



**EXPLAINING
ATHEISM**

CÉSOR

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 Paleri (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):
Combating 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.

This conference was made possible through the support of Grant 61928 from the John Templeton
Foundation managed by The Queen's University of Belfast. It is funded by the Explaining Atheism
programme (www.explainingatheism.org).