CRITICAL POTENTIALS OF SECULARIST PRACTICE

In recent years, secularist activism has been generating considerable interest in terms of historical research. Whereas freethought organizations, their protagonists, and their discussions were intensively investigated, there is up to now scarce discussion on concrete attempts to melt secular positions into a certain lifestyle. Therefore, this international conference focuses on the practical level: What did these secularists actually do? What meant living a secularist life? Furthermore, we evaluate the narratives that were used to legitimate these practices. A central point of reference will be their relation to religion, be it in a positive, affirmative way, be it negatively reactive. The conference will trace these constellations in an international and comparative framework, thereby making apparent differences and similarities of the secularist approaches in the run of the late 19th and 20th century. Our aim is to cast light on the development and critical potentials of the religious and cultural setting that molded the normality of modern secular lifestyles.

Participation in the conference is free of charge. Registrations can be made by 15 May via email to: secularist.practice@uni-leipzig.de. Places are limited.

Convenor: Katharina Neef
Organisation: Inge Fiedler
Venue: Leipzig University
HCAS „Multiple Secularities”
Nikolaistraße 8–10 (Strohsack-Passage), room 5.55

Joint Conference of the Institute for the Study of Religion and the Humanities Centre for Advanced Studies „Multiple Secularities—Beyond the West, Beyond Modernities”.

Funded by:

27 – 29 May 2019
MONDAY, 27 MAY 2019

Introduction

13:00–13:15  Christoph Kleine (Leipzig)
Welcome and Opening

13:15–13:45  Katharina Neef (Leipzig/Chemnitz)
Critical Potentials of Secularist Practice

Section 1: Imagining Community – Creating Community
Chair: Stefan Arvidsson (Vaxjö)

14:00–15:30  Christophe Verbruggen (Gent)
Secularity and Religion in the Transnational Discourse of the Social Reformers

Anja Kirsch (Basel)
19th Century Versions of the Perfect Society: Pietist and Owenite Communitarian Experiments
in New Harmony

15:30–16:00  Coffee Break

16:00–17:30  Anton Jansson (Lund)
“The Purpose of Man”: Freethought and Life Reform in Sweden around 1900

Johannes Gleixner (Prague)

17:30–18:00  Coffee Break

Keynote

18:00–19:30  Horst Junginger (Leipzig)
The Study and Critique of Religion

20:00  Dinner
(Lulu Lottenstein, Karl-Liebknecht-Straße 63)

TUESDAY, 28 MAY 2019

Section 2: Secularist Practices
Chair: Uta Karstein (Leipzig)

09:00–10:30  Daniel Loqua (Newcastle)
The Invention of a Musical Tradition among Freethinkers’ Organizations

Thomas Schmidt-Lux (Leipzig)
A Modern Architecture to Praise Secularity

10:30–11:00  Coffee Break

Section 3: Rites de passage: Performing biographical stages in the secularist milieu
Chair: Bernadett Bigalke (Leipzig)

11:00–12:30  Antoine Mandret-Degeilh (Toulouse/Paris)
The Positivist Settings of Civil Baptisms in France

Jenny Vorpahl (Potsdam)
Giving Nice Wedding Traditions a New Meaning: Civil Marriage in the GDR

12:30–14:00  Lunch Break

14:00–16:00  Carolin Kosuch (Rome/Göttingen)
Cremation, Burning Corpses, a lasting Protest Against Christian Culture

Hélène Tóth (Bamberg)
Secular Burial Ceremonies

16:00–16:30  Coffee Break

16:30–17:30  Discussion

19:00  Dinner
(Volkshaus, Karl-Liebknecht-Straße 30)

WEDNESDAY, 29 MAY 2019

Section 4: Education and Socialization
Chair: Sabrina Weiß (Leipzig)

09:00–11:00  Dirk Schuster (Potsdam)
On the Scientification of Atheism in the GDR

Stefan Schröder (Bayreuth)
Humanism as School Subject and Humanist Private Schools in Germany

Katharina Neef
Religious School Education and Secularist Agency to Separate Church and School

11:00–11:30  Coffee Break

11:30–12:30  Closing Discussion

12:30  Lunch
(Andria, Nikolaistraße 22)