

CEGESOMA - State Archives

NEWSLETTER

No 115 - September 2026



NEWS

IN MEMORIAM ETIENNE VERHOEYEN (1945–2026)

This pioneer of Second World War history worked closely with CegeSoma for many years.

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CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

The 'Resistance in Belgium' project needs you! Take part in a unique project on the resistance in Belgium during the Second World War.

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ON THE AGENDA

BAUDOUIN. UN ROI FACE AUX CRISES DE SON TEMPS

Join us on 9 October 2026 for a public history event with Vincent Dujardin to mark the publication of his biography of King Baudouin. He will be interviewed by Catherine Lanneau.

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DEBATE ON THE 20th CONVOY

On 22 October 2026, the non-profit organisation '*Helden van het verzet*' invites you to an evening debate in Dutch. Simon Gronowski and Nico Wouters will revisit the story of the 20th convoy and shed new light on this episode.

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'WEERAL WO2?!' - PUBLIC RECORDING

Following the presentation of his book *'De mythe van de nieuwe oorlog'* on 27 October 2026, Tom Simoens will take part in a public recording of an episode of the podcast Weeral WO2?! with Koen Aerts and Nico Wouters.

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ARCHIVING IN BELGIUM



ARCHIVING IN BELGIUM

On 7 December 2026, the **second edition of Archiving in Belgium** will bring together archival professionals to address a current challenge: how to translate increasingly complex regulations into operational archival practice?

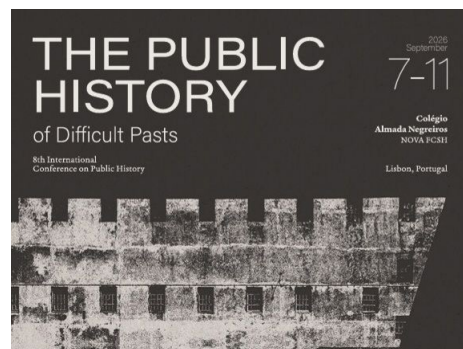
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RESEARCH

PUBLIC HISTORY

Conciliare, a project on the legacy of colonialism, was presented at the 8th conference of the International Federation for Public History.

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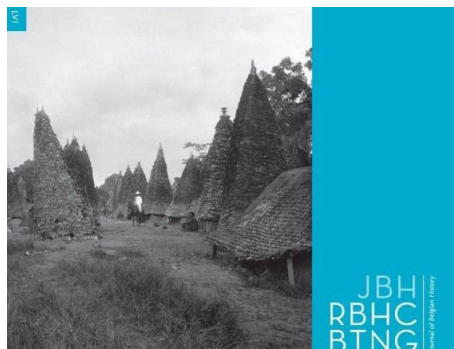


PUBLICATION

JOURNAL OF BELGIAN HISTORY

The latest issue features four original articles examining the Belgian Congo, the resistance during the Second World War, and the memory of the 'Great War'.

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In memoriam : Etienne Verhoeyen (1945-2026)



On 19 July 2026, Etienne Verhoeyen died aged 80. Etienne served as a correspondent for CegeSoma and later as an associate researcher, but he was also involved in various other CegeSoma activities. Etienne Verhoeyen was above all an eminent historian of World War II and the author of seminal publications on various aspects of the history of the occupation and the postwar period.

However, Etienne Verhoeyen did not seem destined to become a historian. He studied Moral Science at Ghent University, a new field of study established in 1963–64 under the leadership of Leo Apostel and Jaap Kruithof. The program was designed to train high school teachers for the subject “non-confessional ethics” (moral philosophy), which was incorporated into the official curriculum following the School Pact. Etienne was among the first generation of graduates in 1968, with a master’s thesis on the political and social stances expressed by protest songs in the United States, Great Britain, and France after 1945. He also co-authored a book on Family, Community, and Society (*Gezin, commune en maatschappij*) with Magda Michielsens and Chris Loones. Etienne became an ethics teacher but developed a parallel career track that led him to the history of World War II.

Toward the History of World War II

A first step was three ‘Courriers Hebdomadaires’ he wrote for *CRISP* in 1974, 1975, and 1976 on the far right in

Belgium. In 1981, he published a book with the Masereel Fund on the same theme, co-authored with Frank Uytterhaegen, covering 50 years of the right and far right in Belgium. By then, he had already been working for four years as a research associate at the *BRT* (where he would later become a producer), conducting intensive archival research to document and substantiate Maurice De Wilde's programs on WWII.

During that period, Etienne Verhoeyen began publishing on one of the topics for which he would become known: the economic history of World War II and economic collaboration. The American historian John Gillingham wrote his dissertation on *Belgian Business in the Nazi New Order*. It was published in 1977 by the Jan Dhondt Foundation and sparked controversy and debate, including with the Leuven economist Fernand Baudhuin. In 1979, a Dutch translation was published by the Leuven-based publisher Kritak. Etienne Verhoeyen provided several critical annotations regarding factual inaccuracies in the book and wrote an afterword about the government and the Galopin Committee, a central body responsible for steering the Belgian economy during the occupation. The committee was discussed in Gillingham's book, but in Etienne's view, the American author did not devote enough attention to its relationship with the government. In the afterword, he addressed that relationship himself. Although the short 16-page article was based primarily on published sources and only a few archival documents, it is relevant, critical, nuanced, and stands out for the pertinent questions it raises.

Etienne Verhoeyen had already written an extensive critical review of Gillingham's book for the *Journal of Belgian History* in 1978. In it, he pointed out a number of shortcomings and gaps and criticized the author for a lack of nuance. However, he went a step further by proposing new avenues of research—such as the continuity of structures during an occupation—and suggesting methodological approaches, in this case a biographical approach that he illustrated using the—particularly well-chosen—example of Léon Bekaert. In 1986, Etienne Verhoeyen published a comprehensive article in *Bijdragen* on the Galopin Committee and the committee's Galopin doctrine and politics of the lesser evil, based in part on new archival material. Although the article is forty years old and archives that were closed at the time have since become available, this article remains one of the most original in its approach, particularly regarding the political sensibilities of Galopin and his group.



Etienne Verhoeyen published works on many other topics related to the history of the Occupation and the prewar period, such as the financing of the newspapers *De Schelde* and *Volk en Staat* between 1929 and 1940. He also shifted his focus to the postwar period with the book on the Murder of Lahaut (*De moord op Lahaut. Het communisme als binnenlandse vijand*), which he co-authored with Rudi Van Doorslaer, published by Kritak in 1985. Etienne Verhoeyen also contributed to various volumes of the book series *Belgium in World War II*, which accompanied the *BRT(N)*'s broadcasts on that topic.

In short, Etienne Verhoeyen had built up a broad range of expertise. It is perhaps no coincidence, then, that in 1993 he was the first to publish a comprehensive overview of the history of the occupation (*België bezet 1940-1944*), which examined the subject from various perspectives. The book was translated into French just one year later. However, the field closest to Etienne Verhoeyen's heart was the history of the resistance in general and of the intelligence and action

services in particular.

The more than 87 works and articles by Etienne Verhoeyen cataloged in CegeSoma's library include not only numerous contributions on the resistance in Belgium from 1940 to 1944, but also a great many studies on the Belgian, French, and German police and secret services from the interwar period through the aftermath of World War II. We would like to highlight in particular his in-depth study of the Marc intelligence service, which was published in 1991 and 1992 in the *Cahiers/Bijdragen* of what would later become CegeSoma, and his 2011 work *Spionnen aan de achterdeur: de Duitse Abwehr in België 1936-1945*.





Etienne Verhoeyen served as a correspondent and later as an associate researcher; he also wrote reviews for the *Journal of Belgian History*, spoke at the major colloquia organized by the Center in the 1990s, cataloged archives—such as those of the Luc-Marc intelligence services, Mill, and Zéro, the William Ugeux archive, and general files from the State Security Service on Belgian intelligence and action services during World War II, and wrote articles for Belgium WWII. In fact, it is thanks to him that most of those collections—and many others—were integrated into the CegeSoma collections. Etienne Verhoeyen was willing to share his in-depth knowledge of sources on the history of World War II with others, such as novice researchers.

Etienne Verhoeyen leaves behind an impressive body of work—books and articles—that have shaped, and will long continue to shape, Belgian historiography on World War II and the postwar period.

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Call for volunteers



New call for volunteers

[The Resistance in Belgium project](#) needs you more than ever ! 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 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](#)

Other news

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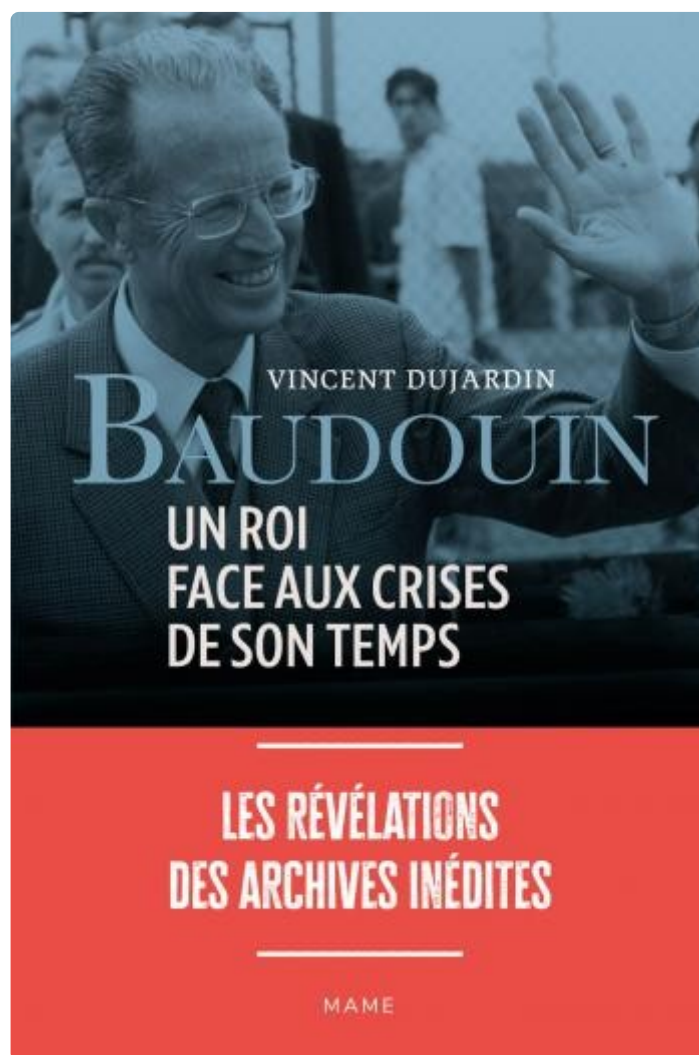
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Baudouin, un roi face aux crises de son temps

Public History Meeting 2026 – 3

World War II **Cold War** [Conference](#)



Lecture and discussion in French with guest speaker Vincent Dujardin **An interview by Catherine Lanneau**

On 9 October, Cegesoma and the nonprofit organization “Les Amis du Cegesoma” will be pleased to welcome Vincent Dujardin, professor of history at UCLouvain and a specialist in Belgian political history, to mark the publication of his book ‘Baudouin. Un roi face aux crises de son temps.’ He will be interviewed by Catherine Lanneau, professor at Liège University.

The history of the monarchy and the personalities of successive Belgian kings are subjects that leave no one indifferent. Belgian historians have contributed significantly to writing this history, from Leopold I to Leopold III. Until now, there has been no true biography of King Baudouin, whose reign spans the turbulent context of the royal question to the federalization of the Belgian state.

The fruit of nearly twenty years of research, this 800-page book draws on exceptional source material: King Baudouin's personal archives, political and spiritual diaries, private correspondence, agendas, Belgian and foreign administrative archives, as well as numerous firsthand accounts, including those of Queen Fabiola and several political and diplomatic figures close to the monarch.

Through the figure of Baudouin, the political history of Belgium, Europe, and the world in the second half of the 20th century also unfolds: the war and its aftermath, the Royal Question, decolonization, the Lumumba affair, the great strike of the winter of 1960–1961, institutional reforms, European integration, relations with foreign leaders, and the crisis triggered by the king's refusal to sign the abortion law. How does one write the history of a king? What archives are available, and how can one make use of long-unpublished private archives without succumbing to the fascination of the document itself? How can the monarch's personal diaries be cross-referenced with diplomatic archives, oral testimonies, and administrative sources? What can the historian say about "the man behind the king"?

This exceptional event will allow us to explore some of these questions and examine the choices, limitations, and challenges of writing a historical biography.



Vincent Dujardin is a full professor at the Catholic University of Louvain. He is a visiting professor at the University of Strasbourg. He has also taught at KULeuven and Jagiellonian University in Kraków.

At UCLouvain, he served 10 years as director of the Institute of European Studies. His research focuses on Belgian political history, European integration, and international relations.



Catherine Lanneau is a full professor of contemporary history at Liège University and secretary of the FNRS contact group "Belgium and Contemporary Worlds."

Her research focuses primarily on the history of Belgium, Wallonia, and Franco-Belgian relations in the 19th and 20th centuries, with a particular emphasis on media activity by pressure groups and think tanks.



09/10/2026 - 14:00 to 15:30

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Where: CegeSoma Conference Room, Aviation Square 29 – 1070 Brussels

When: Friday, 9 October 2026 (2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.)

Registration required: isabelle.ponteville@arch.be or 02.556.92.11.

The book can be bought on site: Vincent Dujardin, *Baudouin, un roi face aux crises de son temps*, Mame, 2026, 800 p. (€30.00- only cash)

Event fee: €5.00 (payable on site in cash)

Main language

French

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Debate: Simon Gronowski and Nico Wouters Discuss the 20th Convoy

World War II [Conference](#)

22.10.26
19u00
Saintelettesquare 17, 1000 Brussel

**Het 20ste treinkonvooi
naar Auschwitz-Birkenau**

Lezing door

 **Nico Wouters**
(directeur Cegesoma)

 **Simon Gronowski**
(overlevende 20ste konvooi)

Aansluitend dubbelgesprek onder leiding van Dany Neudt

resistance talks

On 22 October 2026, the nonprofit organization '*Helden van het verzet*' will host a discussion evening about the famous 20th Jewish transport. This transport was stopped by the resistance on 19 April 1943, enabling many people to escape. In a recent podcast episode of the series "Weeral WO2?!" (WWII Again?!), Koen Aerts and Nico Wouters shed new light on several aspects of this history: new details that are not accepted by everyone. On 22 October, Nico Wouters will discuss this topic with Simon Gronowski, who, as an 11-year-old boy, managed to escape from this 20th convoy and has since become one of the most important witnesses of World War II in Belgium. The discussion will be moderated by Dany Neudt (*Helden van het Verzet*).

The event will begin at 7:00 p.m. at 17 Saintelette square, 1000 Brussels. For all practical information and to register: <https://heldenvanhetverzet.be/events/resistance-talk-3-de-bevrijdingsactie-op-het-20ste-treinkonvooi-naar-auschwitz-birkenau>

You can still listen to the two episodes covering the 20th Convoy in the podcast series *Weeral WO2?!* via Spotify, Apple Podcasts, or the website: www.weeralwo2.be

**22/10/2026 - 19:00 to 21:00**

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Unique live recording of the podcast series *Weeral WO2?!* with Tom Simoens

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

BOEKVOORSTELLING

U bent van harte welkom op **27 oktober** in de **Uilenspiegel te Diest** op de presentatie van *De mythe van de nieuwe oorlog*. U krijgt een unieke kans om voor de eerste keer een live-opname mee te maken van de succesvolle podcast **Weeral WO2 ?!**

Over het boek

Het lijkt wel of de oorlog in Oekraïne fundamenteel verschilt van alles wat eraan voorafging. Maar is dat wel zo? Tom Simoens onderzoekt en relateert deze hardnekkige stelling.

Programma

- **19.00:** deuren van de foyer open
- **20.00:** inleiding door Geert Cortebeek (Horizon)
- **20.10-21.10:** live podcastopname **Weeral WO2?!** met Koen Aerts (UGent/Archiefpunt) en Nico Wouters (Cegesoma/UGent) die met hun kritische scherpte en humor in gesprek gaan met Tom Simoens
- **21.10-21.30:** Q&A, stel je vraag via een e-mail naar onderstaand mailadres
- **21.30:** boekverkoop & signeersessie met een drankje (betalend) in de foyer

Reserveren is gratis

Maar wel verplicht! [Klik hier](#) of scan de QR-code en reserveer je plek.

Heb je zelf een vraag (over het boek), stuur deze naar antwerpen@overamstel.com. Dan wordt die tijdens de voorstelling misschien wel beantwoord.



On 27 October 2026, Tom Simoens (Royal Military Academy) will present his new book: '*De mythe van de nieuwe oorlog. Oorlogsvoering van Oekraïne tot de Eerste Wereldoorlog*' (The Myth of the New War: Warfare from Ukraine to WWI.) In addition to the book presentation, you can also experience a unique live recording of the successful podcast series "Weeral WO2?!" that evening. Koen Aerts and Nico Wouters will be in conversation with Tom Simoens, and their conversation will be recorded live as an episode of this podcast series. So you can be part of it!

Venue: Zaal De Uilenspiegel in Diest.

Date and time: 27 October, with a reception at 7:00 p.m. and the event starting at 8:00 p.m.

Registration is free but required via: <https://uilenspiegel.nu/bestel/extern/de-mythe-van-de-nieuwe-oorlog-avoBLb>



27/10/2026 - 19:00 to 22:00

Main language

Dutch

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07.12.2026 - Brussels - Pacheco Center

If you would like to receive updates about the
conference programme, registration, and practi-
cal information, please leave your details below.

Démarrer maintenant

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Démarrer maintenant



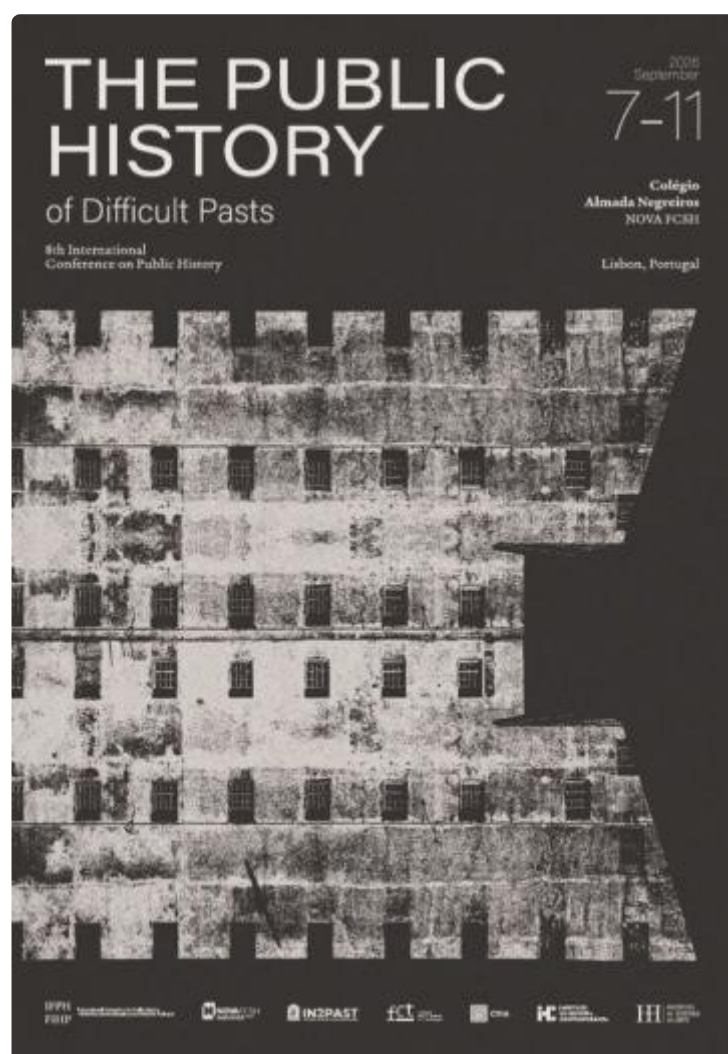
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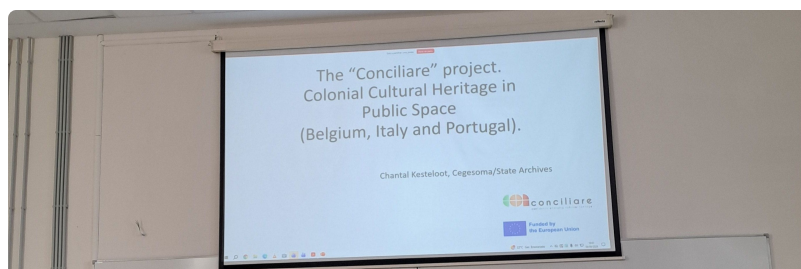
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Public History of difficult Pasts



From September 7 to 11, 2026, the 8th conference of the International Federation for Public History ([IFPH_Final_Programme.pdf](#)) was held in Lisbon. Since its professionalization and growth, public history has been deeply engaged in bringing to light so-called “difficult” pasts—precisely the theme of this gathering. But it will not have escaped anyone’s notice how much the recent context has deteriorated, with a proliferation of attacks and statements against historical scholarship and the defense of democratic values. The Lisbon conference thus served as an opportunity to reaffirm the need for critical engagement—a position championed by practitioners of public history. In many countries, practices such as censorship, imposed silences, the denial of historical realities, or the marginalization of certain viewpoints have indeed become commonplace.

A Diversity of Approaches



As part of the conference, some fifty panels provided a forum for discussing topics as diverse as the place of the past in the public sphere, the representation of difficult pasts in museum settings, the impact of the emergence of artificial intelligence



and digital developments on historical practices, and the role of video games and marginalized historical narratives –particularly those of abused children and homelessness. Of course, more traditional issues such as the history of sites of violence, the question of colonization and slavery, and that of decolonization in all its diversity were also discussed. The conference also served as an

opportunity to promote new publications in the field of public history, notably the volume edited by Thomas Cauvin (Center for Contemporary and Digital History, Luxembourg) and Joanna Wojdon (University of Wrocław) on the long history of public history practices in Europe. The entire volume is available online ([The Long History of Public History in Europe](#)). New ongoing projects addressing the challenges of public history and the issues surrounding diaspora histories were also presented. Driven by historians from numerous European countries as well as North and Latin America, Africa, Asia, and Oceania, public history is increasingly establishing itself as a resolutely cross-disciplinary and transnational practice, while often drawing on local and participatory practices.

The Conciliare Project

The conference also provided an opportunity to present the Conciliare project—in which Cegesoma/State Archives is a partner—which is now in its final phase, set to conclude in March 2027. We therefore felt it would be worthwhile to take advantage of the conference to present one of the project's main areas of focus, which concerns colonial heritage in the public sphere in Belgium, Italy, and Portugal. Beyond simply compiling an inventory, the project has also focused on in-depth studies of a variety of cases in each of the areas under consideration, before embarking on co-creation initiatives with stakeholders from the nonprofit sector. This latter approach, which draws heavily on the practices of public history, may be seen as one possible response to the issue of difficult pasts.

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Release of the Second Issue of 2026 of the Journal of Belgian History



The new issue of the Journal of Belgian History invites you to explore four original research studies that shed light on major issues in Belgian and international history.

The Belgian State's Colonial Exploitation of the Congo: A More Humane Colonial Policy?

In an article written in English, **Lucas Van Oost** and **Benoît Henriët** (VUB) revisit a key moment in Belgian colonial history: Belgium's takeover of the Congo Free State in 1908. Through several case studies, they challenge the notion of an immediate shift toward a more humane colonial policy and demonstrate that practices of colonial violence persisted well beyond the institutional change.

Forced Labor and International Law in the Belgian Congo

Colonial history remains at the heart of this issue with the study by **Christian Via Balole** (Catholic University of Bukavu / UCLouvain). His article analyzes how Belgium applied the "colonial clause" of the Forced Labor Convention from 1930 to 1960. This research highlights the mechanisms that allowed certain forms of forced labor to persist and offers a critical reflection on the application or circumvention of certain international convention

rules in the colonial context.

Civil Resistance in Antwerp During World War II

In an article in Dutch, **Anne Bekers** (UAntwerpen) presents the findings of her master's thesis on the organization of aid to people living in hiding in the occupied city of Antwerp. This pioneering study reveals the inner workings of a form of civil resistance that remains little known and helps enrich our understanding of daily life under the Occupation.

Commemoration of World War I at the Palace of the Nation

Finally, **Sophie Wittemans** (curator at the Palace of the Nation and Ph.D. candidate at the University of Liège) offers an original analysis of the cultures of remembrance surrounding the Great War. Her study examines the commemorative exhibition dedicated to World War I at the Palace of the Nation and shows how parliamentary art shaped a unique representation of the German occupation, centered on the experiences of Belgian citizens rather than on military heroism or the victims of the conflict.

This issue of the JBH sells for 15.00 euros (plus shipment) and can be ordered from CegeSoma, Aviation Square 29, 1070 Brussels, +32 2/556 92 11 - cegesoma@arch.be.

Issue 3–4 of 2026 will be the final printed issue. We would like to inform you that, starting with volume 2027, the *Journal of Belgian History* will be published exclusively in digital form on UGent's Open Journals platform. All new issues, as well as the complete archive of the *JBH* and its predecessors, will be fully accessible through this platform in open access. This decision will ensure much broader and more efficient dissemination of the journal. The platform's various new functionalities will also improve the accessibility and quality of its digital presentation. It will make our journal better equipped for the academic landscape of the 21st century.

Other news

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