



**EXPLAINING
ATHEISM**



Centre d'études
en sciences sociales
du religieux

International Conference
“Communist Perspectives on Atheism in the 20th Century”
13th-14th November 2023, Aubervilliers

Centre de colloques – Campus Condorcet
Room 100 (13th November) and Room 50 (14th November)
Place du Front populaire, 93300 Aubervilliers, Métro 12 “Front populaire”
A link to join the conference online will be available.

Monday 13th November 2023

9h Registration, coffee (Faculty Club in Maison des Chercheurs – Campus Condorcet, 3 Cour des Humanités, ground floor)

9h30 **Introduction** by Eva Guigo-Patzelt (CéSor, EHESS/CNSR, Paris)

10h-11h45 **Panel 1: Struggles in the interwar era**
Chair: Pierre Antoine Fabre (CéSor, EHESS/CNRS, Paris)

Laura Pettinaroli (École française de Rome):
The International of proletarian freethinkers and the communist movement: uncompleted attractions
(1925-1936)

Kostas Paloukis (International University of Greece, Thessaloniki):
Greek Communists against Religion and Church during the interwar period

David Nash (Oxford Brookes University):
The Blasphemy of Communist Godlessness – responses to Communist Atheism in Britain 1936-
1938

12h-13h30 Lunch break

13h30-15h15 **Panel 2: Enforcing atheism in Eastern Europe**
Chair: Lois Lee (University of Kent)

Artan R. Hoxha (Academy of Albanian Studies, Tirana):
The Red and the Black: Atheism, Religion, and Modernity in Communist Albania

Johannes Gleixner (Collegium Carolinum, Munich):
Empirical origins of Soviet atheism: Engaging believers, managing expectations

Kristina Kovalskaya (École Pratique des Hautes Études, Paris):
Soviet Research on Religion and Unbelief after Stalin: Modernise and Moralise with Atheism

15h15-15h45 Coffee break

15h45-17h30 **Panel 3: Eastern European ambivalences in the late 1970s and 1980s**
Chair: Todd Weir (University of Groningen)

Irina Morozova (University of Regensburg):
The duality of anti-religious social campaigns in Soviet Central Asia in the 1980s

Jan Tesař (Josef Gocar School Prague):
The Foundation, existence and demise of Czechoslovakian Museum of Religion

Petar Dragišić (Institute for Recent History of Serbia, Belgrade):
Serbia in the Eighties. Between Religiosity and Atheism

17h30-18h30 **Keynote** by Victoria Smolkin (Wesleyan University):
In the Shadow of Godlessness: Soviet Atheists and the Fate of Secularism in Interwar Europe

Conference dinner for speakers

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Tuesday 14th November 2023

9h30 Coffee

10h-11h45 **Panel 4: Re-interpretations in varying cultural and religious contexts**
Chair: Eva Guigo-Patzelt (CéSor, EHESS/CNRS, Paris)

Lucky Igohosa Ugbugu (Alex Ekwueme Federal University Ndufu-Alike, Ebonyi):
Communist Perspectives on Atheism in the 20th Century Nigeria

Raghavan Nair Santhosh (Indian Institute of Technology Madras/University of Sussex) and Dayal Palleri (Indian Institute of Technology Madras):
“Godless” Communists in “God’s Own Country”? The Communist Party and Its Strategic Ambiguity towards Belief and Non-Belief in Kerala, South India

Sayed Hassan Akhlaq (George Washington University, Washington/Coppin State University, Baltimore):
“Muslim Communists”: Afghan Atheism in the 20th Century

12h-13h30 Lunch break

13h30-15h15 **Panel 5: Atheism and Catholicism between condemnation and dialogue**

Chair: Victoria Smolkin (Wesleyan University)

Marie Lucas (Paris 3 Sorbonne Nouvelle) and Mikhail Velizhev (Université Grenoble Alpes):
“Is Marxism necessarily atheistic?” Gustav Wetter, the Holy See and the Condemnation of Communism

Gašper Mithans (Science and Research Centre Koper):
Atheization and individualization of non/religious worldviews: the Catholics in Socialist Yugoslavia

Heléna Tóth (Otto Friedrich University, Bamberg):
Combatting Indifference Together: The Shifting Premises of the Christian-Marxist Dialogue in the 1980s

15h30-16h15 **Conclusions** by Todd Weir (University of Groningen)

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Academic committee

Pierre Antoine Fabre, Directeur d'études at EHESS, Deputy Director of CéSor

Eva Guigo-Patzelt, Associate member of CéSor

Dr. Jonathan Lanman, Queen's University Belfast, Project Lead Explaining Atheism

Lois Lee, Senior Lecturer at University of Kent

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The conference will take place in English.

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