

CEGESOMA NEWSLETTER

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CHILDREN OF WAR: CONFLICTS THAT GIVE LIFE

During the Second World War, Belgian women met German men in occupied Belgium and in Germany, and a number of births resulted from these encounters. These children would not have been born without the war. Gerlinda Swillen will come to CegeSoma on Wednesday 20 April 2016 to give a conference about what is both the subject of her PhD thesis and a personal experience: "Conçus par la Seconde Guerre mondiale. Enfants de guerre sur l'axe Bruxelles-Berlin" [\[MORE INFO\]](http://www.cegesoma.be/cms/index_en.php?article=3150&pag0nbr=25&pagofs=0)

WAR ENTHUSIASM: EUROPEANS ATTRACTED BY THE DARK SIDE

How could we explain the rapture that seized thousands when World War One broke out? How can we understand how sensitive, cultivated and smart people from different European backgrounds turned into enthusiastic and convinced warmongers? "Oorlogsenthusiasme. Europa 1900-1918" by Ewoud Kieft, a Dutch historian, writer and musician, is centered on these questions. Kieft will give a conference on his book at CegeSoma on Wednesday 11 May. [\[MORE INFO\]](http://www.cegesoma.be/cms/index_en.php?article=3157)

WOULD YOU LIKE TO RECEIVE THE STATE ARCHIVES' NEWSLETTER?

The State Archives is a federal scientific institution of the Belgian Federal Science Policy Office. They obtain and preserve archive documents, and ensure that public archives are transferred according to strict archival standards and the proper preservation of archival documents is conducted and managed by the state authorities. For this purpose, the State Archives issue directives and recommendations, conduct inspections, organise training for civil servants and act as an advisory body for the construction and preparation of premises for the conservation of archives and for the organisation of archive management within a public authority. Would you like to receive the Archives' newsletter? Subscribe here: [\[MORE INFO\]](http://www.arch.be/index.php?!=en&m=newsletter)

NEW ISSUE OF THE JOURNAL OF BELGIAN HISTORY

The fourth edition of the Journal of Belgian History for 2015 is finally available. It contains abstracts of all the new PhD-theses, an article by Stefan Huygebaert on national identity after the Revolution of 1848, and a contribution by Karel Van Nieuwenhuysse and Kaat Wils on the role played by historical narratives in the Flemish colleges. It also features an article by Isabelle Devos and Tina Van Rossem on life expectancy estimates in Belgian cities between 1846 and 1910. [\[MORE INFO\]](http://www.journalbelgianhistory.be/en)

MADDLAIN SURVEY: LAST DAYS!

Take part in the MADDLAIN project! We want to improve the digital offerings of the CegeSoma, the State Archives and the Royal Library. And for this we need your help. Give us your unvarnished opinion in our online survey! [\[MORE INFO\]](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/MADDLAIN)

WORKSHOP ON RECONCILIATION IN POST-WAR CONTEXTS (DEN HAAG)

CegeSoma co-organises an international workshop on reconciliation in post-conflict situations. The discussion will focus on the tensions between international policies and the expectations and needs of local communities.

The workshop will take place in Den Haag on 18 May 2016 in English. All details are in the programme.

[\[MORE INFO\]](http://www.cegesoma.be/docs/media/Activites_Scient/ActScient_JournReconciliation_Programme.pdf)

FROM FLEMISH CATHOLIC STUDENTS MOVEMENT TO COLLABORATION

Piet Meuwissen's daughter has recently deposited her father's archives at CegeSoma. The archive is henceforth available for research and study. Meuwissen is best known for his controversial mandate as director of the National Corporation for Food and Agriculture between 1940 and 1944. [\[MORE INFO\]](http://www.cegesoma.be/cms/index_en.php?article=3131)

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Children of War: Conflicts that Give Life

During the Second World War, Belgian women met German men in occupied Belgium and in Germany, and a number of births resulted from these encounters. These children would not have been born without the war. [Gerlinda Swillen](#) will come to CegeSoma on **Wednesday 20 April 2016** to give a conference about what is both the subject of her PhD thesis and a personal experience: "*Conçus par la Seconde Guerre mondiale. Enfants de guerre sur l'axe Bruxelles-Berlin*".

The Point of View of the Offspring

The biological parents are studied through the eyes of their children: who were they and what did they do, how did they meet and if there was a relationship, how were they able to develop it, given the social context? A very important aspect of this research is the sexual intercourse which gave birth to these children, but also their juridical status and the social consequences.

Revealing Sources

Gerlinda Swillen's research is based on conversations with more than 120 Belgian children of war, on original documents and on rarely studied archives in Belgium and in Germany. The conclusion is that these children of war are often in a dangerous zone, deprived of juridical and social protection. She underlines the need for an international status for current and future children of war to be included in all international human rights treaties.

Practical Information

Where: CegeSoma conference room, Square de l'Aviation 29, 1070 Brussels

When: Wednesday 20 April 2016, 2:30 pm

The conference will take place in French.

Attendance is free, please subscribe at ambar.geerts@cegesoma.be.

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Baptism of the baby girl of a Belgian woman and a "Wehrmacht" soldier. (Photo CegeSoma, No. 262518)

War Enthusiasm: Europeans Attracted by the Dark Side

How could we explain the rapture that seized thousands when World War One broke out? How can we understand how sensitive, cultivated and smart people from different European backgrounds turned into enthusiastic and convinced warmongers?

"*Oorlogsenthusiasme. Europa 1900-1918*" by **Ewoud Kieft**, a Dutch historian, writer and musician, is centered on these questions. Kieft will give a conference on his book at CegeSoma on **Wednesday 11 May 2016**.

First Months Exhilaration and Emblematic Characters

Many important members of European society shared the enthusiasm of the first months, among which a number of writers, artists and scientists. Who were they and why did they react this way? Ewoud Kieft selected a number of emblematic figures from different parts of Europe, and carried out an in-depth biographical research in order to understand their affinities with the conflict. He exposes the development of this enthusiasm as the war broke out, and the shapes it took in the face of its unprecedented destructive power

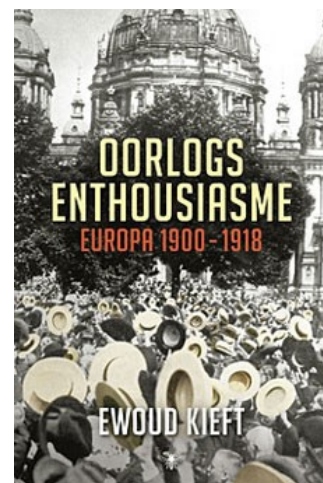
The Dark Side of European History

On the basis of war enthusiasm, Kieft pinpoints fundamental cultural schemes of European history. By explaining the phenomenon of the enthusiasm for WWI, the author sheds light on the birth and drawing force of fascism and National Socialism, and on the potential attraction exerted by the war.

Practical Information

- **When:** On Wednesday **11 May 2016 at 14:30**
- **Where:** In the conference room of CegeSoma, Square de l'Aviation 29, 1070 Brussels
- The conference will be in Dutch. Attendance is free, please subscribe beforehand by email: ambar.geerts@cegesoma.be or by phone: 02/5569211

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The third issue of 2018 has been published

The issue has **four articles**: one in French, two in Dutch and one in English. These articles are contributions from Margaux Roberti-Lintermans about post-war repression in the Eastern Cantons after 1944, of Michèle Corthals on the Flemish resistance press during WW II, of Christa Matthys and Soetkin Gryson about midwives and reproductive healthcare during the 19th Century and finally Eduard Clappaert and Martin Kohlrausch (in English) on Belgian diplomacy and the trials of German war crimes after the First World War.



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Latest news

Double-sized issue 'Congo at War'

 THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2018 - 16:13

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Call for Authors

 TUESDAY, JUNE 26, 2018 - 11:27

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Thematic issue on the history of psychiatry in Belgium

 THURSDAY, APRIL 26, 2018 - 15:15

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The 'Bijdragen'/'Cahiers' (1970-1995) added to our digital archive

 THURSDAY, MARCH 15, 2018 - 12:27

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Debate about the risks and opportunities of Digital Humanities

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Problematizing Reconciliation in Local Contexts and the Role of the International Community

Centre of Global Affairs, Faculty of Governance and Global Affairs | MSc in International Relations and Diplomacy | CegeSoma

Workshop Aims

This workshop attempts to deepen the meaning of reconciliation in local contexts and trace the influence of the international community on reconciliation. The latter includes states represented through Embassies, IOs, NGOs, humanitarian organizations, universities, religious organizations and other groups in the respective case studies.

Organisers

This workshop is organized by the Centre for Global Affairs, Faculty of Governance and Global Affairs (Leiden University in the Hague), MSc in International Relations and Diplomacy, and CegeSoma (Brussels).

Introduction

- 10.45 Registration
- 11.00 Opening statement by Prof. Madeleine Hosli, Programme Director of MIRD, Leiden University
- 11.05 "Problematizing Reconciliation in Local Contexts and the Role of the International Community" By Keynote Speaker Prof. Valérie Rosoux, Université Catholique de Louvain

Session I: Western Balkans

- 11.35 "Framing Reconciliation in the case of Serbia" by Dr. Heleen Touquet, Researcher and Lecturer at KU Leuven, and Co-authors Drs. Ana Milosevic PhD student at Ku Leuven, and Dr. Julianne Funk, Lecturer at University of Zürich.
- 11.55 "Reconciliation as Practice and Promise in the Post-Yugoslav Context" by Jacqueline Nießer, Institute for East and Southeast European Studies Regensburg
- 12.15 "The Meaning of Reconciliation in the case of Kosovo: A comparison between Local and International Perspectives" by Ph.Dc. Arlinda Rrustemi, Center for Global Affairs, Leiden University
- 12.35 Discussion led by Assistant Professors Maja Vodopovic, Leiden University College, Leiden University

Practical information

Conference Venue:

Leiden University
Faculty of Governance and
Global Affairs
Schouwburgstraat 2
2511 VA The Hague

Date: 18 May 2016

Time Frame: 10.45-18.00

Registration:

Participants should register
before the 15/4 via email to
Ragnhild Drange,
MIRD@fgga.leidenuniv.nl

Contact: For general
questions about the
Conference, please contact
Arlinda Rrustemi,
a.rrustemi@fgga.leidenuniv.nl

Lunch 13.00-14.30

Session II: Africa

- 14.30 “Whom to what? ‘Reconciliation’ in the Democratic Republic of Congo” Dr. Laura Davis, Independent Consultant
- 14.50 “Transitional justice and national reconciliation in Côte d’Ivoire: diverging directions and therapies of a crisis” by Dr. Adou Djané Dit Fatogoma, Swisspeace/University of Basel
- 15.10 Discussion led by Prof. Rob de Wijk, Center for Global Affairs, Leiden University

Session III: Middle East and Asia

- 15.35 “Is there a Role for International Criminal Courts in Promoting Reconciliation in Israel/Palestine?” by Yael Vias Gvirsman, Director, ICL/IHL Clinic, Radzyner Law School (via Skype)
- 15.55 “The Role of Indigenous/Traditional Institutions in Peace Building” by Assistant Professor Jeroen Adam, Ghent University
- 16.15 “Localising Reconciliation: An exploration of the language and practice of reconciliation in local communities recovering from genocide and other mass violence in East Timor” by Dr. Wendy Lambourne, University of Sydney (via Skype)
- 16.35 Discussion led by Prof. Madeleine Hosli, Programme Director of MIRD, Leiden University
- 17.00 Concluding remarks by Dr. Nico Wouters (Cegesoma/Ghent University)

From Flemish Catholic Students Movement to Collaboration

The Piet Meuwissen Archives are available

Piet Meuwissen's daughter has recently deposited her father's archives at CegeSoma. The archive is henceforth available for research and study. Meuwissen is best known for his controversial mandate as director of the National Corporation for Food and Agriculture between 1940 and 1944.

Meuwissen's youth

Who was Piet Meuwissen (1909-1968)? As the son of a Flemish Catholic bourgeois family, he followed a classical education and studied political and social sciences at KU Leuven (1936). He stood out as a leading member of the KVHV (*Katholiek Vlaams Hoogstudenten Verbond* - Flemish Catholic Higher-degree Students Union) and student associations such as the *Dietsch Studenten Verbond*. These associations were basically promoting the unity of Flemish Catholic student movements with strong local roots and a close bond with the episcopate. He favoured KVV-VNV ideas (*Katholieke Vlaamse Volkspartij - Vlaams Nationaal Verbond*), but stood against the interference of Verdinaso (*Verbond van Dietsche Nationaal-Solidaristen* - Union of Diets National Solidarists) in student movements. In 1936 he became private secretary of Gustaaf Sap, former Minister of Agriculture, and a year later general secretary of the so-called "*Boerenfront*" (Farmers front), a dissident branch of the Catholic Boerenbond.

Collaboration and repression

After the German invasion he opted for VNV- politics. With his corporatist ideology, it was logical that despite his youth, the general secretary of the Ministry for Agriculture Emiel De Winter appointed him head of the *Landbouw- en Voedingscorporatie* (NLVC - The corporation for Agriculture and Food). The NLVC had been founded with the agreement of the occupier. Its politics can be resumed in its motto "*Volk en Bodem*" (People and Land).

Would rationing have been more flexible without the NLVC? In any case, Meuwissen was sanctioned to 5 years of prison after the liberation. The accusation was "having intentionally played into the hands of the enemy". It was after all a light penalty, which he served intermittently. In 1964 he was even rehabilitated. After serving prison he had several jobs in the private sector and became for instance director of the *Instituut voor Gemeentelijke Organisatie en Planning* in 1962.

The Archive

All these aspects are present in the different documents contained in the five boxes of this well-preserved archive: the student movements, rationing, prison. Through letters, formularies, publications, pictures and other documents, we discover a character who might be seen as the symbol of an entire generation of young Flemish technocrats who were unable to resist the attraction exerted by an authoritarian regime.

Dirk Martin

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Celebration for the foundation of NLVC in 1943. Left stands Secretary Emiel de Winter and right Piet Meuwissen. (Photo CegeSoma, No. 32396)

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