

Conference

The *Ligue des Droits de l'Homme* since the Second World War Thinking and acting in favour of human rights

International conference organized by the *Bibliothèque de Documentation Internationale Contemporaine* (BDIC) with the support of the Labex project '*Les passés dans le présent*'

Call for papers

In 2018, the *Ligue des Droits de l'Homme* (LDH)¹ will commemorate the 120th anniversary of its creation. On this occasion, the *Bibliothèque de Documentation Internationale Contemporaine* (BDIC)², which conserves the Ligue's archives, is organizing a pluridisciplinary international conference on the history of the LDH and of human rights between the Second World War and the early 2000s.

The objective of this initiative is firstly to elicit research into the history of the association based on study of its post-1945 archives which were recently given to the Library. More broadly, the aim is to study the question of the defence of human rights during the second half of the XXth century in a political landscape which was different to that of the French IIIrd Republic and marked by a renewal of associative actors and the emergence of new issues of importance.

The BDIC has conserved the LDH's archives since they "came back from Moscow" in the year 2000. These cover the first decades of the association's existence between 1898 and 1940. An inventory of the documents can be consulted online in Calames, the catalogue of French higher education archives and manuscripts (<http://www.calames.abes.fr/plus/doc/920509801/FileId-928.pdf>). The inventory of later archives from the 1945-2000 period is currently being finalized and these new collections will soon be available for research purposes.

This rich set of sources — completed by the Ligue's collections of publications — will enable the construction of the history of an association whose evolution and activities since the Second World War remain little known despite some pioneering works. The archives will help enrich the current issues linked to the historiography of human rights and contribute to putting some of society's current debates into perspective.

Proposals for presentations could involve one or more of the following main subject areas:

- **The history of the LDH's structures and spaces for action:**
 - the internal structures and relations between national bodies, federations and local sections
 - the links between the Ligue and other human rights defenders in various countries
 - relations with the FIDH (International Federation for Human Rights)

- **Networks and forms of collective and individual mobilization:**
 - political careers particularly those of the Ligue's successive presidents (Paul Langevin,

¹ French Human Rights League.

² Contemporary International Documentation Library.

- Justin Sicard de Plauzoles, Emile Kahn, Daniel Mayer, Henri Noguères, etc.) and general secretaries or of various personalities (René Cassin, etc.)
- the career paths of militants at different levels of the association
 - links with other human rights organizations in France or on the international scale
 - relations with political parties and unions
 - relations with the profession of lawyers (the Touvier, Papon, Barbie cases, etc.)
- **The evolution of the causes the LDH supports including the following positions:**
- against the death penalty
 - against discriminatory legislation
 - in favour of the freedom of the press, audiovisual media and of opinion in general
 - in favour of decolonization
 - the subject of immigration and the defence of the rights of people from other countries
 - the right to housing
 - against racism
 - in favour of freedoms in the army (*Comité droits et libertés dans l'institution militaire*³)
 - in favour of women's rights
 - etc.

Within the framework of these three main subject areas, speakers may freely discuss and compare the history of the association with individual career histories or mutations of other structures. It will also be interesting to envisage the discourses about "human rights" which the association has developed over time and how these translate into commitments, practices and representations.

This call for papers is addressed to researchers from all disciplines - historians, political scientists, sociologists, lawyers, philosophers, etc.

These researchers will be asked to use the LDH's collections conserved at the BDIC.

The archives of the LDH dating from after 1945 are those of the national bodies. They provide accounts of how the Ligue functions and on its internal organization - the activities of the presidencies, the general secretariat, the central committee, commissions and various working groups; annual national congresses; relations with the sections and different local bodies. The activities of the legal service, one of the Ligue's structuring departments since its very origins, are also well documented in the archives. The collection is also useful for the analysis of the campaigns organized by the Ligue sometimes in partnership with other associations and the place it occupies at the intersection where French and international civil and political societies meet. The archives also include files on some of the major events with which the association has been linked like the celebration for the Bicentennial of the French Revolution or its own centenary in 1998. There are some gaps in the archives dating from before the 1970s but these are compensated for by the various periodicals published by the LDH which will be made available in digital format.

The conference will be followed up by a publication.

Conference location: Paris Nanterre University
Scheduled dates: December 11th and 12th 2018

³ Committee for Rights and Liberties in the Military Institution

Please send your replies with a short CV and an abstract for your proposal in 500 words for January 31st 2018 to anne.joly@bdic.fr and franck.veyron@bdic.fr.

Organizing committee

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