

The commemorations of the 50th anniversary of the end of the Second World War.

The commemorations are ever-present in our society today. The centenary of the Great War, the bicentenary of the Battle of Waterloo, and of course the recent terrorist attacks were all themes for commemoration ceremonies. Commemorations are social perceptions that should be studied not only for their historical relevance, but for the way societies have behaved with respect to them. In other words, how and to which end does the present claim the past?

However, the study of the commemorations is not always an easy one. Which documents should be consulted? Where are the interesting archive collections?

A lucky coincidence: in view of the 50th anniversary of the Second World War, the government had decided to seek the assistance of the Fondation roi Baudouin, an organization which can boast considerable experience in this field following the commemorations of King Baudouin's 'double anniversary': his sixty years of age and his forty-year reign.

The context of these events was rather particular : the commemorations were the first of their kind since Belgium had officially become a federal state, and were among others a political mobilization against the extreme-right and negationism. In fact, a particularly 'sensitive' context. CegeSoma had not only closely followed the events but had also published a book on the subject.

Thanks to the archives that have been entrusted to us by the Fondation roi Baudouin, new research can be launched. The documentation offers a perspective from within and looks for answers to questions such as: Which were the means that were used? How did the cooperation with the federal government and the different states work out? Which values were emphasized?

A lot of research questions to which the answers might be found in the archive boxes. A hint for the enthusiasts!

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