

**“La valise oubliée. Enfants de guerre (1940-1945)”™. Interview of the author of the book, Gerlinda Swillen by Alain Colignon.**

Touchy, sometimes difficult and often unknown, such is the history of children born from romances between Belgian women and Wehrmacht soldiers.

The CegeSoma (State Archives) and the Auschwitz Foundation ? Remembrance of Auschwitz are pleased to invite you to the presentation of the latest book by Dr Gerlinda Swillen titled '*La valise oubliée. Enfants de guerre (1940-1945)*' \* on the occasion of which the author will be interviewed by Alain Colignon.

The Auschwitz Foundation - Remembrance of Auschwitz contributes to the publication of scientific and pedagogical works to keep memory alive. This study intends to preserve the memory of children born of war by giving them a voice.

'With his father' Fonds Norbert Delanghe : enfants de guerre, [1940-1945], photo n° 261811, © State Archives.

The stories of these lives in search for identity are riddled with heavy silence, animosity, and sometimes deep suffering.

These life stories are pieced together step by step, through conversations, discoveries of hidden letters, forgotten photographs? In almost all of these stories, the father is a deep mystery, a secret preciously guarded within the family.

'Elisabeth with the photo of her father', Fonds Elisabeth Erika Charlier : enfants de guerre, [1940-1945], photo n° 262519, © State Archives.

Gerlinda Swillen was born in 1942 in Ostend. Her father was a Wehrmacht soldier and her mother a Belgian governess.

She has been a teacher for almost 40 years (1963-2002).

Today, she is associated researcher at CegeSoma/State Archives and scientific collaborator at *Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB)*.

She is also the founder and former president of the Association of Belgian War Children (2008-2013).

Furthermore, she was the first spokeswoman of the Born Of War international network from 2009 to 2013. In 2010, she acquired the German nationality, thereby becoming the first Belgian war child to be given this nationality.

In 2016, she was awarded a doctorate in History from *VUB* for her thesis about Belgian war children in WWII titled '*Verwekt door de Tweede Wereldoorlog. Oorlogskinderen op de as Brussel-Berlijn*'.

The author will be signing copies after the presentation of her latest publication. The book is on sale for ? 15.00.

This conference (in French) will take place in the conference room of CegeSoma on Monday 21 January 2019 at 2.30 p.m. (Square de l'Aviation, 29 - 1070 Brussels).

Registration is required: [asbl-vzw.cegesoma@arch.be](mailto:asbl-vzw.cegesoma@arch.be) or 02.556.92.11

Do not hesitate to bring other interested persons !

\* This book is the translation of '*Koekoekskind. Verwekt door de oorlog (1940-1945)*' published by Meulenhof-Manteau in 2009.

