

## CEGESOMA - State Archives

## NEWSLETTER

No 107 - October 2025



## NEWS

## REPORT – WORKSHOP ON COMMUNISM

A look back at a workshop co-organised by CegeSoma on new perspectives on communists and communism in Belgium. Explore new research avenues and methodologies based on recently accessible sources.

► Read more



## ON THE AGENDA



## LECTURE

The Belgian Railways in Wartime: a lecture by Nico Wouters on Sunday, 9 November 2025, at 11 a.m. (DU) and at 2.30 p.m. (FR) in Train World, Schaerbeek. Visitors can explore the museum exhibition before or after the lecture.

► Read more

## FAMILY STORIES AND HISTORICAL TRUTH

A conversation (in Dutch) between Björn Rzoska and Timmie Van Diepen on 12 November 2025, about (the transmission of) family memory and the history of the Second World War. The discussion will be moderated by Dimitri Roden.

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ELIJKE BEHANDELING VAN DADERS EN SLACHTOFFERS DOOR DUITSLAND NA WERELDOORLOG  
TRAITEMENT ENTRE LES AUTEURS ET LES VICTIMES PAR L'ALLEMAGNE APRÈS LA SECONDE GUERRE

**SAVE THE DATE**  
STUDIEDAG - 28.11.2025 - JOURNÉE D'ÉTUDE

4 maart 2019	4 mars 2019
<b>VOORSTEL VAN RESOLUTIE</b> over de verduidelijking en de stopzetting van de regeling inzake pensioenen die worden toegekend aan Belgische voormalige militaire collaborateurs van het Duitse nationaalsocialistische regime tijdens de Tweede Wereldoorlog	<b>PROPOSITION DE RÉOLUTION</b> visant à clarifier et à abroger le régime des pensions octroyées aux anciens collaborateurs militaires belges du régime national-socialiste allemand durant la Seconde Guerre mondiale

## GERMAN FINANCIAL COMPENSATION

On 28 November 2025, a study day will take place at the VUB on the imbalance between German financial compensation for collaborators and for the victims of Nazism. Don't hesitate to register!

► Read more

## ARCHIVING IN BELGIUM

The Belgian archival sector is gathering. More than 200 people have already registered for this first national archives conference, which will take place on 1 December in Brussels. Discover the programme and register until 24 November. Simultaneous translation will be provided.

► [Programme and registration](#)



## YOUNG HISTORIANS' DAY

On Friday, 5 December, around twenty recently graduated historians from universities across the country will present their master's theses. A day not to be missed!

► [Read more](#)



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[Home](#) » [News](#) » Workshop report: New Critical Perspectives on Communists and Communism in Belgium.

## Workshop report: New Critical Perspectives on Communists and Communism in Belgium.



On Wednesday, 22 October, an international workshop was held at CegeSoma entitled New Critical Perspectives on Communists and Communism in Belgium. In their introduction, **Chantal Kesteloot** and **Widukind De Ridder**, explained how more than a year after the passing of José Gotovitch it was time for junior and senior scholars to reflect on new avenues of research, innovative methodologies, and recently accessible sources.

The first session explored the intricate relationship between communism and several transnational solidarity movements – for instance, with Algeria between 1954 and 1962, and with the anti-apartheid movement from the 1960s to the 1980s. **Paul-Emmanuel Babin** examined how the communist youth and student movement at the Université Libre de Bruxelles came into conflict with the party hierarchy over its denunciation of the “genocide” that France was committing against the Algerian people.

**Aline Martello** seamlessly linked the anti-colonial struggle in Algeria to anti-apartheid activism by tracing the trajectory of lawyer and activist Paulette Pierson-Mathy from the 1960s into the 1980s. Her fascinating talk shed light on the dynamics between the far left, social democracy, and other networks in the transnational politicization of anti-apartheid – a politicization that, among other things, sought to sever Belgium’s military and economic ties with South Africa.

Joining the conference online from Pretoria, **Jitske Quanten** confirmed some of Martello’s observations regarding the comparatively lesser or belated impact of this politicization in Flanders. Her case study focused on the efforts of a younger generation of Flemish Eurocommunists to connect anti-apartheid activism with their own federalist aspirations in Belgium, often in opposition to the party leadership.

The final presentation of this session, delivered by **Sigfrido Ramírez**, examined several “mass organizations” established by the PCB and PCE in exile during the Franco dictatorship. These transnational community and syndicalist movements eventually helped bridge the gap between opposition to Francoist Spain and similar

authoritarian regimes in Latin America during the 1970s and 1980s.

The final session turned to the wealth of archival sources made available in recent years, while emphasizing the lack of oral histories to accompany them. **Luca Provenzano** explained how the gradual integration of the PCF and PCI into the political fabric of France and Italy was accompanied by an improvised reconfiguration of state anti-communism in the wake of the student revolts and labour unrest of the 1960s and 1970s.

In his subsequent presentation on Belgium, **Elie Teicher** offered an overview of both the possibilities and limits of writing the history of the so-called New Left based on police archives, stressing the urgent need to develop oral histories – a call that resonated strongly with the audience.

**Widukind De Ridder** argued for a conceptually driven approach to the history of antifascism in Belgium. Rather than viewing it as a unified left-wing strategy to confront the rise of fascism in the 1920s and 1930s, he posited that antifascism was, from the outset, a divisive concept that enabled both social democrats and communists to assert influence over the workers' movement in their respective countries as well as during the Spanish Civil War. The "popular front" policies that emerged from these dynamics later facilitated communist participation in the first postwar governments in countries such as France, Italy, and Belgium.

The complexities of these policies were further illustrated in **Guy Coppieters'** presentation on the unexpected role of the PCB in resolving the Belgian coal crisis prior to the onset of the Cold War in 1947.

**Frederik Verleden** likewise drew attention to the often-overlooked parliamentary activities of the PCB. Through statistical analysis, he sought to account for differences and similarities with their parliamentary counterparts. Finally, **François Bellot and Theun Vonckx** brought the workshop to a fitting close by presenting the contents of the research and militant archives of José Gotovitch. Combined with the archival sources, methodologies, and theoretical frameworks discussed throughout the day, these collections will hopefully offer fertile ground for future research.

#### Other news

[Ctrl-Alt-History: \(Digital\) Humanities meets AI](#)

[CegeSoma Annual Report 2023-2024](#)

[Belgium WWII : a new thematic page, in-depth contributions and new entries](#)

[A special issue of JBH devoted to the history of the police and public order in Belgium](#)

[Changes to the CegeSoma reading room](#)

[Looted Art and the Art Market: Nazi Art Theft in Belgium, Europe, and its aftermath](#)

[Resistance fighters in the underground press on the online platform Resistance in Belgium!](#)

[Workshop Report: "The Korean War and Belgium"](#)

[Issue 2/2025 of the Journal of Belgian History \(RBHC/BTNG\) released](#)

[80 jaar na de Tweede Wereldoorlog: welk verleden voor de toekomst?](#)

[The Great\(er\) War of Military Occupations in Europe](#)

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[Home](#) » [Event](#) » Confronting family stories with historical reality

## Confronting family stories with historical reality

CegeSoma Public History Meeting (2025-7)

World War II [Conference](#)



**Conference-debate (in Dutch) with guests**

**Björn Rzoska and Timmie Van Diepen.**

**An interview conducted by Dimitri Roden.**

On Wednesday 12 November at 2:00 p.m., CegeSoma will host a Public History Meeting with two authors who will unflinchingly examine family memory and the history of World War II in a personal quest for understanding and transmission.

In *Gedeelde grond* (*Common Ground*), historian Björn Rzoska traces the intersecting paths of his two grandfathers:

one a Flemish volunteer who fought on the Eastern Front, the other a Polish soldier. Drawing on previously unpublished archives consulted in Belgium and abroad, he compares family stories with historical reality and reveals a complex, intimate, and collective memory. His journey took him from Poland to Normandy, and then to Waasmunster, where the paths of the two men unexpectedly converged.

In *De razzia. Het waargebeurde verhaal achter een doodgezwegen oorlogsdrama* (*The Razzia: The True Story Behind a Hushed-up War Drama*), historian and journalist Timmie van Diepen investigates a tragedy that has long been silenced: the Molenbeersel roundup (*razzia*) in August 1944. Five members of his family lost their lives there, following a reprisal operation long described as a 'mistake'. After ten years of research in the archives and interviews with the last remaining witnesses and their descendants, he reconstructs the facts with precision and questions how this war violence has been passed on – or concealed – within families and collective memory more broadly.

Although these two works differ significantly in their approaches, they demonstrate a common desire to find meaning in silences, confront family stories with historical realities, and pass on a resonant memory. During the presentation, authors will be invited to reflect on several questions. For instance, how do we navigate between personal memory and historical truth? What dilemmas arise when we question family stories? How do these personal stories shed light on the mechanisms of war, collaboration, and resistance? Why were certain tragedies silenced for generations? And how can we transmit these stories to future generations without freezing them in time or betraying them?

The two authors will be interviewed by Dimitri Roden before the floor is opened to the public. This event is part of the CegeSoma Public History Meetings series and has been organised in collaboration with the non-profit organisation 'Friends of CegeSoma'.



**Timmie Van Diepen** studied history at *KU Leuven* and journalism at *VUB*.

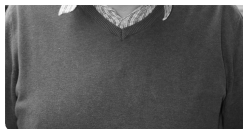
He is a political journalist for *Het Laatste Nieuws*, after writing for *Het Belang van Limburg* for 15 years.



**Björn Rzoska** studied history at Ghent University, where he carried out research on the Lokeren Internment Centre after the Second World War (1944–1947). After working in the cultural heritage sector with *FARO*, he turned to politics and served as a member of the Flemish Parliament for almost 12 years. He is currently chief librarian for the University of Antwerp Library.



**Dimitri Roden** holds a PhD in history from *UGent* and a PhD in social and military sciences from the Royal Military Academy. He worked as a historian at the Breendonk National Memorial, was a research assistant at the Royal Museum of the Armed Forces/WHI, and conducted postdoctoral research at the Military Academy on collaboration, repression, and military



justice. He is currently in charge of the FED-Twin People@War project at Cegesoma.



12/11/2025 - 14:00 to 15:30

### PRACTICAL INFORMATION

**Where:** Cegesoma conference room, Aviation Square 29 – 1070 Brussels

**When:** Wednesday 12 November 2025 (2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.)

**Registration required:** [isabelle.ponteville@arch.be](mailto:isabelle.ponteville@arch.be) or 02.556.92.11

**Admission:** €5.00 (paid on arrival)

It will be possible to purchase both books after the event (cash only and for the exact amount):

- Björn Rzoska, *Gedeelde grond*, Erstberg, 2024, 224 p. (€27.50)

- Timmie Van Diepen, *De razzia. Het waargebeurde verhaal achter een doodgezwegen oorlogsdrama*, Pelckmans, 2024, 384 p. (€29.50)

### Main language

Dutch

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[Home](#) » [Event](#) » Unequal treatment of perpetrators and victims by Germany after World War II

# Unequal treatment of perpetrators and victims by Germany after World War II

**World War II**   [Study day](#)

## STUDIEDAG - 28.11.2025 - JOURNÉE D'ÉTUDE

DE ONGELIJKE BEHANDELING VAN DADERS EN SLACHTOFFERS DOOR DUITSLAND NA WERELDOORLOG II

L'INÉGALITÉ DE TRAITEMENT ENTRE LES AUTEURS ET LES VICTIMES PAR L'ALLEMAGNE APRÈS LA SECONDE GUERRE MONDIALE

<p>4 maart 2019</p> <h3>VOORSTEL VAN RESOLUTIE</h3> <p>over de verduidelijking en de stopzetting van de regeling inzake pensioenen die worden toegekend aan Belgische voormalige militaire collaborateurs van het Duitse nationaalsocialistische regime tijdens de Tweede Wereldoorlog</p>	<p>4 mars 2019</p> <h3>PROPOSITION DE RÉSOLUTION</h3> <p>visant à clarifier et à abroger le régime des pensions octroyées aux anciens collaborateurs militaires belges du régime national-socialiste allemand durant la Seconde Guerre mondiale</p>
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CegeSoma, the non-profit organization Helden van het Verzet, and the VUB chair Sporen van het Verzet invite you to participate in a study day on 28 November 2025 at the VUB Campus in Etterbeek (Promotiezaal D.201). The (re)discovery of German payments to people convicted in the context of the repression of collaboration in Belgium led the Belgian Parliament in 2019 to pass a resolution calling for an end to this practice and for the establishment of a commission of historians to study its origins and mechanisms. Although the resolution had no impact, the scientific questions remain relevant. They refer to a lesser known aspect of Belgian-German relations after the Second World War and raise the question of a striking imbalance between German financial compensation for collaborators and that for victims of Nazism. The study day aims to review the current state of the issue and formulate new avenues of research.

## PROGRAM

- **9:00 a.m. Welcome**
- **9:30 a.m. Welcome address**

Moderator: **Nel De Mûelenaere** (Chair 'Sporen van het Verzet', VUB)

- **9.45 a.m. Christoph Brüll** (C<sup>2</sup>DH/Université du Luxembourg), *Les traités bilatéraux belgo-allemands relatifs à la Seconde Guerre mondiale (et ses conséquences)*.
- **10.15 a.m. Dirk Luyten** (CegeSoma/Rijksarchief) & **Widukind De Ridder** (CegeSoma/Rijksarchief - KULeuven),

*Emissiebank, clearing, clearingschuld en de naoorlogse juridische en financiële afwikkeling tegen de achtergrond van de economische herstellpolitiek.*

- **10:45 a.m. Discussion**
- **11:00 a.m. Stefan Klemp** (Dortmund, independent researcher), *Opferrenten für KZ-Aufseher- kein Verstoß gegen Grundsätze der Menschlichkeit?* (Translation will be provided)
- **11.30 a.m. Koen Aerts** (UGent), *De prijs van de collaboratie: patrimoniale sancties na de Tweede Wereldoorlog.*
- **12:00 Discussion**
- **12:30 Lunch break**
- **1.30 p.m. Bruno Duboisdenghien & Alvin De Coninck** (researchers), *Duitse pensioenen voor collaborateurs, vanuit de vergeetput van de Senaat (naar een nooit toegepaste) Kamerresolutie 1997-2019.*
- **1.50 Christoph Brüll** (C<sup>2</sup>DH/Université du Luxembourg), *Les administrations ministérielles allemandes et les paiements en faveur de Belges sur base de la Bundesversorgungsgesetz.*
- **2:20 p.m. Discussion**
- **2:45 p.m. Coffee break**
- **3.00 p.m. Charlotte Wirth** (Journalist), *Pensions for the SS? How we challenged German bureaucracy and found on of last living Waffen-SS Volunteers.*
- **3.30 p.m. Dany Neudt** (founder of the non-profit organisation Helden van het Verzet), *Hoe zinvol is een herinneringsbeweging?*
- **3:50 p.m. Discussion**
- **4:10 p.m. Conclusions: Nel De Mûelenaere** (Chair 'Sporen van het Verzet', VUB)



**28/11/2025 - 09:00 to 17:00**

## PRACTICAL INFORMATION

**Where:** VUB Campus in Etterbeek (Promotiezaal D.201). The 'Promotiezaal' is located in building D ([you can download a map of the campus here](#)). Parking is available on campus.

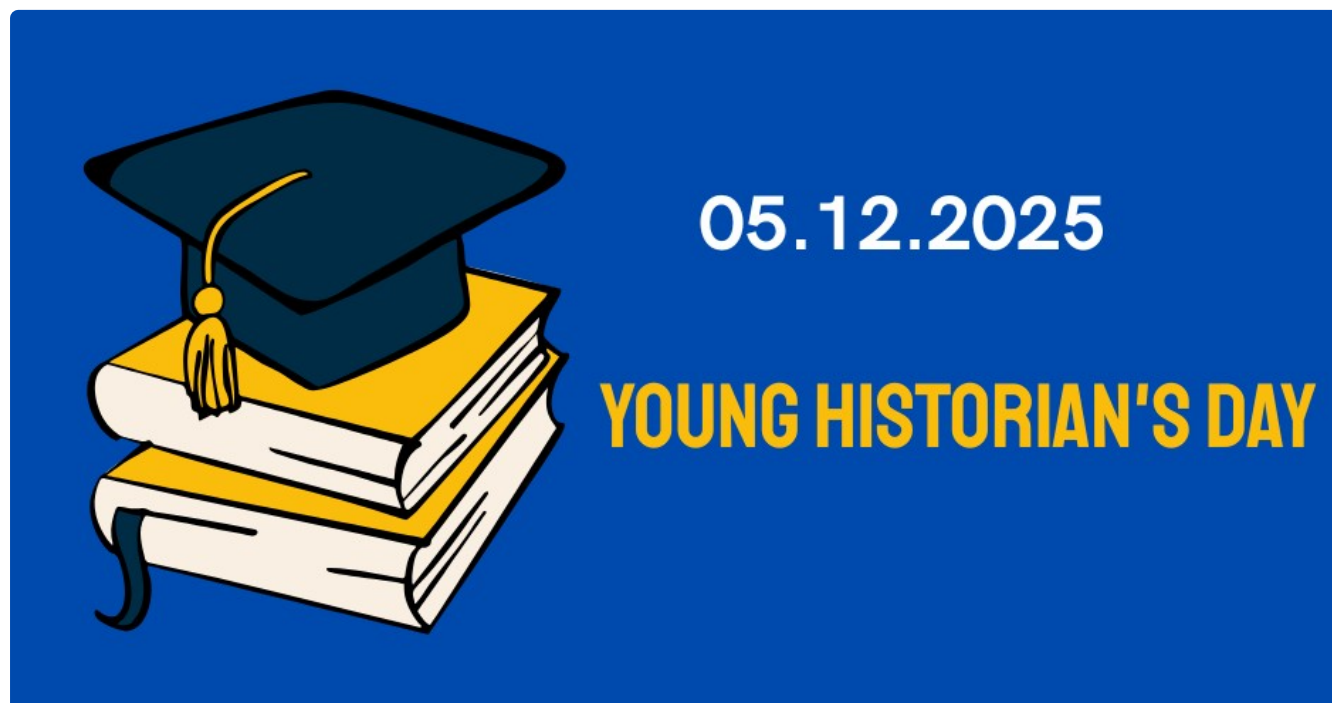
**When:** Friday, November 28, 2025 (from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.)

**Registration:** [isabelle.ponteville@arch.be](mailto:isabelle.ponteville@arch.be)

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## Young Historian's Day

[World War I](#)   [World War II](#)   [Cold War](#)   [Study day](#)

CegeSoma/State Archives invites you to its annual study day on Friday, 5 December 2025, featuring master's theses by talented young graduate historians.

This year, 19 students will present the results of their research.

The history of World War I will be covered through topics ranging from the emotional expressions of French-speaking Flemings in their personal diaries to the role of DNA analysis in identifying missing soldiers, Belgians in the Canadian Expeditionary Force, and the denunciation of incivism after the war.

The interwar period will feature topics like Belgium and the Sino-Japanese War, and the criminalization of anarchists in Belgium.

As every year, the history of World War II will be covered extensively with such diverse topics as the comparative study of the daily lives of Eastern Front soldiers in the Walloon Legion and the Legion of French Volunteers Against Bolshevism, the Belgian delegation investigating the Katyń massacre, the post-war reconstruction of Brussels, debates on the repression of incivism, the attack on the Antwerp police academy in November 1942, the study of resistance in history classes or resistance and censorship in Spirou magazine.

The Cold War will also be discussed, with a focus on crimes committed by the Belgian volunteer battalion in Korea, the International Council of Women's fight against apartheid, and the missionary activities of the Congregation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (CICM) in the Philippines.

Finally, the program will also include topics like Belgium's Communist Party and the politicization of abortion in Flanders, fascism as a concept, and the culture of fascist memory in the Abruzzo region.

A very interesting program that once more will give you the opportunity to discover the latest areas of research at our universities. As usual, this meeting is open to everyone... So welcome, you all!

## [-> Discover the program for the day](#)



**05/12/2025 - 09:00 to 16:30**

### **PRACTICAL INFORMATION**

**Venue:** Conference room of CegeSoma, Square de l'Aviation 29 – 1070 Brussels

**Date :** Friday 5 December 2025

**Registration mandatory until 3 December 2025 at the latest:** [isabelle.ponteville@arch.be](mailto:isabelle.ponteville@arch.be) or +32 (0)2.556.92.11 – please indicate if you would like to have a small snack (sandwich, drink) at noon.

- ▶ Fee per day: € 7.00 (Participation is free for students attending the presentations of the papers - ! registration is mandatory).
- ▶ Fee per day including lunch: € 15.00 (Participation is free for students attending the presentations of the papers - ! registration is mandatory).

Please transfer the right amount beforehand to the account of CegeSoma: IBAN: BE12 6792 0045 0092 - BIC: PCHQBEBB + communication: 05.12.2025 + Last name and first name. Upon payment, you are automatically registered for the Study Day.

Feel free to bring someone with you!

### **Main language**

Dutch  
French

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