

# CEGESOMA NEWSLETTER

## NO 60 - NOVEMBER 2020

[nl](#) [fr](#) [en](#)

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### PUBLICATION

If you were unable to follow the online presentation of the book 'Experiencing 11 November 2018: Commemoration and the First World War Centenary' please watch it and browse through the book.

[\[MORE INFO\] \(https://www.cegesoma.be/en/publication/experiencing-11-november-2018-commemoration-and-first-world-war-centenary\)](https://www.cegesoma.be/en/publication/experiencing-11-november-2018-commemoration-and-first-world-war-centenary)

### LIBRARY

Latest additions to the CegeSoma library. [\[MORE INFO\] \(https://www.cegesoma.be/en/face-pandemic-library-cegesoma-stands-its-grounds\)](https://www.cegesoma.be/en/face-pandemic-library-cegesoma-stands-its-grounds)

### CHILDREN OF COLLABORATION

As a complement to the TV documentary film shown on 'La Une' (RTBF) 'Les enfants de la collaboration', watch the views of historians in the three episodes of the TV mini-series 'Regards d'historiens' and read the related article by Koen Aerts.

[\[MORE INFO\] \(https://www.cegesoma.be/en/event/regards-dhistoriens-historians-viewpoints\)](https://www.cegesoma.be/en/event/regards-dhistoriens-historians-viewpoints)

### EHRI ANNIVERSARY

An occasion to look back on the history of the EHRI (European Holocaust Research Infrastructure) project and its achievements over the past ten years.

[\[MORE INFO\] \(https://www.cegesoma.be/en/news/ehri-celebrates-10th-anniversary\)](https://www.cegesoma.be/en/news/ehri-celebrates-10th-anniversary)

### NAZISME AND OCCULTISME

Discover the first part of our series 'The Librarian Talks' with Alain Colignon.

[\[MORE INFO\] \(https://www.cegesoma.be/en/nazismand-occultism-cegesoma-library\)](https://www.cegesoma.be/en/nazismand-occultism-cegesoma-library)

### COVID-19 PANDEMIC

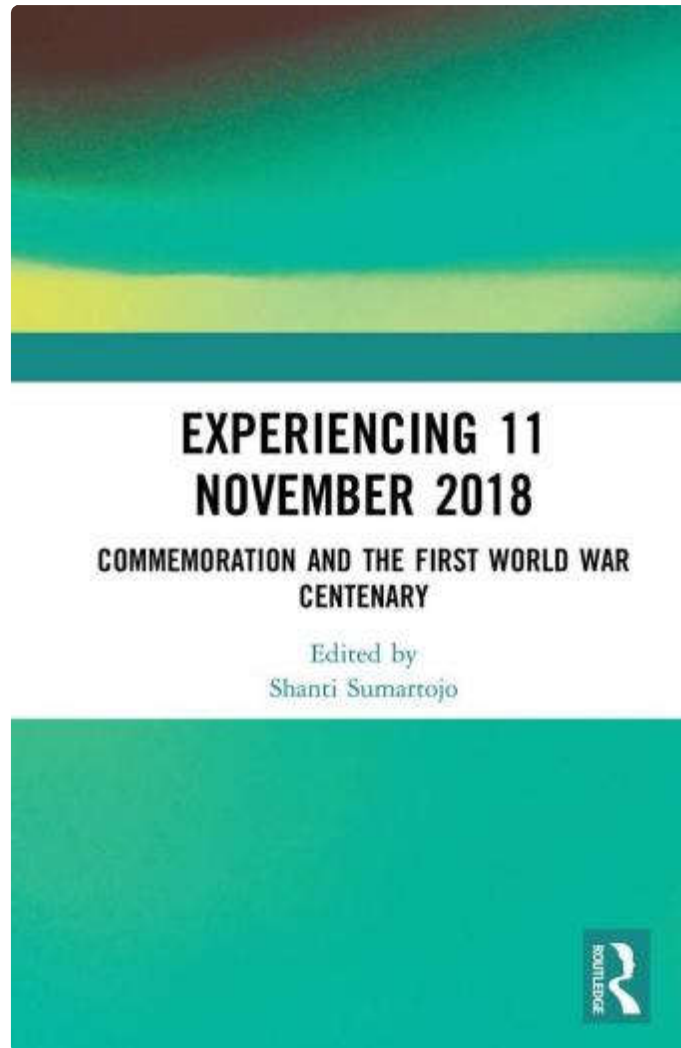
Reopening of the reading rooms in two phases. [\[MORE INFO\] \(https://www.cegesoma.be/en/covid-19-update-reopening-reading-rooms-two-phases\)](https://www.cegesoma.be/en/covid-19-update-reopening-reading-rooms-two-phases)

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[Home](#) » [Publication](#) » [Experiencing 11 November 2018: Commemoration and the First World War Centenary.](#)

## Experiencing 11 November 2018: Commemoration and the First World War Centenary.

World War I [Book](#)



In a resolutely international and interdisciplinary perspective, researchers from a dozen countries have participated in numerous commemorative events in their respective countries. They then analyzed these events according to their respective disciplines. This book is the product of the "Commemoration reframed" reflection group (which met several times at CegeSoma) led by [Professor Shanti Sumartojo](#) who teaches at Monash University in Australia.

The result is a resolutely original and innovative approach to the phenomenon of commemoration. In his presentation, [the historian Jay Winter](#) revisits some aspects of this question as well as the diversity of contexts and actors involved. Stimulating reflections to be heard as a foreword to the reading of the book...

Click [here](#) (Youtube link) to listen to the presentation of the book 'Experiencing November 11, 2018'.

**Where was I on November 11, 2018? This could be one of the questions you might ask when reading this book.**

## PRODUCT DETAILS

**Binding:** hardcover

**Number of pages:** 234 p.

Format:

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## AUTHOR(S)

[Shanti Sumartojo](#) (Edited by)

## PRICE

Hardback: £ 90.00 - eBook : £ 40.49

**ORDER**

**LOOK INSIDE**

**WATCH THE ONLINE PRESENTATION OF THE BOOK**

## TAGS

[WWI commemorations](#)

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## In the face of the pandemic, the Library of CegeSoma stands its grounds!

This year 2020, that proves to be quite particular... and frankly calamitous with regard to health and economy, has nevertheless brought a significant expansion of our library, albeit a rather qualitative than quantitative one due to budget restrictions.

Among the recent accessions to the library (September-November 2020) we would like to highlight the significantly revised edition of *Onverwekt verleden, 1942-1952* by Luc Huyse and Steven Dhondt. This book about the repression of collaboration was first published by Kritak in 1991, and has now – thirty years later – been revised and republished, still by Kritak and under the same title, but with major input from collaborators who were or still are closely linked to our institution: Koen Aerts, Bruno De Wever, Pieter Lagrou. The same Pieter Lagrou also penned another no less important publication about the statistical review of the last world conflict: *Les guerres, les morts et le deuil. Bilan chiffré de la Seconde Guerre mondiale* (published in Paris by Rohrbasser). This book provides a sound synthesis of the issue and allows us to find out if statistics are indeed an exact science!

In the category 'studies about the Resistance', let us pinpoint three recent and very promising works – one about our southern neighbours, by Yagil Limore, *Les « Anonymes » de la Résistance en France 1940-1942: Motivations et engagements de la première heure* (Paris, Lharmattan, 2019), and another one with a more international profile, about armed insurrection, by Thierry Grosbois, *Résistance contre le nazisme. Maquisards et partisans sur le front occidental et soviétique* (Brussels, Editions universitaires européennes, 2020). The third one, somewhat romantically titled *Het Schaduwleger/L'Armée de l'ombre*, but with the more explicit sub-title *Van clandestiniteit naar herinnering/De la clandestinité à la mémoire*, was recently published by Gompel&Scavina as a collective work (with papers by Emmanuel Debruyne, Dirk Martin, Laurence Van Ypersele, Robin Libert,...). Three important studies to mention, and that "every honest man" should try to include in his library, at least if he is interested in WWII.

Specialists in issues of identity, particularly those studying nationalistic problems in Belgium from a Flemish angle, may, if they master Goethe's language, refer to the comprehensive work by Jakob Müller, *Die importierte Nation. Deutschland und die Entstehung des flämischen Nationalismus 1914 bis 1945* (Göttingen, 2020): the title is sufficiently self-explanatory and like all German studies on such issues, it is a serious work, with a high level of erudition. Amateurs of social semiotics will certainly appreciate the research published by a "veteran" of CegeSoma, who served when it was still named CREHSGM: *Sieg Heil! Van mythische groet tot verderfelijke ideologie*, by Gie Van Den Berghe, a reflection in light of the 21<sup>st</sup> century about the use of the "Lingua Tertii Imperii" within society. A new and complementary approach to the works of Victor Klemperer so to speak!

Finally, as the commemorations and remembrance of the “Great War” are fading away in time, our library, faithful to its mission, has seen fit to add to its collections *Writing the Great War. The Historiography of World War I from 1918 to the Present* (Ed. by Christoph Cornelissen and Arndt Weinrich; published by Berghahn in 2020) in order to have a global vision of this topic in the English-speaking world.

We could leave it at that, as the scope of such Newsletters has its limits, but we could not resist the pleasure of presenting to our highly esteemed readers the literary feat of Antonio Scurati of 2018. His work achieved great success beyond Italy and was translated into several languages. In his 850 pages strong “fictional reality” book titled *M, Il Figlio Del Secolo* he retraces the rise to power of Benito Mussolini, from 1919 to 1922. As the publishing success of this book is undeniable and surely reflects a certain zeitgeist, it seemed advisable to CegeSoma to “exceptionally” acquire the book and make it accessible to its readers, in the same way it had previously added to its collections for other reasons the novel *Les Bienveillantes* by Jonathan Littel.

Through their respective successes, both books are mirrors of our times, reflecting a fascination for a certain past and fears of a certain future...

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[Home](#) » [Event](#) » [Regards d'historiens \(Historians' viewpoints\)](#)

## Regards d'historiens (Historians' viewpoints)

The children of collaboration in Francophone Belgium: silence finally broken?

[World War II](#) [Film projection](#)



Three years ago, Koen Aerts (who in the meantime became a member of CegeSoma's scientific team) presented in the conference room of our institution a preview of '*Kinderen van de collaboratie*' a VRT documentary series broadcasted in several episodes on Canvas. The following year, a source guide for the history of collaboration in Belgium was published in French and Dutch under the title '[Papy était-il un nazi ? Sur les traces d'un passé de guerre](#)'. / [Was opa een nazi? Speuren naar het oorlogsverleden](#)'. ( « [Was Grandpa a Nazi? On the Trail of the War Past](#) »). A book that soon became a must-have to discover the war past of thousands of families in Belgium.

But until today, there was no TV coverage of what remained a great taboo: collaboration in the French and German speaking parts of the country ...

It is only now, at the end of 2020, that what could be considered the Francophone counterpart of the program broadcast on *Canvas* is shown on *RTBF*. The production company *De Mensen/Les Gens* and Koen Aerts originated this approach in 2018. The development and production of the series was entrusted to director Tristan Bourlard (Zest Studio) and journalist Anne-Cécile Huwart. Several members of CegeSoma staff and of the Transmemo project team helped them to contextualize the subject both historically and in terms of the intergenerational transmission of the memory of the war.

If on the Dutch-speaking side, the search for witnesses didn't really cause problems, among Francophones,

finding people willing to testify freely about the collaborationist past of their parents represented a completely different challenge.

The 90-minute program "Les enfants de la collaboration" (« Children of Collaboration »), broadcast on Channel One of RTBF on November 25, 2020, gives the floor to seven witnesses. In 2017, on Canvas, the 7-episode documentary series ended with a debate between experts. RTBF has made another choice: the historians' viewpoint will only be available on the Auvio platform. Of course, these two RTBF TV broadcast complement each other.

Therefore, before watching the TV program "[\*\*Les enfants de la collaboration\*\*](#)" **we strongly advise you to view online, via the [RTBF's Auvio platform](#)**, the three sequences that were filmed in the presence of seven historians specializing in the subject : Koen Aerts, Christophe Brüll, Alain Colignon, Martin Conway, Chantal Kesteloot, Pieter Lagrou and Florence Rasmont. In three times 20 minutes, they evoke the context of the period (from pre-war to post-war, define the scope of collaboration in Francophone Belgium, and evoke the policy of repression implemented after the war by Belgian military justice. In short, it is an indispensable complement to understanding the viewpoints of the witnesses.

- [\*\*#1 'Regards d'historiens' - First episode\*\*](#)
- [\*\*#2 'Regards d'historiens' - Second episode\*\*](#)
- [\*\*#3 'Regards d'historiens' - Third episode\*\*](#)

Finally, we invite you to discover, on the blog of the Belgium WWII website, an article (in French and in Dutch) by Koen Aerts entitled '[\*\*Enfants de la collaboration \(RTBF\) versus Kinderen van de collaboratie \(VRT\): programmes similaires, réactions similaires?/dezelfde programma's, dezelfde reacties\*\*](#)'.

Next event - coming soon! A radio series in three episodes on the transmission of war memories 'Les transmissions. La guerre en héritage' (1/ De mère en fille; 2/ Le secret; 3/ Bompa) directed by Florence Rasmont and Guillaume Abgrall. A CegeSoma-Archives de l'Etat and Gsara asbl production.



25/11/2020 - 20:30 to 22:00

#### Main language

French

#### TAGS

[collaboration](#) [Everyday life](#) [Rexism](#) [Wallonia](#) [Repression of collaboration](#) [Public debate](#)  
[Eastern Front](#) [Collective Memories](#)

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[Home](#) » [News](#) » EHRI celebrates 10th anniversary

## EHRI celebrates 10th anniversary

#EHRI10Years

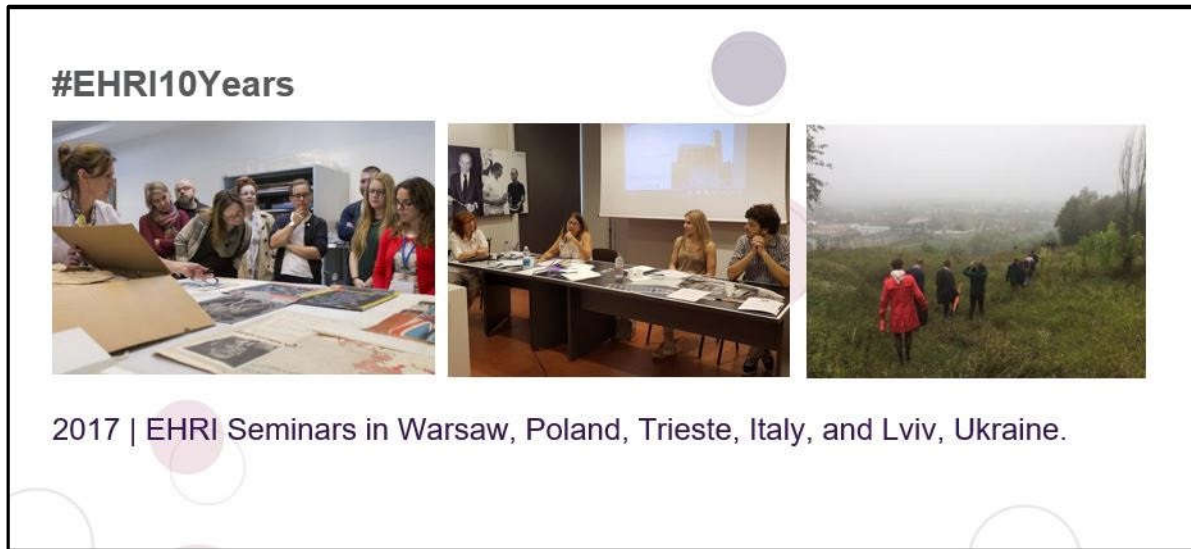


16 November 2010 | Prof. Jerzy Holzer at the Launch Event of the European Holocaust Research Infrastructure, the Royal Museum of Art and History, Brussels.

The 16<sup>th</sup> of November 2020 marks the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the launch, in Brussels, of [the European Holocaust Research Infrastructure \(EHRI\)](#). This is the occasion to look back on the history and the realisations of EHRI, which has entered its third project phase in anticipation of a hopefully successful transformation into a permanent research infrastructure. Research into the Holocaust is subject to a strange paradox. The Holocaust was by essence a European phenomenon: Nazi-Germany systematically exterminated Jews not only in Germany but also in other countries it occupied or annexed. The sources about the persecution of the Jews are broadly scattered however, and no overall finding aid is available. One of the key missions of EHRI is to make these scattered sources more easily identifiable and traceable by providing an overview of the institutions in which they are conserved and by bringing together the collection descriptions of Holocaust-related sources in a user-friendly manner and making them accessible. Right from the onset, EHRI aimed at digital accessibility. Thus, researchers can find archive institutions and collection descriptions from various countries in Europe and elsewhere in the world through the research portal. Over 325.000 descriptions are available. Within the framework of ERHI-3 this number is bound to increase. You can discover how this portal works and the research opportunities it offers [here](#) (Youtube film in the bottom of the page EHRI).

### Connecting people

The research portal is not only intended to simplify the work of individual researchers, but also to foster international cooperation between Holocaust researchers. For example, if you want to conduct comparative research between different countries, it is much easier to look for relevant sources or find clues for transnational research themes. EHRI is not only useful to accomplished Holocaust researchers; its fellowship programme gives young researchers the opportunity to carry out archival research in one of the partner institutions of EHRI for a short period of time. Throughout the years, EHRI has organised a number of workshops and colloquia that were often centred around underexplored regions or issues. This has also contributed to the emergence of an international research community that is in contact through EHRI. Other initiatives such as summer schools and online courses were additional building blocks that shaped the research community.



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### Digital Humanities

Digital humanities not only facilitates access to archives, it also serves as a means to advertise sources and archives among the broad public in an innovative and interactive manner. The [document blog](#) is a bright example of this. For the memory of the Holocaust, the importance of a digital infrastructure accessible to everyone cannot be underestimated either.

The collaboration among colleagues with very different backgrounds is one of the most enriching experiences that EHRI has to offer. First, there is the geographical diversity: EHRI's partners come from various European countries (including Central Europe) from Israel and the USA. This diversity is also found in the disciplines: next to historians, archivists and other collection specialists, IT specialists play a key role within EHRI. These factors contribute to the shaping of a broader view and the realisation that research can but benefit from international and interdisciplinary cooperation, thereby allowing us to stay abreast and informed of the latest developments.

### Conny Kristel

Dutch historian Conny Kristel played a crucial role in the establishment and progress of EHRI. Not only did she help setting up EHRI, she also coordinated its expansion while working at NIOD. Conny Kristel earned her PhD under the supervision of Hans Blom, with a dissertation on the historiography of the persecution of the Jews in the Netherlands, in which she drew a subtle analysis of the lives and works of Abel Herzberg, Jacques Presser and Lou de Jong. Conny Kristel carried out her role as coordinator in a determined but inclusive manner and managed to make people from various horizons work together, and to create good relations with the persons in charge of European research programmes. Sadly, Conny Kristel passed away on 6 October 2018. In her honour, the *fellowship* programme that shall be continued within the EHRI-3 framework carries her name. Cegesoma was one of the '*founding fathers*' of EHRI and is still today among its partners, together with Kazerne Dossin, for the third phase of EHRI and the so-called '*preparatory phase funding*' of EHRI. The goal of this phase is to transform EHRI into a permanent research infrastructure. The horizon for this conversion is January 2025, the eightieth anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz.

### Other news

[Les Transmissions. La guerre en héritage \(The Transmissions. The Legacy of War\)](#)

[Lives turned topsy-turvy, forever](#)

[A new colleague reinforces Cegesoma's permanent scientific team](#)

[The historical truth and the perception of the Second World War in Belgium in these times of so-called 'post-truth'](#)

[Belgian Colonial History in the JBH](#)

[Was grandpa a hero?](#)

[The peculiar summer of 1940](#)

[Farewell ....](#)

[Science and truth : archives and research](#)

[Belgium WWII in times of confinement](#)

[Discover the publications of Cegesoma or let others discover them...](#)

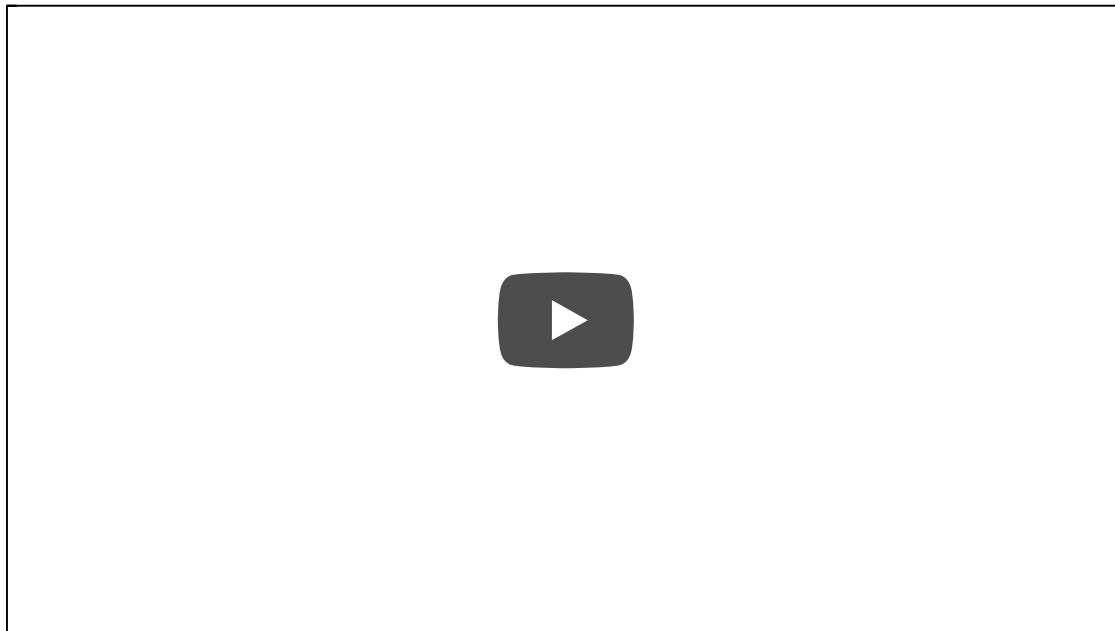
[Cegesoma in times of telework...](#)



## Nazism...and occultism in the CegeSoma library

Nazism and occultism in the CegeSoma library ... Under this title, we invite you to discover the first topic of our series "The Librarian's Pick". Each topic gives you the opportunity to delve into our collections and shall be accompanied by a video and a text as complementary information.

**Watch the first video 'Les rendez-vous du bibliothécaire: 1. Esotérisme et occultisme sous le régime nazi'.**



Until very recently, both in French-speaking Belgium and in deep Flanders, the naive who would have ventured to evoke supposedly esoteric aspects of Nazism, or who would have gone so far as to link certain rituals of the SS Black Order to those of an occultist sect, would inevitably have raised the eyebrows of professional historians, if not a gentle irony on their part. Such comparisons made on this topic have often had a sulphurous reputation for the corporation of historians who, by vocation, like to show a Cartesian spirit - when they were not assimilated to pure fantasy. And this field of research was usually left to the journalist with too much imagination, or the amateur historian, a bit demented, when he was not some shipwrecked Fascist, in search of pseudo-philosophical but valorizing justifications (or deemed as such) for the errors of his past.

Yet, abroad, confirmed researchers have long since devoted themselves to dissecting and putting such themes into perspective, whether it be Nazi esotericism or the mysticism and pseudo-mysticism conveyed by Nazism and its

nineteenth-century ideological ancestors. Thus, we will remember Jan Baird's pioneering study on « The Mythical World of Nazi War Propaganda » (1974), Hans Mommsen's « National Socialism and German Society »(1998), or George Mosse with « The Crisis of German Ideology. Intellectual Origins of the Third Reich » (1964). For a long time lagging behind in this domain, France has managed to make up for lost time thanks to the substantial research of Stéphane François, from « Le nazisme revisité : l'occultisme contre l'histoire » (2008) to « L'occultisme nazi : Entre la SS et l'ésotérisme » (2020). The reserve, or indifference, of our historians is, however, quite understandable in this matter, because it is very difficult to sift the grain from the chaff while remaining within the framework of a scientific approach.

However, the theme does not fail to challenge the curious researcher insofar as the belief in "Nazi esotericism" may seem to be based on a series of indisputable data.

-Nazism, as it appeared in 1919 in the wake of the German defeat, is not a creation "ex nihilo nihil". It has strong roots in a whole "völkisch" nebula, often anti-Semitic and pangermanist, already present in the pre-war period and at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries in a myriad of ultra-nationalist circles and small groups which often spread heterodox, semi-esoteric or pre-ecological ideas, imbued with "Nordic" or "Old German" racialism. The 'Germanenorde' (1912) and the Munich-based 'Thule-Gesellschaft' (1918), matrix of the 'Deutscher Arbeiterpartei' which was to welcome a certain Adolf Hitler, are often singled out among the immediate "great ancestors" of Nazism...

-Several senior leaders of the young Nazi party (Scheubner-Richter, Hess and Hans Franck as well as Himmler) belonged to one or the other of these societies and drew some of their ideas and Nazi symbolism from them. The same goes to some extent for Hitler himself, a sympathizer of Schönerer's Austrian Pangermanist movement and occasional reader of Jörg Lanz von Liebenfels' racist magazine Ostara (but he was not really in contact with it, contrary to what was believed for a long time...).

-Nazism as a movement presents para-religious aspects in terms of political aesthetics, with the liturgy of its ceremonies and the adoption/use of a pre-Christian, "Nordic" symbolism (swastika or swastika, runes of the SS...).

However, from the beginning of the 1930s, with the rise of the NSDAP, the equation Nazism/esotericism, or even Nazism/occultism was systematized in the ranks of the Catholic Church led by its hierarchy. Seeing the Hitlerian movement as a dangerous competitor, the latter assimilated Nazism to an emerging neo-paganism and were more or less happy toying with this model. Later, on the war's eve, « Hitler told me » ('Gespräche mit Hitler') the bestselling book of Hermann Rauschning, a breakaway from the Nazi party, added a layer to it by presenting Hitlerism as a phenomenon much more demonic than specifically political. To be somewhat reductive (to say the least), this thesis achieved a certain success in the Christian movement.

Curiously enough, this vision of things was to enjoy renewed success with the general public at the beginning of the 1960s with « Le Matin des Magiciens » (translated to English as « The Dawn of Magic » in 1963) by Louis Pauwels (born in Ghent but French-speaking) and Jacques Bergier, a work imbued with magical realism and the starting point for a whole series of "non-conformist" and "para-scientific" productions spread from Paris by the widely distributed magazine « Planète » (1961-1971). The writings of Saint-Loup/Marc Augier ('Nouveaux cathares pour Montségur'-1968 and 'Götterdämmerung. Rencontres avec la Bête'-1986) and Jean Mabire ('Thulé. Le soleil retrouvé des Hyperboréens' - 1978) as well as those of their epigones, sometimes linked to the most radical extreme right, will complete the field of research on this theme. And our historians, amateur or professional, will no doubt be dissuaded from venturing into it. It is hardly possible at this stage to pinpoint the recent contribution of Arnaud de la Croix,

'Himmler et le Graal. La vérité sur l'affaire Otto Rahn' (2018), honestly made but not very innovative (we find there echoes of 'Le mystère Otto Rahn : Le Graal et Montségur' by Christian Bernadac, a book which dates back to 1978 anyway...).

The curious reader will find all these titles, and a few other 'ejusdem farinae' (« of the same flour ») in the CegeSoma library - As you have probably understood by now this library extends its areas of interest far beyond the real or supposed tribulations of Nazism with the Cathars, Thule or neo-Pagan esotericism...

Luckily!

Alain Colignon, librarian

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