

CEGESOMA NEWSLETTER

NO 15 - JUNE 2015

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"VAN ONZE JONGENS GEEN NIEUWS" A ROAD TRIP IN TIMES OF WAR

75 years ago, the Belgian government sent around 300 000 young men to France. The idea was to keep them out of reach of the German invader. Three historians re-lived the improbable adventure, and wrote a fascinating book about it. [\[MORE INFO\]](http://www.cegesoma.be/cms/index_en.php?article=2961&pag0nbr=28&pagofs=0)

AN IMPORTANT POLITICAL ASSASSINATION

On 18 August 1950, Julien Lahaut, charismatic leader of the communist party, was assassinated on his own doorstep. This political murder, of paramount importance in the history of Belgium, had never been clarified. Qui a tué Julien Lahaut? reviews the judicial inquiry carried out at the time of the facts, and explores new approaches to the case by replacing the facts in the context of the Cold War. [\[MORE INFO\]](http://www.cegesoma.be/cms/index_en.php?article=2958&pag0nbr=28&pagofs=0)

NOW AVAILABLE IN BOOKSHOPS: SPECIAL ISSUE ON BELGIUM 1940-1945

A number of members of our staff were requested to collaborate with Le Vif L'Express for a special issue dedicated to the history of Belgium during the Second World War. The result is a richly illustrated volume, which gives precise and nuanced analyses based on the most recent sources. [\[MORE INFO\]](http://www.cegesoma.be/cms/index_en.php?article=2968&pag0nbr=28&pagofs=0)

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME 'WAR AND FATHERLAND' COMPLETED

The international conference War & Fatherland. Nations, Identities and the First World War takes place in October. The final programme is now complete and contains seven internationally renowned keynote speakers. A closing panel discussion will tackle the ongoing Belgian WW I research. [\[MORE INFO\]](http://www.cegesoma.be/cms/index_en.php?article=2892&pag0nbr=28&pagofs=0)

EHRI CONTINUES UNDER HORIZON 2020

The international Holocaust-project EHRI (European Holocaust Research Infrastructure) will be expanded. The EU has decided to support the next phase of EHRI work with 8 million euro of funding under Horizon 2020. [\[MORE INFO\]](http://www.cegesoma.be/cms/index_en.php?article=2971)

VALUABLE WAR & TELEVISION ARCHIVES NOW AT CEGESOMA

Recently, Cegesoma acquired the documentary archives of two well-known RTBF journalists and programme makers. We also received some important private archives related to the Second World War. [\[MORE INFO\]](http://www.cegesoma.be/cms/index_en.php?article=2964&pag0nbr=28&pagofs=0)

“Van onze jongens geen nieuws”, a Road Trip in Times of War

75 years ago, the Belgian government sent around 300 000 young men to France. The idea was to keep them out of reach of the German invader. Three historians relived the improbable adventure, and wrote a fascinating [book](#) about it.

Young Men on the Warpath

When the German army invaded Belgium in May 1940, around 300 000 men aged between 16 and 35 received the order to leave the land. They did not say where to or for how long. The Belgian government wanted to keep them from falling in German hands and to remain south as reserve soldiers. The men left by train, bicycle or even on foot, and landed in Northern France, with the Germans right on their heels. Most of them had never been that far from home. They soon learned what war meant: bombardments, fear, unending flows of refugees...

To Become a Man in Three Months

Around half of the men were caught up by the enemy and did not get further than the Somme. The rest were embarked southwards by train. In southern France, they discovered the pleasures of “la douce France”: wine, French beauties and delightful sunshine. On the other hand, they also suffered idleness, hunger, sickness, and they missed their homes. They were never to become soldiers.

Running After the Past

75 years later, Belgian historians [Karel Strobbe](#), [Hans Boers](#) and Pieter Serrien, fascinated by the Belgian reserve draftees' road trip, decided to retrace their steps. They gathered the results of their journey in [Van onze jongens geen nieuws](#). The book features stories from testimonies, journals and historical documents, bringing a forgotten war episode back to life.

[Chantal Kesteloot](#) will talk with the three authors on **Wednesday 17 June**. The book can be purchased after the discussion (25€).

Practical information

When: **Wednesday 17 June 2015**, from 14:30 to 16:30

Where: Square de l'Aviation, 29, 1070 Brussels

Attendance: free, please subscribe before 15 June via cegesoma@cegesoma.be or 02/5569211

Language: Dutch



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Qui a tué Julien Lahaut ?

Emmanuel Gerard (éd.), Widukind De Ridder & Françoise Muller

Qui a tué Julien Lahaut ? Les ombres de la guerre froide en Belgique

A political assassination

On 11 August 1950, the communists present at King Baudouin's oath shouted "Long live the Republic!". One week later, Julien Lahaut, charismatic leader of the communist party, was assassinated at his own doorstep. This political murder, of paramount importance in the history of Belgium, had never been clarified.

The trajectory of an anticommunist network

Qui a tué Julien Lahaut? reviews the judicial inquiry carried out at the time of the facts, and explores new approaches to the case. The authors dug through the archives and found a "forgotten" document that led to André Moyen. The latter was an agent whose mission was to create an anti-communist network in Belgium after WWII.

Why was the assassination never Clarified ?

The book follows the tracks of Moyen, shedding light on the intellectual authors and members of this network. Its ramifications go as far as extremist groups and outstanding figures of the financial milieu. By replacing the facts in the context of the Cold War, the authors reveal how and why the inquiry got stuck in the midst of errors and omissions, which explains why the murder was not clarified.

The authors

Emmanuel Gerard is professor in history at the KU Leuven. He specializes in the study of 20th century political life in Belgium and has been a member of the parliamentary committee of inquiry into the assassination of Patrice Lumumba. The book was co-written with two experienced historians : Françoise Muller, author of a doctoral thesis on the history of the Court of Cassation, and Widukind De Ridder, doctor in history specializing in the study of labour organization and professional relations in modern times.

To order the book

The book can be ordered at CEGESOMA ([Lut Van Daele](#) or 00 32 2 556 92 07) at the price of 19,95 EUR, postage not included, instead of 24,90 EUR (bookseller's price).

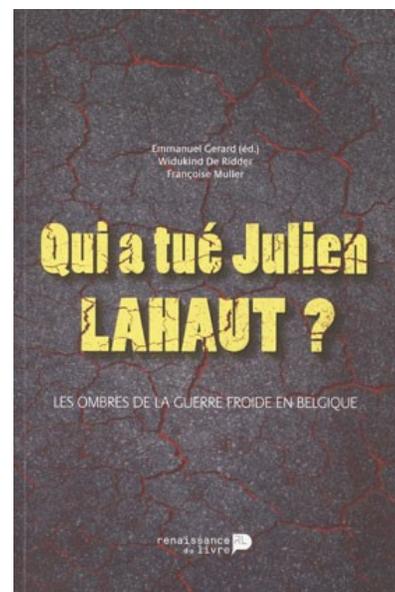
The Book

Qui a tué Julien Lahaut ? Les ombres de la guerre froide en Belgique [Emmanuel Gerard (ed.), Widukind De Ridder & Françoise Muller], Waterloo, Renaissance du livre/CegeSoma, 2015, 16 x 24 cm, 350 p.

Press map with downloadable images and extracts of the book

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Special Issue on Belgium 1940-1945

A number of members of our staff were requested to collaborate with Le Vif L'Express for a special issue dedicated to the history of Belgium during the Second World War. The result is a richly illustrated volume, which gives precise and nuanced analyses based on the most recent sources.

Team Work, Diverse Approaches

Fifteen historians, six of them from CegeSoma, embark on the vast topic of World War II. A total of twenty-three chapters, richly illustrated with photographs, many of which come from our own collection, cover the entire conflict from the very rise of danger until the lessons drawn from the war, including the invasion, the occupation and the liberation. Military events feature of course in detail, but even more attention is paid to the way in which the population experienced the occupation. The period is described in detail, with particular attention to the attitude of the occupier, daily life, economics and work, collaboration, the attitude of the local government, the persecution of the Jews, resistance movements, propaganda, Nazi repression, the Church, education, culture, the Congo, the exile of the government, the stance of political parties and, finally that of King Leopold III.

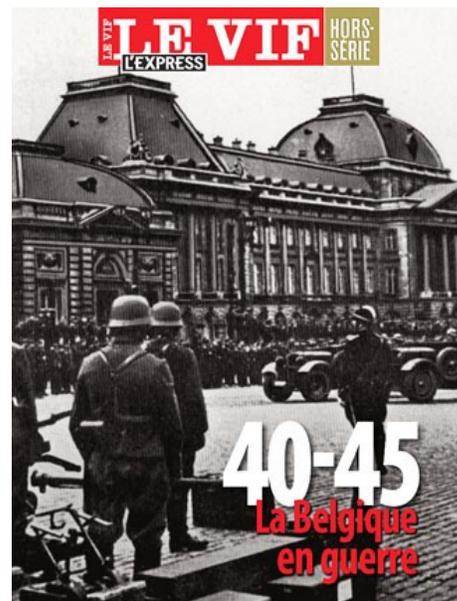
Beside this bulky collection of information, it also features a special file by the editorial staff of Le Vif L'Express about the Normandy landings and Belgian life during the harsh summer of 1944.

Belgians at War, no Shortcuts, no Compromises

This original study is of great importance, carefully written by the greatest Belgian experts on WWII. It features in a concise way the main and most recent achievements on the subject. Moreover, one of the conclusions was written by one of the rare foreign experts on the matter. As often happens in the field of history, the resulting picture is far more nuanced and the reality is far more complex than certain simplistic and manichean views that have been recreated lately by diverse Flemish and Walloon circles. Yet a balanced view does not necessarily imply making compromises. This is clear in the article on Leopold III written by Vincent Dujardin. Indeed, on the basis of the King's unedited personal diaries, he reveals a profoundly anti-communist monarch, who even refused, on the basis of his ideology, to oppose compulsory labour in Germany.

So many reasons to set hands on this 180-pages long issue, 40-45 La Belgique en guerre, which costs 14,95 euros. Available in bookshops or via [Mediaclub](#).

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“War & Fatherland” Colloquium Programme is Finalized

This autumn, the international colloquium “*War & Fatherland. Nations, Identities and the First World War*” will take place in Brussels. Outstanding Belgian and foreign historians, among whom Sophie De Schaepdrijver, will debate on nationalism and collective identities during and in the aftermath of WWI.

Seven Outstanding Keynote Speakers

“War & Fatherland” is a colloquium with high scientific ambitions. The programme includes interventions from internationally renowned experts on WWI and nationalism. Seven keynote speakers will participate, namely John Horne (Trinity College Dublin), Daniel Laqua (Northumbria University Newcastle), John Breuille (London School of Economics and Political Science), Peter Gatrell (University of Manchester), Elise Julien (*Institut d'Études politiques de Lille*), David Edgerton (King's College London) and Sophie De Schaepdrijver (Penn State university).

The Belgian experts will present the six thematic sessions. International experts will reflect on the keynote. This will be followed by questions and a debate.

Belgian and International Research Agendas

The seventh and final session uses a different format. The Keynote Lecture by Sophie De Schaepdrijver will be followed by a panel discussion, moderated by [Chantal Kesteloot](#) (CegeSoma). Two Belgian early stage researchers, two Belgian senior researchers and two conference Keynote speakers will reflect upon the impressive body of ongoing Belgian WW I-research and to place Belgium's war research agenda in its international context.

Unique inter-university project

“War & Fatherland” is also a project supported by all Belgian universities through a inter-university scientific committee. The committee also includes representatives of the Royal Military Academy, the State Archives and The Royal Library. CegeSoma acts as coordinator.

“War & Fatherland” practicalities

- When: **14 & 15 October 2015**
- Where: Egmont Palace Brussels
- Programme & registration : www.warandfatherland2015.org
- Different attendance fees



Men from Paris on the way to their units in August 1914. (Photo 'Archives nationales de France')

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EHRI Continues Under Horizon 2020

Kick-off for its Second Funding Period in Brussels on 29 and 30 June

The international Holocaust-project EHRI (European Holocaust Research Infrastructure) will be expanded. The EU has decided to support the next phase of EHRI work with 8 million euro of funding under Horizon 2020.

Already present in 51 Countries

The news was announced by Robert-Jan Smits, Director-General of DG Research and Innovation at the European Commission, at the presentation of the EHRI portal in Berlin on 26 March 2015. The EHRI portal provides access to more than 1,800 Holocaust-related archival institutions in fifty-one countries, and to descriptions of tens of thousands of archival materials. Starting out in 2010 as a EC-financed initiative, researchers in twenty institutions in Europe and Israel worked together to make archives accessible and to connect collections.

Second phase: Expanding and Reinforcing

International historical research into the Holocaust and its impact as a European phenomenon has to be continued, according to the EU. In this second phase, EHRI will consolidate its existing position and expand it to other countries. The new consortium will enable EHRI to reach those regions where much valuable Holocaust source material is located, but where access has hitherto been problematic. Director-General Robert-Jan Smits said: "EHRI's impressive work has given invaluable support to Holocaust researchers. I am delighted that under Horizon 2020 the project will even expand its scope during the second phase. It will continue to be a 'best practice' model for other humanities projects in its innovative approach not only as regards data integration, management and retrieval, but also as outreach to society."

First Plenary Meeting in Brussels on 29 and 30 June

CegeSoma continues to take part in the Consortium by actively contributing to various aspects of its work, including hosting fellows via the EHRI fellowship program. The first general partner meeting of the new consortium of twenty-two institutions from seventeen countries will be held in Brussels on 29 and 30 June. Further information can be found on [EHRI's website](#).

[Veerle Vanden Daelen](#)



EHRI online portal presentation on 26 March 2015. (Photo EHRI)

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We Acquire Valuable War & Television Archives

Recently, Cegesoma acquired the documentary archives of two well-known RTBF journalists and programme makers. We also received some important private archives related to the Second World War.

Two documentary makers of the RTBF

The documents of the late André Dartevelle (1944-2015) mainly concern WWII in Belgium and the resistance. Its inventorisation has already started. Hugues Le Paige dealt with more general post-war topics, such as conscientious objection and international politics (Mitterrand!). He also deposited the archives concerning his activities outside the RTBF, among others those of *'Mémoire et Politique'*.

Archives of eye-witnesses

But more new archives will soon be available to our reading room visitors. A number of files stand out. Among these the archives of Georges Henry, the last president of the Union nationale des CRAB's (the Belgian young men who were supposed to form a new army in France in 1940). Part of the archives of Piet Meuwissen is also deposited at CegeSoma. He was the wartime head of the *Corporation nationale de l'Agriculture et de l'Alimentation*, a key figure in the food production and distribution.

In agreement with Kazerne Dossin, the archives of the well-known – some would say notorious – communist resistance fighter Louis "Lowietje" Van Brussel (leader of the Armed Partisans) have been deposited at CegeSoma.

Finally, we acquired a voluminous research archive on the events of 1940, the political history of the occupation and the royal question.

[Dirk Martin](#)



Louis Van Brussel speaks during a ceremony in honour of the Armed Partisans. In the background we can see, from left to right, portraits of Stalin, Roosevelt (largely hidden), Leopold III, Churchill and De Gaulle. (Photo CegeSoma, fund Louis Van Brussel, No. 33331)

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