

## From Europe to the World: Alain de Prelle de la Nieppe's globe-trotting journalism during the early Cold War (Michael Auwers)

### Abstract

The Belgian nobleman Alain de Prelle de la Nieppe was a key witness of several civil wars that took place in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Born in 1922 in Beijing as the son of the military commander of the Belgian legation, ten years later Alain and his family left the capital of a China torn between nationalists and communists to return to his home country, which would soon be occupied by Nazi-Germany. During the Second World War, he fled Belgium via France and Spain to reach England, where he enlisted as a war volunteer. In 1946, de Prelle married a refugee from the Spanish Civil War, but not long afterwards embarked on a journey through Central and Eastern Europe, the Balkans and the Mediterranean, writing reports that he sold to a great variety of Belgian and foreign newspapers and magazines. His articles reported on the many geopolitical conflagrations during the hottest years of the Cold War. Among the events covered, the Greek civil war ranked most prominently, followed at close distance by the denouement of the Chinese Revolution and the Korean war.

My proposed paper will take a closer look at the articles and books published by de Prelle about these civil wars. It will also analyse his unpublished texts, the scripts of his radio performances and the visual material he used during the many talks he gave about his travels in war-torn countries. I will focus on how he represented the struggles between the rivalling parties and the way he translated them to the diverse (Western-)European audiences he addressed. What frames did he use in his stories about these civil wars and to what extent did he compare them? How were they connected from the transnational point of view he inevitably adopted?

### Bio

Michael Auwers is a diplomatic historian of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries who is increasingly turning towards the social and cultural history of the Cold War. He is a Senior Researcher at the State Archives of Belgium's Study Centre for War and Society (CegeSoma), the managing editor of the *Journal of Belgian History*, and a member of the University of Antwerp's Center for Political History (PoHis).