Belgium

National Affairs

The June 10 federal elections and their aftermath suggested that the delicate bonds holding the Belgian nation together might be fraying.

In Flanders, the Dutch-speaking part of the country, the Christian Democratic and Flemish Party (CD&V), allied with the New-Flemish Alliance (N-VA)—a Flemish nationalist grouping—posted a resounding victory, ousting Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt’s “purple coalition” made up of his own Flemish Liberal Democrats (VLD, a free-market party) and the Socialists (SPA). Vlaams Belang (Flemish Interest), a separatist and anti-immigrant party, increased its vote total over the previous election but lost one parliamentary seat. In the French-speaking (Walloon) area, the VLD’s sister party, Mouvement Réformateur (MR), defeated the Socialists, while the environmentalist party Ecolo made striking gains.

Immediately after the election King Albert II appointed MR leader Didier Reynders formateur, the person designated to organize the new government and then assume the position of prime minister. But conflict between the French-speaking parties and their Dutch-speaking counterparts frustrated his efforts, and the king turned to CD&V leader Yves Leterme, but his efforts proved equally ineffective.

The major roadblock to the creation of a governing coalition was whether to change the electoral system in the district of Brussels-Halle-Vilvoorde (BHV), a question that evoked Flemish-Walloon ethnic tensions and symbolized the fragility of Belgium’s national identity.

The problem arose some years earlier, when electoral districts were mapped out so as to correspond to provincial borders, meaning that there would be Dutch- and French-speaking districts. This was done, however, for only nine of the ten provinces. The tenth, Flemish Brabant, suffered the “amputation” of Halle and Vilvoorde, which were joined to the Brussels-Capital Region to form a separate election district. This hybrid entity ensured that residents of Brussels’s outskirts (in Flemish territory) had access to both the French- and Dutch-speaking courts and could vote, if they chose, for French-speaking Brussels candidates in both Bel-
gian and European elections. A court ruling in May 2003, however, invalidated this arrangement since it was incompatible with the principle of division of electoral constituencies by province, and gave the government until the next election to remedy the situation. But no remedy had been found by election day 2007.

The Flemish parties submitted a bill aimed at splitting the BHV electoral district so that Halle and Vilvoorde would be attached to the Flemish district of Leuven to the east. This would impact negatively on the French speakers there, however, putting an end to their right to vote for Brussels candidates or have recourse to French-speaking courts (the proposal itself mentioned only districting for electoral purposes, but judicial redistricting would be the next step), and so the Francophone parties opposed the bill and argued for other solutions, such as returning to the previous system of electoral districts unrelated to provincial borders or possibly retaining the old prerogatives of the French-speakers even after moving Halle and Vilvoorde into a Flemish district. But the Home Affairs Committee of the Chamber of Deputies, in charge of examining the matter, was predominantly Dutch-speaking, and therefore unlikely to show sympathy for the Francophone position.

That this struggle was far more a matter of symbolism than of substance, especially for the Dutch-speaking parties, was evident from the fact that the Dutch-speakers would actually lose one or more parliamentary seats if the BHV district were divided, and the Dutch-speaking residents of Brussels would become a tiny minority there. Nevertheless, the Flemish parties wanted to make the point that their region should be monolingual and that the French speakers desiring to live there had to assimilate.

On November 7, more than five months after the elections, negotiations for a new government were still stalled, and the Flemish parties took matters into their own hands. Using their majority in the Chamber of Deputies, they voted to split BHV. This came as a shock to much of the country, since both language groups had traditionally maintained the principle of government by consensus, with respect for minority rights. The action was widely viewed as the imposition of the will of six million Flemings upon four million French-speakers. The Francophone parties responded by breaking off coalition negotiations. Guy Verhofstadt's outgoing government remained in place and ran the country's business in a caretaker capacity, but was not empowered to adopt a budget or make important decisions.

This ongoing political crisis triggered a grass-roots response. In August,
a simple Belgian citizen—a woman from Liège—launched an Internet petition for Belgian unity that quickly collected close to 142,000 signatures. On Sunday, November 18, an impressive procession of 35,000–40,000 people walked from Brussels’s North Station to Jubilee Park calling for Belgium to remain united. The demonstrators included Walloons, Flemings, and Brussels residents. As they passed the Senate, the petition was presented to its president.

Just a few days before this rally, however, a new obstacle to amicable relations between the linguistic groups emerged. On November 14, the Flemish government refused to confirm the appointments of mayors in three predominantly French-speaking BHV municipalities—Linkebeek, Kraainhem, and Wezembeek-Oppem. The reason given was that these mayors had sent out voting information in French rather than Dutch, and this was deemed a violation of the law.

In early December the king entrusted Verhofstadt with the task of finding a solution. He managed to create an interim government to manage urgent business, including a number of serious economic problems, and also set up a committee to find solutions to the differences between the language groups. This government would remain in place until March 23, 2008.

Israel and the Middle East

As in the past, Belgium—which housed the headquarters of the European Union—espoused the EU (and thus the Quartet) position on Middle East issues. It favored a two-state solution, praised the Saudi-Arab League plan for Arab recognition of Israel in return for an Israeli return to the 1967 borders, and expressed support for the resumption of talks between Prime Minister Olmert of Israel and President Abbas of the PA. While calling for an end to rocket attacks from Gaza into Israel, Belgium also wanted Israel to ease restrictions on the movement of Palestinians in the West Bank and to halt settlement expansion.

Foreign Minister Karel De Gucht visited Israel on March 21–22 as part of a weeklong trip to the Middle East. He met with Prime Minister Olmert, Foreign Minister Livni, and other key figures, and also spent time with the parents of the three abducted Israeli soldiers.

The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) examined Belgian attitudes toward Israel and other Middle Eastern issues as part of its survey of opinion in six European countries. Belgians tended to be pro-Palestinian: 41 percent of respondents had a favorable view of the Palestinians and 24
percent viewed them unfavorably, as compared to 35 percent who were favorable to Israel and 32 percent who were unfavorable. Asked with whom they sympathized more in the present conflict, 31 percent named the Palestinians and 16 percent the Israelis. Forty-nine percent agreed with the view that Israeli treatment of the Palestinians was similar to South African apartheid, 44 percent believed that “American Jews control U.S. Middle East policy,” and of those who felt that media coverage of the Middle East was biased, those identifying the bias as pro-Israel outnumbered those seeing it as pro-Palestinian by two to one.

The survey uncovered considerable uneasiness about the prospect of Iran developing a nuclear capacity, with 79 percent of respondents saying they were “concerned” or “somewhat concerned.” Sixty-three percent believed that Iran was working to acquire nuclear weapons and 56 percent favored the imposition of economic sanctions.

An important source of information about and analysis of Middle East issues in Belgium was the Brussels-based Transatlantic Institute, an arm of the American Jewish Committee. Throughout the year it hosted programs and issued publications on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the threat posed by Iran, and other matters of concern.

Anti-Semitism and Extremism

A total of 69 anti-Semitic incidents were reported in Belgium during the year, the highest number since 2001. The cities most affected were the two largest, Brussels (17 incidents) and Antwerp (16). Some “incidents” were national and even international, involving the media and the Internet. In only one case was physical violence involved, as compared to four such cases in 2006. But the 50 “ideological” incidents—such as slurs and insults—were up from 45 in 2006 and 30 in 2005. A sample of these anti-Semitic manifestations follows.

On January 25, during a routine inspection of travelers’ tickets on a De Lijn tram in Antwerp, a noticeably Orthodox Jewish woman who was six months pregnant was asked to show her ticket and ID card. A native English speaker, she did not understand his instructions, and the inspector became angry, saying, “You [people] never pay.” He then confiscated her multitrip ticket, which had not been used up. Her husband, demanding a refund, an apology, and the assurance that she would not be fined, contacted the Forum der Joodse Organisaties (FJO), the umbrella body of Jewish groups in Flanders. It brought the matter to the attention of the
Center for Equal Opportunity, which contacted the tram company on February 2 and requested an explanation. None was ever received.

On February 3, a rabbi visiting from abroad got off a train at Brussels's South Station. Identifiably Jewish, as in the previous case, by his clothing, the rabbi was set upon by a group of youths, who spit on him. He did not notify the police, and casually mentioned the incident in a talk he gave that evening at the conference to which he had been invited. He said he was shocked, but that he was mostly sorry for the unfortunate young people who had attacked him.

After receiving information, on February 22, that the Skynet Internet site had a link to the text of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* with no accompanying explanation, the Equal Opportunity Center filed a complaint with the company. On March 6 the link was removed and replaced by another that provided the text along with commentary that situated the anti-Semitic work in its historical context, stating explicitly that it was a forgery.

Notified that a Brussels bookstore was selling a CD of the Koran that also included two Arabic sermons with anti-Semitic content, the Center for Equal Opportunity verified the translation and, on August 2, sent a letter to the store manager requesting a halt to the sale of this product. A reply was received on September 19 from the management of the bookstore chain explaining that it had previously been unaware of the content of the CD and had now removed it from the shelves of its stores.

The ADL survey of attitudes in six European nations contained data about Belgian views of Jews. Fifty-four percent—the highest figure among the six countries—said it was "probably true" that Jews were more loyal to Israel than to their country of residence. That same "probably true" response was registered by 36 percent when asked whether Jews had "too much" power in the business world, 40 percent when asked about "too much" Jewish power in international financial markets, and 43 percent when asked whether Jews talked "too much" about the Holocaust. Queried about the source of anti-Jewish incidents in the country, 35 percent cited hostility to Jews and 37 percent anti-Israel feeling. Twenty percent of Belgians blamed the Jews for the death of Christ.

Attention to anti-Semitism should not obscure the fact that the large Muslim minority was a much more inviting target for xenophobia. As Brussels—whose Muslim inhabitants constituted between 17 and 20 percent of the population—was the "capital" of the EU, broader European-wide anxiety about Islam focused on that Belgian city. In late August,
Brussels mayor Freddy Thielemans refused permission for a rally against "Islamization" to mark the sixth anniversary of 9/11, citing a threat to law and order and charging that the organizing group, Stop the Islamization of Europe (SIOE), was racist. SIOE appealed the decision, but it was upheld by an appeals court.

The rally nevertheless took place, illegally, on September 11, attracting about 200 people, many of them far-right members of the European Parliament from several countries (the organizers had hoped for a turnout of 20,000). Police removed the demonstrators by force, arresting most of them and keeping them in custody for several hours. The Website of Vlaams Belang, the separatist, anti-immigrant Flemish party, sarcastically proclaimed, "Today the foreign media has again seen a fine image of how democracy works in Belgium," and denounced Mayor Thielemans as an "Islamosocialist."

Holocaust-Related Matters

On February 3, the Brussels-based Center for Historical Research and Documentation on War and Contemporary Society (CEGES) issued *Docile Belgium*, its 1,114-page final report on the role of Belgian authorities in the destruction of the country's Jewish community in World War II. It had been commissioned by the government in 2003.

The team of historians that carried out the project presented ample proof that "the Belgian state adopted a docile and cooperative attitude in some very diverse but crucial domains, providing collaboration unworthy of a democracy, with a policy that was disastrous for Belgian and foreign Jews," while also pointing out that individual Belgians risked their lives to help Jews. Prime Minister Verhofstadt expressed the hope that the findings would be incorporated in history text books. As a follow-up, CEGES held a conference, hosted by the Coordinating Committee of Belgian Jewish Organizations (CCLJ), to publicize the report.

On October 28, FJO, the Dutch-speaking federation of Jewish organizations, held a forum in Antwerp on "Children of the Holocaust." No one could have predicted that this innocent event would trigger an explosive controversy.

About 1,200 people from all over the world came to hear 33 speakers, including several high-ranking politicians, psychiatrists, historians, survivors, and special guest Arno Lustiger, cousin of the late cardinal of Paris who died in August (see above, pp. 397-98). There was a ceremony honoring the Belgian Righteous among the Nations and Jewish soldiers
who served in the Allied armies, as well as exhibitions of books on the Holocaust and photographs that had been taken of Jews being deported. The Museum of Deportation and Resistance had an exhibit with a touchscreen function enabling visitors to view and possibly identify pictures of lost Jewish family members. A number of films were screened as well.

The highlight of the forum was the presentation of Antwerp mayor Patrick Janssens, who apologized to the Jewish community on behalf of his city for the involvement of municipal authorities and the police force in the three 1942 roundups that culminated in the deportation of 1,200 Jewish residents of the city to Auschwitz. This was the first time any Antwerp official had ever issued such an apology, and the Jewish community was extremely appreciative.

The next day, however, Bart De Wever, who was chairman of the New Flemish Alliance (N-VA) party and also an Antwerp town councilor, declared that the mayor’s apology was uncalled for and had been made for the sole purpose of delivering a political swipe at the separatist Vlaams Belang. According to De Wever, “Antwerp did not organize the deportation of the Jews; [the city] was a victim of the Nazi occupation. Antwerp’s officials had to make decisions. In my view, attacking them does not seem very courageous.” And he went on to suggest to the Jewish community that remembrance of the Holocaust should not obscure Israel’s occupation of Palestinian territories.

There were immediate denunciations of De Wever’s remarks from across the political spectrum, and some charged him with anti-Semitism. Perhaps the most anguished complaints came from the Flemish Christian Democrats (CD&V), the party that had allied with the N-VA for the elections and was now seeking to set up a government coalition with it. Michael Freilich, editor-in-chief of the Jewish monthly Joods Actueel, called De Wever’s statement “scandalous,” adding that if he were to become mayor of Antwerp its Jewish citizens would have reason to worry.

So quick and sharp were the expressions of criticism that De Wever backtracked the following morning, October 30. He now said that his words had been misinterpreted; he had not meant that the mayor’s apology should not have been made, rather, that it had been made too late. And he apologized if his comments had had the effect of injuring the feelings of the Jews of Antwerp. The Jewish community did not accept the apology.

Another event that focused on children during the Holocaust took place in Jerusalem, an international conference on “Children Hidden in Belgium during the Shoah,” held April 15–19. It was conceived by Shaul
Harel, a professor at Tel Aviv University who was himself hidden as a child in Belgium, and was sponsored by the Belgian Foreign Ministry. The nearly 300 participants attended seminars and workshops on the influence of the experience of being “hidden” on the children and their families. Andrée Geulen, a Belgian who helped save as many as 300 Jewish children and had already been recognized as “Righteous among the Nations,” was made an honorary citizen of the State of Israel in a ceremony at Yad Vashem. The Institute of Jewish Audiovisual Memory (IMAJ) filmed the entire conference.

The Jewish Museum of Deportation and Resistance (JMDR) in Mechelen—whose name was to be changed to Kazerne Dossin [Dossin Barracks] Museum, Memorial and Documentation Center on Holocaust and Human Rights—was planning to expand. With the aid of the Flemish government, a new structure would be built to house the museum, the design to be chosen through an international architectural contest. It would feature a permanent historical exhibition on the racial persecution of Jews and Gypsies in Belgium and northern France during the Nazi era, and also host temporary exhibitions on human-rights issues related to Belgium. The Dossin Barracks project itself would triple the current permanent exhibition space.

Some 35,000–37,000 people visited the museum during 2007, about 40 percent of them French-speaking (since admission was free and there was no ticketing system, the exact number was not available). The great majority of visitors were secondary-school students, and they were given a special 100-minute guided tour in French, Dutch, or German. In addition, the museum chairman appeared at 25 schools in Flanders to relate his personal wartime experiences. The museum was currently located in what had been an SS barracks. For two months the JMDR hosted an exhibit on the famous 20th transport from Mechelen, featuring portraits of 1,200 of the 1,600 deportees. It was also shown in Antwerp and Cologne, Germany.

The JMDR was the moving force behind the creation of the Belgium Museum in Auschwitz, which opened in May 2006. During 2007 steps were taken to install a touch screen on the premises so as to make available the portraits of deportees from Mechelen to Auschwitz.

A plaque paying tribute to the Belgian citizens who provided assistance and helped save the lives of Jews during the Nazi occupation was unveiled on the façade of the Jewish Museum of Belgium, in Brussels, on September 25. The ceremony also recalled the exploits of Captain (later Baron) Jean Bloch, who participated in the liberation of Brussels at the
head of a detachment of the Piron Brigade, and was the first liberator to enter the town hall on September 3, 1944.

Sister Francia de Linares of the order of Our Lady of Zion was posthumously given the title Righteous among the Nations by Yad Vashem, the ceremony taking place on February 1 in Paris. She was the fifth nun of Our Lady of Zion to receive this honor.

JEWISH COMMUNITY

Communal Affairs

The Consistoire Central Israélite de Belgique (Belgian Jewish Central Consistory)—the representative body of the Jewish religion in the country, created, like its French counterpart, by Napoleonic decree in 1808—made preparations for celebrating its bicentennial in 2008. Three high-profile events were planned that, it was hoped, would generate media coverage and educate Belgians, as well as other Europeans, about the Belgian Jewish community: a gala dinner, a pair of colloquia (one in Brussels and the other in Antwerp), and a solemn service in the Grand Synagogue of Brussels.

The Comité de Coordination des Organisations Juives de Belgique (Coordinating Committee of Jewish Organizations of Belgium, CCOJB), the umbrella organization of some 40 secular Jewish groups, mostly in Brussels, had considerable difficulty electing a new chairman. Prior to leaving office at the end of his term, incumbent Philippe Markiewicz organized elections for December 14, 2006, to choose his successor. However, a two-thirds vote of the electoral board was necessary for election, and neither that ballot nor others taken early in 2007 produced a winner. This was the case even in June, after the field had been winnowed down to two candidates: Joel Rubinfeld received 65 votes, a majority but not two-thirds of the 113 total, while Norbert Cigé got 47, and one abstained.

Markiewicz made little secret of his preference for Cigé, who was, like the incumbent, a moderate who favored emphasis on improving intergroup relations. Rubinfeld, a critic of Markiewicz, argued for greater Jewish assertiveness in fighting anti-Semitism and more energetic support of Israel. His supporters went to court, charging Markiewicz with seeking to deprive some of them of their right to vote. As 2007 came to an end the two sides remained deadlocked.

The parallel Antwerp-based organization, Forum der Joodse Organ-
isaties van Belgie (Forum of Jewish Organizations of Belgium, FJO), devoted considerable energy to fighting manifestations of anti-Semitism, as noted above (p. 000) in the case of Bart de Wever’s offensive remarks in Antwerp. The FJO also sought to counter calls to boycott Israel by organizing “Support Israel, buy Israeli products!” campaigns in local supermarkets twice during 2007; conducted the annual Holocaust Remembrance Day commemoration on May 8; hosted residents of Sderot and gave them the opportunity to brief the media about the relentless Palestinian rocket attacks on their town; and filed an official complaint against six people with Belgian/European links who participated in the Holocaust denial conference in Tehran in December 2006.

Service Social Juïf (Jewish Social Service) dealt with the welfare needs of the Brussels Jewish community and also provided cultural activities for its volunteers. La Centrale d’Œuvres sociales Juives de Bruxelles (Central Administration of Jewish Welfare Organizations of Brussels), which discreetly collected funds for the community’s social institutions, also produced a quarterly bulletin containing articles about Jewish and general cultural matters.

**Interfaith Relations**

The Sisters of Zion community in Brussels continued its efforts to improve Christian-Jewish relations. In the educational area, it brought together Christians of all ages throughout the year for classes in Biblical Hebrew at four levels of difficulty, with the use of rabbinical sources. There were also Biblical Hebrew weekends in Strasbourg and Evry, near Paris, and the theme was animals in the Bible.

The Sisters of Zion helped organize two interfaith meetings in Brussels, each of them attended by more than 150 people. One was a festive “getting-to-know-each-other” day held in a high school, under the banner, “Jews, Christians, Muslims, Hindus, and Secularists: Let’s Build Bridges Together.” The other activity was an interfaith walk through Brussels in which the participants were welcomed in various houses of worship, including the Orthodox synagogue in Rue de la Clinique/Klinikstraat. These large events in turn triggered numerous activities on a smaller scale.

The Sisters of Zion participated in the international colloquium on “Religion(s) and Modernity” that was held at the Museum of Europe in Brussels on May 5. They also created a Website, www.sion.org/brux-
elles.htm, to keep people abreast of the calendar of activities of the Jewish community and of joint Jewish-Christian events.

**Education**

There were two Jewish schools in Brussels that provided primary and secondary education and were recognized by the state: Maimonides Atheneum, which was Orthodox, and Ganenou Atheneum, which was Zionist and also enjoyed recognition from Israel’s Ministry of Education.

Maimonides celebrated its 60th anniversary in 2007. To mark the occasion pupils participated in several humanitarian projects to develop their civic spirit, including the collection of money for charitable causes in Belgium, Israel, and Africa. The theme of the 2006/07 school year was “A healthy mind in a healthy body”; every grade was involved in activities related to this theme, culminating in a family rally on foot in the woods (Forêt de Soignes/Zonienwoud) under a clear blue sky. After six years of a successful Dutch-immersion program in the primary grades, the program was extended to the first year of secondary school.

The heavily Orthodox Jewish population of Antwerp created a different educational picture, as some 90 percent of the children attended Jewish schools. The two major ones were Tachkemoni, run by the Shomre Hadass community, and Yesode HaTorah, which serviced the more strictly Orthodox Machsike Hadass. There were also many smaller Hasidic institutions, some not recognized by the state.

Adult Jewish education was available at the Institute of Jewish Studies, the only university-level school in the country that offered degree programs exclusively in Jewish fields. Many of its students were also enrolled at Brussels Free University (ULB), which gave credit for its courses. In fact, a new ULB master’s program in the Study of Religion and Secularism included institute courses in the history of the Jews of Belgium; Israeli society; Biblical Hebrew; and Aramaic. In addition to the wide variety of courses offered, the institute also hosted a number of public lectures, perhaps the most unusual being a presentation, in English, on “Jews in China” by Prof. Guang Pan, director of the Shanghai Jewish Studies Center, on October 2.

A long-term project of the institute was Dictionnaire sur les signes précurseurs du nazisme et les persécutions des Juifs (1918-1945), a dictionary of the warning signs of Nazism and persecution of the Jews from 1918 through 1945, which was due to be published soon.
Culture

The Jewish Museum of Belgium, approaching its 25th anniversary, featured a major exhibit entitled “Sarah and Her Brothers” that opened October 11. It was about the Kaliski family—two brothers, René and Chaim, and their sister Sarah—whose works were deeply influenced by the Holocaust. René Kaliski was one of the most outstanding playwrights of the contemporary Belgian theater; Chaim composed a stunning hallucinatory fresco fed by history and his own Jewishness; and Sarah’s paintings—as well as her notebooks that were included in the exhibit—were clearly haunted by the memory of the dead.

The Centre Communautaire Laïc Juif (Jewish Secular Community Center, CCLJ), sponsored a number of Jewish cultural activities including lectures, book launches, and symposia. On November 22 the CCLJ had an extraordinary gala at the Royal Conservatory of Brussels in honor of Israel’s 60th anniversary. The theme was “Israel in Music: 1947–2007,” and several renowned musicians participated.

The women’s Zionist group WIZO, which raised money for a number of welfare projects in Israel, held its 21st Book and Art Day in Brussels on March 11, including book signings by authors. It also ran a weekly Monday lecture series.

Zionist cultural programming was provided by the Ben-Gurion Circle. Each month there was an Israel movie night, and, in conjunction with the House of Jewish Culture, the circle sponsored regular lectures. It organized an evening featuring Israeli entertainers, karaoke, dancing, and food to mark the 60th anniversary of the Jewish state.

The Brussels-based Contemporary Memory Foundation was created in 1994 to study and teach the history of Belgian Jews in the twentieth century, and in 2007 it became a “privileged partner” of Brussels Free University’s Interdisciplinary Center for the Study of Religion and Secularism. Its research projects during 2007 included an investigation of marginality in Jewish society between the wars, an exploration of painter Arno Stern’s career in Belgium, the Brussels Jewish community’s reconstruction in the aftermath of the Holocaust, illegal immigration from Belgium to Palestine during the British mandate, and the fate and current status of Yiddish in Belgium.

The Liège Jewish Cultural Center, created in the aftermath of World War II by a battered, decimated community, had become the main driving force behind secular Jewish life in Liège. On May 16 it celebrated the 50th anniversary of its founding. Its annual commemoration of Holo-
caust Memorial Day in April featured a talk on the influx of Jews from Eastern Europe into that region of Belgium between the wars.

IMAJ, the Institute of Jewish Audiovisual Memory, screened previously unreleased documentaries about Jewish life, and sponsored an Israel film festival June 3–5 with the support of the Israeli embassy. IMAJ also began work on an ambitious project, in cooperation with other institutions, to archive the audio and visual heritage specific to the history of Belgium’s Jewish community. This would include religious and secular music, international conferences held in Belgium, debates, and broadcasts, all of which were currently conserved in their original media. Several foundations, some of them outside Belgium, were approached for grant money to carry out the plan.

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