenship from August 1942 to a minority of Luxembourgers who were considered “bewährte Deutsche”: members of the NSDAP, volunteers in the Wehrmacht and Waffen-SS, and forced recruits of the Wehrmacht, ultimately, no more than 15,000 people from a total population of 290,000. The majority of the population who had formerly held Luxembourg citizenship, some 200,000 people, along with their families, and who became members of the Volksdeutsche Bewegung were granted German citizenship upon revocation – a “second-class-citizenship” (Alexa Stiller). The citizenship of a mi-

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dem Höhepunkt der Ressourcenmobilisierung in der letzten Kriegsphase bestanden 13 Prozent der deutschen Armee aus Ausländern.” (Gosewinkel, *Schutz und Freiheit?* . . . ; *ocit.*, 273–274).

nority of about 20,000 people remained unclarified, also acknowledged in official documents as “ungeklärte Staatsangehörigkeit (früher Luxemburg)”. In this respect, the Germanization of the Luxembourg population appeared to be a highly fragmented endeavor.

More research will be necessary to analyze the National Socialists’ assessment of the racial suitability of the population in Luxembourg on an individual basis for the period of 1943/1944, as well as the classification of the roughly 1,000 Poles in the German Volksliste.

It should here be noted that on 30 August 1945, the Allied Control Council for Germany proclaimed Law N° 1 in Berlin which repeals the political and discriminatory laws of the defeated Nazi regime (Kontrollratsgesetz Nr. 1 betreffend die Aufhebung von NS-Recht, short form: Kontrollratsgesetz Nr. 1). But, as David Fraser and Frank Caestecker have shown for German Jews, this led to a complicated situation: “At first blush, it might appear obvious that liberal governments, as part of their victory over totalitarianism, and within the legal framework of the immediate abrogation of Nazi anti-Jewish laws by the Allied Occupation Authorities, would choose to restore the former German nationality of these Jews as evidence of their complete rejection of Nazi policies legalized practices of racial, ethnic, and religious persecution. However, the actual political and legal situation “on the ground” did not necessarily lend itself to such a seemingly principled liberal legal solution consistent with the dominant framework of the state/citizen *modus operandi* of international law. Many individual Jews challenged the automatic restoration of their former nationality, and demanded a less obvious straightforward solution to the legal consequences of the persecution they had suffered.”<sup>80</sup> More research has also here to be done on the surviving Jews who returned or tried to return to Luxembourg after the war and who had become stateless. Statelessness was also a challenge for many Polish immigrants in Luxembourg before, during and after the war.

Finally, it will also be important to analyze the influence that these Nazi ethnicity and citizenship policies had, along with their accompanying racial theories on Luxembourg administration and politicians, both before, during and after the war. In my former research on Luxembourg citizenship policy, predominantly within my doctoral thesis on the history of the Luxembourg nationality in the long run, I pointed out that the 1930s saw a breakthrough in the Luxembourg parliamentary and governmental sphere of ethnic nationalist theories influenced by

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<sup>80</sup> Fraser, David and Caestecker, Frank, “Jews or Germans? Nationality Legislation and the Restoration of Liberal Democracy in Western Europe after the Holocaust.” *Law and History Review*, 31/2 (May 2013): 393–394.

racial theories, which were used to analyze immigration through the language of biology. This was not only the prerogative of the Nazis in Germany after 1933. In France, racial themes were raised by hygienists, who in the 1920s attempted to legitimize their function as salaried doctors by raising the question of foreigners. They focused on this “social peril”, to the extent that historian Gérard Noiriel speaks of “*Les origines républicaines de Vichy*”, the republican origin of exclusionary measures, which would culminate under the Vichy régime with the denaturalization of French Jews who were naturalized between 1927 and 1940.<sup>81</sup>

In Luxembourg, medical-racial language became established in the 1930s, as can be seen in the observations of the special commission set up by conservative Prime Minister Joseph Bech in 1936, who wrote in his opinion on the law of Luxembourg nationality that: “Every normally conditioned mixture must be made in reasonable proportions; if foreign substances are added in too large quantities, they can no longer be assimilated and they dominate”.<sup>82</sup>

The issue of foreigners continued to be brought up after the war, as questions of “Überfremdung” and “assimilation” that were expressed in biological units of “foreign bodies” (“Fremdkörper”). The influence of National Socialist ethnicity and citizenship policies on these theories during the occupation of Luxembourg and the lasting effects after the war are undeniable.

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<sup>81</sup> Noiriel, Gérard, *Les origines républicains de Vichy*, (Paris: Fayard, 1999); Zalc, Claire, *Dénaturalisés. Les retraits de nationalité sous Vichy*, (Paris: Seuil, 2016).

<sup>82</sup> See Scuto, *La nationalité luxembourgeoise*, op. cit., 191f.

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