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## CEGESOMA - State Archives

# NEWSLETTER

No 70 - November 2021



## NEWS

### BELGIUM WWII

Discover new contributions on key persons and events related to World War II in Belgium.

► [Read more](#)



### THE MOVING OF COLLECTIONS IS FINISHED

Where and how can you consult our archives, our books, our journals, our audiovisual collection, etc. ?

► [Read more](#)

## FOCUS ON THE COLLECTIONS

### THE SPANISH WAR IN THE LIBRARY OF CEGESOMA

An overview of the richness of our collection on this subject.

► [Read more and watch the video](#)



### DIGITIZING OUR BOOKLETS

A long term project to give a durable life to the most representative booklets of our collection.

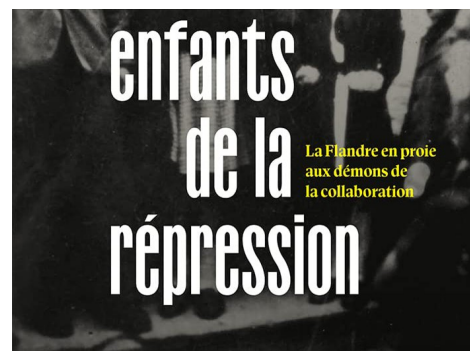
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## PUBLICATIONS

### COLLABORATION AND REPRESSION

'*Les enfants de la répression. La Flandre en proie aux démons de la collaboration*'. The French translation of the book by Koen Aerts is now available.

► [Read more](#)



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## Belgium WWII: from the closure of the Free University of Brussels (ULB) to the archives of repression



With the Belgium WWII website, CegeSoma aims to evoke both classic aspects of the history of the Second World War and to draw attention to lesser known dimensions or personalities of this history.

### Facets to discover

This is the case of [Franz Leemans](#), a resistance fighter active in the Clarence network and who, at the Liberation, got totally involved in the defense of the cause of Leopold III after having also worked for Paul van Zeeland, then commissioner for repatriation. Through him, **Baudouin Collet** lifts a corner of the veil on the often little-known commitment of intelligence and action agents. This little-known story is also that of [Otto Sieburg](#), a member of the Jewish section of the Sipo-SD in Brussels, tried by the Belgian courts in December 1949. His complex trial is evoked by the historian **Marie-Anne Weisers**, who devoted her doctoral thesis to the attitude of Belgian justice towards German nationals involved in the persecution of Jews. In the register of better known personalities, the site has also been enriched by two new entries devoted to personalities from the entourage of Leopold III: [Robert Capelle](#) and [Jacques Pirenne](#). Both successively held the position of king's secretary. These two entries complete the picture. In this field, the site now offers entries about [Leopold III](#) himself, [the Regency](#) and [Raoul Van Overstraeten](#), the king's military advisor.

The reality of war also plunged whole social groups into particular situations. This was the case for [the Italian](#)

[community](#), numbering some 30,000 on the eve of the conflict and composed in part of anti-fascist refugees. What was their fate under the occupation? What participation in the resistance and what impact did they have in the aftermath of the conflict? A contribution written by our Italian intern and history student **Giuffredi Francesca** and historian [Fabrice Maerten](#).

### [Liège, the Cité ardente, under the occupation](#)

Beyond personalities and organizations, it is also possible to immerse oneself in the history of the occupation through a given geographic setting. This is the exercise undertaken by historian [Alain Colignon](#). Through a dense article, he revisits the question of the accommodation of the traditional elites, the Rexist overbidding in the collaboration, but also the multiple forms of resistance that developed and the repression of the occupier that followed, without forgetting the very heavy price that [the city](#) had to pay at the time of the liberation.

### **A return to the chronology**

The site also allows you to look back at key moments. [Just over 80 years ago, the Free University of Brussels \(ULB\) closed](#). Historians [Chantal Kesteloot](#) and [Dirk Martin](#) recall this anniversary. At the origin of this decision, the will of the occupier to impose the nomination of three professors labeled "New Order" which the Brussels institution did not want. This incident was the last straw that led to the rupture. Until then, the University had been rather accommodating to the demands of the occupation power. This closure was to have serious consequences for the students. Some stopped their studies, a majority found refuge in other universities, Liège or Louvain, according to geographical and/or philosophical criteria, while others chose to participate in the clandestine courses that were gradually organized. As in other institutions, the Liberation led to a resumption of activities but also to the difficult question of internal purging.

### **Access to sources of repression: the Dutch example**

As in Belgium, [the repression of collaboration in the Netherlands led to a massive production of archival documents](#). There, as here, these documents are of particular interest to the descendants of the people concerned. In 2025, these archives will be in the public domain. The question of their digitization and its implications is therefore raised. Historian [Dirk Luyten](#) looks back at this example and analyzes its ethical and societal dimensions; in other words, how can we reconcile the respect of private life with the right of societies to apprehend their past? In short, a sensitive and stimulating debate both in the Netherlands and in Belgium.

### Other news

[Everything you want to know about Belgian resistance fighters ? Discover Wikibase Resistance](#)

[Historiography in Belgium and the Netherlands](#)

[Results of the ADOCHS project](#)

[Marie Curie fellowship for Adina Babeş-Fruchter](#)

[ADOCHS study day: Register now!](#)

[The Resistance in Belgium: a debate](#)

[The censored and underground press of the two world wars now accessible via the Abraham online catalog](#)

[Was grandpa a hero?](#)





## Consult our collections

In order to properly and efficiently store our collections, they are kept in different locations.

**-> DON'T FORGET TO CHECK BEFORE YOUR VISIT IN WHICH READING ROOM YOU WILL HAVE TO CONSULT THE DOCUMENTS!**

### ARCHIVES

- **What?** Our collection of "paper" archives and microfilms - including files with the old references "AA" and "AB" \*.
- **Where?** These archives are kept in the National State Archives - Joseph Cuvelier Repository (**AGR-2**) and can be consulted in the [AGR-2 reading room](#), Rue du Houblon in Brussels.

\* Our microfilm collection and the files with the reference "AB" are presently still kept at CegeSoma but are not accessible .

### ! Exceptions:

1. **The archives constituted by CegeSoma itself**, such as interviews conducted by its own researchers (AA2268), will in theory remain at CegeSoma.
2. Because of their ongoing processing (e.g. in [the Wikibase project](#)), some files remain at the Aviation Square for the moment, partially or totally ([list of files](#)).
3. A series of files have been definitively transferred to **the National State Archives** ([AGR1](#)) ([list of files](#)).

- **How do I search?** Our archive collections are searchable via [the Search engine](#).
- **How do I consult?**

1. **Send a message to** [cegesoma@arch.be](mailto:cegesoma@arch.be) mentioning the funds/inventory numbers you wish to consult.
2. **You will receive a confirmation e-mail** when the documents are reserved for you. Orders are collected twice a week (Monday and Wednesday).
3. **After receiving this confirmation, make an appointment in** [the AGR2 reading room](#) by sending a message to [agr\\_ar\\_2@arch.be](mailto:agr_ar_2@arch.be).
4. A CegeSoma researcher is available to assist you on site every Wednesday.

### LIBRARY

- **What?** Monographs, magazines and newspapers, theses, yearbooks, censored press, brochures, leaflets, press clippings. The underground press can be consulted on the website [The Belgian War Press](#).
- **Where?** Our entire library is located at CegeSoma and can be consulted in [our reading room](#).
- **How do I search?** The collections of the CegeSoma library can be searched via the [Pallas catalogue](#).

- **How do I consult?** Cfr [Visit to the reading room](#).

## **AUDIO-VISUAL ARCHIVES**

- **What?** Photographic archives and photo collections, audiovisual collections (e.g. films, sound recordings), posters, etc.
- **Where?** These sources are available in their entirety at Cegesoma and can be consulted in [our reading room](#).
- **How do I search?** The photo collections can be searched in our [Pallas catalogue](#). A large number of photos are available in digital format via this catalogue.
- **How do I consult?** See [Visit to the reading room](#).

Please note: in principle, the originals of digitised documents cannot be consulted.

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## The Spanish War in the CegeSoma Library

'The Spanish War in the CegeSoma Library'. Under this title, we invite you to discover the eighth 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 eighth episode of our video series 'The Librarian's Talks: 8. The Spanish War in the CegeSoma Library'.**

La Guerre civile d'Espagne - De Spaanse Burgeroorlog



During the "early20<sup>th</sup> century", the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939) is undoubtedly the conflict that, apart from the Second World War, received the most media attention, as its implications, real or imagined, seemed fundamental for the fate of humanity at that time. Indeed, many fine minds...and a considerable proportion of the broader populace saw it as a direct confrontation between fascism and communism, civilization and barbarism, progressives and reactionaries, Christianity and Marxist atheism. In essence, a battle between light and darkness. And, as often in such cases, the inflamed passions hid the cold geopolitical and politico-strategic considerations, both within democracies and antagonistic "totalitarian" powers...

By its nature and its mission, our institution was bound to focus on this tragic phase of the twentieth century and it has done so to a great extent: a search of our library catalogue reveals that the word 'Spain' alone appears in the titles of 314 works held in our collection'. Even if not all of these are solely concerned with the Spanish Civil War of 1936–1939, it is not an exaggeration to say that CegeSoma has more than 650 titles on this subject, from its most distant origins to its most immediate consequences. However, these works are not all of the same nature or quality.

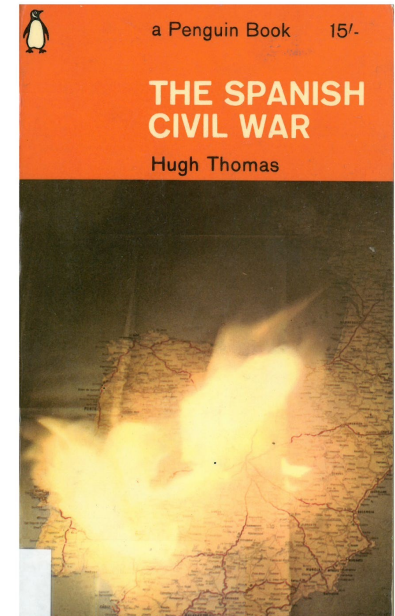
**A little bit of everything, but...**

Let us be clear from the outset, most of these publications were written in the language of Voltaire or Shakespeare rather than that of Vondel (a few dozen titles are, however, in Dutch...). And publications in Spanish or Italian are scarce. Nevertheless, in terms of historiographical contribution, there is considerable wealth both in approach and conceptual emphasis.

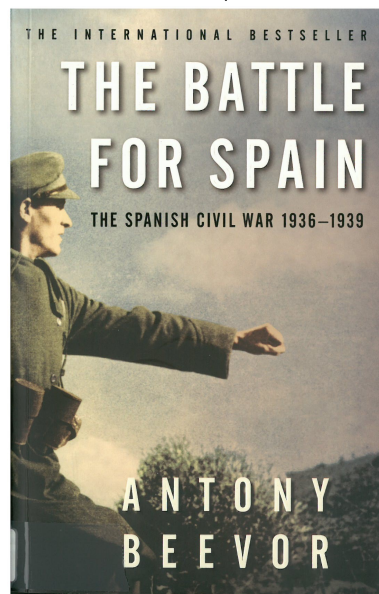


Engaged works, such as those of Paul Nothomb (*Belges dans les tranchées d'Espagne-1937*) and Charles Terlinden (*L'Espagne martyre-1939*), which are very much linked to the positions taken at the time, are in good company alongside later productions, which are more nuanced in appearance but no less partisan, such as, the "Memoirs" of Ramón Serrano Suñer (*Espagne 1931-1945*), Franco's brother-in-law (and former minister of the interior).

"Pure" historiography is itself affected by the sharp antagonisms of the past, and for a long time it struggled to conceal sympathies for one side or the other, given that, for many years, Franco's Spain – because of its dictatorial nature and its indisputable membership to the camp of defeated fascisms – had very bad press in the small world of Clio's disciples. It is sufficient to read two "classics" of the genre, *The Spanish Civil War* (1961) by



Hugh Thomas and *The Battle for Spain* (2006) by Antony Beevor, to perceive "for whom the bell tolls", notwithstanding the passage of time.

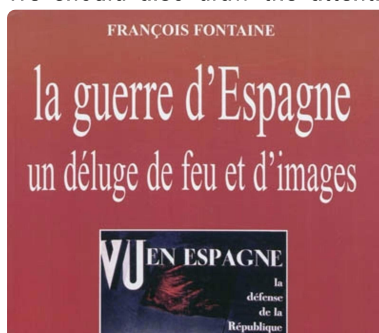


And the same goes for the indispensable research of Stanley G. Payne, even if there are inflections between his *Phalange : Histoire du fascisme espagnol* (1965) the French translation of Payne's *Phalange: A History of Spanish Fascism*, 1961) and one of his later contributions on the Spanish war, *La guerre d'Espagne: l'histoire face à la confusion mémorielle* (2010) (the French translation of Payne's *40 preguntas fundamentales sobre la guerra civil*, 2006), which is more of a general overview... These are broad syntheses, even when focused on a single issue.

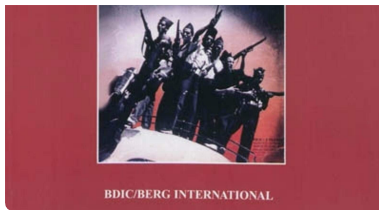
While partisan literature survives pretty much to our time ( for example, Victor Alba's *Histoire du POUM: le marxisme en Espagne* (1919-1939), time has generally done its work by now, smoothing out many sharp edges. This can be readily seen in the nuanced approaches proffered in Serge

Wolikow and Annie Blaton's edited collection *Antifascisme et nation. Les gauches européennes au temps du Front populaire* ((Editions Universitaires de Dijon), published in 1998, or the long-term study on *La montée du militarisme en Espagne: d'une dictature à l'autre (1923- 1939)*, published by L'Harmattan in 2004.

We should also draw the attention of readers interested in iconography to *La guerre d'Espagne: un déluge de feu et d'images* (published in 2003 by the B.D.I.C. ); or point out, for those interested in comparative history, the work of Gregory Tuban on *Camps d'étrangers: le contrôle des réfugiés venus d'Espagne (1939- 1944)* (2018); or even, for lovers of "collective representations" and other







memorial histories, the beautiful work of Stéphane Michonneau, *Belchite: Ruines-fantômes de la guerre d'Espagne* (2020).

As far as the Belgian political arena is concerned, it is especially appropriate to put the spotlight on the special issue of the *Journal of Belgian History* (RBHC-BTNG), which was dedicated to the Spanish War and published in 1987 (no. 3-4). In this issue, our country's brightest contemporary scholars contributed works on war that were relevant to their specific fields of expertise



In summary, the historiography of the Spanish War is infinite (or close to it). And the space to discuss it here is strictly limited. All that is left for the librarian to do now is take his leave... while encouraging curious readers to come visit!

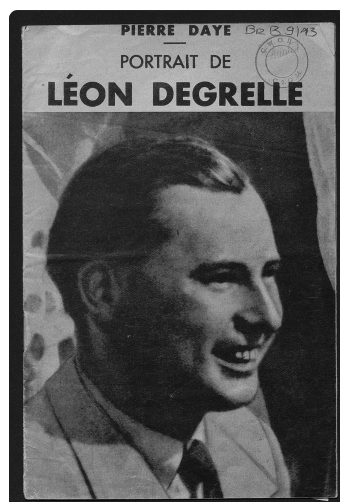


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## The digitisation of Cegesoma's booklets, a work in progress !

For a long time, Cegesoma's collection of booklets – which came from the *INBEL* Fonds (the former Belgian information office in London) – was specifically classified under the code "Br B..." and then "BB..." based on the assessment of our scientific team while the centre's library was taking shape. This was understandable. Even if these booklets had more than one similarity with 'normal' works, albeit in a very succinct form, they differed fundamentally in their purpose: all of them were directly related to war propaganda. All of them defended a cause (that of the country at war from which they emanated) and all of them expressed a certain political position (even when they dealt with socio-economic or cultural themes). Moreover, the content and graphics of many of these brochures reflected, sometimes in a subliminal manner, the ebb and flow of the conflict. Finally, this rich documentary collection of several thousand titles presents, beyond their content, a certain aesthetic interest. On both the Axis and Allied sides, the best graphic designers endeavoured to create cover images that were sometimes seductive, sometimes striking, and always likely to attract the eye... and to incite the potential buyer to read the text.



Then time passed and the booklets were placed in the general collection, classified in one way and then another. Frequently

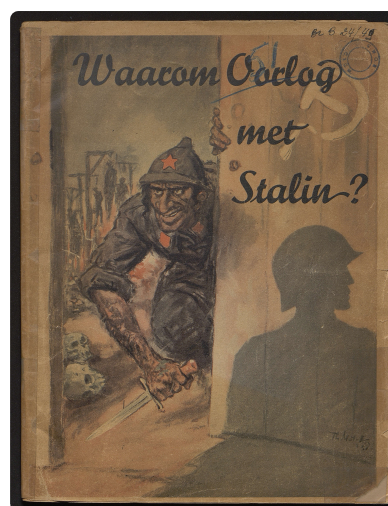
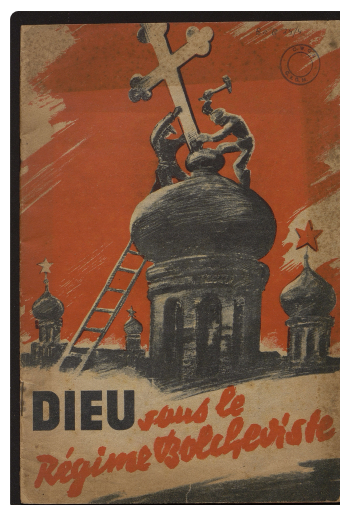
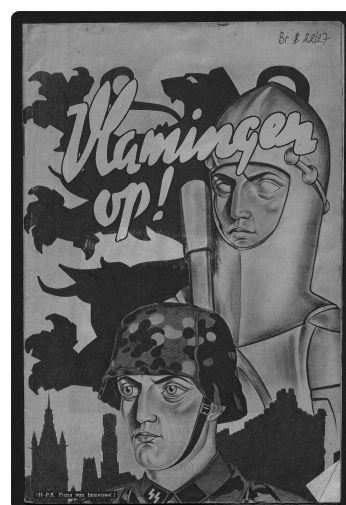


handled and made of poor quality wartime paper, they did not age well. This is why, in order to ensure their continued existence for as long as possible, the centre's management decided to proceed with the digitisation of the most decisive elements of this collection three years ago, starting with the titles relating to collaboration and the nationalist far right (NL/Fr) during the inter-war period.

An important collection of documents representative of these political currents and organisations was selected by Dirk Luyten and Alain Colignon and then carefully digitized for consultation in the institution's reading room.

But this process is far from over. We have turned to digitising booklets related to other fields of research, while still focusing on the Belgian framework and maintaining the principle of reasoned selection, as was done from the outset. Issues that are now being addressed include those of supply, the protection of the civilian population, cultural life, hygiene, anti-Semitism, and prisoners of war, among others.

Several hundred new booklets, carefully digitised by Soumaya Bounekoub, will also be made available to the public as soon as they have been processed (quality control and OCRization have been planned in order to facilitate research and offer readers the possibility to search for any word in the text), first in the reading room, and later online.



But the work is far from complete; it could very well continue over a long period of time, expanding to include other occupied and non-

occupied countries of the Old Continent, and even Great Britain, the United States and Japan, as our documentary holdings are very well equipped in these domains.

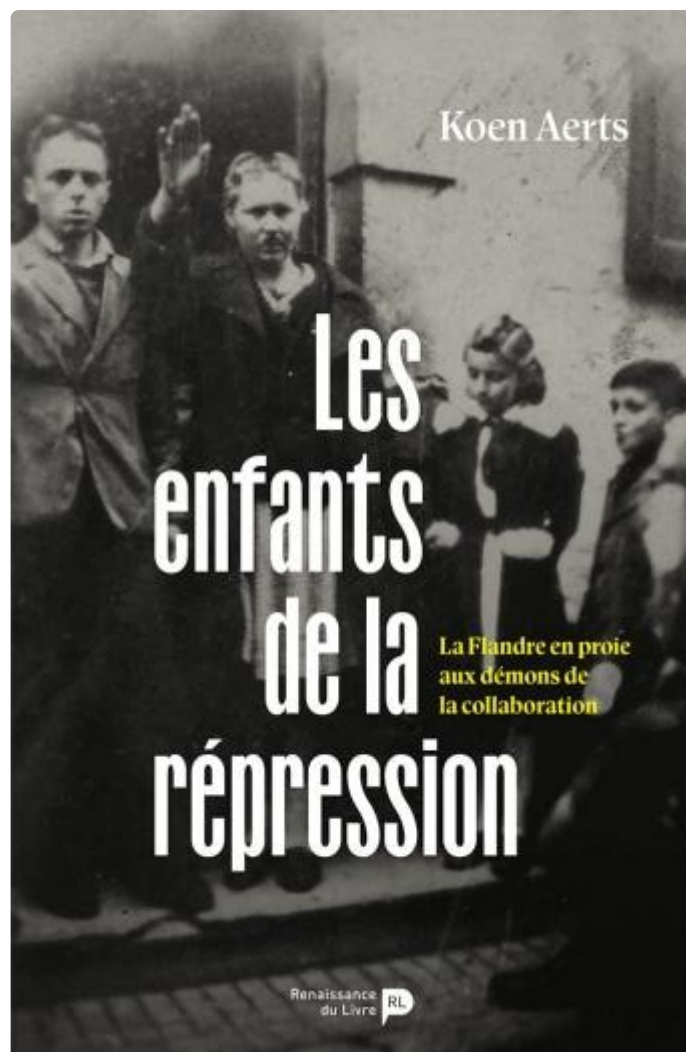
Finally, it is important to add that, while the CegeSoma is well stocked with collaborationist or, more generally, pro-German productions, it has fewer booklets related to the resistance. Apart from the fact that the latter was not, and for good reason, all that visible and not abundantly subsidised by the occupying forces, it was more concerned with publishing clandestine leaflets. Only very occasionally were such publications relayed by the presses of the allied nations, especially in the second half of the conflict.

[Home](#) » [Publication](#) » [Les enfants de la répression \(Children of Repression\)](#)

## Les enfants de la répression (Children of Repression)

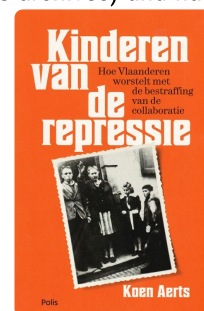
La Flandre en proie aux démons de la collaboration.

World War II   [Book](#)



This book is the result of years of research by [Koen Aerts](#) (University of Ghent/CegeSoma-State archives) and has already been published in Dutch in 2018 by Polis (*[Kinderen van de repressie. Hoe Vlaanderen worstelt met de bestraffing van de collaboratie](#)*). Based on dozens of interviews with children of Flemish collaborators, it tries to define how collaboration and post-war repression in Flanders still echo across generations.

The author combines his research with a broader political and socio-cultural history of the postwar image of collaboration and repression, so that his book becomes a larger reference work on "the past not overcome" of World War II in Flanders and Belgium.



Koen Aerts further conducted part of the follow-up research within the [TRANSMEMO project \(BRAIN-Belspo\)](#), in which Cegesoma (State Archives) was a partner.

**A reference work on the long-term impact of collaboration and its repression in**



## | Belgium."

### PRODUCT DETAILS

**Binding:** paperback

**Number of pages:** 336 p.

**Format:** 15 x 23 cm

**Publishing date:** 2021

**EAN/ ISBN:** 978-25-0705-724-4

**Editor:** Waterloo, La Renaissance du livre

AUTHOR(S)

[Koen Aerts](#)

PRICE

26,00 € (postage non included)

**ORDER**

TAGS

[Childhood](#) [Repression of collaboration](#) [collaboration](#) [Oral history](#) [Collective Memories](#)

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