

# CEGESOMA NEWSLETTER

## NO 24 - NOVEMBER 2016

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### **PUBLICATIONS – CITIES AT WAR, 1914-1918. WALLONIA AND BRUSSELS**

The authors of « La Wallonie dans la Grande Guerre » and « Bruxelles ville occupée » relate the experiences of Walloons and inhabitants of Brussels during the First World War through the medium of the image. They examine how the major challenges of this turbulent period are reflected by means of photographs, postcards or the illustrated press.

The books are for sale at CegeSoma at the price of 20 €. [\[MORE INFO\]](#) ([http://www.cegesoma.be/cms/index\\_en.php?article=3297&pag0nbr=30&pagofs=0](http://www.cegesoma.be/cms/index_en.php?article=3297&pag0nbr=30&pagofs=0))

### **CONFERENCE - DID THE BELGIAN ECONOMY REMAIN "FROZEN" AND "STATIC" FOR NEARLY A CENTURY?**

On 14 December 2016, Kristof Smeyers (University College London) will talk about Belgium's economic history since the First World War from a totally new perspective: was there a recovery in Belgium after the First World War or did the Belgian economy remain static from then on? [\[MORE INFO\]](#)

([http://www.cegesoma.be/cms/conferences\\_en.php?article=3283](http://www.cegesoma.be/cms/conferences_en.php?article=3283))

### **JBH – NEW THEME ISSUE: "BELGIAN MILITARY HISTORY UNTIL 1914"**

What is the significance of studying military history today? And where lies the relevance for Belgium, a state that for a long time had a mandatory neutral status and had only a limited military importance? The two young historians and guest editors of this new theme issue show that military history can be a flourishing field of research for Belgium, and that it is more than the history of famous battles!

[\[MORE INFO\]](#) ([http://www.cegesoma.be/cms/index\\_en.php?article=3289](http://www.cegesoma.be/cms/index_en.php?article=3289))

### **EXHIBITION - 14-18 THROUGH CHILDREN'S EYES**

The catalogue accompanying the exhibition « War in Short Pants, 14-18 » recounts the fate of children during the Great War. After a presentation of the history of childhood in 1914-1918, the book follows the traces of seven boys and girls who experienced the conflict in Belgium, Germany, Russia, the Ottoman Empire and Australia. The catalogue is for sale at the CegeSoma at the price of €13. [\[MORE INFO\]](#)

([http://www.cegesoma.be/cms/index\\_en.php?article=3303](http://www.cegesoma.be/cms/index_en.php?article=3303))

### **ARCHIVES – 20,000 NEW PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE SIPHO NEWS AGENCY DISCOVERED**

No less than 20,000 new pictures of the news agency Sipo have recently been discovered. They will enrich the first part of the fund preserved at CegeSoma, which already includes 175,000 images relating to Belgian and foreign news of the period 1930-1944. Filed and accessible in digital format, these photographs enjoy a high visibility and are frequently used to illustrate publications. [\[MORE INFO\]](#)

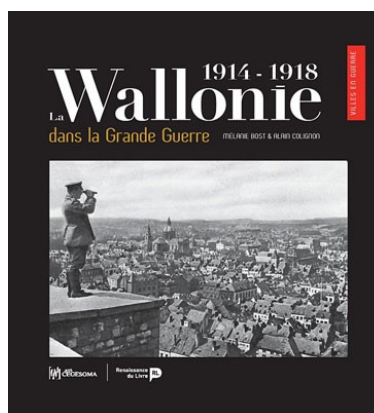
([http://www.cegesoma.be/cms/index\\_en.php?article=3300](http://www.cegesoma.be/cms/index_en.php?article=3300))

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## Cities at war, 1914-1918 - Wallonia and Brussels

The authors of *La Wallonie dans la Grande Guerre* and *Bruxelles ville occupée* relate the experiences of Walloons and inhabitants of Brussels during the First World War through the medium of the image. They examine how the major challenges of this turbulent period are reflected by means of photographs, postcards or the illustrated press.

The books are for sale at CegeSoma at the price of 20 €.



### A Double Challenge

Six years after the publication of the series "*Villes en guerre*", dedicated to the Second World War, the same approach was used in two new volumes with regard to the First World War. The challenge was twofold: to present an overview of a period less researched than the Second World War, on the basis of less and more dispersed photographic material.

### The Image as Vehicle

At the outbreak of the First World War, photography was already a long-established medium. To have one's photograph taken at important moments in life had become a custom. Not everyone possessed a camera yet, but the object had increasingly become a popular possession. The image had become an important vehicle and the occupier was determined to maintain control of it. Several restrictive measures explain the rarity of photographs by amateur photographers. The work of professional photographers has been better kept. Even in times of occupation, press photography became an essential medium during the First World War. Yet it would seem that some subjects were widely treated while others left few traces in visual history. The four authors have nevertheless succeeded to present many original photographs that present a varied image of day to day life in the cities at war.

### Wallonia and Brussels, Singularities and Convergences

In these two volumes, singularities and convergences between the "cities at war" are widely discussed. The capital may have escaped the worst of the massacres and destructions of the rest of the country, but like the Walloon cities it soon fell victim to famine, shortages and misery. By its status as capital and because of the presence of a Germanic community there was more than one cultural life in Brussels, which was not the case in Wallonia. The thousands of refugees who required food, shelter and care were an urgent problem both in Brussels and Wallonia.

These two richly illustrated volumes present an intimate image of Wallonia and Brussels during the First World War. This particular approach of the war via photography offers a whole new perspective of daily life in this troubled period.

- *La Wallonie dans la Grande Guerre 1914-1918* [Alain Colignon & Mélanie Bost], La Renaissance du Livre, 2016, 176 p.

- *Bruxelles ville occupée 1914-1918* [Chantal Kesteloot & Bruno Benvindo], La Renaissance du Livre, 2016, 176 p.

The books can be ordered at CegeSoma via email ([Lut Van Daele](mailto:Lut.Van.Daele@cegesoma.be)) or telephone (00 32 2 556 92 11) at the price of 20 € per book (postage not included) in stead of 22,90 € (bookseller's price)

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## A Conference by Kristof Smeyers

### *Het gestolde land. Een eeuw Belgische economie*

On **Wednesday 14 December 2016** (at 2.30 p.m.), CegeSoma will give the floor to **Kristof Smeyers** (University College of London). He will use a totally new perspective to talk about the economic history of Belgium since the First World War.

The conference will be held in Dutch.

#### **A Frozen Economy for Nearly a Century ?**

What if Belgium's economic difficulties started much earlier than is generally believed? This is the essence of the study of Kristof Smeyers and Erik Buyst recently published by Polis. A theory which is worth considering, decoding, analyzing.

Which is exactly what CegeSoma proposes by inviting **Kristof Smeyers** (*University College London*). He will talk about the economic history of Belgium since the First World War from a totally new perspective by examining the key question whether there was a recovery in Belgium after the First World War or whether the Belgian economy remained 'frozen' and static from then on?

#### **The War, a Socioeconomic Trauma**

Throughout the 20th century, the Belgian economy has undergone fundamental transformations. Before 1914, Belgium was a liberal, innovating and aggressive world power. It fundamentally remained this in 1918, although in a less pronounced manner. The war proved also traumatic on the socioeconomic level. In the following decades, the country tried to adapt by embracing protectionist trade policies. New economic mechanisms such as the index, the structures of social dialogue, social security, as well as a policy of pacification and international collaboration were introduced. The goal of these policies, which may well be seen as safeguards, was to prevent further catastrophes. At the same time, this meant that Belgium became a country that looked at real socioeconomic modernization with great hesitation. ? 100 years later, the little, open country still suffers from the effects of that policy caused by the trauma of WW I. Did little Belgium emerge from the trauma or did it remain in a frozen state for ever?

**Kristof Smeyers** (°1988) is cultural historian at the University College of London. Among his fields of interest are the history of books and libraries, the history of historiography, and also the history of globalisation which has inspired him to write a general study on the economic history of Belgium entitled *Het gestolde land* (Polis, 2016).

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](mailto:isabelle.delvaux@cegesoma.be)

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National Bank of Belgium – gold loading (32 millions BEF) (CegeSoma)

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## Journal of Belgian History - 2016, no. 2

### *Country and Army in the Making. The Belgian Military in the Long Nineteenth Century*

What is the significance of studying military history today ? And where lies the relevance for Belgium, a state that for a long time had a mandatory neutral status and had only a limited military importance ? Nel de Mûelenaere and Josephine Hoegaerts, the two young historians and guest editors of this new theme issue, show that military history can be a flourishing field of research for Belgium, with innovative and interdisciplinary methods.

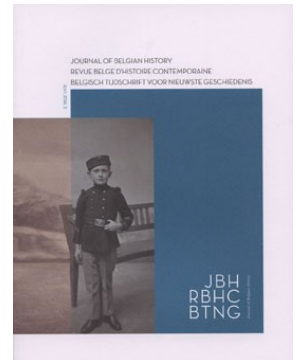
The articles in this issue offer a new perspective on the organization and practices of the Belgian army and demonstrate that, with respect to New Military History, Belgium can be an interesting subject in an international perspective, as is the case in other fields.

The articles in the section "debate" prove that a wide public is interested in military history and history teaching.

In other words: (Belgian) military history is very much alive and is more than the history of famous battles !

For more information, see the **new website** of the journal : <http://www.journalbelgianhistory.be>

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## 14-18 through children's eyes

The catalogue accompanying the exhibition "[War in Short Pants, 14-18](#)" recounts the fate of children during the Great War. After a presentation of the history of childhood in 1914-1918, the book follows the traces of seven boys and girls who experienced the conflict in Belgium, Germany, Russia, the Ottoman Empire and Australia. The catalogue is for sale at the CegeSoma at the price of €13.

### **A total war**

The First World War consists of more than trenches and mustard gas. For the first time in history, entire societies are included in the war effort. The war dominates everyday life, including that of children. From 1914 onwards, fathers and brothers leave for the front and families flee the occupant. The Great War thoroughly changes the children's lives.

### **Dreaming of the front**

More than ever, children are now both instrument and target for war propaganda. In all sorts of different ways, they are being mobilized to contribute to the war effort. Seemingly innocent channels such as literature, toys and coloring books aim to justify the war. Some older children even dream of taking part in the fighting on the front.



*Franz Przybyla, born in Dresden in 1904, captures some of the most important war events in his drawings. © Europeana 14-18.*

Touching testimonies and rich visual material bring to life the world children grew up in during the war. They show how this war turned their world upside down during four long years.

The catalogue is for sale at the CegeSoma. It costs €13 (excluding shipping costs) instead of €14,95 and also can be ordered by e-mail ([cegesoma@cegesoma.be](mailto:cegesoma@cegesoma.be)) or by telephone (00 32 2 556 92 11).

*Oorlog in Korte Broek, 14-18* (Bruno BENVINDO, Martine VAN ASCH & Rudi VAN DOORSLAER), Hannibal, 2016, 64 p.

To consult the list of our publications, [click here](#).



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## DISCOVERY - 20,000 new photographs of the Siphos news agency

No less than 20,000 new pictures of the news agency Siphos have recently been discovered. They will enrich the first part of the fund preserved at CegeSoma, which already includes 175,000 images relating to Belgian and foreign news of the period 1930-1944. Filed and accessible in digital format, these photographs enjoy a high visibility and are frequently used to illustrate publications.

The archives of the international press agency Siphos constitute one of the most important parts of the iconographic collections preserved by the CegeSoma. The archives do not only include the production of the Siphos agency itself between 1930 and 1944 but also photos made by a national and international network of news agencies whose images relating to Belgian and foreign news were distributed by Siphos in the 1930s and early 1940s.

### **Archives confiscated due to collaboration**

In the context of the post-war trials for acts of collaboration, the Siphos agency was condemned by the Military Prosecutor's Office in 1946 and its archives were confiscated by the Belgian State. These archives were transferred to the State Archives and when the CegeSoma was founded in the late sixties the archives were moved there. The archives have gradually been inventoried by the staff as well as by passionate volunteers.

### **175,000 photos scanned and made accessible**

At present, nearly 175,000 images have been made available in digital form, either online or in the CegeSoma reading room. The internal logic of the fund has been kept during filing and photographs were therefore first inventoried by country and then by theme. The best represented countries are Belgium, Germany, France, Russia and Great Britain. However, the fund is also valuable for its photos concerning Latin America, Northern Africa and the countries in the Pacific Ocean.

### **Use of photos**

The advent of digitisation in the mid-nineties and the development of a photo module for the document management system of the CegeSoma (Pallas) have ensured that the Siphos collection enjoys a great visibility. The images are often used in scientific as well as in popular publications. In addition to the thematic approach of a classic inventory, Pallas also offers the possibility of describing an individual picture by means of a legend. To ensure the integrity of the archival documents, it was decided to preserve the original legends, namely the propaganda texts that were sent along with photos when they were distributed to Belgian or foreign media after the Germans had censored them.

### **20,000 new images to explore**

We thought we had reached the end of our effort to ensure the accessibility and distribution of the Siphos fund, but this year 20,000 additional photos were discovered at the State Archives. Consequently, there is yet again classification work for a few years. At present, the photos are being reviewed to establish how many are already present in the original collection in order to determine how much work will have to be carried out. Who knows, maybe this latest find will contain some surprises !

### **Florence Gillet**

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Photographs in their original maps before repackaging by CegeSoma

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