

CEGESOMA NEWSLETTER

NO 50 - OCTOBER 2019

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A FESTIVE CONFERENCE

Join us for a conference on 10 December 2019 in the Senate about the legacy of the Second World War in Belgium to celebrate the 50th anniversary of CegeSoma and 75 years of liberation. [\[MORE INFO\]](#)

ARCHIVES

A new transfer of archives of the Witte Brigade Fidelio (an armed resistance organization with its HQ in Flanders) representing among others 3.800 individual files. [\[MORE INFO\]](#)

THE RESISTANCE

Discover the different initiatives of CegeSoma related to a topic that sees a renewed public interest. [\[MORE INFO\]](#)

PUBLICATIONS

Our associated researchers have published four new books dedicated to different aspects of the Second World War. [\[MORE INFO\]](#)

INVITATION ADOCHS PROJECT

Take part in an international conference about Linked Data in the Royal Library on 22 November. [\[MORE INFO\]](#)

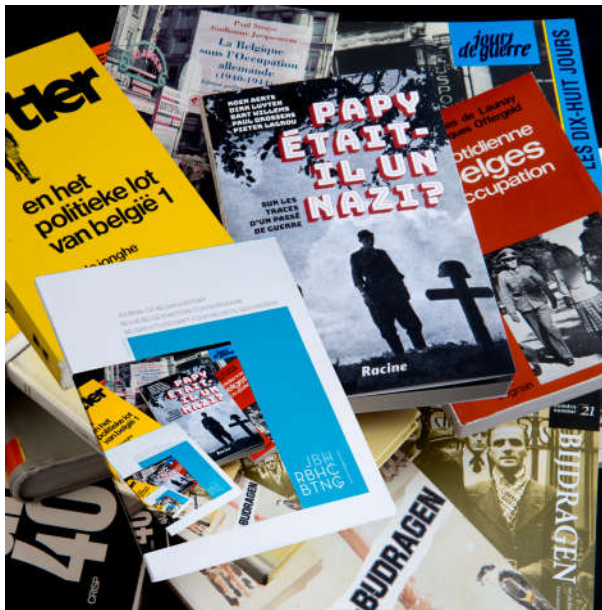
SAVE THE DATES

To mark in your agenda : our 'young historians' day on 28 November 2019 at CegeSoma and still until 3 November our exhibition in the Halles Saint-Géry 'Bevrijd Brussels Libérée' about the liberation of Brussels in September 1944. [\[MORE INFO\]](#)

Colloquium about the 75th anniversary of the Liberation and the 50th anniversary of CegeSoma

The heritage of the Second World War in Belgium. Future prospects for history?

10 December 2019 – Senate



About the event ?

In 2019, we commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Liberation of Belgium and the 50th anniversary of CegeSoma. Indeed, CegeSoma was created in 1969 as the Belgian center of expertise for the study of the Second World War.

In time, the Centre for Historical Research and Documentation on War and Society (CegeSoma) was given a broader scope of research.

The colloquium of 10 December 2019 at the Senate is, so to speak, the apotheosis of this double anniversary.

In 2019, the public seems to have become increasingly interested in the Second World War.

But what about historiography and its sources?

What are the gaps in our knowledge about this last major worldwide conflict?

Which lessons can be learned today from this past?

Is the Second World War a moral reference or just another

historical topic?

Is historiography under pressure from a culture of commemoration prone to spectacle?

Can public history bridge the gap between research and society?

Let us find out, 75 years after the Liberation, and dare to look into the future.

In the course of the morning session, experts from the Netherlands and France will take the floor and a special edition of the 'Journal of Belgian History' will be presented. The afternoon session is dedicated to two debates with the most distinguished Belgian experts.

Programme

9.15 am - Arrival and registration

10.00 am - Welcome address

10.20 am - 75 years of history of the Second World War in Belgium

Nico Wouters (Head of CegeSoma)

10.50 am - Keynotes from the Netherlands and France

Ismee Tames (NIOD-Amsterdam): *'WOII vandaag: bedenkingen bij de spanningen tussen het onderzoek,*

het beleid en het publiek'. ('WWII today: Reflections on the tensions between the research community,

policymakers and the public').

Cécile Vast (*Université de Franche-Comté*) : '*L'écriture de l'histoire de l'Occupation à la lumière des archives de chercheurs*'. ('Historiography of the Occupation through the researcher's archives').

11.45 am - Lunch Break - Sandwich buffet

1.00 pm - Debat I: Historiography and society

Host : Dirk Luyten (Head of Research at CegeSoma)

Panel : Sophie De Schaepdrijver (*Penn State University*), Pieter Lagrou (*ULB*), Bruno De Wever (UGent) and Pierre-Alain Tallier (State Archives).

2.15 pm - Debat II: Public history and public debate

Host: Chantal Kesteloot (Head of Public History at CegeSoma)

Panel: Christophe Busch (Kazerne Dossin), José Gotovitch (*ULB*), Koen Aerts (UGent), Anne Roekens (*UNamur*)

3.30 pm - Conclusions

4.00 pm - Reception

Practical information

- Venue: Senate of Belgium, Rue de Louvain/Leuvenseweg 7, 1000 Brussels. (Lift available for persons with reduced mobility, please inform us of special needs at registration)
- Date: 10 December 2019 from 9.15 am to 5.00 pm.
- Languages: French and Dutch (simultaneous translation provided).
- Free access, lunch included.
- **Registration mandatory before 25 November 2019 by e-mail to cegesoma@arch.be - please mention name, function and address. Attention: Number of attendees is limited.**

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Donation of the Witte Brigade (Fidelio) archives

The Witte Brigade (Fidelio) is of significant historical relevance, as it was the only armed resistance organisation headquartered in Flanders.

In 2017, we already reported on the donation of some twelve linear metres of archives from the more recently established non-profit organisation Witte Brigade (Fidelio) to CegeSoma.



Fidelio Hemiksem, Picture no 28163 @ CegeSoma/State Archives

by the organisation at that time.

The donation comprised documents from the former armed resistance group Witte Brigade (Fidelio)(AA2495), but also from the archives of the non-profit organisation Witte Brigade (Fidelio) (AA2496), the private limited liability company Home Marcel Louette (AA2497) as well as from founder Marcel Louette himself (AA2498).

Although this donation already included a series of individual files of members of the Kempisch Legioen, regarding their official recognition as resistance fighters, almost 3,800 similar individual files of WB(F) members were still to be conserved

CegeSoma recently received the last remaining archives conserved by the archival and documentation centre of Witte Brigade (Fidelio). The remaining individual files of the armed resistance group can now be incorporated in the original fonds.



Marcel Louette, chief of the Witte Brigade-Fidelio, 1940-1945, (Fonds Lejeune, picture no 32.328) @ CegeSoma/State Archives.

A number of boxes with additional documents about the resistance group will be described and added to the existing collections.

Additionally, we now also keep the archives of the non-profit association Witte Brigade (Fidelio), an interesting source for the study of the post-war culture of remembrance and commemoration.

The archives of this cluster of organisations orbiting the iconic resistance group can now be consulted in the reading room of CegeSoma.

Finally, we also received a number of objects, including a uniform worn by Louette, a pistol, a radio set and other items. These objects will also receive an appropriate destination.

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Focus on the Resistance

On 1 October 2019, the TV series '*Kinderen van het Verzet*' (Children of the Resistance, broadcast as from 22 October 2019) by Canvas was launched at CegeSoma.

The series addresses the growing interest of society and historical research in the history and remembrance of the resistance in Belgium. CegeSoma plays a key role in this trend and we give an overview of our main 'resistance initiatives'.



Allied leaflet airdropped over Belgium in 1944 (Collection of leaflets and official documents [AC 9/6]: nr. 285739).
© CegeSoma/State Archives.

The history of the resistance has always been closely linked to the history of CegeSoma. When the institute was founded in 1969, associations of patriots and former resisters had been pleading for the creation of this type of centre for many years. Research about the resistance and the collection of their sources was therefore a priority.

Thus, heightened interest in the resistance in this commemorative year is very fitting. In this context, the first results of the current project TRANSMEMO (about family memories about collaboration and resistance) were presented in the Senate on 3 October 2019. Fresh scholarly results will also be published in 2020.

The resistance is currently also the major focal point on our online platform 'BelgiumWWII'. Many articles were published in recent months, among which about violence, administrative resistance, resistance and liberation, gender, the Jewish Defence Committee, the Secret Army, the underground *Soir* newspaper, the *Enfranchised*, the communist party and the *Maquis de Semois*, as well as people such as Amanda Stassart, Marguerite Bervoets, Nina Erauw, Henri Malfait, Eugène Predom, Raoul Baligand, Paul Struye, Andrée Herscovici, Charles Rahier, François Amiel, Fernand Demany, Yvonne Jospa, Herz Jospa, Louise De Landsheere. Furthermore, a timeline of the resistance will be published on our website shortly. After 22 October, Doctoral researcher Babette Weyns (*UGent*) shall provide critical comments on the Canvas series through the blog of BelgiumWWII.

Together with her doctoral colleague Michèle Corthals (*UAntwerpen*), Weyns will also serve as guest editors for a special edition of the *Journal of Belgian History* about new historical research about the Belgian resistance.

Progress is made with regard to archives as well. Indeed, the archives of the organisation '*les enfants de la patrie*' is currently being inventoried by colleague Gertjan Desmet. The remaining archive documents of the Witte Brigade / Fidelio (i.e. all personal files) were handed over to CegeSoma on 2 October 2019. We now conserve the entire archives of this armed resistance group.

Last but not least, a book will be published in spring 2020 entitled '*Was opa een held ? Speuren naar mannen en vrouwen in het verzet*' ('*Papy était-il un héros ? Sur les traces des hommes et des femmes dans la résistance pendant la Seconde Guerre mondiale*') (Lannoo/Racine) under the supervision of colleague Fabrice Maerten. Just as the previous title '*Was opa een nazi?*' ('*Papy était-il un nazi ?*'), this book shall provide an overview of sources and information but also delve into the history of the resistance in Belgium. This major work is in its final stage and shall become a key working instrument for researchers once it's published.

All these initiatives show that the history of the resistance is one of our focal points in the coming six months.

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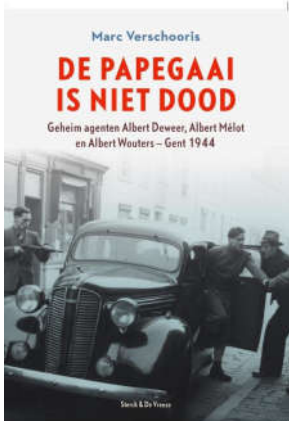
Fresh publications from CegeSoma associated researchers

Three associated researchers of CegeSoma just published new works and a fourth researcher brought out the French translation of a book published in 2018.



The publication of Frank Seberechts entitled '*Vechten voor de vrede*' (Fighting for Peace) deals with the liberation of Antwerp in September 1944. This liberation was not instantly followed by times of peace, because the city and the port were actually not fully liberated directly as they continued to be bombarded by V1 and V2 rockets, and it had to be decided what to do with collaborators, how to welcome back war prisoners, political prisoners, forced labourers, etc ... A liberation of joy, doubts and sadness.

Frank Seberechts, '[Vechten voor de vrede](#)', Antwerpen, Polis, 2019, 296 p.



In his book '*De papegaai is niet dood. Geheime agenten Albert Deweer, Albert Mélot en Albert Wouters - Gent 1944*' Marc Verschooris relates the history - marked by sometimes dramatic unexpected developments - of three secret agents during the Second World War. The story is based on scores of archive documents and photographs that were unexplored up to now.

Marc Verschooris, '[De papegaai is niet dood. Geheime agenten Albert Deweer, Albert Mélot en Albert Wouters - Gent 1944](#)', AE Gorredijk, Sterck & De Vreese, 2019, 272 p.

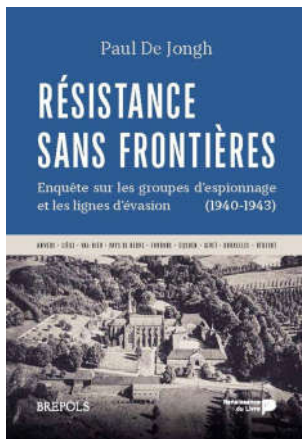


The latest publication by Gerlinda Swillen '*Der Zweite Weltkrieg ist unsere Wiege. Eine ostbelgische Geschichte (mit Zeitzeugenberichten von Wehrmachts- und GI-Kriegskindern)*' is based on testimonies and relates the history of a hidden and forgotten generation of children born from a relationship between a Belgian woman and a German *Wehrmacht* soldier, and as from 1944, between a Belgian woman and a G.I. The existence of these war children and their untreated suffering remained a taboo subject for many years. Recent and current conflicts show that the issue is still topical however...

Gerlinda Swillen, '[Der Zweite Weltkrieg ist unsere Wiege. Eine ostbelgische Geschichte](#)'. (mit Zeitzeugenberichten von Wehrmachts- und GI-Kriegskindern), Eupen, Grenz-Echo Verlag, 2019, 280 p.

The latest book by Paul De Jongh titled '*Résistance sans frontières. Enquête sur les groupes d'espionnage et les lignes d'évasion (1940-1943)*' is the French translation of '*Grenzeloos verzet. Over spionerende monniken, ontsnappingslijnen en het Hannibalspiel (1940-1943)*' published in 2018.

Paul De Jongh examines the resistance during the Second World War from each side of the Belgian-Dutch border. He follows the track of two monks from the Val-Dieu abbey who were executed in 1943 together with other members of the resistance. He traces back the history of the espionage groups and the escape routes of the region. This account sheds light on the role played by the Church and



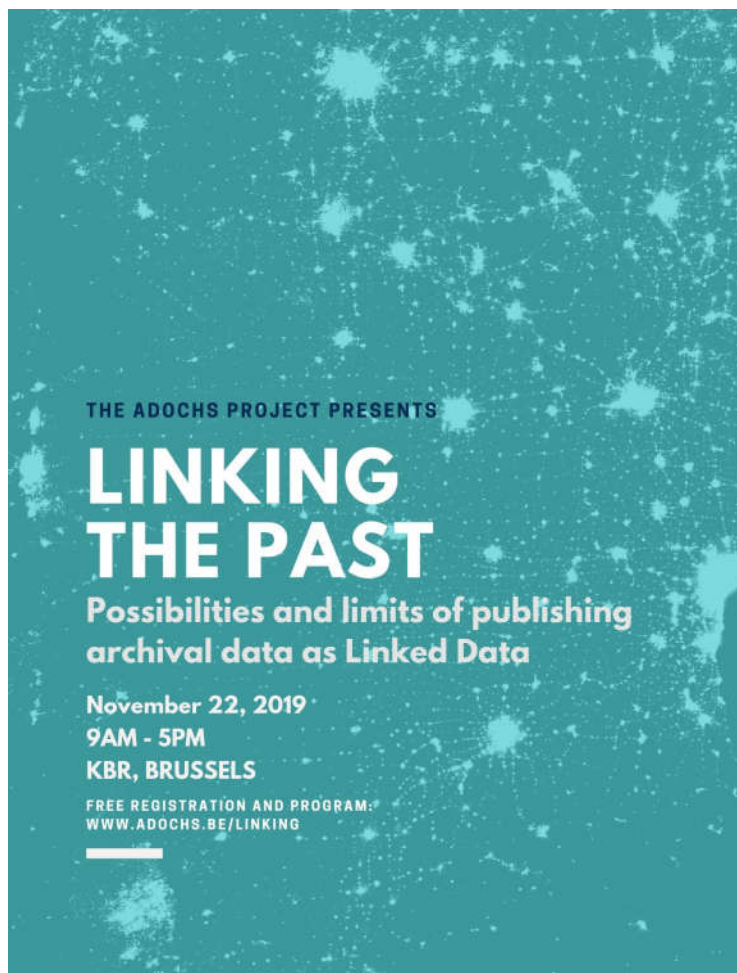
by the abbey in particular, but also by the families of the two clergymen.

Paul De Jongh, '[Résistance sans frontières. Enquête sur les groupes d'espionnage et les lignes d'évasion \(1940-1943\)](#)', Waterloo, La Renaissance du Livre, 366 p.

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International colloquium about Linked Data (ADOCHS project)

On Friday 22 November, the ADOCHS project (Auditing Digitalization Outputs in the Cultural Heritage Sector) organises an international colloquium about Linked Data at *KBR* (the Royal Library of Belgium).



The morning sessions will be dedicated to the presentation of new data models, and in the afternoon we will discuss several case studies about the publication open data, in particular about the Second World War.

Link to the event page with full programme and practical information:
<http://adochs.be/linking>

Link to the registration form on Google Forms:



https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeZihpN4mCFwIZGEjFqxOKVhoZ1fi2rLTWK1fxwndsE94_A/viewform?usp=sf_link

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Calendar of Events

Friday 22 November 2019 from 9.00 to 5.00 pm (in the KBR)

- [International colloquium about Linked Data \(ADOCHS project\).](#)

Tuesday 10 December 2019 from 9.15 to 5.00 pm (in the Belgian senate)

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