

# COLLINT

## Internment of suspects of collaboration in Belgium (1944-1946)

**DURATION**

1/02/2023 - 1/05/2025

**BUDGET**

€ 371 000

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The internment of suspects of connivance with the occupier at the end of the German occupation of Belgium (September 1944) was a huge 'operation' in Belgium's post-war history that still has an impact on present-day Belgian society. Based on a decree of 1918, up to 40.000 suspects were deprived of their freedom and interned in prisons or internment camps in 1944-1946, many of them taken captive by resistance members. Intense societal debates have lasted for decades, myths were created and the legitimacy of the way the Belgian State and military justice system dealt with collaboration was and still is questioned. Publications by former internees have created a widespread image amongst a significant proportion of public opinion in Flanders of innocent civilians who were imprisoned on loose charges.

The COLLINT research project wants to contribute to a better understanding of the organization of the internment and the military justice system, as well as challenge and, confirm or deconstruct myths surrounding this issue. By combining a large variety of unexplored sources and contextualizing the cases and by analyzing decision-making processes in the military justice system, this two-year research will enable us to explain the chain of decisions: who was brought in and by whom, what were the reasons of arrest and internment, who became subject to criminal investigation and trial; how the judicial system worked, how legal provisions have evolved and how military prosecutors' offices and the minister of Justice dealt with the problem.

The expected output of the project is on the one hand the development of a tool to be used by the WHI (Breendonk Memorial), enabling the Memorial to answer questions of relatives, researchers etc. regarding former interned suspects, starting with a focus on Camp Breendonk, but also intending to enlarge the study to other sites. The results of the research project will be disseminated by publishing a book addressed to a broader public and organizing a workshop and a conference.



## CONTACT INFORMATION

### **Coordinator**

**Patrick Nefors**  
War Heritage Institute (WHI),  
Documentation Centre  
[patrick.nefors@warheritage.be](mailto:patrick.nefors@warheritage.be)

### **Partners**

**Stanislas Horvat**  
Royal Military Academy (RMA),  
Department Behavioral Sciences (SCGW),  
Research Unit Military Law  
[shorvat@skynet.be](mailto:shorvat@skynet.be)

## LINKS

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