

CEGESOMA NEWSLETTER

NO 22 - SEPTEMBER 2016

[nl](#) [fr](#) [en](#)

DIRECTORATE – NEW LEADERSHIP FOR CEGESOMA

Rudi Van Doorslaer has left the institution on 31 August 2016 to enjoy his well-earned retirement. During the appointment procedure for a new director, management of CegeSoma, now Operational Directorate 4 of the State Archives, has been entrusted to our colleague Dirk Martin, who has been in charge of the archives of the organisation for many years. [\[MORE INFO\]](#) ([http://www.cegesoma.be](http://www.cegesoma.be/cms/index_en.php?article=3222)

[/cms/index_en.php?article=3222](http://www.cegesoma.be/cms/index_en.php?article=3222))

EXHIBITION – WAR IN SHORT PANTS, 14-18

On 14 October, the exhibition War in Short Pants, 14-18 opens in Ghent. It is the fruit of a collaboration between CegeSoma and the Historische Huizen Gent and shows that the First World War was not only a matter for soldiers but also mobilised children. [\[MORE INFO\]](#) (<http://www.cegesoma.be>

[/cms/index_en.php?article=3228](http://www.cegesoma.be/cms/index_en.php?article=3228))

PUBLICATION - A RENEWED WEBSITE

The website of the JBH – the journal of reference for Belgian contemporary history – has recently been renewed !

It is now possible to search all articles by keywords, by category or by thematic issue.

Browse the clear and user-friendly pages of the site and discover the second new thematic issue of this year dedicated to the Belgian Military History before 1914.

Enjoy the (re)discovery ! [\[MORE INFO\]](#) (<https://www.journalbelgianhistory.be/en>)

STUDY DAY - YOUNG HISTORIANS WITH TALENT!

On 14 October, CegeSoma will once more give the floor to young and talented historians who graduated in 2015, authors of Master theses concerning the two World Wars and their aftermaths. For this 11th edition, CegeSoma has chosen an original approach, the Pecha Kucha. Concise and rhythmic, this format combines academic rigour and a sense of oral and visual communication. The study day is open to everyone. [\[MORE INFO\]](#) (http://www.cegesoma.be/cms/index_en.php?article=3210&pag0nbr=22&pagofs=0)

ARCHIVES - THE KEY TO INFORMATION ABOUT ORPHANS OF 1940-1945

Recently, CegeSoma acquired an archive holding with regard to war orphans. The Oeuvre royale nationale Les Enfants de la Patrie provided essential material and educational support during and after the Second World War. The organisation's records mainly comprise individual files about each orphan – the key to discover the fate of these children ! [\[MORE INFO\]](#) (<http://www.cegesoma.be>

[/cms/index_en.php?article=3225](http://www.cegesoma.be/cms/index_en.php?article=3225))

New leadership for CegeSoma

Rudi Van Doorslaer has left the institution on 31 August 2016 to enjoy his well-earned retirement. During the appointment procedure for a new director, management of CegeSoma, **now Operational Directorate 4 of the State Archives**, has been entrusted to our colleague Dirk Martin. Spotlight on two individual careers.

Rudi Van Doorslaer, from a Gifted Researcher...

After a first appointment at the Centre as scientific collaborator from 1977 to 1980, Rudi Van Doorslaer was recruited in a permanent position in 1985. His thesis *De KP&B en het Sovjet-Duits niet-aanvals&B, 1939-1941*, published in 1975 received much attention. His doctoral thesis entitled *Kinderen van het getto. Joodse revolutionairen in België, 1925-1940* and presented in 1990 made him known as one of the specialists of Belgian 20th century history. This thesis reflects his increasing interest in the social and cultural history of radicalism in the 1920s-1950s.

The researcher from Ghent then delved into the involvement of the Left in the Second Spanish Republic, but also and more specifically into the history of the Jews, actors and/or victims of the terrible events of the end of the second half of the 20th century. He was in charge of several collective research projects about this subject and is the architect of the sensational *La Belgique docile* (2007) concerning the responsibility of the Belgian government in the Jewish tragedy.

...to a Tireless Director

On 1 September 2005, Rudi Van Doorslaer became the third director of CegeSoma. During the eleven years he spent leading the institution, he continuously developed initiatives with regard to academic activities, access to documentation through digital means and, since 2011, public history. The last years of his appointment were marked by his concerns for the sustainability of the institution that suffered from budget cuts and an insecure status.

The [bio-bibliographical note](#) and the [speech](#) (French) given in his honour on 25 August 2016 rounds off the portrait of Rudi Van Doorslaer.



Rudi Van Doorslaer (right) in conversation with the Director General of the State Archives, Karel Velle, at the reception organised in his honour a couple of days before his retirement. (Photo CegeSoma)

Dirk Martin, a Pillar of the Archives

After a four-year appointment as aspirant for the National Fund for Scientific Research (FNRS), Dirk Martin joins CegeSoma in 1979. His research leads to the presentation of his doctoral thesis in 1990 about local politicians in Antwerp and Ghent during the interwar period. He also publishes a number of studies about Ghent and Antwerp during the dark years, about the foreign policy of Belgium and about the German cultural and university policy in the same period. He would soon be charged with the management of the archives of the institution and contribute to several publications about the archival sources on the Second World War in Belgium. Having been head of the archives of CegeSoma for many years now, he has developed unmatched expert knowledge in this field. After having been in half-time employment since 2011, he accepted to work fulltime again as from September 2016 in order to take on the delicate mission to lead CegeSoma until the official appointment of a new director in 2017, at which time he will retire. Moreover, he already was in charge of the institution during the 'interregnum' between José Gotovitch and Rudi Van Doorslaer in 2005.

The [bio-bibliographical note](#) rounds of the presentation of Dirk Martin.

Fabrice Maerten

21 / 9 / 2016

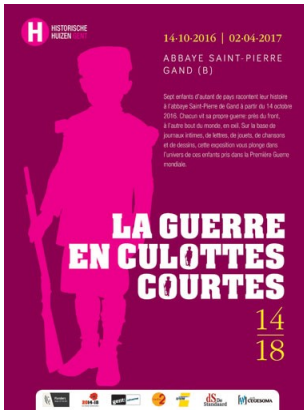


Dirk Martin

◀ Back ▶

Exhibition War in Short Pants, 14-18

On **14 October 2016**, the exhibition **War in Short Pants, 14-18** opened in Ghent. It is the fruit of a collaboration between CegeSoma and the *Historische Huizen Gent* and shows that the First World War was not only a matter for soldiers but also mobilised children. By means of audio guides, available in four languages, the exhibition takes us on a journey through the universe of seven boys and girls who experienced the conflict in occupied Belgium, but also in Russia, Germany, France, England, the Ottoman Empire or even in Australia.



Victims but also Actors

Their diaries, letters and drawings expose a war in which children are for the first time in the front line. Children and young people are no longer only victims of the conflict, they also actively take part by providing for their families, collecting money for the home country and even by trying to reach the war front. They are true actors in the History that is being written.

Disrupted Lives

From the very first days of the war, the lives of the children were disrupted. Families were greatly affected by the men leaving for the front. Many women went to work outside their homes, which left the children with unprecedented autonomy but also with new responsibilities: taking care of the youngest, queuing for food or working on the family farm. Schooling was also affected by the war. In the combat zones, schools were destroyed or requisitioned. Many teachers were sent to the front. But schools tried to get the children involved in the war effort, sometimes in very concrete ways: the pupils were charged with the sale of war loans, growing vegetables or knitting pullovers for the soldiers.

Survival Strategies

Hunger is a recurrent subject in children's writings about the war. The impact of the food crisis was particularly harsh in central Europe, but also in occupied territories such as Belgium. In all belligerent countries, the public authorities undertook efforts, with varying success, to ensure the health of the children. The latter also adopted their own survival strategies that occasionally crossed the boundaries of legality: juvenile crime rates soared in 1914-1918.

At the Front

Some children even tried to reach the trenches and did not hesitate to lie about their age in order to fight alongside the adults. Most children were stopped at the recruitment offices, but several tens of thousands actually fought at the front. These child soldiers were sometimes celebrated as national heroes: their example was to stir up patriotism and create a sense of guilt among those men who did not fight. As propaganda put it, it is in their stead that the children die in no man's land. Everywhere, the First World War put children at the forefront. This war heralded a 20th century in which young children had become a major part of conflicts: being targets of violence, witnesses of grief and, at the same time, a motivating force for national mobilisation. In other words, the war became "total war" in 1914-1918 and remains so today.

Bruno Benvindo

Practical information:

- "La guerre en culottes courtes 14-18"
- Date: 14.10.2016 until 2.4.2017
- Venue: Sint-Pietersabdij Ghent - Sint-Pietersplein 9 - 9000 Ghent
- Contact: +32 9 266 85 00
- For more information: www.historischehuizen Gent.be

21 / 9 / 2016

◀ Back ▶



1916: London pupils pay their weekly contribution to the War Savings Association. (©IWM)

- [Nederlands](#)
- [Français](#)
- [English](#)



Journal of Belgian History, XLVIII, 2018, 3



2018 3

[READ MORE >](#)

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.



WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 2018 - 22:37 [READ MORE >](#)

Latest news

Double-sized issue 'Congo at War'

 THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2018 - 16:13

[READ MORE](#) >

Call for Authors

 TUESDAY, JUNE 26, 2018 - 11:27

[READ MORE](#) >

Thematic issue on the history of psychiatry in Belgium

 THURSDAY, APRIL 26, 2018 - 15:15

[READ MORE](#) >

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

 THURSDAY, MARCH 15, 2018 - 12:27

[READ MORE](#) >

Debate about the risks and opportunities of Digital Humanities

 FRIDAY, MARCH 2, 2018 - 11:25

[READ MORE](#) >

The JBH in search of 'Position Papers'

 MONDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2018 - 14:44

[READ MORE](#) >

[MORE NEWS](#)

Young historians with talent ! An 11th edition with multiple accents

On **14 October 2016**, CegeSoma will once more give the floor to young and talented historians who graduated in 2015, authors of Master theses concerning the two World Wars and their aftermaths. The day will be organized around a number of key points: a series of debates with experts on the questions concerned; a focus on a selection of archive funds with promising research possibilities and, finally, an analysis of the subjects of contemporary history theses presented in Belgium over the last ten years.

To valorise in order to remember

The "Young Historians" study days have been organized since 2006. They aspire "give the floor" to authors of Master theses of quality and thus avoid their gathering dust in university depots or to get lost in the maze of the web, with no perspective of valorization. This study day also wants to create an opportunity for students of universities of the two communities to meet.

Rhythm and concision

For this 11th edition, CegeSoma has chosen an original approach: the *Pecha Kucha*. We would like to increase the awareness of young graduates regarding the importance of communication and we invite them to present the results of their research in this concise and rhythmic format which combines academic rigour and a sense of oral and visual communication.

You can find **the programme** and **the abstracts of the presentations** [here](#).

Practical information

- **Registration:** the study day is open to a large public: students, professional and amateur historians, family and friends, publishers looking for new talent...and to everyone interested in 20th century history. Participation is free, but registration is required isabelle.delvaux@cegesoma.be or by telephone (02/556.92.57).
- **Time:** from 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m.
- **Venue:** conference room of CegeSoma, square de l'Aviation, 29, 1070 Brussels.



www.ntico-technology.com

8 / 9 / 2016

◀ [Back](#) ▶

ACQUISITION - Archives Les Enfants de la Patrie – Kinderen van het Vaderland

The key to information about the fate of children during and after the Second World War

Last June, the Operational Directorate 4 – CegeSoma – received a remarkable archive holding to be joined to the many archives of patriotic associations it keeps. In this case, the association was not one of the former parties involved in the conflict in a classical sense (war prisoners, resistance fighters, deported persons, etc.), as the *Oeuvre royale nationale Les Enfants de la Patrie* is dedicated to the collateral victims of the war, namely the **war orphans**.

Essential Material and Educational Support

A lot of patriotic organisations were created at the end of the First World War. One of them was an organisation for support to war victims, called *Les Invalides Prévoyants (IP) (AA 2281)*. This organisation was very active during the interwar period and organised, at the initiative of its president Jean-Joseph Michel, and as early as 1941, a number of charity dinners for the benefit of children of persons having been executed, killed by the enemy or made prisoners of war. It offered substantial aid to those children in need. At the Liberation, the people in charge of the IP soon realised that they could not stop supporting the orphans and decided to continue to do so during their studies and to help them find a decent profession "worthy of the hopes of those who died". Thus, on 5 April 1949, the non-profit organisation *Les Enfants de la Patrie* was created.

Hundreds of Children Aided

Throughout its existence, the association will provide financial aid to hundreds of children and be one of the cornerstones of the *Union internationale des Orphelins de Guerre (UIOG)* founded in Paris in 1956. In 1993, this organisation extended its field of support to children of Belgian citizens deceased during war or humanitarian operations decided by the Belgian government, thereby playing a pioneering role in changing the status of "veteran".

An Individual File for Each Orphan

The archives of the *Enfants de la Patrie (AA 2487)* are currently being inventorised, but it is already clear that this fund is a goldmine for anyone interested in the fate of children during and after the war. The archive is structured according to the proceedings of the General Assembly and Board of Administration meetings. It also contains documents about the activities of the organisation and charity dinners for the benefit of the children, as well as documents giving insight into the relationship with the *IP* and the *UIOG*. Yet, this 11 linear metre long archive holding is mainly composed of **individual files about each child** helped by the organisation. These files hold information about the death of the parents, about the legal guardians, but also about the living conditions of the children, about their school education and their professional aspirations. The archive holding also contains a photographic series (32 albums) related to the life of the organization in general.

Mathieu Roeges

21 / 9 / 2016



Saint Nicholas Day celebration organised by Les Enfants de la Patrie, 1941.
(CegeSoma, fund Enfants de la Patrie)

◀ [Back](#) ▶