

# NEWSLETTER

No 83 - March 2023



## NEWS

### ASBL/VZW 'FRIENDS OF CEGESOMA'

Support CegeSoma by joining the ASBL/VZW and share with us your passion for history.

► [Read more](#)



## AGENDA



### SAVE THE DATE

On 27 April 2023, CegeSoma organises a study day dedicated to talented, recently graduated young historians. Each year, this study day lets you make new and interesting discoveries.

► [Read more](#)

### CONFERENCE ABOUT THE RESISTANCE

On 10 May 2023, the FelixArchives organises a study day on the Resistance during WWII in Antwerp, in co-organisation with CegeSoma and the Peace Centre. We take stock of the research with specialised historians.

► [Read more](#)



## FOCUS ON THE COLLECTIONS



### FASCISM IN THE CEGESOMA LIBRARY

Discover with our librarian the second part (on Belgium) of a trilogy dedicated to the richness of our collections on this subject.

► [Read more & watch the video](#)

## PUBLICATIONS

### TWO NEW INVENTORIES

The inventories of the archives of two related associations are now available: '*Les Invalides Prévoyants*' and '*Les Enfants de la Patrie/De Kinderen van het Vaderland*'.

► [Read more](#)



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## Support CegeSoma by becoming a member of its non-profit association!



This year, the non-profit association 'Les Amis du CegeSoma' (French) / 'De Vrienden van het CegeSoma' (Dutch) celebrates its 33<sup>rd</sup> anniversary!

The association was founded in 1991 and its objective was always to promote the activities of the Centre by all means related to its mission, to stimulate interest in the Centre in particular and in the study of the Second World War in general.



*Over 60 participants have taken part in the private visit of the*

Thirty years later, the association can look back on a good record of numerous activities, visits, conferences it organised. If you wish to become a member of the association, simply fill in [the registration form](#), send it to the following e-mail address: [asbl-vzw.cegesoma@arch.be](mailto:asbl-vzw.cegesoma@arch.be) and pay the annual membership fee of 15 Euros. Your benefit: Upon payment of your membership fee, you shall receive a 30% discount on all publications of CegeSoma, including the *Journal of Belgian History*.

You will of course be invited to all activities organised by the association and by CegeSoma: The perfect opportunity to discuss subjects that we feel passionate about, and that you feel passionate about...

Our next upcoming events are scheduled for 12 and 24 May. All relevant information about these two events can be found in our Newsletter and on our website.

Looking forward to meeting and getting to know you!

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

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

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## SAVE THE DATE : Thursday 27 April 2023

Young historians' day – class of 2022



On Thursday 27 April, CegeSoma/State Archives organises its traditional one-day meet-up dedicated to young and talented historians who recently graduated. This will be the occasion for them to present the results of their research about topics related to the missions of the Centre, and it will be the opportunity for you to meet them and find out more about the research carried out at the universities of the country.

As every year, this meeting is open to everyone: students, researchers, journalists, amateur historians and history enthusiasts – this unmissable event is your chance to discover rare gems and shining jewels that may become the great historians of tomorrow.

More information (programme and registration) will follow soon.

Looking forward to meeting you at CegeSoma!

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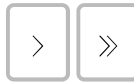
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# The Resistance in Antwerp during the Second World War

Study day (FelixArchief - Antwerp)

World War II   [Conference](#)



Antwerp was the most important city for the resistance in Flanders during the Second World War. This resistance in Antwerp was as diverse as the city itself: men and women, French-speaking bourgeoisie and communists, Jews and Catholics, people from the left and the right of the political spectrum. In recent years, we have seen a rising interest in the resistance in Belgium during the Second World War, as reflected by this study day organised by CegeSoma/State Archives in collaboration with the *FelixArchief* of the City of Antwerp and the *Vredescentrum*. In the course of this day, the state of affairs with regard to research about the resistance will be presented and a discussion about the relevance of resistance today and tomorrow will round off the day.

The study day takes place at *FelixArchief* in Antwerp on 10 May 2023. **Registration is free but mandatory. Simply send a message to: [stadsarchief@antwerpen.be](mailto:stadsarchief@antwerpen.be).**

Welcome to all of you!

## PROGRAMME

- 9.00-9.30 - **Welcome**
- 9.30-9.40 - **Welcome address** | Marie Juliette Marinus, FelixArchief
- 9.40-10.15 - **Het verzet in Antwerpen: synthese en krachtlijnen** | Nico Wouters, CegeSoma/State Archives
- 10.15-10.45 - **Session 1: "De onvergetelijken Fidelio": Marcel Louette (1907-1978) als pionier in het verzet** |

Babette Weyns, UGent

- 10.45-11.15 - **Coffee break**
- 11.15-11.45 - **Session 2: "Voor vrede, brood en vrijheid": straatprotest van Antwerpse volkswomen tegen de bezetter (mei 1941)** | Michèle Corthals, UAntwerpen
- 11.45-12.30 - **Open floor discussion**
- 12.30-13.30 - **Lunch**
- 13.30-14.00 - **Session 3: Het georganiseerde Joods verzet in Antwerpen: een stand van zaken** | Janiv Stamberger, Vredescentrum; Dorien Styven, Kazerne Dossin
- 14.00-14.30 - **Session 4: Collectieve herinnering versus oorlogsrealiteit: de politie van Deurne en het verzet, 1942-1944** | Herman Van Goethem, UAntwerpen
- 14.30-15.05 - **Open floor discussion**
- 15.05-15.30 - **Coffee break**
- 15.30-16.30 - **Open floor discussion and conclusions** | Marnix Beyen, UAntwerpen; Bruno De Wever, UGent; Nico Wouters, CegeSoma/Rijksarchief
- 16.30 - **Reception**

**Host and floor leader:** Frank Seberechts, FelixArchief

## **-> INVITATION**



**10/05/2023 - 09:00 to 16:30**

### **PRACTICAL INFORMATION**

**Where :** FelixArchief - Oude Leeuwenrui 29 - 2000 Antwerp

**When :** Wednesday 10 may 2023, 9.30 - 16.30 (closing reception)

**Registration:** free of charge but registration required via e-mail: [stadsarchief@antwerpen.be](mailto:stadsarchief@antwerpen.be)

#### **Main language**

Dutch

#### **TAGS**

[Resistance](#)   [Flanders](#)





## Fascism in the CegeSoma Library (2) : the case of Belgium.

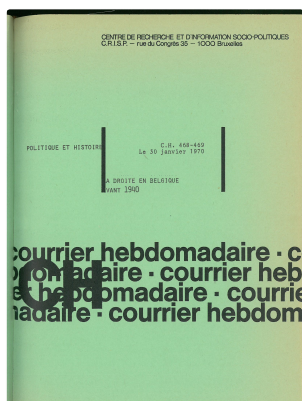
"Fascism in the CegeSoma Library (2) : the case of Belgium". Under this title, we invite you to discover the thirteenth theme of our series 'The Librarian's talks'. Each theme will be the occasion to dive into our collections and will be illustrated by a video and a text to complete the information contained therein.

**Watch the thirteenth episode of our video series 'The Librarian's Talks : 13. "Fascism in the CegeSoma Library (2) : the case of Belgium".**

As fascism became an essentially (but not exclusively) European issue in the course of the interwar years, Belgium would not be able to escape it. Still, for a large part of this period, the appeal of such a regime remained marginal. The attractiveness actually came in the 1920s for thousands of soldiers who fought in the First World War, who suffered emotional damage and struggled to find their way back into a normalised civil society. Their resentment was indeed voiced by parts of the 'old Catholic right' that had a hard time accepting the loss of its political monopoly when universal suffrage was introduced... A couple of names illustrate these fascist or fascist-leaning movements of the time: the Légion nationale, the Jeunesses Nationales, and later in Flanders the *Verdinaso* of Joris Van Severen. The economic crisis of the 1930s and the inefficiency of the Belgian parliamentary system caused a regain of interest in Belgian-style fascism and even a political breakthrough in 1936, when *Rex* and *VNV* entered parliament. But they were two distinct movements with regard to their identity politics: one was a proponent of the Belgian state, while the other rejected it and advocated for Flanders and the Greater Netherlands. And both joined forces in the collaboration with the Nazi occupant, which in the eyes of the public, ultimately blurred the lines between them...

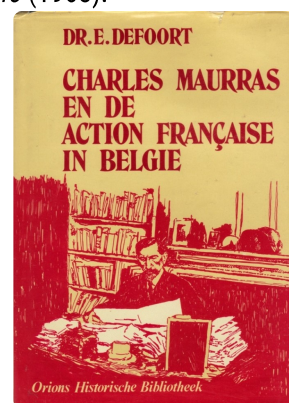
As such and despite their eventual failure, they marked the memory of people, with Rexism and its excesses being much more demonised in the French-speaking areas than *VNV* in Flanders.

However, it took a long time to address the issue of fascism in a scientific manner, as the topic carried such a heavy emotional burden “*in illo tempore*”.



It was not until the 1960s that some historians addressed the issue, with all necessary dialectic precautions. While Jacques Willequet presented *Les fascismes belges* in a special edition of the journal *Revue d'histoire de la Deuxième Guerre mondiale* (in April 1967), Jean Stengers delved into this curious political phenomenon with a rather neutral, catch-all... but misleading title (*La Droite en Belgique avant 1940*) in *Courrier Hebdomadaire du Crisp* (January 1970). But the most comprehensive study of Rexism was carried out, quite revealingly, by a French researcher and not by a Belgian one: Jean-Michel Etienne indeed penned *Le Mouvement rexiste avant 1940* (1968).

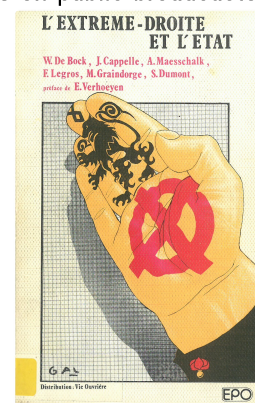
On the Flemish side, Eric Defoort wrote a voluminous research a few years later titled *Charles Maurras en de Action Française in België* (1978). Before them, the subject



matter of fascism was the specialty of a handful of engaged publicists, mostly “anti”, such as Michel Géoris-Reitshof (*Extrême droite et néo-fascisme en Belgique*-1962). Nothing much changed during the 1970s, with the exception of the qualitative and useful studies by Etienne Verhoeyen in a series of *Courrier du Crisp* dedicated to *L'extrême droite en Belgique*, from 1974 to 1976: to this day these remain very reliable studies when addressing the issue in a post-war context, as they examine both Neo-Nazism and Catholic traditionalism.



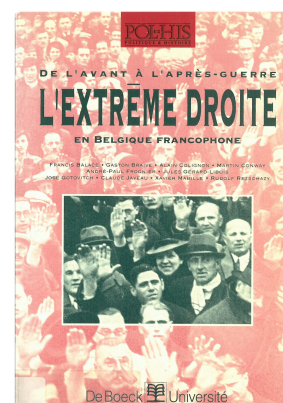
But these studies remained few in number. Yet the interest of the large public for this issue was revived in the 1980s with journalist Maurice De Wilde and his programmes that tried to dissect *De Nieuwe Orde* on public broadcaster VRT (1982). After that, publisher EPO, which was well-known in Flanders for its evidently progressive orientation, a number of researchers and investigative journalists (such as Walter De Bock) get interested in the far-right subject with *L'extrême droite et l'Etat* (originally published in Dutch under the title *Extreem-rechts en de Staat* in 1981) and *Les plus belles années d'une génération* (original title: *De mooiste jaren van een generatie. De Nieuwe Orde in België voor, tijdens en na WO II*, in 1982). This seemed to hit a nerve because



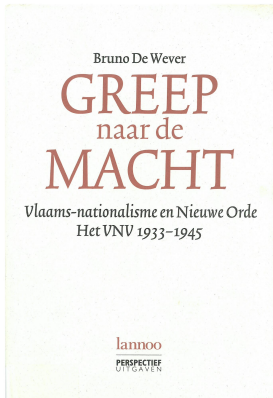
afterwards publications appeared by Serge Dumont (*Les Brigades noires*-1983), Hugo Gijssels (*Het Vlaams Blok 1938-1988*), Manuel Abramowicz (*Les rats noirs. L'extrême droite en Belgique francophone*-1996). While this research was not lacking interest, “professional” historians were still not that much interested in the subject. Things started to move with the first successes of the Flemish-nationalist far-right Vlaams Blok, which was soon labelled by media as neo-fascist or fascist-leaning.



The result was that around CegeSoma, or rather around its predecessor CREHSGM, a number of worthy researchers, put down as such, came together and their corporative reflexions yielded two major publications: *Herfsttij van de 20ste eeuw - Extreem-rechts in Vlaanderen 1920-1980* (1992) and *De l'avant-guerre à l'après-guerre : l'extrême droite en Belgique francophone* (1994). Both of them are collective works. And soon afterwards – coincidence? – two major works about the “historical” fascist movements were published by Martin Conway, *Collaboration in Belgium. Léon Degrelle and the Rexist Movement 1940-1944* (1993) and Bruno De Wever, *Greep naar de Macht. Vlaams-nationalisme en Nieuwe Orde. Het VNV 1933-1945* (1994). The first publication was

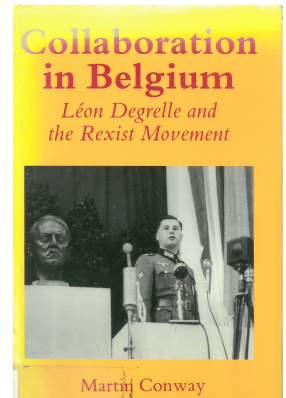


soon translated into French and Dutch.



From this moment onwards, scientific publication flourished but without abundance, while more polemic publishing was ongoing for another fifteen years or so...It is worth underlining that while Vlaams Blok was regularly of particular interest for journalists and historians, its successor, Vlaams Belang, got much less attention. Maybe because it succeeded in fitting in with the political landscape in Flanders? Or because the political accusations it faced became unsubstantiated, more than two generations after the end of the Second World War? This seems to be the argument put forward in the latest work of Vincent Scheltiens and Bruno Verlaeckaert, *Extreem rechts. De geschiedenis herhaalt zich niet (op dezelfde manier)*,

published in 2021.





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



Two new inventories were published recently by CegeSoma, related to archives about closely related associations.



*Les Invalides Prévoyants, Œuvre royale d'Assistance aux Eprouvés de la Guerre (1920-2003)* was founded after the First World War as a philanthropical circle of disabled veterans from Brussels that mainly provided financial aid to needy disabled, veterans, war widows and orphans, and former political prisoners. During the Second World War, the association provided free lunches for children of fallen soldiers, executed or political prisoners. During the occupation, the non-profit organisation delivered meals for some two million Belgian francs and provided about one million francs of assistance in kind.

After the war, the "*Invalides Prévoyants*" decided to continue their philanthropic work for war orphans in a more structural manner. To this end, a new non-profit





organisation was established in 1949: *Enfants de la Patrie*” (*Fonds pour l’Education des*) or in short [Les Enfants de la Patrie / De Kinderen van het Vaderland \(1949-2017\)](#). As a subdivision of *Les Invalides Prévoyants*, the association tasked itself with contributing to the professional training of war orphans by taking over study costs providing limited student loans. Its philanthropy was considered as an addition and even a correction of parastatal institutions such as the National Office for War Orphans: *Les Enfants de la Patrie/De Kinderen van het Vaderland* helped out where (semi-)governmental agencies could not. As years went by, the support was quite naturally extended to children of former war orphans.

The founder and omnipresent chairman of both associations was Jean-Joseph Michel (1890-1974), owner of a bodywork company and disabled veteran of the First World War. For decades, ‘papa’ Michel was the soul and face of *Les Invalides Prévoyants* en *Les Enfants de la Patrie/De Kinderen van het Vaderland*. In his honour, the municipal school no. 6 in Saint-Gilles/Sint-Gillis (Brussels) was named after him in 1976.

The archives of these associations (former ref. AA2218 and AA2487) are indissociable. Beside standard records series (minutes, statutes, accounting etc.) they also contain a number of unique documents. For example, both associations kept a *Livre d’Or* to honour generous donors. The archives of *Les Enfants de la Patrie/De Kinderen van het Vaderland* contain some thirty photo albums, many dozens of photographs and even some films about meetings, internal activities and fundraising campaigns led by both associations – ranging from the most mundane to the most lavish events. The series of individual files kept by *Les Enfants de la Patrie/De Kinderen van het Vaderland* is in fact the richest source: more than 650 files from the period 1945-1994 classified by family name testify of the help that the association provided.

The archives of *Les Invalides Prévoyants* counts 43 items. (0,6 linear metres) and can be accessed freely. Access to the archives of *Les Enfants de la Patrie/De Kinderen van het Vaderland* (849 items, 15 linear metres) is subject to the authorisation of the National Archivist or his/her delegate, and the signing of a research declaration. The iconographic materials will be systematically digitised and the corresponding originals are no longer accessible.

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