

NEWSLETTER

No 82 - February 2023



NEWS

SUPPORT FOR POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCH

The Federal Science Policy Office (BELSPO) grants 24 postdoctoral fellowships to Ukrainian researchers. Applications can be submitted to the State Archives/CegeSoma.

► [Read more](#)



3 QUESTIONS TO ...

Hilde Keppens and Kathleen Vandenberghe, two familiar faces in our reading room, talk about over 30 years of history of CegeSoma.

► [Read more](#)

AGENDA

PUBLIC HISTORY MEETING

On March 22, 2023: a conference-debate in Dutch with guests Kristof Bohez, together with Eva Kamanda the co-author of the book '*Een verzwegen leven*' (A covert Life)," and Guy Vanthemsche. An opportunity to become acquainted with a still little-known subject of "Belgium's Congolese history".

► [Read more](#)



'OORLOGSCAFÉS'

Not to be missed: our last two dialogues with a wide audience on collaboration and repression: Bruges, March 9, 2023, and Brussels (Joseph Cuvelier repository), April 24, 2023.

► [Read more](#)

FOCUS ON THE COLLECTIONS

THE TOPIC OF FASCISM IN OUR LIBRARY

Discover with our librarian the first part (the general perspective) of a triptych on our rich collection on this subject.

► [Read more & watch the video](#)



PUBLICATION

RAPPORT ANNUEL

CENTRE D'ÉTUDE
GUERRE ET SOCIÉTÉ



ANNUAL REPORT 2021-2022

Discover the overview of CegeSoma's activities, publications and research during the past two years.

► [Read more](#)



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Postdoctoral fellowships for Ukrainian researchers



The Belgian Science Policy Office has launched an initiative aiming at offering 24 postdoctoral research stays (of maximum 12 months) in Belgian Federal Scientific Institutions to Ukrainian researchers. One of the institutions for which can be applied are the Belgian State archives/CegeSoma. The research of CegeSoma focusses on the history of the Second World War (including the Holocaust) and its aftermath and the history of the Cold War. For more information on the application form, on the fellowships and on the eligible scientific institutions, please consult [the dedicated portal](#).

Other news

[Young Historians 'class of 2022': a beautiful bloom](#)

[Helden van het Verzet. Dit zijn de namen.](#)

['Cultures of spectacle' during WWI and WWII: new thematic issue of JBH](#)

[Two new inventories! 'Les Invalides Prévoyants' and 'Les Enfants de la Patrie/De Kinderen van het Vaderland'](#)

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[THREE QUESTIONS TO ... Hilde Keppens and Kathleen Vandenberghe](#)

[13–14 December 2022: EHRI-PP General Partner Meeting at CegeSoma](#)

[Launch of new calls for candidates for the EHRI-Conny Kristel scholarships - 2023](#)

[News from the Wikibase Resistance project](#)

THREE QUESTIONS TO ... Hilde Keppens and Kathleen Vandenberghe

The two pillars of the CegeSoma reading room



Hilde and Kathleen, you joined the team of CegeSoma respectively 35 and 34 years ago! You have catalogued over 100.000 items and everyone who has visited the reading room had the pleasure of being warmly welcomed by you, so you are without doubt part of the DNA of the Centre.

From the early 1990s until 2023 you surely must have seen a lot of changes?

Yes! It feels as if there were four different periods in this timespan.

In the beginning we were only a small team at Place de Louvain. It was a young team and with a couple of conscientious objectors also. We were full of enthusiasm and everything had to be made from scratch. The institution had to establish itself and find its place, but the workshops open to the public were already a big success. The reading room was even too small sometimes and we had to rent chairs so that everyone could be seated. This period was also marked by the early beginnings of computerisation, which profoundly changed our work.

In 1993, everyone rolled up their sleeves for the move to the Résidence Palace: it was a real 'team building' operation. This was the start of a period of growth, in which relations with universities and international stakeholders were developed. More and more readers came to our reading room, among which groups of first-year

History students.

In 2004, the institution moved again, this time to Square de l'Aviation, where it is still established today. And the number of colleagues keeps rising too, with many young researchers joining. We sometimes think that if we would gather everyone who has ever worked at CegeSoma in the central hall, there would not be enough space.

The integration of CegeSoma into the State Archives marks the beginning of a new era, although this time, only the archives were moved [to the NAB2 repository located Rue du Houblon] This period was characterised by a more centralised organisation, but also by the COVID-19 pandemic and changing work habits, such as the possibility to work from home and the reservation system introduced for the reading rooms.



How has your work evolved?

In the beginning we worked with catalogues on record cards. We had to print these cards with a stencil machine and carbon paper. Our fingers were often covered in ink. And then came the first computer! At first, there was only one, a big machine that every colleague wanted to see and was placed in a separate room so that we could concentrate on our cataloguing work. Then came a number of cataloguing software applications that each required adaptation efforts, but the pleasure brought by the smell of new books still remains!



In the reading room, we changed from a system in which documents were handed out to readers immediately to an organisation where document requests were treated every hour, and finally to a combined and fully online system for booking a seat in the reading room and simultaneously requesting documents. At first, we were opposed to the system because we thought it would be detrimental for the readers...

But now we think that it greatly improves our organisation.

'Een Verzwegen Leven' (A covert life)

Public History Meetings of CegeSoma (2023-3)

World War II [Conference](#)



Conference-debate in Dutch with guest speaker Kristof Bohez

Hosted by Guy Vanthemsche

'*Een Verzwegen Leven*' (A covert life) is the fruit of three years of research and investigation into a (family) history unknown for far too long. Eva Kamanda is the great-granddaughter of François Kamanda. The latter arrived in Belgium in 1930, more precisely in Antwerp, aboard the *Léopoldville*. In Antwerp, all trace is lost for six years. In 1936, he served as a model for a painting by Henri Logelain that is today conserved at the Royal Museum for Central Africa. He then became a hairdresser working from the Rue de l'Etang in Etterbeek. In 1942, he married Lucienne Berger. A mixed marriage in occupied Belgium.

In 1940, at the most 200 Congolese lived in Belgium. Most of them were associated through the '*Union congolaise*', founded in 1919 to defend the interests of Congolese living in Belgium. Its members resided in Brussels for the most part. Some of them joined the resistance movement. Their history is largely unknown today. What did they do, who were mere 'Congolese subjects' at the time? What about François Kamanda? How did Belgian authorities treat

them after the war? The present book, written with an empathic take on the subject, delves into these issues and opens a rather unknown chapter of the 'Congoese history of Belgium'.

For its third Public History Meeting this year, CegeSoma is pleased to invite Kristof Bohez, co-author (together with Eva Kamanda) of the book *Een Verzwegen Leven (A covert life)* published by *Vrijdag*, on Wednesday 22 March. He will be interviewed by Guy Vanthemsche.



Kristof Bohez is a reporter and editor since 2005. He graduated from *Arteveldehogeschool* in Ghent and specialises in human interest-reports. He mainly writes for *Het Nieuwsblad* and *Gazet van Antwerpen*.



Guy Vanthemsche is emeritus professor of Contemporary History at *Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB)*. He is the author of a dozen of books and countless papers about the contemporary history of Belgium. Among these publications, a book worth highlighting is one about the relations between Belgium and the Congo during the colonial period titled *'Belgium and the Congo, 1885-1980'*, (Cambridge University Press, 2012).



22/03/2023 - 12:30 to 14:00

PRACTICAL INFORMATION:

Where: Conference room, CegeSoma, Square de l'Aviation/Luchtvaartsquare 29 – 1070 Brussels

When: Wednesday 22 March 2023 (12.30 pm – 2.00 pm)

Registration required: Send an email to isabelle.ponteville@arch.be or phone 02.556.92.11

Feel free to spread the word about this event.

Main language

Dutch

“Oorlogscafés”: Collaboration and repression in Flanders

A new and more accessible series of lectures for the large public

World War II [Conference](#)



On 24 November, [Koen Aerts](#) (*UGent*/State Archives-CegeSoma) and **Bruno De Wever** (*UGent*) launched a new type of lectures in Gent titled “*Oorlogscafés*”. Partners are the Davidsfonds and the State Archives-CegeSoma. The goal is to share knowledge and findings from scientific research into collaboration and repression with the large public in an informal, café-like setting.

Upon registration, attendees will be given **access to some 20 webinars of maximum 10 minutes about topics related to collaboration and repression**. Once registered, you can also ask questions in advance that will be summarised and addressed at the event. “*Oorlogscafés*” are organised in every Flemish province.

-> Registration via this link: <https://www.davidsfonds.be/zoekresultaten?q=oorlogscaf%C3%A9>

-> Further information: https://view.publitas.com/davidsfonds/het-accent_juli_2022/page/8-9

Please also note the scientific survey about the Second World War that underpins these lectures. Link to the

survey: <https://forms.gle/X49BRr5Mc3z1jKPE9>



24/11/2022 - 19:30 to 24/04/2023 - 21:30

Dates and locations of the Oorlogscafés:

Thursday 24 November 2022 from 7.30 pm to 9.30 pm - NTGent, Sint-Baafsplein 17, 9000 Ghent

Tuesday 13 December 2022 from 7.30 pm to 9.30 pm - De Steenberg, Spechtenlaan 9, 3080 Tervuren

Wednesday 8 February 2023 from 2.00 pm to 4.00 pm - Borrelhuis, Witte Nonnenstraat 28, 3500 Hasselt

Thursday 16 February 2023 from 7.30 pm to 9.30 pm - De Basiliek, Trooststraat 22, 2650 Edegem

Tuesday 9 March 2023 from 2.00 pm to 4.00 pm - ZoWe Vormingscentrum, Barrièrestraat 2 D, 8000 Brugge

Monday 24 April 2023 from 1.15 pm to 4.00 pm - National Archives 2 - Joseph Cuvelier repository, Hopstraat/Rue du Houblon 26-28, 1000 Brussels

Main language

Dutch

TAGS

[collaboration](#) [Repression of collaboration](#)

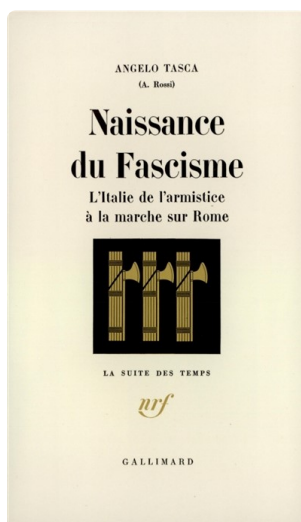


Fascism in the CegeSoma Library (1) : general perspective.

"Fascism in the CegeSoma Library (1) : general perspective". Under this title, we invite you to discover the twelfth theme of our series 'The Librarian's talks'. Each theme will be the occasion to dive into our collections and will be illustrated by a video and a text to complete the information contained therein.

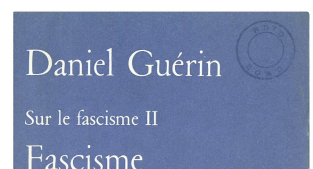
Watch the twelfth episode of our video series 'The Librarian's Talks : 12. "Fascism in the CegeSoma Library (1) : general perspective".

Le fascisme : 1. perspectives générales - Het fascisme : 1. ...

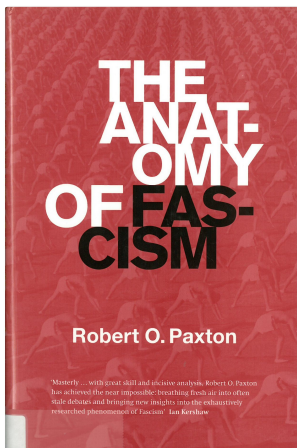
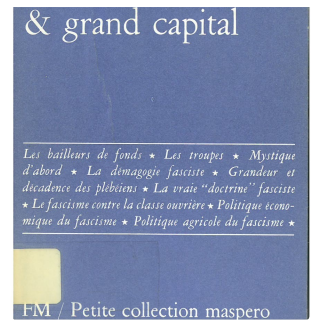


If, as already mentioned in this section, communism has been the object of sustained attention in our library, its worst enemy, fascism, has, over the years, also come to occupy a prominent place on our shelves. How can we be surprised? From the point of view of a certain approach to history, fascism, born out of the Great War, highly belligerent and fully responsible for the outrages of the Second World War, was bound to arouse the interest of historians, political scientists... and the general public. Its spectacular and militarised aspects, sometimes resembling a 'political religion' that stirs up human masses could only further raise interest in the topic.

In fact, if we limit ourselves to scientific circles, from the time of its emergence in Italy between the two world wars up to our eminently post-modern era, several schools have been trying to interpret the fascist phenomenon and



identify its social or political meaning. Right from the start, there was competition between three classic explanations. The liberal thesis, first defended by Benedetto Croce, first saw fascism as a simple parenthesis linked to an Italy that had not yet recovered from the spasms of the First World War, before casting it as a global and authoritarian rejection of the Enlightenment. Another view, based on historical determinism, associated it with the political and social state of the country in which it arose. Thus, there was fascism for rural states (Spain, Romania, Poland, etc.) or semi-rural states (Italy, Argentina, etc.) and fascism for industrial states (Germany, Netherlands, France, Belgium, etc.). Finally, the Marxist thesis, propagated by Karl Radek, Antonio Gramsci and others, including Maxime Litvinov, which was quite popular in the 1930s and at the end of the Second World War, saw fascism as an expression of the paroxysmal crisis of capitalism in its death throes, the last stage before the "classless communist society"...



Then, after the second world conflagration and the onset of the Cold War, came the "American School" following Hannah Arendt and her disciples, with its hypothesis linking fascism to a nebulous, polymorphous totalitarianism (H. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 1951). After which came studies of fascism interpreted through the lens the social sciences and the Frankfurt School, or exhaustively dissected by the human sciences and psychoanalysis (in the 1960s and 1970s) with Wilhelm Reich as poster boy, and, finally, the postmodern and highly (perhaps overly) relativised reading of fascism from the 1990s onwards. It is probably no coincidence that this period corresponds with the fall of the Soviet Union and the "death of ideologies".

In any case, this profusion of schools and researchers ended up producing a plethora of writings on this issue, for better or worse. Thorough or truly innovative analyses rubbed shoulders with theses stated a thousand times over and reiterated in the form of platitudes by publicists or politicians. And it is in this compact but uneven body of work that our library carried out its mission, drawing on its traditional eclecticism... as well as on specialised bibliographies.



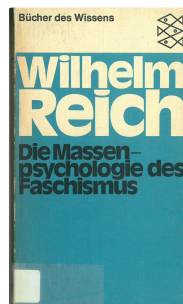
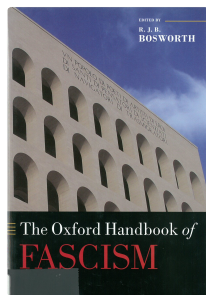
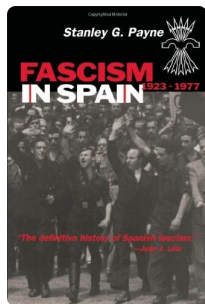
Ultimately, the harvest has been rich, and few classic productions have escaped our attention. In our collection, Angelo Tasca (*The Rise of Italian Fascism*, 1938) sits alongside Pierre Milza (*Le fascisme italien: 1919-1945*, 1980), while Hans Mommsen (*Der Nationalsozialismus und die deutsche Gesellschaft*, 1991) is in good company with the finest works of Fritz Stern (*The Politics of Cultural Despair*, 1961), George Mosse (*The Crisis of German Ideology. Intellectuals Origins of the Third Reich*, 1964), and Robert Paxton (*The Fascist Revolution: Toward a General theory of Fascism*, 2005).

Zeev Sternhell
La droite
révolutionnaire
1885-1914



biohistoire

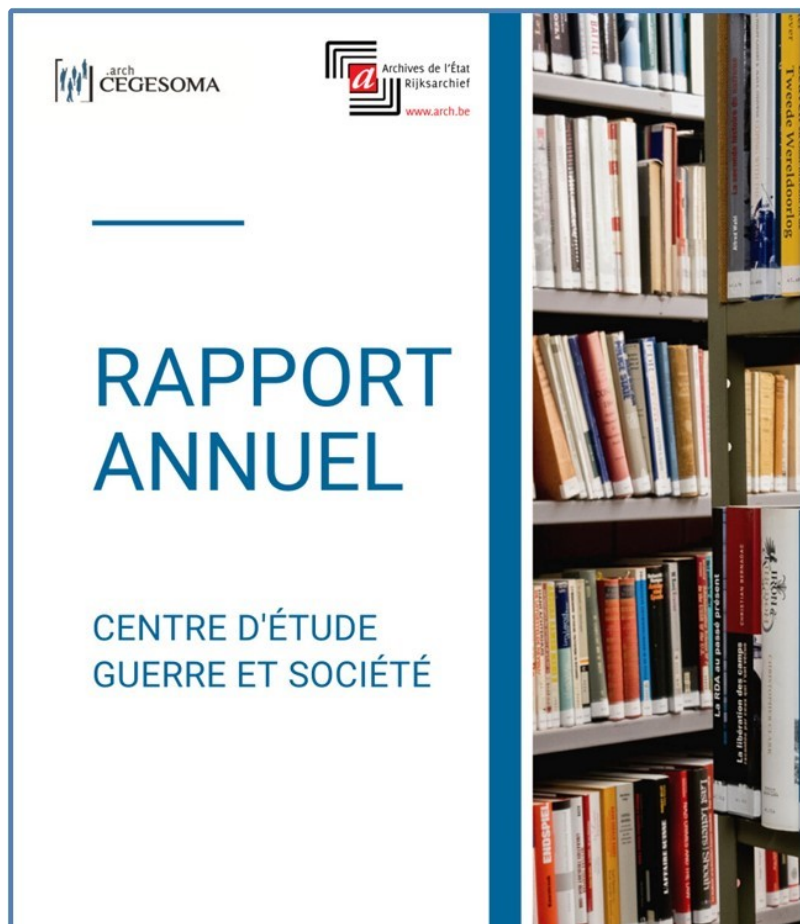
And there are so many others, whose theories are sometimes questionable and/or strongly contested, for instance the *Historikerstreit* in Germany in the 1970s and 1980s sparked by Ernst Nolte's attempt to see Nazism above all as a clumsy response to Bolshevik terrorism, as well as the vehement quarrels between Zeev Sternhell, champion of the French origins of fascism (*La droite révolutionnaire 1885-1914*, 2000), and Winock or Bernstein. In doing so, these distinguished academics have shown that it is possible to be both a scholar and an activist. And that the ashes of fascism, like those of communism, have not yet cooled...



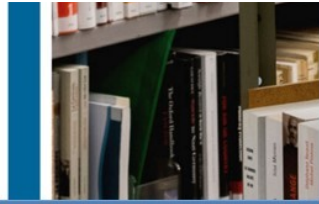
CegeSoma Annual Report



If you wish to have an overview of the activities, publications, projects and research conducted at CegeSoma/State Archives in 2021-2022 as well as some figures, please consult our report clicking [here](#).



2021 - 2022



Other news

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