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WORKING ON THE RELATIONSHIP

EXCHANGING LETTERS, GOODS,

AND PHOTOGRAPHS

IN WARTIME

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War letters might seem to create a sphere of „private” intimacy isolated from the „public” sphere of politics. On closer inspection, this „couple cosmos” was intricately entwined in macrohistorical relationships. This talk will explore the practices through which this intertwining took place in the everyday lives of Hilde Laube and Roland Nordhoff, whose extensive correspondence stands at the heart of the public humanities project Trug&Schein. After Roland was enlisted in the Navy in August 1940, the newlyweds revived many of the same epistolary practices from their courtship. They „worked on their relationship” through the exchange of letters, goods, and photographs. In the process, they built not only a minimal degree of consensus between them about the future of their private happiness but also about their public integration into the Kriegsgemeinschaft. This couple cosmos proved to be an ideal locus for highly political fantasies of privacy.

Eine Kooperationsveranstaltung der Landeszentrale für politische Bildung Hamburg mit dem Arbeitsfeld Public History am Fachbereich Geschichte der Universität Hamburg und dem Gängeviertel.