

CEGESOMA - State Archives

NEWSLETTER

No 103 - April 2025



NEWS

THREE QUESTIONS TO ...

Artyom Lyapounov, craftsman in the digitization and conservation of collections at CegeSoma/State Archives.

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ON THE AGENDA



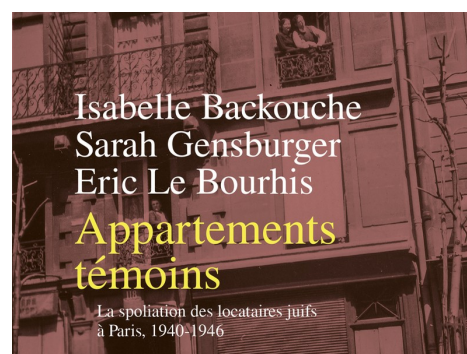
THESE ARE THE NAMES

By providing information on several thousand members of the Resistance who died between 1940 and 1945, CegeSoma is making an active contribution to the reading marathon taking place from May 6, 2025 at 2:00 pm to May 8, 2025 at 2:00 pm at Fort Breendonk.

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THE SPOLIATION OF JEWISH TENANTS IN PARIS

Join us on May 22 for a Public History Meeting (in French) with Sarah Gensburger. She will present the results of her research on this dispossession, ignored by historians, at the crossroads between the history of the Holocaust and that of housing. The interview will be conducted by Laurence Schram.

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COMMEMORATING THE HOLOCAUST IN GREEN SPACES

On Thursday June 19, Alana Castro de Azevedo invites us to take a fresh look at the issues surrounding Holocaust memorials in the green spaces of London and Amsterdam. This Public History Meeting (in French) will be moderated by Bruno Benvindo.

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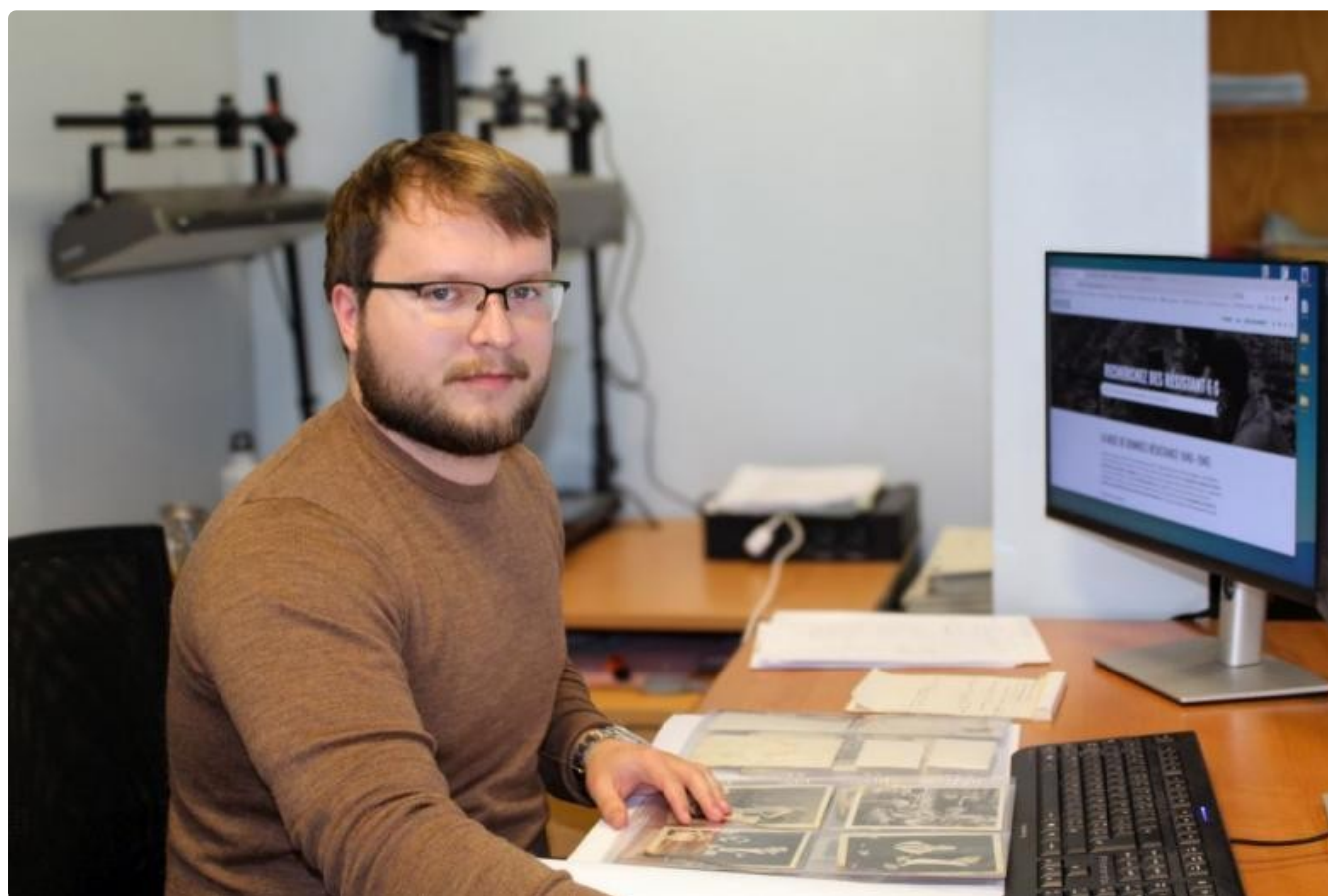


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[Home](#) » [News](#) » THREE QUESTIONS TO ... Artyom Lyapounov,

THREE QUESTIONS TO ... Artyom Lyapounov,

craftsman in the digitization and conservation of collections



For many years, CegeSoma has been conducting research into the Second World War and contemporary conflicts. While this work is often highlighted in the media, it also relies on equally essential behind-the-scenes work: the conservation and digitization of archives. Without this painstaking work, no research would be possible. Today, we put 3-4 questions to Artyom Lyapounov, the team member in charge of this fundamental mission. He holds a B.A. in Economics and an M.Sc. in Environmental Sciences and Management from Brussels University (ULB), and completed a number of internships in finance before arriving at CegeSoma in July 2023.

What does your job involve?

One of my main tasks is quality control of scanned documents. In other words, I check that each scan complies with a series of technical and visual criteria, by comparing it with the original document. Once this initial check has been completed, we move on to the post-production phase: the files are then converted into different formats, renamed, etc., to ensure their long-term preservation. This ensures their long-term preservation. For photographs, we also sometimes have to transform negatives into positives, crop images, adjust certain parameters, etc.

A few months ago, for example, I completed the processing of [a photo collection from the personal archives of a German military photographer active during WWII](#). These include several hundred negative films, mainly taken in France during the Occupation, but also in Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany. The project took almost a year and a half to complete, as each photo had to be individually cut from the film strips and then digitally processed. Today, all these images can be consulted in all the State Archives reading rooms.

In addition, I also deal with requests for reproductions, which we receive by e-mail or directly from the reading room. [These are mainly files on members of the Resistance that we keep](#). These documents are requested by family members or researchers. It's an aspect of the job that I really enjoy. We are often in contact with people who have been looking for information on their parents or grandparents for a very long time, and who finally discover something thanks to these files. It's a pleasure to get feedback from these people, who are sometimes on the other side of the world, in New Zealand or Canada for example.

Talking about the Resistance, I must mention the project that has taken up most of my time in recent months: [the Resistance in Belgium project](#), the national database dedicated to the Resistance in Belgium. Following the departure of Anne Chardonnes, who was in charge of the project until recently, I took over the task of importing data onto the platform.

At the moment, I'm working on importing data from individual files linked to resistance fighter status in the underground press. This represents around 25,000 files. In addition, there are over 500 underground newspapers, each of which will have its own entry on the platform. Some of these publications can also be consulted online via our dedicated website: [The Belgian War Press](#). It's a job that's very close to my heart, and one that I hope to complete.

In addition to these activities, the relatively small size of CegeSoma's staff also means that we have to take on a variety of day-to-day tasks. These range from providing support in the reading room, to preparing documents for university events, to moving collections or books into our storage areas, such as the basement.

What skills and challenges does your job require?



I'd say that the work I do at CegeSoma relies above all on a strong capacity for self-organization, but also on patience and great attention to detail. Most of the tasks I carry out don't have a clearly defined deadline, but represent a considerable volume. This requires regular, steady effort if you ever want to get anywhere. So it's essential to stay focused, keep on track and avoid being overwhelmed or distracted by other urgent matters.

I think I'm a naturally patient and meticulous person, qualities that serve me well on a daily basis. I'm glad that these personal qualities have proved relevant to the work I do at CegeSoma. Given the diversity of our assignments, it's also essential to be versatile and flexible, and sometimes creative too. We're regularly faced with unforeseen situations, where we have to come up with practical solutions using whatever means are at hand.

It also requires the ability to adapt to people and their needs. For example, when it comes to requests for reproductions, we often come into contact with elderly people, who may not be at ease with digital tools. We

need to take the time to explain things, so that everyone can access the information without feeling lost.

The last major challenge I faced was the tasks I took on as part of the Resistance in Belgium project. In a very

short period of time, I had to acquire a whole range of new skills and assimilate a vast amount of information. My thanks again to Anne Chardonnes, who did her utmost to share her expertise with me in such a short space of time.

What did you learn at Cegesoma that could help you in your future career?

In the field of history, I discovered the richness and complexity of the Resistance in Belgium, a topic I knew very little about before joining the project. Working closely with the archives has given me a better understanding of the issues at stake, the individual paths taken and the diversity of forms of commitment.

I've also acquired a large number of technical skills, particularly in digitization, postproduction and database management. These are skills that I probably wouldn't have been able to develop as intensively elsewhere, and which will be invaluable for the rest of my career.

It's a rather atypical job, combining several fields and involving a great deal of responsibility. It's this mix that I appreciate and that motivates me on a daily basis. Motivation also comes from my colleagues, people who are passionate about their work and committed to it, and with whom it's a pleasure to work.

Did you make interesting discoveries?

Of all the documents that passed through my hands, it is without doubt those in [our diary collection](#) that impressed me the most. When you spend hours handling these notebooks, you cannot help but read excerpts. And some remain in your memory.

I'm thinking in particular of the diary of a woman who, during the Occupation, recorded day after day her efforts to find her missing husband and brother. She documented everything, down to the smallest detail. On one page, she even had a sort of astrological calculation, as I understand it, to determine the "ideal" time to send a letter to someone who might be able to help her. In the final pages, she explains that she managed to locate them and is preparing to go and meet them.

I also looked through the diaries of resistance fighters imprisoned in Saint-Gilles or deported to Germany. They describe their daily lives, their fears, but also the solidarity between prisoners. These texts are often very moving. They offer a glimpse of history as it was experienced from the inside, in its most human dimension. Some of the stories have the feel of novels or film scripts, and yet they are true to life.

One of the notebooks recounts the life of a student in Liège during the Occupation. He talked about his daily life at university, his family tensions, his own questioning... Quite familiar stuff, if you leave aside the historical context. He also recounted, for example, how he and his brother used to go "defrauding" to Brussels by truck, bypassing all restrictions.

Among the diaries, I also saw a series of false papers used by Belgian refugees in France. Once again, these are very concrete objects, behind which lie unique and interesting personal stories. We have digitized just over 340 diaries from this collection. They can be consulted in the State Archives reading rooms. For those interested in daily life during the war, this collection offers a very direct, unfiltered perspective. That's what makes it so interesting.

Thank you Artyom for such a detailed and informative interview! Unfortunately, we have to say goodbye to you at the end of June. Your future employer will be very fortunate to benefit from your skills!

Other news

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

A 'new' colleague joins CegeSoma team

Issue 2/2025 of the Journal of Belgian History (RBHC/BTNG) released

80 jaar na de Tweede Wereldoorlog: welk verleden voor de toekomst?

Belgium WWII as we commemorate the 80th anniversary of the German surrender*

New Critical Approaches on Communists and Communism in Belgium.

Voici les noms / Dit zijn de namen

A unique opportunity to complete your 'paper' collection of the Journal of Belgian History (BTNG-RBHC) for free!

The first 2025 issue of the Journal of Belgian History is out !

The Conciliare project is one year old!

Belgium WWII: local resistance, the Battle of the Bulge and the administration of occupied Belgium

New inventory!

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[Home](#) » [News](#) » Voici les noms / Dit zijn de namen

Voici les noms / Dit zijn de namen



This year again, **CegeSoma is actively contributing to the commemorative event 'Voici les noms/Dit zijn de namen'**, which will take place from May 6, 2025 at 2:00 pm to May 8, 2025 at 2:00 pm at Breendonk Fort ([an online broadcast is also planned on the 'Helden van het Verzet' website](#)). By providing information on several thousand members of the Resistance who died between 1940 and 1945, our institution is making this reading marathon possible on the occasion of May 8 - a day commemorating the victory over Nazism.

CegeSoma is making an essential contribution, since most of the information read during these 48 hours comes from our databases: first name(s) and surname(s) of resistance fighters who died between 1940 and 1945, dates and places of birth and death, marital status, country of nationality, profession, as well as membership of resistance organizations, possible periods of detention and national recognition statuses granted by the Belgian state

This data is encoded as part of the development of [the Resistance in Belgium platform](#), which was launched in October 2024. This platform already enables searches on over 45,000 members of the Resistance, most of whom were active in the intelligence and action services. By the summer, some 20,000 biographical records will be added from Resistance members' files for the underground press.

The launch of this platform is scheduled for September 2024. In the meantime, [don't hesitate to contact the scientific coordinator of the project, Fabrice Maerten](#). He will be happy to check whether there are any files with the names of the Resistance fighters you are looking for, and if so, will help you access the relevant documents in CegeSoma's reading room.

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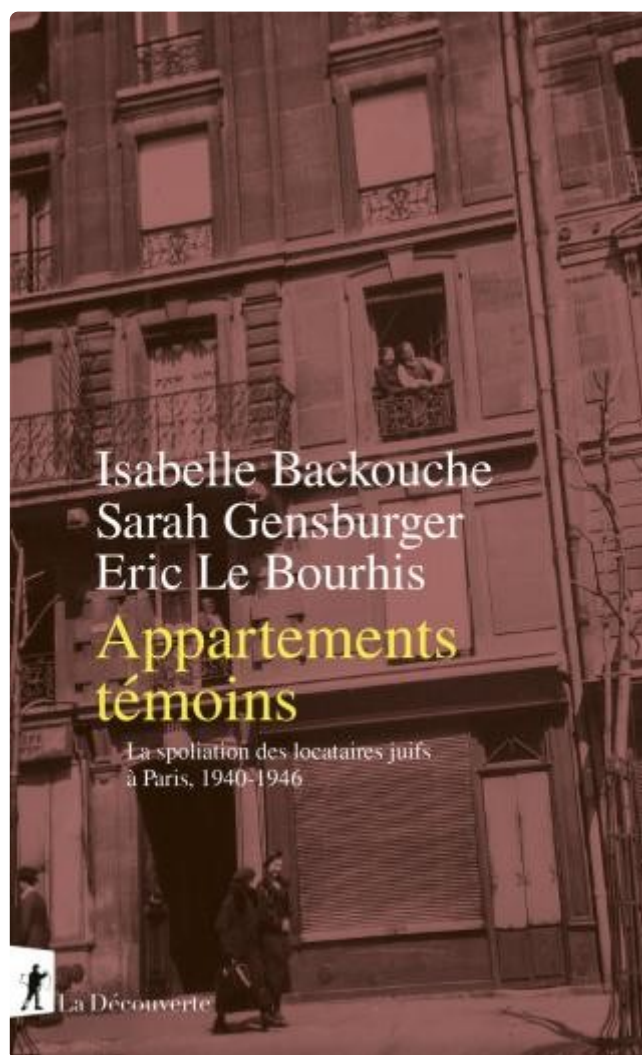
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[Home](#) » [Event](#) » Appartements témoins. La spoliation des locataires juifs à Paris, 1940-1946.

Appartements témoins. La spoliation des locataires juifs à Paris, 1940-1946.

CegeSoma Public History Meeting (2025-4)

World War II [Conference](#)



Conference-debate (in French) with guest Sarah Gensburger.

An interview led by Laurence Schram.

At the time of the Liberation, the return to ordinary life was not easy for the vast majority of Jews in the Paris region who had survived the war. Out of a population of some 200,000 Jews before 1940, 40,000 were murdered. To survive, the majority of them left their homes, either for the Free Zone, the provinces or some other address in the capital. When they returned, they found their apartments occupied by non-Jewish families, leaving them dispossessed. Contrary to popular belief, these new tenants did not move in spontaneously, but under the aegis of the Vichy authorities, backed by the Germans. Worse still, it was ratified by the restored Republic after the Liberation.

The book '*Appartements témoins. La spoliation des locataires juifs à Paris, 1940-1946*' tells the untold story of this

dispossession, at the crossroads of the Shoah and housing history. A public policy was introduced to satisfy a Parisian population in need of shelter. The aim was also to rehouse victims of the Allied bombing raids. Jewish people found themselves excluded from the real estate market, where owners, civil servants, evacuees, neighbors, concierges and "well-connected" customers - in short, Parisian society in all its diversity - all came together. Thousands of unpublished archival documents, tearful letters and discriminatory paperwork describe this spoliation.

Long after the Liberation, virulent anti-Semitism was expressed regarding these apartments, as the returning Jews disrupted the arrangements of the time of the Occupation: the restored Republic eventually worked to limit their right to return. As such, these apartments bear witness to the mechanisms by which Jews were excluded from Parisian society. This book finally gives them a voice.

Sarah Gensburger will present the results of her research on Thursday May 22. The debate will be moderated by Laurence Schram. This event will take place in CegeSoma's conference room as part of the Public History Meetings program, in partnership with the non-profit organization 'Friends of CegeSoma'.



Director of research at the *CNRS, Centre de Sociologie des Organisations - Sciences Po Paris*, **Sarah Gensburger** is a sociologist and political scientist of memory and a Shoah historian. Besides the book presented at this meeting, she co-edited among others : *Qui pose les questions mémorielles ?*; with Jenny Wustenberg (dir.), *Décommémoration. Quand le monde déboulonne et change les noms de rues*, or *The Covid-19 Pandemic and Memory. Remembrance, commemoration, and archiving in crisis*. (photo Julian Tappich)



Laurence Schram, historian at Kazerne Dossin and scientific collaborator at Brussels Free University, took part in the design and creation of the Jewish Museum of Deportation and Resistance (1995), in close collaboration with Prof. Maxime Steinberg. She contributed to the

renovation of the Belgian pavilion at Auschwitz, the new Kazerne Dossin Museum and its memorial. Author of studies on the Shoah in Belgium, she wrote her doctorate on the history of the Dossin barracks. Her research was awarded the Natan Ramet Prize in 2016 and the Jacques Rozenberg - Auschwitz Foundation Prize. Her book *Dossin - l'antichambre d'Auschwitz* was published in 2017.



22/05/2025 - 14:00 to 15:30

PRACTICAL INFORMATION :

Where: CegeSoma conference room, Aviation Square 29, 1070 Brussels

When: Thursday, May 22, 2025 (2:00 pm to 3:30 pm)

Registration required: isabelle.ponteville@arch.be or 02.556.92.11

Event fee: €5.00 to be paid on site

Isabelle Backouche, Sarah Gensburger, Eric Le Bourhis, *Appartements témoins. La spoliation des locataires juifs à Paris, 1940-1946*, Paris, Editions La Découverte, 2025, 448 p.

Main language

French

OBTAIN THE BOOK (PAPER OR DIGITAL VERSION)

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[Home](#) » [Event](#) » Commemorating the Holocaust in green spaces: tensions and contestations in London and Amsterdam

Commemorating the Holocaust in green spaces: tensions and contestations in London and Amsterdam

World War II [Conference](#)



Conference-debate (in French) with guest Alana Castro de Azevedo.

An interview led by Bruno Benvindo.

Today, all over the world, existing monuments are the subject of debate and contestation. But what about new monuments? Aren't they sometimes controversial even before they exist?

The processes involved in building memorials in the public space are often long and complex. They mobilize many players and unfold in several stages: project conception, search for funding, choice of site and artist, obtaining planning permission, etc. The visions and interests of those involved in this type of process are sometimes fundamentally opposed.

Building a memorial is a complicated, politicized and far from consensual process. To illustrate this point, Alana Castro de Azevedo has carried out a comparative analysis of three concrete cases: the creation of two memorials to the victims of the Holocaust, the Holocaust Namenmonument in Amsterdam the UK Holocaust Memorial and

Learning Centre in London, and a memorial to the victims of colonial slavery in Lisbon. Although each project raises specific issues - from the choice of artist, to the location of the memorial, to the influence of citizens and other stakeholders on decisions - what they have in common is that they all provoked controversy.

Beyond a simple description of the issues at stake in each case study, she also asks how to reconcile the work of remembrance with other concerns, such as the preservation of green spaces in urban areas? Who should be involved in these processes? Who holds the decision-making power? Is it possible, through a participatory process, to achieve a unanimously accepted result?

On Thursday 19 June, Alana Castro de Azevedo will answer these questions, based on five years' research as part of her PhD dissertation on the analysis of memorial construction processes in public space. Her aim is to take a fresh look at the challenges of memorialization in green spaces, while reflecting on how to make commemorative processes more inclusive and democratic. More specifically, she will look at the memorials in Amsterdam and London. The debate will be led by Bruno Benvindo.

This event will take place in the CegeSoma conference room as part of the Public History Meetings, in partnership with the NPO "Friends of CegeSoma".



Alana Castro de Azevedo holds a PhD in Political Science from Amsterdam Free University. Her doctoral dissertation, defended in 2025, examines citizen participation in the process of creating memorials commemorating the victims of colonial slavery and the Holocaust, as well as the many conflicts arising from them. From 2016 to 2019, she worked on the implementation of UNESCO's Slave Route project, focused on the identification and valorization of places of memory and heritage sites linked to slavery and the transatlantic slave trade. Since 2024, she has been conducting research at CegeSoma on controversies linked to colonial heritage in the public space, as part of the European CONCILIARE project.



Bruno Benvindo is a historian. He worked as a researcher at Brussels Free University, then at CegeSoma, publishing '*Henri Storck, le cinéma belge et l'Occupation*' (2010) and '*Décombres de la guerre. Mémoires belges en conflit, 1945-2010*' (2012, with Evert Peeters). He is currently Director of Exhibitions at the Jewish Museum of Belgium, where he is developing a program of exhibitions exploring the interface between art and history in the 20th century.



19/06/2025 - 14:00 to 15:30

PRACTICAL INFORMATION:

Where: CegeSoma conference room, Aviation Square 29, 1070 Brussels

When: Thursday, June 19, 2025 (2:00 pm to 3:30 pm)

Registration required: isabelle.ponteville@arch.be of 02.556.92.11

Event fee: €5.00 payable on site

Main language

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Check out the content of each issue on our website: <https://www.journalbelgianhistory.be/en>

Interested? Email us : hilde.keppens@arch.be

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