

CEGESOMA - State Archives

NEWSLETTER

No 109 - January 2026



NEWS

WILLEM MEYERS HAS PASSED AWAY

With the loss of this former colleague, who worked at CegeSoma until the late 1990s, we have lost a wealth of knowledge and a piece of the history of the “old Centre”. Among other things, we owe him high-quality publications and countless interviews.

► [Read More](#)



CTRL-ALT-HISTORY: (DIGITAL) HUMANITIES MEETS AI

Call for contributions within the framework of the Contemporary History Day dedicated to the opportunities, risks, and challenges associated with AI as it relates to Belgian historical research, heritage management, and education.

► [Read More](#)

NEW CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

If you are passionate about history with a working knowledge of French and Dutch, ‘Resistance in Belgium’ needs you! Join us one day a week and contribute to a unique project on the Belgian resistance during World War II.

► [Read More](#)



REPORT ON THE YOUNG HISTORIANS DAY

Discover all the summaries of the master's theses (class of 2025) presented on 5 December 2025 at CegeSoma.

► [Read More](#)

CALL FOR PAPERS



In June 2026, the BRAIN ProVEnhance project, of which CegeSoma is a partner, is organising a conference entitled 'Looted Art and the Art Market: Nazi Art Theft in Belgium, Europe, and its aftermath'. Presentation proposals are due by 31/01/2026.



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ON THE AGENDA



DEPORTATION-ROLE OF THE NMBS/SNCB-20TH CONVOY

On 11 February 2026, Nico Wouters will participate (at the initiative of the *Direction Citoyenneté, Mémoire, Démocratie de la Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles*) in a webinar (in French) aimed at educators, on the Belgian National Railway Company and deportations during WWII.

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THE RESISTANCE DURING WWII IN ANTWERP

Lecture by Nico Wouters on the Resistance during WWII in Antwerp, on 19 February, 2.30 p.m., Carolus Campus, Antwerp. All information: *Wereld in Beweging – Antwerpen*.



THE GHOST TRAIN OF SEPTEMBER 1944

Dimitri Roden will give a lecture on the Ghost Train, symbol of the resistance of railway workers to the occupiers, on 1 March 2026 at 11:00 a.m. in Dutch and at 2:30 p.m. in French at Train World.

► [Read More](#)

RESEARCH

FOUR NEW PROJECTS FOR CEGESOMA!

Funding from two Belspo programs will enable the development of the "History of the Resistance" network, work on the theme of "red kapos" and the Belgian labor market during World War II, and consolidate the position of AEs within the EHRI.

► [Read More](#)



PUBLICATIONS





COMPLETE YOUR JBH OR CHTP/BEG PRINT COLLECTION

Are you missing issues of the Journal of Belgian History or the Journal of Contemporary History? Would you like to start a paper collection of these journals? CegeSoma is clearing out its stock and offering a selection of issues free of charge!

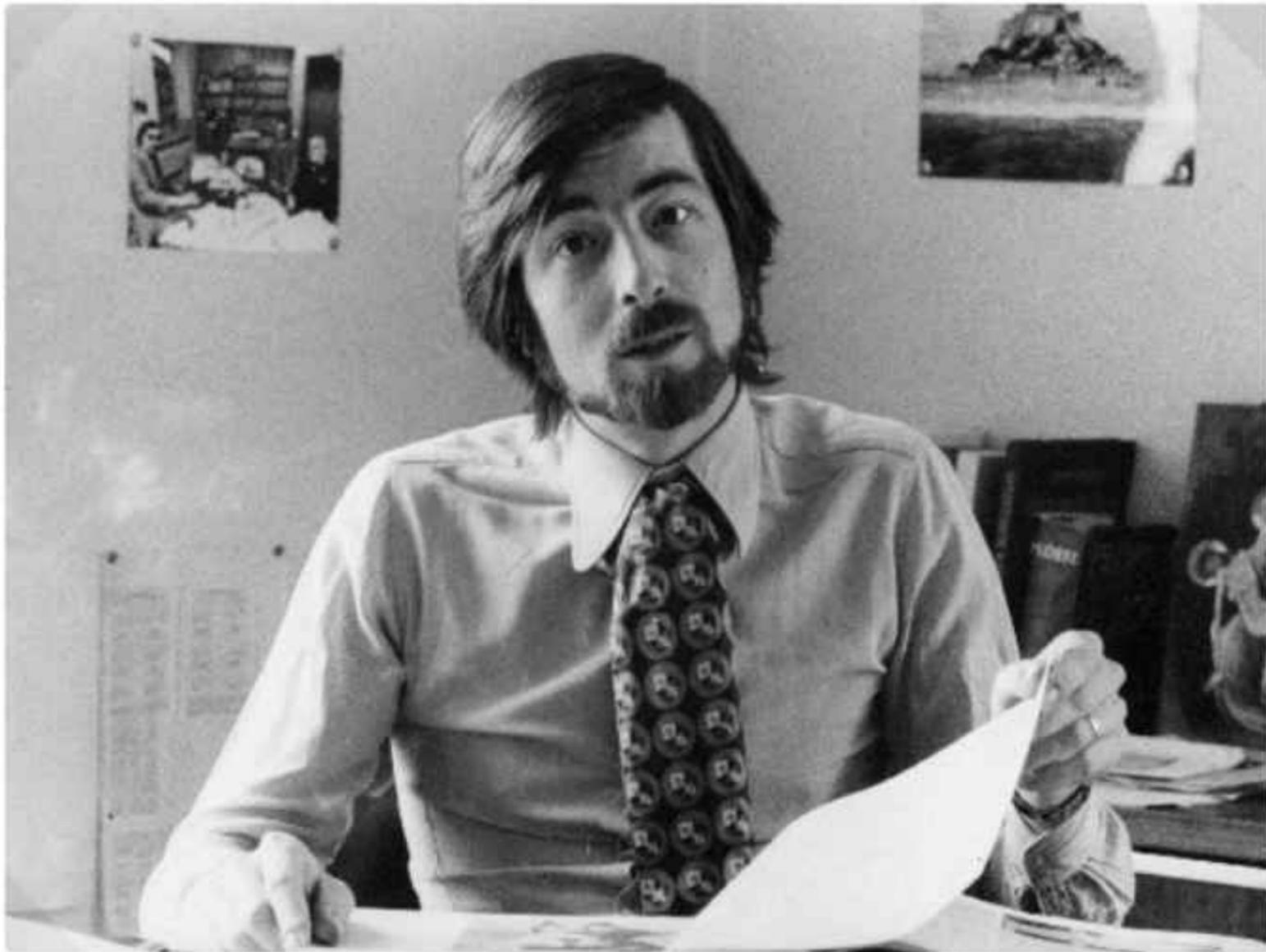
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[Home](#) » [News](#) » Willem Meyers has left us ...

Willem Meyers has left us ...



Wim Meyers' passing on 15 January 2026 means that more of the memory of the "old Centre" is gone. He was among the first to join the institution in the early 1970s, when it was known by the somewhat unwieldy French/Dutch acronyms CREHSGM/NCWOII... simply referring to the Centre for Research and Historical Study into the Second World War...

Wim was born on 30 March 1943 and often recalled that one of his earliest childhood memories was sitting on the lap of Cyriel Verschaeve, priest, poet, Flemish nationalist and Nazi... After studying history at the University of Ghent, he began his career at De Standaard, where he got to know Frans Selleslagh (former colleague at CegeSoma, who died in October 2008). They developed a strong friendship and, by chance, or perhaps because of shared interests, ended up working together in our institution. Wim became our librarian and carried out his duties with zeal and eclecticism until the early 1990s.



The Centre owes him several high-quality publications. Among others, his pioneering work on the impact of the German occupation on Belgian society, *"De vijand te lijf"*, published in 1974 and co-authored with Frans Selleslagh, stands out, as well as two very important articles, first on the councils of mayors and aldermen in 1940-1944, *"Burgemeesters, schepenen en gemeentelijke administraties"*, in Etienne Verhoeyen, *België in de Tweede Wereldoorlog, Deel 9*, Kapellen, 1990, pp.



Alain Colignon & Wim Meyers
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84-99, and then on the « *Flemish national leadership* » in Germany after September 1944, "De Vlaamse Landsleiding. Een Emigrantenregering in Duitsland na september 1944" in *Bijdragen tot de Geschiedenis van de Tweede Wereldoorlog*, no. 4,

1972, pp. 29-86.

At a time when library catalogs were recorded on small index cards, he spent many years compiling bibliographies on Belgium during World War II. Generations of students and researchers remember his first volume covering the period 1970-1980, printed on yellow paper. It included not only standard publications but also press clippings and numerous local publications. An indispensable tool back then.

Along with the rest of our pioneering team, he conducted numerous interviews. In 1972-1988, [he produced a series of interviews on Flemish collaboration, with a particular focus on the VNV](#).

Coming from a Flemish nationalist family, he was sensitive to the place and history of the Flemish people in Brussels. As such, he was one of the founders of the Archive and Museum of Flemish Life in Brussels (AMVB), on whose board he served for many years.

Always available to the public, despite his shyness, and eager to listen to young researchers so he could help and guide them, he had a wealth of knowledge. He left CegeSoma in the late 1990s. to devote himself fully to his beloved family. Those who knew him also remember his sense of humor.

Alain Colignon

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Ctrl-Alt-History: (Digital) Humanities meets AI

Call for papers - 15.02.2026



In the last couple of years, Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become a central reference point and even buzzword within (digital) humanities. In almost every research proposal at universities and archives, the AI possibilities and capabilities are (over)emphasized, while those same institutions struggle with its limitations and pitfalls, not in the least with the environmental consequences of its widespread use. AI impacts how research is understood, conducted, valorised, and funded. Its fast-changing abundance of digital tools—from text analysis and image recognition to generative applications—is quickly altering the way historians, archivists, and teachers deal with the past and translate it to the present.

Yet, no substantial debate has taken place on a national level to understand how these processes affect our fields, professions, and society. This 2026 edition of the *Dag van de Nieuwste Geschiedenis – Journée de l'Histoire Contemporaine (29.04.2026)*, organised by the *Belgische Vereniging voor Nieuwste Geschiedenis – Association belge d'Histoire contemporaine BVNG-ABHC* and the University of Antwerp, aims to focus on the use of AI in (Belgian) historical research, heritage management, and education, and to provide a forum for exploring the opportunities, risks, and challenges of AI within the Belgian historical landscape by inviting contributions that approach these developments critically, empirically, and/or pedagogically.

Call for sessions / papers

We invite contributions that address questions such as (but not limited to):

1. Historical case studies and comparisons

- Research that applies digital or even AI techniques to Belgian or comparative historical sources
- Comparative analyses between “classical” and “AI-supported” interpretations and how these models affect research workflows
- Case studies in which digital tools contribute to the (re)discovery of forgotten actors, networks, or perspectives.

2. Archives, heritage, and digitalisation

- Application of digital tools in the archive, library, and museum sector: automatic description, image recognition, transcription, or semantic linking of collections.
- Reflections on the collaboration between heritage institutions, universities, and technology teams, e.g. in public history, heritage presentation, and crowdsourcing initiatives.
- Ethical and practical challenges surrounding copyright, privacy, or algorithmic bias in heritage data.

3. Education and public history pedagogies

- Integration of digital tools in higher education: opportunities and risks for historical literacy.
- Digital tools in public history and outreach: digital exhibitions, interactive reconstructions, or AI-generated narratives.
- Critical pedagogical approaches to distinguish between source, interpretation, and algorithm

4. Audience, reliability, and societal impact

- Methodological, ethical/environmental, and epistemological pitfalls of using AI in historical research (e.g. the impact on theory, methodology, historiography).
- Questions of transparency, reproducibility, and verification with automated interpretation and the redistribution of knowledge authority: who ‘reads’ the past, and who programs the models?
- Critical assessment of biases and distortions when using digital tools, e.g. data selection, algorithmic decisions, or historical inequalities.

Call for workshops

To survey the state of the field and stimulate the exchange of good practices, we also reserve one timeslot for three workshops on the use of digital tools in (historical) research. We invite workshops that dive into the application of digital methods, such as text analysis, image recognition, language learning or machine learning techniques, and apply it to Belgian historical and archival research and teaching. We are specifically looking for sessions that deal with (o.a.):

- How can AI tools help with text analysis, entity recognition, named entity linking, pattern detection (e.g., in newspapers, archives, social media), or data access?
- Can such AI-based workflows be linked to existing digital humanities standards (e.g., TEI, IIIF, Linked Open Data)?
- How can historians, archivists, and educators harness digital tools for producing better, more intelligible histories, grant proposals, and public/educational output?

- How to integrate and evaluate generative tools responsibly into research training and teaching practices?

We particularly encourage hands-on workshops or demonstrations that explore how AI and digital methods can be applied concretely to (Belgian) historical and archival research and teaching practices. These sessions may include tool demonstrations, dataset walk-throughs, or collaborative exercises.

Practical

When? **Wednesday, 29 April 2026**

Where? **University of Antwerp**, Stadscampus, Hof van Liere.

Deadline for proposals: 15 February 2026. Acceptance of proposal: End of February 2026.

Please send your proposals to info@contemporanea.be.

Proposals may be composed of traditional panels (3 to 4 presentations of 15 minutes) or workshops and other innovative formats (demonstrations, interactive sessions of maximum one hour). You are free to submit a broader panel proposal or an individual paper/workshop. The length of the proposals should be around 300–500 words, clearly stating the research objective, methodology, expected contribution, and central questions. Proposals in Dutch, French, or English are accepted. Early-career researchers and graduate students are particularly encouraged to submit.

Target audience: historians, digital humanities researchers, archivists, heritage professionals, teachers, and anyone working at the intersection of digital technology and history. This *Dag van de Nieuwste Geschiedenis – Journée de l'Histoire Contemporaine* aims to bring together researchers, heritage professionals, and teachers to reflect on the place of digital tools and AI in contemporary historical practice. By linking concrete examples to methodological and ethical reflections, the study day aims to promote a better understanding of how technology shapes our engagement with the past – in archives, classrooms, and research centres. This day aims to provide a forum for both experimental and reflective contributions on digital methods in the historical field. We hope that participants will inspire each other, share methodological lessons learned, and critically reflect together on the future of history in a context where digital tools are increasingly becoming inevitable.

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New call for volunteers

Resistance in Belgium



[The Resistance in Belgium project](#) needs you more than ever, following the departure of several team members for professional or health reasons, or for a well-deserved retirement – in the latter case, we are thinking of our colleagues in the reading room, Hilde Keppens and Kathleen Vandenberghe! So why not join the CegeSoma team of volunteers for one day a week to enter data relating to the identity and activities of resistance fighters and any repression they may have suffered, at [the National Archives \(AGR1\)](#) or [CegeSoma](#) in Brussels?

- You are passionate about the history of World War II in Belgium;
- You have a good passive knowledge of French or Dutch, and preferably of both languages;
- You have an analytical mind, capable of following instructions carefully;
- You enjoy teamwork.

Then this is the volunteer job for you! There is plenty of work to be done, since the contents of tens of thousands of personal files created for recognition by the Belgian state as civil or armed resistance members still need to be encoded. Please contact us to find out more (cegesoma@arch.be).

| **Access the platform: [Resistance in Belgium](#)**

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Report on the Young Historians Study Day - Class of 2025



On Friday, 5 December 2025, CegeSoma welcomed eighteen talented young historians, recent graduates from various universities across the country. Selected for the quality of their master theses, they came to present the results of their research on topics traditionally addressed by CegeSoma, such as the two World Wars, the interwar period and the Cold War. Once again, this edition offered a particularly rich programme, reflecting the dynamism and recent advances in research conducted at Belgian universities.

Below you will find summaries of all the papers presented. If any of the topics covered are of particular interest to you, [please do not hesitate to let us know](#). We will forward your comments and any questions you may have to the young historians.

PROGRAMME FOR 05.12.2025

1/ The First World War: Emotions, presences and legacies - Session chaired by Catherine Lanneau (ULiège)

- Guillaume TOISOUL, ["Les flamingants - que la foudre les écrase !" Étude des expressions émotionnelles des francophones de Flandre dans leurs journaux personnels pendant l'Occupation de la Belgique \(1914-1918\)](#) (UCLouvain – L. van Ypersele)
- Marie VERROONEN, [Identificatie van vermiste soldaten uit de Eerste Wereldoorlog vanaf de jaren '90 en de rol van DNA-onderzoek hierbij](#) (UGent – B. Bevernage)
- Robin VANASSCHE, [Voor Vaderland en Thuisland: Belgen in de Canadian Expeditionary Force. Een](#)

[prosopografische en vergelijkende studie naar de Belgische dienstmemers in de CEF tijdens de Eerste Wereldoorlog](#) (UGent, A. Vrints)

2 / Fascism, memory and political discourse – Session chaired by Widukind De Ridder (CegeSoma/State Archives - KU Leuven)

- Sterre ELIAS, [„Eerbied voor het leven? Hypocrieten!“: De KPB en de politisering van abortus in Vlaanderen](#) (KU Leuven – W. De Ridder)
- Otto LAGAE, [Fascisme als begrip: Historische definities en hedendaagse toepassingen](#) (UGent – B. Bevernage)
- Anna DURNEZ, [Monumenten van \(on\)macht. Fascistische herinneringscultuur in Abruzzo, 1918-1970](#) (KU Leuven – A. Stynen)

3/ Diplomacy, anarchism and the Eastern Front – Session chaired by Kas Swerts (ADVN vzw|archief voor nationale bewegingen)

- Maï DAGONNIER, [La Belgique et le conflit sino-japonais : entre protection des intérêts, influence et perceptions. Le rôle de la diplomatie et de l'opinion publique belge face à la montée des tensions asiatiques à l'aube du second conflit sino-japonais \(1931-1937\)](#) (ULB – P. Lagrou)
- Sean WANSCHOOR, [Contrôler et réprimer le Drapeau Noir. Une histoire de la criminalisation des anarchistes en Belgique durant l'entre-deux-guerres](#) (ULB, N. Verschueren)
- Romain VERMEERSCH, ["Bourguignons" et "Grogards" lors de l'Opération Barbarossa. Étude comparative du quotidien des soldats de la Légion Wallonie et de la Légion des volontaires français contre le bolchevisme sur le front de l'Est durant la Seconde Guerre mondiale \(1941-1943\)](#) (UCLouvain – L. van Ypersele)

4/ Second World War: violence, local approaches and teaching – Session chaired by Fabrice Maerten (CegeSoma/State Archives)

- Robbe SCHROYENS, [Horen, Zien en Zwijgen. Verzet en Censuur in het striptijdschrift Robbedoes tijdens de Tweede Wereldoorlog](#) (KU Leuven – K. Swerts)
- Gavriil SEMENOFF, [La délégation belge partie enquêter sur le massacre de Katyn : de leurs témoignages à leurs condamnations \(1943-1947\) postérité, enjeux et mémoire](#) (ULB – P. Lagrou)
- Benoît VANWIJNSBERGHE, [Rue André Fauchille, 10 novembre 1944. Contribution à l'étude de la reconstruction de Bruxelles après la Seconde Guerre mondiale](#) (ULB – P. Lagrou)
- Noah DECORTE, [Het repressiedebat in België, 1950-1978. Buitenparlementaire acties rond strafvermindering voor collaborateurs](#) (UGent – K. Aerts)
- Noah DELCUEILLERIE, ["Het schijnt, alsof over deze zaak een sluier der vergetelheid werd gespreid". Een microgeschiedenis van de overval op de politieschool van Antwerpen in de nacht van 28 op 29 november 1942 \(1940-1956\)](#) (UAntwerpen – M. Beyen)
- Liz DEVIGNE, [Approche didactique de la prise de perspective historique : étude de la Résistance en classe d'histoire](#) (ULiège - Gaël Pirard – Catherine Lanneau)

5/ Cold War: Korea, apartheid and religious missions – Session chaired by Bart Willems (CegeSoma/State Archives)

- Nina NIJS, [De vergeten of verzwegen oorlog? Misdrijven door het Belgisch vrijwilligersbataljon in Korea en hun invloed op de Koreaanse bevolking, 1951-1955](#) (VUB – N. De Muelenaere)
- Nina NAVARRO TELLEZ, [Verdeeld zusterschap. De Internationale Vrouwenraad en haar confrontatie met](#)

[apartheid, 1960-1991](#) (UAntwerpen – H. de Smaele)

- Pieter-Jan LESAGE, [Zieltjeswinners of ontwikkelingswerkers? Verschuivende missieactiviteiten van de CICM-missionarissen in de Filipijnen tijdens de twintigste eeuw](#) (KU Leuven – I. Goddeeris)

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Looted Art and the Art Market: Nazi Art Theft in Belgium, Europe, and its aftermath

CALL FOR PAPERS



On 11 and 12 June 2026, the BRAIN project, ProvEnhance (Enhancing the provenance data of the collections of the Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium (RMFAB) since 1933. Scientific study, digital valorisation and narrative in context), coordinated by the Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium (KMSKB) and of which the State Archives/ CegeSoma is one of the partners, is organising a colloquium on Looted Art and the Art Market: Nazi Art Theft in Belgium, Europe, and its aftermath.

Proposals are welcome **until 31 January 2026**.

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La déportation. Le rôle de la SNCB. Le 20ème convoi.

Webinaire

Seconde Guerre mondiale [Conférence](#)



L'enseignement de la Shoah est une des préoccupations prioritaires de la Direction Citoyenneté, Mémoire, Démocratie (CiMédé) de la Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles. Dans ce cadre, [un cycle de webinaires a été mis en place](#) à l'attention du monde des enseignants, des professionnels de l'éducation permanente et du milieu associatif afin de les outiller spécifiquement sur cette thématique et de leur permettre également de déconstruire des « vérités alternatives » qui alimentent l'antisémitisme actuel.

Le **11 février 2026**, **Nico Wouters** viendra dans le cadre de ce cycle consacré à la Shoah en Belgique, présenter un exposé intitulé 'La déportation. Le rôle de la SNCB. Le 20ème convoi.' Son exposé sera suivi d'un échange avec les participants.



11/02/2026 - 14:00 - 15:30

INFORMATIONS PRATIQUES

Quand: 11 février de 14H00 à 15H30

Où: CiMédé - Boulevard Léopold II, 44 - 1080 Bruxelles

Inscription gratuite mais obligatoire : [Jotform d'inscription au cycle des webinaires](#)

Langue(s) principale(s)

Français

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De Spooktrein van september 1944

Wereldoorlog II [Conferentie](#) LEZING - CONFÉRENCE**DE SPOOKTREIN VAN
SEPTEMBER 1944****LE TRAIN FANTÔME DE
1944**DOOR/ PAR *DIMITRI RODEN*

1/03/2026, 11u NL – 14u30 FR



In het kader van de lezingenreeks over de geschiedenis van de Belgische spoorwegen tijdens de Tweede Wereldoorlog geeft [Dimitri Roden](#) (UGent- CegeSoma/Rijksarchief), lid van [het Netwerk Verzetsgeschiedenis](#), op **1 maart 2026 om 11 uur in Train World een lezing over de Spooktrein van september 1944.**

"In het voorjaar van 1944 zitten de strafinrichtingen in bezet België overvol met politieke gevangenen en verzetsstrijders. Om te voorkomen dat zij bij de bevrijding opnieuw in actie zouden komen, organiseert de Duitse bezetter op haastige wijze een reeks grootschalige deportaties naar de kampen in het Reich. Het zal gaan om de laatste deportaties van onder andere politieke gevangenen tijdens de bezetting van België. Op 2 september 1944 – een paar dagen voor de bevrijding van Brussel – vertrekt een trein vanuit Brussel-Zuid. De trein was door de Duitsers opgevorderd en moest 1500 politieke gevangenen uit de gevangenis van Sint-Gillis naar hun dood deporteren. De trein werd getrokken door een locomotief Type 12. Door de trein opzettelijk te vertragen en te saboteren, geraakt de trein amper twee kilometer verder. Zo werden de levens van de 1500 gevangenen gered. Sindsdien staat de trein bekend als de 'spooktrein' en is het symbool geworden van het verzet van de spoorwegarbeiders tegen de bezetter." (cfr Website Train World)



01/03/2026 - 11:00

PRAKTISCHE INFORMATIE

Waar: Train World, Prinses Elisabethplein 5 - 1030 Schaarbeek (afspraak in Zaal Pays de Waes, 1ste verdiep Grote Lokettenzaal)

Wanneer: 01.03.2026 om 11 uur.

Prijs: 5 € toegangsbewijs alleen voor de lezing (zonder toegang tot het museum) ; € 18 toegangsbewijs voor de lezing en toegang tot het museum. We accepteren Article 27 en Vakantieparticipatie, op vertoon van een geldig bewijs aan de kassa. Neem in dit geval vooraf contact met ons op via e-mail op info@trainworld.be

Hoofdtal (Hoofdtalen)

Nederlands

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Four new projects for CegeSoma!



Seven projects submitted by the State Archives of Belgium have obtained funding under Belspo's P4S (Policy for Science) program. Three of these will be carried out at CegeSoma over a two-year period. They are as follows:

REDCAPOS - Belgian 'Red kapos': A Political History of 'Antifascism'

This project, coordinated by **Widukind De Ridder**, aims to analyze the political dynamics within Nazi Germany's concentration camps and their impact on public memory in Belgium during the Cold War. So-called 'Red Kapos' were predominantly communist political prisoners who served as prisoner functionaries. In the context of the Cold War, their actions were variously framed either as forms of 'antifascist resistance' or as acts of 'collaboration'. Political structures forged in captivity later evolved into post-war concentration camp committees. These committees functioned as transnational political actors and key meeting places during the Cold War, actively shaping public memory of 'antifascism' and, over time, contributing to broader narratives on human rights and crimes against humanity.

BELAMAR-The Belgian labour market in the Second World War through the lens of unemployment

One of the major gaps in the socio-economic history of World War II in Belgium concerns the labor market. There is

no comprehensive overview of the evolution of unemployment during the occupation, only partial data whose origin and reliability are not always clear. The aim of the Belamar project, coordinated by [Dirk Luyten](#), is to compile, from all available archival sources in Belgium and abroad, a series of data that is as homogeneous as possible on the evolution of unemployment among men and women at the national level and at the level of employment agency districts in order to map the evolution of the labor market during the Occupation. This research is of fundamental importance. Unemployment and the labor market are key factors in macroeconomic development. Certain fundamental changes, such as the impact of the absence of Walloon prisoners of war from the local labor market for nearly five years and the employment opportunities for women, can now be studied and examined on the basis of empirical data. A reliable overview of unemployment during the Occupation will also make it possible to critically examine the results of Galopin's doctrine on an empirical basis.

RESIST - Expansion and consolidation of a European resistance history network

The RESIST project, directed by [Nico Wouters](#), provides funding for the "[Resistance History Network](#)", created by CegeSoma in 2024. The aim is to improve international contacts by organizing an international conference. It also involves continuing to develop the '[Resistance in Belgium](#)' database and, in particular, facilitating new research and developments for the general public. This project is closely linked to CegeSoma's current activities on the resistance. The person hired for this project will work closely with [Bart Willems](#) (coordinator of the Resistance History Network) and [Fabrice Maerten](#) (coordinator of the "Resistance in Belgium" database).

Exciting news for the Belgian national node of the [European Holocaust Research Infrastructure, EHRI-BE](#)! The Belgian State Archives/CegeSoma's proposal for the four-year project **TRACE-BE (Training Research Access and Connectivity for EHRI-BE)** has been approved for funding through BELSPO's ESFRI-FED programme, which is designed to support the participation of Belgian Federal Scientific Institutions in ESFRI research infrastructures. TRACE-BE will be coordinated by the CegeSoma with Kazerne Dossin as a partner and it is a natural extension of the work the CegeSoma/State Archives has already carried out on five European Holocaust Research Infrastructure (EHRI) projects to date. Its overarching aim is to consolidate the State Archives' position within EHRI by stimulating and facilitating archival-based national and transnational research on the Holocaust and by contributing to the further development of EHRI-BE.

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Good news: CegeSoma is clearing up its shelves and offering a selection of issues free of charge:

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- Issues of the CHTP (1996–2011), with the exception of issues 4 (1998) and 7 (2000)

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