

A conference by Luis Angel Bernardo y Garcia

Le Ventre des Belges. Grandeur et misères d'un petit État nourricier en temps d'occupation et de sortie de guerre (1914-1948)

On Wednesday 16 November 2016 (2.30 p.m.), CegeSoma will give the floor to Luis Angel Bernardo y Garcia (State Archives). He will address the role of the Belgian state in the economic recovery of post-war Belgium, in particular with regard to its food policy.

Loading of sacs of flour in a flour mill. Excerpt from a propaganda film "Où en est notre ravitaillement ?" made in 1946 by Gaston Vernailen for the department of Supply. (Cinémathèque Fédération Wallonie Bruxelles)

At the end of the Second World War (1945-1948), as a result of the German occupation, there was still an acute food shortage in Belgium. To maintain food provisioning and the economic activity, the State was obliged to organize the national economy, a policy that was contradictory to the tradition of free market economy which was prevalent in pre-war Belgium. The consecutive post-war governments focused on the recovery of the labour market. Like the defense of a "strong franc", this recovery was necessary for the relaunching of economic activity, as well as for the maintenance of the order and the normalization of political life. On this level, Belgium pursued a different policy than its neighbours.

To understand the policy of the Belgian state, it is essential to bear in mind the food policies of the past. These questions will be addressed by Luis Angel Bernardo y Garcia, author of a recent PhD thesis on the food crises in Belgium.

Luis Angel Bernardo y Garcia is first assistant at the State Archives where he is in charge of the political archives. Since 2015, he coordinates the transfer of the "African archives" of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation. Also in 2015, he has defended his doctoral thesis at the *Université libre de Bruxelles* on the diachronic approach of the food crises in Belgium during occupation periods, the liberation and the immediate post-war period.

The conference takes place in the conference room of CegeSoma, Square de l'Aviation 29, 1070 Brussels, and will start at 2.30 p.m.

Participation is free, but registration necessary via 02/556.92.57 or isabelle.delvaux@cegesoma.be

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