

PHD RESEARCH

LAWRENCE VAN HAECKE

Repression and purges : The protection of the external security of the State as a politico-legal problem during the Belgian regime crisis, 1932-1948 - [Original Title : *Repressie en epuratie. De bescherming van de uitwendige veiligheid van de Staat als politiek-juridisch probleem tijdens de Belgische regimecrisis (1932-1948)*]

Universiteit Gent, 2014. Supervisor : Karel Velle. Co-supervisor: Dirk Luyten.

This research offers new insights into the repression of collaboration after the Second World War. First, the author attempts this through a thorough analysis of new and largely-unused archival sources. Secondly, he views the repression of collaborators not as a process in itself, as part of a much broader period than sometimes considered, which mostly, but not exclusively, encompasses the 1930s.

In this decade, the crisis of the democratic regime began. The mainly-conservative elites strengthen the penal law to defend the Belgian State against their enemies (mostly communists or Flemish nationalists). These draft and voted laws were not free of political ambiguity, but offered the necessary precedent as a comparison to the repressive legislation enacted by the Pierlot government in London. Of course, the repression of collaboration after the First World War is also important.

These comparisons are also put to use into the postwar period, when the repression of collaboration was pursued by military courts, as politicians prepared reforms to speed-up the punishment of suspects. Thus, this research is able to clearly show the influence of the reforms in the latter part of 1945 on

the policies of the military prosecutor's office. Lastly, the Royal Question heralded the last phase of the crisis of the Belgian democratic regime. This research is able to retrace the general effect of this important political problem on the Belgian parties and their plans for the repression of collaboration.