

NEWSLETTER

No 87 - September 2023



NEWS

COLLECTIONS INSPECTION

From October 2 to 6, 2023, CegeSoma's collections at the Square de l'Aviation and the Cuvelier repository (AGR2) will not be accessible.

► [Read more](#)



KOREAN WAR

CegeSoma is looking for photos, letters and other archives relating to Belgians in the Korean War. If you have any such documents, please do not hesitate to contact us.

► [Read more](#)

ON THE AGENDA

PUBLIC HISTORY MEETING

Meet us on October 25 at CegeSoma for a conference-debate (in



Dutch) with guest Patrick Buyse. He will present his book on the exodus of some 60,000 inhabitants of Antwerp to West Flanders in 1944-1945. Bruno De Wever will conduct the interview.

► [Read more](#)



PUBLICATIONS

NEW JBH ISSUE

We invite you to discover the new thematic issue (in English) of the Journal of Belgian History, dedicated to a subject rarely covered in historiography: the history of Belgian businesses.

► [Read more](#)



1943 IN OCCUPIED BELGIUM

Don't miss the dossier in *La Revue Nouvelle* (2023 - no 6) on the attitudes of the Belgian population after three years of occupation.

► [Read more](#)

LA REVUE NOUVELLE



RESEARCH

FED-TWIN BELCOWAR PROJECT

Discover the latest news on this project, launched a year ago by the State Archives/CegeSoma and *KULeuven*, about the economic aspects of the Cold War in relation to Belgium.

► [Read more](#)





Square de l'Aviation 29 / B-1070 Brussels / Belgium
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CegeSoma inventory operation, October 2 - 6, 2023



During the first week of October, as every year, CegeSoma staff will proceed with a general in-depth inspection of the collections in the Aviation Square and the archives in National Archives 2 - Joseph Cuvelier repository. In practical terms, this means that the CegeSoma reading room will remain open as usual from Tuesday to Thursday, but it

will not be possible to order books, journals or brochures on these days. During this period, no CegeSoma archives can be requested either. We thank you in advance for your understanding.

Other news

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Wanted: photos, letters and other archives on Belgium and the Korean War!

It was seventy years ago last summer that the Korean War (1950-1953) ended in an armistice. A real peace never happened. In the summer of 2025, we will commemorate the 75th anniversary of the start of the war.

In late 1950, the Belgian government accepted a request from the United Nations to send troops to the Korean peninsula to fight communism there under the leadership of the United States. In all, more than 3,000 Belgian volunteers would serve in the Belgian United Nations Command for shorter or longer time periods.

In the framework of CegeSoma's research domain on the Cold War, we will pay extra attention to the history of the Belgian battalion in Korea over the next few years. Therefore, we are looking for photographs, letters and other documents (such as memoirs, pamphlets, copies of the soldiers' magazine *De Stille Morgen / Le Matin calme*, etc.) about the experiences of Belgian veterans that you would be willing to donate to CegeSoma. Indeed, as part of the State Archives, CegeSoma can guarantee the long-term preservation and accessibility of your sources.

Over twenty years ago, our center launched a similar appeal which yielded more than a thousand photos at the time, including the album of battalion commander Albert Crahay and that of military prosecutor in the field Georges Schuermans. But we received just as valuable photos of "ordinary" soldiers and obtained valuable archives from Lieutenant Benoît Verhaegen. Through this appeal, we hope to match that success.

Do you have photos, letters or other items about the Belgians in Korea that you would like to donate? If so, please contact michael.auwers@arch.be or gertjan.desmet@arch.be.

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Weg van 't Stad! De Antwerpse exodus naar West-Vlaanderen 1944-1945 (Away from the City ! The Antwerp exodus to West Flanders 1944-1945)

CegeSoma Public History Meetings (2023-6)

[World War II](#) [Conference](#)



Conference (in Dutch) with guest Patrick Buyse

An interview led by Bruno De Wever

The autumn of 1944 was extremely hard on the greater Antwerp area. German V1 and V2 strikes killed 3,515 people. The people of Antwerp massively sought shelter in other places. There are very few references to this exodus in the numerous works dealing with this period. However, it involved at least 150,000 Antwerp refugees, nearly 60,000 of whom were spread over 254 West Flanders municipalities for an average six-month period between autumn 1944 and spring 1945.

A question asked by an Antwerp family prompted Patrick Buyse to dig into the archives. He interviewed witnesses, relatives, local historians and other historians, most of whom knew little about this episode.

The resulting book tells the story of this exodus to West Flanders, and attempts to answer a number of specific questions. How many families and children were involved? Who was behind these massive displacements? Where did all these people end up? How was the exodus experienced by everyone? What are the memories left by this unusual adventure?

We can't help but draw parallels between this forgotten history and current events. But this story is also full of warmth and humanity. The welcome extended to the displaced often led to friendships that continue to this day.

On Wednesday 25 October, CegeSoma and its non-profit organization "Friends of CegeSoma" are delighted to invite you to discover Patrick Buyse's book as part of their Public History Meetings. Professor Bruno De Wever has co-written the preface to this book, which also delves into a part of his family history.

You are all very welcome!



Patrick Buyse comes from West Flanders. Passionate about history, heritage and politics, he likes to explore forgotten parts of our national history. *'Weg van 't Stad'! De Antwerpse exodus naar West-Vlaanderen 1944-1945'* is his first book.



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Bruno De Wever is Professor Emeritus at Ghent University. He is the author of numerous articles and books on the history of the Flemish movement and on collaboration during the Second World War.



25/10/2023 - 12:30 to 14:00

PRACTICAL INFORMATION :

Where? CegeSoma conference room, Square de l'Aviation 29 - 1070 Brussels

When? Wednesday, 25 October 2023 (12.30 - 14.00)

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

For those who wish, the book will be on sale for €25 (instead of €27.95 in bookshops).

Please come along!

Main language

Dutch

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Belgium's corporate history

Discover the new thematic issue of the Journal of Belgian History (2023-3)



The last theme issue of the JBH has just been published in English under the direction of **Robrecht Declercq** of the University of Ghent and **Kenneth Bertrams** of the *Université Libre de Bruxelles*. As guest editors, they compiled this thematic issue on Belgian business history, a greatly underexposed topic in Belgian historiography.

This new issue, entitled "Belgian business beyond borders", treats the subject from an international perspective that includes the colonial dimension. It begins with an introductory article by the two guest editors, who situate the six texts that follow within the wider historiography.

The first contribution by **Jan Vandersmissen** and **Christophe Verbruggen** (both from *UGent*) uses network analysis to examine Belgian investments in Egypt, starting from the central concept of interlocking directorates that could connect different private actors in order to accelerate Belgian expansionism.

In his article, **Sven Van Melkebeke** (*Industriemuseum Gent*) discusses the development of the Congolese cotton and textile industry in relation to the textile industry in Ghent, and more specifically also the role of the conglomerate UCO.

Robrecht Declercq (*UGent*) analyzes the evolution of Belgian business in Congo after independence in 1960 by taking the strategies of some major companies as a starting point.

Maité Van den Borre (*UGent*) sheds new light on the stakes and outcome of the entire nationalization process of the *Union Minière du Haut Katanga (UMHK)* in 1966-67.

Kenneth Bertrams (*ULB*), then examines how *UCB*, a family-owned chemical company, gradually established itself as a key biopharmaceutical firm.

And finally, **Julien del Marmol's** (*ULB*) article analyzes the international expansion of the French company Piedboeuf-Artois before it became the world's largest beer multinational, AB-Inbev.

This thematic issue is priced at 15 euros (excluding postage) and can be ordered from Hilde Keppens, CegeSoma, Square de l'Aviation 29, 1070 Brussels, +32 2/556 92 11 - hilde.keppens@arch.be.

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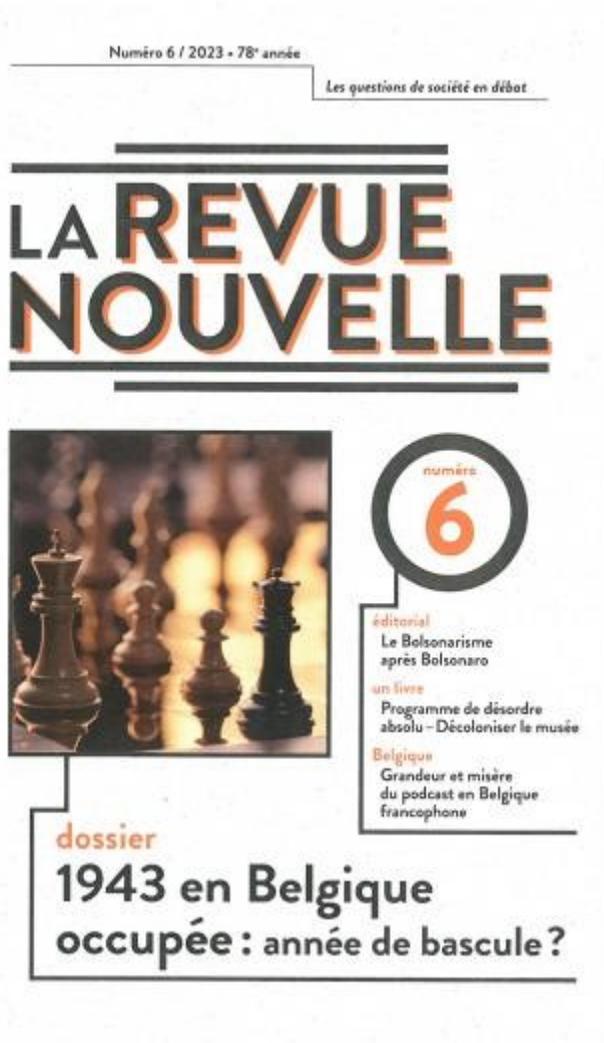
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1943 in occupied Belgium: a turning point?

A dossier in La Revue Nouvelle (2023 - n°6) on the attitude of the Belgian population after three years of occupation.



The articles in this dossier, coordinated by **Geneviève Warland** (*UCLouvain*), are based on the Belgian population, its morale, expectations and reactions, as well as the constraints and repression it faced in 1943. Six contributions by seven authors lift the veil on themes that rarely covered in Belgian historiography. Among them, two are written by CegeSoma historians Fabrice Maerten and Dirk Luyten.

The first contribution, by **Hugues Wenkin**, analyzes the contrasting feelings of the Belgian population in 1943. A year of setbacks for the German army and acts of resistance on the one hand, and of increasingly harsh living and working conditions on the other.

An interview with **Fabrice Maerten** provides an insight into the various forms of Resistance set up in Belgium, and offers a sociographically informed reflection on the population's growing involvement from 1943 onwards.

Luc Michel takes a closer look at the Socrate network, set up by a young banker, Raymond Scheyven, to finance resistance fighters and the Resistance.

Louis Fortemps and **Gabriel Vincent** analyze the harsh repression carried out by the German army's secret police (*Geheime Feldpolizei*) against Resistance fighters and their networks. In this case, 1943 saw the radicalization of the police's actions and the introduction of enhanced interrogation techniques.

1943 was a black year for Belgian purchasing power, which fell sharply. Compulsory labor service in Germany reached its climax with the age-based draft system. On the other hand, 1943 was also a year of progress in the post-war preparations for the Social Pact. An analysis of these issues is presented in **Dirk Luyten's** contribution.

Finally, **Marc Audrit** gives a detailed account of the famous attack on Gestapo headquarters by aviator Jean de Sélys Longchamps on January 20, 1943. While this event had a major impact and undeniably raised the morale of the Belgian population, it has sometimes been the subject of fanciful accounts.

Interested in the contents of this issue of the *Revue Nouvelle*? Visit [the journal's website](#) for more information.

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Latest news on the FED-tWIN BELCOWAR project



On October 1, 2023, the FED-tWIN BELCOWAR (Belgium and the Cold War) project will enter its second year. To date, research into the economic aspects of the Cold War has been undertaken on several fronts. Some of it, for example, has been carried out in the archives of the Ministry of Economic Affairs, transferred to the General Archives and

recently made accessible to the public. Thanks to the collaboration of Guy Coppieters (archivist at AGR), the Belgian archives of "CoCom" (Coordinating Committee) have resurfaced. CoCom was created as part of the Marshall Plan and imposed restrictions on European trade with Eastern Europe. Historians who studied the subject rightly suspected that Belgium had played a significant role in this informal organization, but considered the Belgian archives lost.

The contents of these archives will be the subject of a position paper to be published in a forthcoming special issue of JBH on "Belgium and the Cold War".

Several master's theses were also written last year at the *KULeuven* on the basis of this very rich collection. One of these was written as part of the English-language Master of History program, and will also give rise to a scientific article in due course.

A politico-economic approach to the geopolitical hotbeds of conflict in the 20th century was also presented to students of the Bachelor and Master of History and the Master of European Studies. To ensure that research in the archives was carried out in the best possible conditions, the students first attended a number of introductory sessions on the (inter)national historiography on trade relations and the origins and development of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). They then had the opportunity to share the results of their preliminary research in informal research seminars.

Bart Kerremans (*KULeuven*), for his part, also carried out in-depth research in the National Archives in Washington. Among other things, he was able to pinpoint documents testifying to tensions between Belgium and the USA over a bilateral treaty of friendship, trade and navigation in the 1950s.

We'll be bringing you regular updates on this exciting project, led by Widukind De Ridder (*CegeSoma/KULeuven*) under the supervision of Bart Kerremans (*KULeuven*) and Dirk Luyten (*CegeSoma/State Archives*).

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